

Seminar 13: Homelessness in Italy (Floor -1, Room 9)

Chair: **Stefano Tomelleri, IT**

Teresa Consoli and Antonella Meo, IT: Homelessness in Italy: Analysis, Data and Latest Policies



Teresa Consoli is Associate professor in Sociology of Law at the University of Catania. She is member of the scientific Committee of the Italian federation of services for homeless people (FioPSD) and monitored the first experimental implementation phase of Housing first in Italy, 2016 (https://www.feantsaresearch.org/download/10-1_article_46549812314095159059.pdf). Her main research interests are oriented towards poverty, migration, inclusion and exclusions processes and the normative dimension of welfare systems.

Antonella Meo is Associate professor in Sociology at the University of Turin, Italy. She is member of the scientific Committee of the Italian federation of services for homeless people (FioPSD). Her main research interests include social vulnerability and inequality dynamics, poverty and social exclusion, social policies and local welfare.



Homelessness in Italy is recently facing a growing political and social attention. Since the approval of the Guidelines for severe adult marginality in 2015 by the Italian Minister of Labor and Social Policy, more services have been offered on the ground and spread awareness is perceived by all actors involved in enhancing the conditions of the life of homeless people. Furthermore, some European funds have been specifically oriented towards homelessness (Avviso 4/2016, PON Inclusion) and others will be devoted only to increasing the services for this vulnerable population.

How these recent interventions are contributing to a better understanding of the condition for falling or not into homeless in Italy? Which kind of analytical and methodological approach is characterizing the policies actually financed and locally implemented? Which directions are following Italian policies towards homelessness?

Lessons to be shared from all recent publications (ie. M. Allen, L. Benjaminsen, E. O'Sullivan, N. Pleace, 2020) are strongly underlying the necessity of a deeper understanding of the causes of homelessness in national contexts, as well as to the availability of data while, on the other hand, strongly support the offer of preventive service and of skilled public servants to be implemented in a long-term strategy alongside the supply of affordable public housing.

The paper would try to describe how the implemented policies in Italy are pursuing, among others, also these two different aims: a re-conceptualisation of the term of the debate and the definition of preventive policies through skilled professionals. Is it actually the case in Italy? An analysis of the latest policies and service provision will be offered for the discussion.

Daniela Leonardi, IT: Homelessness since Covid: An Opportunity to Re-imagine Policies?



*Daniela Leonardi holds a PhD in Applied Sociology and Methodology of Social Research, and is a Postdoc Researcher at the University of Parma, Italy. She is a member of the Scientific Committee of the Italian Federation of Services for Homeless People (FioPSD). Her research interests concern poverty and social exclusion, public policy analysis, street-level bureaucracy theory, homelessness and welfare systems. Her most recent publication on homelessness is Leonardi, D. and Stefani, S. (2021), *The pandemic and homeless people in the Turin area: the level of housing adequacy shapes experiences and well-being*, in «Housing, Care and Support», Vol. 24 No. 3/4, pp. 93-104. doi: 10.1108/HCS-03-2021-0006.*



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Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, homeless people have had unprecedented visibility in empty cities. For this population, life under the pandemic has been even more difficult but, at the same time, the pandemic has been an opportunity to rethink policies, to implement Housing First projects and to change the organisation of shelters.

This contribution aims to explore a case study in which the condition of people experiencing homelessness was analysed starting from the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in five territorial areas around Turin, in Northern Italy. The author was in charge of monitoring the implementation of Avviso 4/2016, a call on European funds that allowed 5 territorial areas in Piedmont to implement Housing First projects. Starting from the implementation of Avviso 4/2016, the effects of the pandemic in the local reception of homeless people will be analysed.

The empirical data consists of in-depth interviews with social workers, social service managers, local politicians and former homeless persons now living in Housing First accommodations. The interviews were collected during the first wave of the pandemic in Italy and a follow-up was conducted after one year.

According to the results, Housing First projects emerged as inclusive and safe spaces that empower people in their own lives. The case study provides empirical insights to recognise, at policy and organisational levels, the importance of Housing as a measure of individual and collective security, calling for intervention to address homelessness in terms of housing policies rather than exclusively social and emergency treatment.