

Abstract

The phenomenon of social exclusion and homelessness has been gradually coming to the forefront of interest in the Czech Republic in connection with the economic and political transformations that occurred after 1989. One problem is the insufficient effectiveness of social integration policies, predominated by only isolated solutions for the most blatant consequences. The aim of this work is to compare and evaluate selected social integration policy documents within the framework of the European multilevel system of government. The current possibilities for the social reintegration of homeless people into Czech society will be assessed on the basis of the results of this analysis. This work also attempts to validate published causes of homelessness for a selected group of homeless Czech people. In the empirical part a combination of qualitative research methods is used (semi-structured interviews with homeless people) together with a comparative analysis of the formulated goals of the social integration policies within the framework of the European multilevel system of government. Through this research it was found that the problem of the effectiveness of social integration in the Czech Republic is determined in particular by the excessive generality of the formulated goals at national level. One consequence of this is a relative lack of success in implementing the stipulated goals at regional and local levels of government. The interviews show that the homeless people consider that the only way back to social integration is through acquiring their own housing and potentially permanent employment; however, the unaffordability of rented apartments works as a barrier. One possible solution is the creation of a coherent legislative framework that would contribute towards the development of a social economy in the Czech Republic and would thus enable persons in difficult circumstances to make use of social accommodation and a protected job market.