SUMMARY

Social Policy and the Right to Housing

Shogo TAKEGAWA

Housing policy is a marginal area of social policy, and it differs widely from country to country. In the early stages of social policy, housing for workers was regarded as part of the factory facilities. However, for reasons of public health, the state began to intervene in housing. Subsequently, rent control, security of tenure, construction of council housing, promotion of owner-occupiers, and rent subsidies were implemented. The housing policy of post-war Japan was based on the so-called “three pillars”. However, since the Basic Housing Act of 2006, Japan’s housing policy has changed greatly.

Key words: housing policy, social policy, right to housing

Housing Policy and the Reproduction of Home Ownership

Yosuke HIRAYAMA

By the late twentieth century, following the sustained promotion of property ownership, Japan’s home-owning society was effectively mature. This implies that the reproduction of home ownership, rather than its creation, has become the focus of policymaking. Since the 1990s, however, economic decline, combined with the reorientation of housing policy towards accentuating the role of the market in providing and financing housing, has undermined the reproductive capacity of Japan’s homeowner society. The contemporary housing situation of Japan is now raising questions as to the extent to which home-owning societies can be maintained. Private ownership continues to be the dominant housing policy objective in Japan. Therefore, Japan’s home-owning society is likely to be maintained in the foreseeable future. However, home ownership in present-day Japan is completely different from what it was before. For the past two decades, most owner-occupied houses have consistently generated capital losses and an increasing number of homeowners have been trapped in negative equity. Moreover, younger generations are increasingly being excluded from conventional routes that could lead to property ownership. This paper explores transformations in Japan’s home-owning society, placing particular emphasis on the role played by housing policy in eroding the traditional system of reproducing home ownership.

Key words: home ownership, housing policy, housing market, residential mortgage, commodification

The Transfiguration of Livelihood Capital and the Housing Poor

Yoshitiro OKAMOTO

Livelihood capital means the conditions and structures that support people’s lives and livelihoods. Housing should be of suitable scale and quality, and should be appropriately regionally structured and located, so that it can be used without great difficulty. When the conditions that support livelihoods change, adjustment in living environments should be possible.
Improvement in housing standards has been dependent on economic growth in Japan. Housing stock in Japan is not of sufficient quality to support livelihoods. The housing standards gap has arisen in income and ownership forms. It is difficult for some persons to obtain suitable housing due to unstable income and employment. Changes in regional structure or resident attributes is creating greater demand for housing support. Nevertheless, social security policy focuses on community care and provides no assistance for suitable housing. If there is no security for housing that can sustain livelihood capital, we will be face high risks of worsening housing poverty.

Key words: livelihood capital, housing poor, housing, employment, regional structure

Housing Policy and Social Security Reform in Britain

Michihiko TOKORO

Housing policy is a core subject in social policy. Britain has presented an interesting development. The post-war welfare state provided council housing, but Margaret Thatcher's government implemented a 'right to buy' programme under her privatisation policy. While public sector housing provision declined, cash benefits to support tenants have grown since the 1980s. The current coalition government aims to cut the social security benefits, and in particular to target housing benefits. It is feared that the recent policy changes will lead further difficulties for those with housing needs.

Analysis of British housing policy offers a good platform for social policy debates, including the roles of state, market, cash benefits, and social housing for fulfillment of citizens' basic needs. It is also important to examine the outcome of housing policy in the context.
of social exclusion. My paper will try to suggest the direction for Japanese social policy by evaluating the British policy developments.

Key words: Britain, social security, housing policy

What is the Minimum Standard for Housing?

Aya ABE
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This paper analyzes what is the minimum standard of housing acceptable to general public of Japan using three public opinion surveys: 1. 2011 Publicly Perceived Necessities Survey, 2. Estimates using the Minimum Income Standard (MIS) methodology, and 3. Survey on Minimally Required Housing. The three surveys share the general purpose of finding out what the public perceives as necessary in terms of size, facilities, and share of housing cost in income. The analysis compares these results with the Minimum Standard of Living set by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. The findings suggest that the public opinion of acceptable housing differs depending on the sex, age and family structure of resident(s), and the standard set by MLIT is too general to meet the specific needs. Further, the general public regards the “quality” of housing as important as the size of housing. Third, for the cost of housing, the general public is of the opinion that the cost should not be higher than 30% of income. So far, there is no standard of housing cost burden and thus no policy to alleviate it, but the surveys suggest that such policies are needed.

Key words: minimum living standard, housing, poverty

Housing for Low-Income People: Factors Related to Exclusion from Rental Houses

Hanako ODAGAWA

The purpose of this paper is to specify why present safety-net schemes for housing are not helping the low-income people, and to discuss what is needed to secure housing for them. The major problem is that low-income persons are excluded from the rental housing market. Based on research regarding residents of an illegal share-house, this paper indicates five factors hindering access to rental housing: (1) Low-income persons cannot cover the primary cost, (2) they cannot consistently pay the rent, (3) they have neither housing guarantors nor emergency contacts, (4) they cannot use the services of loan guarantee companies, and (5) there is little suitable housing for underemployed people.

This paper reviews the safety-net schemes for housing for low-income people, two main means being social housing and housing support councils, and points out that these schemes do not meet the demands of low-income persons. To assist low-income persons, it will be necessary to conduct a housing policy that increases the supply of social housing, provides housing benefits, including subsidies for the primary cost, and establishes a support system for those who do not have guarantees or emergency contacts.

Key words: underemployed, safety-net scheme for housing, social housing, housing support council, housing benefit
Job Allocation for Employees Returning to Work after Mental Health Treatment: Case Study of an R&D Department in a Pharmaceutical Company

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Osamu UMEZAKI

This study analyzes factors influencing employees' return to work after mental health treatment. Interviews were conducted with employees and their supervisors in the R&D department of a pharmaceutical company, followed by comparative analysis of the cases. The analyses revealed three important findings.

First, whether an employee can successfully return to work after mental health treatment depends on the difficulty level of tasks assigned to them. The difficulty levels include "moderately difficult" and "very difficult" followed by relatively easy jobs. When planning job allocation for such employees, supervisors should consider not only the quantity but also the quality of allocated work. Especially, it is important for supervisors to use proper timing in allocating jobs of moderate difficulty to such employees.

Second, in some cases, supervisors cannot allocate jobs of moderate difficulty in the original departments of employees returning after mental health treatment. Under such circumstances, supervisors reassign the employees to other departments if they have successful returns, but do not do so in failed cases.

Third, allocating fewer working hours at an early return-to-work stage does not necessarily contribute to a successful outcome.

Key words: mental health, return to work, allocation of jobs, quantity and quality of job, role of supervisor