

VERSIÓN FINAL ACEPTADA

CHILDHOOD SEXUAL AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ADULT VICTIMIZATION
AMONG WOMEN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN ARGENTINA

Malena Lenta¹, Jorgelina Di Iorio², Adrián Cabrera³, José Juan Vázquez⁴

1. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7761-3329, Dpt. Preventive Psychology, Universidad de Buenos Aires/CONICET, Buenos Aires. Argentina. Universidad de Alcalá de Henares. Alcalá de Henares. España. Postal address: La Rioja 572 dto. 5, CP. 1221 Ciudad autónoma de Buenos Aires. Argentina. Cellphone: +5491144171396. E-mail: malenalenta@psi.uba.ar

2. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3714-7340, Dpt. Social Psychology. Universidad de Buenos Aires/CONICET. Buenos Aires. Argentina. E-mail: diiorio.jorgelina@gmail.com

3. ORCID ID: orcid.org/0000-0002-6043-4666, Dpto. Economy, Universidad de Alcalá. Alcalá de Henares, Spain.
E-mail: adrian.cabrera@uah.es

4. ORCID ID: orcid.org/0000-0003-4601-1920, Dpto. Social Psychology, Universidad de Alcalá. Alcalá de Henares, Spain. E-mail: jj.vazquez@uah.es

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Conflict of interest disclosure

Authors have no conflicts of interest

Ethics approval statement

The study was conducted in compliance with the Internal Review Board [Comité de Ética de Investigación y Experimentación Animal] of the University of Alcalá (Ref. CEIP/2021/2/027).

Patient consent statement

The informed consent of interviewed were requested for participation in the study.

Permission to reproduce material from other sources

Not applicable

Clinical trial registration

Not applicable

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by “Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación” of Spain (PID2019-104152GB-I00/AEI/10.13039/501100011033).

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Abstract

The article analyses the suffering from sexual and family violence situations during childhood and adolescence and its impact in the processes of victimization in adult life in women experiencing homelessness in the city of Buenos Aires (Argentina). The study sampled 72 women who were selected using the snowball technique. Information was gathered using structured interviews and statistical analysis. Violence experienced in early age is associated with traumatic events after the age of 18, which may influence the persistence of homelessness. It is essential to establish gender-informed public policies from childhood to mitigate revictimization and prevent social exclusion.

Key words: Child sexual abuse; Childhood family violence; Victimization, Homelessness; Social Exclusion; Gender.

Introduction

The problem of homelessness, despite being a systemic structural issue, tends to be largely perceived by society as a problem of an individual nature, and there is a tendency to hold people experiencing homelessness responsible for their situation. People experiencing homelessness represent one of the most extreme manifestations of the phenomenon of poverty and social exclusion (Leonori et al., 2000). Women experiencing homelessness are made up a particularly vulnerable group, with different characteristics, necessities, and life trajectories than men (Vázquez et al., 2019, 2022; Wolf et al., 2016). In research focusing on homelessness, women are often under-represented, and gender issues in this group are under-researched (Mayock & Bretherton, 2016; Suarez et al., 2018). The absence of research on women experiencing homelessness is connected to the gendered social structure that assigns contrasting roles to men and women. This issue is evident in the context of homelessness, where the patriarchal sexual division of spaces persists (Ciapessoni, 2019).

Different studies pointed out that people experiencing homelessness are exposed to a large number of situations of physical and sexual violence, quantitatively more meaningful than those suffered by the general population, both during their childhood (Calvo et al., 2022; Lenta et al., 2022; Panadero et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Moreno et al., 2021a; Cutuli et al., 2017) and adulthood (Rodríguez-Moreno et al., 2021b; Guillén, et al., 2024; Vázquez et al., 2019). Experiencing physical and/or sexual abuse during childhood (e.g. Cutuli et al., 2017; Guillén et al., 2024; Lenta et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022), as well as impaired or neglectful parenting (e.g. Cutuli et al., 2017; Lenta et al., 2022, 2023; Manyema et al., 2018; March-Llanes et al., 2017; Vázquez et al., 2023) can have severe consequences.

The scientific literature indicates that women experiencing homelessness are exposed to high levels of physical and sexual violence from a very early age (Di Iorio, 2022; Hatch &

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Dohrenwend, 2007; Lenta et al., 2022; Rodríguez-Moreno et al., 2021a; Sundin & Baguley, 2015; Vázquez & Panadero, 2019). Studies in different cultural contexts have pointed out that 30%-75% of women experiencing homelessness had suffered physical abuse (Rodríguez-Moreno et al., 2021b; Lenta et al., 2022; Vázquez et al., 2023) and/or sexual abuse (Rodríguez-Moreno et al., 2021b; Lenta et al., 2022; Tyler & Schmitz, 2018; Vázquez et al., 2023) during their childhood having a negative impact on their sliding into and staying homelessness. As Alonso et al. (2020) argue, these circumstances lead women to early estrangement and even to the rupture of ties with their family of origin. Often this deprives them of housing or creates a situation of chronic housing instability (Di Iorio, 2022; Lyon, 2016; Gonyea & Melekis, 2017).

Furthermore, Núñez Matus (2013) and Alonso et al. (2020) suggest that the separation of women experiencing homelessness with their families of origin does not imply that they problematize the violent relationships they experienced as children. They often do not receive the necessary support and the coping strategies they develop may be more avoidance, escape and hypervigilance rather than positive re-signification or agency (Miranda et al., 2023). As a result, many women face social subordination, economic and emotional dependence and the need for protection from their partners when they try to start a new life. It is due to the patriarchal matrix that shapes their gender socialization and put them in a passive position (Matulic et al., 2020; Chambers et al., 2014).

Several studies (McCabe et al., 2022; Carillo Beck et al., 2022; Flynn et al., 2023; Whitfield, 1998) have shown that being exposed to multiple critical life events, particularly those linked to sexual and familiar violence during childhood, is associated with problematic use of alcohol, tobacco and other psychoactive substances in adult women. These behaviors are related to mental health problems and difficulties in maintaining stable and healthy

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

relationships with work, accommodation, partners and peers, which inhibit the potential for self-sufficient life trajectories. These behaviors often lead to increased vulnerability and the perpetuation of abusive gendered attachment patterns (Gámez, 2018). This issue may play a role in women experiencing homelessness having higher rates of physical and sexual abuse than women in the general population (Vázquez et al., 2019, 2023).

Victimization refers to the process by which a person becomes a victim of a criminal or unjust act, resulting in physical, emotional or social harm (Panadero & Vázquez, 2022). Studies in different contexts (Song et al., 2021; Broll & Huey, 2020; Edalati & Nicholls, 2019; Ciapessoni, 2019) agree that childhood victimization of women experiencing homelessness (especially associated with physical and sexual abuse) has an impact on developing depressive symptoms in adulthood and different risk behaviors such as excessive substance use, survival sex, among others. Positive social support can significantly mitigate the consequences of experiencing violence in childhood and adulthood (Herman et al., 1997). Together with the development of targeted policies, this could act as a protective factor to reduce re-victimization processes.

In Argentina, it is known that women experiencing homelessness who spend the night on the streets, in public spaces, in shelters, in social integration centers or in other care facilities for people experiencing homelessness account for around 26.5% of the total number of people in this situation by 2023 (DGEyC, 2023). However, the specific scientific literature which could show some others characteristic or needs about women experiencing homelessness is scarce in this country. This paper aims to analyze the exposure of adult women experiencing homelessness in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to sexual and family violence in childhood and adolescence, as well as the implications of this exposure for victimization processes in adulthood.

Method

72 women experiencing homelessness, including 67 cisgender and five transgender individuals, were surveyed in District 1 (62.5%) and District 3 (37.5%) of the city of Buenos Aires (Argentina). The highest concentration of homeless individuals is found in these central districts. To access the interviewed women, we employed snowball sampling, supported by key informants such as people living homeless, and people affiliated with social organizations that offered care to people who live in homeless. First, we made contact with each woman experiencing homelessness. Secondly, we explained the research objectives and asked for their informed consent to take part in the study. The information was collected through a structured interview conducted by a third party, which made it possible to overcome any problems arising from the respondents' reading and/or comprehension difficulties.

The structured interview used was a gendered version of an instrument used in previous studies of people experiencing homelessness in Spain and Latin America (e.g. Guillén et al., 2020; Lenta, 2023; Panadero et al., 2018; Rodriguez-Moreno et al., 2021a; Vázquez, 2019), adapted to the fact that the interviewees were women. Thus, the interview paid more attention to issues that affect women in a particular way, mainly related to suffering specific stressful life events (e.g. sexual assault, sexual exploitation, unwanted pregnancy...), women's health issues, working conditions, gender-based violence or motherhood. The structured interview collected information on 474 variables and took between 45 and 80 minutes. The study was conducted in compliance with the Internal Review Board [Comité de Ética de Investigación y Experimentación Animal] of the University of Alcalá (Ref. CEIP/2021/2/027).

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

The participants surveyed had a mean of 42.9 years old (SD=15.21), with 25% being below 30 years old and another 25% being over 53 years old. The majority were single (62.5%, n=45), and 58.3% (43) had given birth - with an average of 3.6 children (SD=1.83) - while 22.2% (16) reported cohabitating with their children. 9.7% (n=7) of the people interviewed were foreigner nationalities. 2.8% (n=2) had not completed their primary education, while 62.5% (n=45) had completed primary education, 25% (n=18) had completed secondary education, 5.6% (n=4) reported having non-university higher education and 4.2% (n=3) reported having university education. In the month preceding the interview, 51.4% (n=37) had spent nights outdoors, 65.3% (n=47) had spent nights in unsuitable spaces to sleep and 45.8% (n=33) in shelters. Participants first experienced homelessness at an average age of 32.2 years (SD=17.084), spending a mean of 41.6 months (SD=56.998), or 3.5 years, without a home. Objective data indicated that none of the participants reported consistent use of alcohol, cocaine, or heroin. However, 5.6% (n=4) frequently used marijuana, and 1.4% (n=1) informed regularly using cocaine paste or “paco”.

The database was compiled and processed using the SPSS 22 statistical analysis and data management system and the Stata 18 software. For comparisons, the "Chi-square" statistic χ^2 was used for nominal variables and "Student's t-tests for independent samples" for continuous variables. The effect sizes were also calculated using Cohen's d for quantitative variables and the Phi coefficient (ϕ) for nominal variables. To analyze the relationships between different situations of violence experienced by the participants, a Path Analysis (PA) using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was carried out. A distinction was made between situations of violence experienced before the age of 18 (sexual abuse and family violence), situations of violence experienced throughout life (intimate partner violence, sexual assault over 18 years old, survival sex, and physical violence over 18 years old) and other life

circumstances faced throughout life (excessive drug consumption, unintentional pregnancy, drunk too much at some point in their life, and serious illnesses, injuries or accidents). All variables included in the model were dichotomous, taking the value '1' if a particular situation had been experienced and '0' otherwise. Finally, the risk of experiencing different life situations was analyzed between women who "suffered from sexual abuse before they were 18 years old" and those who had not, and between women who "suffered from family violence before they were 18 years old" and those who had not. We computed the odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals by standard methods.

Results

Table 1 about here

As shown in Table 1, 63.9% (n=46) of the mothers of the women interviewed had experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) and 79.2% (n=57) of the women interviewed had lived in households with family violence problems when the interviewees were (on average) less than 3 years old. 76.4% (n=55) of the women interviewed had experienced physical abuse during their childhood and adolescence and had experienced violence in their family of origin for the first time at an average age of 6 years. Also, 56.9% (n=41) of the women interviewed experienced sexual abuse before they were 18 years old, both by family members and by people outside their family for the first time at an average age of 9-10 years old.

83.2% (n=60) reported having experienced "physical abuse" or "sexual abuse" (at least one of the two) before they were 18 years old. 50.0% (n=36) of the women indicated having experienced "physical abuse" and "sexual abuse" (both) before 18 years old.

Table 2 about here

Table 2 shows that 54.2% (n=39) of the women had suffered sexual assault when they were over 18 years old. In this regard, 44.4% (n=32) had been sexually assaulted by a partner, mainly before becoming homeless, but also, to a large extent, after becoming homeless. More than a third had been sexually assaulted by people outside their family, both before and after they became homeless. In addition, 75% (n=54) of the respondents had experienced intimate partner violence and 79.2% (n=57) had suffered from physical violence over 18 years old, in both cases mainly before they were homeless, but also after they had been homeless. 11.1% (n=8) of the women were in prostitution situation mainly after being homeless, and 54.2% (n=39) had had survival sex (exchange of sex for shelter, food, drugs, etc.), both before and after being homeless.

Figure 1 about here

Table 3 about here

Figure 1 and Table 3 show that having suffered from “Sexual abuse before 18 years old” increases the likelihood of having suffered from a life-long “Sexual assault over 18 years old”, “IPV”, “Physical violence over 18 years old”, “Survival sex”, “Excessive alcohol consumption”, “Serious illness, injury or accident” and “Unintentional pregnancy”. For their part, having suffered from “Family violence before 18 years old” increases the likelihood of

having suffered from a life-long “Sexual assault over 18 years old”, “Drunk too much at some point in their life”, “Excessive drugs consumption”, “IPV”, “Physical violence over 18 years old”, “Unintended pregnancy” and “Survival sex”.

Table 4 about here

According to the data in Table 4, 75.6% (n=31) of the women surveyed who had been sexually abused before the age of 18 were sexually assaulted as adults. In addition, these women were eight times more likely to have been sexually assaulted after the age of 18. Similarly, women who had been sexually abused before the age of 18 were seven times more likely to have experienced IPV and physical violence over the age of 18, affecting over 90.2% (n=37) of these women. 78.0% (n=32) of women who had been sexually assaulted as children or adolescents reported having had an unintended pregnancy and were five times more likely to have experienced this. It is also worth noting that 65.9% (n=27) of those interviewed who had been sexually assaulted before the age of 18 had resorted to survival sex, had had excessive alcohol consumption and had suffered more serious illness, injury or accidents, being 3-4 times more likely to have been in these situations.

It can also be seen in Table 4 that women experiencing homelessness who suffered from family violence before they were 18 years old were four times more likely to have suffered from sexual assault and intimate partner violence when they were over 18 years old, and eleven times more likely to have suffered from physical violence when they were over 18 years old. Likewise, participants who suffered from family violence during their childhood and/or adolescence were nine times more likely to have had heavy alcohol use and twelve

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

times more likely to have had substance misuse. These women were also four times more likely to have had an unintended pregnancy and/or resorted to survival sex.

Participants who experienced family violence before turning 18 were more likely to be homeless (2.97 times, SD = 2.033) than those who did not experience family violence during childhood or adolescence (1.55 times, SD = 0.820). ($t = 3.464$, $p = .000$, $d = 1.843$).

Discussion and conclusions

The study of violence suffered in childhood and adolescence by women experiencing homelessness shows a link between sexual abuse and violence in family context before the age of 18 and the experience of traumatic events after the age of 18. This highlights the impact of the intersectional violence experienced by this group, not only because of their homelessness, but also because of their gender condition (Flynn et al., 2018). Acts of violence take place in public spaces which is an area that can be observed where social class and gender intersect (Vigoya, 2016). This perpetuates a culture of cruelty which, according to Segato (2014), normalizes the subordinate socialization and fragilized corporeality of women and/or the feminized individuals, particularly among impoverished women.

Suffering violence in the family environment before the age of 18 and, especially, having suffered sexual aggression during childhood and/or adolescence are two aspects with significant subjective implications of pain for this group, and likely to experience further situations of violence. Women experiencing homelessness interviewed in the city of Buenos Aires (Argentina) had suffered a high percentage of physical and/or sexual violence, both in their childhood and adolescence and throughout their lives, in line with what has been observed in studies carried out in different cultural contexts (i.e. Calvo et al., 2022; Cutuli et al., 2017; Panadero et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Moreno et al., 2021a; Vázquez et al., 2023).

Women experiencing homelessness are exposed to many more violent situations than their

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

men counterparts and women in the general population (Rodríguez-Moreno et al., 2021b; Lenta et al., 2022; Vázquez et al., 2019, 2023). Women interviewed experienced multiple situations of violence since a very early age, largely in their family environment.

Unfortunately, experiencing victimization from an early age could have an impact on later becoming homeless, staying homeless and revolving door to homelessness (Broll & Huey, 2020; Rodríguez-Moreno et al., 2021a; Mayock et al, 2015).

Different studies point out that a history of family violence and/or sexual abuse during childhood (e.g. Cutuli et al., 2017; Guillén et al., 2024; Lenta et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022), and impaired or neglectful parenting (e.g. Cutuli et al., 2017; Lenta et al., 2022, 2023; Manyema et al., 2018; March-Llanes et al., 2017; Vázquez et al., 2023c) are life events with particularly serious consequences when suffered during the first years of life. Among the women interviewed in the city of Buenos Aires, victims of family violence and sexual abuse during their childhood seem to have developed more risky behaviors during their adulthood, with a higher percentage experiencing substance abuse problems, illnesses, injuries or accidents or unintended pregnancies, agreeing with Song et al. (2021). Also, women who were victims of family violence and/or sexual abuse during their childhood had experienced physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence and survival sex in a higher percentage during their adult lives. These aspects were particularly highlighted among women who had experienced sexual violence as children.

Situations of victimization seem to be particularly concentrated among some women, with a substantial percentage of women interviewed were victims of different types of violence during their childhood. Growing up in family contexts marked by different types of violence seems to lead to victimization both within and outside the family environments (Miranda et al., 2023; Southern & Sullivan, 2021). Thus, half of the interviewees suffered

both physical and sexual abuse, largely by members of their family. And experiencing violence in childhood seems to increase the likelihood of suffering different types of violence in adulthood, especially sexual assaults, intimate partner violence or survival sex. According to authors such as Whitfield (1998), the experience of multiple stressful life events, especially during childhood and adolescence, may lead to difficulties in acquiring the skills that allow to establish solid relationships and maintain stable accommodation or a job. In addition, experiencing adverse family situations may limit the ability to receive crisis support from families of origin (Herman et al., 1997), facilitating becoming homeless and influencing long periods of homelessness. Thus, participants who had experienced violence within their families before turning 18 were more likely to experience homelessness (the revolving door to homelessness). Severe violence during childhood may increase the risk of exposure to environments that re-victimize in adulthood (Bellis et al., 2013; Di Iorio, 2022; Edalati & Nicholls, 2019), such as homelessness.

Of the various types of childhood violence, sexual assault seems to have had particularly negative consequences for women experiencing homelessness in adulthood. Thus, women who experienced sexual assault were more likely to have had problems with alcohol misuse. Several studies (e.g. Aubry et al., 2012; Caton et al., 2005; Guillén et al., 2020) have pointed out that substance use is an important factor in people becoming and staying homeless. Likewise, women experiencing homelessness who suffered from sexual abuse before they were 18 years old were much more likely to suffer physical violence, intimate partner violence and sexual aggression in adulthood, as well as survival sex, serious illness, injury or accidents and/or unintended pregnancy, which allows inferring their relationship with risk practices and behaviors that configure patterns of vulnerability.

Among the limitations of the study are the characteristics of the sample. Due to the difficulties of accessing a population that is in a situation of vulnerability and often invisible in public spaces, the sample was drawn using the snowball method, which could have biased the type of participants towards the network of key informants who facilitated the initial contacts. It was also not possible to interview the most vulnerable women on the street, mainly those with severe cognitive impairment and/or excessive drug use, as we only worked with those who were able to give informed consent at the time of contact, which also excluded those who were in a particularly critical condition. Additionally, although the study was conducted in two central districts of Buenos Aires (Communes 1 and 3), where most people experiencing homelessness were concentrated during the study period, there was limited contact with women in more peripheral districts, which have less access to shelters and care resources.

Due to the size and composition of the sample, the findings can only be generalized to the women who participated in the study. However, since few previous studies have been conducted on this population in the studied area, with even smaller sample sizes than this study, the results are valuable for gaining initial knowledge of the characteristics and needs of women experiencing homelessness in Buenos Aires (Argentina). Nevertheless, new research with representative samples is necessary to generalize the results.

Addressing a systemic structural problem such as homelessness requires an appropriate redistribution of resources and facilitating access to and maintenance of stable housing for vulnerable groups (Panadero & Vázquez, 2022). However, it is also important to implement public policies, prevention programs and care mechanisms with an intersectional gender perspective to minimize the number and intensity of situations of violence suffered by the

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

most vulnerable groups, especially women and girls at risk of social exclusion such as homelessness.

Protective factors are the resources and conditions that help people cope with risky and vulnerable situations and improve their emotional and social well-being. Social policies play a key role in this, especially among historically violent and segregated populations. Given the significant prevalence of this problem among the women participating in the study, work on the timely assistance and prevention of sexual violence against girls and violence in the family environment requires the special involvement of the system of comprehensive protection of the rights of children and adolescents. An early and timely approach could alleviate suffering and processes of re-victimization in adulthood. This approach could also act as a protective factor against the risk of homelessness.

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

References

- Alonso, A., Palacios, J. & Iniesta, A. (2020). Mujeres sin hogar en España. Narrativas sobre género, vulnerabilidad social y efectos del entramado asistencial. *Revista OBETS*, 15(2), 375-404. <https://doi.org/10.14198/OBETS2020.15.2.01>
- Aubry, T., Klodawsky, F., & Coulombe, D. (2012). Comparing the housing trajectories of different classes within a diverse homeless population. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 49(1-2), 142-155. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-011-9444-Z>.
- Bellis, M. A., Lowey, H., Leckenby, N., Hughes, K., & Harrison, D. (2013). Adverse childhood experiences: retrospective study to determine their impact on adult health behaviours and health outcomes in a UK population. *Journal of Public Health*, 36(1), 81–91. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdt038>
- Broll, R., & Huey, L. (2020). “Every time I try to get out, I get pushed back”: The role of violent victimization in women’s experience of multiple episodes of homelessness. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 35(17-18), 3379-3404. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517708405>
- Calvo, F., Watts, B., Panadero, S., Giralt, C., Rived-Ocaña, M., & Carbonell, X. (2022). The Prevalence and Nature of Violence Against Women Experiencing Homelessness: A Quantitative Study. *Violence Against Women*, 28(6-7), 1464–1482. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012211022780>
- Carrillo Beck, R., Szlapinski, J., Pacheco, N., Sabri Laghaei, S., Isard, R., Oudshoorn, A., & Marshall, C. A. (2022). Violence and victimisation in the lives of persons experiencing homelessness who use methamphetamine: A scoping review. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(5), 1619-1636. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13716>

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Caton, C. L., Dominguez, B., Schanzer, B., Hasin, D. S., Shrout, P. E., Felix, A., ... & Hsu, E.

(2005). Risk factors for long-term homelessness: Findings from a longitudinal study of first-time homeless single adults. *American Journal of Public Health*, 95(10), 1753-1759. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2005.063321>

Chambers, C., Chiu, S., Scott, A., Tolomiczenko, G., Redelmeier, D., Levinson, W. &

Hwang, S. (2014). Factors associated with poor mental health status among homeless women with and without dependent children. *Community Mental Health*, 50(5), 553–559. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-013-9605-7>

Ciapessoni, F. (2019). La prisión y después. Violencia, reingreso y situación de calle. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 32(45), 15-38. <https://doi.org/10.26489/rvs.v32i45.1>

Cutuli, J. J., Ahumada, S. M., Herbers, J. E., Lafavor, T. L., Masten, A. S., & Oberg, C. N.

(2017). Adversity and children experiencing family homelessness: implications for health. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 23(1), 41-55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10796126.2016.1198753>

DGEyC (2023). *Relevamiento Censal sobre Personas en Situación de Calle de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Abril de 2023. Resultados y Aspectos Metodológicos*. Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires.

Di Iorio, J. (2022). Cartografía de violencias hacia personas en situación de calle. Ciudadanías.

Revista de Políticas Sociales Urbanas, (10), 1-10. <https://revistas.untref.edu.ar/index.php/ciudadanias/article/view/1460>

Edalati, H., & Nicholls, T. L. (2019). Childhood Maltreatment and the Risk for Criminal Justice Involvement and Victimization Among Homeless Individuals: A Systematic Review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 20(3), 315– 330.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838017708783>

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Flynn, C., Couturier, P., Turcotte, S., Dubé, K., Levesque, C., Côté, P. B., & Lapierre, S.

(2023). How social responses to child sexual abuse and intimate partner violence affect homelessness among women in two rural regions with resource-based economies in eastern Quebec. *Violence against women*, 29(3-4), 602-625.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801222108332>

Flynn, C., Damant, D., Lapierre, S., Lessard, G., Gagnon, C., Couturier, V., & Couturier, P.

(2018). When structural violences create a context that facilitates sexual assault and intimate partner violence against street-involved young women. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 68, 94-103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2018.01.004>

Gámez, T. (2018). *Personas sin hogar: un análisis de género del sinhogarismo*. UMA.

Gonyea, J.G. & Melekis, K. (2017). Negotiating the identity of homeless older women:

Agency, resistance and building a valuable self. *The Sociological Review*, 65, 67-82.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12369>

Guillén, A. I., Marín, C., Panadero, S., & Vázquez, J. J. (2020). Substance use, stressful life

events and mental health: A longitudinal study among homeless women in Madrid (Spain). *Addictive Behaviors*, 103, 106246.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2019.106246>.

Guillén, A.I., Panadero, S. & Vázquez, J.J. (2024). The effects of traumatic events on mental

health among women experiencing homelessness: a longitudinal study. *Violence Against Women*, 30(15-16), 3900-3916. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231178002>

Hatch, S.L. & Dohrenwend, B.P. (2007). Distribution of traumatic and other stressful life

events by race/ethnicity, gender, SES, and age: A review of the research. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 40, 313-332. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-9134-z)

[9134-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-9134-z)

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Herman, D. B., Susser, E. S., Struening, E. L., & Link, B. L. (1997). Adverse childhood

experiences: are they risk factors for adult homelessness? *American Journal of Public Health*, 87(2), 249-255. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.87.2.249>

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., & Vázquez, J.J. (2022). Stressful life events among women living homelessness in Argentina. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 28(6), 522-536. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2022.2115206>.

Lenta, M., Panadero, S., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J.J. (2023). Health situation and perceived health status among women experiencing homelessness: A longitudinal study in Spain. *Public Health Nursing*, 40(1), 9-16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.13130>.

Leonori, L., Muñoz, M., Vázquez, C., Vázquez, J.J., Bravo, M., Nuche, M., Brandt, P., Bento A., & Horenbek, B. (2000). The mental health and social exclusion European network: A research activity report on European homeless citizens. *European Psychologist*, 5(3), 245-251. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040.5.3.245>

Liu, M., Mejia-Lancheros, C., Lachaud, J., Nisenbaum, R., Stergiopoulos, V., & Hwang, S. W. (2020). Resilience and adverse childhood experiences: Associations with poor mental health among homeless adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 58(6), 807-816. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2019.12.017>

Lyon, V. (2016). Medicalizing Homelessness: The production of self-blame and self-governing within homeless shelters. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 14(3), 328-345. <https://doi.org/10.152/maq.2000.14.3.328>

Manyema, M., Norris, S. A., & Richter, L. M. (2018). Stress begets stress: the association of adverse childhood experiences with psychological distress in the presence of adult life stress. *BMC Public Health*, 18, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5767-0>.

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

March-Llanes, J., Marqués-Feixa, L., Mezquita, L., Fañanás, L., & Moya-Higueras, J. (2017).

Stressful life events during adolescence and risk for externalizing and internalizing psychopathology: a meta-analysis. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 26, 1409-1422. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-017-0996-9>

Matulic, V., Munté, A., & De Vicente, I. (2020). Sinhogarismo Femenino: Una aproximación a la intersección entre género, edad y procesos migratorios. *Research on Ageing and Social Policy*, 8(1), 57-85. <https://doi.org/10.17583/rasp.2020.4724>

Mayock, P., & Bretherton, J. (2016). Introduction. *Women's homelessness in Europe* (pp. 1-12). Palgrave Macmillan.

Mayock, P., Sheridan, S., & Parker, S. (2015). 'It's just like we're going around in circles and going back to the same thing...': The dynamics of women's unresolved homelessness. *Housing Studies*, 30(6), 877–900. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2014.991378>

McCabe, S. E., Hughes, T. L., Beal, S., Evans-Polce, R. J., Kcomt, L., Engstrom, C., ... & Boyd, C. J. (2022). Sexual orientation differences in childhood sexual abuse, suicide attempts, and DSM-5 alcohol, tobacco, other drug use, and mental health disorders in the US. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 123, 105377. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105377>

Miranda, J., Olivares, N., & Crockett, M. (2023). Growing Up with Intimate Partner Violence at Home: Adolescents' Narratives on Their Coping Strategies. *Journal of Family Violence*, 38,105–116. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00345-7>

Núñez Matus, C. A. (2013). Mujeres en situación de calle más allá del andar cotidiano. *Sociedad y Equidad: Revista de Humanidades, Ciencias Sociales, Artes y Comunicaciones*, (5), 188-212.

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Panadero, S., Martín, R.M., & Vázquez, J.J. (2018). Suicide attempts and stressful life events among homeless people in Madrid (Spain). *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 28(4), 200-212. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2351>.

Panadero, S. & Vázquez, J.J. (2022). Victimization and discrimination: Forgotten variables in evaluating the results of the "Housing First" model for persons experiencing homelessness. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, 33(1), 266–271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10530789.2022.2159617>

Rodríguez-Moreno, S., Panadero, S., & Vázquez, J.J. (2021a). The role of stressful life events among women experiencing homelessness: An intragroup analysis. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 67(3-4), 380-391. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12480>.

Rodríguez-Moreno, S., Roca, P., Panadero, S., & Vázquez, J.J. (2021b). Differences in stressful life events between men and women experiencing homelessness. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 49(2), 375-389. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22465>

Segato, R. L. (2014). Las nuevas formas de la guerra y el cuerpo de las mujeres. *Sociedade e estado*, 29, 341-371. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-69922014000200003>

Song, A., Wenzel, S. L., & Cho, Y. (2021). Child abuse victimization, depression, and substance use among homeless women: Application of general strain theory. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(17-18), 8852-8873. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519853410>

Southern, S., & Sullivan, R. D. (2021). Family violence in context: An intergenerational systemic model. *The Family Journal*, 29(3), 260-291. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807211006274>

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Suarez, A., Berrios, A., Bonilla, E., & Vázquez, J.J. (2018). Homeless people in Nicaragua:

A point-in-time count in León. *Journal of International Development*, 30(1), 155-158.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3303>.

Sundin, E. C., & Baguley, T. (2015). Prevalence of childhood abuse among people who are

homeless in Western countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Social*

Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 50, 183-194.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-014-0937-6>

Tyler, K. A., & Schmitz, R. M. (2018). Child abuse, mental health and sleeping arrangements

among homeless youth: Links to physical and sexual street victimization. *Children*

and Youth Services Review, 95, 327-333.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.11.018>

Vázquez, J.J., Berrios, A., Cala-Montoya, C., & Lenta, M. (2023). Stressful life events among

women living homeless in Nicaragua, a low-income country. *Journal of Community*

Psychology, 51(4), 1495-1503. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22931>.

Vázquez, J. J., Cabrera, A., & Panadero, S. (2022). Evolution of the accommodation situation

among women living homeless in Madrid, Spain: A longitudinal study. *American*

Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 92(2), 159. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000601>

Vázquez, J.J. & Panadero, S. (2019). Suicidal attempts and stressful life events among women

in a homeless situation in Madrid (Spain). *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 89(2),

304-311. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000387>.

Vázquez, J.J., Panadero, S., & Pascual, I. (2019). The particularly vulnerable situation of

women living homeless in Madrid (Spain). *Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 22, e52.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/sjp.2019.58>.

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Vigoya, M. V. (2016). La interseccionalidad: una aproximación situada a la dominación.

Debate Feminista, 52, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.df.2016.09.005>

Whitfield, C. L. (1998). Adverse childhood experiences and trauma. *American Journal of*

Preventive Medicine, 14(4), 361-364. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797\(98\)00013-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797(98)00013-0)

Wolf, J., Anderson, I., van den Dries, L., & Hrast, M. F. (2016). The health of homeless

women. Mayock, P. & Bretherton, J. *Women's homelessness in Europe* (pp.155–178).

Palgrave Macmillan.

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Table 1. Violence experienced by women experiencing homelessness in the city of Buenos Aires (Argentina) before they were 18 years old and the age they experienced them for the first time.

Violence experienced before 18 years old	% (n)	Mean age at which it happened for the first time (yrs.) (SD)
Her mother suffered intimate partner violence	63.9% (46)	2.75 (4.249)
Family violence	79.2% (57)	2.35 (4.291)
Physical abuse	76.4% (55)	6.45 (4.227)
Sexual abuse	56.9% (41)	---
Sexual abuse perpetrated by a member of her family	36.1% (26)	9.23 (3.840)
Sexual abuse perpetrated by someone outside her family	29.2% (21)	10.67 (3.071)

Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Table 2. Violence suffered by women experiencing homelessness in the city of Buenos Aires (Argentina) during their lives.

Violence experienced	It happened to her	It happened before the first time homeless	It happened when they were experiencing homelessness
	% (n)	%* (n)	
Sexual assault over 18 years old	54.2% (39)	---	---
Sexual assault (over 18 years old) perpetrated by her partner	44.4% (32)	40.3% (29)	20.8% (15)
Sexual assault (over 18 years old) perpetrated by a member of her family	5.6% (4)	5.6% (4)	0% (0)
Sexual assault (over 18 years old) perpetrated by someone outside her family	37.5% (27)	29.2% (21)	25.0% (18)
Intimate partner violence	75.0% (54)	66.7% (48)	38.9% (28)
Physical violence over 18 years old	79.2% (57)	73.6% (53)	54.2% (39)
Engaged in sex work	11.1% (8)	5.6% (4)	9.7% (7)
Survival sex	54.2% (39)	38.9% (28)	40.3% (29)

Table 3. Structural Equation Model coefficients, standard error and probability of relationships.

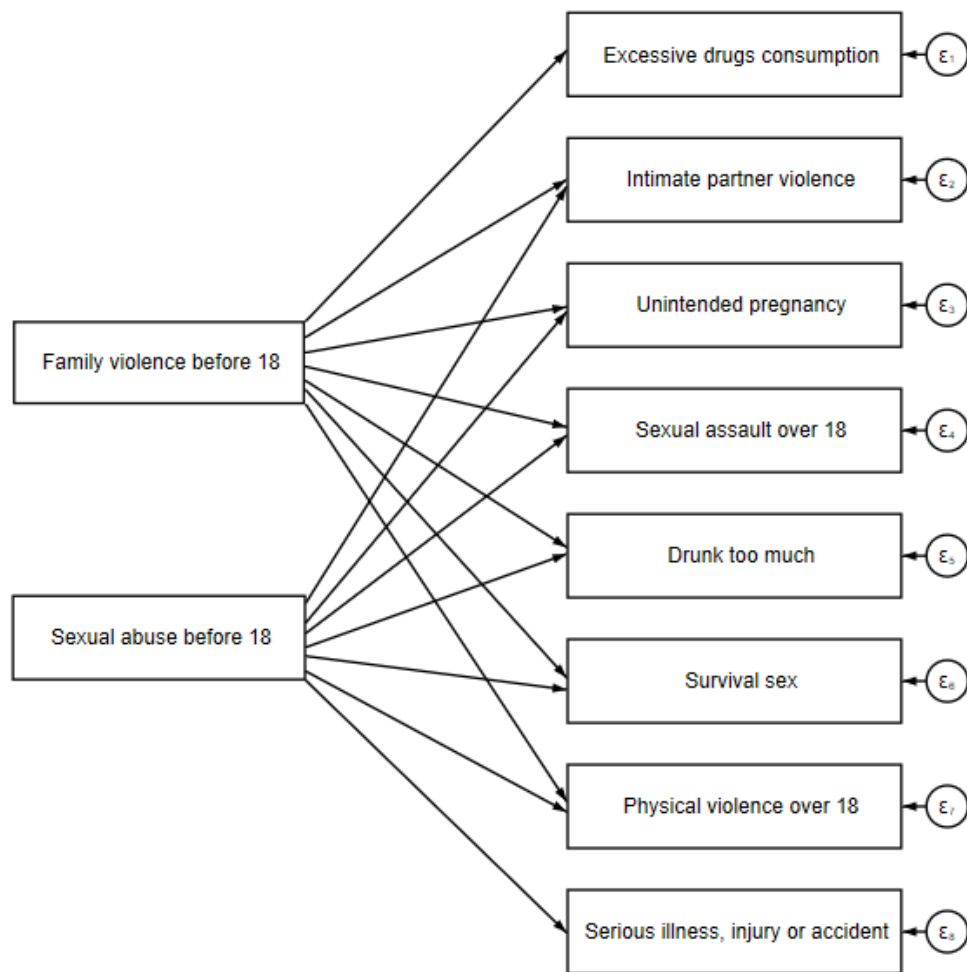
		β	Standard error	P> z
Family violence before 18 years old	→ Excessive drugs consumption	.402	.137	.003
Family violence before 18 years old	→ Intimate partner violence	.268	.114	.019
Family violence before 18 years old	→ Unintended pregnancy	.262	.131	.046
Family violence before 18 years old	→ Sexual assault over 18 years old	.243	.128	.048
Family violence before 18 years old	→ Drunk too much at some point in their life	.406	.136	.003
Family violence before 18 years old	→ Survival sex	.287	.141	.042
Family violence before 18 years old	→ Physical violence over 18 years old	.421	.099	.000
Sexual abuse before 18 years old	→ Intimate partner violence	.303	.092	.001
Sexual abuse before 18 years old	→ Unintended pregnancy	.349	.106	.001
Sexual abuse before 18 years old	→ Sexual assault over 18 years old	.460	.103	.000
Sexual abuse before 18 years old	→ Drunk too much at some point in their life	.252	.109	.021
Sexual abuse before 18 years old	→ Survival sex	.224	.113	.049
Sexual abuse before 18 years old	→ Physical violence over 18 years old	.242	.080	.003
Sexual abuse before 18 years old	→ Serious illness, injury or accident	.347	.108	.001

Table 4. Differences in life situations experienced among women undergoing homelessness in the city of Buenos Aires (Argentina) in terms of their experiences of sexual abuse before they were 18 years old and family violence before they were 18 years old.

Situations experienced:	Suffered from sexual abuse before 18 years old				
	No (n= 30)	Si (n= 41)	χ^2	Odds ratio	95% CI
Sexual assault over 18 years old	26.7% (8)	75.6% (31)	16.792***	8.525	2.900- 25.062
Sexual assault over 18 years old perpetrated by her partner	23.3% (7)	61.0% (25)	9.915**	5.134	1.791- 14.720
Sexual assault over 18 years old perpetrated by someone outside her family	13.3% (4)	56.1% (23)	13.443***	8.306	2.452- 28.134
Intimate partner violence	56.7% (17)	90.2% (37)	10.725***	7.074	2.008- 24.918
Physical violence over 18 years old	63.3% (19)	92.7% (38)	9.427**	7.333	1.826- 29.452
Survival sex	40.0% (12)	65.9% (27)	4.677*	2.893	1.091-7.668
Excessive alcohol consumption	33.3% (10)	63.4% (26)	6.272*	3.467	1.288-9.329
Serious illness, injury or accident	43.3% (12)	78.0% (32)	8.995**	4.650	1.654- 13.071
Unintended pregnancy	40.0% (12)	78.0% (32)	10.642***	5.333	1.886- 15.081
Situations experienced:	Suffered from family violence before 18 years old				
	No (n= 14)	Yes (n= 57)	χ^2	Odds ratio	95% CI
Sexual assault over 18 years old	28.6% (4)	61.4% (35)	4.894*	3.977	1.110- 14.252
Sexual assault over 18 years old perpetrated by her partner	0.0% (0)	56.1% (32)	14.309***	---	---
Physical violence over 18 years old	42.9% (6)	89.5% (51)	15.429***	11.333	2.923- 43.936
Intimate partner violence	50.0% (7)	82.5% (47)	6.501*	4.700	1.346- 16.411
Excessive alcohol consumption	14.3% (2)	59.6% (34)	9.259**	8.870	1.813- 43.395
Excessive drugs consumption	7.1% (1)	47.4% (27)	7.614**	11.700	1.434- 95.482
Survival sex	28.6% (4)	61.4% (35)	4.894*	3.977	1.110- 14.252
Unintended pregnancy	36.7% (5)	68.4% (39)	5.102*	3.900	1.143-13.31 1

*p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01; ***p ≤ .001.

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model



Lenta, M., Di Iorio, J., Cabrera, A., & Vázquez, J. J. (2025). Childhood Sexual and Family Violence and Adult Victimization Among Women Experiencing Homelessness in Argentina. *Violence Against Women*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251347593>

Author Bio Statements

Malena Lenta

PhD. in Psychology (Universidad de Buenos Aires). PhD. Candidate in Estudios Interdisciplinarios de Género (Universidad de Alcalá). Postdoctoral fellow at CONICET. Professor and researcher at Universidad de Buenos Aires.

Jorgelina Di Iorio

PhD. in Psychology (Universidad de Buenos Aires). Attached researcher at CONICET. Professor and researcher at Universidad de Buenos Aires.

Adrián Cabrera

PhD. in Economics and Business Management (University of Alcalá). Professor and researcher at Universidad de Alcalá.

José Juan Vázquez

PhD. in Psychology (University Complutense de Madrid). Professor and researcher at Universidad de Alcalá.