

International Perspectives in Geography  
AJG Library 20

Toshio Mizuuchi  
Geerhardt Kornatowski  
Taku Fukumoto *Editors*

# Diversity of Urban Inclusivity

Perspectives Beyond Gentrification in  
Advanced City-Regions



 Springer

# **International Perspectives in Geography**

AJG Library

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Toshio Mizuuchi · Geerhardt Kornatowski ·  
Taku Fukumoto  
Editors

# Diversity of Urban Inclusivity

Perspectives Beyond Gentrification  
in Advanced City-Regions

 Springer

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*In an unfortunate turn of events, Jeroen passed away on 9 December 2020. We are all shocked and saddened by his loss. We remember Jeroen as a kind, outgoing and energetic colleague, who was very passionate about the politics and practices of social housing and who was deeply interested in the experimental efforts throughout the East Asian region. We first met Jeroen (and his charming wife Ashimi) at the International Conference on Social Housing in Taiwan (“Taiwan the 2nd World Habitat Day”) in 2011, where he contributed to the formulation of the social housing manifesto for Taiwan. His valuable insights come from his long involvement (23 years in total) in the Amsterdam Federation of Housing Associations, where he served as a policy advisor and vice director. We were very excited when he agreed to contribute to the book, and his chapter (Chap. [Housing Policy and the Role of Housing Associations: The Case of Amsterdam and Urban Renewal in the Bijlmermeer](#)) magnificently illustrates his professional perspective on Amsterdam’s housing policy and the potentiality of social*

*housing in urban planning. We will miss him  
as a good colleague, but foremost as a gentle  
friend.*

*Toshio Mizuuchi, Geerhardt Kornatowski and  
Taku Fukumoto*

# Preface

The idea for this book goes back to a 2001 research project on the then-new social phenomenon of homelessness in the East Asian city-regions of Japan and South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong.<sup>1</sup> We conducted a comparative study of the newly emerging assistance measures for exiting homelessness with a strong focus on transitory housing facilities in homeless-ridden inner-city areas. What went unnoticed during the early stages of the survey was the fact that these (what we began to call) “service hubs” were all located in flophouse areas, stigmatized low-income neighbourhoods and/or socially segregated areas. When we conducted additional surveys on the changing conditions of the Japanese service hubs in Kotobuki (Yokohama—see also Chap. [Spatial Dynamics and Strengths of Service Hubs Addressing Homelessness in Global Miami](#)), Kamagasaki (Osaka—see also Chaps. [From “Politique de la Ville” to “Renouvellement Urbain”: Paradigm Shifts of Urbanism in Plaine Saint Denis, Paris](#) and [From Confinement to Dispersion: The Changing Geographies of Homeless Policies and the Last Housing Safety Net in Tokyo](#)) and San’ya (Tokyo—see also see Chap. [From “Politique de la Ville” to “Renouvellement Urbain”: Paradigm Shifts of Urbanism in Plaine Saint Denis, Paris](#)), the participants—all with their own set of interests—came to the conclusion that we had to further explore the spatial politics of service hubs, especially in terms of shifting power relations between major stakeholders (such as service providers, local businesses, community organizations and public sector officials) and partnership approaches to welfare governance. This was around 2015.

A focus on the spatial politics of service hubs forced us to look beyond street homelessness and broaden our perspective to various kinds of disadvantaged populations, such as ethnic minorities and foreign workers, non-regular workers in unstable employment and other needy persons who rely on spatial safety nets in the city. This gave us the opportunity to explore the specific linkages between the organization

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<sup>1</sup> Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) by JSPS “Comparative Survey of Homeless and Squatters’ Problems in the Metropolitan Regions in Japan, China, and Korea”, 2001–2003, Nr. 13572039 (PI: Toshio Mizuuchi).



and the provision of care services and other sources of survival, such as the availability of informal employment opportunities and non-formal housing arrangements. These (often spatially bound) linkages—and the way they are forged, maintained and reworked—proved to be just as critical in the survival geography of the city-regions as their separate workings. And so, we were able to gain more insight into how these neighbourhoods constantly diversify their care services—whether provided by the voluntary sector, public sector, or informal sector—and create their own conditions of urban inclusivity, whether out of social innovation or resistance toward external pressures of gentrification and redevelopment. In this sense, the book is also an attempt to break away from the academic overreliance on revanchist theories and an attempt to delve deeper into the internal mechanism and politics of neighbourhood transformations. In other words, we felt the necessity to acknowledge the conspicuous resilience of and welfarist approaches to urban spatial safety nets (such as the service hubs) and consider their theoretical implication to urban studies.

In search of a conceptual roadmap (see Chap. [Introduction: Towards a Framework of Urban Inclusivity](#)), the authors initiated a study group in March 2016, kindly sponsored by Osaka City University Urban Research Plaza.<sup>2</sup> The opportunity to tie everything together and publish this book came along in early 2017, following the kind invitation by Prof. Yoshitaka Ishikawa and the Association of Japanese Geographers (AJG). We foremost would like to thank Prof. Ishikawa and Prof. Yuji Murayama for their generous support and endless patience in the publication of this book.

In preparation of this book, numerous discussions on its conceptual framework, the actual impacts of gentrification, differing political cultures of city-regions, the inherent strengths and weaknesses of service hubs and the concrete outcomes of the spatial politics have been held to flesh out the diversity of urban inclusivity. To this end, we thank all authors for their valuable contribution.

This book could not have seen the daylight without the research grants from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.<sup>3</sup> Returning to our initial research network on homelessness in East Asia, we sincerely thank Soo-Hyun Kim (South Korea), Wing Shing Tang (Hong Kong), Liling Huang and Li-Chen Cheng (Taipei)

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<sup>2</sup> The following research projects were funded: “A Comparative Study on Social Justice Issues in Inner City and Outer City Districts of World Cities in Europe and America (2016–2017)”; “Towards a Theory of the “Capacious City”: A New Approach to Gentrification (2017–2018)”; “The Spatial Formation Process of “Service Hubs” in East-Asian Advanced City-regions: A Focus on Local Housing Markets (2018–2019)”; and “From Resilience to Innovation: Urban Theories on Service Hub Neighborhood Vitalization Processes (2019–2020)”.

<sup>3</sup> Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A) “Advocating New Geographies of Homeless Assistance and Pragmatic Regeneration Efforts of the Inclusive City in East Asia” 2013–2016, Nr. 25257014 (PI: Toshio Mizuuchi); Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) “A Geographical Approach to Bottom-up Notions of ‘Human Rights’ Beyond Ethnic Boundaries between Japanese and Koreans”, 2016–2019, Nr. 16K03209 (PI: Taku Fukumoto); Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) “The Tolerant City without Exclusion: The Production of Space between Resilient Revitalization and Urban Polarization”, 2018–2020, Nr. 18H00773 (PI: Toshio Mizuuchi); Grant-in Aid for Early-career Scientists “Service Hubs in East Asian City-regions: From Self-development to Self-preservation?”, 2019–2022, Nr. 19K13444 (PI: Geerhardt Kornatowski).

and Yingfang Chen (Shanghai) for their long-lasting cooperation and compelling advice. We hoped to include at least one case study from China, but due to the political sensitivity of field research on social inequality, we unfortunately had to let it go. We do hope to include Chinese case studies in the near future. Finally, we deeply thank all the voluntary organizations, service clients, business owners and civil workers from all cities for their hospitality and support to our surveys. We are especially grateful to Yun-Sheng Yang, Hsien-Chung Chang, Wai Tung Ng and Jong Gyun Seo.

Osaka, Japan  
Fukuoka, Japan  
Nagoya, Japan  
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Taku Fukumoto

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# Introduction: Towards a Framework of Urban Inclusivity



Geerhardt Kornatowski and Toshio Mizuuchi

**Abstract** This book systematically explores the contours of urban inclusivity in advanced city-regions to initiate a cross-geographical and cross-cultural discussion of actually existing inclusionary neighbourhoods and their capacities to tackle urban inequality. The chapters of this book are organized into four parts, in accordance with the four-dimensional framework introduced in this chapter. The framework is derived from the workings of the public sector, private market, informal communities, and voluntary sector (or civil society). By focusing on how these dimensions complement and counter each other, we open up new approaches to the politics of the urban in a way that acknowledges the interlocked nature of stakeholder interests.

**Keywords** Inclusivity · Social inequality · Governance · Urban studies

## 1 Introduction

The academic fixation on the neoliberal turn in urban governance and exclusionary patterns of city-(re)making in advanced city-regions around the globe has led much of urban scholarship to adopt an overwhelmingly negative outlook on the prospect of achieving socially just and equitable cities. After all, numerous city-regions have now polarized to the degree in which the lower end finds itself nearly completely excluded from urban politics, and from urban space all together. At the same time, the widespread use of neoliberalism and gentrification as conceptual perspectives to decipher the dynamics of this polarization, often in interrelated ways, has drawn attention to the enormous rescaling of urbanization processes and the restructuring of social relations over ever-expanding city-regions (e.g., Brenner 2014; Rickards et al. 2016). Consequently, the epistemological usefulness of “the city” as a bounded

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entity (i.e., a “settlement”) has increasingly been casted into doubt, as it fails to keep up with the actual extent of social structures and uneven urbanization patterns. These structures and patterns are now thought to reach far beyond the administrative boundaries of core cities and into unventured territory. The implications of such views matter, not least because they affect the actual spatial focus of urban politics, and thus the ability to bring about effective change to the underlying structures of polarization, but also because they influence our intellectual ways of engaging with the spatial manifestation of social issues, and our ways of addressing them.

Such new topographies of urbanization have been extensively addressed by recent conceptual efforts such as “planetary urbanization” and “planetary gentrification,” both which explicitly problematize the spatial complexities in which common patterns of inequality are morphing along changes in the global urban environment (e.g., Lees et al. 2016; Shin et al. 2016). As such, their focus goes out to the capitalist (and more specifically the neoliberalist) imperative of seeking (often rapid ways of) profitable growth, in which the urban environment, more than ever, is expected to offer the source of that growth. Hence, we are now believed to be caught up in the “urban age,” in which the spectacular process of urbanization relentlessly alternates to the woes of (especially financial) globalization, and which more than ever adheres to the ultimate quest of profitable city-making.

The outcome of this global-scale pattern of urbanization has been one of reinforced as well newly produced inequalities among its residents. Not only is this manifested through the steep contrast between slums and privileged areas in developing cities (e.g., Davis 2006) but also through the advanced forms of polarization among the economically successful and the disadvantaged working classes (e.g., Sassen 1991).<sup>1</sup> In both cases, aggressive and subtle acts of dispossession against less privileged urban dwellers form the focal point in addressing new inequalities. This means that the global urban scale has become the personification of intensified class struggle, in which the less privileged are being “expelled” to the far-flung edges of the city, or even beyond (i.e., Sassen 2014). In other words, current (neoliberal) urbanization is rather a non/anti-social process marked by an extreme exclusion of the economically vulnerable and a selective inclusion of the relatively small privileged class.

The grim outlook depicted above certainly has a truth to it as polarizing trends are showcased all over the urban globe. However, this perspective is not left unchallenged. While it is generally accepted that the spatiality of social issues is susceptible to global woes, these perceptions only draw limited attention to the *plurality of interventions* that cities undertake—or facilitate—in managing their social turfs, in addition to the apparent lack of theorizations on everyday heterogeneities in urban place-making, especially in non-Western contexts (see, e.g., Robinson 2006; Simone and Pieterse 2017). In other words, not all social interventions necessarily situate in the purely capitalist contours of urbanization, nor are all interventions inspired by

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<sup>1</sup> In relation to the distinction between developing/emerging (i.e. Third World, Global South) and developed (i.e. First World, the West, advanced regions), Goldman (2011: 233) points out that within the current financialized global context, this distinction is now rather translated as “declining” (developed) and “growing” (developing) in terms of opportunities for profitable investment in urban projects.

neoliberal solutions, and nor act all urban dwellers in a resistless or powerless fashion. Yet, what does tend to get lost out of critical sight are the relatively “inessential” and “stagnant” old urban geographies that reside in the shadows of the “spectacular” (DeVerteuil 2015). These spaces often organize themselves according to alternative *spatial logics*, in which urban space manifest itself as accommodative and inclusive to various walks of life. Perhaps, this has been captured most vividly by the vast empirical explorations of neighbourhood-scale geographies, locally targeted policy interventions and voluntary sector services to vulnerable populations (see, e.g., Cloke et al. 2010; Marr 2016; Milligan 2001; DeVerteuil 2015). It is also showcased in the recent literature of place-based solidarities (e.g., Oosterlynck et al. 2020) and social economics (e.g., Murtagh 2019), both pointing to the inclusionary potential and practices witnessed throughout varieties of urban spaces.

It is especially to these spaces that this book turns to, and in particular to those that have an outspoken history in experimenting with *inclusivity*. These are neighbourhoods characterised by sets of practices that exceed unilateral dimensions of “inclusion” (as a top down process of reinserting excluded populations into conventional social structures) and that offer a variety of opportunities to the vulnerable to settle (whether in transient or permanent fashion) in urban space, without necessarily depending on forms of public (nor necessarily voluntary) assistance. The book is guided by two interrelated questions: (1) What particular urban settings promote inclusionary features in contrast to the conspicuous exclusionary mechanisms of market-led urbanization, and; (2) How do we conceptualize these features in dialogue with concurrent urban theories that continue to grapple with the structural properties of exclusionary urbanization under the auspices of the neoliberal turn and gentrification? The ultimate aim, therefore, is to (re)focus on the peculiar social processes in the “small portions of the city” (Palm 1981) and to capture the diversity of organized efforts and struggles against exclusionary forces that continue to co-shape these spaces. The rationale for adopting this approach is twofold. First, the importance of old urban centralities continues to puzzle and divide scholarly opinion, especially because of their ambivalent character in terms of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>2</sup> Much has been written on the detrimental effects of urban restructuring (i.e., gentrification) on these places, yet, less attention has been paid to their survival pathways and the various strategies of adaption based on residual forms of social infrastructure or new solidarities that these places breed. Indeed, we are often presented with the image of urban projects pushing poverty and related services out of prime urban spaces. However, many empirical (however diversified) accounts also showcase the other side of the coin: local forms of mutual aid and solidarity that take a stake at the same centrality in order to provide inclusionary services and hold on to an urban

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<sup>2</sup> With the term centrality and centralities, we refer to the geographical importance of relatively centrally located places in relation to economic opportunities and social resources such as welfare-related services. Centrality in the city is commonly augmented by high rates of accessibility (such as public infrastructure) on the hand but may also be threatened by urban projects that seek to extract untapped value from it. Commonly, these centralities are taken up by critical urban research as they make up the frontier of renewed rounds of investments under the neoliberal context of reurbanizing capital flows (i.e., predominately financially led urban projects. See, e.g., Smith 1996).



environment fit for the needs of vulnerable populations. Of course, this is not a given condition: the same places are constantly pressured to reinvent and reorganize themselves in response to external threats, such as gentrification, both in piecemeal and encompassing fashions (e.g., DeVerteuil 2015). It is these strategies, ranging from voluntary to individual to public initiatives, that require more insight in their patterns of survival and adaptation. This necessitates us to look beyond the “luxury city” (Stein 2019) and into the spaces that not quite fit into the common logic of social relations along the lines of the private market economy. As such, we need to engage with these peculiarities and explore their relation to the common logic of market-led urbanization.

Second, there is a newly emerging interest in makeover processes that emerge *from within* these spaces. Such interest focuses on the socio-spatial functions that do not merely respond to external threats but proactively change from the inside, in response to the changing conditions of local inequality, or through the acquirement of new knowledge and expertise (such as in service provision). These internal changes often amount to new *visions* on local place-making and future directions. To a certain extent, these internal changes influence the overall perception whether these places are in a situation of decay or deprivation (i.e., in need of more advanced tools of social upgrading) or, on the other hand, whether they are awash with sources of social innovation (i.e., deserving more public backing). In practice, however, local deprivation and social inclusivity are heavily intertwined with each other. More could be learned then from the potentialities that these places and their interest groups possess and how these potentialities improve the urban conditions of vulnerable populations.

Both rationales demand further empirical insights into how inequality remains connected to certain centralities and how their inclusionary properties act as a counterweight to exclusionary (re)urbanization and spatial displacement. Yet, we do need to go beyond the empirical and consider the theoretical implications of these features of urbanization. What follows is an attempt to tie together the empirical insights and identify the pathways they open for inclusionary placemaking. However, conceptualizations of real-world inclusive practices ultimately vary according to the factors of space, time, and prevalent ideologies, and therefore may be employed either haphazardly or with careful planning. This contingency in turn spurs the complexity of the diversity witnessed throughout the centralities, and it is this complex, yet spatially specific diversity that this book seeks to come to terms with.

Thus, as the pursuit of new growth opportunities through urbanization continues to fragment its reaches on ever-expanding scales (thereby exerting a continuous production of new urban theories; e.g., Brenner and Schmid 2014), our analytic endeavour focuses on the social functionality of cities in general, and old urban centralities in specific, thereby attending to the seemingly coherent yet continuously changing urban structures that continue to shape the spatial patterns of social inequality (Rickards et al. 2016). To a large extent, these traditional forms of centrality were the initial focus of urban theory (such as the Chicago School), although nowadays it is often criticised as outdated and incapable of apprehending the large-scale (and mainly neoliberal) urbanization trends as they are contended to be unfolding

on a planetary scale. In this sense, we draw attention to neighbourhood-scale places that perhaps are less conceptive to the neoliberal remaking of urban space for the various, contradictory reasons explored below.

## 2 Conceptual Framework

In order to position our approach to the “small portions of the city” in question, a synthesis of related urban theories is required. In this section, we develop a framework that dials into the specificities of social (re)configurations in a spatial context, while taking explicit notice of the implications for urban inclusivity as discussed above. Next, we may proceed to comparative perspectives and consider more broadly the similarities over multiple city contexts, albeit predominately in the context of advanced city-regions. Although the term “advanced” may not prove viable anymore to explain differences in the urbanization pathways of developing and advanced city-regions in a global context (Robinson 2006; Roy and Ong 2011), the term does resonate with a considerable embeddedness in the regulated form of market-led urbanization, and a sustained, yet maybe more complex, *tendency*<sup>3</sup> towards the (re)valorisation of urban spaces that are not fully embedded yet in the circuit of capital accumulation (and which are the object of this book).

The framework is organized over two main axes (see Fig. 1). The horizontal axis contrasts the socio-politically constructed “ideology of the collective” on the left-hand side with the “ideology of the individual” on the right-hand side. However, rather than looking at this spectrum as the ideologically extreme opposites of socialism/communism and capitalism, we frame both ends within the boundaries of capitalist society, taking notice of the two general approaches to the mode of capital accumulation. Conceptually, this refers to forms of urbanization based on public sector-led development and collective consumption (left), and forms facilitated by the “free market” (right) that is fuelled by private autonomy and individualism. This duality, however, is not absolute. Theoretical engagements with the political facets of urban space already have unpacked how “hegemonic as well as counterhegemonic dimensions of space” mediate ideology (Goonewardena 2004: 174) and how ideology also shapes space. What we need to take away from this is that both ideologies have their own institutional interest, or their own “networks of order” (De Certeau 1984: 95), whether it is rooted in distributive politics (left) or directed to the principle of self-dependency (right).

The vertical axis is divided between macro/formal (top part) and micro/informal approaches (bottom part). The macro/formal approach showcases general insights which are derived from the abstract sphere and encapsulated by the dominant theoretical perspectives that are in turn grounded in their abstractions (such as the idea

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<sup>3</sup> Here, the term “tendency” implies a possibility that capital might not follow through on its quest for (re)valorization. As some the case studies will show, injections of big capital can be offset by public measures and local practices with different agendas.

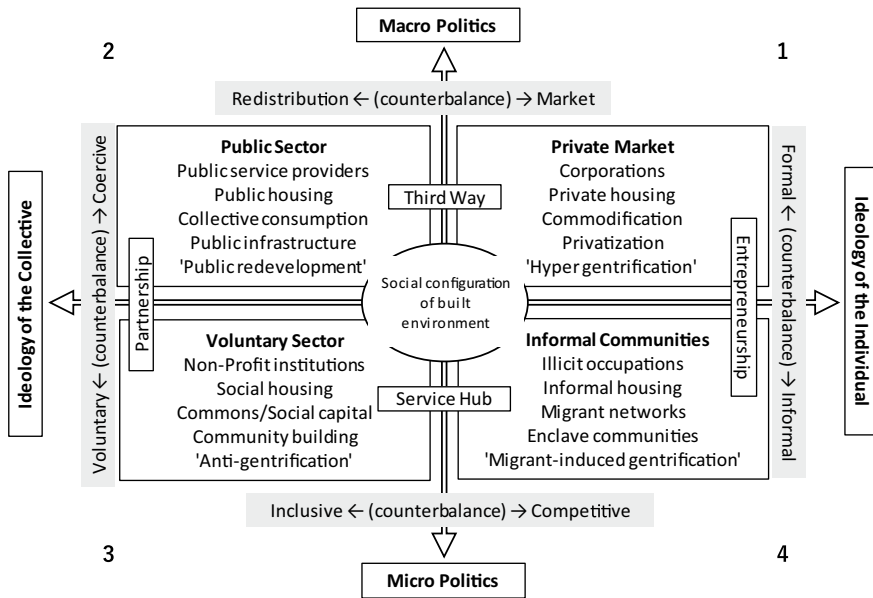


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework of socio-spatial (re)configurations in city-regions

of a pure market-economy or a homogenous public sector as analytical departure points). Because of its abstract in character, both the public sector and the private market seek to homogenize urban spaces into their formalized images. It is therefore a *structural dimension* in which concrete politics may take shape, depending on the ideological duality mentioned above. The politics are inherently connected to issues of social reproduction, and are conducive to the formulation of major policy sets, which in turn are implemented and executed through fixed institutional arrangements that often operate over multiple scales (from state to supra-state to sub-state levels). The conceptual approaches of neoliberalism and gentrification focus on the dynamics of this abstract dimension and how it impacts concrete, material places. On the other hand, the micro/informal approaches represent the smaller scale insights acquired from these material spaces, such as specific empirical case studies. It is therefore characterized by the particularities of urban life (in contrast to the generality derived from the abstract). Importantly though, while the lower part presents the rather chaotic, it can never entirely exist outside of the abstract, as the abstract exerts itself as the normative. This could be in the form of a hegemony, in which conceptual norms are accepted, or in the form of coercion when resistance occurs against the norms. And thus, while there is a distance (i.e., distinction) between the abstract (upper) and concrete (lower), this distance is maintained through the chaotic practices in place, and at the same time is always susceptible to increased governance (whether public or private) and legitimization. The extent of the distance, however, often resides in a state of flux as it is constantly negotiated between the formal (regulated) and informal (weakly regulated).

Together, both axes leave us with four distinct, yet porously bounded planes. What follows is a more detailed account on the distinctive properties of each plane. In effect, each plane serves as a filter on urban realities and provide a close-up of the primary dynamics that (co-)shape the spaces of interest. It is similar to what David Harvey calls a methodological approach of selecting “different windows from which to view the totality of capitalist activities” (2001: 79). Each window brings out certain aspects to the fore, but at the same time it excludes (as its size is always limited) other aspects that inevitably remain in the background. This limitation does not necessarily mean a disadvantage. On the contrary, it allows us to select and isolate certain processes in order to decipher their specific role in urbanization and their precise impact on place-making.

Situated in the top part and belonging to the realm of the ideology of the individual, *plane 1* approaches urban space from the logic of the private market. Its dynamics are therefore profit-motivated and individualized, mainly along the lines of financial arrangements (both in the production and consumption of urban space) (Friedmann and Wolff 1982). It is possible to narrow down this plane to the contours of neoliberalism, but we prefer to widen it up so as to cover the market economy in general so that we not get caught up in the specifics of “what is and what is not neoliberal” (Clarke 2008: 135, quoted in Storper 2016: 253).<sup>4</sup> Yet, it is important to understand that the neoliberal turn in urban studies is heavily rooted in this plane. Consequently, urban spaces and their transformations are thought to be the result of unleashed private market forces which manifest themselves in the form of gentrification, privatization, and more recently, austerity (e.g., Smith 1996; Peck 2012). These transformations are widely considered to be a determinant factor in the well-documented disruptions to everyday life on the community scale (e.g., Elliot-Cooper et al. 2020; Kern 2016). In effect, this view regards urban space as subjective to a market logic in which winner takes all, eventually leading to the displacement of those who occupy a precarious position in the market. It is these market structures—i.e., the predatory side of capital accumulation (and therefore implying the contours of this plane)—that have been serving as a lens to structural causes of the displacement and their role in the widening of inequality.

Remaining in the realm of abstraction, yet away from the ideology of individualism, *plane 2* concerns public sector-led forms of urbanization. In the Western context, this mostly accords with the Keynesian approach of a strong state that actively intervenes in urban investments. It is often related to demand-led economics, in which politics prioritize increased consumption power and favour the empowerment of working classes. In relation to urbanization, public sector-led economics involve large-scale (re)development projects, such as housing estates and various

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<sup>4</sup> The ideological resonance of private market adherence, perhaps, is best exemplified in Margaret Thatcher’s belief that “there is no such thing as society, only individual men and women.” This belief was widely propagated in her quest to defund the British state and to marketize its public functions, in what was widely considered as an aggressive enforcement of neoliberal policies. In the United States, this was echoed in the view that “social order and integration should come *exclusively* from individual responsibility, family, or religion” (Storper 2016: 249, emphasis ours).

other types of public infrastructures that can be summarized under the term “collective consumption” (e.g., Castells et al. 1991). In the East Asian context of developmentalism, massive public interventions in urbanization are more straightforward (e.g., Doucette and Park 2020). The massive public housing development estates scattered around in the megacities of Hong Kong and Singapore bear clear witness to such interventions. In summary, the public interventions are key parts of various forms of redistributive policies and have the potential to leave substantial footprints throughout the urban environment in general but also through intensive public investment policies targeted to certain deprived neighbourhoods. These, in turn, might vary from selected public works to comprehensive intervention such as slum upgrading and urban beautification projects.

Moving into the less formal and more concrete sphere of micropractices, *plane 3* is *plane 2*'s less planned and more haphazard counterpart. Constituted on personal motives of collective and unreciprocated acts of care,<sup>5</sup> the third plane locks into the specifics of urban spaces with substantially high concentrations of vulnerable populations that are often described as “service-dependent populations”. While these populations might be accommodated in the publicly developed areas (such as public housing, see *plane 2*), spaces belonging to the third plane essentially function as supplemental sources to public assistance. This supplemental role may be the result of issues with citizenship (which is crucial for inclusion into the second plane) or just plain rejection of the public sector's normative regulations. At the same time, these spaces could also be regarded as accommodative to the spillover from the arrangements of the private market.<sup>6</sup> As such, they are somewhat of a “last resort” of social resources, a *spatial safety net* for vulnerable populations (E.g., Kiener et al. 2018). The voluntary sector, including non-profit, not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005), are the main agents of the accommodative function, but we may even scale it up to the level of civil society. The voluntary sector takes a stake in the on-site provision of assistance services and actively engage in the sort of place-making that can thrive as potential and genuine sites of care and sustenance. While their motives are essentially of a non-profit nature, their actual organization can be highly diverse, such as charities and faith-based organizations. Importantly, the spaces of *plane 3* are often major sites of social advocacy, since the prevalence of inequality becomes the visual context from which social campaigning (and public awareness-making) is conducted (DeVerteuil 2015; Cloke et al. 2010). Dear and Wolch (1987) initially conceptualized these urban spaces

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<sup>5</sup> With the term “unreciprocated care” we refer to acts of caring that are of altruistic motives and not precipitated on an expectation of returned favours. They are rather unilateral and imply degrees of selflessness. As explained in the next paragraph, the motives of *plane 4* slightly differ as the acts here are rather precipitated on the idea of *mutual* solidarity.

<sup>6</sup> The term “surplus population” fits the description here well, as it implies a population that is superfluous to capital (mostly in terms of productive employability but also in terms of the inability to consume commodities. See, e.g., Tyner 2013) and for whom the availability of non-commodified essential services is vital to their sustenance.

as “service-dependent population ghettos”, with a particular focus on the organization of community-level care initiatives for institutionally marginalised populations (including the homeless, the disabled, substance abusers, and ex-offenders) in socially marginalised inner-city neighbourhoods. Later they reconceptualized these spaces according to their social functionality, namely as “service hubs” (Dear et al. 1994). By doing so, the specific spatiality to networking and cooperation strategies between the various service providers was put in the foreground. Similar urban “environments of care” have also been examined in its capability to operate across various spatial and organizational levels and challenge rigid policy frameworks (Milligan 2001). The limited presence of these areas throughout city-regions, however, comes from its “ghetto-like” character and the common unwillingness of (or excessive pressure on—see, e.g., Lyon-Callo 2004) established communities to accommodate what is commonly considered as marginal services that inevitably attract more dependent populations. In short, these spaces are rather scant because of NIMBY-ism.

Problems of stigmatization and NIMBY-ism are also frequently observed in *plane 4*. Similarly located in the realm of concrete micro-practices, the fourth plane differs from the third plane in that its spaces are largely shaped by the resourcefulness (often depicted as “survival strategies”) of its users, which is mostly predicated on the workings of the (informal) market. Yet, this resourcefulness proceeds along reciprocal lines, i.e., among “groups” and therefore sets itself apart from the advanced individualization witnessed in the social relations of plane 1. The specific urban spaces of plane 4 have often been related to the street economy—spaces with conspicuous informal activities where new arrivals to the urban often pass through (Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Saunders 2011). Rather than catering for the “service-dependent populations” of plane 3, the spaces of the fourth plane take up the slack of the formal economy, in which populations eke out their own living arrangements, i.e., independent of the structural arrangements that shape the first two planes. Because of its informal arrangement, even more than plane 3, plane 4 is often subjected to ambivalent forms of regulation on the one hand and various degrees of toleration by state structures on the other. Nevertheless, as an informal counterpart of the state and the market spaces, it always resides beyond a complete reach of governance (i.e., regulative control), however thin that margin may be. Since its spaces operate independently from the redistributive services of planes 2 and 3, a significant portion of activities is taken up by illicit occupations, which in turn cause these spaces to be generally perceived as being negative and dangerous. So one might define the fourth plane as a clandestine arrangement in which individual group networks built mutual self-help structures among its members, ideally, to get ahead and transit into (or acquire access to) the formal side of society (of planes 1 and 2). One celebrated approach that has systematically tried to conceptualize the *functionality* of these urban spaces is the “arrival city” (Saunders 2011). While this approach foremostly explores the *locus* of successful rural-to-urban transformations among migrant populations, it does so by closing in on specific urban environments that are conducive to (semi-formal) entrepreneurial practices, which may offer opportunities for social mobility down the road. This process may or may not occur smoothly and spatially depends on the degrees of intervention (such as redevelopment or slum clearances). In short, these

are the urban spaces which are highly susceptible to migratory flows in any given city-region (see also Panayi 2020).

### 3 Variegated Gentrification?

Before we continue to consider the set of relations across the four planes, we first touch upon each plane's particular relation to gentrification, as a significant part of urban studies locates this transformative process at helm of (exclusionary) patterns of (re)urbanization. For plane 1, we already saw how the private market may unleash gentrification in its quest for profit on un(der)realized land values and how this may result in the displacement of populations with insufficient consumption power. Ruth Glass's (1964) pioneering work on the issue very much focused on how the private market facilitates this process, however locally limited and piecemeal it may have progressed at the time. But with the advent of the global/neoliberal turn, subsequent scholarship has increasingly been framing the conspicuous role of gentrification as "an urban economic strategy" (Moreno 2014: 248), achieving its ultimate potential in the form of "hyper-gentrification", in which vast swaths of urban centrality are subjected to the destructively speculative practices of finance capital (e.g., Forrest et al. 2017), thereby even transforming the very conditions of urban life. This leaves vulnerable populations prone to a displacement process that relegates them out of centrality and into periphery. Here, we must also consider the ideological impact on the dimensions of economic and social life. This requires us to reflect on how "market-oriented individual subjectivity" (Storper 2016: 253) correlates with the marketization of space, and how it mirrors the foundational logic of plane 1. Smart and Lee's (2013) study on financialization and the role of real estate in Hong Kong's growth regime illustrates this point well, as they showcase the ways in which asset-driven wealth accumulation affect the cultural and social practices of everyday life. These practices became conspicuous during the 1990s when financially ambitious middle-class households *systematically* started flipping over their properties as a strategy to gain wealth in an ever-demanding housing economy. The snowball effect of these practices eventually imploded during the 1997/1998 Asian Financial Crisis. Of course, these practices can be witnessed in any advanced economy, but it is these moments of intensification in finance-led wealth accumulation that can dramatically accelerate into full-fledged gentrification. Also, Forrest and Hirayama (2015) identify a significant shift from the social promise of owning property to wielding it as a financial asset (i.e., landlordism). In the case of Singapore, Chau (2015) explores a similar phenomenon in which public housing flat owners meet their financial retirement needs through the monetisation of their property. All of this is grounded in the mental conception of property values continuing to increase over time, eventually accumulating to a form of urbanization that is purely based on property relations. It is ultimately this dynamic that propels the "widening disparities in the distribution of income, and [...] huge social upheaval" (Moreno 2014: 254).

Public investments in the urban environment largely have been about provisions through non-marketized means. These investments are commonly perceived as injections of social infrastructures with redistributive purposes, through which households with weak market positions can gain a foothold in, in our case here, housing. Plane 2 is thus about incorporating the hardware of collective consumption in the built environment, which lends it the character of the “reproductive fabric of cities” (*Ibid.*: 258). So how does this dimension get caught up in gentrification? As a result of the expansionary forces of profit-based urbanization (plane 1), a push for privatisation emerges. And indeed, numerous studies have problematised the private encroachment of public resources and identified this process as one of the critical features of neoliberalism. The pinnacle of this process is well captured by the perspective of “state-led gentrification” (see, e.g., Hochstenbach 2017; La Grange and Pretorius 2016). Yet, urban transformations facilitated by the public sector also possess specific features that may produce distinct trajectories.<sup>7</sup> Historically, public housing has been an important way to provide mass housing to certain populations. We might want to stress here that this often has gone hand in hand with the spatial structuring of cities. Again, cities like Hong Kong and Singapore are an easy example, as public housing in both cities play(ed) a crucial role in carving out new residential spaces in underdeveloped areas and to set up a mass infrastructure also shouldering economic growth. It also has redistributive function in the planned organization of residential space. Therefore, it has the potential to divert overcrowding from central areas and to connect new urban expansions to the regional economy. Spatial arrangements like “satellite towns” and “new towns” come to mind. But if once expanded urbanisation through mass housing was a prominent part of public investments, then currently we also must take heed of public sector-led *redevelopments*. These may involve the reconstruction of aged housing stocks and other sorts of regeneration-focussed projects with varying degrees of inclusiveness for different strands of the population (e.g., Goh 2001). These projects may be focused on central areas in the city, or on the periphery. Nevertheless, due to their scale, and their supposedly inclusionary character (as a public project), they each possess their own stake in centrality. Redevelopment and upgrading may enhance or reshuffle these centralities, depending on the actual project put in place.<sup>8</sup> The main factor to take in mind here is that these are top-driven style interventions (comprised of hierarchically organised administrative arrangements), which do not necessarily result in the displacement of the original residents (although land values may be affected in and around). On the contrary, public urban projects may very well enable vulnerable populations to be accommodated in an upgraded and revalorised environment. And while the actual profile of the

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<sup>7</sup> But, as Castells (1979) points out, the socially reproductive capacities of public urbanization ultimately must be in function of capital accumulation. Public housing, in this sense, has served to keep housing affordable to a (relatively) low-wage population, which in turn is a subsidy to capital as it keeps the cost of labor down (see also Castells et al. 1991).

<sup>8</sup> This may vary from changes in rent, in connection with changes in flat sizes, new amenities, extended or improved public infrastructure etc. (see Goh 2001 on the discourses and effects of upgrading to Singapore’s public housing under the globalizing conditions of the 1990s).



residents may change over time and space, we must keep in mind that these projects have a *potential* to uplift vulnerable populations in the housing environment.

The relation of spatial micropractices to gentrification becomes more hazy once we enter the dimensions of plane 3 and 4. Here, we encounter socio-spatial mechanisms that exceed the limitations of citizenship, allow for unsanctioned and informal place-making, and (importantly) seem to have a propensity to resist the spatial pressures of marketization. However, perspectives on contemporary transformations in these urban spaces have been diverse and less clear-cut. Much attention has gone out to gentrification pressures *à la* plane 1, but recent urban scholarship is tentatively exploring non-exclusionary forms of urban transformations. Among these, one perspective that serves of reference here is that of “incomplete forms/structures of concurrent urbanisation”.<sup>9</sup> The “incompleteness” part refers to a situation that differs from the formal, planned and regulated purview of the first two planes. And it is exactly this condition, which leans closer to the chaotic and unruly (e.g., Smart 2001) that opens up possibilities for inclusivity *in conjunction with* its own (less planned) arrangements in the built environment. Again, the terminology of these peculiar arrangements varies, but the terms urban slum or ghetto are often invoked. Other perspectives of reference include “de-urbanized spaces”, “interrupted urbanization” and “left-over spaces,” in which practices of “clandestine urbanization” become prevalent (whether overtly or covertly) (Kamel 2016; see also Evans 2020). As such, practices of informality become embedded in certain parts of the urban fabric, mostly in isolated and segregated fashion. These features shape the “incompleteness” in the urban fabric and are characterised by *communal aspects* that reside outside formal market relations.<sup>10</sup>

Bottom-up practices of inclusivity take place in the incomplete spaces of the urban fabric, but in direct relation to the built environment. On the surface, these may share the face of gentrification, but further exploration often points to different mechanisms. Let us first look at the third plane, in which the voluntary sector functions as the prime actor of place-making. DeVerteuil’s (2015) study on the resilience of this sector showcases the potential of service hubs to excel as bulwarks against gentrification, through various strategies such as property ownership, fundraising and the acquirement of public funding. But this capacity is not limited to the protective dynamics of resilience. Kiener et al.’s (2018) account on private welfare housing for public assistance recipients illustrate how bottom-up private investments in service-focused housing can incrementally improve the built environment of disadvantaged inner-city neighbourhoods, as part of service hub economics. These service practices can even substitute for a lacking public sector in social housing projects (e.g. Mizuuchi and Jeon 2010). Yet, the scale of these changes tends to remain small and piecemeal, and lack the expansionary drive of traditional gentrification.

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<sup>9</sup> Concurrent urbanization may include a variety of current neoliberalist urban planning (e.g., DeVerteuil 2015), developmentalist approaches to urbanization (e.g., Kornatowski 2019) and value creation in newly urbanizing areas (e.g., Ren 2020).

<sup>10</sup> In relation to our framework, we can define the spaces of incomplete urbanization as those that are not in accordance to the regulatory arrangements of plane 1 and 2.

The same piecemeal transformations are noticeable in the migrant spaces of plane 4. Saunders (2011: 321) describes these transformations as a “self-renewing process” that perspires over a series of (immigrant arrival) waves and argues to look beyond this process as a mere manifestation of gentrification. Based on an investigation of commercial migrant spaces around European main train stations, Özkan (2015) also takes up the issue of urban revitalization, in which migrants “gentrify” their own spaces but in different fashion than that of exclusionary gentrification. And thus, recent research also highlights other dynamics that does not escalate into the engulfing marketization processes of plane 1. Yet, as Saunders (2011) showcases, these bottom-up changes may eventually build up to the point of first plane-level marketization, as the neighbourhoods in question have the potential to become new frontiers of urban trendiness. Still, the exclusionary impacts of such change, while not always completely absent, are not as straightforward and might be even circumvented. Others have examined the particular market values in the land and how they co-develop in an “unruly” fashion (Ren 2020). Entrepreneurship satisfies a crucial role to manipulate these values into the self-dependency of these spaces. In addition to acting as easy-accessible entry points for employment, the ownership of land and buildings (ranging from shops and offices to dwellings) strengthens the (inclusionary) foothold of these marginal stakeholders (see, e.g., Fukumoto 2013; Min 2008).

In summary, we could argue for an approach that goes deeper into bottom-up communal arrangements and that includes a perspective of how “belonging” (Evans 2020) is obtained and sustained through everyday practices in the built environments of planes 3 and 4. The embedded communal practices do not merely hold on to what is remaining but may also upgrade (i.e., “revitalize”, “regenerate”) its spatial resources along inclusionary lines, albeit inevitably implying the increase of land values. Yet, it is the local uses of these values that set them apart from the marketized practices of gentrification and these can open up non-exclusionary possibilities for urban upgrading.

## **4 On Contradictions, Interconnectivity, and Coherence of Urban Space**

The four planes of our conceptual framework reside in constant tension with each other yet in a fundamentally interconnected manner. Taken in its totality, each plane adds a specific logic to the coherence of urban space. Tensions and contradictions in social spaces have been of interest to prominent critical thinkers, such as, among

others, Henri Lefebvre<sup>11</sup> and Jane Jacobs.<sup>12</sup> They were deeply concerned with how various “forces” impact strands of daily life, regardless of whether they are instituted through policy or not. These forces are often described as “social forces”. The term “social force” is of a highly abstract order but is often invoked to refer to constitutive influences beyond any control at the mere individual level. Therefore, social forces constrain agency and affect the basic foundation of lived experiences under a certain societal order (Eagleton 1991). The four planes are specific types of social forces that can (re)shape urban space, and which are the focal point of the book. In order to stress their contradictory, yet at the same time interconnective character, we will use the term “counterforces”. In regard to its contradictory character, David Harvey has discussed “contradictions” (and “tensions”) while highlighting the effect of *seemingly* opposite forces (i.e., counterforces) that are “simultaneously present within a particular situation, an entity, a process or an event (2014: 1)”. Instead of regarding these forces as absolutely at odds which each other, he considers them manageable as they can be “internalised” through various arrangements (*Ibid*: 2). But internalisation does not solve the actual contradictions, it just hides them in the background causing them to go unnoticed most of the time. As for the complementary part, it situates the four planes as *integral parts* to each other, meaning that to a certain extent they are interconnected as much as co-constitutive (such as the third plane serving as an additional safety net to the second plane). Our framework therefore aims to capture and articulate the main contradictions posed by each of the planes, but in a way that takes notice of the internalization, i.e., the particular *balance and distribution* of power interests that are tied to each counterforce. This way, we can proceed to unveil their respective shaping powers on urban space.

Having outlined its specific contours, the conceptual framework can now serve as *departure points* into various urban perspectives (and the confluence of their theories) and the particular sets of social relations they focus on. Coherences unfold through the overlapping of, or even intrusion by, each of the four planes. For example, consider how private market-led practices have overtaken previous state-led arrangements through privatization, commodification, the professionalization of social work, etc., thereby undermining the respective mechanism of redistribution (planes 1 and 2). Consider also how these tendencies may be countered by grassroots service providers and other so-called “marginal” agents in order to secure access to urban spaces in non-commodified ways (planes 3 and 1). City regions in the Global South—which are not the explicit focus of this book—may be characterized by large informal settlements that operate through local structures of self-help. Yet, these structures may be subjected to change as these they are increasingly subsumed in the global economy and their spaces of marketization (planes 4 and 1). Overlapping arrangements, on the other hand, are noticeable through cooperative endeavours, such as inner-city spaces

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<sup>11</sup> “Ideologues have tried to eliminate dialectical thought and the analysis of contradictions in favor of logical thought—that is, the identification of coherence and nothing but coherence” (Lefebvre 2003: 14).

<sup>12</sup> “Intricate minglings of different uses in cities are not a form of chaos. On the contrary, they represent a complex and highly developed form of order. Everything in this book so far has been directed toward showing how this complex order of mingled uses work” (Jacobs 1961: 222).

which function as the spatial backdrop of voluntary organizations and semi-formal housing accessed through mutual self-help channels (planes 3 and 4). Social enterprises providing welfare services with a profit motive perform a bridging function between planes 1 and 3. Lastly, there are also ideological reformulations that reform urban politics. The “third way,” of the early 1990s represented a clear shift to the centre from rightist and leftist politics, to strike a new balance between the state (plane 2) and market (plane 1).

Cutting through the fleeting contradictions and coherences, our framework not merely seeks to identify theoretical situatedness, but also consider the political implications of the “small practices and tissue of millennial daily life and governmentality” (Storper 2016: 251) in dialogue with the socio-spatial features of each plane.<sup>13</sup> Popular notions like resilience, social justice, and even the social meanings attached to important urban resources, such as housing, employment, social services, etc. are filled in differently according to the logic of each plane. Our interest lies in investigating how these elements are spatially translated and governed in relation to urban inclusivity.

Having established our conceptual framework, we promote a *systematic* approach beyond singular perspectives on spatial change. And while certain truths may be more conspicuous than others (as illustrated by the separate accounts of each plane), we seek to explore them in terms of counteracting power balances within the context of capitalist urbanization in general and place-making in particular.

## 5 The Structure of this Book

The chapters of this book are organized into four parts, which in turn are structured around the planes of our framework. And while the chapters are not strictly limited to just one of the planes, they each touch on the planes’ specifics and constitutive capacities for place-making and place-(re)structuring. Our initial idea was to organize the chapters according to their geographical context, mainly arranging them according to the major welfare regimes (i.e., plane 2) that are prevalent in their respective continents. It would have been loosely divided into a theoretical part, followed by cases of the West, East Asia, and Japan (as a more developed welfare state in comparison to other East-Asian states). While such an approach does lend to us valuable insights on inclusionary practices of regional geographies, it soon became clear that it was more beneficial and intellectually challenging to compare similarities across geographical boundaries. After all, this is a book on the socio-spatial functions of urban inclusivity, and how neighbourhoods combat urban inequality in the face of competitive imperatives of global capitalist growth. There is much to learn from these similarities and how they operate in different welfare regimes. As such, another objective of this book is to initiate a cross-geographical and cross-cultural discussion of actually existing

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<sup>13</sup> “Spatial practices [...] secretly structure the determining conditions of social life” (De Certeau 1984: 96).

inclusionary spaces in developed city-regions and their capacities to tackle urban inequality. Yet, by examining their capacities, it is also necessary to address their respective frailties and to identify the conditions that are crucial to their sustained operation.

Part I, titled “Gentrification and Adversarial Inner-City Neighbourhoods,” begins by examining common forms of restructuring, popularly conceptualized as gentrification. Its objective is to apply context-dependent interpretations in order to obtain insights into local mutations, focusing especially on the implications for inclusive neighbourhoods and how “counterweight” initiatives are conceptualized. In Chap. 2, **Taku Sugano** discusses why the concept of gentrification is rather an awkward fit in relation to the Japanese context. He offers a meticulous overview of how tenancy rights in Japan have historically functioned as a barrier to aggressive class reconfigurations of urban space. His objective is not necessarily to deny the existence of class-based restructuring in Japan, but rather to argue that deeper insights are available by thinking of this history in terms of cultural struggle over urban symbols. He argues that this is an important reason why gentrification has not become a vast public concern in Japan in the same way it has in other areas of the global North. On a macro scale, despite the gradual weakening of legal protections at the hands of policy-backed financialized real estate interests to meet global standards, current Japanese urban conditions, such as population decline, aging, and the steady increase of vacant housing, continue to pose barriers to profitable opportunities for capital accumulation through speculative practices. Far from pushing poverty out of the urban centres, the use of housing has been diversifying to accommodate a wide variety of transient users, such as tourists (e.g., Airbnb), and specialized housing for welfare recipients (especially elderly singletons). How this translates into the intra-urban scale is taken up in the following chapters.

In Chap. 3, **Meriç Kirmızı** focuses on the recent transformation of the Horie neighbourhood in the historic city centre of Osaka. By using a framework of different patterns of gentrification found in the global North, South, and Japan, the chapter expands on the conspicuous absence of uncompensated displacement in Japanese cities, similar to the previous chapter’s approach of examining legislative networks. Approached from the Japanese concept of re-urbanization, Kirmızı scrutinizes the thickening of the area through capital-led projects of construction and consumption—what is sometimes referred to as “condominiumisation”—in relation to its commercial shopping streets conspicuously targeted by Tokyo-based retail companies. While the area attracts a rather diverse population, the profit-led spatial reconfiguration negatively impacts the social relation between long-term versus new residents, and homeowners versus renting residents. To this end, she proposes a “neighbourhood commons” that can counterbalance these tensions in favour of a more collective organization of the area.

Chapters 4 and 5 redirect our attention to inner-city neighbourhoods, focusing on the birth and death process of their inclusionary properties. First, **Deok Young Lim** discusses the substandard housing of Seoul’s *jjokbang* areas. These areas, located near the old urban centres, are stuck in a contradictory spatial trajectory between poverty relief and urban regeneration. Historically marginal in comparison to Seoul’s

former large squatter areas, their existence and socio-spatial potential became manifest after the Korean urban homelessness crisis of the late 1990s. The *jjokbang* served as daily rent accommodations for the urban poor, but its residents were subjected to the precarious state of street sleeping, posing an unprecedented challenge to public welfare. This new social condition of a (formerly hidden) urban underclass being relegated into homelessness was in fact increasingly becoming a common phenomenon in East Asia's advanced city-regions. This was countered through an alliance between the voluntary, corporate, and public sectors, which assembled unique community resources in the late 2000s with the objective of creating a residential safety net, based around and robust social capital. Yet, recent redevelopment projects have been targeting these areas for urban regeneration and commercial transformation. How their social function can survive within these conditions will depend on the goodwill of the public sector and the political leverage exerted by supportive movements (a question addressed more explicitly in Part II).

In Chap. 5, **Magda Bolzoni** analyses how Turin's (Italy) inner-city became the victim of its own success and transformed from a socially mixed but economically depressed area into a trendy nightlife quarter. Framed in terms of commercial gentrification, the cultural symbolism mentioned in Chap. 2 is further elaborated upon in this chapter in order to illustrate how the spatiality of upscaled consumption affects the regeneration process of a neighbourhood that once functioned as a landing zone for immigrants. The chapter outlines how, along with commercial deregulation measures by the city government, social and cultural interventions on part of civil society and local NGOs eventually sparked a positive revaluation of this neighbourhood. This cultural reshaping plays a crucial role in how residents perceive the recent transformation into the contemporary rhythms of night commerce. Yet, there is no remarked remaking of class structures through residential property upgrading, although long-term residents are feeling out of touch with the studentification process that is taking hold.

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Part II focuses on the spatial politics and inclusionary properties of "service hubs." These neighbourhoods fulfil a crucial role in absorbing vulnerable populations, but in a more haphazard manner than state-led social arrangements. Within the global restructuring of urban space, these neighbourhoods are exposed to increasing threats of relocation (along with the in-site housing options of its service users) yet exhibit advanced levels of ingenuity to withstand and adapt to these threats. As such, they remain at the forefront of battling urban inequality and providing care services. In Chap. 6, **Geoffrey DeVerteuil** focuses on the resilient strategies exerted by the voluntary sector to stay put in their respective inner-city service hubs amidst encroaching waves of gentrification. The content of these strategies depends on the local context of public welfare spending and degrees of gentrification; yet the sector is proactive in securing centrality in response to the limited mobility of its service users (in this case the homeless). Therefore, they constantly must mediate their position; yet, the (re)inventive capacities of the voluntary sector, framed as "resilience," do show an

ability to hold onto competitive spaces, albeit to varying degrees. However, the ability to hold on does not necessarily translate in an ability to adjust to and accompany the changing geographies of poverty and gentrification, thereby preventing services to move beyond their respective service hubs.

In Chap. 7, **Matthew Marr, Rebecca Young, Jacquelyn Johnston and Karen Mahar** examine the spatial dynamics of Miami's service hubs through the analysis of users' experiences. Echoing the market-like professionalization and industrialization of homeless assistance in US cities, the private sector is accommodating homeless households in "campuses" built to provide housing together with supportive services. These campuses operate like service hubs, though on less elaborate scales and with fewer third-party network ties. They are also not necessarily confined to the centrally occupied by the racially segregated inner-city service hubs, such as the greater Downtown Area. The outlying campuses do have their advantages, such as relatively safe and secure environments, yet lack mobility opportunities that could assist the users' journey out of homelessness. In contrast, the pragmatic benefits of segregation in a poor, yet centrally located hub stand out, although the hub's centrality requires far more state-sponsored resources to bolster its capacities against an aggressively financializing real estate market.

The overt prioritization of welfare recipients and the resulting tendency of excessive professionalization of service hub-related welfare services form the main topic of Chap. 8. Here, **Kahoruko Yamamoto** raises concern over the exclusionary properties of Yokohama's service hub, at the expense of those who do not receive social welfare benefits. As one of Japan's four major *yoseba* (see Part IV), it historically served as an underclass community for day labourers but nowadays has evolved into a welfare town for predominately aging, needy singles. Yamamoto scrutinizes the institutional response from public authorities in relation to vocational training centres for the homeless and the conversion of day-labour lodging facilities into accommodation predominately for social welfare recipients. With the voluntary sector in partnership with the public service sector moving to the forefront of welfare delivery at the expense of advocacy groups, homeless individuals who do not fit into either category of worker of welfare recipient may feel less welcome now in this area. This trend is now being reinforced through a top-down urban revitalization project and private investments in commercial hostels.

The experiences of the homeless are taken up by **Constance Ching** in Chap. 9. Although not explicitly dealing with service hub neighbourhoods, Ching's detailed accounts of two homeless individuals in Hong Kong explore how their agency impacts urban space when securing sleeping spaces, which are usually within the reach of service hubs (such as outreaching routes). Personal resistance to becoming long-term service users and a strong will for self-dependence lead some of the homeless to opt for alternative ways of life within the unforgiving context of Hong Kong's ever accelerating housing affordability crisis. With the help of the organizing capacities of the voluntary sector, the most disadvantaged among them proactively push back against market-induced displacements and become "resilient" actors within the incomplete "portions" of Hong Kong's ultra-dense urban space. While these survival practices are often framed in public opinion as a form of transgression, these individual spaces

also represent the tolerant responses of homeless support organizations (i.e., social workers).

Also situated in the East Asian context, **Geerhardt Kornatowski** (Chap. 10) focuses on the voluntary care services for migrant workers in Singapore. He examines the political background of service provision in two ethnic neighbourhoods that serve as service hubs. In the process, he clarifies the importance of their centrality in the context of a highly regulated migrant worker regime that spatially separates migrant workers' living and working spaces from Singapore's mainstream society. In reaction to the rigid migrant worker regime, voluntary organizations operate in the interstices where governmental recourse channels fail to deliver services. These interstices stand in stark contrast to Singapore's highly regulated built environment but are crucial for service provision and advocacy. However, while the physical presence of the service hubs is not challenged in a direct way (unlike the spaces of advocacy) the government has been setting up a "non-governmental" organization to divert grievances to a less political and more controlled environment. However, Kornatowski points out that the voluntary services in connection to informal housing resources has been vital to the development of both service hubs.

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Part III delves further into the complexity of inner-city neighbourhoods; however, the perspective shifts to how the spatial capacities of self-dependent forms of urban inclusivity have consolidated over time. Chapters 11 and 12 both provide an historical background to the arrested development of social and residential mobility of ethnic communities after the process of globalization in the 1980s. Both chapters also consider the implications both types of mobility may hold for future waves of gentrification. First, through a discussion of Ernest Burgess's urban ecology model, and specifically its concept of inner-city "zones of transition," **Christian Kesteloot** provides a spatial account of foreign migration to Brussels and the historical transformation of what was intended to be a transitional inner-city zone. Focusing on its vibrant informal economic networks, he examines the local elements of the consolidation process, both in terms of structural neglect of public policy and thriving ethnic trade networks between African and Europe. Kesteloot argues that going forward a key determinant for local change will not only be local government's commitment to upgrading the built environment, but also the opportunity for the migrant communities to capture shares of the existing rent gaps. Such reciprocal politics serve a crucial function in the socio-spatial consolidation of what was intended to be a competitive zone of transition. Echoing the themes of bottom-up gentrification and ethnic segregation, **Taku Fukumoto** examines the historical background of the comparatively less buoyant Korean immigrant (*zainichi*) communities in Osaka. Beginning with the historical institutional neglect of these segregated neighbourhoods, he details the emergence of ethnic economies and self-dependent networks in the face of labour and housing discrimination. One crucial factor he examines is the peculiar purchase practices of tenement apartments (referred to as "emergency buying" in Chap. 12), a self-dependent strategy that contributed to the consolidated character of the area



in terms of lessened residential mobility and vital concentration of ethnic enterprises. However, status-quo was undermined by global economic restructuring, which resulted in unfavourable conditions for an aging community and growing property vacancies following population decline (these conditions were also witnessed in Osaka's other inner-city areas). The Korea Town Initiative began in the late 1990s as a community-led effort for revitalization; yet it remains to be seen whether it ultimately will result in a bottom-up form of gentrification or residualisation.

**Kuniko Ishikawa**, in Chap. 13, traces the recent transformation of a historically disadvantaged neighbourhood in south central Kyoto. Harboring both a *buraku* (Japan's former social outcasts) and *zainichi* (Korean residents) community, the neighborhood has somewhat evolved unevenly as a result of various public policies and community initiatives. As the neighbourhood now stands a turning point, Ishikawa advocates for a more balanced strategy of merging school districts in a collective effort of neighbourhood revitalization. New uses to the community's large public housing estates, which have been keeping gentrification at bay, would play a central function in countering the aging and depopulation issue (as identified by Fukumoto in the previous chapter). In doing so, she hopes issues such as those identified by Fukumoto in the previous chapter (aging and depopulation) can be addressed.

In Chap. 14, **Takuma Matsuo** investigates the topic of diversity. Through a tentative exploration of inclusivity in an inner-city area in London, he probes the area's historical context and the role of its mixed-use built environment, which has long accepted socially disadvantaged populations and ethnic (predominantly Caribbean) communities. As an extension of the area's inclusionary features, Matsuo highlights the role of two charity organizations in resisting gentrification. Similar to the other chapters, Matsuo connects the historical developments of place-bound migration, housing, and reciprocal networks to the current manifestation of social diversity in a highly mixed-use inner-city space.

\* \* \*

Part IV focuses on governmental interventions and local partnerships with community organizations in deprived, yet inclusionary neighbourhoods. The chapters offer empirical insights on the diversity of collective consumption in close partnership with the voluntary sector. Here we expand our spatial focus to include the more planned, yet socially unstable suburban neighbourhoods.

**Jeroen Van der Veer and Geerhardt Kornatowski**, in Chap. 15, discuss the role of housing corporations in Amsterdam's new town renewal projects. The Netherlands's social housing sector has been playing a vital role in offsetting inequality and its wide accessibility to various social classes has contributed to the Amsterdam's image as an "undivided city". Following regime changes in the 1990s, however, local housing policy has taken on a different character, which in turn has influenced the housing approach in the renewal projects of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. A crucial factor in preventing displacement has been the availability of national housing

allowance, housing priority for urban renewal candidates, and financial compensation for residents who had to move. The fact that more than half of the housing stock is still owned by housing associations also added to the overall success of the project. This is not to disregard the relatively low socio-economic positions of most residents, yet housing associations continue to fulfill a crucial role in securing housing for low-income groups.

In Chap. 16, **Natsuki Kawaguchi** examines the political background of urban policy on the Paris *banlieue* neighbourhoods. She clarifies how Paris has resorted to concepts of urbanism rather than explicit social policy to deal with socially disadvantaged suburbs. Paris's poverty problem has long been perceived as a failure of urban policy, which explains why social issues were addressed under the banner of "urban politics (*politique de la ville*).” Over time, the focus of policy shifted toward an entrepreneurial approach that failed to reach the local labour market and ultimately displaced the communities there. In reaction to these orthodox forms of urbanism, local initiatives have emerged in order to resolve the periphery-urban deadlock. Although still in an experimental phase, Kawaguchi argues that these new initiatives have a potential for equality of input between local residents, architects and urban planners, and public administration.

Focusing on Tokyo's landscape of urban poverty, **Toshio Mizuuchi and Tohru Nakayama** (Chap. 17) explore how official poverty measures have shaped the most recent housing safety net for needy persons in Japan's largest city-region. Originally limited to what Yamamoto (Chap. 8) called the "underclass communities" of the *yoseba*, they track the evolution of Tokyo's social policy for the most precarious populations, such as the homeless. The most significant shift in policy was a reform from the mere provision of welfare to the provision of transitory housing facilities and supportive housing. Moreover, this move has been important for the re-use of depopulated housing in inner-city neighbourhoods. A legislative framework has been set in use to streamline funding for voluntary sector. The resulting expansion of both public and professionalized voluntary sector resources has resulted in relief measures with a dispersed character. This, however, has had the effect of making poverty less visible. Mizuuchi and Nakayama conclude by discussing the theoretical implications of Tokyo's relief model, from which they argue for an urban theory that incorporates elements of inclusivity based on the actual geographies of social policy.

As a counterpoint to the Tokyo case, Chap. 18 by **Johannes Kiener** provides a historical account of policies concerned with housing issues in Osaka's inner city by focusing on concentrated public interventions in two distinct neighbourhoods. In doing so, he clarifies how these policy interventions gradually shifted in favour of solutions offered by private market and civil society organizations like NPOs and welfare corporations. He argues that the changing importance of the public sector in place-making processes is evident in the case of Osaka City's social governance, and reflected in a dynamic welfare housing market. However, this is not merely an effort to boost competitive entrepreneurship in order to provide assistance services to the high number of public assistance recipients, but also an attempt to retain the neighbourhoods' function as service hubs amidst changing land processes.

Finally, maintaining the focus on the historically deprived inner-city context of East Asian city-regions, **Kojiro Sho** explores the housing-based welfare initiatives for the formerly homeless in the Longshan Temple Area of Taipei City (Chap. 19). He begins by examining Taipei's housing policy in order to evaluate the assistance services of a local homeless support organization and the role of public social workers. Being the first municipality in Taiwan to institutionally formulate homeless policy, Taipei City used a supra-departmental strategy of pooling resources with a particular focus on rent subsidies. The use of low-rent apartments was promoted as a measure to help the homeless find affordable housing. With housing as the central focus of the relief of homelessness, the Longshan Temple area has served as an important provider of affordable, if also informal, rental apartments. However, it continues to be heavily stigmatized as a place of chronic poverty. In order to overcome this stigmatization, Sho's account of the support organization dials in the potential of community-based business projects, in which the ex-homeless are offered jobs to obtain a self-reliant income, as an essential part of housing-based welfare.

\* \* \*

In the final chapter (Chap. 20), the editors summarize the overarching findings and insights of all the chapters in accordance to the book's conceptual framework.

## 6 Prospects

The above chapters illustrate the diverse tactics and ideological approaches taken by or imposed upon deprived yet inclusionary neighbourhoods in the context of the four planes of our framework (Fig. 1). Perhaps the key upshot of these case studies is that *within* the capitalist mode of urbanization, each plane has the propensity to act as a social force, and the constant counterbalancing between these forces produce a certain outcome, i.e., *a spatial logic*, in the specific spatial backdrop that they are operating in. In other words, as the perpetual pressure of expansionary growth and the advanced marketization of social relations in accordance to the requirements of our economic regime appear irrevocable (as planetary-scale conceptualizations on the urban often so stress), the place- (and time-) based micropractices, bundled up as a counterforce, do provide openings for manoeuvring in ways that are not necessarily bound to the hegemony of growth and competition. It is in this sense that we want to look beyond the fixation on neoliberalism and gentrification as something "rampant and exhaustive" (Atkinson and Bridge 2005) and turn the spotlight to other approaches to and practices in place, but without romanticizing them. Indeed, micropractices have their own flaws and often depend on non-standard resources.

Urban theory has long tried to conceptualize the city as a specific entity under certain structural conditions (e.g., the neoliberal city, the capitalist city, the inclusive city, etc.). While we realize we are still in an initial phase with our conceptual project (and therefore still lacking sufficient robustness in some areas), the chapters of this

book seek to illustrate how prevalent counterforces ultimately operate in enmeshed ways, in connection to a continuous rebalancing of power relations. Understood this way, perhaps we can open up new approaches to the politics of the urban, thereby cutting across the heterogeneities set out in our framework, from which we can contribute to a political consciousness that is not averse to the interlocked nature of stakeholder interests. This is similar to what Goonewardana concluded on his account of how urban space is inevitably political: “For an adequate conception of that totality is one essential precondition for the emergence of a collective agency capable of transforming it (2004: 174)”. Ultimately, this would include the importance of centralities and the different (counter)forces that have a stake at these spaces. We hope the book is read in this way.

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# **Gentrification and Adversarial Inner-City Neighbourhoods**

# Gentrification Not as a “Dirty Word”: a Brief History of Recent Residential Rights in Tokyo, Japan



Taku Sugano

**Abstract** This paper discusses why “gentrification as a dirty word” is irrelevant in Japan. It can be proven that the system of protecting the rights of tenants who could not afford their own homes continues even today. This system was established at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Japanese society was in a state of immature capitalism, with limited surplus capital, and housing finance for general citizens was not well developed. At the same time, it demonstrates the difficulty of comparing visible spatial events while ignoring the systems of various countries and the styles of spatial fixing caused by the diversity of capitalism. In addition, the direction of tenants’ residential rights and whether the system changed into one where residents’ rights were weakened is unclear because of the financial big bang that targeted the globalization of the financial markets of Japan at the end of the twentieth century along with the development of the securitized real estate investment market.

**Keywords** Gentrification · Japan · Residential rights · Securitization · Spatial fix

## 1 The Saying “Gentrification as a Dirty Word” is Irrelevant in Japan

This paper discusses the reason why “gentrification as a dirty word” is irrelevant in Japan. As typified by Smith (1996), there exists diverse literature that discusses “gentrification as a dirty word” with the intent to criticize greedy capitalism causes rent increases, evictions, and segregation of classes and races along with urban redevelopment (Hartman 1984; Newman and Wyly 2006). However, few studies discuss “gentrification as a dirty word” in Japan. For example, Fujitsuka (2005) discusses gentrification of the Japanese inner city using Kyoto as a case study, where the land of old houses and small businesses are used as high-rise apartment housing. Even if

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it is accepted that the areas of gentrification in the US and Europe resemble many aspects of Japanese gentrification, it is not certain that the truth of rent increases or expulsions is being investigated. Lützel (2008) discussed that the changes in social composition in central Tokyo result from the redevelopment of unused land (brown-field land) and of the land for a newly developed waterfront. Furthermore, he asserted that this case should not be considered a “revanchist city” that Smith (1996) argued but instead should be considered a “new-build gentrification” as Davidson and Lees (2005) argued. In addition, Haraguchi (2016) analyzed the transformation of the inner city of Osaka, which was organized as a space where low-class workers such as day laborers gathered, and stated that the process of erasing traces of such areas and transforming it into a space for the middle class and tourists is not accompanied by compulsory eviction from the area. Instead, some institutions have changed, and concurrently, it is illustrated as a cultural struggle transforming the meaning of the symbol. The poor fit of “gentrification as a dirty word” in Japan is also relevant in the argument of Mizuuchi (2014), who mentions that the gentrification is not appropriate as a framework to analyze the transformation of Osaka’s inner city. Rather, many dirty words such as eviction and expulsion refer to the problems of excluding the homeless from public spaces including parks (Nagahashi and Dohi 1996; Haraguchi 2008) and are not related to residential rights of people living in houses.

Why is “gentrification as a dirty word,” which tends to be associated with eviction from houses and communities, irrelevant in Japan? We assert that the system of protecting the tenants’ residential rights in Japan is powerful, in comparison with other advanced countries. The present study argues the above by focusing on the history of the rights protection system of residents in Japan, particularly for tenants, and the changes in living spaces in urban societies that developed with the maturation of capitalism and the spatial fixing of capital.

This paper, similar to recent institutional economics like North (1990), Bowles (2004), and Greif (2006), defines the institutions, such as protection system of residential rights, as the systems including the unique business practices which represent what Japanese consider to be the rules of society in addition to clearly defined laws and systems. In addition, when residing in a building in Japan, as both the land and building have ownership and leasing rights, there are three basic forms of residency: (a) residence based on ownership (possessing land/building), (b) residence based on land leasehold (leasing/building owned), and (c) residence based on the right of lease. This paper focuses on tenants with a residency status of (b) or (c). The laws covered in this chapter are detailed on the website of the National Diet Library, Japan (Nihon Hourei Sakuin [Japanese Law Index] <https://hourei.ndl.go.jp/>).

## **2 Tenant Protection Brought About by the Lack of Surplus Capital—The Beginning of the 20th Century, and Following the Defeat in WWII**

With the Meiji Restoration in 1867, private land ownership was recognized for the first time and modern land possession ushered in Japan. Subsequently, registration laws were established in 1886. Learning from the French Civil Code, civil laws were enacted in 1896 and 1898. At that time, land and building registers were required to be maintained as individual booklets and the separation of land and buildings was handed over to civil law. As a result, ownership rights, land leasing rights, and the right to lease were established in the modern pattern of Japanese residency rights, which persist to the present.

In 1909, the “Building Protection Act” was enacted to stabilize tenants’ residential rights. If a building stood on leased land, the purchase of land could be opposed even without the registration of land leasing rights (Kasuya 2007). In 1921, the “Land Lease Law” was enacted, establishing the system that enhanced the protection of land renters’ rights, such as significantly extending the lease period to 60 years when constructing a sturdy stone or brick building; in other cases, the lease period was extended to 30 years and the land renter was granted the right to be able to seek the purchase of the building from the landholder after the lease term expired. Moreover, the “Building Lease Law,” which was enacted at the same time as the Land Lease Law, recognized tenant rights for renters even if the building was not registered, while the ability to oppose usage rights granted within ownership rights for the land or building was strengthened, and the protection of tenants’ rights were also enhanced (Nakamura 2007). Both the laws also stipulated that the landholder and the renter had the right to seek an increase or decrease in rent, which made it impossible for landlords to raise rents unilaterally without logical reasoning, removing the ability to raise rents to evict the tenant.

Considering the housing condition at the time, it was more advantageous to hold the land than to sell it until the Land Lease Law and the Building Lease Law were enacted. This was because the rate of increase in land prices in Tokyo between 1877 and 1912 was 12% annually, which yielded the benefit of price increases due to increases in land value and high rent yields. Changes to land taxes were also sluggish, causing tax rates to remain low. However, housing finance for ordinary citizens was underdeveloped, and other financing options for average citizens generally had high interest rates. Therefore, the only option was to become a tenant because those with little capital could not acquire land (Segawa 1995). As a result, renting a house became the primary way of life in urban areas. According to a survey conducted in 1941 by the Ministry of Health and Welfare for 24 cities, 75.9% of all households lived in rented homes while only 22.3% owned a house (Livelihood Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Welfare 1942).

Thus, with housing finance being underdeveloped, where capital did not flow back into the acquisition of homes for ordinary citizens, even under unfavourable conditions, it was not possible to acquire a house to live without becoming a tenant.

Furthermore, the ability to oppose the usage rights of those in possession of land or buildings was weak. As a result, conflicts over rented land and houses remained constant, and the rights of tenants became strongly protected under the Leased Land Law and the Building Lease Law. The basic content of the protection of tenants' rights remained unchanged until 1999, and many rental agreements are still currently bound by these laws.

With strong protection of tenants' rights, Japan rushed into a wartime state from the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 to its defeat in World War II in 1945. A comprehensive system of warfare was introduced, which systematically mobilized national resources in all aspects of production, distribution, and consumption, and various economic controls were implemented from 1937. The "Rent Control Act" was implemented in 1939, and the systems pertaining to real estate were formalized. With systems that fixed land and housing rent in addition to introducing appropriate pricing levels, it was difficult to establish home rental businesses as construction costs rapidly increased under the wartime systems (Numajiri 2007). Moreover, in 1941, the Building Lease Law was revised to allow the refusal of renewal or requests for contract cancellation on justifiable grounds, such as the owner's personal use. However, these justifiable grounds were contested in a trial following the war, and as courts continued to define that content, tyrannical actions by owners were prohibited and tenants' rights came to be protected. As a result, supply of houses for rent ceased, and owner-occupied houses became the dominant form of residence. A government survey conducted in 1948 indicated 27.2% rented homes and 67.0% owned homes, which was a reversal of residential style from the previous government survey conducted only seven years earlier (Prime Minister's Office, Statistics Bureau 1950).

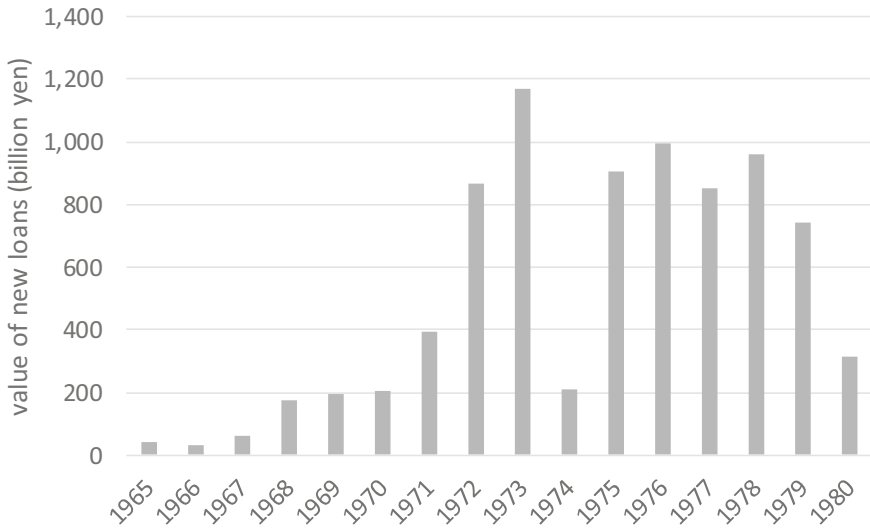
During those seven years, the country also suffered from the damage of World War II in 1945. Excluding a few cities, bombings had caused considerable damage. Buildings, including many houses, were severely affected (55% in Tokyo, 48% in Yokohama, 51% in Nagoya, 55% in Osaka, and 70% in Kobe) (Mizuuchi et al. 2008, p.218). Following the defeat in 1945, amidst war damage revival planning and farmland reform, controls on land and housing rent continued in the form of measures for restraining inflation. However, rather than encouraging the use of leased land by suppressing rents, it generated a dramatic increase in the transaction price for leaseholds (Numajiri 2007). Moreover, as economic recovery after the war focused on key industries (coal, iron, steel, shipbuilding, electricity, etc.), fundamental industries in financing were also prioritized, and the inability to supply private funds for real estate continued (Kinoshita 1969). As a result, residential financing for middle class citizens remained underdeveloped. Many people struggled to have their own houses and housing shortage became a problem. As of 1949, the shortfall had reached 3.68 million houses (Ministry of Construction 1949).

### 3 Enhancement of Tenant Protection and Land Investment: From the High Growth Period to the Bubble Period

The Rent Control Act ultimately remained in effect until 1986. However, in 1950, newly constructed housing and non-housing were removed from the control system. In 1956, housing exceeding 100 square meters in total floor area was also removed; gradually, subjects to the control system became limited. Under such circumstances, the “Housing Finance Corporation Law” was established in 1950 and the “Public Housing Law” in 1951, in response to housing difficulties. The policymaker for the Ministry of Construction at that time held an optimistic view, stating that if they provided public aid for the lowest-income bracket and public housing for the next level, they would immediately transition to owning a house, resolving housing issues (Oomoto and Kawashima 1991). However, as housing difficulties persisted, the “Japan Housing Corporation Law” was enacted in 1955 in order to provide rental housing for the middle class. At the same time, the rights of residency for tenants remained strongly protected due to multiple cases of requests to cancel a rent agreement and justifiable grounds for refusing renewal. In addition, although the landowner’s consent was required when leaseholders purchased, rebuilt, or renovated a building on lease-held land, a revision of the Land Lease Law in 1966 introduced a process for the courts to grant permission in place of the landowner, further strengthening the ability to oppose the usage rights of the landowner. With these factors in place, the supply of new leases started to decline significantly in urban areas in the mid-1960s. Under these circumstances, as a result of responding to labor demand during a period of high growth, inexpensive groups of rental houses were formed in the periphery of large cities (Harada 2007a). These rental houses were primarily supplied as private cooperative rental houses made of wood and were called “moku-chin apartments (wooden apartments).” As those moku-chin apartments were extremely small, they were densely constructed in the western area of a special ward in Tokyo (Honma 1987: 140–152), within 10 km of the city center, and along the train lines of Osaka, excluding the center (Mizuuchi et al. 2008: 276–279).

It was under these conditions in 1970 that the acquisition of houses by middle class citizens began in earnest. Figure 1 shows the new loan volume for housing finance for individuals and it already began growing in 1968 and grew rapidly further in 1971. Against this backdrop, with surplus funds accumulated from rapid growth, it was possible to relax the conditions for lending finance for housing to ordinary citizens (Segawa 1995). According to the Family Savings Survey of Statistics Bureau of Japan, the proportion of debt for housing and land for overall household debt was 60.3% in 1970, 68.1% in 1975, and 81.0% in 1980, demonstrating that homeownership using housing loans became widespread.

Capital accumulation through rapid and stable growth, as well as the establishment of a society where the lifestyle of owning a house, known as an “owner-occupied society” (Hirayama 2009), was common, attracted investment in land and real estate, inviting continuous increases in land prices, and leading to the Bubble Economy. During the 1960s, legislation continued to support the redevelopment of existing



**Fig. 1** Lending amounts of housing finance for individuals (adjusted to the 1965 standards of the consumer price index (housing), created by author from Bank of Japan statistics)

urban areas as well as the development of new urban areas, including the “Urban Regeneration Law” in 1961 and the “New Urban Residential Area Development Law” in 1963. In 1965, the central government sought the main factors behind the soaring prices of land in response to a lack of housing supply, and clearly laid out the basic course of land policies to expand the supply of residential land and housing, including the use of high-rise buildings in existing urban areas. Legislation and policies at that time contributed to the expansion of the housing and residential land supply but did not provide effective means to control land prices (Harada 2007a). This resulted in urban centers witnessing high land prices and high rents, and those who worked in downtown areas looked for homeownership in the suburbs, leading to problems of long-distance, time-consuming commutes on crowded trains (Hayakawa 1979: 99–124). In addition, the spread of welfare, including commuting allowances provided by companies, which is a characteristic of Japan, was a cause and effect of encouraging workers to live in the suburbs. As the government and railroad companies also responded to this, it led to the creation of an urban spatial structure of vast train-based commuter areas unique to Japan. According to a survey by the Ministry of Labor, 29.2% of enterprises institutionalized commuting allowances in 1955, 64.8% in 1964, and 86.7% in 1975 (Labor Minister’s Secretariat, Labor Statistics Survey Department 1955, 1964, 1975). The Urban Transportation Council issued reports in 1962, 1968, and 1972, seeking the extension of commuter railway lines, relaxation of congestion, and mutual transfers between national and private rail companies (Yasojima 1986).

After the oil crisis in 1973–74, while land prices continued to rise and investment in real estate expanded, the “land myth”—the idea that land prices will never go

down—became a common thinking throughout the 1980s. Investment in real estate accelerated due to the deregulation of building standards laid out by private-sector businesses under the Nakasone administration (Hayakawa and Hirayama 1991), and land speculation with the goal of redeveloping existing urban areas became active under real estate enterprises like developers. However, as land and housing rental rights were strongly protected, even when the landowner agreed to hand over the possession of the land rights, if the land or housing tenants did not readily agree to the termination of the contract, it would trigger a large eviction fee in order to fulfil the request for termination or to satisfy a justifiable ground for refusing agreement renewal.

#### **4 Weakening of Tenant Protection Due to the Securitization of Real Estate: From the Collapse of Bubble Period to Present**

In the mid-1980s, the increase in land prices was considered a difficult issue to set aside, even from the perspective of the policymakers in charge. Therefore, in 1989, revisions to the Land Lease Law and the Building Lease Law were proposed as a critical countermeasure to land prices to make more effective use of existing urban areas, by relaxing floor area ratios and housing supplies within major metropolitan areas. Although the bubble collapsed in 1991 and land prices began declining, the Land Lease Law and the Building Lease Law were both revised in the same year, merged into a single law—the “Leased Land and House Lease Law.” The real estate industry had two goals in its drive to request a reformation of the Land Lease Law and the Building Lease Law. The first was the relaxation of regulations on the protection of land and house leasing rights, which typically took the form of expensive eviction fees; the second was seeking the so-called diversification of leased land rights through the establishment of a mechanism that could be used by others if the landowner was unable to make advanced use of the land. In the revision of the laws, the first point was dismissed, and the second point established (1) ordinary leaseholds that were more restricted than before being automatically updated by the law and (2) three types of fixed-term leasehold rights (Harada 2007b). However, the adoption of these new systems was sluggish. Rather, fundamental reforms came from the global standardization of finance, as discussed below.

In 1996, under the slogan of rebuilding the Japanese economy, following the collapse of the bubble economy, the relaxation of financial regulations and reforms called the “the financial big bang” began with the goal of globalizing the Japanese financial market (Hoshi and Patrick eds. 2000). Legislation progressed in relation to the securitization of land and real estate in order to keep pace with the global standardization of this type of finance. Unlike legislation that adjusted the situation of landlords, tenants, and real estate businesses, these pieces of legislation were characterized by the fact that they were made from the perspective of how to make

the circulation of money easier. Therefore, the goal was to make smaller products for easy investment in real estate by relaxing the opaqueness of earnings due to the size of investment amounts, the difficulty of risk distribution, and long-term contracts through legislation related to the securitization for the unique elements of real estate, namely land and buildings.

There were several obstacles to the full-scale entry of foreign funds into the Japanese real estate investment market in the 1990s. Typical barriers included the legal system and business practices in Japanese leasing contracts. In Japan, the term of a real estate lease agreement is two years, and the business practice of the renter being able to dissolve the agreement by giving six months prior notice was common. Under these commercial practices, the vacancy risk was unreadable, making it difficult to calculate the expected earnings as well as evaluate the assets of the investment property. Additionally, the mechanism for isolating bankruptcies was insufficient and acted as a barrier. For example, the “Real Estate Specified Joint Enterprise Act” enacted in 1994 did not guarantee that investments would be refunded if the real estate business went bankrupt (Kin 2013).

In 1997 the financial big bang scenario, “Comprehensive Countermeasure for the Fluidization of Collateral Real Estate” was announced, including the measures to promote the securitization of real estate. In the same year, securitization of loan collateralized commercial real estate became acceptable. In 1998, the “Act on the Liquidation of Specified Assets by Special Purpose Companies (SPC Act)” was enacted, which allowed special purpose companies (SPCs) to purchase an asset from the originator of the said asset, issue small securities with the asset as collateral, and procure funding in the market. This became an epoch-making system, converting real estate into securities under the Securities and Exchange Law in Japan. It was truly the dawn of the securitization of real estate in Japan (Kin 2013). Subsequently, the lifting of restrictions on investment trusts using vehicle companies, the simplification of establishing SPCs, permitting real estate funds, etc., continued. In March 2001, the real estate investment trust market (J-REIT) opened on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

In this way, there was a rapid acceleration in the legislation on the securitization of real estate, which followed the global standardization of finance and the opening of secondary markets. At the same time, legislation was enacted to eliminate vacancy risks and enabled the calculation of earnings when designing products for real estate investment funds. In December 1999, the “Special Measures Concerning the Promotion of the Supply of High-quality Rental Housing Act” was established. Under this Act, “fixed-period housing rental” was facilitated, which enabled rental agreements where the agreement would terminate without renewal upon the conclusion of the period defined in the agreement. This mechanism guaranteed contract rental income in addition to eliminating the renter’s right to terminate the agreement part way through. Moreover, in contrast to the name of the act, it was strongly tied to the securitization of real estate (Harada 2007c). Traditional rights for leasing land and housing continue to exist, but this act changed the fundamental content of the protection of tenants’ rights that had persisted since 1921, establishing a system where tenants’ rights could be radically weakened.

The impact of these changes on tenants’ rights is currently unclear. The use of fixed-period housing rental for residences is currently low, and the tendency to make contracts with ordinary tenancy rights is strong. For example, according to a survey of housing market trends conducted by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the ratio of lease agreements based on fixed-period housing rental overall for newly constructed private rentals across rental contracts between 2008 and 2016 was roughly between 1.5% and 5.7%; in addition, there is no clear trend toward an increase (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport 2013, 2017). In addition, it is possible to estimate that the number of properties in real estate investment trust products targeting housing as an investment make up only about 1% of the total stock of private rental housing as of 2016 (The Association for Real Estate Securitization 2017). However, fixed-term housing rentals are advantageous to landowners and investors, and it is assumed that tenants’ residential rights will gradually weaken over the long term. This means that a condition has been created to cause “gentrification as a dirty word”.

## 5 Summary and Future Possibilities

As discussed earlier, the reason why “gentrification as a dirty word” is irrelevant in Japan is that the systems that have continued since the beginning of the twentieth century, when Japan lacked surplus capital and was still an immature capitalist society, required a strong protection of tenants’ right of residency. In brief, it is difficult for landlords and developers to force evictions or increase prices on tenants under Japanese systems.

Meanwhile, this proves the difficulty of ignoring the diversity of national institutions and capitalism and of comparing spatial events only with what is immediately visible. For example, instead of comparing countries solely on the basis of the modern form of gentrification, the most meaningful endeavor is comparing the structures themselves, as well as their expressed forms rooted in those structures, once we understand the historical context of the structures found in each country’s systems that generated those expressions in the first place (Aoki 2001; Amable 2003).

In the author’s opinion, “gentrification as a dirty word” will be irrelevant in Japan even in the future, and if it does, it will be limited to certain areas. As discussed earlier, this is because the protection of tenants’ residential rights is weakening, their rights remain strong at present and the Japanese society has entered a period of declining population and surplus housing stock. Utilizing unoccupied housing stock has become a societal trend, as seen symbolically in the rapid spread of Airbnb and the establishment of the “Residential Safety Net Act,” which is intended to utilize vacant housing stock in order to control social security expenses in an aged society. This trend is similar to the inner-city issue of intense concentration of homeless people in Nishinari ward in Osaka (Mizuuchi 2006). In this area, we can find that private enterprises have the prosperous initiatives by using vacant housing stock to generate housing resources (Mizuuchi and Kiener 2017). In this example, rather than



gentrification, it is more appropriate to describe it as constructing a residency safety net.

With the increasing return of the populations to the city center, it is not possible to say that gentrification will never appear as a dirty word in large conurbations. However, it is possible to infer that a system that strongly protects tenants' rights of residence and abundant housing stock will reduce the earnings that make capital to do the dirty work. Capital will find different spatial fixes in such circumstances.

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# Defining Japanese Gentrification in Comparison to the Global North and South



Meriç Kırmızı

**Abstract** Various forms of post-industrial urban change had filled in the inner-city void that resulted from deindustrialisation and suburbanisation. Among these urban change processes, gentrification had the strongest sense of agency. At the same time, it took different forms itself, depending on geography. While gentrification is stated to have the benefits of environmental upgrading, reversal of urban decay, social mobility and mix, and local tax income, it causes the problems of social inequality, polarisation and displacement. The suggested solutions for these problems range from radical systemic changes to incremental improvements through urban planning and an emphasis on urban resilience, social inclusion, and urban commons. This paper contributes to these debates with a focus on the Japanese context in comparison to the gentrification patterns of Global North and South. It suggests “neighbourhood commons” as an alternative to the existing gentrification schemes.

**Keywords** Post-industrial urban decay · Gentrification in the West · Japanese gentrification · Comparative urbanism · Neighbourhood commons

## 1 Introduction

The deindustrialisation process that began to affect the western cities in the 1970s brought about a post-industrial society (Bell 1973; Harvey 1997; Smith 2007), where cities went through a period of decay. Inner-city decline or urban decay is defined as “the degeneration of the buildings and infrastructure in an urban area” (Oxford English Dictionary). As a result of this decay, people and capital fled away from the city centres. This hollowing out of cities (*dōnatsuka genshō* in Japanese) led to the phenomena of “urban sprawl” as cities expanded outwards. Various forms of post-industrial urban change occurred in the inner-city after the 1970s, and yet they created their own issues.

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Some of these post-industrial urban change processes were defined with words with a “re-” prefix, such as revitalisation, regeneration, redevelopment, renovation, repair, and rehabilitation, and pointed to the recovery from urban decline or decay. Other concepts connoted the spatial dimension of change—e.g. compact city or the social class dimension—e.g. gentrification and creative city. Still others underlined the environmental and technological aspects of change—e.g. sustainable city, green urbanism, eco-city and smart city. Not only did the concepts differ, but also the geographical scale of the place concerned, including cities, areas, neighbourhoods, streets, and buildings in these forms of post-industrial urban change.

The way to deal with urban decay depended on whether market or social equity was prioritized. For this reason, the critics of gentrification usually emphasized the neglect of social equity principles. A choice of prioritizing the market interests in post-industrial urban change could be exemplified by the concepts of “global city” and “world city” that were described as the “command centers” (Sassen 1991) and “the ‘basing points’” (Friedmann 1986: 69) of the global economy. In these cases, the renewed post-industrial city harboured “a new visibility and domination of the finance and service sectors in the city’s economy and urban landscape” (Candan and Kolluoğlu 2008: 12). Under the market logic of urban revitalisation, the cities on the lower steps of the global urban hierarchy should also aspire to become neoliberal or entrepreneurial cities by privatizing their public assets and services.

This paper firstly, introduces the concept of gentrification as an inner city social upgrading process. Next, it looks into the Japanese gentrification and compares it with the gentrification patterns of the Global North and South. Thirdly, it presents the positive and negative claims regarding gentrification and other urban revitalisation schemes and the suggested solutions. The paper ends with a suggestion of “neighbourhood commons” as an alternative notion to the existing gentrification schemes.

## **2 Neoliberal Urban Policies and Gentrification in the North/West**

Post-industrial urban change processes, such as “gentrification, high-end condo construction, and ‘Disneyfication’” (Harvey 2012: 35) allured the capital that returned for “extracting value from the city” (Weber 2002: 519). After the 1980s, neoliberal urban policies based on urban entrepreneurialism caused a shift from production to services, and the creation of a city for consumption that had homogenised and polarised urban spaces. Cities adapted to the free-market ideology through these neoliberal urban policies (Hubbard 2004; Kern 2010; Peck et al. 2013; Wilson 2004) in a way that the market principles dominated over people’s right “to reinvent the city more after their hearts’ desire” (Harvey 2012: 25).

Gentrification, defined as “the reinvestment of real estate capital into declining, inner-city neighborhoods to create a new residential infrastructure for middle and

high-income inhabitants” (Patch and Brenner 2007) or “a process ... in which a marked change in social composition is accompanied by a substantial reinvestment in the physical condition of the urban fabric” (Bondi 1999: 265) had a stronger sense of agency than the other post-industrial urban change schemes. The other schemes pointed instead, to a simple environmental upgrading or their particular targets of creativity, compactness, and sustainability. The gentrification process mainly consisted of: “(1) reinvestment of capital; (2) social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups; (3) landscape change; and (4) direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups” (Davidson and Lees 2005: 1170). Increasing property prices and new service establishments for the new-middle class taste were its common indicators. Harvey (2011) explained gentrification as follows:

A community group that struggles to maintain ethnic diversity in its neighborhood and to protect against gentrification, for example, may suddenly find its property prices rising as real estate agents market the “character” of the neighbourhood as multicultural and diverse as an attraction for gentrifiers. (Harvey 2011: 105–106)

In addition to gentrification’s two classical forms of residential and commercial gentrification, the concept and the corresponding urban phenomena evolved over time in such a way that it began to appear in multiple forms as follows: inner-city gentrification, provincial gentrification, rural gentrification, new-build gentrification, super-gentrification, studentification, gay gentrification, tourism gentrification, state-led gentrification, and municipally managed gentrification (Lees et al. 2008: 129–135). Gentrification’s heterogeneous forms in different geographies rendered the hegemony of the “Northern/Western experiences of gentrification” (Lees et al. eds. 2015: 2) highly questionable. If gentrification benefited some actors, it also subtracted from the general social welfare and was therefore considered a “neighborhood expression of class inequality” (Lees et al. 2008: 80).

## 2.1 *Japanese Gentrification Literature*

The debates on the applicability of the gentrification concept for the non-western contexts (Lees et al. eds. 2015) also influenced the Japanese studies on post-industrial urban change. Japanese research on urban regeneration was mostly centred on the major cities of: Tokyo (Saito 2012), Yokohama City (Yamamoto 2014), and Osaka (Fujitsuka 2005, 2015; Mizuuchi 2006; Mizuuchi et al. eds. 2015). Furthermore, Sasajima (2015) did fieldwork in New York and Kawaguchi (2016) and Kawano (2008) did fieldwork in French cities.

Among Japanese researchers, sociologists used the gentrification concept to define, for example, Osaka’s post-industrial restructuring. On the other hand, geographers preferred more the “re-” concepts, such as redevelopment, rehabilitation, renovation or resilience. One exception was Fujitsuka (2017), who published his single area or comparative work from Japan and abroad as a book, entitled, *Gentrification*. Despite these linguistic choice differences among Japanese researchers, they

had some common interests in the complementary issues of homelessness (Kiener and Mizuuchi 2018) and poverty (Haraguchi 2016; Kawano 2016) that also enabled international collaborations, such as book translations (Paugam 2016).

Japanese gentrification research corresponded mainly to studies of re-urbanisation (*saitoshika*), “urban core revival” and “return to the city centres” (*toshin kaiki*) since the late 1990s. These studies could be based on either a single Japanese city, such as Osaka and Tokyo or comparisons. As an example of the former, Tokuda et al. (2009) found that Osaka’s six central wards have had a population increase after the 1980s (Tokuda et al. 2009: 19). The same authors also indicated that the specific socio-demographic groups that were on rise in Osaka’s central areas were: 20–24 year olds, female population and single households (*ibid*: 23–24). Another significant finding of their study was that Osaka’s re-urbanisation after the 1990s was shaped by the private housing sector, whereas in Tokyo, public housing in the central city areas guaranteed a degree of better social mix (*ibid*: 28–29). Therefore, Osaka was considered more open to gentrification due to its privatised housing stock (*ibid*: 34).

In a comparative study, a high level of population movement between prefectures was observed in the central wards of Sapporo, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Fukuoka (Yagi 2015). Yet these major Japanese cities’ central wards did not give so much migration to the Kantō region. Similar to the Osaka study, the female employee population grew in these cities from 2000 to 2010 (Yagi 2015: 71). This comparative study of Sapporo, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Fukuoka argued that re-urbanisation took different forms in these cities, depending on the whole urban area’s population movements (Yagi 2015: 78).

Japanese research on re-urbanisation also examined its social effects on local communities. A common finding in these works was a lack of interaction between long-term residents and new residents, who settled mostly in apartment buildings of the redeveloped city areas. Bestor (1990) interpreted this relationship as being prone to tacit struggles over community resources and identity. These tacit struggles could be intensified by a lack of participation of the newcomers in neighbourhood organisations (Maruyama and Okamoto 2013) and an anxiety of the long-term residents about accepting them in turn. These prevalent social issues caused a sense of dim prospects for local community making in metropolitan areas (Maruyama and Okamoto 2013). Nevertheless, community-building examples at apartment building level were not totally missing in the related literature.

One major difference of Japanese re-urbanisation from gentrification in the west rested in the diverse social mix of returning population of single female and dual-income households as well as low-income groups, as in the example of Tokyo’s Minato ward (Yabe 2003: 94). Yet housing affordability and nursery incapacity issues continued to push away nuclear family households from the city centres. Japanese gentrification also differed in terms of an inadequate development of gentrifier-friendly commercial facilities, which was the case in the ARK Hills and waterfront city development projects in Tokyo’s Minato and Chuo wards (Takagi 1999: 35). Therefore, Japanese gentrification had its unique qualities just as Seoul in South Korea (Seong-Kyu 2015). These differences will be summarized in a more organised fashion in the next section.

### 3 Japanese Gentrification Compared to the Global North and South

Japanese gentrification is compared in this section with the gentrification patterns of Global North and South in terms of: place, motivation, actors, effects, and degree of violence. Firstly regarding the place of gentrification, the gentrification of the Global North after the 1970s happened mostly in abandoned city centres. The gentrification of the Global South after the 1990s was more of a phenomenon of informal urban settlements, such as *barracas*, *barrios*, *clandestinos*, *favela*, *gecekonddu*, *hutong*, *labour villages* or other names. Japanese gentrification is observed in both city centres and urban peripheries in the forms of art management; new-build gentrification—condo and office developments; new towns; regional revitalisation (*chiiki kasseika*); renovation of wooden houses; shopping street revitalisation; special (business) zones; town development (*machizukuri*); and urban redevelopment (*toshi saikaihatsu*). For a more enhanced classification, Mizuuchi's (2015) factor-based classification of town developments in Osaka based on the city areas' situations after the Second World War and their town developments' characteristics can be seen (Mizuuchi 2015: 8).

While the motivations or reasons for gentrification in the Global North were rent-gaps and the new-middle class taste for a new housing supply, these corresponded to developmental agendas in the Global South. The Japanese gentrification rested on the tendency of returning to urban areas (*toshin kaiki*) in the 1990s after the bubble economy. This spatial mobility tendency was associated with “the construction of public and private housing ... [for] population recovery, followed by the opening of new subway stations” (Yabe 2003: 292), and the political adoption of compact and sustainable city discourses. It is also related to socio-economic changes in household types, women's employment, and people's preferences on where to live in the city (Izuhara 2010; Ronald and Nakano 2013).

Thirdly, the post-industrial urban change processes in the Global North and South were led by the private capital and the state actors respectively. In Japan, there was a shift in time from the local government that dominated the post-war urban transformation to private actors—architects, banks, companies, developers, local community actors, and local organisations. Therefore, Japanese town development resulted from an interaction among facilitators, homeowners, landowners, managers, producers, real estate industry and users (Mizuuchi 2015: 12).

Gentrification in the Global North and South harmed the social capital of blue-collar and immigrant workers with lower income levels. On the other hand, Japanese gentrification at most changed an area's identity, and caused “vertical densification” (Lees et al. eds. 2015: 207). The latter phenomenon, which appeared as “mansionization” in this paper's author's research (Kırmızı 2017), was deemed “condo-ism” in Rosen and Walks' (2015) work. In Japan, the lifestyle of apartment buildings caused a lack of communication between long-term residents and newcomers. The Japanese case differed from the Global North and South in terms of the social inequalities, deepened among social classes as well. The milder impact on various social classes in Japan can be explained by the “homogeneity of Japanese society” (Bestor



and Hardacre 2004).<sup>1</sup> The social class identity of the newcomers and the existing middle-class residents resembled in Japanese cities unlike the wide gaps between the bourgeois and the global elites and the lower income groups, including the working poor and immigrants in the west. Only, Chinese investors of tower apartment buildings probably belonged to the global elite in Japan. Moreover, poor and rich city areas were not totally isolated from each other in Japan. Japanese gentrification harmed most small family businesses or mom-and-pop stores, as they had also become less protected with the deregulation in the 1990s. As a further social issue observed in Japanese gentrification, Japanese gentrification intensified public space surveillance and therefore, affected rough sleepers or the homeless population.

Looking at the harshness of gentrification processes, a shadow state as in the U.S. (Williams 1986: 63) or an over-dominant state as in Syria (Lees et al. eds. 2015) were shown as the primary causes of gentrification's violence. The Japanese state was not as involved in local revitalisation efforts as the northern and southern states. Road construction and land speculation (*jiage*) had caused displacement in Japanese history. Yet Japanese urban change had also become mellow over time and began to apply soft power. The "forceful evictions" (Mizuuchi 2006: 115) of the 1950s changed into compensated and voluntary displacements and other social approaches for the city areas that were losing their populations. These alternative mechanisms included, for example, low-rent housing in exchange for Do-It-Yourself (DIY) housing repairs and tax discounts for families with small children. Therefore, uncompensated displacement and coercion are not noticeable at present.

In sum, Japanese gentrification differed much from the gentrification patterns of the Global North and South with respect to locations, motivations, actors and social effects.

#### **4 Arguments for and Against Gentrification in the Western Literature and Conceptual Alternatives**

The literature on post-industrial urban change can be categorised as focusing on: criticisms (e.g. Dinardi 2015; Gordon and Richardson 1997; Vanolo 2014) and supportive arguments (e.g. Caragliu et al. 2011; Sumka 1979; Thomas and Bromley 2000). There are also in-between papers (e.g. Miles and Paddison 2005; Pratt 2008; Scott 2006). In critical papers, social inequality and polarisation were depicted as two major social issues that arose from these urban revitalisation processes (Caragliu et al. 2011: 68; Scott 2006: 12). However, there were other criticisms as well. Many scholars criticised these urban change policies for ignoring local contexts and providing "universally applicable" recipes for contextual urban problems (Gordon and Richardson

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<sup>1</sup> Sugimoto's (2010) idea on the current social structure in Japan was a bit different: "... social divisions in Japanese society today derive not so much from the unequal distribution of commonplace and mundane industrial goods as from that of prestigious and stylish cultural goods" (Sugimoto 2010: 8).

1997; Miles and Paddison 2005; Pratt 2008). An associated social issue underlined in the western gentrification literature was about omitting local urban communities from their neighbourhood's change process (Dinardi 2015; Miles and Paddison 2005; Rautenberg 2012).

While Vanolo (2014) problematised responsabilisation and social control issues, MacKinnon and Driscoll Derickson (2013) warned against the justification of the political-economic status quo. These usually top-down policies led to "urban imaginaries" that functioned as "powerful devices ... to justify political choices and trigger new economic paradigms" (Vanolo 2014: 885–886). For Lees et al. (2016), gentrification policies denoted the problem itself rather than being a solution; real solution required creating alternatives to these policies. Altogether, the costs of gentrification included the following: price inflation and embourgeoisement; socio-spatial polarisation and uneven development; dispossession of homes and jobs through displacement; social tensions based on intolerance and exclusion; privatization or enclosure of common city resources; city's homogenisation, commercialisation, touristification; and people's surveillance and alienation.

On the other hand, there were supporters of gentrification that also included the young Florida (2002). This group of scholars expected urban growth from urban revitalisation processes that could be actualised through for example, "smartmentalisation" or "creative clusters" (Caragliu et al. 2011; Sumka 1979). The supporters also expected more "conviviality" and "camaraderie" (Scott 2006: 15) and "vitality and viability" (Thomas and Bromley 2000: 1404) in the gentrified city areas. Urban revitalisation's benefits were assumed to be environmental upgrading, recovery from decay, social mobility and mix, and local tax income (e.g. Cortright 2015; Sumka 1979) more generally.

Although there was a more or less agreement on the issues of gentrification, the solution suggestions differed in ideas regarding who will lead the change and how. These solutions ranged from radical change to incremental improvements through urban planning and adopting the notions of social resilience, inclusion, and urban commons. The alternatives utilized mainly the following concepts: commons (DeVerteuil 2015: resilience as commons; Harvey 2012: urban commons), just city (Fainstein 2011), resilient city (DeVerteuil 2015), resourcefulness (MacKinnon and Driscoll Derickson 2013) and right to the city (Harvey 2008).

Regarding the commons alternative, Garrett Hardin's theory of "the tragedy of the commons" promoted a private property regime for an efficient use of scarce natural resources. Harvey (2011) questioned this very private ownership of commons by saying: "The real problem here, it seems to me, is not the commons per se. It is the failure of individualized private property rights to fulfil our common interests in the way they are supposed to do" (Harvey 2011: 104). Harvey (2012) interpreted commons as a collective ownership of a collective product, including natural resources, cultural products or urban spaces. As these products should be, by definition, achieved by a collective, political, and non-commodified activity, public goods and public spaces were not commons, if they were not appropriated by citizens through political action.

Diversity, equity and democracy were the underlying tenets of a “just city” ideal (Fainstein 2011). Resilience was on the other hand, “holding on to previously hard-won gains, yet using them (through the spatial manifestation of the service hub) as the basis for challenging the status quo and holding out for incremental change.” (DeVerteuil 2015: 18) Resourcefulness was brought as an alternative to resilience by MacKinnon and Driscoll Derickson (2013), who considered resilience to be a conservative, externally imposed and locally trapped solution to a global threat. For them, resourcefulness “focuses attention upon the uneven distribution of resources within and between communities and maintains openness to the possibilities of community self-determination through local skills and ‘folk’ knowledge.” (MacKinnon and Driscoll Derickson 2013: 15) Musset (2016), who criticized “the just city myth” (Musset 2016: 59) as much as the other notions of “equity, resilience, durability, participation, inclusion and innovation” (ibid: 58), argued for a politics of equality instead.

Finally, Lefebvre’s right to the city as the most popular expressed a right to difference of different social groups and also their right not to be excluded socio-spatially (Ryan 2007). On the other hand, Harvey’s (2008) right to the city was a collective right to have a collective power over urban processes.

## 5 Thinking Out of the Revitalisation Construct

Scholars like Harvey (2012) and Smith (1979/2010) argued that the gentrification processes were more sensitive to the profit-making interests of capital than urban citizens’ needs and expectations. Harvey (2011) also interpreted gated communities as “an exclusionary commons” (Harvey 2011: 103) for the wealthy. The Osaka study of this paper’s author also justified the existing knowledge that the market solutions to urban decay led to further social inequality and polarisation issues for the unequally developed urban areas while at the same time, the “spatial fixes” for the privileged areas remained highly temporary.

It is already time to change our thinking with respect to revitalisation. There is a need for researchers and urban policy-makers to find other methods for urban redevelopment that are more sensitive to social inclusion and community-making aspects as this volume’s endeavour. The new urban change framework should not neglect the following issues: historical place identity, neighbourhood community culture, and ‘use value’ of space. This is because the neighbourhood community culture against a “gentrified authenticity” (Gonzalez and Waley 2013: 965) has to be maintained “in a world of cookie-cutter regeneration and serially reproduced urban landscapes” (DeVerteuil 2015: 251). Although the local (neighbourhood culture) is not valuable per se, one needs to reflect on the question of whose culture and right to the city are being promoted through post-industrial urban change processes.

This research was an attempt to search for the means to achieve an urban neighbourhood, which had a socio-cultural life in an environment that was freed from the pressures of private property relations unlike for example, gated communities.

## 5.1 *Neighbourhood Commons as an Alternative*

The need for an alternative city-making arises, because area branding or marketing and gentrification continuously fail in securing their social diversity and participation goals. This continuous failure of the existing schemes can be expected, because a harmonious unity of people cannot be built on consumption that only groups them into segments based on income levels, gender and so on. The consumerist mentality divides people simply as buyers of a lifestyle and non-buyers.

In practice, urban change alternatives were also experimented in Osaka for example, in Nakazakicho in Kita ward. These earlier empirical alternative attempts paved the ground for this paper's suggestion of leaving aside place branding and adopting an idea of "neighbourhood commons". Yet actualisation of neighbourhood commons is framed by Japanese (political) culture similar to Japanese gentrification. Therefore, local organisations, such as PTA and neighbourhood associations could replace active politicization for protecting collective local resources in the Japanese context.

In the few studies that referred to a neighbourhood commons earlier (Kuo et al. 1998; Linn 2007; Neighborhood commons 2007; Noonan et al. 2016; Teck et al. 2016), the concept was used in a different sense than this paper. It could refer to for example, dog parks, landscape design for low-income neighbourhoods or neighbourhood commons governance. Neighbourhood commons is understood here differently as an urban environment that nurtures meaningful social encounters through collective spaces and activities of a neighbourhood.

A whole neighbourhood itself, including both physical and social elements is considered as a commons, where intangible community culture matters as much as the concerned area's material culture and physical environment. After all, a sense of place is a combination of built-space and relational social space (Harvey 2015). The social encounters and interactions will work against the compelling urban neoliberalist logic. Only by freeing their social environments from the pressures of consumption, can people enact collectively a localised version of welfare state to pursue a more inclusive and equalitarian urban social life.

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# *Jjokbang* as Symbols of Poverty: The Creation and Eradication of the Last Residential Safety-Net in Seoul, South Korea



Deokyoung Lim

**Abstract** *Jjokbang* is an extremely poor housing form, consisting of rooms without amenities like a bathroom or kitchen that provide barely enough space for one grown man to lay down. Concealed in the old city center, *jjokbang* were re-discovered when issues regarding rough sleepers gathered increasing attention. Thus, also in the academic literature they were conceptualized out of this context. But recently their association with rough sleepers gradually weakened and as living space for impoverished people, that crucially differs from other housing types, they became a symbol of the housed poor and also sites of concentrated support efforts. Today *jjokbang* are endangered by the re-development of the old city center. Next to this threat, their further existence is also dependent on factors like their reputation as poor areas in need for support, or the condition of concerned grass-roots movements. These factors are also likely determining the speed of their dismantlement or re-construction.

**Keywords** Jjokbang · Korean slums · Homelessness · Symbols of poverty

## 1 Introduction: The Transformation of Korean Slums

Seoul has grown into a large metropolis, comprising a quarter of the Korean population. This growth was spurred by an influx of rural farmers in the 1950s when land reform and agricultural aid from the US impoverished the Korean farming industry, and this rural exodus continued well into the latter half of the 1980s. While most of these rural settlers in the early 1960s were single young men or women, they were soon followed by family units. Settlements were formed on state-owned grounds in mountainous areas or along river banks by these people who otherwise had no place to reside in Seoul. Such villages (*chon*) later became known as *panja-chon*, as many houses there were assembled with *panja* (scrap lumber). Similarly, villages located in places that seemed high enough to reach the moon (*dal*) were named *dal-dongne*

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(*dongne* has the same meaning as *chon*) while *chon* formed in *san* (mountain) was called *san-dongne*. These slums were clearly delineated. There was a clear distinction between so-called “ordinary residences” and these areas occupied by the poor. However, at the time, the slums also displayed a vibrancy that was unique to farming communities as they were filled by people of all age groups coming from all over the country. This dynamic and affectionate interaction between settlers, despite the poor living conditions, was referred to as “poverty of hope” by many researchers familiar with slums of that particular period (Chang 2005, etc.).

Nonetheless, these poorer communities were broken up by the re-development of urban areas during the 1990s. Some settlers were relocated into newly constructed public rental housings, but most chose to move to other areas. Despite on-going stigma and conflicts with nearby residents, these public rental housing complexes have, with their modern appearance, at least managed to incorporate themselves into the local landscape.

*Jjokbang* is the name given to new settlements of the poor “founded” after the 1997 economic crisis. *Jjok* means “divided” and *bang* means “room”. Hence, *jjokbang* meaning of a very small room, for example a small room that has been partitioned into even smaller rooms. These *Jjokbang* not only look very different to “ordinary residences”, their living environment is also substandard.

This study aims to examine *jjokbang* as the representative dwelling of the poor in modern Korea; tracing the development of *jjokbang* from its “creation” to recognition as the “last residential safety-net”. In particular, the social positioning and role of *jjokbang*, which is also a reflection of housing shortage, shall be discussed critically while drawing attention to why such dwelling options have been allowed to exist until now, despite it being regarded as physically “unfit” for twenty-first century Korea.

## 2 The Discovery of *Jjokbang*: Residences for Potential *Nosukin* (Homeless People)

In winter 1997, Korea experienced an economic crisis that was “unprecedented in history”. The South Korea’s Financial Crisis in 1997 sent a great tremor through Korean economy/society/culture. It paralyzed all economic regulatory functions within the Korean government and brought down large corporations along with smaller businesses. Amid this crisis situation, unemployment rate rose to a record high, and social problems, such as the disintegration of family, as well as suicide exploded. The poorer people who lost their homes became street dwellers, or homeless.

In fact, street dwellers were present long before the economic crisis. However, at the time, such individuals were simply regarded as *burangin* (vagrants) with “personal temperament problems”. As a result, measures to combat the issue of homelessness were largely limited to shelter relocation. On the other hand, street dwellers that appeared after 1997 were seen as victims of “unemployment”, a problem to do

with social structure, and these people became known as *Nosukin* (meaning “suk-in”, or “a person sleeping”, drenched in “no”, or “dew”)<sup>5</sup>. It was only then that the city of Seoul and the Ministry of Health and Welfare launched new relief measures which sought to provide temporary housing and act as an intermediary for job seekers.

However, the situation changed again in the summer of 1998. This was spurred on by scenes where street dwellers were seen cooking and drinking in parks during summer that year, which gave them a negative image among other citizens. The sympathy for street dwellers faded, and serious discussions were held with regard to their proper accommodation. A plan for the simultaneous crackdown of all street dwellers in Seoul along with measures for forced relocation was put forward by the mayor on June 9, 1998, but it was called off in the face of vigorous protests from civil groups. Instead, the city mobilized all social welfare resources under its jurisdiction and established “The House of Hope” as a shelter for *nosukin* in September 1998. As a result of swift actions taken by the city of Seoul, 102 shelters were founded in just three months with enough capacity to house 2941 people (the Council for the homeless people in Seoul 2000: 80). Despite that, street dwellers can still be seen in train stations and parks. As winter was approaching, there was a grave concern that they might freeze to death. The city administration actively campaigned for the shelters, but the inconvenience of the shelters: from sharing small spaces; group living; the rigidity of bed-time and curfew; as well as the prohibition of alcohol, saw some homeless people adamant in their opposition to relocation. Consequently, the city of Seoul set up a new “The House of Freedom” in January 1999. This facility made use of remodeled buildings that were once dormitories for local factories, and, as the name suggested, it had allowed “freedom” in terms of access and drinking of alcohol.

More than 700 street dwellers gathered for the opening day of “The House of Freedom”. This was about 400 more than the number of street dwellers that the city had accounted for in 1998. So where exactly did these people come from? According to surveys conducted by researchers and shelter workers, these street dwellers had previously lived in *jjokbang* around Seoul Station but were forced onto the streets in winter when work was scarce and they could no longer afford cost of living. In other words, among street dwellers gathered at the “The House of Freedom” were previous tenants of *jjokbang* who could no longer pay their rent. This particular incident had “revealed” that *jjokbang* were closely related to the problem of homelessness.

### 3 The Structure and Function of *Jjokbang*

By the end of December 2014, the number of people living in *jjokbang* across Korea was estimated to be 6,147. The *jjokbang* population has remained fairly stable, with minimal fluctuation in numbers. Most of the *jjokbang* in Seoul are concentrated in five locations in the old city center, which included areas around Seoul Station, Yeongdeungpo Station, Jongno3-Ga Station, and Dongdaemun Station (Ministry of Health and Welfare 2015). All of these areas have easy access to transportation, large

traditional markets, and information centers for day labor. The status of *jjokbang* in Pusan, Daegu, Incheon, and Daejeon are fairly similar to Seoul, although the presence of *jjokbang* residents is much more prominent in Seoul at 3475 people compared to 887 in Pusan, 893 in Daegu, 477 in Incheon, and 415 in Daejeon (Ministry of Health and Welfare 2015: 303).

The definition for *jjokbang* was also inconsistent. In 2000, the city of Seoul and the Ministry of Health and Welfare tried to define *jjokbang* according to: (1) the physical attribute of its building; (2) the attribute of its residents; and (3) the attribute of its management. In other words, (1) the size of the room must be barely enough for an adult to lie down and it must not contain facilities such as a bath or a kitchen; (2) the resident must come from a background whose work is unstable and generally moving from job to job; and (3) no deposit is required in most cases and rent is calculated daily (Health Right Network et al. 2012).

Each region had its own definition for *jjokbang*. For instance, some regions regarded old buildings that displayed signs for inns or “hostels”, and housed day laborers or street dwellers, as *jjokbang*. In fact, some of these run-down buildings where day laborers stayed can still be considered a *jjokbang* even when they are not clustered together.

This means *jjokbang* is not only defined by the way it is operated or its physical condition, but also takes into account the attribute of its occupants. Hence, an old building in a poor state does not automatically become a *jjokbang* if it has no connection to street dwellers or day laborers. In short, *jjokbang* is a concept based on its relationship with street dwellers. It is seen either as the last stop prior to a life on the streets, or an inferior place where street dwellers come and go.

The stereotypical image of a *jjokban*” is a three- or four-story building of old age. It has narrow corridors lined by rooms to both sides with shared toilets and wash basins (see Figs. 1 and 2). There is no space for cooking. The residents must provide their own fridge and simple cooking utensils. Normally no deposit is required, and, in the case of Seoul, rent is often paid monthly. The rent range between 150,000 won to 200,000 won per month (approximately US\$140 to 190 in 2019) depending on room size and access to windows. The electricity fee is paid to the landlord, and rooms with fridges are charged US\$9 extra.

In 1998, problems with *jjokbang* finally came to light just as street dweller issues were gaining attention. In order to help *jjokbang* residents, religious groups and private welfare organizations set up the “Counseling Center for *Jjokbang* Residents” to provide voluntary services. The government soon implemented its own relief measures for *jjokbang* through this counseling center from 2003 onward. The purpose of such measures, as specified by the government, was to “prevent poorer class living in *jjokbang* from becoming *nosukin* by heightening their sense of self-reliance through services provided at the “Counseling Center for *Jjokbang* Residents” (Ministry of Health and Welfare 2003). It is evident here that the government also saw *jjokbang* as the last residential safety-net for the prevention of homelessness.

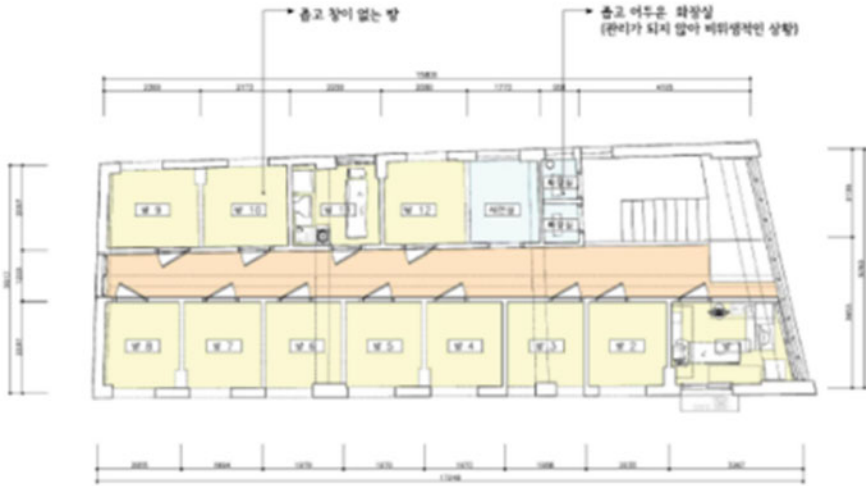


Fig. 1 The layout of a Jjokbang. Source Seo et al. (2013: 195)

Fig. 2 The interior of a Jjokbang. Source Photograph taken by author



#### 4 The Development of Jjokbang Policies

Jjokbang was not only gaining attention as the last safety-net for the prevention of homelessness, but it was also seen as the first waypoint for anyone wanting to escape life on the streets. The city of Seoul and the Ministry of Health and Welfare tried to devise a follow-up plan for street dwellers in shelters, and among the various

proposals and experimental programs, the most effective one was the “Temporary Housing Cost Support Project” put forward by a private group. The aim of this privately-run project was to make sure that street and shelter dwellers were also covered by “The National Basic Living Security Act”,<sup>1</sup> a public aid system. Until then, people living on the streets were denied access to this system because they were unable to apply for a “Korean resident registration card” as they did not have an address. The resident registration card is the most fundamental form of identification in Korea, and local governments reserve the right to remove one’s resident registration without a known current address. Once that happens, a street dweller can no longer enter into a lease contract, and access to the public aid system is automatically denied. In other words, it is a vicious cycle for street dwellers, where losing your home also means losing the right to all public aid. The “Temporary Housing Cost Support Project” first ensures that street dwellers have a known residence, with a subsidy to cover rent for three months, and then helps them apply for public aid once the resident registration card is issued. The costs incurred by this project are paid by the state-owned Social Welfare Community Donation Group, while the actual operations are carried out by civil groups and shelter workers involved with street dwellers.

Limited by its budget, the “Temporary Housing Cost Project” began reaching out to *jjokbang* as it could only afford places with low rents. Hence, *jjokbang* was momentarily known as the “exit from street life”. From 2006 to 2009, the number of people benefiting from this project totaled 2332 (The National Nosuk-in Homeless Welfare Facilities Association et al. 2012). As a result, *jjokbang* was also recognized for its role within homelessness-related policies. It not only fueled discussions toward wider utilization of public aid system but was now seen as a stepping stone for the transition from emergency measures such as shelters to residential assistance.

Furthermore, *jjokbang* had become a subject of interest for both experts and policymakers, and this new interest was recognized by the mass media. They were a sanctuary from both summer heat and winter cold for destitute people, and it was home to those without a place to go to during New Year or *Bon* Festival. It also became a hot topic for politician visits, volunteer activities, and religious missions. The more attention it garnered from society, the more support it received.

Eventually, areas with *jjokbang* slowly transformed from areas where street dwellers mingled with ordinary tenants to “suburbs” occupied by destitute people and recipients of public aid. There was now less common ground between *jjokbang* residents and street dwellers.

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<sup>1</sup> The law is the basis of Korea’s public-aid system, the National Basic Living Security System. This system provides seven types of benefits for receivers, including Livelihood benefits, Housing benefits, Medical benefits, Education benefits, Childbirth benefits, Funeral benefits, Self-sufficiency benefits. Only those who are below a certain standard are paid. The criteria for each benefit is different. In principle, they can receive pay in areas registered as residences for Korean resident registration card.

## 5 Conflict Between “Jjokbang Aid” and “Development”

This transformation in the nature of *jjokbang* occupants brought along other changes. First of all, various “resident movements” were initiated. Among them, ones launched in 2010 by residents of Dongja-dong near Seoul Station through an organization called “Dongja-dong Sarang-bang” were particularly well-known. “Sarang-bang” means a room where guests are received. In other words, it means “a space where anyone can visit without hesitation”. Through “Sarang-bang”, Dongja-dong established a mutual aid association providing small loans and services for residents. The small loan program gives out loans at a lower interest to *jjokbang* tenants who were fee-paying members to the organization. This service was vital to public aid recipients as it was difficult or impossible for them to apply for loans at normal banks. In addition to small loans, it also introduced the “Fun Eating” program. The “Sarang-bang” makes its kitchen facility available to all locals who lived and dined alone, providing them with the opportunity to enjoy meals with others. It also held regional funerals or community festivals for *jjokbang* residents who passed away.

The people responsible for these resident movements were those who had already been involved in homeless movements. When a plan for forced relocation of street dwellers into regional facilities was announced just before the 2002 Japan-Korea World Cup, citizen movement groups formed a “Homeless Human Rights Action Team” to protest that decision. This team met on a weekly basis even after the closing of the World Cup and continued its outreach programs for street dwellers, including the afore-mentioned “Temporary Housing Cost Support Project”. People who met through these programs then formed their own groups and started their own volunteering works.

Apart from such grass-root movements, community centers were also set up through collaboration between large corporations and the *jjokbang* counseling center. With free showers and computers, these community centers not only became an important base for *jjokbang* residents, some also provided the opportunity to work at their own cafe. Besides community centers, support groups-initiated projects such as lunch box delivery services, tour programs, and provision of groceries. Some go as far as providing services such as fire-alarm and heater installation, as well as changing wallpaper. Slowly, various programs were implemented in *jjokbang* areas. Soon, these relief programs for the poor were beginning to draw attention from both the government and large enterprises.

Meanwhile, *jjokbang* areas have been much affected by urban development plans as they are mostly situated in the heart of the city. For instance, some *jjokbang* around Seoul Station were demolished between 2006 and 2009 as a part of one such plan, and in their place, skyscrapers were built. Since 2016, the city of Seoul has also been pushing “Comprehensive Development Plan for the Seoul Station Area”, which is based on a 2015 proposal to transform overpasses near Seoul Station into walking paths. In addition, the city government has announced the “Promotion plan for revitalization of foreign residents’ business” (Seoul Tourism Policy Division 2013) in 2013, which hopes to turn *jjokbang* and old hostels into modernized guest-houses in

order to compensate for the lack of readily available accommodation around Seoul Station (see Fig. 3). As a result of these recent developments, local administration has tightened its grip on regulations and crackdowns of street dwellers, causing tension to escalate in *jjokbang* areas.

The implementation of these redevelopment plans has led to growing confrontation with *jjokbang* relief programs, with the anti-demolition movements around Seoul Station a clear example of such animosity. In Dongja-dong, for instance, protests occurred when the owners of *jjokbang* declared that they were planning to rebuild *jjokbang* into cheap guest-houses, and demanded the residents leave (see Fig. 4). Initially, the city administration insisted that there was no policy against the demolition and re-construction of private properties, but it eventually compromised by renting out buildings scheduled for demolition so that residents could continue to lease their rooms from the government, after groups such as “Dongja-dong Sarang-bang” rallied and held press conferences to voice their objection. To do so, the city

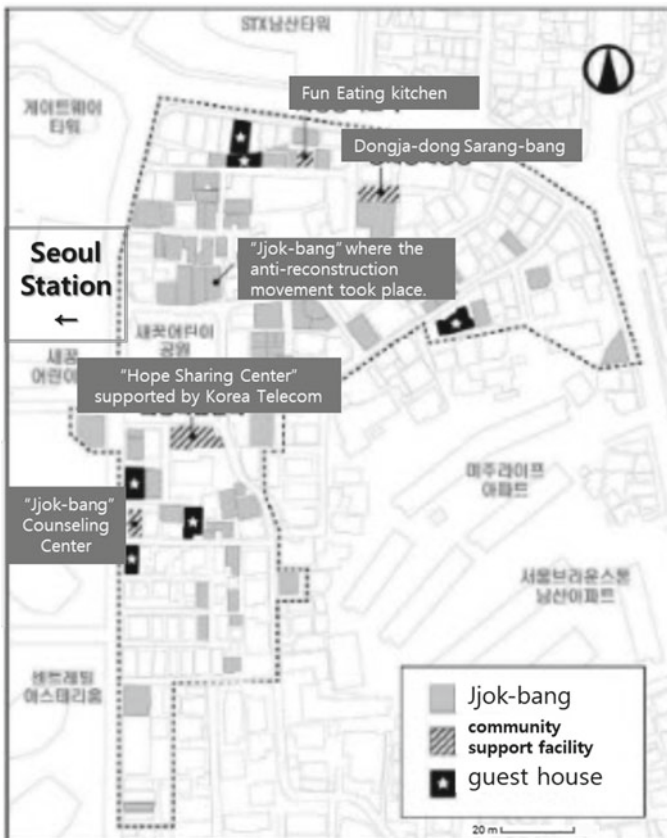


Fig. 3 Distribution of *Jjokbang* (Dongja-dong). Source Chosun ([http://reality.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2017/08/16/2017081600985.html](http://reality.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2017/08/16/2017081600985.html)—accessed on 16 august 2017)





**Fig. 4** *Jjokbang* in the middle of skyscrapers (left)/new hotel in *Jjokbang* area (middle)/a *Jjokbang* renovated by city of Seoul (right). *Source* Photograph taken by author

administration launched the “Low-Rate *Jjokbang* Rental Project”, and up until June 2016, it has provided 134 rooms in 7 buildings to *jjokbang* residents. However, even within the same area, if the owner of a *jjokbang* was leaning heavily towards reconstruction, then the residents were required to vacate their rooms in exchange for a small deposit. Help from “Counseling Center for *Jjokbang* Residents” to relocate to public rental housings was also met with a lukewarm response from the residents, as many of the public housing buildings were situated far away from *jjokbang* areas.

As such, *jjokbang* in Seoul have been placed in a rather complicated position, where they are expected to fulfill the role of a sanctuary for street dwellers, while having to resist the pressure of re-development at the same time. Even today, they are struggling to keep a delicate balance between the two opposing forces.

## 6 In Conclusion: Conditions for the Survival of *Jjokbang*

*Jjokbang* is by no means suitable for dwelling in Seoul in the twenty-first century. It is a substandard way of living, which does not even meet the minimum residential requirement set by law. Hidden in the heart of the city, these buildings only came to light when they were “revealed” as a way of life for some street dwellers. Although *jjokbang* eventually shed its image as a sanctuary for street dwellers, it was still seen as quite different to ordinary residence and came to be expected to serve as a safety net for the poor. That, however, is now threatened by recent implementation of public sector-led urban redevelopment. Hence the survival of *jjokbang* now hangs in a delicate balance under the weight of urban redevelopment, its expectation as a residential safety net, and the tenacity of resident movements.

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# Material Changes, Symbolic Transformations: Commercial Gentrification and Urban Change in Turin, Italy



Magda Bolzoni

**Abstract** The chapter focuses on the relevance of commercial transformations in processes of urban change. By investigating the modifications in the commercial and recreational landscape of a semi-central neighbourhood of the city of Turin, a previous one-company-town in the north-west of Italy, the chapter argues that commercial changes have a major role in challenging established uses and representations, affecting the urban spaces in both symbolic and material terms and possibly supporting dynamics of socio-spatial inequalities. Even if the relevance of commercial premises in shaping how a neighbourhood is perceived, described and used in everyday life has been acknowledged and the development of urban landscapes of leisure and consumption is currently a key dynamic in processes of urban upgrading, only in recent times have scholars started wondering how these processes may play into broader dynamics of urban change and social inequality. The centrality that consumption, leisure and entertainment are acquiring in post-industrial cities urges to closely investigate these processes and their social, cultural and economic implications.

**Keywords** Commercial gentrification · Nightlife · Urban change · Post-industrial city · Turin · Italy

## 1 Introduction

As many other post-industrial cities, Turin has recently embraced the turn towards culture and entertainment to face the challenges of this economic and social shift. For long known as a typical one-company-town, strictly related to the automotive industry, it has been recently following a pro-growth agenda towards new paths of development (Bagnasco 1990; Belligni and Ravazzi 2012; Capello and Semi 2018). Along with mega-events, cultural branding and the renovation of the museum offer,

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different districts of the city have emerged and have been promoted as new places of leisure, consumption and night-time entertainment for residents and city-users alike (Semi 2004; Crivello 2011; Bolzoni 2016; Bolzoni and Semi 2020).

Right next to the historical city centre of Turin, the mixed and lively neighbourhood of San Salvario has gone through subsequent periods of fortune and decline, recently becoming one of the new trendy districts of the city. Few blocks tightened between the central railway station and the main river of the city, it hosts Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Islamic places of worship, a diverse population in terms of origin and class and narrow streets with buildings presenting commercial and workshop spaces at the ground floor and residential units at the upper ones. Its dense commercial fabric is nowadays at the centre of the scene: after a couple of decades in which closed shutters, traditional, everyday stores and ethnic shops characterized the streetscapes, in the last decade fancy stores, graphic and design studios and, later on, lounge cafés, bars, restaurants and night venues have emerged. San Salvario has become the new hub of leisure and consumption of the city, the place to go for a perfect night out. While the demographic composition of the neighbourhood seems to have been only slowly affected, its everyday rhythms, representation and practices have deeply and rapidly changed.

The relevance of commercial premises in affecting the ways a neighbourhood is perceived, described and used in everyday life has been largely acknowledged (Jacobs 1961; Ley 1996; Cooper and Mele 2002; Zukin 2010; Oejo 2014) and the creation of landscapes of leisure and consumption supporting distinctive lifestyles and social identities is now a key dynamic in processes of urban upgrading (Bridge and Dowling 2001; Zukin and Kosta 2004). It has been indeed argued that commercial streets “provide places with their distinct identities” and they serve as the “structure and symbol of neighborhood life” (Deener 2007: 294). New shops, stores and recreational businesses “embody, serve and represent a powerful discourse of urban change” (Zukin et al. 2009: 47). Moreover, by legitimating some uses and users over others, they may contribute in creating spaces of exclusion (Deener 2007; Zukin 2010; Oejo 2014). However, only in recent times have scholars started wondering how processes of commercial transformation may play into broader dynamics of urban change and social inequality. Decades of researches on gentrification have mostly focused on residential, demographic changes and housing dynamics, but more recently the policy drivers, the actors and the social implications of a neighbourhood’s commodification and commercial transformation have increasingly and more clearly come to scholars’ attention (Deener 2007; Rankin 2008; Zukin et al. 2009; Oejo 2014; Hubbard 2017). With due exceptions, to the extent that the commercial dimension of urban change was previously addressed, it was mainly considered as marker of residential transformations, an anecdotal evidence of broader processes of change or a symbol of the new inhabitants’ lifestyle, reflection and material support of the social and cultural identity of the new urban middle classes (Ley 1996; Bridge and Dowling 2001; Rankin 2008; Zukin et al. 2009).

However, to take commercial transformations seriously and to address them as agents of urban changes appear to be crucial and even more relevant in settings where gentrification, here intended as “the production of urban spaces for increasingly more affluent users” (Hackworth 2002: 815), may take forms and dynamics that are

different from those traditionally pointed out in the literature (due, for example, to the structure of the housing market, of homeownership or of the political regulatory framework). In Italy, for example, according to the 2011 national census, the 72.1% of the households own the house where they live, 18% are on the rental market, while the remaining 9.9% are in free usufruct. These characteristics group Italy together with other Southern-European countries, where over the last 50 years most of the families have chosen buying over renting in the private market (Filandri 2015). In such a setting, it is plausible to expect that residential gentrification may generally be interstitial and slow, while deep and rapid changes may still take place in the commercial landscape. Residential transformations may have different timing—or they may happen with a different magnitude.

The analyses here presented rely on two years of ethnographic fieldwork (2011–2012) in the neighbourhood of San Salvario and on broader investigations in the following years concerning the city transformations. Different data collection methods were adopted, mainly participant and naturalistic observation, in-depth interviews, archival and media research. The participant observation took place in neighbourhood's public spaces, commercial activities, events, fairs and manifestations, with the purpose of understanding the concrete changes occurring in the area, as well as how residents, workers and neighbourhood's users supported, reacted and interacted with the on-going transformations in everyday life. Participant observation was also carried out within the associative fabric of the neighbourhood, taking active part to it, to deepen one of the crucial settings where narratives, discourses and interventions on the neighbourhood and its changes have taken shape. Around 70 qualitative in-depth interviews were recorded with four different actors: local authorities, association representatives, residents and commercial and recreational entrepreneurs. Even if with different specifications, the purpose of the interviews was to investigate how the neighbourhood, its processes and dynamics of change were experienced, acted, perceived and reflected upon by the actors. Archival records and previous researches have been utilized both to gather information on the neighbourhood and to investigate narratives and discourses over its space. Newspaper articles from the local editions of two main national newspapers (*La Stampa* and *La Repubblica*) have been collected and brochures, flyers, and local booklets have been archived, and the social media, such as the local blogs and the pages of local restaurants, clubs, commercial and recreational activities, have also been taken into account, mainly focusing on the way the neighbourhood was portrayed.

By discussing the case study of San Salvario, the chapter aims at investigating the relevance of transformations in the commercial and recreational landscapes in processes of urban change. It intends to highlight some of the material and symbolic ways through which such transformations may affect a neighbourhood, influencing everyday practices and uses, but also images and representations, defining who's entitled to be in the urban space and what is the legitimate path of change the area should follow. In doing so, the analysis engages with the concepts of *commercial gentrification* (Rankin 2008; Zukin et al. 2009; Ocejo 2014), that it is here intended as the production of increasingly exclusive and socially homogeneous spaces of leisure and consumption for consumers considerably more affluent than the previous ones,

and of *urban playscapes* (Chatterton and Hollands 2002), as urban areas transformed into nocturnal playgrounds for young revellers, city-users and tourists.

## 2 Changing Landscapes of Consumption

Transformations in the global geography of power and in leading economic sectors have been challenging cities' structures and urban governments in new and complex ways. In a frame of global competitiveness and economic changes, cities have emerged as new key actors, and local authorities are increasingly in charge to find new strategies to promote urban growth (Harvey 1989; Brenner 2000; Jessop et al. 2008).

Once quite marginal to the city's economic engine of production and manufacturing, consumption, entertainment and culture have become significant contributors to the growth and success of the post-industrial city. So central have leisure and consumption come to be in the new economy that some scholars have started talking about the city as an "entertainment machine", affirming that are now amenities, cultural attractions, consumption and night-time entertainment businesses that drive urban growth and local policies (Clark et al. 2002; Zukin 2010; Hae 2011; Oejo 2014). Cities are more and more places of consumption rather than just of production (Zukin 1995), and the model of the creative city (Florida 2002) contributed in strengthening these elements as recognized ingredients of growth in the eyes of the urban governments (Clark et al. 2002; Peck 2005). In this frame, specific urban areas, usually close to the city centre, are promoted as entertainment districts, where locals and city users alike go for distraction, relaxation and fun. Daytime and night-time attractions and places of consumption draw visitors and investments to the city core, and the emergence of these activities fulfils the idea of replacing the old economic structure of cities, based on manufacturing and production, with a new one, based on consumption, culture, tourism and creativity. Local authorities usually welcome, if not directly promote, such processes as signs and means of urban growth, often scarcely taking into account the social backlashes they may involve. This urban growth agenda often results in upscale redevelopments, supporting or producing nightlife scenes and high-end commercial precincts, stressing economic growth from expanding tax revenues and employment as legitimization (Chatterton and Hollands 2002; Clark et al. 2002; Zukin 2010; Aytar and Rath 2012; Oejo 2014; Hubbard 2017). Such agenda tends to produce a commercial and recreational scene that appeals to wealthier tourists, city-users, temporary residents and newcomers, and prioritizes their needs and desires as consumers over those of lower classes and long-term residents and users (Deener 2007; Zukin 2010; Oejo 2014). The frequency and relevance of these strategies of urban growth in post-industrial cities ask for a careful investigation.

The commercial landscape has a crucial role in shaping uses, meanings and the sense of place of a neighbourhood (Jacobs 1961; Deener 2007; Zukin 2010). Its transformation and the arrival of new, upscale shops affect both its internal and external

perception, as well as its everyday life (Cooper and Mele 2002; Deener 2007; Chapple and Jacobous 2009; Zukin 2010; Duyvendak 2011; Ocejo 2014; Hubbard 2017). In other words, new shops, stores and recreational enterprises may influence the neighbourhood both in material and symbolic terms. The closure of old, traditional shops and the opening of new upscale stores that cater for a different clientele may disrupt established routines, sense of place and the neighbourhood's identity. Sidewalk cafés privatize portions of public spaces, imposing specific uses and legitimizing the presence of particular segments of people and of certain behaviours (Zukin et al. 2009). The establishment of night-time entertainment businesses may subvert the urban everyday rhythms, attracting night-time revellers and workers who use the street intensively throughout the night (Crang 2001; Chatterton and Hollands 2002). These upscale, stylish landscapes often contribute to raise the value of the local properties and mark an area as safe and ready for further investments while, institutionalizing the consumption practices of new affluent users as legitimate, they may end up putting the former users out of place (Chapple and Jacobous 2009; Zukin et al. 2009). The new enterprises and their owners exercise a “control over the relationship between aesthetic presentation, public perception, and social and economic utility of a neighborhood location to the effect of closing off additional definitions and uses” (Deener 2007: 311), and, overall, they are able to define who belongs to the urban space, including some while excluding others. In the next few pages we will observe these processes in the city of Turin and in the neighbourhood of San Salvario in particular, trying to discuss their socio-economic implications too.

### 3 The Case of San Salvario, Turin

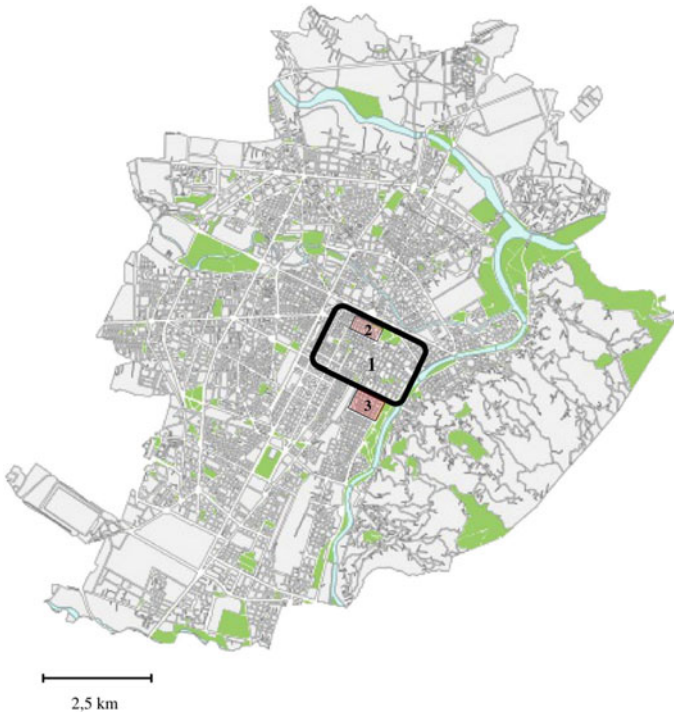
#### 3.1 *Turin on the Move*

Turin is the capital of the Piedmont region, in the north-west of Italy, and the country's fourth largest city in terms of population, with around 872,000 inhabitants in 2019. It has been for long considered the one-company-town of Italy, the city of FIAT (*Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino*—Italian Automobiles Factory Turin), the largest national automobile manufacturer, which has had its headquarters in Turin since its foundation in 1899, and the Italian city closer to the ideal model of Fordist-city, well exemplified by Detroit (Bagnasco 1986). Together with Genoa and Milan it was one of the vertexes of the so-called *triangolo industriale* (industrial triangle), the first industrial region of the country, and it was a nodal hub of the *mira-colo economico* (economic boom) after the World War II. For almost a century, the image and the identity of the city have been strongly tied with the industry, its rhythm followed that of the industrial mode of production and its demography developed accordingly: the immigration from other areas of Italy, and from the South especially, connected to the city industrial expansion, brought Turin inhabitants to 1.2 million in 1974, rising the population of two-thirds in twenty years.

Not surprisingly, the crisis of the industrial society became a crisis of the whole city (Bagnasco 1990). In the same period, other broad dynamics were at work, such as the reshaping of the relationships of power between different scales, in which the national state progressively loses pace against the local scale, on the one side, and the sovra-national one, on the other, as well as neoliberal and deregulatory trends. Moreover, this transition took place in a phase of general crisis of legitimacy of Italian political parties that asked for a change in directions and ways of government. At the beginning of the Nineties a new generation of local politicians took office and involved the civic society and the intellectual elite of the city in envisioning new lines of development (Belligni and Ravazzi 2012). Municipal and regional governments, business communities and private actors gathered around the adoption of a pro-growth agenda following three guidelines: 1) infrastructures and built environment, 2) knowledge, research and technical innovation, and, finally, 3) culture, leisure and tourism (Belligni and Ravazzi 2012). Part of the effort was devoted to establishing a new and attractive image of the city. Mega-events such as the Winter Olympic Games in 2006, the promotion of yearly art and cultural festivals and the re-launch of museum centres have been a part, probably the most visible one, of this strategy. In some aspects, the recent history of Turin, the initiatives and the urban branding's experiments of the last two decades may be read as an attempt of progressive emancipation from FIAT (Vanolo 2008). The development of night-time entertainment activities was promoted too: against the image of a grey, industrial city, tied to the factory's rhythm, the celebration of Turin as a lively, exciting city acquired a central position in city branding (Semi 2004; Vanolo 2008; Crivello 2011).

Within this process, the local authorities supported throughout the years the re-development of different districts as hip and trendy destinations for city users and visitors. The first neighbourhood interested by this new agenda between the end of the Nineties and the first years of the Two Thousands was the Quadrilatero Romano, in the city historical center (Fig. 1). In this case, public-private partnership, zoning policies and ad hoc interventions turn the area in an example of state-led gentrification (Semi 2004). The residential and the commercial landscape were modified to promote a new image of the city and attract new, more affluent, residents and users. Zoning policies involving the commercial landscape, creating an area where new openings were allowed without restrictions, were put in place exactly for this reason. The transformation of Quadrilatero Romano was considered a success by the local authorities and referred to as a model for other areas of the cities, despite the social backlashes involved and scarcely addressed by the municipality. After a phase in which the city adopted a proactive approach in managing such kind of transformations, later on, after that the Olympics debts and the economic crisis stroke the city budget, this support took a more laissez-faire approach, with the municipality letting the market go mostly un-ruled (Bolzoni and Semi 2020). The emergence of the neighbourhood of San Salvario as a new landscape of leisure and consumption took place in this frame, in absence of strong political interventions but with a new agenda, direction and narrative of the city in the background.





**Fig. 1** Map of Turin, with the historical city centre (1) Quadrilatero Romano (2) and San Salvario (3) highlighted. *Source* author's elaboration on Geoportale Città di Torino map (geoportale.comune.torino.it)

### 3.2 *A Focus on San Salvario*

San Salvario is a semi-central neighbourhood of Turin, planned and built in the mid Ninetieth century right outside the city historical centre, between the central railway station and the main river of the city (Fig. 1). The streets are narrow, usually one-way only, and the urban fabric is dense. The buildings are often arranged around a courtyard and many of the tenements have communal balconies, from which accessing the apartments. There are not many public spaces available for meeting or gathering, with the exception of Largo Saluzzo and Piazza Madama Cristina that since 1876 hosts an important daily open-air market. The neighbourhood fabric maintains a characteristic already present in the original Master Plan, particularly relevant for our analysis: buildings that host workshop and commercial spaces at the ground floor and residential units at the upper ones. The mix of uses goes along with a historically mixed population, in terms of classes, places of origins and religions. Created in the period in which the freedom of religion started to be granted, the neighbourhood accommodates Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and, nowadays, Islamic places of worship. The proximity to the railway station contributed in making the area a first beachhead

of following waves of immigration, while its position within the city, its historical buildings and the closeness with the main city park and a branch of the University, supported the presence of representatives of middle class, entrepreneurs and professionals (Ires Piemonte 1995; Belluati 2004). The area therefore served as first landing zone for migrants from the countryside at first, from the South of Italy in the years right after the WWII and from other countries from the Eighties onwards. Its historical buildings, similarly to others in the central part of the city, have always supported a form of vertical social stratification: in each building the first floor (the *piano nobile*) used to be reserved to the aristocracy, the second one to the bourgeoisie, while the upper floors were inhabited by servants, craftsmen and the first industrial workers. With due distinctions and transformations, this vertical separation maintained itself in time, facilitating the population mix in the neighbourhood space. The newcomers would frequently take advantage of the marginal, and often informal, rental market of the garrets of the oldest buildings closer to the railway station, frequently left in a situation of abandonment and decay (Allasino et al. 2000). However, each new wave of migrants contributed in making the mix more variegated, rather than turning the social fabric of the neighbourhood totally upside down or transforming it in a neighbourhood populated by migrants or working-class representatives only (CICSENE 2003; Todros 2010). Indeed, the neighbourhood has never become an exclusively working-class or ethnic one, rather maintaining its mixed character. Similarly, buildings in clear need of maintenance were in between refined and well-preserved ones, while high-end stores shared the streets with everyday popular and then ethnic ones.

In the mid-Nineties, however, the issues of inter-ethnic coexistence, building deterioration, small retail crisis and industrial decline merged together in a climate of social tension and distress (Allasino et al. 2000). The external image of the neighbourhood strongly declined and San Salvario became known as an example of “urban crisis”. The attention was especially focused on the presence of migrants, considered connected to issues of public safety, drug dealing and general decline of the neighbourhood. Even if in 1995 only the 5% of the neighbourhood’s residents was foreign (but they were the 3% at the city level), a larger number of migrants was present in the area during the day because of the services, shops and social networks, creating a visible presence in the neighbourhood (Belluati 2004). Ethnic shops sprung alongside the traditional ones and Islamic places of worship were established.

The outburst of the crisis triggered the reaction of both public institutions and civil society. Municipal authorities’ actions mainly developed along the lines of public safety and infrastructural interventions, while civic society, local NGOs and bottom-up initiatives mostly focused on social and cultural interventions, in the attempt to create a climate of communication and trust and on promoting a positive image of the area (Allasino et al. 2000). Mostly thanks to the work of civic society, local NGOs and bottom-up initiatives, in less than ten years time San Salvario came to be considered a positive example of multicultural integration (Bolzoni 2019). The number of migrants has risen that since, reaching a pick of 26% of the resident population of the neighbourhood in 2010, to then decline (by the end of 2019 they will constitute only the 14%). In that period, traditional everyday stores, ethnic shops

and a number of empty commercial spaces, inherited from the small retail crisis of the Nineties, characterized the streetscape.

From the mid-2000s onwards, the diverse, gritty and authentic atmosphere of the neighbourhood—together with the availability of empty commercial spaces with a rent lower than that of the surrounding areas and its proximity to the city centre and the Architecture Faculty—attracted the interest of young representatives of the so-called new urban middle classes. In a period in which sharing the streets with a diverse population was becoming one of the desirable characteristics of an authentic urban experience (Lloyd 2006; Zukin 2008), the ethnic diversity of the neighbourhood, from a reason of stigma, became a positive and attractive element. While the high degree of homeownership and the fragmentation of the property contributed in making the demographic transformation of the neighbourhood slow and interstitial (Belluati 2004; Todros 2010), the commercial landscape has proven to be more porous. Since the late 2000s the area started hosting design, graphic and architectural studios and few night-time venues. In the following years these new commercial premises were joined by an increasing number of restaurants, cafés, cocktail bars and night-time clubs, which firstly sprung alongside and then progressively displaced ethnic shops and traditional everyday stores. Even in absence of specific policies on the area, a process of commercial gentrification was taking place, closely followed by the emergence of the neighbourhood as a night-time entertainment district. Slow at first, this became increasingly visible and speeded up from 2011 onwards.

This process was supported by the combination of transformations at both national and local level. At the national level, the revision of the law on commerce promoted a liberalization in terms of licenses and working hours throughout the whole country. At the same time, at the city level, the local authorities stopped for few years the new openings in the city center and closed down a number of establishments located in an area along the river that used to be devoted to night time entertainment (Crivello 2018). The combination of national liberalization and local limitations, the availability of commercial spaces left empty by the crisis of the Nineties and relatively cheaper than the city historical centre, the gritty atmosphere and the collocation of the neighbourhood right outside the historical city center and next to the former night-time entertainment area along the river, contributed in fostering the commercial transformation of the area even in absence of a direct zoning policy. As it often happens in cases of commercial upgrading (Deener 2007; Zukin 2010; Ocejo 2014), once the neighbourhood started to be considered as the new trendy district of the city, the transformation took an even faster pace, attracting new businesses and investors into the area. While the resident population still appears quite mixed, both in terms of ethnic origins and class, the commercial landscape has been deeply changing and becoming increasingly socially and culturally homogeneous.

### 3.3 *Material Changes, Symbolic Transformations*

Transformations in commercial landscape may affect a neighbourhood's life in multiple, interconnected and complex ways, involving both material and symbolic changes. For example, the emergence of commercial premises devoted to leisure and consumption may change the streets' uses and everyday practices, and may at the same time re-shape the image of a neighbourhood, which in turn ends up in attracting new consumers and enterprises. The relationship between these two levels, likewise the relationship between images, discourses and everyday practices, should be therefore understood as circular and mutually reinforcing. Since transformation is a cumulative process, these multidimensional dynamics are constantly intertwined and affect each other over time (Cooper and Mele 2002; Deener 2007; Zukin 2010; Oejo 2014).

The concrete, *material*, tangible dimension is of course the most immediately visible one. San Salvario inherited from the crisis of the mid-Nineties a number of empty commercial spaces that resulted in a relevant number of closed shutters. Indeed, at the end of the last decade, the streets of the neighbourhood were strongly characterized by vacant spaces, alternated with ethnic shops and old traditional stores. The new commercial and recreational activities have initially reopened spaces left empty by the crisis of the Nineties. The rent was not extremely cheap, but it was anyway cheaper than in the city center, where, as mentioned, it was also difficult to open new businesses because of the city regulations. While initially individual, small, young entrepreneurs started to open their activity there, in a few years time bigger and already established local businesses (often with other activities in the city already) moved into the area too: the interest in capitalizing on the new fame of the neighbourhood rapidly spread. As the neighbourhood started to become increasingly trendy, the value of the commercial spaces started to increase too. The new activities did not only occupy previously empty spaces but they also started taking over venues previously occupied by traditional or ethnic shops, buying them out. The emergence of new enterprises therefore started a process of commercial displacement and introduced new practices of consumption, goods and consumers, changing the uses, the aspect and the everyday routines of the streets.

The effect on the streetscape was immediately relevant: according to the city regulations (approved in 2004), commercial activities have the right to obtain the permit to occupy the sidewalk or the parking spot in front of their enterprise for business-related reasons, e.g. terraces. Therefore, as the number of restaurants, cocktail bars and cafés increased, the number of terraces did the same. While some of them are characterized by mobile items, with chairs and tables that are put on the sidewalk only during the business working hours, many have got a more permanent character, with stable fences, tables, chairs and other furniture (Fig. 2). These outdoor terraces stay put also when the establishment is closed and they often remain there throughout the whole year, becoming an integral part of the commercial activity itself. The addition of new urban furniture is not only visible but also asks for a different interaction with the urban space. Even if this may seem rather banal, for example, their increase



**Fig. 2** Terraces and sidewalk cafés in San Salvador's streets. *Source* picture taken by author in 2012

implied a decrease of spots available for parking. In this historical area, where residents and everyday users park their cars in the streets because of the absence of garages, this had a relevant impact on the everyday routines. The decrease of spaces available for parking and the increase of people coming to the neighbourhood, along with the residents, have resulted in more chaotic streets and longer time to park, as frequently emerged in the interviews with residents. The use of sidewalks was affected too. The presence of stable furnitures in the streets that can be used only by the clients of restaurants, bars and cafés, implies a growing privatization of public space: increasing portions of public spaces have become privately managed and privately used. The use of public spaces has become bound to specific practices of consumption, more or less explicitly and directly displacing other uses. While during the day terraces and sidewalk cafés are empty monuments to the on-going changes, symbols that mark the public space and affect the way it is used, the creation of exclusive places through consumption is even more noticeable in the evening and night hours, when sidewalks and streets become an extension of restaurants and pubs and a young and quite homogeneous crowd, at least in term of class, ethnicity and age, take over wide portions of the neighbourhood.

The growing number of venues that stay open from the afternoon until late at night also contributed in shifting the neighbourhood economy from a prevalence of daytime towards night-time activities. This transformation does not affect only the economic balance, but also the everyday rhythm of the area. In the morning and in the first hours of the afternoon, indeed, the streets of the neighbourhood are characterized by a large number of closed shutters that often signal the presence of cafés, clubs, restaurants and night-time activities that are closed during the day and open at night. On the other side, the night-time is more active than ever and the streets are intensely used from the early evening until late at night (Fig. 3). At night, a young crowd of revellers, consumers and night-time workers characterizes the space of the neighbourhood. In so doing, they disrupt the previously existing correspondence between day as active and night as quiet, adding movements, actions and sounds to a time frame that used to be still and silent (Crang 2001; Ocejo 2014). The shift from a city mostly centred on industrial rhythms, considered as austere and hard-working, to another



**Fig. 3** Nightlife in San Salvario. *Source* picture taken by author in 2014

one that, especially in some of its portion, revolves around night-time businesses and entertainment economy, is striking. Moreover, because of the architectural structure of the neighbourhood, that is both commercial and residential, the new urban rhythm affects the residents' everyday life, mostly because of the nuisance during the night. Indeed, the neighbourhood's night-time users and the residents are not the very same population and the issue of night-time public nuisance has come to be a crucial topic of discussion: numerous protests, more or less formal and organized, have taken form. Along with individual residents filling out complaints to local authorities (and throwing out of the windows eggs and bucket of water on the young revellers in particularly intense nights), some collective actions have been made and a socio-cultural association of residents opposing the spreading of night-time entertainment businesses on the basis of the right to sleep at night has been launched.

More *symbolic* transformations grow upon and supported these material changes. The new activities, for example, have not only re-opened previously closed spaces, changed their uses or started offering different goods or services: the style, the atmosphere, the people are different too and contribute in creating a different sense of place. As emerged in the interviews, many long-term residents and users started to perceive the neighbourhood as changed, not finding any more the character and the references they used to rely on. The displacement of commercial activities, after all, does not only affect the shopkeepers and the entrepreneurs who are displaced, but the urban population too (Marcuse 1985; Shaw and Hagemas 2015): some goods and services cease to be available and the social relations that used to revolve around those places vanish, or need to find other spaces to express themselves. Moreover, the new establishments mostly target some segments of the urban population, often different from those who were targeted before: university students, young people working (or striving to work) in creative and intellectual jobs, the young members of the so-called new urban middle classes, visitor and city users (Ley 1996; Florida 2002; Butler and Robson 2003). As consumption is by no means neutral but works as means of social distinction (Bourdieu 1979), consumption practices more or less explicitly include some while excluding others. The displacement of ethnic shops, everyday stores and traditional bars by trendy restaurants, cocktail bars and design

studios have changed the uses, the appearance and the people walking in the neighbourhood's streets, signalling some preferred uses over others. By legitimizing some uses and users over others (e.g., hip consumption of Italian university student in the sidewalk cafés versus migrants hanging around), the new stores contribute in creating urban spaces where only some are welcomed. Therefore, the closure of old shops and the opening of new ones affect the aspect of the street and modify the reference points that make the space familiar. Through their storefronts, furniture, advertisements and their arrangement of the outside area, the aesthetic of the commercial activities affects the streets too. In this sense, the new businesses and their owners exercise, even involuntarily, a "symbolic ownership" over the neighbourhood's streets (Deener 2007). Not only the concrete elements, but also the social and cultural references are different, and the new references may make someone feel out of place, while reassuring others (Zukin 2010; Duyvendak 2011).

The features of the commercial and recreational landscape are central in shaping also the external image and perception of an area. The opening of upscale stores and restaurants marks an area as safe and ready for further commercial and residential investments, giving way to successive processes of change: these transformations "signal the market about the direction and specific type of change in a community" (Chapple and Jacobus 2009: 27). In the mid-Nineties, the external image of San Salvario was characterized by the features of danger, public insecurity and crisis linked to the presence of migrant population. The large number of closed shutters, especially visible in the area because of the architectural character described above, supported such image and was often referred to as sign of a problematic situation. As mentioned, thanks to the work of association and civic society, the situation slowly changed, but the external image of the neighbourhood was not equally affected. However, from late 2010, that is when the process of commercial change started to gain a faster and more invasive pace, the media coverage on San Salvario started to be increasingly centred on its new cafés, restaurants and shops. The new openings were firstly greeted as evidences of a progressive distancing from the neighbourhood's troubled past, and, later on, as confirmations of the fact that San Salvario was becoming the new trendy area of the city. The reviews both echoed the process of change and contributed in shaping the new atmosphere of the neighbourhood. The emergence of this new image of the neighbourhood has been facilitated by and integrated within the city's one: as mentioned, Turin has increasingly betted on culture and entertainment as a route for re-development (Vanolo 2008; Crivello 2011). In the process of creation of selective narratives about the city and its desired path, those that are in line with the preferred one are more easily stressed and valorised. In later years, San Salvario has come to be portrayed not only as a place where to enjoy the downtime and to consume in a nice, diverse, familiar, cool environment, but also as the new hub of Turin's night-life. Also, through the transformation of the commercial landscape, the image and representation of the neighbourhood have been deeply changing, as well as its position in the cityscape.

## 4 Conclusions

The main argument of this chapter is that commercial changes can have a central role in promoting urban transformations at both material and symbolic levels. The case of San Salvatio allowed us to investigate the role and relevance of commercial transformations in processes of urban change. The arrival of new commercial premises, catering an increasingly homogeneous group of consumers, mainly university students and young representatives of the new urban middle classes who do not live in the neighbourhood but come there to spend their free time, has affected the area in both material and symbolic terms. As the services and goods available, and for whom, were altered, transformations in terms of uses and everyday routines went together with changes in terms of aesthetic, atmosphere and representation of the neighbourhood. The process of commercial gentrification implied a changing use of the urban spaces in which some social groups and practices have become legitimated over others. This contributed in creating practices and spaces of social exclusion, on the one side, and material repercussions on the residents' everyday life, on the other side. Moreover, the establishment of these new upscale venues contributed in changing the internal and external image of the neighbourhood, marking it as a hub for leisure and consumption within the city and therefore attracting an increasing number of consumers and prospective enterprises. This case, therefore, underlines that commercial gentrification should not only be considered a sign or a mark of residential gentrification but also an agent of change, which dynamics, actors and outcomes ask for specific analyses. As mentioned in the introduction, this appears even more relevant for those settings in which residential and demographic change might be slowed down because of the characteristics of the housing market and the high degree of homeownership.

The case of San Salvatio also supports the argument that gentrification, as production of urban spaces for increasingly more affluent users, may involve different forms of displacement beyond direct residential displacement (Marcuse 1985; Slater 2009; Shaw and Hagemas 2015). In the neighbourhood of San Salvatio, commercial displacement and commercial turnover have been relevant and data show an increase of rental and sale values of the commercial stock. However, the residential change of the area has for long been slow and marginal, insomuch that previous studies described it as "minute" and "interstitial" (Todros 2010), and data do not show any peculiar increase in terms of value. Most likely, the high level of homeownership and the residual nature of the rental sector worked as a sort of stabilizer (Belluati 2004; Todros 2010), while the economic crisis of 2008 had probably a certain role in that too. Interestingly enough, the idea of moving out of the area has emerged in interviews with some homeowner residents: in some cases, the material issues (especially noise and parking problems) were put forward as central, while for others the main problem was the perceived changed character of the neighbourhood, which started making them feel out of place. Everyday practical problems as well as changes in the sense of place and in the atmosphere of the neighbourhood may therefore create



a certain pressure towards displacement, encouraging some to move out, and also preventing others to move in.

While we have here discussed a specific case, the creation and support of entertainment districts have become a popular strategy of urban development and it is increasingly part of the urban growth agenda of post-industrial cities. As mentioned, San Salvario is not the only area of Turin that has gone through this kind of change: other districts, in different times and with slightly different dynamics (with a stronger intervention of the local authorities in some cases, with a more *laissez-faire* approach in others), emerged as places of consumption and night-time entertainment (Semi 2004; Crivello 2011; Bolzoni and Semi 2020). They have been considered as positive and successful processes by the local authorities who have often dismissed the protests and complaints of some of the residents as irrelevant: the transformations indeed comply with the new path chosen for the city's development. However, the emergence of urban neighbourhoods as places of leisure and consumption, that are increasingly socially and culturally homogeneous, may have problematic outcomes both in social and economic terms, especially in the long run. The pervasiveness and immediate high economic returns of this upscale economy tend to displace locally rooted economic activities that cannot keep up with the economic returns of the new enterprises. But when the next trendy, hip destination of the city will emerge, it will likely attract many of the users and the activities that were so flourishing: the risk is to end up with a neighbourhood that has no economic backbone anymore, with the previous activities already disappeared and the new ones declining or moving into the new trendy district. Moreover, the tendency of replicating models of entertainment, leisure and consumption that have proven to be successful elsewhere may create homogeneous and standardized places, eroding local specificities and potential competitive advantages, which, in the long term, nullifies the competitiveness of singular localities in the global arena. It is also relevant to highlight that these trends support a model of uneven urban development, with an unequal spatial and social distribution of loss and gains within the city. In the current reshaping of the relations between the state and the market, the economic and social sphere, these processes therefore ask for careful investigation.

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# **The Inclusive Properties of Service Hub Neighbourhoods**

# Service Hubs: Stuck in Time, Stuck in Place



Geoffrey DeVerteuil

**Abstract** In this chapter, I focus on the tension and contradictions between the displacing logics of gentrification on the one hand, and the spatial resilience of service hubs on the other. Defined as conspicuous clusters of voluntary sector agencies that help the vulnerable in urban areas, service hubs are threatened by the gentrification of inner-city quarters of global cities such as London, Los Angeles and Sydney. I present three case studies in these same cities, focusing on the process and strategies of spatial resilience in terms of private strategies, spatial clustering, support from the local state, with the result that resilient service hubs are increasingly stuck in place and unchanging, and thus stuck in time as well. The chapter speaks to the importance of spatial resilience, but also to the increasing entrapment of formerly important uses marooned in dynamic city centres.

**Keywords** Service hubs · Gentrification · Resilience · Voluntary organisation sector

## 1 Introduction: Service Hubs, Gentrification and Resilience

This chapter will focus on the tensions and contradictions between the privatisation and neoliberalisation of urban space via gentrification on the one hand, and the spatial resilience of “service hubs” of voluntary sector organisations (DeVerteuil et al. 2020) and collective action on the other. These counterforces map on to urban change via revalorisation versus staying put, with a focus on active strategies of resilience, rather than inertia. Gentrification may be defined as “the production of space for progressively more affluent users” (Hackworth 2002: 815), resulting in what Smith (1996: 39) called “the class remake of the central urban landscape”. For Lees et al. (2016), gentrification across the globe necessarily involves an incoming, higher-income group that displaces—directly or indirectly—the original inhabitants, leading to a reworking of urban space via landscape change. Of late, gentrification

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has become very much a fusion of state policies and private interests that seek to revalorise urban land, and as such is part of Plane 1 from "Introduction: Towards a Framework of Urban Inclusivity". There is also the sense that quaint notions of gentrification as the outcome of individual preferences have been thoroughly overtaken by the state drive towards the privileging of real estate values, producing remarkably mimetic landscapes across the globe. This state-led financialisation of real estate is fuelling new-build gentrification, particularly in the Global South (DeVerteuil and Manley 2017). The state has now become the central agent of gentrification, imposing a global gentrification blueprint through zero-tolerance policing, creative city and mixed communities discourse, heritage preservation policies, and slum gentrification in places such as Mumbai and Rio de Janeiro. This broad understanding of gentrification incorporates incumbent rehabilitation of existing stock *and* new-build redevelopment (Lees et al. 2016).

Service hubs can be defined as “conspicuous concentrations of voluntary organisations, many of which emerged and prospered in the public domain of pre-Keynesian times (for example, the Salvation Army) but reached their apogee during the era of the Keynesian “public city” in the 1970s, providing advantageous agglomeration effects for their clients, many of whom prize the maximised accessibility that a central location affords” (DeVerteuil 2015: 10). Service hubs are very much part of Field 3 from Chap. 1, which covers the more informal mechanisms of support for people who are not easily absorbed into local communities, or by the state or market. In effect, Field 3 meshes collective ideologies of care and help with micro-politics of inclusivity via the platform of the voluntary sector, which sets itself apart from other social institutions (state, market, informal community and family) by addressing the needs of the vulnerable and unserved (DeVerteuil et al. 2020). Service hubs are holdovers from the public city, when the state was not interested in regeneration and gentrification but rather supporting vulnerable populations, at least indirectly through support to the voluntary sector.

The displacing logics of gentrification—in terms of raising rents, evictions, destruction of low-density and “lower use” areas, creating high-end landscapes that forever exclude access by the lower classes—are in tension with the spatial imprint of service hubs, which benefit from the agglomeration of like-minded helping agencies. I have conceptualised this tension using the frame of *resilience*, particularly the spatial kind. At its most basic, resilience refers to the “ability to recover and position elastically following a disturbance of some form” (Wrigley and Dolega 2011: 2345). Resilience must involve a particular shock, whether social, ecological, political, or economic, to a stable system, combined with its capacity to “bounce back” to some degree in the post-shock period while showing adaptability and elasticity (DeVerteuil 2015; DeVerteuil and Golubchikov 2016). By adopting a (spatial) resilience approach, I move away from risk and vulnerability to adopt a more proactive stance, living with and expecting risk, and grasping the capacity of people and places to anticipate, endure, adapt to and minimise the disruption from a variety of shocks. Resilience is very much about slow and incremental change, capturing the “autonomous initiative [and] recuperation”, the “getting by”, protective care and mutual aid that enables survival in circumstances that do not allow changes to the

causes that dictate and constrain survival (Katz 2004: 242). In this way, resilience can be seen as slowing down change, of protecting long-established places like service hubs—this defence process is at the heart of the chapter, in terms of how service hubs prove resilient in the face of the gentrification threat, and at what cost.

The chapter is organised as follows. First, I will present three case studies of service hubs in global cities that are undergoing gentrification: Sydney, London and Los Angeles. Data—in the form of in-depth qualitative interviews of voluntary service providers was collected in 2011 and 2014 for Sydney, and 2009–2010 for London and Los Angeles, and have largely been unpublished so far. The sampling focus was on gentrifying inner-city areas in these three global cities, each of which are experiencing widespread upgrading, increasingly at the behest of the state (DeVerteuil 2015). Each case study features different aspects of the tension between rapacious gentrification on the one hand, and spatial resilience (i.e., “staying put”) of the voluntary sector in service hubs on the other. In the discussion, I return to the idea that the spatial resilience of service hubs has been successful enough that many are prone to being stuck in time—not necessarily a bad thing—while immune to some of the larger dynamics in urban space, but also at risk of being stuck in place, as pervasive surrounding gentrification makes it impossible to relocate or expand in situ (DeVerteuil et al. 2007; Lix et al. 2007; Marr et al. 2009; DeVerteuil 2011, 2019). As such, service hubs become throwbacks to an older kind of urbanity and civil society.

### ***1.1 Case Study 1: Sydney Service Hubs***

In this particular case study, I investigate the resilience of service hubs to the south and east of the Sydney CBD: Kings Cross, Surry Hills and Darlinghurst (see Fig. 1):

All these areas have seen systematic gentrification since the 1990s, and yet the service hubs that revolve around serving homeless people, youth, indigenous groups and the LGBT community have remained remarkably resilient. Despite the displacement pressures, there has been no concerted effort to push out the poor and their services, partly due to the fact that these inner-city communities remain tolerant, if not progressive in outlook. This has certainly been the case in Surry Hills, which features both rampant gentrification alongside a well-established set of services that cater to those drifting into the inner city, as one shelter noted:

Our people come from a range of locations ... they tend to gravitate here by reason of circumstance (mental health problems, addictions, prison background, etc.). There are extensive public housing facilities in this area, as well as private housing stock which are increasingly being sold, redeveloped and upgraded; these are [now] out of reach to our people.

The service hub has remained resilient partly due to a diligent process of image management for those services considered “trendy” and that fit in well within the gentrifying yet outwardly progressive inner-city landscape. A street-level community organisation serving vulnerable populations noted that those services with “trendy” clients such as homeless youth, were more welcome than those who



**Fig. 1** Location map for Sydney case studies. *Source* DeVerteuil (2015: 59)

served “lost causes”, such as homeless adults and those who used drugs—their next-door neighbour, a needle exchange, was viewed as particularly problematic and ill-suited to the environs. An environmental advocacy organisation similarly stated that “Surry Hills is ideal for trendy causes such as the environment, especially with young people ... it is also attracting “start-up” not-for-profits attracted to the progressive vibe” (DeVerteuil 2015). In effect, Surry Hills is attractive for voluntary sector organisations with an “edge” that fits into the overall gentrification narrative.

As such, the services in Surry Hills are adamant about staying put, even when their clientele is increasingly displaced to cheaper areas, especially the western suburbs that are up to 40 kms from the traditional CBD. As one youth shelter put it, “young persons have fewer affordable options for sourcing food and other essentials... young persons feel increasingly as though they cannot “belong” in these areas”. However, gentrification introduces the impossibility of moving within Surry Hills, or of even expanding on site. Instead, the focus is on using the network of services, as well as support from local councils and the long-lost ability to purchase the property, to ensure spatial resilience (DeVerteuil 2015). The excellent transportation links to the rest of Sydney ensure that Surry Hills will remain popular for voluntary sector organisations, although again the clientele is certainly at risk of displacement.

In Darlinghurst to the east, many of the services specifically cater to the LGBT community, which also has a hand in gentrifying the neighbourhood. This community has held steadfast to the inner-city, given its greater tolerance and freedom when compared to the suburbs. Most of the LGBT services, however, noted that they



could not get a similarly central location if they had to start from scratch. While Darlinghurst is the epicentre for the LGBT community in Sydney, even this community is now being displaced to cheaper locales under the threat of “gay gentrification” that pushes out poorer and younger gays—yet again the services themselves stay put because of the central location and the symbolism of remaining in Darlinghurst. For instance, HIV + clients are now much more scattered than they used to be, and they are living longer—for health clinics in Darlinghurst, this means a more challenging ability to reach clients who no longer live nearby, but certainly not impossible. For those services that did not cater to the LGBT community, such as a mental health facility attached to the St Vincent’s Hospital, staying put was relatively straightforward (DeVerteuil 2015). The facility had “cashed out” in 2010 from a previous, more rundown premises and had used the proceedings to buy the next facility space, giving it better access and proximity to clients, and better integration with mental health services. Despite its stable and protected location, the organisation had noticed the upgrading in the area, as well as its mixed nature—incumbent upgrading punctuated by new-build projects that dramatically altered the visual and social landscape, as in neighbouring Kings Cross.

Finally, in Kings Cross to the far east of the Sydney CBD, the longstanding concentration of homeless and substance abusers has attracted a stable set of services that feed off the area’s highly accessible, dense and transient nature. These very characteristics make it easier for many services to blend in, even with gentrification. One prime example is a medically-supervised injection site for opioid users, using the harm reduction approach that only seeks to reduce the harm associated with taking drugs, rather than banning drugs altogether while promoting abstinence (DeVerteuil 2014). There are up to 180 visits per day, but all are anonymous. While at first there was considerable community opposition to the site, this has gone down as the number of overdoses in public spaces (as well as discarded equipment) have also gone down in lockstep. The management of the site’s image means that its presence and exact location are known only to long-term residents of Kings Cross. Similarly, a women’s-only shelter felt that gentrification-fuelled pressure had forced it to keep its clients inside the facility more often, and that its original dormitory-style look had to be replaced by something more appropriate to its (changing) surroundings. And yet since this shelter rented directly from the State Housing Department, it was at the mercy of the government selling off its real-estate assets, as well as moving towards a “Housing First” model that would largely dispense with emergency services unless absolutely crucial in making invisible the presence of surplus populations. The delicate balance in Kings Cross—as well as the other two case studies—show that resilience is not automatic but requires active strategies and good connections to the locality itself.

### 1.2 Case Study 2: London Service Hubs

In this case study, the focus was on the Inner London boroughs of Lambeth and Islington, both undergoing significant gentrification pressures since the early 2000s but in different ways (Fig. 2).

For Lambeth, much of the gentrification came as new-build developments along the River Thames and in Vauxhall, not entirely dissimilar from neighbouring Southwark to the east (DeVerteuil 2015). Mixed in to this new-build gentrification is more traditional incumbent upgrading of the built environment, particularly for areas such as Brixton. For Islington, gentrification has proceeded more block-by-block, spreading out from areas of established wealth and “super-gentrification” in places such as Barnsbury (Butler and Lees 2006). Both boroughs have extensive social housing stock nearing 40% of all units, which means that gentrification can only extend so far—as well, this social housing stock houses much of the clientele for the voluntary sector organisations. This has not, however, guaranteed spatial resilience, and so many of the interviewed organisations have been more pro-active in keeping their place in their respective boroughs.

For Lambeth, there were several service hubs, the main ones being by Waterloo Train Station and in Brixton. Like all train stations in London, there has been a

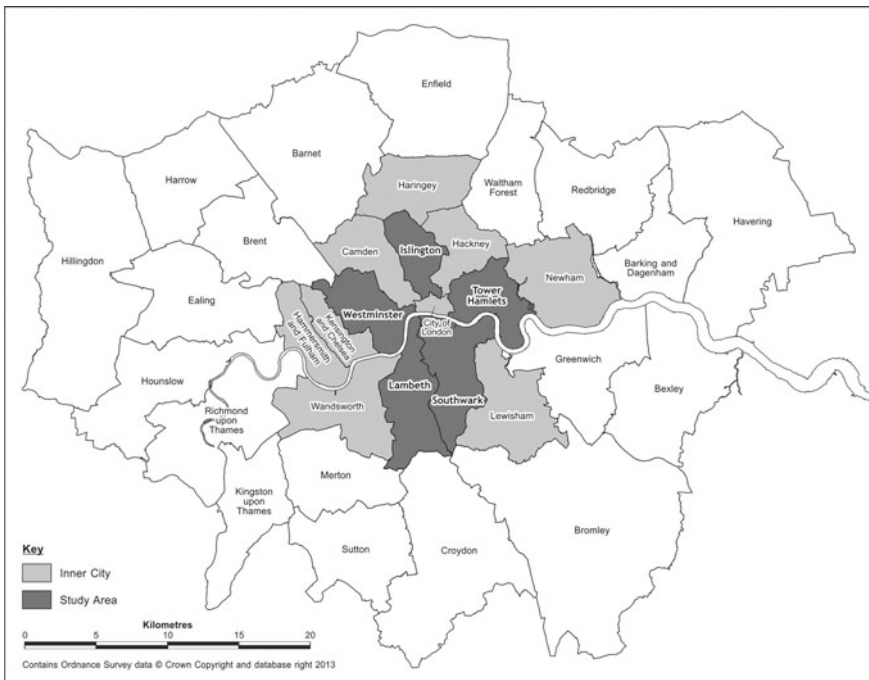


Fig. 2 Location map for London case studies. Source DeVerteuil (2015: 58)



**Fig. 3** Hostel with redeveloped Vauxhall in the background. Picture by G DeVerteuil, July 2015

concerted effort at redevelopment and densification, although not as fundamental as at London Bridge Station or King’s Cross Station. Just the same, this area of redevelopment now extends from the South Bank area south and west along the River Thames to include all the riverside, including Vauxhall and Battersea. A hostel in Vauxhall is now surrounded by high-rise new developments, including the new American Embassy in the United Kingdom. When interviewed in 2009, they were struggling with keeping their clientele away from the redeveloping zones, using outreach teams to target rough sleepers and bring them inside the hostel (see Fig. 3).

Located in Vauxhall since 2001, the hostel wants to keep its location despite being approached by developers on a regular basis, to tear down the building and densify. Indeed, since 1980 more than 400 beds have been lost to redevelopment in the Vauxhall area—the hostel remains in place given the excellent transportation links and good community relations, as well as being owned by a local housing association that is not looking to sell. Nearby is the “Big Issue” headquarters, which has also been in Vauxhall since 2002. This organisation is a social enterprise, working with homeless vendors who sell the newspaper on the street to passer-by. Despite gentrification, the vendors do not experience harassment from the police, but the facility itself is surrounded by new developments that hem it in. The Big Issue maintains its location for the same obvious reasons as the hostel—highly accessible to Tube, bus and trains, and on foot for certain homeless vendors.

Near Waterloo Station, several of the organisations that provide direct services to the homeless are subsidised by Lambeth Borough Council, which ensures their continued presence despite sustained redevelopment since the mid-2000s. For one

hostel, the landlord was the borough and the hostel also fit in well within its long-term plans for the redevelopment of the area: as the director said, “we are designated with strategic relevance in the authority’s plan”. Another hostel nearby rented from the London Housing Foundation, which again seeks to keep services anchored to the area. An organisation that advocated on behalf of homeless services also kept its location near Waterloo Station as a way to maintain visibility and be taken seriously by funders, the borough and Greater London more generally. As the communications officer stated, “we need to be centrally located since we are a national organisation, and the location affords us good access to governments, including Greater London Authority and the national government in Westminster. However, we do feel perhaps that our organisation is too London-centric”.

In Islington, most organisations in the service hub found protection and stability by aligning with the council, or working together to avoid piecemeal displacement. A centre for refugees and asylum seekers related how, as a frontline institution, it relied on a church for cheap rent, and the borough for 75% of its funding. It felt vulnerable, however, given that increasing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers were being sent to cheaper cities well beyond London (since they did not qualify for social housing or benefits), and that there is reduced income from government sources since austerity in 2008. As such, refugees and asylum seekers are completely reliant on local resources, and are perceived to be a drain on them as well. Some organisations had been displaced from other boroughs, especially neighbouring Camden where there had been extensive redevelopment of the King’s Cross/St Pancras area, a process ongoing since 2008. An example is a food distribution operation for street people, heavily reliant on donations. Since the redevelopment of the King’s Cross/St Pancras area, there has been more pressure on the homeless and their (mobile) services. In response, the operation shifted to Islington where pressure is less obvious. As the director noted, “there is no pressure to leave like in Camden—Islington Council does not bother us and there is no community opposition because the feeding is mostly done off-site in public areas on the backstreets”.

Conversely, some organisations spoke of a more aggressive push by the Council to ditch certain buildings that were housing voluntary sector organisations at very cheap rates. For instance, a community group for Chinese immigrants used to be in a Council-owned building, but after 2000 the Council decided not to fund the voluntary sector directly and began selling off properties to the private market. When interviewed in 2009, the organisation was renting on the private market, and could not buy any property in the post-2008 credit crunch. Similarly, a LGBT housing service stayed in Islington not because it is in a high-access, high-profile area for clients more specifically and the LGBT community more generally, but because it could not afford anywhere else and had no recourse to borough funding. The same situation bedevilled an Irish community centre in the north part of Islington—borough funding had been completely cut, so all funding from the Catholic parish and Ireland, with an all-volunteer workforce. And yet, since the parish owns the facility, there is little chance of being displaced.



raucous vending culture to the restaurants, coffee shops, and boutiques on other nearby commercial strips; and it has residents consumed by a spirited political dialogue about its future” (Deener 2012: 1). For much of its existence it has been home to low and extremely low-income people, including a sizable homeless population, with a reputation for being eclectic but also affordable—in fact, until the early 2000s, the last affordable beachfront area in Los Angeles County. It was during this time that many of the organisations managed to buy their properties, thereby unwittingly protecting themselves from subsequent upgrading. However, this does mean that organisations can move within the general vicinity or expand in place. For instance, a substance abuse treatment centre occupies prime real estate along the Venice Beach Boardwalk, and services a clientele that is generally destitute. The centre would like to expand, but given gentrification there is little ability to do so in the immediate area—a real expansion would require moving away from the Boardwalk and the easy access to clientele there, as well as its purported therapeutic views of the Pacific Ocean. The neighbourhood is tolerant of the centre along with several others in the nearby streets, although this has waned with gentrification. A food pantry and gateway services for the homeless only five blocks from the Boardwalk were displaced in 2004 as the site was redeveloped for condos. In the words of the director, “it then took a year to relocate, could not find anyone to rent to us until a thrift store took us in. Even then there was quite a bit of community opposition”.

In particular, those services for non-homeless people have seen significant displacement of clientele to cheaper locales more inland, which challenges their original reason for locating in Venice. For a health clinic a few blocks from the beach, they bought their facility in the 1990s with city assistance, and before the housing boom. In 2010, the health clinic found itself entrapped in Venice, but unwilling to move with its clientele farther afield, given their scattered nature. There has been no obvious support from the City of Los Angeles in this regard, so invariably organisations rely on each other to provide a common front against displacement, for example banding together when one is threatened by displacement, usually using some kind of legal defence or political pressure. At the very least, the organisations attempt to manage their image by constraining the amount of time clients spend “hanging around” in front of their facilities. This has extended to the lack of mobile feeding of hungry indigent people in Venice, with a clear preference towards food banks in industrial areas with feeding strictly indoors.

Santa Monica is its own municipality separate from Los Angeles, and as such runs its own services alongside those provided by the voluntary sector. Unlike many other well-off cities (especially Beverly Hills), Santa Monica has always had a strong public mission to help the poor, even with gentrification accelerating since the 2000s, and these residues of support exist alongside the pervasive upgrading. For example, a voluntary sector organisation that provides affordable housing since 1982 holds the properties in trust as a community resource, and the operating budget is funded by fees earned from developers and property management. They held, in 2009, 1,500 units housing 3,500 people, without fear of displacement from gentrification. Moreover, the units are usually within close proximity to existing services in the Downtown Santa Monica service hub.

Like Venice, however, the ability to expand is severely limited—for many services, it takes at least ten years for the local community to accept their clientele, especially if they are homeless, mentally ill or substance users (or all three). A supportive housing service near Downtown Santa Monica had this to say about their original welcome:

We have been in Santa Monica since 1997. But it took 7 years to get this site, permission was helped by a church next door. There was lots of NIMBY—it took another 10 years for the community to fully accept us, and this was mostly due to the fact that our clientele are more families and seniors, rather than single homeless individuals. We needed to be in a central location, but we could not get an equally central location now if we had to start again.

A similar experience was found with a drop-in centre with deep roots in Santa Monica—it still took them many years to find the right facility in the right location, looking at over 25 different sites but encountering much NIMBY in areas of high residential and/or business, or in areas too isolated to attract enough clientele. Maintaining a presence in Downtown Santa Monica remains delicate, given the large numbers of tourists and businesses as well as gentrifiers, but also remains crucial to attract clientele who will not stray far to access services. The presence is easier to maintain with support from the City of Santa Monica, of course, and many (but not all) of the services enjoy good relationships, if not financial support that enables spatial resilience.

## 2 Conclusions: Stuck in Place, Stuck in Time?

The case studies raise some crucial points about spatial resilience within and across service hubs. First, the spatial clustering of organisations enables resilience, given that they all share the same goal of staying put in highly accessible areas. Second, there are private strategies that ensure resilience, in terms of buying property. This option, however, has pretty much come and gone, given pervasive gentrification in all of the case study areas—certainly by 2008. And of course, this option is in some ways inadvertent—few of the organisations could actually have foreseen the upgrading in their neighbourhoods when they did buy the property. Third, in several cases there was crucial support for spatial resilience coming from the local state, in terms of subsidies, properties or both. In places like Lambeth and Santa Monica, certain (but not all) organisations could expect some support from the local state, although this does always deflect or absorb community NIMBYism. Fourth, in an era of pervasive gentrification, organisations had to be especially cognisant of their image, and manage it in such a fashion so that potential NIMBY is reduced to a bare minimum. This was the case in all the examples, notably Surry Hills where “blending in” with gentrification has become something of a common strategy.

The tension between resilience and displacement becomes apparent when considering the co-location of organisations and their clientele, which is the essential and original bedrock of the service hub itself. Virtually all of the organisations interviewed were adamant about maintaining maximum accessibility at all costs, and

certainly did not see client displacement via gentrification as a prime reason to move in lockstep. The reasoning was that even with client displacement, a highly centralised location will still attract clients, albeit a longer trip to-and-from. Moving to follow clientele would make it impossible to maximise accessibility, and would also reduce visibility for fundraising. Ostensibly, organisations serving the homeless could move when their clientele had entirely scattered, since the latter will not travel for services. However, this has yet to happen in any of the cities under study, given that the homeless are spatially resilient as well.

In these ways, service hubs prove resilient but also appear to be “stuck in time”. In effect, the spatial resilience of service hubs has been so successful that many are at risk of being immune to some of the larger dynamics in urban space, but also of being stuck in place, as pervasive surrounding gentrification makes it impossible to relocate or expand in situ, thereby ensuring spatial entrapment as much as spatial resilience (DeVerteuil 2000, 2011, 2012). This was noted across the three case studies, namely the grave difficulties of moving within the service hub itself. In turn, this acts as a rebuke to the endless fascination in urban studies with the dynamic, the mobile, the diverse, the cosmopolitan, the global city; service hubs are very much parochial and relatively unchanging places, connected by intensely local links that do not extend very far. The parochial is not intrinsically pejorative—it is also about the persistent and deep-seated importance that most people give to sustained place-attachment, the ontological security of home and boundary-making (see DeVerteuil et al. 2019; Tomaney 2015). As such, service hubs also engender a sense of belonging alongside the importance of providing day-to-day survival to vulnerable populations.

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# Spatial Dynamics and Strengths of Service Hubs Addressing Homelessness in Global Miami



Matthew D. Marr, Rebecca Young, Jacquelyn Johnston, and Karen Mahar

**Abstract** Miami, in becoming a global city of Latin America and the Caribbean, has struggled to address an entrenched problem rooted in racial inequality—mass homelessness. A local response lauded as progressive and centred on drawing on national and local public and private funds to increase the supply of permanent supportive housing has failed to achieve the lofty goal of ending homelessness. But how are these housing programs and supportive services spatially distributed throughout the global city region of Miami? Are they evenly distributed or clustered in certain neighbourhoods to form “service hubs?” How can service hubs foster and impede the effectiveness of housing and supportive service programs addressing homelessness? In this chapter, we map out all identified housing and services in Miami-Dade County and find considerable clustering, mostly intensely in the downtown area. We then analyse qualitative interviews with persons using permanent supportive housing and transitional housing in the central hub as well as outside of hubs, also considering the role of “campus” facilities. We argue that although broader, more systematic societal changes are necessary to end mass homelessness in Miami, a centralized service hub, with improvements in safety, shows potential to bolster the effectiveness of efforts to help people escape homelessness.

**Keywords** Service hub · Homelessness · Urban poverty · Permanent supportive housing

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## 1 Introduction

Miami transformed from a sleepy tourist town of the U.S. South to a leading global city of Latin America and the Caribbean in less than a century's time (Nijman 2011). In this process, systemic racial oppression shifted from Jim Crow legal exclusion to high inequality, racial and class residential segregation and mass imprisonment (Dunn 1997; Portes and Stepick 1993). Like most cities in the US, in the 1980s Miami saw a tremendous surge in homelessness due to deterioration of living wage employment, affordable housing, and social safety nets (Greer 1999; Mahar 2012). Initially responses were largely punitive, and the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County were entwined in a legal battle over its treatment of people, disproportionately African American, living on the streets, in parks, and underpasses. But after Hurricane Andrew imposed homelessness on a broader segment of Miami's population in 1992, the legal battle was settled and a less punitive response emerged, with more resources dedicated to increasing permanent supportive housing (Kendrick 2001). As a result, by the mid-2000s there was a visible and enumerated decrease in street homelessness in the County. However, with persistent structural and racial inequality exacerbated by soaring rents and the burst of a housing bubble, street and shelter homelessness in Miami has not seen subsequent major decreases and remained at a high level into 2020.

So, in Miami, as is the case of every major American city, there has been a substantial response to mass homelessness that has failed to meet the policy mantra of ending homelessness. Drawing on a combination of national and local public and private funds, sizeable archipelago of housing and supportive services has emerged in urban areas. Despite good intentions, these have been criticized as entrenched industries primarily serving an economic purpose for private sector actors (Willse 2015) as well as used to justify criminalization of street homelessness, especially in central business and entertainment districts (Murphy 2009). However, study of the spatial patterning of these housing and supportive services, and how this impacts the people who are trying to escape homelessness is only beginning to emerge.

Housing programs addressing homelessness in Miami have been shown to take on a particular spatial pattern, with clustering in the poorer areas of downtown Miami and the rural/suburban City of Homestead (Rukmana 2011). In Los Angeles, high rents and strong NIMBY-style resistance in prime spaces have driven shelters, transitional housing programs and permanent supportive housing to cluster in certain neighbourhoods, mostly poor and marginalized spaces (Marr et al. 2009). But, in our discussions with policy administrators in both Los Angeles and Miami, they have described pressure to push back against NIMBYism and avoid over-concentration of poverty, embracing the objective of distributing housing and services equally across the urban area. Hsu and colleagues (2016) show that people placed in permanent supportive housing on the outskirts rather than the core of Skid Row, Los Angeles felt a higher sense of security where there were less litter, malodour, and homelessness. However, transitional and permanent supportive housing residents in central neighbourhoods like Skid Row, Los Angeles and San'ya, Tokyo described

a diversity of supportive services, philanthropic organizations, social movements, transportation outlets, and employment and volunteer opportunities in and around the neighbourhood as improving their quality of life and durability of exits from homelessness (Marr 2015, 2016). Centrally located service hubs also show potential as de-marketized “commons” that are resilient to gentrification (DeVerteuil 2015; DeVerteuil et al. 2020) and provide marginalized people a “right to the city” (Harvey 2003).

In this paper, we analyse spatial and qualitative interview data to explore empirically how the spatial structuring of homelessness relief services affect the experiences of those using them. In doing so, we address a number of empirical questions. How has the response to homelessness in Miami been spatial structured? Are housing and services distributed evenly across the urban landscape, or are they clustered in poor neighbourhoods? How does this affect the subjective experience of residents? In addressing these questions, we aim to contribute to the research literature on the spatial location of housing and services by further exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the service hub approach.

## 2 Global Miami’s “Progressive” Response to Mass Homelessness

In the late 1980s, it was reported that Miami had an estimated 8000–10,000 people living on the streets, in parks, and in enormous encampments under the long bridges formed by expressways in the downtown area (Miami Coalition for the Homeless 1987). The surge in homelessness in Miami, like most cities transformed by neoliberal globalization, is rooted in de-industrialization, the ascendance of a service economy and deregulated financial sector and weakening social safety nets. This combined with more local conditions, such as massive migration from Latin America and the Caribbean, high residential segregation and concentrated poverty, a volatile real estate market, and the area’s prime role in the drug trade and War on Drugs. Together, these trends have brought massive wealth for some, but extreme poverty, incarceration, mental illness, and homelessness for many more.

The landscape of homelessness in Miami Dade County was transformed dramatically by the intersection of intense legal conflict over the rights of people living on the street and natural disaster. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a class action suit against the City of Miami Police Department on behalf of persons experiencing homelessness 1988, known as the Pottinger case (Atkins, Senior US District Judge 1992). Over four years, the ACLU showed that the City of Miami Police implemented a policy of arresting and harassing people for engaging in the basic activities of daily life such as sleeping and eating in the public spaces where they must live. The decision on the case hinged on arguments about whether or not homelessness is a choice. The argument that it was not, and subsequent decision on behalf of the plaintiffs, was likely influenced by the coincidence with a major hurricane which brought wider sympathy to those without housing.

Hurricane Andrew destroyed tens of thousands of homes in 1992 (Peacock et al. 1997). This disproportionately affected the poorest and most vulnerable citizens of South Florida, pushing many into literal homelessness. But the disaster affected a wider swath of the local population and made the problem of homelessness more visible. Along with decreases in arrest and police harassment, there was awareness of a need for more shelters and housing. A public and private partnership responded to this need, collaborating to develop and implement new measures to address homelessness.

Perhaps most importantly, in 1993 a one percent tax was levied on restaurants of a particular size or larger to tap funds to address homelessness from Miami Dade County's tourist industry (except the City of Miami Beach, which opted out of the tax). By the end of 2011, the tax had brought in more than \$97,000,000 (Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust 2012). Also, the Miami Dade County Homeless Trust, a public-private entity, was formed to administer the tax dollars as well as coordinate a continuum of care services and housing that was developing locally with influence from national policy. Federal funding provided through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by the Stewart B. McKinney Act has also helped finance the development, primarily by private, non-profit organizations, of a considerable amount of emergency and transitional housing, as well as permanent supportive housing. The Miami Dade Homeless Trust embraced the housing first movement, joining the national 100,000 Homes Campaign, which helped communities dramatically increase their permanent supportive housing stock in an ambitious effort to end homelessness.

As a result, the stock of permanent supportive housing in Miami Dade County has increased considerably. Between 2005 and 2017, the inventory of permanent supportive housing beds in the County increased by 87%, from 2471 beds to 4620 beds.<sup>1</sup> Roughly during the same period, the total population counted in shelters and transitional housing in the County has remained about the same, whereas street counts have shown the point-in-time population decreasing by around 50% between 2005 and 2010, but roughly remaining at that level since. The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust reports counting 929 persons living on the streets and 2426 persons living in shelters and transitional housing in August of 2021. Since structural conditions producing mass homelessness have not abated, this response thus has failed to achieve the homeless management industry's mantra of "ending homelessness." Also, as in most American cities, Blacks or African Americans are disproportionately affected by homelessness in Miami-Dade, making up 56% of point-in-time enumerations of homelessness, but only 19% of the County's total population.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From the U.S. Department of Housing and Human Services (HUD) Continuum of Care Housing Inventory Reports, Accessed at <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-housing-inventory-count-reports/>. accessed 26 February 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Data on homelessness from HUD's Continuum of Care Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Reports accessed at <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/>. Accessed 26 February 2018. Data on Miami Dade County's total population from the U.S. Census Department's website at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/miamidadecountyflorida/POP060210>. Accessed 26 February 2018.

In recent years, several trends have exacerbated structural conditions reproducing mass homelessness in global Miami. Miami's real estate sector is heavily financialized and has seen massive boom and bust, substantially reducing the supply of affordable housing. Amid recovery from the burst of the local housing bubble that coincided with the 2008 global economic crisis, Miami's real estate industry has largely been bolstered by foreign (mostly Latin American and European) purchase of high rent condominiums and houses (Nehamas 2015). Gentrification around the urban core has spread through the poor and working class, predominantly black and Hispanic, neighbourhoods of Wynwood, Edgewater, and Little Haiti, further depleting the supply of affordable housing (Elliot et al. 2017). Wages, especially at the low end of the massive service sector, continue to lag far behind the cost of housing (Bustamante 2017). Welfare benefits are limited to households with young children and have become so difficult to obtain that low-income mothers we interviewed described trying to get their children certified as disabled so the household could survive off of disability benefits. Public housing waiting lists are several years long and have been closed because of high demand. An opioid epidemic has also struck South Florida, rendering many addicted, just as a crack epidemic seemed to be fading. With street homelessness persisting, residents, business owners, and developers in and around downtown and Miami Beach have pushed for increased use of "therapeutic policing" (Stuart 2016) to move people into shelters, diverting effort and resources away from permanent supportive housing.<sup>3</sup> As a result, even as the supply of permanent supportive housing increases, it lags far behind the demand created in a structural context that constantly reproduces vulnerability to homelessness.

### 3 Mapping Miami's Homelessness Management Archipelago

Since the sizeable amount of housing and relief services have seemingly become an entrenched part of Miami's urban landscape, in this section we will examine some of its spatial dynamics. In order to map Miami's homelessness management archipelago, we first created a database of all housing and service providers serving people experiencing homeless in Miami-Dade, including shelters, transitional housing, permanent housing, mental health facilities,<sup>4</sup> drop-in centres, and other supportive services. The database drew from documents such as South Florida Behavioural Health Network,

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<sup>3</sup> Of particular note is an apparent increase in use of the "Baker Act," and other legislation that can legally force someone who is at a danger to themselves or others into a psychiatric hospital short-term for evaluation. This was done during Hurricane Irma in the Fall of 2017 (Smiley 2017). The City of Miami Beach has used other legislation to force people living on the streets into substance abuse treatment for up to 60 days (Lipscomb 2016).

<sup>4</sup> These are not all mental health facilities in the County, but only those specified in resource guides to address homelessness.

Inc.'s Miami-Dade Housing Directory (2014), the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust's (2016–2017) Directory of Services, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) yearly funding applications (accessed from HUD's website), and resource fliers collected from a drop-in program. Duplicated entries were deleted. Each entry included the name, address, service category, capacity (if housing), and brief description.

Figure 1 shows all homelessness housing and service locations in Miami Dade County. It clearly demonstrates a general tendency for clustering around downtown as well as far south around the City of Homestead.

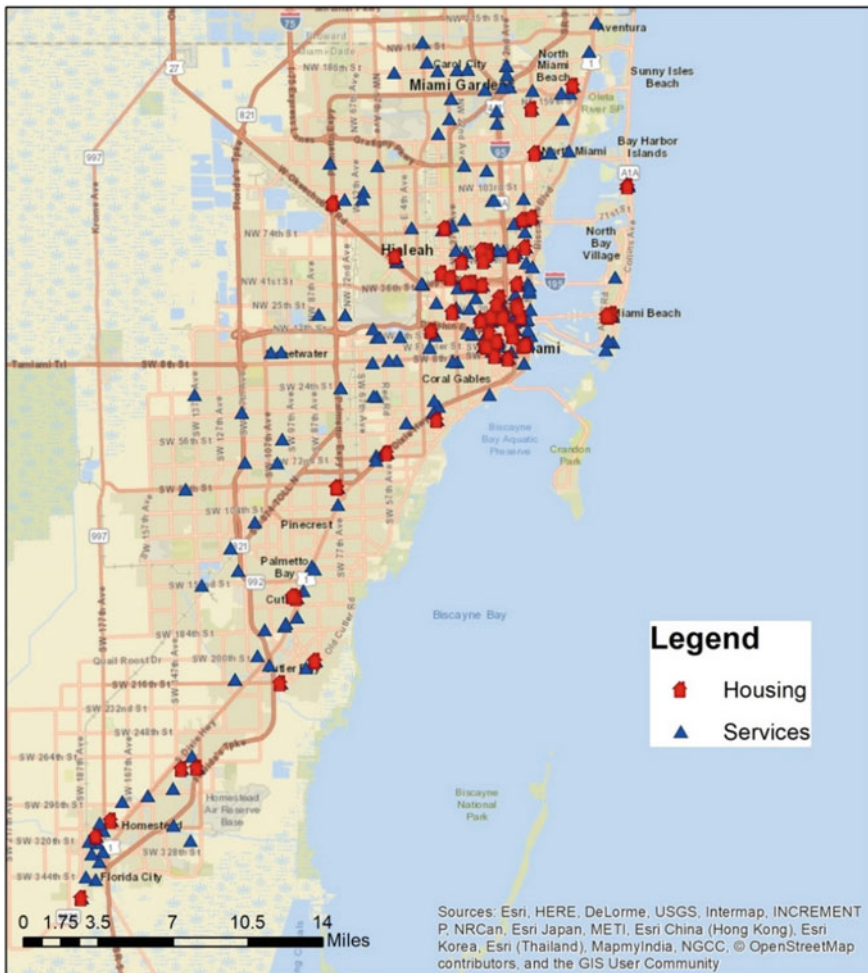


Fig. 1 Miami dade county housing and service locations

For the purposes of this study, we use a simple definition of service hubs as clusters of housing and services addressing homelessness. To identify clusters or service hubs, we applied a half mile buffer to each housing and service location to represent a reasonable walking distance between each location. We then created layers to represent clusters where five or more housing and service locations' buffers overlap. From the 399 housing and service addresses plotted, we found 16 clusters containing 81% of all housing and services. Three of these clusters, highlighted in Fig. 2, had more than 15 housing and service locations within the buffer zone: the greater downtown area (185), the western City of Hialeah (22), and the rural/suburban City of Homestead (18). Due to the substantially larger sizes of these areas, we identify these three areas as containing the major service hubs of Miami-Dade County. Together they encompass a majority of the housing and supportive services addressing homelessness in the County, with 46% located within the downtown hub, 6% in the Hialeah hub, and 5% in the Homestead hub.

Do these areas where housing and services cluster represent a diversity of income levels in the Miami urban area? To address this question, we ran a base map comparison of service addresses in relation to percent of population below poverty level. Figure 3 shows that, in the cases of the downtown and Homestead hubs, housing and

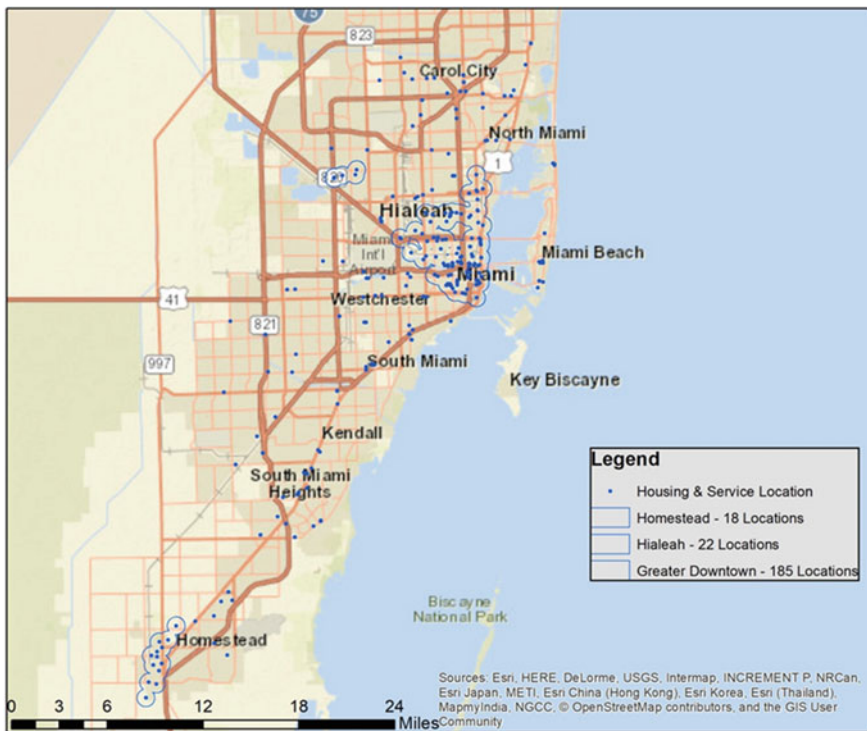


Fig. 2 Miami-dade county service hubs



services tend to cluster in poor neighbourhoods. The vast majority (80%) of housing and services in the downtown cluster are located in a high poverty level (32% or higher) census tract. The Homestead hub is even poorer, with 94.4% of locations in high poverty tracts. The Hialeah hub is not poor, with no locations in high poverty level tracts. In fact, the census tracts containing the Hialeah hub have a poverty rate of 15–22%, similar to that of the County as a whole.

The three hubs vary not just in terms of size and level of poverty, but in the types and amount of housing and services available. Table 1 shows the distribution of housing and services by type in the three hubs. In addition to having by far the most housing and service locations of any hub, and the lion’s share of those in the County, the downtown hub has the most diverse set of housing and services. Whereas the Hialeah hub is predominantly permanent supportive housing (59% of the locations in that hub), the Homestead hub is mostly food and clothing, as well as employment services (together 72% of the locations in that hub). While the downtown hub is fairly balanced with substantial numbers of locations in each category, the other hubs are far less balanced, with zero or one location in four categories. The Hialeah hub has a dearth of emergency and transitional housing, as well as employment services. The Homestead hub has a dearth of housing.

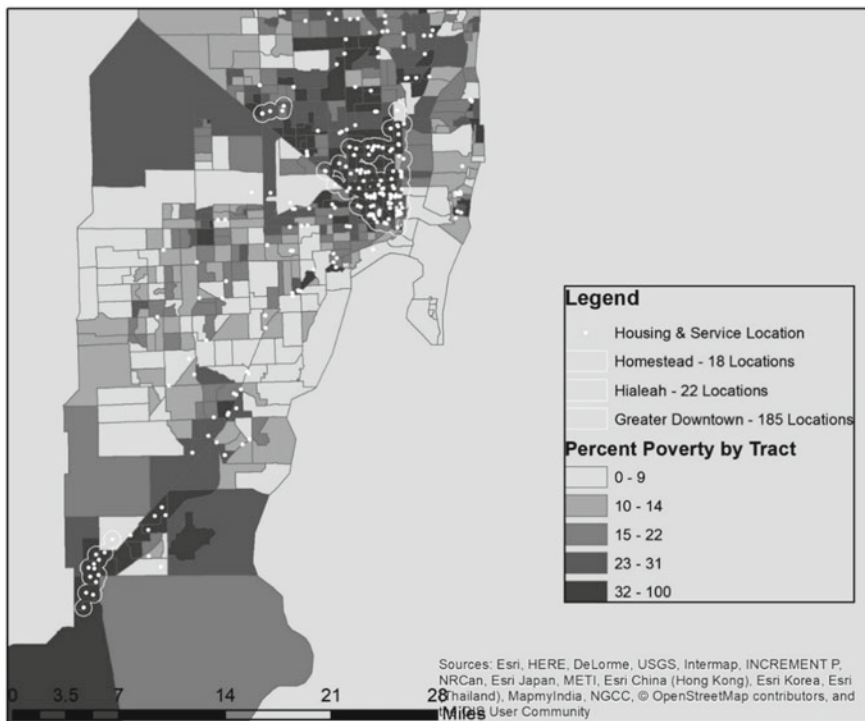


Fig. 3 Miami-dade service hubs by census tract poverty level

**Table 1** Type of service by hub, Miami-dade county

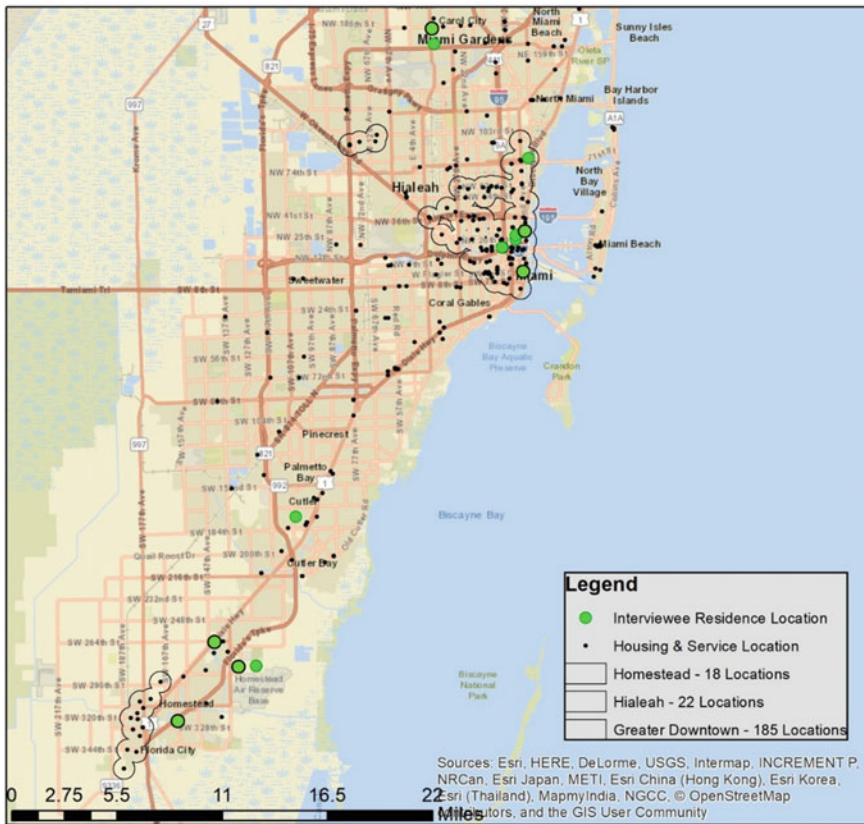
Type of service	Downtown hub (185 locations)	Hialeah hub (22 locations)	Homestead hub (18 locations)
Permanent supportive housing	10% (19)	59% (13)	6% (1)
Transitional and other housing	14% (25)	5% (1)	6% (1)
Emergency shelter	9% (17)	5% (1)	6% (1)
Healthcare	15% (27)	23% (5)	11% (2)
Food and clothing	26% (49)	9% (2)	33% (6)
Employment	23% (43)	0% (0)	39% (7)
Other	3% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total	100%	100%	100%

With these characteristics we can begin to identify these three locales as different types of service hubs. The poor, downtown mega-hub with a diversity of housing and services ranging from emergency to permanent in focus may be suitable to persons with various, complex needs, but high poverty could be a concern for residents. The non-poor mini hub in Hialeah is focused on permanent housing with few emergency or employment services offers little for persons struggling with street homeless, especially those without disabilities who would need to re-join the labour market. The poor mini hub in Homestead is focused on emergency services like food and clothing and offers modest housing assistance, but ample employment services.

But what are the experiences of people who live in service hubs? Are there differences between living in a hub and outside of a hub that relate to the process of escaping and avoiding returns to homelessness? We turn to these questions in the following section.

#### 4 Subjective Experiences of Miami’s Homelessness Management Archipelago

In order to explore how subjective experiences differ based on location within or outside of service hubs, we analysed interviews conducted with 23 people who had experienced homelessness and had moved into a transitional housing program or permanent supportive housing in Miami-Dade County. Figure 4 shows the location



**Fig. 4** Miami dade county service hubs and interviewee residence location

of our interviewees’ residences in relation to the hubs, with some living in the same location. Twelve interviewees resided in the downtown service hub (6 in permanent supportive housing, 6 in transitional housing) and 11 (5 in permanent supportive housing, 6 in transitional housing) resided in areas outside of service hubs. Thus, we are unable to compare how experiences in the Hialeah and Homestead hubs differ from those in the downtown hub. However, we can compare experiences in the large, centrally located downtown hub to those outside of hubs.

In recent years, with the difficulty of locating housing and services addressing homelessness due to NIMBYism and given the efficiencies of proximity, some organizations have built new facilities as “campuses.” These can contain not only a variety of forms of housing (emergency, transitional, and permanent) but also have an array of supportive services (case management, mental health treatment, health care, etc.). In a sense, this model replicates or intensifies the proximity of a service hub in a single location. However, campuses do not contain some of service hub’s other attributes such as loose connection between multiple service providers to allow for flexibility

of service use. Also, they can be less diverse in terms of the availability of services. In our two groups of interviewees, there were individuals living in campus locations (7 of 11 in the downtown hub, and 5 of 12 outside of hubs). Thus, in our analysis we also assess the role of campuses in replicating and intensifying the influence of hubs on our interviewee's experiences.

These interviews were conducted as part of a comparative study examining the relationship between neoliberal globalization and homelessness (Yamaguchi and Aoki 2020). Interviewees were recruited through several different non-profit service providers with programs in different parts of the County. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately 90 min. Our interview guides were not designed specifically to capture impacts of service hub residence but did cover topics such as daily life, social ties, service access, and other issues the interviewee deemed important. We inductively analysed interview transcriptions and found key differences rooted in service hub residence that relate to the ability to escape homelessness and avoid returns. We organize these differences into the areas of transportation, employment and volunteer opportunities, system access, and safety. We analyse experiences in each area within the larger context of the interviewee's life, to show how each relates to their ability to address needs and avoid returns to homelessness.

#### ***4.1 Transportation***

Overall, interviewees in the downtown hubs described the convenience of the proximity of services accessible by bus or walking. In contrast, some interviewees living outside hubs had transportation problems which impeded their ability to access services. However, residence on a "campus" helped mitigate these issues for those living outside of a hub, and for those in a hub, enhanced the accessibility of supportive services.

Ingrid, an immigrant from Cuba in her early 40s, lived with her pre-teen daughter in a scattered site transitional apartment a few miles outside the Homestead hub. She described a lack of transportation as interfering with her ability to tend to her medical needs. She had no car, and her only income was from selling food informally to elderly neighbours of her father, who also lived in Homestead. She applied to disability benefits due to problems with her kidneys and gall bladder, hernias, and depression, but was denied. Tragically, her daughter had been sexually abused and was in need of psychological and other health care. Speaking in Spanish, she said the following.

Well, the biggest problem I have is the problem of transportation. I often have appointments that I can't go to. Well, when my father can't take me, I have to look to some friends so they can take me here, there, because just imagine, I don't have the means like... My primary doctor told me to make appointments with a urologist and a nephrologist, so then, I made the appointments, but they were in Kendall (a suburban area about 20 miles north of Homestead). On the day of, my father felt sick because he had a problem with his blood sugar, so I couldn't go to the appointment, and that's how that begins. And for the other doctor, they called and

told me the doctor was not coming in, that I had to call to make another appointment, and I haven't been able to call again because, imagine, I always I have a different problem.

Fortunately, her daughter's school was within walking distance, but living in a scattered site apartment in a rural/suburban area outside of a hub with little public transportation rendered her ability to secure health care and other supportive services tenuous. Although her housing was subsidized, if her health problems worsened, she would have difficulty earning her portion of the rent, putting her at risk of a return to homelessness.

In contrast, Jaime, a middle-aged Afro-Cuban, was able to address his various ailments without transportation issues while living in permanent supportive housing on a campus in the downtown hub. He was shot while working in a market in Little Havana and suffered from depression, anxiety, and high blood pressure. After the shooting, the owner of the market supported him financially for a time, but Jaime had difficulty accessing health insurance and disability benefits. He ended up sleeping on the streets around Little Havana, as well as near Jackson Hospital and eating at "Mother Theresa's" (Ministries of Charity) soup kitchen, next to Overtown, close to the core of the downtown hub. Staff at the hospital referred him to the Camillus Health Concern, a clinic serving the homeless also in the centre of the downtown hub, which was able to help him access disability benefits, food stamps, and Medicaid. Eventually, the clinic helped him get into a subsidized apartment on the site of a new campus in the downtown hub with various programs addressing homelessness on site.

At the time of the interview, Jaime had been in the apartment for two years. He saw a therapist three times a week at a clinic in another building on the campus. There he monitored his high blood pressure and gets regular check-ups. In addition to the convenience of the proximity of health care, Jaime also took advantage of the density and public transportation in the downtown hub.

I take the bus, take the train and sometimes I'll take the train until the last stop. I do that almost every morning and sometimes I go downtown, and I walk around downtown Monday through Friday. To distract myself, I get up at 6 in the morning. I go to bed early. I get up at 6 in the morning, get dressed and take to the streets. I return early because I have to cook, and I don't like being out on the street in the afternoon. And sometimes my friends invite me to church, and I go. Sometimes on Sunday mornings. There's a Peruvian who lives here, who I get along with. He asks me if I want to go to church and I go with him.

Jaime said he maintained this routine to avoid sinking back into depression. In his quote, we can glean how the dense hub in downtown with ample public transportation, as well as his residence on a campus, facilitated his efforts to maintain his overall health. These factors also helped him meet his spiritual needs, with a Spanish-speaking Catholic church nearby in Little Havana. Through accessing these services and social activities Jaime was able to improve his physical and mental health, thus bolstering his ability to avoid a return to homelessness.

As living on a campus bolstered many of the conveniences of living in the downtown hub for Jaime, living on a campus outside of a hub did mitigate transportation issues for some interviewees. Andrea, a single mother in her late 20s living

in permanent supportive housing on a campus a few miles outside the Homestead Hub found nearby access to case managers, therapy, and volunteer and employment opportunities to be helpful.

I was working with them, right now I'm off. We work by...they get grants and depending on the grants you could apply for a position here. I've been volunteering since like day one. I was part of the community board, still am. I do different things with the organization. We've done Halloween parties, Christmas parties, Thanksgiving, different events.

I was actually in the committee for building a playground with KaBOOM, which builds playgrounds for children all over the world. I did that for a year, we actually built our park in March of this year... I was a really big part of that and still now, I still do a lot of things with the community. This past summer I actually worked with the children here. We had a summer camp with the children from the ages of five to 18. I worked with the children.

Some are paid, some are volunteer work. I do what I can. I love working with the community itself. The children here are a joy. I love working with the children... I've grown on them, and they have grown on me, so I try as much as I can to really help out the children here in the community.

Due to the availability of work and a myriad of events to be involved in on her campus, Angela felt a sense of community from her permanent housing program. Angela also described case managers on-site assisting residents with applying for food stamps or other programs, as well as health fairs and job fairs. She also was able to see a therapist on-site every week for depression. Since a lot of these events and services are on-site or close by, Andrea was able to volunteer and be involved while attending school, going to her appointments, and taking her son to his speech therapy and other appointments. If she needed to travel farther, it is unlikely that she would be able to maintain this schedule.

## ***4.2 Employment and Volunteer Opportunities***

The cluster of housing and social services in the central location of the downtown hub provided economic and volunteer opportunities for our interviewees. Joe, a Hispanic in his late 30s, was participating in a substance abuse recovery program while living in a Christian mission in the downtown hub. He was working full-time in "guest services" at the mission for \$10 per hour and saving to move into subsidized housing and reunite with his children. He applied online for a part-time job cleaning up at the American Airlines Arena, home of Miami's National Basketball Association team and other events. Since the arena was conveniently located a 15-min bus ride or a 30-min walk away, Joe was able to "give back" to eight other mission residents who also were hired at the arena after his referral. It was not uncommon among our interviewees in the downtown hub to work part-time at the arena or other downtown attractions such as the Miami Marlins' baseball stadium. While these jobs are low paying (minimum wage, \$7.79 per hour) and unstable, for people like Joe, it served as a crucial way to supplement his income while saving to move into a partially subsidized apartment.

The experiences of one interviewee who had lived in shelters in two different hubs and then placed in scattered site housing outside of a hub, shed light on how housing location can impact employment. Danielle, an African American in her early thirties with five children had been a victim of domestic violence. She spent a few years moving between shelters, and the homes of friends and relatives within the downtown hub. During this time, she worked part time in concessions at the American Airlines Arena and the Miami Marlins' baseball stadium. However, the part-time and seasonal minimum wage job did not provide income sufficient for her to avoid homelessness and she and her children were placed in an emergency shelter in South Miami Dade County. From there, she had to commute two hours by bus to her job at the stadium. She quit when she became pregnant and moved back to a shelter in the downtown hub where a therapist diagnosed her son with a mental illness and helped her family move into a three-bedroom house. At the time of our interview, she was living in a scattered-site location in Miami Gardens, in a predominantly black and high poverty neighbourhood a few miles north of the downtown hub. She planned to resume working at the arena as soon as the basketball season started again, but it would still take her an hour and a half by bus to the arena.

Ruben, a white Hispanic in his early 60s living in a single site permanent supportive housing program in the middle of downtown Miami, benefitted from the cluster of private non-profit and other social service organizations in the hub. He had been through substance abuse programs but had difficulty finding stable employment. He worked for cell-phone companies and a Spanish language phone directory on commission, but these jobs did not last long. So, he was actively looking for work with the assistance of job developers at the Veteran's Administration (VA), a state job development office, and faith-based organizations. While searching for paid work, he immersed himself in volunteering in some of the numerous social service organizations in and around the downtown hub.

Well, I've been volunteering in a number of places. I did get President Obama's Gold Medal Volunteer Award for 2012–2013. And those were for hours I put in at the Arsht Centre (for the Performing Arts) and at Miami-Dade College computer courtyard. But unofficially, I have been volunteering at the South Florida Key Club houses for people with persistent mental illness. That is what they call it. And with the VA.

Despite unstable employment and income, Ruben described his life living in supportive housing as the most stable that he had known.

### ***4.3 Service System Entry***

While new requirements from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development have led to many local areas to coordinate entry into permanent supportive housing through a single, centralized process, the density of housing and services in a poor neighbourhood where street homelessness exists can foster entry and access to services in unplanned ways. Winston, an African American veteran in his late 50s,

had been living on the streets of downtown and Overtown or in jail or prison for about 30 years, addicted to cocaine. He had tried substance abuse recovery programs before, but he always relapsed. Here he described how a chance meeting with a former substance abuse counsellor at a market in the neighbourhood unexpectedly set him on course towards overcoming his addiction and moving into transitional housing.

One of the counsellors here, I was at the store in town buying some beer and stuff and he walked up to me and said, 'You need to come on back home.' That right there, dropped a pebble in the water. I marinated on that for about a 10th of a second. Then I went on about my business.

That was when the changes started taking place, because sometimes words play a real powerful meaning to life. When he said that I thought about it. Then I laid down and I thought about it. I should get a change-up. I was getting older and looking at all my peers and the people that get high with me and everything.

All of a sudden, the drug didn't have the effect like it used to have. I said, 'Shit. I might as well go in Camillus House.' But my intention was, come to Camillus House, stay at Camillus House and get clean, then go back.

They told me to come back at 5:00 in the morning. Right across the street there, you see that sidewalk right across the street over there. I went right across that street and laid on the concrete until 5:00 the next morning. When I came in here, Mr. James, also was one of the counsellors over there, had to open the house. He seen me, and he let me in. He said, 'Oh, here come the blast from the past.'

When I came up in here, I was thinking of one expectation. ... The deal was for me just come in here, check it out, and see what it's about (and go back to smoking crack on the streets) ... But when I got in here and they took me to the elevator, and showed me what my room was, it was mind-blowing. Right then I see gratification. I see inspiration. I said to myself, 'Damn. I think I can handle this.' Things start changing. One accident, one humane act, changed the homeless state, to where I'm at today.

The density of social services in downtown near a cluster of street homelessness fosters such chance meetings. In a sense, the density and diversity of amenities in the neighbourhood allows some staff to be "eyes on the street" (Jacobs 1961) not only in the sense of increasing safety but also as a "signpost" (Clope et al. 2010), directing people to services. In turn, Winton also was "giving back" by volunteering in the clothing room on the campus where he lived in a transitional housing program.

#### **4.4 Social Ties**

Some residents living outside of the downtown service hub sometimes faced difficulty maintaining social ties. When Danielle, described above, moved to her scattered-site apartment in Miami Gardens, she was no longer close to many of her friends that lived closer to the downtown service hub. The separation affected her strategies for feeling safe, and she often ended up staying inside her home. Other interviewees felt reluctant to move from a shelter to other housing programs if it meant moving far



from their network of social ties. Shana, an African American woman in her early 30s with three children, reluctantly moved into the two-year transitional housing offered to her in Homestead from the shelter her family was staying at in the downtown hub.

I think they made some phone calls and got me in here and I didn't want to be down here because I don't really know anyone down here and my home was in Northwest. That's where I've been since I was a child. I had to come down here, didn't want to.

Shana's family had been in the shelter for three months, and a judge that was following up on her eviction case (in which she was ordered into the shelter) ordered the shelter to find her housing since he did not feel a shelter was a proper place for children to grow up. While Shana appreciated having an apartment, she did not want to move to Homestead, and would have preferred to wait for an apartment in the Miami area. She felt so strongly about not wanting to leave her former neighbourhood, that it took a court order to make her move.

I was court ordered down here. I did everything in my power I could to fight it, but in the end, I had to surrender because if I didn't come, I was going to lose my kids. I absolutely did not, positively did not want to come down here.

Moving to Homestead brought her further away from her brother and other family members, as well as places that she had worked before. At the transitional housing in Homestead, Shana considered only a few people close enough to call friends and share advice with but said they did not share resources with each other.

In contrast, some interviewees in the downtown service hub, especially those who grew up close by in neighbourhoods such as Overtown, discussed how proximity to family made it easy to maintain contact with a crucial form of emotional and material support. Dale, an African American in his late 50 s, was living in permanent supportive housing in the downtown hub after two years of substance abuse recovery in transitional housing. He was in contact with his siblings, children, and grandchildren in South Miami, a 30-min train ride away. While in the recovery program, he suffered a heart attack and family members helped him recover. He applied for disability benefits immediately after getting out of the hospital and returning to the program, but he was denied. Staff referred him to a lawyer who was able to appeal and get him benefits within seven months. This enabled him to move into permanent supportive housing on the campus in the downtown hub. From there he still visited family, but he was motivated to try to help family members who are still suffering from addiction.

## 4.5 Safety

Whereas the factors above point to potential benefits of service hubs, especially in central neighbourhoods, a perception of high crime in the downtown hub did appear to constrict the movement of some of our interviewees. Dale, living in a single site permanent housing program in the downtown hub, avoided spaces, including those in the immediate vicinity of the program, that he identified as "ghetto."

I might go downtown every now and then or catch a train to ride the train or trolley through downtown. Mostly, I try to stay where it's safe at. I try to stay in a safe environment, because I'm from the ghetto, and if I go in those places, there's no telling what the young kids are doing now, because they shoot now, and they're running you over.

Interestingly, Dale noted that the staff of the organization discourage their clients from hanging outside and in the nearby neighbourhood. This is often due to the perceived temptation of drugs for people recovering from substance abuse as well as to avoid complaints to the organization from police about loitering. During ethnographic fieldwork, another resident described being told by a case worker not to go to the nearby impoverished area of Overtown. But he was frustrated because he was from Overtown and still had family and friends there. In discussions with administrators of the non-profit organization operating the permanent supportive housing program, they described strong pressures from the local government and police to minimize the visibility of homelessness by encouraging people to remain within the walled courtyard of the campus. So, the perception of the surrounding neighbourhood as dangerous combines with pressures from officials to limit the visibility of homelessness to drive staff to discourage residents from socializing in public spaces nearby.

However, interviewees living in the downtown service hub were not the only ones with safety concerns. Eve, an African American woman in her late 40s living in permanent housing with her children on a campus a few miles outside the Homestead hub had similar concerns with her neighbourhood. Eve received disability benefits for her diabetes and often stayed home given limited mobility. On weekends she sat on her porch and watched her neighbours' "drama unfold."

Every weekend. Rescue was here two days ago. Police was here last night at somebody's house. Every weekend. Every weekend it's coming. I don't want to live here. They tried to break in my house because they knew I was at the hospital. My kids came to see me the last time when I was in hospital, which was three weeks ago. They tried to break in my house, they tried to get through to the windows.

Although the non-profit operators of permanent supportive housing could terminate and evict residents for such incidents, Eve's experience suggests that they were not able to completely eradicate crime and conflicts on campuses. Due to the experience of her home break-in and witnessing her neighbours' issues, Eve said she did not want to live on the campus anymore. However, she did not have many other options since, as she admitted, she could not afford market rate housing without financial assistance.

Danielle, who was living in a scattered-site apartment located in Miami Gardens north of the downtown hub, described hostility from her neighbours as well.

The neighbourhood is nice, even though the people next door got hostile to me yesterday. They had me a little fearful once they continue to stay around here... I should be OK, but I'm not OK with it. It shouldn't scare me as much as it is, being that I stayed in Overtown, around a whole bunch of other stuff. Normally, sometimes I'll be gone. I don't really like to be here. I try to I go to the library, get on the computer, or I'll go to a friend's house. But since all my friends stay so far from here, I just mainly stay home and watch TV.

Similar to Dale, Danielle avoided areas in the immediate vicinity, either staying inside her home or travelling to places she felt were safe such as the library or a friends' house. However, since she had to move away from her social networks into her current apartment, many of her friends live too far, undercutting her sense of security.

## 5 Conclusion

Overall, like many other global cities, Miami has seen homelessness become entrenched along with the bifurcated labour and housing markets and retreating welfare protections that characterize these nodes of the global economy (Sassen 2001). However, Miami's position in the U.S. South and its history of racial segregation, as well as its status as global city for Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States have shaped how homelessness has manifested here. At times, local actors have worked to use federal assistance and the local private sector to implement progressive measures to address homelessness like increasing permanent supportive housing. However, this fails to meet demand and homelessness is continuously reproduced. With sizable populations still fending for themselves on the streets, developers as key agents in the local economy have mobilized more punitive responses. One of Miami's key challenges to become a global city known not only for economic prowess but inclusiveness and equality, is to move beyond this stagnation. While this will require massive societal change and federal government support, a community response that addresses inequalities in labour markets and housing, as well as shredded public safety nets is needed. Housing will need to be redefined as a fundamental human right rather than a financial tool.

In a Foucauldian critical analysis of the "homeless management industry" in the United States, Willse (2015) argues that the social function of this industry is not only to impose discipline and self-responsibility on individual recipients of aid. The broader system of non-profit organizations that are subcontracted by national and local governments and also privately funded is an example of how in the biopolitics of managing homelessness under neoliberalism, illness and waste in the form of surplus populations become fodder for economic investment and growth. In contrast to social welfare in the Fordist-Keynesian era which aimed to bolster labour to serve the economy, neoliberal social programs, and the social scientific knowledge supporting them, have become part of the economy. The economic, political, and social conditions that produce structural holes in terms of a lack of affordable housing, living wage employment, and social safety nets are left untouched by the homeless management industry. Surplus populations are not left to die, but they experience slow death by management, thus giving economic and social value to abandonment. As Willse (2015:50) states, "The act of dying, of being ill, gives economic life as matter to be neoliberally and biopolitically managed." While the noble efforts and successes of housing first and increasing permanent subsidized housing in Miami Dade County should certainly not be brushed aside, the persistence of mass homelessness and

inability of a sizeable entrenched relief sector to make substantial strides to ending the social problem renders the Foucauldian critique clearly applicable to global Miami. A broader social movement reducing the fundamental social and spatial inequalities in cities and truly treating housing a human right are necessary to overcome the limits of managing homelessness in global Miami and to prove this critique wrong.

In terms of the spatial characteristics of the homeless management archipelago, our findings show that it is highly structured by clustering in poor neighbourhoods. This runs counter to the ideal of equal distribution of housing and services across urban space and shows clear influence of NIMBYism. Furthermore, as evident in our findings, it renders residents of the downtown hub as well as those not residing in the hub vulnerable to crime and unsafe conditions. This is important because these neighbourhood conditions can contribute to limited socializing, inactivity, as well as health and mental health complications. We identified a small but substantial hub in the nonpoor area of Hialeah. Further qualitative research in that hub could shed light on potential strengths and weaknesses of a nonpoor hub located away from the urban core.

There were some aspects of the clustering of housing and services, especially in the downtown hub, that seemed beneficial to our interviewees. The volume, density and diversity of services downtown not only enabled residents to access the various services they needed but provided access to efficient public transportation and employment and volunteer opportunities, as well as facilitated service system entry in an unintended way. However, it should be noted that job opportunities were low-paying and unstable, unable on their own to prevent returns to homelessness. This suggests that employers such as the large entertainment venues downtown need to further invest in their workers' ability to maintain housing. Also, the central location in the metropolitan area and the public transportation system also facilitated residents' ability to maintain their social ties, especially with family members.

Further research is necessary to flesh out the strengths and weaknesses of service hubs for their residents. We have shown that service hubs vary greatly in terms of size, content of services, and neighbourhood characteristics. Ethnographic research should be conducted in hubs with varying characteristics to identify how these characteristics can shape resident experiences. Then, quantitative approaches could be used to test these effects.

At a City of Miami Beach Commissioner's meeting in the spring of 2017 about the municipality possibly participating in the County's 1 percent restaurant tax, nearly all commissioners opposed. They argued that it would hurt the area's tourist industry. Amid escalating debate, with strong support for joining the tax program from citizens, representatives of non-profit organizations, and the Miami Dade County Homeless Trust, one commissioner scribbled some notes and found a what she thought as a simple solution to the complex problem. 'We can send all of these (homeless) people down to Homestead and house them for \$200 per month.' This not only ignored the scale of the problem and the costs of providing housing and supportive services, but also suggested banishing the extremely poor to the outskirts of the global city region was a viable solution to mass homelessness.

We agree that housing and services addressing homelessness should not be ghettoized and should be available in various parts of the metropolitan area. However, the reality of income and race-based segregation and the power of NIMBY in U.S. cities like Miami has restricted this ideal from being actualized. Additionally, our findings suggest potential benefits of clustering in a central service hub, and potential negatives of spreading housing and services away from residents' families, efficient transportation, and employment and other opportunities. Therefore, we suggest policymakers and practitioners consider these benefits, resist pressures to push the most vulnerable out of the city, and work to bolster the effectiveness of hubs, fostering the "right to the city" of even the most vulnerable residents.

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# The Impact of Increasing Welfare Needs and Exclusion of Homeless People in the Urban Underclass Communities of Kotobuki, Yokohama



Kahoruko Yamamoto

**Abstract** Kotobuki, Yokohama is a lower-income urban community in Japan that has recently experienced a noticeable increase in welfare needs. With the inception of a new public program designed to encourage the homeless to find employment, previous forms of support for those in need, especially the homeless, have ended, with a negative impact on aid recipients. In addition, the increasing number of people on welfare in Kotobuki has affected the balance of power between local organizations and activist groups. Greater emphasis is now placed on welfare services to the elderly and the disabled, whereas living conditions in Kotobuki have become much more difficult for people who are homeless and able to work only occasionally. New developments in the town have effectively excluded people of low income, particularly the homeless, who are increasingly losing their access to public support.

**Keywords** Urban community · Aging · Welfare · Homeless · Yokohama

## 1 Increasing Welfare Needs in Low-Income Urban Communities

As the Japanese population ages rapidly, the number of welfare recipients has increased nationwide, and poverty has become the country's most pressing social issue (Iwata 2007). In particular, the number of households classified as elderly (i.e., households in which all occupants are either age 65 or older or under age 18) and receiving welfare has continued to increase, based on data from November 2017 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2018).

As a result, finding housing has become increasingly difficult for the elderly who are living on welfare. This is mainly due to the lack of affordable, barrier-free housing for elders living alone, age discrimination in privately owned rental accommodations, and prejudice and discrimination toward formerly homeless people (Inaba 2009). For

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those who cannot work due to illness, disability, or simply old age and who do not have relatives willing to assist them, housing options are very limited. Lodging houses (also referred to as single-room occupancies) in low-income communities are often the only choice available for welfare recipients.

In contemporary Japanese society, these generally poverty-ridden communities have experienced changing trends with regard to their populations and the issues they are facing. For example, Kamagasaki in Osaka, San'ya in Tokyo, and Kotobuki in Yokohama have historically been known as *yoseba* or “day-labourer towns,” a distinct sub-category of low-income communities. Kotobuki is among the areas marked by a noticeably increased need for welfare assistance, as many welfare recipients have moved into what were previously day-labourer lodging houses.

Unlike the situation in other low-income communities, formerly homeless people have been living in lodging houses as welfare recipients in Kotobuki since the 1970s. In fact, the earliest known instances of such individuals living on welfare in lodging houses were in Kotobuki. People on welfare can live in lodging houses or other facilities under the public assistance system in Japan, although most formerly homeless people still frequent bread lines and soup kitchens. In addition, although other disadvantaged communities have recently had increases in their population of welfare recipients, nearly 90% of Kotobuki's population lived on welfare as of 2018; this was the highest percentage of any community in Japan (Yokohama City Kotobuki Fukushi Plaza 2019).

It is important to consider the impact of increasing welfare needs on the social structure of low-income urban communities, and especially on those members of the community who are not receiving welfare, such as the homeless and day labourers. Accordingly, this chapter focuses on Kotobuki as a case study. After explaining the town's background and recent development in the next section, the following sections analyse the changes of Kotobuki's social structure and their negative impact on the homeless before highlighting the changes in the community and local support activities. Furthermore, I will illuminate that new development has focused mainly on people receiving social welfare benefits, not those engaged in temporary labour or the homeless. I then consider who has been excluded in Kotobuki as the focus of assistance has shifted to welfare recipients before measuring the impact of these changes on the social structure of urban communities.

## **2 Kotobuki's Background and Recent Development**

### ***2.1 Kotobuki's Past Development***

At the end of World War II, inner Yokohama was heavily damaged by firebombing attacks, and after the end of the war, the area was requisitioned by the Allied Forces for almost 9 years. A few years before the inner area's release from Allied control, the port of Yokohama resumed operations. At that time, more than 80% of all grain being



imported into Japan landed at Yokohama, and enormous amounts of manpower were needed to unload the grain shipments. In addition, with the start of the Korean War in 1950, an influx of hard currency to pay for special procurements of war materials occurred, bringing an economic boom to Japan. This situation resulted in an even greater demand for labourers, and a large number of people from all over the country flocked to jobs in Yokohama, especially around the port.

The available residential facilities were insufficient to accommodate this sudden influx of labourers and their family members. As a result, slums gradually formed in the area near the port. Initially, some workers lived in ship hotels anchored on a nearby river, but because of some terrible capsizing accidents and the spread of infectious diseases, these floating hotels were soon abolished, adding further to the heavy demand for labourers' housing.

In 1952, Yokohama City adopted a master plan for post-war rehabilitation. As part of this plan, the slums were swept away and the people living there were relocated. Of these former slum residents, families and women moved to public housing facilities in Yokohama's suburbs. Single men, however, moved to Kotobuki, a former working-class neighbourhood, and a job centre for day labourers relocated to Kotobuki from its previous location in central Yokohama (near the port) in 1957. With the opening of the job centre, cheap lodging houses owned by Korean residents began to appear. There were only two or three such lodging houses in 1957; 2 years later, there were 64. During the next decade, the number of lodging houses in Kotobuki continued to increase at a rapid pace (Yamamoto 2008).

## 2.2 *Changes in Kotobuki as a Town for Day Labourers*

During the high-growth period of the Japanese economy, demand for workers increased greatly and the population of Kotobuki grew to around 6,000 (see Table 1). In addition to the previously mentioned job centre for day labourers at Kotobuki's public labour and welfare facility, a second, unauthorized job market, called a *yoseba*, existed on a Kotobuki street. In the very early morning, people would come to this market and traders would simply gather the number of workers they needed for the day. Kotobuki was one of the major *yosebas* in post-war Japan.

In contrast to workers at other *yosebas*, Kotobuki residents worked mainly as dock labourers and stevedores. For this reason, they did not need to move repeatedly to different construction sites to find their next job, and so they were able to marry and have families. In 1965, the labour and welfare centre added a nursery school for the children of day labourers.

Some residents in Kotobuki formed their own community association, and a labour union organized local workers. The efforts of these two organizations improved communication among residents and helped them advocate for more and better welfare facilities and services.

In 1965, the Promotion Act of Stevedores was approved and the automation of dock work in Yokohama port began. As a result, the demand for day labourers on

**Table 1** Population in Kotobuki (1989–2016) (data of every November)

Year	Number of lodging houses	Rooms of lodging houses	Residents of lodging houses	Over 65-year-old population	Welfare recipients (housing support)
1989	85	6158	6151	459	1652
1990	86	6349	6362	492	1638
1991	86	6297	6334	548	1706
1992	87	6328	6476	602	1983
1993	88		6205	792	2562
1994	87	6133	6331	941	3413
1995	89	6460	6340	1116	3893
1996	92	6606	6243	1112	3997
1997	92	6719	6401	1221	4221
1998	96	6968	6495	1430	4537
1999	102	7199	6678	1458	4571
2000	103	7251	6429	1668	4627
2001	107	7440	6589	1768	4594
2002	107	7443	6559	1942	4698
2003	110	7733	6279	1975	4836
2004	115	8194	6654	2133	4913
2005	118	8461	6412	2231	4869
2006	120	8653	6461	2374	4849
2007	122	8685	6301	2539	4893
2008	121	8615	6338	2604	4848
2009	121	8611	6517	2963	5320
2010	124	8818	6572	3000	5230
2011	123	8875	6510	3023	5161
2012	124	8774	6429	3112	5242
2013	122	8499	6322	3219	5242
2014	123	8598	6318	3224	5301
2015	124	8479	6150	3318	5387
2016	124	8423	5842	3300	5228
2017	121	8371	5728	3295	5094
2018	121	8286	5716	3164	5007

*Sources* Kotobuki Seikatsu-kan & Yokohama city (number of lodging houses & rooms of lodging houses, over 65-year-old population), Kotobuki Fukushi centre (residents of lodging houses) and Yokohama city, health and welfare bureau (welfare recipients)

the docks decreased, and many of them had to shift to construction work to earn a living. In the 1970s, the local population began to age significantly as the number of elderly labourers in Kotobuki increased. The percentage of Kotobuki residents with disabilities also rose, as the physical demands of long-term work at the port and construction sites took their toll. Many residents were both old and disabled and lived on social welfare (Yamamoto 2008).

### ***2.3 The Impact of Globalization on Kotobuki***

The years from 1986 to 1991 were years of high economic growth in Japan—the so-called “bubble.” During this time, many foreign workers migrated to Japan, mostly from other Asian countries such as the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, and Korea. Even today, the Japanese government does not grant foreign migrants a work visa for blue-collar jobs, so most of these migrant workers entered Japan on a short-term tourist visa, and many of them continued to work in Japan after their visas had expired.

The migrants who settled in Kotobuki came mainly from the Philippines and Korea. Most were single males, but there were some females and youth among them. With the increasing arrival of migrants, some ethnic businesses also appeared in Kotobuki. Around the early 1990s, the number of businesses specializing in Korean food, newspapers, rental videos, and magazines grew rapidly. Even though relations between established Koreans (i.e., those who had been living in Japan for some time) and the newcomers were not particularly intimate or collaborative, the new arrivals enjoyed having a place where they could communicate in their own language and preserve their Korean lifestyle (Yamamoto 2008).<sup>1</sup>

## **3 Changes in Social Structure in Kotobuki and Its Negative Impact on the Homeless**

### ***3.1 Decreasing Demand for Day-Labourers and Changes in Social Structure in Kotobuki and Its Negative Impact on the Homeless***

By 1991, the bubble of high economic growth burst and the onset of a long-term economic depression, along with changes in the industry, decreased the need for

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<sup>1</sup> We cannot see the situation mentioned in the town now, because of the decreasing number of migrants. With the long-term recession of the 1990s and intensified crackdown of the Immigration Service, some migrants moved to other areas in Japan to obtain a better chance to earn a living while others went back to their home countries.



**Fig. 1** The number of day labourers in the construction sector (1985–2015) *Source* Ministry of internal affairs and communications ‘labour force survey’ (due to the great Tohoku earthquake and Tsunami, there is no data of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefecture in 2011)

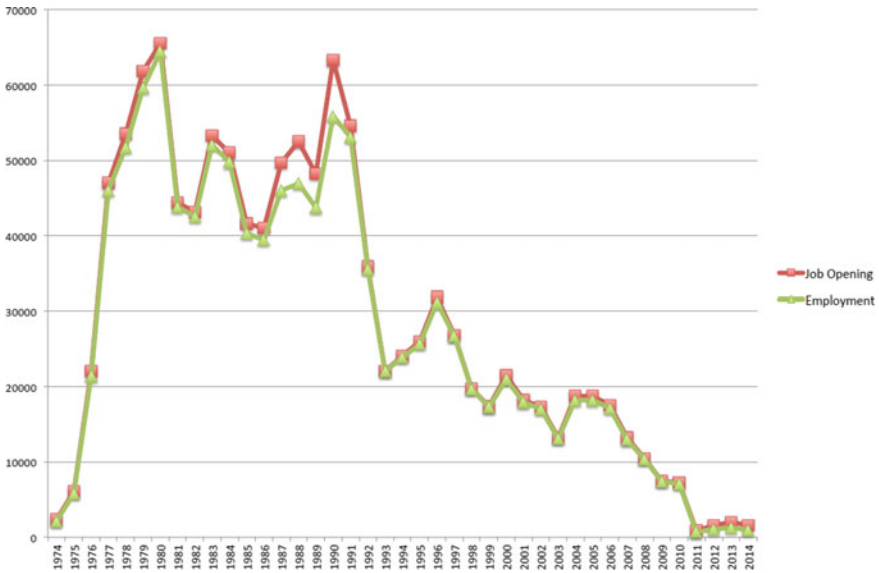
day labourers at construction sites, making jobs of this type harder to find. As Fig. 1 shows, the number of day labourers in the construction sector has been dropping since the 1980s, but the most dramatic decrease came after the bubble. This phenomenon had a huge negative impact on day labourers in Kotobuki (see Fig. 2).

As the number of homeless people in Japan’s major cities increased,<sup>2</sup> the Japanese government enacted in 2002 its Act on Special Measures concerning Assistance in Self-Support of the Homeless (amended in 2012). Under this act, public “self-support” (i.e., self-reliance) facilities for the homeless opened in several large cities, including Tokyo, Osaka, and Yokohama, and a facility with a maximum capacity of 226 persons opened in Kotobuki in 2003. As of 2010, about one-third of the people who had lived in these facilities had found regular employment, one-third were unable to find employment by the deadline, and one-third had left of their own accord.<sup>3</sup>

Many of those who could not find regular employment faced homelessness, whereas some fluctuated between being homeless, living in self-support centres, and living on social welfare. (In Japan, the homeless do not receive welfare because one must have a permanent address to be eligible.) Moreover, some of these individuals

<sup>2</sup> The number of homeless people was 20,451 in 132 municipalities as of October 1999 and 24,090 in 420 municipalities as of January 2001, according to the national homeless count.

<sup>3</sup> This estimate was provided in an interview with a self-support facility staff member in September 2010.



**Fig. 2** The number of job openings and employment number of day labourers at the Kotobuki Labour Centre. *Source* Kotobuki labour centre

had mental problems (including addictions and intellectual disabilities), communication disorders, and issues with social adjustment that made it difficult for them to maintain regular jobs. Some of these people could work as day labourers, but the self-support policy covered only those who had consistent employment, as it was designed to assist only those who were willing to accept regular work, not day labourers. The self-support program included meals, shelter, and vocational guidance and training, with the eventual goal of enabling clients to find a steady job and permanent housing.

Some scholars have indicated that at the beginning of the self-support program for the homeless, clients had the option of seeking regular employment or receiving public assistance, whereas those who could not do either were removed from welfare altogether (Kitagawa 2008: 237). Another study found that those who suffered from chronic homelessness were eventually excluded by both the homeless support system and the social welfare system (Okino 2012: 55). The 2002 law to help the homeless become financially independent gave local municipalities a justification for removing those homeless people who could not secure regular employment or public assistance from any welfare support whatsoever. Even for those who managed to subsist with help from local private organizations, life became much more difficult because of the lack of support from public welfare programs.

In Yokohama City, long before the self-support system started in 2002, a municipal special temporary welfare support program (a voucher-based service) was established for labourers in Kotobuki in the 1970s. This program was initially formed to assist jobless day labourers during the economic depression that accompanied the oil crisis

in 1973. However, the increasing number of vouchers awarded placed an enormous financial burden on the city, especially after the economic recession in the latter half of the 1990s after the bubble economy collapsed. In addition, with the opening of the self-support centre in 2003, Yokohama City reduced its special temporary welfare support for the homeless and provided vouchers only for those attempting to find regular employment. The city's program was terminated completely in 2012.

Mr. A was one of the Kotobuki residents who received assistance through the voucher system. He had worked at a construction site as a day labourer, and when he could not find a job, he slept on the streets. He explained in September 2012:

I can work and want to work as long as my body is okay. I want to live on my earnings. I do not want to speak negatively about welfare recipients, but I do not spend all my day in front of the TV. But job opportunities are decreasing now. So far, I have eked out a scanty living with the vouchers. Those have saved my life. If the vouchers end, then I will have to leave Kotobuki. My colleagues who live like me say the same thing: "I cannot live in Kotobuki and I will have to move."

From the perspective of those working as day labourers, the end of the voucher service deeply affected the livelihood of those living in the Kotobuki area, including but not limited to the homeless (Yamamoto 2013).

### ***3.2 The Increasing Number of Socially Vulnerable People and the Concentration of Welfare Recipients***

According to Yokohama City, the number of persons with physical disabilities living in Kotobuki as of 2011 was 435. Of these, 47.1% were age 60 to 69 and another 29.2% were age 70 or older, meaning that more than three quarters of those with disabilities were at least 60 years old. Furthermore, in the overall population, the number of people age 75 and over has recently increased. For example, in 2011, 718 residents belonged to this age group or 139 more than in 2009 (Yokohama City Health and Welfare Bureau 2012).

The increasing number of elders living alone and dependent on welfare has spawned a wide range of welfare needs, such as attendant services, home nursing visits, visits to confirm residents' safety, community services, and even hospice care. In addition, there has been an increasing number of cases in which welfare recipients from outside the area have moved to lodging houses in Kotobuki (as welfare recipients) after being discharged from hospitals or other public facilities.

As a result, multiple medical and welfare institutions and businesses have opened in the area since the 2000s. In March 2011, 35 such entities existed in the area (including public housing facilities, medical services, nursing care services, and other non-profit organizations), of which nine were established between 2001 and 2005 and 13 more after 2006 (Yamamoto 2013).

Currently, the Kotobuki area includes many residents who have multiple disabilities and/or illnesses and live alone in lodging houses. The presence of these individuals has increased the need for home visitations by medical and nursing professionals, which indicates the growing demand for community welfare services. The great concentration of medical and nursing care services in and around Kotobuki has increased the frequency of home visitations, since these facilities are in relatively close proximity to one another. In addition, this local characteristic has enticed additional welfare recipients to move to this area from other parts of the city (Yamamoto 2013).

With the increasing number of welfare recipients, these individuals have become primary customers of lodging houses along with day labourers. Since the late 1990s, the owners of these lodging houses have been reconstructing or renovating their buildings to provide elevators, handrails, and other necessary aspects of barrier-free facilities. Although the rooms were still small, they allowed the elderly and those with physical disabilities to move around with relative ease. In addition, the owners even changed their prior attitude of resistance and began to actively welcome welfare recipients.

### 3.3 Changes in Social Structure in Kotobuki

Figure 3 presents a breakdown of the population of Kotobuki, categorized by work or welfare status and by type of housing.

Day labourers, who are now a minority in Kotobuki, work mainly at construction sites, earning their own livelihood, and generally live in lodging houses.

Welfare recipients, who make up the majority of residents, can be divided into two groups based on their reason for coming to Kotobuki. One group comprises those who have been living in Kotobuki for a long time as day labourers and became dependent on welfare because of disease, disability, or old age. The second group is composed of those who formerly lived outside the area and did not work as day labourers but faced dire situations such as losing employment and housing. People in such crisis situations who did not have a place to live or relatives to provide support

Many people circulate among the three categories

	Day Laborers	Welfare Recipients	People in the Self-Support Center	Low-Income/ Homeless Person	Other Residents
Work/Welfare	Day Labor	Social Welfare	Job Search for Self-Support	Day Labor, Recovery of Waste Materials, (Temporary Welfare Support)	Other Jobs
Housing	Lodging Houses (SROs)	Lodging Houses (SROs)	Public Self-Support Facilities (Max. 3 months*)	Homeless, 24hrs-open facilities (an Internet Cafe, a Fast-Food Chain, etc)	Public Housing, Apartment Houses, etc

**Fig. 3** Kotobuki’s population categories according to work/welfare status and type of housing (as of 2019)

moved to Kotobuki lodging houses to become eligible for welfare since to receive welfare, one must have an established residence.

In addition, there are other groups among Kotobuki's population. People living at the self-support centre receive public support and vocational training to help them find permanent employment. If they cannot find a regular job during a defined period of time (3 months; as of 2019), they must move out; however, there is no limit on the number of stays, so some return again (There is no minimum amount of time that people must be out of the centre).

If people cannot earn enough money to live in a lodging house in Kotobuki, the only alternatives are to sleep in the street or stay overnight in commercial facilities that remain open 24 h a day (such as Internet cafés and fast-food restaurants). Many of them are day labourers, doing menial work such as recycling of waste materials. Like Mr. A, who is one example of this group, some have received temporary welfare support.

Some welfare recipients face termination of support because of troubles with the welfare office, extravagance (e.g., spending their house payment money on gambling), or various difficulties. Other welfare recipients have their support ended because they have recovered from their disease or injury, but some are unable to find a job or to resume work immediately when their welfare payments are terminated. If they are willing to seek permanent work, they can move into the self-support centre for a limited time period. If they move out of the centre because of failure to meet the job search requirements or because they have broken another of the centre's rules (such as by drinking or breaking curfew), their only remaining options are the streets and other 24h commercial facilities. As a result, many people moved back and forth between the three groups—i.e., the lodging houses, the self-support centre, and the streets (Fig. 3) (Yamamoto 2013).

## **4 Changes in the Community and Local Support Activities in Kotobuki**

Ever since Kotobuki's initial establishment as a "day-labourer town," the area has had a high influx and outflow of people, especially those working at construction sites. As a result, much of the population has suffered from unstable living situations.

Prior to the increase in local welfare needs, the main areas of focus for the local government in Kotobuki were labour issues and providing basic support for labourers and their families. Until the 1980s, when there were plenty of job opportunities for day labourers, even the local union presumed that ensuring job security should be the top priority.

Conversely, the two local support groups for the homeless, established in the 1980s as volunteer organizations after violent incidents in which unruly teenagers killed or injured several homeless people, conducted outreach activities and advocated



on physical security and health issues on behalf of the homeless. Their advocacy pressured the public sector to provide proper support for the homeless.

In this case, the initial supportive activities for the homeless focused not on providing welfare for them but on ensuring basic security for people living on the streets. Members of these advocacy groups contended that people in Kotobuki with unstable living situations should be treated as humanely as those with stable lifestyles.

After the recession began in the early 1990s, support services for labourers in Kotobuki became intertwined with those for the homeless, including helping them to apply for social welfare. Ensuring job security for people in need was no longer always possible, because of the large number of unemployed people.

During this recession period, several local organizations, including the union and the Christian mission chapel, began supplying meals to the homeless and the unemployed. Furthermore, *Etto* (directly translated as “Winter Crossing” in English), following the example of the union and other activists who offered shelter and food to day labourers during the end-of-the-year holidays in the 1970s, began offering similar assistance to the homeless regularly in the early 1990s.

For the homeless and needy in and around Kotobuki, the area has become a place to access basic resources such as meals, public facilities, and necessary information. Even the needy who spend their nights outside Kotobuki itself are frequently described as “Kotobuki-related people” by those who assist and advocate for them.

As part of the outreach activities to the homeless conducted by each local support organization both inside and outside Kotobuki, the staff members assess the conditions of each person and attempt to determine his or her most pressing issues, and they encourage homeless people to come and receive services in Kotobuki. However, since all the local support organizations have limited resources, they lack the ability to actually improve the livelihood of the homeless. They can only provide short-term assistance (e.g., help in applying for social welfare, meals, and temporary shelter) and encourage the public sector to become more aware of the “new welfare needs” present in their community. However, the public sector has generally followed the lead of the national government and its “self-support” policy for the homeless, causing the efforts of the local support organizations in Kotobuki to be less successful (Yamamoto 2010).

## 5 The New “Town Development” in Kotobuki

As mentioned earlier, the percentage of welfare recipients in Kotobuki has risen dramatically; in fact, this small town, which was known originally as a “labourers’ town,” has become a “welfare recipients’ town.” Since the existing laws are designed to help the homeless become financially independent, homeless people, including many who had never visited Kotobuki previously, have come there to live in the self-support centre or lodging houses in the area, becoming long-term residents of the town. Meanwhile, the union has been losing its influence and the remaining union

members are aging. At the same time, people who have worked in the welfare sector are gaining a greater voice in developing a vision for Kotobuki's future.

Additionally, local governments including Yokohama City have placed heavy emphasis on cooperation with community action groups in recent years. In the past, the labour union tended to take a clearly adversarial stand against the government in its attempts to secure funds and other resources for its members. But today, these methods have fallen out of favour as citizen participation has gained importance for local governments in Japan and collaboration between governments and residents (typically represented by local organizations and groups) has increasingly become a main focus. It is now standard practice for non-public organizations to present proposals to the government; if a proposal is adopted, the non-profit entity is commissioned to carry out the plan using public funds.

In this way, not only the social structure of Kotobuki but also relations between the government and local support organizations, as well as the balance of power among local organizations in Kotobuki, have changed drastically. One newly formed organization started a hostel to serve foreign backpackers and tourists. Some young architects and artists came together to renovate the lodging house rooms in Kotobuki, making them clean, safe spaces.

These kinds of change do not happen overnight. Yokohama City has promulgated a new urban redevelopment plan that integrates town development with art and artists, called "Creative City Yokohama." Under this new plan, historically low-income areas and streets have been cleaned up, and the government has sought to attract young residents to live or to open shops and art studios in these areas (Yamamoto 2013).

The changes mentioned above have had a large effect on Kotobuki and the activities that occur there. For example, people who have played a substantial role in improving the physical environment of Kotobuki, most of whom work in the welfare sector, convinced a business that sells tickets to motorboat races to locate in Kotobuki. This kind of facility is generally avoided by local residents, consistent with typical NIMBY (not in my backyard) principles but accepting it has brought some revenue to the Naka ward of Yokohama City (which includes Kotobuki). The members of the local community association have tried to find independent revenue sources for the local residents for a long time. The ticket centre opened in 2007, and a small percentage of the gross sales of race tickets is dedicated to community development as part of the local government budget.

The members of the local community association hope to regenerate Kotobuki and cause people from outside the area to perceive it as a normal community. To that end, residents have tried to organize various events to change Kotobuki's image. They wanted to show outsiders that this was no longer a frightening area but a community like any other town. As a result of these efforts, in 2007, the Yokohama City musical band held a march and a small open-air musical concert in Kotobuki, and young artists presented open-air exhibitions and public performances in 2008.

According to the Local Welfare Health Plan of Kotobuki, as stated by the Health and Welfare Bureau of Yokohama City, the public sector recognizes the following as important local issues: (1) life support for the elderly and disabled, (2) disaster prevention and crime prevention, (3) protection of the elderly, and (4) preventing

the illegal dumping of garbage (Yokohama City Health and Welfare Bureau 2012). Labour issues do not appear in this list.

Over time, the general public became familiar with these changes in Kotobuki through the events planned by the local community organization. However, local residents and people who have engaged in local social activities, especially those aiming to assist the homeless and other poor people, do not believe that much has changed. Even though Kotobuki's public image has improved somewhat, there are still many homeless people in and around the community. Furthermore, as young people are suffering from very severe labour issues in Japan (Iijima 2011), some of those whose employment is insecure come to Kotobuki as a last resort. Even though it has weakened in influence, the labour union and its members continue to carry out supportive activities for the homeless, and they play a central role not only in Kotobuki but across all of Kanagawa prefecture (Yamamoto 2013).

## 6 Who is Excluded from Welfare in Kotobuki?

Currently in Kotobuki, nearly 90% of those living in lodging houses are welfare recipients, contributing to the community's reputation as a "welfare recipients' town." Despite this, there are still life support resources that anyone can obtain (such as meals and public housing) to temporarily address their unstable living situation. This strong safety net is probably due to the area's long history of helping day labourers.

However, in the institutional context, welfare and nursing care support services have been prioritized within the local area plan. This prioritization excludes the homeless from the public assistance framework, because they do not have a formal address and are therefore not officially treated as "residents." As a result, local support organizations have struggled to negotiate and expand the framework of public assistance. In this regard, I contend that social and cultural features, such as accepting those who have an unstable lifestyle, should be incorporated into the local public assistance system so that welfare support for local needs can be more expansive, as the former special temporary welfare support for the homeless had been.

In the public sector's view, the term "the elderly and the disabled" refers only to those who reside in lodging houses, not the homeless, and this stance has not changed since the national act for "self-support" was enacted. Moreover, the homeless who are living in and around Kotobuki have been treated as outside the local welfare system and thus not eligible for self-support assistance. Even though they are living physically in the same area, their problems are not classified as "local welfare needs," since the homeless are not officially considered residents of the area.

After the special temporary welfare support for the homeless ended in 2012, living conditions have become much more difficult for the homeless who can work occasionally and who sometimes receive temporary social welfare. Under such circumstances, the activities of the support organizations help to provide basic life supports for those who are excluded from public assistance. Furthermore, the local support

organizations claim to have expanded the framework of public assistance within the municipality (Yamamoto 2013).

## 7 Conclusion

Kotobuki, which was formed in the 1950s and has long been known as a “day-labourer town,” now has many residents suffering from multiple disabilities and/or illnesses who live alone in lodging houses. Many of those residents live on social welfare. The percentage of welfare recipients among the residents of Kotobuki’s lodging houses was nearly 90% as of 2016. One reason for this widespread poverty is the lack of affordable, barrier-free housing for elderly people living alone in low-income housing. In many cases, the formerly homeless and other needy people choose to live in lodging houses upon becoming welfare recipients.

Today, medical and nursing care services are heavily concentrated in and around Kotobuki. But this extensive availability of quality health services has only accelerated the pace of needy people moving to Kotobuki to receive welfare.

Under the 2002 law designed to help homeless people become financially independent, a self-support centre opened in Kotobuki in 2003. The homeless, as well as low-income people not on social welfare in and around Kotobuki, had been eligible for the municipal special temporary welfare support program (the voucher service) since the 1970s. However, Yokohama City reduced its support and provided vouchers only for those attempting to find regular employment, and it eventually eliminated the entire program in 2012. This change in policy deeply affected the ability of low-income working people to maintain their livelihood in and around Kotobuki.

These situations have also impacted the balance of power between local organizations and activist groups in Kotobuki. The local community organizations focusing on welfare issues have gained a relatively stronger voice, and the local government has also become more involved, especially with regard to the area’s comprehensive local welfare scheme, which emphasizes delivering welfare services to the elderly and the disabled but only if they become local residents. However, the living conditions in Kotobuki have become much more difficult for the homeless who work only occasionally, and the conceptualization of the “welfare recipients’ town” has effectively excluded them from welfare.

Although this case study has focused on just one community in Japan, the concentration of needy people, such as the elderly and the disabled, in urban inner areas has become quite evident in the modern post-industrial society. The contradictory results of the welfare system based on self-support, in addition to exacerbating inequities for low-income working people who are being increasingly removed from the public support rolls—despite the government’s greater involvement with residents receiving welfare—could lead to further discussion of common themes in and with other urban areas.

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# Structurational Perspectives on the Resilience of Homeless People in Hong Kong



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**Abstract** Since its emergence as a social issue in Hong Kong in the late 70s, the framing of homelessness has shifted from the individual to structural perspectives. There has also been a surge of media and public accounts that are largely framed in punitive terms, describing the containment, criminalisation, and extermination of homeless people in public spaces. While these accounts may not be inaccurate, they point to a research gap in the Hong Kong context. There is little known research, if any, on how homeless people navigate these punitive responses to carve out a place socially and spatially. Using a structurational framework, this study seeks to explore how homeless individuals interact with social structures through exercising agency, and the resilience that emerges from navigating the structures' inherent barriers and opportunities. Two case studies are used to illustrate the complex interactions between agency and structures, and the dual nature of social structures. Implications on social work are discussed, including a community programme as an example that capitalises on the resilience and lived experience of homeless people.

**Keywords** Homelessness · Punitive · Containment · Resilience · Structuration · Hong Kong

## 1 Introduction

The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not “marginals”, are not people living “outside” society. They have always been “inside”— inside the structure which made them “beings for others”.

—Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970.

In recent years, public perception on homelessness in Hong Kong has swung from a “blame the individual” to a “blame the system” narrative that is critical of punitive

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measures imposed on homeless people, rendering them helpless victims. DeVerteuil et al. (2009) and Cloke et al. (2011) highlight the importance of acknowledging the symbiotic relationship between these punitive measures and the support that emerges from non-statutory entities such as volunteers and community organisations; as well as how homeless people demonstrate their agency when faced with these measures. These perspectives form an alternative to the revanchist accounts of homelessness—which segues to the aim of this paper—to explore the resilience of homeless people in Hong Kong in the context of social structures. The analysis of the two cases in this paper fills a gap in a current social climate that almost solely focuses on the punitive measures imposed on homeless people. Borrowing concepts from Giddens’s structuration theory on agency and structure, this paper examines how homeless people navigate and transform the social structures to carve out a spatial and social foothold for themselves, no matter how transient. The themes that emerge include how homeless individuals: transform uninhabitable urban enclaves into personal homes; insist on pursuing economic self-sufficiency to invert the stigma of homeless people, contest the hegemonic definition and meaning of home; challenge the demarcation between public and private space; navigate between mainstream society and the world of street life for support networks; assert the right to be homeless; and invert the role of homeless people and social advocate.

## 2 Homelessness in Hong Kong

The first survey that documented the status of street-sleepers in Hong Kong was organised by the University of Hong Kong in 1977. Though the issue was of little concern to the colonial government, it was then that homelessness began to emerge as a social issue (Kornatowski 2010). During 1970s and 80s, even though sleeping rough was quite common for some labourers to be close to their daily jobs in inner-city areas (HKCSS 1983), the media and popular discourse essentialised homeless people as aberrant and morally-deficient who were undeserving of governmental help. Against the backdrop of a colonial capitalist economy that prized free labour market, it was a general belief that selling labour was a first step to secure basic livelihood, including housing. This moralising discourse was deeply-entrenched in Hong Kong’s cultural and social fabric, and served a purpose in a society where one’s status was determined by the ability to provide labour and contribution to productivity. Thus, it was common to encounter parental warning to their children along the lines of “if you don’t work hard then you will end up sleeping on the street”. Such reminder kept the working poor on their toes and reinforced the work ethic that was instrumental in upholding Hong Kong’s capitalist economy. Personal traits highlighted in the dominant homeless narrative such as mental and physical disabilities, drug addiction, and gambling were associated with unproductive individuals with moral shortcomings deemed unfit to be part of the labour force.

## ***2.1 How Homelessness is Portrayed***

In the past few years, there has been a rather acute shift in the homelessness discourse in the media in Hong Kong, drawing more attention to structural factors such as lack of affordable housing, gentrification, economic restructuring, and the market-led neoliberal political economic system. Media coverage following the Homeless Outreach Population Estimation (H.O.P.E.) survey reports in 2014 and 2015 highlights the unaffordable housing market, and criticises the government for inadequate support and the absence of a comprehensive policy (H.O.P.E., 2014, 2015). This contrasts greatly with earlier accounts that largely depict the homeless as people who are fraught with socially disreputable traits as well as personal pathology.

The recent change in discourse has shifted the blame of the problem away from the individuals towards the structures, which may have some effects on ameliorating stigma and evoking greater sympathy from the public. It has also coincided with a predominant public sentiment emerged from grassroots backlash against the dire inequity, aggressive redevelopment, and unaffordable housing market in Hong Kong. Housing insecurity became more vicious after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and the economic stagnation subsequent to the 2003 SARS epidemic (Kennett and Mizuchi 2010). Though the economy has recovered since, housing insecurity persists. As this backlash gains traction in public opinion and the media, the discourse on homelessness has become more fixated on structural factors, especially in the midst of mounting housing insecurity. Sharing a common thread in this hapless plight with many others in society, homeless people are now seen as helpless victims of structural ills plagued by disparities, poverty, and lack of social security—and are considered more deserving of justice.

A surge of media accounts largely framed in punitive terms that describe the containment, criminalisation, and extermination of the homeless in public spaces comes as an extension of this shift. Flooding the headlines of various media platforms are news of how homeless people are evicted from covered areas underneath the flyovers, their personal belongings being confiscated in street raids, and their makeshift beds or cardboard houses thrown away under governmental orders. More covert tactics include urban greening construction, paving uneven rocks underneath the flyovers and on the roadside, installing immovable handgrips on park benches, locking the gates of outdoor sports stadiums at night, and using corrosive substance to clean the areas where homeless people sleep (SoCO 2014). As homelessness becomes more sensationalised in the public domain and media, in some instances it has become “sites of political productivity” (Willse 2010) on which some politicians capitalise. For instance, plans to remove homeless people from under a flyover so the space can be “returned to the public” have been boasted by the district councillor in Yau Tsim Mong district.



### 3 Punitive Framing

Such is not a phenomenon unique to Hong Kong. Kawash (1998) and Horsell (2006) unreservedly point out the violent exclusion policies and a social norm that sees homelessness as a threat to both the public space and private property in other parts of the globe. Within this framing, the social service sector becomes another insidious tactic complicit with the punitive response—in the West, the predominant medicalised case management approach is to treat symptoms that are barriers to the morally-accepted mode of housing; and in Hong Kong, response to homelessness has changed significantly from non-intervention to quite assertive professional social services (Kornatowski 2010). The prevailing order is that homeless people need to get cleaned up, get off the street and be kept away in some sheltered stay, while case managers map out service plans to right the wrong of their life course (Willse 2010). Gowan (2010) and Willse (2016) question how the “homeless industry” defines and perpetuates homelessness as something to be managed in the knowledge and social service industries, serving an economic function. Willse (2016) goes so far as referring housing deprivation faced by homeless people as “sites of economic productivity”, providing raw capital and material for experts to produce their research, policy goals, and social services.

#### 3.1 *Passive Victims or Agentic Subjects?*

I would be remiss to undermine the truth of these containment and control responses. No doubt, they serve to further marginalise homeless people from the public, reinforcing their already socially-excluded disposition; and warrant political pressure to put them to halt. But under this framing, homeless people and their experiences become helpless consequences of social structures and control; being rendered as merely a homogenous and powerless subaltern. Addressing these responses, DeVerteuil et al. (2009) call for a critical examination of the one-sided all-punitive revanchist accounts, in particular those emerged from the US and UK that are mostly focused on the vengeful claiming of city spaces by the upper classes from the underclass, deconstruction of homeless encampments through policing and intervention, and policies to “purify” public spaces by annihilating homeless people. Contrary to these accounts in which welfare agencies are framed as accomplices in the capitalist agenda by exterminating homeless people and moving them into shelters, DeVerteuil et al. (2009) and DeVerteuil (2014) stress the importance of recognising the symbiotic relationship between containment and control and abeyance, sustenance, and care.

Cloke et al. (2011) also argue that this very punitive governance, other than just a tool for criminalisation, containment and control, has also brought out “the ability of homeless people as tactical authors of at least some of their own life experiences, and the extraordinary acts of generosity and care being exercised by the staff, volunteers

and charitable donors who ensure a network of non-statutory services in the homeless city” (209). Oftentimes, the shelters, hostels, day centres, and soup kitchens, representing the homeless industry, are sites where various models of social control are actively resisted. They urge to look beyond the structuralist position and to examine the role of individuals including homeless people themselves and welfare organisations—if these sites of control did seek and serve to victimise homeless people, they are also where homeless people demonstrate their tenacity and resilience to cope with the structural barriers, everyday hardships, and environmental insecurities.

#### **4 Studies on Homelessness in Hong Kong and Research Gap**

The critical views on punitive framing have provided segues to homelessness in the Hong Kong context, paving ways to explore the role of homeless people in constructing those homeless spaces where they experience a wide range of relationships. The existing body of English literature on homelessness in Hong Kong began to surface in the late 1990s, around the Asian financial crisis when homelessness itself became more visible (Kwok and Chan 1998; Wong et al. 2002; Mizuuchi 2004; Kennett and Mizuuchi 2010; Kornatowski 2008, 2010; Kornatowski and Wong 2017). The literature mainly focuses on government policy responses and non-governmental support. Both the H.O.P.E. 2014 and 2015 surveys help gain understanding on the size of the homeless population, where they are, who they are, length and recurrence, factors associated to their homelessness, and the policy and programmatic changes needed. However, little has been said about their lived experience, in particular how they navigate certain predicaments creatively to carve out a space in the city; and their agency and resilience as they negotiate with certain social structures—whether on the streets, in the voluntary/non-governmental sector, or in the community (Ching and Kornatowski 2017). The call for examining the unintended effect of punitive treatment has brought light to the duality of these structures, as the punitive also reveals the agency and resilience that these very mechanisms are devised to curtail. To respond to the research gap, this essay highlights two case studies that are part of my ongoing doctoral research. They are selected based on the complex layers of agentic actions demonstrated by these two participants, which provide a rather textured content for a short essay. Material for Nin’s story was gathered from when I visited her in the tunnel in Wan Chai on Hong Kong Island. Interviews for Ming’s story were conducted in the office of Society for Community Organization (SoCO) in Sham Shui Po, Kowloon.

## 5 Structuration

Scholars who study homelessness in the past two decades have pointed out the theoretical rut inherent in the individual vs. structural framework, and how it is largely driven by ideological influence (Neale 1997; Clapham 2003; Fitzpatrick 2005; McNaughton 2008; Ravenhill 2008; Cronley 2010). In order to go beyond the impasse of this dichotomy, I examine the lived experience and resilience of homeless people from a structurational perspective (Giddens 1984). Structuration looks into the dynamic interaction between agency and social structure, and the properties (opportunities and barriers) inherent in the structure. Thus, structurational capacity is how one uses agency to interact with the duality of social structures. Resilience can be understood as the continued articulation of skills, abilities, knowledge, and insight that people accumulate over time through the interplay of risks and protection when faced with challenges and adversities (Saleebey 1996). Examining acts of agency does not mean that structural factors are negated; just like resilience is not the blithe denial of trauma, but rather how people are able to go on in life with it. While structures can constrain or enable social action, it is social action that constitutes those very structures, and human agency is constantly intervening in social structures. Neither social structures nor independent actors can operate without the existence of the other (Giddens 1984). Although there are power relations and structural forces that render certain people with limited choices and therefore more susceptible to marginalisation, those who are completely constrained are rare (Neale 1997). Given the interactive nature of the exclusion process, people who are socially excluded are not in a fixed state of powerlessness. Although their power to participate in society is hampered by political, economic and social structures, individuals do have the ability to play an active part in preventing or exacerbating their social exclusion (Ravenhill 2008). In this context, structuration allows more exploration on the scope of action of the homeless agent, highlighting the dynamic interactions between people who are homeless and their structures and environment—without narrowly and deterministically representing them as passive victims or guilty individuals under the punitive structures.

## 6 Nin's Story

Nin slept rough in the pedestrian tunnel that connects Wan Chai and Happy Valley. People living in the tunnel were divided up into different sections—new-arrivals from China, South/Southeast Asian migrants, and the locals. Makeshift homes were created—cardboard beds, mattresses, personal belongings, wet clothes drying on ropes, and cooking utensils lined along the tunnel. There was also presence of drug activities.

In her early 40s, Nin came from Thailand and was living in Hong Kong for over 15 years. She was suffering from an unknown sickness and had difficulty breathing.

She became homeless twice in the past few years. Both times she ended up in this tunnel. She was fluent in English and Cantonese and she worked at the bars in the red-light district of Wan Chai. Before that, she was once the manager of a Thai restaurant. When she found out that her boyfriend was actually married upon his arrest for trading pirated movies, and later upon his incarceration, her life took a downward turn. She lost her restaurant job, and started living on the money from subletting her apartment to other Thai migrant workers. Eventually her drug use took hold of her, the tenants all left the apartment taking whatever they could take, and she lost the apartment. She became homeless for the first time. After sleeping in the tunnel for a few months, she found a small place in North Point and moved in with a male friend she had met in the tunnel. Nin felt the friend was not doing his share of household chores, and her trust was further violated when the friendship ended with non-consensual sexual advances. With little money and resources, she made a decision to move out and ended up staying in the tunnel again.

### **6.1 *A Homeless Woman***

I shaved my head because it's more convenient when I am staying out here. When you live in the tunnel, you do not want men looking at you in a certain way. Many of them who sleep here drink and do drugs, and become quite annoying and rowdy. I keep to myself and ignore them. Now that Moo is staying with me, even though I get angry at her sometimes because not only does she not help me clean up and cook, I have to take care of her—I do feel safer. When I work at the bar, I just put on a long black wig, with hair down to my waist. If you look at me now, you probably can't picture how I used to turn heads.

Women constitute a minority among those who sleep rough in Hong Kong. Shaving her head to avoid the sexualised male gaze or unwanted advances when sleeping in the tunnel demonstrated Nin's acute awareness of how her safety is at stake being in an environment where sexual violence was a perceived and real threat. However, that very physical attractiveness or rather, sex appeal, was needed for her work at the bar as part of the charm to get her customers, who were mostly male, to buy drinks. The same trait can be a liability or an asset depending on the environment. Manipulating the same trait to manifest in opposite forms (bald vs. waist-long black hair) required skilful command. Here she demonstrated her agency by hiding or blunting a trait when dealing with an environment that threatened her safety; but highlighting it on command when the trait was needed. Even though Nin was often frustrated with Moo because she felt like she took up the caretaker role in a state of ill health, she also knew having the company of Moo made her feel safer in the tunnel.

## 6.2 *Dispelling Misconception of Homeless People as Helpless Victims*

My health is giving out but the doctors cannot figure it out. As long as I can manage, I will continue to work two or three nights a week. Staying here makes it easier for me to get to work. Don't worry. I know how to take care of myself when I am at the bar. I have my tricks. Some customers whom I know well are kind. They see me pouring my drink out from the glass under the table, and they keep quiet. I buy food with the money I make, so I have to work. I cannot eat fast food. With my health as it is I would die even sooner if I don't eat well. I don't want to be on CSSA, it's shameful. Though I am sleeping in the tunnel, I am not a useless person.

There is a popular misconception that most homeless people do not work and rely on donations or CSSA. Nin's social worker has suggested to her to apply for CSSA. She was determined not to apply even though she was eligible. To her, holding on to a job means she was "not a useless person". This insistence was perhaps compounded by her need to invert the social stigma attached to being homeless. Nin's job required her to drink alcohol with customers at the expense of her ill health. Her agency was demonstrated when she devised tricks, no matter how small, to protect her health. She also relied on her rapport with customers, knowing that they would not take issue with it. Her insistence on working in spite of poor health and her refusal to receive CSSA were efforts to maintain a sense of self-determination and self-reliance. CSSA is a part of a larger social system that provides help, but also functions as a form of social control (Wong 2000). To Nin, help that came in a form of systematic handout was not acceptable; but help that came by way of human relationships and with ways to reciprocate (e.g. cooking meals for her social workers) seemed much more palatable for her.

Due to her health conditions, her social workers and myself suggested that she stay at a shelter. However, she declined as that would mean the shelter's curfew and the locations may not be convenient for her to get to work. Her working hours usually started from evening until early morning, and she had to remain in the loop to find out when and where she was needed at the bars. Viewed from a structural perspective, by intentionally choosing not to become a part of the system has destructuring effects to existing power structures that set the norm. Her determined non-interaction with the larger social welfare and shelter systems, how she found her own ways to selectively seek and receive help, and how she supported herself—spoke volume about her sense of agency and resilience when navigating a terrain that came with threats for her personal safety, at-risk health conditions, and systemic pressure to get off the streets.

### 6.3 *Between 'Choice' and 'No Choice'*

He would come to my bed when the other roommate was out, and forced himself on me. I was too weak to push him away. After a while, I decided to leave but I had no money to rent another apartment. So I came here.

I remember I met Anh here. She also came from Thailand. We sometimes talked when I was working around the racecourse outside of the tunnel. I think she has some mental issues. She comes and goes, and disappears for a while sometimes. But I felt I could rely on her. She has a good heart. When I left the apartment I thought of her, so I chose to come here.

I don't want to go to a shelter. I heard the conditions are quite bad and there are many restrictions. You know my working hours would be a problem. I also don't want to be so far away from here, I know this area well.

A structuralist approach would posit that the unaffordable housing market and a public housing system that typically requires a long wait left Nin with little to no agency to exercise choices but to sleep rough. Oppositely, an individualist approach sees effects of structural factors as minimal—people become homeless because of personal failure to achieve certain social goals, and they are solely responsible (Ravenhill 2008). Examples of such view are prevalent, as can be seen in discussions in the Legislative Council: "... street sleeping was personal choice of many street sleepers, reasons for not moving into emergency shelters/hostels included 'street sleeping was more convenient', 'to save money', and 'preferred street sleeping to living with others'..." (Legislative Council 2017). Oversimplified statements as such imply homelessness as a direct choice or even a preference. The sense of fault casted on them is as if they were deserving of such living conditions, which affects views on how deserving they are of official help and support.

The concept of choice is complex and homelessness is rarely a direct choice. While structural factors alone are insufficient in explaining homelessness, agency has to be understood in more nuanced terms (Nicholls 2009). The urgency to end an abusive situation precipitated Nin to leave the apartment. She had to leave the apartment to be safe. But that was hardly the same as choosing or wanting to be homeless. Sleeping rough was hardly a choice per se as her ability to make free choices was inherently compromised by certain structural constraints: a housing market with options of her preference unaffordable to her; conditions among those she could afford unacceptable to her; and a public housing system that was not readily accessible to her. Parsell and Parsell (2012) discuss how being homeless is usually a consequence of other choices—sometimes a solution to temporarily address other problems deemed more unacceptable than sleeping rough. Even among those who claimed becoming homeless was their own choice, later explained that it was based on the context that available housing options were inconceivable to them. Within this context, claiming homelessness as a choice gives people a sense of control and pride to invert the stigma associated with being homeless.

However, homelessness is also rarely a situation of no choice. Shelters were available—but entering one would have meant having to give up her job at the bars. Working for money and not having to rely on any system or handout was core to

her identity. Within the structural constraints, she ended up sleeping in the tunnel in Wan Chai—as the familiarity with the neighbourhood, her work location, daily routine, social network, and occasional drug use at the time were pull factors. Also, the tunnel was a roofed, insulated, and secluded area that allowed her some privacy—as compared to the cramped conditions of shelters and substandard private housing. It also had a sentimental connection to someone she met with whom she struck up a supportive friendship the first time she lost her apartment. These layers of deliberate considerations and decisions illustrate even though limited by structural constraints, within those, lied some agency, reflexivity, and choice (Nicholls 2009).

Both the individual and structural approaches, expressed in terms of it's their choice vs. they have no choice omit the complex layers of structural forces between the housing market, social welfare and support systems, and Nin's exercise of agency. Nicholls (2009) uses contextualised rational action to explain that even though the thin rationality makes their choices appear problematic, and capacity of the individuals is diminished due to structural limitations, homeless people are almost always conscious of the decisions they make.

#### ***6.4 Contesting Socially-Constructed Artifice of Home and Homelessness***

This dish takes a long time to prepare, with intestines, kidneys, and livers, my favourite. I spent a long time washing them in the public bathroom. I go to the wet market a few times a week. Moo can help me carry groceries. We cannot always afford to buy proper meat, but these internal organs are cheap and very nutritious. I only eat fresh ingredients. Not that many people know how to cook these things nowadays. It's spicy but please sit and eat with us. Cooking makes me feel like I am taking care of myself, and it feels like home.

Nin built herself a little tent-like living space in the tunnel—two cots, an umbrella, and a vinyl sheet used as a screen for some privacy in a public space where people shuttle back and forth at all hours. The tunnel sleepers each constructed their living space in quite different ways. Her space was located near the exit, a strategic location for convenience and safety. Personal belongings were neatly placed in one corner of her cot, and pieces of clothing were hung on a rope dangling from the fluorescent light boxes. Beside the cots was a small gas stove, around it, plastic shelves stuffed with bottles of condiments, cooking utensils, plates and bowls, and ingredients such as ginger, scallion, onions, and chili. As I watched her squat on the ground preparing ingredients and instructing Moo to help, and later cooking up a gastronomical feast with meticulous attention, it became clear that through the journey of sleeping rough she had constructed out of this little space her own version of home. It was a place where she entertained guests, had communal gatherings, rested, cooked, and cared for herself. Cloke et al. (2011) discuss the capacity of homeless people to deploy various place-making devices to cope with changes of becoming homeless. Some of them have used their knowledge of the urban micro-architectures to creatively transform

environments originally unintended for habitation, entering a home-making process in these alternative spaces. This means homeless people are not just merely surviving within the punitive socio-spatial order, but rather, they continue to make physical, social, and emotional meaning out of these spaces; and exercise choices to navigate these spaces in the face of existing constraints as well as available resources that are embedded structurally.

Nin's alternative version of home and those of many others' have helped expand the definition of home. Home is not only a physical space offering safety and security, it also carries a range of environmental, physical, emotional and social meanings—a family, a social center, a place to relax and where one can be yourself, a means by which we organise our activities, something that defines our status in life (Smith and Ravenhill 2007). Thus, a home is also a living process and a social and personal construct that serves the function of protection, a place to keep personal possessions, an address, a symbol of belonging to a community, economic value and social status (Ravenhill 2008). There is a complex relationship between home and homelessness than just a simple presence or absence of a material home (Kellett and Moore 2003).

I don't want to go to a shelter. I heard there are many restrictions. My working hours would be a problem. I don't want to be so far away from here, I know this area well. I will eventually find an apartment. But I don't have the money yet. This is where I am now. I can manage.

In recent years, the discourse on homelessness in Hong Kong has been increasingly synonymised with housing issues. Veness (1993) questions the context of how, when and where home is defined; and who has the power to prescribe and regulate its standards. It is quite common for social workers and policy makers to assume the ideal solution for homeless people (and their problems) is to either apply for public housing or move into private housing, that is more often than not substandard housing. From my research, I have found quite a number of people give into the pressure for the sake of compliance. Until the public housing of their preference comes through, they pay rent for these substandard places but continue to sleep on footbridges and parks due to concerns of unhygienic conditions, infestation, crowdedness, and lack of privacy and safety. The streets, by comparison, feel safer and more comfortable. If those options are not immediately accessible, the next proposed solution is shelters and transitional housing—so long as they are off the streets and into what deemed as private space. Hence the phrase “up to a building off the streets” has become quite popular among homeless people, social workers, policy makers, and in the media (Ching and Kornatowski 2017).

Granted, immediate concerns such as safety, security, hygiene, crime, and responses to homelessness from government departments and the public warrant such contemplation and assumption. However, these assumptions, no matter how well-intentioned, somewhat reproduce the prevailing power structures that define what is home and what is not. Social policy that dictates differential access to housing (e.g., public housing) seems to favour people who are most able to align themselves according to this hegemonic standard set by those who are outside of this designation. Yet, people who are unable or unwilling to maintain the prevailing definition of home are often marginalised socially (Veness 1993).



The little alternative world constructed in the pedestrian tunnel, no matter how temporary and how far it is from the socially-valourised version of home, reflects the reality of the juxtaposition between “what many people want as home” and “what they have as home” (Veness 1993). When Nin said “this is where I am now”, she could have well meant this is where home is now. However, against the hegemonic standard, certain classes of poor people who fall into variations of the “marginalised habitat” category (Veness 1993) are rendered as homeless. Home, and its meaning and definition, have merely become certain forms of housing. People like Nin, whose circumstances make them see home beyond the physical structure and the social-political designation of public and private, also define home in terms of support network, autonomy, self-determination, accessibility, affordability, and convenience. They construct their home based on resisting the hegemonically-constructed, politically-contested, and spatially-constituted definitions that seek to “unmake their personal worlds” (Veness 1993). While their living situations confront the privileges of those who subscribe to the prescribed version of home set forth by dominant social policy and institutions, they are also contesting what it means to be homeless.

## 7 Ming’s Story

Ming was 64 years old and had recently moved into a public housing unit. He was in jail for almost 40 years. After he came out, he was sleeping rough in Sham Shui Po (and neighbouring areas) for about ten years. He slept in the park outside of the then Jade Market, an area where some street sleepers were also involved with drug activities. During that time he was still in and out of jail due to minor crime. Ming was one of the plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed by a group of homeless people against the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department when they raided the streets and threw away personal belongings of the street sleepers.

### 7.1 *Deviance as Action to Break Free from Social Constraints*

My childhood was quite tragic. My dad was addicted to opium. My parents’ relationship was very cold. They rarely talked or ate a meal together. My dad and myself slept on the upper section of the bunk bed, my mother and siblings slept on the bottom part. There was no mandatory education then, I dropped out after primary three. I had to make money to help my family. I am the oldest. My mother could not work because she had to take care of my siblings. I started selling dim sum at a restaurant at 14 years old, and joined the gang at 16.

Homelessness in adulthood often stems from triggers that began to amass in childhood and each trigger is compounded with multiple impacts that emerge in later life (Ravenhill 2008). Many people who eventually become homeless already have low levels of social and economic capital (McNaughton 2008) from the beginning. The edgework they engage in further depletes their already low levels of capital,

compounding the risk factors leading to homelessness. However, Nicholls (2009) considers engagement in edgework as acts of agency sometimes, rather than mere deviance. This kind of active risk-taking, though underpinned by thin rationality, usually provides a way to break free from the over-determined social life and limited life choices governed by social structures. Ming grew up at a time when there was no policy to ensure access to education for children. Growing up in an unhappy family fraught with poverty and drug use, and with a primary three education—given the context of time (1960's and 1970's) when triad activities were in their heyday (Chin 1995), joining the triad to help “secure the territory” would have understandably seemed to be a more appealing opportunity than selling dim sum at a restaurant. Using his agency, he executed a transaction with the available social capital within his reach in his social environment as an effort to break free from the emotional, environmental and social constraints. Antecedence to homelessness often gives hints to what one needs in order to exit homelessness. In Ming's case, it was the re-building of social capital and support network that he lacked in his earlier life.

## 7.2 *Navigating Support Networks of Dual Natures*

I was 17 and was trying to secure the ‘territory’, ended up with manslaughter, there goes 38 years of my life. Even after I came out, I was in and out of jail for minor crime because of my drug habit. I was always stealing and doing other things to get money.

I have known Ah Wah (social worker from SoCO) for over 10 years. When I first came out of prison, I was nervous. I did not know what to do. My friend from jail told me to go to SoCO to look for help—maybe money for food and transport. I came here, and he never said no to helping me.

Back then I would always wander the streets in Sham Shui Po looking for money and drugs. I hustled, and people gave me what I wanted. Recently I have quit, and I would just come here (SoCO) to spend my time—volunteering and helping out. I am quite well-known and popular on the streets, so if the social worker walks with me on the streets, he can reach many other homeless people.

Through the years of living the vibrant street life, Ming built himself support networks that were of different natures yet complementary to each other. He was immersed in the life that was filled with transgression and risks, but enabled him to hustle to survive and feed his drug habit. Yet, he was also able to build very strong relationships with his social workers and the community organisation that provided him with support. With that he integrated himself into a support network that provided him with a safe space and social services, and even advocated on behalf of other homeless people. This duality reflects the “divestment” and “integrative” passages (McNaughton 2008)—the former a downward path of edgework that becomes more intensified after becoming homeless; the latter a pathway toward a delineated new social status, bringing people closer to exiting homelessness. These passages are

rarely linear nor mutually exclusive. Ming straddled both passages at the same time—one that drew him deeper into the street life, while the other tried to achieve the opposite.

The street life is built-in with its own social structures, with pecking orders based on key determinants such as endurance and survival. Social capital needed for survival within the street culture is different from mainstream society, and often involves inverse hierarchies. What is seen as negative in mainstream society (e.g., survival of child abuse, surviving long duration of homelessness, dealing with drugs and crime, and serving jail time) can be seen as an asset within the homeless community (Ravenhill 2008). Ming's history with the triad and his long-served jail time were testimony to his ability to survive and endure, a badge of honour that gained him respect through the hierarchies of street life. Some of the traits honoured in the triad subculture such as sworn brotherhood and loyalty, and the culture of traditional hierarchy—rules, codes of conduct and chains of command (Lo 2010)—are quite similar to those honoured in the homeless street culture.

His ability to uphold the strong networks enabled him to navigate seamlessly and effectively to get his needs met. Ming's networks on the streets also became an asset for his social workers on which they capitalised. Having him as a volunteer can have far-reaching effect that aids the outreach services, not only in the breadth of the reach, but also the depth with some hard-to-reach cases. His volunteer services allowed him to navigate a different set of social activities and structures—ones that are praised and valued in the mainstream world. The reciprocity with those who have helped him gained him a place in the community organisation, which enabled him to later become an advocate for other homeless people.

### ***7.3 Asserting the Right to be Homeless***

The government cleared Tung Chau Street, throwing our belongings away. We filed a lawsuit against the government. I was one of them. The case went on for nine months, we each ended up getting \$2,000. My social worker and SoCO played a big role in this. He took us to file a report at the Sham Shui Po police station, organised legal aid, and backed us up every time we had to go to court. We didn't know these procedures, and had no connections. I was still sleeping in Tai Kok Tsui at the time, and my friend told me there was work in a hardware store. The shop owner recognised me because I was on the news about the lawsuit.

The homeless people in the Sham Shui Po area, supported by community organisations, have been very vocal in public forum and the media about the street raids conducted by government departments such as the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. With the support of SoCO, Ming joined hands with a few homeless people and won the lawsuits that demanded just and respectful treatment of homeless people. Such action does not only assert the right of homeless people to be homeless, it is also one that contests and challenges the hegemonic spatial definition of home and housing, as well as public and private space (discussed above in Nin's case). Those who are without private homes, especially those who are sleeping rough,

often become the contested subject matter in debates on who should or should not have access to the public space, and who has the right to decide how the space is used (Kawash 1998). Apart from seeking justice on a personal level, this is a collective action that stands against unjust treatment, a kind of grassroots micro-resistance challenging the hegemonic power structure. Such position is a unique one—instead of succumbing to the pressure to dispel their homeless identity due to stigma and exclusion, they are claiming their right to sleep on the street, but also reclaiming the existential right to be (themselves).

## 8 Discussions and Implications on Social Work

But in the lexicon of strengths, it is as wrong to deny the possible as it is to deny the problem.

—Saleebey (1996: 297)

The objective of this study is to understand, using a structurational framework, how individuals interact with social structures through exercising agency, and to explore the resilience that emerges from navigating the inherent resources and constraints embedded in these structures. Nin's story—from leaving her own apartment and ended up sleeping rough to salvage her safety and dignity; making her femininity as invisible as possible to avoid the male gaze for her sense of safety; playing up the very same trait for her work in order to sustain herself; insisting on working to support herself and to invert the stigma of “free-loaders”; to creating a temporary home for herself in alternative dwelling spaces that defy the hegemonic definition of home and housing—shows that agency is an integral part of the homeless discourse. And from Ming's story, the structurational lens has enabled us to understand behaviours that are usually deemed as deviant as a form of agency to break free from social constraints; that living on the streets involves steering through complex formal and informal structures from different social worlds that sometimes intersect and overlap, and may have oppositional impacts on the homeless pathways; and that there is power that rests in the grassroots to assert contestations of the hegemonic discourse governing one of the most fundamental aspects of human living, defending those who live in alternative spaces and ways. Both stories have demonstrated that the exercise of agency is core to their resilience and existence.

It has become quite prevalent in homelessness studies to attack social structures as limiting and oppressive. While it serves as partial truth, contained within these very structures is the resilience demonstrated by how homeless people and their support networks manage to stay put. The rootedness of homeless people and these service hubs, and their genuine and nurturing relationships are in themselves a “material critique” against the prevailing political and socioeconomic order (Evans 2017).

Understanding that sometimes transgressions are inevitable as individuals exercise their agency to deal with certain social constraints and recognising there is inherent resilience in transgressive behaviours are different from glorifying or

condoning them. Nor does the examination of transgressive actions mean pathologizing the individuals or groups. Rather, it helps expand the scope of our understanding on resilience—that it may not always be transformative, and oftentimes incremental or even paradoxical, yet nonetheless critical (Evans 2017). In an age when the therapeutic culture of personal transformation (McLaughlin 2003) that promotes ideas of “success stories” becomes more central to professional/clinical social work, this insight can ground and remind social workers of a basic social work tenet—“meeting clients where they are at”; rather than imposing on them a hegemonic narrative that lacks authenticity. Even though situated within certain structural conditions, the structuration lens sees homeless people as agents who have a role in constructing their own life paths, as opposed to being passively hailed as the scripted victim or success stories). This puts some onus back on the individuals, and with it, comes power and strength.

### ***8.1 Light Walker Community Guided Tour***

This very paradigm shift is illustrated in the Light Walker Community Guided Tour Project, in which homeless people are hired and trained as guides in Sham Shui Po as a form of gainful employment. On one level, the walking tour contributes to the building and promoting of narratives that highlight the neighbourhood’s unique community history and fabric—through showcasing to the public and tourists its local businesses, strong presence of grassroots networks, and how livelihood is changing in the face of rapid urban renewal. The tour guides, instead of whitewashing their street and homeless experiences, are encouraged to guide participants through their life stories. In fact, those narratives are capitalised as valuable resources illustrating how different parts of the community converge and how street life is organised and enriched. On another level, not only does the tour serve as a public education tool to dispel stigma and misconception, its design reverses the usual role between homeless people and the general public. Instead of passive service recipients, now homeless people are using their own resources (stories, networks, and experiences) and agency to guide and educate the public, raising pertinent community issues and participating in a platform that allows homeless people to be seen in the light of their resilience, capacities, competencies, possibilities, values, and hopes (Saleebey 1996).

The use of two case studies is hardly representative and sorely inadequate, but I hope this essay serves as a call for more research coming forth to enable deeper understanding on how people navigate through the course of homelessness in the Hong Kong context. Lack of such research allows the festering of the misconception that homeless people are a homogenous group who are either helpless victims or a threat to the public, and are void of resilience to steer their own life paths. That vacuum could fortify the very punitive, control and containment responses (e.g. homeless people have to be managed or controlled) and stigma that many researchers, social workers, and homeless people seek to condemn in the first place. The lack of understanding could lead to the reproduction of a homeless discourse so deterministic that social

interactions (Goffman 2009) and structures will become increasingly oppressive and limiting—enabling the stigma’s self-fulfilling prophecy. Awareness and knowledge generated from such research can help social workers identify structures and systems that hold within them social capital and resources to support homeless individuals to effect change in their personal and social environments. It can also help social workers reflect on whether in their own practice they have inadvertently reproduced some of the hegemonic and marginalising discourses that deny the agency of homeless people—as most social policy frameworks that govern social work practice are still within the bounds of the hegemonic structure. As one of the organisers of the first H.O.P.E. HK street count, one of my intended objectives was to facilitate the volunteers (university students), through their interactions with homeless people and community organisations, to unveil the resilience, resistance, and human stories underneath the numbers and trends that took center-stage in the survey. Structuration brings to light that homeless people are social subjects who create themselves and are created under structural conditions (Ruddick 1996). In a parallel process, social workers ought to be mindful of both the possibilities and limitations inherent in our work, and the role of our own agency when interacting with the duality of social structures.

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# Voluntary Services in Disordered Space: The Inner-City Service Hub for Foreign Workers in Singapore



Geerhardt Kornatowski

**Abstract** This chapter examines Singapore’s service hubs for foreign workers who have deserted their workplace in search for voluntary care services. It does so by focusing on their social background in an authoritarian political context and in relation to the inner-city built environment. The objective is to dig in deeper on the social and spatial dimensions of urban disorder, how this set functions in the workers’ geographies of survival, and how these are co-opted as well as contested by the government. As such, this chapter is interested in how these spaces are ambivalently regulated, used and negotiated. This provides an insight on how these inner-city areas operate not only as a place of refuge but also a counterweight to Singapore’s highly ‘sanitized’ urban space.

**Keywords** Service hub · Foreign workers · Geographies of survival · Street economy · Housing

## 1 Introduction

[W]e must also explore the limits to hegemony which privileges highly capital-intensive, commercially-related and increasingly ‘sanitized’ development over spontaneity and apparent ‘disorder’ (Shaw et al. 2006: 188).

The rather authoritative-political character of Singapore leads us to believe the first plane (globally market-led development projects) and second plane (large-scale public projects such as the Housing Development Board housing estates), as explained in the preface’s framework (see Fig. 1 of Chap. 1), are the major players in shaping the city. This chapter diverts this view to Singapore’s rather “unruly” (Smart 2001) or “disordered” spaces (Shaw et al. 2016), where “control seems to be absent, neglect is more apparent than surveillance and where practices blatantly in opposition to law and policy are ubiquitous (Smart 2001: 31)”. In specific, I focus on

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the question of how these spatial characteristics shape the socio-spatial conditions of Singapore's inner-city areas of Little India and Geylang, through the lens of the "service hub". Through this I set out to illuminate how these spaces have evolved over time and interact with the survival geography of foreign workers in distress and the provision of voluntary assistance services (Kornatowski 2017).

Within the last 20 years or so, a significant amount of literature has been exploring and discussing the plight of foreign workers particular to Singapore, both in regard to female domestic workers (see, for example, Platt et al. 2017; Yeoh and Huang 1998) and male contract workers (E.g., Bal 2015; Kornatowski 2017; Ong 2014; Yea 2017). Common ground can be found in the overarching concern that the workers reside in a vulnerable condition since almost all of them go into debt in order to "purchase" their job in Singapore, and, that they are confined to the accommodation provided by the employer (E.g., Kornatowski 2017; Neo 2015; Platt et al. 2017). In order to address the spatial implications of the workers' vulnerable condition, among others, some research has been focusing on the scope of civil society contention and political spaces for NGO services and advocacy (Bal 2015; Kornatowski 2017; Lyons 2009; Lyons and Gomez 2005; Piper 2006), the governance of public space (Ye 2014; Yeoh and Huang 1998) and other forms of inclusive spaces where recourse and other social needs become possible (Bunnel and Kathiravelu 2016). Here, I want to add to these perspectives by looking at the spatiality of volunteer assistance services in the inner-city context.

First, I will discuss the concept of service hubs within Singapore's context, yet at the same time I will expand common accounts of this concept to include the inherent, yet sometimes overlooked, element of the local street economies in relation to the direct service provisions/networking practices done by the voluntary sector. Next, I will explain the background of foreign worker issues, mainly in relation to official policy and public service channels, before going into more detail on the formation process of the service hubs. I ultimately use these elements to frame the political as well as spatial setting in which the voluntary organization sector operates today.

The data used here was obtained mainly through interviews with fulltime NGO staff members between January 2017 and May 2018 (see also Kornatowski 2017).

## 2 The Service Hub in Context

Service hubs are an existential part of the spatial manifestation of modern inequality and serve as a buffer against the social/spatial exclusion of populations who are largely uncovered by the common protective arrangements of capitalist society. As such, these populations are vulnerable and place-dependent (DeVerteuil 2015: 42). As a reaction to this manifestation of inequality, the "service hub", is "the artful 'co-locational' siting of facilities that can create, and benefit from, an array of agglomeration economies" for the socially marginal and service-dependent population" (Dear et al. 1997: 182). Kearns et al (2019: 299) defines the service hub somewhat broader as "clusters of low-cost housing and social support services". I favour this definition as

it denotes not only the typical built environment depended upon by potential clients, but also the peculiar in-situ social and informal networks that are indispensable to day-to-day survival. In many cases, these sites are primarily located in global and regional city-scale inner-city areas, which are commonly characterized by their (relatively) dilapidated built environment and the presence of relatively cheap dwelling units. It is here where vulnerable populations such as the homeless, drug-abusers, immigrants etc. can access final resorts of sustenance and social rehabilitation. In the American urban context, in which the service hub was originally conceptualized, these areas are often characterized as skid row areas and service-dependent “ghettoes”. However, because of their spatial concentration within the urban geography, “facilities are able to function as an integrated whole, offering comprehensive, yet flexible, programs of assistance” (Dear et al. 1997: 182). And thus housing-wise, these programs are supported by “the existence of an adequate level of residential opportunities in close proximity”, typically being the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels and emergency solutions such as shelters.

DeVerteuil (2015) his recent analysis of service hubs in three Western global cities, although foremost concerned with the empirics of their resilience, also offers a political economic perspective to its existence. Echoing the fact that service hubs are conspicuous concentrations of voluntary organizations with pronounced levels of centrality and high visibility, he traces back their structural roots to the era of the “public city”, when the urban social grid was rather firmly organized around redistributive (Keynesian) politics and state intervention. As such, its present form is considered to be a “residual arrangement” for the marginalized, a spatial response that bolsters the possibility and capacity of a substitute for the Keynesian welfare state (DeVerteuil 2015: 41). It is therefore not merely an arrangement subjected to the almighty will of ‘neoliberal governance’ (which offloads welfare responsibilities to the voluntary sector), but rather an counterresponse mustered by volunteer (or, non-governmental) actors who genuinely desire to serve and deliver human care to service-dependent populations.

The organizational dynamics that emerge within the volunteer sector are picked up in Marr’s comparison of two service hubs in the American and Japanese context (Marr 2015, 2016). His detailed analysis illuminates how these dynamics are mitigated by differing urban welfare regimes as these regimes influence the geography of social service need and delivery, namely whether services are spatially concentrated in hub neighbourhoods characterized by racial and ethnic minorities, or distributed evenly throughout a city. In resonance with DeVerteuil’s work (2015), this geography is shaped through the local spatial politics of not-in-my-back-yard ideology (nimbyism), “whereby residents and other urban actors with political influence mobilize to resist placement of social service providers, especially those serving marginalized and poor populations” (Marr 2016). Eventually, the local political climate of urban welfare regimes influences tie activation by shaping the (ideological) views of staff members about the causes and interventions for urban poverty.

When looking at the voluntary provision of foreign worker services in Singapore’s urban geography, the same centrality of voluntary services and peculiar residential opportunities is clearly present. However, having run a different historical pathway

from that of the West pertaining to welfare and even democracy, we first need to contextualize its spatial arrangement and identify the particular factors that shape the contours and content of Singapore's service hub. I will take up this task in the following sections, yet there are some important elements to the service hub concept in general that I want to highlight here first.

First, arguably all major cities (in the context of the developed world, at least,) are characterized with specialized spaces that offer services for a population that finds itself unable to fit the structures of capitalist society, such as the homeless, (undocumented) migrants, drug addicts, the disabled, aged singletons etc. This is particularly true with the rising levels of inequality and issues with affordable housing, both which have become increasingly conspicuous throughout urban areas in the last two decades or so.<sup>1</sup> These tendencies towards polarization are believed to be the outcome of and exacerbated by global forms of neoliberal policies, which in turn have urged new forms of "poverty management" in which voluntary agencies perform a key role (DeVerteuil 2003).

Second, as exemplified by the politics of nimbyism, service hubs for vulnerable populations generally endure a highly stigmatized reputation and often spark substantial levels of fear in the spatial imaginary of the local citizenry. Citizens tend to avoid these areas and are commonly convinced that these areas require extra measures of control (such as policing). This is part and parcel connected to the specific form of the built environment that harbours unusual facilities, overused public spaces and slum-like housing resources. It is this appearance that adds to the common perception of these places as "unruly" (Smart 2001). Eventually, this popular imaginary also carries over to its resident population, whom, varying on the specific urban context, may be subjected to place-bound forms of discrimination or prejudice.

Lastly, and in connection to the both points, service hubs often serve as 'symbolic spaces' which voluntary/advocacy organizations can build upon to create momentum in their activities and political demands (DeVerteuil 2015; see also Gotham 2003). Especially the high visibility of inequality and persistent forms of injustices can serve as a leverage tool for directing attention to the precarious conditions faced by clients and the public mismanagement that is held responsible for these conditions. In other words, these areas function as a movement *for* (yet rarely *by*) vulnerable populations. Stigma, then, can be flipped on its head to create feelings of indignation and sympathy on the part of the citizenry. Importantly, the same stigmatic conditions may keep external private interests (such as gentrification) at bay.

Considering the various elements that play a role in shaping the service hub, one possible way to understand these neighbourhoods is to approach them as an ecosystem that operates around the immediate access routes to care and/or service delivery. And although the clustering of facilities may be vital, their centrality also depends on the clients' personal networks, accessible forms of housing and the availability of miscellaneous income, as well as other, personal preferences such as

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<sup>1</sup> "Singapore ranks first among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries for income inequality using the 2013 Gini index and this figure does not include migrant workers" (Wise 2016: 2305, Note 1).

religion and (ethnic-related) culture. Crucially, these elements stand in close relation to each other and are mutually constructive. This then implies that the service hub is a place that constantly evolves along contextual conditions, such as the resources it has at its disposal and the socio-political influences it faces.

For our case study of Singapore however, it is imperative first to conceptualize the service hub in a context-sensitive manner so that it can enable us to take account of the specificities of its urban regime. Indeed, if the service hub is to be considered a “residue” or “remnant” of the Keynesian city (DeVerteuil 2015; or “Toyotist city”, see Marr 2015: 44), then surely our case requires a different lexicon as Singapore’s regime has emerged from a different (and colonial) socio-political trajectory. In the next section, we will first deal with Singapore’s foreign worker regime before we examine the constituent factors of the service hub in relation to Singapore’s political climate.

### 3 Workers’ Mobility Regulated

Worker grievances alone [...] do not provide the impetus for advocacy. The breakdown of tactical accommodation in the workplace, and subsequent worker desertion to NGOs, does. (Bal 2015: 233)

Singapore heavily relies upon “cheap” foreign labour to supplement its labour force in order to meet the local demand for (mostly male) low/semi-skilled workers and (female) domestic workers. To this end, an elaborative regime has been set up to manage the aspects of work-based immigration and the actual regulation of foreign labour. Instead of discussing all the particularities, I will mainly focus on how this regime influences workers’ mobility and how the service hub comes into play.

Due to their strictly transient treatment, the mobility of foreign workers in Singapore is heavily circumscribed through state regulations in the form of “work permits”. These permits are in effect bought by the workers as various middlemen such as recruiters, employers and contractors shift the high costs of migration to the workers themselves (Platt et al. 2017; Yea 2016). In general, the workers go into debt to cover these costs. This puts them in a vulnerable or even precarious position vis-a-vis their employer. One of the important restrictions the workers face is that they cannot change employers. In order to change employers, in rule, they would need to return to their country of origin and redo the costly application procedure. Moreover, the employer may terminate the contract to his own will, which also results in the immediate repatriation of the worker. Secondly, he/she must be accommodated in employer-provided housing for the entire duration of their stay. Male workers are generally accommodated in purpose-built dormitories located in the fringe parts of the city, or in makeshift housing on construction sites. The domestic workers are obviously accommodated in the employer’s home. Whether it is accommodation far into Singapore’s outskirts or indoor confinement, these arrangements cause the workers to be spatially separated from mainstream Singaporean society and subject

them to a highly regulated stay. Only a small amount of male worker dormitories is located in inner-city neighbourhoods. The workers regularly exit their regulated space on their day-off, which often concurs with a visit to the ethnic parts of the city where, for the sake of brevity, he/she can feel “at home” (see Hamid 2015 for the case of male workers in Little India). The other common instance the worker abandons his dormitory or her employer’s home is when disputes with the employer arise and escalate. This “desertion from the workplace” (Bal 2015) is a determinant factor for the service hub in Singapore, as it also implies an exit from the regulatory framework by the worker into the less organized (and/or hardly known) spheres of state or voluntary service channels. However, reaching these “safe havens” and seeking individual recourse is fraught with difficulties (Yeoh et al. 2004: 16).

Disputes mostly arise because of exploitative or abusive practices by the employer (see Chok 2014; and Yea 2016 for more details) or other personal issues (such as the inability to keep up with work etc.). A significant amount of research considers these practices to be partly a result of the high administrative costs involved in the employment of foreign workers.<sup>2</sup> Parts of these costs, which are a form of investment in the worker, are forfeited in case a worker absconds or violates regulations. This then explains why the employer is often inclined to excessively control the mobility of his worker(s) even to the point of keeping them nearly confined. As such, it follows that the act of desertion is a highly extreme and aggravating endeavour, and that it is crucial for some forms of sustenance to be readily accessible. Next, I will explore how these resources have been spatially organized and developed into the currently existing inner-city service hubs for foreign workers.

#### 4 The Making of the Service Hub: From Suspicion to Acceptance

“VWOs (Voluntary Welfare Organizations) receive money to fill the ‘gaps’ in social policy and that the gaps that are filled are those decided by the government. And so here we come, and we are not a VWO, we don’t receive funding and the government doesn’t like the kind of things that we said because we are talking about systemic problems. We see problems in the way the foreign workers are treated, and the government doesn’t see that there is a problem because it works very well. It works very well for the Singapore economy ... Whatever works for the Singapore economy, for the benefit of the Singapore people [the government] will definitely go for it. [They] don’t see it from a point of view of a human rights issue. So that is why it is a huge benefit to have an indebted group of foreign workers who can be repatriated at any time. We see that as a problem, they see that as a solution.” (Interview, NGO senior staff member, January 15, 2017)

The origin of Singapore’s service hubs for foreign workers can be traced back to the 1980s, when Singapore was rapidly modernizing its cityscape and unequal

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<sup>2</sup> These costs include costly security bonds, monthly levies and insurance fees which all have to be borne by the employer.

growth among the local population was becoming more conspicuous. In addition—and following the opening of certain parts of the local labour market to transient migrant labour—new issues of less visible abuse and exploitation were gradually surfacing, which would be initially challenged by liberal Christian movements (Go 2010). The state-led redevelopment of Singapore's Central Business District around the same time forced centrally located religious instances to relocate, and for some Christian churches the inner-city neighbourhoods of Geylang was a popular choice in terms of its location (located directly east of the CBD), affordability, and convenience (the spacious shop houses are relatively flexible in use). Importantly, Geylang also proved to be a space for social engagement due to the high visibility of poverty and presence of foreign workers in distress. Accounts from this period note how the area was a disordered “mix of Malays and Chinese, [...] included many bars and brothels with mainly low-income patrons, as well as illicit gambling joints, and small-time drug trafficking” (Arotçarena 2015: 31). Within this setting, the Geylang Catholic Centre emerged not only as an important service provider for the poor but also as a proponent of social equality and radical democratization (Ang and Neo 2017). The Centre was soon to be used as a night shelter for female workers who were staying in “dormitories”, i.e., subdivided cubicle apartments in the upper floors of shop houses provided by their employer. Functioning as a quasi- “crisis centre”, various associations came in contact to it and even a local police station would refer their cases when deemed necessary. Local population cases were often sent through to the Social Welfare Department (*ibid.*: 37). This networking would eventually expand to include social work students, (mostly young) lawyers and other groups that shared interest in volunteer work to engage in underaddressed social issues.

This networking expansion was a crucial phase in the making of the service hub, which, to various volunteers, grew out of an abjection to social disparity and the government's lacking commitment to state-organized welfare. However, its activities were abruptly halted by the government in 1987. Due to the social agitation and fear for further escalation, the government evoked the Internal Security Act to detain prominent Church members, still know today as “Operation Spectrum” and the “Marxist Conspiracy”.<sup>3</sup> Although officially framed as a pre-emptive repression of escalating anti-capitalist ideology, this operation served to blunt social development in Singapore by a government that was primarily dedicated to rapid industrialization and docile labour (*Ibid.*). Following the multiple arrests and detentions, the incident had serious repercussions on Singapore's social landscape, as the government had successfully discouraged welfare activism and banned religious organizations from any form of political activism. As a result, the service hub faced a period of arrested development throughout the 1990s.

During the early 2000s, new life was sparked into the voluntary sector following the gruesome incidents of domestic worker abuse and public concerns over an overtly apathetic civic society (Lyons 2005; Piper 2006). While public awareness-making constituted an important part at the initial stage, efforts were soon directed to the delivery of direct services, such as sheltering and legal assistance. In Geylang, the

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<sup>3</sup> See Chng et al. (2017) for more detailed accounts of the detentions.

Humanitarian Organization Migrant Economic (H.O.M.E.) was established in 2004 as a registered NGO and HealthServe in 2006 as a religious (and thus non-advocative) Voluntary Welfare Organization (VWO). These two organizations would become the nexus of frontline services in Geylang. However, throughout the end of the 1990s and 2000s the service hub was also changing in other ways, predominately through the large presence of male foreign workers that flocked into Singapore's inner-city neighbourhoods. The largest influx of workers on Sundays (off-days) was seen Little India, where another NGO known as Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2), also registered in 2004, would start services for South Asian workers in 2008. These activities co-shaped Singapore's second service hub in Little India.

Singapore's service hubs are commonly known as ethnic towns. While in Little India this has been historically so for South Asians (Henderson 2008), in Geylang this is a rather recent phenomenon (Wei 2009). Geylang has gradually transformed into Singapore's second Chinatown where PRC workers and other citizens congregate around "PRC Chinese eateries" (as opposed to "Singaporean Chinese eateries"), places of worship, clan associations and other leisure facilities. The relatively large presence of (legal as well as illegal) "dormitory bed spaces" has been a vital element to this. Their presence is illustrative of the overall negative public image of the service hub's actual landscape. Since the 1980s, companies employing foreign workers have made use of low-cost rental properties to accommodate their workers (Ang et al. 2017). The relatively low rental costs were the result of Geylang's local image of poverty and vice, which made it a rather unpopular area for Singaporeans to reside in. Locals accounts mention that a significant number of condominium and shop-house owners rent out their properties to companies and decide to reside elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> Dormitory bed spaces are exclusively rented by foreign workers and also make up the predominant resource of accommodation for work deserters. These bed spaces are also found in relatively large numbers in Little India. Rent fluctuates between US\$150 and US\$300 a month. Apart from the relatively cheap prices, the centrality that Geylang and Little India have to offer has been important for companies to house workers who can be rapidly dispatched to central city sites (in-home repairs etc.). In the case of Geylang, these workers are often Chinese workers because of their general experience in the required skills, and their ethnic/lingual advantage in Singapore's ethnic Chinese majority society.

The large presence of foreign workers living in local dormitory bed spaces and those residing in the outskirts dorms who come over on their days off have spawned an array of small-time businesses that trade at a lower cost, ranging from foods to other ethnically preferred goods (Rahman and Fee 2015: 80). This ethnic aspect of the built environment is complemented by shady internet cafes, cheap eateries, backpacker hostels, all which add to the transient character of the service hub. The numerous hotels scattered throughout the neighbourhoods perform an auxiliary function to the prostitution sector, which overlaps with the same area. Other hotels are frequently used by "budget gamblers", as Singapore's two casinos are easy-accessible from both areas. Much of these developments, which look overwhelmingly disorderly and

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<sup>4</sup> Information provided by Geylang Tours (<http://www.geylangadventures.com/about-us/>).

unruly in comparison to Singapore’s sanitized urban landscape, have in fact evolved through a sphere of managed tolerance, word of mouth information channels and resourcefulness. Taking a quick stroll through Geylang, one can easily notice the peculiar street economy of unlicensed cigarettes vendors, Chinese manufactured sex medicines, gambling spots and the like. Going into the backside parts of Little India, there is a vibrant street economy centred on the recycling of household appliances and outdoor drinking places. This sight conspicuously contrasts with Singapore’s “common” urban areas which are strictly monitored by the state and appear as orderly, “sanitized” spaces.

Following the 2013 “riot” in Little India (Neo 2015), however, this public approach of tolerance has gradually made way to increased monitoring practices to prevent any possibility of another (male) migrant worker uprising. Seemingly, public space has been on forefront of this trend. One of the earliest countermeasure responses following the riot was the instalment of an alcohol-free public zone within the perimeters of both Little India and Geylang. New state-of-the-art CCTV and infrared cameras were installed to detect unusual gatherings from the point of formation and outdoor lamp posts have been redone with anti-adhesive paint in order to prevent the dispersion of uncontrolled information (Fig. 1). Little India got a new bus terminal (for buses owned by large dorms) at a former heavily used open space to streamline worker movements in and out of the area.

The above-mentioned countermeasures were also extended to the private sphere. Especially in Geylang, there was a noticeable shift to the clamping down of illegal vending practices and a step up in dormitory bed space apartment raids to target illegal stayers and related regulation violations (Tai 2016; Wei 2015). The once so common sight of prostitutes lining up in the area’s *lorongs* (lanes) was banned completely to indoor facilities, and even then, some brothels have been evacuated for piecemeal redevelopment. In overall, the interventions after the riot have represent a step-up in control, with the government attempting to make this particular urban existence less



Fig. 1 From left to right: Info on dormitory bed spaces; no-liquor signs; anti-adhesive lamp post



like a city, i.e., with fewer potential social dangers, and at the same time also more like a city, i.e., more “civilized” (Smart 2001). Next, I will look how at the actual operation of the service hub in interaction with these conditions.

## 5 Managing the Service Hub

The issue of space will be different for NGOs that operate on independent funding and do advocacy campaigning in comparison to VWOs that merely provide services in a non-provocative way. In this section I will focus exclusively on the NGOs and make a distinction between their service and campaigning spaces. I also focus predominately on the service hubs for male workers, but will make some references to the case of domestic workers as well, since there is a spatial overlapping between both services. After this I will reconnect both spaces to assess the degree of contestation involved.

### 5.1 Operational Space

When a male worker abandons his employer (and thus also his work permit and accommodation), he is forced to rely on services outside the workplace and thus seeks refuge in the ethnic parts of the city he knows best. Most are familiar with these parts because they have used the public spaces and/or shopping facilities etc. before and are savvy about the local resources. In this sense, these parts are relatively easy-accessible and become the backbone of their survival geography. Knowing this, NGOs have targeted this ethnic centrality and developed their operational space around its resources. The basic factors pertaining to this space are as follows:

*Rent.* NGOs reaching out to foreign workers require a space to operate their services and thus need to negotiate rent, which is purely a private market matter. This means that there is no governmental interference at this point. Foremost, this encompasses space for easy-accessible helpdesks, shelter, as well as frontline services such as soup kitchens and medical facilities. In order to negotiate rents, ideally, the NGO should be a registered organization (Societies Act<sup>5</sup>) as this would give it leverage as a legal entity and as a formally recognized organization *with* stable sources of revenue. Apart from this, conformity to zoning regulations in case of shelters is required. Soup kitchen spaces, however, are commonly outsourced to existing restaurants or eateries already in possession of a food shop license. As such, food can be legally distributed in a private space and individual communication with the workers becomes easier for the NGO staffs. Importantly, the negotiation of rent and the concentration of services in Singapore’s service hub are less as an outcome of nimbyism, than an

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<sup>5</sup> The Societies Act is commonly considered being a legal tool that actually restricts NGO’s in their political engagements (Lyons 2005; also see Bal 2015: 222). However, in this case it also has an enabling function as it provides them leverage for obtaining facility space.

outcome of proximity (centrality) to where workers congregate and seek housing themselves. Of course, the actual spaces used are mainly located in commercially or mixed zoned areas, which decreases the potential resident resistance to the provision of care. On the other hand, the fact that these hubs are also ethnic areas keeps the workers tied to these neighbourhoods without their concentration expanding into Singapore's common spaces.

In case of the domestic workers, while a shelter is available in an undisclosed place in Geylang, rent for helpdesk spaces forms a bigger issue. Many domestic workers frequent certain malls (according to ethnicity) to congregate on their days off. One of the local NGOs has set helpdesks in these malls, yet the overall high rents in the commercial facilities demand for other tactics such as leasing out parts of those spaces to cut costs.

*Networking.* Actual service provision stands in close contact with related public instances. Foremost, the voluntary sector stands in close contact with the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), which is the ministry in charge of supervising and processing foreign worker related claims. Related services come in the form of legal advice, assistance and follow-up on formal complaints and documentation against their employers at MOM. In effect, these services are a form of cooperative case working, in which the legal framework of MOM is utilized at its fullest on part of the NGOs and where partly frontline duties are left up to the voluntary sector. While cooperative case working may be the most crucial part of networking, this must be supplemented with the direct emergency services that assist the workers in an ad hoc manner. Soup kitchens are negotiated with existing restaurants in close vicinity that are willing to reserve space apart from their regular business and prepare the ethnic dishes preferred by the workers at an affordable cost. Medical care such as simple injury/illness treatment may be provided at the NGOs' helpdesk, but mostly professional care services are provided through a referral network of cooperating clinics (also run by VWOs). Insurance-related assistance with hospital visits are part of this, although the public hospitals are physically located outside service hub areas. Even skill and language training may be provided such as basic computer skills etc. through several volunteering networks. Information on low-rent housing, although rarely provided directly, is obtainable through fellow worker contacts and information available in the streets (see also Fig. 1).

Food programs are often used as a contact point for legal advice and individual follow-up. These programs as well as the assistance services are accessed through word of mouth. There are only rarely outreach visits to the outskirts dorm areas, and information travels fast within the contours of the service hubs and even beyond.

The service hubs of Little India and Geylang are connected to each other as well. Referrals are done based on each service provider's field of specialization, while remaining focused on the ethnic features and needs of their clients. As part of the campaigning and awareness raising, the NGOs frequently get together to exchange information and coordinate surveys. Recently a shared databank has been set up to avoid overlap in casework.

## 5.2 *Spaces of Expression*

The government knows that there is a space for NGOs. But they nudge, and they can only nudge so much as possible, to do the work the government is not keen to, and to nudge them away from antagonism. (Interview, NGO senior staff member, January 17, 2017)

Apart from the physical space necessary to conduct the daily operations that fit the service hub, NGOs also require space for campaigning for the wellbeing of their clientele. However, and in contrast to material space, this kind of space is comparatively limited in Singapore's political context. Below, we focus on how counter-practices of self-governance and the actual acts of campaigning enter into the equation of the service hub.

*Self-governance.* As a result of the Singapore's (semi-)illiberal character, the scope of voluntary service delivery and advocacy is considerable circumscribed. The possible extent of critical feedback towards the government can largely be framed under the "OB markers",<sup>6</sup> yet is not confined to it. Rather one should imagine a set of unwritten rules that guides the boundaries of conflictual interaction between NGOs and the government. The basic rule is framed around an unconditional respect for the government and around the fact that all policies should be formulated exclusively to the benefit the nation (as opposed to non-nation entities). A consequence is that advocacy cannot be framed under human rights since Singapore has not signed any related international conventions and thus does not acknowledge any direct claims pertaining to this issue. Examples of "respect" include the official addressing of the government or ministry as a single counterpart instead of targeting individual officials. Shortcomings of policy may be pointed out but the government's "expert knowledge" of policy making itself cannot be contested. To this extend, NGOs frequently mention that although the government is susceptible to casework feedback, it rejects any direct suggestions to policy making as this remains the exclusive field of policy makers: "... [T]hey are very defensive on being criticized and I often feel that when we talk to MOM and we come up with suggestions, and we are just thinking in terms of what we can do and what can be done, but MOM in their defence they tend to say three things: We don't believe that that problem exists; we are well-aware of that problem and we are already on top of it, [so] we don't need you to tell us about it; if we were to address that problem this would just open up a can of worms, there are so many unintended consequences to try to address this problem." (Interview, NGO senior staff member, January 15, 2017). So, and although a vast amount of research on foreign worker issues has been conducted by the NGOs, the government generally opts to relies on its own data. Even for casework, selected cases may be discussed in closed-door meetings (Bal 2015: 227), without resorting to other communication channels such as the media.

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<sup>6</sup> OB (Out of Bounds) Markers are a vaguely defined political tool by the Singaporean government to restrict certain politically charged topics or comments (especially on, but not confined to, religion and race) in public discussions (see also Lyons and Gomes 2005).

Moreover, self-governance can be supplemented by “sales talk”. This is foremost a strategy to package recommendations as ultimately beneficial to the government and Singaporean society in general. One example is the framing of policy recommendations into terms of improving citizen (and employer) mentality as responsible hosts for domestic workers (Lyons 2005) and improved worker productivity (Kornatowski 2017), both which overlap with state interests. Any of such kind of framing would attract positive attention.

*Platforming.* Although within the bounds of self-governance, the actual act of advocacy occupies a significant role in addition to service activities of NGOs. Yet, the common importance of “symbolic space” (DeVerteuil 2015; Gotham 2003) should be nuanced in the context of Singapore. While undoubtedly the concentrated presence of distressed foreign workers in service hub areas is a determinant factor for advocacy campaigning, the problem of space is rarely used as strategic leverage. Rather, the politics of space is separated from advocacy in favour of challenging structural issues that obstruct the workers’ wellbeing such as perceived flaws in Singapore’s legal framework and common labour law violations by employers (Bal 2015: 233–235), all which exceeds the confined spaces of the service hub. Such transgression of space translates in the use of different platforms that enable the public expression of advocacy. These can range from forums provided at universities or conferences to the use of the internet and the local media in order to disseminate confronting content. Notably, these advocacy valves spill over to other emancipating networks that use overlapping strategies of expression following the fact that “Singapore is a small city, especially when it comes to advocacy for disadvantaged populations” (NGO informant, interviewed on 15 January 2017). As a result, advocacy is framed on the city-state scale, and thus does not explicitly focus on the spatiality of the service hub.

Due to the social mission of NGOs in response to policy shortcomings, service hubs also serve as an educational field: “Schools are generally happy to deal with groups like us because we are more exciting than the VWOs who are doing, you know, simply serving food. We also serve food you know, but we do it for a specific reason... [The VWOs] serve healthy food, we serve [ethnic] greasy food!” (*Ibid.*). School visits or student participation in volunteering also provides an opportunity to entice alternative perspectives to common forms of solution-making: “Because of the education system and state building, foreign workers issues are easily addressed as ‘lack of racial integration’, but the foreign workers are segregated in everything they do! So, students will often react that racial integration are social interaction is part of the solution and we say: we don’t think so...” (*Ibid.*)

Lastly, NGOs make use of international channels such as the United Nations and International Labour Organization to obtain some traction on the issues of human rights and submit shadow reports etc. in response to the restrictive Singaporean state context (see, e.g., H.O.M.E. and TWC2 2017). As such, these kinds of engagements with spaces of expression do seem to stretch out the “extent and nature of civil society space” (Bal 2015: 223) and, although perhaps still relatively limited, certain leeway for campaigning can be obtained through platforming channels. Yet, this does not mean it is left uncontested.

### 5.3 *Contesting the Status-Quo of the Service Hub*

Singapore's service hubs for foreign workers are characteristically conflictual and cooperative at the same time. The survey respondents often mention that Singapore is small in terms of absolute space and that practically all people know each other in this field, which brings mutual communication and negotiation close to a personal level. In overall, the official channels frequently made use of the service hubs, such as the government (MOM), police and major hospitals, are commonly trusted, yet "feel different" depending on the counterpart: "I trust everybody to do what they are supposed to do, and I also trust everybody in MOM to do what they are supposed to do. But the strange thing is that when we talk to the policemen, doctors etc. I feel that I am talking to a human being, but not the people from MOM... I feel like they are different class of persons ... They are so bureaucratic in their approach ... It's like the regulation states this and state that, you know?" (Interview, NGO senior staff member, January 15, 2017).

The service hubs perform an important task in addressing foreign worker needs which the government "cannot address" or "won't address" and so there is a mutual understanding of the importance of VWO/NGO services. Yet, the antagonistic character of the NGOs is a major concern, to which the government has felt itself obliged to intervene. One of the major strategies to counterchallenge the landscape of service provision, especially in connection to advocacy campaigning, has been the establishment of the "Migrant Worker Centre (MWC)" in both service hubs by the government-controlled National Trades Union Congress and the Singapore National Employers' Federation. The MWC was set up to promote "better employment practices" and provide legal aid to foreign workers in distress. It also funds soup kitchens, a free legal clinic and a shelter in one of the large outskirt dorm areas. From time to time cultural events are organized, in order to facilitate the social integration of the workers, however ironically this seems to the independent NGOs, considering the workers do not have any opportunity to permanently settle.

Following its privileged capacity to secure funding, equip its large fulltime staff with former MOM officers and organize volunteer outreach teams to the dorm areas, MWC is now regarded as a "heavyweight" among all voluntary sector organizations (Chuan 2016). Due to such implicit government interference (and thus a conspicuous lack of any form of advocacy), the MWC is regarded as an example of a "government-organized non-government organization (GONGO)". Nevertheless, it is now an integral part of Singapore's service hub which actively caters for foreign workers in distress. The MWC is to a certain extent considered as a partner as they tend to get things done fast: "MWC ... was set up by the government. They do many things we do. They were set up to act like an NGO ... in response to us ... They do the government bidding ... We take a more adversarial role [but] we also send people to MWC, especially when we had less access to MOM. They would call their buddies and that would work" (Interview, NGO senior staff member, January 15, 2017).

However, the overall perception of MWC is rather negative and at times the MWC's way of operation is problematized. In addition to its background and its

*tour de force* capacity-wise, the NGOs are chiefly concerned of how MWC draws away international attention and media coverage by profiling themselves as a genuine NGO. To this end, survey respondents commented that “serious cases can be kept out of the limelight” and even that the MWC initiative looks like an attempt to “make the independent NGOs obsolete” (Interview, NGO fulltime staff member, January 15, 2017).

It is critical to note that with the MWC initiative, the service hub is challenged and encroached upon in their own field of operation. Instead of publicly challenging the advocacy campaigns (which does can happen if deemed necessary by the government), the momentum of campaigning is weakened, and some share of antagonism is bypassed. However, it is not completely erased, as the NGOs financially independent services and field experience remain a valuable source of service provision in an ambiguous landscape.

## 6 Conclusion

By framing the concentration of voluntary sector organizations that provide services for foreign workers in distress as service hubs, this chapter has attempted to connect both elements of service provision for a marginal population and the “disordered” built environment of Singapore’s inner city. Due to their politically antagonistic character, over the years the service hubs have been shunted, accepted, and contested by the Singaporean authorities. This has led the NGOs to seek leverage for their service and advocacy campaigns through various means of negotiation, self-governance and platforming. On the other hand, the governmentally managed Migrant Worker Centre was a powerful mechanism to distract attention away from antagonistic NGOs, both in terms of publicity and clientele and to reframe foreign worker grievances as issues of social integration (as opposed to systematic flaws).

Observing the politics of unruly urban places, Smart (2001) asserts that the accomplishments of the poor require more appreciation (30). In a similar vein, we can extend this to the accomplishment of the service hub and its inherent street economy for its unique capacity to include marginalized individual such as the foreign workers into centrally located urban areas. It is these particular NGO services *within* the disordered inner-city environment that fulfil an important welfare task for the marginalized and enable them access to urban space, however precariously it may seem. Yet the functioning of service hubs requires a fair amount of “toleration” and “goodwill” by the government. With state’s increased concern of any potential foreign worker uprisings in the future following the events of the Little India Riot in 2013, it remains to be seen how much of toleration will be remaining towards certain structures (such as the dormitory bed space apartments) of the service hub’s ecosystem in the future and the kind of counter-reactions by the NGO sector.

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# **Consolidation of Inner-City Social Relations**

# Transition or Consolidation? The Role of Inner-City Neighbourhoods in the Integration of Immigrants in Brussels, Belgium



Christian Kesteloot

**Abstract** Ernest Burgess' transition zone has become a classical concept in urban sociology and geography. Because of the development of inner-city working-class neighbourhoods in the nineteenth century and an unfettered suburbanisation process after the Second World War, Brussels shares similarities with the American city that Burgess was contemplating: a poor inner city and rich suburbs. The inner city has continuously played the role of arrival place for lower class newcomers and is often considered as a transition zone, where the next wave of newcomers pushes the previous one in the adjacent concentric zone. This conception of the city implies that the more people live away from the city centre, the more they are integrated in the urban community and vice versa. This chapter develops a close examination of social and economic life in these Brussels neighbourhoods. It starts with an overview of the concept of transition zone, examines immigration and residential mobility patterns in the city and then focuses on immigration, residential mobility, economic activities and social networks in one of these neighbourhoods, the district of Kuregem. Results shows that a large part of immigrants stays in the zone and develop opportunities for economic and social integration within these areas, hence consolidating these neighbourhoods into ethnic enclaves.

**Keywords** Brussels · Human ecology · Transition zone · Ethnic enclave · Immigration · Residential mobility

## 1 Urban Ecology and the Zone of Transition

In terms of human ecology, urban growth is an expansion process that disturbs previous symbiotic and ecological balances in the city. In order to understand this, a short introduction to the conception of an urban community by the human ecologists is needed.

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Human ecology was developed in the 1920s at the University of Chicago by Robert Park and his colleagues. Park defines human ecology as follows in “The City”, the most famous book of what will become the Chicago school of sociology: “There are forces at work within the limits of the urban community ... which tend to bring about an orderly and typical grouping of its population and institutions. The science that seeks to isolate these factors and to describe the typical constellations of persons and institutions which the co-operation of these forces produce, it what we call human, as distinguished from animal and plant, ecology (Park 1925: 1–2)”.<sup>1</sup> By stating in the same chapter that “The city ... is a product of nature, and particularly human nature” (1925: 1), Park enables sociologists to study the city by using the concepts of ecology. The basic concepts are:

**The community:** a population organised within a given territory and hence considered as an organism related to the space it occupies. There are interdependencies between the individuals that constitute that organism (symbiotic relations), as well as natural processes generated by the organism to maintain or re-establish the population and the balances between the individuals that compose it in response to internal or external changes (today this could be called a form of resilience). The city is seen as such a community, but a large city would contain subcommunities that in turn are interdependent with each other.

**Natural areas:** these areas reflect the territorial nature of the community and subcommunities. A city will have as many natural areas as subcommunities. They result from the natural balance between each subcommunity and the space in which they organise themselves.

**Symbiotic balance:** this balance results from the biological needs of the individuals living in the subcommunities and the interdependencies between them. The interests derived from these biological needs at the level of the individuals and of the groups that constitute subcommunities, are at the same time common and conflicting, resulting in what Park called “competitive co-operation”, a concept based on the combination of Darwin’s “struggle for life” and “web of life” (1936: 22).

**Competition:** the competitive element in the relations of competitive co-operation is crucial for maintaining the symbiotic balance. This balance is socially expressed in the division of labour. From a spatial point of view, the same competition will yield an ecological balance, that distributes the subcommunities and their individuals over different natural areas in the urban community.

**Dominance:** the symbiotic balance achieved by competition expresses the relations of dominance in the community. Park compares this with the competition for light among different plant species, that results in different vegetation layers. In this way, competition for the better economic activities and for the best places in the city, will result in dominance patterns that will decide the position of the groups in the division of labour and the location of their natural areas in the community’s territory.

**Moral order:** this represents the cultural dimension of the community, i.e. the set of values, norms and beliefs that enable the integration of an individual in the

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a reworked version of a paper published in 1915 in the American Journal of Sociology. The original paper does not contain our citations.

community and the social control that prevents individuals to develop behaviour that would threaten the community.

All these elements form a complex system that reacts to internal growth and external changes (Fig. 1). Expansion of the community or invasion by outsiders, like through migration, will trigger a round of competition through which the dominance structure of the subcommunities and individuals will be expressed. The competition unfolds both in social space and on the territory of the community (geographical space). In the former, positions in the division of labour are at stake and competition will result in a new symbiotic balance in the division of labour (something strongly illustrated by the succession of ethnic groups in economic niches or the game of ethnic musical chairs (Waldinger 1996)). In geographical space, it concerns the best locations in the territory and results in an ecological balance. The natural areas that are assigned to a precise subcommunity through that competition process strongly reflect different positions in the division of labour. This is a crucial point in the human ecology, as it opens the way for studies of society through its spatial organisation: the social distances between individuals and groups in the social division of labour correspond to the spatial distances between them in urban space. Studying the social structure of urban space is much easier and time saving compared to the study of individuals, groups and their interrelations (see Kesteloot et al. 2009 for a critical analysis of this approach) and thus gives a boost in the social study of cities.

According to Burgess, the ecological balance of a city generates concentric zones of natural areas that reflect the different levels of dominance: the central business district, the zone in transition, the workingmen’s zone, the residential zone and the

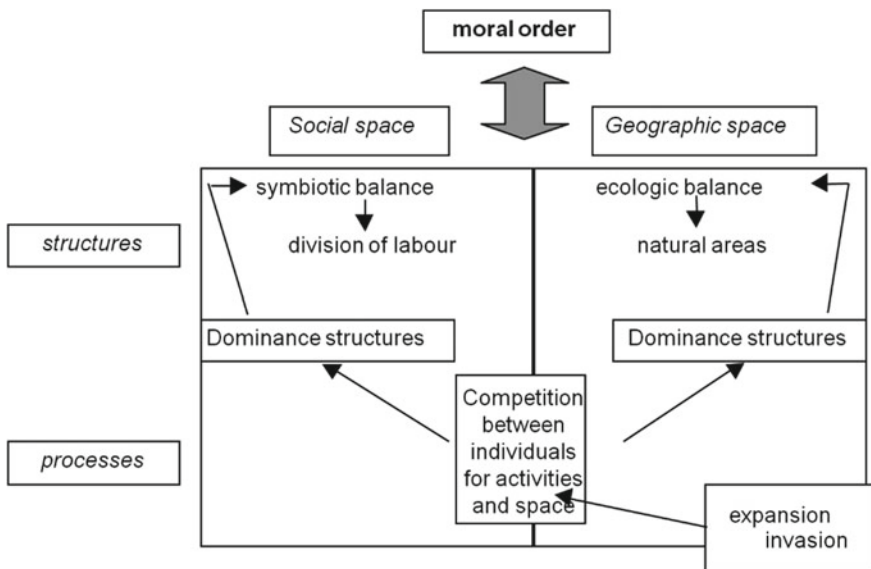


Fig. 1 The urban community according to Park (Source Kesteloot et al. 2009: 118)

commuters' zone (Burgess 1925: 50). It is this spatial partition of the city that has been recognized as Burgess' concentric model of the city. The zone in transition is the place where invasion takes place, because it contains the weakest natural areas in the urban territory. The resulting competition is described as follows by Burgess: "Their invasion [by the immigrants] of the city has the effect of a tidal wave inundating first the immigrant colonies, the ports of first entry, dislodging thousands of inhabitants who overflow into the next zone, and so on until the momentum of the wave has spent its force on the last urban zone" (1925: 58).

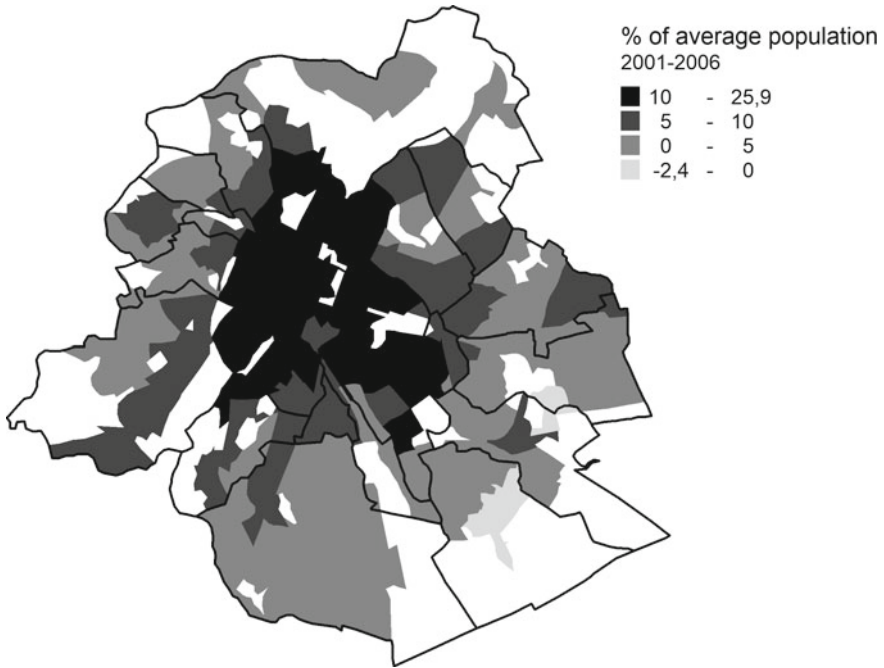
This process is then illustrated by a vivid, although short portrait of Chicago's natural areas, with slums, vice, the Black belt, Chinatown, ghetto, little Sicily, the underworld and roomers mentioned in the city's zone of transition. However, people in that zone are not expected to live there forever. The next wave of invasion will push them away in the workingmen's zone and meanwhile what Burgess calls the urban metabolism will have changed them into workingmen, much better integrated in the urban community. This metabolism, like in nature, has two phases: catabolism, during which the old migrant mentality of the newcomer is destroyed, and anabolism that reassembles the individual into a member of the urban community. Catabolism results in a period of disorganisation of the individuals and the groups they belong to. Burgess states: "If the phenomena of expansion and metabolism indicate that a moderate degree of disorganisation may and does facilitate social organization, they indicate as well that rapid urban expansion is accompanied by excessive increases in disease, crime, disorder, vice, insanity and suicide, rough indexes of social disorganization." (1925: 57). Hence, these problems are expected in the zone of transition whenever the city experiences massive immigration, as was the case in Chicago at the time Burgess was writing.

## 2 The Urban Ecology of Brussels

It is very tempting to apply Burgess' vision on urban growth to the Brussels case. The maps on recent international and internal migration suggest a wave-like process, with a central zone of arrival that closely matches the idea of a zone of transition and a concomitant emigration out of this zone to the next concentric circle in the city (Figs. 2 and 3). This wave continues behind the limits of the Brussels Capital Region (which is not even encompassing the whole urban agglomeration) as the migration balance of the Region with the suburban areas around it is strongly negative (De Maesschalck et al. 2015).

The concentric nature of the movements is not perfect, since emigration from the transition zone is stronger towards the west of the city. But this can be explained by the socio-economic differentiation of Brussels' urban space, with the highest social status areas in the east and the south-east.

Burgess' view is even more tempting when the immigrant spaces in the city are considered. They perfectly fit the idea of "natural areas" as a result of competition for space. To name and illustrate a few (Fig. 4), the urban landscape in the western

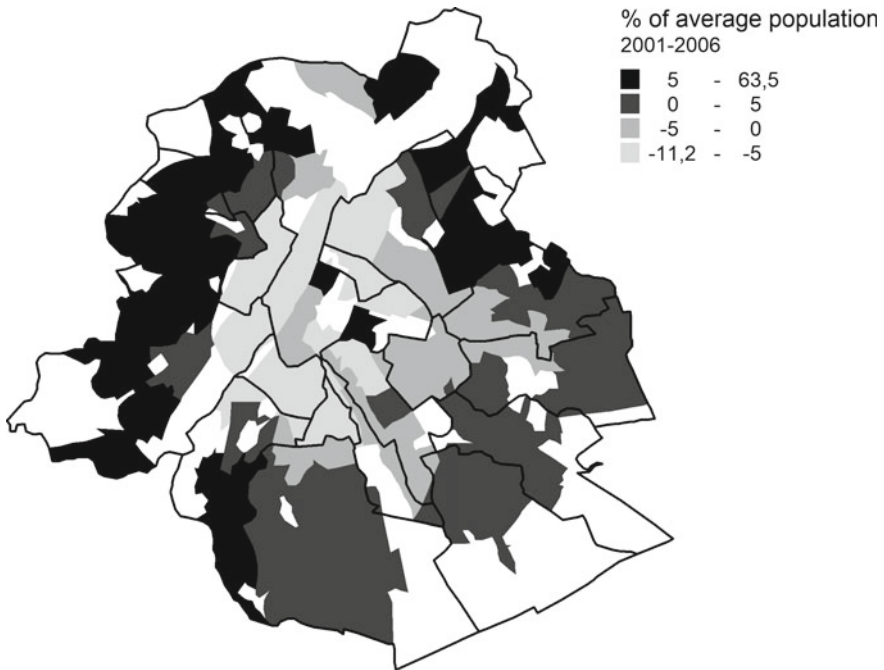


**Fig. 2** Balance of migration movements with foreign countries and the Brussels capital region, 2001–2006 (in % of the average total population)

part of the zone is dominated by Moroccans (the picture shows the weekly market in the centre of Molenbeek, right in the middle of the area named “Morocco” on the map). The northern part of the zone, nicknamed Little Anatolia, displays a parallel domination of Turks, a result of chain migration from the surroundings of a little town in Anatolia, Emirdağ. In the south-east, Matonge is the main shopping and leisure area for the Congolese community in the city and by extension for many other sub-Saharan communities (the name refers to a famous nightlife district in Kinshasa). Heyvaertstreet in Kuregem, a neighbourhood in the south-west, located along the canal that formed the main industrial axis of the city in the nineteenth century, concentrates a vibrant second-hand cars business that caters for the needs in West-Africa. These look like clear equivalents of the Black belt, Chinatown, the ghetto and little Sicily in Chicago. Moreover, the traces of vice, crime, the underworld, and roomers are present as well in this Brussels’ zone of transition.

### 3 Transition or Consolidation in Brussels

The crucial point, however, is that if Brussels looks like a case of Burgess’ conception of the city in terms of concentric zones and waves of invasion, the inward and outward



**Fig. 3** Balance of migration movements within the Brussels capital region, 2001–2006 (in % of the average total population)

movements are not triggered like Burgess imagined them. The origin of the zone, as well as three successive transformations of the Brussels inner city zone invite to reverse this view and to see that many inhabitants stay notwithstanding the waves of immigration. Hence, the zone of transition becomes a zone of consolidation.<sup>2</sup> A crucial consequence of this is the development of opportunities for economic and social integration within the zone, so that consolidated neighbourhoods appear as ethnic enclaves.<sup>3</sup>

### ***3.1 The Origin of the Transition Zone***

The origin of Brussels' transition zone lies in the nineteenth century industrial revolution. The huge demand for industrial labour force resulted in the erection

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent cartographic and iconographic account of these changes, see Dessourroux (2008). For a more detailed analysis of the processes and their relation to economic growth, see Kesteloot (1990).

<sup>3</sup> An ethnic enclave is a zone in which an ethnic group develops economic and other activities that enhance the welfare of the group (Marcuse 1997).



**Fig. 4** “Natural areas” in Brussels. *Note* Left top picture by Wieland De Hoon (2010). Right top picture by Pascale Mistiaen (2003). Other pictures by Christian Kesteloot (2021)

of these neighbourhoods, populated with immigrants from Flanders and Wallonia (Dessouroux 2008). Housing was conceived for low-paid workers, doing long working days and submitted to high employment insecurity, three elements on which profit making and economic growth were based on. These three elements also explain the high building density of the neighbourhoods, the low quality of dwellings—merely conceived as shelter—and the closeness of these to the working places. One might consider this new area in the city as a zone of transition, but the living conditions of the workers were so bad, that further immigration did not push the previous groups further away from the city centre but replaced those that had been exhausted by sheer exploitation. Or it increased the available labour pool to respond to the growing labour demand caused by capital accumulation. Indeed, until the second half of the nineteenth century, productivity increases were relatively slow, and growth was much related to increase in labour time. Hence, this invasion was not creating a next zone, but rather expanding the transition zone. The only, relatively minor change before the second half of the twentieth century in terms of housing and inhabitants, was the creation of social housing to improve the living conditions of the workers. This was limited to a few employers’ experiments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and to the creation of a ring of garden-city like social housing neighbourhoods that were built outside the city in order to offer healthy neighbourhoods, but more essentially to avoid high land prices (Smets 1977). The dwellers of these social



housing estates were not pushed away from the transition zone by new immigrants, but by the living conditions in it. Interestingly, this helped to separate the elite of the working class, for which social housing was affordable, from the lower working class that was constrained to stay in the zone, making the social housing policy part of the class struggle (a divide and rule strategy of the bourgeoisie to weaken the labour movement).

### 3.2 *The “Guestworkers” Invasion*

The first large scale change of the transition zone happens after WWII, again as a result of changes in the economic system. Belgium entered in an US-like Fordist economy, where surplus value created through productivity increases was shared between investment for further productivity growth and wage increases to create the necessary outlet for the swelling production. Logically, this mass production was concentrated on housing (through building for ownership) and durable consumer goods (car and domestic appliances). Housing became the seat of an expanding consumption process and became therefore much more space consuming than before. This gave rise to urban sprawl. Hence, not any sort of invasion in the transition zone, but economic growth created the expansion of the city through suburban sprawl. This growth also explains how the working class was transformed into a middle class that entered in new or expanding job sectors that took care for the technological, educational, health, cultural and infrastructural needs of this economic regime and enjoyed the benefits of wage increases. The result was a gradual abandonment and decay of the transition zone, creating what was called “the hollow city” (Van der Haegen 1985). But economic growth did not only create a vacuum on the housing market. The upward mobility of the working class, in which higher education levels of the younger generations played an important role, resulted in a shrinking low skilled worker’s pool. While productivity increases in the industry and the growth of the tertiary sector diminished the need for such workers, they remained necessary in great numbers in the construction industry, transportation and many urban service sectors. This need explains the first wave of foreign immigrants, the so-called “guestworkers”,<sup>4</sup> in Brussels. The most important groups came in the late 1950s from Italy and Spain, later on from Morocco and Turkey. These guestworkers filled the double gap in the housing market (the emptying rental sector in the transition zone) and in the labour market. This is the first comprehensive transformation of the transition zone. But it can hardly be seen as an invasion that pushed the Belgian working class in the next concentric zone.<sup>5</sup> Economic forces, and not migration, triggered

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<sup>4</sup> This naming of the labour immigrants reflects the fact they were considered as temporary hosts that would return to their home country after having fulfilled their role in the Belgian economy.

<sup>5</sup> This fact has not been very much studied at the time and the public opinion likes to see the arrival of the guestworkers as an invasion that pushed other inhabitants away and even threatens to spread all

the wave-like movement and explain the reverse order of it (the outward movement from the transition zone preceded the inward “invasion” of it).

### 3.3 *The Origin of Consolidation*

The end of Fordism triggered an economic stagnation period that started in 1973 with the oil crisis and lasted until the second half of the 1980s. This caused the second deep change in the migrant neighbourhoods, namely consolidation. Before that crisis, the first arrived guestworkers, the Italians and Spaniards, were able to join the Fordist upward social mobility to a certain extent. Many members of their second generation could enjoy good education and joined the middle class. Also, quite some older migrants returned to their home country. However, the Turks and Moroccans who arrived from the second half of the 1960 on, the job opportunities disappeared less than 10 years after their arrival and many saw their income dropping with unemployment. So, the crisis prevented a long-term investment in their second generation. Moreover, as the term “guestworkers” makes clear, the myth of return was maintained both by the Belgian authorities and the migrants themselves. The crisis shattered the myth. On the one hand, these later guestworkers could never accumulate enough wealth to successfully return to their country. But on the other hand, the Belgian government declared a migration stop in 1974, inducing the fear that any return would also entail the impossibility to join Belgium again later on.

Unemployment and the blocking of upward social (and spatial) mobility, as well as the shattering of the myth of return have consolidated the migrant neighbourhoods. The traces of this are those described earlier in this paper. Several interrelated elements play a role in this consolidation process.

First, the difficult economic situations of the households forced them to adopt sheer survival strategies (see Meert et al. 1997; Kesteloot and Meert 1999 for an analysis of these and their variation according to places and ethnic groups). These strategies could target self-provision within the household, mutual help within social networks of kin and neighbours, increasing access to social and welfare benefits or producing goods and services for sale. They all have their negative or dark counterpart, like underconsumption, social isolation (i.e., avoiding social relations in order to avoid being entangled in reciprocal services, social and (petty) fiscal fraud, as well as stealing or selling illegal goods like drugs).

The most visible result of consolidation is the appearance of ethnic entrepreneurship and ethnic infrastructure. These result largely from survival strategies, since these efforts are deployed to avoid unemployment. But they can also lift up survival issues to economic success. Typically, ethnic entrepreneurship arises from demand of the ethnic community and the capacity of some members to respond to it (Kesteloot and Mistiaen 1997). Hence at the start, both entrepreneurs and customers are ethnic,

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over the city. However, the only known contemporary study by a geographer confirms the departure of Belgians before the arrival of foreigners (Dussart-Féron 1963).

**Table 1** Four types of ethnic enterprises

Enterprise impulse	Orientation	
	Towards ethnic group	Towards host society
From ethnic group	<i>Ethnic niche</i>	<i>Exoticism</i>
From host society	<i>Protection/bridge Non-ethnic activity</i>	<i>Economic assimilation</i>

Source adapted from Kesteloot and Mistiaen (1997: 326)

and the demand tends to replicate consumption modes of the region of origin, notably food, catering, cloth, and furniture. These “ethnic niches” are complemented with activities responding to needs generated by the displacement of the ethnic group and the need to bridge their place of residence with their place of origin (and sometimes also the other places where groups of their community migrated to). Translation offices, bank branches from their country of origin, import–export and other activities related to the circulation of goods, people, information, and money between these places are at stake (see Fig. 4). Unlike the ethnic niche that replicates the retail and catering sectors of the places of origin, these activities wouldn’t appear in the places of origin in the absence of emigration.

Non-ethnic activities are also to be found. As the other types, they cater for the needs of the local population, but are not ethnic in nature and hence not deeply different from similar activities in other neighbourhoods of the city. Barbers, hair-dressers, health services, launderettes, second-hand shops are examples of such enterprises.

All these activities oriented towards the needs of the ethnic group create a niche market for the entrepreneurs, shielding them to a large extent from competition by other enterprises in the city. Conversely, they are subject to internal competition: given the relatively large number of entrepreneurial initiatives to avoid unemployment, new entrepreneurs tend to imitate successful pioneers, which generates fierce competition and after some time, the search for a new more profitable niche by the most innovative entrepreneurs.<sup>6</sup> Hence, waves of investment in particular businesses appear. But the competition also results in low prices for the goods and services produced by the ethnic businesses. In other words, this internal competition is part and parcel of the creation of neighbourhoods in which daily life is relatively less expensive than elsewhere in the city and responds to the low purchase power of their inhabitants.

The “ethnic niche” activities have a strong potential to develop into entrepreneurship based on “exoticism”, namely attracting customers from other social groups on the basis of the ethnic nature of their products and services. This process is strongest in food, restaurants and catering businesses and brings customers and money from outside the neighbourhood into the ethnic community. Moreover, the internal competition results in competitive advantages for these enterprises compared to their equivalents in the non-ethnic sector (Table 1).

<sup>6</sup> This is de facto another explanation for the musical chair process referred to above.

Both “ethnic niches” and “exotic” enterprises produce a strong ethnic character in their neighbourhood. The ethnic niche businesses tend to cover the whole area dominated by the ethnic group at stake, while the exotic ones take advantage of concentration, usually in the central parts of the area or in retail streets that pre-existed their arrival.<sup>7</sup>

The core of the consolidation process lies in the increased dependence of the inhabitants on their neighbourhoods. Most of the survival strategies depend on social networks available in the neighbourhood and are largely constructed on a shared migration experience. In Brussels, the Turks are especially known for their strong social bounds as a result of chain migration.<sup>8</sup> Obviously, these networks gain in strength by being concentrated in their neighbourhoods. This dependence also explains why, if the possibilities are available, migrants search to become landowners in their neighbourhood. Turks appear as champions in this strategy and were able to counter the pressure of gentrification by buying the houses they were renting previously. This process has been called “emergency buying” (Kesteloot et al. 1997): it enables the household to avoid increasing rents, as well as the increasing costs of living through the transformation of the retail supply through the gentrification process. But it also enables to maintain the strong neighbourhood-based social networks and the advantages of their fairly central and therefore convenient location in the city. One could also include the services and infrastructures that are run by the authorities or Belgian actors in these neighbourhoods: schools, health services, public transportation, municipal services are all symbiotically (to use a human ecology term) adapted to the presence of these communities. Displacement by gentrification processes would have destroyed all these advantages.

Among the other survival strategies, underconsumption and social isolation are at first sight unrelated with place and social networks. Nevertheless, such strategies also contribute to the consolidation process, since they are much easier to develop in these parts of the city, where consumption and daily life are critically less expensive than elsewhere.

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<sup>7</sup> In cities where an ethnic community, large enough to create ethnic enterprises, would be scattered in different areas, such exotic retail concentrations or markets can appear in places that offer good access from all these areas even if the community is not living in the area (the Albert Cuyp market in Amsterdam is a good example).

<sup>8</sup> As stated above the largest group of Turks, living in the north-eastern part of the transition zone, come from the surroundings of Emirdağ. Many of them arrived in a period of clandestine migration to respond to the demands of the urban industries and services. Hence a chain-like migration, with pioneers securing employment and housing and then inviting other members of the family and the village to join. In this way, the social networks of the place of origin are literally transplanted into the city. Conversely, many Moroccans were recruited by Belgian government agencies located in the major Moroccan cities, resulting in dispersed origins of the Moroccans in the city and less strong social networks.

### 3.4 *The Second Invasion*

The economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the official immigration stop in 1974, didn't stop international migration movements from or to Brussels. As mentioned above, the presence of foreigners in the city creates bridges with their countries of origin that generate continuous movements of goods, money, information, and people. The same happens between Brussels and other European places where immigrants from the same origin have settled.

However, a second large-scale wave of immigration started in the second half of the 1980s, driven by globalisation and enabled by cheap and frequent transport and communication networks. Both political and economic refugees from all over the world arrived in the city, be it to ask asylum in Belgium or transiting to other places in the world offering them better life opportunities. A large group has been formed by Central and Eastern European countries after the fall of the Soviet Union and even more after some of these countries joined the European Union, granting free movement on the European territory.<sup>9</sup> However, all continents have contributed to immigration into Brussels and this created a surprising demographic rise in the Brussels Capital Region. This movement is the third exception to the expected invasion and overflow model that Burgess presented. Indeed, to a large extent, these new migrants did not invade the—now consolidated—transition zone to dislodge the previous wave of immigrant, but most of them dwelled in the interstices of the zone and in its inner and outer fringes, where an old, lower middle-class population slowly disappeared through ageing.

This is not to say that all descendants of the guestworkers stay in their consolidated neighbourhoods. There is indeed, after more than 50 years of presence of these groups, a certain upward social mobility that is translated into a centrifugal movement. This is particularly visible in the south-west and westward movement of the Moroccans along the main radial roads. However, the largest outward movement is not caused by upward mobility, but by gentrification. It not only pushes households from the second and third invasion away in zones not yet affected by gentrification and in less attractive social housing estates, but also in former industrial regions and towns where old, dilapidated and cheap working-class housing is available (Van Crielingen 2006).

## 4 Kuregem and the Limits to Consolidation

Kuregem with its second-hand car business in the Heyvaertstreet has already been cited as a « natural area » in the Brussels transition zone. The district was among the first to develop outside the city walls during the industrial revolution, in the

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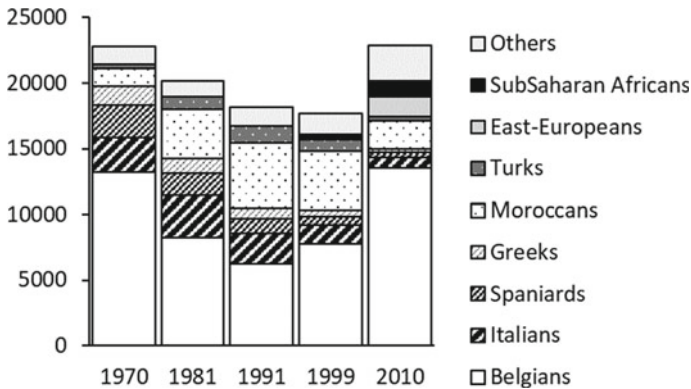
<sup>9</sup> In order to avoid sudden massive immigration of these nationals, this freedom was granted with a time lag of several years after accession.

valley of the Zenne river. Before, Kuregem was a small hamlet built at the intersection between the Zenne river and the road towards Mons. This convenient location first attracted textile factories and then developed in a dense industrial district with factories, working-class houses and even bourgeois housing for the factory owners. The district thus became the richest and most vibrant part of the municipality of Anderlecht in the second half of the nineteenth century. This explains the fact that the Anderlecht's new town hall was built in the centre of Kuregem, rather than in the former village of Anderlecht. The district is encircled by the Brussels South station and the railways in the south, the slaughterhouse in the west, the canal towards Charleroi (from where coal could be imported as a source of energy for the industries and the households) and Antwerp in the north and the boulevard that replaced the city walls of Brussels to the east. Obviously, all these elements explain a vibrant industrial activity among which textile, leather, metal work and food industry were the most important ones. The labour force mainly came from Flanders. Jews from central and eastern Europe and Germany arrived in Kuregem during the interwar period and specialised in the textile and foremost the leather industry that took advantage of the proximity of the slaughterhouse. Industry could continue to flourish until the end of WWII, when deindustrialisation and the tertiarization of economic activities transformed the city. Meanwhile, as explained above, upward social mobility and suburbanisation started to depopulate districts like Kuregem. The first post-war labour migrants that would come in to fill the gaps on the labour and the housing markets were Italians (Fig. 5), among which people that previously worked in the coal mines in Wallonia.<sup>10</sup> The Lemmens square in Kuregem became the centre of Sicilian immigration in Brussels. They were followed by Spaniards and Greeks, as Belgium signed bilateral migration conventions with these countries respectively in 1956 and in 1957. These groups started to decline in the late 1970s for several reasons. The upward social mobility has been mentioned earlier, but the economic growth in the countries of origin, as well as the end of dictatorship and the EEC (now EU) accession of Greece (1981) and Spain (1986) ended emigration from these countries and also enabled return migration in good conditions. Aging of the remaining people explains further decline. These three groups were followed by Moroccans and Turks (with migration agreements signed in 1964). The latter is a small group compared to the Turkish community in the north-east of Brussels ("Little Anatolia") and most of the people come from Denizli rather than Emirdağ. The Moroccans succeeded in becoming the dominant group in Kuregem. The figures do not fully reflect these waves of immigration in the district, as lots of foreigners, especially Moroccans and Turks, obtained the Belgian nationality after the modifications of the law in 1991 and in 2000.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Belgium and Italy signed an agreement to exchange Italian labour force for the Belgian mines against coal for Italy in 1946. A huge mine disaster in 1956, after a long series of minor accidents and complaints, caused the Italian government to stop labour migration to the Belgian mines, but Italian migration shifted towards the cities and the urban labour markets.

<sup>11</sup> A first change occurred in 1984, conferring the Belgian nationality to children of a Belgian mother in mixed marriages. In 1991, foreigners born in Belgium could obtain the Belgian nationality at the age of 18. Later legislation, especially in 2000 (allowing to be naturalized conditionally after 3 years



**Fig. 5** Population of Kuregem by nationality 1970–2010. *Source* Population census, 1970, 1981, 1991; population register 1999, 2010

The consolidation process was, however, somewhat different than the one described above. Kuregem, and particularly the Lemmens square and its surroundings, became famous as a “no-go area” in the city. Poverty, drugs, carjacking were ascribed to the local youth and the place was close to a small hyperghetto.<sup>12</sup> The keys for understanding this are at least threefold: the economic crisis of the 1970s and 80s that created a generation of youngsters without future and that deeply weakened the capacities of family and neighbourhood relations to integrate the youngsters in the broader urban society (hence not a problem of too rapid urban expansion and metabolism as conceptualized by Burgess); a complete neglect of the area and its inhabitants by the municipality<sup>13</sup> and the failure of the education system to cope with these difficulties, resulting in massive youth unemployment (Mistiaen and Kesteloot 1998). A second obvious difference was the flourishing of informal economic activities, many of them linked to formal economic circuits. The presence of the slaughterhouse enabled the development of meat and food industry-related activities. The old Jewish textile business gave rise to informal production and trading in clothing. But the most conspicuous activity became second-hand car trading, that took advantage of the many warehouses along the canal and the Heyvaertstreet, emptied by deindustrialisation (for a full account, see Rosenfeld and Van Crieckingen 2015; Vandecandelaere

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of living in Belgium and to obtain the nationality (nearly) unconditionally after 7 years of presence in the country) further facilitated access to the Belgian nationality, until a new law in 2013 made it much harder. In Brussels, more than 70% of Turkish and Moroccan-born persons were Belgian in 2016. These figures are much lower for the Italians, Spaniards and Greeks (between 10 and 20%) because their EU membership gives them access to most rights enjoyed by the Belgians (Hermia and Sierens 2017).

<sup>12</sup> See Marcuse (1997): the concept refers to an area that captures poor people and maintains them isolated from the rest of the urban society in this area.

<sup>13</sup> The most striking symbol was the gate welcoming people into Anderlecht on the main street installed by the municipality, not at the limit of the municipality with Brussels in Kuregem but at the exit of Kuregem in the middle of the municipality’s territory.

2012). In the early 1990s, this car trade catered for Eastern European countries, especially Poland. Likewise, the food industry reflected to a significant extent the tastes of the Poles and later the Romanians that were searching for new economic opportunities in Brussels after their countries joining the EU. This explains the surge of East-European inhabitants in the district. However, the car trade gradually became the European hub for second-hand car export to West-Africa, and Sub-Saharan African inhabitants appeared soon after the East-Europeans. The second-hand cars, collected from all over Western Europe, are presented to potential buyers coming from Africa for that purpose and then brought by lorry to Antwerp where they are shipped to West-Africa (export figures from the port of Antwerp indicate that more than 380.000 cars a year are shipped towards Cotonou in Benin, most of them being sold in the Heyvaertstreet). This intense activity generates secondary activities like trading in car parts, in all sorts of domestic appliances and equipment that are stuffed in the cars to reach the same countries, as well as cheap sleeping places, restaurants and groceries that cater for the African visitors. The whole business offers opportunities of petty jobs and shelter for African asylum seekers. Many of the latter try to attract customers to a particular trader for a small fee. All this animation also makes the area a place of encounter where news and information can be exchanged, and all sorts of daily problems solved (Chabrol and Rozenholc 2015).<sup>14</sup> But this is not without creating problems: noise, pollution, traffic jams and deterioration of the streets and pavements by the heavy lorries that have to penetrate into the neighbourhood and block the streets to unload and load cars.

One could easily identify this activity and the concomitant presence of West-Africans as a good example of an ethnic enclave, although it is buoyant not only because the local economy cares for (part of) the local population, but also because it bridges the neighbourhood with lots of places in Europe from where the cars come and the places in West-Africa from where the customers come.

However, this enclave became the trigger of profound changes at the political level, that jeopardize the double consolidated nature of the neighbourhood. One of the first steps of the Brussels Capital Region after its creation in 1989, was to develop a policy to revitalise deprived neighbourhoods, through contracts with the municipalities concerned. The purpose was mainly to improve public space, encourage housing renewal and to create (a limited amount of) public housing. Municipalities had to prepare renewal projects for their deprived neighbourhoods and be selected by the Regional Government to get funded. Four such contracts have been developed in different, partially overlapping parts of Kuregem (Sacco 2010).<sup>15</sup> In the two

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<sup>14</sup> The same can be said about the slaughterhouse as an important meeting place for Poles and Romanians in the city.

<sup>15</sup> In the 1960s, the municipality of Anderlecht had plans to renovate the district. For that purpose, it bought property in the neighbourhood. The only achievement, however, has been the building of an apartment block for aged people close to the Lemmens square in the 1980s. By doing so, the municipality was symbolically telling the neighbourhood inhabitants that it was not caring for them (most of them not having voting rights), but for the Belgian elderly. The place became conflictual. Not only had the building to be fenced, but the ground floor apartments remained empty to avoid trouble with the local youth. The neighbourhood also reacted to petty criminality by fencing



early ones, the car trade was considered as an asset and the complaints voiced by the inhabitants were ignored. This was not because the municipality recognized the role of the activity in integrating West-African (and East-European) newcomers into the city, but because it defended the economic interests of the owners of the car trade companies. Today, both the municipality and the Region are trying to organise the displacement of the car trade to the canal, in the far northern part of the city and to substitute road transport of the cars by shipping.<sup>16</sup> Political changes in the municipality (possibly brought about by the access to the Belgian nationality and thus voting rights for many Moroccans and Turks), the monitoring and assessment of the neighbourhood contracts by the Region and a learning process within the municipal administration about revitalizing deprived neighbourhoods have brought a new perspective more in line with the defence of the interests of the residents rather than those of the economic actors. Today, the municipality is together with the Region, actively searching for a way to relocate the car business. This change was also triggered by newcomers in Kuregem. Indeed, meanwhile, the regional urban development agency had constructed new middle-class housing along the canal, close to the city of Brussels, in a strategy of waterfront development encompassing the whole canal zone. This is part of a larger strategy to attract middle-class households in the Region and especially in its poorer municipalities because of the local fiscal system: the Region as well as its municipalities are largely financed according to the number of inhabitants and their income. Hence, each municipality and the Region as a whole tend to try to get rid of poor inhabitants and to attract middle-class population in the city. This is, more than rent gap seeking or cultural changes among the middle classes, the motor of gentrification in the city. Although this public real-estate development, called “L’écuse” (the sluice), is situated on the territory of the neighbouring municipality of Molenbeek (precisely at one end of the Heyvaertstreet), these newcomers sought alliances with the immigrant population (Lenel 2015) in order to get rid of the nuisances in the district (as a matter of fact, the Region revised its neighbourhood contract policy and the last contract now involves this part of Molenbeek in the participation process).

Interestingly, some owners of the car trade companies see a new opportunity in this change and imagine selling or redeveloping their premises for more housing projects along the canal and thus capturing the increasing rent gap.<sup>17</sup> They thus

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passages between housing blocks (above covered branches of the Zenne River) and thus limiting the mobility of the criminals, as well as of all other neighbourhood inhabitants. However, in 1989, the alderman for Spatial Planning and Urban Renewal started a redevelopment initiative with the participation of the inhabitants on the model of the French “Développement Social de Quartier”, but he never got the necessary support from the mayor, his colleagues and the municipal council (see Mistiaen 1994).

<sup>16</sup> Until now, this is unsuccessful. The size of available land along the canal is too small for displaying all the cars to the customers, the accessibility is very poor and there will be no facilities like those offered by the enclave economy.

<sup>17</sup> The slaughterhouse is another economic space that triggers changes in the district. We have no space to develop it fully here. Nevertheless, the slaughterhouse activities are in the hands of the private sector and its strategies are much more in symbiosis with the neighbourhood. The largest

would ironically participate in the deconstruction of the consolidated nature of the district.

## 5 Concluding Thoughts

In many cities of the world, the zones of arrival of the poorer newcomers are not close to the centre, simply because they didn't experience the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century and hence, they lack working-class areas in their inner areas. Arrival zones are then at the urban fringes and they offer slums or sometimes social housing to their inhabitants. Compared to them, the areas under consolidation of the Brussels metropolitan region are much more efficient areas of arrival, because of three interrelated geographical characteristics: centrality, heterogeneity and historical thickness. Inhabitants of centrally located areas enjoy the advantages of concentration of services and amenities, as well as accessibility, which are important both for the access to markets, including the labour market, and to collective consumption.<sup>18</sup> The heterogeneity of space, more precisely the diversity of housing, which generates a diversity of inhabitants and the potential of fruitful exchanges, as well as the presence of economic activities offering jobs and services, can also become a powerful asset in integrating newcomers in the city. Finally, the historical thickness of space, meaning that the area carries a long and diversified history, offers similar morphological and functional heterogeneities, but also memories that can be retrieved when they fuel present struggles for a better life.

The concept of «zone of transition» developed by Burgess is appealing to apply to the nineteenth century working-class areas of Brussels (and in all other cities with such historical areas located in the inner city), but in fact it is failing to grasp the complexities of the socio-spatial processes at play. The basic reason for this is the reduction of social reality to competition and dominance structures between social groups, which is similar to reducing societal relations to market exchange. It ignores politics, as well as all sorts of solidarities and reciprocities between people. In contrast, the concept of consolidation offers a way to unravel the dynamics in these areas in a more encompassing way. Although the processes of consolidation have their origin in periods of economic crisis, they are part and parcel of social integration of newcomers in the city. However, they are under threat of gentrification processes, supported by the local and regional authorities. These threats are endangering the capacity of the city to absorb immigration and to maintain diversity, which is the heart of urbanity.

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and cheapest food and textile market of the city takes place twice a week on the slaughterhouse premises (see Sénéchal 2015).

<sup>18</sup> This is also the case for the informal economy as well as criminality: the sale of drugs or stolen goods can reach a much larger number of consumers than in the city fringe.

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# Absence of Urban Policy: The Historical Transformation of Korean Resident Areas in Osaka, Japan



Taku Fukumoto

**Abstract** This chapter attempts to investigate the historical formation of Korean ethnic clusters in Ikuno Ward, Osaka City, with special attention upon its resistance gentrification. In reaction to the absence of urban policy and severe discrimination, the Korean community over time developed self-dependent networks through their ethnic relations within the clusters. These networks are mainly constituted on strategies of property and self-employment which have contributed to the resilience of the ethnic clusters. It is this resilience that has kept gentrification at bay. At the same time, local ethnic organisations played an important role to support the Koreans' social struggles for their citizen rights (resisting special fingerprint registration) and challenging legality issues concerning their migration status. Although the clusters had to deal with a deteriorating inner-city environment, some potential changes, including the establishment of “Koreatowns” and the recent inflow of young Korean entrepreneurs, are evident. These recent changes showcase possibilities for renewed urban citizenship in a previously stigmatized community.

**Keywords** Ethnic/racial segregation · Ethnic economy · Urban citizenship · Inner city areas · Korean residents in Osaka

## 1 Ethnic/Racial Segregation and Gentrification

Numerous efforts have been made to investigate the effects or the significance derived from ethnic/racial segregation in various academic fields related to urban studies. Recently, several researchers have paid increasing attention to the relationship between segregation and gentrification and focused on the current changes in urban space that emerged from such a relationship.

The formulation between gentrification and rent gaps by Smith (1996) readily evokes David Harvey's classical explanation of racial segregation (especially racial ghettos in US inner cities) in terms of transference of consumer surpluses within urban

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land markets. Racial segregation can only be understood as a phenomenon that is formed through spatial configuration by capital; the inner-city areas are usually left undercapitalised because lower-income residents in those areas can only pay below a certain rental value, while landlords choose to stop further investment to their properties in order to maximise their excess-profits (Harvey 1973, 1985). It is precisely these decaying situations that attract subsequent investment or give rise to urban redevelopment; therefore, segregation and gentrification are indivisible processes in urban space configurations.

In fact, several empirical studies have shown the negative consequences of gentrification with respect to ethnic and racial segregation. For example, based on small-scale analyses of the conversion of the built environment in Chicago, Hwang and Sampson (2014) noted that gentrification-related processes occurred aside from the existing segregation of Blacks and Hispanics. Moreover, in the context of European welfare state regimes, neoliberal urban reform policy is typically characterised by the reduction of public sector housing, where a number of immigrants tend to be overrepresented, causes various changes in segregation (Musterd et al. 2017). Anderson and Turner (2014) consider how the privatisation of the housing sector and the increase of owner-occupiers have made residents, especially immigrants in existing public housing, relegated to the residual stock within contemporary urban spaces.

However, we should not underestimate the social and economic benefits or advantages derived from the concentration of immigrants or ethnic populations. Studies related to ethnicity or immigrant-related issues have continuously noted that the roles of ethnic economies, usually accompanied by a growing proportion of self-employed workers or the formation of ethnic niches, are played as a means of ethnic minorities' adaptation to the host societies (Portes and Manning 2008). Ethnic networks or social relationships formed in ethnic neighbourhoods not only help the (more or less) self-sustained ethnic economy but also promote the emergence of self-supportive ethnic organisations and "service hubs" that are agglomerations of such organisations (DeVerteuil 2016). In short, ethnic neighbourhoods can provide the basis for social life with respect to both the production sphere and the reproduction sphere outside mainstream society.

Additionally, as Sugiura (2011) found from the case of Japanese Americans in Seattle, ethnic clusters nurture strong ethnic and place-related identities and sometimes encourage ethnic populations to resist neoliberal urban redevelopment; Japanese-Americans had insisted to conserve historical ethnic characters in the place and forced the official redevelopment agency to modify the original plan to meet their demands.

In relation to such responsive activities toward gentrification, we should not neglect the politics over the citizenship of ethnic minorities activated within ethnic neighbourhoods. Especially in the present era of global capital flows, while several core urban areas provide places that serve as the nodes of the headquarters of multinational business enterprises, they generate a demand for underpaid workers (Sassen 1988). A certain proportion of the workers are shared by undocumented or unauthorised migrants. Scott (2001) predicted that the citizenship of those migrants procured through globalisation of capital would be problematized within some large cities

because of the contradiction between the necessity of the migrants and their vulnerable legal status. In fact, at present, debates over citizenship of unauthorised people are typically evoked in “sanctuary cities” in the US (Purcell 2003; Ridgley 2008).

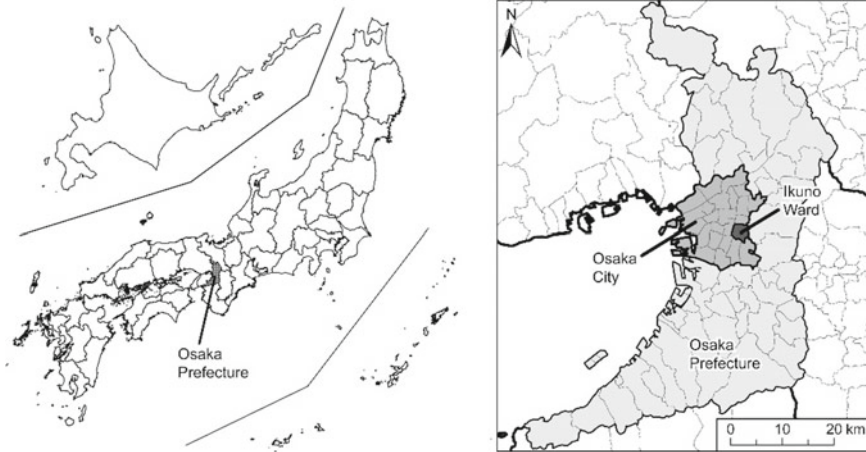
Moreover, the struggles for such a citizenship would have connection to those over gentrification in the contemporary global cities (Sassen 2006). Therefore, rights to the city, or rights to continue to reside in cities, contain possibilities for resisting both neoliberal spatial configurations implemented across various scales as well as tighter restrictions upon immigrants enacted in urban areas. In other words, if we intend to investigate gentrification and its consequences with respect to rights of immigrant residents as well as socio-spatial configurations in terms of ethnic segregation, it seems crucial to focus upon trends within international migration and also the political and economic contexts that motivate these trends.

This chapter attempts to pose a preliminary investigation into transformations and continuities of spatial features related to segregation and gentrification from a historical perspective. The author has collected historical materials to uncover the dynamics of ethnic clusters of Korean residents in Osaka, one of the metropolitan regions in Japan. As noted later, large Japanese cities have not experienced prominent processes of gentrification, including the ethnic clusters in inner city areas. Can these inactive trends in gentrification be evaluated as the results originating from the resistance of existing residents? In the next section, I will provide an overview of contemporary changes in terms of population characteristics and Korean residents in Osaka.

## **2 Socio-spatial Characteristics in Osaka with Respect to Segregation and Gentrification**

### ***2.1 Trends in Segregation and Symptoms of Gentrification in Contemporary Osaka***

Osaka was once the largest industrialised urban area in East Asia, and its population had exceeded even that of Tokyo, the capital, around the 1930s. However, long-term economic deterioration after the 1980s, especially experienced in material production and labour-intensive industries, has severely damaged its standing in the world economy. The population growth rate in Osaka city from 2005 to 2015 was the fourth lowest among the 15 major cities in Japan, according to the Population Census. This modest increase presents a typical contrast to Tokyo, whose prominence as a global contemporary city has been explicitly acknowledged by many researchers. At the same time, it is worthy to note that the local governments of Osaka (Osaka Prefecture and ordinance-designated Osaka City, see Fig. 1) have turned their urban policy toward neoliberalism to a considerable degree (Matthew 2013). For example, those governments have made vigorous efforts to reduce social welfare budgets, including a scrap-and-build approach to public-sector housing that is characterised by attempts



**Fig. 1** Study area: Osaka city and Ikuno ward

to disperse socioeconomically disadvantaged persons and to accommodate relatively young nuclear households. Moreover, the governors and a not small number of city council members tend to express overtly not only neoliberalism but also apparently racist attitudes toward the minority population.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, population decline has not occurred uniformly across Osaka City in the past 50 years. While the urban core and its adjacent areas lost a significant number of residents in parallel with suburbanisation after the 1960s, the direction of this change has reversed in the early twenty-first century. Indeed, the wards in the urban core have gained population while the districts where the population growth rate is less than  $-5\%$  have basically been distributed within inner city areas, adjacent to those wards (Fig. 2a). These general trends have been partly caused by the instalment of private capital through the increase in supply of newly built housing stock. However, the progress of gentrification is not so prominent here as it is in large cities in Western countries.

Ethnic segregation in Osaka City has followed three notable features that may be compared with existing findings derived from cases in Western countries. First, in contrast especially to the segregation in the European context, the proportion of residents residing in public housing is specifically lower among Korean residents in Osaka. This is because they are treated as “foreigners,” and both the national government and most municipal governments have excluded ethnic Korean residents

<sup>1</sup> As one of the most typical cases, Hirofumi Yoshimura, the governor of Osaka City, decided to cancel its sister-city affiliation with San Francisco in 2017 because he and his colleagues believed that the city’s erection of a monument to Korean “comfort women,” who forcefully dedicated themselves to soldiers during the WWII, constituted a criticism of Japan. Japanese historical revisionists have rejected critics who point to the war responsibilities of the Japanese government. This rejection is quite often connected with racist attitudes toward ethnic minorities.



**Fig. 2** Population characteristics in Osaka city  
**a.** Population change (%) from 2010 to 2015  
**b.** Share of foreigners (%) in 2015  
**c.** Proportion of owner-occupied residences (%) in 2015  
**d.** Proportion of persons who have resided at the present address for over 10 years (%) in 2015. *Source* The 2015 population census

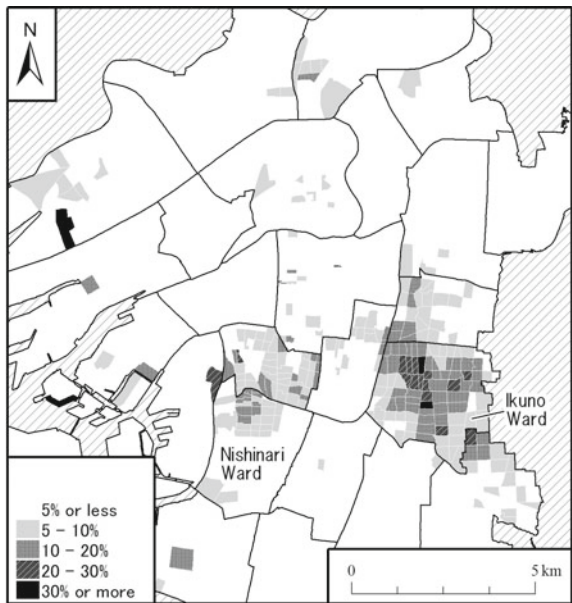
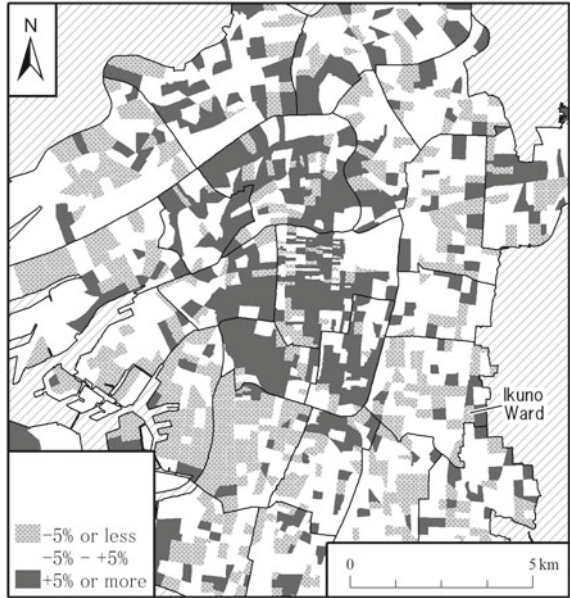
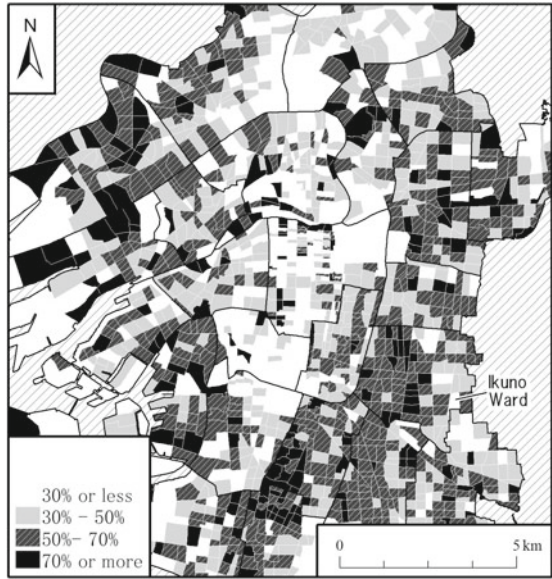
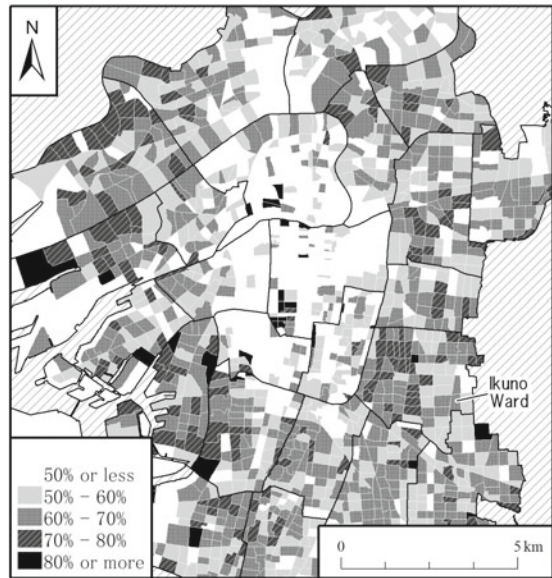


Fig. 2 (continued)



c



d

from public housing due to the lack of nationality.<sup>2</sup> This political discrimination partly resulted in a high proportion of owner-occupiers among Koreans in Ikuno Ward (Fig. 2c), as will be discussed below. Second, those Korean residential clusters share characteristics in common with ethnic neighbourhoods of Western countries in terms of the existence of ethnic economies; such an economy mainly consisted of small-sized, labour-intensive factories and had contributed to the social mobility of Koreans who suffered from discrimination in labour as well as housing markets. Third, their residential mobility within the Korean residential concentration is low, although existing ethnic neighbourhoods usually play a key role as a “gateway” of newly arrived immigrants, especially in the nodes of international migration flows. During the Cold War era in particular, people in the Korean peninsula found it almost impossible (in principle at least) to immigrate to Japan due to severe migration control policies in Korea as well as Japan. All of these factors should be kept in mind when considering the present relationship of gentrification and ethnic segregation in Osaka.

The distinct features of the high proportion of owner-occupiers and the low residential mobility among Koreans in Osaka are the result of their land purchases after the 1960s under the condition of housing market discrimination. At the same time, the ethnic economy characterised by the agglomeration of labour-intensive industry had formed a reliance not only upon self-employment but also a spatially fixed home-work relationship within the ethnic clusters. Therefore, it is essential here to analyse how these features of ethnic clusters postpone or make inactive the advancement of gentrification.

The question that is posed is this: Is the late arrival of gentrification within ethnic Korean residential concentrations in Osaka the result of their resistance to contemporary urban space configurations or a typical example of the deterioration of inner-city areas? An answer to this question would contribute to the investigation of the relationship between segregation and gentrification in metropolitan areas that attract an increasing number of international migrants. The remainder of this chapter provides an explanation of the historical dynamics operating within the Korean clusters and the process by which they generate civic rights and even citizenship.

## 2.2 *Korean Residents in Osaka*

Osaka, once the largest industrial city in East Asia, had experienced a sizeable number of migrants. Most of them were inexpensive unskilled labour from Korea and Taiwan, which were under Japanese colonial rule, as well as from rural areas inside Japan. Mizuuchi (2004) described Osaka at that time as “Chicago in the Orient,” because such huge immigration had emerged with the rapid expansion of urban areas and clear

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<sup>2</sup> Before and during WWII, immigrants from Korea and Taiwan, which were then under Japanese colonial rule, held Japanese nationality. However, after 1952, with the Treaty of San Francisco, they were deprived of it.

areal differentiation there. A considerable number of Korean residential concentrations before WWII had immigrants from Cheju Island and were found broadly across inner city areas of modern Osaka. Most of the Korean immigrants were low-wage labourers, and their residential mobility was generally high. However, Osaka lost approximately 70% of its Korean population within a few years of the end of WWII due both to repatriation to liberated Korea and to the destruction of their livelihood in ethnic clusters caused by air raids. As a result, almost all Korean residential concentrations except those within Ikuno and Nishinari Ward nearly disappeared, where some Koreans became entrepreneurs and had a relatively stable livelihood (Fukumoto 2004). After the 1950s, mainly political reasons related to the Cold War, including Korean War (1950–53), made it almost impossible for Koreans to cross national borders with official permission; therefore, Osaka (and Japan as a whole) could only gain ethnic population through domestic migration of ethnic groups who were already living in Japanese territory.

As referred to in Chap. 13 by Ishikawa, one of the most important aspects in terms of the livelihood of ethnic Koreans in Japan can be characterised by a lack of urban policy towards them (Ishikawa 2023). Before WWII, the municipal government of Osaka showed an active interest in the Korean ethnic clusters and regarded them as areas for improvement both from the perspective of assimilationist colonialism and from the perspective of modernisation. Then after WWII, urban policies had come to lose sight of issues related to Korean residents because of the exclusion of Koreans from all of the official social welfare services except for livelihood protection payments. As mentioned earlier, this exclusion was mainly caused by the post-war deprivation of Japanese nationality held by Koreans.

At the same time, not only institutional but also social discrimination in housing and labour markets lessened the chances of Koreans to reside or work outside their community. Therefore, in a sense, Koreans faced more severe living conditions after WWII than before the war. This situation in part facilitated the emergence and development of an ethnic Korean economy characterised by self-employment in labour-intensive industrial sectors through ethnic networks and resources. Moreover, the severe circumstances also encouraged them to establish various ethnic associations (e.g., banks, schools, insurance, etc.) that could support their livelihood or offer bases for reproduction on behalf of Japanese public institutions. These associations, nevertheless, were prevented from standing together due to political conflicts originated from the Korean peninsula.

At present, areas of heavy concentration by foreigners face decreasing populations because a part of second and third generations of Koreans have decided to acquire Japanese nationality,<sup>3</sup> and, more importantly because their continuous

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<sup>3</sup> Formerly, Koreans were generally reluctant to acquire Japanese nationality because renouncement of Korean nationality had been regarded not only as the forceful assimilation into Japanese society but also as the loss of ethnicity as Koreans. In Japanese context, citizenship and Japanese nationality connotes slightly different meanings in terms of human rights, respectively. The former has an ambiguous meaning that connote basic human rights ensured in ordinary life. Meanwhile, the latter naturally contains of the former and ensures Japanese nationals for the rights conserved under a legislation.

dispersal outside the existing ethnic clusters had become apparent after the 1980s. As far as population decrease, contemporary changes in those ethnic clusters seemingly owed to the deterioration of features inherent in inner cities rather than gentrification. In the following sections, I will offer an explanation of the features mentioned above found within ethnic clusters in detail, especially those in Ikuno Ward.

### 3 Spatial Overlapping of Residence and Workplace in Korean Residential Clusters

This section focuses on the formation and fixation of specific spatial overlapping of residence and workplace in Korean residential clusters. In other words, the research question here relates to the processes by which a high proportion and spatial concentration of owner-occupiers and self-employed had emerged.

First, concerning the residences of Koreans, most had resided in rented tenements before WWII. Therefore, the process of home and land purchases had become rapidly evident after that time. In Ikuno Ward, a limited number of large landlords began a tenement rental business on a significant number to fulfil the housing needs of Korean immigrants before the war. Mainly after the 1960s, a considerable number of these tenements and lands were purchased by Koreans who had already resided in such an accommodation. In short, the conversion from rented tenants to home occupiers among Koreans can be regarded as the consequence of their active land purchases. These processes resulted in high proportion of owner-occupiers among Koreans in Osaka; the national census in 1985 showed that 63.7% of the foreign population in Osaka prefecture were owner-occupiers, while 58.4% of Japanese were owner-occupiers (data based on the Population Census).<sup>4</sup>

Why could ethnic Koreans in post-war Japan become owner-occupiers? To answer this primary question, we now have to turn our eyes to the Japanese-specific land-related legal systems, explained in detail by Sugano in Chap. 2 (Sugano 2023). Under the act on land and building leases in pre-war Japan, landlords were constrained from raising the rents at will. Therefore, within this general context, it was rather reasonable for landowners to cash out their real property when facing a potential need to increase rent rates. Additionally, in Ikuno Ward, some inheritors of landlords transferred their assets to the Ministry of Finance in order to pay their inheritance tax; the ministry later disposed of the lands to tenants, including Koreans. According to the land registration data in Ikuno Ward, the number of Koreans who obtained land had grown rapidly through the 1960s and 1970s. Purchasing land and becoming owner-occupiers was one of the few options for Koreans, who faced severe discrimination in housing market and were excluded from public housing. Moreover, after the 1970s, the existing Korean owner-occupiers usually sold their property to people of the same ethnic group. While the decrease in the ethnic Japanese population of Ikuno Ward

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<sup>4</sup> The data of Osaka City was not released. In 1985, 93.1% of all foreigners in Osaka Prefecture were Koreans. Among them, 59.8% resided in Osaka City.

had decreased in direct correspondence with general trends in suburbanisation during the same period, the process by which ethnic Koreans obtained land contributed to the endurance of ethnic clusters and other spatial patterns of their distribution among the population.

Of course, we should not overlook the fact that the land purchases could not be realised without a certain amount of financial resources. The collateral and mortgage information included in the land registration data indicates that finance loans were funded not only by formal ethnic institutions, for example banks, but also by their co-ethnics.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the same data also shows that a considerable number of those land transfers within ethnic clusters had been conducted by (generally small-sized) ethnic entrepreneurs. In other words, the processes related to land purchases occurred in both aspects of residence and workplace<sup>6</sup> (Fukumoto 2013).

Second, with respect to employment, it is noteworthy that the ethnic economy of Koreans had been flourishing, especially in Ikuno Ward. For instance, the national census in 1985 shows the rough but clear distinction between Koreans and Japanese in terms of employment status. As reported by the data, the share of self-employed among the foreign population in Osaka prefecture overwhelmed that of Japanese; the proportion of self-employed (including family workers) of foreigners was 38.6%, much higher than the rate among Japanese of 25.6%.<sup>7</sup> Self-employment among Koreans was particularly evident in the service and manufacturing sectors; the number of self-employed foreigners in the service sector accounted for 47.7% of workers in the same sector, a rate twice as large as that of Japanese. A considerable number of Korean entrepreneurs in the service sector supposedly depended mainly upon ethnicity-related service demands among them, similar to the ways that immigrant minorities run and stabilise their businesses in Western countries. More specifically, the proportion of self-employed in the manufacturing sector was 44.8%; this proportion of self-employed manufacturing workers included 19.0% of foreign workers in all economic sectors, although the percentage among Japanese workers was no more than 8.7%. This feature of the manufacturing sector of Koreans should be paid more attention when considering the spatial effects of employment upon the endurance of ethnic concentration.

Although no official information reveals the spatial aspects of Korean entrepreneurs in detail, some lists published by Korean organisations are useful in assessing the home-work relationship in ethnic clusters as well as the spatial

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<sup>5</sup> However, Koreans did not depend exclusively on ethnic resources. Some land-occupiers prepared the needed money by themselves. Others also utilised financial loans by Japanese banks. This is because the relatively high lending rate of ethnic banks sometimes discouraged Koreans from borrowing money from them. The reason that ethnic banks raised their lending rate is related to the division among the ethnic communities among Koreans derived from the conflict between the Republic of Korea and the D.P.R. Korea. Han (2010) shows the background of this high lending rate owing to the competitive deposit interest rate among ethnic banks to get more members for the sake of expansion of their political influence.

<sup>6</sup> Namely, nearly 90% of Korean entrepreneurs in the ethnic clusters as discussed later located in the same place of their residences.

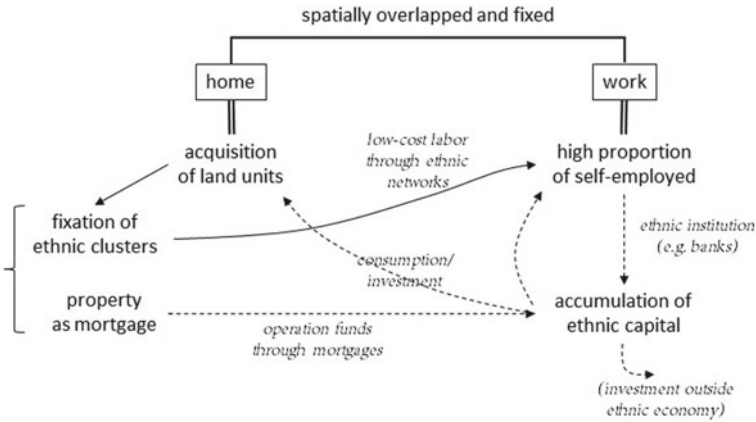
<sup>7</sup> See note 4.

distribution of such entrepreneurs. For example, “The Directory of Korean person-ages” published by One-Korea Daily News in 1981 offered 1,681 cases of Korean entrepreneurs with information about their age and origins, type of industry, the number of employees, the amount of capital funds, business addresses, and so forth. Based on the directory, about a half of entrepreneurs engaged in the manufacturing industry, and 321 of 1,681 businesses (19.1%) were located within Ikuno Ward. The degree of overrepresentation among entrepreneurs in the ethnic clusters was quite high among rubber-related production (41 of 52, 78.8%), sandal fabrication (24 of 27, 88.9%) and plastic components production (32 of 85, 37.6%), all industries that are characterised by labour-intensive production processes (the numbers are obtained from the same directory). As for the ethnic enclave in Ikuno Ward, many of those entrepreneurs had origins on Cheju Island in Korea, and they could utilise capital and workforces or accumulate necessary technologies through ethnic networks based on kinship or original local communities in Korea.

Admittedly, these features have been already noted in existing studies of ethnic economies; however, it is necessary to focus on the agglomeration effects of such industries in terms of the fixation of Korean workplaces (cf. Wang 2010). That is, the reason for this is as follows: When there is a well-developed division of labour, entrepreneurs have to locate as close to each other in the same manufacturing sector as possible in order to decrease transaction costs. The concentration of the factories, especially small-sized ones, also enables entrepreneurs to achieve a flexible production system that absorbs the risk of demand fluctuations. Moreover, the heavy dependency of the Korean ethnic economy on family workers as well as co-ethnic employees could contribute to reduced production costs. In all, these spatial and social features were essential for the ethnic economy of Koreans in post-war Japan to reduce various costs in production processes and be competitive in the general market.

As discussed above, ethnic clusters had striking features both in residence and occupation. At the same time, the importance of land purchases in ethnic entrepreneurship must also be mentioned here. The land purchases performed by self-employed Koreans played a significant role in the ethnic economy; the entrepreneurs who were also landowners could capitalise their lands to ensure operation funds by putting mortgages on the assets. In doing so, they could not dispose of the assets unless they wound down the mortgages; therefore, the lands would also contribute to the immobility of Korean businesses and employment within the ethnic economy.

In sum, the endurance of notable ethnic clusters owes to both the residential immobility resulting from the increase of owner-occupiers and the agglomeration of ethnic entrepreneurs characterised by division of labour. Additionally, not only did residences and workplaces spatially overlap; a kind of circulation of ethnic capital had been formed within the notable ethnic clusters. As Fig. 3 shows, with respect to work-related aspects, an ethnic economy characterised by a high proportion of self-employed in labour-intensive production processes could make the accumulation of ethnic capital possible through low-wage ethnic labour, acquisition of land assets, and ethnic institutions, respectively. Land assets in particular could result in the fixation of both the spatially overlapped relationship between residence and workplace and



**Fig. 3** The home-work relationships of Koreans in Ikuno Ward. The dotted lines represent flows of capital

also of the fixation of residential clusters. The specific circulation of capital flows in Korean ethnic clusters seems to be critical to an understanding of the unfolding of gentrification in the present-day context.

However, while the Korean ethnic economy could contribute to the improvement of the livelihood of Koreans who were facing various discriminations, it had lost its advantages because of economic restructuring that became prominent in Osaka after the 1980s. The labour-intensive manufacturing sectors in Osaka as a whole were seriously damaged by the transference of production bases overseas (mainly to mainland China), and the ethnic economy could not avoid the general trends of economic deterioration. At the same time, the entrepreneurs faced severe difficulty in keeping the stock of low-wage labour within the community; it became apparent that the second and third generations of Koreans had gradually experienced advancements in their socio-economic status and tended to move out from the existing clusters, while the additional influx of immigrants from Korea as unskilled labour has been strictly regulated under Japanese immigration policy. Although some entrepreneurs began to invest their capital in commercial buildings or rental apartments located in close proximity to existing clusters<sup>8</sup> (Fig. 3; see also Fukumoto 2015), such investment could not resist the shrinkage of the Korean ethnic economy as a whole.

<sup>8</sup> The investments in these commercial and apartment buildings have transformed the area of *Hanamachi*, traditional Japanese entertainment district, into characteristic ethnic space of the concentration of Korean-style nightclubs after the 1990s. While the commercial buildings apparently offer the space for the nightclubs, the apartment buildings accommodate (mainly female) workers in such clubs. The formation of this ethnic space has been realised not only by the land purchases and investments of Korean entrepreneurs but also by the liberalisation of international travels in the Republic of Korea in 1989.



## 4 Social Movements During the 1980s for Rights to Inhabitation

It is also notable that the fixation of ethnic clusters and the development of the Korean ethnic economy had also played a crucial role in the formation of numerous ethnic institutions, including political organisations, that all provided a basis for reproduction of Koreans' life of their collective consumption in the absence of urban policy after the WWII. But the political antagonisms that prevailed in East Asia had made it difficult for Koreans to establish a single and united ethnic organisation representing the whole of Korean residents. As for political organisation, the separation into two regimes of the Korean peninsula during the Cold War split the community according to individuals' political stances toward these regimes and interjected competition among the Korean community. Of course, these formal political groups (*Mindan*, or Korean Residents Union on behalf of the Republic of Korea, and *Soren*, or the General Association of Korean Residents on behalf of D.P.R. Korea) organised several social movements that were directed toward the Japanese government around issues affecting Korean residents. Such campaigns, however, were generally evoked on the framework at the national scale rather than those at the community level.<sup>9</sup>

In the meantime, after the 1980s, a certain number of ethnic institutions apart from the existing formal political organisations had nurtured social movements from the bottom-up to problematize the lack of basic rights of Korean residents, especially those of second and third generations who faced unavoidable barriers to entry into the Japanese society. One of the most influential among these movements was the campaign against the Alien Registration Act, originally established in 1955, that forced all foreigners to fingerprint. The objective of the act was not only to supervise Koreans as a group whose very existence disrupted law and order but also to make it possible to deport Koreans under indictment for minor offences like non-possession of a registration card or disobedience to the obligation. In other words, the act or related laws could intentionally delegitimise their residency and cause them to be deported even if they were born in Japan and never emigrated outside the country; therefore, in a sense, the continuous inhabitation of Koreans in Japan had been not necessarily ensured without any official disturbances.

In the beginning, opposition toward the fingerprint obligation constituted a few individual acts of refusal of fingerprints. On the one hand, they obviously faced intolerant and oppressive attitudes from Japanese officials. On the other hand, and more importantly, a growing number of organisations, including both Korean and

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<sup>9</sup> For example, the confrontation between these political institutions became prominent in the correspondence toward the Japan-Republic of Korea Basic Relations Treaty in 1965. The Japanese government decided to ensure permanent residency only for Korean residents who had the nationality of Republic of Korea. While ethnic organisations approving of Republic of Korea recommended that Koreans obtain the nationality of the country (Koreans only had a quasi-nationality named "*Chosen*," a designation derived from the geographical term for the former colonized Korea), these political organisations met stiff opposition from their counterparts on behalf of D.P.R. Korea.

Japanese spontaneous organisations<sup>10</sup> (e.g., non-profit organisation, church networks and labour unions), had supported them and the subsequent refusers of fingerprint obligation. Some of these organisations had networked closely together and developed their support systems for Korean residents in ethnic clusters outside of official urban policy and predominantly ethnic political institutions. They were also aware of those compulsory methods in laws as violations of the basic rights of inhabitancy regardless of stabilisation of residences or employment of Koreans.

For instance, the Osaka Municipal Workers' Union had declared that it would not report the refusers of fingerprinting to the Immigration Bureau, although the Japanese government had ordered municipalities to report and hand over violators of the Alien Registration Act to police or the immigration office immediately when they confronted the individuals that disobeyed the fingerprinting law. This kind of movement seemed to be related to citizenship beyond ordinary human rights of ethnic minorities and drove a wedge into the relationship between urban policymakers and ethnic minorities. In a sense, this significant but temporary suspension of regulatory immigration practices can be compared to the sanctuary cities in the US at present. Simultaneously, such social movements prevailed not only within the ethnic clusters in Osaka but also within ethnic clusters in other metropolitan areas; therefore, the places with ethnic population concentrations formed "relational spaces" (Harvey 2009) for supporters of these movements beyond specific ethnic clusters.

Moreover, as for Osaka, the example of supportive actions for unauthorised immigrants is also worthy to be noted. Although it was quite difficult to cross the border between Japan and the Korean peninsula during the Cold War, as mentioned earlier, a certain number of immigrants (especially those who originated on Cheju Island) attempted to enter Japan either without permission to reunite with their family members or in order to get better earnings—not a few Koreans had kept their connections and contacts with their relatives or acquaintances in their hometowns even after WWII. Additionally, most of these undocumented "smugglers" had played significant roles as low-wage workers in the labour-intensive production processes within the ethnic economy. In this sense, the circulation of ethnic capital showed in Fig. 3 should also be understood within the context of the flow of domestic and international migration. At the same time, of course, their rights to inhabitancy had been threatened by Japanese officials much more than that of ordinary Korean residents, and they were at a real risk of being deported if their residential status was inspected. In fact, some of these migrants were captured in everyday situations and charged with violating immigration-related laws.

It should be noted here that several local organisations gathered on a case-by-case basis to pledge for the release of incarcerated Koreans as well as for special

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<sup>10</sup> Especially *Soren*, among the formal ethnic political institutions, had not apparently participated in these social movement because they have kept the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs.

permission for them to stay in Japan.<sup>11</sup> Among such movements, local Japanese citizens as well as the established ethnic organisations cooperated to help the captured persons through, for example, campaigns for collecting signatures (Fukumoto 2011). Because unauthorised migrants had formed face-to-face relationships with local residents, including Japanese, for many years and were recognised for their contributions to the local economy as diligent workers, or even for their self-employment within the ethnic clusters, most supporters of these movements tended to regard their members and the co-ethnics whom they represented as “ordinary citizens” who were in a similar position and of a similar status to other local residents. As to factors by which these local social movements were made possible, the moderate level of ethnic segregation promotes daily encounters among the residents of the ethnic clusters, whether Korean or Japanese, regardless of the status of the former (Tani 2002). Furthermore, the organisations mentioned above developed open and dense networks with other bottom-up social movements targeting other socially disadvantaged communities, such as the handicapped and the elderly.

Unfortunately, existing studies dealing with the social movements in the ethnic clusters have not yet considered the phenomenon of urban citizenship and its dimensions in detail. However, as discussed above, challenges to the attainment of social inclusion (sometimes beyond ethnic communities) have emerged based on several features in the ethnic clusters: the economic (e.g., ethnic economy), the social (e.g., social movements), the legislative (e.g., citizenship to inhabitancy) features altogether have made possible the more inclusive society that appeared in the urban socio-spatial structure of Osaka.

## 5 Resistance Toward Gentrification or Residual Urban Spaces?

What relation do the characteristics of the ethnic neighbourhoods mentioned above have with the present urban spatial configuration, represented by the process of gentrification? After the 1990s, while the economic restructuring of Osaka undermined the basis of the Korean ethnic economy, especially among those who were self-employed in labour-intensive sectors, the population decline in the existing ethnic clusters become more apparent than ever before. Ikuno Ward at present faces two crucial challenges: an aging community and a growing number of vacant houses. These are both typical problems that are being experienced across the deteriorating inner cities of Japanese metropolitan regions. As for the latter in the case of the ethnic enclaves discussed here, the stock of vacant houses cannot be easily renewed because the housing units are generally small and distributed in worm-eaten patterns. These features of these housing units originate from the historical processes of land

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<sup>11</sup> This permission is given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in consideration of various conditions around a person in charge of unauthorised status. Some of the basic criteria for permission are publicly released, but the final decision is not necessarily uniform.

purchases by Korean residents. Although Narita (1995) pointed out that the houses on the land owned by Koreans were more frequently rebuilt than other buildings in the ethnic clusters, the symptom of gentrification of an influx of capital has not emerged on a large scale thus far.

While various aspects of the trend of decline are apparent in Ikuno Ward, some potential changes may be found within these ethnic clusters that would ameliorate the deterioration that is occurring. For instance, in 1995, one shopping district consisting mainly of Korean proprietors planned to reform the district into a Korean-style landscape in response to decreasing sales. The district is now widely known as Osaka's "Koreatown" and attracts people beyond the Korean ethnic community (Fig. 4). Moreover, after the 2000s, the number of stores (especially ones dealing with K-pop or famous Korean idols) run by newly arrived Koreans has gradually grown in Koreatown. The concentration of such businesses owes partly at its base to the commodification of ethnicity that had already existed there. During the "Korea Boom" around 2010, subsequent applicants to open a goods shop devoted to K-pop or Korean idols had to be added to a list and wait for the tenant vacancies to arise. In recent years, some Korean-style vacation rental businesses have emerged around Ikuno Ward in response to the rapid increase of foreign (largely Korean) tourists in Osaka.

**Fig. 4** The Koreatown gate in Ikuno ward (photo by the author)



However, it is still too early to say that these positive changes can confront the deteriorating situations in the existing ethnic clusters. In fact, land prices in Ikuno Ward have steadily decreased in the past 20 years. Although capital flows derived from newly arrived entrepreneurs and tourists are not negligible, they do not promote the specific capital circulation that was once found in the Korean ethnic economy (Fig. 3); also, the amount of employment provided by these businesses is not large. As for ethnic organisations, their present concern is primarily with the elderly demographic that is growing and apparent even among Japan's Korean population. In the meantime, the existing bases for social movements are now facing attacks to basic human rights by racist movements, including hate speech, that are prevalent across Japan.

It is too early to decide whether the present situation related to ethnic segregation constitutes a resistance toward gentrification or the residualisation of existing urban spaces. It is rather significant to consider how the recent changes contribute to further reform of existing communities or built environments and whether an influx of capital would promote gentrification, positive or negative. We should also focus on the struggles for the renewed rights of inhabitancy with corresponds to gentrification or its related phenomena in the future. Can existing organisations, including ethnic-related ones, reorganise local citizens to realise such rights and to counter the contemporary urban policy characterised by neoliberalism and racism? To consider these ongoing transformations, it is crucially important to recall the historical dynamics of Korean ethnic clusters, or ethnic segregation, in Osaka.

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# Community Creation and Current Changes in Higashikujo, Kyoto



Ishikawa Kuniko

**Abstract** This chapter introduces the Higashikujo area of Kyoto, which historically has been marginalized and where social problems involving poverty and multiculturalism are conspicuous. Yet, the area is also awash with various organized resident initiatives that have been tackling these problems for nearly 50 years. Furthermore, it investigates how this community of mixed social profiles has been pressed for change, due in part to the changes in regional policies by the city and in part to the thriving guest house and *minpaku* (private residence temporarily taking lodgers) businesses near Kyoto Station in recent years. The paper concludes by evaluating the roles of stakeholders and residents in the process of change.

**Keywords** Korean resident settlements · Burakumin · Zainichi · Mixed living · Community practice groups · Human rights · Guest houses

## 1 Introduction

In Japanese social welfare studies, there has been scant research on minority groups other than senior citizens, people with disabilities, and children. There are very few studies that focus on foreign citizens, or citizens with foreign roots. While it is not to the extent of Europe or America, 2% of Japan's population are such citizens, and cities where multi-nationalization; multi-ethnicity and multilingualism are all increasing are becoming more common around Japan (Watado 2009). In Japanese Social Welfare Studies, the elementary school districts are used as the basic area for studies in regional welfare. The practical side of regional welfare practices is generally through mutual assistance activities via neighbourhood and residents' associations. Ethnic minorities are not in general included in any assumptions, and there is a tendency for them to be considered a nuisance factor, with the implicit belief that they do not follow the local rules.

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Kyoto's Higashikujo district is an area with a high concentration of residences belonging to Korean people (*zainichi*), formed in the context of the pre-war colonial policies. It is just south of Kyoto JR station (that is additionally a Shinkansen station) and is a convenient location for transportation. In the immediate vicinity of this entrance of Kyoto, an international cultural tourist city, there are settlements of both groups that are characteristic of thinking about minorities in Japan and cities; the outcast people (*burakumin*) and the Koreans living in Japan that are the subject of the present study (see Figs. 1 and 2). This area was historically marginalized, and when the modern city expanded, this area corresponded to the typical fringe inner city located on the geographical outskirts of the historical city centre. This area seems like it should be nice, due to the thriving tourism industry, but did not improve was because of the existence of these two fringe areas. The process of historical development was also quite complex. Since before the war, the area belonging to the Burakumin and *zainichi* had a reputation of being a bad neighbourhood. Although it has now been resolved, until the mid-1990s a 1-km squatters' settlement known as "*banchi* nr. 40" was between the bank of the Takase River and the portion of Kamo river to the south-east of here. Higashikujo is an area that has been discriminated against, formerly referred to by the insulting name "*Tongku*."

The urban policies of post-war Japan led to an investment of public funds in burakumin as a national project, but the *zainichi* were omitted from these urban policies. Despite this, the phrase "Higashikujo: the neighborhood where people live together" started to be used in the city planning. How the burakumin on the north side and *zainichi* on the south side have historically gotten along has been studied. Additionally, as society ages and people with disabilities have started to get involved in community development, Higashikujo has been repositioned as "a neighbourhood that accepts various people without consideration of nationality, cultural background, disability status, or age, whether senior citizens or children, and as a neighbourhood where people know about and cherish their differences, learn from each other, and enjoy the diversity" as well as to "share these accomplishments."

In the approximately 50 years since the 1960s, the population of Higashikujo has declined. According to the 1965 census, 30,986 people lived there, but as the birth rate declined and the population has aged, it has halved—according to the 2010 census, only 16,325 people lived there at that time. There were previously three elementary schools in the area: Sanno, Toka, and Towa Elementary, but due to the declining birth rate, in April of 2012 the three elementary schools and Toka middle school were consolidated. Now, these schools are the combined Ryofu Public Kyoto Elementary and Middle School.

This paper will examine the following questions regarding the residents of Higashikujo. What sorts of problems did they face historically? What sort of progression led to community development of a neighbourhood where people live together? And how has this "neighbourhood where people live together" been changing since

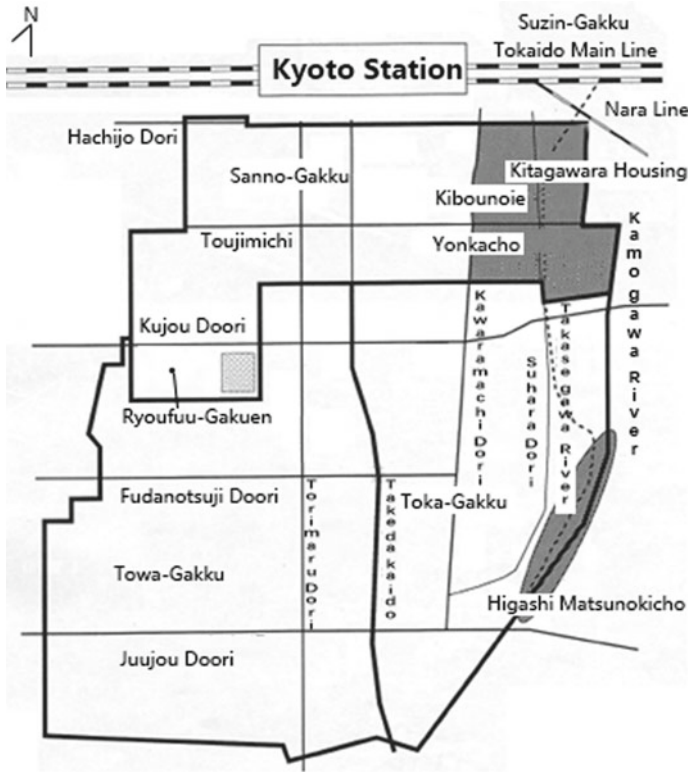


Fig. 1 The neighbourhood of Higashikujo

2011 when the residential environment project that was primarily focused on building municipal housing came to an end?<sup>1</sup>

## 2 The Creation of Higashikujo as a Neighbourhood with a Poor Standard of Living

Even in the same neighbourhood of Higashikujo, the conditions were quite different for each of the 3 former school districts and 38 districts. The northern area is close to the Hachijo exit of Kyoto station, and this area is the pleasure quarter that is lined with combined commercial facilities, hotels for tourists, restaurants, and entertainment facilities. However, past this area, the scenery changes to a town scape where old

<sup>1</sup> Sections 2 up to 5 were written based on the present author’s research (Ishikawa 2014), and Sects. 5 and 6 were written based on materials published by local organizations and the administration as well as interviews with officials at local organizations conducted from November through December 2017.

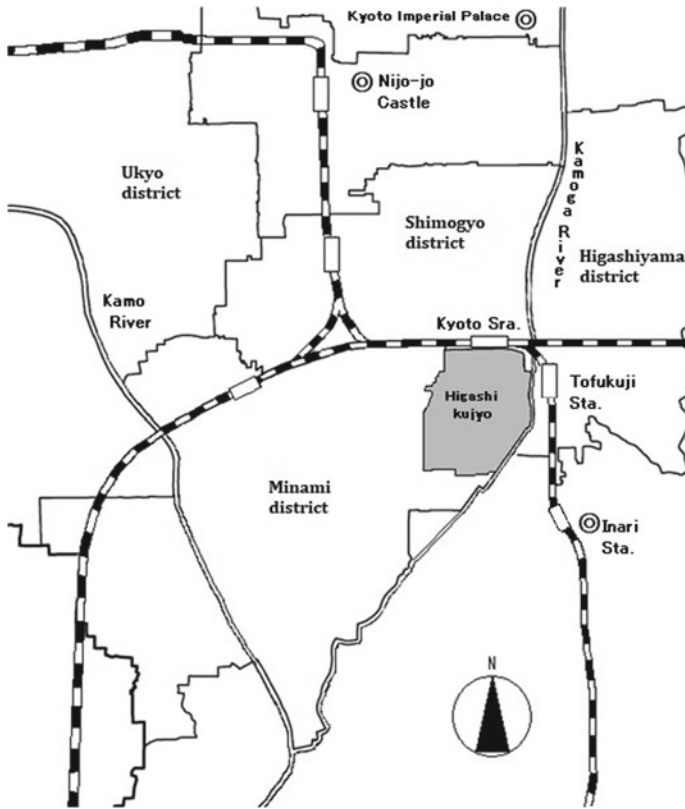


Fig. 2 The location of Higashikujo in Kyoto

buildings stand out. This trend gets stronger when one goes to the eastern side of Kawaramachidori.

Historically, Higashikujo was called Higashikujo village and was part of Kii-gun Kyoto, and it was an area in the suburbs that produced vegetables such as Kujo onions. The east side of Kawaramachidori towards the Kamo river was a quiet rural zone, with expansive rice fields. However, after the Meiji restoration, there was an increase in factories alongside the improvement of Kyoto's transportation network, and from the 1920s/1930s Korean people started moving here. They worked in the textile and dye industries and in Kyoto's urban development projects such as the Kamo river levee protection works and the construction work of several lines of Tokaido Rail.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, Higashikujo became the largest settlement of *zainichi* in Kyoto. The

<sup>2</sup> The construction of the Cooperation Hall a building for the Kyoto Cooperation Association in Nishiwamotocho in Higashikujo was also considered a cause for the increase. The Kyoto Cooperation Association is a group that was founded in 1924 with the purpose of social educational services for Korean people like promoting savings, human resources consultations, job introductions and lodging.

Suujin district to the north was the largest burakumin area in Kyoto, and the fact that it had land that would accept poor people was one of the reasons for the settlements (Uno 2001).<sup>3</sup>

Higashikujo was troubled with a poor living environment both before and after the Second World War. Shortly after the war, a black market appeared at the Hachijo exit on the south side of Kyoto National Railway station, and there was an influx of people returning from the former colonies into Suujin and Higashikujo (Fig. 1). There is a theory that Koreans from other areas who were attempting to return to the Korean peninsula gathered at the Hachijo exit on the south side of Kyoto station, but when they learned that their nation had become unstable, they stayed in the surrounding area.

In any case, a slum formed from Yakatacho in the Suujin school district on the south-eastern side of the station along the Takase River to Yonkacho in the Sanno school district. This created a situation where, from the windows of the trains going to and from Kyoto station, it was possible to see the scenery of shacks right along the Kamo river. For the city of Kyoto, that was trying to become an international tourist city, the existence and visibility of a slum were considered a more vexing problem than the problems in the lives of its residents. During this era, the so-called “all romance incident” took place.

The “all romance incident” was an incident where the Kyoto City personnel used the All Romance magazine that was released in October of 1951 to publish a novel entitled the “Burakumin Area.” This was based on the people who lived in the slum alongside the Takase River in Suujin and Higashikujo, and this started a movement against discrimination. The movement said that this novel was inciting discrimination against the outcast people (burakumin), and they said that the city of Kyoto was responsible because they failed to deal with this situation. The struggle to make the administration responsible for neglecting the poor living conditions of the outcast people spread across the nation, and it was connected with the findings reported by the 1965’s national council on social integration measures. These areas were targeted for improvements, but because these improved properties were allocated on the territory and attribute system for the benefit of *burakumin*,<sup>4</sup> *zainichi* were unable to remain, and were forced to move into Higashikujo. Some of the residents of the slums along the Takase River moved into the Kitagawara complex that was built nearby,<sup>5</sup> but even after this, there was still a high density of shacks around Yonkacho.

Together with these Yonkacho, there was one more district in Higashikujo that had a poor living environment. This was the “*banchi* nr. 40” that was formed along 1 km of the riverside along the Kamo river, extending to the north from the Toka bridge

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<sup>3</sup> Before the war, Korean residents of Japan also lived in the Suujin district. Conversely, there were at least a few people from the Suujin district who resided in Higashikujo, and additionally, they had interactions with Korean residents of Japan and people from the social integration districts in many areas like life, local government, and exercise.

<sup>4</sup> This refers to the system where, one had to be an outcast person (*burakumin*) living within a social integration district in order to be eligible for social integration benefits.

<sup>5</sup> The Kitagawara Complex was a former new railway construction project but was reconstructed as a place for evicted residents after becoming an eminent domain.



**Fig. 3** The row of houses in lined up on the bank of the Kamo river in *banchi* nr. 40 (the 1980s).  
Source Higashikujo community development support centre

on the south-eastern side of the Toka school district. The river terrace originally only had pigsties, but from the mid-1950s, it became a “squatters’ settlement.” In this neighbourhood, the Takase River flowed right next to the Kamo river terrace. The “*banchi* nr. 40 area” that was built between the Takase River and the river terrace was a problem that the School District Local Government Federation thought they should not be involved in. Thus, these Yonkacho and the 40 *banchi* became the targets of exclusion and discrimination. The problem of illegally occupied river terraces could be seen in regions across Japan such as beside the Tsurumi River in Yokohama, the Abe River in Shizuoka, and the Otagawa river in Hiroshima. However, in other regions, the “New River Law” that was enacted in 1964 was used as an opportunity for developments by the Ministry of Construction and the local municipalities, and it is an issue that has generally disappeared (Motooka 2014). However, the complete elimination of “*banchi* nr. 40” around the Kamo river happened after the year 2000 (Fig. 3).

### 3 The Creation of Higashikujo as a Neighbourhood Where People Live Together

Higashikujo has a complex combination of problems such as housing, discrimination and poverty, ethnic issues as well as the declining birth rate and aging population. The residents have not been content with this situation. The city of Kyoto drafted the “basic plan for measures to handle slums” in 1967, and this led to starting policies to help Higashikujo in earnest (see Table 1). This was also brought about by the appeals of citizens seeking improvements in the community. Rather than attempting to clear

the slums to create an “entrance to the tourist city,” citizen pressure caused the city of Kyoto to move in the direction of ensuring a minimal standard of living for the community residents. The initiatives made in Higashikujo that could be considered demanding a normal human life have been developed by groups of citizens, ethnic groups, support groups, and welfare groups from before 1967 until the present year of 2018.

First, a look will be taken at the initiatives undertaken by community residents. The Council for the Improvement of Higashikujo is a local organization that was founded because of a fire that happened in February of 1982 is still active. It allows community residents to make independent efforts to improve the community environment. They do things to create connections between community residents such as holding a summer festival and making mochi, and they propose projects and make demands to the city of Kyoto from the perspective of residents. In particular, they have been positioned as a group that represents local opinions about the comprehensive development projects for residential urban areas that started in 1993.

**Table 1** The main movements involving Higashikujo (centred on the policies of the city of Kyoto)

1967	City of Kyoto’s “basic plan for measures to handle slums in Kyoto”
1971	City of Kyoto’s “Higashikujo community social welfare pilot plan”
1976	City of Kyoto’s 2first urban redevelopment project for the district near the southern exit of Kyoto station” (project completed in 1983)
1982	Establishment of city of Kyoto’s “Higashikujo Improvement council”/formation of the “Higashikujo improvement committee” by the local residents
1989	Formation of the “association against land sharking” and “association to protect Higashikujo” in response to land sharking in Yonkacho
1991	Establishment of city of Kyoto’s “policy group for the improvement of the welfare of the Higashikujo area”
1993	Approval of the “community residential environment development project” in Yonkacho by the ministry of health and welfare (from 2004 the comprehensive development projects for residential urban areas was started and planned to be completed in 2017)
1995	Completion of the Higashikujo municipal housing (the garden desired by Higashikujo was also built)
2001	District community development policies for the area near the southern exit of Kyoto station
2010	Aeon Mall KYOTO was opened
2011	Municipal housing in Higashiiwamotocho (Kyoto regional multicultural network centre was combined into the construction) was completed
2014	City of Kyoto decided on the “relocation of the Kyoto city university of arts to the Suujin area”
2016	City of Kyoto’s “plaza development project for the area in front of the Hachijo exit of Kyoto Station”
2017	City of Kyoto’s “Kyoto station southeastern area revitalization policy”

In Higashikujo where *zainichi* live, there are branches of the ethnic associations, such as the Korean Residents Union in Japan and the General Union Association of Korean Residents in Japan. These two ethnic associations are undertaking activities to give people more rights in their lives and also to help provide mutual aid. For example, the Southern Kyoto Branch of the General Union Association created a seniors' club for senior citizens, and they are also registered with the Kyoto Southern District Council of Social Welfare. The Democratic Korean Women's League in Japan also cooperates in the activities of longevity clubs. The activities of the Women's League led to the launch of the LFA- Kyoto Korean Life Support Centre, an NPO that is the primary ethnic care provider for elderly Korean residents of Japan.

Since the 1980s, ethnic volunteering that doesn't fit into the frameworks of these ethnic associations has also taken place. In 1986, the Hanmadang was formed because of the call of the scholar of literature Mingi Yan. This passed on the ethnic culture of the Madang theatre, and it was aimed to create active culture in Higashikujo through the participation of both *zainichi* and Japanese people. It was a new sort of movement that was different from the ethnic associations in that it tried to contribute to the development of a new independent creative culture. The activities of Hanmadang led to the creation of the "Higashikujo Madang" a festival that represents the multiculturalism of the area (Fig. 4).

The Higashikujo Madang is held once a year by renting a local elementary school. The students at local nursery schools, elementary schools, and ethnic schools in Kyoto hold a performance, and it was still continuing as of 1993. One of the objectives of the Higashikujo Madang is to create a place for true exchanges and the self-liberation of every ethnicity including Japanese and Korean people by having them actively participate together in the festival. This objective is symbolized by the "*wadaiko*" (Japanese



Fig. 4 Hishashikujo Madang (picture taken by the author)

drumming) and *Samulnori* (Korean percussion quartet”) performance done at the end of the festival. Usually, Madang is a festival that has been centred on Korean residents of Japan, and the *Samulnori* performed with Korean folk instruments is a standard event. However, Higashikujo is a place where the outcast people (*burakumin*) live in great numbers, and the recital contest that uses *wadaiko* which is part of Japanese culture, and something that was created through trial and error by both *burakumin* and *zainichi*. It is filled with the hope of wanting to live together.

#### 4 Independent Life Support Practices that Support Living Together

Welfare organizations also play a large role in Higashikujo. In Higashikujo, there are many minorities living in the area who need both housing and care at the same time, such as senior citizen Korean residents of Japan, people with disabilities, and elderly Japanese people who don't have visitors. In Higashikujo, there are also some public welfare institutions, and in addition to these, systems for voluntary independent living support for minorities has also been set up. Here, three such systems will be introduced.

First, there is living support by Kibounoie (The House of Hope), a community welfare centre in Yonkacho. Originally, Kibounoie was a settlement workhouse established by an American priest in 1959. In 1965, it opened a children's centre, and in 1967, it engaged in children's welfare projects like opening the “Kibounoie Catholic Nursery.” Additionally, it also gave support by distributing food and visiting people so that the residents around Yonkacho, who had more complex problems, could continue living independently. From 2011, the Kibounoie community welfare centre was also entrusted with the management of the Kyoto area multicultural exchange network. The second such system is housing management and living support for the apartments in Higashi Matsunokicho complex, where the residents of the “*banchi* nr. 40” squatters' settlement moved into. Specifically, this project consists of (1) individual living support to the residents for whom there are concerns such as protective monitoring, consultations, and housekeeping assistance, (2) projects that gather people together such as dining and recreation, and (3) cooperating with other specialized agencies or autonomous organizations. This project was realized through negotiations with residents' association of the squatters' settlement. The project was entrusted to the Higashikujo community development support centre, an NPO that has a history of supporting the illegally occupied district of “*banchi* nr. 40.”

The third such system is the paid volunteer system entitled the foreign welfare committee system. The medical and welfare institutions in Japan still do not assume that their clients will have different cultural backgrounds. The foreign welfare paid volunteers who receive training handle interpreting, giving assistance with consultations that respects people's cultural backgrounds, and carry out protective monitoring activities. The Care Insurance System that was started in 2000 in the context of the



problem of care for senior citizens becoming more intense does not discriminate against any nationality, and by all rights, it will be useful for senior citizen Korean residents of Japan. However, foreigners might not be able to read the documents, and have had bad experiences in the past where they have been excluded from the social security system because of their nationality. Therefore, some ethnic associations are concerned that the foreign senior citizens might not be able to use the system. These associations and volunteer groups formed by people with experience and social workers are planning the care network for foreign senior citizens and people with disabilities in Kyoto, and with the support of the city of Kyoto, they are operating this network.

## **5 The Intersection of Higashikujo Policies Guaranteeing Human Rights and Policies to Invigorate the Area in Front of Kyoto Station**

So, how has Kyoto City Hall been involved with Higashikujo? The city of Kyoto has implemented a variety of policies for Higashikujo, but when these are broadly divided, they fall into two categories: policies trying to guarantee the human rights of community residents, and policies trying to revitalize the area.

The policies to guarantee human rights started with the mayor of Kyoto in 1967: “the actualities of life for the residents of Higashikujo is a serious social problem related to basic human rights and social welfare as stipulated in the constitution”. A fact-finding investigation into the lives of people in the north-eastern districts of Yonkacho nr. 4 was conducted in 1968, and all sorts of welfare policies were emphasized, such as establishing a public living centre, corresponding to the burakumin community centre. Since 1993, the “plan for residential environment development projects for the Higashikujo local community” that made serious inroads into the housing problem was decided on. Because of this plan, dilapidated residences were bought up and eliminated, and municipal housing and district facilities were developed. The total cost of the project exceeded 20 billion yen, but in 1995, municipal housing was constructed in a total of 4 sites starting with the construction of Higashikujo municipal housing in Nishiiwamotocho. In the final municipal housing in Higashiiwamotocho, a multicultural exchange and regional network centre were included into the construction. This centre was established by the city of Kyoto with the goal of fostering exchanges between people with diverse backgrounds including *zainichi*, based on the historic characteristics of the Higashikujo area, and conducting social welfare projects for people to coexist. Its management has been entrusted to the community welfare centre named “Kibounoie”.

In “*banchi* nr. 40” part of the Toka school district, the “Headquarters for Environmental Construction Policies for the Area Upstream of the Toka Bridge on the Kamo River” was established by the national government, the Kyoto prefectural

government, and the Kyoto City government. The “issue of the squatter settlements” had disappeared, because the residents of “*banchi* nr. 40” had moved into the newly constructed municipal housing in Higashi Matsunokicho. As was seen in the previous paragraph, there are housing management and living support projects being implemented in Higashi Matsunokicho that are not being done in other municipal housing.

The other policies are those related to community revitalization and economic development of the area. The development of the area in front of Kyoto station was historically managed as the centre of the northern part of the Shimogyo district. In contrast to this, the city of Kyoto was slow in the development of the southern side near the Hachijo exit, and in 1976, the area near Nishisannocho was designated as the first urban redevelopment project near the southern exit of Kyoto station. This project constructed a new railway line and built commercial complexes. In 1983, the “Hotel Keihan” opened in front of the station, and in 1984, the commercial complex called the “Kyoto Avanti” was opened. The city of Kyoto aimed to develop the southern exit further, and in 2001, the district community development policies for the area near the southern exit of Kyoto station were put together. The community development policies established a “zone to install new facilities,” and in 2005, a new building addition was added to the New Miyako Hotel Kyoto that was already in the project district. In 2011, the “Aeon Mall KYOTO” was opened. A large flow of people has been created going west from the Hachijo exit of Kyoto station.

The area in front of Kyoto station is in the same Sanno school district as the Yonkacho, but different policies have been adopted for the western side near Takedakaido road (that includes the area in front of the station) and the eastern side of Kawaramachidori. The creation of an intrinsic safety net in “Higashikujo community where people live together” might have taken root because people constantly felt that it was possible that minorities could end up excluded in the process of regional revitalization.

## **6 Exploring Higashikujo as a Model Area for “Young People and Art”**

Because of these two policy groupings, the eastern side of the Sanno former school district became a welfare community, and the western side of the Sanno former school district became a base for developing southern Kyoto. Under these circumstances, in 2017, the city of Kyoto released new policies that invigorate the area southeast of Kyoto station in an attempt to characterize Higashikujo as a cultural art area. The context for this was the Cultural Agency moving to the Higashiyama district of Kyoto, and the Kyoto City University of Arts moving to the Sujin district.

The Sujin district that is located near Higashikujo has had strong interactions with the formation of Higashikujo. The Sujin district is the largest settlement of the outcast people (*burakumin*), and the development of social integration projects was seriously

delayed because it is so large-scale. During the bubble period, this area experienced similar problems to Higashikujo with people buying up plots of land by force to resell them. Additionally, the municipal housing that was connected to the social integration measures, which comprised the majority of the district, adopted a system where individuals with long-term residency were given preference; the end result of this was, when the social integration measures were completed, the working age groups ended up moved outside of the district. Furthermore, this district experienced a more rapidly declining birth rate and aging population than Higashikujo. Local organizations were eager to move public facilities to invigorate the area. Meanwhile, the Kyoto City University of Arts that was located in Nishkyo district (that undeniably feels removed from the central area of Kyoto) had been exploring a move to the central area since around 2010, partially because of their buildings deteriorating and being too small.

In March of 2013, the Mayor of Kyoto submitted the “petition for developing and moving to the Sujin district,” and the local Sujin Neighbourhood Association and the Sujin Community Development Promotion Committee made submissions welcoming this. When the construction of the planned municipal housing was completed in Higashikujo, the Higashikujo Area Management Preparations Committee was founded. This committee explores new community development, and the Higashikujo Regional Improvement Committee plays a central role in it. In July of 2013, the Higashikujo Area Management Preparations Committee submitted a petition requesting the promotion of community development to “unify the Higashikujo area and the adjoining Sujin area.” This petition stated that Higashikujo and Sujin were the same, insofar as they needed initiatives to ensure that the residents could continue living safely because they have the same distressing problems of poverty, discrimination, and having many vacant sites for which a purpose has not been determined.

In this way, new community development for art and youth was basically welcomed by the neighbourhood, but there are still many unknowns about how this will actually affect residents. In 2017, the city of Kyoto took measures to reconcile the neighbourhood with “youth and art” by entrusting the “Model Project to Build a Society where People Shine through Culture and the Arts” (under the jurisdiction of Civic Culture Bureau) and the “Project to Promote New Community Development based on Young People and Arts and Culture” (under the jurisdiction of the General Planning Bureau) to the Non-profit Organization, Higashiyama Artistic Presentation Services (HAPS). Additionally, a new movement attempting to promote cultural activities on their own sprung up in the private sector as well. Arts Seed Kyoto also plans to build a small theatre. This construction plan came from a completely different context from the community development of Higashikujo. Several small theatres in Kyoto that had provided a place for student theatre and young theatre companies like the Atelier Gekken, and that had continued in Sakyo district for the past 33 years, closed one after another in 2017 because of owners aging or the buildings getting worn down. Modern artists and the director of the Atelier Gekken felt a sense of crisis at the decline of theatres in Kyoto, and they established a general incorporated association and searched for a place that could become a theatre. In this process, they

found the warehouse of Hachise Co. Ltd. in the Yonkacho. They are currently in the middle of fund raising the required 100 million yen to remodel it into a combined cultural complex called the “Theatre E9 Kyoto,” and they are trying to collect this from a wide variety of citizens.<sup>6</sup>

## 7 The Sudden Increase of Guest Houses and *Minpaku* (Private Residence Temporarily Taking Lodgers) that Used Empty Space and Empty Houses<sup>7</sup>

The movement of the Kyoto City University of Arts and the policies to invigorate the south-eastern area are both administrative policies, but the Higashikujo area is currently being shaken up by a different movement. This movement is the sudden increase in guest houses and *minpaku*.

The number of tourists who are visiting the global tourist city of Kyoto is increasing. Until now, there were three hotels located south of the Hachijo exit: the “Hotel Keihan” (opened in 1983), the “Kyoto Daiichi Hotel” (opened in 1991), and the “Hotel Centnovum Kyoto” (opened in 1995). In Osaka, Kamagasaki, Yokohama and Kotobukicho, there was a movement to try to create a lodging industry targeting backpackers from abroad by utilizing the relatively cheap real estate properties. However, the only real guest house in Higashikujo was “J-Hoppers” Kujo street (opened in 2002).

However, since 2012, this situation started to change. Until then, hotels were only built in locations that were extremely close to Kyoto station, but in 2012, Almont Hotel Kyoto was opened on Kawaramachidori street. Then, guest houses (simple lodgings) gradually started to open. In 2012, there were only 3 guest houses. In 2013, there were 3 new ones, and in 2015, there were 14 guest houses. By October of 2017, the number of registered guest houses had skyrocketed to 56 (Fig. 5).

In Kyoto, the #Project Team for *minpaku* Policies# was started in December of 2015, and this team investigated the state of these *minpaku* facilities in Kyoto. The specific content of the investigation done by the city of Kyoto was a factual investigation of the *minpaku* facilities targeting 8 brokerage sites including Airbnb and interviewing the related businesses. The results of the survey confirmed that there were 2702 facilities; the top three districts with the most locations were Shimogyo district (599 cases), Nakagyo district (470 cases), and Higashiyama district (445 cases), and Higashikujo Minami district had 168 cases. The number of cases where the location could be pinpointed was 1260 cases, and this was not even half of the total cases at 46.6% of the total. The number of cases that had a license under the travel lodge business act was 189 which was 7% of the total. The following 4

<sup>6</sup> See ARTS SEED KYOTO (<https://askyoto.or.jp/e9/>).

<sup>7</sup> The information in this section and Fig. 5 in Chap. 12 come from Kyoto City Information Center’s “list of travel lodge industry facilities (November 30th, 2017)”.

<http://www.city.kyoto.lg.jp/hokenfukushi/cmsfiles/contents/0000193/193116/1130jpn.pdf>.

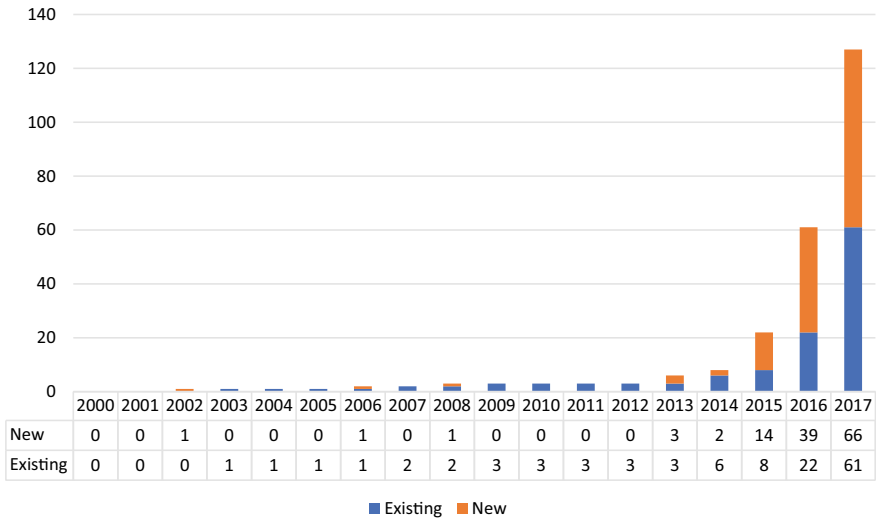


Fig. 5 Increase of guesthouses (created by the author)

problems were brought up based on the survey results: (1) the *minpaku* facilities had many unlicensed businesses, (2) the residents in areas near the *minpaku* facilities felt anxiety, (3) the *minpaku* facilities are not being managed, and (4) the locations could not be pinpointed in more than half of the cases. The city of Kyoto is emphasizing that “guaranteeing the safety and security of the *minpaku* clients and surrounding residents” is of the utmost importance (City of Kyoto 2016).

Although there are cases of new construction and operation of *minpaku* facilities in Higashikujo, there are also many cases of repairing existing vacant houses and operating them as *minpaku* facilities. Among all the cases, it is suspected that there are some cases that “Urban Renaissance” (UR) housing where *minpaku* is prohibited, and some cases where people are listing their own houses that are public housing on *minpaku* intermediary sites (Fig. 6). There are also instances when these are not run from the outside but rather are managed by community residents.

## 8 Conclusion

Higashikujo is currently at a turning point. Originally, Higashikujo had the two streams occurring simultaneously: the guarantee of human rights of minorities like *zainichi*, and a movement to economically stimulate the area. This might have been the fate of an inner-city area that had a history being a slum. Furthermore, as there is an increase in *minpaku* facilities due to an increase in foreign tourists and as the public art projects increase accompanying the movement of the Kyoto City University of Arts to the Sujin district, what should “the neighbourhood where people live together

**Fig. 6** *Minpaku* restrictions (picture taken in 2016 by members of community groups)



in Higashikujo” be like? The decline of community is becoming a problem in every region. In this sort of era, urban areas, in particular, are seeking a local image of “being good to live in, good to visit, and good to work in.” The lives of the people living there are fundamental, but the following two points should be addressed in the current situation of opening up to outsiders.

The first point is the way of thinking about the area. As was mentioned at the beginning of the text, Higashikujo consists of 3 former school districts, and each district has different characteristics. Additionally, in the invigoration policies of the south-eastern area the term Higashikujo was not used. The city of Kyoto conducted as survey of vacant houses in the area, and they explored if it might be possible to use them to support young artists. However, it felt like the priority was making money with *minpaku* facilities rather than community development for “young people and art.” If community development using the new elements of “youth and art” is going to be invigorated, isn’t it essential to adopt a strategy that doesn’t fixate on the south-eastern areas but rather also looks at resources in the wider area of Higashikujo like the southern region with Toka and Towa school districts?

The next point is about the new people entering the area. This might be true for all of Kyoto, but there is a sense of being on guard against new residents and participating actors. However, cities are places where a mixture of humans with a variety of backgrounds live. It seems like an increase of new entities that take part in community development is a plus for community development whether these entities are artists or *minpaku* sojourners. On the other hand, young people and artists are not primarily concerned with community development in the first place. Young people are young people, and artists are artists. Both of these groups should be guaranteed free action and expression. Policies that do not guarantee these things and just use these people are irresponsible. If these people are being asked to contribute to community development, it is essential to create reasonable incentives. The people who have lived there until now and the new people visiting both bring up possibilities. It seems like art management that creates possibilities for people meeting in the same world is needed.

However, if this happens, there are also concerns about what will happen to the lives of minorities like people with roots in foreign countries, senior citizens, and people with disabilities and to the “community where people live together in Higashikujo.” Regardless, the public housing that has been built again in Higashikujo is a stronghold of minority residences, and the local resources that support them have been established in abundance. It seems essential to conduct community management that handles a wide range of elements like art, housing, the economy, and welfare, and to do fund raising using private residences, businesses, and citizens inside and outside the area, and capital that is not public funding.

The Higashikujo Area Management Preparations Committee that petitioned to the city of Kyoto to promote a unifying community development of the Higashikujo and the Sujin area will be reorganized into the Higashikujo Community Development Liaison Committee, and the next turning point will likely be after the Tokyo Olympics. The search for cooperation and initiatives by various actors will continue.

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# Uncovering Inclusivity in London's Inner City: A Historical Analysis of Diversity and Its Relation to Gentrification in Brixton



Takuma Matsuo

**Abstract** This chapter will depict an outline of the inclusivity of Brixton, an ethnically mixed inner city of London, and suggest some aspects of inclusivity that was developed due to the historical context and the social and spatial diversity and is maintained by charity groups. Whilst Brixton has gained a bad reputation because of inner city problems and the riots in 1981, now it is known as an area that is the epitome of gentrification. Focusing on these historic events and the transformation, I argue that these elements generate the environment and actors that accept people who have been put in a variety of circumstances including immigrants, low-income people and people with social disadvantages. Through this examination, I want to make this text a handle on the theory of inclusivity of urban spaces.

**Keywords** Inclusivity · Inner city · Diversity · Gentrification · Brixton · London

## 1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Brixton (Fig. 1), located in the middle of the Borough of Lambeth in London,<sup>1</sup> and it attempts to discover the inclusivity in the history and current state of Brixton as representative of the inner city and to find it of charity groups whose activities are based in Brixton.

From the beginning, the concept of the inner city did not simply signify a geographic location, but since the 1970s it has been politically formulated as areas that have social problems. In the first half of the 1970s, Inner Areas Studies were

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<sup>1</sup> London (Greater London Authority), the capital of the UK, is comprised of 33 basic municipalities that include the City of London, the City of Westminster and other 31 Boroughs. One of these 33 basic municipalities is Lambeth, and this paper focuses on Brixton which locates on the eastern side of central Lambeth. In term of using Brixton in this chapter, it indicates the district that is the combination of the following 5 wards: Brixton Hill, Coldharbour, Herne Hill, Ferndale and Tulse Hill.

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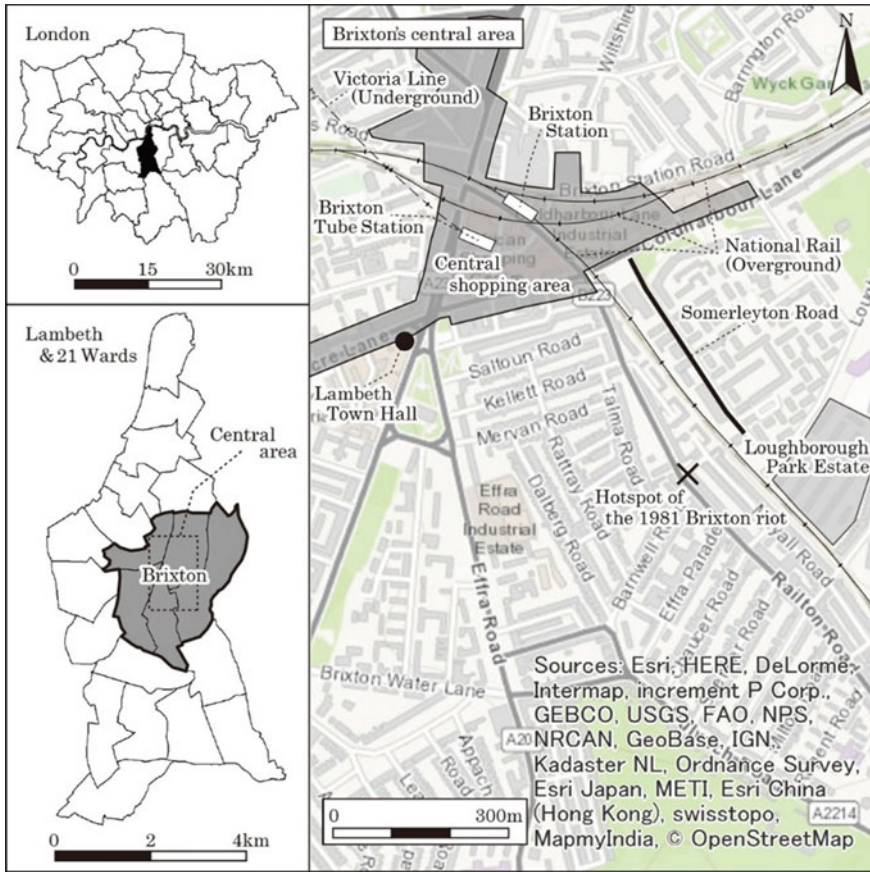


Fig. 1 Case study area. Source Author's drawing

conducted in the British cities of Birmingham, Liverpool, as well as Lambeth Borough of London, and the 1977 White paper Policy for the Inner Cities was released based on the results of these studies. These were pioneering in the discussion of the inner city, and in formulating the concept of the inner city. The concept of the inner city that was constructed in these frameworks was defined as: areas on the edge of the city centre that had problems with economic decline, physical decay, social disadvantages, and ethnic minorities (DoE 1977a, b; Takayama 2013).

There are four reasons that this chapter focuses on Brixton as a way to look at this concept of the inner city. First, the area of Lambeth that the aforementioned Inner Area Study targeted is close to Brixton. Second, since World War II, the situation in Brixton has consistently had all of the aforementioned inner-city characteristics. Third, the social and spatial diversity that characterises present day Brixton originated in its history as part of the inner city. This chapter asserts that this historical context and the present-day social and spatial diversity in the area the foundations for

this area's so-called inclusivity that promotes the acceptance of ethnic groups and socially disadvantaged people. Fourth, present-day Brixton is an area with a high concentration of poverty and ethnic groups that is representative of Inner London, yet at the same time, it is an area that epitomises gentrification; the factors that created this situation can be seen when looking in its history as an example of an inner city. One of the objectives of this chapter is to bring up the charity groups that base their activities out of Brixton as elements that support this inclusivity, and yet to ask the question of why these charity groups still have a need to exist, linking them to the progression of gentrification and the social diversity of Brixton.

Based on the above-mentioned points, this chapter will depict an outline of the inclusivity of an urban space from a wide variety of perspectives such as the inclusivity that was developed due to the historical context and the social and spatial diversity, the inclusivity that is maintained by various groups, and the overall inclusivity of Brixton that combines these more narrowly defined notions of inclusivity. The hope is that through this process, the text will get a handle on the theory of inclusivity of urban spaces.

## **2 The Influx and Establishment of Caribbean Community in Brixton**

In the southern part of Inner London, Brixton is the residential area where black people are primarily concentrated. According to the 2011 census, the population of Brixton was 52.4% White, 13.6% Black Caribbean, and 12.1% Black African; thus, Black Caribbeans were the next highest percentage after White people. This diversity in present day Brixton originates from the influx and establishment of Black Caribbeans since 1948. For this reason, we will first clarify the sequence of events that led to this and the process through which the Brixton area was transformed because of it.

The first large groups of Caribbean immigrants to the UK came in 1948, and nearly 500 people (the majority of them young Jamaicans) boarded the immigration ship the *Empire Windrush* and came to the UK. There were a variety of problems (overpopulation, low economic growth, unemployment and unstable employment and a slump in the export of sugar that was the primary industry) in various islands in the West Indies such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados that had been British colonies since the latter half of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, there was an increased demand for labour in the UK after it had gone through World War II (Patterson 1965; Tomioka 1988; Sakiyama 1990; Makiguchi 2007; Adachi 2013).

In this context, population movement gained momentum, and on a more micro-scale, the factors that have been brought up that caused the concentrated influx of Caribbean immigrants to Brixton were primarily the existence of the cheap lodging houses and abandoned residences, and its good accessibility to the central part of London (Patterson 1965). Originally, Brixton was a residential district in the suburbs

of London where the middle class lived, but around the end of the nineteenth century, the large undeveloped plots became construction sites for cheap lodging houses and housing for the working class. It shifted from a district with high-end houses to a residential district for working class people (Scarman 1982; Piper 1996). These cheap lodging houses were initially owned by European immigrants like Irish, Polish and Cypriot people. These people themselves were immigrants, and because of their experience with accepting actors, entertainers and theatre staff, they had little colour consciousness even among the local tradesmen (Patterson 1965). For this reason, it seems like they were tolerant of accepting the Black Caribbeans who came in after 1948.

However, a factor that was more important for the influx of Caribbeans than the cheap lodging houses was the existence of abandoned residences. The fixing of rent prices due to the introduction of Rent control<sup>2</sup> in 1915 reduced the desire to invest in rental properties, and it was a factor that led to selling of rental houses and abandoning repairs on residences. Moreover, the boom in the construction of houses that people could buy in suburbs in the 1930s caused the middle class to move out of the inner cities, and the foundation for managing rental houses in the inner city seemed like it was collapsing (Komori 1978, 1990). Under these circumstances, the Victorian style houses in Brixton dramatically lost value as investments or rental properties and fell into decay, and the Caribbean immigrants moved into these houses. Because these residences had been abandoned, they were cheap and relatively large despite their low prices, so they functioned as places that could receive the immigrants who came to the UK by relying on their blood relatives or local connections. The houses that the Caribbean immigrants purchased or rented, and the houses that the friends and relatives who came after the first immigrants rented or lived in with them, were concentrated in Somerleyton Road and Geneva Road in Brixton.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, this area became the centre where Caribbean immigrants came and became established.

### 3 From a War-Damaged Area to an Inner City and then to a Riot Area

On the one hand, there was a serious housing shortage in London after World War II. This shortage was caused by the many houses that were destroyed due to the German air raids, and there was an absolute shortage of houses to receive the people returning from evacuation (Piper 1996). The damage from the war in the central part of London from 1939–1945 was mapped out upon being classified into 6 levels for each building: “total destruction”, “damaged beyond repair”, “seriously damaged-doubtful if repairable”, “seriously damaged-repairable at cost”, “general

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<sup>2</sup> The Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act 1915.

<sup>3</sup> Somerleyton Road is shown in Fig. 1, but Geneva Road isn’t shown because it no longer exists today by the redevelopment of this area.

blast damage-not structural”, and “blast damage-minor in nature.” Additionally, this map specified the impact sites of V1 Flying bomb and V2 Rockets.<sup>4</sup>

Looking at the map of war damage, the situation of the central part of Lambeth (including Brixton) shows differences to the extent and magnitude of the damage, with the boundary being the National Rail's railway line that generally runs from east-to-west through the central part of Brixton. North of the railway line, overall, there were a considerable number of buildings that had “Blast damage-minor in nature”, and in particular, the area between Stockwell Road and Brixton Road had many buildings with “General blast damage-not structural.” In addition, this area was hit by V1 flying bombs (3 impacts), and the buildings near these impact sites suffered total destruction or became damaged beyond repair.

South of the railway line, on the other hand, there were not as many damaged buildings as there were to the north. However, places where V1 flying bombs impacted such as the town hall, the north side of Morval Road, the area around Effra Parade and the vicinity of Bonham Road suffer serious concentrated damage to around 10–20 houses.

In present day Brixton, there are many council/social housing estates located north of the railway line, including some that were constructed in areas that were damaged during World War II (Piper 1996; Hirukawa et al. 2002). In other words, the fact that Brixton was an area that suffered war damage during World War II, that council/social housing estates were constructed on these war damaged sites, and that these accepted people in a variety of social circumstances including low-income people, supported the creation of a physical and spatial foundation for its inclusivity.

The origins of present-day Brixton's diversity lie in the transformation in the area involving the residential environment after World War II as well as the influx of Caribbean immigrants; however, after the influx of immigration, Brixton started to be described using terms like decline and decay and became an area that had inner city aspects. According to Patterson (1965) who examined Brixton from the end of the 1950s to the early 1960s, the abandoned houses that promoted the influx and establishment of immigrants stood out because of noticeable contamination to their outer walls, entry ways and windows. The shared spaces like the kitchen and bathrooms were not kept clean, and they had serious problems with overcrowding because several households lived in a single house. Patterson kept this in mind and used the metaphor “ghetto” to describe Brixton. However, she also described it as “the reception centre for new arrivals, and for the unsuccessful, the single, the adventurous, the ‘wide boys’, and the white girls who live with them” (Patterson 1965: 167) and also “certain streets become the dormitories of the restless, the unsuccessful, the unattached, the anti-social, and the newcomers who have nowhere better to go, together with the white misfits who have drifted into the coloured orbit” (Patterson 1965: 194). For better or worse, she looked at Brixton as an area accepted people of all sorts, both good and bad.

Furthermore, at this point, the Brixton Riot that broke out in 1981 must be mentioned as an important historical opportunity for Brixton. The full picture of

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<sup>4</sup> Approximately 150 maps of war damage are collected in Ward (2015) Bomb Damaged Maps.

the Brixton Riot of 1981 is detailed in The Scarman Report (1982), in which Lord Scarman analyses the factors and background of the Brixton Riot; taking many viewpoints and facts into account, from the tense relationship between black people and the police as well as the socio-economic conditions in Brixton at that time. Additionally, Paul Gilroy, whose study included the Brixton Riot and The Scarman Report, made the following statement: “Britain’s ‘race’ politics are quite inconceivable away from the context of the inner city which provides such firm foundations for the imagery of black criminality and lawlessness” (Gilroy 2002: 311). Hence, the historical background of Brixton, an inner city and the site of a riot, can be extended to “Britain’s race politics,” and through that viewpoint, it can be possible to illustrate clearly the importance of considering of the historical background of Brixton.

As was mentioned above, from the late nineteenth century until the 1980s Brixton has repeatedly changed. Changing from a suburban high-end housing district to an area with a concentration of cheap housing; becoming an area with an influx of immigrants; becoming part of the inner city; becoming a region with council/social housing estates; and being the site of riots. Based on this historical background, the existing cheap lodging houses, and abandoned houses, as well as the council/social housing estates that were built in sites of war damage, were important conditions for promoting the influx of people from a variety of social circumstances including low-income people and immigrants. These conditions can be used to explain the origins of present-day Brixton’s social diversity. Moreover, the riot that broke out after Brixton started to have these serious inner-city problems was caused by problems both within Brixton and with the entire society of the United Kingdom. Additionally, it can be evaluated as one large incident that etched the historic destination of these factors into Brixton a place which is inclusive.

#### **4 Social and Spatial Diversity as the Foundations of Inclusivity**

From this point onwards, the state that present day Brixton has reached by undergoing these diverse changes will be reviewed based on the historic background of Brixton as described so far. The text will investigate what aspects of present-day Brixton inclusivity can be found in. For example, Mavrommatis (2010) who clarified how the symbolism of race, difference and identity has evolved, using the examples of Brixton and Brick Lane in Spitalfields. He examined local policy documents from the 1970s through the 2000s from these two areas and identified how representations changed into three time periods; he positioned the mid-1990s onwards as “a celebratory moment”, when differences were celebrated and commodified. Moreover, Robson and Butler (2001) which studied the gentrification of areas all over London, called out Brixton since the mid-90s as “an internationally renowned, cosmopolitan lifestyle centre” (pp. 75–76). In other words, after being an inner city, several riots

breaking out in the 1980s, but since the start of the 1990s, many aspects of the area changed significantly.

Present day Brixton is of course on the extension of the historic background of Brixton and the process of transformation that took place in this area, and its current characteristics can be explained in terms of the social and spatial diversity demonstrated below. I emphasise this social and spatial diversity as the foundation of Brixton's inclusivity.

First, as was noted at the beginning of this section, the social diversity can be seen in the fact that Brixton is an area with a mixture of a variety of ethnic groups. The population is comprised of 36% White British, 14.1% other white, 13.6% Black Caribbean and 12.1% Black African.<sup>5</sup> A considerable number of various ethnic groups that are not White British are resident here. In terms of population, the population of the area was about 83,200 people in 2016. In 2004 the population started increasing from approximately 72,000, an increase of around 10,000 people in the last 10 years.<sup>6</sup> Looking at the percentage of population by age, it is apparent that people in their 20s comprise approximately one fourth of the whole population, and the total population of people who are 39 years or younger has climbed to 67.5% of the entire population.<sup>7</sup> Based on the fact that there has been a striking increase in the population influx of people aged between 20 and 30, it can be characterised as a region with intense population movement centred on the younger generation.

There are various spatial elements that comprise the commercial and residential spaces that deserve to be mentioned with regards to spatial diversity. The central area within a 300 m radius of Brixton Tube Station has a row of a great variety of retail shops and street stalls that sell fresh food, general living necessities, clothing, and electronics, and in this same commercial space, there are also international food chain stores like KFC, McDonald's, Subway and Starbucks Coffee. In recent years, there has been a succession of cafés, bars and restaurants targeting young people that have opened, and Brixton Village and Pop Brixton where these stores are concentrated are important spatial elements that make Brixton an internationally renowned, cosmopolitan life-style centre that is noticed as a popular spot in London. Furthermore, Brixton's spatial diversity can also be explained in terms of the concentration of various facilities in a central area such as cultural facility like the Black Cultural Archives, historical and commercial facility of the Bon Marche established in 1877 and the Ritzy Picture House Cinema in 1911, and concert venues like the O2 Academy Brixton and Electric Brixton. In addition, the residential space that spreads out surrounding this central area is comprised of 29.7% owned, 28.2% private rented, and 41.0% social rented residences.<sup>8</sup> While the percentage of social

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<sup>5</sup> London Datastore "Ward Atlas Data—Ethnic Group 18 groups—2011 Census" in Ward Profiles and Atlas.

<sup>6</sup> London Datastore "GLA SHLAA Trend based Population Projection data, released in March 2013".

<sup>7</sup> London Datastore "Ward population estimates by single year of age".

<sup>8</sup> London Datastore "Ward Atlas Data—Tenure of households—2011 Census" in Ward Profiles and Atlas.

rented residences is quite high, the residential environment is maintaining a certain balance based on the fact that the percentage of specific tenure is not extremely low.

The high concentration of ethnic shops that originated from the influx of Caribbean immigrants is an element that particularly emphasises Brixton's characteristics, and this visually ethnic space engenders an atmosphere of "everybody welcome." Moreover, Brixton still functions as a place that can receive low-income people because it still has a lot of social housing. It has this diversity that originates in the conventional history of how the area was formed and inclusivity that originates from this diversity. However, the population increase in recent years that is primarily centred on the younger generation and the transformation of the area into a cosmopolitan life-style centre have brought about new perspectives to approaches on this inclusivity. In other words, these new perspectives are assuming that Brixton's inclusivity includes not only immigrants and low-income people but also white people, the younger generation and high-income people who are working professionals.

## 5 The Changes in Brixton Caused by Gentrification

Up to this point, Brixton's social and spatial diversity has been confirmed, but the local transformation of Brixton from the 1990s to date requires us to broaden the scope for another dimension of Brixton. This very point is expressed by the following description. In recent years, Brixton "is gentrifying as young professionals are attracted to its arts, nightlife, and generous stock of Victorian properties" (Dehanas 2016: 10), and "... now stands as the epitome of 'class war' as incoming gentrifiers covet formerly radical and immigrant spaces" (DeVerteuil 2015: 136). That is, Brixton changed from inner city to a typical area of gentrification.

The sociologist Yasumasa Igarashi (2009) raised the following factors for the gentrification of Brixton: the low property values since the "danger zone era" that appealed to realtors as an area ready for redevelopment; and the multicultural environment that has been symbolised in musical genres such as reggae and that has been extremely attractive to yuppies (250). If Igarashi's assertions are re-perceived according to the content of this chapter, the low property values are a historical result of Brixton as inner city, and the multicultural environment can be re-phrased as social and spatial diversity.

In addition to the current situation and the historical background, Brixton Tube station that was opened in the centre of Brixton in 1971 was also a large conditional element that promoted the advance of gentrification. Brixton Tube station is the last station of Victoria Line that connects to some busiest stations in central London (Victoria, Euston, King's Cross St. Pancras), as well as to Oxford Circus the most bustling shopping district in London. This gives it a very high level of accessibility because it takes about 15 min to get to the central district of London. The total number of passengers that get on and off at Brixton Tube station increased by approximately



10 million people in the five years from 2010 to 2015,<sup>9</sup> proving that Brixton as an inner city is something of the past.

It must be pointed out, however, that the progression of gentrification in Brixton has not simply caused updated commercial spaces, increased the younger generation and an influx of professionals and gentrifiers, it has also had a large effect on the local residents of Brixton—particularly low-income people. Therefore, these specific effects will be clarified using the example of the problem of displacement of residents in Loughborough Park Estate<sup>10</sup> in the south-eastern part of Brixton's central area, largely by relying on the articles in the Guardian and local media source the Brixton Buzz.

According to these sources, Loughborough Park Estate was built in the 1930s, and it had 390 social rented flats that were managed by Company A, an affordable housing provider. Forty-four of these 390 flats were rented out as short-term rentals, but Company A evicted the Assured Shorthold Tenants (AST) in these 44 flats under the pretext of a reconstruction project necessitating rebuilding. Some of the new units that had already finished being rebuilt had life-time tenants or tenants with full life-time tenancy rights move back into them. However, after the reconstruction, the rent on the other units that were previously rented at affordable rates, was set at around 80% of the average level for Brixton. This rental price was difficult for AST who had lower wages than average, and setting this price ultimately meant semi-forced evictions.

Another problem related to this reconstruction project was that Company A did not have any obligation to the AST, and AST were not even guaranteed re-entry into the apartment complex. In 2012, for the first time, some of the AST were evicted from Loughborough Park Estate. Because these AST did not have any legal rights, they inevitably had to move out, and many of the households ended up moving to residences that were far from Brixton, and they needed housing subsidies to be able to pay the new rents. Among the residents who given eviction notices there were some who refused to leave in protest, started making statements in the media, occupying empty residences, lobbying members of parliament, and submitting petitions. Because of these protests, Company A stated the possibility of accepting residents into other properties that they owned, but the initial offers required moving outside of London, so the protests continued. In the end, the residents reached a point where the residents got agreement to be rehoused in London (Brixton Buzz 21/04/2015; The Guardian 20/02/2015).

At the moment it does not seem that cases such as Loughborough Park Estate happened frequently in Brixton. However, there is certainly a basis to make the statement that the housing environment of Brixton residents is undergoing large changes. For example, in the 10-year period from 2001 until 2011, the number of households in Brixton increased by approximately 5000 to around 33,600. The social rented sector reduced by approximately 80 households, whilst private rented

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<sup>9</sup> Transport for London "Entry and exit figures by station from 2007".

<sup>10</sup> As of 2020, the redevelopment project of Loughborough Park Estate has been completed.

households increased by approximately 4700.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in this 10-year period, the number of private rented households approximately doubled.

Of course, understanding this change in the housing environment is a result of the influx of young professionals and gentrifiers and a direct cause for the eviction of low-income people is making quite a leap. However, the case of Loughborough Park Estate seems to predict that the change in housing environment discussed earlier will lead to large increases in rent and more eviction issues in Brixton in the future.

## 6 Foodbanks as Bearers of Inclusivity

Under the situation that this transformation of its social and spatial diversity and gentrification are proceeding, how or by whom is Brixton's inclusivity maintained? I chose to focus on two charity groups in Brixton that support people having difficulties in their lives, paying attention to Brixton's characteristic of historically accepting all sorts of people. As is noted below, both of these two charity groups give supports in the form of being foodbank, and they support the needy by providing the essential item "food". A more important reason for choosing these groups is that they both have diversity and inclusivity, and it seems like they contribute to reinforcing Brixton's inclusivity while responding to the changes the area is undergoing.

### 6.1 *Brixton Soup Kitchen*

The first group that will be introduced here is Brixton Soup Kitchen (BSK) that started its activities in January of 2013 and became a registered charity in January 2015. The founder of this group is from Brixton, and he started support activities in Brixton in January of 2013. He started a group to support homeless people together with his current co-representatives. Initially, the group started its activities as a community centre that provided beverages and biscuits, but because they gained a lot of supports, they have moved their base of activities to Coldharbour Lane. The reason they started their activities in Brixton was that the founder was from Brixton. Now, the group's activities are managed by a team comprised of three representatives including the founder and around ten volunteers. The volunteer staff members are from a variety of places, with Spanish and French as well as people from the UK. Additionally, there is a variety of religious beliefs with both Christian and Muslim staff.

The BSK provides around 40 meals a day at its two-storey building where its activities are based, and it gives these meals to homeless people as well as to families having difficulties securing food and drink. Additionally, they also do consultations about housing, education, payments, and legal issues. They are also putting efforts

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<sup>11</sup> London Datastore "Ward Atlas Data—Tenure of households—2001 & 2011 Census" in Ward Profiles and Atlas.

into their outreach services that they do twice a week, and they provide warm food and clothing to homeless people in central parts of London. The food and drinks provided at their foodbank centre and through the outreach activities are supported by individuals, groups, as well as famous food and drink chains and supermarkets (BSK homepage; Brixton Blog 11/12/2015).

BSK is a group that operates on the donations received from individuals and local communities, and it is not receiving any funding from other charities or the government. By adopting this policy, BSK can develop its activities that suit the stature of the volunteer staff and the founder himself (Brixton Blog 11/12/2015). By only operating on funds that are donations from individuals and local communities, BSK can maintain its independence and autonomy as an organisation, and by fully maintaining this autonomy and independence, it can be flexible in its provision of support activities to match the situation. The founder's comment below provides a glimpse of this organisation's large tolerance or inclusivity for people needing support, and its acceptance of religion. "(W)e found that most soup kitchens were run by religious centres, and people felt bad having to pretend to pray to get food. So, we decided to open a soup kitchen that people, whether they are Sikh, Muslim or not religious, could come and eat at" (Quote from Brixton Blog 12/04/2013).

## **6.2 *Norwood and Brixton Foodbank***

The second volunteer group is Norwood & Brixton Foodbank (NBF). NBF is a group that started a foodbank in September of 2011 in a church in West Norwood, approximately 3 km south of Brixton, and it started its second foodbank (Brixton Foodbank) in Brixton in March 2012. NBF's activities are reported based on information provided by the manager of the Brixton Foodbank, the NBF's homepage, and a field survey conducted by the author.<sup>12</sup>

The reason that the NBF—that is mainly based in Norwood—also started a foodbank in Brixton was that they had a cooperative relationship with a church group in Brixton at that time. From summer 2012 they have been getting support from another group's advice worker, and cooperation with several organisations—including support from Lambeth council—continues today. Their primary method of generating operating funds is through donations from groups and individuals, but they also get a small amount of monetary assistance from some foundations and the government. The majority of this funding is used for the advice workers from other organisations with which they cooperate.

Brixton Foodbank's activities are conducted in St Paul's Church located approximately 500 m east of Brixton Tube Station. The non-perishable food and drinks donated by schools, other churches, businesses, and individuals are sorted and managed by the staff, and they are supplied to the needy people who visit seeking

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<sup>12</sup> When doing field studies in London from September to November of 2016, the author visited St. Paul's Church the base of NBF's activities (Visited on November 1st, 2016).

support. Brixton Foodbank opens two days a week, and their full-time volunteer staff have a broad age range from 16–80 years old. Many of these volunteers are British women, but there are also the staff of different races or nationalities. Additionally, although this group uses a Christian church and cooperates with church groups, only around half of the staff are Christian. According to the manager, the religions of the people who need support are not related to their supporting, and indeed, when a Muslim woman has visited in the past, she was given assistance without problems.

The staff have set up a cooperative system with care specialists like doctors, rounding public health nurses and social workers. And they set up times to interview with people in need of support, share the method of support and guidance to solve their issues and distribute foodbank vouchers for them. Through this voucher system, those in need of support exchange and receive food and drink. The people being supported are also of a wide variety of ages, and they have a variety of nationalities, races, and religions, but there are a relatively high percentage of single men in their 50s and 60s as well as single-parent families. Many various situations and conditions lead people to need support, and one of the staff members made the following statement. “It’s a real mixture of people who come to Brixton Foodbank. We get people who have been in benefits mix-ups, asylum seekers and refugees, people just out of prison and people who might be working but still struggling” (quote from Brixton Blog 15/05/2012).

## 7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the transformation of Brixton, particularly the historical changes that took place from the end of World War II when the influx of Caribbean immigrants started, until the 1980s. It also reviewed its transition into an area that is the epitome of gentrification and affirmed the social and spatial diversity of Brixton. Brixton’s social and spatial diversity has been constructed by diverse ethnic groups and the diverse spatial elements represented in the many small retail shops and street stalls in centre area, and these factors make Brixton be assessed as “an internationally renowned, cosmopolitan lifestyle centre.”

Among the historical background of Brixton’s transformation, some events in the environment of housing had important roles: the existence of cheap housing since the end of the nineteenth century; the slump in the management of rental properties that accompanied the middle class moving to the suburbs; and the decline in the desire to invest and abandonment of maintenance caused by rent control. These were all factors that made Brixton the centre of the influx of Caribbean immigrants. Additionally, Brixton was a war-damaged site during World War II, and the construction of council/social housing estates took place in the areas that were damaged by air raids. These points substantiate the fact that after the war Brixton functioned as a place that received low-income people. And from the 1950s onward, Brixton started to have inner city elements such as economic decline, physical decay, social disadvantage, and ethnic and racial discrimination, but looked at this situation from

another perspective, it could be possible to understand that Brixton had conditions to be “the reception centre” for low-income people and socially disadvantaged people. Moreover, the riots in the 1980s were not mere incidents, but they were critical historical opportunities that determined Brixton's subsequent identity. With regards to this point, the aforementioned representative of BSK said that after the riots black people got to be free to walk around Brixton,<sup>13</sup> and based on the fact that there are frequently protest movements in recent Brixton, the manager of NBF expressed the opinion that Brixton is a place to oppose authority and suppression.<sup>14</sup>

So, what is the significance of pointing out such as Brixton's historic background, social and spatial diversity, and the existence of inclusivity like this? I argue that these points provide us with important elements when we consider the questions about how we should interpret the transformation of Brixton from the 1990s until the present and about what changes in the future will be expected.

Regarding the local transformation from the 1990s until the present, the largest change during this time period gave huge impacts because through that Brixton became situated as an area that epitomises gentrification. Some characteristic trends that demonstrated the progression of gentrification in Brixton are such things as the aforementioned influx of young professionals and gentrifiers, the trend for an increase in people in their 20 s and 30 s that has continued since around 2010, the update of commercial spaces represented in Brixton Village or Pop Brixton and the increase in private rented households. As I've stated, while this transformation has been promoted by Brixton's historical background and social and spatial diversity, the popularity created by these local characteristics and the original high-level accessibility to the city centre have also worked as key elements in the transformation of Brixton into an area that epitomises gentrification. At the same time, however, there are also cases like the displacement problem in the Loughborough Park Estate that stop us from thinking that the gentrification of Brixton was entirely positive. This point is related to the previously posed question of “what changes in the future will be expected.”

The changes currently happening in Brixton, as well as the changes that will happen subsequently, doubtlessly should be understood and discussed in relation to gentrification. Therefore, Brixton's inclusivity must be assumed to include not only immigrants and low-income people but also new white people, the younger generation and high-income people who are working as professionals. And I believe that Brixton's future probably depends on these people and that they are needed to be involved extensively developing realistic responses to today's issues. The various organisations and groups that base their activities in Brixton represented by above-mentioned two charity groups are the kinds of people that can be expected to handle these realistic responses. Indeed, NBF has built partnerships with a wide variety of support groups and BSK has maintained a high level of autonomy by not receiving any subsidies from the government and has assured their own flexibility in managing

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<sup>13</sup> The founder's statement from an interview survey conducted by the present author on the founder at BSK's base of operations in Coldharbour Lane (visit on September 20th, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Footnote 12.

their group and handling assistance activities. The existence of groups like these two that accept and give support to everyone who needs it regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, religion, or social class will probably be a driving force in the maintenance of Brixton's inclusivity into the future.

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# **Urban Policies for Social Inclusivity**



# Housing Policy and the Role of Housing Associations: Urban Renewal in the Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam



Jeroen van der Veer and Geerhardt Kornatowski

**Abstract** This chapter focuses on the activities of housing associations and municipality in urban revitalization of the Bijlmermeer neighbourhood in Amsterdam against the backdrop of regime changes in national and local housing policy. The Bijlmermeer case is a clear example of partnership between local government and non-profit housing associations in deprived neighbourhoods as mentioned in the Chap. 1 of the book. This chapter shows that in Bijlmermeer urban restructuring and mixed-income development resulted in an increased socio-economic mix and higher satisfaction with dwelling and neighbourhood conditions. Displacement of vulnerable tenants was prevented by policy measures like priority for another house in Bijlmermeer.

**Keywords** Housing policy · Social housing · Urban renewal · Housing associations · Amsterdam

## 1 Introduction

Since the Second World War, the Dutch social rental housing sector has covered a broad segment of the population. Therefore, middle-income groups have also been highly represented among its residents. Especially in large cities, the percentage of social housing within the total housing stock has been high. In 2011, the OECD described the Netherlands as a broad-based system where no income limits are applied for social housing (OECD 2011).

However, a new era has arrived following the continuous restructuring of the Dutch welfare state, fiscal austerity, and adjusted European guidelines. On a national level, the social housing sector decreased from 40% in the mid-1980s to 30% at

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present. In Amsterdam, the percentage of social housing owned by independent housing associations decreased from 58% in 1995 to 41% in 2019, allowing for more tenure mix in neighbourhoods (Amsterdamse Federatie van Woningcorporaties 2019). Access to the city for all income groups has always been a policy priority. This is why Amsterdam has been described as an undivided city.

The economic crisis from 2008 onwards, combined with fiscal austerity and new government measures resulted in a more means-tested social housing sector. This change followed the big regime change in the 1990s. During this period, the housing associations became financially independent and construction subsidies for social housing were abolished. In the first section of this paper, we describe these changes in the Netherlands at a national level.

The second and main section of the chapter looks at local housing policy in the city of Amsterdam, especially focusing on urban revitalization in the Bijlmermeer neighbourhood. It shows the importance of non-profit housing associations and the cooperation on a local level. Crucial in the “success” of Bijlmermeer was the availability of national housing allowance, the priority for urban renewal candidates, and the financial compensation for residents who had to move out due to the ongoing urban renewal.

## 2 Changes in Dutch National Policy

Housing associations in the Netherlands were private and non-profit from the 1800s onwards; however, since the Housing Act of 1901, they have always been under the central governments’ authorization, support, and control (Prak and Priemus 1992; Schaar 1987, 2006). With the first Housing Act of 1901, national government began to accept the differently founded private initiatives into the new formal status of authorized institutions, which were called *woningcorporaties* (social housing associations) later and provided financial and legal privileges for the fulfilment of broadly defined social tasks. The financial support could be outright subsidies or soft loans and cheap land for housing construction, combined with organizational support in the form of extending professional expertise. The housing associations could take the legal form of a society, a foundation, or even a company in the beginning, as long as they were engaged in the improvement of social housing (Ouwehand van Daalen 2002).

### 2.1 *The Restructuring of the Social Housing Sector in the 1990s*

The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (in Dutch: VROM) argued at the end of the 1980s that although the quantitative housing shortage was

solved, an “oversupply” of cheap housing was now posing a threat to the viability of the entire sector. It implied a misallocation of subsidies, because higher-income groups were also making use of subsidised rented apartments. Against this background, the national policy report “Housing in the 90s” (VROM 1989) announced a regime shift for the social housing sector, namely from brick-and-mortar subsidies to subject subsidies targeted to lower-income groups (Van der Veer and Schuiling 2005). These subsidies provide low-income households with a rent allowance up to €720 per month (2019 prices). As part of the shift, the housing associations had to become financially independent instead of relying on different types of subsidies and state loans.

From 1995 onwards construction subsidies were mostly cancelled. Furthermore, all the future subsidies for running cost deficits of the existing social housing stock were capitalized (€15.9 billion) and exchanged against the outstanding loans from central government to housing associations (€18.6 billion) (Boelhouwer and Priemus 2014). A part of the rationale behind this so called *brutering* (tax gross-up) was the decrease in state debt, as calculated by the EMU. Entrance requirements of the EU called for diminishing this burden and the *brutering* helped by swapping the long-standing subsidies and loans. Van der Veer and Schuiling (2005: 170) remark that “from then on, the housing associations had to change into social entrepreneurs, working with revolving funds by spending their income from profit-making activities (like sales of new and existing houses) in loss-making operations (like refurbishment, transformation, and construction of social rent).” Thus, public expenditure on housing reduced (Ronald and Dol 2011). However, tax relief for access to home ownership remained an important part of Dutch housing policy. Tax relief accounts for 2.3% of GDP in the Netherlands, while the average for OECD countries is 0.36% (Salvi del Pero et al. 2016). In fact, tax relief on mortgages constitutes a far larger part of the government budget than the expenditure on social housing (including allowances).

The regime change in the 1990s was accompanied by a national decline of the social rental stock (from almost 40% to 30%) and a growth of the owner-occupied stock (from 42 to 60%). Within Western Europe, the growth of the owner-occupied sector since 1980 was the fastest in the UK and the Netherlands (Ronald and Dol 2011).

## ***2.2 Mixed Income Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Policy in the Netherlands***

Since the 1990s, Dutch housing and urban renewal policies have placed an emphasis on creating a diverse housing stock and a high degree of social mix. As Musterd and Ostendorf (2008) acknowledge, this orientation is not unique to the Netherlands, but its policy is more explicit in advocating social mix as a solution to the low level of social cohesion in neighbourhoods. In a series of big city policy (BCPs) initiatives,

the Dutch government has targeted poor urban neighbourhoods, particularly those with homogeneous populations. The BCPs attempted to develop an integrated policy approach that addresses economic, physical, and social dimensions of neighbourhood renewal (Musterd and Ostendorf 2008).

The *White Paper on Urban Restructuring* (1997) stated that non-diverse districts should be transformed into socially mixed areas by demolishing parts of the social rental stock and constructing more expensive dwellings (Van Kempen et al. 2009: 4). Post-war areas were particularly targeted.

In 2007, a minister was appointed for housing, districts, and integration. Forty deprived neighbourhoods were selected for intensified support. The policy was aimed at transforming problematic urban districts into “strong districts.” Differentiation of the housing stock and mixed income development formed a key element of these efforts, but they were usually accompanied by measures for improving education, employment, and social integration as well. These steps were mainly undertaken by housing associations and municipalities. In addition, most of the investments had to come from the local and not the national level. Bijlmermeer was one of the targeted areas, although urban renewal of the area had already started before 1992, with substantial support from the national government and the housing associations’ Central Housing Fund. A national “Investment Budget Urban Renewal” provided funding for urban renewal from 2000–2014 but was abolished after 2014.

### ***2.3 Changing Circumstances for the Housing Associations: The 2008 Crisis and the Parliamentary Inquiry***

The 2008 crisis caused a dramatic slump in the sale of new and existing houses and created financing problems for homebuyers and developers, including the housing associations. After the associations switched into financial independency and become risk-taking social entrepreneurs, the room for manoeuvring by their directors and treasurers became much wider than before. As long as house prices were booming and customers were queuing to get a social rental dwelling, there were not so many problems. During this period, the scope of activities of housing associations widened increasingly and politicians were in favour of this, because they found an extra funder for (semi-)public expenditure. However, in some cases, this went too far outside the core remit of housing associations, and in other cases it opened the doors to bad governance, or even fraud. The media reported how some were caught up in miscalculations in commercial property development and land acquisition for mega projects, financial mismanagement, and speculation. Following the media attention, a parliamentary inquiry into the housing associations was established. The conclusions, published in Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (2014), highlighted frequent cases of: (1) failing managers/supervisors and operational and/or financial mismanagement: self-enrichment, and the lack of moral compass; (2) failing public supervision; and (3)

failing politicians and policymakers: there was a lack of political guidance and supervision. “During the 1993–2013 period, there was an inconsistent and changing policy environment: there were 12 different ministers and deputy-ministers responsible for housing policy and the Housing Act was amended 78 times, on 59 occasions. A key recommendation of the parliamentary committee is a return to basics by the housing associations and a phase-out of involvement in commercial activities.” (Salvi del Pero 2016: 38). However, housing associations were successful in urban revitalization, improving the liveability of neighbourhoods, and combining market activities with high-quality social housing for the low-income groups without government subsidies. They had performance agreements with the local governments as well (see Sect. 15.3.2).

#### ***2.4 The Role of the European Union: Towards a Means-Tested Social Housing Sector in the Netherlands***

Investments of housing associations are financed by their own equity and bank loans. After the *brutering* in 1995, the housing associations had to earn their income (besides rents) from market developments and by selling off parts of their housing stock. The housing associations were now competing with private developers; for instance, in market rental projects and development projects of new owner-occupied housing. The housing associations borrow money from the capital market. The collective assets of all social housing organizations (with a property value of €318 billion in 2016) are used as collateral for banks through a sectoral guarantee fund (WSW), which also watches over risk management. The loans (roughly €82 billion) are backed up by the WSW, which in turn is backed up by local and national governments. This results in lower interest rates (between 1.5% and 2%) and favourable financing terms for housing associations (WSW 2017). The profits of housing associations are again invested in new social housing, urban revitalization, and liveability of neighbourhoods. Dutch housing associations are hybrid organizations at their core, while the EU tends to define activities in terms of either state or market. Open competition in a free market is a clear target for the EU. Housing policy is a responsibility of the national governments. However, the EU influences housing policy through its economic competition policy and guidelines.

In 2005, the (Dutch) commissioner of the EU for Competition sent a letter to the Dutch Ministry of Housing to express his dissatisfaction on the unfair competition against the private rental sector. She also pressed for a large-scale sale of social housing. According to the commissioner, the social housing stock was far too large in relation to the target low-income groups, and there was insufficient separation between public and private activities. The EU has problems with the hybrid character of Dutch housing associations. The WSW guarantee, even though not a subsidy, is considered as state support by the EU. Interestingly enough, it was the Dutch

Ministry of Housing itself that asked the EU its opinion on the Dutch system of housing associations (VROM Raad 2008).

Former housing minister Van der Laan reached an agreement with the European Commission (EC) in October 2009 on the activities of housing associations and state support. Van der Laan and the EC agreed that households with an income below €38,035 per year (before tax, 2019 prices) belong to the target group for social housing. As such, households in this group are eligible for social housing with up to €720 as rent per month (2019 prices). In return, the EC agreed to recognize the Dutch system of social housing and agreed that housing associations could invest in real estate for schools, neighbourhood centres, etc. The European guidelines were translated into Dutch regulation. The three most important subjects are: (1) Limitation of access to social housing, (2) Separation of social housing from other activities, and (3) Fiscal austerity and budget cuts.

The European guidelines were translated into Dutch regulation. As a result, access to social housing in the Netherlands was limited to households with an income below €38,035 (2019 prices), with some exceptions. This measure was applied from January 2011 and is applicable for households entering the social housing sector (rent up to €720). 80% of all new lettings of social housing have to be allocated to household income groups below €38,035. If the housing associations do not reach this threshold, they will lose their state support in the form of loan guarantees of the WSW.

The above-mentioned separation between state and market was translated into a proposal for a revised Housing Act. This revised Housing Act took effect on July 1, 2015. The main aim of the revised act is that housing associations should concentrate on their core activities, that is, providing housing for the lowest income groups (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties 2015). At the same time, the position of the municipality and the tenants will be strengthened, and the ministry will have a stronger role in the control of housing associations. Activities which are eligible for state support are listed as activities of general economic interest (DAEB). The housing associations receive loan guarantees backed by the government for these core activities. For other activities, the housing associations have to rely on the free capital market without any guarantees.

Activities of general economic interest are:

- providing rental dwellings for the target group;
- constructing social rental dwellings with a monthly rent less than €720;
- constructing and renting out social real estate, which has a relationship with the above-mentioned social rental dwellings.

Housing associations were forced to put all their market dwellings and other market activities (like commercial real estate, land acquisitions, participations in private or public limited companies) in a separate entity. The housing associations had a choice between an administrative and a legal separation. Under the administrative separation, the housing associations have a lower possibility of carrying out activities other than social housing. Other activities are possible only when they directly serve social housing. Activities besides social housing are only possible as the municipality

deems necessary. For instance, if the housing association plans to construct middle income rental housing in an urban renewal neighbourhood as part of a mixed project, the municipality has to state that it is necessary. Additionally, the housing association has to prove that no market supplier is interested in constructing these dwellings (through a market test, supported by a statement from the municipality). Liveability activities are allowed only when they have a direct relationship with the social rental dwellings in the neighbourhood.

Through the revised Housing Act, the housing associations will lose a part of their hybrid character. In addition, it will be more difficult to construct mixed tenure projects in mixed neighbourhoods. Cross-subsidization from market to social activities becomes impossible, because of the requirement that the non-social part of the housing associations should have the same return on investment as a normal commercial company. The implications of the revised Housing Act are enormous. The impact of these measures is comparable to the *brutering* in 1995 and may also be called a regime change.

Fiscal austerity has had an enormous impact on Dutch housing policy. In order to meet the 3% budget deficit demands of the EU, the national government tried to find ways to raise its income. Since 2013, social rental dwellings charging less than €720 per month (2019 prices) were taxed with a levy that amounted to €2 billion in 2018. The levy is applicable to all landlords owning more than 50 social rent dwellings and the ceiling of the tax is based on the property value of the dwelling. In Amsterdam, social rental dwellings have a higher property value, so the tax per dwelling is higher than the national average. For private owners, the tax is an incentive to raise the rent higher than the social-rental threshold of €720, because the tax only applies to social rental dwellings. Internationally, this levy is unprecedented because the construction of social rent housing is no longer subsidized in the Netherlands. Instead, housing associations, and consequently tenants must pay for a part of the state deficit. Also, housing associations have been paying corporation tax since 2008.

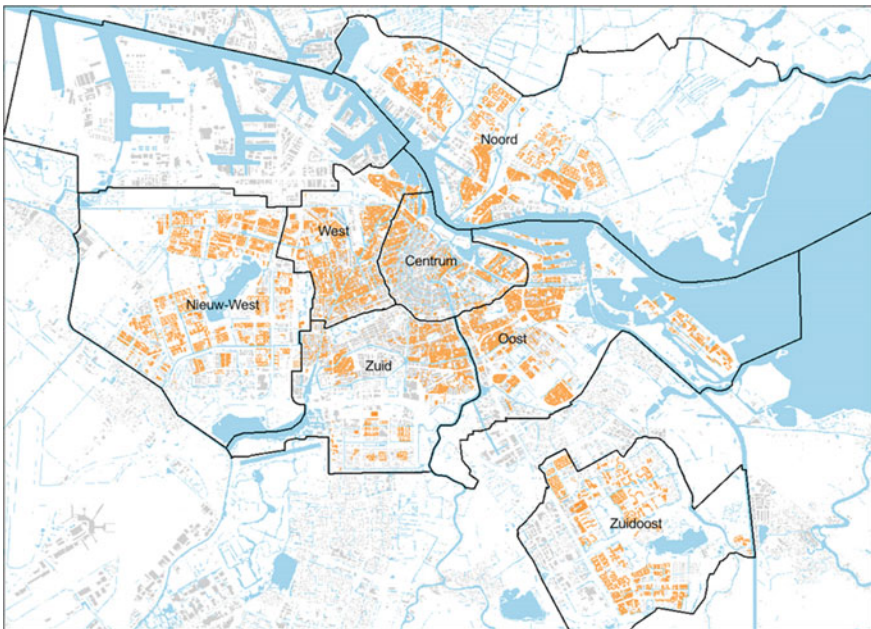
### 3 The Amsterdam Case

Amsterdam is largest city in the Netherlands. The municipality has 862,987 inhabitants (as on January 1, 2019) and the Metropolitan area covers 2.5 million inhabitants. The local economy is characterized by a mix of business and financial services, higher education (two universities), and a large creative sector. Schiphol airport is a major transport hub in Europe. Amsterdam's science park is home to one of the major internet hubs in the world. Since 2010, the population of the municipality has been growing by roughly 11,000 per year. The net growth by foreign immigration has never been as high as in 2018. In that year 43,325 people moved to the city from other countries). Apart from cyclical developments, there is a long-term growth in employment. This results in a continuously growing pressure on the housing market for almost all income groups.

### 3.1 Social Housing in Amsterdam

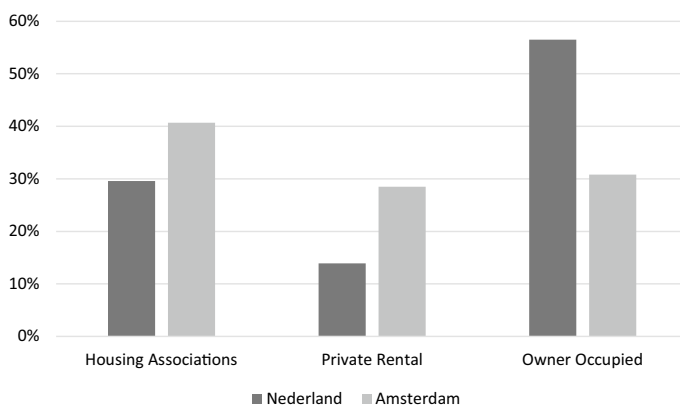
Fainstein (2000, 2010) regards Amsterdam as a “just city” because of the large size of the social rental housing sector and the relatively low stigma attached to such residences. As we can see in Fig. 1, the properties of the housing associations are spread all over the city. Ever since the Housing Act of 1901, the construction of social rental housing has been the municipality’s main policy focus. Amsterdam owns most of the land within its boundaries and leases it to the real estate owners. The leasehold system was introduced in 1896. Therefore, the municipality has held a large influence on the type of houses constructed. Most of the social rental housing was not constructed by the municipality itself, but by independent non-profit housing associations (Van der Veer and Schuiling 2005).

In Amsterdam, the nine housing associations own roughly 180,000 dwellings (as on January 1, 2019), being 41% of the total housing stock (see Fig. 2). Amsterdam is divided into 7 city-districts (*stadsdelen*). Every district accommodates social rental housing. Even in the highly valued city-districts (like *Zuid*), the share of social rental housing exceeds 25% of the total stock. The neighbourhoods that were constructed after WWII, such as the Western Garden Cities, Amsterdam-North, and Amsterdam Southeast hold the highest percentages of social rental housing (Van der Veer and Schuiling 2005).



**Fig. 1** Amsterdam: Dwellings of housing associations (in yellow). *Source* Amsterdamse federatie van Woningcorporaties (2019b)

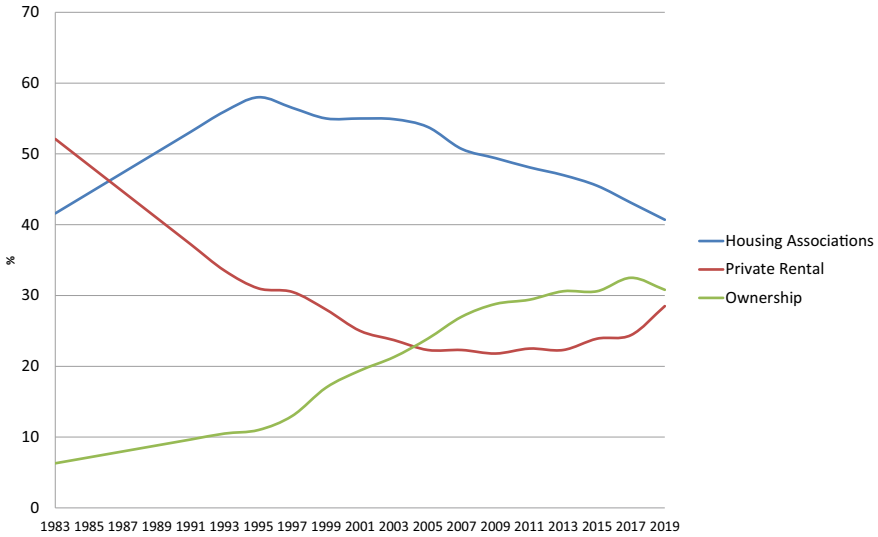




**Fig. 2** Composition of housing stock according to tenure in Amsterdam and the Netherlands in 2019. *Source* Berkers and Dignum (2020), Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties (2019)

Especially after WWII, the size of the social rental housing stock in Amsterdam grew rapidly from 18% in 1950 to 58% in 1995, replacing the private rental housing as the dominant sector. The 1980s were a period of urban revitalization in the pre-war neighbourhoods. In the 1980s, large numbers of private rental dwellings were annually demolished and replaced with new dwellings constructed by housing associations. Social rental housing was also built at high-value locations in the city centre. Moreover, tens of thousands of private rental dwellings were bought up by housing associations and renovated. The result was a decrease in the size of the private rental sector and significant growth of the social rental sector in the 1980s and early 1990s (Van der Veer and Schuiling 2005).

From the mid-1990s, Amsterdam experienced strong economic growth. As a result, the percentage of low-income households (the group eligible for housing allowance) decreased from 47% in 1995 to 32% in 2009. This resulted in increased demand for quality and larger and owner-occupied dwellings. From the mid-1990s, Amsterdam experienced a decline in housing owned by housing associations, from 58% in the mid-1990s to 41% in 2019 (this excludes affordable rental dwellings owned by private owners but includes market rental (above €720) by housing associations). The decrease is a result of urban revitalization, construction of market dwellings, and sale of social housing. At the same time, we notice an increase in the owner-occupied housing sector, from 6% in 1983 to 30% in 2011 and 31% in 2019 (Berkers and Dignum 2020), although it is still lower than the national average of 56%. The changes in housing policy in the 1990s are clear from Fig. 3.



**Fig. 3** Amsterdam: Composition of the housing stock according to tenure. *Source* Gemeente Amsterdam, OIS, Amsterdam in Cijfers (several years) and Gemeente Amsterdam en Amsterdamse Federatie van Woningcorporaties (2020)

### 3.2 *Mutual Dependency Between Local Government and Housing Associations—Policy Agreements*

Both the central government and local governments do not construct or transform houses in the Netherlands by themselves. This means local governments depend on housing associations for production, maintenance and management, and transformation of the housing for the target groups in housing policy. Since the national policy change of the mid-1990s, bricks-and-mortar subsidies are no longer available to adjust the housing production and performance. However, the housing associations remain dependent on local governments for the acquisition of land to build on and securing a fair share of production in new areas (Van der Veer and Schuilting 2005).

In the best tradition of the Dutch “polder model” of deliberating with all stakeholders before taking decisions, there is a standing deliberation committee for housing in Amsterdam with representatives of the municipality, the tenants, and the housing associations. This group prepares the policy agreement on housing. The first Amsterdam policy agreement dates to 1994. (Van der Veer and Schuilting 2005). Amsterdam was a frontrunner with respect to policy agreements between local governments, tenants, and housing associations. In 2015, the new Housing Act increased the involvement of municipality and tenants on the policies of housing associations, but in Amsterdam, this was already a standing practice for 20 years.

Since the mid-1990s, both the Amsterdam municipality and the housing associations agreed that there was a need for transformation of the housing stock to improve

quality and increase the share of owner-occupied dwellings. For instance, in the 2001 policy agreement, the parties agreed that the percentage of owner-occupied dwellings could increase from 17% in 1999 to 35% in 2010, while the percentage of social rental dwellings could decrease at the same time (Beleidsovereenkomst Wonen 2001). This was also supported by the tenants' organizations. Eventually, this resulted in more tenure mix in the city and within districts. Despite these changes, the social housing sector remained by far the largest sector in Amsterdam.

### ***3.3 Urban Revitalization 1995–2010***

One of the main purposes of the transformation of post-war neighbourhoods is to mix in tenure types and offer improved quality. This, in turn, is to mitigate the concentration of particular population categories, namely those of low income and in unemployment. This way, the upwardly mobile people will not be forced to leave the city and occupy a house in the suburbs or new towns but instead maintain prospects to a housing career within the neighbourhood (Van der Veer and Schuiling 2005). From the 1990s, this has led to an impactful transformation program aiming at differentiation of houses, especially in the areas seen as the most in need (Van der Veer and Schuiling 2005). The largest urban revitalization areas in Amsterdam are Bijlmermeer and the Western Garden Cities. In the Bijlmermeer case the urban revitalization started earlier (1992) and is already further ahead. Urban revitalization of the Western Garden Cities started in 2001 and the process will go on until at least 2025 (originally 2015, but now extended).

## **4 The Bijlmermeer Case**

The municipality of Amsterdam is divided into seven city-districts. Amsterdam Zuidoost (Southeast) is one of them. The area was annexed by the municipality of Amsterdam in 1966 and forms a separate enclave from the rest of the municipality. The entire district of Southeast has a population of 88,000 and provides 80,000 jobs. Most of the jobs are in the office area around the Ajax (Arena) football stadium and the Amsterdam-Utrecht rail line. Apart from the office area, the city-district consists of the residential areas of Gaasperdam, Driemond, and Bijlmermeer, which is the main focus of this case study. Bijlmermeer is located east of the railroad and is predominantly a residential area. Bijlmermeer in the original lay out consisted of neighbourhoods with low-, mid-, and high-rise dwellings. The renewal area consists of the area where the original high-rise blocks were constructed. This area was confronted with severe problems of liveability and deprivation since the 1980s and has been the focus of the urban renewal of Bijlmermeer since 1992. The first high-rise flat in Bijlmermeer was ready in 1968, so the area celebrated its 50 years anniversary in 2018.

#### 4.1 *Original Plans and Layout*

At the time of construction, Bijlmermeer was considered the ‘city of the future’. Bijlmermeer was constructed between 1966 and 1975. At the time, high-rise estates were constructed all across Europe, many of them influenced by the CIAM (*Congres Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne*) movement led Le Corbusier (Helleman and Wassenberg 2004). These neighbourhoods from the 1960s and 1970s share a strong uniformity in building style with a strict separation of functions (living, working, and recreation). In Bijlmermeer, 12,500 dwellings were constructed in large honeycomb blocks (300–500 dwellings each) and that were 11 stories high, all of them in the social rental sector (Helleman and Wassenberg 2004). The dwellings were large, and the surroundings consisted of green park-like surroundings with watercourses, crossed by footpaths and cycle ways. Elevated roads were constructed for cars. The planners thought they designed the ideal city of the future. However, in the case of the Bijlmermeer, reality turned out to be different (Helleman and Wassenberg 2004):

- Originally, Bijlmermeer was partly meant for middle-class households residing in the city. However, these households were far more attracted to emerging “new towns” that offered single family dwellings with gardens. As a result, there was insufficient demand for the flats from the beginning, and Bijlmermeer became a place for people with no other options.
- The composition of the population in the district started to change in the early seventies, becoming dominated by single-parent families, single persons, and migrants. In 1975, the former Dutch colony of Suriname gained independency; and many of its residents migrated to Amsterdam and found relatively easy access to housing in Bijlmermeer.
- More and more community spaces were subject to deterioration and criminal activities; car parks, interior walkways, and green public areas were felt thought to be unsafe.
- At its peak (in 1985), the vacancy rate of the apartments was more than 25% and the yearly turnover of residents was 50%.
- Bijlmermeer developed into a problem estate with concentrations of poverty, unemployment, crime, and drug use.

#### 4.2 *The Role of Housing Association(s) and Municipality*

When Bijlmermeer was constructed, the housing associations did not play any role in the design of the neighbourhood and the high-rise dwellings. Amsterdam’s “city of the future” was conceived behind closed doors in the Amsterdam Municipality Spatial Planning Department (*Dienst Publieke Werken*) in the first half of the 1960s. “All that remained for the associations to do was to collect the keys to the finished properties.” (Amsterdam Federation of Housing Associations 2017: 6). Later, from the mid-1970s, the housing associations were more involved with planning and construction

of the dwellings in Amsterdam Southeast, like in the area of Holendrecht, which consisted more of mid-rise and low-rise dwellings.

From their completion in the 1960s and 1970s, the properties in the high-rise dwellings were owned by 15 different housing associations. When the housing associations experienced maintenance problems in the 1980s they decided to create one consolidated housing association “Nieuw Amsterdam” for all the properties in Bijlmermeer. In the 1980s, The Nieuw Amsterdam Association was on the brink of bankruptcy due to the high vacancy rate, high turnover and maintenance problems.

Three parties were responsible for the renovations between 1992 and 2013: *Woningstichting Rochdale* (the later merger partner of Nieuw Amsterdam), the Municipality of Amsterdam and the City District of Amsterdam-Zuidoost.

The *Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer* (PVB, the planning office for the renewal of Bijlmermeer) was commissioned by these parties to prepare and implement the urban renewal (*Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer 2014*). We can conclude that the construction of Bijlmermeer was not a good example of cooperation between the municipality and the housing associations, but the urban renewal was. The urban renovation of Bijlmermeer was a cooperative effort and the aims of the renewal were shared by municipality, city district and housing associations.

### 4.3 *Physical Renewal*

Between 1975 and 1990, small-scale measures were taken for the design of the high-rises and their maintenance. However, the position of the district in Amsterdam’s housing market remained weak. After years of debate, it became clear that the urban layout had to be structurally adjusted (Helleman and Wassenberg 2004: 7). Bijlmermeer was too uniform and had lacked differentiation in its housing stock. The urban renewal area consisted only of high-rise rental apartments in the social housing sector. From 1992 onwards, it was realized that a more radical approach was needed (*Projectbureau vernieuwing Bijlmermeer 2014*).

Part of the approach was demolishing high-rise flats and replacing them with more single-family housing, and renovation of other parts of the high-rise. In addition, the unsafe parking garages had to be demolished and the elevated traffic-ways lowered to ground level, thereby offering a safer environment and more possibilities for social interaction on the street. A mix of functions (residential, business, recreation, and shopping) was also a target. In this way, the past mistakes of functionalism could be corrected. “*The various functions—residential, business, recreation, shopping, and parking—will then become more intermingled*” (*Projectbureau vernieuwing Bijlmermeer 2014*).

In 1992, demolition of one-quarter of the flats was decided. After an evaluation in 1999, it was concluded that more flats had to be demolished. In 2002, the municipality, city-district, and housing association decided that 6500 of the 12,500 flats had to be demolished. All flats that were not on the demolition list were renovated. Since the start of the urban renewal, housing association Rochdale renovated 5000 high-rise

**Table 1** Plans for urban renewal of Bijlmermeer (2002). *Source* Gemeente Amsterdam (2002) Finale plan van aanpak vernieuwing Bijlmermeer

	1992	2010
High rise	12.500	6.034 (45%)
Other apartments		4.495 (34%)
Low rise		2.840 (21%)
Social rent	12.500	6.650 (50%)
Market		6.750 (50%)
Total	12.500	13.400 (100%)

dwelling (Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer 2014). Unsafe interior walkways and storage rooms were removed and replaced by dwellings. The demolished high-rise apartments were replaced with more than 7000 new dwellings, of which 30% were for social housing and 70% for market housing. This means over time the number of dwellings will increase. Social and rental dwellings share the same level of quality as the market dwellings, so these are indistinguishable from each other. As a result, stigmatization is prevented. When the operation is finished, roughly half of the housing stock will still be social housing. In 1995, Geinwijk was the first high-rise flat to be demolished. Eeftink was the last in 2009. This means the phase of demolition is over. After years of demolition, the new construction of mainly low-rise dwellings dominates the picture in Bijlmermeer now. This has resulted in a complete change in the urban layout and a break from the uniformity of the original Bijlmermeer (see Table 1 and Figs. 4, 5 and 6).

#### ***4.4 Aims of the Renewal***

The aim of this renewal was to create a liveable district that is safe and attracts people for positive reasons. Residents at a vulnerable social position will be given the opportunity to improve their housing position, while residents at a stronger social position will be offered a wider range of choices in their own neighbourhood. (Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer 2014).

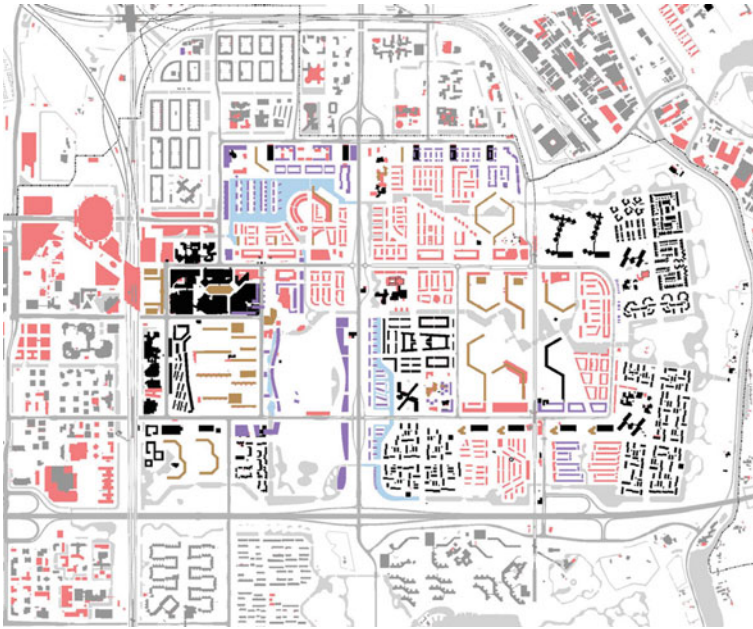
In 1995/1996, it was stated that the main goal of the renewal operation was to make Bijlmermeer an area where the liveability is just as good as the Amsterdam. The satisfaction with the neighbourhood for residents of Bijlmermeer should be as high as the satisfaction of other residents of the city of Amsterdam. During the process, the horizon of the renewal process shifted from 2009 to 2013. From the start, socio-economic policies were part of the renewal.



**Fig. 4** Urban revitalization in the Bijlmermeer: old high-rise (top) and new low-rise (bottom). *Source* picture taken by Peter Elenbaas



**Fig. 5** Demolished high rises (shown in red). *Source* project bureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer (2014)



**Fig. 6** Bijlmermeer 2013: Newly constructed buildings (shown in red) renovation (shown in brown) to be constructed (shown in purple). *Source* project bureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer (2014)

#### **4.5 Social and Economic Renewal**

Job creation was an important part of social renewal in Bijlmermeer. In 2004, the Zuidoost Cultural Educational Centre (CEC) was completed. The CEC accommodates various organizations related to education and employment opportunities, such as a women empowerment centre. With the help of European subsidies, cheap office space was set up. In addition, art ateliers were created with low rents.

Socio-economic policies were encouraged by the development of many facilities and jobs just outside Bijlmermeer, in the Arena area. Since the 1980s, this area has developed to the west of the railroad, but in the Southeast city-district. At first, many office buildings were constructed for jobs in the financial and business sectors. Later, the new Ajax football stadium (Arena) opened there, along with a cinema, shopping malls, and theatres. In 2008, a new Bijlmer Arena station was opened, which was partly designed by architect Nicholas Grimshaw. It has been upgraded to an intercity station and serves both trains and the metro. All these developments together with the physical renewal of Bijlmermeer itself help in improving the image of the area. With all this employment close by, there are opportunities to strengthen the link with the population of Bijlmermeer. In the Arena area, educational facilities such as the Vocational School for Economic Studies have been set up (Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer 2014).



#### ***4.6 Resident Survey and Relocation***

In 2001, a survey was conducted among residents of almost 5000 flats, of which 3500 participated. A majority of them were in favour of demolition, but in some areas, they were in favour of keeping the high-rises. This is why the high-rises in the H-neighbourhood and parts of the G and K neighbourhood remained standing. The last neighbourhoods will keep their original urban lay out, the so-called “Bijlmer Museum” (Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer 2014). Residents who were forced to move out as a result of demolition or renovation were entitled to a suitable and affordable home in Bijlmermeer. Just like in the rest of Amsterdam, “urban renewal candidates” went ahead of all the other dwelling seekers in the municipality. Therefore, they could also move to another part of the city, if they preferred to. In addition, they received the standard €5,500 to cover the cost of relocation (2019 prices). About two-third of the residents stayed within the city-district (Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer 2014).

Usually, the rent of the new dwelling is higher than the previous dwelling. Therefore, national rental subsidy was an important instrument in facilitating urban renewal. In Amsterdam, the large social housing sector provides relocation possibilities both within and outside the urban renewal area. Lower income households were able to move to new social housing and receive national rental subsidy. Middle income households were able to buy a house in Bijlmermeer or elsewhere. In this way, the institutional context facilitated the urban renewal process.

#### ***4.7 Increased Satisfaction with the Neighbourhood***

There has been an enormous increase in resident satisfaction within Bijlmermeer neighbourhood between 2001 and 2013 (see Table 2). In Bijlmer Centre, the satisfaction with the neighbourhood increased from 5.4 in 2001 to 6.8 in 2013 and 2017 (on a scale from 1 to 10), while the eastern part showed an increase from 5.9 in 2001 to 7.2 in 2013 and 7.1 in 2017. During the same period, the Amsterdam average increased from 6.9 in 2001 to 7.4 in 2013 and 7.5 in 2017. While the neighbourhood satisfaction is not yet near the Amsterdam average, the increase is substantial. In addition, the satisfaction with and the maintenance of the dwellings increased. This does not imply that all problems are solved. For instance, there is still a lot of dissatisfaction with the amount of garbage on the streets. Unemployment has also fallen sharply from 32 to 10% in 2009 (Boer 2012). Residents are also feeling safer and the drug nuisance has fallen sharply. In 2009, only 22% of the residents said that they were inconvenienced by drug nuisance. In 1999, this percentage was almost twice that of 2009 (39%). Residents feel safer than they did at the start of renewal project (Boer 2012).

The rest of the city did not stand still during the renewal operation. People outside Bijlmermeer have also started feeling safer and incomes have increased. One of

**Table 2** Satisfaction with the neighbourhood, 1 = very dissatisfied, 10 = very satisfied. *Source* Gemeente Amsterdam en Amsterdamse Federatie van Woningcorporaties (2020)

	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017
Bijlmer Centre	5.4	5.9	6.3	6.8	6.8
Bijlmer East	5.9	6.3	6.7	7.2	7.1
Amsterdam	6.9	7.1	7.3	7.4	7.5

the reasons why the difference still remains with the rest of Amsterdam is because ongoing gentrification in the city areas that were built before the Second World War. These areas increased in popularity and the number of high- and middle-income dwellers have steadily increased.

(1) Urban revitalization and transformation in Amsterdam after 2010

The economic crisis had an enormous impact on the urban revitalization process in Bijlmermeer and the Western Garden Cities. Most projects are a mix of social rental and market. Since 2008, the sale of new dwellings has decreased, especially in areas with low market pressure, also affecting mixed projects in urban renewal. In addition, the demand for owner-occupied homes dwindled in Bijlmermeer. Therefore, the construction of 2500 homes in Bijlmermeer was postponed to a later date (showing the dependence on the market situation). In the meantime, temporary solutions such as temporary student housing were applied. The general trend in urban revitalization after 2010 is towards less demolition and more renovation. An important goal is to make the housing stock more energy efficient by insulation and the use of solar energy.

Another decision that was taken during the crisis was not to demolish the last old high-rise flat Kleiburg (500 apartments). Instead, the flat was sold to a Consortium. People could buy their own flat and renovate it themselves (Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer 2014). The exteriors of the high-rise flats were renovated by NH Architects and won the Mies van der Rohe Prize in 2017, in Barcelona. The first phase of the Kleiburg renovation started in 2013. At that time, during the housing market crisis, the sale prices of Kleiburg were €1,000 per square meter. After 2014, Amsterdam experienced a fast recovery of the housing market and demand growth in all sectors, along with Bijlmermeer. Since then, the sale prices of the Kleiburg flats have at least doubled.

(2) A new phase of Urban renewal: Development Neighbourhoods (*ontwikkelbuurten*)

In 2017, the municipality of Amsterdam and the housing associations started a new program for development neighbourhoods. In recent decades, much has been invested in recent decades in urban renewal, and neighbourhood approach in the neighbourhoods of Western Garden Cities, Southeast, and North, yet this does not appear to be sufficient for sustainable improvements of in the quality of homes, living environment, facilities, liveability, the socio-economic position of residents, and the ability to optimally benefit from developments in neighbouring ('new') areas.

Certainly, considerable amount of social and physical work still remains to be done in the neighbourhoods where renewal has been delayed or postponed due to the crisis (like Bijlmermeer), there is still a considerable social and physical task. For the period 2019–2022, the municipality aims to invest €10 million per year in the development neighbourhoods. Two neighbourhoods in Bijlmermeer are part of this program.

The goal of the new program is:

- Upgrading the quality of homes, living environment, and built facilities.
- Improving the liveability of the neighbourhood (public space, cleanliness, safety).
- Mitigating the socio-economic position of the neighbourhood and its residents.
- Linking urban development areas with strategic neighbourhood development.
- Improvement of the energy quality (sustainability) of the houses.

For Bijlmermeer, it is clear that the liveability of the area has increased since the urban renewal from 1992. But the socio-economic position of the residents has not changed considerably. Unemployment has decreased, but it is still relatively higher than other neighbourhoods in Amsterdam. In addition, the education level of the population is lower than the average.

In practice, we see that the gap between supply and demand for jobs in Amsterdam Southeast is not optimal. To bridge this gap, employers from Southeast and the municipality of Amsterdam are joining hands to develop a job plan for Southeast. Several large employers are active there with many vacancies in the labour-intensive services sector (Gemeente Amsterdam 2019).

## 5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the activities of housing associations and municipality in Amsterdam's urban revitalization schemes against the backdrop of regime changes in national and local housing policy. Housing associations and municipality played an essential role in the urban restructuring of Bijlmermeer. The Bijlmermeer case shows that urban revitalization and mixed income development resulted in increased socio-economic mix, higher satisfaction with dwelling and neighbourhood, decreased crime rates, and lower unemployment. Crucial in the success of Bijlmermeer was the availability of national housing allowance, priority for urban renewal candidates, and financial compensation for residents who had to move because of the urban renewal. This means displacement did not take place on the scale as we see, for instance, in the United States. Roughly two-third of the residents found a (new) home in Bijlmermeer again and one-third used their urban renewal priority status to find a dwelling elsewhere. Moreover, it is important to note that after the urban renewal operation, roughly 56% of the housing stock in Bijlmermeer is still owned by housing associations. For Bijlmermeer, the liveability of the area has increased since the urban renewal from 1992. But the socio-economic position of the residents lags behind. Unemployment has decreased, but it is still relatively higher than other

neighbourhoods in Amsterdam. In addition, the education level of the population is lower than the average. Certainly, considerable amount of social and physical work still remains to be done in Bijlmermeer.

In Amsterdam as a whole, the size of the stock owned by housing associations decreased from 58% in 1995 to 41% in 2019, allowing for more tenure mix in neighbourhoods. This decrease was supported by municipality, housing associations, and tenants. However, the affordable housing stock decreased faster than the number of low-income households last years. Now, both the municipality and the housing associations want to increase the social housing stock again.

From 2008, the credit crisis caused a dramatic slump in new house and existing house sales and created financing problems for homebuyers and developers, including the housing associations. The EU ruling of 2009 added restrictions to the eligible tenant groups for social housing where state support is involved. The Netherlands is a unique example of a social housing sector paying to the state instead of receiving money from the state (excluding rent allowances). The landlord levy, which is mainly aimed at housing associations, increased to €2 billion per year in 2018. All this points to a smaller social housing sector that caters to a smaller target group. The new Housing Act of 2015 has resulted in a sharp divide between social and commercial activities of housing associations. In the long run, they will sell off the last ones and go back to their core: housing for low-income groups.

The recent national policy measures will make it more difficult for housing associations to carry out urban revitalization. For instance, the strict separation of market and social housing will hinder mixed projects and the new European guidelines will prevent the middle-income groups from moving into social housing in the urban revitalization areas. In addition, the landlord levy from 2014 has severely limited the investment capacity of housing associations. This will have a negative influence on investment in new construction, renovation, and sustainability. Given the enormous pressure on the Amsterdam housing market from 2014 onwards, market parties in all segments are also interested in investing in urban renewal areas. This was not the case during the crisis.

It is still too early to tell the long-term effects of the new Housing Act on new developments, because it was enacted in July 2015. In the meantime, it is clear that urban renewal is an ongoing process. The municipality and the housing associations have started a new policy of development neighbourhoods in 2017, including (again) parts of Bijlmermeer. How the new national policies will work out for urban renewal on a local scale in the future remains to be seen.

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# From “Politique de la Ville” to “Renouvellement Urbain”: Paradigm Shifts of Urbanism in Plaine Saint Denis, Paris



Natsuki Kawaguchi

**Abstract** This chapter aims to examine the paradigm shifts in urbanism and urban policy in France. It also aims to illustrate the ways “peripheries” (*banlieue*) were formed and transformed. First, we trace the transformation of French peripheries, with special focus on *Plaine Saint Denis*, an old industrial district in the north of Paris. Second, we examine a series of French urban policies that are inseparably intertwined with urbanism. By doing so, we aim to throw light on the political measures that have been taken to address the socioeconomic problems in the peripheries. Third, we focus on the concept of “participatory urbanism”, which has recently gained currency in France. The concept has been applied in certain renovation projects conducted in deteriorated districts.

**Keywords** French urban policy (Politique de la Ville) · Periphery (Banlieue) · Participatory urbanism · Plaine Saint Denis

## 1 Introduction

It is generally accepted that French cities differ from those of Anglo-Saxon ones in terms of physical structure and planning. In other words, the middle and upper classes live in interior urban areas, whereas the working-class lives in the peripheral areas (*banlieue*). This is also true of most areas of Paris, with the exception of the peripheral areas in the city’s eastern region. This form of division is not simply due to the fact that, historically, castle walls had created distinctions between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ of French cities but also due to principles of urbanism that are uniquely French. These attitudes are largely a result of Georges Haussmann’s renovation of Paris, which is also described as “Haussmannisation”.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, “Haussmannisation” led to the displacement of a significant number of factory workers and slum dwellers,

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whereby most were displaced into the periphery of Paris (Harvey 2003). Furthermore, following the Second World War, the peripheries of Paris became the catalyst of economic growth. Numerous high-density social housing blocks (*grand ensemble*) were constructed in the peripheries by the French State. This was essentially an interventionist project aimed at providing housing for the working class. The peripheries were later occupied by immigrant workers from Portugal and the Maghreb region of North Africa. During the period of high economic growth, the peripheries in Paris were regarded as the catalysts of prosperity and economic growth, and such a perspective influenced urbanism and urban policy to a significant extent.

However, since the late 1960's, the role of the peripheries and their significance in terms of urbanism have changed. Owing to the deindustrialization and the following economic crisis of the early 1970's, Parisian peripheries experienced significant decline. Socioeconomic problems, such as unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, became more entrenched in the social housing blocks. In fact, these problems plague Parisian peripheries even today. Since the 1980's, French urban policies (*Politique de la Ville*) have sought to address the social problems entrenched in the peripheries. However, the problems have only intensified over time.

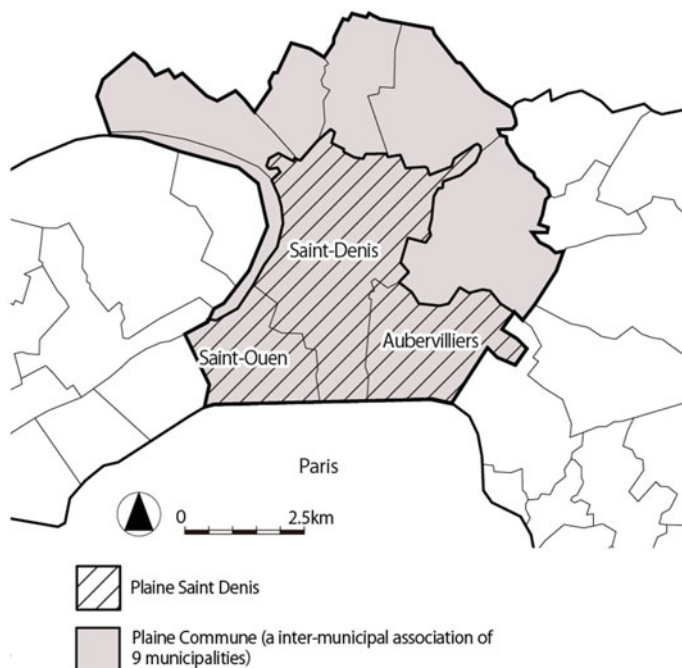
This chapter throws light on the ways in which Parisian peripheries have changed over time and examines the political measures that have been taken to address the problems in the peripheries. To this end, the chapter focuses on *Plaine Saint Denis*, an old industrial district located in the north of Paris. The chapter also focuses on some of the renovation projects. Notably, these projects involved citizen participation and, therefore, were markedly different from the earlier projects, which were based on orthodox urbanism. The newer projects promoted equality between the residents, the architect or the urban planner and urban policy administrator. As a result, urbanisation came to be a collaborative endeavour. These projects actively aimed to address the long-standing social problems in urban spaces, especially in the peripheries. More importantly, these projects question the principle itself of orthodox urbanism. They aim not only to alleviate the long-standing social problems but to create an alternative approach to urbanism.

## 2 The Urban Transformation Processes of Plaine Saint Denis

The Plaine Saint Denis area encompasses three cities situated close to Paris: Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers, and Saint-Ouen (Fig. 1). Plaine Saint Denis is an industrialised area, and its efficient transport system consists of canals and railways. As a result, Plaine Saint Denis has been an important industrial centre in France. This section provides a brief overview of Plaine Saint Denis' spatial transformation.

The department of Seine Saint Denis, including Plaine Saint Denis, adopted industrialization in the mid-nineteenth century. In particular, Plaine Saint Denis and Pantin, a city located to the east of Aubervilliers, emerged as important industrial centres. The





**Fig. 1** Plaine saint denis area. *Source* Drawn by the author

construction of the railways and the strategic location of the Saint Denis and Ourcq canals strengthened the region's industrial development. A number of large-scale factories and warehouses were constructed along the canals and the railways. Moreover, the motor industry and the machine industry developed significantly during the 1920's and 1930's, and this further strengthened industrial development in the region (Katz 2003). For instance, Citroën constructed two of its factories in Saint Denis in 1920; the factories employed as many as 4900 workers.

In addition to factories and warehouses, the region also had housing facilities for industrial workers. Most workers resided in small houses (*pavillon*), or in private, low-rent housing facilities (*HBM = Habitation à bon marché*). Notably, the construction of public housing projects in the region began only after the 1920's. Therefore, Plaine Saint Denis was as an industrial district, as well as a working-class town (Fourcaut 2006). The working class greatly influenced the culture of Plaine Saint Denis during the 1930's. In fact, Plaine Saint Denis was known as “the red periphery” (*banlieue rouge*), as it served a base for the French Communist Party (*PCF = Parti Communiste français*) and the labour movement (Bacqué and Fol 1996; Isobe 2003).

Following the Second World War, France experienced a period of rapid economic growth; this period is commonly referred to as *trente glorieuses*. During this period, France adopted the socio-economic principles of Fordism, and this paved the way for

a culture based on mass-production and mass-consumption. This in turn led to rapid economic growth. In order to sustain this culture, France required a large number of motivated workers.<sup>1</sup> As a result, France also required a large number of housing projects, especially for industrial workers. Therefore, the French State undertook the construction of a large number of social housing projects (*HLM = Habitation à loyer modéré*), as well as high-density social housing blocks (*grand ensemble*).

The *HLMs* constructed during this period were high-rise constructions with very few decorative elements. The *HLMs* were designed to achieve the following two objectives. First, in keeping with the principles of modernism, they were built to embody and encourage rationality and comfort (Le Corbusier 1946). As a result, the *HLMs* were adequately spacious; they had essential equipment and also received ample daylight. They were also systematically arranged in form of blocks. Second, the *HLMs* were designed to accommodate as many workers as possible in order to drive the country's economic growth. Consequently, the French State began to focus more on housing quantity and the average cost per building was reduced after 1955 (Mori 2014). In other words, the pursuit of quality and social reform was superseded by the pursuit of economic rationality.

### 3 The Emergence of Socioeconomic Problems in Peripheries and “French Urban Policy (*Politique de la Ville*)”

Between the late-1960's and the early-1970's, Plaine Saint Denis experienced significant changes. As Fordism matured, manufacturing was outsourced to countries that had only recently adopted industrialisation. This was because the cost of labour was lower in these countries. As a result, several cities in Western countries experienced deindustrialization, and Plaine Saint Denis, too, was transformed into an industrial wasteland.

In addition, the high-density social housing blocks were plagued by a number of socioeconomic problems during the late 1960's. Unemployment, in particular, increased during this period. In addition, growing poverty and violence in the form of vandalism forced the State to decide against constructing more high-density social housing blocks. The State conveyed this decision in the Ministerial Circular dated March 21, 1973 (Fourcaut et al. 2007; Hinokidani 2008).

Economic growth was especially low during the latter half of the 1970s, and this worsened the socioeconomic problems in the peripheries. High-density housing blocks and the peripheries of major cities, including Plaine Saint Denis, faced severe poverty. The peripheries in this region no longer exemplified modernist ideals; in addition, the peripheries could not sustain the workers' movement.

The peripheries still face a number of socioeconomic problems; in fact, these problems are mainly concentrated in the peripheries. Disparities between the urban

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, migration of Portugal/Algerian/Moroccan and internal migration.

areas and peripheries have grown, and the peripheries continue to be stigmatized. In addition, the French society has also adopted a seemingly anti-immigrant attitude. However, the French State has not overlooked these problems. During the 1970's, young immigrants in major French cities frequently protested these issues, and the protests brought these issues to the State's attention. The State came to take the initiative in addressing the peripheral problems described below under the banner of “French urban policy” (*Politique de la Ville*).

Why were these socioeconomic problems addressed under the banner of urban policy (*Politique de la Ville*)? In other words, why were socioeconomic problems in the peripheries not treated as ethnicity-related problems? Why were they regarded as spatial problems even though they affected a large number of immigrant workers? This could be explained by the importance accorded to the principle of *laïcité* (“secularism”) in France. For instance, all individuals are considered equals in France, and citizens are typically very aware of their “social contract” with the French State. Moreover, the French State does not officially prioritize any particular ethnic group or religious value (Naito 1996). In addition, for the French State, the socioeconomic problems in the peripheries were not a result of the actions of any ethnic group; they were a result of the ways in which the urban space was organized. In France, urban planning is considered as a political key measure.

The workings of French urban policy (*Politique de la Ville*) are shown in Table 1. In general, the focus of French urban policy has shifted from social development to economic development (Donzelot 2006; Kawaguchi 2013) (Table 1). At first, the goal of French urban policy was the amelioration of the poor living conditions and the alleviation of social inequality. During the 1980s, French urban policy focused on the social development of districts. In particular, the policy sought to address the periphery-urban divide by encouraging citizen participation. Since the 1990s, the Ministry of Urban Affairs has increasingly institutionalized the implementation of urban policy. The Ministry focused on the ‘Local affirmative action’ (*discrimination positive*), and this involved generous public investment in districts faced with socioeconomic problems. Public services were especially made available to the most affected peripheries in the districts.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the “Urban Sensible Zone” (*ZUS = Zone urbaine sensible*) was established in 1996. *ZUS*'s are districts with serious socioeconomic problems and most of them are located in peripheries. It can be considered as the typical and symbolic district of French urban policy.

However, French urban policy changed significantly during the latter half of the 1990s and early 2000s because of the absence of the effective solution. Firstly, its focus shifted from the social development to the economic development. This approach involved the physical upgrade of deteriorated districts in order to attract private investment<sup>3</sup> and new residents in the middle/upper classes. In addition, private sectors were considered as the good partners for investment.

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, “Priority Educational Zone” (*ZEP = Zone d'éducation prioritaire*) was one of the special zones. (It was established in 1981).

<sup>3</sup> For instance, the “Urban Duty-Free Zone” (*ZFU = zone franche urbaine*) was established in 1997.

**Table 1** Workings of “French urban policy”

1973	The ministerial circular dated March 21, 1973: A halt to construct more high-density social housing blocks
1981	A riot in <i>Vénissieux</i> , a periphery of Lyon The ‘social development of districts’ program started
1990	A riot in <i>Vaulx-en-Velin</i> , a periphery of Lyon
1991	Establishment of the ministry of urban affairs
1994	Enactment of ‘grand urban development project’
1996	Establishment of ‘urban sensible zone’ (ZUS)
1997	Establishment of the ‘urban duty-free zone’ (ZFU)
1999	Establishment of ‘new grand urban development project’ (GPV) Establishment of ‘urban renewal operations’ (ORU)
2000	Enactment of ‘law SRU’
2003	Enactment of ‘law borloo’

Source Donzelot (2006), Hinokidani (2008)

It was the social mix that this approach set as the goal with the argument that it was necessary to defeat the “culture of poverty” spreading in disadvantaged districts and to integrate abandoned people in districts in ‘normal condition’ (Donzelot 2006). The “Grand urban development project” (*GPU = Grands projets urbains*) was established in 1994 as a concrete measure, and this was followed by the “New grand urban development project” (*GPV = Grands projets de ville*) in 1999. In addition, the “Urban renewal operations” (*ORU = Opérations de renouvellement urbain*) was also established in the same year.

Since 2000, a series of measures were implemented under the banner of “Urban Renewal” (*Renouvellement urbain*) in accordance with “law SRU” (*loi SRU*). According to Bonneville (2004), ‘Urban renewal’ strategy had a very ambiguous notion and objectives. It extended the policy target areas whereas the prior French Urban Policy mainly targeted deteriorated social housing blocks in peripheries. It came to cover peri-central sectors in decline or unutilized districts. These newly targeted areas had much more economic potential and investments there were accelerated.

However, not surprisingly, the urban renewal projects mentioned above were criticized as entrepreneurial and as acts of gentrification (Bonneville 2004; Garnier 2010). Bonneville (2004) pointed out that the success of this approach represents the exclusion of residents, activities or sectors that are put in a vulnerable market position from the renewal process and renewed space. Garnier (2010) suggests that “the residents are never mixed but displaced”. In fact, this is a common global phenomenon.

In 2003, under the new urban law “Borloo Urban Renewal Act” (*loi Borloo*), Urban French Policy adopted a new approach that differs greatly from *Renouvellement urbain*. The latter approach concerned not the wide-ranging target of “law SRU” but also high-density social housing blocks in peripheries with serious socioeconomic problems that were mostly classified as “sensible districts” (*quartiers sensibles*). In

terms of the restrictive target area, it had the same attitude as Urban French Policies in 1980s and early 1990s (Bonneville 2004). It involved the vast demolition and reconstruction of social housing.

However, eventually they faced the same dilemma and question: First, does this type of approach itself stigmatize the targeted districts?<sup>4</sup> Second, can orthodox approach really change deteriorated districts and solve socioeconomic problems despite the long-time absence of an effective solution?

As described above, French Urban Policy has tried to address socioeconomic problems in peripheries, taking varied approaches. It has changed focus points or political measures over time, but it has been always closely intertwined with urbanism.

#### **4 The Urban Transformation of Plaine Saint Denis in the Paradigm Shift of Urbanism: 1970–1990**

Plaine Saint Denis lost its status as an industrial centre. Deindustrialization involved the withdrawal of factories and companies, and this led to the creation of industrial wastelands. It also resulted in decreased production and unemployment in several countries in the West. In 1986, only 13 companies that employ more than 100 workers remained in Plaine Saint Denis. There were as many as 200 industrial wastelands in 1990 (Giblin 2009).

However, Plaine Saint Denis faced a turning point in the 1990s, when Patrick Braouezec became mayor of Saint-Denis (1991–1994). In 1993, the Cabinet decided that the main stadium for the 1998 FIFA World Cup would be constructed at *Cornillon*, in the centre of Saint-Denis. Led by Braouezec, Saint-Denis accepted the implantation and offered some conditions through negotiations with the State. As a result, a new station was constructed for the Regional Express Network (RER); the A1 line of the expressway was refurbished; the metro was expanded. In addition, the “charter on employment” was established to provide employment in the area. Braouezec tried to use this implantation as an opportunity to improve the infrastructure and alleviate unemployment (Braouezec 1999; Payot 2006). In addition, along with the implantation of the stadium, deteriorated districts in Saint Denis and Aubervilliers were renewed by means of GPU.

The completion of the stadium and the staging of the 1998 FIFA World Cup significantly changed the landscape of Saint Denis. Private investments transformed *Cornillon* and its surroundings into a business district. A number of commercial facilities and office buildings were also constructed in the region (Mori 2016) (Fig. 2). From the latter half of the 1990s, Plaine Saint Denis was reframed as a model of national/regional development strategy, leaning on entrepreneurial urban renewal to trump interurban competition. With progress in urban transformation involving

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<sup>4</sup> Patrick Braouezec, Mayor of Saint Denis from 1991 to 1994 also pointed out this dilemma. It was one of the reasons why he chose an ‘entrepreneurial’ urban renewal strategy in Saint Denis. We examine it in the following section.



**Fig. 2** The stadium and office buildings in *Cornillon*. *Source* Photo taken by author (24 September 2011)

construction of new housings, population and employment increased during the 2000s (Figs. 3 and 4).

The image of Plaine Saint Denis has also changed a lot. New positive images were given to this area, such as successful social integration symbolized by the victory in the FIFA World Cup 1998. The peripheries in the region were also regarded as hopeful spaces (Payot 2006). However, this area also had to confront new problems. First, a mismatch in the regional labour market emerged. In many cases, newly created employment required skills and knowledge in the tertiary sector, so it was difficult for a lot of less skilled, unemployed people in the peripheries to get jobs. Second, in effect, most residents evacuated the neighbouring districts of Cornillon, although the total population increased.<sup>5</sup> As Garnier (2010) pointed out, the residents were not mixed, but replaced. Moreover, the socioeconomic gap between the renewed districts and nearby social housing blocks was expanded (Giblin 2009). These new problems were a result of French urban policy and urban planning.

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<sup>5</sup> Based on a September 2011 interview with Antoin Rogé, a policy administrator of Plaine Commune (an inter-municipal association). According to this, there had been about 7000 population in the neighbourhood of Collignon, whereas 20,000 population in 2010. More importantly, almost all of the former residents were moved out.



**Fig. 3** Changes in population and employment in Plaine Saint Denis. *Source* INSEE



**Fig. 4** A new housing in a run-down block. *Source* Photo taken by author (24 September 2011)

## 5 Alternative Approaches to the Peripheries: A Brief Overview

In the context of orthodox French urbanism, it has always been urban planners or other specialists who have been allowed to produce space. Mass construction in the period of rapid economic growth following the Second World War and their

deconstruction since 1973 are just two examples of the attitude of French urbanism. Furthermore, the urban renewal projects in recent years follow it. Urbanism is the unilateral designing of “appropriate” space (Paquot 1999). This section focuses on alternative approaches to peripheries.

Lucien Kroll, a pioneer architect, has suggested the concept of “rehabilitation” (*réhabilitation*) as an alternative. He insists that it is necessary to involve residents in order to produce space. “Rehabilitation” is similar to the concept of ‘renovation’. It is a new approach to architecture and urbanization. It involves physically renovating a building or a district without deconstruction, and, at the same time, it includes giving back honour and bestowing civil rights to buildings that are isolated from urban landscapes and society (Hallauer 2015). It is in direct opposition to the large-scale de/reconstruction approach, irrespective of whether the latter involves urban social policy or urban renewal projects. In addition, the idea of participatory urbanism is gaining currency in the fields of architecture and urban planning. It places emphasis on the participation of residents. Recently, France has adopted the concept of “rehabilitation” and participatory urbanism.

A renovation project implemented in Boulogne sur Mer would be a good example. It is a project to renovate “*De Transition*”, a parcel in a social housing block in *Cité Chemin Vert*. “*De Transition*” consists of 60 housing units, which were built in 1972, and accommodate low-income families that are on public assistance (*RSA*). From 2010 to 2013, it was renovated by collaboration between Patrick Bouchain, a well-known architect, his colleagues in “*Construire*”, and the residents (Bouchain 2016).

Bouchain’s projects typically embody the motto as ‘construct in an alternative way’ (*construire autrement*) (Bouchain 2006). He and his colleagues directly approach social housing blocks, workers housings, and former industrial districts in the peripheries of major cities or traditional industrial cities, which deteriorated during the process of socioeconomic change. While it can be said that they follow the traditional pattern of French urbanism in terms of spatial approach to any socioeconomic problem, they try to renovate the space using alternative methods. They never adopt top-down methods.

First, their emphasis is on discussion between residents, architects and policy administrators about how to transform housings or districts. They also focus on citizen participation. That is, the non-specialized residents are given the liberty to participate in the process of conceiving and constructing space. Architects and urban planners are expected to support the residents.

Second, it is an individualized form of renovation, which respects the history of the neighbourhood and the residents’ decisions. Unlike orthodox urbanism, this new approach aims to “go beyond the norms” (*dénormer*). It could be understood as an assertion of departure from the old paradigm of urbanism.



## 6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the Parisian peripheries’ spatial transformation in the context of French urbanism and French Urban policies, with special focus on Plaine Saint Denis. We reviewed a series of French urban policies that are inseparably intertwined with urbanism. Since 1970s, various measures were taken to address the socioeconomic problems in the peripheries, shifting the focus from social development to economic development. However, all these measures within the framework of orthodox urbanism and urban policy have not been able to provide a crucially effective solution.

Recent alternative approaches such as “participatory urbanism” question the attitude itself of orthodox urbanism and attempt to break the periphery-urban deadlock, which is largely a result of orthodox urbanism. They are primarily ‘experimental’ attempts, and these approaches are not without challenges. For example, how can we encourage the residents to participate and collaborate with architects, planners, and administrators? However, it must be remembered that this new movement arose as a critical response to orthodox urbanism, and this is an encouraging fact.

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# From Confinement to Dispersion: The Changing Geographies of Homeless Policies and the Last Housing Safety Net in Tokyo



Toshio Mizuuchi and Tohru Nakayama

**Abstract** Japan's last urban housing safety net has undergone several important evolutions since the late 1990s, with the gradual establishment of homelessness policies. Prior to that, there had only been two options for people to get out of homelessness—either by earning a living as a day labourer in the so-called *yoseba*, a flophouse district developed in metropolitan areas, or by entering a welfare facility, such as a shelter under the Livelihood Protection Act or an emergency hospital that was available to people in poor health. However, once the homelessness policy was implemented, self-reliance support centres, lodging facilities for welfare recipients (Article 2.7 of the Social Welfare Law) and even private rental apartments became available to the homeless. In Tokyo's case, Shinjuku became a new hub for homelessness assistance in the late 1990s and eventually an important base for the newly consolidated housing safety net, along with Tokyo's *yoseba*—San'ya. In addition, especially since the late 2000s, new facilities and assisted apartments for the homeless were dispersed throughout the metropolitan area, and the containment of “visible poverty” into concentrated venues began to weaken. However, the increase in service hub functions in the western subcentre of Tokyo must be recognised as a geographic feature of this new housing safety net. On the other hand, Osaka's service hub is strongly confined to its *yoseba*, Kamagasaki, which continues to serve as an important hub for the housing safety net, stifling gentrification. This led to the new housing safety net playing a different role in Tokyo and Osaka due to differences in social resources and built environment at the local scale.

**Keywords** Homeless assistance · Livelihood protection · Day-labourers · Housing safety net · Tokyo

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## 1 Development of the Post-war Housing Safety Net

As Kasai (1999) pointed out, “a city that does not support rough sleepers and does not provide exiting-homelessness assistance, is not a real city”. What is it, then, that constitutes a “real city”? The housing safety net is, for those who have lost their homes and have been forced to sleep rough, the last chance to find a secure shelter. This chapter not only focuses on how Japan’s rapidly growing housing safety net has been formed; it also pays attention to its relation to gentrification, a phenomenon considered as strongly contrasting with the housing safety net, while following an urban theory in pursuit of the “real city”. A tentative outlook on Japan’s urban condition will be provided by asking the following question: do the new urban spaces created by the housing safety net function as bulwark to gentrification? Or do they function as accelerators of gentrification by containing homelessness, as has been argued by critiques of the services industry for homeless people? (Willse 2016).

In the case of Japan, this housing safety net developed as a welfare policy rather than a housing policy in the 1960s and the 1980s, a time of strong welfare interventions that saw high economic growth and consequent population growth. According to Iwata (2005), it consisted of a set of special programmes that were enacted only in the largest cities. These programmes included (1) relief and rehabilitation,<sup>1</sup> (2) extra ad hoc support programmes<sup>2</sup> providing food and shelter in case of emergency, and (3) *yoseba* policies consisting of interventions into day-labour markets and cheap hostels that were provided in confined spaces. Until the 1990s, this housing safety net only operated in the large metropolitan authorities of Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya and Osaka, as part of a residual welfare system by using their own budget (Kiener and Mizuuchi 2017).

However, these residual welfare functions did not work well in the 1990s, when homeless people began to proliferate in the public space, and, after much struggle, they shifted significantly to homelessness policies in the 2000s (Mizuuchi 2003a, 2009), introducing the principle of “self-reliance”. Furthermore, in the 2010s, a policy to support their self-reliance was promoted with the labelling “needy person”. The last housing safety net was also placed firmly in the law, and the remaining welfare was finally implemented as a general measure.

These changes are also reflected in the geographies of the housing safety net. Until the early 1990s, the time of residual welfare, this safety net was confined to the aforementioned facilities and *yoseba* (Aoki 1998, Nishizawa 1995). However, since the 2000s the housing safety net has diversified, and while self-reliance assistance centres for homeless people, temporary shelters and lodging facilities<sup>3</sup> emerged as

<sup>1</sup> These facilities are designed under the Livelihood Protection Act, Article 38. This shelter assistance offers only gender-based assistance to selected people who qualify for a particular facility. Hospitals that provide to people who fell sick by the wayside are also regarded by the specific law as shelters.

<sup>2</sup> In contrast to relief and rehabilitation facilities, these programmes are not provided by the Livelihood Protection Act but are created by municipalities outside of the welfare framework provided by the central government.

<sup>3</sup> Lodging facilities are run under Article 2 of the Social Welfare Act.

transitional housing, private low-rent apartments revived as the so called “welfare apartments”, providing welfare and livelihood services to their residents. Existing vacant housing could be put to new use, triggering a redensification of the existing housing in inner-city areas. The development of the housing safety net generated a new demand that countered population decline and the hollowing-out of inner-city housing.

Transitional housing is not only located in historically deprived areas like *yoseba* but can be also found close to thriving city centre areas, as it was already observed with “service hubs” (DeVerteuil 2006). Poverty in its most extreme form could be observed in the many rough sleepers or tents and huts that were frequent in public spaces around the year 2000, when the number of homeless people peaked. However, after homeless policies had been in force for about ten years, these landscapes of extreme poverty gradually disappeared. Furthermore, the appearance of *yoseba*, to which extreme poverty had primarily been confined, began to change, increasingly resembling common areas. Poverty became difficult to observe. Today, welfare apartments and lodging facilities are scattered throughout the city, visually concealing extreme housing poverty (Marr 2015).

New service hubs that supported the housed poor developed abruptly under the new conditions provided by the Homeless Self-reliance Support Act (hereafter “Homeless Act”) of 2002, which was replaced by the Needy Persons Self-reliance Support Act (hereafter “Needy Persons Act”) of 2015 and reinforced by the Housing Safety Net Act of 2017. The core issue of these acts was not the visibility of poverty but the implementation of adequate housing in local communities and the shift towards social businesses run by non-profit organisations (NPOs) or social welfare entities and able to support housing.

Based on the theoretical framework set out in the Preface of this book, the restructuring of Japan’s housing safety net can be considered a typical example of a shift from the *second plane* (state-led economics) to the *third plane* (voluntary welfare), in an urban environment that is strongly shaped by the *first plane* (market economy). It could be partly seen as a day labour movement in the *fourth plane*. Here, however, we reserve the mainstream interpretation of the flow from the second to the third plane as a reflection of the government’s neoliberalisation (Hirayama 2010). The social movement agendas of NPOs, which produced pre-eminent policy initiatives of central government officials and parliamentarians, are strong forces for developments in the *third plane*. This also contributed to a geographical change from confinement to dispersion of the housed poor, which will be discussed in the context of Tokyo in this chapter.

## 2 Before Homeless Assistance: From Labourer Movements to NPOs

In Japan, the safety net for work and housing was geographically confined to certain urban areas called *yoseba*. Academically, this term was established in the 1980s, followed by the foundation of the Japan Association for the Study of Yoseba in 1987. This term had been used during the Edo period (1603–1868) to describe camps for labourers, which were created by the *bakufu* (shogun’s office or government) to geographically confine and control underclass labourers. It revived to describe places characterised by the spatial vicinity of day-labour markets and flophouses, such as San’ya in Tokyo, Kotobuki in Yokohama, Sasajima in Nagoya and Kamagasaki in Osaka, which are typical examples of modern-day *yoseba*. In these places, derogatively also often referred to as *doya-gai* (“flophouse quarters”), labour and welfare policies—the so-called “*yoseba* policies”—were introduced from the 1960s with the aim to geographically confine day-labour markets.

The *yoseba* became a Mecca for people who engaged in day-labour movements, which sought to break the exploitative structure inherent to day-labour markets and improve working conditions. These movements rapidly gained influence in the 1980s, after activists from the student protests of the 1970s had come to the *yoseba*. Based on an ideology aimed at the liberation of workers, this movement expanded its activities, adopting anarchist ideas and sometimes even extreme violence. During the second half of the 1970s it departed from radical ideologies, focusing on the improvement of labour conditions, campaigning for wage increases, labourer camp improvements and condemning vicious labour sharks. At the same time support for rough sleepers, such as night patrols, distribution of free meals or health support gained traction—mainly by Christian organisations, students and volunteers engaged in these activities.

During the economic crisis of the 1990s the number of day labourers under poor working conditions or forced to sleep rough on the streets, in shacks or tents, increased tremendously due to the rampant unemployment. Facing this situation, the day-labour movement changed its campaign focus from the improvement of employment to the establishment of a livelihood and housing safety net for precarious day labourers. For its operation they founded NPOs, which were based on the Act on Promotion of Specified Non-profit Activities enacted in 1998, giving the day-labour movement a new role.

This development is analysed through the research framework presented in the Preface of this book. The focus is on the role of the day-labour movement’s mission. Its representative struggle was to expel violent labour sharks and had the objective of liberating informal workers—belonging to the *fourth plane*—from the mafia’s rule without yielding to the power of capital in the *first plane*. This can also be interpreted as the seed for a social solidarity economy, which continues in the contemporary employment-securing programmes. However, the economic depression that started in the 1990s and the ageing of day labourers changed the course towards the rapid construction of a safety net relying heavily on assistance from the public and associated with the *third plane*.

The National Diet members drafted the Homeless Act of 2002, which was initiated by the national labourer movement association and by NPOs and passed with the support of all parties. The law had a 10-year validity, extended for five years after 10 years and then for another 10 years in 2017. In both cases, the NPOs took action to move the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and Diet members. The Needy Persons Act, which will be discussed in detail later, was drafted by the cabinet but was also a result of the lobbying of NPOs.

### **3 Evolution of Homeless Policies: From Local Policy Initiatives to a Nationwide Legal Framework**

On the other hand, looking at developments on the government side, the central government first came up with homelessness measures in 1999, and the Homeless Act of 2002 clarified its responsibilities. The term “homelessness” has also been formalised as a new policy target. Formally, it is a *second-plane* movement (for Tokyo, see Marr 2015). Until then, city governments had defined them as “street sleepers”, “rough sleepers”, “persons of no fixed abode” and so on. The ad-hoc measure called ‘extra ad hoc assistance’ without using the Public Assistance Act has been reworked, with the establishment of the Self-reliance Assistance Centre for homeless people as the main pillar. For people of working age, these centres started to function as transitory housing, introducing a concept of achieving ‘self-reliance’ through employment. Many of these facilities were entrusted to social welfare corporations with a long history of collaboration with local governments. In some cases, such as in Kyoto and Nagoya, new social welfare corporations were created for this purpose. Kitakyushu had been initially the only place where NPOs were commissioned, and other designated city governments did not yet have the confidence to entrust the project to NPOs.

In the 1990s and early the 2000s, however, the labour movement and NPOs were at odds with the large, designated city governments, which did not want to use livelihood protection money to actively implement homelessness measures. Court battles were also fought, and the city governments were defeated in review claims and lawsuits alleging non-availability of livelihood protection as a means of exiting homelessness on the grounds of lack of address. Applying livelihood protection was desirable for people of working age with difficulties in obtaining work or for the elderly without sufficient pension rights. With the defeat of the city governments in court cases, especially regarding Osaka’s instance, and a series of notifications from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare urging local governments to expand the application of livelihood protection to homeless people, livelihood protection has been applied to homeless people nationwide. Because it can be applied relatively flexibly, it proliferated especially under city governments, and operated housing welfare support expanded under NPOs and the private sector (Iwata 2010)—a development associated with the *third plane*.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Osaka City Government developed different approaches for the application of livelihood protection to homeless people. In Osaka, flophouses that were converted into apartments, the so-called “supportive houses”, and regular rental apartments were utilised. This type of housing could be realised through the housing allowance of the livelihood protection scheme, which is paid as rent, enabling a form of “housing first”. Meanwhile, in the Tokyo metropolitan region and in other cities such as Yokohama, Kawasaki and Nagoya, livelihood protection was mainly used to house homeless people in transitory housing, such as flophouses and lodging facilities, rather than in ordinary apartments. Only in Osaka lodging facilities were not utilised; instead, only relief and rehabilitation facilities were provided in Kamagasaki through the Airin Policy. Further, public assistance was not available to flophouse residents.

In summary, four major measures played a crucial role as support to exit homelessness: (1) Policies on self-reliance assistance centres for homeless people, (2) transitory housing for public assistance recipients such as lodging facilities and flophouses, (3) “housing first” realized through private apartments, and (4) hospitals and social welfare facilities. According to an estimation,<sup>4</sup> 41,000 people had exited homelessness in 2010, and over 80% realised this through approach (2) and (3). Of course, this is an approximate number; there were also people who continued sleeping rough without seeking support or rejected any form of consultation.<sup>5</sup>

The local governments that directly used the Homeless Act during the 2000s by running self-reliance assistance centres for homeless people were Tokyo Metropolis, Osaka Prefecture and eight designated cities (Sendai, Kawasaki, Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto, Kitakyūshū, Fukuoka and Osaka). As shown in Fig. 1, the budget provided by the Homeless Act was constant from 2003 to 2008; however, the costs of livelihood protection and its recipients increased at the same time, especially in large cities. The number of people who relied on it to exit homelessness is considered a factor that led to this development.

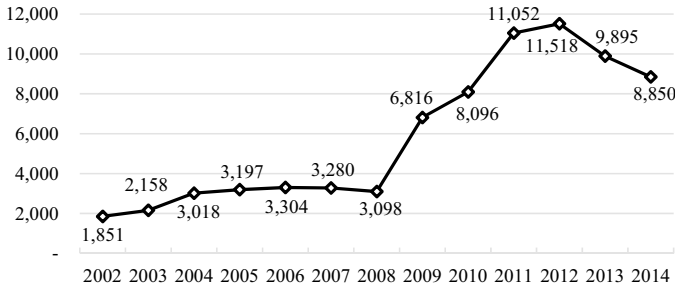
This opened some room for the development of the third sector (Mizuuchi 2020). Self-reliance assistance centres for homeless people were usually run by social welfare corporations without connections to social/citizen movements, with the exception of a very small number that were entrusted to powerful NPOs. However, with the application of livelihood protection to homeless people, some NPOs with a background in social movements emerged, and others began operating transitory housing such as lodging facilities. Nevertheless, the bulk of NPOs managing lodging facilities did not have a social movement background and were new to the housing welfare business (see also Chap. 18). Although the majority had good intentions, aiming to contribute to society, they were accused of running a ‘poverty business’, appropriating an illegitimate amount from the livelihood protection payments.

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<sup>4</sup> The NPO National Network for Homeless Assistance carried out a nationwide survey of counting the number of those exiting homelessness through welfare offices and NPO homeless assistance organisations in 2010. By using this outcome, this NPO estimated the percentage share of the above four routes of exiting homelessness.

<sup>5</sup> Nationwide surveys on the number of rough sleepers in Japan started in 2003. At that time, 25,296 people were counted; in the latest survey of 2018, it was 4977 people.





**Fig. 1** Budget provided by the homeless act (in thousand yen, by fiscal year). *Source* Unpublished documents from the Japanese ministry of health, labour and welfare

The Lehman Brothers shock in the fall of 2008 manifested the homelessness caused by the layoffs of dispatched temporary workers. At the beginning of 2009, a large homeless tent colony for the jobless called *Hakenmura* opened at Hibiya Park, right in the centre of Tokyo, over the New Year’s period in 2009, in order to support the many jobless, homeless temporary workers. This brought homelessness to public attention as a social problem (Mizuuchi 2020); it was generalised not as the homelessness of day labourers but as the homelessness of non-regular employees, and the support for exiting homelessness strengthened the citizen’s movement. Under the administration of the Democratic Party of Japan, which has an affinity with the citizens’ movement of the time, the Regeneration Program for Human Ties, known as *Kizuna* Program (a bonded regeneration project using the Emergency Job Creation Programme Fund) was launched. For five years from 2010, with the central government paying 100% of the cost, outreach and aftercare for homeless people, free meals and shelter operations, consultation corners or open chatting spaces were granted to NPOs through prefectural governments. In the designated cities in the regional area and in some of the core cities, NPOs are now using funds, and homelessness support, which had been largely dependent on livelihood protection outside of major cities, has spread nationwide in the form of increased budgets for homelessness measures, as shown in Fig. 1.

At that point, developments belonging to the *third plane* gained momentum. In 2011 the cabinet office assigned a prominent NPO representative as director of the social inclusion promotion office, gathered motivated central government officials and organised a team for social policy implementation (Mizuuchi 2020). Along with the existing homeless support measures, the Personal Support Model Programme was implemented for a five-year period starting in 2010, providing support in the rehabilitation of needy persons through NPOs. Through these developments, the group of people considered eligible for support was further expanded, and the new term “needy person”, describing this group, was introduced by the Needy Persons Act of 2015. The budget for homeless support previously available through the Homeless Act was provided by the Temporary Livelihood Support Programme, a shelter

programme that is currently operating in Tokyo's 23 wards, 19 of the 20 designated cities and about half of the 48 core cities. In larger cities, city governments do not directly operate these programmes but usually source them out to NPOs, social welfare corporations or social welfare councils.

The number of homeless people sleeping rough or living in tents or huts decreased considerably by the year, eventually falling below 5000—less than 1/5 of their number in peak times. Interview surveys on the living conditions of homeless people<sup>6</sup> confirmed their age, reaching an average of 62 years in 2016, while more than one-third of the respondents had lived out of collecting recyclable goods, such as aluminium cans, for over 10 years. Through these activities, associated with the *fourth plane*, homeless people continued to sleep rough. Some organisations that did not adopt the self-reliance principle promoted by the central government actively protested against banning homeless people from parks, riverbanks, or places under elevated highways, especially in Tokyo (Hayashi 2013, 2015).

In 2017, the Homeless Act was extended for another 10 years, but the actual support programmes for homeless people were transferred to the Needy Persons Act. Local governments were still obliged to formulate or revise basic homeless policies and undertake homeless surveys. However, in order to utilise various acts that provide welfare support, such as the Livelihood Protection Act, to support homeless people, the guiding function of the Homeless Act was strengthened.

## 4 Geographies of Homelessness in Tokyo

In this way, assistance for exiting homelessness has undergone a major transformation since the early 2000s. While the progress of support for homeless people has changed its course towards the *third plane*, in the four cities with major *yoseba*, such as Tokyo and Osaka, service hubs developed through the advance of self-reliance assistance centres for homeless people, transitory facilities utilising livelihood assistance, and livelihood assistance recipients living in private rental apartments. In 2017, the Housing Safety Net Act was revised, and a new concept of “persons in need of stable housing” was introduced by a collaboration between the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation.

In this way, the fast-developing housing safety net led to the emergence of very different geographical arrangements of service distribution in the two most representative cities—Osaka and Tokyo. Different modes that led to a homeless geography of confinement in Osaka and dispersion in Tokyo can be identified.

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<sup>6</sup> The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare conducted interview surveys of homeless people in urban areas in 2003, 2007, 2012 and 2016. The number of respondents was 2100 at the beginning and 1,300 in the latest survey. This survey was conducted according to the basic action programme of the Homeless Act (MHLW 2016).

As Mizuuchi (2003b) showed, there are four main types of deprived areas in Japan: (1) ghettos of the outcast, the so-called *buraku* people; (2) flophouse quarters, inhabited by day labourers; (3) districts predominantly occupied by underclass labourers working in miscellaneous industries; and (4) enclaves of Korean immigrants. While the former two resulted from residential segregation policies in cities during the Edo period, the latter two developed unmediated with industrialisation. Both the historical geographical developments that were determined in the pre-modern era and the modern geographical developments greatly influenced Japan's urban spatial structure. Unlike the industrial and commercial city of Osaka, the imperial capital Tokyo adhered to a policy of dispersing outcast ghettos, while flophouses were concentrated in selected areas of both cities.

However, under the urban policies of 1943, during World War II, Tokyo City and Tokyo Prefecture were merged into the Tokyo Metropolis, and poverty policies started to differ from those of Osaka. While flophouses in Tokyo concentrated in San'ya, their dispersed geography was generally maintained. In Osaka, policies that targeted outcast areas and flophouse quarters were strengthened, and flophouses were especially concentrated in Kamagasaki. The background of these differing policies is that issues concerning the underclass and poverty in Tokyo were not dealt with by the budget of the 23 wards, which had gained considerable independence under the new system, but by the Tokyo Metropolis. In Osaka, however, Osaka City was financially responsible for these policies, and Osaka Prefecture did not intervene.

From the latter half of the 1950s Japan's policies for deprived areas were formulated around slum clearance, public housing and livelihood protection, including unemployed workers in the coal mining industry. These interventions in deprived areas focused especially on family households; areas left out of these policies were the *yoseba* and the enclaves of Korean residents that were labelled "illegal occupation" (Mizuuchi 2006).

*Yoseba* policies did not develop as policies of the central government but were conducted as independent programmes by municipalities. Described by Iwata (2005) as special programmes policies for localised residual welfare interventions, they started in 1962 in Tokyo's San'ya, covering food and accommodation coupons and special working opportunities, and being positioned as extra ad-hoc support programmes. From 1975, a lodging facility located in the Ōta ward, which was 15 km away from the city centre, was used as a shelter for one-night stays. Additionally, housing built on reclaimed land in Tokyo Bay has been used since 1976 as temporary accommodation in times where day labour is rare, such as during the New Year holidays or the "Golden Week Holidays" in May.

## 5 Geographies of Tokyo's Housing Safety Net

In 1964, when the administrative powers of the 23 special wards were expanded, and general welfare management functions were relegated to them, neither the metropolitan government nor the special ward governments wanted to take initiative

for poverty issues. Among them, the San'ya measures, consisting of extra ad-hoc assistance without using the Livelihood Protection Act, would be run by the special programme of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, while the operation of livelihood protection and homelessness measures was a prerogative of the Collective body for promoting wellbeing benefit programmes in the 23 wards. The union was run jointly by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the governments of the 23 wards. Therefore, San'ya policies were not run directly by the Taitō and Arakawa wards, in which the *yoseba* was located, but relied on the metropolitan government by the newly invented name of *Johoku* (literally meant the “northern castle town”). Under this system, Tokyo's most extreme poverty issue was dealt with and confined to San'ya and temporary shelters on reclaimed land in Tokyo Bay. The problems of Tokyo's poorest were set to be dealt with in the area and in the temporary prefabricated shelters set up on the Tokyo Bay landfill, under the leadership of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. It was managed by a long-established social welfare corporation with a tradition of supporting lodging hostels for vagrants after World War II.

This system was challenged by the sudden increase in the number of homeless people during the 1990s. Around Shinjuku Station's west exit, right in front of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, a cardboard box village emerged, making homelessness a pressing issue. The homeless movement changed as well – from support provided in San'ya, mainly by the day-labour movement, to a citizen's movement led by NPOs that operated primarily in Shinjuku, one of Tokyo's central wards. While the policies were realised by the metropolitan government, the Shinjuku Ward Office took action, starting in 1994 with the clearance of cardboard box shacks and a more proactive use of temporary shelters on reclaimed land in Tokyo Bay. In 1996, the Rough Sleeper Investigation Committee of the Metropolitan and 23 Ward Governments was set up, whose initiatives paved the way for self-reliance assistance centres for homeless people. When Tokyo's homeless policy was subsequently enacted, a framework that fostered dispersion was favoured, stating that “self-reliance assistance centres for homeless people will be established jointly by the metropolitan and ward governments, and located in five different places, which will change in sequential order to ensure the regional balance between the wards”. This policy was also welcomed by some citizen's movements.<sup>7</sup>

In 1997, a fire broke out in the cardboard village around Shinjuku Station's west exit; those who were affected by the fire moved to temporary shelters on reclaimed land in Tokyo Bay, where self-reliance assistance had been introduced. In addition, in the Shinjuku ward, two self-reliance assistance centres for homeless people were set up. The fact that this was not a mere extension of the San'ya policies, concerned with the issues of one small area, but a new city-wide policy, attracted much public attention. Learning the lessons from Shinjuku's experience, four representative NPOs from Shinjuku, San'ya, Kamagasaki and Kitakyūshū took the initiative to move forward

<sup>7</sup> For Kasai, who was the leading figure in the Shinjuku movement, this was a bitter decision—he wanted to respect that the homeless could be independent on the streets. At that time, the movements that collaborated with the government formed NPOs to promote social business, and those who stayed in pure social action groups without forming relations with the government tended to be split between pro- and anti-government (Kasai 1999).

by adopting this self-reliance assistance system coupled with outreach activities and requested that the central government directly invest funds in the largest municipalities (Mizuuchi 2020). After lobbying members of the National Diet and bureaucrats of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Homeless Act was enacted in 2002, focusing on self-reliance through employment and targeting mainly rough sleepers (Kasai 2004). In the face of increasing homelessness, the existing San'ya policies proved to be inefficient and, without addressing this issue, they entered their final stage of *yoseba* (Watanabe 2008).

In San'ya, on the other hand, a part of the day-labour movement gradually began acquiring NPO status in 2000, and started changing their focus to offering services specialized in exiting homelessness, providing former day labourers (who often suffered homelessness) with lodging facilities and an address. Rent was covered by housing assistance and living expenses, such as food, by livelihood assistance; all were provided by the Livelihood Protection Act. In response to the rapidly increasing numbers of elderly homeless people, and in addition to the provision of short-term accommodation, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government added 30% to the maximum amount of housing assistance.<sup>8</sup> This new praxis indirectly supported the housing business of NPOs. Under the new NPOs, which ventured into this housing business, were many who were strongly business-oriented and did not relate to progressive citizen's movements. Since 1998, this type of housing has expanded extensively throughout the Tokyo Metropolis.

Furthermore, in Shinjuku, one NPO had begun to move users directly into apartments without the intervention of new intermediate facilities such as self-reliance support centres or lodging facilities. This is what the NPO calls the "Japanese Housing First". Further, in 2004, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government started the Community Life Support Program for Homeless People, which targeted rough sleepers living in parks and riverbanks and enabled them to live in apartments by granting them only 3000 JPY per month designated for rent for a period of two years. After moving into apartments, NPOs provided livelihood support and employment opportunities. This programme drastically reduced the number of rough sleepers in parks and riverbanks. During the project period, the former homeless lived in apartments throughout the entire Tokyo Metropolis. After the two years, they either stayed where they were or moved to various places in the city, living from their own work or from livelihood protection payments. NPOs that participated in this programme were assigned tasks according to their specialisation. In line with Iwata's (2010) conclusion, this project is currently considered ground-breaking.

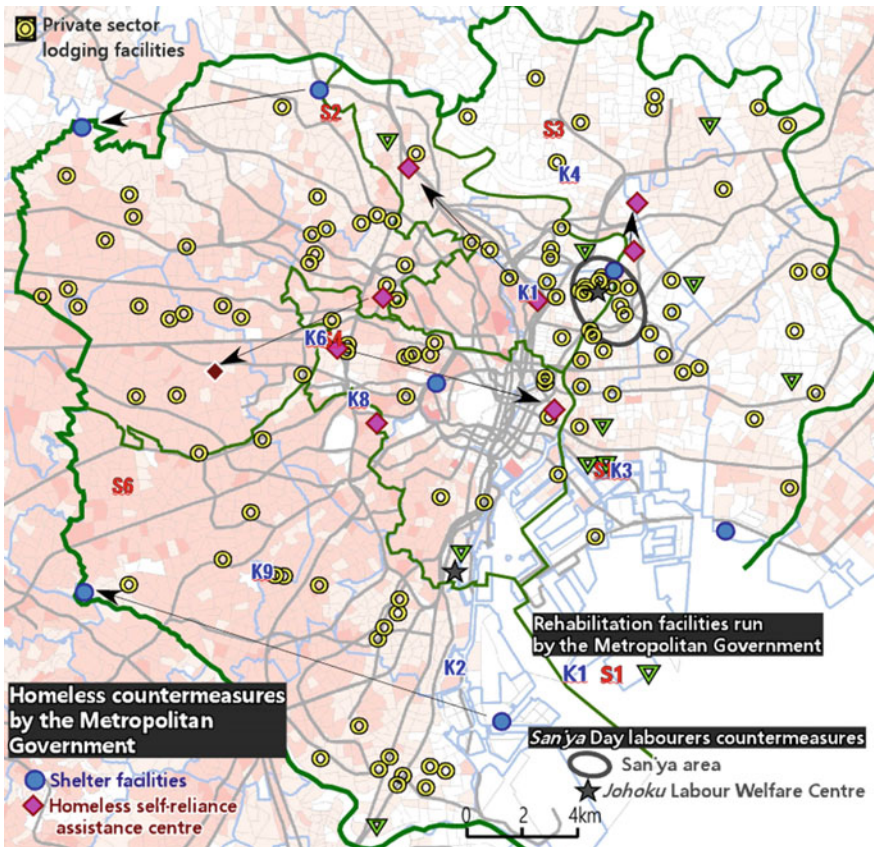
Figure 2 shows the distribution of all facilities that support homeless people as of 2010. Many former homeless who used livelihood protection moved into lodging facilities; they are no longer confined to the long-established area of San'ya but are more evenly distributed across all 23 wards. However, there is a tendency for former residents of lodging facilities to move into apartments in inner-ring area districts around the city centre. Furthermore, facilities and service centres of NPOs

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<sup>8</sup> Usually, the central government covered 75% of livelihood protection expenses, and the remaining 25% were provided by local governments.

are especially located in San'ya and Shinjuku, which shows that local service hubs are also developing.

A representative NPO of San'ya is contributing to the service hub formation in the Taitō, Sumida and Shinjuku wards, the typical inner-ring areas, with its Local Community Improvement Program. However, due to the pressures of population growth and soaring rents, the business is now at a crossroads as to whether it will pay off or not. However, in the case of large NPOs that operate lodging facilities in the capital region, the facilities themselves function as service hubs. As shown in Fig. 2, they are often isolated from other facilities without distinctive concentrations; furthermore, people who leave lodging facilities do not always continue to live in their vicinities. The geography of former homeless people tends to be dispersed over the whole metropolitan area and exhibits a heightened concentration only in old urban areas.



**Fig. 2** Distribution of facilities that provide services to homeless people in Tokyo as of 2010. *Source* The background map is based on the distribution of professional job households (2010 national census); the location of facilities is based on the open list provided by the Tokyo welfare office

In the late 2000s Japan's major cities began to migrate their population back to the city centres of large cities. Figure 3 shows the rate of change in the population of the census blocks included in each 1.5 km concentric ring in Tokyo and Osaka. Within a 3-km radius of the city centre, the population of both cities is growing rapidly. In the 3–6 km inner ring, more than 80% of the subregions in Tokyo have increased, but just over 40% in Osaka. In the outer ring (6–12 km), Tokyo's population is increasing in nearly 80% of census blocks, while Osaka's population is decreasing in nearly 70% of census blocks. As for the supply of housing to support the last safety net, Osaka, where the pressure of population growth is smaller, has not seen a rise in rents in the inner ring; further, many houses are vacant, so there is room for welfare housing to be provided. In contrast, due to the pressure of population growth in almost all of Tokyo, the provision of welfare housing has become increasingly difficult in recent years.

In Tokyo, some lodging facilities have been forced to close due to soaring rents. Elderly single, formerly homeless people on welfare (livelihood protection) without access to lodging facilities are increasingly living in "Outside-Tokyo facilities" in northern Kanto and other areas, with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government covering the cost of welfare outside the Tokyo Metropolitan Prefecture. The geography of poverty spread even further; older single, formerly homeless people find it difficult to live within the 23 wards of Tokyo, and those who have relocated to rural areas are unable to return. This is the so-called "Tokyo problem", which is unique to it.

## 6 From Confinement Towards Social Inclusion in Tokyo

Since the 2000s the geography of poverty in Tokyo has changed from the confinement of visible poverty to the proliferation of visible poverty and the movement to "Outside-Tokyo facilities". Iwata (2010) claims that the "landscape" of poverty found in a particular area or group of people has become less visible due to the dispersion of poverty.<sup>9</sup>

Hard-to-see or invisible, precarious residents, such as those who use internet cafes, friends' homes, or temporary workers' dormitories (*hakenryō*), have become the majority of homeless assistance users. In addition to the single elderly people mentioned above, the target population encompasses all ages.

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<sup>9</sup> A leading researcher on poverty, Iwata (2017: 244), provides crucial insights for urban spatial structure-making by proposing an interpretation of poverty geographies that is pathbreaking for the understanding of Tokyo. She argues that "poverty in the form of vagrants and street children, shacks and slums, abandoned coal mining areas and remote areas or *yoseba* has not drawn attention through statistical figures but through their specific landscapes of poverty. Their existence was confirmed by the resistance and revolt with which the people responded, or by the discriminatory gaze with which society looked on them". The urban space of *yoseba* is reflected well as "landscape" in the actions of society, giving birth to particular politics of place, such as the San'ya Policies or the Airin Policies in Osaka.

The influence of the geography of poverty in Tokyo has weakened and has become visible as an act of support, a service hub function. This means that the geography of service hubs and their social networks have become more important. The geography of NPOs is relevant in politicising the “landscape” of poverty, which has become invisible or obscured in Tokyo, from different angles.

This is what Kasai (1999) once said about the switch from a limited policy for a specific area of San’ya to a “comprehensive measure” and a new positioning of the problem as a “new urban problem”. What kind of governance has been developed in Tokyo, with NPOs as new actors, as part of this “comprehensive measure?”

We have pointed out the “Tokyo problem” of geographically dispersing from the metropolitan area to the surrounding rural areas. Another problem arises from the fact that the governance of support for the homeless and needy is complicated by the impact of having a special metropolitan government and a special ward government, i.e., the absence of a “Tokyo city”. For example, with regard to the establishment of the homeless self-reliance support centre, the ward government provides the building and the location on a rotating basis every five years, but the expenses are paid by the metropolitan government, and the operation is carried out by social welfare corporations. The organisation supervising this system exists as “Tokujinko” (Special District Personnel and Health Affairs Association), which is jointly maintained by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the 23 ward governments. There is also a system by which if a person receiving livelihood protection uses a lodging facility run by an NPO, the expenses are paid by the metropolitan government; if the person uses a rented flat, then the ward government pays the expenses. Thus, we have another “Tokyo problem”—one where policy decision-making and orientation are difficult to understand.

The NPOs have been the most active in addressing the “Tokyo problem” in Japan. Two distinctive tactics are noteworthy. First, NPOs need to arm themselves with theories to make policies with the help of academia; then, they must use the internet for effective publicity. Tokyo has the distinction of being an active academic researcher with a focus on NPOs that support community life and street life; the argument is closely related to studies of NPOs and the third sector. Many of the San’ya-based NPOs mentioned above have contributed to academic journals and have collaborated with the government at best, but have taken an open-ended attitude of saying what needs to be said when dealing with actual cases. Their research is focused on transitory housing based on *machizukuri* and support systems for community living. In any case, it can be said that the development of NPO projects and support has created a multi-layered service hub with a diverse housing safety net that indirectly serves as a bulwark against gentrification.

It is also important to note that, against this backdrop of power, NPOs are moving the central government and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to promote new safety net policies, and are taking a pragmatic approach to collaborating with the latter. Despite the importance of lodging facilities in the Tokyo area, there has been no direct financial support from the central government, while the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, in collaboration with NPOs, established a warranting support lodging house system in 2014 and provided financial assistance to excellent lodging houses



with a high level of support.<sup>10</sup> In addition, an active social welfare corporation based in Shinjuku has been the most active in Japan in providing consultation centres for job introductions and livelihood support, specialising not in people living on the streets but in unstable residences such as internet cafes.

On the other hand, a characteristic of Tokyo is the diversity of support for people living on the streets. There was no squatting of vacant houses like in the West, and the scene of the occupation of the park was a tranquil one more than 15 years ago—a tent village of workers diligently making a living by collecting aluminium cans and other materials. Although such scenes are rarely seen in Japan anymore, eviction notices for people living on the streets still occur in Tokyo. This is due to the ward government where the park and other areas are located. The situation in some parks, criticised by non-profit organisations fighting surveillance, security, and exclusion, is similar to the counter-revolutionary revanchist cities and gentrification in the United States, as articulated by Smith (1996) and Mitchell (2003). Part of the research on the homeless situation, represented by sociology and geography, introduces the line of justifying the occupation of public space and emancipatory autonomy to Japan as a critical urban theory (Haraguchi 2016). In terms of the relationship with people living on the street, Big Issue Japan started its activities in Osaka, though most of its vendors sell in Tokyo. In addition, a fund has been established to raise awareness and involve many supporters. Meanwhile, the Tokyo Street Count initiative, led by a civic group, has enlisted a large number of citizens to count just over 2000 people at night—twice the official number of people living on the streets of the metropolitan government. In Tokyo, support for homeless people is being developed in a variety of ways to include vulnerable people.

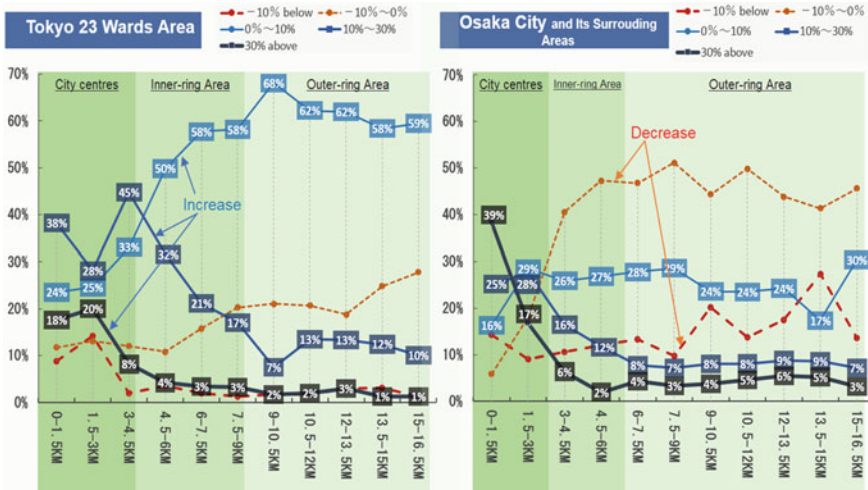
Theoretically, we propose conceptualising the “city with inclusivity” with an inclusive urban space based on the new concepts of “emplacement” and “redensification” rather than a counter-theory to gentrification.<sup>11</sup> This concept is elaborated in the context of Osaka, where a polarisation trend has recently emerged, with population growth in the city’s central areas and a depopulating inner-ring area (see Fig. 3 and Kornatowski et al. 2018).

In Osaka, regional discrimination against stigmatised areas discourages real estate investment, and socio-economically vulnerable areas continue to act as a bulwark to gentrification (see Chap. 18 and Kiener et.al. 2018). In Tokyo, unlike Osaka, it is

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<sup>10</sup> This led to the introduction of a new system by the central government of “residential facilities to support daily living” from 2020, which subsidised staff expenses and clarified building standards. In the process of enactment, a study committee was held under the push of NPOs, and the central government institutionalised it.

<sup>11</sup> The concepts of “emplacement” and “redensification” refer to inner-city regeneration strategies to counter anti-value in the land created by depopulation. The term “emplacement” refers to the practices of attracting certain population groups with certain capabilities and possibilities of creating land benefits, yet lacking the common suspects of gentrification, such as: (1) attracting affluent groups and (2) the intrusion of aggressive real estate capital, displacement or disposition. The term “redensification”, however, refers to strategies for finding alternatives to former forms of condensed and rapid urbanisation, which have historically been vital for creating and sustaining land values and the local economy.



**Fig. 3** Population change in the 1.5 km concentric rings of Tokyo and Osaka, based on the population change of each census block from 2012 to 2019 according to the basic resident register

difficult to play the role of a bulwark with such a mechanism. Rather, it is the geography of the NPO that matters, not the geography of poverty. It has formed a diverse and multi-faceted network of welfare inclusion, which has become Tokyo’s strength. In the run-up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the precarious residential population is being absorbed more and more into temporary dormitories (*Hakenryo*), and a kind of ‘economic inclusion’ is being detected. Some companies have begun to work with welfare liaisons to include the perspective of livelihood support as well as labour management. Some dormitories have also begun to work with the welfare sector in dealing with the loss of employment. We must also pay attention to the function of such “economic inclusion”.

As DeVerteuil (2015) revealed in London, there is a sustained generation of resilient support service hubs in the field of assistance action in Tokyo. As already demonstrated, we will have to continue pursuing academic analysis of the policy process and the complexities of governance (Cloke et al. 2011).

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# Housing Policies and the (Re-)Shaping of the Inner-City: The Case of Osaka City's Nishinari Ward



Johannes Kiener

**Abstract** During the 2000s, public assistance in Japan underwent some crucial changes, making housing benefits available to homeless and needy people. The resulting increase of public assistance recipients in Japan's major cities exhibited a particular spatial pattern characterized by strong concentrations in inner-city areas. This chapter investigates this pattern by tracing back the development of policies concerned with housing issues in Nishinari Ward, Osaka's notorious inner-city. Nishinari Ward serves as an example in case as it is home to Japan's largest day laborer district and an area of *burakumin*, descents of Edo period outcasts, which are both typical features of inner cities in Japan. The analysis shows that the inner-city was shaped and reshaped by housing policies in three distinctive phases. While in the first phase (from the turn of the nineteenth century to the 1950s) policies contributed mainly through their exclusionary character to the development of the inner-city, in the second phase (from the mid-1950s to the early 1990s) direct government interventions in response to social movements and day laborer riots were prevailing. In the third phase (from the late-1990s to the present), these direct government interventions were gradually residualized, and local communities, civil organizations such as NPOs, and the market have been increasingly mobilized for welfare provision, becoming crucial factors shaping the inner-city.

**Keywords** Burakumin · Day laborers · Housing policies · Inner-city · Osaka · Public assistance

## 1 Introduction: Public Assistance and the Inner-City

During the 2000s and the beginning of the 2010s, the number of public assistance recipients increased sharply in Japan. This development occurred as consequents of public assistance eligibility range adjustments, that were enforced in reaction to the rise of new forms of poverty. In particular, this was an adjustment of eligibility

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to homeless people in 2003 and to a wider range of needy people, such as laid-off temporary workers, in 2009, which were mainly responsible for this increase. The public assistance rate changed from its all-time low of 0.7% (882,229 people) in 1995 to 1.7% (2,141,881 people) in 2017, a percentage that had last been recorded in 1964.

This increase exhibits a particular spatial pattern. Public assistance recipients are distributed unevenly and tend to cluster in inner cities. The distribution of public assistance recipients over the wards of the six largest cities in Japan, as displayed in Fig. 1, reveals this geographical characteristic. To a certain extent, this is evident in the cities of the Kantō region. Taitō Ward of Tokyo Metropolis had in 2016 a public assistance rate of 4.4%, and in Naka Ward of Yokohama City it reached 6.2%. In Nagoya City, the rates in Minami and Nakamura Ward reached 4.2% and 4.0%, respectively. In comparison, this tendency was especially strong in the cities of the Kansai region. Kyoto City's Fushimi Ward reached a rate of 4.8%, Osaka City's Nishinari Ward a rate of 24.0%, and Kobe City's Nagata Ward a rate of 8.3%.

While such an uneven distribution of public assistance recipients can be found in many cities, the specific causes behind it differ strongly according to location and are the objects of ongoing debate. In this chapter, I turn especially to the role of housing policies for the creation of such spatial figures. The inner-city is often the site of public intervention, reflecting distinctive paradigms of urban policy. These are not only interventions in the form of massive urban renewal and collective consumption but also efforts to realize mixed-use developments and state-sponsored downtown regeneration (DeVerteuil 2016). Therefore, this chapter investigates the concentration of public assistance recipients in the inner-city by focusing on the role the public sector played for the development of a distinctive housing stock.

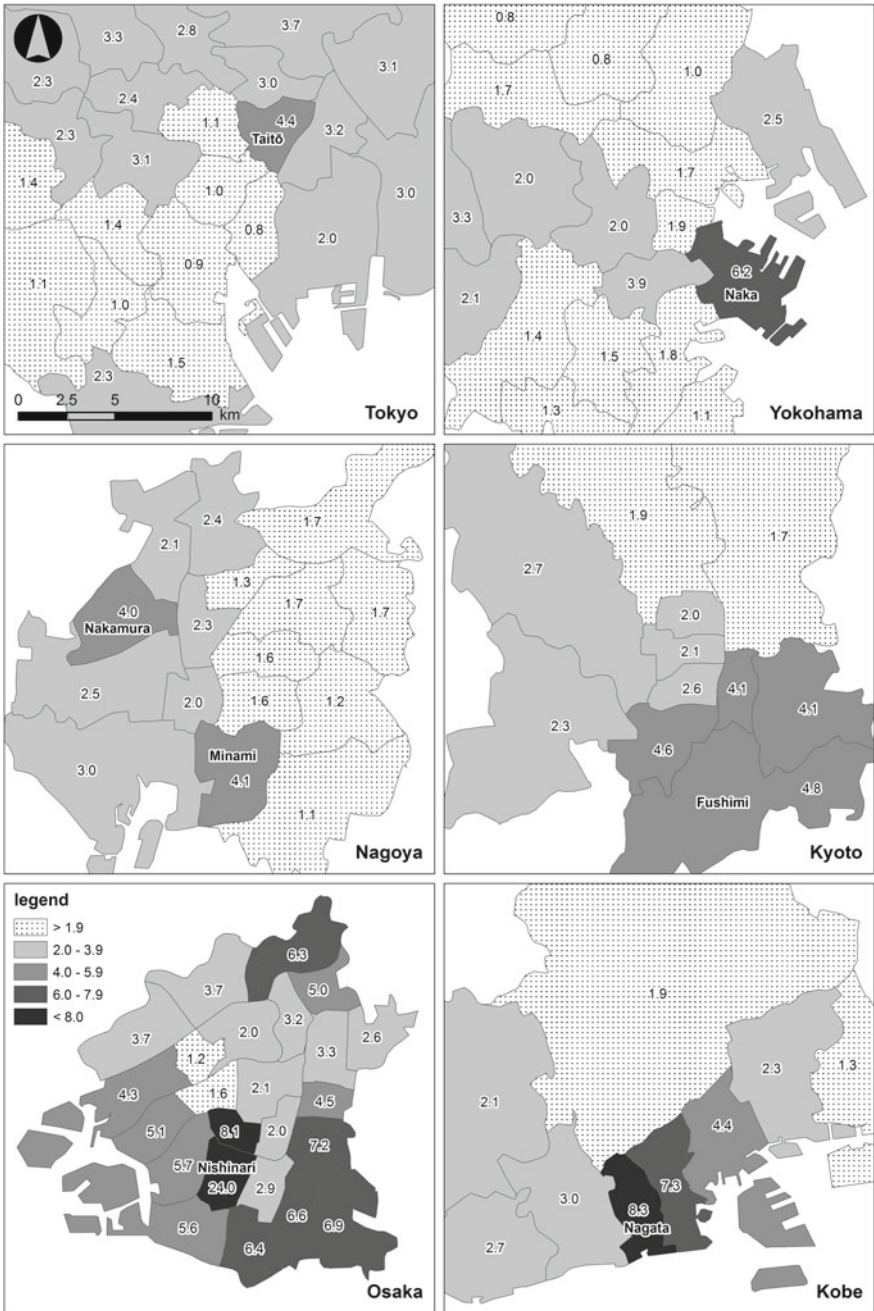
Given its strong concentration of public assistance recipients, this chapter turns to Osaka City's Nishinari Ward as an example in case. It focuses on the effect of housing policies in two typical Japanese inner-city areas located in the North of Nishinari Ward: Kamagasaki, Japan's largest day laborer district, and Northwest Nishinari, which is an outcast area associated with *burakumin*.<sup>1</sup> In the following sections the history of housing policies in these two areas is traced back from the first modern urban policies at the turn of the twentieth century, to the dynamics that can be observed today. An overview is provided in Table 1.

## 2 Industrialization and the Urban Fringe

The inner-city of Osaka resulted from the urban policies that were enacted during the modern period, between the Meiji Restoration and the end of the Second World War.

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<sup>1</sup> *Burakumin* are descents of outcast groups that were at the bottom of Japanese society during the Edo period. These people were discriminated because they had occupations considered impure or tainted, such as tanners or leather workers. Discrimination against them continued beyond the Edo period and is still present in contemporary Japan.



**Fig. 1** Public assistance rate per ward in Japan’s six largest cities (FY 2016). *Source* Kōbeshi (2019), Kyōtōshi (2019), Nagoyashi (2019), Ōsakashi (2019), Tōkyōto (2017), Yokohamashi (2019)

**Table 1** Major policies that contributed to the development of the inner-city housing stock in Nishinari Ward

	Year	Northwest Nishinari	Kamagasaki	
First period	1880		1886 Lodging Regulation Order (Osaka Prefecture)	
		1897 First city area expansion (Osaka City)		
			1898 Lodging Business Regulation Order (Osaka City)	
	1900		1903 5th National Industrial Exhibition (state)	
		1906 Slaughterhouse Act (state)		
		1919 Urban Planning Act (state)		
		1919 Urban Building Act (state)		
	1920	1923 Local Improvement Program (state)		
		1925 Second city area expansion (Osaka City)		
		1927 Improvement Act for Districts with Poor Housing (state)		
		1938 Complete prohibition of leather production for private demand (state)		
	Second period	1940		1948 Hotel Business Act (state)
1950 Housing Loan Corporation Act (state)				
1951 Public Housing Act (state)				
1952 Osaka City Housing Control Ordinance (Osaka City)				
1956 New Highway Construction Plan (Osaka City)				
1956 New Loop Line Construction Plan (Osaka City)				
1957 Naniwa-Nishinari Housing Request Alliance (community)				
1960		1969–2002 Dōwa Program Special Measure Act (state)		1966 Airin System (state, Osaka Prefecture, Osaka City)
	1978 Nishinari District General Plan Committee (Osaka City)			
Third period	1980	1995 Nishinari District Community Development Committee (community)		
		1997 Act to Accelerate the Maintenance of Disaster Prevention Districts in Densely Built-Up Urban Areas (state)		

(continued)



**Table 1** (continued)

	Year	Northwest Nishinari	Kamagasaki
		1999 Osaka City Private Dilapidated Housing Reconstruction Support Program (Osaka City)	1999 NPO Organization to Support the Homeless in Kamagasaki (community)
	2000	2003 Circular concerning public assistance (state)	
		2009 Circulars concerning public assistance (state)	
			2012 Nishinari Special Ward Initiative (Osaka City)
		2015 Self-Reliance Support Act for Impoverished People (state)	

Its development marks a departure from the city form that had evolved during the Edo period (1603–1868) in which settlements of *burakumin*, living areas of lower servants, or graveyards were embedded in the city system consisting of Osaka's three core areas—Kitagumi, Minamigumi and Tenmangumi—and associated villages. During the emergence of modern Osaka City, graveyards, flophouses, and entertainment facilities were relocated outside of the city area, especially after its first expansion in 1897. There the newly developing regulatory framework of the city did not apply. These were especially the in 1919 introduced Urban Planning Act (*toshi keikakuho*) and Urban Building Act (*shigaichi kenchikubutsuhō*), which fostered more orderly land development and introduced building standards in the city area.

The areas outside the city, however, developed in an unregulated and unplanned manner, and at best land consolidation was conducted to foster urbanization. Only after the second city area expansion in 1925, together with surrounding villages, these inner-city areas were formally incorporated into Osaka City (Yoshimura 2013). Nevertheless, the inner-city continued to exist and expand further. Its typical residents were *burakumin*, day laborers, workers of small factories, and immigrants from the Korean peninsula, who kept on settling at the outskirts of the already built-up area. Attempts for the improvement of urban areas began already in the 1920s. However, most of them targeted at that time central city areas and not the inner-city.

## 2.1 The Emergence of the Flophouse District Kamagasaki

Kamagasaki, the flophouse district, developed exactly at this time in the early twentieth century. Its urbanization started when in 1898 the Lodging Business Regulation Order (*shukuya eigyō torishimari kisoku*) was introduced and the Lodging Regulation Order (*shukuya torishimari kisoku*), which had regulated the flophouse business before, abolished. The new order restricted the operation of flophouses in the city. Since the city area had been expanded just one year earlier, this meant that new flophouses had to be constructed now far beyond the already built-up area (Kiso 1986). As Katō (2002) pointed out, the Lodging Business Regulation Order did not

only confine flophouses to the urban fringe; in fact, it further restricted them to seven places. Two of them, Nishinarigun Imamiyamura and Higashinarigun Tennōjimura, were located in the area of present-day Kamagasaki.

Although there is disagreement in the literature about the beginning of Kamagasaki, it is today considered that the first flophouses came into this area in 1903. Due to road widening during the run-up to the 5th National Industrial Exhibition, that was held in the area north of Kamagasaki, flophouse owners who had their business next to the street were forced to relocate. Some of them moved to Kamagasaki, where they were joined by landlords from other areas (Mizuuchi 2004). In fact, records from 1921 state that the oldest flophouse residents in Kamagasaki had been living there since 1904. Most of the early residents were displaced by later slum clearance or through the construction of rail tracks, which particularly accelerated between the years 1904 and 1907 (Katō 2002). According to Mizuuchi (2004), Kamagasaki also became the place of action for one of the earliest welfare organizations in Osaka City. Here, Ōsaka Jikyōkan, the largest welfare organization operating today in Kamagasaki, opened a private free lodging facility in 1912.

While Kamagasaki was initially inhabited by single day laborers, this changed during the Great Depression. From 1929, many different people poured into this area, including also families. When news about the neglect and malnourishment of children spread, households with children in Kamagasaki soon became a major concern to the public (Yoshimura 2013). Nevertheless, at that time policies did not tackle these issues. Based on the Improvement Act for Districts with Poor Housing (*furuyō jūtaku chiku kairyōhō*) from 1927, Osaka City initiated a housing improvement project in 1928 and maintained it for six years. In Kamagasaki, three buildings with 78 flats were constructed under this policy and opened to occupation in 1929. But instead of housing the local poor, they inhabited people displaced from other slum areas. All other projects under this act were concentrated in areas north of Nishinari Ward, in today's Naniwa Ward (Mizuuchi 2004).

## 2.2 *The Development of a New Outcast Area*

Northwest Nishinari started to develop at almost the same time. The area facing it in the north had already been in the Edo period a nationwide center for leather production and trade. To the south of this settlement, known as Watanabe Village, fields and rice paddies stretched at that time. After the caste system, and in 1871 the restriction of the leather business to outcasts, was abolished, the leather industry flourished even further. Due to its strategic significance for the military industry, which boomed because of Japan's military activities and its emergence as colonial power in East Asia, businessmen who had not been associated with outcasts invested fresh capital. Next to the traditional production of shoes, new products such as military boots, horse harnesses, and equipment for cannons were now on the production agenda, increasing the demand for labor in the leather industry. *Burakumin* from other areas in Osaka and surrounding prefectures were attracted by these job opportunities. Especially from

the end of the 1910s they started to settle in the vicinity, expanding the area to the south and forming a considerable portion of today's Northwest Nishinari (BKDNS 1993).

With the growing of Osaka City's population, the demand for meat also increased, and its production gained especially after the rice riots from 1918 a strategic role. The enactment of the Slaughterhouse Act (*tojōhō*) in 1906 formed the basis for public-run slaughterhouses, and subsequently Northwest Nishinari became the site of one. The first slaughterhouse in this area was founded in 1909 but was not run by the municipality before the city's expansion in 1925. While the production of meat in Osaka City initially increased, it was slowed down by the Great Depression and the slaughterhouse's relatively high usage fees. This problem was partially solved when the usage fees were lowered by 25% in 1936 (Yoshimura 2013).

Owing to the leather industry, a highly differentiated society developed in which wealthy entrepreneurs and poor workers lived in close proximity (Yoshimura 2014). However, the areas of *burakumin* were identified by the government as containing many deteriorated housing units. During the early twentieth century, policies to improve areas inhabited by the poor were started, but not extended to the recently developed Northwest Nishinari. Areas of *burakumin* were targeted by the Local Improvement Program (*chihō kaizen jigyō*). This program started in 1923 with a ten-year pilot project that targeted 20 places in Japan. Next to public housing the pilot project involved the construction of roads and sewer systems as well as community and welfare facilities, such as clinics for trachoma patients or daycare centers for children. In Osaka City, this program was implemented outside the regular welfare programs, and only one area was selected. Although in Northwest Nishinari surveys were conducted, showing that it was considered for intervention, the area had a low priority, and was not targeted by this project or any of its follow-up programs. In addition, Osaka City also ran a public housing program that had already started in 1919 to foster slum clearance, long before the enactment of the Improvement Act for Districts with Poor Housing (*furyō jūtaku chiku kairyōhō*) in 1927 provided the means for redevelopment on a wider scale. But Northwest Nishinari was not targeted by these programs either. Again, priority was given to older slum areas closer to the city center (Mizuuchi 2004).

### 3 Social Movements and the Rise of the Public Sector

The Second World War left vast areas of the city destroyed and disrupted Japanese society, throwing many people into bitter poverty. Although it marked a turning point for urban policies, many parts of Osaka's inner-city were spared by aerial bombing and a substantial part of the prewar inner-city urban fabric remained. This contributed to the formation of a strongly divided housing stock, characterized by prewar, substandard housing that had remained especially at the urban fringe, while the city center was widely redeveloped through a comprehensive war damage redevelopment plan.

The brownfields that resulted from the aerial bombings soon became a refuge for those who had lost their homes during the war, through typhoons, or displacement as a result of the restitution of land to their former owners, and turned into shanty towns. In both areas, the miserable situation of the population did not improve substantially, causing from the 1960s on riots and demonstrations. As consequents, authorities devised countermeasures, resulting in a series of direct public interventions. This marked the rise of the public sector in the inner-city, which dominated its further development.

### 3.1 Day Laborer Riots and Flophouses

After the Second World War in Kamagasaki land readjustment was conducted to facilitate the reconstruction of war-damaged areas; from the 1950s on, the whole area revived as a flophouse district. After the restriction on moving in urban areas ended in 1949 (Motooka and Mizuuchi 2013), this development accelerated so that by 1960 already 134 flophouses had been registered under the in 1948 enacted Hotel Business Act (*ryokangyōhō*). The original flophouses were wooden two-story buildings with either small single rooms with an average size of 3.3 m<sup>2</sup> or large dormitories. They were mainly rented by day laborers working in the port, and the manufacturing and construction industries. Nevertheless, at that time, despite the small room size, families with children were also among the residents.

This housing stock gradually changed in reaction to the day laborers' situation. Starting in 1961 a series of 24 violent riots occurred in Kamagasaki over the next decades. These riots were caused by the increasing dissatisfaction of the day laborers, who were standing between the *yakuza*, exploiting their labor force, and the police, suppressing every protest. Eventually, when Osaka City was selected as the site for the 1970 World Exposition, the workforce of day laborers got strategical importance for the city government to respond to the demands of the booming construction industry. Together with the riots this cumulated in the establishment of the Airin System (*airin taisei*) in 1966, which changed Kamagasaki crucially. The area was renamed "Airin District" and in it all policies concerned with day laborers were concentrated. Driven by the construction boom before the 1970 World Exposition also many flophouses were rebuilt. Although they were not direct policy targets, the attitude of Osaka City towards them changed. At the beginning of the 1960s, the poor living conditions they provided had been of concern for officials, and guidance for their owners and residents was suggested as a suitable countermeasure. But after the importance of the day laborer workforce had increased the city encouraged flophouse owners to build smaller rooms. This resulted in a densification of the flophouse stock and rooms, not larger than 1.6 m<sup>2</sup>, became the standard. Therefore, in 1969, the flophouse stock of Kamagasaki had reached its top capacity of 24,500 beds, while at the same time the total number of flophouses had decreased. Families, on the other side, were encouraged to move away from the area, turning it gradually into an area for single male workers (Haraguchi 2003).

The situation of day laborers changed further when during the 1970s, the day laborer movement gathered momentum. From the late 1960s onwards day laborers started to form labor unions and became increasingly organized. Their members built bases in public parks in Kamagasaki and utilized the riots to strengthen their claims. On their agenda was the organization of soup kitchens, work consulting, or support during the New Year holidays for unemployed day laborers. But they opted also for incremental change by addressing issues such as the improvement of labor conditions or fair payment. Eventually, the day laborer unions were also joined by Christian churches and welfare organizations during the 1970s. Many of the churches had given up traditional missionary activities, which had proved to be difficult to realize in Kamagasaki. Instead, they focused on the struggle against exclusionary policies towards day laborers and provided support that fills the gaps left by the welfare system (Shirahase 2017).

While the insecure housing situation of day laborers continued to be taken for granted, the pressure from their activities bore some fruits and the government implemented several new policies. These included a rudimentary unemployment relief and health insurance system for day laborers, or a temporary emergency shelter for the New Year holidays. These programs were added to the existing Airin System that had developed around the Airin General Center, which dealt with work, and medical issues, and the Osaka Municipal Rehabilitation Counseling Office, which provided limited public assistance and referral to welfare facilities.

In order to improve the working conditions of day laborers the Nishinari Work and Welfare Center was set-up inside the Airin General Center. Recruiters, who are hiring day laborers for construction companies, broke frequently the oral work agreements. Therefore, the center provided jobs under fair conditions and issued standardized forms that displayed the terms of contract to prevent this arbitrary handling. Further, identification cards were issued, making it possible to contact the center in case of emergency and enabling day laborers to demand compensation for loss of earnings through work accidents. The day laborer unemployment relief system, the so-called “white card,” was issued to day laborers registered at the Airin Public Job Office. It enabled them to receive unemployment benefits in accordance with the number of days they had worked and made them eligible for small extra payments in summer and winter. Finally, the Airin System also addressed illness, disability, and old age to a certain degree. In the Airin General Center a medical facility was set up that provides health checkups, simple treatments, and referrals to other healthcare facilities, while charging fees adapted to the economic situation of the clients and providing loans for medical treatment. Further, the Osaka Municipal Rehabilitation Counseling Office provided temporary shelter, consultation services, and medical benefits through the public assistance framework to day laborers. It also referred them to rehabilitation and relief facilities; however, it denied people without address housing assistance that would enable a secure housing situation (Kiener and Mizuuchi 2018).

The flophouses in Kamagasaki, however, were not directly influenced by these developments and changed rather with the general economic situation. After they were densified before the 1970 World Exhibition, they got their contemporary form during the “bubble economy”. In the second half of the 1980s the construction

industry was flourishing, which also improved the economic situation of day laborers significantly. Flophouses were typically rebuilt into six-to-nine-story light-gauge steel and ferro-concrete buildings with elevators and 4.9 m<sup>2</sup> rooms. They were equipped with color television and air conditioning, raising their standards close to that of business hotels (Hirakawa 2011).

### 3.2 *The Buraku Liberation Movement and Housing*

In Northwest Nishinari only the northern part was bombed during the Second World War, while the south was spared. After the war, evacuees and repatriated soldiers returned to the area. While some managed to buy buildings that were not burned down, others, mostly *burakumin*, built shanties in burned-out sites (BKDNS 1993). In addition to the poor housing situation, many *burakumin* had lost their employment due to the war. The leather industry had been hit heavily by the leather restriction upon private demand from 1938 that aimed to secure the leather supply for the military and export. This had damaged the economy of Northwest Nishinari, especially the shoe industry, forcing many companies to close and becoming a matter of life or death for about 5,000 workers, apparent in extraordinarily high unemployment and public assistance rates at that time (Yoshimura 2014).

After the war, Osaka City built temporary emergency accommodations, and from 1947 on also public housing; however, *burakumin* were either not the target population or lacked the financial means to move in. To foster the construction of owner-occupied housing, the Housing Loan Corporation Act (*jūtaku kinyū kōkohō*) was issued in 1950. This act together with the Osaka City Housing Control Ordinance (*jūtaku kanri jōrei*) of 1952 aimed to increase the quality of housing; again, however, *burakumin* were unable to benefit from these policies. The situation tightened in 1956, when the New Highway Construction Plan (*kokudō shinsetsu keikaku*) and the New Loop Line Construction Plan (*kanjōsen shinsetsu keikaku*) were released and Osaka City labeled many shanty towns on former brownfields in Northwest Nishinari as “illegally occupied,” attempting to enforce displacement. Ignored by housing policies and threatened by displacement, the *burakumin* in Northwest Nishinari began to organize and formed in 1957 the Naniwa-Nishinari Housing Request Alliance (*Naniwa Nishinari jūtaku yōkyū kisei dōmei*). They demanded from the city government (1) the postponing of displacement until adequate housing became available, (2) the revision of urban planning that required the displacement of *burakumin*, (3) the construction of adequate public housing, and (4) the adoption of a *buraku* liberation policy. With support of the National Buraku Liberation Movement they succeeded, and Osaka City constructed in the following years 202 low-rent public housing units in Northwest Nishinari that could be occupied by *burakumin*.

Since Osaka City had to bear a substantial portion of the costs of this public housing, it considered all other constructions after the 202 units in Northwest Nishinari as regular public housing—unaffordable for *burakumin* due to their high rent. In response to this policy shift, the *burakumin* organized again to request housing,

succeeding in further construction of low-rent public housing (BKDNS 1993). After the Dōwa Program Special Measure Act (*dōwa taisaku jigyō tokubetsu sochihō*) was enacted in 1969, the entire area was officially designated as “Dōwa District,” making it eligible to further interventions. Through large-scale public funding the construction of a total of 1,500 public housing units and many facilities, including a youth center, a low-cost home for elderly people, or three community centers, was realized (BKDNS 1998).

However, these developments did not reach into the southern part that had been spared by the bombings of the Second World War and was not targeted by the War Damage Reconstruction Program. Therefore, it retained its substandard pre-war living environment. Since outside investors avoided this area due to the general stigma of areas in which *burakumin* live, most of the investments in the real estate market came from the profits made by local industries such as the leather, shipbuilding, and machinery industries and local commerce. Eventually, new kinds of wooden tenement houses like *bunkajūtaku*<sup>2</sup> and apartment buildings<sup>3</sup> were added to the pre-war *nagaya*<sup>4</sup> housing stock (Kiener et al. 2018).

The result was a densely built-up area of 1.2 km<sup>2</sup>, consisting of about 10,000 housing units. To resolve this issue, the Nishinari District General Plan Committee (*Nishinari chiku sōgō keikaku iinkai*) was set up in 1978. Instead of promoting one masterplan, the committee agreed to address every area and its particular problems separately. But this approach met only limited success, and soon the program was halted (BKDNS 1993).

## 4 Local Communities, the Market and Welfare

After the Japanese economy fell into a serious recession at the beginning of the 1990s, new inner-city issues, especially in the form of increasing homelessness, emerged while the prewar housing stock further dilapidated. This time, however, these issues were not tackled by direct investments in the built environment or welfare provisions by the public sector. Policies shifted rather towards a system of benefits and funding programs. Under this condition new types of community-led welfare initiatives and market approaches developed that actively reach out to the new benefit and funding schemes. They had the effect of gradually improving inner-city housing and providing rudimentary welfare services.

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<sup>2</sup> A *bunkajūtaku* is a type of tenement building that was predominantly built in the Kansai region during the 1950s and 1960s. It is typically a two-floored building made of wood and plaster, with several flats in a row. Meaning “culture housing,” it takes pride in the higher living standard it offers with a toilet in every flat, but lacks a bathroom.

<sup>3</sup> In the Japanese context, apartment buildings (*apāto*) are wooden tenement houses with shared toilets and without bathrooms.

<sup>4</sup> *Nagaya* are wooden row houses that lack bathrooms and are usually run as tenements. They were the standard housing before the Second World War in Osaka City.

## 4.1 *The Transformation of the Airin District*

As a result of the day laborer market crisis that followed the recession of the 1990s, Kamagasaki's housing market changed crucially. In the second half of the decade, public investment in infrastructure dropped sharply, and the construction industry lost its ability to absorb unskilled workers, leaving numerous day laborers without job opportunities (Aoki 2003). Consequently, the number of homeless people increased. When in 1998 the first homeless survey was conducted in Osaka City, 8,660 people were counted, more than in any other Japanese city. A follow-up survey showed that as many as 57.9% of them had previously worked as day laborers (Mizuuchi 2001).

This increase in homelessness among day laborers had a direct impact upon the construction of new flophouses, which came to a sudden halt. Because many day laborers could not afford to live in them any longer, the average utilization of the total flophouse beds in Kamagasaki reached a low of 57.6% in 1999 and many flophouses had to handle vacancy rates of over 50%. This affected their revenues considerably (Shōji 2015). Before these events, the expansion of the public assistance eligibility range through several circulars of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, described in the introduction, was welcomed by the flophouse owners. Many of them gave up the flophouse business and converted their buildings into so-called “welfare housing,” residences that provided especially to public assistance recipients. By 2010 already about half of the 199 flophouses had shifted their business towards welfare housing (Mizuuchi and Hirakawa 2011).

However, this rapid increase of public assistance recipients soon raised the concern of local authorities. Osaka City initiated countermeasures in 2010 that reduced direct payments for security deposits and key money, and switched partly to material support, such as the provision of futons instead of cash payments (OSFK 2015). While this slowed down the welfare housing market, a nationwide revision of the housing benefit scheme in 2015 resulted in benefits being readjusted according to housing size. In Osaka City, the maximum monthly allowance of 42,000 yen for single household apartments over 15 m<sup>2</sup> was reduced to 40,000 yen (Shirahase 2015). This diminished the profit margins of welfare housing considerably. In addition, the Self-Reliance Support Act for Impoverished People (*seikatsu konkyūsha jiritsu shienhō*) was enacted in 2015 to implement a second security net before public assistance that aims to support needy people to stay in employment. Under these new circumstances, the number of public assistance recipients in Osaka City and the profits of welfare housing were effectively reduced, and the development of welfare housing dropped considerably. Therefore, the tourist industry that began to flourish in the middle of the 2010s, became a promising sector, and many of the flophouses adopted hotel business practices, catering now to inbound tourists and businessmen.

Further, the founding of the NPO Organization to Support the Homeless in Kamagasaki (*tokutei hieiri katsudō hōjin Kamagasaki shien kikō*) in 1999 marked a turning point of the relation between the city government and the day laborer unions. This NPO—formed through a coalition of day laborer unions, welfare organizations, and local community organizations—was entrusted by the city with the operation of



several kinds of support for homeless people in Kamagasaki. The services they provide are strongly built around day labor, dealing mainly with job support and providing housing only in the form of a temporary night shelter, which could be considered a kind of surrogate for flophouses.

The cooperation between the city and local organizations in Kamagasaki was further strengthened through the Nishinari Special Ward Initiative (*Nishinari tokku kōsō*), which was initiated in 2012 by Osaka City's former mayor Tōru Hashimoto. This initiative provided a platform to discuss the development of the area. Although initiated by the city, in workshops and public discussions officials from the Nishinari Ward office, day laborer unions, local community and welfare organizations and a group of intellectuals, consisting of scholars and social workers, participated. Nishinari Ward, which was previously not involved in the Airin System, took on a leading role in the organization. As part of the Nishinari Special Ward Initiative in 2013 the Haginochaya Community Building Limited Liability Company (*Haginochaya chiiki shūhen machizukuri gōdō gaisha*) was created and became an important institution for realizing new programs in Kamagasaki. Formed by a coalition of local organizations and businessmen, the limited liability company is entrusted with programs aiming to create a "neighborhood where the voices of children can be heard." Under this framework, next to countermeasures against bicycle parking and illegal garbage disposal, several welfare interventions such as support programs for elderly public assistance recipients, one-stop consulting services, or a social real estate agent were implemented.

However, older institutions that were created under the Airin System are gradually being downsized or closed, and public assistance and homeless countermeasures increasingly resemble those adapted in other areas. Most crucially, the Osaka Municipal Rehabilitation Counseling Center was closed in 2014 and public assistance is now handled at the ward office. The other central facility of the Airin District, the Airin General Center was closed in 2019, and is currently under reconstruction. The medical center it housed was permanently relocated, and the Airin Public Job Office and the Nishinari Work and Welfare Center were downsized and temporarily relocated. In addition, the capacity of a homeless shelter that had opened in 2000 was reduced but is now also accessible as drop-in center during the day.

## **4.2 Towards Policies for Densely Built-Up Areas**

While the policies concerned with Kamagasaki changed considerably, a different trajectory led also to new housing policies in Northwest Nishinari. Since the existing legal framework was not able to solve the issue of the dilapidating prewar housing stock, particularly in the densely built-up area in the south, voices that demanded new countermeasures arose in the local community at the beginning of the 1990s. These demands resulted in a new form of community development in 1995 advanced by the newly founded Nishinari District Community Development Committee (*Nishinari chiku machizukuri iinkai*). This committee was formed by local organizations such as the Nishinari branch of the Buraku Liberation Movement, neighborhood and

shopping street associations, and PTAs. Its foundation marked a turning point of the Buraku Liberation Movement's attitude, which started to address actively discrimination issues through their own activities. This sentiment was also fostered by the end of the Dōwa Program Special Measure Act in 2002, which called for a change of strategy. Instead of demanding the construction of housing or facilities from Osaka City, a social welfare corporation, which realizes welfare programs in accordance with the legal frameworks, such as group homes for handicapped people or housing with support for elderly people, and a stock company, which addresses housing issues through the market, were founded.

Further, a series of important new legislations was also implemented that aimed to foster inner-city redevelopment through the private market. Most prominently this was the Act to Accelerate the Maintenance of Disaster Prevention Districts in Densely Built-Up Urban Areas (*misshū shigaichi ni okeru bōsai gaiku no seibi no sokushin ni kan suru hōritsu*), which was enacted in 1997, in the aftermath of the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake. This act provided regulations and benefits for the reconstruction of buildings in designated densely built-up areas to reduce their vulnerability to disasters. After a revision of the act in 2003, a stronger role was given to civil organizations such as NPOs, making them possible partners (Ikuta 2008). Furthermore, under the name "Osaka City Private Dilapidated Housing Reconstruction Support Program" (*Osakashi minkan rōkyū jūtaku tatekae shien jigyō*), several different programs for the redevelopment of old private buildings were initiated. These include free consulting services and dispatching of specialists for rebuilding, or partial subsidizing of the planning, construction, and rent of former residents. This program was particularly able to reduce the concerns of landlords regarding the recruitment of new residents (BKDNS 2008). By 2018, with the support of the stock company and social welfare corporation, under this framework eight new buildings were constructed.

One example is the so-called "Masumi Condo." This project was developed together with the Nishinari District Community Development Committee, several consulting experts, and Osaka City, all of whom worked together with the landlord. The former building had been aging rapidly, but since residents were still living inside, initial attempts to rebuild failed. To resolve this situation, the landlord approached the city government, and the Nishinari District Community Building Committee. The professional planning knowhow, for the initiated project, was provided by a construction company, which worked together with the city government by utilizing effectively the support program described above. By adjusting the rent to the local market prices and reducing the costs for rent further through subsidies from the city government, former residents were enabled to live in the new building. Moreover, to attract new residents with the collaboration of a local welfare organization a part of the building became a group home (BKDNS 2008).

Although many public assistance recipients found a home in these new buildings, they were far from being able to house all of them, as the numbers increased rapidly during the 2000s. Since most single households had no access to public housing, they had to rely on the private welfare housing market that developed swiftly at that time. Similar to Kamagasaki, old housing units in Northwest Nishinari were

utilized to house public assistance recipients, involving a piecemeal renovation of the built environment combined with a stricter selection and monitoring of residents and sometimes even with the provision of livelihood services or home care, organized by local landlords and real estate agents (Kiener et al. 2018).

At the same time, however, Osaka City also closed several public facilities that were previously built under the Dowa Program Special Measure Act to support the *burakumin* community. The “Asuka-kai incident” in 2006, in which a leading member of the Buraku Liberation Movement was accused of embezzling money provided the pretext for the city government to retreat from these projects (BKDNS 2008). In 2009, three facilities in Northwest Nishinari—the Liberation Hall, a home for elderly people, and a youth center—were closed by the city, and in 2016 their successor, Osaka City Citizen Exchange Center, faced the same fate. In response to this development, the stock company and the social welfare corporation opened a privately-run neighborhood center in 2016 with the aim of assuming all the tasks originally administered by the public facilities. Nevertheless, this neighborhood center does not receive any funding from Osaka City.

## 5 Conclusion

The discussion above identified three distinctive periods in which the public sector shaped inner-city housing in Nishinari Ward in very different ways. The first period extended from the turn of the nineteenth century to the 1940s. In it, housing policies that contributed to the formation of the inner-city were primarily concerned with securing a modern city space. Under their influence, unwanted developments such as flophouses or leather production facilities were pushed beyond the city’s fringe. There, housing for minority groups developed haphazardly and was widely unchallenged by the emerging urban planning framework. After this area became a part of the city, policies concerned with the improvement and construction of housing rarely targeted the inner-city and were mainly restricted to housing for people displaced from slum areas of older parts of the city, further contributing to the consolidation of its marginal status.

The second period began in the 1950s, when the *burakumin* in Northwest Nishinari succeeded in demanding public housing from the city and continued until the 1990s. In this period, policies that concerned housing were enacted in direct reaction to the protests in the communities and they were bundled in areas designated for intervention. This strengthened the inner-city character of the targeted areas, and led to a strong association of them with the communities they supported, i.e. day laborers and *burakumin*. The local communities, however, were only marginally involved in the realization of these policies. While this had the benefit of establishing housing independent from the capabilities of local communities and the market, it also meant that their impact on its realization was limited.

The third period began in the mid-1990s, when the Buraku Liberation Movement in Nishinari Ward decided actively to engage in the transformation of their community and is continuing at the time of writing. In this period, welfare interventions shifted away from direct countermeasures and instead the state and municipality appeal more to the capabilities of communities and the market. Hence, these new policies are realized in areas where the local communities manage to acquire the necessary knowhow to utilize the policy frameworks and where the market situation allows to run them efficiently. Consequently, these areas are no longer as strongly associated with the communities they support, enabling also different and competing developments.

The inner-city as identified through the public assistance rate in the introduction was shaped by all three phases, and residuals of them are remaining today. These are, for instance, the densely built-up area that remained from the early days of its formation in Northwest Nishinari or the concentration of flophouses that were rebuilt during the bubble period in Kamagasaki. They support also today disadvantaged populations, leading to a high public assistance rate in Nishinari Ward. Nevertheless, the dismantling of major institutions that were established in the second phase heralds a new spatial order. In it the space created through welfare depends increasingly on the ability of local communities to operate welfare programs and the conditions of the market, being more exposed to competition and economic fluctuations.

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# From Stigma to Pride: New Practices of Housing-Based Welfare for Regenerating Disadvantaged Communities in Taipei City, Taiwan



Kojiro Sho

**Abstract** Homelessness has been considered a common issue in Taiwan’s developed city-regions since the 1980s. This Chapter focuses on the case of the Longshan Temple area in Wanhua district, Taipei City which is a well-known gathering spot for homeless people. This Chapter focuses on the housing-based welfare support aimed at the self-reliance of ex-homeless people as promoted by the local non-governmental organization (NGO) “Homeless Taiwan.” It argues that this organization significantly has contributed to the regeneration of disadvantaged communities and has mitigated the stigma imposed on ex-homeless people by helping them to become self-reliant. To evaluate the effect of housing-based welfare support provided by “Homeless Taiwan”, this Chapter first reviews homeless policy in Taipei City and focuses on the field of housing-based welfare. It also clarifies the role of social workers and the issues they are facing in Taipei City.

**Keywords** Homeless · Longshan temple area · Homeless Taiwan · Housing-based welfare support

## 1 Introduction

During the early 1980s, homelessness emerged as a significant public problem. It attracted a sizable amount of news coverage and became the target of public and private efforts at the national, state, and local levels in the U.S. (Stern 2012). However, the issue of homelessness has emerged as a significant public problem only since the 1990s in Eastern Asian cities. According to Mizuuchi (2004), the main reasons for this delay of homeless issue in Asian cities are that homeless has been isolated and excluded from the mainstream society as well as the policy field and is regarded as vagrants or dropouts by citizens for a long time (Mizuuchi 2004).

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With regard to housing support for the homeless, the only choice has been subdivided apartments where the rent is extremely cheap. However, criticism toward this concealment began to appear from numerous grass-roots volunteer organizations and social welfare NGOs through the recent development and progress of enlightenment and democratization about human rights awareness in Asian cities, especially democratically-governed cities such like Taipei, Hong Kong, Singapore as well as Seoul. Because of the conditions of the homeless, the attention and consideration given to them are also deeply linked with the economic depression of the late 1990s, especially the IMF crisis in 1997, and the appearance of many unemployed rough sleepers (Mizuuchi 2004).

This Chapter focuses on the case of the Longshan Temple area in Wanhua district, which is a well-known gathering spot for homeless people in Taipei City, Taiwan. Several previous studies on socially disadvantaged areas in Taipei City have discussed the cases of Shezi Island (e.g., Hsiao 2021), Treasure Hill Settlement (e.g., Hsiao 2022) and Xizhou indigenous squatter settlements (e.g., Hsiao 2020) in New Taipei City, yet the Longshan Temple area remains understudied. Taipei City is the first municipality that initiated a series of homeless policies and reformed the institutional system of homeless services by transferring homeless affairs from the policy department to the social welfare department. As the capital of Taiwan, Taipei City's government also provides the most integrated homeless services of all municipalities in Taiwan today. This Chapter focuses on how the city government's social workers make an effort to provide housing support for individuals who were previously homeless. Specifically, they help the homeless to get various types of rent subsidy and introduce them to available and affordable (actually low-rent) private rental apartments. This support is not wholly an official and formal service for the homeless in Taipei City, but it has been carried out by some city government's social workers semi-privately for a long time. Moreover, this support has actually helped a number of the homeless return to normal living conditions.

Based on the understanding of the afore-mentioned issues, this paper will first review the preceding studies on homeless policy and housing support. I will then provide an overview of the existing homeless support policy as well as the actual cases in Taipei City, Taiwan by focusing mainly on the field of housing support. The data for the analysis were mainly collected from in-depth interviews with social workers, the ex-homeless, and owners of affordable private rental apartments. Case studies were also conducted to assess how this support is actually working. In the last section, the paper will clarify how this kind of housing support has been carried out by the social workers so far and identify the issues they are facing.

## 2 Homeless Issues and Service

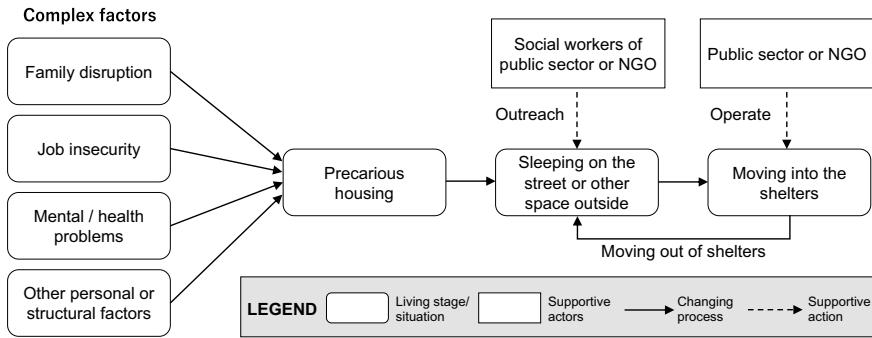
Support policy for homeless people is related to labour policy, social welfare and even housing policy for the urban poor in East Asia. The main factor giving rise to the increase in the population of homeless people was obviously the increasing

numbers of unemployed and precariously housed people. This phenomenon was discovered remarkably in Hong Kong as well as Seoul and Taipei which the appearance of inflowing cheap foreign workers especially appears to be an additional factor (Mizuuchi 2004). The upsurge in homeless numbers in the late 1990s Hong Kong caused by the economic turmoil of the Asian Financial Crisis and neoliberal restructuring was an important turning point for the reconceptualization of homeless support policy in Hong Kong. The implementation of the Three-year Action Plan in 2001 before the official formulation of Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region allowed NGOs to initiate their own social welfare responses thereby bringing in the present transitory housing system. However, the government started to outsource their responsibility for social welfare gradually to social welfare NGOs and turned to a monitoring role, by which it can intervene and utilize the transitory housing facilities to clear out and contain the visibly homeless. This motoring role included subsidy allocations, through which the government retained control of the spatial distribution of housing resources and content of social welfare services (Kornatowski 2008). On the other hand, the burst of the bubble economy followed by the prolonged economic depression in the 1990s was considered another critical factor of homeless issue in Japan; it was also one of the key reason for the drastic increase in homeless people who have come to sleep on not only the streets but also any other kinds of open spaces such as parks, river banks, train stations or other public facilities (Mizuuchi 2004).

As Cheng and Yang (2010) argue that although each case of homelessness entails a unique life-history of falling into homelessness, each person tends to have a similar experience of life trajectory that results in homelessness and street-sleeping. Falling into homelessness is considered the consequence of a series of unpredictable life events such as a business bankruptcy, job insecurity, mental illness, or family disruption. In such a case, they will become isolated from their families and society gradually and finally have no other option but to become homeless. Once they have become homeless, continued street-sleeping for a certain length of time, and experienced an unhealthy diet, irregular lifestyle and alcohol addiction, it is likely that they are damaged physically or mentally and suffer from medical problems. Facing the unhealthy conditions, homeless people might be sent to shelters or medical institutions for rehabilitation. However, in most cases they return to the streets and fall in homelessness again. This becomes a vicious cycle until homeless people exhaust their lives. A life trajectory of those who fall into homelessness is illustrated in Fig. 1, based on the life stories of the interviewees (Cheng and Yang 2010).

Various types of housing such as emergency shelters, transitional supportive housing and permanent supportive rental housing are distinct programmatic responses to address the housing and support service needs of homeless people under the model of “Continuum of Care” (CoC) for homeless service delivery (Wong et al. 2006). Outreach as well as transitional housing is provided under the purpose of enhancing the “housing readiness” of homeless people by encouraging the sobriety and compliance with psychiatric treatment considered essential for successful transition to permanent housing (Tsemberis et al. 2004). On the other hand, as mentioned





**Fig. 1** The life experience of becoming homeless. *Source* Drawn by author in reference to Cheng and Yang (2010)

above, the “Housing First” program is another important approach regarding to homeless support policy. This program was first implemented in 1999 by the National Alliance to End Homelessness. As applied to individuals who are possible to become homeless, its approach initially contacts persons in outreach activities and then offers, but does not require their participation in, other services as part of gaining access to housing. The types of housing provided vary with the programs (for example, scattered site, public housing or private rental housing in the normal housing market). Multiple services such as specific needs’ assessment, housing support, varying levels of public support services, case management, on-site medical and mental health treatment are also provided as part of this kind of program (Kertesz et al. 2009).

Today, the Housing First program which originated in the U.S. has evolved rapidly in East Asia. The provision of mainstream scatter-sited permanent housing is the initial stage of support for homeless individuals with multiple needs (Nicholls and Atherton 2011). In Japan, the? Housing First programs aim at helping the homeless return to community life. According to Iwata (2010), official support approach for homeless people on the street focuses mainly on the transfer to supportive facilities called “Homeless Self-Independent Support Centres” which support homeless people’s return to the labour market. Major municipalities such as Osaka City or Tokyo metropolitan government have designed gradual support programs to help homeless people getting off from the street-sleeping and homelessness step-by-step. In such a case, the first step might be moving into temporary emergency shelters called “Assessment Centres” in Osaka City or “Emergency Centres” in Tokyo Metropolitan Government for about one month normally. The next step might be an entry into a “Homeless Support Centre” for no more than two months according to the rule (this is flexible in Osaka) as a transitional process toward self-reliance (Iwata 2010).

Cheng and Yang (2010) make a strong appeal for the importance of providing stable housing as well as appropriate support based on case evaluation and management in Taipei City. Regarding this kind of support approach for homeless people, Cheng and Yang point out that the municipality must provide them with housing resources such as affordable private rental housing or public housing as the first

step. After their settlement, social workers then might introduce them to supportive services such as an opportunity for domestic work or other chances to acquire stable housing to support homeless people to keep a household and break away from the situation of homelessness. Social workers can furtherly provide them with additional services such as employment counselling, physical or mental health treatment and support for construction of personal relationship and social network with local community as part of case management (Cheng and Yang 2010).

### 3 Homeless Support in Taipei City

As mentioned above, the approaches of Housing First and the CoC, which emphasize the importance of emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing, are important for homeless support. These two approaches have one thing in common, namely, giving priority to housing support.

This section examines the homeless support menu in Taipei City based on this concept. The present menu of homeless support provided by the Taipei City government could be summarized as follows, according to an interview with an officer from the Department of Social Welfare and the review of previous literature (Hsiao et al. 2016, 2017). These services are mainly provided by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and partly by the Department of Labour (DL).

#### (1) Emergency support

- (a) Emergency shelters: DSW has provided an emergency shelter service since 2005 when the temperature in Taipei City was reported as 12°C. Hot food, a blanket and a sleeping bag are also provided. In addition, an emergency shelter service is also provided when a medium level of typhoon is forecast.
- (b) Life support: haircuts, showers, and emergency material are also provided.
- (c) Emergency help: DSW provides support for? social insurance applications, and acute disease treatment support.

#### (2) Self-reliance support

- (a) Outreach by DSW: social workers affiliated with to the city government conduct outreach daily. DSW also subsidizes NGO/NPO to conduct outreach for NTD200<sup>1</sup> for each person/case (“Outreach and sheltering program for homeless” of DSW, which is financially supported by the lottery proceeds held by Taiwan Government).

#### (3) Medical support

- (a) Medical treatment is subsidized by the DSW (3000 cases per year).

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<sup>1</sup> One USD is 29 NTD (January 2018).

- (b) Health examination, infectious disease examination and normal treatment are provided in the public hospital (fee is covered by the DSW).

(4) Employment support

- (a) The Taipei City Employment Services' Office (a sub-office of DL) provides employment support for the homeless.
- (b) DSW provides an employment support allowance during the period (maximum 30 days) of seeking employment. NTD 200 /per time is allowed for transportation expenses and NTD 200 /per day for a daily allowance.
- (c) Cleaning jobs in public facilities or local communities are provided for the homeless ("Working and rehabilitation program for homeless" of DSW, which are financially supported by the lottery proceeds held by Taiwan Government) by the city government. The pay is NTD 500/person/per day (4 h).
- (d) DL has had a "New Year's project" in place since 2009 to provide the working homeless a chance for 10 to 20-day work before the Chinese New Year to help them earn an allowance for the holidays. This allowance pays the maximum legal minimum wage for 8 h./per day.

(5) Housing support

- (a) Shelters: provided for the homeless as transitional housing to prepare for moving into permanent housing. These consist out of "public shelters", mainly the "Homeless Shelter Centre" (a public facility run by Taipei City with a capacity of 84 beds) and the House of Peace (publicly owned but privately run with 29 beds). In addition, Taipei City also subsidizes NGOs/NPOs to offer shelter for NTD 250 for each person/per night (also known as the "Outreach and sheltering program for the homeless").
- (b) Rent subsidy (NTD 6000/per month—also known as the "Working and Rehabilitation Program for the Homeless") for private rental housing. This subsidy is intended to support the homeless to move into permanent housing (private rental housing) on a self-dependent basis and includes the rent deposit. It is provided by each social welfare centre from DSW or the Taipei City Employment Services' Office from DL. The decision regarding payment is mainly taken by the social workers. The subsidy gives priority to those who are aged and disabled and can function as transitional support for those who are going to receive other long-term welfare resources.

In addition, there are other kinds of rent subsidy that are normally used as a long-term resource for previously homeless after the transitional resource, namely, the rent subsidy for private rental housing provided by the "Working and Rehabilitation Program for the Homeless.":

- (a) Rent subsidy for the disabled: the rent, calculated at NTD 100/m<sup>2</sup>, is provided by DSW only for those disabled ex-homeless who have a Disability Card.

- (b) Rent subsidy for low-income families: NTD 1500/month is provided by the Department of Urban Development, Taipei City government for those ex-homeless who are identified as a low-income family.
- (c) Professional facility: those who are in poor health or have a mental health condition are sent to a specific facility.

The homeless support service provided by Taipei City government can be summarized as follows. First, although the Taipei City government provides several kinds of housing subsidy, the housing supply is not actually secure. The housing supply depends strongly on owners of private housing. Second, the employment support provided by the Taipei City government is not linked to the housing supply. The previously homeless are expected to find housing themselves with the help of social worker. This makes it harder for them to smoothly become self-reliant.

#### **4 Social Disadvantage and Poverty Issues in the Longshan Temple Area**

In this section, I will focus on housing support measures taken in the Longshan Temple area, including some of the housing supports mentioned above, which are provided by the Taipei City government. Specifically, I will focus on how affordable private rental apartments are used as important tools of housing support for the homeless in the area.

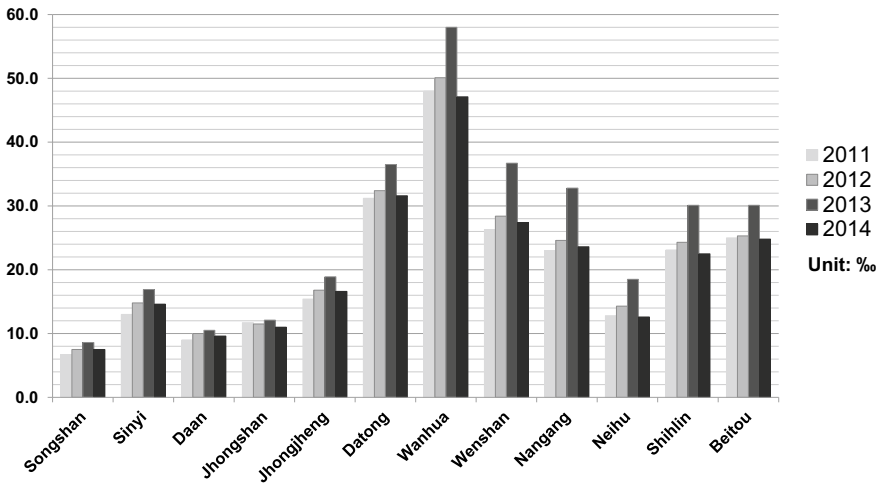
The Longshan Temple area in Wanhua district is known as a town with many homeless people and as a socially disadvantaged area of Taipei City. According to Liu (2012), homeless relief programs have been extensive since the Ching Dynasty, and include the Lifeline Hospital, Stream Habitat, and Raise-Economic Homes. Ai Ai Home, near the area, is the oldest homeless support facility and has had a strong presence in the local community ever since the Japanese occupation era until today. Most institutions providing homeless services were established in this area and still play an important role in the private welfare system. This may be the main reason why the Longshan Temple area functions as a de facto service hub for the homeless today.

It is important to explain the present situation to understand why demand and supply in affordable private rental apartments exists in this area. As Table 1 shows, housing in the Wanhua district is both the smallest and the oldest in Taipei City. In fact, the entire area is densely built-up and crowded. Moreover, as Fig. 2 shows, Wanhua district has the highest ratio of low-income families in Taipei City. Two critical factors, poverty and poor housing quality, exist simultaneously in the Wanhua district, and especially in the Longshan Temple area, where most homeless make use of the park in front of the Temple. Within the area, numerous small and old buildings with very poor living conditions accommodate to those with very low incomes.

**Table 1** The data on average housing conditions in each district of Taipei City

District	Average housing area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Small size ranking	Average age of building (years)	Old age ranking
<b>Wanhua</b>	<b>77.98</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>34.31</b>	<b>1</b>
Nangang	89.06	2	26.71	11
Jhongshan	89.52	3	28.74	9
Datong	89.55	4	34.07	2
Jhongjheng	93.59	5	32.37	3
Wenshan	94.84	6	26.89	10
Sinyi	95.07	7	30.78	7
Beitou	97.98	8	29.94	8
Neihu	98.51	9	23.59	12
Songshan	100.20	10	31.5	5
Shihlin	109.02	11	31.48	6
Daan	112.83	12	31.79	4

Source Ministry of the Interior (2015)



**Fig. 2** Ratio of low-income households in Taipei City. Source Created by the author based on data of Ministry of the Interior (2015)

### 4.1 Housing-Based Welfare Support in the Longshan Temple Area

#### 4.1.1 Basic Framework of Housing-Based Welfare Support

As summarized in the previous section, this section assumes that out of the present support menu offered to the homeless of Taipei City, the main issue is that the existing housing supply is not actually secured. Thus, the homeless may face some difficulties with the homeless support offered in the city. The provision of housing is actually provided by the private sector as a complementary service to the homeless support. I consider this kind of service as a “housing-based welfare support,” a mixed approach of Housing First and CoC. In this section, I focus on the situation of “housing-based welfare support” promoted by the Non-Government Organization called “Homeless Taiwan” in the Longshan Temple area (Fig. 3).

As mentioned in the previous section, the employment support provided by the Taipei City government is not linked to the housing supply, which hinders seamless self-reliance by those who were previously homeless. To change this situation, Homeless Taiwan started to provide “housing-based welfare support,” in which housing support and employment support are actually linked.

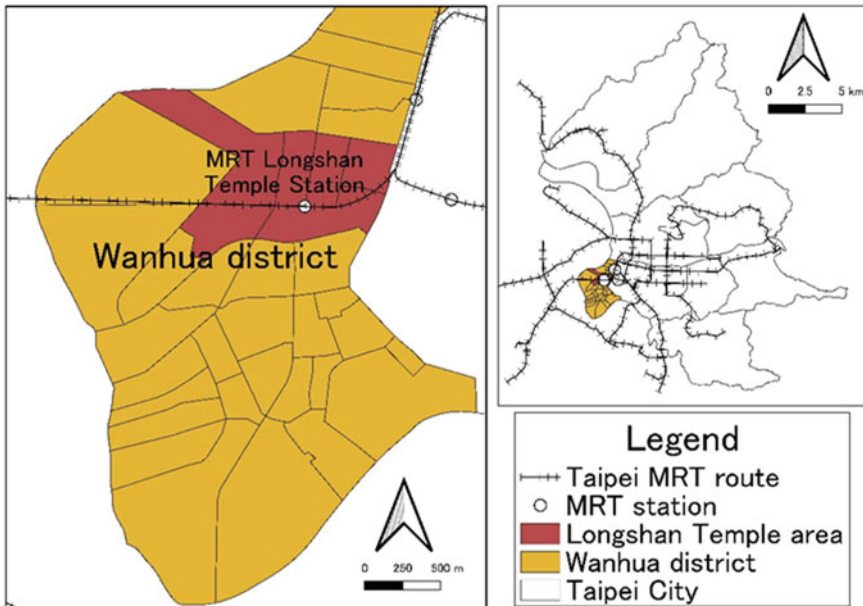


Fig. 3 Target area: Longshan temple area in the Wanhua district, Taipei City. Source Created by the author based on data of National Development Council (2022)

Homeless Taiwan has promoted housing-based welfare support at several facilities including the “Sanshui Building”, a self-reliance support centre and original business program including the “Hidden Taipei City Tour” (called as HTCT below) and the “KIGE Workshop” (called as KIGEW below) all of which are effective in promoting the self-reliance of residents. Moreover, as community businesses these projects play an important role in producing income. HTCT is a walking tour held around the area, which is one of the most famous tourist sites in Taiwan. Ex-homeless guide will lead the visitors and introduce them about the details of the area from the viewpoint of street sleeper rather than the ordinary tour guide based on their own experiences. On the other hand, KIGEW is a construction shop that makes use of the skills acquired at construction sites experienced by most ex-homeless people. KIGEW is undertaking construction work at relatively low cost, mainly for homes where the vulnerable people such as the elderly, the disabled, and single-parent family live.

Basically, the framework of housing-based welfare support provided by Homeless Taiwan is operated according to the provision of housing, including shelters (see the upper part of Fig. 4), and long-term low-rent private rental housing (see the lower part of Fig. 4). Support for the homeless begins with outreach, which is conducted by the social worker from Homeless Taiwan. People may be sheltered in the shelter run by Homeless Taiwan. They will eventually be introduced to low-rent private rental housing—those who are not in good physical or mental health will enter the special facility—however, they may also enter the low-rent private rental housing right after identified as in need by outreach workers.

The resident (i.e., the formerly homeless person) may receive employment support, opportunities for cleaning work, and a three-month rent subsidy from the HTCT and the KIGEW but also from the program provided by the Taipei City government, the “Working and rehabilitation program for the homeless.”

## 4.2 *The Private Rental Apartment and the Residents*

To realize the basic conditions of affordable private rental apartments provided as the basis of the housing-based welfare support by Homeless Taiwan, some of the common characteristics of these apartments can be summarized as follows. Several cases of those who were homeless but are now living in affordable private rental apartment are also shown in Table 2 according to the life-history survey and interview survey conducted by the author.

- (1) The monthly rent is about NTD 3000 to 6000 depending on the size of the room. Ordinarily, rent for a single room in Taipei City is around NTD 10,000 monthly.
- (2) Most housings are apartment-type rooms while some of them are rooms inside a solitary house. The size of the room is below 13.2 m<sup>2</sup> on average.
- (3) There are no independent showers, toilets, or kitchens in this type of room (known as *Yafang* (雅房)) in Taiwan. On the other hand, those that include a toilet or shower are known as *Taofang* (套房).



**Fig. 4** Shelter and low-rent private rental housing in the Longshan temple area. *Source* photos taken by the author (photographed in 2011)

**Table 2** The data of affordable private rental apartment residents

Code	Age	Sex	Income	Room area/bath	Housing type	Monthly rent (NTD)
A	65–70	Male	Working	7m <sup>2</sup> /shared by 3 rooms	3F/apartment	4000
C	40–45	Male	Working	8m <sup>2</sup> /shared by 5 rooms	2F/apartment	4000
F	50–55	Male	Low income	10m <sup>2</sup> /shared by 5 rooms	3F/apartment	3500
P	55–60	Male	Low income	10m <sup>2</sup> /shared by 5 rooms	5F/apartment	3000
T	55–60	Male	Working	7m <sup>2</sup> /shared by 9 rooms	2F/apartment	4000
Y	60–65	Male	Low income	10m <sup>2</sup> /shared by 5 rooms	5F/apartment	3000
L	60–65	Male	Working	10m <sup>2</sup> /shared by 7 rooms	2F/apartment	5000



- (4) Owing to the low level of rent and poor housing quality, most residents living in these kinds of apartments are socially disadvantaged groups such as single, elderly, handicapped, and previously homeless people.

To understand the mechanisms of how affordable private rental apartments are provided, three typical cases are picked up for further analysis as following.

(1) The case of Mr. C

The detailed route for moving into an affordable private rental apartment, according to the interview:

I was put into jail first in 1982; after that I became a frequenter of jail and finally got out in 2002. I worked for a while but since 2004 I finally became homeless in Taipei; I was discovered by the social worker and was sheltered in the “Homeless shelter centre” since 2008. After that, I got cleaning work from the DL, Taipei City government and the social worker introduced me to the room. (Summarized from the interview with Mr. C at his room, Aug.11, 2011).

(2) The case of Mr. L

The detailed route for moving into an affordable private rental apartment, according to the interview:

I moved to Taipei and became a taxi driver. I changed my job to be a guard in the temple in 1992 after a car accident in 1990. However, I lost my job in 2004 and returned to being a taxi driver. Unfortunately, I crashed my taxi again and had no choice but to be homeless since 2005. I was discovered by the social worker December 2007 in the Wanhua 12th park. He introduced me to the cleaning work and also the apartment. (Summarized from an interview with Mr. L at his room, October 20, 2012).

(3) The case of Mr. T

Details of the path to moving into an affordable private rental apartment were as follows, according to the interview:

I got fired from my job in my hometown when I was about 50. I came to Taipei to find a job and stayed at the house of some friends for a while. However, I couldn't find a job and became homeless. I used to be sheltered in the church shelter in the Longshan Temple area. I met the social worker there and he introduced me to the cleaning work and also the apartment. (Summarized from the interview with Mr. T at his apartment, October 20, 2012).

According to the three cases above, we can identify similar patterns into and out of homelessness. In particular, loss of job or release from jail leads to street sleeping in the Longshan Temple area. This process is the intervened by a social worker (outreach), who assists the homeless individual into temporary housing or shelter. This step then functions to move back into employment and private, low-rent housing.

**Table 3** Self-reliance among disadvantaged residents

Subject	Housing	Social participation	Employment and education
Mr. H (male, 65)	Low-rent private rental housing	Attending community dinner time	– Employed by HTCT
Mr. J (male, 66)			–
Mr. E (male, 64)			–
Mr. C (male, 65)			– Employed by KIGEW

### 4.3 The Hidden Taipei City Tour and the KIGE Workshop

Next, this Chapter examines how four residents listed in Table 3 attained a degree of self-reliance through becoming accustomed to a job. As mentioned above, the previously ex-homeless people have a strong need for employment; the HTCT and the KIGEW play an important role in job creation. Moreover, these activities also provide the homeless with an opportunity for social participation. In such cases, individuals hired by the HTCT and the KIGEW can earn an independent income to pay their housing rent in low-rent private rental housing. By working as a guide for the city tour or as a worker at the KIGEW, they simultaneously find a way for social participation and finally become self-reliant through making an independent living.

In addition, according to the data, Homeless Taiwan itself became financially self-reliant by promoting housing-based welfare support. For example, given the financial soundness of Homeless Taiwan in Table 4, it is possible to say that Homeless Taiwan can generate a surplus through housing-based welfare support to sustain their operation. Generally speaking, this is the most critical issue for an NGO: to make ends meet and further generate a surplus. In this sense, Homeless Taiwan has been successful in creating income from housing-based welfare support and producing a new business model.

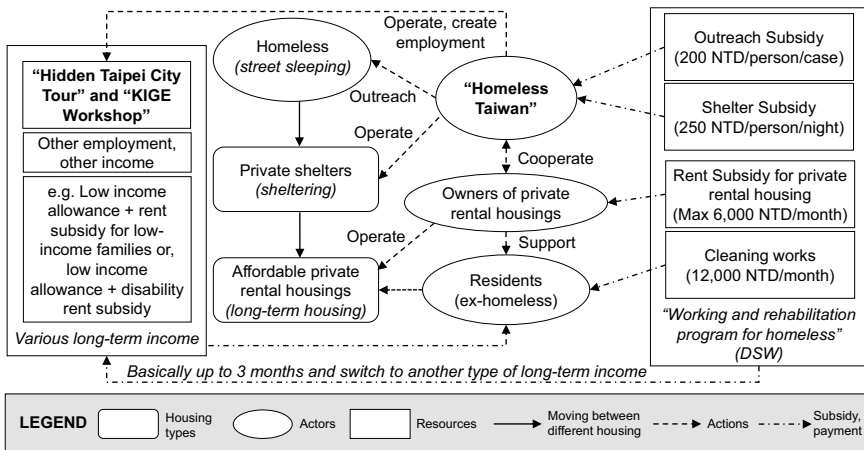
This chapter regards this kind of new business model, which actively employs the ex-homeless as the key factor in the success of Homeless Taiwan. Both the HTCT and the KIGEW make full use of ability and experience of ex-homeless people, in such sense, these two projects provide important work opportunities that are otherwise rare to obtain. These projects are effective at employment creation and attractive to others as part of a tourism program. Furthermore, as these two projects have very strong profitability that not only makes housing-based welfare support possible but also realizes the financial self-reliance of Homeless Taiwan, they contribute to the sustainability of Homeless Taiwan as an NGO.

To summarize the framework of housing-based welfare support in the Longshan Temple area, Fig. 5 shows the main conclusions of the study. Basically, support for the homeless starts with outreach, which is conducted by the social workers from Homeless Taiwan. Individuals are provided with shelter in the shelters operated by Homeless Taiwan, which are subsidized by the “Outreach and shelter program for the homeless” sponsored by the Taipei City government. They eventually enter affordable

**Table 4** Financial soundness of homeless Taiwan

	Item	Budget (NTD)	Settlement (NTD)	%
Income	Total income	6,500,000	9,184,300	100
	Interest	0	1,693	0.02
	Project income	5,000,000	6,464,337	70.38
	Donation	1,500,000	2,718,270	29.60
Expenditure	Total expenditure	6,767,075	8,270,121	100
	Project expenses	5,000,000	5,573,374	67.39
	HTCT	0	557,390	6.74
	KIGEW	0	130,816	1.58
	Personnel expenses	720,000	822,850	9.95
	Insurance fee	357,075	384,863	4.65
	Office rent	210,000	263,604	3.19
	Other	480,000	537,224	6.50
	Total	NTD	-267,075	914,179

private rental apartments (while those who are not in good physical or mental health enter a professional facility); however, individuals may also enter low-rent rental apartments directly after being contacted by the outreach teams and without going through the regular homeless assistance channels.



**Fig. 5** The framework of housing-based welfare support. *Source* survey results by the author

## 5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the housing-based welfare support aimed at the self-reliance of former homeless individuals as promoted by the local NGO “Homeless Taiwan”. It evaluates the NGO’s role in realizing the self-reliance of both disadvantaged communities and the former homeless themselves. It demonstrated that not only the clients but also the organization itself became financially self-reliant in the process. This is why this chapter regards this business approach as a viable reference for private initiatives of housing-based welfare support in the future.

Service recipients may obtain employment support, take up opportunities for cleaning work, and a three-month rent subsidy from the “Working and Rehabilitation Program for the Homeless” of the Taipei City Government. However, as these kinds of subsidy are only short-term, Homeless Taiwan’s HTCT and KIGEW projects, which are both devoted to creating long-term employment, are important in promoting self-reliance. Both projects have evolved into stable income streams for the organization to sustain its housing-based welfare support activities. Ultimately, these new projects positively rebrand negative community images, which also contributes tackling stigmatic views of the homeless. In turn, this can lead to a local sense of pride to propel more regenerative initiative on disadvantaged communities.

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Geerhardt Kornatowski, Toshio Mizuuchi, and Taku Fukumoto

**Abstract** For this final chapter, we summarize the overarching findings and insights of all the chapters. This book has been an attempt to provide clarity on the different types of urbanization in relation to vulnerable populations, according to the book's conceptual framework, and its situatedness within the complex totality of the urban. Within the context of urban studies, we opted for a return to the neighbourhood scale and illustrate its functional part in inclusionary placemaking in reference to the urbanization pathways of the respective cities explored in each chapter. The main aim has been to explore and contextualize a less appreciated side of capitalist urbanization, but one which stands out against the concurrent market-led makeovers (gentrification processes) in advanced city-regions, and even more importantly, one that holds on to its inclusionary capacities.

**Keywords** Inclusivity · Urban growth · Commons · Urban studies

In this final chapter, we summarize the overarching findings and insights of all the chapters in accordance with the book's conceptual framework (see Fig. 1 of Chap. 1). The purpose of the framework lies in its systematic approach to spatial transformations on the neighbourhood scale by juxtaposing the (counter)forces of the (1) private market, (2) public sector, (3) voluntary sector, and (4) informal communities with each other. Ever since gentrification has become prominent lens to scrutinize the social effects of spatial upgrading in the built environment, the onus has shifted over the years towards detailed explorations of the devastating impacts of private

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market-led urbanization on vulnerable populations, with or without state-financed resources. Yet, while the insights acquired in this way have been crucial in (politically) addressing issues of inequality, deprivation and exclusion, its use is increasingly at danger of being overstretched to dogmatic proportions. To this end, this book—and its chapters—has been an attempt to look beyond gentrification (without ignoring it) and to explore the diversity of (counter)forces that produce and manage local forms of urban inclusivity. The purpose is not to stir unneeded controversy within/against critical urban scholarship but rather to constitute an attempt to explicitly capture the less spectacular forms of urban change, which are easily overlooked within the context of revanchist urbanism—i.e., private market *cum* state-sponsored urban practices that tend to lead to the exclusion of vulnerable populations. Yet, in order to promote theoretical dialogue, and to go further than just the empirical, we have also attempted to contextualize these (counter)forces, by highlighting the spatial practices of the public sector, voluntary sector, and informal communities—while being aware of the particularities of the private market. The properties of those practices have been discussed in Chap. 1 and projected onto the conceptual framework.

In accordance with the two driving questions set out at the start of Chap. 1, we refocus our attention to the (1) urban settings of inclusivity and (2) their structural properties. By revisiting the specific urban spaces addressed in each chapter, we further articulate the (counter)forces that continue to shape and remake them. This way, we extend our perspective beyond the mere exclusionary properties of gentrification while carefully taking account of the complexities that these local spaces are respectively subjected to. For this, we stick to the four-part structure of the book before arriving at the overall conclusion.

Part I explored the context-dependent interpretations of gentrification in order to weigh its impact on the inclusionary function of urban space. Thus, the role of the private market and land-related capital flows are explicitly considered. In Chap. 2, Sugano examined the relevancy of Japan's legal framework—such as tenancy rights—which provides a systematic barrier to forms of urban upgrading that only benefit the wealthier classes. This account runs counter to the ongoing (hyper-)gentrification processes commonly witnessed throughout the global city-regions of the West and other neoliberalised parts of the world. Therefore, we are confronted with the peculiar absence of academic case studies on gentrification-induced displacement in the global city of Tokyo, at least in comparison to the vast literature on gentrification processes in North America and Europe. On the other hand, capital flows are most certainly set to find other means that can surpass the legal barriers in residential markets, but the awkward context of a depopulating nation in conjunction with the re-urbanization trend of suburb populations in Japan's city-regions demands a more cautious approach to whether a similar push for displacement will occur in their undervalued inner-city areas. Going deeper into the Japanese context, Mizuuchi & Nakayama, and Kiener (Chaps. 17 and 18) illustrate how vulnerable populations have been the target of spatial inclusion through various public and voluntary initiatives. Moreover, they describe how these initiatives eventually

progressed to regenerate some of the inner-city neighbourhoods based on the interplay between public investments and mediocre-profit welfare businesses (joined by volunteer sector agencies) (Part IV).

The neighbourhood scale formed the explicit focus of the following three chapters. In Chap. 3, Kırmızı took a closer position to the neoliberal manifestations of gentrification in the residential neighbourhoods of Osaka's CBD, while Lim (Chap. 4) discussed the current changes in Seoul's historically marginal and transient neighbourhoods at the fringes of its CBD. Bolzoni (Chap. 5) on the other hand looked to the current changes of the commercial spaces in Turin's inner-city neighbourhoods. In each of these chapters the role of historicity and culture stood out, both as factors that run against cookie-cutter forms of gentrification, yet at the same time as something that can be appropriated and marketized. But it follows that the (old) centrally located areas share a rather long history of private investments in the built environment and are thus likely to retain a sufficient density on which further rounds of accumulation could take place. By focusing on the increasing numbers of consuming students, Chap. 5 illustrates how such density has given way to a nightlife economy that estranges the local, established communities.

In summary, the creation and marketization of new consumption patterns over the historically inclusive properties of the neighbourhoods discussed in the chapters have been problematized and are consequently being challenged from various sources of "commons" that seek to accommodate the original population, whether in terms of relief infrastructures (Chap. 4) and tightly-knit community infrastructures (Chap. 3). The details of these infrastructures and their inherent capabilities are addressed in the next part.

\* \* \*

Part II provided a detailed examination of the inclusionary properties of certain urban centralities, by focusing on voluntary sector organizations that manage these properties and the levels of contestation that these spaces tend to be subjected to. Of significance here is the specific spatial and organizational structure of voluntary services, to which the concept of service hubs serves as an analytical lens. As a result, the politics of centrality and accessibility for vulnerable populations stood out in all case studies.

In Chap. 6, DeVerteuil addressed the contradictory character between old and new centralities in global city-regions and its ramifications for voluntary sector geographies as they heavily rely on the occupation of strategic neighbourhoods. Throughout the built environment, these centralities are constantly negotiated through the existing housing/facilities' stock and new-build (re)development. Whereas the service hubs—as residual clusters from the Keynesian era—exhibit significant degrees of resilience by staying put in the old inner-city pockets of London, Los Angeles, and Sydney, encroaching gentrification at the edges prohibits their care infrastructures to expand and intensify in response to the increasing number and mobility of vulnerable populations. As such, it becomes hard to lay claim on the newly built centralities, making the traditional service hubs immobile among the shifting geographies of city-regions.



Such a perspective resonances with the tendency towards consolidation as identified in the self-help spaces of ethnic neighbourhoods in Part III.

By focusing on the spatial distribution of permanent supportive housing for the homeless, Marr, Young, Johnston and Mahar in Chap. 7 stressed the effectiveness of a centralized service hub to assist people out of homelessness and into permanent housing in the globalizing city of Miami. The countervailing tendencies between rather punitive private development and progressive welfare policies influence the spatial landscape in which non-profit organizations organize their services. Yet, the neoliberal reframing of the market economy seems to have gulped up a considerable amount of the non-profit sector according to its ideological structures (such as self-dependency and self-responsibility). To a certain extent, the service “campuses” in the outlying areas resemble the transformation of voluntary sector services into an entrenched “homeless management industry”. And while in theory it would be a welcome factor to have inclusive spaces equally distributed throughout the city, the centrality of services near the downtown labour market is invaluable to service dependent populations that are in the process of exiting homelessness. Here we see centrality being redefined in terms of “volume, density and diversity” setting apart the downtown service hub from its campus counterparts at the fringes of the city. Yet, as similarly argued in Chap. 6, the Miami downtown hub needs to deal with its potential land values (gentrification) and at the same time needs public sector involvement to tackle the unsafe conditions brought forth by former rounds of social disinvestment.

Chapters 8 to 10 explore the East Asian urban context in relation to voluntary sector geographies. Yamamoto in Chap. 8 and Kornatowski in Chap. 10 explored the equivalent of service hubs in the inner-city neighbourhoods of Yokohama and Singapore. In both chapters we were introduced to the historical backdrop of their emergence as spatial clusters of voluntary sector services. In Chap. 8, Yamamoto explores the implications of an important question, namely who of the vulnerable populations—the homeless—can benefit from the inclusionary space that the service hub is supposed to be? Of particular interest is the public sector’s power over who qualifies as a deserving vulnerable person and more importantly who is welcomed and assisted in the particular centrality that service hubs and their arsenal of welfare resources offer. In Chap. 10, however, this situation rather gets turned around as Kornatowski explored Singapore’s service hub for migrant workers amid an ambivalent and often contested relation to public policy. Here, the contours of the service hub are extended beyond the clustering of voluntary sector agencies and into the ethnic-targeted self-help economies that have been able to emerge just outside the heavily state-planned urban centralities. In analogy to DeVerteuil’s apt observation of service hub neighbourhoods as spaces of incomplete neoliberalism, the migrant worker service hub in Singapore resembles a condition of incomplete developmentalism (i.e., in this case “disordered spaces” in a rigorously planned city). This is where the service hub has carved out its own centrality in the city, in accordance with their own definition of vulnerable migrant populations (i.e., workers that have

abandoned their dormitories) and which provides an important alternative to the rigid arrangement of official, state-sponsored channels.

The aspect of incompleteness is also taken up by Ching in Chap. 9. She showcased how Hong Kong's street sleepers navigate through urban space to secure their own centrality in the city. But, in a similar vein to Chaps. 7 and 8, the structural limitations to exiting homelessness are highlighted as well, as both the market (exorbitant housing prices) and the public sector (undersupply of public rental housing) are unable to tackle the gap of extreme inequality. And thus, in addition to a relatively vibrant voluntary sector, Ching turns the spotlight to the resilient strategies of the homeless themselves, and how they stay put in the centrally located public spaces. This however raises the issue of visible "marginality" and the NIMBY-like responses by the general public. But here too, the situation can be turned on its head as some voluntary organizations organize tours guided by the homeless as a social effort to publicly display their place-making strategies. The same initiative is also discussed by Sho in the context of Taipei in Chap. 19.

\* \* \*

Each chapter in Part III focuses on ethnic or racial minority spaces in inner-city neighbourhoods. In contrast to the formal arrangements of the private market in Part I, this informal counterpart is characterized by neighbourhoods that depend on and operate according to the particularities of local street economies and sometimes even clandestine practices. In general, the livelihood of the minorities that inhabit these spaces has long been neglected by urban planning and public welfare structures (managed both by national and local authorities). They also share a long history of severe social discrimination from their host societies. Although the residential concentration of minorities usually becomes a trigger for stigmatization, the socio-spatial structure of ethnic and racial clusters nurtures an environment fit for survival and sustained presence in the city. In relation to residential concentration, two keywords stood out: autonomy and self-help based on mutual aid practices within ethnic groupings.

Most notably, these features play a key role in mitigating the spatial pressures by private market forces, such as gentrification. Kesteloot in Chap. 11 and Fukumoto in Chap. 12 shed light on the actual processes and consequences of land transfers done by ethnic communities. Stable and owner-occupied housing has contributed to the concentrated persistence of ethnic populations and has led to a social consolidation within the respective enclaves. Therefore, their findings accentuate the importance of not just property ownership, but also owning a share in the local circuit of capital flows. This includes ethnic entrepreneurship often outside but also in parallel to the private market economy.

While self-sustained communities cannot be formed without strong social bonds based on ethnicity (i.e., mutual aid), we should not regard their consolidation as an isolated phenomenon. For example, Ishikawa in Chap. 13 elucidates the coalitional

movement by Japanese outcast (*buraku*) populations and Korean residents in an effort to improve their living standards. As she noted, it is noteworthy that this movement not only leads to an upgrading of the local housing environment but also to a strengthening of the overall sense of inclusivity. Similarly, Matsuo (Chap. 14) paid attention to the activities of soup kitchens in the racially mixed inner-city neighbourhoods of London. He concludes that the socially mixed character has enabled various inclusionary practices that exceed racial lines.

At the same time, the authors of Part III do share some concerns on the inevitable consequences wrought by gentrification-like processes. As implied in each chapter, to a greater or lesser extent, such processes undermine the strength of the autonomous practices by vulnerable populations. From these cases (except maybe the Osaka case), it is assumed that local governments remain dedicated to redeveloping these often-stigmatised neighbourhoods and continue to be influenced by private market-led profitable regeneration schemes. However, it is not necessarily adequate to regard ethnic minority groups as mere victims of exclusionary gentrification; as Kesteloot shows in Chap. 11, the second-hand car businesses run by immigrants are unintentionally implicated in the process of gentrification for the sake of their own interest (i.e., migrants becoming their own gentrifiers). With respect to ethnically bounded communities, while they do possess the capability to provide opportunities for their peers' upward social mobility, the advancement in their socioeconomic status implies a move out of the community. And, like the Korean residents discussed in Chap. 12, such an exodus may lead to the deterioration of the local built environment, rather than the usual makeover that gentrification produces. Therefore, the findings of Part III compel us to carefully take notice of the delicate changes and exact spatial transformations inside ethnically diverse neighbourhoods that face gentrification-like pressures.

\* \* \*

In Part IV, and in contrast to Part II and III, the authors explored cases where the public sector fulfils a prominent role in creating and maintaining an inclusionary environment for vulnerable populations. In the five selected cities—Amsterdam, Paris, Tokyo, Osaka, and Taipei—the impact of the public sector's role differs to various extents and this provided an opportunity to readdress the scope of the “public city” in multiple ways. In all cases, the intermingling of the voluntary sector with the public sector during this process was conspicuous, even to the degree that there can be mention of a mutual deepening between both sectors and their respective approaches to welfare delivery arrangements.

By elaborately highlighting the role of the public sector, Part IV presented the typical continental European welfare model in contrast to the East Asian welfare model in relation to the everyday workings of service hubs. The case of Seoul in Part I and Yokohama in Part III also exemplified aspects of the East Asian welfare model. The service hub neighbourhoods of East Asian city-regions are characterized by their spatial safety net functions in inner-city neighbourhoods where the limited

availability of small and overcrowded housing fulfils a crucial function for the precariously employed. Another feature, especially in the case of homeless services, is the absence of any significant ethnic diversity. It can also be said that city governments, rather than the central government, have played a rather residual role in this regard, as illustrated by the cases of Tokyo (Chap. 17), Osaka (Chap. 18), and Taipei (Chap. 19). In other words, the conspicuous concentration of small, low-cost housing, precarious wagedworkers and public assistance recipients creates the precondition of the expansion and professionalisation of relief infrastructures, notwithstanding the continued stigmatization and spatial discrimination by the general public. This combination, in effect, continues to be the main reason why mainstream developers and usual-suspect gentrifiers refrain from proactively investing in these neighbourhoods. Such continuing low inertia of investment has been particularly noticeable in the East Asian context, and ironically serves as a bulwark against the intrusion of private market-led forms of gentrification. At the same time, some East Asian service hubs are losing their historical function of inclusionary practices for the vulnerable, such as the main service hub in Tokyo, while the service hubs of Taipei and Osaka still retain their outspoken local character of inclusionary functionality. In all cases, the emergence of the voluntary sector as a new and prominent service provider in recent years under the residual welfare arrangements of public social security is becoming a common feature throughout urban East Asia.

On the other hand, the two continental European cases, unlike the informal spaces (marked by self-help and mutual aid) discussed in Part III, are more explicitly situated within the framework of public welfare. The difference is that the informal spaces are rather arranged in spontaneous and organic ways, while the neighbourhoods examined in Chaps. 15 and 16 have been artificially shaped as a vast spatial arrangement under the auspices of the central government. In Amsterdam, as part of the Netherlands' welfare regime, the provision of social housing has been the main resource of housing safety for vulnerable groups, including those with migratory backgrounds. The vast scale of housing estates built in the *banlieue* suburbs of Paris also fulfil this function. The housing security net is characterized by multiple housing complexes in the outer city and suburban fringes. These complexes represent the universal efforts of continental Europe's "public urbanization" in the 1970s and 1980s. But, the unplanned concentration of minorities gave way to spatial isolation and high degrees of stigma, and consequently these neighbourhoods became perceived as problematic areas. However, local improvement efforts have played out differently in Amsterdam and Paris. The outcome of the Dutch case was rather promising in that vast restructuring and a complete makeover based on mixed income resulted in a more balanced socio-economic mix and overall higher satisfaction with the upgraded built environment (especially in terms of housing conditions). In the case of Paris, however, recent alternative approaches, such as "participatory urbanism", to merge social and economic development, have had less success as these approaches often amount into professionals' platforms with only limited opportunities for community residents to participate (something also discussed in the latter chapters of Part I). In the case of Osaka, the provision of public housing to the *burakumin* (outcaste people) also took place on a huge scale, yet mostly concentrated in inner-city areas. While

this type of public housing is a rather unique case in Japan, it has been a long-time feature of the state's high degree of public intervention, thereby also resembling the case of continental Europe.

Lastly, and in contrast to Part II where the overall focus was put on the rather haphazard voluntary sector arrangements in the form of service hubs, Part IV also shed light on the shift of welfare management from the public sector to the voluntary sector. At the same time, the general safety net and service hubs are diverse in relation to their respective welfare regimes, labour markets, and migration inflows. While the strength of the "public city" is increasingly receding into the background (in favour of the private market), the new prominence of the voluntary sector and its pragmatic partnering with the public sector proves to be a valuable and resilient counterweight to the gentrification-like makeovers of the urban spaces with historically high levels of inclusivity.

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In reflection, the four parts of the book have been an attempt to come to grips with the diversity of urban inclusivity, also in the context of urban restructuring (gentrification), but more importantly in terms of distinct moments of urbanization that exceed mere neoliberal arrangements. To this end, our conceptual framework served as a guideway to systematically identify inclusionary (counter)forces and project them against the strands and theories in critical urban research. The four planes of the framework served as "windows", each revealing a peculiar logic—a drive, if you will—that underwrite a certain aspect of place-making. In other words, each window figured to unveil a certain reality and its inherent dynamics. But on a theoretical *niveau*, we still need to make work of putting all windows together so as to shed light on the urban totality that emerges from their interrelation (i.e., their mutual contradictions).

The objective of this book was to move beyond a generic understanding of gentrification that is limited to perspectives of an unleashed private market and a punitive state/public sector as its enabler. To this end, the book explored and highlighted the countervailing tendencies from the less spectacular aspects of urbanization, namely the inclusionary practices by local governments, the voluntary sector, and informal communities. As seen from the various case studies in this book, all actors have the potentiality and concrete experience to resist unilateral forms of profit-motivated urban restructuring (gentrification). This was contextualized and set out against the spatial backdrop of the cities addressed in the chapters, as the countervailing forces continue to evolve in tandem with the particularities of their localities, and their capacities for urban inclusivity. But we need to be more perceptive of how these diversities continue to coexist, not just as separate counterforces but as a sum that constantly gets rearranged according to the prevalent power relations among them, whether in conflictual or symbiotic ways. And thus, we are presented with a certain balancing act, a spatial status-quo, which occasionally may appear stable, but which

is in effect constantly under pressure for change. From here we can rethink how corresponding politics are organised in response these counterforces and their spatialities, at least in the context of advanced city-regions, to which the book has limited itself.

And thus, we need to reconsider the political implications for inclusivity. As long as our (urban) society remains embedded within a capitalist structure that restlessly seeks new opportunities for growth, there will be an inevitable and constant drive for spatial restructuring for the sake of capital accumulation, and this seems to be the ultimate bottleneck of realizing inclusionary cities. It thus follows that if the precondition of growth on an aggregate scale remains unchallengeable, the question of how and where this growth is to be realized—even on a sustained and compounding basis—becomes extremely important. *Growth needs to be realized somewhere but it should not need to be anywhere.* It is at the interstices of this somewhere and anywhere that a pragmatic politics towards urban inclusivity may unfold. This may imply a further empowerment of the voluntary sector and/or informal communities, but we have seen that this happens through the constant reinvention of their spatial presence (social innovation), as discussed in Part II and Part III. And while the spaces managed by the voluntary sector often require financial backing by the public sector (Part IV), informal communities get ahead thanks to the discretionary approaches by state actors that in turn enable their street economies to function in service of their inhabitants (more than often in a semi-legal and somewhat clandestine context).

Next, from considering the diversities of urban inclusivity over the spectrum of our conceptual framework, we should try to define its spatial situatedness. Within urban studies in general, inclusionary spaces have been perceived as some form of “alternative spaces”, which are out of touch with or even antagonistic to contemporary urbanism. But we contend that cannot be the case. On the contrary, these spaces are less alternative than they are integral to and part of capitalist urbanization. In other words, the tendency exists to juxtapose these spaces against the spaces of the (formal) private market, and therefore consider them as something “off”. And it is exactly the spaces submerged in the logic of the private market that have the propensity to be exclusionary and/or punitive in character. But the market cannot function without the state in regulatory terms, nor can the public sector deliver on all the welfare functions without the help of the voluntary sector. In terms of (re)housing vulnerable populations, the same voluntary sector often needs to depend on informal arrangements. But, in turn, these arrangements often exist in parallel to the formal market (but usually take up the slack of it). And so, we arrive at a more total picture—or a balance in which different spaces of inclusivity are rather part and parcel of an organic whole, and not a separate “alternative”. They are integral to each other and vulnerable populations would often find themselves navigating through all the spaces depending on their life stage. Once we perceive these spaces in this way, we could further focus on the type of distributional politics that these spaces deserve (and require), as the balance—at least in the context of advanced city-regions—more than often tends to tip over to the spatial logic of the private market. In other words, how small and restricted the spatial resources of inclusivity managed by the public sector, voluntary sector and informal communities may be in comparison to those of the private market, they can never be completely done away with as numerous

populations remain dependent on non-market social interventions. It would be from these small openings (i.e., the inclusionary “small portions of the city”) that a politics of empowerment may be constructed upon from, although, at the same time, and to a certain extent, it must also be receptive to the requirements of capital accumulation (i.e., the logic of the private market). Of course, such balancing is an immensely difficult task with just too many key stakeholders holding opposite interests. Yet, the book’s conceptual framework seeks to provide an anchor point to navigate through these interests.

Another way to redirect from the notion of “alternative spaces”, is to play into the (often politicised) degrees of visibility that spaces of inclusivity exhibit within the overall urban context. As discussed throughout the book, these spaces are the result of the uneven character of capitalist urbanization, but they are equally a manifestation of *a particular usefulness* within the urban, although in non-conventional appearance (which is often the target of formal intervention). In other words, the landscape that developed along inclusionary, yet in appearance rogue lines, and the inherent social relations that take form in them, point to a particular use that cannot easily be displaced—or replaced by arrangements based on a different logic (whether from the market or public sector). Especially the informal and ad-hoc practices cannot thrive within the confinements of the public sector and private market, nor can a regulated context deliver the human-scale opportunities to vulnerable populations that remain out of the reach of formal structures. Yet again, this does not necessarily mean that this usefulness (whether it is delivered and maintained by the voluntary sector, informal communities, or even a progressively engaged public sector) exists as an alternative to this status-quo. It is inherent to this status-quo and this how it should be approached. And by approaching it in this way, the non-conformist visibility serves as an easy reminder to the structural inequalities in urban society. Processes of gentrification and numerous public redevelopment project have sought to erase the visibility without practically offering any solutions on a structural level. A politics on the usefulness of inclusionary landscapes, however confronting their appearances may look, should therefore identify, and seek to optimize its use within the larger urban context, not as an alternative, but an integral part to capitalist urbanization.

This book has been an attempt to provide clarity on the different types of urbanization in relation to vulnerable populations, according to the book’s conceptual framework, and its situatedness within the complex totality of the urban. Within the context of urban studies, we opted for a return to the neighbourhood scale and illustrate its functional part in inclusionary placemaking in reference to the urbanization pathways of the respective cities explored in each chapter. The main aim has been to explore and contextualize a less appreciated (and most of the time less “spectacular”) side of capitalist urbanization, but one which stands out against the concurrent market-led makeovers (gentrification processes) in advanced city-regions, and even more importantly, one that holds on to its inclusionary capacities. Whereas the result of this academic endeavour may still be somewhat rudimentary, we hope that urban spaces of inclusivity, along with their countervailing potential against exclusionary forces, will be considered more explicitly in critical theorizations of contemporary urbanization and inclusionary policymaking.

Lastly, we conclude by looking beyond the neighbourhood scale. While the purpose of the book has been to explore on-the-ground manifestations of urban inclusivity, and therefore looking at various urbanization pathways that exceed the exclusionary mechanisms of gentrification, future research would also significantly benefit from a regional perspective. In light of the book's approach, efforts to identify and conceptualize regional features across all planes of the conceptual framework would offer us a richer understanding of the similarities in urban inclusivity within a regional spectrum. We have merely scratched the surface on this matter, since we have chosen to highlight the East Asian context in comparison to the European and American context. As a future direction, however, we would need to include a systematic approach to urban inclusivity according to welfare state types and variegated forms of capitalism. This would significantly enhance our understanding of the structural forces that continue to shape the social turfs of cities as well as their innovative responses on the ground.