

Twenty years of homelessness policy in Israel 1991-2011

Shmulik Szeintuch¹

This article presents an evaluation of homelessness policy in Israel between the years 1991 and 2011. This policy was first formulated during the first years of the Street Dwellers Unit in Tel-Aviv-Yafo. Its continuation manifests in the writing of relevant social work regulations which were first published in 1996 and updated three times since then. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services leads the relevant policy, which also includes the participation of the Ministry of Construction and Housing and the National Insurance Institute. The policy presented here is evaluated by a dual theoretical framework that includes the construction of social problems as well as policy ideas. The study shows that homelessness policy was led by the policy idea of rehabilitation. Moreover, it shows that the relevant policy was constructed for a small sub-group within the homeless population, whilst constructing the social problem of "street dwellers".

Key words: Homelessness, policy, policy idea, construction of social problems, rehabilitation.

1 School of Social Work, Sapir College.