Toward a Geographical Comparison of Welfare Restructuring in Vienna and Osaka

Johannes KIENER*

This study compares welfare restructuring in two cities, Vienna and Osaka. Based on a literature review, it identifies three topics with a geographical focus: the scale of welfare policies, role of the inner city for the provision of welfare, and spaces of care created by welfare providers. These three topics are discussed through a historical review of the development of policies for homeless people in both cities, focusing on the period from 1980.
Keywords: Homeless people, inner city, welfare regime

1. Introduction

Since the 1970s, following the impact of repeated economic crises and industrial restructuring, the welfare states of developed countries have faced restructuring efforts. This includes attempts to respond to newly emerging social issues and deal with a tighter fiscal situation that are usually accompanied by a shift to neoliberal policies. Focusing on the issue of homelessness in Vienna and Osaka, this study adds to the increasing comparative literature on policies for homeless people in the context of urban welfare regimes (e.g., DeVerteuil 2016, von Mahs 2013, Yamaguchi & Aoki 2020, Zufferey & Yu 2018) by comparing welfare restructuring from a geographical point of view. The work of Geoffrey DeVerteuil (2016), who compared the liberal urban welfare regimes of London, Los Angeles, and Sydney, and Jürgen von Mahs (2013), who compared a liberal with a conservative urban welfare regime, i.e., Los Angeles and Berlin, are leading studies in this field.

In contrast to these accounts, this study compares the restructuring of conservative and productivist urban welfare regimes by focusing on policies for homeless people in Vienna and Osaka. In section 2, an overview of three geographical approaches toward urban welfare regime restructuring, which form the focus of the analysis, is provided. Sections 3 and 4 review the development of policies for homeless people since the 1980s in Vienna and Osaka, respectively (an overview of the major policy changes is provided in Table 2). Finally, section 5 highlights the potential of a comparison of urban welfare regime restructuring between the two cities, by bringing together the sections 2 to 4 in a summary.

* Associate Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Saitama University. Human Geography.

2. Geographical approaches toward welfare restructuring

2.1. Scales of welfare policies

The first focus of analysis is the scales of welfare policies. Under pressure from fiscal crises, which undermine political support, welfare states face a "hollowing out" and devolution of the national scale (DeVerteuil et al. 2002). Responsibilities to provide welfare can be transferred to local and regional authorities, or supranational state systems and bodies (Jessop 1993). This offloading can involve a wide range of resources, personnel, institutional capacities, delivery systems, and governance arrangements (Peck 2001). Therefore, it can enable the production of new spaces for the local welfare state, by allowing more leeway to dismantle, privatize, and experiment with new bureaucratic structures (DeVerteuil et al. 2002). In this way, autonomy can be an opportunity to consolidate innovative practices at the local level. But it can also become an obstacle for diffusing or scaling them up, especially in contexts characterized by a lack of central coordination, fostering the development of an unequal welfare landscape (Kazepov et al. 2020).

The devolution of the central state is also promoted by offloading state functions and responsibilities to private organizations, such as volunteer organizations, non-profit organizations (NPOs), or private companies. This development is usually encouraged by the state through the retrenchment of public welfare services and reorganization toward investment stimulation and labor supply incentives, leading to the dismantling of welfare services. The void left by state retreatment is filled by private organizations that take over previous state duties and functions (Wolch 1990).

Policies that contribute to the growth of private organizations and turn them into key agents for the provision of collective services are widely criticized. On the one hand, private organizations usually prove unable to respond fully to all the people reliant on them, by selecting and excluding certain groups. These limitations are dictated by their context, namely, the available financial resources, established policy requirements, public sector's capacity, and politics of the urban regime in power (Lake & Newman 2002). On the other hand, they are criticized because, next to the obvious goal of reducing welfare expenditures, offloading welfare services to private organizations also leads to a depoliticization of welfare, which reduces the risk of policy failure and establishes new means of control from a distance (Manzi 2015). This places private organizations, rather than established political institutions, at the center of public policymaking, crucially changing the relation between communities and the state.

2.2. The inner city

The second focus of analysis is the inner city, the part of cities that develops during industrialization and is intimately interlinked with the provision of welfare. It remains home to many welfare organizations that value the central location to maximize their accessibility and increase their visibility.

The role of the inner city in welfare provision is emphasized against the background of the shift to neoliberal policies under which previous welfare arrangements face dismantlement through deregulation,

privatization, and austerity measures as well as rising land prices, NIMBY[1] movements, and the displacement of their clients (Wolch & Dear 1993). The reality of this restructuring is incomplete and uneven because of the nature of neoliberalism (DeVerteuil 2016). Typically, it is an assemblage of disparate, hybridized, and intrinsically precarious arrangements that exist alongside residual welfare arrangements from previous eras. Midst the increasing metropolitan dispersion, fragmentation, and implosion, it remains politically and socially an arena of collective consumption and tolerance for difference. Therefore, the inner city becomes the battleground on which neoliberal governments launch their attacks on residual welfare arrangements of previous eras (Caulfield 1994).

The dismantling of previous welfare arrangements also leads to growth in demand for community care. Hence, the inner city becomes the site in which this demand is met, although usually to an insufficient degree. It has a considerable welfare service infrastructure that was founded by public and private organizations (often religious orders). In addition to this support network, the inner city housing market provides cheap accommodation and community opposition toward welfare services and their clients is weak (Dear & Wolch 1987). Under ideal conditions so-called "service hubs" emerge. In them the interaction between service providers is promoted through the physical proximity of small community-based welfare services, enabling them to serve a wide range of clients. The linkages that can develop through this proximity not only enable the smooth transition between services but also allow them to share infrastructure and help provide a range of services at the same time. Proximity also strengthens the networks of clients and facilities, supporting the development of community life, and effective delivery of welfare services (Dear, Wolch & Wilton 1994).

This geography can be enforced through "malign neglect." Owing to NIMBY pressure from residents, many communities refrain from providing services to homeless people, rule them out through planning regulations, or even actively drive them away. In their need to survive in this environment, homeless people are drawn to the inner city and other places in which some welfare services and a more welcoming environment exist. As a result, areas that provide for homeless people attract even more of them. On the contrary, areas that do nothing or actively shun homeless people can externalize care for such people to more charitable neighbors (Wolch & Dear 1993).

2.3. Spaces of care

The third focus of analysis is the space created by organizations that support homeless people. Especially voluntary organizations are recognized as creators of "spaces for care" in cities that increasingly employ punitive policies for homeless people. They can have several functions such as preventing survivalist crime; opening a route into housed life; providing essentials such as food, clothing, bathing facilities, and primary healthcare; functioning as a hub for information and advice; and providing

[1] "NIMBY" is an acronym for "not in my backyard." It refers to the opposition of residents to proposed developments in their neighborhood, such as housing estates, skyscrapers, and homeless shelters.

opportunities for social interaction. At an essential level, they "provide an environment where homeless people may simply 'be'—within a (revanchist) city that (increasingly) does not want them" (Johnsen, Cloke & May 2005: 805).

Although spaces of care may be embedded into a revanchist policy logic that aims to contain homeless people, their managers usually understand them as created by a genuine and deep-rooted urge to care. However, the nature of these spaces of care is highly fragile. Despite being usually created as "therapeutic heaven open to all," they can be perceived very differently by their clients. This is partly related to the clients themselves, who can behave in challenging and unpredictable ways. To protect and safeguard the sustainability of services, "othering," which reflects mainstream understandings and hierarchies of stigma, is conducted and practices of self-policing of clients are frequent. However, spaces of care are also influenced by highly unsustainable funding arrangements and staffing shortages; therefore, they frequently operate under the threat of imminent closure (Johnsen, Cloke & May 2005).

This fragile nature of spaces of care makes them sensible to welfare restructuring. Their agenda is easily undermined by the state—a phenomenon referred to as "shadow state" (Wolch 1990)—and they can become nothing more than a means for containing homeless people in certain inner city areas (Wolch & Dear 1993). This is especially the case in the "revanchist city" (Smith 1996). Under the pretext of improving quality of life and providing a business-friendly environment, many policies are adopted to evict homeless people from public spaces and punish those unable to adjust themselves to market conditions. Against the background of a shift to neoliberal policies and intensifying gentrification, new anti-homelessness, and anti-squatter policies "intended to 'take back' the parks, streets and neighborhoods from those who had supposedly 'stolen' them from 'the public'" (Smith 1996: 221) are enacted. Parks and streets are cleared of homeless people, shanty towns are bulldozed, and a broad swath of activities in public spaces are criminalized. This involves panhandling and squeegee windshield cleaning from which many homeless people make a living. The remaking of public spaces is accompanied by welfare cuts, involving the closure of soup runs and introduction of fees for homeless shelters. The resulting climate of hostility against homeless people and increase in police violence can make rough sleeping even more dangerous, encouraging the homeless to leave the city (Smith 1996).

3. Restructuring of policies for homeless people in Vienna

This section reviews the development of policies for homeless people in Vienna. As displayed in Table 1, Vienna is Austria's largest city with a population of over 1.9 million people. This included 12,817 people registered as homeless in 2017. Because of its status as Austria's capital, the politics and administration of the City of Vienna are special, combining the functions of a federal state and a municipality (Gluns 2019). These bundled competencies enhance the high local autonomy typical of Austria, assuming many responsibilities for welfare policies to the federal states (Kazepov et al. 2020).

Table 1. Overview of Vienna and Osaka

	Vienna	Osaka
Population (2020)	1,911,191 people	2,750,812 people
Homeless people (2017)	12,817 people[2]	1,208 people[3]
Governance structure	City of Vienna (combining a federal state and municipality, 23 wards)	Osaka City (government-ordinance designated city, 24 wards)

Austria is a typical conservative welfare regime in which labor unions and business associations are involved in the negotiation of labor regulations and welfare policies. Despite some restructuring in recent years, that has led to a stronger employment of markets and competition, its core characteristics have remained. Social security programs are mainly funded by social contributions on income, but funding for social security from general taxes has increased over time. Compulsory federal insurance-based programs comprise unemployment, retirement pension, and invalidity insurance, whose benefit levels depend on former employment status and income, and eligibility criteria are prescribed by national law.

The unemployed receive 55 percent of former income in unemployment benefits (*Arbeitslosengeld*) for a period that lengthens with the age of the recipient and training or education up to four years. After that, means-tested emergency support (*Notstandshilfe*) can be received. It is also a service of unemployment insurance but without time limitation. For those not covered by unemployment insurance, social benefits are regulated by the social welfare laws of federal states. In Vienna, this is provided as means-tested minimum support, which aims to reintegrate people into the labor market, supplementing financial benefits with job counseling. In addition, the City of Vienna provides a separate subsidy for housing (Gluns 2019).

3.1. Homeless asylums

Until the late 1980s, support for homeless people in Vienna was characterized by large-scale residential institutions called homeless asylums (*Obdachlosen Herberge*), which had been created since the end of the 19th century to address housing issues. Three municipal homeless asylums that provided 700 beds for families, 100 beds for women, and 540 beds for men existed at the end of the 1960s in marginal areas of the city (Oberhuber 1999). Homeless asylums charged a weekly fee, but residents without sufficient financial means could receive support from the city magistrate (Girtler 1980). At the time these homeless asylums were opened, they had comparatively high standards with heated bedrooms and sanitary facilities. These structural standards, however, were not improved over the following 80 years (FSW 2009).

[2] People registered as homeless (excluding those living in facilities and apartments).

[3] People identified as homeless through a visual survey conducted in January.

Table 2. Overview of the major changes in policies for homeless people in Vienna and Osaka

year	Vienna			Osaka		
	European Union	Austria	City of Vienna	Japan	Osaka Prefecture	Osaka City
1980			homeless asylums (late 19th century), railway social services (1971)	Public Assistance Law (1950)	Airin General Center (1970)	Airin District (1966), Municipal Rehabilitation Counseling Center (1971)
1981						
1982						
1983			sheltered housing			
1984						
1985						
1986						
1987			day center, winter emergency shelter			
1988						
1989			Joint Venture Housing for Citizens in Distress, social-therapeutic residential home, Step by Step Plan of the City of Vienna for the Reintegration of Homeless People	ambulatory assistance		
1990						
1991						
1992						
1993			Louisebus, social housing contingent			
1994					work program for elderly day laborers	
1995	Austria accesses the European Union					
1996			Department for Housing-protection			
1997			housing with social care			
1998	Stability and Growth Pact			Law to Promote Specified Non-profit Activities		deposit payments for people discharged from hospitals
1999		Federal Joint Venture for Homeless Support	homeless support → Social Welfare Office			NPO Kamagaski Support Organization, homeless counseling patrol program
2000			homeless asylums → Social Welfare Office			homeless self-reliance support center, temporary night emergency shelter, provisional temporary shelter, deposit payments for people discharged from welfare facilities
2001						
2002				Special Law on Temporary Measures to Support the Self-reliance of Homeless People		
2003			closure of the last homeless asylum, P7	circular from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare		
2004			homeless support → Vienna Social Fund			
2005			Housed Again			
2006			Housing Base			
2007						
2008			Viennese Homeless Support Association			closure of the last provisional temporary shelter
2009				circulars from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare		
2010	European Consensus Conference on Homelessness					poverty business countermeasures
2011						
2012			Housing First			Nishinari Special Ward Initiative
2013						
2014						closure of the Municipal Rehabilitation Counseling Center
2015				Self-reliance Support Law for Needy People, readjustment of housing benefits		
2016						
2017						
2018			Shelter Vienna, chance house			
2019					closure of the Airin General Center	
2020						

Homeless asylums aimed to "take into custody the 'unsocial' rest of society" (Oberhuber 1999: 96), a praxis that changed little until the end of the 20th century. Usually, the magistrate sent people released from prison or hospital with no place to stay to these institutions (Girtler 1980). The integration of clients into the common housing market was not promoted and the staff's main duty was surveillance. Although social workers were dispatched, their resources were insufficient and the institutional division, which made the homeless asylums subject to the Municipal Housing Administration (*Städtische Wohnhäuserverwaltung*), complicated systematic social work.

Therefore, homeless asylums became the final home for many inhabitants, where they stayed until their death (FSW 2009). Not surprisingly, the main inhabitants were older homeless people who usually abused alcohol heavily. Younger homeless people tended to avoid these homeless asylums and preferred sleeping in houses scheduled for knocking down or under construction. Homeless people also frequented monasteries that served soup made of leftovers for free to the poor (Girtler 1980). Additionally, in 1971 the private organization Caritas introduced railway social services (*Bahnhofsozialdienst*), which provided advice and support to homeless people during the day at major railway stations (FSW 2009). They were important contact points for social services because many homeless people used to spend the days drinking in pubs in and around Vienna's major railway stations (Girtler 1980).

This system started to change gradually from the second half of the 1980s. In this decade, the increase in homeless people, particularly in the winter months, exposed the limitations of the existing system (FSW 2009). Under these circumstances, support for homeless people came under strong criticism. Improvements to social services such as counseling and care services as well as a shift to ambulatory services were demanded (Oberhuber 1999). However, homeless asylums were initially unaffected and only became the focus of reform when a thorough survey in 1997 revealed that despite clients' high potential for independent living, many of them continued to live in homeless asylums in the long term. Finally, these large-scale facilities, with a high density of residents and low-quality standards, were closed. The last one, the Haus Meldemannstraße, which had with a scale of 350 beds and a history of nearly 100 years a strong symbolic significance, closed in 2003. The former residents were rehoused in apartments or new small-scale facilities to promote social inclusion according to the standards of the new policies for homeless people (FSW 2009).

3.2. Step-by-step social inclusion

After a period during which experiments with sheltered housing (*Betreutes Wohnen*), day centers (*Tageszentrum*), and winter emergency shelters (*Winternotquartier*) were conducted, from the end of the 1980s Vienna's support system for homeless people was crucially revolutionized. Together with changes in its institutional foundation, the Step-by-Step Plan of the City of Vienna for the Reintegration of Homeless People (*Stufenplan der Stadt Wien zur Reintegration von Obdachlosen*), a comprehensive welfare system that aims to reintegrate homeless people into the housing and labor market and protect

housed people from homelessness, was gradually implemented. Decisive for its enactment was the founding of the platform Joint Venture Housing for Citizens in Distress (*ARGE Wohnplätze für Bürger in Not*) in 1989. This platform of several departments of the city magistrate and private organizations (FSW 2009) took over the responsibility for coordinating private organizations, creating standards, and conducting quality control and research (Oberhuber 1999).

The institutional foundation developed further when, in 1999, a department of support for homeless people was established within the Social Welfare Office that took charge of coordinating public and private organizations and financing the latter. In addition, the homeless asylums were integrated into it in the following year (FSW 2009). The joint venture was suspended on this occasion, and the Federal Joint Venture of Support for Homeless People (*Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe*) was created as its successor. Further, the Viennese Support Association for Homeless People (*Verband Wiener Wohnungslosenhilfe*) was founded in 2008 to strengthen the cooperation of private support organizations. Initially, in 1989, eight private organizations cooperated with the City of Vienna, including established support organizations for homeless people such as Caritas and the Salvation Army. Over time, their number increased, reaching 30 by 2019 (FSW 2019a).

In 2004, the institutional foundation of support for homeless people evolved further, and it became a section in the Vienna Social Fund (*Fonds Soziales Wien*), a city fund initially created in 2000 for preventing addiction and coordinating related support. Subsequently functions of the magistrate department Care and Support (*Pflege und Betreuung*) and partly of the Social Welfare Office were also transferred to it. According to policy guidelines it plans social services and their scope, recognizes welfare organizations as official partners, and manages the quality of social services in Vienna. In 2005, as an affiliated organization of the Vienna Social Fund, the NPO Housed Again (*wieder wohnen*) was founded but renamed Shelter Vienna (*Obdach Wien*) in 2018. Its mission is the provision of social services to homeless people, which were taken over from the Social Welfare Office (FSW 2009). Its services have expanded to the point that it operated 25 facilities in 2019 (Obdach Wien 2020), catering for 7,580 people (FSW 2019b).

Other related agendas were gradually integrated into the support system for homeless people. In 2006, the Housing Base (*wohnbasis*), a project that provides apartments to families that have stayed in welfare facilities, was founded. Further, in 2007, private mother-and-child facilities (*Mutter-Kind Einrichtung*) were also transferred to the support for homeless people of the Vienna Social Fund. During the 2000s, several facilities that cater to the needs of women were created and Housed Again developed a gender manifest in 2008 that led to the introduction of gender-specific support measures into its services (FSW 2009).

The comprehensive support system for homeless people introduced with the step-by-step plan consists of several major support groups. Low-threshold institutions with outreach functions provide entry to this system. These are day centers and night shelters (*Nachtquartier*) that provide facilities for

showering, laundry, cooking, and resting, as well as information and medical services for short periods. Through consulting services for clients and street-work that reaches out to people who do not actively search for help, day centers and night shelters provide an access point to the support system. Initially, they were run by the municipality and through cooperation with private organizations. In 1993, the Louisebus, a mobile medical center, was introduced by Caritas (Oberhuber 1999). It functions in a similar way as outreach. In 2003, the by the Caritas run P7 opened its doors as a successor to railway social services. It is also a low-threshold facility that provides access to services for homeless people (FSW 2009). Subsequently, chance houses (*Chancenhaus*), residential facilities with outreach functions, were introduced in 2018. Chance houses provide single and double rooms as well as specialized staff for counseling support. The use of the facilities for up to three months is unconditional, making them available to people without a legal right to social services. Their aim is to provide clients with opportunities to connect to appropriate welfare services to tackle prolonged homelessness (FSW 2021). In 2018, facilities with outreach functions, including night shelters and chance houses, had 500 beds that provided to 4,260 clients (MSW 2020).

In addition, a transitional facility system was built. A social-therapeutic residential home (*Sozialtherapeutisches Wohnheim*) opened in 1989 as the first of its kind, but similar facilities have gradually been established since. These transitional facilities are a combination of accommodation and psychosocial support that prepare residents to live independently. Many were created for different target groups such as mentally disabled people, alcoholics, young people, and mothers with children. Transitional facilities can be occupied for up to two years (FSW 2021). In 2018, there were 1,630 beds in transitional facilities and 3,040 people used them (MSW 2020).

The core of this system is formed by sheltered housing, which aims to integrate homeless people into society and support them toward independent living. Sheltered housing is provided through apartments across the city to avoid the negative effects of slums, such as stigmatization and the formation of marginal groups. A holistic approach is employed that includes support for living, work, health, administrative tasks, and recreational activities. One social worker is assigned to 15 clients, providing a degree of support that could not be realized in homeless asylums. After about two years, clients who can live on their own are offered regular housing. While the City of Vienna organizes and adapts the apartments, provides furniture, and covers the running costs, private organizations provide the staff to support clients and maintain the apartments. The aim was initially to create sheltered housing units for 580 people (FSW 2009), but this target was subsequently increased, rising to 2,280 units in 2018 (MSW 2020).

After about two years in sheltered housing, clients deemed capable of independent living are moved to general housing, usually municipal public housing (Oberhuber 1999). Compared with private housing, municipal public housing has the advantages of rent below the market value, unlimited rental agreements, and strong protection through the Tenancy Law (*Mietrechtsgesetz*). To secure suitable housing, in

municipal public housing a social housing quota for homeless and homelessness-threatened people was created in 1993. Initially, 10 percent of the annually available 7,000 apartments were considered necessary. However, it became clear that this was inadequate to meet the actual need, and debate about the appropriate number continues (FSW 2009).

Further, housing with social care (*Sozial Betreutes Wohnhaus*), permanent housing for people unable to live independently, was introduced. The first, opened in 1997 and housed older people. Fostered by the structural reform in 2004, private organizations increasingly introduced housing with social care. Today, these small-scale facilities are distributed throughout the city (FSW 2009). In 2018, the number of beds in housing with social care was 1,150 (MSW 2020).

The final and first support in this system is eviction prevention. It aims to prevent the eviction of residents by registering and proactively providing support to people in crisis. This includes offering information about the rental law and rights to social services, support for negotiations with landlords, and financial aid. For municipal public housing, these services are realized through cooperation between the Social Welfare Office and Housing Office (*Wohnungsamt*). For the private market, the Department for Housing Protection (*Fachstelle für Wohnungssicherung*) was created in 1996. Initially, it was a model project restricted to one area but was extended to the whole city in 1998 (Oberhuber 1999).

3.3. The European Union and Housing First

With the accession of Austria to the European Union in 1995, many policies of national and federal states became subject to its regulations. However, policies for homeless people in Vienna have been only indirectly affected. For instance, public aid that distorts market competition has been banned and the rule that housing subsidies should be targeted toward low-income households has been extended to municipal public housing. Also, the Stability and Growth Pact, which was enacted in the second half of the 1990s, follows a neoliberal paradigm and restricts public deficits and debt financing (Gluns 2019).

Policy promotion by the European Union may also influence policies for homeless people in Vienna. In particular, Housing First, an initiative to place homeless people directly into suitable housing without the use of transitional facilities, is being promoted at the European level. The starting point for this policy direction was the 2010 European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, co-organized by the European Commission and FEANTSA (*Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri*). Through this conference, an international network for mutual learning among practitioners, researchers, advocacy organizations, and policymakers was created. This network promotes Housing First and links theoretical and practical knowledge with evidence-based policymaking to address the issue of homelessness (Novy et al. 2020).

The City of Vienna started to develop Housing First in 2010 when the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei*), which had managed the city almost a century, formed a coalition with the Greens (*Die Grünen*). At the request of the Greens, the city administration decided to introduce Housing

First. By then, the limitations of the support policy for homeless people through gradual social integration were apparent. Various private organizations cooperating with the Vienna Social Fund criticized that people with multiple problems lack the skills to live in institutional accommodation, that sharing facilities in a community of cohabitees does not prepare for a self-determined life, and that the constantly changing social environment contributes to destabilization.

This led to the establishment of Housing First, starting with a pilot project in 2012. Under the leadership of the Vienna Social Fund and a private organization, standards for a Viennese approach to Housing First based on five principles were developed: direct access to permanent accommodation, organizational separation between housing administration and personal counseling, promotion of social inclusion, autonomy and participation, and flexible assistance for individual needs (Weinzierl et al. 2015). The social services necessary for Housing First are provided by organizations that collaborate with the Vienna Social Fund. To obtain apartments, these organizations rely on the private market; in many cases on housing subsidized by the City of Vienna (Gluns 2019).

4. Restructuring of policies for homeless people in Osaka

This section reviews the development of policies for homeless people in Osaka. As displayed in Table 1, with a population of nearly 2.8 million people, Osaka is the third largest city in Japan after Tokyo and Yokohama. In addition, 1,208 homeless people were counted in the annual street count in 2017. Osaka is the economic center of the Kansai region and as the site of the Osaka Prefectural Office it also functions as a political center. Despite the strongly centralized administration of the Japanese state, as a government-ordinance designated city, Osaka City has a relatively high degree of autonomy (Kiener 2020).

Japan's welfare regime is usually described as productivist, subordinating welfare policies to other policy objectives, typically economic growth. Together with the right to "a minimum standard of healthy civilized life" guaranteed by Article 25 of the Japanese Constitution and realized through the Public Assistance Law (*seikatsu hogohō*) from 1950, a health insurance scheme and pension system exist that extend social rights across the population. However, benefit levels are criticized as being low and public assistance is only assigned to the poorest strata of society, thereby having a minimal redistributive effect (Holliday 2000).

4.1. Airin District

In Osaka, policies for homeless people have developed since the 1960s around the issue of day laborers, who experience frequent episodes of homelessness. Japan's developing welfare state showed little concern for single male workers (Haraguchi 2016), and the ability to respond to homelessness through the Public Assistance Law was further weakened when the Ministry of Health and Welfare

(*kōseishō*) released a circular in 1981 aimed at preventing members of organized crime from receiving welfare benefits, which also affected the poor and needy (Kuwahara 2007). Day labor, on the contrary, was integrated into the legal framework and regulations for recruiting day laborers were eased. For them, a parallel welfare system was installed in *yoseba*, places where they used to gather to find work. There their work and life were managed, transforming them into a casual labor force (Haraguchi 2016). Thus, homelessness and most policies dealing with it have been confined to these places since the 1960s.

Osaka was home to Kamagasaki, the largest *yoseba*. In 1966, the government designated it as the Airin District (*airin chiku*), and special policies for day laborers were introduced to the area in a joint effort between the state, Osaka Prefecture, and Osaka City. These policies included the Airin General Center (*airin sōgō sentā*) and Municipal Rehabilitation Counseling Office (*shiritsu kōsei sōdansho*). Osaka City also encouraged flophouse owners to build smaller rooms, resulting in a densification of the stock of beds, which in 1969 reached its peak capacity of approximately 24,500 (Haraguchi 2003). Housing assistance for day laborers was only provided in the form of a seasonal shelter for the winter, operated by a social welfare legal entity (*shakai fukushi hōjin*)[4] (Kiener & Mizuuchi 2018).

The Airin General Center opened in 1970 and housed three major organizations: the Public Interest Foundation Nishinari Laborer Welfare Center (*kōeki zaidan hōjin nishinari rōdō fukushi sentā*), which provides support to secure work for day laborers and improve their welfare and lives; the Airin Public Employment Security Office (*airin rōdō kōkyō shokugyō anteisho*), which provides unemployment insurance and health insurance for day laborers; and the Social Welfare Corporation Osaka Social Medical Center (*shakai fukushi hōjin ōsaka shakai iryō sentā*), which provides a wide range of medical services and referral to other healthcare facilities.

The unemployment insurance system for day laborers was developed in the 1970s, propelled by the upcoming day laborer movements and deep recession after the oil crisis in 1973. Through it, the so-called "white card" (*shiro techō*) was introduced, which was issued to day laborers registered at the Public Employment Security Office. For every day of work, a stamp was pasted onto the white card, making day laborers who collected a certain number of stamps eligible for unemployment benefits. However, this system proved to be weak in times of economic slowdown when workers could not work the required number of days (Haraguchi 2011).

The Municipal Rehabilitation Counseling Center moved to the Airin District in 1971. It provided temporary shelter, counseling services, and public assistance mainly in the form of medical benefits or referral to welfare facilities such as rehabilitation and relief facilities; however, it denied the housing benefits that would have enabled down-on-their-luck day laborers to stabilize their housing situation

[4] Social welfare legal entities are defined under the Social Welfare Law (*shakai fukushihō*) and oversee the operation of social welfare programs. Next to the state, prefectures, municipalities, and by municipalities accredited organizations, they are licensed to operate first-class social welfare programs. These are for instance rehabilitation (*kōsei shisetsu*) and relief facilities (*kyūgo shisetsu*) run under the Public Assistance Law, or care (*yōgo rōjin hōmu*) and special care homes for the elderly (*tokubetsu yōgo rōjin hōmu*) run under the Law on Social Welfare for the Elderly (*rōjin fukushihō*).

(Kiener & Mizuuchi 2018). After the revision of the Mental Health Law (*seishin eiseihō*) in 1965, people with multiple disabilities and social handicaps who had no prospect of improving their health condition through training or rehabilitation were transferred to relief facilities. Joined by aged, disabled, and homeless day laborers, most of these facilities turned into permanent homes suffering from a bad reputation as being "at the bottom of social welfare" (Mizuuchi 2010: 56).

Although some of these support institutions are still in place, Kamagasaki recently changed markedly through the Nishinari Special Ward Initiative (*nishinari tokku kōsō*). Initiated by the former mayor Hashimoto Tōru in 2012 and realized through the Nishinari Ward Office, it aims to transform Kamagasaki. Based on the opinion of representatives of local community and welfare organizations a through a public call selected board of advisors worked out concrete policies. The result has been a plan that consists of policies to solve short-term local issues, policies for the future concerned with economic revitalization and population influx, and set the stage for independent reform (Suzuki 2017).

These policies aim to create employment opportunities for homeless people and aged day laborers as well as improve the social participation of public assistance recipients. However, they also provide countermeasures against the illegal dumping of garbage and illegal parking of bicycles (Shirahase 2019), installation of CCTVs to reduce drug handling, and crackdowns on an informal second-hand outdoor market. In addition, unauthorized graffiti are overpainted and replaced by planned graffiti projects (Suzuki 2017). In 2018, further plans were published by the board of advisors after consultation with selected community members. These aimed to preserve some of the support functions for needy people in the neighborhood, while opening them up to new residents and investments. This should be achieved by strengthening work, housing, and welfare to create a service hub with multiple and integrated forms of aid and creating "third spaces" that can be shared by many different people. In addition, to overcome the negative stereotypes of Nishinari Ward an image-upgrading campaign should be started and the environment should be made suitable for raising children. This should be realized through a cooperation between the local community and government, while attention should be paid to prevent possible damage from gentrification.

This Nishinari Special Ward Initiative was accompanied by the closure of the Municipal Rehabilitation Counseling Center in 2014 and Airin General Center in 2019. The Airin General Center was closed under the pretext of its poor earthquake resistance and decrease in the number of day laborers, but is scheduled for reconstruction in the same place. The Public Job Office and Nishinari Laborer Welfare Center that it housed were moved temporarily under the elevated Nankai Main Line to the west, while the Osaka Social Medical Center was moved permanently to the former site of the Haginochaya Elementary School to the south (Shirahase 2019).

4.2. Self-reliance support

The extraordinary increase in and visibility of homeless people at the end of the 1990s showed the limitations of existing policies and called for new approaches. In Osaka, new policies began as early as the first half of the 1990s but gained momentum when the Special Law on Temporary Measures to Support the Self-reliance of Homeless People (*hōmuresu no jiritsu no shien tō ni kan suru tokubetsu sochihō*) was enacted in 2002. The special law, originally limited to a 10-year period, was extended for another five years in 2012 and for another 10 years in 2017. Alongside support guidelines, it provided a budget of 1.9 billion yen in 2002, which was drastically increased by the cabinet of the Democratic Party of Japan after the global financial crisis in 2008, reaching 11.5 billion yen in 2012. The formulation and operation of policies for homeless people were entrusted to municipalities (Matsumoto 2016). Therefore, since 2002, most previous support for homeless people of Osaka City has become subject to the special law (Kiener & Mizuuchi 2018).

The new policies for homeless people began with the introduction of a work program for older day laborers in 1994, followed by the construction of a temporary shelter in Kamagasaki. Further, since 2000 temporary night emergency shelters (*rinji yakan kinkyū hinansho*) were built in Kamagasaki to prevent day laborers from sleeping rough. They provided beds for the night, releasing clients in the early hours when recruiters arrived at the Airin General Center (Mizuuchi 2003). The operation of these supports was outsourced by Osaka City and Prefecture to the NPO Kamagaski Support Organization (*tokutei hieiri katsudō hōjin kamagasaki shien kikō*), after it was founded in 1999 by representatives of local communities and support organizations for homeless people. NPOs like this are in Japan comparably new organizations that emerged after the Law to Promote Specified Non-profit Activities (*tokutei hieiri katsudō sokushinhō*) was passed in 1998. In 2021 one temporary night emergency shelter with 450 beds was operating.

Starting in 1999 and accelerating with the passing of the special law in 2002, in Osaka a support system was built to make homeless people self-reliant again, initially through work, but later through combinations of work and public assistance. Outreach activities, such as the homeless counseling patrol program (*nojuku seikatsusha junkai sōdan jigyō*), were started to build up contact to homeless people. In parks with many homeless people, provisional temporary shelters (*kasetsu ichiji hinansho*) were erected during the 2000s to improve their living conditions and make the parks available to local residents.

At the core of this support system were homeless self-reliance support centers (*hōmuresu jiritsu shien sentā*). Initially, three of them opened in Osaka. Because of their poor performance, an assessment center to select clients willing and able to work, and a fourth homeless self-reliance support center were added in 2007. All homeless self-reliance support centers, the assessment center, and temporary emergency shelters were entrusted to social welfare legal entities; organizations that had a long history of cooperation with Osaka City (OC 2014).

In homeless self-reliance support centers, homeless people can stay for up to six months. During this time, clients are expected to find a job and earn enough money to move into an apartment. They receive necessities such as food and clothing and items for job hunting. Different types of counseling support and vocational training are also provided. However, public assistance is only available to clients in the form of health benefits. Further, despite these efforts, in Osaka, fewer than half of clients find employment and the percentage of former day laborers who find work is only between 20 and 30 percent (Mizuuchi 2011). In recent years the number of homeless self-reliance support centers was reduced, and in 2022 only one, with 92 beds and additional 20 beds in rental apartments, continued to operate.

Further, welfare facilities run under the Public Assistance Act have undergone some crucial changes. Starting in 1989, a series of reforms allowed the introduction of ambulatory assistance (*tsūsho jigyō*) for former clients in rehabilitation and relief facilities, with the aim to increase the ability of clients to live alone by providing training after they are discharged. In response to the expansion of the scope of public assistance (see below) many rehabilitation and relief facilities introduced this ambulatory assistance. Aside from job support and training for self-reliance, some facilities also started to work closely with local support organizations to provide a wide range of care (Mizuuchi 2010). In 2020 one rehabilitation facility with 50 beds and 12 relief facilities with 1,448 beds were operating (OC 2022).

4.3. Public assistance

Alongside the development of this support for homeless people, public assistance has become a major force in reducing homelessness. Next to the practice of Osaka City, that granted deposit payments to people discharged from hospitals and welfare facilities in 1998 and 2000 respectively, the scope of public assistance was crucially altered by three circulars from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (*kōsei rōdōshō*) during the 2000s. The first, issued in 2003, urged welfare offices to assess the eligibility of homeless people for public assistance in the same way as they assessed non-homeless citizens. Backed by the enactment of the special law in 2002, it had wide-reaching effects on older homeless people (Mizuuchi 2007). The second and third circulars were both issued in 2009 after fierce protests in Tokyo's Hibiya Park demanding action against increasing poverty following the global financial crisis of 2008. These circulars urged local welfare offices to more actively support applications for public assistance from homeless people and temporary workers who had lost their jobs, affecting younger homeless people (Hayashi 2015). Consequently, the number of public assistance recipients rose in Osaka from 96,831 in 2003 to 152,748 in 2012 (OC 2022).

This increase resulted in the development of a housing market for public assistance recipients. In Osaka, public assistance benefits were not granted to flophouse residents, producing a market for welfare housing that tapped partly into Kamagasaki's flophouses and the surrounding housing stock of Nishinari Ward. Since flophouses were experiencing increasing vacancies, many landlords decided to give up this business and transform the buildings into welfare apartments (*fukushi jūtaku*). This was usually only a

formal change, allowing residents to register as citizens and apply for public assistance (Inada 2011). However, in some cases, the business was adapted to the needs of welfare recipients by renovating the building and providing a wide range of services. Supportive houses (*sapōtibu hausu*) became a well-received type of welfare apartment and 17 former flophouses were run as such in 2011. Their common features include staff available for counseling and livelihood support 24 hours a day, a community room that can be used freely by residents, additional help from local support groups, a physical environment suitable for older people, and the abandonment of guarantors and deposit money that is usually demanded by Japanese landlords. This also enables homeless people without financial means to transfer to a housed life (Shirahase 2014). Flophouses transformed into welfare apartments increased sharply during the 2000s, reaching about 50 percent of the 199 flophouses in 2010 (Mizuuchi & Hirakawa 2011).

Welfare apartments spread to other parts of Nishinari Ward, where many landlords reached out to the safe income promised by the business of housing public assistance recipients. Channeled through welfare offices, transitional facilities, and hospitals, many homeless people came to live in Nishinari Ward on public assistance (Mizuuchi 2007). Thus, the public assistance rate in Nishinari Ward reached 23.5 percent of all residents in 2012, far exceeding the national average of 1.7 percent. However, most types of housing for public assistance recipients were heavily criticized and termed "poverty business" (*hinkon bijinesu*), with the low quality of the living environment highlighted. This included small rooms and limited access to sanitary facilities as well as the practice of charging residents for additional services, leaving them only a small amount of disposable income (Shirahase 2014).

Because of the rapid increase in welfare recipients, Osaka City started countermeasures in 2010. The city government reduced payments of security deposits and key money covered by public assistance housing benefits, started investigating free and low-rent hostels, and provided more material help instead of cash allowances. In 2015, the housing benefit scheme under public assistance was readjusted, making in Osaka its upper limit dependent on the flat size and lowering the maximum from 42,000 to 40,000 yen. Further, in 2015, the Self-reliance Support Law for Needy People (*seikatsu konkyūsha jiritsu shienhō*) was introduced to create an additional layer of support ahead of public assistance. By providing employment support and training, it aims to encourage impoverished people to support themselves through work instead of public assistance, and homeless self-reliance support centers came under its temporary life support program (*ichiji seikatsu shien jigyō*). The legal enforcement of this support is based on the cooperation of municipal governments with social welfare legal entities and NPOs (MHLW 2015).

5. Summary

This discussion of policies for homeless people in Vienna and Osaka suggests that a comparison of welfare restructuring can provide a deeper understanding of welfare geographies in the context of

different urban welfare regimes. According to the three geographical approaches toward welfare restructuring, introduced at the beginning, the following three differences can be identified.

First, the scales of policies for homeless people differ considerably. The City of Vienna had sufficient autonomy throughout the study period to develop policies for homeless people with little impact from other scales. Attempts to influence such polices have only recently occurred at the supranational scale of the European Union, but they are mostly of an indirect nature. Next, from the late 1980s onward, the city started to collaborate with private welfare organizations, embracing them today fully. In Osaka, the national scale, especially in the form of public assistance, had a strong impact on homelessness policies. Nevertheless, some local policies were developed at the municipal and prefectural scales, such as those addressing issues concerning day laborers. With the enactment of laws for homeless and needy people as well as the strengthening of public assistance, this tradition continued. Although the development of NPOs was encouraged and their position strengthened, in Osaka they were only one partner next to more traditional organizations such as social welfare legal entities and the market.

Second, the relation of policies for homeless people to the inner city also differs strongly in both cities. In Vienna, homeless asylums were initially built in marginal areas, becoming a part of the inner city. However, with the restructuring of policies for homeless people, their spatial strategy changed, and facilities and housing units were intentionally dispersed across the city. By contrast, in Osaka, with the establishment of the Airin District, policies for homeless people were strongly concentrated in one area in which day laborers were contained. While the newly introduced policies concerned with homeless and impoverished people lack this spatial focus, their spatial pattern is partly reinforced through the market by welfare apartments and the attempt to enforce the service hub in Kamagasaki.

Finally, the spaces of care developed in two directions. In Vienna, private welfare organizations were actively integrated into new policies. This not only led to the emerging of many organizations that provide services for homeless people, but also allowed them to participate in the development of new policies on a wide scale, crucially changing the conditions that form spaces of care. In Osaka, new policies that targeted homeless people were mostly implemented through traditional partners. Further, through the expansion of the scope of public assistance, the role of private organizations was strengthened, and market mechanisms actively employed. However, the possibilities for participation in policymaking were comparatively limited.

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