ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS IN EUROPE

Service Provision For Homeless People In Europe:

Organisational Factors Affecting the Delivery of Services for Homeless People

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Abstract

Social cohesion and the fight against social exclusion are key issues for the European Union. Access to adequate, secure and affordable housing is fundamental to the achievement of a socially cohesive and inclusive society. This collection of papers establishes the organisational factors that affect the delivery of services for homeless people in Europe. The issues involved are examined in five countries in Europe (Austria, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK) representative of different situations in the development of social protection, understanding of the nature and political priority given to solving homelessness and different histories to the development of services to meet the needs of homeless people.

In a context in which homeless services are provided, in the main, by non-governmental agencies funded by the local state in a competitive commissioning culture that combines increased regulation with new public management approaches, the paper examine this changing organisational structure in relation to four key issues: decision-making and accountability, monitoring and evaluation, professionalisation and staffing and evolving organisational structures.

Across Europe the provision of homeless services is delivered by three spheres - the state, the church and the voluntary sector (NGO sector). Although the balance of provision varies there is evidence, in almost all countries, of a shift towards an increasing role for (more recently established) NGO agencies. In the face of changing strategies from 'protection to prevention', services have become both more diverse and more specialised. This has reflected a shift in approach towards more individualised services. It has also reflected changing needs arising from a variety of factors (including de-institutionalisation, increasing immigration and more vulnerable risk groups).

Although church-based agencies can be more independent of state funding there has been an increasing reliance among all homeless service providers upon state funding and this has been, increasingly, devolved to the administration of local authorities. Overall, funding (from all sources) has failed to increase in line with increasing demand for services. Furthermore there is certainly a recent change in increasing regulation of organisational structures and operational procedures associated with this funding regime.

It is apparent in all the papers that follow that there are significant differences in the organisational structures that exist in the three spheres of service provision (state, church-based and NGO). It is also evident that evolving structures vary between the three spheres although there are differences in each country in this respect. Operational procedures and internal organisational structures increasingly reflect care management and prevention strategies especially in the Netherlands and the UK. Specialised services also involve more assessment and screening. Monitoring and evaluation remains a weakly developed aspect of services everywhere and the effects of organisational structures and management on the quality and effectiveness of services is unclear. Although in all countries there is reference to a plethora of agencies, or indeed a fragmentation of service provision, there is only limited evidence that, in response to the exogenous forces described above and to changing philosophies of intervention, there is either a growing dominance of larger organisations, the merger of smaller less efficient organisations or the development of consortia and inter-agency working.

Organisational factors affecting the delivery of services for homeless people in Europe: an overview

BILL EDGAR

Introduction

The aim of this collection of papers is to establish the organisational factors that affect the delivery of services for homeless people in Europe. This builds upon our understanding of the regulatory and financial framework affecting service providers in Europe developed in a previous report by the European Observatory on Homelessness Working Group on Service Provision (Edgar et al 2003; see www.feantsa.org).

Structure-agency models as explanations of homelessness are common and well understood. Perhaps less well developed is an institutional or organisational analysis of the nature of intervention to prevent or alleviate homelessness. This paper aims to address this gap in our understanding.

Organisations providing services for homeless people have emerged over time in response to crises or to government initiatives. Hence there is a rather disparate landscape of provision and a range of agencies, including state and civil society, with distinct aims, philosophies and practices. Equally, organisations have had to change and adapt their organisational structures as well as their operational practices in response to endogenous and exogenous forces. These forces have been agents for inertia as well as for innovation. Regulation and funding uncertainties, and organisational leadership ('ownership'), for example, suggest some of the factors that can lead to the entrenchment of outmoded practices as well as to innovation in service delivery or expansion to incorporate new target groups (Edgar et al 2003).

This collection of essays addresses these questions in five countries in Europe representative of different situations in the development of social protection, understanding of the nature and political priority given to solving homelessness and different histories to the development of services to meet the needs of homeless people.

The approach to understanding the organisational factors involved brings together two areas - organisational issues on the one hand and models of intervention on the other hand. This paper introduces the essays by briefly reviewing the development of intervention strategies and the resulting organisational forms in the delivery of services for homeless people. Second, it presents the context of the changing nature of homelessness or of exogenous factors that may influence the development of service provision. Finally, it presents a overview of the key trends, identified in the five papers, that are shaping the organisational structure of service provision for homeless people.

Interventions in Homelessness

Models of intervention strategies to deal with homelessness recognise a change in approach across much of Europe in the last decade in response to a range of factors. It has become common now to consider homelessness services not simply as services to alleviate crises but as part of a continuum of services that recognise the different pathways into homelessness and the need for individualised solutions. A continuum of intervention may be conceived to include:

> Early intervention
> Prevention
> Crisis support
> Post intervention support (and referral).

This latter dimension also includes the need to consider the interface between housing and support. For some homeless people access to decent and affordable housing is a solution while for others the availability of appropriate (short-term or long-term) support is necessary to enable them to sustain a tenancy (or live independently). Changing policies and funding regimes for support services are, in some countries, leading to a policy-blurring that directly affects traditional homeless services.

This consideration increasingly suggests the need for coordinated inter-agency working and for partnership working. It may also suggest the need for economies of scale and hence a differentiated role for large scale and small-scale agencies. Indeed it may even lead to the emergence of mergers and group structures to enable the provision of the range and quality of (specialist) services required. For example, the emergence of group structures among housing associations in northern Europe and of housing associations with subsidiary support organisations are one recent model of meeting the housing and support needs of homeless and vulnerable groups.

Organisational Factors

A range of organisational factors can affect the nature, effectiveness, quality and innovation of service provision for homeless people. These can best be summarised by reference to the following range of issues and questions.

A. ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Is there an adequate organisational capacity to meet the needs and provide the required services? Is the state and civil society structure of organisations complementary in their roles and service provision? Is there the 'technical capacity' within organisations to carry out their defined roles (e.g. adequate resources and appropriately staffed and managed organisations)? This implies a degree of professionalism in service delivery rather than reliance upon voluntary activity and support.

B. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

How does Board membership and decision-making processes affect the structure, aims, philosophy and practices of organisations? Is there evidence of changing organisational structures and staffing in response to emerging needs or resource factors?

C. OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

Agencies should have effective organisational policies, procedures and guidelines in place. However, we should also expect different models of service provision even among agencies with ostensibly the same objectives (e.g. refuges for women fleeing domestic abuse have different philosophies and practices). How do organisational philosophy, accommodation styles, staffing, regulations and rules affect the range of services available or the mode of delivery of services?

External Drivers for change

Social cohesion and the fight against social exclusion are key issues for the European Union. Access to adequate, secure and affordable housing is fundamental to the achievement of a socially cohesive and inclusive society. During the latter half of the 1990s, there has been an observable trend in all EU member states towards the withdrawal and reduction of state intervention in the housing market particularly in relation to regulation and enforcement. The emphasis on market-led development has been associated with an increased role for private financial institutions in the supply of housing, while traditional social housing providers are coming under threat or are being restructured on the basis of a market model. These changes, which have led to rising housing costs and a consequent lack of affordable housing, are liable to increase the number of households susceptible to housing distress, to increase the inequalities of housing outcomes between higher and lower income groups and to contribute to the difficulties for vulnerable groups to access adequate housing.

These changes in the housing market and the consequences they have for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are compounded by demographic and socio-economic changes which are well documented in previous FEANTSA reports and other research (Edgar et al, 1999, 2000 & 2001). Economic changes have had a perverse effect. General economic growth across the EU often masks the growing inequality between those who can afford escalating housing costs (which are rising faster than wages) and those who, as a result of economic marginalisation, are increasingly unable to meet those costs. Globalisation and economic restructuring have contributed to the growth in low paid and part-time employment leaving many households with insecure incomes or reliant on housing allowances (which, in many countries, are being reviewed in the context of budget restraint). In this context it can also be observed that demographic changes which lead to an increasing number of single person and single income households (which includes a growing number of female headed households) leave an increasing number of households vulnerable to rising costs of housing and the risk of homelessness.

Housing vulnerability applies to those who experience of homelessness and to those at risk of homelessness. Housing vulnerability is a condition of those who are denied access to adequate housing through the established channels of provision (the market and the state). It is an inherent condition of homelessness and it also characterises those who are driven to the margins of the private market and of social housing and forced to occupy, for want of alternatives, relatively high cost and inadequate accommodation. It is also a condition of those who fall through the market/state nexus and are obliged to look for accommodation outwith the established channels, in 'civil society', among friends and relatives, in informal shelters and in charitable hostels.

Access to housing requires that there is a supply of housing sufficient to meets the needs of all households - or at least that there is a reasonable balance between supply and demand and no long run shortages. Changes in the governance of housing and the organisational structures related to housing provision and management may thus affect access to housing generally and for vulnerable groups in particular. The changing role of the state has a key part to play in the changing role of key housing providers (local authorities, housing associations) or the relationship between agencies (regulatory framework, nomination agreements). Three aspects of the policies and practices of government and housing institutions (in place at local, regional and national levels) may act to deny the ability of low-income groups to gain access to housing. Firstly, the impact of subsidy and social protection systems and housing allowances on affordable housing costs for low-income groups. Secondly, the effect of national policies on particular groups (e.g. the young, single people). Thirdly, the need to develop integrated policies and procedures to meet the multi-dimensional needs of vulnerable groups in the housing market.

The changing role of the state is sometimes encapsulated in the term 'hollowing out' (Jessop, 1994). This involves the divesting of state responsibilities 'upwards' to supra-national organisations such as the EU, the 'downward' transfer of responsibilities to local government and quasi-state organisation, and the dispersion 'outwards' to non-state agencies such as NGOs and the voluntary sector, as well as to private, for-profit enterprises. The scale of this hollowing out process varies from country to country and is not, necessarily, linearly cumulative in that the state sometimes claims back powers and responsibilities (Rhodes, 1994).

Further, the significance of the hollowing out process is disputed: does it, as some claim, lead to the establishment of a 'shadow state' (Wolch, 1990) whereby, through monitoring and regulation and indeed funding, the state effectively retains control over the intent and direction of these alternative agencies? Or does it represent something altogether more fundamental, the surrender of state power and control, allowing other ideologies, whether of the laissez-faire market or those of civil society, free reign (Bryson et al, 2002)? Both tendencies can be identified across EU member states and indeed in regional variations within individual country.

The retrenchment of the welfare state in EU member countries over the course of the last few decades, provides a trenchant manifestation of the hollowing out process as it relates to social policy. Though uneven in its impact, all European societies, under the umbrella of a neo-liberal political ethos, have experienced the sloughing-off of once well defined state responsibilities to the private sector and to the voluntary sector; to the market and to civil society. The overall impact has been, on the one hand, to boost market involvement in providing access to housing and, on the other, to encourage the resurgence of not-for-profit organisations in the form of quasi-state or charitable or voluntary housing agencies.

This is the context in which homeless services are provided, in the main, by non-governmental agencies funded by the local state in a competitive commissioning culture that combines increased regulation with new public management approaches. The papers that follow examine this changing organisational structure in relation to four key issues:
> Decision-making and accountability
> Monitoring and evaluation
> Professionalisation and staffing
> Organisational structures evolving

Key trends across Europe

Across Europe the provision of homeless services is delivered by three spheres - the state, the church and the voluntary sector (NGO sector). Although the balance of provision varies there is evidence, in almost all countries, of a shift towards an increasing role for (more recently established) NGO agencies. In comparison, the state sector remains the weakest in all countries either because it has only recently developed a role (Portugal and Greece) or because it is relinquishing that role to the NGO sector (the Netherlands and the UK).

In the face of changing strategies from 'protection to prevention', services have become both more diverse and more specialised. This has reflected a shift in approach towards more individualised services. It has also reflected changing needs arising from a variety of factors (including de-institutionalisation, increasing immigration and more vulnerable risk groups). For example, Wolf refers to the emergence of specialised hostels in the Netherlands for homeless persons with severe mental disorders, hostels targeting homeless young people, hostels for homeless women and for drug addicts, and plans also exist for shelters for older homeless persons.

The question was posed above whether in the face of changing governance structures the state, through monitoring and regulation and indeed funding, effectively retains control over the intent and direction of these alternative agencies. Although church-based agencies can be more independent of state funding there has been an increasing reliance among all homeless service providers upon state funding and this has been, increasingly, devolved to the administration of local authorities. Overall, funding (from all sources) has failed to increase in line with increasing demand for services. This under-funding together with an unreliable or dependable funding stream has hampered expansion and innovation in service development and delivery. Furthermore there is certainly a recent change in increasing regulation of organisational structures and operational procedures associated with this funding regime. This has led to an increase in professionally qualified and paid staff (at least in accommodation based services) and to the introduction of more business oriented methods. The extent and nature of this shift is variable and of recent origin and perhaps should not be over-emphasised but does appear to represent a common trend.

It is apparent in all the papers that follow that there are significant differences in the organisational structures that exist in the three spheres of service provision (state, church-based and NGO). It is also evident that evolving structures vary between the three spheres although there are differences in each country in this respect. In Portugal and Greece there appears a more hierarchical structure and reliance upon the 'presidency issue', as Baptista calls it, for funding which thus permeates all aspects of organisational decision-making and management. This is especially evident in the church-based organisations while the more recently established NGO agencies are led and managed by professionally qualified people.

Operational procedures and internal organisational structures increasingly reflect care management and prevention strategies especially in the Netherlands and the UK. Specialised services also involve more assessment and screening. This impact on service provision has tended to arise from changes in the nature of funding for support towards a 'supporting people' philosophy where the funding follows the person rather than attaching to the accommodation or the service provider agency.

External funding and regulation requires increased levels of monitoring and evaluation. However, this remains a weakly developed aspect of services everywhere and the effects of organisational structures and management on the quality and effectiveness of services is unclear.

Although in all countries there is reference to a plethora of agencies, or indeed a fragmentation of service provision, there is only limited evidence that, in response to the exogenous forces described above and to changing philosophies of intervention, there is either a growing dominance of larger organisations, the merger of smaller less efficient organisations or the development of consortia and inter-agency working.

This issue of inter-agency working models and collaborative or partnership approaches to service provision will be the focus of future work within the European Observatory on Homelessness.

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The United Kingdom

ISOBEL ANDERSON

Introduction
External Drivers for Change

It could be argued that the single key driver for the existence of homelessness agencies is the scale and nature of the homelessness problem. For example, the NGO Shelter was set up in the 1960s to campaign for better housing and housing rights for homeless people. Shelter was influential in the eventual introduction, in 1977, of the UK's legal framework whereby local housing authorities have a duty to assist certain households in the event of homelessness (Somerville, 1999).

During the 1980s and 1990s, neoliberal government policies resulted in significant organisational change in the UK housing sector, including changes in governance and the widespread adoption of New Public Management approaches (Malpass, 1997). Malpass linked organisational change in housing to the remodelling of welfare states, as well as to economic and social change. The Governance of housing became an increasingly distinct and important area for debate during the 1980s with particularly fundamental changes for council housing and local authorities as they were opened up to the 'disciplines of the market' under Thatcherism. Post-1997, the influence of the Blair Government's Third Way approach to social policy has resulted in increased emphasis on networking, stakeholder involvement and the empowerment of service users in the housing and homelessness sectors (Lowe, 2004).

Organisational change will also be driven by specific policy factors, to which homelessness agencies need to respond. Key examples would be legislative change and policy programmes where resources are available for specific services or client groups. For example, central government sponsorship of a Rough Sleeping Initiative in Scotland directly resulted in statutory and NGO homelessness agencies expanding service provision for this previously neglected group (Yanetta, Third and Anderson, 1999).

Since April 2003, local authorities have implemented a new programme, Supporting People, for housing related support. Supporting People (combined with rent restructuring in England) has required landlords who previously 'pooled' rent to account and charge separately for all rent and support costs (Harriot and Matthews, 2004). An unforeseen impact was the large increase in the amount of money charged to Supporting People funds by landlord providers which led to an early review (RSM, Robson Rhodes, 2004) and to the announcement of substantial cuts in the Supporting People budget for England in late 2004, only one year after the programme's introduction.

Linked to policy change is the crucial issue of the capacity of homelessness agencies to respond to a rapidly changing policy and practice environment. The statutory homelessness framework was strengthened in new legislation across England, Wales and Scotland post-2000 (Anderson, 2003) requiring local housing authorities and other service providers to respond to changes with limited additional resources for implementation.

Decision-making and accountability

THE LOCAL STATE:
HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PROVISION

Governance in housing emerged as a new concept for debate in the UK during the 1980s (Malpass, 1997). The notion of Corporate Governance embraces the overall management of any housing organisation (Malpass, 1997, p3), it is about ensuring that organisations are run both 'properly' (within the law) and effectively (in terms of meeting their objectives). Malpass (1997) characterised the Conservative period (1979-1997) as resulting in a fragmentation of governance across housing agencies, resulting in increased numbers of increasingly diverse agencies, which subsequently had to co-operate to deliver housing and services. However, the overarching presence and influence of central government was crucial to this process of change (p6). Somewhat ironically, intervention in the field of homelessness increased as the wider raft of neo-liberal policies precipitated a homelessness crisis (Anderson, 2004). Funding packages for housing, regeneration and services for special needs client groups all became more complex in what was characterised as a 'post-fordist' welfare state of networks and quasi-markets (Malpass, 1997, p10).

In an updated review of the governance of housing in the UK, Lowe (2004) stresses the importance of networks and interorganisational working (p35) but maintains that the central state still has significant influence. Two key trends identified in the 21st century are the dominance of home ownership and the break up of local authority rented housing. The question of accountability, however, remains important (p36). Globalisation has led to new forms of global governance (p38), resulting in what Lowe characterises as a readjustment and rearticulation of the state. Anderson (2004) reflects that as in the earlier neo-liberal period, the post-2000 Third Way period has, so far, seen continued rises in recorded homelessness (though street homelessness has declined) and increased state intervention to alleviate the problem.

Lowe further characterises the changes in the nation state, for the UK, as the 'hollowing out' of the state and governance in Britain (2004, p38). A 'competition state' has emerged following the economic restructuring of the Thatcher period and the stakeholder society of the post-1997 New Labour era (p39). This hollowing out of the state has taken the form of privatisation, an increase in Quangos, increased influence of the EU, and the spread of new public management in the traditional public sector. All of these have contributed to a loss of state control over implementation and a loss of democratic accountability as Britain moved from a unitary to a fragmented state (Lowe, 2004). The most recent phase of hollowing out has been the constitutional restructuring of the UK nation state under New Labour's post-1997 devolution programme. The competition state loosens control to allow business to come in to some areas of provision. Ironically, globalisation leads to divergence rather than convergence, due to its contribution to the further fragmentation of the state. New Labour has proven to be supportive of the continuation of the move to a competition state. Elected Mayors and cabinets in local government demonstrated New Labour's commitment to an entrepreneurial style polity at the local level. Through all of these changes, however, the local state responsibility for alleviating homelessness, in partnership with NGOs, has been sustained and strengthened (Anderson, 2003, 2004).

THE UK NGO HOMELESSNESS SECTOR

Pressure group NGOs
The UK has a fairly well developed homelessness NGO sector, including a number of national level campaign groups (e.g. Shelter, Crisis, Scottish Council for Single Homelessness (SCSH)). These agencies vary in terms of their constitutions and governance. For example, SCSH has a membership mainly comprising local groups or voluntary agencies who work directly with homeless people (e.g. providing accommodation or services). SCSH acts as an umbrella organisation, providing support for its members and with a particular emphasis on policy, good practice and campaigning. Income is derived from membership fees as well as grants and donations.

Shelter and Crisis, on the other hand are not membership organisations in the same sense as SCSH and cannot easily claim to directly 'represent' either other homelessness agencies, or homeless people. However, they are large, well resourced charities with high profiles in terms of public campaigning on homelessness and housing disadvantage. In addition, Shelter runs a network of housing aid/advice agencies and Crisis provides some emergency accommodation and other services. These high profile pressure groups are likely to receive higher levels of public donations (including, for example through Christmas card sales and charity shops) as well as grant income.

Though there is a lack of empirical research, these national level pressure groups can be broadly characterised as professional and professionalised organisations, for example, with clear management structures and experienced research, policy and practice staff within the organisations. The influence of such 'pressure group politics' is well demonstrated in the Scottish policy community where representatives of SCSH and Shelter were members of the Homelessness Task Force (2000, 2002) and continue to sit, alongside government, on the Homelessness Monitoring Group, charged with implementing legislative change. However, there remains a lack of evaluative research into both the governance of these homelessness pressure groups and their impact on the homelessness policy network.

NGO Accommodation and Service providers
The second set of homelessness NGOs in the UK includes the much larger number of local, regional (and sometimes national) agencies whose main purpose is the provision of accommodation and support services for homeless people. These agencies are more likely to target particular groups who may be less favoured in the statutory system (for example non-vulnerable adults). These NGOs are also more likely to focus on emergency and transitional accommodation, as a complement to the permanent housing provided by local authorities and housing associations.

While there has been no national study of organisational change across this sector, recent research on the emergency accommodation and service sub-sector (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002a, b & c) does provide some indication of changing trends. The study examined emergency accommodation, day centres and soup run services for homeless people across England, Scotland and Wales, but excluding London. The researchers felt that much less was known about services outside the capital, but, unfortunately, the study does not compare services within and outside London.

Emergency direct access accommodation
The majority of emergency housing projects were run by voluntary or charitable organisations (64%) with 25% run by housing associations, 8% by statutory bodies and just 1% by private individuals (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002a). Some 80% of these agencies had charitable status and 70% were linked to a larger organisation (e.g. Salvation Army, YMCA/YWCA, etc). Eligibility for housing benefit was an important criterion for access to nearly half of all emergency projects, indicating a dependency, by default, on *statutory* funding through the housing allowance system.

The aims and ethos of emergency housing projects were characterised as follows: Acceptance (17%); Change and rehabilitation (13%); Empowerment and resource (35%); and Not specified (35%) (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002a, p5). None of these categories equates neatly to a new public management ethos though 'change and rehabilitation' may come closest. The high proportion of unspecified approaches also makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions as to whether a 'new public management' ethos can be identified in this sector, though a relatively low proportion operated a basic acceptance approach. However, the study also found that 'Changes in organisational structure commonly resulted in expansion of services, improved standard of accommodation, and professionalism in service delivery' (p6) which could indicate that new public management has been gradually penetrating the emergency homelessness sector. The types of organisational change undertaken included: becoming part of a housing association (10%); becoming a company (3%) and gaining charitable status (3%) (p6).

Day Centres and Drop-In Centres for Homeless People
The majority of these services (75%) were run by voluntary or charitable associations, 10% by churches, 6% by housing associations, 2% by statutory bodies and 1% by private individuals (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002b). Consequently, there remains a higher degree of 'pure voluntarism among day centres, compared to emergency accommodation. Indeed, 88% had registered charity status, but 48% were part of a larger, formal organisation such as the Salvation Army, a foyer, etc. Typically, day centres operated on a fairly open basis, for anyone in need of their services (e.g. cheap or free food, clothes, showers, laundry, and activities).

The operational ethos of day centres was reported as: Acceptance (28%); Change/rehabilitation (9%); Empowerment / resource (29%); Not specified (35%) (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002b, p4). This pattern suggests very little penetration of new public management techniques into these projects. Overall, day centre projects were slightly more reliant on charitable donations than on statutory funding, although statutory funding (e.g. grants from local authorities) was still very important (p12).

Soup Runs and Soup Kitchens

Johnsen, Cloke and May (2002c) found that half of soup runs and kitchens surveyed were run by voluntary/charitable organisations and one third by churches (p2). The majority (78%) were registered charities and 51% were linked to larger organisations. The main reported 'ethos' of operation was acceptance (p4), suggesting that most soup runs and kitchens still operated on a purely altruistic model outside of any formalised sphere of management, let alone New Public Management. This has been an area of NGO service provision which has clashed with central government policy. The Homelessness Directorate in England has argued that such street based services are increasingly inappropriate in an era where policy and practice is striving to end street homelessness and to discourage the congregation of homeless people in public places.

Monitoring and evaluation

Local authority statutory homelessness services are included in the Best Value and Inspection regimes which apply to all local housing authorities in the UK. Best Value requires councils to examine their services with a view to ensuring they are obtaining best value with reference to other providers and the 'four Cs' (Challenge, Compare, Compete and Consult) (Harriot and Mathews, 2004). Local authorities have to show continuous improvement and can review the whole service or parts over a number of years. The Audit Commission (which regulates local government in England) now includes a new Housing Inspectorate which commenced inspections in April 2001. The Inspectorate tests the rigour of Best Value reviews, comments on service performance and rates the likelihood for improvement. The Housing Inspectorate role includes looking at how local authorities respond to those who are homeless or are threatened by homelessness as well as their other service areas (Harriot and Matthews, 2004, p260). The process aims to recognise good performance, promote excellence, and challenge poor performance. The Inspectorate makes judgements on both current service levels and prospects for improvement, giving ratings from excellent to poor.

In Scotland, Communities Scotland (formally a part of the Scottish Executive) has implemented a single regulatory framework for all social landlords (local authorities and housing associations/RSLs) and homelessness functions (under the Housing Act 2001) (Harriot and Matthews, 2004, p264). Again, inspections assess current services, how well the organisation is managed, and the likelihood of continued improvement, awarding grades from excellent to poor.

Inspection reports are published but there is no published summary information on homelessness performance across the UK. Lowe (2004) assesses the influence performance review and the inspection of statutory housing and homelessness services, arguing that there have been important changes in the behaviour and culture of organisations, linked to the growth of the inspection process. Best Value performance can be linked to funding for future housing development and, Lowe argues, is not truly independent of the dominant ideology of managerialism and the quasi market policy agenda.

The Best Value regime does not apply to the voluntary sector, but agencies are likely to have to account for themselves to local and national funding agencies in other ways. The survey of emergency homelessness projects (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002a) found that they were highly dependent on statutory funding (p14). As noted, this was mainly funding for rent through housing benefit, but funding also came from special initiatives; special needs support grants (now Supporting People); and contributions from health and social work departments. Statutory bodies provided at least 75% of the total income for 78% of projects (p14) while total income from charitable donations was 'minimal'. Further, 25% of those responding expressed a desire to increase the reliability and sustainability of their funding, to allow for long term planning (p14).

In terms of regulation of emergency housing, 39% of these projects were run by RSLs and therefore subject to regulation by the Housing Corporation, Scottish Homes (now Communities Scotland) or the National Assembly for Wales (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002a, p15). The majority, 64%, were monitored by their local authority (for example, for health and safety, finance and performance) and 61% were subject to scrutiny by other funding bodies such as central government special funding initiatives and health authorities. Some 61% of day centres were monitored by their local authority (p13) and 66% by other agencies (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002b). Unsurprisingly, soup runs were heavily reliant on churches and donations for their funding (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002c, p9). Nevertheless, half were monitored by an external or parent organisation (including Environmental Health assessment).

Professionalisation and staffing

The UK is unusual among EU nations in having a 'housing profession' with an accredited Professional Qualification. While the existence of the qualification probably reflects the past strength of public housing in the UK, only around 11% of staff working in housing have achieved the qualification, which is not mandatory for practice in the same way as a Social Work qualification is for certain social work posts. Nonetheless, the professional body (the Chartered Institute of Housing) has considerable influence beyond the scale of its membership, notably through dissemination of policy briefings and good practice guidance. A proportion of workers in statutory and NGO homelessness services are likely to have the CIH professional qualification and a much larger group will benefit from its published guidance as well as training through short courses provided in-house and by a range of training organisations.

The requirement for all local housing authorities to produce homelessness strategies has added a further dimension to the 'comprehensiveness' and professionalisation of statutory homelessness services. Sykes (2004) found that staff resources for statutory homelessness services had increased as a result of the production of strategies in England and Wales, but that this had not generally been accompanied by increased financial resources. Most authorities now had a lead officer for the creation and implementation of the homelessness strategy. Most authorities had also developed performance monitoring systems for implementation of their strategies, but were cautious as to the actual expected impact on, for example, targets to reduce rough sleeping and the use bed and breakfast accommodation (Sykes, 2004).

The survey by Johnsen, Cloke and May (2002a) found that all emergency accommodation projects (mainly NGOs) had paid staff and nearly half used volunteers (p11). As noted above, professionalisation of service delivery was reported as a key benefit from organisational change. In the day centre survey, 13% had no paid staff and 88% had volunteer workers (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002b). However, 35% of day centres said they had regular service users' meetings (p10) suggesting a degree of formal organisation. The majority of soup kitchens (77%) had no paid staff (Johnsen, Cloke and May (2002c, p6) with just 17% having one paid co-ordinator and a few having more than one employee. Volunteers were used in 94% of soup kitchens. Hence these less formal facilities are much more 'purely' voluntary in terms of their operation.

Organisational structures evolving

Local authorities remain the main providers of homelessness services in the UK, and these services have been subject to the broad sweep of organisational change which has impacted on local government over the last 20-30 years, including new public management, business planning, increased consumerism and increased interagency working. In the era of strategic approaches to homelessness, partnerships between the statutory and NGO sectors are crucial to implementation of a comprehensive service. The majority of emergency housing projects in a national survey by Johnsen, Cloke and May (2002a) were members of a local consortium for homeless provision as were most voluntary sector day centres (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2002b). As Lowe (2004, p41) concludes, the central state retains some significance, for example on spending control, but delivery and increasingly policy direction are in the domain of policy networks operating across the political terrain.

Conclusion

Lowe (2004, p64) concluded that the competition state has been the stimulus for the new governance of housing, with a particular emphasis on inter-organisational networks replacing the old style, vertical, central-local state relations. While the Centre/Treasury retains financial control, implementation has become much more open - a paradox of post-modernism and the hollowing out of unitary housing governance.

While there is a need for more robust research, larger homelessness NGOs have clearly also embraced much of the new public management approach as they professionalise and bid for increasing amounts of statutory funding. However, survey evidence suggests that there remains a range of organisational approaches within the NGO homelessness sector, with some emergency and street-level provision still following a much more traditional voluntary or altruistic model. A key issue determining the future direction of change must surely be the degree of reliance of voluntary homelessness agencies on statutory funding. Whether this is directly through grants such as Supporting People funding or indirectly through reliance on housing benefit to meet rent costs, such funding is increasingly and inevitably drawing the UK NGO homelessness sector into the 21st century world of social entrepreneurship, regulation and accountability. Research could usefully better document that process of organisational change.

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The Netherlands

Edited by BILL EDGAR *from a paper written by*
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Introduction

Policies on shelter and support for the homeless have undergone major changes in the Netherlands in the past decade. One significant shift occurred when policy responsibility was decentralised from the national level to newly designated local authorities for the shelter and support services *(centrumgemeenten)*. Since that decentralisation took effect in 1994, more than 40 large and medium-sized municipalities have been responsible for policy and practice in assisting the homeless in their regions (VWS, 1997). Funding for shelter agencies no longer comes directly from the state, but from the local authorities. These, in turn, consult with local councils in their region to decide how to spend the funding earmarked for this purpose by the national Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS).

Recent legislation and changes in funding regime, together with this decentralisation of responsibility have initiated significant changes in the organisational structure of the sector. This paper discusses some of the more significant features of these institutional and policy changes.

External Drivers for Change

Regulation of the homeless sector introduced in recent legislation is a key driver for change. The General Welfare Act requires local authorities to draw up a regional policy concept to ensure an adequate level of differentiated services and hold related sectors to their duties to support vulnerable groups. Authorities can issue orders, particularly to agencies dealing with addiction, public housing, probation and aftercare and mental health care, to ensure those duties are met. They are also tasked to promote quality policy in shelter facilities, including the institution of mandatory client participation councils.[1] To adequately carry out their tasks, local authorities need to establish working relationships with many local institutions and agencies. Yet they have no authority over major institutions such as mental health or probation services, whose funding derives from other sources. In such areas, the local authorities can do little more than call the various parties together and try to secure their co-operation using a sense of vision and other persuasive powers.

However, changes in the funding and regulatory framework within which homeless organisations operate have been among the most significant drivers for change in the sector.

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[1] *Homeless people are increasingly invoking the Participation (Clients of Care Institutions) Act (WMCZ) to demand a greater say in institutional policies. Although many homeless agencies have instituted client councils, participation has not yet fully evolved in practice.*

State funding earmarked for the homeless sector grew about 40% over the last decade (Wolf et al., 2000). In 2001, the funding was merged with that for ambulatory addiction services and the combined subsidies from the health and welfare ministry came to € 177 million in 2002.[2] While most other sectors were facing severe cutbacks in 2004, the shelter system saw its budget increase. However, in spite of this increase, most local authorities regard the state funding as inadequate and augment their revenues from local authority treasuries (Wolf et al., 2003).

The modernisation of the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act (AWBZ), which took effect in 2003, is already having a major impact on the shelter and support sector. It was designed to give service users more control over the care they receive ('demand-driven service provision') and to remove the artificial barriers between the various care sectors. The modernisation lies in the fact that specified 'service types' *(zorgfuncties),* rather than the agencies themselves as previously, will be funded by the legislation. This enables any agency, provided it satisfies the qualification criteria, to deliver any AWBZ service type. To secure their eligibility, agencies must apply for authorisation to provide specified service types.

By mid-2004, some 21 homeless shelter agencies had secured such authorisations. This has made shelter agencies into direct competitors with other agencies such as mental health institutions. One crucial reason why they apply for AWBZ authorisation is their belief that this will finally give their clients access to the care they need and that the care can be much better tailored to those needs. Another important consideration is that the AWBZ funding can greatly increase their financial latitude. In many agencies, such revenues have already altered the ratio between AWBZ-funded care and funding from the local authority.

However, a recent survey (among 32 agencies) identified potential negative consequences including the threat to the continuation of services to clients, reduced accessibility of the available services, consequences for staff (including redundancy) and closure of facilities (Wolf et al, 2004).

[2] *Partly at the instigation of Parliament, additional health ministry funding has become available in recent years to improve shelter quality and the working conditions of shelter workers. Since 2000, other funding has become available from the Interior Ministry to develop comprehensive systems offering 24-hour shelter services and to alleviate street nuisance from homeless people. That funding amounted to € 12 million in 2002.*

Operational decision-making and accountability

About 250 homeless and crisis shelter facilities were operating in the Netherlands in 2002, as well as about 125 supported housing or independent living services (excluding women's refuge shelters), most of which operate under the umbrella of the Federation of Shelters (Federatie Opvang). The majority of these agencies are non-faith-based. About a quarter of the Dutch shelter capacity is administered by the Salvation Army.

The homeless sector has expanded rapidly in recent years (from 7,860 places in 2000 to 8,652 in 2002) and expansion was particularly strong in the specialist hostels for homeless people with severe mental disorders, in night shelters particularly in the number of places for supported housing and independent living support (Bettonville, 1997; Wolf et al., 2000, 2003).

Despite this increase there is still a chronic shortage of capacity. Because clients who need long-term support are not being accommodated by other types of services or housing types, and because the average stays of clients in all types of facilities keep increasing, the 'final safety net' provided by the shelter and support services is becoming seriously clogged. By adopting measures such as a single point of access, the local authorities try to exercise more control over (and preferably to stem) the influx of clients. The main purpose of such access points is to make the range of services more accessible to the clients, to better match supply to demand, to focus more effectively on the capabilities of the individual clients, and to smooth the intake, referral and discharge of clients by the shelter facilities (van Leeuwen-den Dekker et al., 2003). Measures to facilitate referral to other services will receive added impetus from the interdepartmental policy study cited above.

Since the mid-1980s, a broad range of provisions have been developed to augment the ore traditional services (boarding houses, night shelters and day care centres). A recent study (Berg-le Clerq and Kornalijnslijper, 2003) has shown that local authorities were devoting more attention to prevention and rehabilitation (research by Schoorl and Vink, 2000), even though the vast majority of shelter facilities still focus on crisis, shelter and support services.

The most common prevention-related efforts in 2001 were debt assistance, budgeting assistance, supported or independent living, addiction education and eviction prevention. Such activities were carried out through nuisance resolution centres, early

detection consultations, local care networks and safety net projects. The purpose was to keep people from slipping into downward spirals and being forced out of their homes.

Since the ,budgets for shelter facilities and addiction services were merged in 2001, prevention activities also include addiction education and the control of nuisance caused by addicted or homeless people. Nuisance reduction was an especially prominent theme in local government policy (Fleurke, 2002). Examples of services deriving from it are drug consumption facilities, case management and specialist hostels for long-term addicts.

So far little thought has been given to what unintended effects might arise from this differentiation of services. There is less evidence of replacement of services than of a mere expansion of capacity. It seems likely that the core competencies of the shelter and support sector will become more diffuse in the long run, making them more vulnerable to deterioration (Godfroij, 2001). Even more interesting is the question of whether the prevention and reintegration activities are indeed reaching the current clients of the sector, or whether they may instead be attracting new or different client groups. The supply could well be creating its own demand, even though the supply of available services has certainly not become more transparent for current or potential clients. A further source of concern is that this whole course of developments is scarcely being monitored by research. Very few process evaluations of prevention and reintegration projects have been carried out, let alone effectiveness studies.

Besides becoming more differentiated, the range of services is also more and more specialised. Whereas shelter facilities in the past were intended for all homeless people - 'one size fits all' - separate provisions are now increasingly being created for specific groups. Specialised hostels for homeless persons with severe mental disorders, hostels targeting homeless young people, hostels for homeless women and for drug addicts, and plans also exist for shelters for older homeless persons and homeless alcoholics.

The advantage to this service differentiation is that it potentially enables the delivery of more tailored care packages. A serious disadvantage, which should not be underestimated, is that more and more acceptance and exclusion criteria are being applied, so that people who narrowly fail to match the profile miss out on the services.

For a variety of different reasons (including workload, differing professional ethos, lack of capacity, privacy legislation, funding competition and organisational changes) co-operation among workers from different sectors and services is not yet ideal (Bransen et al., 2002; Wolf et al. 2002; van 't Land, 2003).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Local authorities are charged with developing policy frameworks, based on their knowledge of the regional situation, and with maintaining adequate networks of shelter facilities for very vulnerable people. These authorities are dependent, in no small measure, on the shelter agencies themselves for their policy information. Policy development is based partly on register data from these agencies and partly on the experiences and distress cries arising from practice settings. What conclusions should be drawn from the available data is not always clear. Information on supply and demand in relation to homeless people is highly deficient at local levels.

In their relationship to the shelter agencies, the local authorities occupy an awkward dual role. In their management role, they are collaborating partners of the shelter agencies, but they also have other official roles as commissioning parties, funders and inspectors. Moreover, most authorities conclude annual contracts with the shelter agencies and set requirements and targets for them as part of this commissioning process.

With the modernisation of the AWBZ, the requirements for obtaining authorisation to provide various service types also involve monitoring of the day-to-day provision of care lies in. These include more stringent criteria for client entitlement, for staff qualifications and for accounting for the services delivered.

Both the local authorities and the local care administration offices require information about what is going on in the shelter and support sector. The shelter agencies are therefore now putting more effort into renewing the obsolete client registration system. For each individual client, agencies must now account for how they deliver the service types and how they spend the money.

More than three quarters of the agencies in a recent survey (Wolf et al 2003) thought the modernised AWBZ would prompt improvement in the collection of data on clients, and 72% thought this would make them keep better records about the care delivered.

However, despite the fact that shelter and support agencies are currently investing substantial resources in a variety of adaptations to secure authorisation for the new AWBZ regimen, it is very possible that the service types they are trying to qualify for (mainly supportive and motivational counselling for identified clients) will come under the auspices of local authorities in 2006. The proposed Social Support Act (WMO) will not prescribe national-level quality criteria or inspections, and the local authorities themselves will determine entitlement to the services. This may lead to discrepancies between local authorities in terms of the nature and level of the services they support for homeless people (Ministerie van VWS, 2004).

A recent 'interdepartmental policy study' (IBO MO, 2003) was undertaken to identify bottlenecks in the current shelter and support system and to formulate policy variants aimed at a more efficient and effective range of services. A number of proposals from the report that have already been approved by Dutch government include recommendations regarding:

Role of Local Authorities and housing agencies
> Strengthening the directive role of the local authorities
> Monitoring the effects of funding on the quality of the care provided to the homeless
> Improving the distribution of housing and the allocation of accommodation

Role of Shelter Agencies
> Tackling congestion in the shelter sector
> Providing better prison aftercare
> Developing intensive forms of case management to guide clients more effectively towards other services, thereby also speeding turnover in the shelters
> Investing in information provision infrastructures.

As a direct result the budget for the shelter and support services is to increase by a total of 4 million by 2007, aimed at accelerating turnover. A further 1 will be allocated to improve information provision and to fund practice development and research on the effectiveness of services, and 3 million to enable the probation and aftercare services to assist ex-offenders in finding suitable housing.

Professionalisation and staffing

A major challenge for management, at the present time, is the upward re-grading of staff positions resulting, in part, from a shift in the ratio between voluntary and paid staff. Most staff now occupy paid jobs and this seems to be a continuing trend, not least, because of the increasing difficulty of recruiting and retaining volunteers. In 2000, the number of volunteers caring for the homeless was still estimated at 60%, as compared to 40% paid staff (Wolf et al., 2000). The professionalisation trend has received a further boost from the AWBZ criteria for staff qualification mentioned above. Supportive counselling now requires senior vocational training (MBO), and motivational counselling requires higher professional training (HBO). Management is now recruiting new staff with these educational backgrounds. Three quarters of agencies have reported that the modernised AWBZ is leading to higher staff costs, and 80% reported a need for more in-service training (Wolf et al, 2003).

While no research has been done to date that can shed light on management styles, organisational decision-making processes or board membership, a recent survey of shelter staff did record their assessments of employment conditions (Wolf et al., 2003). In comparison with managers, the operational workers reported significantly more problems concerning
> Insufficient input in decisions
> Lack of job variation
> Lack of autonomy
> Insufficient involvement in the organisation
> Insecurity about the future
> Insufficient training opportunities.

Managers were significantly more likely to report problems with
> Stress
> High work pace and workload
> Less satisfactory relations with colleagues.

For a variety of different reasons (including workload, differing professional ethos, lack of capacity, privacy legislation, funding competition and organisational changes) co-operation among the shelter and support workers is not yet ideal (Bransen et al., 2002; Wolf et al. 2002; van 't Land, 2003).

Evolving organisational structures

The local authorities are faced with a highly fragmented field of organisations, some offering more or less identical services and even competing with one another. Some organisations are very small and can barely survive, while others hold virtually unassailable monopoly positions by sheer virtue of their size. Competition between local services has become fiercer since the shift in funding noted above.

Many services that were formerly rather small have been amalgamated into large-scale organisations, which nonetheless increasingly tend to deliver their services through separate, small-scale units. In combination with other changes and challenges in areas like funding, capacity, care continua and interagency co-operation, these developments now pose new and different demands on organisation and management. Management styles and backgrounds have changed, with more managers now running agencies as if they were businesses.

The modernisation of the AWBZ has further intensified the process of streamlining and rationalising care. These include changes in the assessment of client needs, the preparation of care plans, task differentiation and improved monitoring all of which are likely to impact upon the organisational structures and management procedures of homeless agencies.

The prevailing paradigm has shifted from 'protection' to 'activation'. Under the former protection paradigm, the primary aim of the services was to provide homeless people with a secure institutional environment or enduring protection. In an apparent shift from this purely problem-oriented approach to a mixture of problem-oriented, development-oriented and environment-oriented interventions (Wolf, 1997), provisions are now more geared to the activation and social integration of the homeless.

The shift in thinking has not yet led to many changes in the professional action of the staff members. Homeless people point out that vulnerable people risk developing an institutionalisation syndrome after admission to the shelters, and that clients do not take kindly to the patronising treatment they often receive from staff members. They further complain of receiving too little time and attention from staff (Hoogenboezem, 2003; Menger et al., 2003).

Conclusions

Changes in policy, funding and legislation have had, and will continue to have, a significant impact on the organisational structure, management procedures and staffing of homeless agencies in the Netherlands. While many of these pressures for change are exogenous factors, they are resulting in widespread and irreversible internal changes within organisations and in the professionalisation of the sector. While these changes have been accompanied by significant increases in the levels of funding the impact of the implementation of financial change has inevitably had negative as well as positive consequences. To the extent that these changes have emanated from the new public management approach, evident in many countries in Europe, they have not been met with the equal response from all parts of the homeless sector. Whether their impact leads to a rationalisation of organisational structures remains to be seen and deserves further focussed research.

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Austria

HEINZ SCHOIBL

Introduction

In Austria there is a lack of systematic research on the organisational aspects of service provision and its effects on the nature and effectiveness of services. Furthermore, Austria is a federal state whose nine counties (Vienna is the capital and a county) have far reaching competencies including policies against homelessness. As a federal state, there is no legal framework for homelessness at a national level. Each county has its own laws and systems of services. This is the basis for quite large differences in strategies of planning, regulation and funding and, last but not least, of provisions to deliver the concrete services.

Hence the approach taken in this paper is to present a general overview of homeless services and to then present a brief review of the situation in three counties to illustrate the range and variety of structures. This understanding is then used to draw out the key issues related to organisational factors affecting service provision.

General remarks about services for Homeless in Austria

Instead of a federal housing act in order to guarantee a right on housing especially for vulnerable people and to ensure (re)integration into mainstream housing there are nine different laws on social benefits (Sozialhilfe), regulating an individual right to social services (also in the case of homelessness) and the pathways of funding. Even at this regional level there is no special framework to provide planning of services, regulating access to services or improving the standards of provisions for the homeless.

In the last two decades a process of de-institutionalisation and improvement in the standards of services for the homeless as well as an improved provision of individual support has taken place but this development is not yet completed. Some of the old fashioned low standard-institutions in the tradition of poverty administration are still in evidence. These traditional 'asylums' are still characterized by inadequate resources for individual support and low standards of accommodation.

In brief the recent development of the services for homeless persons in Austria can be characterised by a number if important:
> foundation of many small service providers at local / regional level;
> shift from large and universalistic institutions provided by communal authorities or churches to small specialized services by private organisations, funded by communal and / or regional authorities;
> provision of individual support; recently also the traditional asylums have started to improve their standards by employing social workers;
> development of services with the goal to prevent eviction - at least in the major cities of Austria;
> diversification of facilities in the range of supported housing including residential homes to replace traditional institutions, flat-sharing, and supported housing in dispersed flats for singles or families;
> target-group specific services like residential homes for old homeless persons, for drug addicts, young homeless, and for women (with or without children) in housing stress.

These changes are not guaranteed by any legal frameworks at the federal level or regional level. Instead of a general framework and basic regulation, the development in the range of provision and services for the homeless depends mainly on informal networks of private service providers at federal, regional and communal levels. For example, there are: BAWO - federal umbrella organisation for service providers on homelessness - and its regional working groups / networks - like 'BAWO-knot' Vienna; forum of services for the homeless in Salzburg (Forum Wohnungslosenhilfe); working groups on housing in the counties of Tyrol, Upper Austria and Vorarlberg (Arbeitskreis Wohnen); Housing-Association in Styria (Wohnplattform); residential homes - association in Nether Austria).

External drivers for change

External drivers for change are the result of different forces responsible for innovation and improvement of standards in the last decade.

The process of professionalisation which took place in some of the small providers at local / regional level has not only an internal effect, at the level of organisational, occupational and methodical aspects, but also affected local / regional authorities in the range of social policy and welfare administration. The process of professionalisation of services develops a driving quality in influencing other providers to close the gap between the services. On the other hand professional standards of services give an example that there is a visible effect fighting homelessness and re-integrating homeless persons into mainstream housing and enabling them to live independently. Success of services changes their role in the public discourse on issues like poverty and homelessness.

When the services for homeless people in Salzburg proved that prevention of eviction is much cheaper than re-housing homeless persons this acted as a signal to develop new measures and instruments. Services for the prevention of eviction quickly spread from Salzburg and Vienna to almost all of the Austrian counties and cities. Programs to prevent eviction have been established and special services founded. Practical success and empirical evidence of the effects of measures has been important in the diffusion of this policy innovation.

When local and regional authorities established boards of social planning and regulation of services (e.g. in Vienna, Salzburg and Upper Austria), this had far reaching consequences because these boards started to influence the development of services, to improve target specific measures, to regulate specialisation and to improve monitoring and evaluation. Therefore these statutory boards of social planning became an important external driver for change and development of standards.

The regional structure of service provision for the homeless

Three counties are described here to illustrate three different situations of service provision. In Vienna the public authority has the most developed or integrated approach to services for the homeless. In the county of Salzburg services are provided, in the main, by private organisations operating in a network of co-ordinated services. In Styria, on the other hand, the majority of services are situated in the capital (Graz) and are provided by the local authority.

VIENNA

Since 1988, when the Working Group 'Housing units for people in need' was founded, the public authority of Vienna, in partnership with private service providers, has started to build up a model of integrated and adapted services for the homeless. This 'staircase-model'[1] consists of

> an elaborated service to prevent eviction, provided by a NGO
> direct access services for rough sleepers like day centres and emergency shelters provided mainly by the communal authority representing the first step of the stair case model - the low barrier access to the system of help
> a widely differentiated system of target group specific residential homes by NGO and public organizations (for adolescents and old homeless persons, battered women, young mothers and children, and for drug addicts).
> floating individual support in self sustained accommodation and supported shared housing - mainly provided by NGOs, cooperating in the working group of supported housing
> a pool of city-owned follow-on accommodation is strictly reserved for homeless persons and families; the 'Vienna Housing' is administrated by the local authority but the reintegration into this follow-on accommodation is undertaken by a cooperative board in which statutory and private providers of supported housing are represented
> additional services in the context of outreaching social support (Streetwork) and medical care.

This system of services for the homeless is almost completed and recently the numbers of homeless persons in Vienna has been decreasing. So the city of Vienna can afford to shut down the traditional low standard asylums for single homeless (as it happened already with the large asylum for homeless men 'Meldemannstraße', where Hitler has lived during his time in Vienna) as well as for homeless families.

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[1] Gerhard Eitel, *Implementation Plan for the gradual reintegration of the homeless in Vienna,* 1996

SALZBURG

In the county of Salzburg services for homeless people are provided by private organisations. These have developed in a network of services, widely differentiated and adapted to ensure cooperation. Social workers in public institutions (e.g. hospitals) are cooperating with the specialized services for homeless persons.

This specific development of service provision has led to a model of a rehabilitation / reintegration chain which consists of services like prevention of eviction; direct access services like emergency shelters and day centres; counselling centres for homeless people; counselling centres for specific target groups as women and youth in urgent housing needs; residential homes for different target groups; target group specific provision of supported housing; and floating individual support following on from reintegration into self sustained accommodation.

However, there are almost no specialized services provided in the rural parts of Salzburg where services are mainly provided by statutory bodies such as the office for social benefits, for youth care and so on. Therefore it is no surprise that more than 50% of the homeless clients of the services for the homeless were originally living in the disadvantaged rural parts and that a problem transfer into the central area is still a common strategy by local authorities in the rural areas.

Recently the regional body for social planning has been established and a process of regionalisation of services and provisions has begun (especially the service of eviction prevention and debt counselling). However, this process of regionalisation is still in its infancy.

GRAZ / STYRIA

In Styria the most important part of the housing services for the homeless are situated in of the capital Graz. Furthermore about 75% of supported housing (i.e. shelters, residual homes) are provided by the local authority itself. Beside the statutory services there are some further services provided by churches and clerical organizations. Some of these services have only a small qualified staff and rely up to a large degree on voluntary persons without professional qualifications.

The Styrian correspondent[2] of the Austrian survey on homelessness and services for the homeless (BAWO 1998) characterized the situation of the homeless in Styria:

> low standards of accommodations in shelters, residual homes and even in container villages

> high share of voluntary workers instead of educated social workers on a regular employment basis

> problems in communication and cooperation between professional services and the voluntary sector

> problems in the coordination of services as well as concerning the access to special service provisions

> lack of services in the rural parts; more than 30% of the clients of the shelter of the city of Graz were living in rural parts of Styria before they attended the shelter

> missing conscience about homelessness in the regional boards of social planning and welfare administration

> low standards of individual support and especially problems to provide supported housing for the target groups of elder homeless and mentally ill persons with housing problems

> problems in providing follow up accommodations after the stay in institutional care; there are long waiting lists before a detachment into an affordable dwelling takes place.

More recently the city of Graz have charged BAWO to undertake a survey on provisions and services for homeless people in the city of Graz and to develop measures and strategies to improve this situation. This survey has finished at the end of 2003 (BAWO,2004).

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[2] *Walter Trost, in: BAWO 1998*

Thematic analysis
of the organisational impact

These case studies are used in this section to give an impression of the most relevant criteria of difference and to show the most obvious consequences at the level of living conditions / being homeless in some of the Austrian cities. In comparing the service systems in the Austrian cities and counties it becomes evident that in Austria there are at least four classes of service systems for the Homeless in place.

THE RURAL IMPACT ON SERVICES FOR HOMELESS

In the rural parts of Austria as well as in the counties with a less urban structure (like Burgenland, Kärnten) there are almost no services for homeless persons and families established. These parts of Austria have in common that there are only very few services with only insufficient resources according to housing places, funding and professional staff which have to cover a wide spectrum of needs related to poverty, housing stress and homelessness. Furthermore services mostly have to work with low standards of target group specific services, almost no provision of individual support, very inadequate occupational aspects and a high share of voluntary and unskilled social workers.

Homelessness in these parts of Austria means that the homeless have almost no chance to access services which can cover their needs and / or to help them to cope with the crisis confronting them. To a degree the individual crisis is made worse by the lack of need oriented services which results, in many cases, in homeless persons and families having to transfer into the next larger city where services for the homeless are provided.

THE CHARITABLE IMPACT
OF SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS

In some counties and cities like Styria / Graz services for the homeless provided by the catholic church or clerical led associations have great influence on the systems of service provisions. Mostly of these services can be characterized by low housing standards (e.g. large old buildings, container villages), low occupational standards and up to a reliance on volunteers and almost no need oriented provision of individual support.

Living in institutions like that means that many of the homeless clients stay in these services at a very low living standard with almost no privacy and low living quality for a long time because there is almost no provision for re-settlement into main stream housing and independent living.

THE STATUTORY IMPACT

In some cities like Graz and Innsbruck, though to a diminishing extent, there remain asylums and shelters in the old tradition of poverty administration. That means that these institutions are very likely to have low housing standards, only very reduced provisions of privacy, a small professional staff, low standards in individual support.

Also in institutions like that we can observe the tendency that homeless inhabitants will stay there for a very long time. For example, when the city of Vienna started to build up the stair case model for homeless persons and families a survey on the inhabitants of the old fashioned asylums showed that some of them were living there for more than 40 years.

THE PROFESSIONAL IMPACT

In some counties, like Vorarlberg and cities such as Linz, Salzburg and Innsbruck, professional social workers have had the chance to establish services with increasing standards according to privacy, individual support, supported housing, target group specific services (youth, mentally ill, elder homeless persons, families in housing stress etc.). In these counties and cities, in the last two decades, a development of adjusted systems of services has taken place which resulted in a high level of interagency cooperation.

Such provision means that homeless persons and families have good chances to access services and to get support according to a reintegration model.

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL PLANNING AND REGULATION

Some counties have established statutory boards of social planning and regulation which have had a far reaching influence on the development of services and standards. This is particularly the case in Vienna where the welfare administration of the city has established a whole system of cooperation and adjusted development of standards - starting with low threshold services and aiming in the detachment of homeless persons and families in city owned dwellings.

The board of social planning in Vienna played therefore an active role in the construction of a whole system of services and integrated services provided by NGO's in a common definition and realisation of standards.

A similar effect can be expected of the initiatives of the welfare administration in Upper Austria which has started recently with a social planning program to combine the services of NGO's into a county wide system of services for the homeless.

In the county of Salzburg the effects of the establishment of a social planning board at county level are somewhat different. In this case the effect has been to keep things as they are and hinder innovation and increasing standards. The declared intention to improve the regional dissemination of services has not taken place so the situation in the city of Salzburg is still fixed at the level of about 5 years ahead.

METHODS OF CONTRACTING AND FUNDING
The methods of commissioning and funding which are in place at the regional level are of enormous importance for the development of different services, the provisions for specific target groups, the standards of housing and individual support. In many respects the systems of services in the Austrian cities are different and it becomes evident that the development of standards differs according to financial security on the one hand and the active role of statutory boards for social planning and regulation.
When the Viennese authority started to implement a new model of services (the stair case model) this initiative was directly organized at the level of funding contracts.

Specific service providers which had been active in the range of supported housing were invited to participate in a program which aimed to prepare homeless persons and families by individual support in transitory accommodation to cope with the challenge of living in independently. The contract between service providers and the city of Vienna defined rules and standards concerning transitory housing and individual support, the qualification of the staff as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the progress of individual support. Furthermore the service providers were obliged to provide some follow on support in order to prevent irregularities like not paying the rent or misusing the flat. This initiative by the welfare administration of Vienna was the start of a far reaching development of standards in other services for the homeless, which were not part of this program, like residual homes, emergency shelters and day centres. These contracts were the mechanism for the implementation standards in every respect.
However, each city and county has established its own method of contracting and funding with greater or lesser influence on the development of services in general and the provision of standards according to housing, need orientation and professionalism..

THE ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT ON THE SERVICES
There are only very few service providers which are providing services at an Austrian wide level and have established standards and services which are in place in all counties and cities. This may only be the case with the probation office provided by a NGO and covering all counties and cities in Austria. The services for the homeless mainly are provided by local associations, only few of which are working at a county wide level. So the organisational impact is definitely of less importance in relation to the city- and / or county-specific impact of social planning and / or of the way of contracts and funding which is in place.

Anyway the organisations have to adjust their structure into the funding system which is in place. Because of the dominance of the county wide systems of social policy, administration and / or planning and controlling the organisation structure of the service providers have only little influence on standards of services.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT
The development of instruments and standards of monitoring and evaluation depends to a large degree on initiatives of the service providers. There are at least only two counties (Vienna and Salzburg) where the social planning board at county level took active influence on the development of monitoring systems. In the other counties and cities of Austria the development of monitoring systems, as well as programs of evaluation, are more likely in place when the standards of professionalism are already high.

Especially service providers in the tradition of poverty administration or with a more charitable approach have both low standards of professionalism and deficits according to monitoring and evaluation.

COOPERATION AND INTER AGENCY WORKING
In the counties of Austria where there is a county or city wide system of services for the homeless in place the structures of communication and inter-agency cooperation are more or less well established. There are just differences according to the intensity of communication and cooperation.

In counties / cities with low standard systems of services for the homeless one can observe that the communication between social workers of different services depends up to a high degree on personal relations between them and are less based at a structural level.

Especially it seems to be very difficult to build up a network of communication and cooperation if services rely on voluntary and unskilled colleagues, if there is a high fluctuation in occupational aspects and if there are only less developed systems of monitoring established. Services with low standards of professionalism are more likely not to communicate / cooperate than services with a more professional approach.

The examples of Vienna, Linz, Salzburg and Tyrol show that high standards of professionalism are no guarantee that communication and cooperation between different segments of the service systems will work. Problems in communication and cooperation are reported between services for homeless on the one hand and services for mentally ill persons on the other.

Conclusions

In Austria there are as many systems of services addressed to the issue of homelessness as there are cities / capitals of the nine counties. Recently the regional authorities have started to realize their responsibility for the development of services in general and standards concerning housing, financial and personal resources as well as the quality of the delivered services.

The social planning approach has had a significant effect in improving standards of monitoring, evaluation and regional networking and has led to a new competition of best practice and bench marking, influenced by market oriented considerations as well as by new models of public management.

At the same time it must be stated that there are some counties and cities which have not taken part in this general development of professionalisation (e.g. the counties of Burgenland and Carinthia). Furthermore, some other counties (e.g. Styria and Nether Austria) are lagin behind. The difference between the counties is even increasing. A recently completed survey on the situation of the homeless in the city of Graz gives impressive evidence about the effects of inefficient methods of contracting and funding in the county of Styria.

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Greece

ARISTIDES SAPOUNAKIS

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to assess the organisational and operational complexities involved in the provision of services for homeless people in Greece based on an analysis of their developmental and institutional characteristics. In view of this need, services will be approached in relation to the following set of operational criteria: (a) external drivers of change, (b) decision-making and accountability, (c) monitoring and evaluation, (d) professionalism and staffing and (e) the organisational structures involved.

The manner in which services have been founded and developed is a key factor to explain the operation of services for the homeless in Greece. Evidence suggests that the current delivery of services reflects the original philanthropic approach which is generally characterised by the creation of a 'warm' environment for the users while excluding them from decision-making and monitoring processes. This attitude is clearly reminiscent of the country's strong family and community informal networks and, to an extent, the state's past record in institutions like children's homes. This approach is more geared to reproduce the ideals and methods of service organisers rather than bear a tentative ear to the users' specific needs.

For this reason, the analysis of the operational aspects of services is based on a comprehensive overview of the manner in which they developed. This approach must be paired with an insight on relevant aspects of the Greek society as for example the significance of the role of the family in relation to the development of a coherent system of state support.

The development
of services for the homeless in Greece

In Greece, the phenomenon of homelessness has only become evident during the last two decades and especially in the 1990's when it became apparent that homelessness may relate to a considerably large portion of the population. Traditionally, accommodation issues in Greece are dealt with within families. However, structural changes in Greek society and the gradual loosening of family bonds suggest that family solidarity will not play a similar role in the near future.

State intervention in the housing market has always remained too modest to cope effectively with the level of need and has relied upon high levels of home ownership. As informal family and social networks used to be particularly effective in earlier years, the traditional way in which society addressed phenomena of extreme poverty and social exclusion was through the church and philanthropic organisations which largely depended for their funding on the resources of the Church of Greece and private donations.

Thus, the church and charitable organisations have developed a fairly extensive network of services for people in need. This involves not only soup kitchens and meals for the (elderly) poor but also accommodation which, although providing a homely ambience, operates on a strongly religious basis. This philanthropic and religious approach is not readily accepted by all homeless people.

The statutory approach to such sensitive phenomena of social exclusion has historically been dominated by problem-oriented responses. To elucidate this, it is interesting to note that the statutory accommodation structures established immediately after World War II aimed to 'protect' the younger generation from communist infiltration. These institutions used to operate as children's homes in the '50s and, in effect, attempted to provide the needed influence to young people of politically undesirable family background of parents who had flown to the East after the Greek civil war of 1946-49. Evidence suggests that these services were governed in a fairly strongly authoritarian manner.

It is only effectively since the late 1980's that the framework of what aims to be the safety net to protect people who experience extreme poverty, and among them the homeless, has started to be realised through central government policies. Yet, this safety net has never been the result of a thoroughly planned strategy but the outcome of fragmented problem-oriented campaigns; as a result, it remains full of shortcomings and inadequacies.

Character of services delivered to the homeless

The main mechanism for the provision of affordable housing has been the OEK (Workers' Housing Association). Their main beneficiaries, however, are low to middle income office and industrial employees. This has been achieved by both direct provision (purchase of ready made dwellings allocated on a lottery basis) and by programmes such as loan systems and rent benefits. Similar policies addressed to homeless families in general have been organised by the Ministry of Health and Welfare through a programme called 'Popular Housing'. Distribution of benefits follows a similar pattern to the OEK, yet the impact of the programme has remained minimal due to funding shortages.

As the above programmes are addressed to beneficiaries who do not need complementary support, the services delivered only involve housing. Nevertheless, it is important to note that beneficiaries have often expressed complaints related to bureaucratic delays as well as to a certain degree of injustice involved in the manner houses are distributed, even though this allocation follows a strict lottery system.

The housing and social inclusion programme for repatriate Greeks from Pontos has been organised by the Ministry of the Exterior through EIYAAPOE. This programme, which is currently at its last phase, has faced severe criticism as its complexities restricted its application to a mere tenth of its target group. Similar complaints have been reported for policies directed to housing and social inclusion of the Roma population in Greece. Users have been disillusioned as housing support for the Roma community does not aim to provide ready made proper dwellings but a mere improvement of their settlements' infrastructure. In addition to this, users of both programmes also complain about the tedious bureaucratic procedures that result in considerable delays before the actual support is realised.

Another important target group relates to people involved in the process of de-institutionalisation from psychiatric institutions. During the last years, the programme called 'Psychargos' has undertaken what has been termed as the 'opening' of mental hospitals to society by gradually resettling former patients in the real world. Thus many ex-patients now live in specially arranged hostels and 'protected flats' where they receive the social and psychological support they need in order to maintain independent living.

The Psychargos programme has faced strong criticism in relation to its effectiveness, mainly based on the selection of users, as well as its impact on the operation of mainstream psychiatric clinics. On the other hand, services channelled through shelters and protected flats appear to be adequately organised and monitored. Given the fact that a substantial percentage of Psychargos users are not as yet prepared to live independently while the programme has a few more years before its completion, the question is whether its operation will be prolonged after European funding will come to an end.

Refugees, the influx of which has escalated in recent years, constitute a target group which experiences acute housing and social exclusion problems. These problems are particularly accentuated during the initial phase of immigrants' entry in the country. The phenomenon has generated the need for new and differentiated services to address their urgent housing and social needs.

Thus, several voluntary organisations provide social and legal assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. Amongst these, the Doctors of the World and Voluntary Work have set up services providing accommodation, health care, counselling on legal, emigration and employment issues as well as general support. Similarly, the Greek Red Cross and the Social Work Foundation operate supported housing projects combining provision of accommodation in shared flats along with the provision of social work assistance, networking with employment, health and social services etc.

As in most similar initiatives, these projects face difficulties related to the continuity of funding, which produces a sense of anxiety for both their clients as well as their staff. The staffing of these projects mostly comprises volunteers who, although properly trained and sensitive to the users' specific needs, are affected by the financial insecurity faced by the projects. It is clear that additional support from local and central government agencies is needed to maintain the needed input of these voluntary institutions.

Finally, several services are addressed to the large group of single homeless people which is particularly relevant to the context of the present study. These institutions are either statutory, since they are organised and run by central or local governments, or voluntary, in case they are run by the church, philanthropic organisations or NGO's. In all cases, accommodation institutions are supervised by the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare runs two hostels providing emergency accommodation for single homeless people in Athens. A third shelter has been originally run by the Ministry but has recently been taken over by "Doctors of the World" operating as a hostel for refugees and asylum seekers. Furthermore, a fairly wide variety of smaller statutory institutions offer housing support and a friendly environment for youngsters below the age of 18. These agencies are supervised and run either by the Ministry of Health and Welfare or, in cases of young ex-offenders, the Ministry of Justice.

Historically, Local Authorities' contribution to service provision impact on community matters in Greece has traditionally been limited. In the past, Local Authorities usually organised and ran 'public poorhouses' in various parts of Greece, which offered accommodation to elderly people lacking an income and family support. Several municipalities also provide free meals for the poor.

In recent years the Municipality of Athens has set up a Shelter for Abused Women and a day care service for homeless people both of which are innovative services in Greece. It also introduced a scheme for the provision of temporary accommodation to nearly 180 homeless people in partnership with two low-cost private-owned hotels in the centre of Athens.

With reference to the contribution of the church and voluntary organisations, it has already been mentioned that this form of support relates directly to the traditional approach to helping people who experience extreme poverty in Greece. There are currently many guesthouses all over the country which belong to the traditional philanthropic voluntary sector and generally provide shelter for elderly people in need. Some of these shelters are organised by the Church while others belong entirely to the voluntary sector either based on the origin of the users and being the chief responsibility of the relevant community (e.g. shelters for elderly people who come from Armenia or Constantinople) or being organised by a particular person or group of people with philanthropic ideals.

Lastly it is important to note the few examples of voluntary services for different groups of homeless people that have developed as community initiatives by several independent NGO's. This sub-category comprises agencies like 'Arsis' and 'Voluntary Work' who address their emergency accommodation and psychosocial support services to young offenders and other similarly vulnerable target groups. These organisations have set up services on a purely professional rather than philanthropic basis and largely depend on co-operation with local and central government bodies to flourish.

The characteristics of services for the single homeless, such as their organisation, decision making process, efficiency and professionalism of staff and, above all, the philosophy of their approach and funding pattern, vary mainly according to their status and historical development. Their efficiency and effectiveness varies depending upon the specific goals they have set for themselves and the prevailing climate of culture among their staff (ranging from philanthropy to professionalism).

Almost all services are supervised and, in most cases, funded by the Ministry of Health and Welfare while the majority of them are run by independent agencies. Despite the fact that direct funding from the Ministry should be a guarantee for continuity of funding, social hostels like most welfare services in Greece, face chronic financial and staffing problems. In the Careas hostel, for instance, there are periods when up to 50% of the available beds (50 in total) remain unoccupied, whereas from time to time, there is severe pressure for further reduction of the number of residents, due to funding cuts, despite a much higher demand for beds. Similar problems have been affecting the operation of services for the young homeless. Yet, it is important to note that, although hostels face severe shortages of professional personnel, the few social servants who staff them are particularly sensitive to approach the issues they face in the best possible manner with minimal assistance from their governing body.

The tendency of isolation and lack of co-operation with other bodies and services which is typical of the majority of public services in Greece, is also found in services for the homeless and often results in dysfunction and limitation of their effectiveness. The day-to-day operation of the services is also often obstructed by bureaucratic delays, ineffective procedures and problems on senior management level. Such problems, with some variations, affect most of the services of the statutory sector presented below.

The funding of homeless services comes directly from the municipality's budget. Hence, many services operate with temporary staff so that the municipality can control expenditure depending on its financial condition. This fact creates major difficulties related to the stability and continuity of operation of the service. Furthermore, they are directly dependent upon the will of each municipal authority. Their management is the responsibility of a committee, the president of which is usually an elected councillor appointed to that post by the mayor. The manner of their operation is very often directed primarily by political motives and by the municipal authorities' will to impress their electorate, especially in pre-election periods, rather than by the philosophy of maximizing effectiveness and offering the best possible service provision to their users in real terms or in a long-term perspective.

Organisational structures and staffing

The few statutory shelters that exist offer a reasonably good standard of accommodation in terms of hygiene, facilities, provision of meals and access to basic health care. However, the provision of quality services for the homeless is often obstructed by problems on senior management level mainly stemming from public agencies (such as the Ministry of Health and Welfare) which are responsible for bureaucratic procedures and inconsistencies in funding.

As a result, these statutory shelters remain under-staffed and under-occupied, despite a high demand for beds. Failure to achieve full occupancy is also due to complicated admission procedures, which are often too lengthy for people who have problems in their social functioning. Furthermore, people such as those with psychiatric problems or problems related to alcohol or drug dependency are excluded and often have to remain in the streets in the absence of adequate specialised services.

The lack of staffing means that staff, although they are highly professional and strongly motivated, are too over-worked to realistically address users' needs and especially assist in the search for employment and housing. In their present function, therefore, these shelters seem to offer a kind of respite to their client-group, a form of breathing space for the better functioning homeless people. Thus statutory hostels are incapable of providing real solutions to the most vulnerable, the more chaotic people they accommodate.

Non-governmental hostels and guesthouses, on the other hand, tend to offer longer-term accommodation and support. Standards of service provision vary widely, as a comparatively large number of different services falls into this category. Many

of these hostels are run by the church and are characterised by a high degree of commitment and care, aiming to offer a supportive, home-like environment for their clients. Their self-governing character and philanthropic approach however, suggests that in many cases there may be a lack of adequate procedures for quality control as well as more room for arbitrary action on the part of staff or management, which may leave residents in a very powerless position.

It is possible therefore to classify services into three groups - statutory, church-based and voluntary sector NGOs. Statutory and church operated organisations, for example, tend to have distinctive attitude to organisational structure as well as operational practice in as much as they normally have a specific aim and philosophy reproduced by their rigid approach and assured financial support. On the other hand, non-governmental organisations and services of the voluntary sector are bound to be concerned about securing subsidies in such a manner that even their overall operational practice may be severely affected.

Evidence has shown that even statutory services may well suffer from government cuts and experience the consequence of similar organisational difficulties as bodies of the voluntary sector. Thus, it has become reasonably apparent that the majority of services, either statutory or voluntary, may have acute deficiencies as regards the organisational capacity that is needed to meet their demands.

Civil servants have been used to dealing with scarcity of assets and staff and have always tended to do more than what is expected from them to meet the service's requirements. Thus, it is common that the same person who has the responsibility of the service as a whole is also responsible for interviewing new applicants for admission, dealing with issues of proper co-habitation, while also caring for the users' re-insertion in the labour market. As is often the case for statutory bodies, decision-makers have been used to the idea of their staff's meticulous and conscientious approach and they end up economising rather than enlarging the service's personnel to the desirable figure.

In contrast, the eagerness of most voluntary bodies to secure their resources has generally tended to affect their practice, as the tasks involved are usually undertaken by the same people who worry about funding. This anxiety poses severe constraints in the quality and efficiency of service provision.

Decision making and accountability

In as much as organisational structures of services are concerned, statutory bodies and church institutions have a distinctive pattern of decision-making process they follow. In these cases, the rule is that issues that concern the governing of services, their goals and philosophy of approach, are decided, or rather, have already been decided at a higher level. Even though senior officials may often manage to have a tentative ear to sense the reality of the issues an agency may face, the general norm remain non-committal and insensitive to the changing needs of an active function. Admittedly, sometimes this is better, as social servants joke, because they thus left to do their work they way they know.

On the other hand, non-government bodies and voluntary organisations are more susceptible to adapt to changes of real life situations. Their well-defined philosophy is generally depended on their ownership and management pattern, which allows more for the uncertainty of change.

Operational practice is generally liable to follow the above tendencies. As most services in Greece have developed as a response to crisis support, their practice is attributed by similar characteristics. Small units of the voluntary sector tend to have a more sensitive approach to individual users' needs. Larger services, on the other hand, may guarantee better living conditions for their beneficiaries but still lack the ability to support their resettlement.

Conclusion

This overview of the character of services for the homeless in Greece has shown that institutional and organisational matters are not uniform as they largely depend on the type of institutions concerned and the services rendered. As most of the services addressed to homeless people have developed during the late 1980's and 1990's, the organisational pattern they follow generally depends on the conditions under which they have been established. The predominance of philanthropic and, to an extent, strongly opinionated rather than professional delivery of services in the near past surely plays a significant role in this.

As service provision for the homeless in Greece is still in its initial structural phase, the issue of supported housing has not yet appeared in an organised all-embracing manner. Likewise, it is still early to ask for partnership and inter-agency co-operation between the various interest groups for a common cause.

Apparently, the quest of the desirable co-operation of governmental with non-governmental organisations in the country is still in the process of its shaping. However, the attitude of decision-makers, as well as public opinion's, has been much more positive than it has been just a few years ago. It appears to be a matter of time for the things to settle, as they should.

Thus it appears that a sizeable number of services in the voluntary sector could have been more flexible than the statutory shelters with regard to the length of stay and support they offer to their users thus allowing them to work out solutions for proper resettlement. This needed flexibility however is not feasible in cases where the philosophy of approach does not permit the agencies' officials to focus on their users' needs rather then their preconceived ideas about the way to treat them. Ultimately, the only option open to users of such services with regard to social integration is getting a job and moving into private-rented accommodation, which, especially given present-day salaries and rents is extremely difficult for most people who have found themselves in this situation in the first place.

On the other hand, it has become apparent that a growing number of community initiatives carried out by independent NGO's attempt to cooperate with central or local authorities aiming to provide services for specific target groups for which they are professionally capable of servicing. Although in most cases these initiatives are particularly sensitive as regards their users needs, they are not able to secure consistency in funding their activities.

Portugal

ISABEL BAPTISTA

Organisational models and philosophies: what room for external drivers to change?

The fragmented nature of service provision for homeless people in Portugal, the late and slow development of the Welfare State and the marginal importance given by the public authorities to "extreme social exclusion" may explain why it is difficult to identify external drivers to change in the evolution of service provision in the field of homelessness.

Policy orientations in the field of Social Security which have been introduced in the mid 1990's[1], namely the creation of the so-called Social Networks[2], could have acted as important key drivers in the development of integrated strategies that could respond to more than the basic needs of the homeless population and, hence, to organisational changes in the provision of services. However, the weak involvement of homelessness agencies in these structures has, until now, prevented the emergence of such positive impacts.

No forms of umbrella organisations (national, regional or local) have emerged in this context of a wide range of agencies (confessional, non-confessional, state local services, municipal initiatives) working in the field of homelessness the focus of which, in the main, is social welfare rather than homeless specific. Service provision in this area is therefore implemented according to the aims, philosophies and practices of a wide variety of social welfare institutions.

The organisational philosophies of agencies working with the homeless range from the caring Christian perspective of helping people who are in need (present in many confessional organisations and also in other philanthropic oriented organisations) to other more professional perspectives of work, although differently oriented and with diverse underlying ideologies and working methods.

An interesting issue regarding the way in which the underlying philosophies of the agencies working with the homeless population may affect their organisational practices is the mix of philanthropic and professional perspectives. This mix can be clearly identified both in confessional and non-confessional organisations and is linked to the different organisational layers and hierarchies. Philanthropic perspectives are dominant at the level of the agencies' management boards (mainly composed by volunteers), whereas the growing professionalisation of the working teams has led to the emergence of different perspectives regarding the provision of services.

This process is closely linked to the evolution undergone by many of these organisations in recent years, namely regarding changes in their staffing structures and in a clearer definition of different levels of responsibilities and tasks.

Moreover, the coexistence of these different philosophies - very often in the same organisations - is happening in a context of growing recognition of the need for qualification and professionalisation of the services. The social workers' status has clearly improved and they have become important key actors in the definition of the organisation's operating methods.

Nevertheless, the lack of a more general framework for the implementation and running of services based on a deeper knowledge of the mechanisms underlying homelessness situations and processes inhibits the development of strategies that go beyond emergency or crisis services.

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[1] A range of different forms of mutual assistance and of private non-profit-making and public agencies that work in the field of social action and which coordinate their activities among themselves and with the Government with a view to eradicating or attenuating poverty and social exclusion and promoting social development.

[2] For a more comprehensive perspective on these new policy orientations please refer to Baptista, I. (2003) Services for homeless people in Portugal. Between the State and the NGO's: partnership, protagonism and financing. Working Group Paper. CESIS/European Observatory on Homelessness/FEANTSA.

Organisational structures evolving: integration goals versus crisis support practices

In this context, most services addressing the homeless population are still much more concentrated on the provision of basic support (temporary shelter, food and clothes, basic medical care, personal hygiene) recognised as essential and eligible for funding. Social and psychological support and information are also common among institutions providing services for the homeless. Almost non-existent is the provision of supported housing.

In spite of this restricted provision of services focused on emergency support most agencies have been through a process of evolution and their goals usually reflect their concern with an effective integration of the population. In recent years, apart from an overall increase in the availability of support (mainly emergency) in this field, there has been a gradual shift towards a specialisation of some services in order to better respond to acknowledged needs mentally ill, immigrants, women experiencing domestic violence, drug addicts.

However, this growing concern with responding to specific groups of homeless people and to emerging categories of newcomers (recently unemployed individuals) is not followed by a corresponding level of inter-agency working or background support that would guarantee a follow-up of the situation aiming at social integration: *"What are we doing here? We ensure basic support in terms of hygiene, nutrition (very often they arrive here with severe problems of malnutrition and dehydration), we take care of clothing... And after that? What can we do with these people after one year? There are no support structures after us to continue with the work and we are very limited in our action here. (...) Even at the level of professional training, the criteria for acceptance is so high[3] (6th or 9th year schooling) that it automatically excludes this population. And this is a programme for disadvantaged population!"[4]*

Several problems of availability and quality of service provision for homeless people have been referred to by agencies working in this area[5]. Basic support services have been identified by the agencies themselves as the most common type of services available, in contrast to housing support, professional insertion and mental health care. On the issue of quality patterns, the responses show a high level of dissatisfaction mainly in the areas of housing support, health care and professional insertion. The most positive evaluation in terms of service quality refers to basic services, to individualised support (although little is available) and mental health care (again little available).

Housing support has clearly emerged as one of the main concerns among service providers in the area of homelessness both in terms of availability and quality standards. Emergency accommodation has clearly been the main focus of support in this area. Almost no supported housing exists and even emergency shelters or other temporary solutions such as "pensões" (Portuguese version of B&B) present serious problems in terms of accommodation conditions. In spite of major rehousing programmes in the main urban areas, no involvement of the housing authorities in the provision of housing for the homeless has occurred. Homelessness is a social welfare problem and is not recognised as a concern for the housing authorities. More recently, some municipalities are trying to negotiate with their own housing services ways to co-operate in order to find housing solutions that can overcome the traditional temporary (often lasting for years) accommodation alternatives available until now.

In a context of scarce social housing and of a dual rental market[6], the possibility for service providers to resort to the housing market in search for housing alternatives is extremely limited. Thus, their main concern and dissatisfaction regarding the housing support they can provide either directly or through other agencies and services. Hence, emergency accommodation remains the only (permanent) solution for many of these people.

These and other factors clearly contribute to the fact that people working with the homeless population often underline the fact that agencies are not succeeding in promoting a real

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[3] *"In 2002 only 20.6% of the Portuguese population aged between 25-64 years old had completed at least upper secondary education, and the early school leaving rate of 45.5% contrasts strikingly with the EU average of 18.8%" (CEC, 2003: 199)*

[4] *Interview with the technical coordinator of an agency working with homeless people in the North of the country, in the context of In-Extremis project.*

[5] *Information collected through questionnaires applied in the context of the work developed for the 2004 Working Group Report for the European Observatory on Homelessness.*

[6] *The rental market - following a process of rent freezing after the 1974 revolution - has undergone a notorious deterioration and finally gained a dual character: on the one hand, a set of old contracts with very low rents and completely immovable and, on the other, new houses with very high rents.*

change through the services they provide.: *"People here are depending on projects and subsidies, training courses, occupational programmes... all of which are in a certain sense perpetuating the situation and not promoting a real integration"*[7].

No continuum of intervention has yet emerged that would include early intervention and prevention (preventing entry into homelessness, namely through consistent policies), crisis support (the most common intervention in place aiming at alleviating crisis that often become permanent situations) and post intervention support (done by very few agencies and clearly lacking the necessary multi-agency work and the more general framework for service provision in this area).

Organisational capacity: professionalisation and staffing

One of the issues that clearly affects the effectiveness of service provision is the standard of professionalism and qualification of the staff. Homeless services have known a considerable evolution in this area, driven both by endogenous and by exogenous factors.

On the one hand, the growing complexity of the situations and the increasing number of people resorting for support has clearly demanded a more professionalised approach. On the other hand, the need to secure funds from external (national or European) sources has in recent years led to a higher investment in the qualification of the teams and on the need to resort to professionals in the areas of social work, psychology, social policy and sociology among others.

However, many agencies refer to the explicit lack of human resources as one of the main constraints to innovation and quality in service delivery. It is not uncommon that the few existing staff (not seldom "teams" of one person) is expected to deal with the responsibility of the whole service (including different target groups) and with the different tasks to be performed.

Some interesting features should be highlighted within this professionalisation process among service providers. First, there are apparent signs of tension between the organisation leaders (non-technical staff) and professionals, the former referring to the "lack of personal/relational skills" among the latter which negatively affects the relationship with the users. Second. the professionals demand a more active role in deci-

sion-making which is still centralised in the "political, voluntary and elected" managing bodies of organisations. Third, there is an explicit concern from the professionals about the need for implementing training addressed at the organisations' leaders. Fourth, there exists a movement towards the appearance of new professional profiles coming from universities and other higher education schools who are increasingly being engaged by organisations, and who are forming a sort of "all job" supporters for the traditional social workers.

In spite of this growing professionalisation and qualification of working teams information recently collected among service providers in this area still shows that the proportion of people without any specific training working in these institutions clearly outnumbers the qualified staff. Differences among agencies are in this respect huge.

Voluntary work, on the other hand, is mainly present among confessional organisations and some smaller NGO's, whereas there has been a strong movement towards the reduction (and even total withdrawal) of voluntary activity in major NGO's or municipal initiatives in this area. There is only very few examples of true investment in the training of volunteer staff.

The main constraints that have been identified in the technical capacity of the agencies is in the first place linked to the persistence of financial constraints that prevents the hiring of more professional staff, but also to the lack of specific training in the area; and the fact that existing skills are not adjusted to the intervention needs regarding this specific population.

The very little information it has been possible to collect concerning careers in the field of services for the homeless is illustrative of the diverse situation among the different actors working within agencies providing services. We can point to a number of relevant factors including: a) the presence of highly placed volunteers in the organisations' hierarchy - whose turnover is very low; b) volunteer staff placed in a lower organisational layer, presenting a high level of fluctuation; c) and turnover among professional staff, responsible for the technical co-ordination of activities or their implementation, tends to be higher when their responsibility is merely at the level of activities' implementation.

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[7] *Interview with a social worker of one of the agencies working with homeless people in Lisbon, in the context of In-Extremis project*

Funding patterns and decision-making strategies

The organisational capacity of the majority of services addressing the needs of the homeless population has been clearly affected by the funding pattern that has characterised service provision.

Dependence on the State has characterised this financial relationship. Service providers in the field of homelessness are all working on the basis of contracts established with the Social Security. These contracts - most of which are called atypical agreements as they do not fall under the traditional categories of equipment or services - are approved at a district level and given their atypical nature have to be authorised by central services in Lisbon.

Lack of funding and uncertainty regarding the continuity of that funding are the main problems identified in this area which have had a strong impact on the organisations' capacity to adequately meet identified needs. Service providers usually refer to the constraints imposed by this financing on the possibility to invest on human resources, not only in terms of quantity but also often in terms of quality. Other sources of dissatisfaction are related to the so-called lack of sensibility of public entities to the specificity of the homeless population, to the very scattered financing and to the lack of co-ordination in the granting of subsidies to different organisations in the same area.

The way(s) in which funding criteria are being used may be at the origin of some of this dissatisfaction as they also contribute to a duplication, rather than complementarity, of the services provided and on a competition for resources.

In fact, although the decision regarding funding is taken at a regional (district) level, the analysis of each case is usually focused on the agency's individual situation, its presented needs and targets and not on a regional analysis of service provision or on assessed needs in the area. Such a regional perspective would of course only be possible if the existing local information could be systematically comparable and compiled in order to be duly analysed and reported back. Such a task is still to be done.

Apart from social security funds, which are the most widespread type of funding, agencies in the field of homelessness also access funds from local authorities and from specific projects. Own income is also identified as an important source of funding.

In this context of individualised procedures regarding service provision funding the protagonism of the organisation's leadership becomes vital, particularly in an area where the beneficiaries are in such an extreme marginalisation process that they hardly become a target for any sponsorship.

In fact, in the actual proficiency of the President in accessing financing sources lies, in many cases, one of the main reasons for long-term mandates and low turnover in the boards of management.

Thus, in order to understand the organisational capacity and structure of these agencies it is essential to highlight some of the most striking aspects regarding their leaderships, decision-making processes and priorities.

Most organisations' leaders come from well-educated sectors of the population, presenting relatively high levels of education (more than one in every three leaders have completed medium or high education), a trend that becomes stronger among the largest NGO's. An upper social class origin together with high education levels contributes not only to the reinforcement of the leaders' position inside the organisation but also facilitates the exercise of a voluntary service, a feature that usually characterises their work in the institution.

It has been possible to identify among the presidents of these agencies strong levels of personal authority and protagonism, which are closely linked to long-term leadership and a very low turnover in the presidency of the board of directors.

The "presidency issue" also emerges when looking at the decision making process within the organisations.

In most organisations the management board is elected either following a process of single list, or by the direct nomination of personalities who are then confirmed by electoral procedures. Although most presidents directly refer that decisions are taken in a "shared way" within their organisation, they suggest that this is not what is happening in most other institutions where they believe decisions are taken in a much more solitary and authoritarian way. There is a belief on how decisions should be taken, but no corresponding practice. In fact, most strategic decision making processes (concerning personnel hiring, patrimonial assets, organisational strategies) are clearly assumed by the president. The technical staff is mainly responsible for the daily management of the different agencies and consulting users on organisational decisions is rare.

Nevertheless, there have been recent signs of a growing role played by professional staff - namely technical co-ordinators - in the practices of the organisations, which has been parallel to a growing social recognition of some professions in this area. Social workers, sociologists and psychologists are among those professionals whose role within organisations has been growing along with their professional status. This change has had a direct effect even in the structures of the organisations with a clear demand of higher professionalism in service delivery, rather than resorting to voluntary activity.

Monitoring and Evaluation
- actual and potential roles

As the main funding source of service provision in the field of homelessness, State agencies tend to play a controlling role on investment decisions.

Apart from the analysis of investments required by funding entities (Social Security and municipalities) to annual budgets and assessment of expenses eligibility there is a considerable range of procedures imposed by funders regarding the monitoring of activities in terms of funding.

Other regular monitoring procedures are those related to the monthly information collected by service providers regarding the number of users, respective costs and number of services provided (meals, nights/shelter, trainees, etc). Annual visits are also known to occur and to provide supplementary information, essential to the continuity of the contracts.

In many cases monitoring procedures have been driven by exogenous factors - namely those linked to eligibility criteria imposed by funders - but it is not uncommon that the regular collection of statistical information has turned into an endogenous driven need. The already mentioned professionalisation of services has clearly contributed to this recent change.

Apart from these rather common monitoring procedures it has been difficult to identify on a systematic basis other types of monitoring procedures aiming at the planning, development or even regulating any type of quality standards in service provision. In some regional (district) services of social security there has been an effort to define monitoring models, which can introduce some guidance in the procedures, but no results on these initiatives are available.

Evaluation and users' participation are two areas where discourse has become fluid, but where practice remains "hostage of fear".

The need for service monitoring and evaluation has been clearly identified among service providers and a clear evolution has occurred in latest years. Initially driven by exogenous factors - namely by European funded projects and initiatives in the social arena - evaluation has not yet reached the status of an essential tool for improving working standards and professional practices. It is still very much envisaged as an abusive interference in professional practice, mainly deriving from a still weakly developed evaluation culture in Portugal.

As a result evaluation procedures remain one of the weaknesses in the work developed by service providers. Evaluation usually means informal and irregular talks with users and also, in some cases, the organisation of more formal evaluation moments like team meetings, where more complex individual situations are analysed and, more rarely, the team's performance is also evaluated.

If process evaluation - analysing what services are provided to whom and how often - is often undertaken by service providers and reported back to funding bodies, outcome evaluation - focusing on how people or systems change as a result of a programme or intervention - is clearly non-existent.

Even at the level of identifying the needs of the clients improvements are urgent. Although there is usually some kind of assessment of the needs of the clients, there is no systematic identification of those needs and therefore no basis for any systematic evaluation of outcomes. Consequently, it becomes almost impossible to turn that knowledge into a useful and shareable instrument that could lead to improvement of operational practices within the organisation.

Evaluation is in fact rarely performed in a structured way, with the desirable periodicity and systematisation. Even collecting information in a systematic way is often not compatible with resource constraints and embedded institutional procedures.

Nevertheless, evaluation is one of the concepts that have been fast absorbed by professionals and organisations as an essential dimension to be developed within organisational practices.

External evaluation is much more uncommon in the field of homelessness given the fact that the involvement with wider national and European projects - requiring this type of procedures - is relatively rare in this domain. The development of activities in the field of homelessness is almost exclusively linked to own initiatives funded by Social Security or local entities and at this level the only existing evaluation is process evaluation.

The lack of external evaluation of services by funding agencies, based on a territorial and not on a single institutional level, may pave the way for waste and/or inefficient use of resources. This lack of external evaluation promotes competition and duplication, rather than contributing to an assessment of needs and impacts and for the channelling of support towards integrated strategies aiming at the development of prevention and integration services.

There is thus an urgent need to develop serious monitoring and evaluation procedures on the work developed by service providers in this area, particularly focusing on outcome evaluation procedures. Given the growing acknowledgement of the importance of this type of activity an investment in that field could clearly represent a push factor for motivation and professional development and for the achievement of most homelessness service providers' goals: promoting their clients' integration.

Conclusion

The scattered nature of service provision for the homeless, the lack of inter-agency working, the persistence of central-local relationships and the marginal position and status of most service providers in this specific domain has contributed to slow organisational changes. The growing professionalisation of the sector and the need to secure funds from more demanding European or national programmes has been responsible for the introduction of changes in the organisational pattern of the largest organisations. However, this has been a slow and restricted process, which is still far from affecting the whole sector of the provision of services for homeless people in Portugal.

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APPENDIX

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The series 'Addressing Homelessness in Europe' is the result of the work of the three thematic research groups of FEANTSA's European Observatory on Homelessness that have been set up to cover the following themes:

■ The changing role of the state
■ The changing profiles of homeless people
■ The changing role of service provision

Service Provision For Homeless People In Europe: Organisational Factors Affecting the Delivery of Services for Homeless People is based on five articles produced by the National Correspondents of the European Observatory on Homelessness. The full articles can be downloaded from FEANTSA's website www.feantsa.org

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