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European Observatory on Homelessness

BMSZKI
Budapesti Módszertani
Szociális Központ és Intézményei

Seminar 13: Data Collection Methodologies III (Room: TBD) - Chair: **Lars Benjaminsen, DK**

Nana Mertens, Evelien Demaerschalk, Koen Hermans, BE: Second Round of Point-in-Time Homelessness Counts in Belgium

To provide local and regional governments with data and tools for their policy and approach to homelessness, LUCAS KU Leuven developed a methodology for conducting an extensive service-based homelessness count. This point-in-time count is a ten-month process and entails close collaboration with local services who have (in)direct contact with people experiencing homelessness. Between 2020 and 2023, a total of 14 point-in-time counts were conducted in various cities and regions across Flanders, along with 10 point-in-time counts in Wallonia.

In October 2023, the first reiterations of the extensive service-based counts were conducted in Flanders, specifically in the cities of Ghent and Leuven. We present the figures for both cities for the years 2020 and 2023, with a more detailed analysis of the main changes observed in both cities. Furthermore, we will outline the main lessons learned on the organization of the second count.

Nana Mertens is a researcher at LUCAS, Center for Care Research and Consultancy, KU Leuven. She works on the research topics of care and support for vulnerable and underserved populations in society. In recent years, she has focused on the development and organization of local and regional homelessness counts in Belgium and Europe.

Evelien Demaerschalk is a researcher at LUCAS, Center for Care Research and Consultancy. Her work focusses on the care and support for vulnerable and underserved populations in society. Currently she is involved in the development and organization of local and regional homelessness counts in Belgium and Europe.

Koen Hermans, Belgium is Associate Professor of Social Work and Social Policy at the Centre for Sociological Research, KU Leuven. He is also project leader at LUCAS, Centre for Care Research and Consultancy. His research focuses on the care and support for vulnerable and underserved populations in society, such as homeless persons, persons with disability and youngsters with complex needs. He was the coordinator of the COST Action on 'Measuring homelessness in Europe' (2016-2020). In Belgium, he is responsible for the development and organization of local and regional homelessness counts.

Sarah Coupechoux, FR: Data Collection Methods on Homelessness in France: A Comparative Analysis Between Two Different Methodologies

For years in France, associations and the research community have deplored the lack of reliable, up-to-date statistics on the issue of homelessness. The next survey on homelessness by Insee (the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies) is scheduled for 2025. This third edition of the survey is eagerly awaited, to give a more accurate idea of the scale of the phenomenon at the national level, since the last one dates back to 2012, and the population concerned has at least doubled, according to figures from the Fondation Abbé Pierre. The survey will also provide data that will enable us to better understand the social trajectories and care pathways of individuals without a personal home. At the same time, to make up for the lack of figures needed to guide public authorities' action, France's major cities are implementing protocols to count the amount of homeless, starting with Paris, which launched the first one in 2017 and repeats it every year. These two methodologies for producing figures on the number of homeless and roofless people raise a series of questions that we propose to answer in this contribution: how are these surveys organized? What is their particularity in terms of knowledge production? What issues do they address beyond counting? What are their limits in terms of scope and temporality? How have they evolved over time to adapt to changes in the population concerned? What blind spots can be identified? How do they complement each other? Finally, how are they used by decision-makers?