

Seminar 9: (ROOM TBC) Homeless Policies (1)

Chair: **Isabel Baptista, PT**

Kathy Reilly, IE: People, Policy and Place: Examining Homelessness beyond the Capital in Ireland



Dr Reilly is a lecturer in human geography at the National University of Ireland Galway. Her research interests centre on themes relating to social justice and marginality and she has worked with migrant communities in Ireland in the past. More recently Dr Reilly's work has focused on issues surrounding Ireland's current homelessness crises and she is currently leading an Irish Research Council funded project entitled Deconstructing Homelessness: Finding a Place for Geography?

The number of people experiencing homelessness in Ireland is currently at a crisis level. This sharp rise is reflected in trends globally, and the Irish state's response to homelessness has been an attempt to adopt a Housing First Approach. Given that the responsibility for addressing homelessness in Ireland has been devolved to a series of regions (represented by local authorities, the health service executive (HSE) and NGO service providers, among others) tasked with developing and implementing a series of action plans, the adaptation of a Housing First Approach has been less than rigorous. Contextualised by national data, this paper focuses on three regional contexts in Ireland (West, South-West and Mid-West Regions), challenging Dublin-centred and Dublin-led understandings of the current crises. Examining qualitative data from four case-study sites in Ireland (Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway), this paper incorporates a multi-stakeholder perspective drawing together key findings from the 'Deconstructing Homelessness: Finding a Place for Geography?' project. The paper draws together four elements considering Irish policy, NGO awareness campaigns, community service perspectives and the voice of the homeless person. Central to this analysis is an exploration of homelessness as a societal crisis experienced right across Ireland; challenging Dublin-centred narratives and explicating the importance of place. Furthermore, reflecting on European recommendations, the paper highlights the damaging effect of narrow definitions of homelessness in Ireland, discussing the impact of such limited interpretations on local services and national policy interventions.

Nienke Boesveldt, Chahida Bouhamou, NL: Client Perspectives on Dutch De-institutionalization



Dr. Nienke Boesveldt is Assistant-Professor (ISS, UU). After a social policy career, in 2015 she earned her doctoral degree based on her thesis 'Planet Homeless. Governance Arrangements in Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Glasgow'. Currently she leads a 5-year prospective study on de-institutionalizing and decentralizing responsibilities on homelessness in Dutch municipalities, and three times a year an Executive Program for Policy Makers, with study trip to Finland.

Chahida Bouhamou (1987) is a student-assistent and a Master Student (ISS) at Utrecht University. After a bachelor in Public Administration, and a few years of work experience, she decided to do the Master Social Policy and Public Health. Chahida is committed to bring policies closer to citizens and to make it possible for the citizen's perspective to play a greater role within these policies. Currently, she is working as a student-assistent in a 5-year prospective study on de-institutionalizing and decentralizing responsibilities on homelessness in Dutch municipalities. She also has the ambition to do a PhD on this topic.



In the Netherlands, clients of supported housing and homelessness services are increasingly stimulated to live independently (with municipal support) in the neighborhood. In our study, clients have been asked about their experiences with current de-institutionalization trends. With previous research identifying positive evidence but also several barriers towards independent living, our duo-peer interviews provide a good insight into how these clients exactly experience such barriers. Based on 58 client-interviews, we were able to identify the level of support for de-institutionalization.

The largest group of clients, under the current conditions, did not see de-institutionalization as a feasible development. Interviewed clients do clearly indicate under what conditions they see transitioning to independent housing being feasible. Necessary conditions to be met are the 'right' incentive, more outflow-oriented support and guaranteed continuity of support, when living independent. Additionally, supported housing clients mention increased autonomy as a condition to be improved, whereas homeless clients mention wanting more customized support.

This research has also shown that residence in emergency accommodation such as night shelters contributes to homeless persons being in favor of right-away de-institutionalization irrespective of current conditions. Contrary to this, several supported housing clients indicate never wanting to live independently again, due to several factors mentioned during the interviews.

This research provides valuable insight into the experiences of clients, making the way for more person orientated support for clients. Policy implications indicate debating the need for a variety of housing led options for de-institutionalization of currently residing persons. It also shows how additional conditions for realizing the twofold purposes of de-institutionalization, welfare state revision and improved well-being, still need to be met.

Pedro José Cabrera, Santiago Bachiller, ES/Argentina: Challenges for Public Policies Tackling Homelessness in Latin America: a Comparative Analysis



Santiago Bachiller is searcher of the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET, Argentina). Ph.D (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, España) and graduate (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina) in Social Anthropology. Professor of the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Universidad Nacional Patagonia Austral y Universidad Nacional General Sarmiento (Argentina).

Pedro José Cabrera is Professor of Sociology at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Madrid and former Director of the School of Social Work. He is expert in issues of poverty, social exclusion, homelessness and prison. He was correspondent in Spain of the European Observatory on Homelessness for many years, and is currently advisor and member of the International Advisory Committee of the European Journal of Homelessness.



To live as homeless, or houseless, or "on the streets situation" (situación de calle), as the problem of homelessness is designated in Latin America, means to be facing the strongest social vulnerabilities. In spite of the relatively low number, homeless people in rich countries are an extraordinary opportunity to understand the historical, political and cultural limits in which development of the Welfare States has occurred. On the other hand, we can observe that difficulties to design, implement and evaluate public policies tackling with homelessness, are not only present in countries with higher levels of economical development, but that also need to gain access throughout enormous difficulties among countries of the Southern Hemisphere. This communication offers a comparative analysis in terms of homelessness, analysing the policies implemented in the heart of the Member States of the European Union, and contrasting them with the ones that are starting in six Latin American countries (Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Paraguay) that are part of the RedCalle, a project funded by the EU to coordinate and stimulate the implementation of public policies in this área, which has allowed us to carry out visits and fieldwork in these six countries.