

Seminar 1: Homelessness in Times of COVID-19 (Floor -1, Room 7)

Chair: **Masa Filipovic-Hrast, SI**

Joan Uribe, ES: Homelessness, Pandemic and Public Policies. Impact on Quality of Life, Expectations for the Future and... Missed Learnings?



Joan Uribe is doctor in Social Anthropology by the Universitat de Barcelona, in which he is Associated Professor. Too, member of the Research Group in Control and Social Exclusion (GRECS). He has several researches and publications on homelessness, social services systems, and is currently developing a research on rough sleeping people. With a long professional trajectory on managing social services on NGO's sector and too on public administration. His areas of specialization are: homelessness, children at risk, young people at risk, people with disabilities, and some other vulnerable collectives.

Based on the European, Spanish and Barcelona city context, it's purposed to analyze how the public authorities reacted to support homeless people in the face of the emergency generated by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, through of policies oriented to their survival and based on the guidelines designed by the logic of public health. In a period of approximately two years -2020 and 2021-, and despite the differences in approach depending on where it is contextualized, policies aimed at protecting these people were generated, although some added risks too, while opportunities were opened of improvement that do not seem to have been exploited, or that have been exploited on a very small scale. The aim is to offer a balance between the new logics –and opportunities– implemented on the pandemic in relation with the final discard of many of those, to focus which are the expectations for the early future.

Roberta Bova, IT: The Homeless Population during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Inequities, Practices of Social Resilience and Social Reintegration Strategies



Roberta Bova holds a PhD in International Cooperation. Roberta Bova has been a research fellow in Sociology at the University of Bergamo (IT); her main interests are welfare studies and the role of culture in health and migration. Roberta Bova is currently involved in a number of applied research projects, examining the impact of social interactions in health, assessing vulnerability and the support politics for homeless people.

This presentation analyses the amplification of social insecurity and the social misrecognition of the homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research was carried out in the city of Bergamo (IT) and was developed in two phases. The first phase was conducted in the months of May-September 2020. I carried out 18 discursive interviews with the socio-educational staff and the coordination figures who work in the support services and reception facilities for the homeless. The second phase of the research was conducted in the months spanning January-September 2021 and I carried out 12 interviews with homeless people who are participating in social reintegration programmes.

The survey shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the social insecurity of homeless people. During the first months of 2020, the public authorities failed to pay attention to homeless people, both those who sleep on the street and those who lived in communities or found support in a night shelters. The support services, faced with this process of social misrecognition, reacted by activating practices of social resilience; for instance, personalisation of the intervention, enhancement of the relational dimension and empowerment of users.

At the same time, from directly conversing with homeless people engaged in building paths of autonomy and social reintegration, it emerges that obtaining a stable residence and re-establishing bounds with one's family and friends network are fundamental prerequisites for promoting self-confidence and increasing well-being. However, in order to achieve full social reintegration and to prevent new forms of social misrecognition, in the event of future social or health crises, the relationship with a non-stigmatised social community is fundamental. Consequently, the primary objectives that the support network for homeless people should set



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for future projects should be to involve the local community through project participation activities and raising awareness of the phenomenon of poverty.

2