

**Seminar 10: Women and Homelessness (Floor -2, Room 11)**

Chair: Nóra Teller, HU

**Boróka Fehér, HU:** Life Stories of Homeless Women – Gendered Pathways into and in Homelessness



**Boróka Fehér** has worked with homeless people in Hungary since 1999. She is a policy officer of the Policy Department of the Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy (BMSZKI), the homeless service provider of the City of Budapest. She is a member of the February 3rd research team, carrying out the only annual survey among homeless people in Hungary. Her field of special interest is finding data in order to support the situation and services available for homeless women, empowering and participative ways of working. She is a member of FEANTSA's Women's Cluster. She holds a PhD in Social Work and Social Policy.

The presentation summarizes the findings of two rounds of qualitative research about the life stories of homeless women. In the first round of research, an analysis of 100 entry interviews has been carried out by women who have moved into a temporary hostel in Budapest (mixed or single sex, with a partner or alone). Although the interviews focused on a generic, non-gendered needs assessment (addressing housing, employment and financial needs), in most cases women also told their key worker about their past experiences from childhood, intimate relationships, children etc.). The age of the women is between 18 and 80 years old, with more young women included than their real proportion to gather more information on their relationships with their minor children. Residents in hostels have to pay a fee for staying there, thus they are usually women with income and whose behaviour is not too chaotic (do not drink too much or take too much drugs). The second round of research focuses specifically on the experiences of homeless women and what it is like to be homeless as a woman – the questions of the interviews were put together to fill in the gaps of generic interviews. 42 women responded to questions from the countryside as well as Budapest, from a larger range of living circumstances: rough sleepers, women staying in emergency accommodation, as well as temporary accommodation (hostels and temporary housing for families with children). The second group of women were also encouraged to identify gaps in the provision available for them. Based on the findings of these interviews, policy recommendations shall be formulated.

**Méabh Savage, IE:** Exploring Secondary Affective Professional Care Relations with Homeless Unaccompanied Mothers with Complex Needs - The Perspectives of Homelessness Workers and Mothers



**Dr Méabh Savage** works as a lecturer in social care in the Dept. of Social Care and Early Childhood Studies in the South East Technological University in Waterford. She has professional experience of working in the areas of women's homelessness and domestic abuse. Her research interests focus specifically on issues relating to care and social justice among people who are homeless and have multiple needs (addiction, domestic abuse/sexual violence and mental illness), including mothers, mental health service users, and their relations with professionals. Méabh is passionate about social justice and advocates for the inclusion of care and justice into research and practice responses to marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

This paper is based on some of the findings from a PhD study completed in the Republic of Ireland entitled 'Homeless Unaccompanied Mothers and Affective Injustices: Why a Relational Framework for Social Caring Matters'. A primary aim of this research was to explore how homeless unaccompanied mothers with complex needs have experienced the caring of professional care workers and how professional care workers have responded to the affective, economic and related needs of homeless mothers. The findings seek to advance understanding of the centrality of relationality and affective equality to professional care responses to gender and class-based inequalities, such as women's homelessness. Ultimately, this study seeks to identify spaces of resistance to social injustices within secondary and tertiary care relations (namely, professional care relations with homeless mothers and their relationships to the state) through a framework of Doulia.



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The study consisted of two phases- phase one involved twelve in-depth interviews with seven homeless unaccompanied mothers with complex needs about their experiences of care across three spheres of affective relations ( primary/motherhood), secondary (professional), tertiary (stated-led) (Lynch 2007). Phase two involved critical conversations with twelve professionals working in the homelessness sector in Ireland. In phase two, the study explored professional care and solidarity work with mothers; critically analysing the extent to which relations of institutional and practitioner power or solidarity frame the character of professional care relationships with mothers. It investigated the extent to which responses to mothers are located within a framework of affective equality/inequality.

Findings reveal important insights into the nature of secondary care relations between mothers and professionals under the current model of neoliberal capitalism, from the perspectives of professionals and mothers. The findings reveal the importance of doulia to socially just responses to homeless unaccompanied mothers, and to homeless mothers/women in general.