Seminar 7: Room C127 - Measuring Homelessness (2)
Chair: **Volker Busch-Geertsema, DE**

Olga Nešporová, Petr Holpuch, CZ: The First General Count of Homeless People in the Czech Republic in 2019

Olga Nešporová works as a senior researcher in the family policy team of the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs in Prague. She obtained her PhD. in social anthropology from the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague. She is currently leading the Research of Homeless People in the Czech Republic project commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as part of which the first ever national count of homeless people in the Czech Republic was conducted in early 2019.

Petr Holpuch works at the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs in Prague. He is responsible for the methodology employed for the collection of census data on homeless people in the Czech Republic. Petr designed methodology for the collection of data on homeless people in Prague as early as in 2010 and published his own research on the day-to-day lives of homeless people in the city. As a researcher in the field of homelessness, Petr employs the invaluable experience that he gained during his previous career as a social worker.

Several counts of homeless people have taken place to date in various towns and cities across the Czech Republic using various methodologies and conducted at different times. However, no systematic attempt has been made to unify the partial and non-comparable data gathered from individual counts. Therefore, there was a lack of reliable information on the scale of homelessness at the national level. A previous attempt to count homeless people as part of the general population and housing census of 2011 enumerated only one section of the homeless population – those receiving accommodation-based services for the homeless; it did not consider persons living rough. Our intention was to gather new relevant data on homeless people throughout the whole of the Czech Republic following a request from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. We included the roofless and houseless persons conceptual categories according to the ETHOS typology. We focused on the following operational categories: people living rough, in emergency accommodation (night shelters), in accommodation for the homeless and in women's shelters. The count took place in the second week of April 2019. Since the count was performed in towns with significant differences in size, number of services provided for the target group and the number of social workers and others available for conducting the count in the field, the methodology had to be adjusted to suit the various specificities. We applied four general scenarios (some with subcategories): scenario 1, register-based census, scenario 2, single-contact count at previously identified places, scenario 3, single-contact count at previously identified places supplemented by counting at institutions for homeless people, and scenario 4, the capture-recapture method. Our presentation will focus on the methodological aspects of the count and the introduction of the results.

Susanne Gerull, DE: The Life Situation of Homeless Persons - 1st Systematic Examination in Germany

Susanne Gerull is professor for theory and practice of Social Work at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences (Berlin/Germany) since 2008 with a focus on poverty, unemployment, homelessness and low-threshold social work. Before her doctorate she worked as a social worker for homeless people in two social welfare offices in Berlin.

In 2018, the 1st systematic examination of the life situation of homeless persons has been conducted in Germany. The theoretical basis has been the life situation approach, which considers the multi-dimensional nature of various areas of life in their interaction and thus enables a holistic representation of the life situation of persons. In this study, a life situation index was developed that connects different indicators of the life situation of the persons questioned and thus enables the classification into five life

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situations, ranging from very good to very bad. The study has been planned in a participative procedure in which homeless persons were involved. A total of 1,135 questionnaires were evaluated.

28% of the persons questioned in our study have been in a below-average (bad/very bad) life situation, while 19.7% have been in an above-average (very good, good) life situation. Particularly noticeable here are the differences in the objective and the subjective data: Many of the respondents subjectively assessed their situation worse than the objective data would suggest. According to a principal component analysis, the main factor impacting the life situation as a whole is the existential and ontological security of the homeless persons examined. Correspondingly, in the statistical analysis of data, those who live rough or in similarly precarious living and housing situations were identified as the most vulnerable group. Surprisingly, the life situation of long-term homeless persons is not as bad as the situation of persons who have been homeless for a medium-term period. Their adaptation efforts, which have also been identified through the collected subjective data, may also be used as resources in the aid for homeless persons. The findings are an argument in favour of providing homeless persons with their own living space as quickly as possible again so that precarious life situations cannot manifest.

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