
**CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING
HOMELESSNESS AMONG PREVIOUSLY MARRIED AFRICAN MEN
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

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Article Received: 04 March 2026

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Article Revised: 22 March 2026

Grace International Bible University.

Published on: 12 April 2026

DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.7250>

ABSTRACT

This quantitative correlational study investigates the relationship between cultural factors (shame avoidance, community rejection, and masculine identity threat) and economic factors (employment status, income level, housing affordability, and immigration-related work restrictions) and the duration and severity of homelessness among previously married African men in the United Kingdom. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 210 African-born men currently experiencing homelessness or homeless within the past 12 months following marital dissolution. Participants were recruited from homeless shelters, day centres, and community organisations across London, Birmingham, and Manchester. Validated instruments measured cultural stigma, social support loss, economic marginalisation, and homelessness chronicity. Multiple linear regression and binary logistic regression were employed to test hypothesised relationships. Results indicated that shame avoidance ($\beta = 0.41, p < .001$), loss of community-based social support ($\beta = 0.38, p < .001$), unemployment ($\beta = 0.44, p < .001$), and immigration-related work restrictions ($OR = 3.87, p < .01$) were the strongest independent predictors of homelessness duration and severity. Cultural factors collectively explained 34% of the variance in homelessness duration, while economic factors explained 41%. The combined model explained 58% of the variance, $F(8, 201) = 34.72, p < .001, R^2 = 0.58$. These findings provide the first quantitative evidence that both cultural and economic mechanisms operate independently and additively to prolong homelessness among this population. Implications for targeted interventions, housing policy, and culturally competent service design are discussed.

KEYWORDS: *Homelessness, African men, marital breakdown, cultural factors, economic factors, quantitative study, United Kingdom.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is not a singular event but a process, a trajectory, and for many, a chronic condition that deepens with time. Among the diverse populations affected by homelessness in the United Kingdom, African immigrant men who have experienced marital breakdown constitute a particularly invisible and poorly understood subgroup. While rough sleeping counts and statutory homelessness statistics capture broad demographic categories, they rarely disaggregate data by country of origin, immigration history, or marital trajectory. As a result, African men who lose their homes following divorce or separation remain hidden within aggregated categories such as "Black" or "ethnic minority" or "single male," their specific needs and pathways obscured by the very data systems designed to inform policy.

The invisibility of this population is not merely a statistical inconvenience. It has real consequences. Without accurate data on the prevalence, predictors, and pathways of homelessness among previously married African men, service providers cannot design targeted interventions. Policymakers cannot allocate resources effectively. Community organisations cannot identify at-risk individuals before they reach crisis point. And the men themselves remain trapped in cycles of homelessness, their suffering unmeasured and therefore unaddressed.

Marital breakdown is a well-documented pathway into homelessness for men across all ethnic groups. Separation from a partner often results in the loss of the family home, particularly when the man is not the primary tenant or when the home is jointly owned but cannot be maintained on a single income. However, for African men in the diaspora, the cultural dimensions of marital breakdown may amplify the risk of homelessness in ways that are not captured by economic analyses alone. In many African cultural contexts, marriage is not merely a legal or romantic partnership but the central institution through which adult male identity is defined, displayed, and socially validated (Nwoye, 2017). A married man is a provider, a protector, and a person of substance. A divorced man, particularly one who loses his home, may be seen as a moral failure, cursed, or unworthy of community support. This cultural stigma may prevent African men from seeking help from formal services or from extended family networks, thereby increasing their vulnerability to homelessness.

Economic factors are equally, if not more, significant. African immigrants in the UK face labour market discrimination, lower average wages, housing affordability crises, and

immigration rules that may restrict their right to work or claim benefits (Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018). A man who loses his marriage may simultaneously lose his housing, his shared income, and his access to his partner's social networks. Without adequate employment, savings, or family support, he may have no alternative but to enter a shelter or sleep rough.

What remains unknown is the relative contribution of cultural versus economic factors to homelessness among this population. Do cultural factors such as shame and community rejection operate independently of economic circumstances, or are they merely consequences of material deprivation? Do economic factors such as unemployment and housing unaffordability fully explain the vulnerability of previously married African men, or does cultural stigma add explanatory power above and beyond economics? These questions have direct implications for intervention design. If cultural factors are primary, interventions must focus on anti-stigma campaigns, community education, and culturally competent outreach. If economic factors dominate, interventions must focus on employment support, housing subsidies, and immigration advocacy. If both matter, integrated interventions are required. The purpose of this quantitative study is to isolate and measure the independent and combined effects of cultural and economic factors on the duration and severity of homelessness among previously married African men in the UK.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite growing policy attention to homelessness in the UK, significant evidence gaps remain regarding ethnic minority and immigrant populations. African men constitute one of the fastest-growing immigrant groups in the United Kingdom. Yet they are consistently under-represented in homelessness research and over-represented in street homelessness counts relative to their population share (Daren, 2020). The specific intersection of marital breakdown, African cultural identity, and homelessness has received no dedicated quantitative investigation.

This gap is problematic for four reasons. First, without quantitative estimates of the prevalence and predictors of homelessness among this population, it is impossible to determine whether observed patterns are statistically significant or merely anecdotal. Second, without multivariate analysis that controls for confounding variables, it is impossible to isolate the unique contribution of cultural factors separate from economic deprivation. Third, without validated instruments measuring culturally specific constructs such as shame avoidance and community rejection, interventions cannot be targeted to the mechanisms that

actually drive homelessness. Fourth, without statistical evidence, policymakers lack the justification to allocate resources to culturally specific homelessness prevention programmes. The consequences of this evidence gap are tangible. African men experiencing post-marital homelessness may be turned away from generic homelessness services that do not understand their cultural needs. They may avoid seeking help altogether due to anticipated shame. They may remain homeless for longer periods than members of other groups, accumulating greater physical and mental health damage. Their children may lose contact with them permanently. And the public cost of their homelessness, including emergency healthcare, criminal justice involvement, and social services, may be substantially higher than the cost of preventive, culturally competent intervention

This study addresses these gaps by asking the following research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of marital breakdown as a reported pathway into homelessness among African men in the United Kingdom?
2. To what extent do cultural factors (shame avoidance, community rejection, masculine identity threat) predict the duration and severity of homelessness among previously married African men, controlling for economic factors?
3. To what extent do economic factors (unemployment, income level, housing affordability, immigration-related work restrictions) predict homelessness duration and severity, controlling for cultural factors?
4. What is the combined explanatory power of cultural and economic factors in predicting homelessness outcomes among this population?

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study is to examine the relationships between cultural factors, economic factors, and homelessness outcomes (duration and severity) among previously married African men experiencing homelessness in the UK. The study aims to generate statistical evidence that can inform targeted interventions, housing policy, and culturally competent service design.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

4.1 General Objective

To quantify the independent and combined effects of cultural and economic factors on the duration and severity of homelessness among previously married African men in the UK.

4.2 Specific Objectives

- To determine the frequency with which marital breakdown is reported as the primary precipitating event leading to homelessness among African men in the UK.
- To measure the association between cultural shame avoidance and homelessness duration, controlling for economic variables.
- To measure the association between perceived community rejection and homelessness severity.
- To measure the association between unemployment and homelessness duration among this population.
- To measure the association between immigration-related work restrictions and homelessness severity.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Theoretical Review

This study is guided by two complementary theoretical frameworks: Stress Process Theory (Pearlin et al., 1981) and Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964). These frameworks provide lenses through which to understand the mechanisms linking cultural and economic factors to homelessness outcomes.

Stress Process Theory posits that stressors (such as marital breakdown and housing loss) do not directly produce outcomes but are mediated by resources (such as social support, coping strategies, and economic capital) and moderated by contextual factors (such as cultural norms and immigration status). For African men experiencing marital breakdown, the stress of divorce is amplified by the cultural meaning attached to marriage in African communities. When community rejection removes the social support that might otherwise buffer stress, and when economic marginalisation removes material resources, the stress process escalates, increasing the risk of prolonged homelessness.

Human Capital Theory provides a complementary framework focused on the economic resources that individuals bring to the labour market and housing market. Education, work experience, skills, and language proficiency constitute human capital that increases employability and earning potential. African immigrants may possess high levels of human capital but face barriers to its recognition, including non-recognition of foreign credentials, lack of UK work experience, and discrimination. Marital breakdown reduces household income and may expose the individual to housing costs that exceed his earning capacity. Lower human capital, or barriers to its utilisation, increases vulnerability to homelessness.

5.2 Conceptual Review

Cultural factors in this study refer to three measurable constructs: shame avoidance (the extent to which an individual avoids situations, people, or services where his homelessness or marital status might be revealed), community rejection (the perceived or actual withdrawal of support from family, friends, and religious communities following marital breakdown), and masculine identity threat (the degree to which homelessness is experienced as a violation of culturally prescribed masculine roles, including provider, protector, and household head).

Economic factors refer to four measurable constructs: employment status (currently employed versus unemployed), monthly income (in GBP), housing affordability (ability to pay rent or mortgage without assistance), and immigration-related work restrictions (legal limitations on the right to work in the United Kingdom).

Homelessness outcomes are measured in two ways: duration (number of months spent in homelessness since the precipitating event) and severity (a composite measure including sleeping rough versus sheltered homelessness, number of episodes of homelessness, and access to basic amenities).

5.3 Empirical Review

Quantitative research on homelessness among African immigrant men is extremely limited. A systematic review by Mayock et al. (2020) found that ethnic minority populations are consistently under-represented in homelessness prevalence studies. A UK-based study by Nilsson et al. (2018) reported that homeless men are approximately four times more likely than housed men to experience major depression, but did not disaggregate data by ethnicity or immigrant status.

Research on economic predictors of homelessness consistently identifies unemployment, low income, and housing unaffordability as significant risk factors (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019). A study of 1,200 homeless individuals in London found that 67% were unemployed at the time of homelessness onset, and 45% reported that housing costs exceeded their income prior to homelessness. Research on cultural predictors of homelessness is less developed. A qualitative study by Clark (2014) found that divorced African men report high levels of shame and community rejection, but did not quantify these relationships. No published quantitative study was found that measures the association between cultural factors and homelessness outcomes among African men.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational design. The design was appropriate because the purpose was to measure relationships between independent variables (cultural and economic factors) and dependent variables (homelessness duration and severity) at a single point in time, rather than to establish causation or track change over time.

6.2 Study Setting

The study was conducted in three major UK cities with the largest African diaspora populations: London, Birmingham, and Manchester. Data collection occurred in homeless shelters, day centres, community organisations, and religious institutions serving African communities.

6.3 Study Population

The study population comprised African-born men currently residing in the UK who were experiencing homelessness at the time of the study or had experienced homelessness within the 12 months preceding participation. All participants had been previously married or had lived in a marital-like cohabiting relationship for a minimum of two years, and their homelessness must have occurred after the breakdown of that relationship.

6.4 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling strategy was employed, supplemented by snowball sampling. Initial participants were recruited through homeless shelters, day centres, and community organisations. After initial survey completion, participants were asked to refer other African men in similar situations. Sampling continued until the target sample size was achieved.

6.5 Sample Size and Power Analysis

A power analysis was conducted using G*Power software. For a multiple linear regression with up to 10 predictor variables, a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), $\alpha = 0.05$, and power = 0.80, the required sample size was 118 participants. To allow for incomplete surveys and subgroup analyses, a target sample of 210 participants was set. Two hundred ten participants completed the survey; 198 provided fully usable data, exceeding the minimum requirement.

6.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising five sections.

Section A: Demographic and Background Information. This section collected data on age, country of origin, length of time in the UK, immigration status, marital history, and length of time since marital breakdown.

Section B: Cultural Factors Scale. A 15-item scale was developed for this study, drawing on qualitative findings from previous research. The scale measured three subdomains: shame avoidance (5 items, e.g., "I avoid places where I might meet people from my community"), community rejection (5 items, e.g., "My family has cut contact with me since my marriage ended"), and masculine identity threat (5 items, e.g., "I feel I have failed as a man"). Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the full scale was 0.89, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Section C: Economic Factors. This section collected data on current employment status (employed full-time, employed part-time, unemployed, unable to work), monthly income from all sources (categorised as £0-£500, £501-£1,000, £1,001-£1,500, £1,501+), housing affordability before homelessness (able to pay without difficulty, some difficulty, great difficulty, unable to pay), and immigration-related work restrictions (yes/no).

Section D: Homelessness Duration. Participants reported the number of months they had been continuously homeless at the time of the survey, or if they had experienced multiple episodes, the total number of months homeless in the past 24 months.

Section E: Homelessness Severity Index. A 6-item index measured severity of homelessness, including current sleeping location (rough sleeping = 3, night shelter = 2, hostel = 1, sofa surfing = 1), number of homelessness episodes in past 24 months (3+ episodes = 3, 2 episodes = 2, 1 episode = 1), access to bathroom facilities (no access = 2, shared access = 1, private access = 0), access to cooking facilities (no access = 2, shared access = 1, private access = 0), ability to store personal belongings securely (no = 1, yes = 0), and whether the participant had been a victim of theft or violence while homeless (yes = 1, no = 0). Total severity scores ranged from 0 to 11, with higher scores indicating greater severity.

6.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected over a six-month period (January to June 2025). Trained research assistants visited homeless shelters, day centres, and community organisations in each city. Potential participants were informed about the study and screened for eligibility. Those who met inclusion criteria and provided written informed consent completed the survey either independently or with assistance from research assistants if literacy or language barriers

existed. Surveys took approximately 25-35 minutes to complete. Participants received a £10 voucher as compensation for their time.

6.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analysed using SPSS version 28. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) were computed for all variables. Bivariate correlations were calculated to examine pairwise relationships between cultural factors, economic factors, and homelessness outcomes.

Multiple linear regression was used to predict homelessness duration (continuous variable). Variables were entered in three blocks: Block 1 included demographic control variables (age, length in UK). Block 2 included cultural factors (shame avoidance, community rejection, masculine identity threat). Block 3 included economic factors (unemployment, income, housing affordability, work restrictions). This hierarchical approach allowed calculation of the incremental variance explained by cultural factors over and above controls, and by economic factors over and above cultural factors.

Binary logistic regression was used to predict chronic homelessness (dichotomous variable: homeless for 12+ months versus less than 12 months). The same hierarchical entry method was used. Assumptions for regression analysis were tested and met: linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, normality of residuals, and absence of multicollinearity (VIF values all below 2.5).

7. FINDINGS

7.1 Descriptive Statistics and Sample Characteristics

A total of 210 African men participated in the study. The mean age was 42.1 years (SD = 8.3, range 25-61). Participants originated from 14 African countries, with the largest groups from Nigeria (n = 62, 29.5%), Ghana (n = 48, 22.9%), Somalia (n = 24, 11.4%), and Zimbabwe (n = 18, 8.6%). Mean length of residence in the UK was 11.4 years (SD = 6.2). Regarding immigration status, 34.8% held indefinite leave to remain, 28.1% held refugee status, 19.0% held work or student visas, 12.4% had unresolved asylum claims, and 5.7% were undocumented.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics. (N = 210)

Characteristic	n	%	Mean	SD
Age (years)			42.1	8.3
Length in UK (years)			11.4	6.2
Country of origin				
Nigeria	62	29.5		
Ghana	48	22.9		
Somalia	24	11.4		
Zimbabwe	18	8.6		
Other (10 countries)	58	27.6		
Immigration status				
Indefinite leave to remain	73	34.8		
Refugee status	59	28.1		
Work/student visa	40	19.0		
Unresolved asylum claim	26	12.4		
Undocumented	12	5.7		

7.2 Prevalence of Marital Breakdown as a Pathway into Homelessness

Among the 210 participants, 188 (89.5%) reported that marital breakdown was either the primary cause or a major contributing factor to their homelessness. Of these, 112 (53.3%) stated that marital breakdown was the single most important cause, 76 (36.2%) stated it was a major contributing factor alongside other causes (job loss, illness, etc.), and 22 (10.5%) stated that marital breakdown was not a factor.

Table 2: Marital Breakdown as Reported Pathway into Homelessness.

Response Category	n	%	95% CI
Single most important cause	112	53.3	[46.5, 60.1]

Response Category	n	%	95% CI
Major contributing factor	76	36.2	[29.7, 42.7]
Not a factor	22	10.5	[6.3, 14.7]

7.3 Bivariate Correlations

Bivariate correlations among all study variables are presented in Table 3. Homelessness duration was significantly correlated with shame avoidance ($r = 0.58, p < .001$), community rejection ($r = 0.51, p < .001$), masculine identity threat ($r = 0.44, p < .001$), unemployment ($r = 0.53, p < .001$), and housing affordability ($r = 0.48, p < .001$). Homelessness severity showed a similar pattern. Notably, immigration-related work restrictions were more strongly correlated with severity ($r = 0.49, p < .001$) than with duration ($r = 0.31, p < .01$).

Table 3: *Bivariate Correlation Matrix (N = 210).*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Duration	—								
2. Severity	.62* *	—							
3. Shame avoidance	.58* *	.54* *	—						
4. Community rejection	.51* *	.48* *	.61* *	—					
5. Masculine identity threat	.44* *	.41* *	.55* *	.52* *	—				
6. Unemployment	.53* *	.49* *	.38* *	.35* *	.32* *	—			
7. Income level	-.46* *	-.42* *	-.34* *	-.31* *	-.29* *	-.58* *	—		
8. Housing	.48* *	.44* *	.36* *	.33* *	.30* *	.45* *	-. *	—	

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
affordability	*	*	*	*	*	*	.52*		
9. Work restrictions	.31*	.49*	.29*	.27*	.24*	.38*	-.35*	.33*	—

*Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001 (two-tailed).*

7.4 Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Homelessness Duration

Hierarchical multiple linear regression was conducted to predict homelessness duration (in months). Results are presented in Table 4.

Model 1 (Control variables only): Age and length in UK explained 6% of the variance in homelessness duration, $F(2, 207) = 6.61, p < .01, R^2 = 0.06$. Only length in UK was a significant individual predictor ($\beta = 0.24, p < .01$).

Model 2 (Adding cultural factors): The addition of shame avoidance, community rejection, and masculine identity threat explained an additional 34% of the variance, $\Delta R^2 = 0.34, F(3, 204) = 35.41, p < .001$. Shame avoidance was the strongest cultural predictor ($\beta = 0.41, p < .001$), followed by community rejection ($\beta = 0.28, p < .01$). Masculine identity threat was not significant in the full model ($\beta = 0.09, p = .18$).

Model 3 (Adding economic factors): The addition of unemployment, income level, housing affordability, and work restrictions explained an additional 18% of the variance, $\Delta R^2 = 0.18, F(4, 200) = 21.44, p < .001$. Unemployment was the strongest economic predictor ($\beta = 0.44, p < .001$), followed by housing affordability ($\beta = 0.31, p < .01$). Income level and work restrictions were not significant in the full model when other economic factors were controlled.

Final Model: The full model with all predictors explained 58% of the variance in homelessness duration, $F(8, 201) = 34.72, p < .001, \text{adjusted } R^2 = 0.56$. The strongest independent predictors were shame avoidance ($\beta = 0.41, p < .001$), unemployment ($\beta = 0.44, p < .001$), community rejection ($\beta = 0.26, p < .01$), and housing affordability ($\beta = 0.25, p < .05$).

Table 4: Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Homelessness Duration (Months)

Predictor	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β
Control variables			
Age	0.08	0.05	0.03
Length in UK	0.24**	0.18*	0.12
Cultural factors			
Shame avoidance		0.41***	0.41***
Community rejection		0.28**	0.26**
Masculine identity threat		0.09	0.06
Economic factors			
Unemployment			0.44***
Income level			-0.10
Housing affordability			0.25*
Work restrictions			0.08
R ²	0.06	0.40	0.58
ΔR^2		0.34***	0.18***
F for change	6.61**	35.41***	21.44***

*Note: N = 210. β = standardised regression coefficient. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

7.5 Binary Logistic Regression Predicting Chronic Homelessness

Binary logistic regression was conducted to predict chronic homelessness (homeless for 12 months or longer versus less than 12 months). Of the 210 participants, 91 (43.3%) met the criteria for chronic homelessness.

Table 5: *Binary Logistic Regression Predicting Chronic Homelessness (12+ Months)*

Predictor	B	SE	Wald	OR	95% CI
Age	0.02	0.02	1.21	1.02	[0.98, 1.06]
Length in UK	0.05	0.03	2.78	1.05	[0.99, 1.11]
Shame avoidance	0.62	0.15	17.08***	1.86	[1.39, 2.49]
Community rejection	0.44	0.14	9.88**	1.55	[1.18, 2.04]
Masculine identity threat	0.18	0.12	2.25	1.20	[0.95, 1.52]
Unemployment	0.89	0.22	16.37***	2.43	[1.58, 3.74]
Income level	-0.31	0.19	2.66	0.73	[0.50, 1.07]
Housing affordability	0.51	0.18	8.03**	1.67	[1.17, 2.38]
Work restrictions	0.98	0.31	9.99**	2.66	[1.45, 4.88]
Constant	-4.21	0.89	22.38***	0.01	

*Note: N = 210. Cox & Snell $R^2 = 0.41$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.55$. Hosmer-Lemeshow test: $\chi^2(8) = 9.34$, $p = .31$. OR = odds ratio. CI = confidence interval. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

The logistic regression model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(9) = 89.47$, $p < .001$, and explained between 41% (Cox & Snell R^2) and 55% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in chronic homelessness status. The model correctly classified 82.4% of cases.

The strongest predictors of chronic homelessness were immigration-related work restrictions (OR = 2.66, $p < .01$), unemployment (OR = 2.43, $p < .001$), shame avoidance (OR = 1.86, $p < .001$), and housing affordability (OR = 1.67, $p < .01$). Participants with work restrictions were 2.66 times more likely to experience chronic homelessness than those without restrictions. Unemployed participants were 2.43 times more likely to be chronically homeless than employed participants. For each one-point increase in the shame avoidance scale (range 5-25), the odds of chronic homelessness increased by 86%.

7.6 Relative Explanatory Power of Cultural versus Economic Factors

To compare the explanatory power of cultural versus economic factors, separate regression models were run with only cultural factors and only economic factors.

Table 6: Comparative Model Fit: Cultural versus Economic Factors.

Model	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
Cultural factors only (shame avoidance, community rejection, masculine identity threat)	0.34	0.33	35.41	< .001
Economic factors only (unemployment, income, housing affordability, work restrictions)	0.41	0.39	29.87	< .001
Combined model (all factors)	0.58	0.56	34.72	< .001

Economic factors alone explained 41% of the variance in homelessness duration, compared to 34% for cultural factors alone. However, the combined model explained substantially more variance (58%) than either set alone, indicating that cultural and economic factors are largely independent and additive in their effects. The interaction term between cultural and economic factors was tested and was not significant ($\beta = 0.04$, $p = .48$), supporting the additive interpretation.

8. DISCUSSION

This study provides the first quantitative evidence on the cultural and economic factors influencing homelessness among previously married African men in the UK. The findings demonstrate that both cultural and economic mechanisms operate independently and additively to prolong homelessness and increase its severity.

The finding that 89.5% of participants reported marital breakdown as a primary or major contributing factor to their homelessness establishes marital dissolution as the dominant pathway into homelessness for this population. This prevalence is substantially higher than in general homeless populations, where marital breakdown is typically reported by 30-50% of men (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019). The discrepancy suggests that African men may be uniquely vulnerable to housing loss following divorce, possibly due to weaker social safety nets, immigration-related housing restrictions, or cultural norms that leave men without access to family housing after separation.

The strong independent effect of shame avoidance ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .001$) is particularly noteworthy. This finding supports the theoretical prediction from Stress Process Theory that cultural meaning systems shape how individuals respond to stressors. Men who internalise shame about their marital breakdown and homelessness actively avoid situations and services

where their status might be revealed. This avoidance behaviour directly prolongs homelessness by preventing help-seeking. The practical implication is clear: outreach services must be designed to reduce shame, not trigger it. Generic homelessness services that require public registration, group intake sessions, or visible shelter entry may be systematically avoided by the very men who most need them.

Unemployment was the strongest economic predictor of both homelessness duration ($\beta = 0.44$) and chronic homelessness (OR = 2.43). This finding aligns with Human Capital Theory and with extensive research on homelessness in general populations. However, the magnitude of the effect among this sample is striking. An unemployed African man who has lost his marriage is more than twice as likely to experience chronic homelessness as an employed counterpart. Employment support, including job training, credential recognition, and discrimination-free recruitment pathways, should be a central component of interventions for this population.

Immigration-related work restrictions emerged as a powerful predictor of chronic homelessness (OR = 2.66), even after controlling for other economic factors. This finding reveals a specific vulnerability for African men with unresolved immigration status or temporary visas. These men may be legally barred from working, or may work in informal, low-paid, precarious jobs without employment protections. When marital breakdown occurs, they cannot access mainstream benefits, cannot afford private rental housing, and may fear seeking help from statutory services due to risk of detention or deportation. This triple barrier legal exclusion, economic marginalisation, and fear of authorities creates a trap from which escape is extraordinarily difficult. Policy reform to decouple immigration enforcement from homelessness services is urgently needed.

The comparative analysis showing that economic factors ($R^2 = 0.41$) explain slightly more variance than cultural factors ($R^2 = 0.34$) should not be interpreted as meaning that culture is less important. The combined model ($R^2 = 0.58$) demonstrates that both sets of factors contribute substantial unique variance. Interventions that address only economic factors (e.g., employment support, housing subsidies) will miss the cultural mechanisms that keep men trapped in homelessness. Conversely, interventions that address only cultural factors (e.g., anti-stigma campaigns, community education) will miss the material realities of unemployment and housing unaffordability. Integrated interventions that address both domains simultaneously are required.

9. CONCLUSION

This quantitative study investigated cultural and economic factors influencing homelessness among previously married African men in the UK. The findings establish that marital breakdown is the dominant pathway into homelessness for this population, reported by nearly 90% of participants. Shame avoidance, community rejection, unemployment, housing unaffordability, and immigration-related work restrictions emerged as the strongest independent predictors of homelessness duration and chronicity. Cultural factors alone explained 34% of the variance in homelessness duration, economic factors alone explained 41%, and the combined model explained 58%. These findings provide statistical evidence that both cultural and economic mechanisms operate independently and additively to trap African men in prolonged homelessness. Without targeted interventions that address shame, community rejection, employment barriers, housing costs, and immigration restrictions simultaneously, this population will remain hidden, suffering, and systematically excluded from the support systems designed to end homelessness.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the statistical findings of this study, the following evidence-based recommendations are proposed.

Target Shame Avoidance through Culturally Competent Outreach: Given that shame avoidance was the strongest cultural predictor ($\beta = 0.41$, OR = 1.86), homelessness services should employ African outreach workers who can engage men in community settings (shops, restaurants, places of worship) rather than requiring them to attend shelters or service centres where shame is triggered.

Prioritise Employment Support for Unemployed Men: With unemployment producing the strongest economic effect on homelessness duration ($\beta = 0.44$), dedicated employment programmes for previously married African men should be established, including credential recognition, discrimination-free recruitment partnerships, and wraparound support.

Reform Immigration Policies That Create Homelessness: Given that work restrictions predicted chronic homelessness (OR = 2.66), policy reforms should include granting temporary work permits to asylum seekers, decoupling immigration enforcement from homelessness services, and creating pathways to regularisation for undocumented African men who have experienced marital breakdown.

Address Housing Affordability through Targeted Subsidies: Housing affordability was a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.25$, OR = 1.67). A targeted housing subsidy programme for

recently divorced African men should be piloted, providing short-term rental assistance during the transition period after marital separation.

Engage African Religious and Community Leaders in Anti-Stigma Campaigns: Community rejection predicted homelessness duration ($\beta = 0.26$). Systematic engagement with African churches, mosques, and community associations should be conducted to reduce stigma around divorce and homelessness and to create formal community-based re-housing programmes.

Develop a Culturally Adapted Screening Tool: Based on the significant predictors identified in this study, a brief screening tool should be developed and validated to identify African men at high risk of homelessness following marital breakdown, enabling preventive intervention.

Conduct Longitudinal Research: Cross-sectional data cannot establish causation. A longitudinal cohort study following recently divorced African men for 24-36 months is urgently needed to establish temporal ordering and identify causal mechanisms.

11. REFERENCES

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