

## ӘЛЕУМЕТТАНУДЫҢ ӨЗЕКТІ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ВОПРОСЫ СОЦИОЛОГИИ TOPICAL ISSUES OF SOCIOLOGY

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### IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHANGE ON HOMELESSNESS IN CALIFORNIA

#### *Abstract*

California is the number one state in the USA for the number of homeless people. Taking into account the size of this state's population, the proportion of people who experience homelessness is very significant. However, there are multiple factors that contribute to this problem, including certain categories of government regulations. This study considers how certain government regulations affect the number of vulnerable people in the state. The main hypothesis is that there are not sufficient and feasible measures/regulations in force in California at this time to help resolve this problem. A series of proposals have been made which, if implemented at the California State Head of State level, could significantly reduce homelessness and thereby improve the lives of the marginalized population.

**Keywords:** Homelessness, California, governmental regulations, taxes, unemployment, clinics.

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### КАЛИФОРНИЯДАҒЫ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК-ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ САЯСИ ӨЗГЕРІСТЕРДІҢ БАСПАНАСЫЗ АДАМДАРҒА ӘСЕРІ

#### *Аңдатпа*

Калифорния штаты - бұл Америка Құрама Штаттарындағы үйсіз адамдар саны бойынша бірінші штат. Осы штаттың санына сәйкес есептесе, үйсіздікпен күресетін адамдардың үлесі өте жоғары. Бұл мәселеге әсер ететін көптеген себептер мен факторлар бар, соның ішінде Үкіметтің қаулылары, әлеуметтік мінез-құлық, әлеуметтік сақтандыру саласындағы кемшіліктері. Бұл зерттеу Үкіметтің қаулылары штаттағы қорғалмаған адамдардың санына қалай әсер ететінін қарастырады, мінез-құлыққа, денсаулық жағдайына сай адамдардың баспанасыз қалу ықтималдығын анықтау шараларын да атап көрсетеді. Негізгі гипотеза - мәселені шеше алатын жеткілікті және дұрыс алгоритмдердің болмауында. Бұл гипотезаны тексеру үшін мен қатысушылардың қатысуынсыз сұхбат, сауалнама және бақылау жүргіздім. Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, салықтың жоғары пайызы, тегін және қол жетімді клиникалардың болмауы, жұмыссыздық, үйсіздік деңгейіне қатты әсер етеді. Бұл мәселелер жаңа ережелерді біріктіру арқылы шешілетініне қарамастан, мәселені шешуге мүмкіндік бермейтін кейбір ықтимал қауіптер мен факторлар бар.

**Түйін сөздер:** үйсіздік, Калифорния, Үкімет қаулылары, салықтар, жұмыссыздық, клиникалар.

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## ВЛИЯНИЕ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИХ И ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ИЗМЕНЕНИЙ НА БЕЗДОМНОСТЬ В КАЛИФОРНИИ

### *Аннотация*

Штат Калифорния является штатом номер один по количеству бездомных в Соединенных Штатах Америки. Учитывая численность населения этого штата, доля людей, которые борются с бездомностью, очень велика. Есть много причин и факторов, влияющих на эту проблему, включая правительственные постановления. В этом исследовании рассматривается, как правительственные постановления влияют на количество незащищенных людей в штате. Основная гипотеза заключается в том, что не существует достаточных и правильных мер / правил, которые могли бы решить эту проблему. Чтобы проверить эту гипотезу, я провел интервью, опрос и наблюдение без участия участников. Результаты показали, что высокий процент налогов, отсутствие бесплатных и доступных клиник, безработица тесно влияют на уровень бездомности. Несмотря на то, что эти проблемы решаемы путем интеграции новых нормативных актов, существуют некоторые потенциальные угрозы и факторы, которые не позволяют решить проблему.

**Ключевые слова:** бездомность, Калифорния, правительственные постановления, налоги, безработица, клиники.

### **Introduction**

Social isolation, homelessness, extreme poverty - all these phenomena began to manifest themselves in the future, although the peculiarity of social life was revealed long ago. The problems of homelessness and social isolation cannot be separated from the general problems of the socio-economic development of the country, in connection with the spread of extreme manifestations of poverty - one of the most obvious and sharp exacerbations of indicators of the whole society well-being. This problem is well observed in the USA. According to the Washington Post on December 7, 2021, "Homelessness is one of the biggest current problems in the US, regardless of region. " At some point during the 2020-2021 school year, more than 100,000 New York City students were left homeless, according to a report by Children's Advocates. The total number of homeless students during the school year is almost a tenth of the total number of children in public schools. Some students had to live in cars, parks or abandoned buildings. California is one of the most homeless regions. The research of this subject in this state provides a great platform for studying social problems in other countries.

### **Research methodology**

Since the research topic is related to the homelessness in California, it was relevant to come up with methods arising from socio-political analysis research approach. Therefore, three methods have been chosen: survey (the objective is to find out where homelessness stands in California; the target group is the residents of California; this method provided the study with quantitative data), interview (this research method focuses on obtaining quantitative data and detailed information about homelessness in California from highly experienced experts in the field; 4 people were interviewed: an ordinary Californian, a Bay Area news publisher and an employee of an anti-homelessness organization Marissa Kendall, an employee of the LA Times Benjamin Oreskes, an employee of The Road Home Rachel Anderson, a Utah-based non-profit organization), and non-participant observation (the third method concentrated on obtaining some disguised/unexpected data with no visit to California; the central insights were: "Where do homeless people

usually show up?", "What are the specific reasons for becoming homeless?", "How does the government deal with or assist homeless people?"; this method contributed further to qualitative data; videos, interviews and other observations on various internet resources regarding this problem are at the core of the focus).

### **Results and Discussion**

A recent study found that the growing disparity between rich and poor people is one of the biggest causes of homelessness in California. The authors of the study looked at the relationship between rents, household income and homelessness in different neighborhoods. They concluded that as the difference between the cost of rent and income increased, homelessness also increased.

California experienced significant economic growth in 1980 as wages, and jobs increased. Meanwhile, the rate of housing production was unsustainable and slowed considerably. While the supply of housing in California has increased in recent years, the homes built have been large single-family homes, which often cost more. In 2018, the average price for entry-level properties in the Silicon Valley area of San Francisco was more than \$760,000 [1]. The average entry-level price in Los Angeles was approaching half a million dollars. These figures show that homeownership is becoming increasingly unaffordable for a growing number of households in California. Homeless people are challenged not only for personal reasons but also because of external factors that lead to the non-financial and hopeless situations.

About 70 percent of California's homeless live outside a shelter system, sleeping in tents, public open spaces, or vehicles. That's a stark contrast with New York, where only 5 percent of the homeless population are unsheltered. Opinions diverge on how to reduce the unsheltered homeless population. Disputes center around whether to focus on building permanent housing versus shelters and interim housing and the legality of public encampments. Another challenge lies in the interactions between mental illness, drug addiction, and homelessness. In 2020, about 25 percent of all homeless adults in Los Angeles County had *severe* mental illnesses such as a psychotic disorder and schizophrenia and 27 percent had a long-term substance use disorder. Moreover, a higher percentage of so-called chronically homeless have drug addiction, a severe mental illness, or both. Meanwhile, state and local governments have spent billions of dollars to combat homelessness. Between 2018 and 2020, California spent \$13 billion on homelessness, across nine state agencies through 41 programs (Har 2021). Governor Gavin Newsom signed a \$12 billion funding package of bills in 2021 to tackle the homelessness crisis. [2] The study shows the necessary measures should be taken to prevent further spread of the homelessness rates in California. Scientists from Canada have developed a graphical model to find out the cause of homelessness. The fuzzy cognitive map (FCM) created for their study provides a graphical description of homelessness and facilitates increased understanding of this complex social problem. Through simulation, the usefulness of such a model is demonstrated and implications for its use in policy decision-making are explored. As shown, FCMs related to complex social problems, allow for refinement of knowledge through graphical understanding and simulations that may be useful in improving social policies with the goal of reducing homelessness. First a virtual common-sense map was built based on the researchers' personal and historical knowledge of the factors which they perceived to affect homelessness. Using homelessness as the central hub of the map, concepts which directly or indirectly, positively or negatively affected homelessness, and each other, were linked through directed edges. Each edge was assigned a weight depending on whether the antecedent concept exerted a positive effect (+1) or a negative effect (-1) on the consequent concept (Figure 1 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3766254/figure/F3/>).

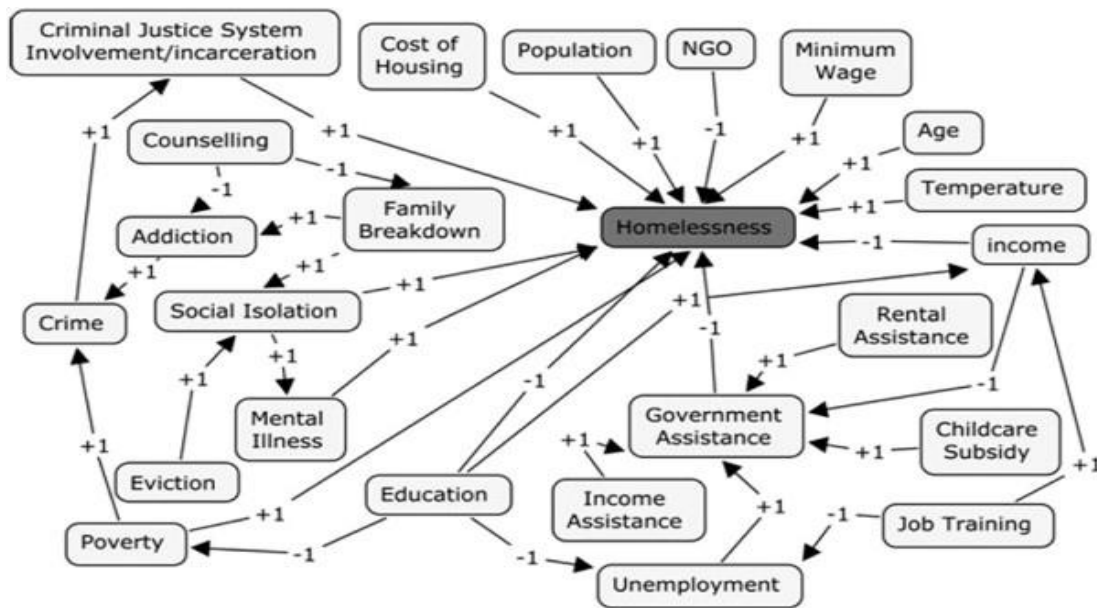


Figure 1 - Virtual common-sense map of homelessness

Three prototypical cases were then developed, and the model was run to ensure it would function in accordance with the determined relationships prior to the actual weights on the edges being refined through a literature search for the linguistic terms. Experimentation with the virtual common-sense model was conducted to ensure that it would perform as expected and reach a stable state after iterating prior to the input of the actual weight values. Sample cases were constructed with the goal of describing an extreme case, most likely to result in homelessness; an extreme case, least likely to result in homelessness; and a middle case, more closely representing the possibilities of the real world, in which the likelihood of homelessness would be uncertain, see Table 1.

Table -1 Summary of expected outcome, concepts activated and iteration process for three sample cases

Case	Concepts activated	Outcome
Case 1: Extremely likely to result in homelessness	Criminal justice system involvement, addictions, mental illness, rental subsidy	Iteration 1: homelessness = 1; all other concepts, stable. Conclusion: extremely likely to result in homelessness.
Case 2: Extremely unlikely to result in homelessness	Education, mental illness, non-government organization, and income assumed to be high	Iteration 1: homelessness = -1; increase in education; decrease in poverty, unemployment, and government assistance; all other concepts, stable. Iteration 2: homelessness = -1; increase in education and mental illness; decrease in crime; and all other concepts, stable. Iteration 3: homelessness = -1; increase in education, and mental illness; decrease in crime and criminal justice system involvement; all other concepts stable. Conclusion: extremely unlikely to result in homelessness.
Case 3: Uncertain likelihood of homelessness	Criminal justice system involvement, addiction, family breakdown, increased income, education, and social systems network.	Iteration 1: homelessness = -1; increase in addiction, criminal justice system involvement, family breakdown, income, counseling, crime, and social isolation; decrease in poverty, unemployment, and government assistance. Iteration 2: homelessness = +1; increase in addiction, criminal justice system involvement, family breakdown, income, counseling, crime, and social isolation; decrease in poverty, unemployment, and government assistance; all other concepts, stable. Conclusion: uncertain likelihood of homelessness.

Note - the data was taken from the source [3].

*Case 1:* In this scenario, the protective factor of rental subsidy was incapable of preventing the negative social factors, criminal justice system involvement, addictions, and mental illness from overwhelming the model - resulting in certain homelessness.

*Case 2:* In this scenario, the protective factors of education and increased income resulted in the elimination of the need for non-government assistance and a decrease in the likelihood of criminal justice system interaction. This is a highly likely outcome given that those with higher incomes and education are better able to identify and seek help for their mental illnesses which increases the likelihood that they will avoid incarceration. However, the strength of income and education as protective factors against increasing mental illness is shown to be ineffective and the level of mental illness continues to rise. Despite the increase in mental illness, education and income will ensure an ongoing ability to provide shelter, resulting in homelessness being an extremely unlikely outcome.

*Case 3:* In this scenario, at the end of iteration 1, the effects of addiction, prior criminal justice system involvement, and family breakdown are held at bay by the protective factors of income, education and counselling. However, due to the known cumulative negative effects of addiction, social isolation increases, signalling the likelihood that, over time, there will be an increased possibility of family breakdown and greater challenges controlling the addiction resulting in the increased likelihood of crime. Iteration 2 demonstrates the actions of all the concepts present in iteration 1 continuing to exert force on the model with the addition of an increase in mental illness caused by the ongoing addiction resulting in an increasing likelihood of homelessness. As the model continues to iterate, the addictions contribute to increasing social isolation and criminal behavior resulting in a greater likelihood of family breakdown. At this point the protective factors of education, income and counselling are overwhelmed by the ongoing addictions and resulting mental illness and crime and the likelihood of homelessness rises. However, given that education and income continue to exert force, homelessness is not a certainty.

Given the fully explainable results of the model and the fact that it was able to achieve stability after iterating, it was determined that the model functioned properly, and the process of refining the concepts through the search of timely empirical literature was conducted [3].

The following steps can be scrutinized and then taken into account:

1. The most popular reason for people becoming homeless in California is unemployment. Unemployment is mostly because of the lack of jobs and the remoteness of the workplace. California has a growing population of over 40 million people which results in tougher competition for jobs. [4] California has an unemployment rate of 5.5% (July 2016), compared to the national unemployment rate of 4.9% (July 2016). According to a U.S. Conference of Mayors survey, major cities across the country report that top causes of homelessness among families also include low wages [5]. During the interviews – especially in cities and areas with a relatively higher cost of living – the interviews revealed jobs are often in cities and areas with a relatively higher cost of living. This makes it difficult for people to get to their place of work.

2. In addition, COVID-19 has caused huge constraints on business, so most companies have had to reduce the number of employees. To summarise, inconvenience and few jobs are the main drivers of unemployment in California. Therefore, it is important for the government to do a study on how to handle widespread competition and increase the number of jobs in each area. Homeless people are more likely to be infected with this virus than other people, and they are also more likely to have underlying health problems. Primary workers and service providers are also at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19. In response to the pandemic, a nationwide eviction moratorium was introduced, prohibiting landlords from evicting tenants for non-payment of rent. This moratorium was extended twice in 2021, in January and June, preventing an unknown number of evictions while thousands were left homeless. In October, the eviction guarantees were largely lifted, leaving a void that tenant activists fear could lead to an increase in homelessness. The state has quietly allocated \$5.2 billion in federal money to provide tenants with housing and landlords with wages, focusing on tenants earning 30% of the regional median income [6].

3. As the population in California grows, the cost of living, but wage levels in the state are not increasing. In 0.1% of cases, people simply can't pay their mortgage or rent with their wages. This is because the demand for housing has increased dramatically with technology companies in California. A central driver of higher home prices in some communities is the heavy regulation of housing markets by localities. House Council on Eliminating Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing, such For example, as stated in President

Trump's Executive Order Establishing a White regulations include: "overly restrictive zoning and growth management controls; rent controls; cumbersome building and rehabilitation codes; excessive energy and water efficiency mandates; unreasonable maximum-density allowances; historic preservation requirements; overly burdensome wetland or environmental regulations; outdated manufactured-housing regulations and restrictions; undue parking requirements; cumbersome and time-consuming permitting and review procedures; tax policies that discourage investment or reinvestment; overly complex labor requirements; and inordinate impact or developer fees." These regulations reduce the supply of housing and as a result drive up home prices. Given that housing market regulations increase home prices and higher home prices are associated with higher rates of homelessness, areas with more regulated housing markets would be predicted to have higher rates of homelessness. After all, in a housing market without supply constraints, new homes would be built until home values fell to their production cost [7]. Despite this, people's average wages have not changed; most people cannot pay their rent. In conclusion, the government should address the problems of stagnant wages.

4. California is the most densely populated state in the country and there are about 1,243,000 people suffering from mental illness. From the interviews, it has been concluded that overall, there is little help available to the mentally disturbed in the state. There are not enough clinical centers, specialists who struggle with the disease and not enough funds for treatment [8]. Considering the linear model of hospital treatment in New York prescribed in the study by Sam Tsemberis, and Ronda F. Eisenberg, it can be assumed that such a model could be successfully used in California. The design of New York City's system of services for the homeless and the mentally ill follows the recommendations of the Federal Task Force on Homelessness and Severe Mental Illness. The system consists of several software components, which together form a linear continuum of care. The system is designed to help clients step by step through the provision of services, from field work, through medical treatment, to permanent housing. In the first step, outreach programs engage a person who is literally homeless and encourage him or her to take a referral to low demand second step programs such as trust centers, shelters, shelters, or other transitional facilities. These programs allow a person to stay at home, usually for a set period of time. They also provide assistance with entitlement and psychiatric or drug treatment. These Phase 2 programs aim to increase the housing readiness of clients so that they can meet the eligibility criteria required by housing providers. Adherence to psychiatric treatment and adherence to periods of sobriety are often among such criteria. Finding permanent housing is the third and final item in the sequel. Most providers use the inpatient linear model for permanent housing programs. Programs consist of a wide range of shared accommodation facilities such as group homes, residence halls and single occupancy residences, with varying intensities of on-site services. The end point of this continuum is independent housing, where the client can live in the community with little support, if any. This model combines treatment and accommodation within a single program to provide clients with a treatment location that best suits their needs and abilities. Residents are housed in a variety of shared housing options with varying degrees of supervision. In linear inpatient care programs, clinical status is closely related to housing status. To be eligible for the program, a client must agree to participate in psychiatric and substance abuse treatment. If he or she later has a psychiatric crisis or relapses into drug abuse, the clinical team may move the client to a more closely supervised residence. The programs also require clients to participate in ongoing psychiatric treatment and stay sober if they want to keep their housing. The overall goal of these programs is to stabilize clients and prepare them for independent living. Consumers and advocates have identified several shortcomings of the linear inpatient care model. One of the major problems is the lack of consumer choice and freedom to choose treatment or housing. Another is the stress that comes from living together and moving frequently. The third problem stems from research on psychiatric rehabilitation, which shows that the skills acquired to function successfully in one type of living space do not necessarily apply to other life situations. The fourth problem is that it takes a significant amount of time for clients to reach the last step in the continuum. Finally, the most important problem with the model is that homeless people are denied housing because housing depends on whether they agree to treatment first [9].

5. The problem is also closely linked to drug addiction and human poverty. In addition, since the cost of building a hospital is extremely high, people refuse to build hospitals. Thus, this leads to some clinics in the state. It seems to me that we need to build a new hospital for the mentally ill and also reduce the cost of building new health centers.

6. Therefore, there is a problem that all the hospitals that have been built are expensive and not accessible to people with low salaries. It is also because the state does not invest in medicine, forcing people to build

only fee-paying clinics. Therefore, building free and accessible hospitals is one of the main problems of the state.

7. An important factor in this problem is also that drug trafficking is widespread. The reason for this is that the state borders Mexico, where smuggling is much more developed than in California. The interviews revealed that the factor in this is the unavailability of medical care for drug addiction treatment. Thus, a study regarding drug addiction in the state should be conducted.

8. Systems Involvement Multiple studies have found a strong correlation between criminal legal system involvement and homelessness. The Prison Policy Initiative found that people who have been incarcerated are 7 times as likely to experience homelessness than a member of the public and that people who have been incarcerated more than once are 13 times as likely. A survey of 350 adults experiencing homelessness, including those enduring unsheltered homelessness, in Oakland, California, found that 79 percent of respondents had a history of incarceration at some point before losing stable housing. An analysis in Los Angeles County found that 58 percent of men and 42 percent of women older than 25 enduring unsheltered homelessness had been incarcerated. This systems involvement may be both a precursor to unsheltered homelessness and a result of living outside. People who endure unsheltered homelessness have frequent interactions with police. According to the California Policy Lab's analysis of VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool is a survey administered both to individuals and families to determine risk and prioritization when providing assistance to homeless and at-risk of homelessness persons) responses, people enduring unsheltered homelessness reported an average of 21 contacts with police in the previous six months, 10 times the number reported by people living in. People enduring unsheltered homelessness were also 9 times as likely as people in shelters to have spent at least one night in jail in the previous six months. In a study in Phoenix, approximately half of a sample of 260 individuals enduring unsheltered and chronic homelessness had spent time in jail. Although existing research does not directly link foster care and unsheltered homelessness, some common experiences in foster care are similar to risk factors for unsheltered homelessness [10].

### **Conclusion**

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study constitute a perspective for future research on the topic. The proposals to be suggested are the following:

1) Mandatory registration of homeless people in a database, for further use of biometric data for identification, further entry of data on health status and current status.

2) Organize gathering points to provide medical and psychological support both online and offline.

3) Convert unused premises to community shelters.

4) Assist in learning new skills and jobs for homeless people

5) Supporting psychological services in each case to reconnect with families and relatives: not only working with the homeless people themselves, but also working separately with relatives to return home.

6) Development of separate alcohol and drug rehabilitation programmes specifically for homeless people which should be completely different from the general programmes. The aim of the programme should be to free the homeless from the disease and to bring them back to a normal life.

7) Firstly, at the level of the State of California to develop a number of financial support measures for the involuntary homeless: provision of jobs in social services where there is an opportunity to increase earnings due to greater involvement in the process and, as a consequence, provision of social housing (sometimes instead of a regular salary).

8) Expanding the network of NGOs dealing specifically with these issues and increasing the dissemination of information in social networks in order to attract more attention and encourage more interested people to work with such categories of citizens.

9) Engaging recovered citizens in working with vulnerable homeless people (including as part of rehabilitation) to showcase their experiences of addiction and increase motivation among them.

10) Development of a program with an algorithm of actions for the individual. If the person is homeless, all his further actions will be written in the program. Once being identified with the help of social service, the homeless person is supported with the documents and certificates (restore the documents if necessary), then the algorithm asks for the health status, all data are entered and the most acceptable way out of the situation is given. For example, to create a fully automated program to track the fate of homeless people.

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## ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК ҒЫЛЫМДАРДАҒЫ САПАЛЫҚ ЗЕРТТЕУ ӘДІСТЕМЕСІНІҢ ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ

### Аңдатпа

Зерттеу мақаласында автор әлеуметтік ғылымдардағы зерттеулерді жоспарлау және ұйымдастырудағы сапалық зерттеу әдісінің ерекшеліктері қарастырылады. Тақырыпты зерттеудің маңыздылығын қарастырғанда сандық және сапалық зерттеулердің кез келген бақылау формасында қолданысқа ие тәсілдердің бірі екендігі айтылады. Соның ішінде сандық әдістің негізгі түрлері мен олардың тәжірибелік тұрғыда пайдаланудың маңыздылығы әдістеріне ерекше мән беріледі. Сапалық әдістер негізінде алынған нәтижелерін қолдану оңайға соқпайтындығы жөнінде айтыла келе зерттеушінің алынған нәтижелер бойынша талдау жұмыстарын жүргізудегі жауаптылығына баса назар аударылады. Әлеуметтану әдістерін қолдану салалары мен механизмдері қарастырылады. Сапалық және сандық тәсілдердің өздеріне тән кемшіліктеріне тоқтала келе талдау