

## Seminar 5: Homelessness Research in Switzerland (Floor -2, Room 11)

Chair: **Eoin O'Sullivan, IE**

**Jörg Dittmann, CH:** Extent, Profile, and Explanation of Homelessness in Eight of Switzerland's Largest Cities



*Jörg Dittmann is a professor at the School of Social Work FHNW. He researches and teaches about poverty and social planning.*

This study aims to fill a gap in the discussion of homelessness and to determine the extent and structure of homelessness in Switzerland. In the study, 543 homeless people were interviewed (face to face) in 8 cities. The projections come to a number of up to 2740 homeless people on an average day in December 2020 in Switzerland. The results confirm that the internationally discussed poverty- and migration-related approaches to the topic of homelessness are also significant for Switzerland. Health problems, medical care and addiction are important both for describing and explaining homelessness, but they do not prove to be the dominant factor. The high proportion of 61% of all homeless people who do not have valid residence papers draws attention to the need to link homelessness more closely to the issues of migration and residence rights.

**Matthias Drilling, CH:** Geography Matters: Results of a Quantitative Survey on Cantonal and Municipal Policies to Combat Homelessness



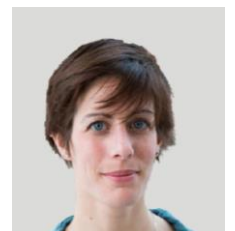
*Matthias Drilling is a professor at the School of Social Work FHNW. He is a Social Geographer and Spatial Planner. He has been researching and teaching about poverty in the context of cities for years, and supports communities in spatial and urban development.*

The project examines the understanding of homelessness, the policies derived from it as well as the strategies to combat homelessness at the level of cantons and municipalities. Examples will be used to show how cantonal and/or communal homelessness assistance is structured and how the policy fields (housing, social affairs, health, etc.) are interrelated. The study is based on a quantitative face-to-face survey of people aged 18 and over in eight of the largest cities in Switzerland. A total of 1,182 people were surveyed. Of these, 543 people, or 45.9% of all respondents, were homeless at the time of the survey.

**Sabrina Roduit and Zsolt Temesváry, CH:** Vulnerabilities and Resources of Central and Eastern European Homeless People Living in Geneva and Zurich



Zsolt Temesváry is a senior lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland. He completed his PhD in social policy in Hungary and was qualified as a professional of urban poverty and mental health in Germany. His primary research areas are migration and homelessness, and the development of social work in Eastern Europe.



Sabrina Roduit is scientific collaborator at the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland and coordinator of the Doctoral Programme for the Centre LIVES at the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne. She has completed her PhD in sociology in Geneva. Her main research areas are social inequalities in health, homelessness, life course and vulnerability, and HIV/aids.

The research project "Routes into Destitution" aims at exploring the vulnerabilities and resources of mobile destitute Central and Eastern European citizens living in the Swiss cities of Geneva and Zurich. In doing so, the project applies a mixed methodology including narrative-biographical interviews and a supplementary quantitative survey. The recent study fulfils an important gap in



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Swiss homelessness studies because CEE citizens are significantly overrepresented in the foreign homeless population based on the latest city counts. Currently one-fourth of all non-Swiss homeless people originate from the CEE region and their social status is significantly worse compared to other destitute EU-migrants. The CEE homeless experience accumulated vulnerabilities during their life-courses in the areas of housing, employment, healthcare and social rights. In the absence of housing and work contracts they do not have access to a Swiss residence permit, consequently they are not eligible on the vast majority of social and medical services. The research study reflects on the heterogeneity of CEE homeless people based on their various resources and vulnerabilities such as the level of education, type of activities, migration experiences, social networks, and language skills. Furthermore, the study provides a special focus on destitute Roma homeless migrants whose vulnerabilities (including ethnicity-based discrimination) are extraordinarily severe compared to other CEE homeless migrants. The project aims at providing useful information for welfare policies and services and supports evidence-based decision making in Switzerland.