

Reinventing homelessness through enumeration in Norwegian housing policies: A case study of governmentality

ABSTRACT

In the course of two decades, “homelessness” was re-defined/re-invented in Norway. Homelessness” had long been seen as a social problem and a moral issue. Then, in 1996, a survey conceptualized it as a *housing issue*. A broader concept of unfavourable positions in the housing market was operationalized to include various situations beyond the narrow stereotypes of shelter-user and vagrant. The survey enumerated, defined and delimited the population of “homeless persons” as constituting a new category of statistics. This approach paralleled major policy shifts in housing politics and the reshaping of the Norwegian State Housing Bank. Drawing on the concept of governmentality, this article investigates how homelessness, previously placed in the sphere of social problems, was re-defined as a housing problem and became a force in developing a new field of social housing policy. The “new” concept includes an administrative territorial aspect defining who are deemed homeless and who are not.

Keywords: homeless survey, governmentality, administrative space, housing policy

Introduction

Homelessness is a complex concept with definitions that vary across Europe and beyond, making it difficult to produce comparable figures. In seeking to establish a common definition of homelessness across Europe, the pan-European organization FEANTSA (Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless) takes its starting point in the various components that constitute a *good* housing situation. From a theoretical construction of housing situation that is satisfactory as regards the legal, physical and psycho-social spheres, FEANTSA has drawn up a set of four conceptual categories for homelessness and housing exclusion, summarized in *ETHOS, European Typologies of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion* (Edgar, Meert and Doherty 2004). The four conceptual categories are classified into 13 operational categories and further divided into a range of generic descriptions. ETHOS was later reduced to ETHOS Light,ⁱ which more directly captures the concepts of homelessness. Even using the more simplistic ETHOS Light for comparison, there is considerable variation within the EU with regard to how homelessness is defined (Busch-Geertsema, Benjaminsen, Hrast and Pleace 2015; Mostowska 2019).

This paper investigates *how* a new definitions and enumeration of the homeless population in Norway in the 1990s initiated a new era of dealing with homelessness through a series of specific programmes and knowledge production.

The conceptual field

The analytical point of departure for this study is the concept of governmentality, introduced by Michel Foucault and further developed by other scholars. In his essay *Governmentality*, Foucault (2002, 216) emphasizes how “population comes to appear above all as the ultimate end of government. In contrast to sovereignty, government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population”. Enumeration and gathering of statistics are at the core of governmentality: indeed, Scott (1998) sees codifying the population and

social issues into standardized facts as a core element of building the modern state. As noted by Shore and Wright (2015), information on the population, its size, conditions and needs, including levels of “trust”, “quality of years” and “cross-national happiness”, constitutes a growing body of statistics. Classifying and enumerating the population in statistics, such as unemployment rate, crime rate, poverty rate and the number of homeless persons, is one technique for gaining information on the population and shaping the truth about the condition of the state. Rose (1991, 675) emphasizes that the “relation between numbers and politics is reciprocal and mutually constitutive.” Politics is involved in what to measure and how to measure. The numbers are diploid in politics and political decisions (ibid.).

Adding to the body of scholarly literature on governmentality, Miller and Rose (2008, 55) note “(t)o the extent the modern state ‘rules’, it does so on the basis of an elaborate network of relations formed amongst the complex of institutions, organizations and apparatuses, that make it up, and between state and non-state institutions.” An essential element of the logic of governmentality are the dividing practices, elaborated in Foucault’s analyses of the growth of the psychiatric institution and the modern prison (1973; 2001) – which are analyses of the development of practices, and of professions (Rose 1999). Dividing practices are both social and spatial (Rabinow 1991), constructing a normalized population, even creating statistical meta-concepts of which “the most notable is normalcy” (Hacking 1991:183), and identifying populations that represent these deviations.

Over the past 25 years, homelessness in Norway has been re-defined and subjected to a “new” regime of governing. A survey of homelessness in 1996 (Ulfrstad 1997) conceptualized, operationalized and enumerated homelessness, thereby framing a population that did not appear as a distinct category in any existing statistics. This paper analyses the circumstances – historical as well as incidental – that laid the foundations for re-defining homelessness as a housing problem. Previously, it had been seen as a social or medical issue,

or an offence, and also spoken of in moralistic terms. Once defined as a recognizable group, the “new” homelessness constituted a problem that required action and new approaches.

“An analytics of government takes as its central concern *how* we govern and are governed within different regimes” (Dean 2010, 33), Here we should note the emphasis on “how.” This article does not aim to answer *why* the development of government of homelessness at the turn of the century took a certain path in Norway. However, the “new” homelessness fit in well with the shift from universal to means-tested housing policies from the 1980s and early 1990s, which included the reshaping of the Norwegian State Housing Bank, and thus opened a window for re-defining homelessness. Drawing on a review of governmental documents, the paper examines how the housing authorities became the main stakeholder of homeless policies — and how homelessness, through enumeration and knowledge production, was to become a force in developing Norwegian social housing policy in the early 21st century.

The development of governmentality represents both continuity and discontinuity (Dean 2010), as can be seen from how homelessness has been governed throughout history. The new approach links homelessness to administrative spaces in terms of citizenship, which also excludes homeless individuals and groups by criteria not specified in the operational definition applied in the survey. Using the case of Norway, this article discusses how the administrative spatial element has accompanied the governing of homelessness through the centuries. It has expanded from local borders to national state borders, determining who is included or excluded from the “homeless” population – regardless of their actual housing situation.

From moral to scientific approaches

Historically, the governance of homelessness has a strong association with specific administrative spaces. The geographical dimension is reflected in labels such as “wanderer”,

“tramp” and “vagabond” applied to the homeless population. Another key element in defining homelessness has been the ability and “willingness/unwillingness” to support oneself through labour. In Norway, regulation of vagrancy was systematized in the first national laws from the 13th century (King Magnus the Lawmaker’s Act of 1274–76), according to which the local parishes were made responsible for taking care of their own poor. Christian IV’s law of 1604 introduced a ban on vagrancy and begging, further confirmed in the Poor Regulation of 1741. Such regulations, including a ban on giving to beggars, together with schemes for minimal support of those most in need, were not sufficient to prevent poor people from moving around between parishes (Midré 1990). The prohibition against begging was continued in the later legal framework: indeed, it was not formally abolished in Norway until 2006. Most recently, the ban on giving money to beggars was taken up in connection with a government proposal to ban begging in 2015 (Høringsbrev 20.02.2015). That proposal, and the preceding discourse, were not aimed at the persons recognized as “homeless” in the surveys introduced in 1996, but at groups of homeless migrants not covered by this official designation. However, the 2015 proposal was withdrawn without substantive debate. As a compromise, police districts throughout the country were authorized to regulate begging locally.

From the 1600s and for the next two centuries, a wide range of destitute groups were housed in what were termed “combined facilities”. Arne Omsted (1969), one of the architects and first director of Opstad workhouse opened in 1915, the first and only specialized incarceration institution for alcoholics and vagrants in Norway, describes those who were housed in the “combined facility” as an unhappy mix of men and women, adults and children, criminals and blameless poor, drunks, vagrants and the sick. Although heavily criticized 50 years later, these views represented a shift from a moral to a more scientific approach to homelessness based on ideas from abroad. Commissioned by the Norwegian state, Omsted undertook study tours in Europe and the USA in the planning phase of Opstad workhouse,

visiting incarceration facilities, mainly prisons known to advocate new ideas of correctional practices (ibid.). Classification and dividing practices, an essential characteristic of the governmentality regime, formed the foundations for creating Opstad: the wish to separate and identify specific populations of socially deviant individuals, in order to enable accurate measures for governance (Omsted 1969).

The balance between governing the poor by punishment and by care is continuously debated throughout the Western world (Garland 1997; Wacquant 2004; O’Sullivan 2012). The Opstad workhouse institutionalized homelessness as both a social problem and an offence; moralistic arguments for establishing Opstad co-existed with the scientifically based arguments advocated by individuals like Omsted. A stay at Opstad was imposed by the Act of Vagrancy, Beggary and Drunkenness of 1900 (the Vagrancy Act). The term “vagrant” is directly derived from the person's employment status. The preparatory works to the Act (Ot. prp. nr 2 [1898–99]) were particularly concerned with vagrancy in Norway’s expanding urban areas. The bill noted the need “to fight the workless proletariat, which has become the great scourge of the towns” (cited in Kalberg 1970:15). Kalberg points out that the Vagrancy Act, and the arguments in connection with the preparation of the Act, criminalized a certain lifestyle. In the 1960s, the discourse shifted from the incarceration approach towards treating vagrancy and homelessness as an issue of social policy. Researchers and other professionals documented and argued that incarceration of persons labelled as vagrants had no curative effect – rather the converse (Ramsøy, Burmann, Johansen and Kalberg 1971; “Vagrancy Care – A Challenge” [1969] no editor given). The paragraph on vagrancy in the Vagrancy Act was repealed in 1970, and Opstad workhouse was discontinued after 55 years of operation. However, no alternative programmes for governing vagrants or the homeless were established. Moreover, the “homeless” were vaguely identified, associated primarily with

persons with addiction and deviant lifestyles, who stayed in hostels and were a feature of the cityscape in larger municipalities.

In the mid-1990s came a new definition of homelessness, on the basis of which a national registration was conducted, enumerating a “new” category of homeless. The definitions and methodology applied in the survey were almost a replica of a Swedish survey conducted in 1993. The Swedish study used what was at the time a new approach and methodology for registering the homeless population (Borgny and Qvarlander 2000).ⁱⁱ The Norwegian survey was initiated by researchers at the independent Norwegian Building Research Institute (NBI) – and not by the authorities, as in Sweden. The definition of homelessness used in Norway’s first national survey, and the subsequent series of five surveys, represents a shift from the previously dominant neglect and moralistic conceptualizations, to a scientific and research-based line of reasoning. Reporting on the first homeless survey, Ulfrstad (1997) refers to Ingrid Sahlin’s (1992) reflections on the concept of homelessness. Definitions of homelessness can be divided into two main groups, Sahlin maintains: one that emphasizes the individual’s antisocial characteristics, where a lifestyle involving abuse, criminality and/or other deviant behaviour dominates over housing situations as the main category. These definitions emphasize homeless persons as belonging to certain “deviant” groups, regardless of their housing situation. The other definition, which Sahlin calls “housing-related”, emphasizes the lack of housing, and classifies homeless persons by their material and legal housing situation. There is also a pragmatic rationale for choosing “houseless” and not “homeless”: it is possible to count the number of dwellings or houses, but it is more difficult to get a precise number of “homes”. Ulfrstad (1997) points out that there are actually statistics on dwellings in a country (Population and housing censuses, Statistics Norway). For a quantitative survey, general concepts need operationalized definitions, and

“houseless” was also a choice in accordance with housing statistics. In English-language texts, “houseless” is often translated as “homelessness”, which is the term used in this article.

Definition and method

The operational definition used in the registration of homelessness in 1996, and the five successive registrations, is based on positions in the housing market. Briefly: A person is homeless if s/he lacks a place to live, whether rented or owned, and finds her/himself in one of the following situations: 1) has no place to stay for the night, 2) is referred to emergency or temporary shelter accommodation, 3) is in the correctional services and due to be released within two months, 4) is in an institution and due to be discharged within two months, 5) lives with friends, acquaintances or relatives on a temporary basis. People who live with close relatives are not considered as being homeless. A central element concerns how homeless persons are registered. Of the various methods for registration and enumeration of homelessness, the most widespread is cross-sectional registration in a given time-window (one night, one week) (Busch-Geertsema, Edgar, O’Sullivan and Pleace 2010). The Nordic countries (in Denmark, since 2007) register homelessness during one specific week. Statistics are collected in two-stages. The first step comprises mapping out services and other agencies, including a wide sample of mainstream services, that have contact with the homeless. These will then carry out step two, the actual registration of homeless persons. A strength of the method, and one which increases the likelihood of more complete representation, is that many agencies participate in the registration – not only the services offered to homeless people. One questionnaire is filled in for each homeless person. Similar surveys are conducted regularly in Sweden and Denmark (Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare 2017; Benjaminsen 2019).

The spatial administrative aspect, which in Norway can be traced back to the first national legislation in the 13th century, is an important feature of the survey and governing of

homelessness in the 21st century. The municipal authorities are responsible for welfare services, including temporary accommodation for homeless persons and assistance in acquiring permanent housing (Act on Social Services). Registration of the homeless person's residential municipality is important for the legitimacy of the surveys of homelessness. The local authorities, as the main partners in conducting the registration, expect to find a fairly accurate number of the municipality's homeless citizens, and to be able to identify those within their responsibilities. Thus, there is an implicit criterion connected to citizenship and legitimate access to housing and to welfare services.

Steering through programmes

Although the definition and method for enumeration of homelessness was initiated by researchers, the population of homeless soon became a subject for governmental steering in Norway. The aim of this article is not to answer the complex question of *why* this happened, but to investigate *how* the housing authorities became the main stakeholder of homeless policies, and developed the field of *social housing work* (*boligsosialt arbeid*). As noted, homelessness had previously been treated as a social or criminal problem, and even a medical issue. The first governmental initiative to address homelessness came from the Ministry of Social Affairs in White Paper No. 50 (1998–99) *The Equality Report*. This White Paper referred to the report of the first homeless survey (Ulfrstad 1997) and the ensuing study of services to the homeless (Ulfrstad 1999). Further, the 1998–99 White Paper announced the first national programme to address homelessness, *Project Homeless 2001–2004*. Although this was prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs, it was the Housing Bank under the Ministry of Local Government and Modernizationⁱⁱⁱ that became the national coordinator and main stakeholder of the programme. *Project Homeless* aimed mainly at developing competence and models for addressing homelessness (Hansen, Dyb, Holm 2002).

The re-definition of “homeless” was launched in the wake of profound changes in housing policy. The post-WWII period was an era of expansive universal housing policy in most Western countries. The “Norwegian way” entailed a deliberate commitment to homeownership which involved establishing the Norwegian State Housing Bank (the Housing Bank, *Husbanken*) in 1946, and through this bank, making loans on reasonable conditions available to most people (Annaniassen 2006). Liberalization of the housing policy from the early 1980s confirmed a shift of the Housing Bank's position from a welfare bank to a governmental welfare agency (Reiersen and Thue 1996; Stamsø 2009; Sørvoll 2011). The downscaling of state responsibility and the shift from supporting the general supply side of housing to targeting individuals and groups with specific housing needs was hardly a uniquely Norwegian phenomenon (Bengtsson et al. 2006; Gowan and March 2001). With the resizing of the overall housing policy from universal to selective policies and means-tested schemes (White Paper No. 34 [1994–1995]), attention was directed at groups with needs of assistance in Norway, as in other countries (Edgar, Doherty, Meert 2002; Doherty 2004; Anderson 2004; Blanc 2004; Busch-Geertsema 2004; O’Sullivan 2004; Sahlin 2004). Greater awareness of the groups with specific housing needs was emphasized in governmental reports issued by the ministry responsible for housing (White Paper No. 50 [1996–97]; White Paper No. 49 [1997–98]). The term “disadvantaged in the housing market” was constructed, embracing various groups – like persons with reduced functionality, young first-time homebuyers, and households with persistently low incomes. In fact, Norway’s homeless population constitute a very small group, ranging from 4,000 to 6,000 persons (at any point in time) in the six surveys (Dyb and Lid 2017). However, homelessness and the definition applied in enumerating the homeless population have remained an important element of the governmentality regime of the social housing policy from the early 2000s.

To back up this contention, a review of documents issued by the housing authorities is presented, concentrating on major policy documents, including *all* White Papers and Green Papers on housing policy in the period in question, and a national audit report offering a comprehensive overview of the field. The review focuses on the *amount of space* dedicated to homelessness, and *how* the documents address homelessness and those who are disadvantaged in the housing market. Parallel with the timeline for the reports, this section presents specific programmes directly targeting or including homelessness, with reference to specific programme documents.

The first governmental report issued by the national housing authorities to address homelessness in the 1990s and after was Green Paper 2002:2, *The Housing Market and Housing Policy*. The report has no separate sections on disadvantaged groups in the housing market, but the issue is not ignored: On p. 42, the definition of homelessness used in the 1996 survey is quoted – for the first time in a governmental document issued by the housing authorities. References to homelessness are generally limited and random; however, homelessness is addressed in the concluding Chapter 18, on measures to improve the distribution of housing to include disadvantaged groups. The report recommends improvement in temporary housing and shelters for homeless persons, and, with reference to the ongoing *Project Homeless*, emphasizes the need for follow-up and other services to persons with complex needs.

In the next White Paper No. 23 (2003–2004), *Housing Policy*, the government presents its visions and objectives for housing policy in the coming next years. Chapter 5 is entirely dedicated to the disadvantaged in the housing market, who are also addressed elsewhere in the report. The definition of homelessness is repeated; the “new” concept and definition of homelessness strengthen its position as the official concept of homelessness. This was the first governmental report to devote a whole sub-chapter to homelessness (pp.43–

49). This sub-chapter addresses theoretical issues concerning the causes of homelessness, including how underlying assumptions of the nature of homelessness may influence the shaping of interventions, housing solutions and over-arching models for addressing homelessness (p.44). This White Paper launched a new programme to counter homelessness, *Pathway to a Permanent Home: Strategy to Prevent and Combat Homelessness 2005–2007*, explaining that the new programme would build on the experiences of *Project Homeless*, but whereas that project had aimed to raise competence through the experiences of the municipalities, the new strategy operated with specific aims and performance measures (Edgar 2006; Housing Bank, final report 2005–2007). The programme was supported by five welfare ministries with subordinate agencies, constituting a governing network (Miller and Rose 2008) of actors on national and local levels, with the Housing Bank as national coordinator.

In 2008, the Office of the Auditor General in Norway (OAG), reviewed the supply of services and housing to vulnerable persons in the housing market (Riksrevisjonen 3:8 [2007–2008]). The review built on a comprehensive body of governmental documents, and served as a summary of the focus in Norway's social housing policy at the time. The main conclusion was that disadvantaged persons in the housing market, homeless persons in particular, did not get the assistance and services to which they were entitled. The OAG review further maintained that the Housing Bank had no functional scheme in place for monitoring disadvantaged populations and their needs. The Ministry's response (appendix, Riksrevisjonen 3:8 [2007–2008], 11–13), drew attention to the schemes targeting the most disadvantaged in the housing market and emphasized the programmes for combatting homelessness, and that three surveys of homelessness commissioned by the Housing Bank had been conducted.

The next governmental report on housing policy, Green Paper 2011:15, increased the focus and devoted all of Chapter 10 to the “work on homelessness”. The chapter summarizes experiences from the previous national programmes and grants made available to municipalities for developing follow-up services for former homeless and persons with addiction (see below). In 2009, the Housing Bank had initiated a municipal programme based on long-term cooperation strategically directed at municipalities that faced the most severe challenges in dealing with social housing issues. The current governmental strategy, *Housing for Welfare, National Strategy for Housing and Support Services (2014–2020)*, was launched in White Paper No. 17 (2012–2013). As with the preceding programme, the strategy is supported by five welfare ministries. Cooperation between a network of national and local authorities and the civil society is emphasized. The programme targets three groups of those who are disadvantaged in the housing market: persons and families without their own home, at risk of losing their home, and/or living in unsuitable housing or living environments (pp. 30–31). Homelessness is addressed throughout the strategy document, including sub-groups of homeless persons identified through the homeless surveys, such as persons recently released from prison or discharged from institutions, young homeless persons or young persons at risk of homelessness, and persons and families staying in temporary accommodation.

Norway has no official definition of “homelessness” embedded in legislation or in formal decisions. The definition introduced in the first national survey on the topic in 1996 is referred to in all major governmental reports and documents, and has gained the status of a de facto national definition of homelessness. The documents reviewed in this section show no traces of dispute as to this definition. On the contrary, documents and programmes aimed at combating homelessness and assisting the disadvantaged in the housing market have continued to confirm the definition, targeting the homeless population enumerated in the

surveys. The main national social housing programmes now target homelessness, making it an important driver for the development of a social housing policy in Norway.

Knowledge production

A core element in governing any specific field and claiming ownership to the area is the production of knowledge, often accompanied by a certain vocabulary. Constructing social categories, enumerating and collecting statistical information of homelessness through repeated surveys and expanded collection of information by adding further questions to the questionnaires, accumulates a body of knowledge. The programmes presented above further add to the body of information on the homeless population, producing knowledge that strengthens the housing authorities' ownership of the politics of homelessness. However, governing a political field also requires specific competence and professionalization (Rabinow 1991; Rose 1999).

In the era of universal housing policies, the Housing Bank had been responsible for designing and implementing spatial measures with objective criteria and norms for standardized, adequate space for every household. The dominant professions involved here were architects, planners and economists. However, the shift towards a social, more selective housing policy called for a new type of knowledge (Ytrehus 2000). Unlike the UK, for example, Norway has no tradition of professions and educations within social housing policy and work (Anderson, Dyb and Ytrehus 2012). More generally, the Housing Bank took the lead in building new knowledge, as regards the municipalities and in its own institution. The Housing Bank's position and role have been described as "social housing supporter of the municipalities" and "coordinator of the national policy in social housing" (Green Paper. No 2011:15, 130–133); further: "The Housing Bank will have a national knowledge role in social housing policy" (Husbanken, Annual Report 2018, 23). Similar formulations are found in a range of public documents, particularly accentuated in White Paper No. 17 [2012–2013]).

Parallel with *Project Homeless 2001–2004*, which was intended as a competence-building programme, the Housing Bank started a trial project to initiate the drafting of social housing action plans in the municipalities. The Housing Bank's methodology as national coordinator in both projects and in later projects involves guidance and funding of activity in the municipalities. "The underlying idea was that the municipalities themselves know best where the shoe pinches ... The Housing Bank would contribute with competence and economic measures so that the municipalities could get an overview of their own needs" (Råd and Sollien 2003). Governmental funding, the Housing Bank's *Competence Grant*, increased in the period from 2001, peaking at an annual €8.2 million (NOK 82 million) in 2013 and 2014 (Husbanken, Årsrapport 2016). This was phased out after 2016, and integrated into the general allocation from state to municipalities.

Much of the *Competence Grant* was allocated to projects in the municipalities linked with ongoing programmes, and then for research and support of further education in social housing work. In practice, competence building has involved local projects and exchange of experience through various networks coordinated or facilitated by the Housing Bank. Professionalization of the social housing field through formal training was initiated already in 2002. The first further education course in social housing work, held at the University College of Trondheim, was directly connected to *Project Homeless*; study places were reserved for employees working with the project on the local and national level as well as NGOs. Further education courses followed at several university colleges; however, no aggregated, joint evaluations or descriptions of these courses are available. The concept of "social housing work" in Norway has been developed through competence- and knowledge-building in the educational system and through networking, and also through a series of evaluations and research projects commissioned by the government (see:

www.veiviseren.no/sok?q=forskning).

Division, inclusion and exclusion

While many countries recognize as “homeless” only those persons who “sleep rough” and use homeless services, the Nordic definitions are fairly generous and inclusive (Busch-Geertsema, Benjaminsen, Hrast, Pleace 2015; Mostowska 2019). During two decades of homeless surveys, the Norwegian questionnaire has successively increased from 13 to 31 items (Ulfrstad 1997; Dyb and Lid 2017) expanding the information about the homeless population and enabling further division and identification of subgroups, for specific intervention measures. However, there is also historical continuity in connecting to and thus delimiting the homeless in terms of administrative and spatial boundaries, increasingly evident with rising global and internal European migration. We now turn to inclusive and exclusive mechanisms of the conceptualization of homelessness in the 21st century in Norway.

“New” groups of homeless have at various times been observed or made visible, and are considered “new” in relationship to the traditional homeless male (Järvinen 1993). The increase in the number of items in the questionnaire enables deeper knowledge about the homeless population, and has been introduced mainly for governance purposes. The “new” categories of homelessness, identified and constructed on figures from the surveys, correspond to target groups in national programmes. For example, young homeless persons, in focus in the latest and earlier programmes, are defined by year of birth and profiled as a distinct group through other variables. Another “new” group is persons with simultaneous addiction and mental illness (“double diagnoses”), constructed by combining responses to the questions about drug/alcohol addiction and mental illness, and quantified and profiled since the fourth homelessness survey in 2008 (Dyb and Johannessen 2009). The subgroup of persons with “double diagnoses” is deemed the most vulnerable of the homeless and targeted

as one of the prioritized groups within the most recent governmental programme, *Housing for Welfare*.

Homeless families with children, a group constructed by adding new questions to the questionnaire, are defined as persons who are homeless together with their children under 18 years of age. Parenthood and formal relations between parent and children in categories ranging from “daily care” to “no contact” were included from the first survey. A question added in 2008 concerned children who stayed in a homeless living situation with a person registered as homeless. The question was added on the background of the increased political focus on child poverty, but was also inspired by discussions about women, including mothers as a group of “invisible homelessness” internationally (Casey, Goudie and Reeve 2007; Baptista 2010; Mayock, Bretherton and Baptista 2016). These discussions emerged in connection with the realization that women constitute a minority of the *recorded* homeless populations. Together with persons with double diagnoses, families in precarious housing situations comprise the other top-priority target group of *Housing for Welfare*.

There are no formal criteria operationalized in the surveys linking individuals to administrative and geographical spaces. Norwegian citizenship or permanent residence permit is a tacit criterion for inclusion in the survey. For some services like the right to assistance with housing problems, legal residence in a municipality is required. This criterion is inherent in the method, because the registration of homeless persons is performed by the welfare services. The broad selection of respondents in these surveys, as regards mainstream services and services for the homeless, generally covers the users of these services. Those with limited or no entitlement to welfare services are likely to be excluded from the count; if they are registered, they are not included in the homeless population. These persons are primarily migrants without residence permits, or migrants with residence permits but with limited entitlement to welfare services.

Migrant groups in a situation of homelessness in Norway consist mainly of two broad categories. First, there are EU citizens without formal ties to the Norwegian labour market. Norway is part of the EU internal market through the EEA Agreement (European Economic Area). EU expansion in 2004 brought labour migration primarily from the states of the former Eastern Bloc. Most EU migrants – those from Poland in particular, the largest migrant group to Norway – have integrated well in the labour market (Søholt and Lynnebakke 2015), although a small group experience homelessness (Mostowska 2013).

A larger group of homeless persons consists of EU citizens who support themselves through begging, collecting bottles for return, and bartering. Without connection to the formal labour market, they have limited entitlement to welfare services in Norway. The vast majority of these persons come from Romania (Djuve, Friberg, Tyldum and Zhang 2014). Hansson and Mitchell (2018) describe the position of “Roma beggars” (a term used in the Nordic countries in everyday speech as well as the mass media) as tolerated, but denied social rights as citizens.

The second group of homeless migrants is refugees and asylum-seekers whose applications for residence permit have been rejected. They live in Norway without entitlement to welfare services except for low-threshold emergency assistance. Those who beg and have the street as their workplace are highly visible, whereas the “undocumented” are almost invisible. In a context of registration of homelessness, these groups are both included and excluded.

Migrants from other European countries and “undocumented” persons living as homeless in Norwegian cities are in very vulnerable situations, but do not fill the “tacit criterion” of citizenship inherent in the surveys. They have access to shelter and low-threshold health services operated by NGOs on contract with local and state authorities, but such services are largely dependent on volunteer workers. However, it is not easy to overlook

groups living in the streets or in overnight shelters. As a compromise, in the fifth survey of homelessness in 2012, the variable “staying temporarily in the country” was introduced in the registration (Dyb and Johannessen 2013) and repeated in 2016 (Dyb and Lid 2017). The figures collected on this group are assessed as being inadequate, due to language barriers and limited resources for conducting the survey (ibid.).

Homelessness, as conceptualized and enumerated in Norwegian surveys introduced in the 1990s, represents a clear departure from the neglect and moralistically laden categories of “drug addict” and persons associated with a deviant lifestyle. However, there is still a long thread of continuity of exclusion based on citizenship. The exclusionary mechanisms based on geographical and administrative geographical borders are imposed on new groups that include migrants and refugees who find themselves living in often extremely precarious situations as “homeless” in Norwegian municipalities. The historical link to the division between perceived willingness and unwillingness to support oneself by “honest work” enters the picture. The prohibition against begging, itself a remnant of the older Vagrancy Act, had been a sleeping paragraph, long since ripe for scrapping when it was finally abolished in 2006. The discussion that flared up resulted in a proposition against begging including a ban on giving money to beggars in 2015, coincided with the arrival of considerable numbers of EU citizens panhandling in the streets.

Conclusion

Enumeration does not merely, or primarily, collect facts about social issues. Statistics and numbers *constitute* social facts. Norway’s first survey of the homeless, conducted in 1996, covered a varied population that had not existed as an assembled category in official statistics previously. This first survey introduced the definition of “homelessness” used today; it was followed by a series of similar surveys, all based on a broad scientific understanding and

definition of homelessness (Sahlin 1992; Ulfrstad 1997) – in contrast to the earlier view of homelessness as a lifestyle associated mostly with male vagrants.

Acceptance of specific ideas and concepts, like the abolition of the vagrancy paragraph in Norway's Vagrancy Act in 1970 and the housing-based definition of homelessness that came in the mid-1990s, is dependent on societal movements or political changes that can help to "open a window" for a new discourse. Viewing homelessness as an issue of housing policy was in tune with the social shift in housing policy, which involved changing the Housing Bank from a state bank to a welfare agency (Reiersen and Thue 1996; Sørvoll 2011). Appointing the Housing Bank as the main national stakeholder in policies of homelessness has not been formally established in Norwegian legislation or formal decisions, but is embedded in governmental reports and is activated in implementing the various programmes addressing homelessness and disadvantaged groups. The prevailing definition of homelessness has become the official national definition, without any formal decisions. The governance of homelessness involves governing by non-decision and steering by controlling the discourse (Sahlin 2004), through specific programmes, networks of governmental agencies, research institutions, municipalities, NGOs and other private actors, as well as through "performative" language (Miller and Rose 2008:57; Rose 1999). An example of the latter is the introduction and development of the concept of "social housing work".

The first in the series of homeless surveys in Norway was initiated by researchers; however, the five ensuing homeless surveys were all initiated and commissioned by the government after a call for tendering. Scott (1998) assumes that what is enumerated is no coincidence, but reflects what the government wants knowledge about. After WWII, social housing in Norway was associated with cooperative house building and collective ownership; full homeownership came with the liberalization of housing policies in the 1980s (Annaniassen 2006; Stamsø 2009; Sørvoll 2011). The construction of a distinct category of

“the homeless”, enumerated and split into subgroups, became an important vehicle in redefining social housing policy to target the needs of specific vulnerable groups. A comparative study of Ireland, Norway and Scotland found that “looking past the formal definitions, all three countries apply concepts of homelessness with extensive room for political priorities and shift of focus between different homeless groups” (Anderson, Dyb and Finnerty 2016: 118).

Steering through categorizing and enumerating the populations and sub-populations is a type of calculating power at the core of governmentality. Such calculations may be used to identify deviance in the population, as well as to measure and enumerate its wellbeing and needs (Foucault 2001; 2002a). Statistics and calculations may also serve ~~as a tool~~ to show the costs of non-intervention, and change the mode of intervention from assisting homeless persons to preventing people from becoming homeless (Culhane, Metraux and Byrne 2011). Enumerating is also a crucial form of recognizing homelessness, and the unwillingness to enumerate may be seen as governing by neglect (Marquardt 2016; Mostowska 2019). However, it may also be conducted in ways that delimit homelessness, conceptualizing it as rough sleeping (Cloke, Milbourne and Widdowfield 2001).

Critical assessments framed by the concept of governmentality may shed light on how the authorities use steering – including non-steering – and on what gets included or excluded from official statistical categories and enumerations. Jacobs and Travers (2015) maintain that Foucault’s thesis of governmentality may critically be used to explain how state agencies are implicated in a project aimed at re-shaping the conduct of government. This analysis of the reinvention and enumeration of homelessness in the era of liberalization of housing politics is an example of just that.

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ⁱ ETHOS: <https://www.feantsa.org/download/ethos2484215748748239888.pdf>
 ETHOS Light: <https://www.feantsa.org/download/fea-002-18-update-ethos-light-0032417441788687419154.pdf> (accessed August 2019)

ⁱⁱ The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare were responsible for the definition of homelessness, and for conducting the survey. It is beyond the scope of this article to investigate the background of the Swedish initiative.

ⁱⁱⁱ Previously known as the Ministry of Local Government and the Regions. Also the Ministry of Social Affairs has changed its title: currently the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs