

# Social housing estates and sustainable community development in South Korea

Seong-Kyu Ha\*

*Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Chung-Ang University, 304 Shingu Villa,  
551-19 Banpo 4 Dong, Seocho-gu, Seoul 137-807, Republic of Korea*

---

## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the characteristics and problems of social housing estates in South Korea, and to explore sustainable community development issues. In order to examine the social housing situation, a survey of the three social housing communities in Seoul was conducted. The survey evidence demonstrates that there is a growing stigma against the poor and social exclusion. This kind of social bias is likely to escalate the construction of social housing estates, which the poor concentrates in. Residents recognized that mixing public and private housing would be an issue and problematic. Public housing was thought to have a negative impact on the neighborhood. It is important to examine why these kinds of social problems arise. Applying the concept of social sustainability to low-income communities in urban Korea requires mobilizing residents and their governments to strengthen all forms of community capital.

© 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

**Keywords:** Social housing; Low-income communities; Social mix; Sustainable development; South Korea

---

## Introduction

As in many countries, low-income housing programs in South Korea are largely divided into two parts: supply-side programs and demand-side programs. The major type of supply-side programs is the provision of public rental housing for low-income households. A permanent public rental dwelling program was launched in South Korea in 1989, representing the beginning of a social housing tradition directed to low-income households.

Public housing (1,150,054 units) including permanent rental dwellings in 2004 accounted for 8.9% of the total housing stock (12,989,000 units). In spite of these efforts, the housing conditions of low-income households have not much improved as expected and the gap of housing conditions between income classes is still large. According to 2000 census, nearly a quarter of all households (23.4%) lived in accommodations that did not meet minimum standards in terms of floor space and basic facilities. In order to tackle the low-income housing problems, the government formulated a 10-year public housing supply plan for the purpose of constructing 1 million dwelling units between 2003 and 2012.

---

\*Tel.: +82 2 535 3068.

E-mail addresses: [skha47@hanmail.net](mailto:skha47@hanmail.net), [ha1234@cau.ac.kr](mailto:ha1234@cau.ac.kr).

In connection with public rental housing provision, one extreme case of social exclusion shocked the nation recently. According to Hankeoyrae 21,<sup>1</sup> wire entanglements stretched between public rental apartments and privately owned apartments within the same housing estate in Seoul in order to close up a road.<sup>2</sup> The residents of privately owned apartments dislike public housing residents who pass through their complexes. Children in public housing take the road to school, passing the privately owned apartments, saving them more than 10 min. Public rental housing parents have requested access to the road. However, residents of privately owned apartments have restricted access by setting up barbed wire. The residents of public rental apartments were considered a nuisance to the middle-income neighborhood. This resulted in a lawsuit being filed by residents of the public rental apartments.

Residents recognized that mixing public and private housing would be an issue and problematic. Public housing was thought to have a negative impact on the neighborhood. It is important to examine why these kinds of social problems arise. Housing is built for the long term and requires a considerable degree of forward planning and commitment. It also requires a longer-term view when corrective action is planned and put into place. The policy is inadequate because it is based upon an inadequate understanding of the situation. In South Korea, the problem is that those living in the social housing estates are increasingly marginalized as a social force influencing the government. This marginalization of those in social housing estates requires a different public housing system. With respect to realization of the community sustainability of the poor disadvantaged groups in South Korea, the government has not paid much attention on seeking the active participation of public, private and non-governmental partners at all levels. This participation is necessary in order to ensure security of tenant protection from discrimination, stigma and social exclusion.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: first, to examine the characteristics and problems of social housing estates in Seoul and second, to explore sustainable community development issues. In order to examine the social housing situation, a survey of the social housing communities was conducted by means of interviews with household heads and field surveys. Applying the concept of sustainable development to low-income communities in urban Korea requires mobilizing residents and their governments to strengthen all forms of community capital.

## Low-income communities and public housing programs

### *Low-income communities and housing situation*

According to the 4th Comprehensive National Territorial Plan (2000–2020) in South Korea,<sup>3</sup> the government is attempting to shift the focus of the existing residential policy away from “my home” to “our smart community”.<sup>4</sup> This will be accomplished by expanding community-oriented residential complexes and public facilities and forming a community-oriented residential culture. The plan is to promote a sense of belonging and neighborliness by inducing residents to form interactive networks.

Community has been defined in different ways in the social sciences, but a through comparison shows three common points of agreement. They are a sense of identity, cooperation, and residence in a common locality. Day and Murdoch (1993) point out that there are a number of reasons why community remains a relevant and useful concept and that communities have not completely disappeared. Newby (1980) argues that community provides a convenient focus for considering major social issues. It draws attention to the direction of social change and the impact this change has on particular localities.

<sup>1</sup>Hankeoyrae 21 is one of the popular weekly magazines in South Korea (Hankeoyrae 21 (2004)).

<sup>2</sup>This estate (Kileum Dongbu Apartment) is located in Seongbukgu, Seoul.

<sup>3</sup>The Plan has been reviewed by the Korean Cabinet Council and announced officially through the Presidential Proclamation (no. 165) on 8 January 2000. In anticipation of upcoming economic and social changes, the Comprehensive National Territorial Plan (CNTP hereafter) sets forth a broad long-range vision of the future, and a direction for development of the national territory. The CNTP also presents policies related to the distribution of population and industries, the supply of infrastructure, the improvement of living environments, the management of natural resources, and environmental conservation.

<sup>4</sup>My home has the meaning that most residents are not likely to consider “home” as a community unit and neighborhood relationship. And “our smart community” indicates a more socially mixed and balanced community.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1048089>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1048089>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)