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# Migration and Homelessness: Measuring the Intersections

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➤ **Abstract\_** *Given the growing superdiversity of European societies, more detailed data on migrant homelessness are needed. Measuring and monitoring the intersections between migration and homelessness needs a fundamental reflection and operationalisation of this diversity. In this contribution, we firstly look into the available evidence produced by (members of) the European Observatory on Homelessness (EOH) on the ways the relationship between homelessness and migration have been measured, given the important role of the EOH in bringing together the available statistics on homelessness in the EU. Secondly, we analyse the way migrant homelessness is measured in Norway, Austria, Belgium and Sweden, all relatively affluent mature welfare states, mainly receiving countries of migration. We describe which types of migrants are studied and we analyse the research designs and the specific instruments to measure migrant background. This paper shows the growing awareness of migration as a new structural factor causing homelessness, next to more traditional structural factors such as the housing market and the social welfare system. Our contribution shows that a fundamental debate is needed about the way homelessness statistics include and exclude specific groups of homeless persons.*

➤ **Keywords\_** *migration, measuring homelessness, exclusion from official statistics*

## Introduction

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Persons experiencing homelessness are believed to have complex needs, such as enduring psychiatric vulnerability and alcohol and drug abuse (see for instance Pleace, 2016; Pleace and Hermans, in this issue). During the last 20 years, a more structural approach is applied to understand and explain homelessness (Pleace, 2016). Instead of focusing on individual characteristics and behaviour, macro-level factors are identified as causes and drivers of homelessness. These factors include housing market characteristics (such as increasing rent costs, lack of affordable housing, lack of access to housing for specific groups) and weakening social security nets (caused by austerity measures and a shift to conditionality) (Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2018). This structural approach also points to institutional factors that complicate exiting from homelessness (such as the exclusion criteria of some services or the lack of support in case of hospital discharge). Migration was considered as a 'new' structural risk factor for homelessness by the European Observatory on Homelessness in the preparation for the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness in 2010.

Migration is a very complex societal process, however, and migration scholars such as Vertovec (2007) use the notion of superdiversity to grasp the complex qualitative and quantitative changes in migration patterns. Wessendorf (2014, p.2) considers superdiversity as a lens to describe "an exceptional demographic situation characterised by the multiplication of social categories within specific localities". Superdiversity refers to the enormous demographic changes across the world as a consequence of new migration patterns after the end of the Cold War. Until the mid-nineties, migration patterns were relatively stable and predictable, leading to specific migrant groups in different countries (often linked to decolonisation processes and specific influxes of labour migrants). As a consequence of wars and disasters, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the development of new communication technologies, many new migration patterns, and a diversification of diversity is observed.

Superdiversity has a quantitative and a qualitative dimension. The first refers to a pronounced increase of the presence of migrants and people with a migrant background, especially in (larger) European cities. The second refers to the growing diversification of diversity, in terms of ethnicities, languages, religions and legal status (residents, refugees, asylum-seekers, informal labour migrants, students, family reunion, irregular migrants). Vertovec (2007) emphasises the additional aspects of migration and legal status, which are more crucial to migrants nowadays than the "traditional" dimensions (such as country of origin, language, ethnicity and religion). These dimensions determine the legal status, and are crucial for the length of the stay, degree of autonomy (regarding employment, social rights) and access to public services and resources. Favell's (2008) notion of circular migration points

to the trend of temporal migration, particularly within the EU/EEA area. It involves people seeking work abroad without the intention of long-term settlement or naturalisation. Favell (2008) characterised the East-European migrants as 'free movers, not immigrants', who move temporarily to other places because of the better economic circumstances. Favell also contrasts the new trends with more traditional forms of migration. New patterns include network migration, where family reunion is one important channel. However, the mobility of single men including both workers from East Europe and refugees/asylum seekers is also increasing (Favell, 2008). Gottlieb *et al.* (2019) refer to the diversity of migration flows as "Mixed Migration". "Mixed flows" have been defined as "complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants". Unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, smuggled persons, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others, may also form part of a mixed flow (OSCE/ODIHR, 2018).

At the level of the EU, internal migration flows are shaped within the context of the regulations on European citizens, who are allowed freedom of movement within the EU. This right to freedom of movement is guaranteed by Article 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) and a most important element constituting a European Union. Together with the still persisting inequality concerning economies and resources among EU Member States, this freedom of movement predominately fosters migration from poor to rich EU Member States. Cheap labour is migrating from for example, Romania and Bulgaria to the rich EU Member States and these migrants are working in the labour market for low skilled workers in construction, agriculture, and care of the elderly. Many also work in the grey economy, where workers are denied social benefits and work under precarious conditions. EU migrants from poor EU Member States often are registered among the clients of NGO services for the poor, seeking shelter, food, and basic health care. For example, the 2019 Observatory Report published by Médecins du Monde shows that among the 16 per cent clientele from EU countries who were seen in MdM clinics in seven countries in Europe in 2017 and 2018, 70 per cent of those clients is from Bulgaria and Romania (Médecins du Monde, 2019). Studies in the field of health care focusing on health and migration show that homelessness is a common and relevant issue in vulnerable migrant populations (Trummer *et al.*, 2016).

Superdiversity also challenges the conceptualisation of citizenship. Citizenship came to be associated with three key values: belonging, rights and participation (Bellamy, 2008). First, citizenship involved belonging to the national community. Second, citizenship was linked to rights; individuals being treated as equals, possessing certain rights by virtue of their humanity – including social and economic rights. Finally, citizenship involved the capacity, entitlement and obligation to participate as a full and equal member within the economy and the political system.

These three values reinforced each other and resulted in a strong connection between belonging and (access to) rights. In other words, legal rights were accessible for the so-called 'birthright citizens' (Isin, 2012). As stated by Turner (2016, p.681), citizenship is an exclusive right that draws clear boundaries between insiders and outsiders in terms of access to rights. The basic tension in the modern history of citizenship is that it is normatively justified in seeking to close its borders against strangers in the interests of the security of the members of a citizenship community. Although many have questioned the relationship between territory and democracy, rights of access and residence remain fundamentally linked in an era of globalisation. Turner refers to 'type 1 denizens', namely a group of people permanently resident in a foreign country, but only enjoying limited, partial or even no rights of citizenship.

Given these various migration patterns, the growing superdiversity of European societies and the growth of type 1 denizens, more detailed data on migrant homelessness are needed. Measuring and monitoring the intersections between migration and homelessness needs a fundamental reflection about the operationalisation instruments to measure this diversity.

In this contribution, we firstly look into the available evidence produced by (members of) the European Observatory on Homelessness (EOH) on the ways intersections between homelessness and migration have been measured, given the important role of the EOH in bringing together the available statistics on homelessness in the EU. Secondly, we analyse the way migrant homelessness is measured in Norway, Austria, Belgium and Sweden. We choose these countries for four reasons, as shown in Table 1. First, these are all relatively affluent mature welfare states, mainly receiving countries of migration. Second, they all score above the European mean on the Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015 that reflects the migrants' opportunities to participate in society. The Index includes the migrant population with citizenship or residence permit. Third, in these countries, irregular migrants are allowed to make use of some very limited support in Sweden, Belgium and Norway (mainly specific low threshold services to meet their most basic humanitarian needs), while in Austria, they have no access to social services. Fourth, we select these four countries, since each highlight various challenging aspects of measuring migrant homelessness. We describe which types of migrants are studied and we analyse the research designs and the specific instruments to measure migrant background. Based on both parts of the paper, we formulate some recommendations to measure the intersections between migration and homelessness.

**Table 1. Migration indicators of the selected four countries**

|         | % foreign <sup>1</sup><br>pop 2005 | % foreign<br>pop 2018 | % foreign<br>born <sup>2</sup> 2005 | % foreign<br>born 2018 | Estimates of irregular<br>migrant population <sup>3</sup><br>2015 | MIPEX<br>2015 <sup>4</sup> |
|---------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Belgium | 8.3                                | 12.1                  | 11.7                                | 16.8                   | 88000-132000  | 67                         |
| Norway  | 4.6                                | 10.6                  | 7.9                                 | 15.3                   | 10500-32000   | 69                         |
| Sweden  | 5.3                                | 8.9                   | 12.2                                | 18.8                   | 8000-12000  | 78                         |
| Austria | 9.4                                | 15.9                  | 14.1                                | 19.4                   | 18000-54000   | 50                         |

Source: OECD (2019); OECD (2018) and MIPEX (2015)

## **Growing Awareness about Migration as a New Structural Driver**

Since the beginning of the 2000s, there is a growing awareness about the structural effects of migration processes on homelessness. Also, the ETHOS-typology, developed in 2004 and the Mphasis study on measuring homelessness, take into account aspects of migration. The European Consensus Conference also established that homeless services are increasingly confronted with different types of migrants. Also, each comparative study by the EOH after 2010 presented some evidence on how migration is affecting the extent and profile of homelessness. In this part, we look into the work of the European Observatory on Homelessness (EOH), given its important role in bringing together the available statistics on homelessness in the EU.

### ***Before the European Consensus Conference***

For the first time the problem of migrant homelessness was raised in 'Homeless in Europe', the FEANTSA magazine, in 2002 as a result of the European conference on this issue. The conclusion was that there is a severe lack of accurate and precise quantitative and qualitative data on homelessness amongst immigrants. In addition, migrant homelessness seemed to be underestimated and was considered mainly an urban phenomenon, since urban areas offer more employment opportunities and easier access to support services like advice centres, counselling, and

<sup>1</sup> The foreign population consists of people who still have the nationality of their home country. It may include people born in the host country.

<sup>2</sup> The foreign-born population covers all people who have ever migrated from their country of birth to their current country of residence. The foreign-born population data shown here include people born abroad as nationals of their current country of residence.

<sup>3</sup> Migration Outlook 2018

<sup>4</sup> The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a unique tool which measures policies to integrate migrants in all EU Member States, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA. 167 policy indicators have been developed to create a rich, multi-dimensional picture of migrants' opportunities to participate in society. The index is a useful tool to evaluate and compare what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants in all the countries analysed.

language courses. The little available evidence showed that single men aged 20-50 make up most of the homeless immigrant population, although homeless services have also seen a sharp rise in immigrant families and unaccompanied minors. Immigrant women were also acutely at risk of homelessness and were the largest group in centres for abused women or female victims of domestic violence.

In 2004, the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion was launched. This typology is meant to classify living situations, and is based on the three domains of home (physical, legal, social). In ETHOS, there is one category that explicitly refers to centres for migrants, namely category 5 'people staying in institutions for immigrants'. In 2007, ETHOS Light was introduced by the EOH, as a statistical instrument to measure homelessness. This is a version of the ETHOS typology developed in the context of a 2007 European Commission study: Measurement of Homelessness at European Union Level (Edgar *et al.*, 2007). ETHOS Light focuses on homelessness (and not housing exclusion) and distinguishes between 6 living situations. Remarkably, staying temporarily with friends and non-conventional housing (such as garages, garden houses) are considered a form of homelessness, but specific reception centres for immigrants (meant for refugees and asylum seekers) are not anymore mentioned as part of category 3 ('people living in accommodation for the homeless'). In other words, although in that period migration was regarded as an important new phenomenon that influences homelessness, it was dropped from ETHOS Light.

The MPHASIS<sup>5</sup>-study (Edgar and Marlier, 2009), the aim of which was to develop a common set of variables to monitor homelessness, named three specific variables that are related to migration and need to be included in homelessness statistics: nationality, country of birth and the reason for homelessness. However, the core set doesn't mention legal status. In addition accommodation services for migrants are not mentioned as the last accommodation before becoming homeless. The MPHASIS-study is still one of the main European efforts to develop a common measurement strategy and it is rather surprising that 'permit of stay' is not mentioned as a core variable, given that this variable is needed to track down which policy departments are responsible to find a solution for the specific situation and to explore to which social support the homeless person is assigned to.

### ***The European Consensus Conference in 2010***

The European Consensus Conference in 2010 was a milestone in understanding homelessness and in developing a common approach to fight homelessness in Europe. As a starting point for the conference, an academic state of the art '*Homelessness and Homelessness Policies in Europe: Lessons from Research*'

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<sup>5</sup> Mutual Progress on Homelessness through Advancing and Strengthening Information Systems

(Busch-Geertsema *et al.*, 2010) was carried out to summarise the available scientific evidence on homelessness. In this report, migration is identified as a new structural driver or risk factor of homelessness, referring to the way that societal trends and more specifically migration patterns, demographical and labour market trends and the geographically unequal economic development are changing homelessness fundamentally. More specifically, the literature review points to the differences in migrant homelessness between North and South Europe but also points to the situation of roofless and destitute migrants from East-European countries. In addition, refused asylum seekers and irregular migrants were recognised as a growing problem in most West-European countries. Their access to services for the homeless is described as limited. At the same time, the study stresses the need for a dynamic approach, paying attention to the interactions between structural, institutional and personal risk factors contributing to the inflow into homelessness.

The jury of the European Consensus Conference that was responsible for the formulation of the policy recommendations of the conference, pointed to the intersection between homelessness policies and migration policies. In the opinion of the jury, homeless services should not be used to systematically compensate for inconsistent migration policies that lead people to situations of destitution and homelessness. Migration policies have a responsibility to prevent migrants from entering homelessness. However, the jury also emphasises that access to homeless services must not be systematically used as a means to regulate migration. Specifically, homeless service providers should not be penalised for providing services to people presenting in need. The jury also pleaded for more research about the relationship between migration and homelessness. This rather ambiguous conclusion led to an ongoing debate in the field of homelessness services about the access to services of different groups of homeless migrants, especially those denizens with less legal and social rights.

### ***After the Consensus Conference***

Pleace (2010) aimed to update and critically assess FEANTSA's work on migrant homelessness. He points to the lack of valid and reliable data on migrant homelessness, but also the varying legal and conceptual definitions of who a migrant is. This is especially important since undocumented migrants tend to conceal themselves for fear of repatriation. Based on a review of the available evidence, Pleace (2010) distinguished five types of migrants in relation to homelessness: (1) asylum seekers and refugees, (2) failed asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, (3) women and children from outside the EU who lose their immigration status when escaping domestic violence, (4) homelessness among A-10 migrant workers (a person from the A10 countries that joined the EU in May 2004, including Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), and (5)

ethnic and cultural minorities who are not recent migrants. Pleace (2010) pleaded for EU-wide monitoring or surveys to understand the extent, nature and implications of migrant homelessness. More data were needed, particularly to ensure that the scale and nature of undocumented migrant and A-10 economic migrant homelessness is properly understood. However, no clear methodological guidelines concerning collection and operationalisation were supplied.

In 2014, the European Observatory on Homelessness published a new, extensive study on the extent and profile of homelessness in European Member States, based on country reports from experts (Busch-Geertsema *et al.*, 2014). In the part dealing with profile characteristics, the study brought together all relevant information on 'ethnic background' in the 10 Member States. Under this heading, different categorisations of migrant homelessness were discussed, such as undocumented migrants, persons with a foreign background, ethnic minorities, Roma people, persons with a foreign nationality and also 'Black British' and 'Asian British' homeless persons. This enumeration shows that migrant homelessness is operationalised very differently in the participating Member States. This operationalisation refers to different aspects of migrant homelessness, but also shows the lack of a common and uniform set of variables to measure migrant homelessness. Not only the operationalisation of ethnic background varies (what is counted), but the study also reveals different answers to the question 'who is counted'. This can be linked to data collection. In surveys, it is easier to gather relevant information on ethnic background than in administrative databases. But even in surveys, the study points to various practices. For instance, undocumented migrants do not appear in the Danish homelessness statistics, although separate estimates of homeless migrants are produced, while in Italy, the 2011 survey included undocumented migrants as part of the homeless population.

In 2016, a new study by the EOH focused on the consequences of the humanitarian crisis in 12 European Member States and distinguished between three subgroups, namely asylum applicants (those who have asked for asylum and are waiting to be assessed), refugees (in this report, this term is used to cover people granted international protection, including refugee status or subsidiary forms of protection that give them the right to remain in an EU Member State) and people whose asylum application has been refused. Based on the country reports, the report clarifies the various effects of the humanitarian crisis on services for homeless people. Concerning rejected asylum seekers, the study states that there are not many figures available and that they are often supported by faith-based organisations and citizen initiatives. Remarkably, this study concludes that the ETHOS typology of homelessness includes people in reception centres and other accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees as being homeless. The definition has been contested, as it makes no allowance for time. A refugee or asylum seeker, in such



a situation, may not be there for very long and may move straight into housing once they leave. Migrant populations are also not a group of people that governments are eager to count as 'homeless' and, by implication, in need of support, which might include being housed. The last comparative study by the EOH focused in 2017 on family homelessness and included numbers on migrant family homelessness, but in rather general terms (European Observatory on Homelessness, 2017).

## **Defining and Measuring Homelessness**

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Based on this review, three conclusions are made. First, with regard to the definition of homelessness, we notice an important change as a consequence of the introduction of ETHOS Light. While ETHOS specifically refers to accommodation for migrants as a specific living situation, ETHOS Light only speaks of temporary accommodation. ETHOS Light is developed for research purposes and practice because of its simplicity (see for instance Demaerschalk and Hermans, 2018), but its use in practice creates room for interpretation concerning the specific operationalisation of category 3. The same applies to the interpretation of category 4, namely are persons in reception centres for refugees also considered institutional leavers? Second, the Mphasis study, which is still considered an important milestone in the measurement of homelessness, does not include legal status as a specific variable. There is also no specific attention to refugees nor to specific minority groups (such as Roma). Third, in the relevant EOH studies that were produced after the Mphasis study, we note that many different categories are linked to migrant homelessness.

## **Measurement Issues in Four Countries**

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In this section, we explore how four different European countries are dealing with the measurement of (migrant) homelessness. Table 1 (above) shows that in the selected countries, the share of foreigners in the total populations has increased tremendously during the last 15 years, especially in Norway. The largest migrant group in Norway is Polish people, who also represent much of the fast increase after 2004 (Table 1). The Poles integrate well with Norwegian society (Søholt and Lynnebakke 2015), or they are part of the circular migration flow. Concerning irregular migrants, the high numbers in Belgium can be noticed, compared to the other three countries. With regard to Migration and Integration Policies Index, the four countries have a higher score than the European mean. The lower score of Austria can be mainly explained by the more difficult access to voting and to the naturalisation procedure. We not only selected these countries because of these general migration patterns, but also because they highlight various measurement issues.

## **Belgium**

Belgium is a very complex state, consisting of three regions, three communities and a federal state. The regions are responsible for housing policies, while social welfare services are steered by the communities. Social security is still a federal competence. In 2014, an intergovernmental agreement on the fight against homelessness was signed by all the policy actors of the federal state, the regions and the communities. This agreement pleads for an intergovernmental coordination of the measurement of homelessness based on the ETHOS typology. Since 2014, the different policy levels launched their own homelessness policies, but an intergovernmental coordination of the measurement of homelessness is still missing. The different policy regions have their own data collection methods, which leads to regional numbers, but these are not comparable on the national level. Demaerschalk *et al.* (2018) developed a common strategy to monitor homeless on the Belgian level, based on scientific evidence and the input of all stakeholders (policy makers, NGO and poverty organisations). The study pleads for the use of ETHOS Light as a guiding framework for data collection in Belgium. However, the study states that one specific method of data collection cannot give information about all the categories. The study recommends a combination of data collection methods, consisting of (1) a national count based on the Nordic model, (2) the exploitation of the administrative social security databases, (3) specific data collection on evictions and waiting lists for social housing, and (4) national statistics based on the affordability and quality of housing based on EU SILC. In 2020, the methodology of the count is operationalised in various cities throughout the country. In these city counts, information is gathered about the nationality, the country of birth and the permit of stay.

With regard to the available Belgian evidence, there are no specific studies on the relationship between migration and homelessness. The first Flemish homelessness count in 2014 was a service-based and questionnaire-based count following the Mphasis guidelines and focused on ETHOS 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 (Meys and Hermans, 2015). Sixteen per cent of the users of night shelters are persons who have no permit of stay. In addition, the focus groups with practitioners made clear that these night shelters use different accessibility criteria. In some shelters, persons without a permit to stay are refused. In the night shelters, almost half of the users do not have a Belgian or other European nationality. Long-term residential services and transitional housing programmes are not accessible for undocumented migrants. One half of the users of residential services and a third of the users of transitional housing programmes do not have a Belgian or other European nationality.

In Brussels, La Strada is responsible for the collection of data. Their data collection strategy consists of two instruments. On the one hand, they organise a two-yearly city count. On the other hand, they have developed a procedure for a unique client identification to link data from different services. The last count of 2018 showed

that a new citizen initiative BXL refugees (Burgerinitiatief) housed 685 persons. They did so in large centres (350 persons in Porte d'Ulysse and Haren), other smaller collective centres (87 persons) and in family homes (248 persons) (Quittelier, 2019). Three hundred and thirty-three persons were counted in negotiated occupations (squatting based on a special agreement with the public services). This is considered a housing 'solution' for undocumented migrants; living in such an accommodation often free or at a very low price. In 2016, 587 persons were counted in squats, 165 more than in 2014 even though several large squats had been closed. The number dropped again in 2018 because of the citizen initiative. The new anti-squat law from 2017 led to a shift from squats to negotiated occupations. The Brussels centres for asylum seekers (Fedasil, Caritas, Leger des Heils, Minor nDako, Samusocial) were only included in the two last counts in 2016 and in 2017. In 2018, La Strada reports the public institutions for asylum seekers do not regard the persons they shelter as homeless. The Brussels count is a combination of a street count and specific data collection in cooperation with specific services. The street count is organised on a specific evening and is mainly a head count. As a consequence, less information on migration issues is collected.

The methodological strength of the Brussels count is that they demonstrate trends concerning category 1 and 2 of ETHOS. In addition, the Brussels count has a strong tradition to also grasp those living in squats (category 8 in ETHOS / category 6 of ETHOS Light). But this is only possible if the methodology remains standardised. However, as these results show, when the reality on the streets and in the city is changing, an important question is whether or not to cooperate with new actors and services that are in contact with migrants. Since this type is based on the cooperation with services, the selection and cooperation of services strongly influences the results. For instance, Fedasil, the Belgian authority concerning migration policies, does not recognise its own services as part of ETHOS 4.

### **Norway**

Norway organises a four-yearly national count, which consists of two steps: (1) mapping services in contact with or who know of homeless persons, and 2) these services fill in one questionnaire for each homeless person they know of during a time window of one week. The registration is carried out in one specific week (week 48 or 49). The method, and mainly the same operational definitions of homelessness, is applied in homeless surveys in Denmark and Sweden (Benjaminsen *et al.*, this issue). The first national survey was carried out in 1996, at a time when migration connected to homelessness was not a theme in the discussion neither in Norway nor in other European countries. The first homeless surveys included a question about the person's place of birth operationalised in the crude categories of regions and continents, in addition to 'Norway'. The majority of homeless persons, four out

of five, captured in the surveys are born in Norway. For comparison, 15 per cent of the Norwegian population has migrant status. However, 'migrant status' also includes persons born in Norway with both parents who have immigrated, and thus embraces a wider group than those registered with place of birth outside Norway in the homeless surveys. Persons with migrant status may be included in the category 'born in Norway'.

Increased migration flows, particularly labour migration from other EU countries, but also refugees from other parts of the world, set migration and homelessness on the agenda with regard to the national homeless surveys. In 2012, a question about persons staying temporarily in the country was included in the survey and repeated in 2016 (also in the planned survey in 2020). The question aims to include persons with limited rights to services due to migration status, and embraces a wide diversity from failed job seekers from EU countries to undocumented refugees including "unreturnable". In 2012, 307 persons staying temporarily were reported in the country (Dyb and Johannessen, 2013), and 169 persons in 2016 (Dyb and Lid, 2017). These numbers are assessed as being highly underreported (assessed in dialogue with the services). As mentioned above, the registration of homeless persons is conducted by employees in the services. Services in contact with homeless migrants are largely based on voluntary work, and due to ethical and practical issues it is difficult to include the group in the count. Results from the last survey shows that 40 per cent of persons staying temporarily in the country are coming from EU countries, 30 per cent from Africa and 20 per cent from Asian countries. Thirty-six per cent of them are living rough or making use of overnight shelters, 18 per cent are temporarily staying with friends and for 23 per cent their place to stay is unknown. In addition, their profile differs significantly from the majority of the national homeless population: one in ten have an addiction (vs 60 per cent in national homeless population), very few report a mental health problem (vs one in three), and very few have experienced eviction in the last six months (vs one third). Statistics about asylum seekers and refugees in reception centres who had their application accepted is made available by the migration authorities. These persons are entitled to housing and support for a period of three years. They are counted as homeless only if the deadline for settlement set by the government is overdue.

Another available source containing information about migration and homelessness is the annual report by the Health Centre for undocumented migrants in Oslo. The Centre is run by the City Mission and Oslo Red Cross (Oslo City Mission/Oslo Red Cross, 2018) and partly funded by the central government and the city of Oslo, but largely dependent on volunteers. The report describes the development among the users of the Centre from the opening in 2009 to the end of 2018. The Centre offers a wide range of health services to people without a residence permit in Norway,

such as (1) asylum seekers with final rejection (after appeal), (2) persons not registered in the Norwegian system, (3) persons with an overdue permit of residence/visa or having their residence permission or citizenship withdrawn, (4) persons expelled from the country, and (5) poor visitors in the country without other opportunities for health care. The Centre opened in 2009 after a mapping among undocumented migrants, showing that the group had significant unmet humanitarian needs, in particular concerning health. Since the opening in 2009, the Centre has treated almost 4 500 persons from 120 countries. After a peak in the number of new patients in 2014/2015, there has been a slight decrease in the number of new patients. The user groups have changed during nearly ten years in operation. The number of asylum seekers has decreased due to a stricter policy on admission to the country and a more efficient return of people with rejected applications. The registration of nationality is based on the information given by the patients, like nationality “Kurdistan”. Nationality does not always provide information about where people have lived most of the life, or where they were born. Some patients were born in a refugee camp and are without citizenship. The last annual report (2018) contained a specific chapter about migration and homelessness. Users of the centre are sleeping rough or make use of an overnight shelter/emergency shelter. Many patients use the overnight shelters for travellers, run by the City Mission and Red Cross, and to some extent the winter shelter for all in need run by Salvation Army, or living in nonconventional dwellings. Living temporarily with family and friends is rather unusual but may occur. Some groups, like migrant Roma people, come with a network or family, but the network members have no access to housing (Djuve *et al.*, 2015). Other groups have little or no network of support.

Other large municipalities offer some low threshold services for migrants, but there are no available figures about the housing situation among the users of these facilities. Some of the services participate in the national homeless surveys. In addition to the very limited sources of data about homelessness and migration, a few qualitative studies show how homeless migrants and migrants living as homeless in Norway (some might have a dwelling in another country) experience very precarious living conditions without accessing mainstream welfare service (Mostowska, 2013; Djuve *et al.*, 2015). The strength of the Norwegian (and Nordic) homeless surveys is that mainstream services, not only services designated for homeless people, are included in the respondent group, which captures “invisible homelessness” like sofa surfers and other homeless people who do not use services for the homeless. To include data on homeless migrants with limited or no access to assistance, it is probably necessary to supplement with other methods, like for example conducting city counts aimed at these groups.

## *Austria*

In Austria, the number of homeless people increased by 21 per cent between 2008 and 2017, according to Statistik Austria. Numbers are provided on the basis of registration data in combination with data provided by homeless services. The official national statistics office indicates 21 567 registered homeless people for 2017. People with a main residence confirmation as roofless (entry with “O” in the central register) and people who are registered in one of 140 facilities for homeless people (the homeless) are added together; 13 926 are recorded as roofless and 8 688 are registered as staying in homeless services. However, institutions focusing on homeless women and refugees, and institutions specifically providing housing for homeless elderly people, are not taken into account. In order to make comparisons possible, the yearly statistics on homeless persons are based on the institutions covered in the 2011 registry census.

The status ‘roofless’ can be issued by the local registration office if the homeless individual can verify that he or she has been staying in the respective municipality for at least one month and can name a contact point that he or she visits regularly. The ‘contact point’ also serves as an address for services, e.g. receiving social transfers or post, if the owner of the contact point agrees. Contact points may be private addresses, homeless assistance institutions, or facilities for probationary services, social counselling or addiction counselling. Probably, the total amount of roofless persons will be higher than recorded, since not every person will have such a contact point. The sum of the roofless and homeless persons is not 21 567, since the total is adjusted for double counting. These data cover people according to the ETHOS Light operational categories 1 and 2, and part of 3 (excluding women’s shelters or refuge accommodation (Fink, 2019)). The calculation method has been changed in 2017. Instead of previously limiting the count of homeless people to four reference days, the new calculation method considers all people who have had at least one episode of homelessness during the course of the year.

Profile characteristics of roofless and homeless persons are only available for two specific years, namely 2011 and 2012. Bauer and Klapfer (2015) provide data calculated according to a concept closely related to the one presented above. On the one hand, their results only cover two reference dates (31 October 2011 and 31 October 2012), but used a much more elaborated list of homeless services. In 2012, 40 per cent of registered homeless people in Austria had not been born in Austria, while the share for the whole population was 16 per cent at this time, and points out that migrants were substantially overrepresented among the homeless (Fink, 2019). A detailed analysis of the same data contains absolute numbers of homeless migrants for 2012 per country (group) of birth. The largest group has been born in an EU country ( $n=1\ 306$ ), 758 have been born in former Yugoslavia (excl. Slovenia), 352 in Turkey, 874 in other European countries, 630 in Africa, 815 in Asia, and 87 in

other countries. Remarkably, two thirds of the persons with a non-Austrian nationality can be mainly found in the category of roofless people, while almost 60 per cent of the Austrian homeless persons can be found in specific services. This can be explained by the specific access criteria of these services (Fink, 2019). The 2018 data on registered numbers of homeless people show that 10 020 homeless people are non-Austrian citizens (44 per cent).

On the regional level, a yearly service-based homelessness survey in Salzburg shows that 35 per cent of the counted homeless persons have Austrian nationality. Twenty-seven per cent of the counted persons are refugees (Fink, 2019). The conclusion of the 2017 report is that the group of homeless refugees is growing. They have a legal permit of stay in the country and have in theory the same rights as Austrian citizens. In other words, counting refugee status as a specific profile characteristic seems to be very relevant, given the Austrian example. For Vienna, the Fonds Soziales Wien, the Viennese social services counted almost 3 000 people who used the so-called winter package for homeless people, which is accessible regardless of nationality and legal status during the winter of 2018. About 75 per cent were non-Austrian citizens. In 2012/13, their share was 66 per cent. People from Slovakia, Romania, Hungary (more than 10 per cent each) and Poland made the majority of this population. There are no numbers available on homeless irregular migrants or on people affected by hidden homelessness, staying with family and friends due to homelessness and not registered at authorities.

### **Sweden**

The municipalities have responsibility for housing provision in Sweden. There are 290 municipalities in the country and most of them have a lack of housing. There is however great variation concerning the extent and profile of homelessness in these municipalities. Homelessness exists in rural areas too, but is concentrated in the urban areas and especially the three largest cities in Sweden. The first national homelessness count in Sweden was executed in 1993. Since then, they are conducted every sixth year. Like Norway and Denmark, this count is based on two phases: first mapping the services that get into touch with homeless persons and then filling in the questionnaires. Between the first homelessness count in 1993 and the most recent one in 2017, the number of homeless people doubled (Knutagård *et al.*, 2019). After 2011, the number of homeless people stabilised, possibly explained by the fact that fewer municipalities participated in the 2017 count. On 3–9 April 2017, 33 250 individuals in Sweden are in one of the four situations associated with homelessness (NBHW, 2017). Almost half (15 900) of the individuals had some type of long-term housing arrangement (situation 3) during the week in question. The next largest group (5 900) were acutely homeless (situation 1). In this situation, 41 per cent were women. Domestic violence was reported to be a contrib-

uting factor to the acute homelessness situation for one third of women. Approximately 650 of the people were sleeping outdoors or in a public space. More than 5 700 individuals had private short-term living arrangements in other person's homes (situation 4). The smallest group (4 900) were staying at various kinds of institutions or assisted living facilities and had no place to live after their scheduled discharge or move (situation 2).

The 2017 count showed that almost half of the homeless population lived in long-term housing arrangements. It also showed an increase in the number of acutely homeless people (i.e. ETHOS Light categories 1, 2, 3 and 5) and a large increase in the number of homeless people within the secondary housing market. The secondary housing market constitutes apartments that the social services rent from housing companies and then sublet to their clients. Moreover, the 2017 survey indicated that the profile of the homeless population had changed. An increasing number of homeless persons were women and an increasing number had a migrant background. In the count, this is defined as 'non-Swedish' nationality (foreign born). Almost half of the counted persons and families have a migrant background in 2017 (Knutagård, 2018). The proportion of people with a foreign background has increased from 23 per cent in 1993 to 43 per cent in 2017.

Some groups are excluded from the national count even though they live in a homeless situation: people without a residence permit, unaccompanied minors, undocumented migrants, mobile EU citizens and newly arrived migrants. One conclusion is that there are no real good mappings on the extent of homelessness among the groups of migrants that are excluded from the definition. In 2013, an extra mapping was conducted after the 2011 mapping. The aim of the mapping was to count the number of homeless so-called mobile EU citizens. The mapping concluded that there were 370 homeless persons in this category. Two years later the estimate was about 5 000 homeless people that were mobile EU citizens.

There have been some important changes in national legislations. During the humanitarian crisis in 2015, new legislation was introduced. In the spring of 2016, the Housing Act began to apply. The purpose was to give newly arrived refugees a good introduction and integration by directing them to municipalities with relatively good labour markets, which were obliged to arrange housing for them. For most municipalities the first two years of the housing provision worked well, but the state funding ended after two years and the legislation didn't specify what type of housing that should be provided, so after the first two-year cycle, there is a tendency that municipalities start to move out refugees from their housing to more temporary solutions.



A recent development is the distinction between so-called social homeless and structural homeless in two of the largest cities in Sweden (Gothenburg and Malmö). In the latter group, we find households that often have a migrant background. They are not eligible for help. They call this new municipal procedure “acute benefits”. These new guidelines for the municipal social workers say that structural homeless people are people that do not have any other problems than lack of housing. Therefore, they should look for housing on their own on the open housing market. Most of them will not be able to get an apartment on their own, since they lack employment, funding or previous references from a landlord in Sweden. If they have children and they cannot find housing, the social services will provide emergency housing on a weekly basis. That means that children might have to move from place to place after a week’s placement at a hostel or similar type of emergency accommodation. In Malmö, two thirds of all homeless persons are considered as ‘structural homeless’ (Sahlin, 2020).

We have only seen the beginning of what the consequences will be, but most likely, structurally homeless families will become socially homeless families over the course of time. What is important here is that it is problematic to categorise individuals as either social or structural homeless, instead of categorising the causes of homelessness as either social or structural. Defining individuals and households as structurally homeless and as such depriving them of assistance from the social services leads to a situation where they are defined as “rightless”, or belonging to a state of exception (Hansson and Mitchell, 2018). In several municipalities local homelessness counts are conducted on a yearly basis. Both Gothenburg and Malmö have seen a dramatic decrease in the total homelessness population. In Gothenburg, it is a decrease of 26 per cent and in Malmö a 31 per cent decrease for adults and a 49 per cent decrease in the number of homeless children. The decrease in the homelessness population is connected to the structural homelessness population. There are however great uncertainties whether the decrease in the homelessness numbers can be related to interventions by the social services, or if the reduction can be ascribed to the exclusion of structurally homeless people from the local definition of homelessness.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

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This paper shows the growing awareness of migration as a new structural factor causing homelessness, next to more traditional structural factors such as the housing market and social welfare system. Given the growing superdiversity of European societies, the circular migration of specific migrant groups and the unclear access to homelessness services, measuring the specific relationship between homelessness and migration is complicated, but essential. Although

migration processes differ between places, cities and countries, we see the same trends in the reviewed studies and countries. On the one hand, a growing share of homeless service users have a migrant background. This trend is evident in Austria, Belgium and Sweden, since most of these services register nationality and/or country of birth. In Norway the vast majority of the service users are Norwegians. Homeless people without or with temporary residence permit are denied access to regular services. On the other hand, the reality on the streets is changing tremendously, not only because of the presence of irregular migrants but also because of the accessibility criteria of night shelters (as shown in the example of Austria). This new reality is less evident in the available homelessness statistics of the studied countries.

It is difficult to get accurate statistics on who is homeless and what is counted as homelessness at a given time. The different countries show that several groups are excluded from the homelessness definitions and are operationalised very differently. One group that stand out and where the estimations from the different countries vary a lot is the number of irregular migrants. The way people experiencing homelessness are defined and categorised leads to a situation where people who actually live in a homelessness situation – on the streets or in temporary shelters – are not counted as homeless, while, as the Swedish case elucidates, people who live in regular apartments but with a second-hand contract are defined as homeless. At the same time, migration policies are designed to prevent migrants from becoming homeless in the first place and governments are reluctant to count refugees as homeless. Sahlin (2020) argues that for many homeless groups they run the risk of being a moving target. When social services recategorise a person, it can result in a move from the position of being entitled to being non-entitled, and as such being responsible for your own housing situation. As stated by Turner (2016, p.681), citizenship is an exclusive right that draws clear boundaries between insiders and outsiders in terms of access to rights. Homelessness policies and services are increasingly confronted by what Turner calls ‘type 1 denizens’, namely a group of people permanently resident in a foreign country, but only enjoying limited, partial or even no rights of citizenship. The examples of Austria and Sweden show how regular migrants with full rights have difficulties to get full access to housing support and welfare services.

In the literature, three specific methods are discerned to measure and monitor homelessness in general: administrative databases, recurrent surveys and one-off surveys (Edgar *et al.*, 2007). Given the insecure permit of stay of some categories of migrant persons, administrative databases don’t offer much information about them. This implies that counts and surveys seem to be a more valid approach to measure migrant homelessness. The success of counts depends mainly on the cooperation with services that are in contact with these groups,

especially if more specific information is gathered by means of a questionnaire. If the homeless population is changing, this also implies the need to broaden the cooperation with other services (including informal actors and volunteer organisations that are in contact with them, as is shown in the Belgian example). An even more important question is who is included in counts and homelessness statistics, as is shown by the examples of Sweden and Norway. In addition, small changes, such as adding one question about permit of stay in a national count can have an impact on homelessness statistics, if this group is included in the statistics. For instance, in Norway adding this question does not affect the official number, since this group is treated separately. The comparison between the countries show that a mixed-method strategy for counting homelessness including a national survey, a broad spectrum of services to include administrative data and city or street counts is needed to grasp the complex reality of homelessness. There is however a risk of viewing homelessness counts as facts, which can lead to a situation where we are viewing like a state and our trust in numbers fail to recognise that excluded groups from official definitions are actually experiencing a real homelessness situation and where their position in society is diminished from being a citizen to becoming a denizen (Porter, 1995; Turner, 2016). Another important issue concerns the ethical questions surrounding counting irregular homeless migrants. What are the possible consequences for these groups, when the services they make use of are included in homelessness counts? Is an attitude of 'functional ignorance' of the services that are in contact with them needed? Functional ignorance refers to the practice of ignoring the permit of stay of persons that would exclude them from service provision and providing them support (Karl-Tummer *et al.*, 2010). This ignorance becomes functional to safeguard ethically sound action for the price of not being able to collect better evidence on the situation of the most vulnerable migrant groups.

Our contribution shows that a fundamental debate is needed about the way homelessness statistics include and exclude specific groups of homeless persons: who is counted and which characteristics are measured? At the same time, we have to remain aware of the risk of a cultural model of homelessness that reduces the causes of homelessness to cultural factors, if we do not consider the complex interaction between migration policies, social policies and structural factors such as the housing and labour market. These complex exclusion mechanisms can't be grasped purely by homelessness statistics or by only measuring migration variables. As advocated by Zufferey (2019, p.2), an intersectional approach is needed that considers how multiple social locations such as age, race, ethnicity, social class, socioeconomic status, mental and physical dis/abilities intersect to disadvantage and privilege different groups.

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