

Seminar 18: (zoom link) Migration and Homelessness II.

Chair: **Nóra Teller, HU**

Martin Toal, IE: Intercultural Competence Training: The Case of an Irish, Not-for-profit, Community Based Organisation for the Homeless in the Republic of Ireland

Martin Toal is a lecturer in both English as a second or other language (ESOL) and intercultural studies in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies at Dublin City University Ireland. His research interests include issues pertaining to intercultural communication and competence; education and training. He has experience living in culturally diverse contexts and has volunteered as an intercultural communication trainer in Focus Ireland.

This presentation describes an ethnographic study utilising participant observations and eighteen group interviews to explore the challenges that face staff in a not-for-profit homeless service provider in the Republic of Ireland called Focus Ireland, in their support of clients who are culturally diverse. This is a timely study, given the significant increase in individuals not originally from Ireland who avail of homeless services.

A number of themes are explored in the first part of the presentation in relation to the difficulties that staff face in the provision of an effective and appropriate service for these customers. They include: challenges related to supporting customers in the semi-public and private spheres such as understanding the ways customers seek privacy or the varying childrearing practices customers might employ; the difficulty staff have in supporting families with diverse family structures and the manner in which this impacts on decision-making, power relationships and the nurture of children; the difficulties staff have in combatting racist behaviour or discrimination by customers themselves, neighbours and private landlords; and the language barrier staff sometimes face, when interacting with customers who speak English as a second or additional language.

The second part of this presentation will describe the delivery of two four-hour training workshops in intercultural competence. These workshops were designed as a response to the challenges that Focus Ireland staff face in the provision of an appropriate and effective service to customers/clients who are culturally diverse.

Analysis of feedback from participants suggest that a bottom-up ethnographic approach to the design and delivery of a context-specific, intercultural competence training programme is very effective. A model to support training of this kind is presented.

Cristian Campagnaro, Nicolò Di Prima, Daniela Leonardi, Antonella Meo and Silvia Stefani, IT: Re-orienting Turin Reception system to Address Homelessness: Findings from an Italian Participatory Action Research



Cristian Campagnaro is an associate professor from the Department of Architecture and Design at Politecnico di Torino. He focuses his research on design for social inclusion and for environmental sustainability.

Nicolò Di Prima is Lecturer and PhD candidate in design at the Politecnico di Torino, Department of Architecture and Design. His research focuses on the relationship between cultural anthropology and design in contexts of social exclusion.



Join us on zoom / WORKSUP



Daniela Leonardi is a postdoctoral researcher in Sociology of Welfare at the University of Parma. Her research interests concern poverty and social exclusion, public policy analysis, Street-level Bureaucracy Theory, homelessness and welfare.

Antonella Meo is an associate professor of Sociology at the University of Turin, Department of Cultures, Politics and Societies. Her main research interests concern social vulnerability and inequality dynamics, poverty and social exclusion, social policy and local welfare.



Silvia Stefani is a fellow researcher in Anthropology at the University of Turin, Department of Philosophy and Educational Science. She carried out ethnographic research in Cape Verde and Brazil about inequalities through an intersectional approach. Currently, she is studying homelessness and welfare in Italy.

The paper presents some analytical findings that emerged from a multidisciplinary participatory action-research aimed at reorienting and improving the public services system for homeless people in Turin, Italy. The research was coordinated by sociologists, designers, and anthropologists from the University of Turin and the Polytechnic of Turin in agreement with the Municipality, on funding from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. The action-research has been carried on since 2018, through co-design activities and qualitative research techniques, involving policymakers from public administration, frontline workers from third sector organizations, and final beneficiaries of the public services for homeless people.

The article focuses on some critical aspects of the city's reception system that emerged from the action-research process, such as the tension between standardisation and personalisation of the actions that the city service provides for and the need to further diversify the housing solutions available to the reception system in order to meet the needs of the beneficiaries.

At the methodological level, the collaboration and long-lasting debate between the university and the local administration was significant; the action-research process encouraged the development of reflexivity among the actors of the local reception system and opened a phase of experimental development of innovative policies and interventions.