

Seminar 3: Housing First I

Chair: **Volker Busch-Geertsema, DE**

Martin Wagener, Koen Hermans, Carole Bonnetier, Nana Mertens, Josepha Moriau, BE: Innovation in Housing First – a Social Reaffiliation Project in Belgium



Martin Wagener is Assistant Professor in sociology at the CIRTES (Centre for interdisciplinary research on Work, State and Society) at UCLouvain. During his PhD thesis about trajectories of single-parenthood regarding parenthood, work and housing, he applied pathways research based on quantitative and qualitative longitudinal data. He has conducted and accompanied numerous research projects on single-parenthood, social policy implementation through actor networks as well as employment-education integration services and homelessness, as for example the regional and federal evaluation of 'Housing First' and was a partner of the federal BELSPO research MEHOBEL and the actual Trahome project.

Koen Hermans is project leader at LUCAS and a member of the Social Policy and Social Work team at the Centre for sociological research. Both authors have worked together in multiple projects regarding Homelessness. (see also Seminar 2).

Josepha Moriau is PhD student and Carole Bonnetier research assistant at UCLouvain.

Nana Mertens is a researcher at KULeuven.

Housing First has been active since 2013 in Belgium. It has renewed the debate on homeless people, their chances of reintegration and the support services available to them. In 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, a new experiment was financed by the federal ministry of Social Integration that aims to develop innovative methods to strengthen the social affiliation process of housed ex-homeless people. Support is provided by 'social affiliation coaches' hired specifically for this project. In this way, this experiment tries to answer one of the main weaknesses of Housing first, namely the social isolation and lack of social participation of housing first clients (Quilgars & Pleace, 2016).

An evaluative research project has been launched by CIRTES (UCLouvain) and LUCAS (KULeuven) in order to accompany the social experimentation currently underway in seven Housing First projects (Namur, Charleroi, Liège, Brussels, Gent, Hasselt and Kortrijk). The research teams combine quantitative and qualitative methods to identify successful methods that enhance the social reaffiliation of housing first users and that counteract precariousness and social isolation. The evaluation framework adapted to homelessness has been conceived by Wagener and Hermans based on the works of Serge Paugam on social ties. (2003, 2011). Paugam presents a comprehensive view of social ties and forms of personal, institutional and societal support that allow for some protection and also deferred access to social recognition. The presentation will focus on the methods that have been developed by the housing first teams, the evaluation method and the main findings related to social affiliation.

Paugam S. (2013), *Le lien social*, PUF, coll. « Que sais-je ? », 127 p.

Paugam S. (2015), *Isolement et délitement des liens sociaux - Enquête dans l'agglomération de Strasbourg*, ERIS, 99p.

Quilgars, D., N. Pleace (2016), *Housing first and social integration: a realistic aim?*, *Social Inclusion*, 4 (4), pp.5-15.

Carne Fortea Busquest and Lourdes Herruz Pamies, ES: Implementation and Evaluation of the Housing First Municipal Project in Barcelona, Primer la Llar

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Carme Fortea Busquets is a graduate in pedagogy, at the University of Barcelona and obtained the master's degree in direction of local public policies, at Pompeu Fabra University. Carme has worked with homelessness since 2003 and has been manager since 2008 of the department of attention to homeless people. Carme is employed by the Barcelona City Council Municipal Institute of Social Services.



Lourdes Herruz Pamies is a graduate in law, from the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. She also has a master's degree in management and local law, from Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. Lourdes has worked in the Barcelona City Council since 2003 and since 2010 in the Department of Attention for the Homeless, and is responsible for the municipal reference of the project Primer la Llar (housing first) at the Municipal Institute of Social services of the City Council of Barcelona.

Primer la Llar has been the first Housing First project promoted by a local government in Spain. Now that the project is finished we have submitted three papers to this 15th European Research Conference.

The first, on the implementation of the Housing First model by the Barcelona City Council. The second, on the impact evaluation carried out by the Catalan Institute of Public Policies (IVALUA) and the third, on the qualitative longitudinal research carried out both with the participants and the practitioners by a research team of the University of Barcelona.

Since 1979, Barcelona has services and resources aimed at homeless people, consolidated and based on the scale or transition model, services that have been growing, diversifying and dignifying, enhancing the role of the person as the center of their own insertion. It has evolved from collective hostels to accommodation in small units and individual apartments on a temporary basis. The Barcelona City Council launched in June 2015, through a public tender, a pilot test of the Housing First model, Primer la Llar. The existing resources to date have left homeless people with a long history on the streets and highly complex situations out of the loop. After 5 years of launching the Primer la Llar program, we can position ourselves positively regarding the operation of the Program, both from the perspective of the participants and the professionals involved.

The city of Barcelona has made a significant effort to contain the growth of residential exclusion, with an extraordinary growth in residential places to serve homeless people, despite which, the number of people who continue to live in the street has not diminished. The city's welfare pressure is very high, social and affordable housing is scarce, so growth in programs based exclusively on housing such as the Primer la Llar Program is really complex and must coexist with the traditional model.

The implementation and evaluation of the Primer la Llar Pilot Project has allowed us to analyze the intervention in depth and draw lessons that we can transfer to all the resources deployed in the city of Barcelona to tackle homelessness.