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Marginalisation processes and youth homelessness in Italy

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1. Homelessness and policy responses: changes and continuities

1.1. Data and trends

There is no new data allowing us to modify the picture on homeless provided in the previous report (Tosi 1995a). The data on services aimed at persons suffering extreme poverty gives some additional information that confirms various tendencies already mentioned in previous years: persons of no fixed abode seem to be on the increase among users, at least in Central and Northern cities; and an aggravation of housing difficulties seems to be among those elements that are modifying the profiles of users. Among the users of Caritas services in Modena, for instance, no abode persons increased by 10 per cent in 1994; a similar increase may be observed for persons in situations of housing exclusion (AA. VV 1995). Among the users of services provided by Bartolomeo & C in Turin, people sleeping rough increased from 10.9 per cent of total users in 1990 to 58.8 in 1993 to 61 per cent in 1995. In the same period there was a marked decrease of accommodation in dormitories (from 29 to 11 per cent) and in cheap hotels (from 46 to 10 per

cent) (Bartolomeo 1995). In Genova, the percentage of no abode among the new users of San Marcellino services was 60 per cent in 1990, 70 per cent in 1993, 74 per cent in 1996 (Associazione San Marcellino 1996).

Various data is, however, available on the different factors that determine precariousness and social vulnerability, data which for the most part suggests an increase in the "at risk" area of social exclusion.

POVERTY

The new report of the Commission for Investigating Poverty points to a slight increase in the incidence of poverty between 1994 and 1995 (from 10.2 to 10.6 per cent of families) (Commissione 1996a). (The analysis is conducted on the basis of Istat data on the consumption of Italian families and considers as poor the families with per capita consumption equivalent to less than half the average per capita consumption). The report again underlines the strong concentration of poverty in southern and island regions where one family in five lives in conditions of economic hardship, while in the North this proportion falls to one in twenty. In 1995, geographical differences became even more accentuated. Finally the report confirms the high incidence of poverty among

children and young people, and the extreme "southern concentration" of poverty for the under 18, on which we will comment in chapter 3.

Given the sources on which this data is based, it is unable to tell us much about situations of extreme poverty. Some indication of the severity of the processes that exist come from data on the poverty gap (the sum of the differences between the income of poor families from the poverty line income divided by the product of the number of the poor and the poverty line income). They indicate that the greater percentage of poor families in the South is accompanied by a more serious conditions. Furthermore, the increase in the intensity of poverty recorded between 1994 and 1995 (from 20.7 to 21.7 per cent) is totally concentrated in families in the South, confirming the accentuation of geographical differences.

Table 1. Poverty in Italy, 1995 (in thousands)

	North	Centre	South	TOTAL
Poor families	415	263	1,450	2,128
All families	9,540	3,884	6,632	20,056

Poor persons	1,088	729	4,879	6,696
All residents	25,092	10,840	20,511	56,442

Incidence of poverty

- families	4.4	6.8	21.9	10.6
- persons	4.3	6.7	23.8	11.9

Intensity of poverty

- families	17.8	18.6	23.4	21.7
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% Distribution

- poor families	19.5	12.4	68.1	100.0
- all families	47.6	19.4	33.0	100.0
- poor persons	16.2	10.9	72.9	100.0
- persons resident	44.5	19.2	36.3	100.0

Source: Commission on Poverty 1996.

LABOUR MARKET

Persons in search of employment in 1995 showed a year on increase of 6.4 per cent. In particular persons in search of their first employment increased. The unemployment rate rose from 11.3 per cent in 1994 to 12 per cent in 1995. The gap separating the North

of the country from the South widened further: the rate of unemployment showed an increase of two percentage points in the South (from 19.2 to 21.1 per cent) and one point in Central Italy while in the North it remained unchanged (6.8 per cent) (Istat 1996). The high and particular geographical concentration of unemployment constitutes a strong aggravating component of the overall unemployment situation in Italy, as does the exceptionally high percentage of youth unemployment. While the rate of unemployment and the tendency in general is not much different from those of other European countries, it is these elements which give a negative character to the "Italian model of unemployment" (Mingione and Pugliese 1993). The 1995 data confirms the much greater extent to which young people are hit (33.8 per cent at national level) as opposed to adults (8.5 per cent). Even in this case the situation is more serious in the South: here the rate of unemployment for young people has touched the record level of 55.3 per cent.

Table 2. Unemployment rates, 1995 (%)

	Long term unemployment	Unemployment	Adults	Young people
North-West	4.3	7.4	4.9	22.4

North-East	2.6	5.9	4.2	15.4
Centre	6.7	10.3	7.1	34.0
South	14.9	21.1	15.2	55.3
ITALY	7.8	12.0	8.5	33.8

Source: Istat 1996.

Finally, in 1995, long term unemployment (unemployed for more than 12 months) was also on the increase and reached 7.8 per cent for the country as a whole. This situation affects 65 per cent of persons in search of employment and the figure rises to 75 per cent in the South, while it affects only half of those living in the North.

HOUSING

New elements of concern arise from an analysis of the behaviour of the public sector and from the tendencies in the private sector. A further reduction in government commitment to the production of

social housing has been observed: Table 3 shows that in a situation of general decline, houses built by government has decreased in particular. Furthermore, the implementation of previous provisions designed to restructure public housing has resulted in an increase in rents for state owned and other social housing rents.

Table 3. Housing construction, 1990-1994

	1990	1994	% change 1994-90
State	2.7	2.0	-37.7
Private	38.3	39.2	-12.4
Co-operatives	12.6	10.8	-27.8
Others	46.4	48.0	-11.3
Total	100.0	100.0	-14.5

Source: Federabitazione 1996.

On the private rent market, the effects of the "Pacts in derogation" (the new contracts provided outside the Fair Rent Act:

see Tosi 1995a) have aggravated the strain on moderate income families. A study in Lombardy shows that the incidence of rents on incomes has grown worryingly for low income families. 17 per cent of low rent tenants (up to 200,000 Liras per month) had a rise of more than 100 per cent (only 4 per cent of middle rent tenants had a similar rise, no rise occurred for high rent tenants) (Cremaschi 1996).

As far as policies are concerned, while an attempt has been made to ease the situation with stop-gap measures by postponing the execution of evictions (October 1996) for the umpteenth time, the various projects for the reform of the rent market have not yet resulted in legislation. A bill is lying in Parliament which would grant tax deductions and concessions both to tenants and to landlords and also reductions in VAT for house purchase, renovation and the construction of houses. However, there are no proposals on the table which directly and systematically tackle the problems of housing exclusion and of housing problems of marginalised groups of people. The bills put forward continue to be limited to the problems of normal social housing demand. At the local level, however, there has been an increase in attempts to meet the housing needs of the poorer sectors of the population (see Aspe 1996).

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES

The data cited above illustrates yet again the entity of the "territorial divide" that separates the South from the rest of the country: the gap does in fact show a tendency to increase for practically all indicators.

IMMIGRATION

According to Ministry of the Interior data, the number of foreign citizens in Italy increased by 68,713 (7.4 per cent) in 1995 reaching a total of 991,419 at the beginning of 1996. Of these, 725,882 are from developing countries and Eastern Europe (73.2 per cent). The percentage of foreign citizens in Italy accounts for approximately 1.7 per cent of the total population; a percentage that is far below that found in other countries in the European Union: Belgium, 9.1; Germany, 8.5; France, 6.3; Holland, 5.1.

To these figures, which are for immigrants in possession of stay permits, those for clandestine and "irregular" immigrants must be added. These constitute the group that is most exposed to the risk of extreme poverty and which may most easily become homeless or fall in to precarious housing conditions (see previous reports). They probably amount to a few hundred thousand persons.

The important news on this front in 1996 was a decree that allowed immigrants in work the chance to apply for work permits and "regularise" their position. At the end of 1996 there were 255,000 applications of which 40,000 were still awaiting a final decision and 5,000 had been refused.

In February 1997 the Government presented a bill to the Parliament, aimed to give a comprehensive regulation to the whole question of immigration. In addition to the redefinition of the criteria for stay permits and quotas for labour immigration, the bill provides a set of policies for the insertion of regular immigrants, including some measures for emergency accommodation and housing.

2.2. The family and the Welfare crisis

On the whole, these data suggest that social vulnerability and the risk of social exclusion are widespread and "diffusive" phenomena, not restricted to the categories that are more prominent in the debate on extreme poverty (immigrants, gypsies, persons of no abode etc.). These risk factors involve virtually all social categories (even if they are more diffuse and more

persistent in some specific categories as those mentioned). The point is important because this increase of the risk factors occurs in a moment in which the "welfare crisis" is becoming more evident.

Until recently, the welfare system - which in Italy is based on a strict integration between public intervention and the responsibility of the family - has worked in a rather satisfactory way. Now the convergence of fiscal crisis and the increase of precariousness and social vulnerability - and its spreading to "normal" families - makes the traditional welfare model less effective and more precarious.

In fact, reference to the characteristic of the "Italian model" has been used to explain both the relative capability of the system to date, at least in certain areas, and the recent increase in the risk of poverty and homelessness. "Up to now the social deterioration brought about by the post-fordist transformation has been partially absorbed by this combination of strong families and social networks and a weak state in such a way that the risk of poverty has been concentrated in southern cities, affecting particularly families with economic resources too limited to support a large number of long-term unemployed or dependent children". Now the things are changing: "the deepening of the fiscal crisis of the state and the deindustrializing crisis of the economy - which has also hit the strongholds of the

Italian industrial empire, leading to a massive wave of redundancies - is paving the way for a new season of social deterioration. It is doubtful that familial, reciprocal and voluntary institutions, even in the North, will have sufficient capacity and resources to prevent the 'new urban poverty' from consolidating its position in southern cities and invading the northern ones on a larger scale" (Mingione and Morlicchio 1993).

These difficulties hit some social areas in particular, as "isolated" people, families overloaded with members in need of special protection, "broken" families etc. (Mingione 1995). The effects of the new situation, however, are going to involve more and more "normal" families, as we have seen. The novelty is suggested by the image of a "stressed family", which has become popular among researchers on family (see chapter 3). The "crisis" means that the family reinforces its importance as a protecting agency; and at the same time that its capacity of protecting is threatened by a reduction in the resources available - as a consequence of impoverishment processes and as a consequence of the crisis of welfare state. The effects can be very hard on low income families. In any case, this means that the discriminating role of the family is accentuated.

The new crisis factors add to a system of social policies characterized by a number of traditional limits: a system of social citizenship extremely differentiated on a territorial

basis, and in which different categories of citizens enjoy different sets of benefits; a low level of social expenditure (except for old age pensions); organizational limits, which reflect in a fragmentation of intervention; a scarce provision of welfare housing measures, and their poor effectiveness as regards the marginal groups of population; the residual place of the policies addressed to the homeless population (a field in which a major role is played by voluntary associations).

Young people are particularly affected by the shortcomings of the social policy system. "The social areas in which the deficits of social protection are more relevant are young people and marginalized adults. As regards young people, low school/occupational qualification, isolation or lack of relationships to family, or belonging to families with poor support abilities means high risk of downdrift" (Mingione 1995, 16). While a fair protection is provided for minors, after the age of 18, when the protection measures provided for the minor cease, many young adults can only count on limited institutional provisions (see Chapter 4); in any case, their opportunities become more dependent on the strong discretionality which characterizes public intervention in this field.

In this situation, it is noteworthy the scarce consideration which is given to the problem of homelessness - and also to youth

homelessness, as we will see in Chapter 4 - in the public debate. While a certain attention is paid to the "no abode" component of the question, as an important aspect of extreme poverty and marginalization, very scarce consideration is given to the question of housing exclusion. In the Italian Report for Habitat II, for instance, there is no mention to the question homelessness.

1.3. Methodological remarks

The discussion of youth homelessness requires all the methodological cautions and conceptual distinctions which are typical of research on homelessness and were pointed out in the previous reports (Tosi and Ranci 1994 and Tosi 1995a).

(a) We must recognize the heterogeneity of the problem homelessness - the variety of figures and processes constituting it, and the impossibility to reduce the problem to any single explanation: assumptions about homelessness as the "result" of poverty, or of social marginality, or of lack of affordable housing etc. are untenable.

(b) Analysis of homelessness implies a complex of concepts, whose relationships need to be adequately controlled. A distinction is necessary, in particular, between the concept of homelessness as referring to persons of no (fixed) abode or roofless or sleeping rough etc.; and the concept of homelessness as referring to persons excluded from housing. In fact, with reference to youth homelessness, it has been observed that the two have different dynamics (Burton et al. 1989).

(c) The field of homelessness relates to the processes dealt with the concepts of extreme poverty, social exclusion, marginalisation etc. But relationships are uncertain and difficult to define. In the production of homelessness there are specific factors and processes which not necessarily correspond to those of marginalisation in general;

(d) This point is particularly important for Italy, because youth homelessness is a somehow latent phenomenon in this country, and - while marginalisation and risk of homelessness have increased - manifest homelessness is a relatively uncommon phenomenon.

2. Youth homelessness as an urban problem

A description of youth homelessness in Italy is difficult due to a lack of available information and the fact that the data available relates to the users of services. In most cases these services are aimed at populations in situations of extreme poverty or social marginalisation and it is not always easy to identify homelessness within these populations especially since different suppliers of services employ different criteria for definition.

2.1. Youth homelessness and marginalisation

Despite this, there is consensus among operators in the field that the phenomena of both extreme poverty and homelessness are affecting younger age groups and the data available confirms the tendency. As far back as 1992, national research on "extreme poverty" done by the Commission for Investigating Poverty (the research examined four types of population considered as exposed to the risk of extreme poverty: persons of no fixed abode (NFA), immigrants, nomads, persons with mental illness problems) described "the increasingly young face of poverty and social exclusion as a

significant fact of considerable importance". The 25-34 age group was the modal value including 45.7 per cent of respondents; 20.3 per cent were below the age of 25. Even if this was partly a result of sampling choices (immigrants and gypsies greatly contributed to increase the number of people in these age brackets), there was a confirmation of the fact that young adults were heavily struck by various forms of extreme poverty (Commissione 1993).

Table 4. Population in extreme poverty, by age, 1992

	No abode	Total
0-17	0.0	1.6
18-24	7.0	18.7
25-34	30.4	45.7
35-44	24.1	18.1
45-54	21.5	9.3
55-64	11.3	4.4
65 and more	5.7	1.9
	100.0	100.0

(460) (3,758)

Source: Survey on Extreme poverty, Commission on Poverty 1992.

The same age group was a modal value for NFA, confirming the well-known trend - brought out by research in all European countries - of a fall in the age of homeless persons and also involving the youngest age groups.

Recent local research on the age composition of the users of individual services indicates a substantial presence of young people among users and among homeless users. In most cases (except for traditional structures such as dormitories where the population is often older), young people up to the age of 35 account for between 30 and 50 per cent of total users (Caritas Ambrosiana 1994, Zajczyk 1996, Bartolomeo 1995, AA. VV. 1995). In some cases there is evidence of an increase of young people. For instance, among the new users of San Marcellino in Genova, the percentage of the under 30 rose from 15.7 to 35.7 between 1989 and 1996. During the same period, there was an increase of young people of no abode, from 16.2 to 26.8 per cent of total no abode users (Associazione San Marcellino 1996). Between 1989 and 1994 the average age of users of Cena dell'Amicizia in Milano lowered from 40 to 30 (Associazione Cena dell'Amicizia 1996).

The fragmentary and heterogeneous nature of the sources does not allow any precise estimate of the most recent tendencies: it is possible that the turning point in the lowering of the age of no abode and marginalised persons can perhaps be identified as occurring at the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's. In any case the increase in youth homelessness is a fact, whether total absolute figures or the percentage of total homeless are considered. Data on services for populations in extreme poverty also confirms that the age of no abode persons is lower than that of the users as a whole (Mingione 1995).

If we consider the set of data mentioned above, the following observations can be made:

- the number of young homeless in the strict sense of the term (roofless or street homeless) is probably low when compared with other European countries. If we translate the data of the Commission on Poverty into absolute figures, the result is 13,000 to 20,000 young people below the age of 34, 3,000 to 4,000 below the age of 24;

- the number of young people in situations of housing exclusion without being "on the streets" should be relatively high: e.g. in situations of forced cohabitation, in precarious marginal

accommodation etc.; and also the number of marginalised young people, or at risk of marginalisation is high. (To give an idea: on the basis of the data provided by the 1992 research on extreme poverty, young people in extreme poverty can be estimate as 100,000 for the under 25, and more than 300.000 for the under 34: see Commissione 1993).

It is therefore possible that the risk of youth homelessness has increased to a much greater extent than the entity of visible youth homelessness would suggest. This could mean that there is a considerable phenomenon of latent youth homelessness, much larger than in other countries. Here we must consider the specific characteristics in Italy of a system in which family networks and cultural models absorb thrusts towards homelessness to some extent and prevent the passage to explicit homelessness, the latter remaining a relatively uncommon phenomenon.

In reality, neither the dimensions nor the characteristics of the phenomenon can be understood unless it is considered that for young people too homelessness - as for homelessness in general - is a heterogeneous problem in which the problems of extreme poverty, of housing exclusion and social marginalisation overlap and combine. The phenomenon is therefore populated by various figures, and also assumes very different features according to the geographical area. Young persons of no abode represent one of the expressions of

social marginalisation and one of the forms of housing exclusion. There is for young people too, a wider housing exclusion not associated with the traits of marginalisation and even less so with those of vagrancy.

(We have little information on young people in situations of housing exclusion: some indications can be drawn from data on some types of person in extreme poverty such as immigrants: see *infra* in this Chapter, and more extensively the Report 1995).

2.2. Young people of no abode

As far as strictly homeless young people are concerned, it must be noted that the lowering of the age groups affected has been accompanied by a change in the qualitative characteristics (see Tosi and Ranci 1994 and Commissione 1993). The change coincides to a large extent with that which in recent debate has been termed "new vagrancy", an identifying feature of which is in fact a larger number of young people. According to the Survey on extreme poverty (Commissione 1993), new vagrancy is characterised by an increase in "external factors" both of a family nature and regarding relationships with institutions as with ex-convicts, the mentally ill, drug addicts and alcoholics.

Amongst the various "causes at the origin" of the state of no abode, resulting from interviews and life histories collected by researchers, most, at least in part, relate to young people: the death of a parent or other relative (30.9 per cent of cases); the lack of sufficient communication within the family (30.9); a traumatic breakdown of the household (20.5); expulsion from the family for deviant behaviour (21.7); abandoned by family as children (9.6); unmarried pregnancies (6.5); being the child of a person of no fixed abode (6.3). Along with these factors that show the centrality of the family in the processes of marginalisation and homelessness, the importance of other relationship-related problems are indicated, such as alcoholism (27.6), moral violence (15.9), drugs (14.1) etc.

All this justifies the emphasis placed, in the analysis of youth homelessness, on the role that the absence or insufficiency of personal relationship resources - and in particular those of the family - play. Another fact on which the accent is often placed is the presence of drug addiction problems and AIDS. In reality, all the factors constituting youth marginalisation are potentially important in the creation of new vagrancy. In addition to relationship resources, family break-up and family marginalisation, involvement in drugs problems and abnormal behaviour, practically all those factors that go to make up the web of old and new poverty are signalled: experiences of institutionalisation; inadequate

integration into the world of work; school drop-out and lack of education; handicaps; precarious health; psychiatric problems; housing difficulties, etc. (see Commissione 1993, Pollo 1995, Zajczyk 1996).

After all, one subject on which the research has long insisted is the "process" and multidimensional character of poverty and social exclusion and this is even more important for no abode persons: "what clearly emerges is the simultaneous presence of several events and situations of need, each of which acts as a contributing cause in the establishment of a state of no abode" (Commissione 1993, 201). A study carried out in Milan on the youngest of persons of no abode (18-24 years) clearly shows that the three main difficulties signalled - the lack of housing, the need for employment and family difficulties are all connected with each other: "the absence of peaceful family relations and the loss of parental support at the difficult stage of entrance into society has direct repercussions on problems with housing and employment so that the three elements mentioned should be considered, for young people, as strictly independent" (Caritas Ambrosiana 1994, 30-31).

2.3. Geographical differences

More precise identification of factors and paths to youth homelessness are not possible unless reference is made to specific geographical contexts. The problem of large regional differences and the clear geographically linked features of hardship on which previous Italian reports have dwelt also concern youth homelessness. The differences are particularly profound between the cities of the South and the rest of the country. As has been seen (chapter 1), poverty continues to be strongly concentrated in southern regions, with concentration being particularly high for children and young people; and the employment crisis in the South hits young people particularly hard (chapter 3).

Differences involve both extreme poverty and housing exclusion. In the North, in a more affluent context, poverty and extreme poverty are more tied to individual paths, which may imply a more "extreme" character of the poverty. Moreover, there seems to be a closer connection between housing exclusion and social marginalisation which develops during the course of individual life histories. In the South hardship and long-term unemployment among young people and adults is a mass phenomenon affecting hundreds of thousands of city-dweller. Lack of services and low quality of welfare services greatly contribute to this, inducing vicious circles which are particularly strong in some "distressed" neighbourhoods. Also

housing exclusion or severe housing hardship seems to be tied to an "environment" factor, to a widespread vulnerability which reflects the vastness and the "collective" character of the poverty. Consequently being excluded from housing concerns to a larger extent "normal" people, very poor but not "marginalised", the situation is particularly serious in the major cities where the poverty factors are even more accentuated even with respect to the South itself (Saraceno and Negri 1994).

As has been remarked in the case of Naples, the "syndrome of widespread poverty" in the South means widespread hardship and housing exclusion, but not homelessness. ("Poverty affects a substantial segment of the urban population, not so much the homeless or vagrants as entire quarters that are in decay and impoverished by the absence of enured job opportunities and exclusion from even minimally effective educational, health and welfare services": Mingione and Morlicchio 1993, 414). This is true for the young too: the risk of homelessness for young people from the South is to a large extent tied, as we will see, to the decision to emigrate to the North.

Marginalisation in the large cities of the North is rather limited and affects particularly disadvantaged groups including a minority of young people who have failed at school and have family problems. While the number of seriously marginalised persons is quite low, it is, however, easier for a worsening situation to evolve towards

irrecoverable drifting. This is even more true for young people when specific risk factors are present.

"(Even if) it is not possible to untangle and sort the accumulation of stressful events that characterises the biographies of users into any order of chronological priority of importance, some critical fields can be seen both in terms of particularly vulnerable stages of the life cycle and in terms of negative experiences that often appear as triggering or aggravating factors. The stage of life that appears to an increasing extent to be at risk is youth and the onset of adulthood, between 16-18 and 25 years of age. It is above all school drop-outs who abandon or are expelled from low-income families who are at greatest risk. Drug addiction, the emergence or worsening of mental conditions or even just serious personality problems and asocial behaviour are among the factors that most frequently accompany this type of youth syndrome. The unstable, unqualified/disqualifying nature of many job opportunities requiring few qualifications in private service industries (what the Americans call "mac-jobs") tends to favour the onset of drifting for the very reason that they do not involve the stabilisation and strengthening of working careers as opposed to what past generations experienced. The strong possibility of housing exclusion is another important aggravating factor. The alarm concerning the potential expansion of the new poverty finds its justification starting with observations concerning these youth syndromes and the reasonable hypothesis that the number of drifters

may rapidly multiply due above all to the growing instability of career paths and the progressive increase in the fragility of family structures" (Mingione 1995, 27).

2.4. Marginalisation paths and youth homelessness in Milan

A recent study of the users of various services aimed at groups of the population in extreme poverty in Milan allows us to obtain a better reconstruction from the histories of young people of some of the fundamental combinations of factors and some of the roads to youth marginalisation. The study also enables us to shed light on what factors are specific to no abode with respect to general processes of marginalisation and how the lack of a dwelling is connected with extreme poverty and marginalisation.

(a) Difficulties on the labour market and the accumulation of risk factors. The users of services examined are often persons with an accumulation of disadvantages, the main ones being identifiable as unemployment and housing problems. As far as work is concerned, this population consists of poorly qualified workers, mainly unskilled factory or services workers hit heavily by industrial

restructuring processes: persons for which there are few opportunities on the labour market.

This situation also concerns young people. (It is worth noting here that of SAM users, for which the proportion of persons with no abode is very high, the younger persons have the poorest job-qualifications). There is also, in the North, a wide band of young people with poor qualifications who have no chance of improving their occupational capabilities. The family once again constitutes that area in which young people are safeguarded and their needs met. The correspondence between negative tendencies on the labour market and the other characteristics of users therefore becomes clear.

Table 5. Users of UAD and SAM-Caritas services in Milan, by job and age (%) (*)

	<34	35-44	45-54	55-64	>64
UAD					
- worker	71.4	71.9	61.5	66.7	72.2
- low tertiary	19.0	7.3	12.7	5.7	9.0
- medium tertiary	8.5	15.6	16.4	14.9	18.2

- artisan 6.1 5.2 3.6 12.6 -

SAM

- worker 52.8 47.7 43.9 30.4 14.3

- low tertiary 34.3 32.2 30.8 21.4 11.4

- medium tertiary 9.3 14.1 15.4 12.5 2.9

- artisan 3.7 2.0 3.8 1.8 -

- pensioner - 4.0 6.2 33.9 71.4

(*) UAD: Ufficio Adulti in Difficolt... (Office for Adults in Need), Municipality of Milan; SAM: Servizio Accoglienza Milanese, Caritas Ambrosiana.

Source: Contiero 1995 and Zajczyk 1996.

While difficulties on the labour market are a fundamental component of marginalisation processes, the users studied are characterised as individuals subject to a high risk of accumulating further negative events such as family, housing and health problems that risk dragging individuals and families along paths leading to real and genuine pauperisation, which ends up as chronic in case of lack of adequate intervention (Contiero 1995).

(b) Social network poverty. The persons studied suffer from

relationship and economic poverty especially with regard to primary social networks (the family, relatives, the local community). Most have a family history characterised by isolation, or conjugal instability and by experiences of break-ups between partners or in the case of single persons an existence characterised by the absence of a family.

For young people (almost all subjects are unmarried) isolation - as appears from a reading of their biographies - is part of a normative crisis with elements of stress often recurring and similar to each other: financial problems connected with the lack of a stable job, health problems due to illnesses and drug addiction or relationship problems with parents and consequent flight from home.

In general living in a family makes it possible to hook into solidarity networks that act to maintain the hardship condition at a latent stage, but when the condition worsens, the resources made available by these networks are no longer satisfactory either because the bonds are too weak or because they have exhausted their capacity to cushion the needs of the individual. At this point the poverty becomes explicit and emerges from the latent stage.

The no fixed abode condition accelerates and renders the process of deprivation chronic because the individual who experiences it appears more distant and uprooted from the system of primary social

networks described. Abandoning housing is often accompanied by a break with the family: this means that the networks of which the person formed part, rather than constituting a source of support, represent a limiting factor of conflict and hindrance to personal autonomy (Ghezzi 1995).

It is not surprising in the presence of these dynamics that persons from southern Italy are over-represented among the users of these services. Southerners - both new arrivals and those that arrived in the 1970's, the younger and the older ones in particular - seem to constitute a particularly disadvantaged component. Today, immigration along the North-south axis has become a gamble that is often lost. The criteria and conditions for access to the job market have become more selective and against this the job skills of the most recent immigrants are often quite poor.

Table 6. Users of UAD and SAM-Caritas services in Milan, by

origin and age (%)

UAD SAM

North South North South

< 34	21.5	13.3	28.5	33.5
35-44	23.1	23.7	20.9	25.7
45-54	28.5	35.2	23.1	21.3
>54	26.9	27.8	27.5	19.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Benassi 1995.

Table 7. No fixed abode users of UAD and SAM-Caritas services in Milan, by origin and age (%)

	<34	35-44	45-54	55-64	>64
North	30.3	24.1	22.8	22.8	43.7
South	37.0	24.9	22.5	15.5	56.3
Total	34.1	24.6	22.6	18.7	100.0

Source: Benassi 1995.

The "young face" of vagrancy in a city like Milan is due to a large extent to young Italians from the South. Among SAM users, where the percentage of persons of no abode is very high, most are southerners (71.8 per cent of users are persons of no abode and of these 77.2 per cent were born in the South as against 66 per cent of Northerners). Even in this case the ever increasing difficulty that young people encounter in finding work is to be set in a context of highly penalising characteristics as far as social integration is concerned and for these people disturbing events in individual life histories seem to be of a genuinely dramatic entity; the result is that a path towards progressive emargination becomes much more probable. This is above all for those who cannot even count on informal networks which continue to play a large part in the Italian social system both in guaranteeing resources and in activating information mechanisms in the search for a job.

The process of the disintegration of social networks seems very precocious, so that the accumulated effect of the various disadvantaging factors amplifies its consequences. Experiences of imprisonment are frequent, school qualifications low and the type of occupation confirms the overall disadvantage. They are characteristics which represent disadvantages in themselves and which, once accumulated together with critical events in individual life or family histories, become the starting point for extremely

serious emargination and pauperisation. To add to this there is an extremely high rate of unemployment. All the conditions for a "cronicization loop" are at work (Benassi 1995).

Table 8. Users of UAD and SAM-Caritas services for people in extreme poverty, Milan, 1993.

	No abode	Other users	Total
- male	86.8	59.5	75.2
- female	13.2	40.5	24.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
- married/cohabitant	31.9	24.9	27.5
- single	41.9	30.1	34.5
- separate/divorced	21.8	36.5	31.0
- widow/widower	4.4	8.5	7.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
- age to 34	33.6	17.4	26.7
- 35-44	25.5	18.6	22.6
- 45-54	20.9	28.6	24.2
- 55 and more	19.9	35.4	26.5

TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
- North	42.3	50.4	45.8
- Centre	4.7	5.3	4.9
- South	50.8	40.1	46.2
- Other countries	2.2	4.2	3.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Mingione 1995.

Table 8 summarises many of the elements of this study and provides strong evidence of the heavy relative disadvantage of persons of no fixed abode as compared to others which, though in a state of need, manage to conserve accommodation. The strong preponderance of males among no abode, of southerners and young people can be seen. The data also suggest a qualitative difference between homelessness as of no abode and other situations of marginalisation and extreme poverty: "it clearly describes the qualitative difference in social exclusion between those who conserve a link (the home) with "normality" and those who are excluded from socialising contexts and are more firmly set on paths towards a chronic state of need" (Mingione 1995, 26-27).

2.5. A gender pattern

The same study confirms that there is a strong gender pattern for both extreme poverty and for homelessness, a gender pattern also confirmed by other studies (see Zajczyk 1996). In an overall context of feminisation of poverty, female poverty seems to be of a lesser entity among the seriously marginalised and it translate less easily into homelessness. Furthermore an examination of the stages of the life cycle in which women are hit most, confirms the important role that family breaks and the truncation of ties with social networks play in the roads to female poverty.

Table 9. Users of UAD and SAM-Caritas services in Milan, by sex and age (%)

F M

UAD

<34	13.4	20.8
35-44	18.4	25.2
45-54	46.3	24.5
55-64	20.9	26.2
>64	1.0	3.3
	100.0	100.0

SAM

<34	29.4	31.2
35-44	19.9	24.3
45-54	19.3	21.6
55-64	12.1	14.7
>64	19.3	8.2
	100.0	100.0

Source: Ruspini 1995.

The smaller numbers of no abode among female users of SAM suggests that women maintain stronger links with a "normal" life. Even in the world of persons of no fixed abode, women manage to maintain greater contact with networks of relatives and friends: 22 per cent declared that they sleep in the homes of friends or relatives as

against 8.7 per cent for males. A lesser exposure to the risks of finding themselves on the road to complete vagrancy seems therefore to depend for women on maintaining ties with family networks. Both for men and women the probability of enlarging the ranks of the "no fixed abode" seems to decrease with age, a further element confirming the greater vulnerability of young persons: but the vulnerability is greater for males (Ruspini 1995).

2.6. Young homeless immigrants

A large component of the young homeless consists of young immigrants from third world countries and Eastern Europe. They constitute an important component of both the no abode and those excluded from housing. Paradoxically, however, they are not "recognised" as homeless, and their problems are considered "apart". This is a genuine distortion of perception, partly due to the separate nature of the provisions. The consequences are in any case important both from an "accounting" view point of the phenomenon and for the construction of policies.

Previous Italian Reports put forward a minimum estimate of 180,000 to 200,000 immigrants suffering housing exclusion, constituting at least a third of those excluded from housing and one third of immigrants. Since the majority of immigrants are young - between 65

and 80 per cent, according to nationality, are aged less than 35 - this means that a large proportion of homeless immigrants are young and that young immigrants account for a large quota of total housing exclusion and of total youth homelessness.

Homelessness among young immigrants is characterised by highly specific elements. Generally the paths to marginalisation for immigrants are different from those of Italian "no abode". This is basically because the reasons for and the dynamics of poverty are different for immigrants and other poor people (Tosi 1995a). There are marked differences between immigrants and other categories living in extreme poverty. Immigrants are characterised by requisites that theoretically are favourable to social integration: a set of motivations congruent with the requisites for social insertion and for integration into the world of work; nor are they affected by factors undermining physical or psychological abilities. Often they have a high level of education and professional training. They are young and at the beginning of their working career and have a strong propensity to change and mobility etc. Characteristics which are substantially all in open contradiction with the conditions characterising other categories of extreme poverty, and particularly the no abode. In fact the risk of extreme poverty for immigrants derives from two main problem areas: housing and work.

This also means there is a different characterisation of

marginalisation and housing exclusion and a different relationship between the two:

(a) for immigrants, homelessness may be a temporary stage on the road to insertion into society, without this involving processes of marginalisation;

(b) in the paths to marginalisation, the housing factor may be more important for immigrants. While for Italians today, those paths leading to the production of homelessness that start with the loss of accommodation are not predominant, this is not the case of immigrants for which this path is often unavoidable in their attempt to gain access to integration (Pollo 1995, 14).

3. Risks of youth homelessness and marginalisation

In the context of the crisis constituted by the post-industrial transformation and the connected crisis of the welfare state, young people emerge as a particularly vulnerable group in all countries. This is equally true for Italy: some of the most widespread risk

factors such as unemployment affect young people particularly. Moreover - as we have already seen in chapter 1 - young adults in Italy are protected very little by the Welfare system; they are one of the categories most affected by the "Welfare deficit" that characterises the system.

3.1. Vulnerability and risk of homelessness/marginalisation

Some distinctions must, however, be made. "Young people are not an undifferentiated mass who share common experiences and face common problems. The divisions which fragment and differentiate populations in general, most notably gender, class and race, are relevant to consideration of any stage in the (family) life cycle" (Burton et al. 1989). It is certainly true that some broad structural changes such as rising unemployment, the changing pattern of housing opportunities etc. have had a disproportionate impact on young people, but the effects in terms of vulnerability are not uniform and there is no sense in talking of risk factors in relation to young people as a whole.

Most young people are able to successfully overcome the elements of the "crisis". Others, however, are exposed to extremely precarious

living conditions or end up on roads to genuine social marginalisation - homelessness being one of the possible manifestations. However, even within the same most precarious situations, the problems vary and vulnerable and at risk groups can not be interpreted in one single way: they involve different needs, different disadvantages and different progressions in the processes of exclusion.

POVERTY

An initial indicator of the degree of risk of "hardship" for young people is the incidence of poverty among children and young people, in the South in particular. Between 1988 and 1992 families below the poverty line with young adult or juvenile children passed from 23.8 to 25.4 per cent (Caritas-Irs 1994). The phenomenon stabilised in the 1990's. Nevertheless the percentage is high, especially in the South as is emphasised by recent reports of the Commission for the Investigation of Poverty. Some indicators: the incidence of poverty is high among large families (where it increased from 13.8 to 21.6 per cent between 1980 and 1994). The incidence among families where the head of the family is below the age of 35 rose from 6.6 to 8.8 per cent between 1980 and 1994: in the South this percentage has now reached 18 per cent.

Table 10. Families below the poverty line with young adult or children (0-29), 1988 and 1992 (thousands)

	Italy	North	Centre	South
1988	23.8	11.0	17.1	28.4
1992	25.4	14.6	19.8	28.9

Source: Irs 1995.

One aspect of the problem to which attention is often drawn is the situation of children. In 1994, for every one hundred persons living in poverty, 13 were children under the age of 13 in the North as against 12 in Central Italy and 20 in the South. A total of more than one million children - one in seven - live in poverty in Italy (Commissione 1996a). On this subject it must be considered that the effectiveness of support for children seems to be very uncertain. "The possibility of access to economic support is tied above all to the employment status of parents. In order to receive family allowance subsidies parents must either be in regular employment or have lost their jobs and have signed on as unemployed. On the other hand it is difficult for families in which there are adults of working age to gain access to true welfare subsidies as a certain right on a permanent basis. Children in

these families consequently may remain with no economic support. Any support they may receive depends on local legislation governing 'minimum subsistence' level payments" (Negri and Saraceno 1995, 133).

MARGINALISATION

Exclusion and marginalisation, however, are more complex processes and in the final analysis of a different nature to those indicated by the term poverty. They represent the possibility of a growing divergence, or a break between the "excluded" and the rest of society, and the possibility that the individual outcome - as the term exclusion suggests - be the breaking of social bonds. The fall into homelessness - in the sense of "with no abode" - is the clearest expression of this. "The rising number of young people who seems to be living on the margins of society in insecure and insatisfactory accommodation is one dimension of more controversial claims regarding the re-emergence of mass poverty and growing social polarization. Progressive inclusion has given way to exclusion and divergence of the majority from the minority" (Burton et al, 1989, 11).

Obviously these processes imply risk factors and chains of cause and effect with specific characteristics, which do not necessarily

coincide with those of poverty, nor with those of the more general "hardship" that young people may suffer. Appropriate risk factors here are if any: long-term unemployment, school drop-out, drugs, environmental exclusion etc.

The diffusion of homelessness among young people is certainly revealing especially if it is understood - rather than being without shelter - as being without a secure and stable home environment, a phenomenon that is much more widespread (Burton et al. 1989). And nevertheless, this does not mean that the factors of homelessness correspond to those of marginalisation in general. That is why it is even more important, when talking of homelessness, to look for specific factors and processes for an assessment of risk.

The main point of reference in the discussion that follows are the structural factors that may constitute a risk of marginalisation - those that in theory are closest to being homelessness risk factors. In reality it is only very rarely possible to specify whether these factors play a role or what role they play in the production of homelessness.

Finally, we must consider that the structural factors analysed interact with policy factors, and their nature of risk factors is to some extent determined by this interaction: from this point of view, the "welfare deficits" involving young people may be

considered themselves as a specific category of risk factors.

3.2. Family and (de)cohabitation

Most of the risks and the ability to face up to them concern the family. The family maintains and from many points of view reinforces its importance as a protecting and integrating agency: roles which, in countries like Italy, also involve the dimensions (which on the other hand should not be exaggerated) of the extended family: family networks continue to provide the social cement of symmetrical reciprocity between the generations (Ecoter 1987). At the same time the capacity to protect is reduced or at least threatened - in addition to and more than by cultural processes that affect its integrating capacity - by a reduction in the physical resources available: as a consequence of processes that make incomes precarious and as an effect of the "crisis of the welfare state". The effects can be very hard on low income families or those affected by other types of precariousness.

The image of a "stressed family", put forward years ago in a study on the problems of accommodation for young people in Italy, still maintains its validity today (Ecoter 1987, 29). "The crisis in the welfare state has deprived the family of many of the (traditional)

types of support and assistance (...). The family is required a greater ability to interact with society to the benefits of its own members". On the other hand, the very contraction of the physical resources available may hinder the functioning of reciprocity bonds within the family at that very moment when the family has had to reassert its role in providing support and assistance for family members" (ibidem). The discriminating role of the family is thus accentuated. Obviously, a greater dependence among young people on family support accentuates the unequal resources available to families within different social groups. When the attainment of independence is reliant on family support this will favour inevitably those young people in families in the strongest social and economic situations (Burton et al. 1989, 24).

This differential - in terms of both economic and strategic resources - must also be kept well in mind when interpreting what is a key theme in the debate on young people in Italy, the role of the "long" family - a typical trait of the "Mediterranean" family model - in the new overall situation of crisis.

Various sources confirm the tendency in Italy for children to remain in the family for a protracted period. Leaving home occurs almost exclusively when children marry. On the other hand the average age of marriage has risen from 27.3 to 28.7 years for males and from 24.1 to 25.9 years for females between the last two censuses (1981-1991). Vice versa only 1.4 per cent of Italian

families consist of married couples below the age of 25 (0.5 per cent approximately of young people living alone). While the number of families with minors in the household fell by 17.1 per cent between 1988 and 1992 (as a consequence of falling fertility), families living together with children between the ages of 18 and 29 increased by 23.1 per cent (Caritas-Irs 1995, 153). According to a survey on a national sample, 80 per cent of young people between 15 and 29 live in family (Cavalli and De Lillo 1993). In 1994 some 269,000 families (1.3 per cent of the total as against 1.2 in 1988) consist of two or more units, where accommodation may be shared by married children living in their parents' house or parents who have followed their children to the new family unit. If we add the number of one-unit families in which there are "other persons", the figure rises to more than one million households (Istat 1995).

Table 11. Households by number of young members, 1988-1992

	1988	1992	% change
Families with minors		7,125 5,904	-17.1
Families with 18-29		5,626 6,924	+23.1

Source: Irs 1995.

As is known, the extension of the juvenile stage is a phenomenon found to some extent in all "advanced" societies. (The structural reasons at the basis of this are to be found in all industrialised countries, which makes one think of a supplementary stage in the transition characterised by the "construction of contacts with partial autonomy": Kaufmann 1994, 166). The phenomenon is however much greater in Italy (Cavalli and De Lillo 1993, 235): the figures given above give the extent to which the phenomenon of the "long family", distinguishes Italian society from other European societies.

Cultural models and constrictions converge to constitute this situation. While the difficulty in finding housing and work act as obstacles, nevertheless some factors are related to the changes taking place in the area of social and cultural behaviour patterns (Ecoter 1987). In fact, one notes that the "dilationers" come on average from the higher socio-economic classes (Caritas-Irs 1995). Furthermore the percentage of employed children living with parents has increased: "those young people who though they have finished their studies and found permanent employment continue to live with their parents are far from a mere few" (Cavalli and De Lillo 1993).

It has been claimed that the tendency to remain for such a long

time in the family must be interpreted, not so much as the effect of the persistence of a cultural ("familistic") tradition as rather the result of the "radical transformation in a modern sense that the Italian family has experienced over the last few decades and which has allowed it to adapt relatively easily to the cohabitation of two generations, one of adults and one of semi-adults". "Young adults rather than emancipating themselves from the family have negotiated considerable freedom within it. They often enjoy their own space within the home that they run autonomously and so forth" (Cavalli and De Lillo 1993). Many traits brought to light by studies converge to support this interpretation.

The cultural reasons are accompanied by "financial" reasons which motivate children to continue to live in the parental home for longer: the difficulties of young people in finding work on the labour market and homes on the urban housing market.

Here the full importance of the stratification of family resources appears. The above mentioned figure giving the extent (incidence) of poverty amongst the young and the rise in the number of poor families with young members takes on particular importance. As noted by Ecoter (1987): "many young people in fact live in families whose economic circumstances are acceptable overall in that they ensure a moderate standard of living for each member of the family but are not sufficient to maintain one or more of their members in living arrangements separate from the original domestic situation,

bearing in mind the diseconomies of scale to which this would also lead".

Apart from economic poverty, when we are in the presence of exclusion/marginalisation processes a set of fairly well identified "weaknesses" are called into play on the family side. Two main constructs are used in the research to define the role played by the family from this point of view. The first is the role of the absence of protective family networks as a powerful factor of marginalisation and also - as we have seen - of homelessness. It may be a weakness or a weakening of family economic resources; or the effect of family break-ups, expulsion from the family, etc.

A specific feature of the Italian case manifests here: the presence of a strong family, that "maintains" - protects - its children for a long time, implies situations with a high probability of social marginalisation when it cannot or does not want (because of insufficient resources or of relationships problems) to do so, or to do so any more. ("Continuing to live within the original family for a long time does not produce widespread difficulty: when, however, situations of conflict explode, they do so acutely, without any help forthcoming from outside the family unit, thus placing the young person in potentially marginalised circumstances": Ecoter 1987, 36).

The other construct is the role that problem families play in marginalisation: their role as a family that penalises children, or that makes the family the "starting point" of marginalisation. (Caritas-Irs 1995).

3.3. School and juvenile hardship

In addition to economic poverty, which affects - as has been said - a considerable proportion of children and adolescents, various other aspects of "hardship" also affect juveniles. Juvenile hardship is a multiple and multiform phenomenon, the size of which is revealed by various indicators: exclusion from school, child labour (illegal), delinquency, etc. (Labos 1994). Between 1986 and 1991, juvenile offences rose from 20,000 to 45,000 (Negri and Saraceno 1995). According to estimates, there are at least 500,000 minors between the ages of 15 and 17 that work; in the South child labour could regard between 20 and 50 per cent of minors between 10 and 14 (ibidem). Between 1994 and 1995 infringements of legislation on juvenile labour increased by 6.7 per cent (Eurispes 1996).

In addition to the increase recorded in the various indicators of juvenile hardship, there is also evidence that the phenomenon is undergoing transformation. New areas are being added to the

traditional forms: e.g. the appearance of hardship affecting immigrant juveniles (Labos 1994) (Aspe 1994).

Even if most forms of juvenile hardship is greater in southern regions, the problem occurs to some extent in all regions, although in different forms. A worsening of truancy rates and the growth of juvenile delinquency has been registered for example in Lombardy (IReR 1993).

Educational hardship is the clearest indicator of the difficulties constituted by "juvenile hardship". For this aspect too, there has been an increase in various types of geographical area. The alarming fact, if the subject is tackled from the viewpoint of hardship, is the high rates of dispersion and drop-out that continue to be concentrated around the passage from the lower school (11-13 years) to the upper school (14-18 years) and in the first two years of the upper school in particular (Table 12). If data on the scholastic qualifications of unemployed workers is examined, it is easy to see a strong connection between poor qualifications and weakness on the labour market (Negri and Saraceno 1995, 220). Research has also confirmed that leaving school at the end of the compulsory period (which lasts only eight years in Italy) is a phenomenon typical of the less privileged classes (Caritas-Irs 1995).

Drop-out rates reach a very high level in the upper school.

Although 89 per cent of children that attend lower schools enrol in upper schools, the average drop-out rate in the first two years is approximately 21 per cent and rises to 39.1 per cent for schools that provide occupational training (Negri and Saraceno 1995).

Table 12. Drop-out rates in the first two years of upper schools, 1992-1993

Schools	Male	Female	Total
Classical	11.4	10.6	10.9
Scientific	11.2	9.9	10.6
Training colleges	17.7	22.9	22.6
Technical	25.7	16.2	22.1
Vocational	42.4	35.1	39.1

Source: Isfol 1994.

While school attendance rates seem to have reached practically 100 per cent for the compulsory schooling age range, worrying pockets of hardship continue to persist. According to a survey on a sample population carried out in 1993, drop-out rates for primary and

lower schools were between 1.07 and 1.7 per cent in the South and 2.56 per cent on the Islands (Eurispes 1995, 813).

Table 13. Drop-out rates in primary and lower schools, 1992-1993

	Primary schools	Lower schools
North	0.06	0.20
Centre	0.06	0.35
South	0.17	1.70
Islands	0.23	2.56
Italy	0.11	1.07

Source: Ministry of Education 1993.

Ministry of Education data for 1992-93, published by Censis (1994) defines a summary indicator for situations of "socio-educational hardship" (a complex index based on characteristic of social and economic context, urban concentration, educational equipments, drop

out, truancy etc.) for the various levels of education: the data confirms the considerable importance that geographical differences continued to have with regard to Italian schools. The index of hardship, which shows a national average of 0.32 for the country as a whole, reaches 0.6 for the South and Islands. The situation is the same with primary school data where, compared to a national average of 0.30, the figure for the South is 0.59 (Negri and Saraceno 1995, 220).

Table 14. Index of socio-educational hardship, 1992-1993

	Nursery	Primary	Lower	Upper
North-West	0.19	0.19	0.22	0.21
North-East	0.12	0.17	0.19	0.17
Centre	0.25	0.27	0.29	0.22
South	0.56	0.59	0.60	0.46
Italy	0.28	0.30	0.32	0.27

Source: Censis 1994.

The particular seriousness of drop-out and scholastic exclusion rates in the South is only one aspect of the dramatic nature of juvenile hardship in these areas, hardship that involves all aspects of the term. All the indicators, black market labour, delinquency and school drop-out rates are dramatically higher in the South and Islands. It has been rightly observed that for juvenile hardship "Italy is split in two" (Aspe 1994, 16): in the South 18-20 children in 1,000 in poverty, 5-8 in the South; 10 as against 4 for truancy; 3 out of 4 convicted juveniles live in the South.

The condition of minors is dramatic above all in certain urban areas. In cities such as Naples and Palermo, juveniles are exposed to serious risks of social exclusion. In addition to high percentages of school drop-outs there is also precocious recruitment to criminal organisations which exploit the immunity of minors from punishment (Negri and Saraceno 1995, 255).

Another unsolved aspect of the condition of juveniles in the South concerns black market labour. According to the Labour Inspectorate

of the Province of Palermo, resort to child and adolescent labour below the age of 14 is almost the rule in industries such as building or very small (artesan) businesses. At the beginning of the 1990's, according to the Observatory on the labour market, there were almost half a million adolescents employed in some type of work. According to an ASPE estimate, juvenile labour (children from 10 to 14 years) is as high as between 20 and 50 per cent in the South.

3.4. The labour market

Employment difficulties constitute one of the main factors of precariousness among young people and the role of these within the accumulation of factors leading to marginalisation (and homelessness) is generally underlined.

The exceptionally high number of the young unemployed, and of young people seeking their first job as a percentage of the total unemployed is a fundamental element of what has been called "the Italian model of unemployment" which evolved during the 1980's. While the unemployment rate in Italy is not very different from the average rate for Europe, the difference for the young unemployed is considerable - approximately double the European rate (Mingione and Pugliese 1993, 245). The other traits of the model are the high

female component and the high and particular geographical concentration. If we look at how youth unemployment "crosses" with the geographical factor we find an extraordinarily serious problem area.

The most recent developments show a permanent seriousness of the overall picture (see Chapter 1). The rate of youth unemployment rose from 27.9 per cent in 1993 to 33.3 per cent in January 1996 with nevertheless a (slight) decrease over the last year. But - while the general gap between North and South is widening - the North-South unemployment divide has become more acute. In 1993 the rate was 45.2 in the South, in 1994 50.2, in 1995 54.7 and preliminary figures for 1996 indicate a further increase to 56 per cent.

There is another problem that does not emerge from the unemployment data: the growth of more insecure and casual forms of employment with part-time and fixed-term contracts replacing long-term, permanent jobs. These forms of employment constitute a sort of resource for young people, or in any case a way of survival - and they mean that the official figures on unemployment may be too high because they only consider "formal" employment. It is particularly important to take account of this in regions where "informal" employment is very common.

On the other hand all this also points to another problem, an

additional risk of marginalisation: a deterioration in the terms of employment that is on offer which may produce a general deterioration in the economic position of young people, and a greater insecurity, for periods that can be long. And with this type of insecurity in employment other disadvantages that form part of the roads to marginalisation and homelessness may easily cumulate (see Chapter 2).

3.5. Housing

As we have already seen, not leaving home is another indicator of housing problems: the millions of young people who live with their parents represent a considerable demand for housing that remains implicit or latent. Living together with parents, given the cultural models previously described, does not necessarily mean the existence of hardship. Nevertheless there is no doubt that the prolonged period for which children live with parents also reflects housing difficulties - the disincentive of high rents, the lack of an affordable supply and a supply congruent with the requirements of this population. On the other hand the role of housing difficulties in hindering "de-cohabitation" is indicated directly by the widespread permanence of children in their parents' home after marriage (Caritas-Irs 1995).

The evolution of markets and policies are unfavourable to young people from this point of view. The housing situation in general is certainly not favourable for young people with no financial resources. The young have little chance of gaining access to the free rent market (in which they are even more exposed to the risk of contracts not covered by the Fair Rent Act) (Commissione 1993). Furthermore (see Chapter 4) they are traditionally given little access to social housing. Single persons in particular are given no priority in the social housing system.

In general, in Italy too, young people risk being particularly hit by the transformations affecting housing in all European countries at the moment: gentrification and reductions in cheap housing, policies increasingly aimed to the promotion of home ownership, reduction of affordable rental market, low investment in social housing etc.

These tendencies increase the risks of exclusion since they affect a key resource - accommodation - needed for adult life. But here it is particularly important to avoid an aggregate approach and rather to ask in what conditions the risk becomes actual, or how housing difficulties function when we are in the presence of real risks of marginalisation. Unfortunately research and information are very scarce on this aspect. We can imagine, however, that family resources are a major determinant in constituting differential risks (Tosi 1995b). On the supply side, the decrease of

marginal/informal markets should be a significant factor, as far as marginalisation is concerned, more directly tied to exclusion processes than the general changes in housing markets and policies (see Tosi 1995a).

4. Responses by Statutory Bodies

As for homelessness in general (see chapter 1), the subject of youth homelessness has enjoyed little discussion in public debate. Furthermore, as far as young people are concerned, the tendency to consider homelessness in terms of the extreme poverty and marginalisation components of the phenomenon and to neglect its relation to the wider questions of poverty and housing exclusion is even more accentuated. On the other hand this is one aspect of the scarce general consideration given to the problem of housing for young people: the conclusion arrived at by Ecoter in 1987, that this is a "submerged" problem, is still essentially true (Ecoter

1987).

These characterisations of public representations do to some extent have objective foundations: they reflect the fact that much of the youth homelessness in this country has a latent character and that only a small part of the phenomena of youth marginalisation, probably on the increase, ends up in actual homelessness. It is a fact that the prevalent perception does not favour any direct responsibility being taken for youth homelessness and for its prevention: the efforts of public policies have rather been centred on "youth hardship", a policy category that neither explicitly addresses nor affords particular importance to housing dimensions.

A discussion of government intervention in this field must take account of some principal features of the Italian welfare system, already mentioned in chapter 1:

(a) the social protection system is highly differentiated according to categories and according to places, and discretionality of local authorities is considerable. Among other things, Italy is one of the few EU countries in which no national programme of minimum income has been set up;

(b) the public sector system is characterised by sizable organisation and co-ordination deficits which are reflected in an accentuated fragmentation of its capacity to intervene and

therefore in "loose safety nets" through which many of the problems posed by marginalisation processes risk falling;

(c) this nature of the welfare system "is also reflected in the poorly co-ordinated relations it has with private and voluntary welfare organisations that inhibit the latter from attaining a greater capacity to make inroads against pauperisation, with the result that the overall situation is unbalanced and unevenly spread with limited capacities for the 're-insertion' of persons into society" (Mingione 1995);

(d) the homeless have tended to occupy a residual position in the system of public policies: they are only mentioned on the sidelines of legislation, action taken to assist them makes massive resort to the voluntary sector and initiatives depend heavily on the will of local authorities (Kazepov 1996).

The heterogeneous nature and the deficits of state welfare were accentuated following the crisis of the "Italian model of welfare", historically based on a strong complementary relationship between state and family. The deficits turned out to be particularly serious for certain groups including young adults for which the risks of marginalisation are high where there are poor job and school qualifications and scarce family resources. In some way, the protection system still reflects the traditional discrimination between deserving poor (minors, elderly,

handicapped) e undeserving poor. Adults, including young adults, are likely to be in the latter group (especially if hit by prison or alcohol experiences etc.). For them the willingness to, and availability of, help is likely to be limited and temporary and subject to strict budget constraints (Mingione 1996).

The discussion that follows is divided in three parts. First we will see the role of housing policies in addressing youth problems, with special attention to their effectiveness in dealing with social marginalisation processes. Then we will discuss the preventive effectiveness with regard to marginalisation and homelessness of social policies specifically aimed at young people. Finally we will consider how policies treat already existing homelessness and marginalisation.

4.1. Housing measures and the young

Young people are given little consideration in welfare housing measures. There are no specific provisions for young people as such and references to young people in general provisions are scarce. Examining the effectiveness of housing policies - in particular as prevention policies with regard to marginalisation processes - therefore means examining:

- a) how young people are taken into consideration by (social) housing policies in general and how much they can actually benefit from them;
- b) the importance of and extent to which young people affected by processes of marginalisation can benefit from these general (social) housing policies;
- c) the housing importance of non-housing policies such as welfare measures aimed at weak or marginal groups and those aimed at marginal young people (hostels for residential care etc.)

INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION

1. Amongst measures concerning social housing - the ERP system (Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica: the system of institutional social housing policies: see previous reports) - public housing has for some time had a "set aside" policy for assigning housing to young couples or recently formed families: the term "couple" or "family" here, however, is more important than the term "young" - this reflects the constant reference to the family in housing policies. Apart from this provision, young people are only taken into consideration if they fall within special categories (socially "weak" categories) given priority by national and regional legislation. One such category is that of university students for

which specific housing provisions have been made.

However, the provision of "quotas reserved for particular social categories" does not confer any priority on young people, the reference to which being limited to the two cases mentioned (young couples and university students) (even though situations may vary from region to region). The CER (Commission for Residential Housing) resolution of 5.11.93 (finance provision) mentions the elderly, large families, immigrants and students "as examples" of socially weak categories.

In the ERP system there are some measures for access to ownership and this has formed a large part of "social" policies in Italy. In the past, loans have been provided for newly formed couples to purchase homes. For partly subsidised housing (edilizia agevolata), which is one of the basic forms of ERP, there are in many cases reserves of set quotas for "special categories".

2. For emergency situations or situations of "particular social importance", there are other housing assistance measures: financial aids, temporary accommodation in hotels etc., and (provisional) assignment of accommodation outside the public housing system. These measures are for cases of particular social and housing hardship; or for persons on waiting lists for public housing or who have no formal right to it (see previous reports). Naturally, even if there is no explicit provision, young people may gain access to

these benefits - but here too, the main point of reference is the family.

3. Finally, there are accommodation provisions, made for particular categories or situations, in non-housing policies. Policies of this type - among those that specifically concern young people - in one way or another, include those that provide accommodation for students: in addition to frequent occurrence as a "special category" in social housing policies, lodgings are provided for students under the heading of the right to education. The most interesting provisions in this area, however, are those aimed at the area of "social hardship" - those aimed specifically at "youth hardship" and also those which are most likely to include young people (e.g. residential communities for drug addicts or for ex-drug addicts). These measures overlap to a various extent with social housing measures: for example, the CER (the agency in charge of programmes for social housing) has responsibility for providing finance for the buildings of therapeutic communities for drug addicts.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HOUSING MEASURES

1. Young people do not benefit much from measures contained in the main body of welfare housing policies, i.e. the ERP system: not

only are they given, as we have seen, little priority by the institutional regulations of that system, but access is also made difficult by a series of practical obstacles.

First of all there is the scarce actual possibility of young people (couples) benefiting from subsidies aimed at home ownership: the contribution requested by potential purchasers means that access is only possible - in most cases - when the young people can count on substantial financial support from their families.

As far as public housing is concerned, the actual possibilities of access must be considered in connection with the overall limitations of this type of supply: the low quantity of housing available and the important gap between supply and demand; the intrinsic irrational nature of the system for assigning accommodation based on points and categories, that leaves numerous groups of the population suffering severe hardship with no chance of access (see previous reports). Young couples are in fact penalised by the constant tendency in recent years to give priority to evicted families in the assignment of social housing (again, see previous reports).

In any case this type of supply - in so far as it is designed for "normal" welfare demand - would have scarce preventive consequences for the homeless, as it does not address the specific risk factors for homelessness. The provisions for housing quotas for

disadvantaged groups would in principle be of greater interest for our problem area as these could include situations of poverty and marginalisation that also affect young people. Even in this case, the potential effectiveness of the provisions are nevertheless limited by the low level of supply and the limits of the system of categories for assignment: not only do they leave unfilled gaps but they also pose particular obstacles against access by some marginalised groups of the population.

2. Similar observations can be made for other measures for emergency situations or situations of particular "social importance" or urgency: here too there is the problem of strong competition for access or the wide gap between supply and demand. In any case, as has been said, here too the tendency is to favour families. Furthermore, the effectiveness of these answers tends to be reduced as far as marginalisation processes are present because, in most cases, of their general welfare benefit nature and the absence of social services support action which may be essential for many of the potential tenants of this type of accommodation.

3. The situation is different for housing measures inherent in non-housing policies and for social welfare policies in particular. (As far as housing for university students is concerned, the problem is, if anything, quantitative and in any case it has little relevance to the prevention of marginalisation and homelessness). Here, attention to young people and actual access on their part is,

relatively, quite substantial and these measures certainly constitute an opportunity for the young homeless or those at risk of homelessness. The effectiveness of some of these measures are assessed later in the text. Here, note is made of the very important role of the voluntary sector in this area of supply and also of the variability of public sector commitment which depends on local situations both in quantitative terms and in terms of the effectiveness of the relationship models set up with voluntary organisations.

Young people are given little consideration in welfare housing measures. There are no specific provisions for young people as such and references to young people in general provisions are scarce.

To summarise what has been said:

(a) general (social) housing measures have - for the most part - little importance for young people: not only is there little access for young people, but their preventative capacities are doubtful if the reference is to those at risk of homelessness and marginalisation;

(b) in fact, current social housing measures are designed for "normal" welfare demand, and they do not address the specific risk factors for homelessness and do not give adequate consideration to

young people at risk, as identified in previous chapters: in particular there is no consideration given to young single persons in difficulty as potential beneficiaries of housing policies;

(c) the field in which the accommodation problems of young people are most likely to be given attention is that of those already suffering hardship: the cover is for already marginalised, homeless or at immediate risk of marginalisation or homelessness - in most cases as part of welfare/reinsertion measures.

4.2. Social policies for young people

The picture is quite different if we examine the preventative effectiveness with regard to marginalisation and homelessness of social protection policies explicitly aimed at young people. In Italy these constitute an important and from many viewpoints an innovative body of policies with considerable effective potential for at risk situations. Large part of them were constructed around the idea of "youth hardship", an idea that has in itself strong preventative connotations with respect to marginalisation.

In reality the prevention role of these policies is not

homogeneous. While, for example, policies for the insertion of young people into work have a clearer prevention logic, those against "juvenile hardship", though placed under the heading of prevention, are more often aimed at actual and not potential hardship. What is more, it is not easy to assess the preventative effectiveness of these policies for youth homelessness: given that in the Italian case, much of the hardship does not actually translate into homelessness, it is difficult to understand whether measures against hardship act to prevent homelessness or not.

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

This is a field in which the welfare deficit with regard to young people, once they have attained majority age, can be clearly observed. After the age of 18, the benefits afforded from family allowance cheques are no longer enjoyed. Furthermore, like adults in general, young disadvantaged adults enjoy less protection as far as a "minimum subsistence" benefits are concerned.

The minimum subsistence benefit system, which has been set up in most Italian regions, is implemented in ways and forms that may reduce its safeguarding effect (Kazepov 1996). That which in principle is a right that should be acknowledged for all those in a state of need is redimensioned by regional directives for

administering it and by local authority practices. Limitations derive in particular from the fact that payment is dependent on the availability of funds in the budgets of administrations and on the considerable amount of discretion left to local authorities and social services. It follows that amongst other things there are also differences in treatment from one area to another, differences that are then added to by differences in regional legislation.

Differences in access and in degree of assistance therefore arise. Some categories, such as juveniles in needy families and the elderly (they are often categories already assisted by state legislation) are provided with greater guarantees and for them the "minimum subsistence" benefit goes to form part of a pool that to a certain extent constitutes a set of integrated services. Adults, however, and therefore also young adults - provided they do not fall into the categories otherwise assisted such as the disabled etc. - generally enjoy a limited protection which involves considerable discretionality. This more reduced assistance is also found with other economic measures: minimum food, continuous benefits, one off grants, etc. (Kazepov 1996).

INSERTION INTO WORK

This is the most interesting area, that in which intervention is

most substantial, anchored to a solid tradition, with a clearer logic of prevention. The most interesting occupational policies for young people are the "active" policies for insertion into work which in many cases are aimed exclusively at young people and in some cases at young people "at risk" (Negri and Saraceno 1995).

Important measures include:

- * training-employment contracts, for the 16-32 age band, which in the most recent versions contain a specific clause for the insertion of young people with a low level of education;

- * insertion without a contract, which provides for insertion into "socially useful jobs" (mostly work safeguarding the environment and the artistic and cultural heritage) and insertion into special projects aimed at unemployed young people between the ages of 19 and 32 (or under 35 if unemployed for more than 24 months);

- * incentives to enterprises to take on permanent employees: this includes incentives for persons in search of their first employment;

- * measures to favour the development of new entrepreneurship: they provide finance for business projects that involve young people or a certain percentage of young people;

- * co-operatives for insertion into work: regulated by a law of

1991, these co-operatives not only constitute a way of obtaining benefits and concessions for a businesses, but are also an instrument that is used for employing "weak subjects", including young people in difficulty.

Assessment of the real effectiveness of these measures is not easy. A recent criticism (Negri and Saraceno 1995) showed that they did not sufficiently observe important prerequisites for the effectiveness of active work insertion policies: setting intervention in a long term perspective in order to prevent the formation of sacks of chronic unemployment; concerted decision-making at local level, etc. In fact different measures have different tendencies. While, for example, the data shows disappointing tendencies in the field of work-training contracts, provisions aimed at developing young entrepreneurship show a certain liveliness (*ibidem*).

Some recent measures in particular seem to contain promising elements of innovation, above all where they are firmly anchored in local realities.

An example may be found in the particular measures introduced with law 452, 1993 aimed at contrasting youth unemployment in the South and in declining industrial areas. According to this law it is possible to create work-training experiences outside a regular work

contract. These experiences, tried experimentally for the period 1994-95, should involve young persons looking for their first job. The projects, prepared by the Ministry of Labor together with regions, envisage the insertion of youths in socially useful jobs. This law de facto introduces a variant to the "stages", which were already provided with law 236, 1993. "The idea behind the stages is that one of the causes of youth unemployment is the lack of interaction between enterprises and the youth, as well as the limited value of many school or training degrees as indicators of actual professional capacity. It is therefore important both to provide young people the possibility to explore the labor market and employers the possibility to 'explore the young', within work relations which are temporary and not binding for both." "Through these measures emphasis is given to the relevance of local networks, of face-to-face interactions, in the inclusion/exclusion processes. These policies, therefore, suggest a new way, suggest that it is crucial to act on 'position' variables, connecting both actors and institutions, such as local employment agencies, which on the contrary tend to separate (Saraceno and Negri 1994).

More recently, "development missions" (*missioni di sviluppo*), planned within the context of Law 44 for youth entrepreneurship, provide a good example of how previous institutional provision may be developed according to the principles of "integrated" area approaches. The *missioni di sviluppo* programme aimed at diffusing a "development culture" and creating employment opportunities and

entrepreneurship for young people, exploiting local potential in some problem areas, especially in the South. By focusing on local community dimensions, development missions try to establish principles of efficacy of social intervention which come very near to the prevailing European models of policies addressed to "neighbourhood in crisis".

SUPPORT FOR DISADVANTAGED JUVENILES

Juveniles are one of those groups that enjoys greater attention on the part of the state, both in terms of rights and in terms of action aimed at safeguarding them from the risk of marginalization (Kazepov 1996). They benefit more easily, as we have seen, from economic support measures. Furthermore there is an articulated body of "social work support" measures aimed at preventing the risks of marginalization: (a) measures for putting children into the care of foster parents and other forms of care designed to protect children against the risks deriving from the inadequacies of the real parents in meeting their child-rearing responsibilities; and (b) some specific measures for the "prevention of juvenile hardship", which provide for the particular involvement of local institutions.

This second type of intervention is of particular interest. One of the most significant legislative provisions was contained in law No. 216 of 1991. It is aimed at favouring intervention for juveniles at risk and provides finance to government and private bodies for local projects. The law covers two areas of interest: measures to favour individual progress and socialisation of minors; and secondly for juvenile offenders or juveniles considered at risk of becoming offenders, intervention to prevent delinquency and to resocialise. The Law is in theory aimed at all juveniles (0-18 years). The accent is, however, placed above all on projects for the prevention of juvenile delinquency in urban areas in the South. The objective given priority by the law is that of promoting initiatives in those urban areas most affected by juvenile delinquency where school drop-out rates are also highest. Four areas of intervention are given priority: residential care, intervention to support families in need, meeting centres and initiatives in districts at risk, and the use of school facilities for non-scholastic activities. The law also favours the involvement of "social co-operatives" and voluntary organisations: in particular for juveniles between 11 and 18 years of age who require the flexible but at the same time constant presence of street workers connected with local social services (Kazepov 1996).

Examination of the initiatives shows that intervention in the South is mainly aimed at school drop-out phenomena and rehabilitation in

the juvenile delinquency area, while in the Centre and North, action is more varied and is able to count on the better organisation of social services. In reality - if the actual law itself and the contents of the initiatives it supports are carefully looked at - most of the preventative action taken in this field occurs after hardship in the family has already arisen. Furthermore, the observations made concerning the lack of uniform criteria hold for these juvenile measures too and when laws exist implementation is dependent to some extent on political will: as has been remarked, there is not a sufficient degree of "statehood" to guarantee uniform standards of implementation throughout the country (Kazepov 1996). The fact remains that these formulas are of considerable interest and potentially very effective, above all when the various measures are combined into integrated action which in various cases means that intervention is extended beyond the ascertained state of hardship or the imminent risk of marginalisation.

"YOUTH PROJECTS"

Since the beginning of the 1990's a range of initiatives aimed at young people have been developed - at a local level - under the name of "youth projects", "adolescent projects", "projects for kids".

We have already mentioned provisions that allude to these projects for juveniles. In fact, policies targeted to social integration of children and youth have a fairly long tradition. They have recently been revived by the youth projects by the Ministry of education, aiming at giving support to adolescents and youth at risk of dropping out from school and of entering illegal activities or deviant behaviors. In many northern cities, but also in some of the South, there are different measures addressing these age brackets: youth centers, youth laboratories, youth offices, "street educators" and so forth. These projects, which involve different actors, both in public and non profit institutions, should encourage cooperation among services as well as more project oriented, and less social assistance oriented activities. These activities involve adolescents and youths in various supervised leisure, sport and training activities; but sometime they just offer a safe space where the young can meet, instead of roaming the streets. Besides these more institutionalized activities, sponsored directly by public administrations, there is a host of initiatives directly promoted by volunteer and non profit associations: churches, scouts, sport associations, neighborhood associations. Also the most traditional measures, such as job insertion through so called "cantieri di lavoro" in some city are now starting to be rethought in less social assistance and more project oriented terms, often in cooperation with social cooperatives (Saraceno and Negri 1994).

A range of diversified activities can be integrated in youth projects in different ways according to local circumstances (Ecoter 40): social welfare intervention; cultural activities; information (information centres, production of information, video library ecc.); training/work activities (vocational training, funds for cooperatives, information centres for the unemployed, job creation programmes) etc.

A list of measures and sources of finance used for "youth projects" includes - in addition to the European community and regional measures - various laws on specific sectors (such as Law 309/1990 on drug addiction, or the already mentioned Law 44 on promotion of youth entrepreneurship) and two major national measures:

(a) the DL 446/1994 which set up a body of experts at the Department of Social Affairs of the Cabinet to monitor and assess projects financed, and extended the possibility of finance to: Ministries, local bodies (giving priority to the South); voluntary organisations and associations that co-ordinate with government bodies; Regions for the training of personnel;

(b) Law 216/1991, already mentioned, drawn up by the Ministry of Justice, heavily oriented towards prevention, financing projects presented by both public and private sector actors aimed at: (a) caring for minors separated from their families; (b) family support intervention; projects for the setting up of meeting centres and forms of community work in local districts; intervention using

school facilities.

The most interesting aspect of these initiatives is the philosophy of the "integrated local project": projects are developed according to the European model of the "fight against poverty": global, institutionally integrated (partnership), participatory, area-based.

An assessment of effectiveness means therefore looking at what is specific in local integrated action in Italy and at the obstacles that these initiatives face in Italy. It is important to point out that these policies are in any case implemented on a voluntary basis even when the initiative comes from local authorities. This means difficulties in terms of financial resources, or resources invested without a comprehensive view, etc. Because of lack of institutional definition of the framework and of responsibility for public actors, local projects are likely to develop in an institutional void and lack of resources.

A huge limitation, once again, is the uneven distribution of these projects throughout the country and the scarcity of them in the South - despite the problems addressed by the relative legislation being more serious and widespread in the South.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The social protection measures addressed towards young people are measures of great interest and in most cases potentially highly effective against youth hardship and marginalisation. (The effectiveness of these policies against youth homeless, however, is less certain for the reasons already mentioned).

The obstacles to greater effectiveness of these measures are fairly clear and to a certain extent obvious to those who know the Italian welfare system. We can assert that most limits of these measures come from the general limits of the welfare system we have already mentioned. For example, the limited commitment: welfare spending as a percentage of GDP is very low (except for old age pensions) as compared with that of other European countries, both for housing and also for unemployment and the family (Europe Social Protection 1995). In another sense, there are the organisational limits of the model of welfare: as has already been said, intervention on behalf of young people is a field in which the welfare deficits of the public sector system show up particularly and where the effects of fragmented and non-organic intervention are clearly seen. This also means that the degree and effectiveness of welfare protection depend to a great extent on local initiatives.

An assessment of policies, however, also brings out a specific limit: the policies - even those labelled "prevention" - tend to be

aimed very late in marginalisation processes: they are, that is, centred to a large extent more on actual hardship and marginalisation or the imminent risk of it. This also puts into question the idea of "youth hardship". The idea tends to represent young people "as persons to be protected or safeguarded to prevent them from becoming deviant, rather than as positive beings in which to invest" (Aspe 1994) ("almost as if the majority of young people were victims, or in any case heavily at risk of some sort of hardship": Labos 1994). It is significant that the main laws used for obtaining finance for youth projects are laws for the prevention of drug addiction and the risk of juvenile delinquency (Pollo 1995).

4.3. Policies for the young marginalised/homeless

The shelter system, in which both accommodation and social support problems are addressed, is the typical welfare supply for marginalised/homeless people. It consists of two basic types: a) temporary or emergency shelter; b) residential shelter or "non-emergency" shelter, normally aimed at weak categories (single

mothers with children, the elderly, young adults, minors), and accompanied by social support or "re-insertion projects".

As far as the first type of action is concerned, the basic structure is still the traditional large size public dormitory. It is important, however, to note the ongoing development of these since the 1980's. The important element in this re-organisation is the difference between emergency and non-emergency shelter: this may be seen within the same building where some beds are for emergency/temporary use and others form part of a "residential area", or (this is the case of Turin: see Chapter 5) where the number of beds concentrated in a single dormitory has been reduced and special purpose structures have been created for different types of homeless. In other words two functions are emerging which on the one hand sees dormitories being used for non-emergency accommodation and on the other hand sees them maintaining their emergency function allowing easy access independently of membership of a "re-insertion" project and this meets a considerable demand on the part of young people as for others.

The most innovative supply is, however, provided by "non-emergency" or "project" shelters which have been set up in some cities to provide help aimed at specific categories of users. The supply here is accompanied by "rehabilitation" or "(re-)insertion" projects. In various cases (Turin, Bologna ...) they are public sector projects while in other cases the main role is played by voluntary

organisations (see Kazepov 1996).

Young people constitute one of the categories at which these projects are aimed. Non-emergency projects aimed at young people are currently underway in various cities (see Kazepov 1996, and chapter 5). In addition to the specific effectiveness that these re-insertion projects may have for young people with no abode, their innovative importance is seen in their attempt to overcome - on the basis of local design - the limits of the Italian welfare system. The integrated, multidimensional character that typifies these insertion projects involves, for example, the need to overcome the fragmentation typical of the public sector system. For example the need to overcome the separation of responsibilities for housing and social assistance (Dante and Valentini in Aspe 1994).

As has been stated in a recent assessment of policies for the no abode in Italy the overall picture is characterised by extreme differences. "It varies from a traditional response to the need for accommodation alone to more complex projects that integrate different resources, such as for example the non-emergency 'project' intervention described. The area of intervention is, however, going through a phase of redefinition which sees the most innovative contexts presenting de-institutionalisation policies which accompany solutions to housing problems with active re-insertion policies and psychological support, so as to help

persons in need to develop a growing degree of autonomy from social services. Once again, then, the most effective answer is an integrated packet of rights and resources, which, however, is unevenly distributed over the country. A comprehensive law is therefore necessary which should not only provide standard criteria but should also make the development of integrated social work support measures widespread to the entire territory" (Kazepov 1996).

The limits of the turning point that the more innovative structures represent are once again to be sought in the general limitations of the Italian Welfare system. The absence of sufficiently "integral" and comprehensive cover and the welfare deficits that among other concern young groups in the population and large areas of marginalisation mean that:

a) in the presence of a fundamental role played by the voluntary sector, generally under contract to the public sector, interaction between voluntary organisations and the state varies greatly both with regard to the responsibilities undertaken by the public sector and as far as the stability and organic nature of the co-ordination that exists is concerned;

b) only in the most innovative city contexts does intervention

employ criteria essential for effectiveness, for example the configuration of a network model that tend to systematically take into account all public and private sector resources available in the community and co-ordinate them (see the Turin case in chapter 5;

c) given the mainly voluntary nature of initiatives, even those taken by local authorities, cover varies greatly from area to area;

d) the chance of groups of the poor or marginalised population failing to gain access to "minimum packets" of public sector resources (consider the exclusion of the weakest categories from certain economic benefits or from social housing) may seriously hinder the effectiveness of re-insertion projects.

4.4. Recommendations

These observation already contain some important operational indications, useful for a redefinition of the system of intervention that would ensure greater effectiveness in terms both of prevention and rehabilitation and re-insertion. Appropriate

innovation must regard both policies addressed to young people and general welfare policies, in order to get over the limits which weaken the effectiveness of specific measures. As we have seen, the effectiveness of specific prevention or reinsertion measures is heavily dependent on the availability of a comprehensive system of social protection. Moreover, the welfare deficits and the "organisational" limits of the Italian system may be seen as causes of the growth of the "risk area" and of its "southern concentration" (Mingione 1996).

As regards policies for young people, the main indications that arise from the assessments of the various measures discussed in this chapter may be summarized as follows:

1. First of all, as is obvious, there is a need to eliminate elements of penalisation from the welfare system which today hit the young and marginalised. This assumes the creation of a more "universalistic" and comprehensive welfare model, which at least reduces the considerable degrees of discretionality that characterises policies aimed at the marginalised and also the huge geographical differences. One fundamental element for reform is the institution of a national system guaranteeing a minimum income, and the insertion of a minimum subsistence benefits in an integrated packet of resources (as proposed by the Commission on Poverty). The constitution of "integrated packets of rights and resources" to be

implemented right across the country also represents a necessary condition for the effectiveness of innovative policies under experimentation locally (for instance the "re-insertion projects"). The huge gap between conditions and policies in the South and the rest of the country should be a fundamental concern in a reform of the welfare system.

2. Measures should be particularly strengthened on the prevention side and the treatment of risk situations. The current system is balanced too much towards the treatment of actual marginalisation and situations of immediate risk of exclusion. This is true both for social measures and for housing measures. (As regards children, a meaningful step towards a more comprehensive and integrate approach is represented by a new bill presented by the Government to the Parliament in January 1997, which enters a vital minimum for children of families in poverty; provides services for prevention of violence on children, enlarges the opportunities for foster families in order to increase de-institutionalisation; and promotes new social, educational, and leisure services).

3. While there is a discrete and in some areas sizeable supply of social services support aimed at young people with serious problems or at risk of marginalisation, resources aimed at providing young people with minimum income and employment resources are scarce and

full of gaps. Such measures would have great significance for prevention. Many risk situations are in effect characterised by the lack of minimum income and employment resources, without any observable elements of "marginalisation".

4. As a whole, the public supply for young people is also unbalanced in the sense that genuine housing measures are scarce (as compared with social assistance measures). In addressing the point, a distinction should be made between housing measures for young people in general, and measures for marginalised - or at immediate risk of marginalisation - young people. In the first direction, accessibility of young people to the range of measures constituting the ERP system should be increased, and specific measures and financial support for accessing to the private rental market should be developed, taking into account both financial difficulties and specific typological requirements of young peoples (families and singles). (A bill has been proposed by the Minister of Social Affairs which provides some support to young families for access to rental market). In the second direction, a (more) differentiated range of intervention and structures should be provided - including emergency short-stay accommodation and long term residence to be used for "re-insertion projects". Both short and long stay facilities should provide a range of social services, and be more widespread in the various urban areas. In any case a steady innovative effort should be made, and models that have

already proved to be particularly effective should be further developed (housing co-operatives and self-build and conversion schemes, integrating professional training of participants, are possible examples: see Chapter 5).

5. Services for homeless youth: good practices

5.1. Areas of innovation

Two main models of intervention can be identified in local action aimed at the young homeless, models for two different homeless populations. The first has its origins in a type of experience that enjoyed a certain popularity in the 1970s and 1980s and was given considerable space in the first European data banks (ELISE etc.) as "models of good practice" in the field of the fight against housing exclusion: the squatting of abandoned (state owned) properties by young unemployed homeless followed by bargaining with local authorities, which then supported the initiative enabling the young

homeless to renovate the properties. The idea of resorting to processes of "self-help" housing production, supported by government action, constituted both an innovative form of welfare housing that was different from conventional types and also provided a series of advantages in terms of training and insertion into work for the young people involved. In this sense the model conserves all its interest and its potential effectiveness remains intact. And nevertheless there have been few initiatives of this type especially after the surmise of the political season with which these experiences were in some way connected. We can perhaps claim that some of these principles have been absorbed into various local experiments which - in the search for welfare housing that is more suitable for the new forms of housing exclusion - explore the possibilities of new forms of supply and the potential of new forms of partnership between associations and local authorities. For example, "marginal" properties supplied by local authorities or by IACPs (area social housing authorities), are being renovated by associations in various cities - however cases of self-help where the houses are renovated by the actual inhabitants themselves, as occurred in previous episodes (e.g. Rome and Bologna), are rare.

The recipients, or rather the protagonists of these experiences were young "homeless", or potential homeless, for whom the risks of marginalisation could be high, but in general they were not marginalised and they were even less characterised by elements of deviance or by particular disabilities. In this sense the "model"

employed had great prevention potential.

The case of the second model, which regards assistance to young people once they become homeless, is quite different: projects for reinsertion into work and society - which at present constitute the most favoured form of local action to assist the young homeless (these initiatives are often sponsored by voluntary associations, although usually in partnership or with the support of local authorities). Here the recipients are young with strong elements of marginalisation, often affected by problems of deviance or some type of disability or personal problems (drug addiction, etc.).

Yet, in this case too, heterogeneity is substantial, which implies different insertion/integration strategies, as it is also shown by the Turin case illustrated in this chapter.

In order to be able to discuss the innovative nature of this formula - and to assess its effectiveness and limits - account must be taken of a series of elements:

* the "insertion plan" model - with the residential resources consisting generally of "non-emergency" hostels/shelters - must be seen within the context of the system of accommodation supply for the marginalised which basically consists, in Italy, of (a) dormitories and other emergency shelters, (b) "non-emergency"

hostels/shelters, (c) emergency housing intervention, (d) shelters for immigrants (see Chap. 4);

* in a system in which there is not normally any specific supply for the young, these "non-emergency" hostels constitute the main exception;

* re-insertion projects represent a developing trend for the young marginalised: an attempt to go beyond the traditional emergency supply limited strictly to accommodation of the dormitory type: but they are still very much in the development stage and the precise characteristics remain uncertain;

* the characteristics and function of this type of supply depend to a large extent on its relationship to other types of supply present in the context: this might seem obvious, but it is important in a system in which the discretionary powers of government administrations (local and central) in this field are almost total;

* in an institutional context in which the responsibilities of government (local and central) are poorly defined, much depends on the capabilities and the initiatives of local authority administrations; crucial points such as the relationship between social services and social housing are left to the initiatives of local authorities and the relationships created by municipalities with voluntary associations, for example, are vary greatly.

5.2. The service for young people of no abode of the City of Turin

Re-insertion projects for young people of "no fixed abode" developed by local authorities are relatively rare. Within the general system of local authority intervention, the work done by the city of Turin appears more innovative than the average and is in fact set in an urban context rich in voluntary welfare initiatives.

Furthermore, this service for young people was started in a particularly lively context of initiatives in the "no fixed abode" field both on the part of voluntary organisations and the local authority.

When the responsibilities of the traditional social welfare authority (Ente Comunale di Assistenza: Municipal Welfare Department) were transferred to the Social Services Department in 1978, the latter was also obliged to take responsibility for persons of "no fixed abode". The decision to set up a service for this purpose was taken at that time, but it was not until November 1981 after a night dormitory was closed due to serious incidents

culminating in a murder that the Municipal Office for Assistance to Persons of No Fixed Abode was set up.

The philosophy that the office decided to employ was strongly innovative given the context of public policies for the no abode in Italy at the time. Right from the start the main objective of the office was to set up a network of varied but integrated services as well as to co-ordinate public and private sector initiatives in order to be able to provide an adequate response to differing needs according to age, health etc..

A senior official was given charge of the office to act as the point of reference for the various hostels, while staff included both professionals responsible for drawing up and running the various individual projects and administrators to keep files and process statistical data etc. and to act as a filter interviewing new users; residential care workers⁵ in the hostels then provide assistance to "guests" according to guide lines drawn up in co-operation with the Central Office.

The intervention and services provided by the office are for persons between the age of 18 and 60, resident in Turin, living in a place other than their official "residence". The majority are men between the ages of 36 and 50, with a considerable increase of young people between the ages of 18 and 35, unemployed with no-housing and the presence of family, social and welfare problems.

The resources available to the Office include placement in municipal hostels; referral to non-municipal accommodation; the payment of subsidies for food on a permanent basis or for specific projects for social "re-insertion"; payment of one-off grants for various requirements; referrals to free canteens or canteens under municipal contract; referral to the Housing Department for allocation of public housing; an information service and social welfare office. A section for co-ordinating between the Municipal Office and the various associations operating in the sector has been operating since 1984.

The residential resources available to the Municipal Administration have been used to create a variety of responses to meet different users requirements: each type of residential resource has different characteristics.

* A hostel for approximately 35 persons, male and female, between the ages of 35 and 65 mostly with serious health problems caused by years of living on the street and waiting for disablement certification. It is open 24 hours round the clock and has a canteen and laundry; it provides some possibilities for employment and guests are paid a subsidy for personal expenses. Average periods of residence are from 12 to 18 months, the maximum time considered necessary to find permanent housing.

* A night hotel with 46 beds, 36 for men, 6 for women and 4 for

emergencies open from 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. the following morning. It is run by a co-operative. As opposed to other institutions, admission is not dependent on permission from the Central Office: it is sufficient to be aged between 18 and 65 and to be in possession of identity documents to gain access; the maximum period of residence is 4 months for residents of Turin and 7 nights for non-residents of Turin.

* The Office made agreements with the Housing Department and obtained 7 single rooms for assignment to users of the service, where the program for an individual identified a need and the possibility for autonomy.

In 1982 the Social Services Department set up a hostel service for young males in difficulty between the ages of 18 and 30. At the start the service provided only night shelter for a maximum of 14 persons from 7.00 p.m. to 8 a.m. the following day for a period of 6 to 9 months. Subsequently, considering the type of user, more varied assistance was provided to help re-insert users into society (occupation, social and health education etc.) rather than mere old-fashioned "welfare" assistance. Over the years, the service has taken on more and more precise characteristics, developing what could be defined as a "community" model.

Today the hostel can take up to 12 persons. It is open every night

of the year from 7.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. the following day, and users may enter up until 11 o'clock at night. This time restriction is to allow sufficient sleep for those who work and those seeking work, but allowances can be made for those who work unusual hours or take part in activities previously agreed with the team at Central Office.

It consists of double rooms for clients equipped with wardrobes where personal belongings may be left, a room for the residential care worker and some common areas: toilets and showers, the kitchen, a large store room, the laundry and a television room.

The main objective of the hostel is to provide users with lodging for the night for a limited time and to satisfy the basic needs of living as well as providing a permanent address. Other objectives specific to this hostel, but no less important, include the possibility to socialise and to draw up a plan aimed at re-inserting the individual into society and work under the guidance of the residential care worker of the hostel and field social workers at the No fixed Abode Office.

A series of instruments are employed to achieve these objectives:

* a canteen service for evening dinner and breakfast supplied by the municipality, but cooked by the guest themselves who also take turns with cleaning and tidying the canteen area. A laundry service has also been set up providing guests with the possibility of washing and ironing their own clothes;

* an individual programme is drawn up for each guest aimed at full self-sufficiency through the payment of small subsidies (minimum necessary for food), but above all by means of setting objectives to be achieved; due to a lack of resources (lodging, employment, etc.), only a few clients manage to achieve real self-sufficiency.

As a consequence the definition of the minimum period of residence has changed considerably since the beginning, being adapted to fit individual plans and is currently an average of 9-12 months;

* a weekly meeting of residential care workers and clients in which general problems of the hostel, kitchen shifts, participation in recreational activities and so on are discussed;

* close co-operation between residential workers and social workers at the Central Office to assess the progress of individual guests: there is a particular commitment to insertion into employment on the part of the Central Office which searches for job openings;

* monthly assessment of individual re-insertion programmes do decide whether to keep individual guests on or not.

The achievement of an individual's set objectives depends strictly on the co-operation of the individual in question. The involvement of clients is an essential point in the social work philosophy.

Each individual client-plan is drawn up as a carefully planned path

leading out of hardship and employing a network of opportunities. The resources most suitable for solving the problems of each individual are selected from those available in the community. Priority is given to enabling clients to make use of all his rights (obtaining identity documents, health card, enrolling on unemployment lists) so that he can benefit from the network of governmental social services. Individual client plans favour insertion or re-insertion into work on the basis of the capacities he displays, studying the possibilities of completing school leaving certificates, gaining access to occupational training courses, obtaining scholarship grants etc.

This method of operating proposes new behaviour patterns and habits to clients (observance of community timetables, mutual respect, dialogue, personal care and hygiene) to the point where they become actively involved in running the hostel itself. At the same time every attempt is made to move from an initial situation which is usually of considerable mistrust towards one of dialogue between client and residential social worker.

Access of the no abode to the hostel is decided by the Central Office, except for cases of requests made by the Juvenile Courts, or alternatively it can be requested by other decentralised services (often the Territorial Drug Addiction Service) in weekly meetings of the team in which clients are assessed. Application may be made directly to the Central Office on days when it is open to the public. Before taking up residence, new clients are required

to read and sign the regulations of the Hostel.

The time to leave the hostel at the end of a period of residence is agreed with clients on the basis of their individual plans. This is done gradually; often the young people are re-inserted in their original families or the municipality pays their rent in lodgings for a few months until they achieve full independence or, alternatively, social workers plan a temporary solution whereby they share an apartment together with others.

The social workers who operate the service identify the main difficulties in the running of the hostel in the limited daily opening time and in the absence of relationships with the surrounding community. These difficulties seem to be strictly correlated with each other: given that the young people are only present in the hostel at night, it is difficult for them to have any contact with the inhabitants of the district. Most of the inhabitants of the district do in fact seem to be actually unaware of its existence except for the sign above the entrance. As a consequence the Central Office is assessing the possibility of changing the opening times to allow the hostel to integrate more into the community, an important step towards the objectives of re-insertion and re-integration into society. Over the last year there has also been a significant decrease in the number of requests for places and the hostel has often been under-used. As a result the project is currently undergoing a phase of redefinition aimed at identifying the causes of this lack of utilisation by analysing the changes in the type of potential user in order to

relaunch the project adapting it to new demands.

Presences

Since the service opened, 277 persons, Italians and foreigners, have used it for a total of 31,200 presences. As far as foreign guests, mostly from the Maghreb, are concerned, it should be pointed out that initially the hostel was only used for non- EC guests occasionally while due to a massive influx of foreigners into Italy in 1989 and above all due to the referral of numerous minors from the Juvenile Courts in the absence of suitable alternative accommodation, the hostel was used to meet the need for emergency care. Subsequently the demand for emergency care was met by means of a agreement with the Caritas of the diocese which reserved 5 places in one of its shelters for this purpose. The criteria for a place in the hostel became the same for Italians and foreigners alike.

The number of places granted over the years show various peaks; one in 1983 when the hostel's main purpose was merely to provide a bed for the night and another in 1989 explained by the massive influx of foreigners into the country and the fact the hostel was used at that time to provide emergency accommodation.

Rehabilitation programmes have been drawn up for 206 users with a period residence, decided on the basis of each individual client

plant, of between 6 months and one year. The data shows that 47 foreign users left the centre within the first month. Most of these were referred by the Juvenile Courts and often "ran away" on arrival.

Characteristics of users

Apart from being between the ages of 18 and 30, what users have in common are: no job, no permanent housing, accentuated social and health problems (drug addiction, alcoholism, mental health problems). Persons with social and health problems often show difficulties in forming relationships, and an absence of strong ties and points of reference which make re-insertion, into work above all, very difficult. Individual plans with these guests have often failed, except for some cases where guests have been admitted to centres for drug addicts. The mortality rate of users is 6%, a very high rate considering their young age.

Periods of residence and dismissals

As opposed to the payment of subsidies, the period of residence in the hostel is not governed by any Municipal regulation. Dismissal and also admission is left to the discretion of the individual social worker responsible for drawing up a client's plan. Data on reasons for dismissal show a high percentage due to expiry of the

period of residence agreed when individual plans are drawn up. In many cases these are persons who have not solved the problem of finding work, not to mention affective and existential problems. Of those clients dismissed who found work and became independent, the clear majority are foreigners; for these, being of no fixed abode is in fact merely a stage they must go through in order to gain access to better living conditions by gaining a permanent job. The tables for the payment of subsidies after dismissal from the hostel clearly show that once dismissed, many clients turn to the social services in search of a stop-gap subsidy to avoid finding themselves definitively "out of the game" on the social plane.

An assessment of this experience leads first of all to confirmation of the reliability of the "re-insertion" model for young people of no fixed abode. The at least relative effectiveness of the initiative is shown by the number of "re-insertions" achieved. The functioning of the model is certainly favoured by the advantages mentioned afforded by the local context both in terms of the fabric of the community and the organisation of the local authority administration. On the other hand the limiting effect of the absence of an adequate institutional context is clear: in a welfare system characterised by sizable inadequacies with regard to this type of hardship, there is always the risk that the "covering" of needs has some degree of irrationality and the connection between

different types of intervention runs into difficulties.

Of the problems mentioned by social workers some - the opening times, relationship with the district - show a difficulty in full implementation of the model and in fully exploiting its potential. Others - such as the recent fall in demand - reveal, on the other hand, uncertainty concerning the model and bring out the need - as mentioned by the social workers - to subject it to examination.

The main critical point of this experience arises from the comparison between Italian and foreign users. The granting of accommodation to young foreigners is the result of "external" demand to which the service adapted positively, innovating its practices. In any case, the simultaneous presence of two different types of populations did not create problems for the functioning of the hostel. Nevertheless the different success rate for the two populations is clear. Even for young persons with problems of deviance, the difference between young Italian homeless and young immigrant homeless (see chapter 2) persists; the latter are equipped with resources that are easy to activate in the process of integration.

This brings attention again to that heterogeneous character of youth homelessness, which has been a starting point of this report (see chapter 2). Taking account of this heterogeneity looks in the end as a basic criterion for re-organizing specific types of

services - in particular reinsertion projects - and, all the more reason, for innovating general policies for youth homelessness.

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