Homelessness

First Country Report Switzerland

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Abbreviations

AHV	Old age and survivors' insurance	Alters- und Hinterbliebenenversicherung
BFS	Federal Statistical Office (FSO)	Bundesamt für Statistik
BSV	Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO)	Bundesamt für Sozialversicherung
BWO	Federal Office of Housing	Bundesamt für Wohungswesen
ETHOS	European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion	
FAGASS	Coordination group of Streetwork in Switzerland	Fachgruppe Aufsuchende Sozialarbeit/Streetwork des Fachverbandes Sucht
FEANTSA	European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless	
Federal Council		Bundesrat
Federal Act on the Promotion of Low-cost Housing		Bundesgesetz über die Förderung von preisgünstigem Wohnraum / Wohnraumförderungsgesetz, (WFG)
Housing Construction and Property Promotion Act		Wohnbau und Eigentumsförderungsgesetz (WEG)
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Internationale Pakt über die wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und kulturellen Rechte (UNO-Pakt I)
IV	disability insurance	Invalidenversicherung
NAP	National Programme for Preventing and Combating Poverty	Nationalen Programms zur Prävention und Bekämpfung von Armut
NEE	Non-entry decision (non-admission)	Nichteintretensentscheid / Recht auf Nothilfe
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	
OR	Code of Obligations	Obligationenrecht
SKOS	Swiss Conference for Social Welfare	Schweizerische Konferenz für Sozialhilfe
Swiss Federal Constitution		Bundesverfassung
Swiss Confederation of Trade Unions		Gewerkschaften
UN	United Nations	
VAT	Value Added Tax	Mehrwertsteuer
WHO	World Health Organisation	
ZGB	Swiss Civil Code	Zivilgesetzbuch

Introduction

Homelessness, which is the most serious form of poverty in Switzerland, has only recently come to be seen as an issue in the field of social science research. Up to now, studies have only been carried out selectively and they have been thematically unsorted. There was no expectation of knowing the extent of homelessness in Switzerland, nor of its regional distribution. To date, there has also been a lack of a legally binding definition of homelessness and statistics that can be used at national level to calculate a profile for this form of poverty.

On the other hand, the understanding of homelessness is more extensive. Anyone who writes about homelessness in Switzerland reinforces the thesis that homelessness is always linked to a housing situation and to a danger of exclusion from the housing market. The Swiss non-governmental organisations responsible for homelessness have always followed the European typology *Homelessness and Housing Exclusion* drawn up by FEANTSA.

Switzerland has a tradition in reporting on housing provision to the UN institutions. And Switzerland has been warned several times about its ignorance regarding rooflessness, houselessness, unsecured and inadequate housing. The Federal Bodies have also discussed homelessness at national level, particularly in Parliament and the Federal Council. In addition, various popular initiatives have been submitted to referendum on the subject of housing – but without success.

In Switzerland, the gap created by the lack of solid scientific knowledge is mainly filled by the press. And precisely because scientific studies are lacking, the image in the public imagination is determined by the media. For example, at the height of Swiss drug policy implementation, the homeless were primarily equated with drug users. This image still influences public opinion today. The press has always condemned negative behaviour and attitudes directed towards people affected by homelessness. For example, when the rule to discourage homeless people from using public spaces was introduced in Switzerland or when it was decided railway stations were to be closed at night.

The approval of research projects on homelessness in Switzerland by the Swiss National Science Foundation has enabled the authors to undertake a review of the current state of knowledge.[1] This document intends to fulfil this purpose. Due to the lack of prior reference studies, broad research was required. It was necessary to record what Switzerland should participate in, what would be expected of the international agreements if they were ratified, and how Europe behaves regarding the issue of homelessness.

This document is intended as a search report. It systematically collects findings from various areas deemed relevant by the research team. However, it limits its findings to the national level. Gathering feedback at the cantonal level and from the municipalities, NGOs and the relevant professional community would be the next step.

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[1] See http://p3.snf.ch/Project-180631 and http://p3.snf.ch/project-185135

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1   Definition of Homelessness

Switzerland has no official definition of homelessness. Switzerland is not alone in this in Europe, as the latest report of the European Social Policy Network ESPN (ESPN 2019) shows.[2] Most European countries work without a definitional framework. In Croatia, for example, a person is homeless under the *Social Care Act* if he or she has no place of residence, lives in a public square or other place that is not intended for housing and has no means of his or her own to change this situation (Bežovan 2019, 5).[3] In the Netherlands, according to the National Statistical Office (CBS), the homeless also include people who live involuntarily with their family or friends "and do not know where they will sleep the next night" (Oostveen 2019, 5).[4]

The lack of clarity in the definitions has various consequences for Switzerland: an internationally comparable assessment of the problem becomes almost impossible due to the incomparability of nationally collected figures or the use of statistics. At the national level, the lack of a definition of homelessness makes it difficult to legislate and thus to secure entitlements for those affected. It also makes it impossible to compare existing statistics from homelessness services and thus clarify the extent and profile of homelessness even in the same city. On the other hand, as far as the national strategies to combat homelessness are concerned, the consequences are not so clear. For example, Denmark, which is a European benchmark for preventing and combating homelessness, has no definition. Here it is the statistical offices that make robust clarifications; however they can only be guided by what is measurable based on the information obtained.

Despite this lack of clarification of the definition of homelessness in Europe – in which Switzerland participates – it is possible to fall back on a largely common understanding of homelessness.[5] Two most important agreements can be named here:

(1)   Homelessness is always linked to exclusion from the housing market. The EU's *Social Investment Pact* (2013) made this clear when it focused the fight against homelessness primarily on the provision of housing and the loss of housing (especially evictions). Homelessness is therefore the most serious of several precarious living situations – and the European umbrella organisation FEANTSA developed this in its ETHOS typology. In addition to homelessness (living on the street and staying in emergency shelters), there are the dimensions of insecure housing and inadequate housing. Accordingly, homelessness in Europe is always linked to other, precarious forms of living.

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[2] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738angId=enubId=8243urtherPubs=yes

[3] Bežovan, G. (2019). ESPN Thematic Report on National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion – Croatia, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Brussels: European Commission.

[4] Oostveen, A. (2019) ESPN Thematic Report on National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion – The Netherlands, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Brussels: European Commission.

[5] http://aei.pitt.edu/45917/1/swd2013_0042.pdf

(2) The idea of 'good' housing is based on a 3-pillar principle[6]: the first pillar focuses on the adequacy of housing in relation to the needs to be satisfied of an individual or a family. The second pillar focuses on the possibility of experiencing living space as an experience of privacy and social embeddedness. The third pillar requires the exclusivity of the rights of disposal over the living space. Where all three conditions (adequacy, privacy, right of disposal) are fulfilled, there is a housing situation that can be described as 'a home'; depending on the situation in the individual dimensions, there are 2 conceptual categories 'homelessness' and 'exclusion from the housing market' or 7 operational categories ('street homelessness' to 'inadequate housing').

Figure 1: The 3 dimensions of homelessness and exclusion from the housing market (explanation of numbers 1-7 see next page)
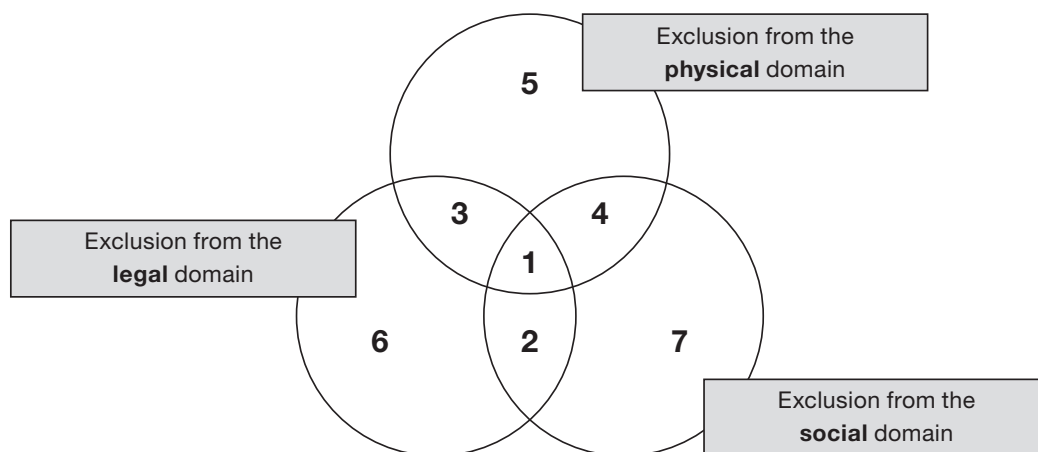
Source: https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2007/study_homelessness_en.pdf[7]

[6] Detailed in: https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2007/study_homelessness_en.pdf, p. 55ff.

[7] Busch-Geertsema, Volker (2010) Defining and Measuring Homelessness. European Journal of Homelessness. 19-39.

Figure 2: The seven categories of homelessness, homelessness and precarious housing derived from the dimensions

Table 1.1: Seven theoretical categories of homelessness

Conceptual category	Operational categories		Physical domain	Legal domain	Social domain
Homelessness	1	Rooflessness	No dwelling (roof)	No legal title to a space for exclusive possession	No private and safe personal space for social relations
Homelessness	2	Houselessness	Has a place to live, fit for habitation	No legal title to a space for exclusive possession	No private and safe personal space for social relations
Housing exclusion	3	Insecure and inadequate housing	Has a place to live (not secure and unfit for habitation)	No security of tenure	Has space for social relations
Housing exclusion	4	Inadequate housing and social isolation within a legally occupied dwelling	Inadequate dwelling (unfit for habitation)	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	No private and safe personal space for social relations
Housing exclusion	5	Inadequate housing (secure tenure)	Inadequate dwelling (dwelling unfit for habitation)	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	Has space for social relations
Housing exclusion	6	Insecure housing (adequate housing)	Has a place to live	No security of tenure	Has space for social relations
Housing exclusion	7	Social isolation within a secure and adequate context	Has a place to live	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	No private and safe personal space for social relations

Source: https://www.feantsaresearch.org/download/ch013303200488323787194.pdf[8]

[8] Busch-Geertsema, Volker (2010) Defining and Measuring Homelessness. European Journal of Homelessness. 19-39.

2 Extent of Homelessness: Statistics and Surveys

Switzerland has no data on homelessness. Neither the number of homeless people nor the number of people potentially affected by homelessness have been recorded throughout Switzerland to date. [9] As part of a European network project, meaningful data is currently only available for the city of Basel (Drilling, Dittmann, Bischof 2019)[10]; a survey is being prepared throughout Switzerland.[11]

An approach designed to establish the number of people affected or threatened by homelessness must therefore be based on the analysis of the housing market. The more exact the studies are with regard to social-structural positions, the better the references that can be made to the topic of homelessness.

The provision of housing via the Swiss housing market is assessed as sufficient and of high quality, for example in the report on Switzerland on the occasion of the UN-Habitat III Conference in 2016.[12] However, although the housing needs of the Swiss population are largely satisfied, there are certain social groups who are disadvantaged in the private housing market – especially in cities and their agglomerations. In particular, it is difficult for older people, people with disabilities and people living in modest financial circumstances to find accommodation and they are heavily burdened by housing costs (National Report Habitat III 2016:11). In their report on the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Switzerland, the Federal Office for Spatial Development and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (2018: 37)[13] state that in Switzerland almost 84% of households affected by poverty and 57% of households in precarious situations do not have adequate housing. The provision of housing is described similarly in the document 'Housing Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Households' (Beck et al. 2018)[14] published by the Federal Social Insurance Office (BSV) and the Federal Housing Office (BWO). In this publication, published as part of the national programme against poverty[15], the Federal Offices refer to the study 'Housing Provision in Switzerland: Survey of households of people living in poverty and in precarious circumstances' (Bochsler et al. 2016)[16] and state that housing costs account for more than 30 percent of gross income for four out of five households affected by poverty. The BSV and the BWO recognise not only a lack of affordable housing but also an access problem, as described in the study 'Non-Monetary Housing Services for People Living in Poverty and

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[9] http://www.oecd.org/els/family/HC3-1-Homeless-population.pdf

[10] https://www.lives-nccr.ch/sites/default/files/pdf/publication/lives_wp_76_drilling.pdf

[11] http://p3.snf.ch/project-185135

[12] https://www.bwo.admin.ch/bwo/de/home/wohnungspolitik/internationale-aktivitaeten/un-habitat-iii.html

[13] https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/agenda2030/de/documents/agenda2030-grundlage-laenderbericht-bestandesaufnahme-schweiz-2018_DE.pdf

[14] https://www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch/cshop_mimes_bbl/8C/8CDCD4590EE41ED881B2126BD9F93239.pdf

[15] The National Programme for Preventing and Combating Poverty (NPA) was implemented by the Confederation, cantons, municipalities, cities and civil society organisations from 2014 to 2018. The programme created new foundations for poverty prevention and promoted the networking of actors. The "Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Poverty" will be followed by the "National Platform against Poverty" (www.gegenarmut.ch) from 2018 to 2024 within the same framework.

[16] https://www.bwo.admin.ch/bwo/de/home/Wohnungsmarkt/studien-und-publikationen/wohnversorgung-in-der-schweiz.html

at Risk of Poverty'[17] as follows: "Access is generally difficult for people who have poor references due to debt collection, lack of payment discipline or conflicts in previous tenancies, regardless of the situation of the rental housing market. The same applies to people on welfare and/or migrants who, because of their name or skin colour, experience implicit or explicit discrimination, even in more relaxed housing markets" (Althaus et al. 2016:VII).

For a better understanding of the difficult situation of certain population groups in the housing market, it is worth taking a look at individual statistics regarding the Swiss housing market. Figure 3 shows that, compared to other European countries, Switzerland has a smaller than average proportion of people owning their own home and a high proportion of female tenants paying rents at market prices. Only 7.2% of the total population benefited from subsidised housing in 2017 (Eurostat 2017).[18]

This situation is reflected in the distribution of owner types in Swiss rental apartments (BFS 2019a).[19] Less than five percent of all rented housing belongs to state actors, which also explains the large use of subsidised housing. In addition there is a low average vacancy rate of 1.66% in 2019 (BFS 2019b).[20]

The burden of housing costs varies considerably depending on disposable income. For the reference value 'Housing costs of more than 40% of disposable income', the Federal Statistical Office calculates on the basis of EU-SILC data (European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) that around 36% of all low-income households are affected. In contrast, only 1.3% of all high-income households spend more than 40% of their disposable income on housing. Looking at social groups, the unemployed, single parents, individuals and above all individuals aged 65 and over (around 40%) are affected by housing costs that demand more than 40% of their disposable income. In addition housing costs are only one of several expenditure items for a household. Consumer spending or expenditure on transport, insurance and fees are also among the items with roughly equal financial expenditure.

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[17] https://www.bwo.admin.ch/bwo/de/home/wie-wir-wohnen/studien-und-publikationen/nicht-monetaere-dienstleistungen-im-bereich--wohnen--fuer-armuts.html

[18] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Tab6_1.png

[19] https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/bau-wohnungswesen/wohnungen/mietwohnungen.html

[20] https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/bau-wohnungswesen/wohnungen/leerwohnungen.html

Population distribution by tenure status, 2017
(Share of total population)

	Owner, no outstanding mortgage or housing loan	Owner, with mortgage or loan	Tenant, rent at market price	Tenant, rent at reduced price or free
EU-28	42.8	26.5	20.0	10.7
Romania	95.7	1.1	1.0	2.2
Croatia	83.6	6.9	1.5	8.0
Bulgaria	80.0	2.9	3.0	14.1
Lithuania	78.6	11.1	1.5	8.7
Slovakia	74.0	16.1	8.5	1.5
Poland	73.1	11.1	4.3	11.5
Latvia	70.7	10.8	7.9	10.5
Hungary	69.3	16.0	5.4	9.3
Slovenia	63.6	12.0	5.4	19.0
Estonia	61.8	20.0	4.0	14.2
Malta	60.5	21.4	4.6	13.5
Italy	58.8	13.6	18.0	9.5
Czechia	57.8	20.7	15.5	6.0
Greece	57.6	15.7	21.0	5.8
Cyprus	50.9	19.8	14.4	14.9
Spain	47.6	29.5	14.4	8.5
Ireland	37.8	31.8	12.5	18.0
Portugal	37.5	37.3	12.8	12.5
France	33.5	30.9	19.2	16.4
Luxembourg	32.0	42.7	20.8	4.5
Austria	30.7	24.3	30.1	14.9
Belgium	29.8	42.9	18.7	8.6
Finland	29.1	42.3	13.4	15.2
United Kingdom	27.1	38.0	17.0	17.9
Germany	25.7	25.7	40.0	8.6
Denmark	14.4	47.8	37.7	0.1
Sweden	13.0	52.2	34.0	0.8
Netherlands	8.7	60.7	29.8	0.8
Norway	21.0	60.5	12.6	5.9
Iceland (¹)	14.8	63.9	10.5	10.8
Switzerland (¹)	4.0	38.5	50.2	7.2
North Macedonia	88.0	0.6	0.4	10.9
Serbia	81.0	0.9	3.1	14.9
Turkey (¹)	52.2	7.5	24.5	15.8

(¹) 2016 data.
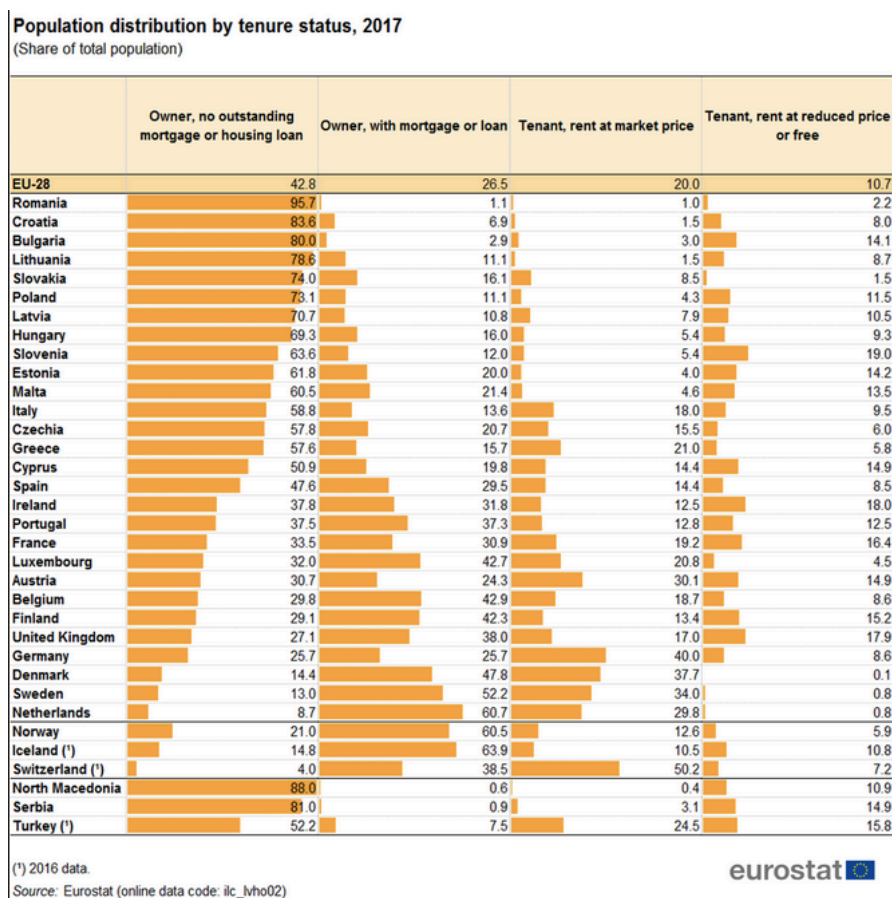Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_lvho02)

eurostat

Figure 3: Proportion of population by type of housing

The OECD also argues in this direction in its 2019 report on affordable housing.[21] Here Switzerland is assessed jointly with other OECD countries and it is established that its housing prices are those which have risen the most between 1996 and 2018 (compared with prices for education or health), and that they also place the greatest burden on low-income households out of all OECD countries. At the same time, the report points to a new group of stakeholders: young people who are looking for a place to live. Here the costs and significance of these costs are particularly problematic in view of disposable income. The OECD report thus points to young people (individuals and families) as a group who are increasingly excluded from the housing market.

[21] https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/06/OECD_Affordable-housing-and-homeless-ness_FINAL.pdf

3 Homelessness in International Conventions and National Legislations

Homelessness as an extreme form of poverty and social exclusion (European Commission 2013)[22] is rarely seen as an isolated phenomenon at the legal level, but rather as part of a broader legal framework of social welfare, poverty reduction and the right to adequate housing. At various levels of political administration, having no shelter or no housing is defined as a situation to be prevented, and an attempt is made to combat it through international conventions or national laws. The right to adequate housing is partially protected under constitutional law at the state level and is used in diverse jurisdictions, e.g. in connection with evictions, tenant internal protection or discrimination in housing. A right to housing derived from this, however, often exists only at the level of society as a whole and not at the level of the individual and varies greatly in its enforceability and implementation depending on the political context.

Below, the international conventions and legislation that Switzerland has ratified, or has not yet ratified, or which are influencing Switzerland in the form of a policy paper are presented:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): ratified by Switzerland
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN Covenant I) 1968: ratified by Switzerland.
- EU Social Charter of 1961/1999: not ratified by Switzerland
- EU Social Investment Package: policy paper
- European Pillar of Social Rights: policy paper
- Agenda 2030: policy paper

3.1 The right to adequate housing under international law

Various international and European treaties and agreements provide for a general right to housing and access to adequate housing for certain social groups. The International Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (Art. 25)[23] and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966 (Art. 11)[24] recognise adequate housing as part of the right to an adequate standard of living. Other international human rights treaties address the right to adequate housing or aspects thereof, such as the protection of one's own home and privacy or protection against discrimination in access to housing.[25] In addition, a right to housing is also described at the European level within the framework of the 'EU Social Charter' (EU Social Charter 1999) and the 'European Pillar of Social Rights'.[26]

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[22] European Commission (2013). Confronting Homelessness in the European Union. Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013SC0042&from=EN

[23] https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=ger

[24] https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx

[25] See, for example, the Antiracism Convention (Art. 5), the Women's Rights Convention (Art. 14), the Children's Rights Convention (Art. 27), the Migrant Workers Convention (Art. 43) or the Disability Rights Convention (Art. 28).

[26] https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf

The international right to decent housing was given additional international attention in 2000 with the creation of the mandate of Special Rapporteur on decent housing. With this mandate, the scope and content of the law could be clarified in greater detail and implementation requirements for signatory states could be specified, as UN Habitat states in a *factsheet* 'The Right to Adequate Housing' (UN Habitat 2009:1).[27] The right to adequate housing is also enshrined in the 'Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development'.[28] Objective 11.1 on inclusive development of cities and settlements provides for "access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services for all by 2030" (United Nations 2015).

3.1.1   Definition by the United Nations: the right to adequate housing

The "right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family [...], including adequate food, clothing and housing [...]" (Art. 11 ICESCR)[29], as set forth in the ICESCR, is to be broadly understood according to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR 1991).[30] The right to accommodation goes beyond the mere possession of one's 'own four walls' and 'a roof over one's head' and is to be regarded as the right to be able to live anywhere in security, peace and dignity. These rights include legal protection against evictions,[31] the availability of infrastructure such as water or energy, sufficient protection against heat, rain, wind and cold, and the accessibility of social facilities. Moreover, housing is not appropriate if it is located in a dangerous area or does not permit the expression of one's own cultural identity (ICESCR 1991).[32]

The international right to decent housing does not force the government to construct housing for the entire population and does not mean that people without housing may demand housing from the government. Rather, it requires governments to take all necessary and possible measures to combat homelessness, prevent evictions, prohibit discrimination in housing and ensure that the housing situation is appropriate for all. These measures may require government intervention at legislative, administrative and political levels, and in certain cases may include specific assistance such as providing housing or housing subsidies, particularly for the most vulnerable groups in society (UN Habitat 2009:6). In accordance with the principle of progressive implementation, the ICESCR obliges the government to implement economic, social and cultural rights to the fullest extent of their possibilities and by all appropriate means. In 2013, an optional protocol for an individual complaints procedure came into force, which allows a government to be charged with disregarding a right provided for in the ICESCR (UN Habitat 2009:44).

The right to adequate housing cannot be considered in isolation from other fundamental rights, but is closely linked to concepts such as human dignity or the principle of non-discrimination.

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[27] https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf

[28] https://www.un.org/Depts/german/gv-70/band1/ar70001.pdf

[29] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

[30] https://www.refworld.org/docid/47a7079a1.html

[31] For forced evictions see also "CESCR General comment no 7: forced evictions": https://www.refworld.org/docid/47a70799d.html

[32] https://www.refworld.org/docid/47a7079a1.html

Adequate housing is indispensable for the granting of fundamental rights such as health or privacy and a permanent place of residence in many places – a prerequisite for being able to choose, find work or claim social benefits (UN Habitat 2009:9).

Homelessness was described by the first Special Rapporteur on the Right to Decent Housing, Miloon Kothari (2000-2008), as "perhaps the most visible and serious symptom of a lack of respect for the human right to decent housing" (Kothari et al. 2006: 51).[33] Homeless people are considered to be a group who have a particular difficulty in exercising this right due to discrimination and stigmatisation. Laws that criminalise homelessness, or so-called clean-up actions to remove homeless people from the streets, result in serious impairment of the physical and psychological integrity of those affected. Because they lack safe housing and privacy, homeless people are much more vulnerable to violence, threats and harassment (UN Habitat 2009:22). Given the seriousness of the multiple violations of the fundamental rights of homeless people, the current Special Rapporteur, Leilani Farha (since 2014), even speaks of a "global human crisis" in connection with the global increase in homelessness, which urgently requires a global response (OHCHR 2015:3).[34] Homelessness is seen as an unacceptable result of states failing to fully guarantee the right to adequate housing, i.e. not taking sufficient account of individual needs and not maintaining structural programmes such as legislation, policies or market mechanisms that discriminate against homeless people (OHCHR 2016:1).[35] In addition to quantitative and qualitative monitoring of homelessness in each country, the current Special Rapporteur calls on the states to take the following specific measures: establish right-based strategies to prevent and combat homelessness, eliminate all policies and structures that discriminate directly or indirectly against homeless people, and ensure access for homeless people to legal assistance when their rights are violated (OHCHR 2016:3).

3.1.2   A human rights-based housing strategy

In a 2018 report, the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing called for an approach to nationally and locally adaptable, human rights-based housing strategies (Human Rights Council 2018).[36] This report distinguishes housing *strategies* from housing *policy* and understands strategies not only as the provision of housing but also as action plans aimed at addressing gaps and inequalities in existing systems and at reviewing and modifying existing housing policies and programmes in order to challenge possible stigmatisation, marginalisation and discrimination behind housing system failures (Human Rights Council 2018: 3). As a basis for such housing strategies, the recognition of the direct connection between inadequate housing and human rights violations is needed: "Homelessness and inappropriate housing violate dignity and are a threat to body and soul, which calls into question the core of what it means to be human. It is precisely these experiences, such as homelessness and inadequate housing

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[33] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238709066_The_Human_Right_to_Adequate_Housing

[34] https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/294/52/PDF/G1529452.pdf?OpenElement

[35] https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Housing/HomelessSummary_en.pdf

[36] https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF-Dateien/Sonstiges/Recht_auf_Wohnen.pdf

conditions, that lead to human rights violations and not only to programme errors" (Human Rights Council 2018: 4).

A human rights-based housing strategy does not understand homeless people or people living in inadequate housing as recipients, beneficiaries or 'objects', as many housing programmes and policies do, but rather as rights holders and active people who are empowered to partici-pate in decisions concerning their lives and the protection of their rights. Housing strategies should thus respond to the lived experience and promote the participation of the people con-cerned (Human Rights Council 2018: 4). Homeless people or people in inappropriate housing are in a special position to identify problems and gaps in housing policies or programmes and have relevant expertise in this regard. Only a strategic approach that recognises this expertise can ensure that nobody is neglected and that steady progress is made in the granting of human rights (Human Rights Council 2018: 4).

3.1.3 The right to accommodation in European treaties and resolutions

A right to accommodation is also provided contractually at European level. The EU Social Char-ter[37], which was adopted by the Council of Europe in Turin in 1961 and entered into force in 1999 in a second, revised version, lays down the fundamental social, cultural and economic rights of all European citizens, including the right to housing (Art. 31): "In order to ensure the ef-fective exercise of the right to housing, the Contracting Parties undertake to take measures de-signed to that end: (1) to promote access to housing of sufficient standard; (2) to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination; (3) to make housing costs afforda-ble for people without sufficient resources" (Council of Europe 1996).

Such a right to housing was also proposed by the European Commission in 2016 in the Twenty Principles of European Social Rights ('European Pillar of Social Rights').[38] Principle 19 on 'Housing and Assistance for the Homeless' provides for access to social housing or housing as-sistance for the needy, protection of vulnerable people from eviction and provision of shelter and social inclusion services for the homeless.

Various resolutions, strategies and measures at the operational level of the European Union can be identified for granting the right to housing and combating homelessness. These are based on the recognition of homelessness as one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation under the 'European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion' as part of the European Strategy 2020 (European Commission 2013:2). In 2013, the European Commission published a working paper 'Confronting Homelessness in the European Union'[39] as part of the *Social Investment Package,* in which it addressed the urgency of the homelessness problem and proposed specific policies and guidelines for the prevention and reduction of homelessness to the member states. These are divided into five areas: 1) prevention of homelessness, 2) de-

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[37] https://www.coe.int/de/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168007cf92

[38] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/euro-pean-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

[39] http://aei.pitt.edu/45917/1/swd2013_0042.pdf

velopment of services for the homeless, 3) participation and empowerment, 4) promotion of access to affordable housing, 5) development of homelessness strategies (European Commission 2013). In the European Parliament, too, the increasing homelessness in most European countries has been the subject of repeated debate over the past decade. The 'European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless', FEANTSA, has produced an overview entitled 'The 2014-2019 European Parliament's Record on Homelessness', praising the broad, cross-party commitment to combating homelessness and social exclusion in the context of precarious housing (FEANTSA 2018).[40] Important moments in this legislature included 19 resolutions addressing homelessness in relation to issues such as gender inequality, fundamental rights, children, disability or marginalised groups, and various actions such as workshops and campaigns on the rising homelessness in Europe. In addition, resolutions have repeatedly been signed calling for an 'EU strategy to combat homelessness'. It calls on the European Community and individual Member States to make significant progress towards ending homelessness and social inclusion through regional and national strategies (European Parliament 2011).

3.2 The international right to adequate housing in Switzerland

Switzerland is committed to respecting universal human rights and economic, social and cultural rights, as described in the ICESCR. It acceded to the ICESCR in 1992, but has not yet ratified the protocol.[41] The EU Social Charter has not been ratified by Switzerland either, although this has been demanded by various actors for several years and the legal conditions for ratification have been fulfilled according to a report by the Federal Council (Federal Council 2014).[42] At the same time, Switzerland participates neither in the form of statements nor through active contributions in the initiatives and resolutions of the European Union on ending homelessness mentioned above.

3.2.1 Implementation of the ICESCR in Switzerland

By signing the ICESCR, Switzerland has accepted the obligation to report regularly on the implementation of the agreement and thus also to demonstrate its consideration of the right to housing. After a delay, Switzerland submitted the first report to the UN Committee in 1998 and the combined second and third reports in 2008. The fourth report was published in February 2018 and discussed in the UN Committee in October 2019. The UN Committee addressed its recommendations to Switzerland in November 2019.[43]

For this country report, these four Swiss reports on the implementation of the ICESCR as well as the recommendations of the UN Committee were analysed using the search terms 'housing', 'shelter', and 'accommodation'. The same procedure was used for the review of statements by

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[40] https://www.feantsa.org/download/world-homelessness-day-20183449149760038022276.pdf

[41] https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/aussenpolitik/voelkerrecht/internationale-uebereinkommenzumschutzdermenschen-rechte/internationaler-pakt-wirtschaftlich-soziale-kulturelle-rechte.html

[42] https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/federal-gazette/2014/5611.pdf

[43] https://www.seco.admin.ch/seco/de/home/Arbeit/Internationale_Arbeitsfragen/UNO.html

Swiss civil society actors, which appeared parallel to the Swiss reporting. When reading Switzerland's reports to the UN Committee, it is noticeable that the right to accommodation provided for in Article 11 of the ICESCR is taken up and commented on in individual passages. However, it plays only a marginal role overall and is not systematically documented and reflected upon in its implementation. The thematic focus of the four reports varies widely and does not cover the various articles of the ICESCR comprehensively, which is why the statements on the right to housing at the various points in time can only be compared to a limited extent and developments cannot be systematically recorded.

The first report of 1998[44] discusses in detail the right to accommodation. In addition to the current housing situation in Switzerland – including that of disadvantaged groups – this report also provides a detailed explanation of Swiss legislation on housing. With regard to homelessness, it is noted that there is no official statistical data, either at national or cantonal level, that would allow an assessment of the situation of homeless people. Only a survey conducted as part of a report from Switzerland to the World Health Organisation (WHO) provided estimates of the number of homeless people in the five largest Swiss cities. These numbers of homeless people, which vary relatively strongly from about 40 people (Lausanne) to a total of about 500 people (Basel), are not further explained in the report. Thus, it remains unclear which definition of homelessness forms the basis of the estimate.

Reports two and three, which were submitted to the UN Committee in 2008, also contain a chapter on the 'Right to Housing', which deals with housing conditions in Switzerland and corresponding federal measures. The housing situation of disadvantaged groups is dealt with only marginally and with reference to Roma people and people with disabilities.

In the fourth report of 2018, the term 'right to accommodation' is no longer used. The 'Housing' chapter focuses on the federal government's housing policy with a focus on the 'Federal Act on the Promotion of Low-cost Housing' and the 'Housing Construction and Property Promotion Act' (cf. Chapter3.3). In addition, a short section on national studies on homelessness appears in the same chapter. As in the first Swiss report in 1998, however, this reference to homelessness is also very brief. Reference is made without comment to a study on housing provision in Switzerland (Bochsler et al. 2016) and to the data on the burden of housing costs from the survey on income and living conditions (SILC) conducted by the Federal Statistical Office (BFS) in 2013.[45]

Switzerland's reporting on the implementation of the ICESCR repeatedly triggered fundamental criticism, not only from the UN Committee, but also from actors within Swiss civil society. In its recommendations to Switzerland in 2010, the UN Committee has expressed fundamental criticism of the binding nature of Switzerland's economic, cultural and social rights. The Committee regretted that most of the provisions of the ICESCR in Switzerland are only programmatic and

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[44] https://www.humanrights.ch/cms/upload/pdf/140602_Staatenbericht_UNO_Pakt_I_1996.pdf

[45] https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/wirtschaftliche-soziale-situation-bevoelkerung/erhebungen/silc.html

social objectives, not binding provisions. This means that some provisions cannot be given effect and cannot be appealed to national courts (Economic and Social Council 2010: 2).[46] Although the UN Committee does not specifically address the right to housing in this context, its criticism should also refer to this. The first report from Switzerland to the UN on the implementation of the ICESCR acknowledges that the Swiss Federal Constitution does not guarantee any right to housing as such and that a corresponding referendum (popular initiative 'Right to housing and extension of family protection') was rejected in 1970. The right to accommodation is only recognised under constitutional law in individual cantons. It is precisely this lack of a national, binding right to housing that forms part of the comprehensive criticism by Swiss non-governmental organisations (NGOs) of Switzerland's first report on the implementation of the ICESCR (Kadima et al. 1998).[47] In their commentary published in 1998, they noted the following shortcomings: "Although tenants are legally protected against eviction and excessive prices, there is no right to housing, i.e. a legal claim including the right of co-determination. Despite protection against eviction, it is now possible, for example, to evict an older, long-term tenant without offering an appropriate replacement and regardless of the psychosocial consequences. Renovations can be carried out at very short notice without the tenants having a say" (Kadima et al. 1998:30). The civil society actors demand a constitutional anchoring of the right to housing that goes further than Article 41 of the Federal Constitution, which only provides for the obligation of the state to ensure that housing seekers can find adequate housing through private initiative and personal responsibility (cf. chapter 3.3) (Kadima et al. 1998:31).

In November 2019, the Economic and Social Council of the UN responds to the fourth report on the implementation and status of the ICESCR of Switzerland.[48] The topics of housing, shelter or precarious living are no longer included within it.

3.2.2 Switzerland's positioning in relation to European measures to grant the right to accommodation

A second debate is taking place in Switzerland regarding the non-ratification of the EU Social Charter by Switzerland. Although Switzerland signed the Social Charter in 1976, both attempts (1987 and 2004) to ratify it have so far failed. Switzerland is thus one of the few member states of the Council of Europe that have not ratified the Social Charter (Council of Europe 2017)[49]. Starting in 2007, a third attempt at ratification took place over more than ten years with the 'Pro Social Charter' campaign of the professional association Avenir Social. The first interim result presented by the Federal Council in 2014 was a report confirming that the legal situation in Switzerland meets the requirements for ratification (Federal Council 2014[50]). Since there has

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[46] http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/docs/co/E.C.12.CHE.CO.2-3.doc

[47] https://www.humanrights.ch/cms/upload/pdf/020612_ngo_sozialpakt.pdf

[48] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCHE%2fCO%2f4ang=en

[49] https://rm.coe.int/16806f399d

[50] https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/federal-gazette/2014/5611.pdf

been no prospect of ratification due to the current political majorities, the campaign was discontinued in autumn 2018 (Avenir Social 2019)[51].

Switzerland has not positioned itself in relation to the 'European Pillar of Social Rights', in relation to housing-specific demands in the European Strategy 2020 or in relation to resolutions on combating homelessness. Individual references can only be found in statements by actors such as political parties or trade unions. Social democrats, for example, are in favour of agreements between Switzerland and the EU based on the 'European Pillar of Social Rights' (lienseurope.ch 2019).[52] The Swiss Confederation of Trade Unions (2018)[53] is also committed to improving living and working conditions by ensuring that new EU social achievements, such as the 'Pillar of Social Rights', are adopted in Switzerland. However, specific references to housing or homelessness are not included in such statements.

3.3 The right to adequate housing under Swiss legislation

3.3.1 Situation

In the Federal Constitution, Switzerland provides for a basic right to assistance in emergencies (Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation Art. 12), which guarantees an unrestricted minimum entitlement to food, clothing, emergency medical assistance and accommodation: "Anyone who finds himself in need and is unable to provide for himself is entitled to assistance and care, and to the means that are indispensable for a dignified existence" (Art. 12 Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation 2018). In practice, emergency aid is targeted at people who have no right to remain in Switzerland and who find themselves in an existential emergency (SKOS 2019).[54]

A universal and legal right to accommodation is not provided for in the Swiss Federal Constitution. Although the social objectives of the federal government define housing as a basic need and stipulate that people seeking housing are to be supported, they do not provide for individual entitlement to housing. In the corresponding Art. 41 of the Federal Constitution, the initiative of those seeking housing is emphasised:

"(1): In addition to personal responsibility and private initiative, the Confederation and the cantons are committed to (...)
(e) housing seekers can find adequate housing for themselves and their families on acceptable terms; (...)

3. They shall pursue social objectives within the limits of their constitutional powers and the means at their disposal.

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[51] https://avenirsocial.ch/was-wir-tun/kampagnen/

[52] https://lienseurope.ch/aufruf/

[53] https://www.sgb.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Kongress2018/Resolution/Resolution_4_de.pdf

[54] https://richtlinien.skos.ch/a-voraussetzungen-und-grundsaetze/a9-nothilfe/

(4) "No direct entitlement to state benefits can be derived from the social objectives" (Art. 41 Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation 2018).

The planned state support for housing seekers is reflected in various housing promotion measures and housing assistance offers. These are based on the constitutionally regulated state promotion of housing construction and home ownership (Federal Constitution Art. 108), which, among other things, also provides for the promotion of housing for economically and socially disadvantaged groups. The enactment of regulations against abusive rents is also laid down as a constitutional mandate (Federal Constitution Art. 109). The primary implementing law is the Housing Promotion Act of 2003, which aims to promote housing for low-income households and access to property, taking into account in particular the interests of families, single parents, people with disabilities, the elderly in need and people in education and training (WFG Art. 1).[55] According to the Swiss report of Switzerland at the UN Habitat III Conference in 2016,[56] the Confederation, cantons and cities have been engaged in an intensive housing policy dialogue since 2013, in which housing market problems are discussed and housing policy measures coordinated at all levels of government in order to provide access to adequate housing for as many sections of the population as possible (National Report Habitat III 2016:11-12). For some time now, various stakeholders have repeatedly called for greater federal commitment to the promotion of affordable housing and charitable housing construction. Such demands regularly appear in national, cantonal and communal political drafts and demands and are expressed in position papers and proposals from civil society organisations. Caritas, for example, states in an analysis on 'Housing and Poverty' (Caritas 2014)[57] that precarious situations in the area of housing can also be attributed to the fact that with the introduction of the Housing Promotion Act (WFG) in 2003 there was a shift from subject-based help to object-based help. Whereas in the previously applicable Housing Construction and Property Promotion Act (WEG) the Federal Government supported people with low incomes and few assets with so-called additional reductions in the sense of subject financing, the WFG limits the Federal Government's support to object assistance in non-profit housing construction (Caritas 2014: 6).[58]

3.3.2   Housing policy measures

In Switzerland, the cantons, cities and municipalities are responsible for implementing housing policy measures and providing housing for socially disadvantaged households. The Confederation defines the legal framework and provides implementation assistance, such as the abovementioned document from the FSIO and the BWO[59], which is conceived as "assistance for cantons, cities and municipalities" (Beck et al. 2018). Possible financial guarantee models for land-

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[55] https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/20010522/index.html

[56] https://www.bwo.admin.ch/bwo/de/home/wohnungspolitik/internationale-aktivitaeten/un-habitat-iii.html

[57] https://www.caritas.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Caritas_Schweiz/data/site/was-wir-sagen/unsere-position/positionspapiere/2014-und-aelter/CA_Armutsmonitoring_2014_DE_Internet.pdf

[58] https://www.caritas.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Caritas_Schweiz/data/site/was-wir-sagen/unsere-position/positionspapiere/2014-und-aelter/CA_Armutsmonitoring_2014_DE_Internet.pdf

[59] https://www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch/cshop_mimes_bbl/8C/8CDCD4590EE41ED881B2126BD9F93239.pdf

lords are analysed in the study 'Securing and Improving Access to Housing for Socially Disadvantaged Households' (Althaus, Schmidt and Glaser 2018) [60], also carried out as part of the national programme against poverty.

In addition to financial contributions to housing costs as part of social assistance and supplementary benefits for old age and survivors' insurance (AHV) and disability insurance (IV), cantons, cities and municipalities are familiar with various other forms of housing assistance for socially disadvantaged households. The Federal Office of Social Security (BSV) and the Swiss Federal Office of Housing (BWO) divide the offers into (1) financial support (subsidising of housing, financial guarantees to landlords), (2) advice and support on housing issues and (3) direct housing offers (emergency accommodation and emergency housing, rental of housing) (Beck et al. 2018:8). In addition to such social policy measures, the public promotion of housing construction and home ownership envisages influencing the housing market at the housing policy level. The BWO has also published a document in this respect in which the possibilities for action by cities and municipalities for the targeted creation of housing for socially disadvantaged households are presented (Beck et al. 2013).[61] In the national programme against poverty, much potential was still attributed to such support measures to facilitate access to and maintenance of suitable and affordable housing for low-income households. The report on the results of the national programme against poverty and a fact sheet on housing published at the same time (National Programme Against Poverty 2018)[62] call for the expansion of financial and non-monetary assistance, the mixing of residential neighbourhoods and the creation of professional interfaces between tenants and landlords in order to be able to contribute more effectively to mediation, counselling and support in terms of housing integration (National Programme Against Poverty 2018). Further action is also seen to be needed to strengthen cooperation between social services and the real estate sector so that the range of services can be better adapted to the needs of the letting party and, conversely, to raise the awareness of the real estate sector regarding the need for adequate housing for disadvantaged groups (Federal Council 2018: 33).[63]

Homelessness appears in the housing policy regulations and recommendations mentioned above as a possible and preventable consequence of inadequate housing provision. Policies and measures that explicitly and primarily relate to dealing with and combating existing homelessness do not exist in Switzerland at the national level. Accordingly, most political debates and demands revolve around housing policy in general, such as demands for more affordable housing, and rarely around the phenomenon of homelessness itself. In the next chapter, the corresponding political transactions will be analysed in more detail.

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[60] https://www.gegenarmut.ch/fileadmin/kundendaten/Studien_NAP/Schlussbericht_Finanzielle_Garantien_17_07_06.pdf

[61] https://www.bwo.admin.ch/bwo/de/home/wohnungspolitik/studien-und-publikationen/preisguenstiger-wohnraum--ein-baukasten-fuer-staedte-und-gemeind.html

[62] https://www.gegenarmut.ch/fileadmin/kundendaten/Faktenblaetter_NAP/Faktenblatt_6_Wohnen_DEF.pdf

[63] https://www.gegenarmut.ch/fileadmin/kundendaten/18._April_18/BR-Bericht_Ergebnisse_Nationales_Programm_Praevention_und_Bekaempfung_von_Armut.pdf

4 Homelessness in Federal Decrees, Parliamentary Debates and Petitions for a Referendum

4.1 Method

In order to analyse the political debates and decisions regarding homelessness and housing in Switzerland, searches were carried out from the search portal Curia Vista[64] on parliamentary business since 1995, on 'palament.ch' and the Swiss official publications of the Federal Archives (without time limit) using the search terms 'homeless* (Obdachlos)', 'houseless* (Wohnungslos)' and 'emergency shelter (Notschlaf*)'. Furthermore, a review of the chronology of the federal referendums[65] (without time limitation) took place. The following hits were found in the search:

database	Keywords and search categories	Total hits	Rele-vant hits
Curia Vista	'Homeless*', under the heading 'agenda items' and under the heading 'Official Bulletin'.	0	
	'Emergency shelter', category 'agenda items'	9	6
	'Emergency shelter', section 'Official Bulletin'.	6	1
	'Homeless,' section 'agenda items.'	29	13
	'Homeless,' section 'Official Bulletin.'	10	3
Official publica-tions Bun-desarchiv	Homeless*, headings 'Federal Assembly (official bulletin, minutes)' (1891-1999) and 'Federal Council' (1948-1995)	6	
	'Emergency shelter', headings 'Federal Assembly (official bulletin, minutes)' (1891-1999) and 'Federal Council' (1948-1995)	17	7
	Homeless*, headings 'Federal Assembly (official bulletin, minutes)' (1891-1999) and 'Federal Council' (1948-1995)	83	83
Federal referen-dums	'Homeless*', search in 'Chronology of Swiss Referendums'	0	
	'emergency shelter', search in 'Chronology of Swiss Referendums'	0	
	'housing*', search in 'Chronology of Swiss Referendums'	5	5
	'rental*', search in 'Chronology of Swiss Referendums'	5	5
	Review of the pending Swiss popular initiatives	1	1
	Review of the pending Swiss referendum documents	0	

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[64] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/curia-vista/curia-vista-erklaert

[65] https://www.bk.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/va/vab_2_2_4_1.html

4.2 Chronology of debates

The following documents can be used for position determination:

year	occasion	detail
1913	Meeting of the National Council, 09.04.1913	Motion Eugsterüst concerning care for those unemployed through no fault of their own
1917	Federal Council meeting, 18.06.1917	Ordinance on limited rent increases
	Federal Council meeting, 20.10.1917	Submissions of the Municipal Council 2629 of the City of Bern concerning the fight against housing shortages
1919	Meeting of the National Council, 04.04.1919	Agenda item: 'Relieving the housing shortage'
1929	Meeting of the National Council, 17.12.1929	Agenda item: 'Tenant protection and modification of the Swiss Civil Codes ZGB and the Code of Obligations OR'
1930	Meeting of the National Council, 10.12.1930	Postulate Escher concerning the promotion of families with many children
1941	Federal Council meeting, 09.04.1941	Utilisation of unused living space
1942	Federal Council Decree, 21.04.194	Postponement of the relocation date in the municipality of Bern to prevent homelessness
1943	Federal Council Decree, 22.04.1943	Postponement of relocation date in the municipality of Biel approved
	Federal Council meeting, 19.08.1943	Promotion of housing construction for officials of public administrations in Bern
1944	Federal Council meeting, 02.08.1944	Credit for the promotion of housing construction
	Meeting of the National Council, 20.09.1944	Postulate Boerlin concerning the promotion of housing construction (in favour of families with many children)
1947	Meeting of the National Council, 07.10.1947	Steinmann's opinion on Schümperlin's postulate 'commercial and industrial buildings (continuation)' (in German)
1950		Federal Decree on the extension of the period of validity and the amendment of the Federal Decree on measures to promote housing construction (rejected)[66]
1951	Federal Council meeting, 07.12.1951	Protection of tenants
1955		Federal Decree of 22.12.1954 on the popular initiative 'for the protection of tenants and consumers (continuation of price control)'
1970	Petition for a referendum, 27.09.1970	For the right to housing and the extension of family protection (rejected)
1972		Federal Decree of 17.12.1971 concerning the amendment of the Federal Constitution by Article 34septies on the declaration of general applicability of tenancy agreements and measures for the protection of tenants
		Federal Decree concerning the amendment of the Federal Constitution by Article 34sexies on housing construction and concerning the referendum on the creation of a housing fund (Denner Initiative) (rejected)
1974	Meeting of the National Council, 02.10.1974	'Narcotics. Change'
1977		Federal Decree of 25.03.1977 on the popular initiative 'for an effective tenant protection.'
1986		Federal Decree 21.03.1986 on the popular initiative 'for tenant protection' (alternative draft)
1988	23.06.1988	Simple Request Braunschweig (88.692) '700 Years of the Confederation: Legislative Programme for Minorities' (in German)[67]

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[66] https://www.amtsdruckschriften.bar.admin.ch/viewOrigDoc.do?id=10036682

[67] https://www.parlament.ch/afs/data/d/gesch/1988/d_gesch_19880692_002.htm

1991	Meeting of the National Council, 21.03.1991	'Federal Decree on Housing Construction' Leutenegger Oberholzer application
1992	Meeting of the National Council, 18.06.1992	Concerning 3.1 million Swiss francs requested by the Federal Council for preventive measures in the field of drugs
	23.09.1992: Motion Caspar-Hutter (92.3386)	'Patients' rights in custodial detention'[68]
	03.06.1992: Motion Bishop (92.3190)	'Misappropriation of the civil defence and its installations'[69]
1993	06.12.1993: Question Dormann (93.5236)	'Homeless. Measures'[70]
	09.12.1993: Motion De Dardel (93.3587)	'People without fixed abode and the right to dwell'[71]
1994	03.10.1994: Urgent interpellation Weber Monika	Drug problem
	16.12.1994: Motion Scherrer (94.3577)	'VAT exemption for non-profit Brockenstuben'[72]
	29.11.1994: Interpellation Scherrer (94.3499)	'VAT exemption for Brockenstuben'[73]
1995	24.01.1995: Interpellation Ziegler (95.3009)	'VAT. Non-Profit Institutions'[74]
1996	National Council, 21.03.1996	Popular initiatives 'youth without drugs' and 'for a sensible drug policy' (Droleg initiative)
1999	1999: Popular Initiative	'Home ownership for all' (rejected)
2003	10.12.2002: Motion Dupraz (02.3692)	'Emmaus Geneva and VAT'[75]
2003	2003: Popular initiative	'Yes to fair rents' (rejected)
	03.03.2003: Debate in the National Council	Extension of the Federal Decree on the medical prescription of heroin[76]
2012	23.09.2012 Popular initiative	'Secure living in old age' (rejected)
2014	11.09.2014: National Council debate on Motion Büchel	'Payments. Ensuring basic services for Swiss citizens abroad'[77]
	23.09.2014: Interpellation Marra (14.3770)	'Emergency shelters for the homeless in Switzerland'[78]
	11.12.2014: Postulate Marra (14.4210)	'Emergency sleeping places. Measures taken or planned.'[79]
2016	15.12.2016: Interpellation Addor (16.4036)	'Are asylum seekers preferred to our homeless?'[80]
2018	31.05.2018: Interpellation Schneeberger (18.3429)	'The commander of the border guard needs clear political instructions. Uncertainty and dissatisfaction in the population grow.'[81]
Running.	Pending Swiss popular initiative	Federal popular initiative 'More affordable apartments'

[68] https://www.parlament.ch/afs/data/d/gesch/1992/d_gesch_19923386_002.htm

[69] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=19923190

[70] https://www.parlament.ch/afs/data/d/gesch/1993/d_fra_19935236.htm

[71] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=19933587

[72] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=19943577

[73] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=19943499

[74] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=19953009

[75] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20023692

[76] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=5382

[77] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=30436

[78] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20143770

[79] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20144210

[80] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20164036

[81] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20183429

In the years before the First World War, parliamentary work was focused on the consequences of unemployment. A first source we found in the databases is the Motion Eugster-Züst. At the National Council meeting on April 9th, 1913, unemployment, homelessness and individual loss of hope were connected in an argument concerning care for the unemployed: *"Unemployment is soon joined by homelessness, and once the family is on the street, it is almost impossible to prevent its complete disintegration. One should not be surprised when the courage of those affected sinks, when they let themselves go completely and when they consequently become a burden to the congregation on the steep slope of gradual occurrence. But not infrequently, before it comes to this, the family, brought to despair by unemployment and misery, ends in common death in shattering scenes."* At this time, the Federal Council is still not very aware of the subject and there are no further debates or motions. That changes abruptly towards the end of the First World War. Homelessness became visible in many cities and leads the Federal Council in its meeting of 18.06.1917 to the adoption of an ordinance on limited rent increases: *"The draft for a Federal Council resolution on the protection of tenants against rent increases and evictions submitted by the Justice and Police Department is approved. The decision shall enter into force on June 20th."* In the same year, cantons and municipalities followed, such as the city of Bern, which sent the Federal Council a petition to combat housing shortages, which was discussed at its meeting of October 20th, 1917. Less than one year later (29.10.1918) it decreed: *"The municipalities of Bern and Madretsch (Kt.Bern) are authorised to order that people and families whose tenancy agreement expires on November 1, 1918 and who have not found another place to live up to that date may temporarily remain in the rented residential premises.*" This order was then be extended regionally (31.10.1918 extension to Strättligen, 25.04.1919 Nidau, 29.04.1919 Lengnau, 09.05.1919 Pieterlen). The Federal Council decree of 08.11.1918 supports the municipalities in implementing this housing policy in the event of housing shortages: *"The cantonal governments are authorised, in the municipalities suffering from housing shortages, to make use of flats and rooms for the accommodation of homeless people or families for the attention of the municipality in accordance with the following provisions"*. The housing shortage remains an issue. National Councillor Burren brings this to the National Council meeting of 04.04.1919 under the title 'Relief of the housing shortage': *"Now we are missing the 250 flats completely, so to speak, because during the World War private building activity has completely failed, for reasons known to all of you. These are conditions that must not be allowed to persist, and which make an intervention absolutely necessary. The municipality of Bern has helped itself with the barrack system, which is inadequate. It has new schoolhouses filled with homeless families, a situation that must not continue, and so it is simply necessary to act; we could not justify it to the urban population if we did not declare that the entry to housing is absolutely necessary at this moment."*

In the years after 1919 no further sources can be found in the mentioned databases. It was not until 10 years later that the housing situation was discussed again in the National Council. This time by Escher, who speaks on December 17th 1929 under the agenda item "*Tenant protection and modification of the Swiss Civil Code ZGB and the Code of Obligations OR*" of the *"duty of the state", "to attend to the right in time and to take the necessary measures, because it is true that childlessness is often the price of homelessness.*" His speech is followed by the corresponding postulate that aims to promote families with many children. At the National Council

meeting of 10.12.1930, he justified "*assistance in housing*" as follows: *"A healthy person can only grow up in healthy and sufficient housing. Last but not least, the housing mismanagement will have to be blamed for the life-threatening crash of the birth curve, especially in the cities. Childlessness is, to a certain extent, the price of homelessness.*"

It took until the Second World War for the debates on housing shortages to appear again in the databases – but from then on they appear almost annually. In its meetings, the Federal Council continually adopts measures: on 09.04.1941 it discusses the use of unused residential space, on 21.04.1942 it decides to provide extensions to relocation dates in the municipality of Bern in order to prevent homelessness, on 22.04.1943 the extension to relocation dates in the municipality of Biel is also approved. On 19.8.1943, the Federal Council also discussed the promotion of housing construction for officials of public administrations: *"According to the Finance Directorate of the City of Bern, dozens of families are still registered with the homeless welfare service. The influx of wartime officials to Bern has not yet come to a standstill. It is common for middle and senior officials not to find accommodation."* Only one year later (02.08.1944), the Federal Council decides on several credit lines to promote housing construction: *"A further delay would now lead to undesirable hardships, and in many places to homelessness when relocation dates arise.*" In the same year (20.09.1944), Boerlin submitted a postulate to the National Council for the targeted promotion of housing construction for the benefit of families with many children. In his explanatory statement, he presents the idea that living spaces that are too small are a form of housing shortage: *"For families with many children, the question of living space cannot be clarified by counting the number of empty flats alone. In particular, it is a question of price, of the increasing rent. The rent rises along with the requirements for space, and this with the number of children, which is not yet taken into account everywhere and in full measure by wage supplements. That is why some large families are forced to adapt in such a way that they have less living space than necessary, a form of housing shortage that can be at least as bad in its effects as homelessness and which the general public urgently needs to eliminate for social, hygienic and moral reasons.*" In the Federal Council, the prevention of homelessness has an undisputed urgency, as it made clear at its session of 29.03.1945: *"The Federal Council has repeatedly taken the view that for reasons of state and social policy, the fight against homelessness must take precedence over all other considerations.* To underpin this urgency, various debates and decisions were taken in the post-war years to alleviate the housing shortage. In the National Council meeting of 07.10.1947 (Steinmann's statement regarding Schümperlin's postulate 'Commercial and industrial buildings') speculation on land is denounced, since this *"obstructs housing construction".* This leads to a preference for *"building for industry and commerce"* with serious consequences*,* as Steinmann explains*: "I myself have witnessed how this shortage has delayed residential construction by months, delayed the move into such apartments by months, and forced the homeless person to wait months for the buildings to be completed".*

Then the decision-making behaviour changes; in the following years there are several votes which have negative effects on the protection of tenants or special target groups: On 29.1.1950, the extension of the measures introduced in 1947 to promote housing construction was rejected by a referendum by around 54%. And in the Federal Council meeting of 07.12.1951 it was decided not to continue the measures for the protection of tenants, as they were defined in 1941,

1944 and 1948 (in particular the extensions to relocation dates), beyond 31 December 1952. Homelessness is explicitly mentioned here: *"The so-called housing shortage is today less a question of housing shortages and the danger of homelessness associated with them than a question of rental prices. However, the latter cannot be regulated by restrictions on termination and extensions given to relocation dates.*" Also the right of official use of unused dwellings and the restriction of the dwelling was abolished. In 1955, the Federal Decree of 22.12.1954 on the popular initiative "for the protection of tenants and consumers (continuation of price control)" was narrowly accepted by the population, but rejected by the Council of States. This concludes a phase of closer political framing of housing supply and numerous target group-specific protection goals.

Even some 15 years later, protection goals cannot be enforced at national level. The 'Referendum for the Right to Housing and the Extension of Family Protection' (1970) is rejected. The popular initiative called for a right to housing to be enshrined in the Constitution: *"The Confederation recognises the right to housing and takes the necessary measures to safeguard it so that families and individuals can obtain housing that meets their needs and whose rent or costs do not exceed their financial capacity".* And where there is nevertheless a shortage of housing, *"the Confederation, in agreement with the canton concerned, shall take the necessary temporary measures to protect families and individuals against unjustified termination of tenancy agreements, against speculative rents and against all other abuses.*" Although the volume of construction increased in the 1970s, the situation in residential construction remained tense. The tensions between a capitalist-oriented housing industry, the liberal state organs and numerous critical Marxist university institutes made the question of interventionist measures by the state an object of debate. As a result, the wholesale company *Denner* supported a referendum to set up a housing fund (Denner Initiative). The plan was to set up a housing fund *"from which mortgage loans with low, socially graded interest rates for the construction of apartments and old people's homes as well as contributions to the development of building land were to be paid".*[82] But even this petition for a referendum was rejected in favour of a counter-proposal, which only spoke of *"granting the federal government general competence to promote housing construction and the acquisition of residential property and house ownership".*[83] However, the intention to keep the development of rents in the focus of social policy led to another popular initiative in 1977. Here, too, the focus is on the protection of tenants, with a controlled increase in rents and making terminations of tenancy agreements more complex. But this popular initiative 'for an effective tenant protection' was also rejected, just like the counter-proposal (of 25.03.1977) on 25.09.1977.

A first National Council meeting took place between the two referendums, during which homelessness was addressed directly. As agenda item 'Narcotics. Change' on 02.10.1974, Bratschi introduced the situation of an emergency shelter and opened the debate on the link between

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[82] https://anneepolitique.swiss/APS/de/APS_1972/APS1972_I_6_c_2_print.html

[83] ibid.

drug consumption and homelessness that continued in Switzerland until the 1990s: *"An emergency shelter, called 'Sleep-in', also accommodates 30 young people night after night. For them, the 'sleep-in' should not be the final destination; it is, however, because there are no corresponding cantonal institutions that could take over this care task. We can only be dismayed and simply state: the drug wave has overrun us."*

Since the 1980s, parliamentary tasks, debates and popular initiatives have alternated on a regular basis in the areas of low-cost housing, protection of tenants, homelessness on the one hand, and drug consumption problems, homelessness and support on the other. The success of initiatives in the area of rent protection remain low. On 21.03.1986 the popular initiative 'For an effective tenant protection' was rejected, in 1999 the federal initiative 'Home ownership for all', in 2003 the popular initiative 'Yes to fair rents' and on 23.12.2012 the popular initiative 'Secure living in old age' failed. Another popular initiative is planned for the coming years: 'More affordable housing' demands in the medium term that the Confederation, *"in cooperation with the cantons, together strive for a steady increase in the share of housing owned by non-profit housing developers in the total housing stock. In cooperation with the cantons, it ensures that at least 10 percent of newly built dwellings throughout Switzerland are owned by these institutions."*

The issue of homelessness in these years is primarily tackled as a consumer problem and no longer by housing construction, as in previous years. This is the understanding of the cost estimate in the National Council meeting of 18 June 1992 in which Leemann reads the 3.1 million Swiss francs demanded for preventive measures in the field of drugs, an argument of conformity with homelessness support and with simultaneous distribution of tasks between the Confederation and the cantons, in which he demands: *"The Confederation should make the social services possible; the operation of the contact points, day rooms or emergency sleeping places, etc. should, on the other hand, remain with the cantons and communes in accordance with the statutory mandate."* Plattner's idea about the help for the homeless in the field of drug prevention is similarly located when, on 03.10.1994, he addresses the urgent interpellation of Weber on the drug problem: *"In Basel we now have three drug consuming rooms, one of which – I don't know if this is already the case today – will even be paid for by a neighbouring canton, although it is in our city. We have several emergency sleeping places. We have a street kitchen. We have day rooms and shelters."* On the occasion of the popular initiatives 'Youth Without Drugs' and 'For a Sensible Drug Policy' (Droleg-Initiative), Gysin links the topic of homelessness even more clearly with drug policy in the National Council on 21 March 1996: *"We have a viable, integrated four-pillar model, as it is on the table at the Federal Government. We've been living this in Basel for six to seven years. We have well-developed, functioning survival support with three drug consuming rooms, emergency sleeping places, soup kitchens, day structures and other institutions …."* And in the late summer of the same year, Plattner renewed his idea in the Upper Chamber (17.09.1996) on the occasion of a debate on the two popular initiatives, that drug prevention was above all also effective in the offers of help to the homeless: *"This policy, the four-pillar policy, is also based on a pillar that is repressive. Repression is important, but it never has the weight that it has in the minds of some representatives of the hard line. We do not primarily send police and investigators onto the streets to clear up the problem, but we concentrate our efforts and resources – including financial ones – on drug consuming rooms, on setting up emergency sleeping places, on street kitchens, on day centres, on shelters for young drug-*

dependent prostitutes, on advice centres on withdrawal possibilities, on outpatient and inpatient drug withdrawal centres and much more besides." In this context two documents are relevant which refer to the accommodation of homeless people with an addiction illness (Motion Bischof of 03.06.1992 and Motion Dormann of 6.12.1993).

Only two documents show that in the time of the narrow definition that homelessness is mainly related to drug consumption, the National Council argued for a further thrust on the topic of homelessness: the motion Leutenegger Oberholzer for the 'Federal Housing Decree' of March 21, 1991 and the motion De Dardel of March 9, 1993. Leutenegger Oberholzer pleads for *"fifteen percent of this to be used specifically for the housing supply for socially disadvantaged population groups and their specific housing needs".* According to the applicant, the *"housing problem has worsened for everyone. For the fringe groups of society, however, the situation has become dramatic in recent times. This is shown by the many homeless people in the cities. The Housing and Property Promotion Act promotes traditional forms of housing. It is a support programme aimed at people with medium to low incomes. It is clear that the socially most disadvantaged groups cannot benefit from this. These are the groups that do not appear at all on the traditional housing market. I am thinking of the homeless, whose numbers are also rising sharply in Switzerland. There are already many people in large cities today who do not have apartments and that are dependent on emergency shelters. Emergency accommodation may include, for example, emergency sleeping shelters, containers, etc.*" Leutenegger Oberholzer refers to the report 'Disadvantaged Groups in the Housing Market' by the Housing Research Commission of 1990: *"I therefore request that part of the framework credits that we are approving today be used specifically to finance such alternative forms of housing for the socially most disadvantaged population groups in Switzerland. (...) Some of the low-interest loans to umbrella organisations of non-profit housing construction for the accumulation of Fonds de Roulement (an instrument for low-interest loans) are to be used specifically for the creation of housing for socially disadvantaged groups. This would then also allow the federal government to co-finance, for example, containers, emergency sleeping facilities and the like.*" The applicant withdrew the application after a debate, but was able to add the issue of homelessness back to the housing supply for public discussion. The motion de Dardel, which was submitted to the National Council on 09.12.1993, was also not processed any further because it was written off after two years. Under the title 'People without Permanent Residence and the Right to Housing', de Dardel asked the Federal Council to include the right to housing as a political objective and to enshrine it in the Federal Constitution. This is especially important for people who live in very precarious housing conditions and for those who no longer have their own living space.

It would be a further 10 years before the issue of homelessness would be more widely discussed in the National Council again. On 23.09.2014 Marra submits an interpellation on 'Emergency Shelters for the Homeless in Switzerland'. With its questions to the Federal Council, it catapults the issue of homelessness to the institutional level, in particular the division of tasks between the Confederation and the cantons; it sees the people concerned as being torn between the levels. She thus addresses the following issue: *"There are, however, great differences between the cities in terms of policy in this area. Some do not shy away from 'sending' their homeless to other cantons where emergency shelter places might be offered. In most*

cases, this depends on the social policy of the city or canton. Article 12 of the Federal Constitution, however, states: 'Anyone who finds himself in need and is unable to take care of himself is entitled to assistance and care and to the means which are indispensable for a decent existence.' Marra asks whether it is '*normal*' for '*certain cities to fulfil their duty by taking on this task as their responsibility, while others simply sit back and rely on the existing offer?*'" In its reply, the Federal Council rejects any responsibility. It plays down the problem by writing that *"the homeless are part of the reality of Swiss cities"* and admits that it has *"no overall view of the situation in the cities"* and *"therefore cannot comment on the practice of referring to other cities"*. The Federal Council also does not consider the lack of national data to be a reason for a survey and hopes that the *"Conference of Cantonal Social Directors (SODK) will deal with the subject"*. On 12.12.2014 the motion was archived as completed. 2 years later Marra passes a postulate to the same topic under 'emergency sleeping places'. She wanted to know from the Federal Council how the SODK or other bodies of federal social policy had dealt with this issue. In its reply, the Federal Council makes it clear and replies that no need for action has been identified in the context of the National Dialogue on Swiss Social Policy *("Nous avons thématisé la question dans ce cadre, mais je dois aussi relever qu'aucune nécessité d'intervention n'a finalement été retenue.").*[84]

In the following years, there are two more interpellations: On 15.12.2016 Addor asks if *"asylum seekers are preferred to our homeless."* In particular, it is important to find out whether Swiss homeless people are disadvantaged by the financial contributions made in the field of asylum. The Federal Council replies that due to the lack of figures on homelessness, it is also not possible to answer this question. And the interpellation Schneeberger of 31.05.2018 under the title *"The commander of the border guard needs clear political instructions. Uncertainty and dissatisfaction among the population are growing"* points out that, on the one hand, the border guard is increasingly taking on police tasks such as *"routine checks of the homeless",* but on the other hand the direction of the interpellation is focusing on measures to clarify the tasks of the border guard.

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[84] https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=38944#votum2

5 Homelessness as an Object of Research in Switzerland

5.1 Method

A two-part approach was chosen for the analysis of scientific publications (incl. bachelor and master theses). On the one hand, the international databases served to outline a state of the art review on all relevant hits on homelessness in Switzerland. Due to their limitations (English, peer review, journals), a picture of homelessness in Switzerland emerges that is mainly regulated by the scientific community. A wave-like approach was also chosen: while the databases 'Web of Science' and 'Scopus' were widely searched, the search in 'Science Direct' was limited to certain disciplinary families. As a result, the social, health, etc. political contributions were given more weight in the relevant hits.

There are also works that cannot be published in international peer-reviewed journals, so to access these publications, in addition keyword searches were performed in Swiss databases.

The following table specifies the search strategies:

Database	Search strategy	Total hits	Relevant hits
International			
Web of Science	Topic = homeless* and region = Switzerland	79	
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (homeless*)) AND (Switzerland); subsequent limitation by journal type	65	
Science Direct	Keywords 'Homeless' AND 'Switzerland'; Einschränkung über Research article, case report / Publication = Social Sciences & Medicines/ Habitat International / Geoforum / Land use policy	64	44
Switzerland			
Swissbib	Homeless* and Switzerland	68	
Helvetic	Homeless* and Switzerland	21	
e-Helvetic	Homeless* and Switzerland		

5.2 State of research

Health issues shape research on homelessness in international peer-reviewed journals. In most of these studies, homeless people in categories 1 and 2 according to the FEANTSA typology (living without a home, on the street or in emergency facilities) are at the centre of the scope.

The studies illustrate the serious consequences of living as a homeless person. According to the journal publications many homeless people are dependent on alcohol, drugs are frequently consumed and a very high proportion of homeless people are in poor psychological and medical (especially infectious) health, with all of this also being of social origin (poor hygienic conditions, poverty). Homelessness is thus an expression of high levels of health and mental vulnerability combined with social exclusion (Grazioli, Collins, Daeppen and Larimer 2015). This is precisely why the life expectancy of the homeless is significantly below average (in France, for example,

49 (+/- 13) years, compared to 77 (+/- 17) years in the population) (Jackson, Wuillemin, & Bodenmann 2016).

The few studies that focus on Switzerland and are listed in international databases can be sorted according to the three topics 'schizophrenia, psychoses and trauma', 'alcohol and substance abuse' and 'tuberculosis and other infectious diseases'.

5.2.1   Mental health studies

In 2005, the first Swiss-related articles in international journals began to address the interface between homelessness and psychiatry. This was prompted by a series of investigations into psychiatric hospitals and programmes. Lauber, Lay and Rössler (2005) develop a profile of homeless people on the basis of a dossier analysis of around 16,000 patients (16% of all patients were homeless in the dataset) and conclude: *"The homeless as compared to other psychiatric inpatients had higher rates of substance use disorders, equal rates of psychotic and personality disorders, but lower rates of organic and affective disorders. Homeless people were more often admitted compulsorily or as an emergency. General practitioners (GPs) were less involved in the admission. The homeless had a shorter inpatient stay and their health status did not equally improve as it did in other patients. Risk factors of being homeless at psychiatric admission were: young age, male gender, single, low education level, urban residence, abuse of illicit drugs, especially multiple substance use, and having a dual diagnosis."* (ibid., 50) One year later, the team of authors presents another study (Lauber, Lay, Rössler 2006). This time they analysed around 28,000 patient dossiers from psychiatric clinics in Switzerland, among which they identified around 1% homeless people. This study focuses more on the housing situation when entering the clinics, and the following risk factors for homelessness were identified as a result: *"being homeless at admission, not living in a relationship, presenting multiple substance abuse or a dual diagnosis, low clinical improvement during inpatient treatment and discharge against medical advice".* (ibid., 138). Finally, a third study by the team (Lay, Lauber & Rössler 2006) gives a view of the length of stay in psychiatric hospitals as a function of homelessness. The researchers separated a cohort of 424 patients from a group of around 2500 hospital admissions and interviewed them regularly over a period of 5 years. Patients with a diagnosed psychosis spent the longest time in the clinics, at the same time they belonged to the group that was least often an inpatient in the clinics (in contrast to the diagnoses 'schizophrenia' and 'other psychiatric abnormalities'). In this study, homelessness was significantly associated with a longer stay in hospital over the observation period. A higher probability of having a diagnosis of 'psychosis' or 'schizophrenia' as a homeless person than for people in other housing situations in the study group could not be established. In conclusion, the authors point to social policy to cover the need of homeless people for sheltered and accompanied accommodation and safe housing: *"This fits recent findings indicating that the homeless use more in-patient and emergency type services and fewer outpatient-type services which can be regarded to a certain extent as an expression of the homeless seeking shelter, but furthermore as an expression of the inability of the social system to find appropriate accommodation for them. "* (ibid., 407)

Jäger, Briner et al. (2015) change the perspective in their study; psychiatric clinics are no longer the focus of attention, but rather institutions offering supported housing in the city of Zurich that are provided for the homeless. They ask how the situation of people diagnosed with schizophre-

nia has changed as a result of the restructuring of Swiss health care ('outpatient before inpatient' and thus processes of deinstitutionalisation). The authors conclude: *"Individuals with schizophrenia in sheltered housing (25% of the residents) have significantly more problems concerning substance use, physical illness, psychopathological symptoms other than psychosis and depression, and relationships, daily activities and occupation than patients with schizophrenia at intake on an acute psychiatric ward."* They interpret this as a contradiction, because supported housing is basically designed to prevent homelessness, but de facto *"serves as housing facilities for individuals with schizophrenia and other severe mental illness. Only 25% had seen a psychiatrist within the last 6 months although 51% stated that they had a permanent mental health problem."* (ibid., 416) The study is part of a larger study on the prevalence of people with mental health issues in adult housing in the city of Zurich ("WOPP study") from 2013 (Baumgartner-Nietlisbach, & Briner 2014). The reason for this study was the observation by psychiatrists that there was an increase in *"severely mentally ill and inadequately treated people"* (ibid., 4). Since in Switzerland there was a lack of data on the mental health status of people without their own housing, the scholars interviewed 338 people (out of a total of 460 people in the residential facilities) from four supported living facilities and the emergency sleeping facilities of the city of Zurich. The study is the only analysis to date of the objective and subjective mental health status of adults (categories covered by ICD-10, HoNOS-D, GAF ranges) affected by rooflessness and houselessness in Switzerland. The central results are therefore presented below (ibid., 5):

- *"96% of all interviewees fulfilled the criteria for at least one psychiatric diagnosis. If addictions are not counted, 61% of those surveyed were still affected by at least one psychiatric disease.*
- *In a direct comparison with patients in the acute wards of the Psychiatric University Clinic Zurich (PUK), the residents of the residential facilities showed on average a lower functional level and were more severely stressed.*
- *Subjectively, 70% of the participants had a permanent health problem, with 40% of all respondents feeling good or very good and 20% feeling bad or very bad.*
- *According to the body mass index, 30% of the participants were overweight, 20% obese and around 7% underweight.*
- *90% of all interviewees had consulted a medical professional in the last six months, 50% had consulted a family doctor and 20% a psychiatrist.*
- *73% of all interviewees regularly took psychotropic drugs at the time of the study."*

Although it should be noted that 259 of the 338 interviewees were from a supervised institution for socially disintegrated, mentally and physically impaired people suffering addiction, and that addiction was therefore highly likely to play a role in the objective state of health, the authors conclude for the practice that the state of health is very important for new clients in the institutions and should be regularly addressed in interdisciplinary cooperation. Morandi, Silva et al. (2017) make it clear that this cooperative approach should be put together in a permanent team and that this team should visit the people in the (supervised or supported) accommodation or even carry out patrols in public space. Their study, in which 30 people participated, showed that a combination of outreach medical, psychiatric, social work (as part of the assertive community treatment) and inpatient intervention periods is particularly effective in preventing emergency situations among homeless people. In another contribution to the practice, the authors propose multidisciplinary *"Intensive Case Management"* teams, a *"Clinical Case Management"* (Silini,

Silva, Gloay et al. 2016) for the inpatient sector and a prioritisation of housing, especially in the form of *'Housing First'* (Garcia Gonzales de Ara, Morandi, et al. 2017, see also Schmid & Bonsack 2018). Stalder's approach, which set up mobile outreach teams for community medicine in Geneva's university hospitals, also fits in with this understanding (Stalder 2003). Stutz, Kawohl et al. (2017) argue in favour of a model of '*night clinics*' such as that of the city of Zurich and come to the conclusion that this form of clinic offers an alternative for inpatient stays because it fulfils a "*rehabilitative task for homeless people with primarily psychotic illnesses*" and thus "*contributes to the avoidance or shortening of fully inpatient hospital stays*" (ibid., 187). Di Bella, Leporatti et al. (2017) take a more fundamental approach with regard to Switzerland's health policy. They evaluate initiatives between 2014 and 2016 to introduce dental treatment into compulsory health insurance in Switzerland and locate a gap in the provision of dental care. For adults, dental treatment is only covered by the basic insurance in the case of accidents and serious dental diseases. Routine dental treatment must be financed by the patient. People who do not have enough money to pay for dental treatment often suffer from toothache. This affects children, the elderly, people on low incomes and homeless people (ibid. 576).

5.2.2   Studies on alcohol and substance abuse

Grazioli, Collins, Paroz Graap and Daeppen (2017) investigated the consumption habits of 85 homeless people in French-speaking Switzerland who regularly visit a contact point to consume their drugs and alcoholic beverages. The authors noted that the mere presence in the institutions contributed to a 7% decrease in consumption. They conclude that shelters for the homeless are an effective intervention measure. Klingemann & Klingemann (2017) also conclude that programmes for homeless alcoholics in Switzerland have led to a reduction in dependence. They interviewed key people from eight providers of the 'Drinking Under Control/DUCPs' programme in Switzerland. However, they also drew attention to a contradiction, since the successes of the programmes are countered by the reluctance of the municipalities to offer such programmes because they fear that they will have a pulling effect on alcohol-dependent homeless people. Stohler & Gehrig (2015), on the other hand, focus on young adults in a hostel. The home offers accommodation for 28 women and men aged between 18 and 24 who cannot live with their families or independently. They have hardly any daily structures, often have debts, are mentally unstable and consume marihuana or alcohol. The caregiver in the home primarily advises the person concerned, while the social worker in charge receives more responsibility for decisions and sanctions (ibid.: 485). Over twelve months, long-term solutions are sought for the young adults, their social and personal skills strengthened and an attempt is made to stabilise their current situation. The authors conclude that the offer is suitable for people who already have a daily structure and are willing to change their situation. For young adults who do not wish to change their situation, do not cooperate, have psychological diagnoses or suffer from substance abuse problems, the length of time is insufficient. Longer-term solutions are needed that go far beyond the twelve months (ibid. 486ff.).

Kübler and Wälti (2001: 35 - 54) discuss these issues on the national level and highlight the attractiveness of Western European cities in the context of drug policy. They explain the effects of measures against drug-related problems in Switzerland, which led to the establishment of facilities for drug addicts at the end of the 1980s. They also compare the successes in reducing drug

and alcohol consumption with the stigmatising effects of the environment: complaints from the neighbourhood, the need to protect the living environment of contact points, etc. Swiss cities, they conclude, are still confronted today with the need for protection of the inhabitants, the needs of the consumers and the need of the city to reduce damage.

5.2.3   Studies on infectious diseases

The Swiss studies published in international journals show the social causes of infectious diseases such as diphtheria and tuberculosis in homeless people. Gruner, Opravil et al. (1994) point out that in Zurich homeless people who also consume drugs are infected with diphtheria mainly because of their low socio-economic status. The long-term study on tuberculosis in the canton of Bern, which analysed data from individuals over 21 years, identified two thirds of those affected as homeless (Stucki, Balif et al. 2015). Janssens, Wuillemin, Adler and Jackson (2017) interviewed those staying at the Geneva Municipal Emergency Service in 2015 and referred them to the Municipal Hospital in case of suspicion of tuberculosis. A total of 726 of the 832 homeless people surveyed completed the questionnaire with a positive analysis and took advantage of the hospital examination. The shorter the phase of homelessness, the greater the willingness to undergo an inpatient examination. The investigation revealed that tuberculosis had not broken out in any of the homeless.

Figure 4: The most common pathologies in the group of homeless people

TABLEAU 2	Pathologies fréquentes et leurs spécificités chez les sans-abri		
Groupes de pathologies	Problèmes fréquents	Spécificités	Références
Santé mentale et système nerveux	• Dépression, trouble bipolaire • Schizophrénie • Troubles de la personnalité • Syndrome de stress post-traumatique • Démences, syndromes gériatriques • Convulsions • Polyneuropathie	• Prévalence élevée et coexistence de troubles psychiatriques et de dépendances • Hospitalisation en urgence et/ou en non volontaire • Sévérité des troubles psychiatriques lors d'hospitalisation comparable à la population générale mais durée des séjours plus courte et moindre amélioration clinique • Risque élevé d'overdose à la sortie de prison	5, 8, 9, 11, 23, 24
Infections	• Hépatite C, VIH, autres infections transmises par voies sexuelle et sanguine • Voies respiratoires notamment tuberculose • Systémique (fièvre des tranchées à B. quintana) • Bucco-dentaires • Intestinales	• Observance thérapeutique limitée lors de traitements prolongés (tuberculose, VIH): intérêt de la distribution de médicaments sous observation (DOT) • Risque de transmission augmenté par la promiscuité dans les lieux d'accueil • Cancer du col de l'utérus, du foie, ORL fréquents dans contexte de faible recours aux soins préventifs (dépistage)	25, 26
Problèmes cutanés	• Infections (mycoses, impétigo/folliculite) • Infestations (pouls, gale) • Eczéma, lésions macérées • Dermite solaire	• Prévalence augmentée chez les personnes dormant dans la rue et associée au manque d'accès aux soins d'hygiène	27, 28
Traumatismes et accidents	• Chutes et accidents de la voie publique • Agressions (notamment sexuelles) • Gelures, brûlures • Intoxications (médicaments, fumées toxiques, etc.)	• Lien avec abus de substances • Traumatismes craniocérébraux fréquents avec risque de déclin cognitif précoce • Jeunes, femmes, minorités sexuelles plus touchées par agressions sexuelles	6, 29, 30
Maladies métaboliques et nutritionnelles	• Diabète, obésité • Maladies cardiovasculaires • Déficits vitaminiques, malnutrition	• Contrôle compromis par alimentation souvent de pauvre qualité et irrégulière • Difficultés masticatoires, douleurs dentaires	31, 32
Dépendances	• Tabagisme avec BPCO • Ethylisme chronique et aigu • Cancers hépato-digestifs, respiratoires, ORL • Pancréatite, cirrhose, hémorragies digestives	• Maladies souvent diagnostiquées à un stade avancé	8, 33
Autres	• Affections obstétricales • Troubles du développement psychomoteur et maladies infantiles de la pauvreté, y compris anémie, dépression, obésité et asthme	• Faible suivi prénatal, fréquents accouchements prématurés, enfants avec faible poids à la naissance • Fréquent retard vaccinal des enfants	10, 34–36

Source: Jackson, Y., Wuillemin, T. & Bodenmann, P. (2016) 1673.

5.2.4 Regional studies

In addition to the generalising studies on health, a number of regional studies have been carried out in Switzerland within the framework of research projects, but also in the context of final theses from various disciplines. These deal with:

- Conceptual approaches to explaining homelessness, such as the vulnerability approach (Dittmann, Drilling, Meissburger et al. 2017), sleeping (Hausammann 2009) and begging (Colombo, Reynaud & de Coulon 2016; de Coulon, Reynaud & Colombo Wiget 2015),
- Surveys of the extent of homelessness in the cities of Basel (Caritas 1989; Drilling, Dittmann & Bischoff 2019; Egli 2001; Stade 2009) and Bern (Fricker, Hardegger, Ly et al. 2017),
- Emergency aid and housing infrastructures, in particular emergency sleeping facilities (Lutz 2016), homeless aid (Beiser 2012; Grangier 2013; Liechti & Kuster 2009; Mathys & Röllin 2010) and supported housing (Sempach, Scholz & Lanz 1996),
- Viewing the situation of homeless people (Forrer, Scherzinger & Wechsler 2012; Taramarcaz 2018; Bell 2014; Gay 2011).

5.2.5 Relevant literature (database research)

Baumgartner-Nietlisbach, G. & Briner, D. (2014) Die Prävalenz psychisch Kranker in den Wohneinrichtungen für Erwachsene der Stadt Zürich. (The prevalence of people with mental health issues in adult housing in the city of Zurich). WOPP-Studie. Zürich: Psychatrisch-Psychologische Polyklinik.

Beiser, C. (2012) Soziales Netzwerk Wohnen. Analyse der Wirkungen eines unterkunftsorientierten Modells in der Wohnungslosenhilfe. (Social Network Housing. Analysis of the effects of an accommodation-oriented model on homeless assistance).MA-Arbeit Fachhochschulen Bern, Luzern, St. Gallen und Zürich. Luzern: Edition Soziothek.

Bell, S. (2014) Les tactiques de résistance des personnes sans- domicile: enquête auprès de personnes sans- domicile dans le canton de Vaud. Lausanne.

di Bella, E., Leporatti, L., Montefiori, M., Krejci, I. & Ardu, S. (2017) Popular initiatives in 2014-2016 call for the introduction of mandatory dental care insurance in Switzerland: the contrasting positions at stake. Health Policy (121) 575-581.

Bežovan, G. (2019). ESPN Thematic Report on National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion – Croatia, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Brussels: European Commission.

Caritas (ed.) (1989) Obdachlosigkeit in Basel. Ausmass und Betroffene. (Homelessness in Basel. Extent and people affected.) Caritas: Luzern.

Colombo, A., Reynaud, C. & de Coulon, G. (2016) Begging in Geneva: Whose Right to the City? Environnement Urbain / Urban Environment (10) 26 pages.

de Coulon, G., Reynaud, C. & Colombo Wiget, A. (2015) Begging in Geneva in Times of Crisis: Multi-layered Representations of Beggars, Begging and Cohabitation in the Public. European Journal of Homelessness (9), 1, 191-211.

Drilling, M. Dittmann, J. & Bischoff, T., (2019). Obdachlosigkeit, Wohnungslosigkeit und Prekäres wohnen. Ausmass, Profil und Bedarf in der Region Basel. (Homelessness and Housing Exclusion. Impact, profile and requirements in the Basel region). LIVES Working paper, 76 Online) https://www.lives-nccr.ch/en/publication/obdachlosigkeit-wohnungslosigkeit-und-prekares-wohnen-ausmass-profil-und-bedarf-der.

Dittmann, J., Drilling, M., Meissburger, M., Düzgün-Yoker, F., Wey, A., Krummenacher, P., Kaufmann-Hörr, K. (2017) Obdachlosigkeit und Obdachlosenhilfe unter dem Blickwinkel von Verletzbarkeit. (Homelessness and homeless help from the point of view of vulnerability). LIVES Working Paper 64. (Online) https://www.lives-nccr.ch/fr/publication/obdachlosigkeit-und-obdachlosenhilfe-unter-dem-blickwinkel-von-verletzbarkeit-n2593.

Egli, R. (2001) Obdachlosigkeit in Basel: Charakteristik der betroffenen Gruppe, Ausmass und Entwicklung, räumliche Aspekte, Trends (Homelessness in Basel: characteristics of the group concerned, extent and development, spatial aspects, trends). Regio Basiliensis (42) 2, 189-198.

Forrer, T., Scherzinger, A. & Wechsler, C. (2012) Wohnungslos in der Stadt Zürich. Eine quantitative Untersuchung zur Lebenslage und zu den Lebenszielen und Wünschen wohnungsloser Menschen in der städtischen Notschlaf-stelle. (Homeless in the city of Zurich. A quantitative study of the life situation and the aims and desires of homeless people in the urban emergency sleeping shelter). Luzern: Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit.

Fricker, S., Hardegger, L., Ly, G.T., Oberkalmsteiner, J., Stritt, F. & Suter, Y. (2017) Armut, Obdachlosigkeit und Re-pression in der Stadt Bern. (Poverty, homelessness and repression in the city of Bern) Projektarbeit Nachhaltige Entwicklung. Universität Bern.

Garcia Gonzales de Ara, C., Morandi, S., Lippuner, M., Delmatti, J., Golay, P. & Bonsack, C. (2017) 'Home First': re-covering from a severe psychological disorder in the home. Swiss Medial Review (13), 1605 - 1609.

Gay, M. (2011) Comment les personnes sans domicile fixe, séjournant à la Fondation Chez Paou, se représentent leurs perspectives de réintégration sociale? HES-SO Vallais.

Grangier, S. (2013) Entre la rue et logement. Geneva: School of Social Work.

Grazioli, V.S., Collins, S.E., Daeppen, J.-B. & Larimer, M.E. (2015) Perceptions of twelve-step mutual-help groups and their associations with motivation, treatment attendance and alcohol outcomes among chronically homeless indi-viduals with alcohol problems. International Journal of Drug Policy (26) 468-474.

Grazioli, V.S., Collins, S.E., Paroz, S., Graap, C. & Daeppen, J.-B. (2017) Six-month outcomes among socially mar-ginalised alcohol and drug users attending a drop-in centre allowing alcohol consumption. International Journal of Drug Policy (41) 65-73.

Gruner, E., Opravil, M., Altwegg, M. & von Graevenitz, A. (1994) Nontoxigenic Corynebacterium diphtheriae isolated from intravenous drug users. Clinical Infectious Deseases (19) 94-96.

Hausammann, N. (2009) Persönlicher Lebensraum. Schlafen als Privatsphäre. (Personal living space. Sleeping as privacy). BA-Arbeit Hf Gestaltung HGK / FHNW.

Jaeger, M., Briner, D., Kawohl, W. Seifritz, E. & Baumgartner-Nietlisbach, G. (2015) Psychological functioning of indi-viduals with schizophrenia in community housing facilities and the psychiatric hospital in Zurich. Psychiatry Research (230) 413-418.

Jackson, Y., Wuillemin, T. & Bodenmann, P. (2016) Health and Care for Homeless People. Swiss Medical Journal (12) 533, 1671-1675.

Janssens, J.-P., Wuillemin, T., Adler, D. & Jackson, Y. (2017) Screening for tuberculosis in an urban shelter for homeless in Switzerland: a prospective study. BMC Infectious Diseases (17) 347.

Klingemann, H. & Klingemann, J. (2017) Unknown and under-researched: the anatomy of drinking under control pro-grams. Sucht (63) 5, 277-288.

Kübler, D. & Wälti, S. (2001) Drug-policy making in metropolitan areas: urban conflicts and governance. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (25) 1, 35-54.

Lau, S., Günther, M.P., Kling, S. & Kirchebner, J. (2019) Latent class analysis identified phenotypes in individuals with schizophrenia spectrum disorder who engage in aggressive behaviour towards others. European Psychiatry (60) 86-96.

Lauber, C., Lay, B. & Rössler, W. (2005) Homelessness among people with severe mental illness in Switzerland. Swiss Medicine Weekly (135) 50-56.

Lauber, C., Lay, B. & Rössler, W. (2006) Homeless people at disadvantage in mental health services. European Ar-chives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience 256 (3) 138-145.

Lay, B., Nordt, C. & Rössler, W. (2007) Trends in psychiatric hospitalisation of people with schizophrenia: A register-based investigation over the last three decades. Schizophrenia research (97) 68-78.

Lay, B., Lauber, C. & Rössler, W. (2006) Prediction of in-patient use in first-admitted patients with psychosis. Euro-pean Psychiatry (21) 401-409.

Liechti, B. & Kuster, M. (2009) Junge Erwachsene in der Wohnungslosenhilfe. Ein Konzept zur Integration in den freien Wohnungsmarkt. (Young adults and support for the homeless. A concept for integration into the free housing market). Luzern: Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit.

Lutz, J. (2017) Notschlafstelle Basel-Stadt: Wenn eine Notlösung zum Dauerzustand wird. (Basel-Stadt Emergency Sleep Centre: When an emergency solution becomes a permanent condition). MA-Arbeit Fachhochschulen Bern, Luzern, St. Gallen, Zürich. Luzern: Edition Soziothek.

Mathys, Y. & Röllin, M. (2010) Wohnungslos in der Leuchtenstadt. Ausmass und Ursachen von Wohnungslosigkeit im Kontext der Schadensminimierung im Raum Luzern. (Homeless in the City of Lights. Extent and causes of homelessness in the context of harm reduction in the Lucerne area). Luzern: Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit.

Morandi, S., Silva, B., Golay, P. & Bonsack, C. (2017) Intensive case management for addiction to promote engagement with care of people with severe mental and substance use disorders: an observational study. Substance abuse treatment, prevention, and policy (12) 26.

Oostveen, A. (2019) ESPN Thematic Report on National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion – The Netherlands, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Brussels: European Commission.

Schmid, O. & Bonsack, C. (2018) Housing First, a change of reference in the fight against housing exclusion. Swiss Archives of Neurology, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (7) 169, 198-207.

Sempach, R., Scholz, G. & Lanz, A. (1996) Evaluation von Haus Breitenstein, ein niedrigschwelliges Wohnangebot in der Stadt Zürich. (Evaluation of Haus Breitenstein, a low-threshold housing offer in the city of Zurich). Sozial und Präventivmedizin (41) Suppl. 1, 576-584.

Silini, C., Silva, B., Golay, P., Besse, C., Spagnoli, D. & Bonsack, C. (2016) Engager dans les soins les personnes ayant des troubles psychiques et des problèmes d'emploi. Swiss Archives of Neurology, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (168) 4, 107-112.

Stade, A. (2009) Bestandesaufnahme und Bedarfserhebung: Grundversorgung randständiger und obdachloser Menschen in der Stadt Basel. (Inventory and needs assessment: Basic care for marginalised and homeless people in the city of Basel). Selbstverlag: KAITO.

Stalder, H. (2003) L'expérience genevoise: le département de médecine communautaire. Santé Publique (15), 147-150.

Stohler, R. & Gehrig (2015) Homeless young adults in the Swiss social assistance system: evaluation of an institution for homeless young adults who have no daily structure. International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies (3) 6, 478-493.

Stucki, D., Balif, M., Bodmer, T., Coscolla, M., Maurer, A.-M., Droz, S. et al. (2015) Tracking a tuberculosis outbreak over 21 years: strain-specific single nucleotide polymorphism typing combined with targeted whole-genome sequencing. The Journal of Infectious Diseases (211) 1306-1316.

Stutz, C., Kawohl, W., Platz, C., Warnke, I. & Jäger, M. (2017) Wer braucht die Nachtklinik? – Stellenwert eines teilstationären Angebotes. (Who needs the night clinic? - The importance of a semi-stationary offer). Neuropsychiatrie (31) 187-195.

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6 Positions of Professional Associations

6.1 Method

Support for the homeless is particularly the responsibility of the social work profession. Professional associations are responsible for the technical, methodical and strategic orientation of their tasks. It is interesting to see how homelessness is justified, oriented and reflected in Swiss and international social work. For this purpose, keywords were searched for in databases:

Professional Association	Keywords	Total hits	Relevant hits
Switzerland			
AvenirSocial https://avenirsocial.ch	'homeless', 'living', 'homeless', 'sans domicile fixe', 'sdf', 'sans abri', 'logement'	9	3
International			
International Federation of Social Work https://www.ifsw.org	'homeless', 'housing'	44	12
International Association of School of Social Work https://www.iassw-aiets.org	'homeless', 'housing'	4	-
International Council on Social Welfare https://www.icsw.org	'homeless', 'housing'	5	-

6.2 Avenir Social position papers

6.2.1 Working groups

Avenir Sociale organises and supports working groups in various fields of social work. In Switzerland, there is a specialist group on streetwork called FaGass. In 1999 FaGass published a posture, target and working paper on streetwork targeting men. It is an internal concept paper for this specific work, which is also available to the public. This paper sets out the basics, concerns, goals, measures and methods of streetwork. The examination of 'manhood' is an important part of the paper. The concerns and objectives as well as the proposed measures and methods are subdivided into various levels (cf. VSD 1999). Homelessness and housing are not addressed in any of the levels.

In 2002, a Charter of Outreach Social Work was published in French, which was then translated into German. It was mainly developed by the 'Hors-murs' group and the German-language version was supplemented by FaGass. This does not refer to people affected by homelessness either. Among other things, it defines the goal as *"enabling individuals (...) to escape social exclusion of any kind or to avoid it and to find a responsible and critical approach to society"* (cf. Groupe Hors-murs du GREAT/FAGASS, Fachgruppe Aufsuchende Sozialarbeit/Streetwork des

Fachverbandes Sucht 2002: 11). The professional ethics of outreach social work was also discussed. *"The outreach social worker meets the target groups by making active contact or offering passive contact. If the initiative comes from the outreach worker, he/she does so without imposing him/herself. He/she shall leave the choice of accepting or rejecting the offer to the person concerned."* (cf. ibid.: 9) The expert group assumes purely advocacy work for the clientele vis-à-vis the authorities: *"The outreach social worker is committed to the concerns and interests of his/her clientele before the competent authorities".* (cf. ibid.).

In 2014 FaGass published a position paper on the topic of regulatory policy commissions in outreach work (cf. Fachgruppe Gassenarbeit 2014). FaGass distances itself from the dual mandate of social work: *"The dual mandate of simultaneous control and support may be characteristic of many fields of social work. In the field of Outreach Social Work, however, a double mandate in this sense would threaten a professional attitude according to the Charter of Outreach Social Work."* (cf. ibid.: 1). The paper explains why Outreach Social Work cannot work under a dual mandate: it must work in an advocatory way to create trust that is central to the clientele it reaches, who in general are suspicious of the helper system. *"A regulatory mandate conflicts with an accepting attitude that recognises individual life realities and coping strategies and does not prescribe an externally determined and morally predetermined change."* The anonymity of Outreach Social Work allows delinquent clients to have easier access. Regulatory work no longer guarantees anonymity because information is passed on to other bodies (ibid. 2). These are some of the reasons for the negative attitude towards Outreach Social Work as a dual mandate.

6.2.2   Sozial Aktuell journal

Since 1999, the Swiss professional association Avenir Social has published position papers as well as the sector journal '*Sozial Aktuell*' (French version: '*Actualité Sociale*'). The tables of contents of the two journals have been available on the homepage avenirsocial.ch since 2014, therefore, the search for relevant articles was limited to between January 2014 and July 2019. The magazine *Sozial Aktuell* has taken up the topic in five issues. *Actualité S*ociale has reported extensively in two issues on the subject of housing.

o   An article in the June 2016 issue of *Sozial Aktuell* (pp. 7-9) addressed the housing market and gave examples of how targeted services can be used to tackle housing shortages. The article refers to a study by the ETH Housing Forum. People who live in precarious living conditions do not have access to the regular housing and real estate market and are therefore excluded from it. Meanwhile, even the middle class is having difficulties finding affordable housing, while the number of expensive flats is increasing (ibid. 7).

o   In the July 2016 issue of the same journal (pp. 10-31), the focus is on securing one's livelihood. It presents the work of the *Surprise* Association (p. 14f.). In German-speaking Switzerland, about 400 people sell the street magazine *Surprise*. The sellers receive 2.70 francs per magazine sold. Through the simple low-threshold sale, people affected by poverty can experience self-efficacy and have the opportunity to establish contacts with their customers. Most sellers, according to *Surprise* 155 people, receive no further financial support (ibid. 14). The association also offers social city tours in various Swiss cities. The trained city guides show their cities from their perspective as poor, outsiders or homeless (ibid. 14f.).

o In an article in the January 2019 issue (pp. 34f.), the precarious residential locations of working poor families are addressed. These working poor families, who often have a background of migration, experience discrimination and disadvantage when looking for accommodation (ibid.: 34). The administrative effort and discriminatory experiences, in addition to inadequate knowledge of German, the lack of a network and lack of time, together make it difficult to find suitable accommodation (ibid.: 35).

o The street magazine *Surprise* is again featured in the March 2019 issue (p. 6f.). For the 16th time the Homeless World Cup took place in Mexico, Switzerland was involved from the beginning. Surprise organises the national league of street football as well as weekly training sessions. Interested parties can register their interest. Through street football and the players, Surprise wants to "give structure and new momentum to everyday life" (ibid. 7).

6.2.3   Actualité Sociale journal

o The June 2014 issue is devoted to housing and poverty in French-speaking Switzerland. The first article deals with the disadvantages that people living in poverty experience in the housing market (restricted lettings, unequal treatment by property owners, problem of insufficient housing subsidies when the housing market is overheated). Subsequently, various projects and foundations are presented: *Fondation Apollo* (Vevey, founded in 2011 by the *Service de prévoyance et d'aide sociales du Canton de Vaud*), the temporary housing complex of the *Service Social* in Lausanne (with the representation of the idea of the *Housing First,* realised with the project).

o The March 2018 issue once again addresses the issue of homelessness. This time, however, the housing policy of the communities is problematised from the point of view of human rights. "*The choice of living space has become an essential component of respect for the dignity of people, even if they are elderly or disabled. This development challenges public policy and social work. Is supported housing the solution?" The* author weighs the form of housing against the principles of autonomy and dignity, discusses the common options and advocates that "*Supported housing should be used to support social life."*

6.3   International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) position papers

IFSW has several times focused on access to the housing market. In November 2019 it sent a statement on affordable housing to ECOSOC and the World Summit for Social Development 2020; the organisation sees unaffordable housing as one of the central drivers of homelessness worldwide and calls for affordable housing: *"Access to housing is a precondition for access to employment, education, health, and social services. In order to address the current housing challenges, all levels of government should put housing at the centre of urban policies by placing people and human rights at the forefront of urban sustainable development."*[85] The letter is the latest of IFSW's interventions to combat homelessness. The organisation considers Article

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[85] https://www.ifsw.org/ifsw-un-commission-submits-an-statement-to-the-un-economic-and-social-council-on-affordable-housing-and-social-protection-system/

19 of the Social Pillar[86] to be its political basis. In 1992 IFSW supported the campaign against the criminalisation of homeless people. *"The campaign draws attention to the increasing number of laws, policies and regulations that force a growing portion of our communities into precarious social, economic and legal existence. The criminalisation of homelessness is a form of criminalisation of poverty which means that homeless people are punished doubly: first, they are criminalised by the penal system for simply being homeless, second, they are excluded from diminishing social aid programs for being criminals."*[87] In the following years IFSW reacted to country-specific criminalisation processes.[88] But self-empowerment, such as the squatting of homeless people in Ireland, is also taken up and interpreted as the consequences of neoliberal policies: *"In a context where governments don't listen or act, people will inevitably find solutions themselves, and social workers will support them, stand alongside them and advocate for their rights. The taking-over of the vacant building in Dublin is a sign of the contemporary civil rights movements and 'reality politics' that the world is likely to see much more of in 2017."*[89]

[86] https://www.ifsw.org/recommendations-of-the-2nd-social-platform-flagship-conference-in-helsinki/

[87] https://www.ifsw.org/ifsw-supports-campaign-against-the-criminalisation-of-homelessness/

[88] https://www.ifsw.org/human-rights-commission-call-for-action-finnish-artist-takes-a-stand-against-the-persecution-of-the-homeless-in-hungary/

[89] https://www.ifsw.org/social-workers-support-civil-action-against-homelessness/

7 NGO Position Papers and Statements on Homelessness

7.1 Method

Non-governmental organisations are among the central actors in all social policy fields in Switzerland and safeguard civil society's demands on politicians. At the same time, there is currently no non-governmental organisation in Switzerland that deals exclusively or explicitly with the issue of homelessness. In order to determine the position of NGOs, the websites of the largest national organisations were searched using the search terms 'homeless', 'living' and 'accommodation'.

NGO	Search areas / categories	hit
Amnesty International Switzerland	'Opinions on laws, popular initiatives and political decisions in Switzerland', 'Human rights in parliament: various positions and recommendations on the forthcoming sessions of the Federal Assembly'.	no
Caritas Switzerland	'Position Papers,' 'Social Almanac,' 'Poverty from A-Z,' 'Statements and Consultations.'	yes
HEKS – Aid organisations of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland	General search function of the website	no
SKOS – Swiss Conference for Social Assistance	General search function of the website	yes
Social Policy City Initiative	'Positions,' 'Consultations,' and 'Conference Topics.'	yes

7.2 Caritas Switzerland

In addition to various analyses of Swiss poverty policy, some of which also refer to the promotion of affordable housing, Caritas focused on housing for poorer households in 2014 with its position paper 'Housing and Poverty'. In the same year, Caritas dedicated the annual Social Almanac under the title 'Under One Roof' to the topic of housing (Caritas Social Almanac 2014). Housing and poverty are linked in two ways: on the one hand, housing can become a poverty trap; on the other hand, poverty results in precarious housing conditions (Caritas Position Paper 2014: 3).[90] Undersupply in the housing sector not only results in material grievances, but also severely restricts opportunities for social participation. It can endanger health, cause conflicts in the family and complicate social integration in the residential environment (Caritas Position Paper 2014: 3). In its position paper 'Housing and Poverty' Caritas describes an increasing precariousness in the area of housing, which on the one hand can be attributed to market mechanisms and displacement problems and on the other hand can be explained by housing and tax policies as well as increasing individual housing needs (Caritas position paper 2014: 4-5).

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[90] https://www.caritas.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Caritas_Schweiz/data/site/was-wir-sagen/unsere-position/positionspapiere/2014-und-aelter/CA_Armutsmonitoring_2014_DE_Internet.pdf

Caritas recognises the relevance of existing national measures to promote non-profit housing and poverty reduction (cf. National Programme for Poverty Prevention and Control), but at the same time calls for a more effective housing policy from a poverty perspective, which is increasingly translated into specific strategies and projects such as the *Projets urbains*[91] (Caritas Position Paper 2014: 6-7). The promotion of low-cost housing by the federal government primarily works to prevent poverty, but according to Caritas it is not sufficient as a measure to combat poverty. Support for people experiencing poverty in the housing sector is mainly provided by private or local civil society actors. This grassroots commitment defuses many precarious housing situations. At a national level, however, large gaps in the provision of suitable housing and the lack of a holistic perspective in the area of poverty and housing have been identified (Caritas Position Paper 2014: 7).

In the position paper 'Housing and Poverty', Caritas further analyses the various cantonal strategies on housing and poverty and calls on the cantons to become more active in a housing policy aimed at reducing and preventing poverty. This includes, for example, advice and offers to increase housing competence or the provision of favourable loans or guarantees (Caritas Position Paper 2014: 14).

In her article 'Adequate Housing for All: A Task of Poverty Reduction' in 2014 Social Almanac, Marianne Hochuli (2014:85) criticises the expansion of existing promotional measures and the strengthening of non-profit housing construction as envisaged by the federal government as not being sufficient. According to Hochuli (2014:85), instead of making housing policy primarily dependent on the housing market, an active housing policy should be created that is the cornerstone of social and poverty policy and promotes not only housing, but also the provision of care and leisure, and makes urban and neighbourhood development processes more participatory. According to Hochuli (2014:87), the following further measures are necessary to enable all people in Switzerland to enjoy the right to adequate living space: management of the scarce asset of land must not be left to the market alone, it requires a nationwide housing strategy with spatial planning that defines shares for non-profit housing construction, grants the municipalities purchase rights in the case of zoning and strengthens non-profit housing providers. In addition, a new financial equalisation system is needed to counteract the drifting apart of municipalities with attractive residential locations, low tax policy and a large proportion of wealthy people, as well as municipalities with less attractive residential locations, higher taxes and many people dependent on social assistance. Finally, new housing projects and increased support for people who on their own find it hard to gain access to the housing market are needed (Hochuli 2014: 87).

In her contribution 'Wohnungsmarkt und Prekarität aus Sicht der Sozialhilfe' (Housing Market and Precariousness from the Perspective of Social Welfare), Guggisberg (2014: 142) emphasises that housing is not only 'a roof over one's head', but also has to do with security and belonging. She notes: *"Those who live without a solid roof over their heads usually do not do this voluntarily. Circumstances such as loss of employment, divorce or separation, addiction or mental health problems can lead to this. A life without a fixed home is exhausting and problematic.*

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[91] https://www.are.admin.ch/are/de/home/staedte-und-agglomerationen/programme-und-projekte/programm-projets-urbains.html

The welfare state network should ensure social balance and cohesion. Private institutions also make a considerable contribution to this, because the costs are often borne jointly by the public or private sector and the performance of tasks is often delegated to the private sector" (Guggisberg 2014: 148). Individual help is important, but social assistance must not be limited to personal support and the establishment of suitable structures. Rather, it should see itself as an *"early warning system in a community"* in which it brings facts and connections into political discussions and social planning (Guggisberg 2014: 148-149).

In the document 'Poverty from A to Z', edited by Caritas, the following is the entry under 'Homelessness': *"In Switzerland there are only a few people who are affected by homelessness, but the number of people who lose their homes and then have to live without a permanent home is increasing. Reasons can be the loss of a job, family break ups, psychological impairments or addiction problems. Today there are various safety nets such as women's shelters and emergency shelters which can temporarily accommodate the homeless."*[92]

7.3 SKOS (Swiss Conference for Social Assistance)

On its website SKOS lists 'Housing' as a separate topic, where we can find various documents, position papers and practical examples. SKOS has also dedicated two issues of the ZESO magazine for social assistance to the topic of housing (04/15 'Poverty and Housing'[93] and 02/19 'Wanted: Cheap 4-Room Apartment – Precarious Households in Difficulties in Finding Accommodation'[94]).

In the 2015 edition, various articles highlight the precarious housing situation and the difficult conditions in the housing market for people experiencing poverty (Bochsler et al. 2016) and possible housing policy measures. How the precarious provision of housing for people experiencing poverty can be countered from the point of view of social welfare is illustrated by a contribution from the Head of the Basic Principles Department at SKOS: Kehrli sees the contribution of social welfare to improving the housing situation of people experiencing poverty in the fact that it pays attention to strengthening housing skills and contributes to keeping risks for landlords low by providing closer support and training clients (Kehrli 2015: 18-19).[95] However, in order to improve access to the housing market for people experiencing poverty and for households with so-called risk factors such as 'origin' or debt, it is primarily the landlords who are responsible, who should make a greater contribution to individual solutions. Finally, policy should solve the main problem of the lack of affordable housing by, for example, creating incentives and legal framework conditions so that private investors become more active in the field of affordable housing (Kehrli 2015: 19).

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[92] https://www.caritas.ch/de/was-wir-sagen/zahlen-und-fakten/armut-in-der-schweiz/armut-von-a-z.html

[93] https://www.yumpu.com/en/embed/view/eXqe3xvYL3WXRzDa

[94] https://www.yumpu.com/de/embed/view/aB8WuSGKpYktj7Em

[95] https://www.yumpu.com/en/embed/view/eXqe3xvYL3WXRzDa

The 2019 issue focuses on the situation of people in the housing market receiving social welfare assistance, especially the homeless, and shows that even middle-income people are experiencing ever increasing difficulties in finding affordable and adequate housing, or being able to pay the increased rent after a renovation. Similar factors and basic problems are listed as in 2015.

The article on methodological support by social services in the search for housing (Steger and Mösch Payot 2019: 14-17) appears as further reading. This takes up the obligation of the social services to support those receiving social assistance who are forced or ordered to look for a cheaper place to live as a result of excessive rent. The article lists the following support: (1) Needs assessment: determination of support needs depending on how many of the award criteria of property administrations are not met by the person seeking accommodation (e.g. no debt collection or positive references); (2) Information and competence; (3) Development of resources: the aim is to obtain a favourable housing opportunity, which includes, for example, housing search, inspection and application as well as the conclusion of a contract; and (4) Transfer of resources: assistance in taking over the apartment, termination of the agreement for the old apartment and relocation (Steger and Mösch Payot 2019: 14-17).[96] Also worth mentioning is an article on a study on the perception of those affected by so-called 'rental removal' and gentrification processes, in which entire properties or housing estates are left empty for renovation, upgraded structurally and, in many cases, newly rented at significantly higher rents. The author speaks of an ever-increasing and broader group of people who, for socio-economic reasons, lose their homes, have to move away and live in inadequate and insecure housing conditions (Reutlinger 2019: 18-21).[97]

7.4   Social Policy City Initiative

The website of the Social Policy Initiative *Städteinitiative* was searched for the sections 'positions', 'consultations' and 'conference topics'. Two conferences on housing were held:

- 'Housing policy as a pillar of social urban development', June 2012:[98] without more detailed mention and discussion of housing in the poverty segment.
- 'Brennpunkt Wohnen in der Stadt', May 2017: Documentation 'Wohnen für alle' (Housing for all) from 2017,[99] which shows the connections between housing supply, social structure and the role of the state. It calls for cities to strengthen the living environment of local social spaces, to make greater use of neighbourhood resources through participation, and to design densification processes in a socially acceptable manner. The sociologist Streckeisen also expects the cities not only to rely on statistical figures, but also to be able to go to the people in the neighbourhoods, listen to them and thus perceive existing problems (Städteinitiative Sozialpolitik 2017).

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[96] https://skos.ch/zeitschrift-zeso/archiv/2019/

[97] https://skos.ch/zeitschrift-zeso/archiv/2019/

[98] https://staedteinitiative.ch/de/Info/Konferenzthemen/Archiv/Wohnpolitik_(062012)

[99] https://skos.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/skos_main/public/pdf/grundlagen_und_positionen/themendossiers/Wohnen/2017_Staedteinitiative_wohnen_alle_si_web_def.pdf

8   Homelessness in the Swiss Media from 1993 – 2019

8.1   Method

The contributions on which this evaluation is based were researched on the *essential.swissdox.ch media* database. The database collects articles (full texts) from 183 Swiss newspapers and magazines (local, regional and national media).

The main question of the research was 'What do Swiss media report about when they address homelessness?'

The search strategy was carried out without any time restrictions. The German-language search was carried out on 20.7.2019 with the keywords 'obdachlos and schweiz' (homelessness and Switzerland) and produced 4970 results. The results were narrowed down in 2 steps. In a first round all titles and abstracts of the 4970 contributions were read. All contributions that were based on the same sources several times (e.g. death of a director of an aid organisation, report on a scientific study, application of a prominent person for the National Council) were deleted. All duplications (same news agency reports in different media) were also eliminated, as were all reports of homelessness abroad in which Switzerland was mentioned (e.g. disaster relief). There were 502 articles left for a detail view.

In the second round, the full texts were worked through with regard to their contribution to the guiding question. Pure portraits of people (not homeless people) as well as letters from readers or discussion collections on reports were eliminated from the text corpus. There remained 336 contributions for the full text analysis.

From the 336 full texts, central topics were named from the material. A clarification had to be made in order to assign each contribution to only one topic. A total of seven main topics were established in this way and the contributions assigned in each case. The content analytical evaluations were carried out along the main themes.

The French-language search was created as a second wave search, i.e. it took place after the evaluation of the German-language full texts on 30.11.2019. The search was carried out with the keywords 'sans-abri and pauvre*' (homeless and poverty). There were 893 hits. This was reduced in two further steps: limited to Europe (433 hits) and reports in regional daily newspapers (204 hits). The 204 hits in the French-language media are thus mainly regional reports and did not increase the number of hits that refer to the reporting throughout Switzerland. The thesis is that these debates can be recorded in the German-language analysis.

8.2   Summary

The media reports on the subject of 'studies', which have been viewed since 1993, mostly focus on partial aspects of homelessness due to a lack of overall studies. The reports take into account individual aspects of homelessness (especially unemployment, indebtedness, sickness/addiction, divorce) to about the same extent as structural problems (housing and labour market, social and health policies). Only two recent scientifically well-founded studies are reported in detail (Briner et al. / Psychiatric Psychological Polyclinic Zurich; Drilling/Dittmann et al. / University of Applied Sciences, School for Social Work FHNW). All other reports refer to data collected in homeless shelters, as part of university theses or by journalists themselves. Or they address homelessness in the context of other studies (debt study, urban growth, population survey). In all reports, specific contradictions in Swiss social policy (in particular various benefit cuts) are highlighted, which in turn emphasises the structural (rather than individual) causes of homelessness.

In the subject of 'public space', the main themes are the cities and their open space in general, and the train stations and airports. Homeless people are depicted as victims of the commercialisation of public space (railway stations) or of an immaculate cityscape. Some measures have been condemned (e.g. checks on people at the railway station by the border corps), and since 1993 there have been continuous reports of examples of defensive architecture and furniture in public spaces (including the removal of seats). Since 2017, national railway and airport management has been more rigorous, reporting to the authorities. These reports are mainly triggered by the recorded practice of the 'Security-Intervention-Prevention SIP' groups in Zurich and Bern as well as the high numbers of homeless people that have been removed from public spaces by the police (according to police reports in Swiss cities). Little differentiation is made between the origins of homeless people (Eastern Europe, Switzerland), their age or gender. The reports deal first and foremost with the right to access public space.

With regard to asylum and refugee issues, the issue of homelessness is critically examined in the context of legislative changes. The interface with the Asylum Act is of particular interest to the media: people speak of 'officially intended homelessness' when asylum applications are rejected and the person's stay becomes illegal – a parallel to the undocumented *sans papier* in Switzerland is established here. And it is reported that due to the revision of the asylum law, people are increasingly marginalised and become dependent on the homeless support services. Alternative reports cite attempts at an *urban citizenship* or various specific offers of assistance such as the *unité mobile of* the University Hospital of Geneva.

The subject of 'housing' is at the centre of reporting and in the most diverse directions. Seldom are international agreements, Switzerland's reports on them and the comments made on them by international organisations discussed. Rather, the connection between the housing market, housing shortages and homelessness or local movements of the 'right to housing' are reported; examples of temporary solutions (containers, etc.) are cited; thus the reporting on the subject of housing remains very strongly based on local conditions and is seldom placed in an international context.

The reports on the subject of social assistance, on the other hand, are quite different. Their fundamental mission, to be the safety net of help in the social security system, is repeatedly contradicted by decisions taken. From the point of view of the press, social assistance is more actively involved in increasing the precariousness of the homeless than in improving their situation. Accordingly, civil society projects, ranging from overnight accommodation to meals or small earning opportunities (especially selling street magazines), are named as aid measures. The *Housing First* approach recently discussed in Switzerland is also presented.

What image does the media itself spread of the people affected by homelessness? It is primarily biographical descriptions that are taken up by the media. They report on the actual lives of homeless people at specific locations (e.g. airports, public spaces, railway stations) or at specific times (especially at the onset of winter). They trace a story that usually goes back to the person's childhood. Sometimes homelessness is also addressed as a voluntary choice or lifestyle. In this way, the media succeed in bringing a relatively differentiated image of homelessness into the public consciousness. There are frequent incidents, e.g. in the context of drug and alcohol dependence and Swiss drug policy, which run counter to the differentiated nature of the reporting. These are more likely to cement the image of the homeless being dependent on alcohol and drugs. But the press reports consistently take up the current profiles, up to the current challenge of destitute people from Eastern and Central Europe, asking questions about homeless support, but also about Switzerland's task in the context of aid.

8.3 The topics in the context of homelessness in detail

8.3.1 Reports on studies

A total of 39 articles have been included in the analysis, which relate to data or which place data at the centre of reporting. The studies mentioned were carried out by universities (6), journalists/media houses (4), professional organisations (5) or intermediary organisations (1).

Only two studies that have been taken up by the media focus on homelessness in the narrower sense and follow scientific methods of survey and evaluation:

- In 2014, the Psychiatric-Psychological Polyclinic of the City of Zurich interviewed 460 people in urban facilities for accompanied and supported living in the City, the night hostel and the emergency sleeping shelter (Baumgartner-Nietlisbach/Briner 2013). The media reported that 96% of all respondents met the criteria for at least one psychiatric diagnosis. If addictions were not counted, 61% of respondents were still affected by at least one psychiatric disease. According to media reports, there was a supply gap here, i.e. patients would be discharged too early and the emergency facilities were thus faced with unmanageable challenges.
- In 2018, the School of Social Work, University of Applied Sciences FHNW surveyed 469 users of the homeless facilities in the canton of Basel-Stadt (Drilling/Dittmann et al. 2019). The media took up the data from the census and noted that there were 100 rough sleepers in the canton and a further 200 people who were homeless and spent the night in sheltered accommodation, emergency apartments or with acquaintances/friends. The

media took up the idea of an unconditional emergency sleeping place as well as the Housing First suggestions from the recommendations.

Other studies presented by the media focus on the connection between young people's indebtedness and homelessness (study by the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts 2014; thesis: unpaid bills and tax debt as main drivers), street children in Bern (master thesis at the University of Bern 2004; thesis: 100 street children in the city of Bern, reason: conflicts with parents or institutions; problem: they do not accept any professional help and sell themselves on the street), homeless people in Lucerne and Zurich (Matura thesis 2015; thesis: more counselling and psychological support is needed) or the differentiation of the city along income groups (ETH study 2006; thesis: spatial segregation of the city of Zurich and positive role of non-profit property owners in preventing homelessness). A final study taken up by the media quotes the results of the population opinion on homelessness (Cattachin et al. 2006). According to the survey by the University of Geneva, which is representative of Switzerland, 36% of Swiss people feel harassed by homeless people and 27% are in favour of removing homeless people from pedestrian zones.

Some reports refer to data collected in the homeless support facilities in different cities: for example, reference is made to data from streetwork outreach professionals in Basel, which in 2018 noted a significant increase in street homelessness (400 users of the association's postal address, 2/3 of users younger than 45 years old, average use of post boxes 7 months), The Salvation Army of the city of Geneva, which is increasingly renting hotels to accommodate the homeless, and the Emergency Sleep Centre in Fribourg, which keeps a list of emergency beds throughout Switzerland and had a total of 800 beds for 2017.

All reports based on objective data emphasise that homelessness is a multiple burden, with factors most frequently mentioned being unemployment, debt, sickness/addiction, divorce and lack of affordable housing. In this way, the reports not only highlight individual problems, but also address structural problems, particularly in the housing and labour markets and in social and health policy. In addition, the reports often refer to specific contradictions that criminalise and aggravate the situation of the homeless (e.g. cuts in unemployment benefits in 2003, cantonal differences in allowances for sellers of the street magazine Surprise, conversion to flat rates per case in the health system, lack of assurances that the municipality will provide a place to live according to §23 Swiss Civil Code ZGB).

8.3.2   Public space

Since 1993, the media have regularly addressed public space. Numerous articles focus on railway stations in Switzerland and trace the negotiations between the city administration and the national railway company SBB regarding the night-time closure of stations. The journalists of all media houses position themselves above all as critical commentators of a creeping privatisation of public space. As early as 1995, contributions were published on SBB's plan to close the Bern railway station between 0.30 a.m. and 4.30 a.m. The project was followed by the publication of a report on the railway station's closure. Although Bern station was by then the last station in Switzerland to be closed at night, the contributions argued in favour of maintaining the opening. The arguments of vandalism, alcohol consumption and addiction in the vicinity of the station

were understood, but at the same time the opinion was expressed that a city has to put up with these ambivalences. In the course of the debate, attempts by the SBB to force homeless people out of stations and their surroundings were criticised: for example, the continuous playing of classical music (La-Chaux-de-Fonds) in bus stop shelters, various defensive measures against sitting and lying down (assembly of metal rods and plates, disassembly of seats and waste bins) as well as the prohibition signs in station halls (prohibition of lying and sitting on the ground).

Since the year 2013, when the first experiences with the rule that people could be expelled from a public place by police were published in the city of Zurich (it was applied 13,000 times in 2012), the critical tone of the reporting has intensified. In connection with their profit-centred strategy and the RailCity concept, the SBB are attributed as having a policy of crowding out, the homeless are usually portrayed as disadvantaged, and the city administrations are positioned as facing the dilemma between city maintenance/ townscape and the right to public space. Time and again, the media bring critical attention to these conflicts: on the one hand because of the expulsion rule, which is increasingly used in numerous Swiss cities, and on the other hand in 2017 and 2018, when officials of the customs administration at Basel railway station begin to subject allegedly homeless people to identity checks. In this context, the SIP (Zurich) and PINTO (Bern) outreach patrols have also been problematic since 2016: contrary to their mandate, they have increasingly assumed police functions and warn, rebuke or even expel homeless people. Also since 2015, various bans have been imposed in public spaces and 'defensive architecture' has become the subject of discussion. In addition to the core cities of Zurich, Geneva, Basel and Lausanne, smaller cities such as St. Gallen are also the focus of reporting. Overall, the media of all media houses regard public space in its public function as somewhat endangered.

The media report just as continually, but not with the same sharpness of focus, on homeless people at the airports in Zurich and Basel/Mulhouse. The first articles were published in 2012, mostly portraits of people using the airport for overnight stays. The airport management was described as tolerant, they were all familiar with each other and had no objection to the 80 people (2012, Zurich Airport) or 12 people (2016, Zurich Airport) as long as they adhered to the house rules. The contributions also described the negative attitude of the municipality of Kloten, which had to pay for accidents, illnesses, etc. of homeless people and was therefore interested in their removal. This is another reason why the SIP outreach teams have been patrolling the airport since 2016. Basel/Mulhouse Airport is presented as being less tolerant: the management does not want overnight stays without tickets or employment and is working to find ways to remove the 30 or so homeless (2015).

8.3.3   Asylum seekers and refugees

With regard to the subject of asylum seekers and refugees, the issue of homelessness is addressed in the media in the context of corresponding legislative changes. As early as the late 1990s, the federal government wrote of a deliberate acceptance of homelessness among asylum seekers. Due to rising asylum costs, Switzerland is successively reducing its support for asylum seekers. Two measures are highlighted: (1) The 'Non-entry decision' (NEE) from 2004; this criticises the fact that asylum seekers whose application is not met by the Confederation

and who do not cooperate in initiating their departure automatically lose all support and therefore remain illegally in Switzerland. This leads to a state of 'officially intended homelessness'. (2) The revision of the Asylum Act of 2008, as a result of which rejected asylum seekers no longer receive social assistance, but only emergency assistance and accommodation in an emergency facility. This amendment has also led to an increase in the use of homeless assistance facilities by asylum seekers. At the same time, there is talk of an omission because the homeless aid organisations concerned are not prepared for the situation or supported in dealing with the new user group.

For the media, this link between refugees and homelessness is a 'crisis', and it is addressed again with each new inflow of refugees; still in 2016, in the context of around 40,000 expected applications for asylum and the only 6,000 emergency beds in Switzerland, the paradigm 'Nobody should be homeless' was written about – and this should really be understood as provocation. In reality, reports were already written in 2011 showing how often refugees are dependent on the services of homeless assistance or private individuals; there was also a kind of consensus that an episode of homelessness of up to 7 days would be 'officially' tolerated in many cantons (2011) and that those responsible would know that leaving a refugee with an 'F permit' for too long would lead to homelessness (2016).

There are few reports that show scenarios of how the asylum system could be separated from homeless support or which specific measures could offer relief. Cross-references to the estimated 100,000 – 300,000 undocumented *Sans Papiers* in Switzerland were produced. This group, which is also remaining in Switzerland illegally, can take out compulsory health insurance with the health insurance funds (in accordance with a directive issued by the Federal Social Insurance Office in 2002), they work in a 'grey' area (social security contributions and withholding tax deduction possible) and since 1993 the *unité mobile of* the University Hospital of Geneva has provided medical care that has specialised in these target groups.

In 2016, the press took up the concept of *urban citizenship,* with reference to New York and with the first implementation tests in the city of Zurich. 'Illegal' rejected asylum seekers would thus at least have the opportunity to access public facilities (e.g. libraries), municipal programmes, discounted admissions or – depending on the decision – health care. The debate around the 'solidarity offence' is also being conducted – triggered by the illegal accommodation of rejected asylum seekers by private people: after around 780 people were punished in 2017 for having illegally hosted refugees refused asylum, a Green Party member of parliament in Geneva has advocated 'decriminalising charity'.

With a view to the Aliens Act, the 2018 issue of 'Refugees – destitute people from Eastern and Central Europe – homelessness' will also be addressed and, above all, the 'sufficient financial resources' for entering Switzerland laid down in the Aliens Act will be questioned, based on the fact that a monthly income of about 9000 SFr. is needed to be able to prove the amount of 100 Swiss Francs per day mentioned in paragraph 5b (students: 30 Swiss Francs).

8.3.4 Living

In connection with reports on homelessness, the topic of housing has been taken up little by the media in Switzerland (19 contributions were included in the analysis) and especially in recent

years. The housing shortage has been at the centre since 1996 (Habitat II and the 'right to housing'). The low vacancy rates in Swiss cities are repeatedly pointed out and the homeless described as the most vulnerable group. Institutions that help the homeless are cited with the demand for housing containers, individual cases are listed in which pensioners have to move into retirement homes because of the high rents and reference is made to a study by Pro Senectute, which estimates the number of pensioner households that can no longer afford their rent – and are thus potentially threatened with homelessness – at 40,000 throughout Switzerland (2016). Individual organisations such as 'Schwarzer Peter', the streetwork organisation based in Basel, are often included in the alerts: the number of homeless people that the organisation lends their postal address to is regarded as the barometer of a non-functioning housing market: 100 addresses in 2010, 290 in 2014, over 400 in 2016.

The media cover the four housing policy initiatives in the canton of Basel-Stadt that were adopted by the electorate in 2018 as the only structural answers to the housing shortage: (1) Housing Protection Initiative: with its campaign on 'RIGHT TO LIVING', (2) Housing without fear of expulsion, ('YES to more consideration for older tenants'); (3) Tenant Protection at Move-in ('YES to Affordable New Tenancies'); and (4) Tenant Protection in Court ('YES to Affordable Rental Court Proceedings)'. In-depth analyses, such as on the prospects of return to the housing market in contrast to the capital market or displacement due to rental platforms such as AirBnB, can seldom be found in connection with reporting on homelessness. This means that there are no specific contributions from the media on how the housing and real estate market can be controlled in the context of homelessness.

8.3.5   Social assistance and emergency housing

In the media in Switzerland, social assistance is increasingly portrayed as an overburdened state institution. A total of 33 contributions were included in the analysis, with condensation of the reports around the year 2010 and since 2017. In the years up to the mid-2000s, the main focus is on the housing policy of social assistance, and since mid-2015 also on the quality of its advice for people affected by homelessness.

The policy of accommodation is regularly discussed in the winter season with alternating target groups: the marginalised, who have to be accommodated in youth hostels (2002), the excessive demands on social assistance, Swiss returnees who are dependent on cheap housing to provide sustainable help (2009), the allocation of children and young adults to private dormitories (2010-2011) and the question of legitimate accommodation for 'migrant workers' (from 2012 until today). The media particularly criticise the contradiction between, on the one hand, open capacities in the emergency sleeping shelters and, on the other hand, the dangers to which homeless people are exposed outdoors in winter. Social welfare specialists are quoted through statements such as 'Emergency sleeping shelters are not a hotel' (2017), 'Emergency sleeping tourism among foreign migrant workers' (2017), 'Basel should not become a magnet for the homeless' (2017) or even the recommendation from a social welfare specialist to a needy person "*buy yourself a tent*" (2018). In this context, the media also draw attention to the fact that most municipalities in Switzerland either have no emergency shelters or offer too few places, and are therefore unable to offer any options of their own despite their mandate to support those in need in their search for accommodation. Here, contradictions are also critically highlighted, such as the

statement by a head of the social welfare office in 2017: "*A good emergency shelter is an empty emergency shelter. So it's available when it's really needed*."

With these reports, the media are positioning social assistance as the last safety net of the welfare state, and the media states that social welfare works in a technically clumsy way that is often directed against the needs of homeless people. And this despite the fact that, according to the Federal Constitution (Art. 12), every person in Switzerland who finds him or herself in need has a "right to assistance and care and to the means that are indispensable for a dignified existence".

In this context, the emergency sleep centre is called a "place of failure" (2010) and social assistance is qualified as "making it more difficult to find accommodation" (2016). This includes surveys of property managers who would like more support from social assistance, in particular for the post-letting phase (in the sense of conflict resolution). Individual companies such as LIVIT will no longer rent out to welfare recipients due to this shortcoming, but only to social institutions that act as intermediaries.

In the years after 2017, the topic of emergency housing is discussed almost exclusively in connection with destitute people from Eastern and Central Europe ('migrant workers'). Here, the conflict of an institution in the city of Basel which, in the opinion of the social welfare authorities, distributed overly generous vouchers for overnight stays in emergency sleeping shelters, served as an occasion for a nationwide debate on the definition of emergency sleeping shelters and their priority target groups. In particular, the allocation of vouchers (only a certain number per month is permitted), the enormous range of prices for an overnight stay in an emergency dormitory and the segmentation according to groups of needy people (cost vouchers, canton citizens, foreigners, migrant workers) are discussed in this area. The 'Igloo' project in Zurich (Sozialwerk Pfarrer Sieber) or the emergency office of the city of Lausanne serve as counterexamples. In the French-language media, in addition to the destitute people from Eastern and Central Europe, the Roma and rejected asylum seekers are also mentioned; in the media, these groups are regarded as the greatest challenge for the homeless system in the French-language cities of Switzerland. As a result of the scandal of the rejection practices of state institutions, the media are rather dealing with the topic of 'voluntary/ involuntary homelessness' as a niche presentation. Until 2017, this pair of terms was mostly used in an undifferentiated manner; since mid-2015, 'voluntary homelessness' has appeared in the media as a lifestyle choice primarily made by people with mental health disabilities.

8.3.6 Funding policies

The media in Switzerland report on a wide range of different support policies to prevent and alleviate homelessness. A first classification was able to differentiate into five areas:

(1) Accommodation: Since 1993, the topic of overnight accommodation has been dealt with annually in the media. Specific projects are presented, mostly on the occasion of cold winter nights. The services of the church and charity-based Sozialwerk Pfarrer Sieber dominate the coverage in the German-language media throughout Switzerland. This is primarily because the organisation is generally the first to respond to needs (e.g. Meeting Point Spinnerei Adrian Gasser 1994, Emergency sleeping bus Pfuusbus 2001, Info Point Nemo 2010, Emergency night

shelter Iglu for homeless people from Central and Eastern Europe 2016) and is thus an alternative to state support. The French-speaking media increasingly refer to the Emmaus community, which was founded by Pierre Abbe and is of greater importance in French-speaking Switzerland. The French-language media, however, report very widely on emergency sleeping shelters, such as *Sleep-In* in Lausanne (which declared a state of emergency in 2019), *Les Vollandes* in Geneva or the *Maison de la Roseraie* of the Salvation Army there. The frequency with which emergency sleep shelters are reported in French-speaking Switzerland is certainly also related to the significantly higher number of homeless people in the cities of Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel and Fribourg (it was estimated that between 2017 and 2019 about 500 and 1000 people had to spend the night outside).

(2) Food security: The media report very intensively on various approaches to food, such as projects such as 'Schweizer Tafel' or 'Lebensmittelverschwendung', which save edible goods from being thrown away and distribute them free of charge to the homeless. In this context, a necessary amendment to the law is also discussed, obliging cantons, retailers, wholesalers, etc. to distribute freshly prepared food free of charge (2016). Here the media take on a clear role of advocating against food waste and thus favour a turn from the rather charitable idea of the monastic 'poorhouse' (offering a meal to needy people) to a socio-political demand (not throwing away food). Accordingly, initiatives that support the self-sufficiency of the homeless, such as *soup populaire* in Lausanne with the distribution of around 36,000 food packages in 2015 or *Tischlein-deck-dich* (which distributed around 2900 tonnes of food in 2014), were recognised.

(3) Employment opportunities: In addition to individual projects in which the homeless can work for a small wage in the institutions that help the homeless or are part of a restaurant business, the *Surprise Street Magazine* project is regularly and extensively featured in the media. The ongoing deterioration in earning opportunities for street magazine sellers is pointed out. In 2007, for example, around 140 issues could be sold by welfare recipients within the scope of the tax allowances, whereas in 2014 this had dropped to only 65 issues. It is also reported that in 2010, cantons such as Basel-Landschaft imposed a ban on the sale of magazines by asylum seekers, which almost led to the project being abandoned because there were suddenly no sellers available to sell the magazine to end readers. In contrast to these negative influences, the Surprise projects *Street Soccer* and *Surprise Chorus* are recognised for their impact on integration. Both have a high motivation effect and give the participants a daily structure – which in the case of the footballers has led to the fact that a large proportion of the players are no longer homeless after the tournaments.

(4) Charity initiatives: Private funding policies are repeatedly addressed and range from a pizzeria serving free food to the needy (2016) to a vending machine run by the NGO Action Hunger in public space (filled with things required for everyday life). The following initiatives fit in this category: the crowdfunding bracelet in Montreal (2017), the emergency housing hotline in Neuchâtel and La Chaux-de-Fonds (2018), the pastoral taxi in Bern (2001), the animal clinic on the street (2014) and the Streetchurch youth church in Zurich (2006). Debates are also emerging here that recommend to the population how much money should be given to homeless people or whether donations in kind should be preferred to monetary donations (2018). Finally, the presentations are regularly supplemented by portraits of NGOs, their working methods and professional principles.

(5) Architecture: architectural/urban concepts are widely covered in the context of homelessness. As early as 1999, the term 'Mobiliengeschäft' was used to refer to a company in German-speaking Switzerland that specialised in mobile buildings which could be suitable for accommodating the homeless. One year later, books were published referring to the model house campaign launched in Bern already at the beginning of the century (in 1921); the books were about the question of whether there were options for homeless housing among the experimental houses (2000). In 2002, the approaches of *flying buildings* were presented, which would serve as accommodation for athletes and carers as part of the Tour de France, and reference was made to the *Transportable Architecture Research Unit* of the University of Lausanne (CCLab), which could also provide ideas for the accommodation of homeless people. More recently, architects such as *Shingen Ban* have been introduced and his cardboard buildings explained – buildings used in disaster areas that journalists could imagine could play a role in providing housing for the homeless. In this sense, the media in Switzerland are very investigative and they prepare discussions professionally. This also includes the presentation of the *Housing First* concept, about which reports began to appear for the first time in 2018 (the French-language media referred to a project from 2016, which was not considered to be *Housing First* by name, but which took a similar approach: the relocation of around 80 homeless people in Neuchâtel from rented hotel rooms to an supported living project, in which the number of hotel rooms was reduced to 48 in the medium term due to the success of the project). *Housing First* is presented as a positively tested model in Finland and its positive correlation with declining alcohol and drug use among homeless people is highlighted. Some media, however, refer to the Swiss practice of controlled drug delivery and cite studies which show that the proportion of homelessness decreased hugely after 6 months of participation in the programme. This implicitly raises the question of whether this form of drug policy is the Swiss model of *Housing First* (1997/2004).

8.3.7   The 'homeless' person in the media

Conversations with people affected by homelessness, the presentation of their biographies or insights into their everyday lives can be found in great detail, and since 1993 more or less continuously in the Swiss media. A total of 55 contributions were included in the analysis and can be clearly distinguished in terms of the construction of the idea of a homeless person and the context in which he or she is embedded. Until the beginning of the 2000s, the 'tramp by choice' (1993), for example, was presented above all, describing homelessness less as a social problem and more as a lifestyle choice made by individuals. People were portrayed who held a general rail pass from the national railway company SBB and used it to sleep on the train; journalists staged encounters between a rich businessman and a homeless person at Zurich Airport, in which both sides compared their daily routines and world views (1994).

It was not until 1998 that a report was published pointing to new forms of poverty in Switzerland, addressing the working poor and calling on the needy to go to the social authorities to claim their rights and entitlement. The basic tenor of these contributions is on the one hand the description of the new (poverty, homelessness) and the astonishment that homelessness exists in a rich Switzerland beyond the self-chosen decision.

This astonishment at the fact that Swiss citizens are homeless continues to this day, albeit with a significantly lower number of contributions. But there are regular portraits of homeless people, who are used to present their situation as a freely chosen decision and thus deprive homelessness of its socio-political focus. The most reported cases are those of middle-aged men who have decided to live in the forest (2004), who feel free if they do not live anywhere (2010), who want to cultivate a lifestyle based on total renunciation of all possessions (2012) or who reflect Generation Y with the goals of total freedom and independence (2018).

In addition to this figure of self-chosen homelessness, the figure of the male alcoholic or drug-addicted homeless person, whose life is marked by a multitude of negative events, has been appearing since the beginning of the 2000s. The biographies are almost always portrayed as a downward spiral: broken family relationships with conflictive relationships with the parents; with training in a craft, but then job loss due to structural reasons; indebtedness, divorce/separation, dismissal and forced eviction; then life on the street for longer periods of time. Social assistance in the course of events is described as barely supportive or even counterproductive; professional counselling seldom takes on any importance compared to the demands placed by the system (efforts to find work, proof of housing search). In those cases in which the biographical processes are described as stabilised by the actions of social welfare support, it is housing opportunities that are mediated. Stable and safe living (partly accompanied or cared for) seems to make a decisive turn in homelessness possible in the overall view of the contributions.

Since 2010, the number of articles portraying rough sleepers has been increasing. The partly romantic and nostalgic descriptions of the 1990s (see above) are now no longer repeated. A hard (survival) life on the street is described, experiences such as nightly assaults, attacks or social exclusion are found in condensed form. Here people are described who have lost touch with social developments, hardly receive any support from the public authorities and are more or less intensively cared for by the institutions providing support to the homeless. In most biographies it is social institutions that are mentioned by the interviewees as door openers or turning points: the Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber emergency sleep centre (with housing agency), the Salvation Army dormitory, outreach by streetworkers or the opportunity to sell the street magazine Surprise.

A large number of other people portrayed are still in the phase of street homelessness. Journalists hold back from judging professional and supportive actions in the reports; descriptions and representations dominate. Few references to social policy solutions or corresponding proposals are formulated. It is the individual stories rather than structural socio-political challenges that are at the centre of descriptions of destitute Eastern European people who are looking for work in Switzerland and who make use of the facilities for supporting the homeless. Thus, in recent years, reporting on people affected by homelessness seems primarily to aim at providing insights into a life outside the usual social structures.

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