
(De)institutionalisation of people with intellectual disabilities in Italy and Sweden

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Résumé

Prompted by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its General Comment n. 5, European countries have committed themselves to a process of deinstitutionalization. Reports (FRA 2017), however, highlight that despite this, there are risks for institution-like solutions and re-institutionalization across various member states, especially for persons with intellectual and multiple disabilities. Additionally, deinstitutionalisation is a heterogeneous process and due to these international divergent policy developments and trajectories, a comparative perspective is necessary to develop an understanding of the welfare and institutional contexts of the country-specific policies as well as potential similarities, differences, and lessons (De Chenu, Dæhlen & Tah 2016).

Therefore, this paper will explore variations/similarities in welfare systems as well as in residential and community measures for people with intellectual disabilities across two different countries: Italy and Sweden. The data informing this paper has emerged from a comparative method based on selected primary/secondary literature to develop a critical thematic analysis (Richardson 1996) between the countries. Due to Italy and Sweden ostensibly adhering to different welfare types, a comparison between the countries may offer enriching insights into the complexities surrounding deinstitutionalisation, particularly with regards to participation, self-determination and social inclusion, which are considered to be a central aspect of quality of life for persons with intellectual disabilities (Clement & Bigby 2010; Kozma et al. 2009).

Ultimately, exploring these issues in a comparative framework will enable a nuanced evaluation of the contemporary state of (de)institutionalisation and potential challenges, particularly in light of emergent neoliberalisation in both countries. This paper will offer a valuable contribution to the critical examination of (de)institutionalisation in light of these processes and the impact of the current global pandemic, where people with intellectual disabilities have been disproportionately impacted, the full effect of which we are only just beginning to learn.

References:

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