

# MEASURING HOMELESSNESS IN GERMANY – THE NEW NATIONAL APPROACHES

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# FIRST ROBUST NATIONAL DATA ON „SHELTERED HOMELESSNESS“ IN GERMANY – POINT IN TIME, END OF JANUARY 2022

- 🔄 German Government has been obliged by a new act in 2020 to collect data on sheltered homelessness for the night of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022, and then each year for the same date.
- 🔄 National office of statistics (DESTATIS) collects data from all municipalities.
- 🔄 Responsible reporting agencies are municipalities.
  - ▶ May either collect data from NGO services for homeless people and add to their own data of homeless people in temporary accommodation or...
  - ▶ ...oblige NGO services to report data directly to DESTATIS.
  - ▶ Fines can be imposed for non reporting
- 🔄 Individual data for every household and every person are asked for.

# FIRST ROBUST NATIONAL DATA ON „SHELTERED HOMELESSNESS“ IN GERMANY – POINT IN TIME, END OF JANUARY 2022

- 📌 DESTATIS data includes homeless persons accommodated by municipalities or NGOs in night shelters, hostels, hotels, supported accommodation (without rental contract) etc.
  - ▶ Refugees with international protection included to large extent (but not completely)
  - ▶ Women in refuges for victims of domestic violence are (yet) excluded
- 📌 Mid July 2022 DESTATIS published results of data collected from 5 007 municipal agencies and from 187 NGOs.
- 📌 Detailed data for every city and every district publicly available
  - ▶ <https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online?operation=previous&levelindex=0&step=0&titel=Statistik+%28Tabellen%29&levelid=1663294760047&acceptscookies=false#abreadcrumb>

# RESULTS CONCERNING „SHELTERED HOMELESSNESS“

- 📌 All municipalities reported data, 100 % return
- 📌 Data of some NGOs may have been omitted; data for refugees incomplete
- 📌 Relatively good quality of data; plausible for many cities and most regional states
- 📌 2023 data probably not yet comparable, trends will probably be observable from 2024 onwards
- 📌 Plans to improve coverage of refugees, no decision yet about coverage of persons from refuges for victims of domestic violence

# RESULTS CONCERNING „SHELTERED HOMELESSNESS“

- 📌 178 000 persons were reported to have been sheltered all over Germany 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022
- 📌 62 % men and 37 % women (1 % sex „unknown“)
- 📌 74 000 (41 % of all persons) were single, 59 000 persons (33 %) living in couples with children, 23 000 persons (13 %) single parents with children (including those children), 4 500 persons (3 %) living as childless couples, 18 000 (10 %) living in „other“ households
- 📌 37 % younger than 25, 5 % aged 65 and older
- 📌 31 % German, 64 % (!! ) foreign nationality (5 % unknown)
- 📌 Large differences according to size of cities:
  - ▶ Large cities (>500 000 inhabitants): 11.4 homeless persons per 10 000 inhabitants
  - ▶ Medium sized cities (50 000-100 000): 3.6 homeless persons per 10 000 inhabitants
  - ▶ Small cities or towns (<20 000 inhab.): 1.1 homeless persons per 10 000 inhabitants

# DIFFERENT PROCESS CONCERNING „UNSHELTERED AND HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS“

- 📌 The Act from 2020 (WoBerichtsG) stipulates in section 8:
  - ▶ (1) National government takes measures to ensure the collection of information and analysis regarding the extent and structure of homelessness exceeding the coverage of national statistics about occupied temporary accommodation according to section 3.2 of the Act
  - ▶ (2) The Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs shall publish bi-annually a report about the results regarding (1), for the first time in 2022
  - ▶ **(3) The report regarding (2) will focus specifically on homeless persons who**
    - 1. live temporarily in conventional housing , without that being their usual residence, or
    - 2. who are roofless / sleeping rough.
- 📌 A consortium of GISS, Bremen and Kantar has been commissioned with a survey on the extent of these two groups and some further details
- 📌 GISS has been commissioned with a feasibility study concerning the coverage of additional groups included in ETHOS LIGHT and alternative methods of measuring homelessness in Germany

# DIFFERENT PROCESS CONCERNING „UNSHELTERED AND HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS“

- Most convincing approach: users of wide range of services
  - ▶ Hypothesis: Surviving in Germany without service support is very difficult. And most persons of the target group use some of the services available (especially low threshold services and not only those targeting homeless people)
  - ▶ Survey covers all contact options and services: Advice centers for homeless persons, street work, jobcenters, mental health services, addiction services, migration services, services for EU citizens, for young people, area based services etc.
- Survey conducted in the week following 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022
  - ▶ Using individual questionnaires to be completed by homeless persons from the two target groups (with help of service staff if needed)
  - ▶ Framework for questions was set partly by WoBerichtsG: age, sex, nationality, household structure, duration of homelessness
  - ▶ Some additional questions were added: health, handicaps, experience of violence, prevention, reasons for not using accommodation-based services, access to drinking water

# DIFFERENT PROCESS CONCERNING „UNSHELTERED AND HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS“

## Definition used:

- ▶ Homeless people without any (institutional) accommodation: people who spent at least one of the last 7 nights at the time of the survey (1-7 Feb 2022) on the street or in makeshift accommodation (e.g., under bridges, in house entrances, basements, demolished houses, wrecked cars, tents, or parks).
- ▶ Hidden homeless people: people who were neither institutionally housed nor street homeless for at least one of the last 7 nights at the time of the survey (1-7 Feb 2022), and who, due to the emergency, do not have a secure (rental or own) home, and who have temporarily sought refuge with friends or family members without having their permanent residence there.



# SAMPLING

- 🚫 Full survey not feasible and methodologically not advisable
- 🚫 Survey of a sample of homeless people, the results are extrapolated to the population of all homeless people based on inference criteria
  - ▶ Sampling frame covers all homeless people in Germany
  - ▶ Random selection with a chance to be drawn for all homeless people of the target group
  - ▶ Weighting and extrapolation factors based on selection and nonresponse probabilities
- 🚫 No direct selection of homeless people due to the lack of a central register or any other source
  - ▶ 3-stage sampling: 1) municipalities, 2) institutions, 3) homeless people
  - ▶ Assumption: Most homeless people are in contact with institutions
  - ▶ Examples of „coverage error“: a) unreported cases (without contact to institutions) and b) duplicate cases (with multiple contacts to institutions)

# RESULTS FOR „UNSHELTERED AND HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS“

- 📌 Unfortunately report is not yet published
- 📌 Will be available from next Monday (26 September) onwards
- 📌 This presentation will be updated with recent results after release of the two studies
- 📌 Won't be a spoiler to reveal that the survey found about 87 000 homeless persons of both target groups together
  - ▶ around 57 % of which were hidden homeless persons and
  - ▶ around 43 % were people living on the street or in some sort of makeshift shelter
  - ▶ Around 8 800 slept in institutional accommodation in the night of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022
- 📌 Again large differences according to size of cities, but differing between target groups:
  - ▶ Large cities (>500 000 inhabitants):
    - 44 % of street homeless persons
    - 26 % of hidden homeless persons
  - ▶ Small and middle sized cities or towns (<1000 000 inhabitants):
    - 27 % of street homeless persons
    - 42 % of hidden homeless persons

# IMPORTANT RESULTS OF FEASIBILITY STUDY

- Better coverage of refugees in national statistics of sheltered homeless people (DESTATIS)
- Recommendation to include persons of refuges for victims of domestic violence in DESTATIS national data collection
- People, who stay longer than needed in institutions (prisons, clinics), because they have no home to be released to, too difficult to count
- Individual personal numbers and fictive addresses may offer new opportunities in the future
- Survey on street homelessness and hidden homelessness has for the first time in Germany (if not in Europe) produced a reliable NATIONAL estimate based on a robust empirical basis
- Should be repeated with some minor improvements bi-annually

# SUMMING UP

- 📌 For the first time reliable data are available on a national scale for sheltered and unsheltered homelessness and the extent and structure of the people affected
- 📌 Point in time respective one week measurement with all the pros and cons
- 📌 Shortcoming of the estimate: no local data, only national
  - ▶ but national data better than anywhere else in Europe
- 📌 Taken together around 26 000 or (taking some under-coverage into consideration) under 300 000 persons have been found in one day/one week to be homeless in Germany
- 📌 Less than high estimates by pressure groups, but more concerning the people without institutional accommodation
- 📌 Ending homelessness in Germany by 2030 is a feasible task!!

Ending homelessness in Germany  
by 2030 is a feasible task

**THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION**



# CONTACT

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