

THE ITALIAN APPROACH TO HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS. A QUALITATIVE PERSPECTIVE DURING AND AFTER THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

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THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This project aims to analyse the reaction of Italian services for vulnerable groups to the spread of the pandemic and how this phenomenon affects the National Healthcare System and policies. The discourse throughout the study is divided in two main conceptual frameworks: one related to the **macro level analysis of institutional contexts and policies**, while the other focuses on the **micro level analysis that observes which resources (material, personal and social) were activated** during the years of the pandemic by both service providers and beneficiaries.

MACRO FRAMEWORK

Policy interventions are never a response to clear unbiased social problems, but they are the result of **problem's representations**. The latter are the product of 'political rationalities' with the exercise of political power in certain contexts (Bacchi 2009). In the neoliberal process of problematization, the health and medical frameworks have been central. Thus, it appears that measures have been directed towards **'fixing' individuals rather than addressing their experience as homeless** (Parsell et al. 2020).

OBJECTIVES:

- Evaluate how and if policies for vulnerable groups are efficient within their aims and in which operational framework the latter lie.
- Observe if they are oriented towards 'fixing' the immediate needs and issues of individuals or do work towards the construction of their capabilities.

MICROFRAMEWORK

The **forced homogeneity** given to social groups **risks overlooking their political agency and their capacity to react against social shaming**. Claiming benefits from services is often defined as 'dehumanizing', representing an obstacle towards their effectiveness while damaging individuals' feeling of being heard by welfare services. The result is **the failure to realize validation and perceived respect** (Lister 2016).

OBJECTIVES:

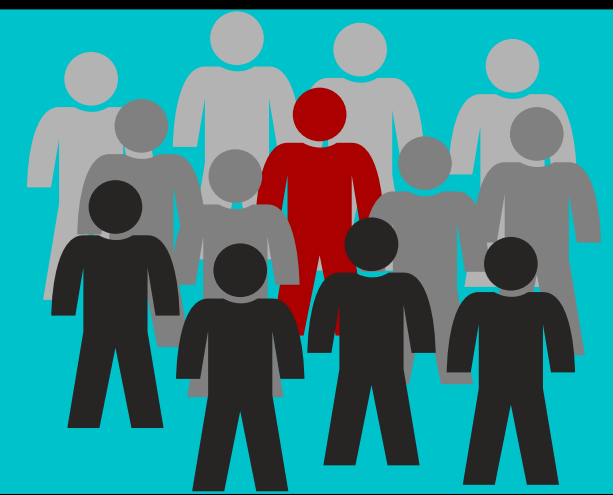
- Analyse different types of services to see how they faced the emergency (if focused on empowerment or immediate fixing) between two Regions with different approaches

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BACKGROUND

In Italy, homelessness has been documented through different approaches and measures. In 2010, the matter of a 'new homelessness' was already discussed. In Italy, the concept of **'home/dimora'** is understood not only in the strict sense of a residence. It is rather a place **where relationships and identities are constructed and developed** (Meo and Capponi 2010). The pandemic exacerbated some of these dynamics. Therefore, the right to health of vulnerable groups became a topic of discussion confronted with different means, depending on the assets in question. Italy is a Nation characterized by **differences between Regions** when it comes to levels of assistance and attention towards specific issues, creating different barriers (Nicoletti 2022).



FOCUSES AND METHODS

POLICY ANALYSIS

- Local and Regional
- Housing
- Healthcare
- Social Services

[Homelessness as a 'wicked problem'] (Parsell, 2017)



FIELD WORK

- Observing services (public and private)
- Semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries and workers on the field

