

An International Perspective: Reflection on the Symposium

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For decades, housing affordability has remained one of the main issues in social science research in most developed countries. Therefore, I believe that the four articles in this *Cityscape* symposium will provide great insight to both domestic and international readers by documenting the recent state of housing assistance programs in the United States. I also appreciate the authors' efforts to tackle critical dimensions of U.S. federal housing programs, ranging from housing quality and preservation of assisted housing units to the mobility and cost burdens of tenants. As the findings of articles are quite relevant to the non-U.S. contexts, it is worth discussing how they can provide broader implications and some cross-country lessons, including how each article relates to other articles on similar topics in the international literature.

Ray et al. (2018) address the continuing loss of the assisted housing inventory, raising the question of the long-term sustainability of affordable housing. Both McClure (2018) and Dawkins and Jeon (2018) find temporal variation in the length of stay in assisted housing and housing cost burdens in the Housing Choice Voucher program—two critical issues in the stability of assisted housing programs. Some scholarly works in Asian countries share similar questions and tend to put an emphasis on the appropriate role of the government. In the case of Hong Kong, the government has effectively preserved the public rental housing stock through large-scale redevelopment of obsolete units even after its adoption of the Private Sector Priority Strategy, which actively involves the private sector in providing assisted owner-occupied units (La Grange, 1998). In Singapore, evidence suggests that the price movement of public and private housing markets are closely interrelated, and policies that aim at any change in supply, financing, or regulations affecting one market have significantly influenced the other market (Ong and Sing, 2002; Phang and Wong, 1997). Finally, Newman and Holupka (2018) focus on the quality of assisted housing and find that the government inspection and quality control systems play a role in providing physically adequate housing to assisted housing residents.

Although challenging in terms of collecting data and standardized measures, comprehensive, comparative analyses between different countries and among different assisted housing programs would be extremely useful for the future research. For example, unlike the United States, many countries including Singapore, China, and Hong Kong have successfully implemented place-based public housing programs. These countries have shown much stronger government commitment in public housing programs and adopted policy measures for ethnic integration and effective property management. Hence, it would be interesting to comparatively analyze key features of these

programs and draw lessons from their successes and failures. A further discussion on the transferability of such successful programs would be informative to many scholars and policymakers who have to deal with broader housing affordability issues.

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