

Actual Living Condition Surrounding Street Dwellers in Downtown Focusing on Sleeping Place and Support, Case Study in Fukuoka

Shintaro IKEDA

Undergraduate Student, Department of Architecture, School of Engineering, Kyushu University
774 Motooka, Nishi-ku, Fukuoka 819-0395, Japan; shin.iked@gmail.com

Takefumi KUROSE

Associate Professor, Graduate school of Human-Environment Studies, Kyushu University, Dr. Eng.

The aim of this paper is to survey on the actual living condition of street dwellers to review the assistance system for them in Fukuoka city, Japan. The survey was conducted as fieldwork by participating in outreach support of an NPO. As results: 1) Compared with results in 2000-2001 survey, sleeping places of street dwellers have separated into permanent structure and temporary structure, and became less visible. 2) Existing support system by the government has not reached all of street dwellers and had an limitation in accessibility, because some had negative intention to receive public welfare and others had disability to express their intentions to receive it. 3) The third sector has tried a longer-term assistance and has more flexibility in customizing care into the different intentions of street dwellers.

Keywords: Homeless, Social Exclusion, Living Condition, Street Dweller, Public Space

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Recent population change of street dwellers in Japan has been showed by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (Fig. 1). The number of street dwellers is decreasing nationwide in Japan from 2003. It decreased from 25,296 to 4,977 during 2003-2018. It is widely said that this decrease is the result of assistances from two sides: the governmental ones, such as the establishment of law of specific measures concerning assistance in self-support of homeless in 2002, and support by the third sector, which is charities and other non-profit organizations, in each city. On the other hand, the decreasing rate has declined in recent 10 years. These changes show a limitation of current assistance system for homeless,

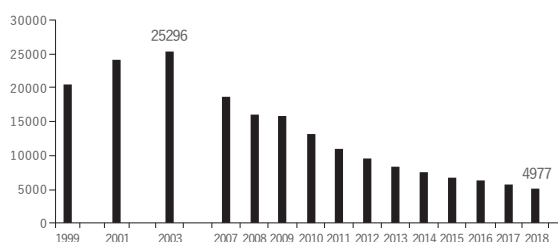


Fig. 1 The Number of Street Dwellers in Japan

thus it is necessary to clarify the actual condition of lifestyles of street dwellers and support for them now again.

Therefore, in this research, we aimed to survey current living condition surrounding street dwellers and clarify the relation in-between.

1.2 Related Study

Regarding living conditions of street dwellers, Sugitomo (1999) clarified the mechanism of spatial occupation of homeless in a city park. Regarding social exclusion of homeless, Dohi (2010) traced the transitions of sleeping places of street dwellers in open spaces in the city and considered the relationship between them and social exclusion. In addition, Saito (2001), (2002a) surveyed the actual living conditions of street dwellers in Fukuoka city.

As described above, according to the living condition surrounding street dwellers, previous studies focus on the spatial behavior of them such as occupation and movement, and social response to street dwellers such as elimination. In this paper, we arranged support movements by the third sector in order to clarify actual living condition surrounding

street dwellers physically and socially.

1.3 Structure and Method

This paper consists with three chapters, survey result of actual living condition of street dwellers in Fukuoka including spatial changes compared with 2000-2001, actual condition of support by the third sector, and comprehensive discussion.

The survey was conducted by fieldwork: we participated the outreach support of an NPO "Homeless Support Fukuoka Onigirinokai" (hereinafter, called "ONG") that acts in the widest area of Fukuoka city. Every Friday, during 9:00-11:00 p.m., from October 6, 2017 to April 6, 2018, we met and interviewed in total 113 street dwellers. In addition, we interviewed ONG about street dwellers support on October 6, 2017.

1.4 Background of Fukuoka City

As with domestic change, the number of street dwellers in Fukuoka city has also decreased since 2009 (Fig. 2). According to the survey by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Fukuoka city had the third largest number of street dwellers during 2008-2009, following Tokyo and Osaka. This is because Fukuoka city had imposed presentation of the residence certificate to apply public livelihood assistance until 2009 so that a person without an address had not applied¹.

In 2009, the city renewed its policy to make the residence certificate unnecessary for the application¹. In this process, a poverty elimination committee which is composed of academic experts, NPOs, medical institutions, etc. was involved¹. In March of the same year, the committee held the consultant meeting about living, employment, and medical

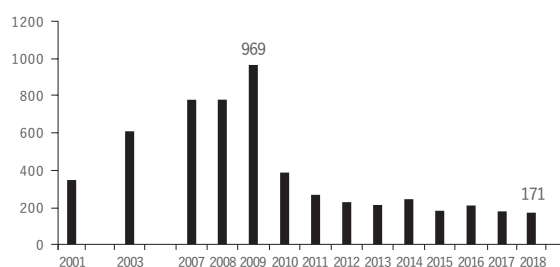


Fig. 2 The Number of Street Dwellers in Fukuoka

treatment for street dwellers and requested the city to promote the housing support for them¹.

As a result of this renewal, more homeless people including street dwellers received the public livelihood assistance of housings and pecuniary aids. Because of this, the number of street dwellers drastically decreased around 2010¹. The number became approximately one fifth of 969 in 2009. After that, the number remains flat around 200 and reported as 171 in 2018.

2. Actual Sleeping Condition

As the result of the fieldwork survey, actual sleeping condition became cleared. This chapter shows the result and the changes between 2000-2001 to 2017-2018, by comparing with the previous surveys.

2.1 Types of Sleeping Place

We categorized sleeping places of street dwellers into 4 types from the following points of view, stability and locational dependency (Table 1). In other words, we classified the length of space occupancy of the sleeping place into permanent and temporary, and correspondence with the existing structure into independence and dependence. In this paper we defined permanent type as staying at the same place in more than a day. In addition, we listed the following attributions for the each sleeping type: components, sex, age group, address of sleeping place and the date we met. (Table 2). Supplementarily, we noted that the sleeping places of 38 people were unknown.

Table 1 Types of Sleeping Place

		on existing structure	
		independent	dependent
length of occupation time	permanent	<input type="checkbox"/> independent-permanent 	<input type="radio"/> dependent-permanent
	temporary	<input type="checkbox"/> independent-temporary 	<input type="radio"/> dependent-temporary

Table 2 List of Sleeping Places

type	structure	components	people	sex	age	site	visit date
independent-permanent	—	self-build hut	2	m	old	Hakata ward	2017/11/3
	—	self-build hut	5	m	old	Hakata ward	2018/1/12
	—	self-build hut	1	m	old	Hakata ward	2018/2/16
	—	self-build hut	1	m	old	Chuo ward	2018/1/19
	—	self-build hut	1	f	old	Chuo ward	2018/1/20
	—	self-build hut	1	m	middle	Chuo ward	2018/1/21
	—	self-build hut	1	m	old	Chuo ward	2018/12/8
	—	self-build hut	1	m	old	Chuo ward	2017/11/3
dependent-permanent	bridge	self-build-hut	1	m	old	Higashi ward	2018/3/19
	bridge	tent for camping	1	m	old	Higashi ward	2018/3/19
	bridge	umbrella & mattress	1	m	old	Hakata ward	2017/11/3
	bridge	uncertain	1	m	old	Higashi ward	2018/2/16
	bridge	sleeping bag	1	m	old	Nishi ward	2018/2/2
	eaves of building	sleeping bag	1	m	middle	Chuo ward	2017/11/3
	eaves of building	sleeping bag	1	m	old	Chuo ward	2017/11/4
	portal culvert	uncertain	1	m	old	Nishi ward	2018/2/2
independent-temporary	—	none	1	m	young	Chuo ward	2017/10/6
	—	none	1	m	middle	Chuo ward	2017/10/6
	—	none	1	f	old	Chuo ward	2017/10/6
	—	none	1	m	old	Chuo ward	2018/10/6
dependent-temporary	underpass	uncertain	14	m	old	Chuo ward	2018/1/26
	underpass	uncertain	7	f	old	Chuo ward	2018/1/26
	underpass	uncertain	2	m	middle	Chuo ward	2017/10/6
	underpass	uncertain	9	m	old	Chuo ward	2017/10/6
	underpass	umbrella, sleeping bag	1	m	middle	Hakata ward	2017/12/22
	eaves of building	partition, umbrella	2	m	old	Chuo ward	2018/2/2
	eaves of building	partition, sleeping bag	1	m	old	Nishi ward	2017/10/6
	eaves of building	sleeping bag	1	m	young	Hakata ward	2018/2/16
	eaves of building	sleeping bag	1	m	middle	Chuo ward	2018/1/19
	eaves of building	sleeping bag	3	m	old	Chuo ward	2017/11/3
	eaves of building	uncertain	1	m	old	Hakata ward	2017/11/3
	eaves of building	uncertain	1	f	old	Hakata ward	2017/11/3
	eaves of building	uncertain	1	f	young	Hakata ward	2018/1/5
	eaves of building	uncertain	1	m	middle	Hakata ward	2017/12/22
	shelter	sleeping bag	3	m	middle	Chuo ward	2017/12/8
	bridge	sleeping bag	1	m	middle	Higashi ward	2018/3/19
	safety fence	sleeping bag	1	m	middle	Chuo ward	2017/11/3
uncertain	uncertain	sleeping bag	1	m	old	Chuo ward	2018/1/26
	uncertain	uncertain	1	m	old	Hakata ward	2018/4/6
	uncertain	uncertain	1	m	old	Hakata ward	2017/12/1
	uncertain	uncertain	12	m	middle	Chuo ward	2017/12/1
	uncertain	uncertain	23	m	old	Chuo ward	2017/12/1

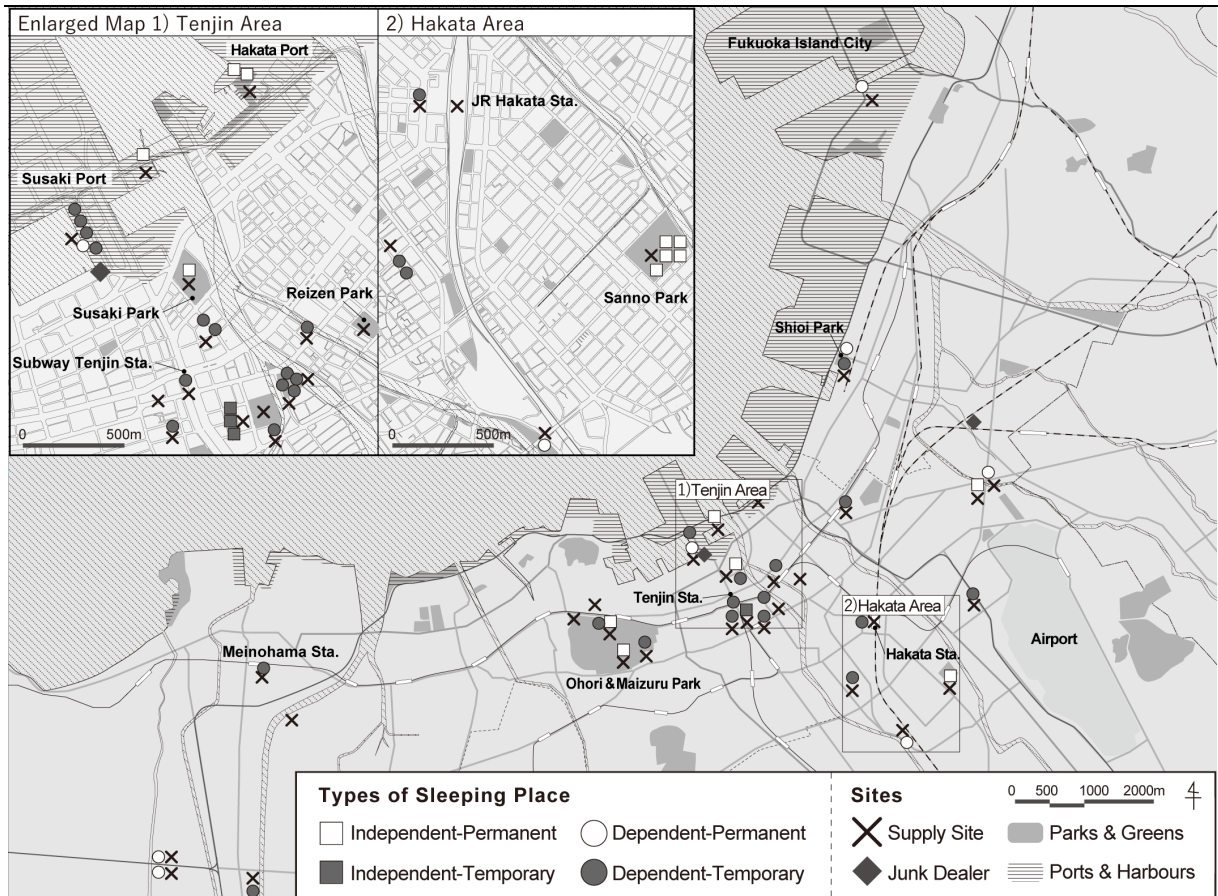


Fig. 3 Sleeping Places of Street Dwellers in Fukuoka

About the independent-permanent type, 13 places were found. They were in parks or green spaces. Most of them had a wooden hut covered with plastic sheets³. About the dependent-permanent type, 8 places were found. They were under bridges, eaves of existing buildings, or a culvert. These existing structures were used as a roof or a wall. The components were wooden huts covered with plastic sheets³, a camping tent, a cardboard partition, or other materials. About the independent-temporary type, 4 places were found. They had no stable locations and temporarily slept on the bench in the park or plaza. There were no components and they wore blankets or only clothing. Additionally, two of independent-temporary were unable to communicate with NPO supporters, so did not express their intention if they want to receive any supports. About the dependent-temporary type, 50 places were found. Most of them were in the passage such as the entrance of subways, the entrance of underground

shopping mall, the eaves of existing buildings. These public spaces were used as roof and wall. The components were umbrellas, partitions, etc.

Based on the above, the following was cleared: according to stability, permanent type had relatively sturdier components and more than half of it were located in the park. In contrast, temporary type had easier and more portable components and about 60% of it were in the underground passage space. Meanwhile, according to locational dependency, most of independent type were in parks and greens and more than half of dependent type used the underground passage space as sleeping place.

2.2 Locational Feature

We found in total 48 sleeping locations by observation and interview (Fig. 2). The locations were classified into the following three areas: parks and greens, ports, and downtown.

In parks and greens, sleeping places were located by trees and bushes and where people seldom

pass so that they cannot be found easily. All of them were permanent type. At the interview, most of them said that they had settled there for over 10 years.

At the ports, sleeping places were located on the greens, wharfs, or under the eaves of storage sheds. The sleeping types were totally different. At the interview, some said that they had slept where are close to day labor working place.

In downtown, sleeping places were located in passage spaces and plaza. Passage spaces, such as in the entrances of subway stations and under the eaves of buildings, were used after they close at night. At plaza, shelters, benches, and steps were used. All sleeping places were the temporary type. At the interview, some said that they had slept where are close to the day laborer pickup location.

As a result, a sleeping place where people are hardly accessed and whose gaze from outside hardly reaches is likely to be selected in various areas of urban areas.

2.3 Relationship between Sleeping Place and other Life conditions

We found some relationships between sleeping places and other life conditions from the results of interviews with street dwellers.

Direct and indirect proximity was found between sleeping place and workplace. Specifically, at the ports, some street dwellers decided the sleeping places due to the fact that they are close to the junk dealers and the day laborer workplace. In addition, in downtown, some decided due to the fact that they are close to the place of work transportation. Incidentally, street dwellers' living sources included pensions and wages. The wages were earned from day labor work or picking up waste cans and bringing to the junk dealers. In addition, some of the permanent type had self-sufficiency in food.

Some street dwellers who did not rely on public livelihood assistance were found in permanent type. Specifically, 5 people appealed to distrust to the governmental support or needed no public livelihood assistance.

Some street dwellers kept sleeping location unstable and flexible so that they could adapt to the climate in temporary type. Specifically, they use Internet-cafes and acquaintance houses as sleeping place on severe cold weather in winter.

2.4 Comparison with 2000-2001 Survey Result

In this chapter we compared the result of this survey with the previous ones in order to estimate the changes of the living condition of street dwellers (Table 3). According to the previous surveys, Saito (2001), (2002a) interviewed in total 108 street dwellers living in Fukuoka city for their life conditions including attributions, sleeping styles, and locations. Those two were surveyed on June 16 and 17, 2000, December 9 and 10, 2000, and July 30 and 31, 2001.

1) Attributional change of Street Dwellers

The proportion of men accounted for 90% in this survey, while it accounted for about 94% in 2001. In addition, the percentage of elderly people accounted for 75% in this survey, accounting for 41% in 2001. Therefore, it was estimated that the gender ratio remained unchanged clearly and that the ratio of the elderly became nearly twice the total of 2001.

2) Disappearance of Sleeping Place from CBD

Permanent huts where street dwellers slept disappeared from the city parks in Hakata and Tenjin, which are CBD of Fukuoka city. In December 2000, the number of the huts was reported to be 12 at Susaki Park, which is in Tenjin, and 14 at Reizen Park, which is in Hakata. However, in this survey, the only 1 hut was found in Susaki Park and no huts in Reizen Park. Moreover, no temporary types were found in both parks.

On top of that, sleeping street dwellers also disappeared from the concourse of the two stations in CBD. In December 2000, the number of street dwellers in the concourse of station was reported to be 45 in Hakata railway station and 13 in Tenjin subway station respectively. However, in this survey, we could not find any sleeping street dwellers in the concourse of the two station. Outside of the

Table 3 Changes from 2000-2001 to 2017-2018

	the previous surveys	this survey
female : male	6 : 94 (Jul. 2001)	10 : 90
rate of elderly people	41% (Jul. 2001)	75%
the number of sleeping place	A) Hakata railway station : 54 (Dec. 2000) B) Tenjin subway station : 11 (Dec. 2000)	A) none B) none
the number of permanent hut	C) Susaki Park : 9 (Jun. 2000) D) Reizen Park : 4 (Jun. 2000) 14 (Dec. 2000)	C) 1 D) none
components of permanent type	1) cardboard huts (Jun. 2000) 2) cardboard houses (Jul. 2001) 3) camping tents (Jun. 2000) 4) self-built huts (Jul. 2001) 5) self-built tents (Jun. 2000, Jul. 2001)	1), 2) not found 3), 4), 5) found
components of temporary type	6) cardboard beds 7) none (only clothing)	6), 7) found

Table 4 Foods and Goods Supply Schedule of February 2018

period	time	place	contents	host
the 1st Monday	18:00	Hakata ward	foods	Special Nuring Home
every Tuesday	13:00	Hakata ward	foods, clothes	Minoshima Megumi House
every Wednesday	11:00	Chuo ward	lunch packages	Fukuoka-Chikko Day Laborers Union
	16:00	Hakata ward	bread	Wakuwaku Life CHURCH
every Thursday	14:00	Hakata ward	bread	Shiminnokai
	16:00	Hakata ward	riceballs	Fukuoka-Chikko Day Laborers Union
every Friday	16:30	Hakata ward	bread	Korean Church
	21:00	(outreach)	riceballs, soup, clothes	ONG
every Saturday	13:15	Chuo ward	lunch packages, coffee	The Salvation Army Fukuoka
the 4th Sunday	15:00	Chuo ward	bread, coffee	Fukuoka Bethany Church

concourse, they were found in the passage spaces such as entrance stairs and outside the station building after the night closure.

3) Disappearance of Intermediate Components

Houses and huts made of cardboard were found in 2000 and 2001 survey. However, not in this survey. The other components found in the past were still used. For example, DIY huts, DIY tents, and camping tents in the permanent type, and cardboard beds, sleeping bags and none (only clothing) in the temporary type.

In these components, houses and huts made of cardboard are classified as intermediate between permanent and temporary. Thus, this change means disappearance of the intermediate components.

3. Supporting System of The Third Sector

In this chapter we organized the actual support system of street dwellers by the third sector. As the

representative contents, we focused on supply of foods and goods, housing support, and events operated by ONG.

3.1 Foods and Goods Supply

As of 2018, foods and goods supply is conducted by several group dispersively. The way of the supply is divided into outreach and soup kitchen. Outreach is the type of visiting the sleeping place of street dwellers and check the safety and health condition through delivery of foods and goods. Soup kitchen is the type of using a relatively large park in the city as a place to cook and serve. Both two types of the supply are mainly carried out voluntarily. ONG acts both types and several other groups are also act soup kitchen. The supply are carried out almost every day except Monday and Saturday (Table 4)³. They do not hold at the same time and place, so that street dwellers can have more opportunity to receive supplies.

ONG provides foods, clothes, fliers and other living goods. In particular, in the fliers ONG prints the schedule of soup kitchen, events, and weather forecasts. These information works as a lifeline for street dwellers.

3.2 Housing Support

Housing support by the third sector is divided into transitional housing and home-visit care. Transitional housing includes temporary housing, employment assistance, and nursing care. Home-visit care is to visit a house of a person who was a street dweller in the past and check his or her safety and health. The representative organizations in Fukuoka city for housing support are "Social Welfare Corporation Green Coop Hobokukan Fukuoka" (hereinafter, called "GCH"), "Fukuoka Sumainokai" (hereinafter, called "FSM"), and ONG.

GCH and FSM manage the transitional housing. GCH lends rooms and offers meals and baths for free to street dwellers for a period of about 6 months to 1 year subject to receiving employment assistance. FSM provides counselling service and nursing care housing mainly for poor people and handicapped people. On the other hand, ONG takes home-visit care every month. The members of ONG visit houses and checks the safety and health of former street dwellers who realize self-sufficiency by ONG's past transitional housing support. Additionally, ONG currently does not manage housing for new street dwellers.

3.3 Events for Street Dwellers

ONG holds events for street dwellers at Susaki Park three times a year. Two of them are held in the severe cold season: from December to March. The content includes providing clothing for cold weather, doctor's examination and medical prescription, and law counselling by a judicial scrivener in addition to soup kitchen. Thus, those events are the opportunities to improve the social problems surrounding street dwellers, in addition to maintenance of health prevention and recovery from illness.

4. Discussion

4.1 Changes of Sleeping Place

Sleeping places of street dwellers have separated into permanent structure and temporary structure, because the intermediate component of the sleeping place disappeared during 2000-2018. Furthermore, no fresh street dwellers were found in the permanent sleeping place. Most of the users had lived in permanent structure for more than 10 years. For these reasons, in urban area, sleeping space of the street dwellers gets clearly polarized into the persistent one and fluid one.

In addition, in urban public spaces, the sleeping places become less visible, because of the following three reasons: 1) compared with 2000-2001, the sleeping places were disappeared from the concourse of two stations in the CBD. 2) The permanent type of the sleeping place were also disappeared from two parks in the city center. 3) The sleeping place found in this survey were little visible, such as in the passage space after its closure, under the eaves of the building after the night closure, and permanent huts over the bushes and trees.

4.2 Limitation of Governmental Support

Governmental support system for street dwellers has its limitation, in terms of maladjustment of self-application. In the survey, we clarified that several street dwellers had negative consciousness to receiving the public support. Moreover, in the type of independent-temporary, some had no ability to indicate their intentions orally. The existing system of the governmental support, such as public livelihood assistance, basically depends on self-application, so it has no chance to improve living conditions of those people.

4.3 Significance of The Third Sector

Current support activities by the third sector function as a longer-term supporting system. According to supports by ONG and other private organizations in Fukuoka city, the support is provided to the following three different process of street dwellers (Fig. 4): 1) the third sector visited the sleeping places and kept an eye on the street dwellers by supplying foods and

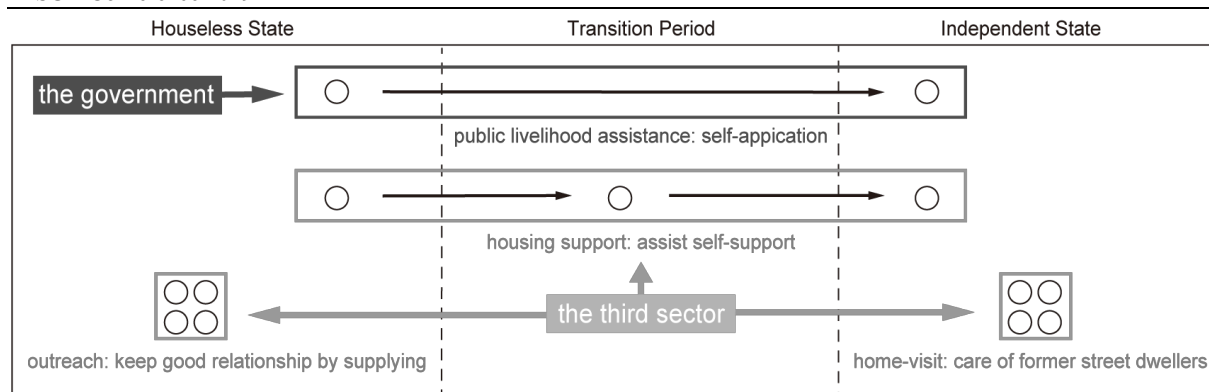


Fig. 4 Process of Supporting Street Dwellers

goods, whether they want to receive supports or not. 2) They assisted street dwellers' self-support by providing housing and employment assistance temporarily. 3) They also assisted people who had been street dwellers, by visiting their home and check their health. In consequence, the common target is to keep or build good relationships of trust between supporters and street dwellers or former street dwellers by making contacts on a regular basis. Considering the current living condition of street dwellers as described above, it is not enough to just wait for street dwellers to receive public livelihood assistance from the government subjectively. Moreover, support activities by the third sector in Fukuoka city is important in terms of the flexibility in customizing care into the different intentions of street dwellers.

Acknowledgements

The authors are sincerely grateful to ONG, a homeless supporting NPO in Fukuoka city, for allowing us to participate the outreach support and to fieldwork there. Moreover, the detail information about the support for street dwellers by the third sector are a primal base for this paper.

Note

1. From an interview to Y, a member of ONG, in October 6, 2017.
2. We checked the inside by looking into from the entrance. Many of the hut were constructed with wooden structures covered with steel panels or

plastic sheets.

3. From the information flier “おにぎりだより (Onigiri-Dayori)” No.425 made by ONG.

References

- Dohi, M. & Nagahashi, T. (1995). *The impact on homeless people of the park management policy of Tennouji park, Osaka city*. Journal of the Japanese Institute of Landscape Architecture. Landscape Research Japan. 59(5), 213-216.
- Dohi, M., Sugita, S., & Kobayashi N. (2010). *The movement of the sleeping places of homeless people and the exclusion of those people*. Journal of the city planning institute of Japan. No.45-3, 751-756.
- Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. *Results of the national survey on the actual conditions of the homeless (estimates)*. Retrieved November 1, 2018, from <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/list/64-15.html>
- Saito, T. (2001a). ホームレスの居住と人権に関する研究 その1、福岡市都心の実態調査より (*A study on housing and rights of homeless people actual condition of Fukuoka No.1 from survey of actual conditions in the city center of Fukuoka*). AIJ Kyushu Chapter Architectural Research Meeting (Planning). No.40, 141-144.
- Saito, T. (2002a). ホームレスの居住問題と支援に関する研究 その3、福岡市内108人の路上生活者の面接調査より (*A study on housing and support for homeless people No.3 from interviews of 108 street dwellers in Fukuoka city*). AIJ

Kyushu Chapter Architectural Research Meeting
(Planning). AIJ. No.41, 145-148.

Sugitomo, G. & Goto, H. (1999). *A study on park
occupation by homeless and the mechanisms in
Toyama park Tokyo*. J. Archit. Plann. AIJ. No.517,
215-222.