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Exploring the sustainability of public housing: the case of customized public housing for artists in Seoul

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Since 2014, Seoul has proposed customized public housing as a means to address the reduced effectiveness of the urban housing supply. The focus of policy has gradually shifted from total housing security to welfare support, and the South Korean government has announced that the model will be replicated nationwide by 2023. The paper aims to summarize the development and characteristics of the artist-tailored public housing through a review of policy developments and cases from 2013 to 2023. The analysis reveals that the model is characterized by a uniform supply by the public sector, starting with the rights of minority groups rather than the needs of society as a whole. It helps improve the housing supply's effectiveness and moderate the vacancy rate in the city and regional economic stagnation. Finally, this paper summarizes the staged development experience of the artist's customized public rental housing system from four aspects: housing market, supply system, regional economy, and residents' spontaneous participation, and discusses the system's role in promoting the sustainable development of the public housing system. It provides suggestions for the current model's promotion and also provides references for the binary opposition relationship between the economic value of art and urban gentrification in other countries.

KEYWORDS

public housing, artists' public housing, Seoul, Korea, sustainable development

1. Introduction

South Korea (hereafter Korea) is in a phase of rapid demographic change, with a fertility rate of 0.81 in 2021 (OECD, 2023). According to the National Bureau of Statistics census results, Korea will become a "super-aging society" by 2025 (Choi, 2020). The continued decline in the birth rate and the decrease in the number of married people will lead to a discontinuity in the life cycle, while the high housing prices and rent burden in the metropolitan area will make it unaffordable for residents. The housing market will become stagnant, leading to a decrease in the sustainability of the housing system. Social conflicts will be further intensified with this intersection of old and new problem development.

To solve the above problems, the South Korean government has tried to supply large-scale public housing through the Korea Land and Housing Corporation (hereafter "LH") and the Seoul Housing and Communities Corporation (hereafter "SH") to alleviate social conflicts and guarantee the basic housing rights of low-income groups by supplying public housing on a large scale. First, in terms of the total number, the Korean government stated in the Roadmap for Residential Welfare 2.0 that more than 140,000 public housing units will be provided annually until 2025, and the total number will be expanded to 2.4 million units. Second, in terms of welfare policies, the housing problem began to be addressed at the level

of welfare in 2000, along with the improvement of the economy and a change in the overall needs of the population (Lee et al., 2018). However, due to the long construction cycle and cost burden to which the public housing market responded in the early period, public housing experienced a decrease in supply efficiency and an increase in the vacancy rate. Therefore, starting in 2014, the Korean government decided to further segment the supply groups and solve the corresponding housing problems by developing and providing customized public housing that meets the needs of different tenants. This approach is represented by the artist-customized public housing supply model, which pioneered a variety of geographical-specific custom supply models. This type of housing has achieved gradual results in the mitigation of urban vacancy rates and high-profile and community restoration. The new government formulated the first basic plan for artists' welfare policy at the national level in the history of Korea (2022–2027) in 2022; in the same year, LH announced that the model would be rolled out nationwide starting in 2023 (Korea Council for Culture and the Arts, 2022). Given this key policy, it is worthwhile to conduct a phased summary of the patterns of the artists' public housing experience.

To address the above issues, this paper adopts a comprehensive review and case study approach to explore the development of the Korean artist public housing model retrospectively. To understand how the model has evolved from a housing policy to a comprehensive approach to urban governance, the paper conducts a comprehensive content analysis based on publicly available information for the period from 2013 to 2023. The content analysis process generalizes existing textual data to identify consistent patterns and relationships, and the approach emphasizes the meaning and understanding of content across a range of outputs, rather than the frequency of particular words, to generate new frameworks and perspectives on the topic. First, we review the present literature and foreign cases, redefine the concept of customized public housing in Korea and identify its supply direction. It then selects the artists' public housing model, the earliest proposed in the system, as a representative to examine how Korea has addressed the rise in the total supply of public housing in the past 10 years with regard to the precise supply and how it has gradually been used as a comprehensive urban governance tool to summarize the experience in stages. This will provide a new perspective on the sustainable development of public housing. Therefore, the research objectives of this paper are fourfold: (1) to review the definition and policy characteristics of customized public housing; (2) to review the historical development of the artists' public housing model in the public housing category; (3) to analyze the institutional characteristics of artists' public housing based on practical cases of artists' public housing; and (4) to discuss the impact of the system on the sustainability of public housing and the future direction of development.

2. Literature and cases review

2.1. Literature review

A review of the literature on the subject of public housing for artists shows that the concept of artists' housing has not yet been

mentioned in the context of public housing or in terms of the direction of the research, which mostly focuses on the economic value of the art housing itself and the gentrification of the city, as well as an analysis of its economic value in relation to the cultural industry (Table 1). First, from the point of view of the economic value of art housing, the main conclusions are in two directions. The first affirms the positive role of art housing in regional development. In 2010, Strom Elisabeth confirmed the importance of artists' housing through interviews and secondary sources, arguing that, in most cities, artists' housing programs are seen as part of an economic development agenda with a transformative effect (Strom, 2010). In 2012, author Zbracki further supported the economic value of artists' housing for regional development through a case study while demonstrating that artists have a guiding role in the policy development of housing corporations (Zbracki and Smulders, 2012). The second argues that art housing slows economic development while driving regional structural change. 2016 author Sheng Zhong shows that artists may fall victim to real estate development in the face of an economic push, resulting in a diminution of value within the group, as well as 2022 researcher Shiro Horiuchi's study of the central Japanese city's Baika-Shikanjima neighborhood in downtown Japan, further suggesting that gentrification can be avoided if artists participate in community life based on art housing, but at the same time, it can slow down the economic development of the area (Shkuda, 2015; Horiuchi, 2022). The limitations of existing research are in three main directions: first, concerns about the gentrification of urban spaces, where Shkuda's study of the history of luxury apartments in SoHo, New York, confirms the role of art as a catalyst for urban development and community renewal but also shows that the model is limited by the possibility of repeatedly trapping urban areas in a cycle of gentrification; and, in the context of a collaborative structure of government policy support and civil society organizations, the role of art as a catalyst for urban development and community regeneration. Under the collaborative structure of government policy support and civil society organizations, the lack of government policies to support artists' housing, such as housing subsidies and the lack of cultural services and facilities, has caused the group to fall victim to real estate development, thereby weakening the cultural values within the group.

When reviewing previous public housing-related policy studies in Korea, the analysis revealed that although the supply of public housing for Korean artists started in 2014, it has been mentioned in the literature but not explicitly studied as a separate topic. The reason is that most previous studies of public housing systems in Korea have been based on cases in Europe and the United States (Ahn et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2011; Chun, 2019; Nam, 2019; Min and Choi, 2020), which has led to much criticism of the vague division of supply types and the decrease in supply efficiency in Korea (Shin et al., 2017; Kim and Jeong, 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Yunyoung, 2020). In this context, artists' housing is analyzed as a type of community housing due to the vagueness of the definition. In terms of research findings, the customized public housing system was introduced by the national government in 2014 to solve the phased housing problem. However, previous studies on public housing in Korea have ignored the developmental combination of this supply model and the summary of the uniqueness of existing housing policies,

TABLE 1 Literature review organization.

| Author | Purpose | Summary points | Issue |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Strom (2010) | Is the development of artist housing a significant policy area for U.S. cities? | Artist housing programs are considered part of an economic development agenda. And projects will generate positive neighborhood effects | Housing subsidies are rare and insufficient to the vast number of households struggling to pay market rents |
| Zebracki and Smulders (2012) | Explores the rationale behind artists-accompanied urban regeneration and the sociospatial implications thereof | Artists have a directive effect on housing corporations' cultural policy. Housing corporations are more inclined to deploy artists in urban regeneration when there are sufficient vacant buildings | Felt the local government provides insufficient services, including cultural ones |
| Shkuda (2015) | Impact on urban change as artists push to legalize their own housing | SOHO has become the new model of development, What began as an attempt to be able to afford New York on an artists' income has become the first step to an accepted progression of gentrification | The process of artist-led urban change is contingent on factors outside of the control of artists and policymakers (such as gentrification) |
| Horiuchi (2022) | Impact of artists on community development | Artists in this area counter the course of gentrification simply by pursuing their activities and rooting them in the community and daily life of the area | Artists' artwork may not directly contribute to the regional economy, slowing down regional development |
| Ley (2003) | The role of the artist as a catalyst for the development of gentrification in urban spaces | Artists have contributed to the structural transformation of the region, i.e., from a position of high cultural capital and low economic capital to a position of low cultural capital and high economic capital | Impact on poor regions on the status of economic capital |
| Cameron and Coaffee (2005) | Consider whether artist might play a role in the transformation of unpopular and stigmatized urban neighborhoods and the renewal of urban housing markets | The main driver of gentrification is "public policy" which seeks to use "positive" gentrification as an engine of urban renaissance | Will it constitute "active gentrification" that benefits both existing residents and newcomers? |
| Mathews (2010) | How to integrate the arts into public policy and urban renewal | Art and artists have the ability to catalyze and facilitate reinvestment in declining or underdeveloped areas of the inner city and promote change in underutilized or vacant spaces in the urban fabric | How to ensure that arts integration in the city provides opportunities for local (and contested) meaning production and expression |
| Strom and Cook (2004) | Do the arts serve as a new policy framework in economic development? | The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in conjunction with the National Environmental Agency (NEA), has developed programs to promote regional development with a focus on community arts event development activities | There is a growing dependence on local arts councils, and an overemphasis on the collateral benefits of the arts can undermine their more compelling intrinsic benefits |
| Zhong (2016) | Artistic production and urban regeneration in relation to capital circulation and transformation | The non-elite artists unconsciously aided Shanghai's urban transformations yet failed to act as a collective critical force | Artists may fall victim to real estate development |
| Currid (2010) | Causes and consequences of local artistic and cultural production and consumption | Artist spaces are increasingly recognized as a full-fledged economic sector with implications for employment, local competitiveness and economic growth | The "value chain" of culture is highly transversal to many other urban functions, and arts and culture have important spillover effects |
| Lloyd (2010) | Analysis of trends and causes of upgrading and new economic developments | There is an antagonistic relationship between the cultural industry and the real estate sector, and the public sector is concerned about losing its young "creative class" to rising rents | The weak real estate market is a major draw for the young arts community. How to balance local economy and development? |

focusing mostly on the reorganization of the policy system and the construction of a new supply model (Jeon and Min, 2011; Seung, 2019; Kang and Seo, 2021; Lee and Kim, 2021; Woo and Koo, 2021; Hee et al., 2022; Jang et al., 2022; Kim, 2022; Park and Choi, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to reorganize and summarize the meaning of the Korean artists' public housing model before studying it.

In summary, the support and subsidization of artists' housing (space) is increasingly seen as a major policy tool for regional economic development. Although its positive effects have been affirmed and case studies and policy analyses have been carried out in a number of places, there is still no clear solution to the problem of how to balance the balance between the group and the region and how to deal with the problems of regional economic development and the gentrification crisis. Further analysis and comparative studies are needed. Further analysis and comparative research are needed.

2.2. Case review

In previous overseas cases, artists' housing has been planned, implemented, and managed by nonprofit organizations as a means to promote regional economic development and as a model of housing provision for minority groups. One of the more well-developed and representative artists' housing organizations is Artspace in the United States. It provides affordable and sustainable spaces for artists and arts organizations through the renovation of old spaces, reuse of historic buildings, and new construction, and works with state governments to provide housing security for artists. In 2000, the Paducah government proposed the Artist Relocation Program to improve the image of the town and revitalize the community, providing artists with financial and creative space support. Although proposed by the government, the housing was supplied by Artspace. In a subsequent development, Artspace gradually established partnerships with state governments, communities, and public interest organizations, thus promoting a new model of artists' housing development and the development of various working facilities. The company now serves multidisciplinary groups, such as performance, culinary, and visual artists. The basic facilities have been expanded from the original living and working spaces to include an exhibition space, an education center, an administrative space, and even an outdoor reception and performance plaza.

Attitudes toward and responses to artists' residences in Asian countries show distinct differences. In China, since 2009, to promote the modernization of cities, large-scale renovation and demolition of areas where artists gather have begun, the most controversial of which was the demolition of the "Huan Ti Art Zone" and the "Rome Lake Art Zone" in 2017. The two large-scale art parks were relocated after the demolition of Songzhuang in 2013. This demolition was different from previous ones, as the artists in the park made a joint petition to try to resist the government's forced demolition. However, this effort was ultimately unsuccessful, and the artists were eventually forced to move again after only 4 years of residency (Currier, 2008; Art Zone demolition, 2010). With this focus on economic benefits and the eviction of art groups, it is not possible to advocate

housing security for artists. The present-day preserved art parks, represented by the 798 Art Zone (Xuefei and Meng, 2012), are cultural landmarks in Beijing and have not been plagued by demolition, but the loss of art groups is becoming increasingly serious due to the transitional commercialization and upscaling of these spaces (Demolition of the Huan Ti Art Zone, 2012). In Japan, projects related to art housing have mostly been launched as part of cultural tourism with the aim of regional revitalization and entrepreneurial industrial development combining art and community. In 1998, the Art House Project, which was organized by artist groups, originated when most of the young people of Naoshima, Japan, left to make a living. Some elderly people donated their old houses and moved to more accessible places, and artists from all over the world transformed the abandoned houses into individual art installations. The innovative combination of history with individual artistic styles turned these spaces into works of art themselves. The community has been successfully promoted through art and is now operating as a visitor attraction. Although it is not associated with housing or public housing to date, the operational model has brought positive interaction between urban and rural, young and old, residents and visitors, and has effectively contributed to regional economic development. The Singapore Arts Housing Scheme was started in 1985 by the National Arts Council to support local artists and arts activities (Chien, 1995; Arts Infrastructure Schemes, 2010). Subsequently, as urbanization accelerated and land in Singapore became scarce and costly, the program began in 2010 to provide liveable rental spaces for artists while bringing the arts to the surrounding communities. In 2019, support for artists was further expanded with the introduction of the Arts Support Framework (ASF). The framework nurtures the local arts and cultural ecosystem by addressing the need for affordable administrative space and suitable exhibition venues (Su, 2020).

In summary, art has been widely used as one of the strategies to promote regional economic development and urban renewal. The common denominator of these cases is that they are organized and promoted by nonprofit organizations in order to support regional economies, taking into account specific development needs. Although they have different developmental priorities and practices, they all confirm the positive role of art in promoting urban and community development. Korea's early years were similar to Japan's in that it used the arts as a primary means of regional cultural revitalization. The difference, however, is that with the success of the art projects, the Korean government did not continue to expand the project scale but rather shifted the focus to the art community itself and then to regional revitalization and creative support premised on livelihood security. The definition and development of this model are detailed in the next section.

3. Review of the definition of public housing

Since the customized public housing system is part of the Korean public housing system, it is necessary to first clarify the concept of public housing in Korea. In South Korea, public housing refers to housing that is built and purchased for rental purposes by the state or local self-government agencies or housing city funds

TABLE 2 Division of public housing system in Korea.

| Type of supply | Type | Definition |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Permanent rental housing | State or local government | Public housing with a 50-year lease for housing stability for the lowest income group |
| National rental housing | State or local self-government groups | Public housing with a lease of 30 years or more for housing stability of the low-income group |
| Happy housing | | Supply for the purpose of residential stability for young people such as college students, social newcomers, and newly married couples |
| Permanent jeonse housing | | Supply for the low-income class and young people and newlyweds |
| Resale rental housing | | Provided with the intention of converting it to commercial housing after a period of lease for the low-income class, young people, and newlyweds |
| Purchasable rental housing | | Existing public housing that low-income individuals, young people, newlyweds |
| Fully jeonse rental housing | | Those with low incomes, young people, and newlyweds can rent the existing home with tax deductions |

and is aimed at people from the low-income to middle-class groups (The difference between social housing and public housing, 2019; Definition of Public Housing in South Korea, 2023). According to the Public Housing Special Act revised in 2018, the public housing system in Korea is divided into seven categories, including permanent rental housing, national rental housing, happy housing, long-term rental housing, and existing housing purchase rental housing (Table 2) (Special Law on Public Housing, 2018; Kim, 2022).

By identifying the supply direction of public housing in Korea, it is clear that the public housing system in Korea includes the concepts of social-type housing, such as subsidized housing and affordable housing. The classification of the types of public housing supply and target groups in Table 2 shows that instead of using home ownership and income level in the traditional sense as the criteria for classifying the types of public housing (Social Housing Association, 2002), the supply criteria tend to be based on improving the residential stability of different social groups.

Public housing, as a primary issue faced by governments of all sectors in their new policies, has introduced new types of housing policies according to the circumstances of each era, and housing types have eventually shown a tendency to cascade. Looking at the public housing supply categories of LH and SH, which are the major housing providers in Korea (Table 3), the overlapping trend is more obvious and shows distinctive timeliness.

Under such development, the quality and welfare effects of housing supply have gradually decreased due to overlapping supply targets and a lack of consistency in rental conditions. Starting in 2014, Korea reworked housing welfare projects to solve the phased housing problem and improve the stability of the welfare of supplied housing. It proposed a customized housing policy by combining housing and housing welfare laws (Mina, 2016), which marked the beginning of a new phase of the supply model in which public housing shifted to a population-segmentation and demand-side focus.

Although the supply-type layer overlaps due to its characteristics and timeliness, the reference value for the supply of

public housing types in the previous period is smaller. Currently, the customized public housing system is the focus of the current stage of housing system development, the supply direction has shifted to the development of new types of housing, and the focus of academic research has also shifted to the investigation of residents' satisfaction with living under the new system. Based on the current stage of research and policy direction, the effects of satisfaction with customized public housing have shown an increasing trend, indicating that the customized housing system has a positive effect on improving housing services and the quality of residence (Moon and Oh, 2011; Italy, 2017; Dojin, 2019; Jin, 2022; Chulho, 2023). Among the many categories of customized public housing supply, the earliest, which is also primarily regional, is artist-customed housing. While in most countries the supply is the responsibility of public interest organizations and social organizations, Seoul has formalized and systematized it into the public housing system with the aim of expanding the supply while achieving effective supply to alleviate the regional crisis of urbanization and achieve economic viability, equity, and sustainability in housing development. The policy development process will be described in detail in the next section.

4. Review of the historical development of customized public housing for Seoul artists

4.1. Phase 1 formation period

The concept of artist housing originated from the practice of urban regeneration projects. In 1972, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism established the Public Art Promotion Committee as a support organization for previous urban art projects to improve the urban environment and revitalize urban culture by enacting the Culture and Art Promotion Act to achieve regional economic recovery (Lee and Lee, 2012). In 2006, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism established the Public Art

TABLE 3 Public housing supply categories major housing providers in Korea.

| Public sector | Category | Year | Type | Audience | Properties |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|---|---|---|
| LH | Public housing | 1988 | Public housing | Low-income group | Commercial housing Rental housing |
| | Welfare housing | 1988 | Happy housing | Youth groups newlywed couples | Commercial housing Rental housing |
| | | | Permanent rental housing | Low-income group | Permanent rental Commercial house for rent Fully Jeonse Rental |
| | | | National rental housing | No housing group | 50-year long-term lease |
| SH | Rental Housing | 1988 | Construction type | Low-income group No housing group | Permanent rental Purchasable rental housing Fully jeonse rental |
| | | | Purchase type | | Permanent rental |
| | | | Rental type | | Fully jeonse rental Rental housing Fully jeonse rental housing |
| | Welfare housing | 2014 | Customized public housing | College students, youth groups, entrepreneurs, newly married groups, elderly living alone, ladies, artist, etc. | Rental |
| | | | 2016 | Housing for youth | Youth groups |
| | | Supportive housing | | individuals with developmental disabilities, long-term homelessness | |
| | | Semi-shared housing | | Single-person | |
| | 2019 | Social housing | Students in college or those who won't have a permanent home within 2 years of graduating | | |

Promotion Committee as a support organization for previous urban art projects. As the policy progressed, however, art creation in the urban context shifted to the “community.” From 2009, it was combined with urban regeneration projects to support regional art projects to alleviate the phenomenon of urban aging and economic decline. During the project promotion phase, the government realized the importance of culture and art for regional revitalization, and these issues gradually became the core driving force of urban development in Korea as “public property” (Woo, 2019).

4.2. Phase 2 development period

With the success of the urban regeneration project, the government began to pay attention to the current living conditions of the art community and found that most artists faced difficulties in their artistic activities and livelihoods due to unstable income (Kim and Choi, 2019). As a result, the government enacted the Artists’ Welfare Act in 2011 to protect the legal rights of the art community and to systematically provide support benefits for

artists and promote their creative activities (Artist Welfare Act, 2021) by launching the first artist housing practice in 2013.

The first artist housing demonstration project was implemented by SH. The project was initially influenced by community housing and art cooperatives in Europe and the United States to create the first art community housing in Seoul (it is worth noting that at this time, arts groups were not part of the target group for public housing). The project was located around Hongdae, one of the most popular areas in Seoul, and featured a community house that could improve the quality of living culture and promote artistic exchange by recruiting residents in advance and involving them in the design of the house (Manli-dong Artist House Collection Announcement, 2013). After 2 years of preparation, the first artist residence was put into use in 2015. However, due to the high construction cost and the localization limitations of the cooperative model, the residence became the only community residence in the subsequent supply, and housing security for the art community was at a temporary deadlock. The next year, the city of Seoul formally included groups engaged in income-generating activities or artistic activities in the public housing supply group through the enactment of the Public Housing Special Act. In the same year, the city purchased

TABLE 4 Development of welfare policy for artists.

| Year | Events | Content |
|------|---|---|
| 2011 | Enactment of the Entertainers' Welfare Act | To promote the development of art and the creative work of artists by ensuring that their legal rights and professional status are upheld |
| 2014 | Enactment of the Emergency Welfare System | Creating welfare initiatives like the artist dispatch support program, the artist social insurance premium support program, the artist counseling support program, and the artist activity certification operation guidelines |
| 2017 | Establishment of the Arts Group Welfare Center | Consultation center for reporting victims of sexual assault against artists, the center for artists' conservation and the center for artists' legal consultation |
| 2021 | Enactment of the Artists' Rights Protection Act | Future artists, such as authors and students at art schools, are now included in the list of "artists" who are legally protected |
| 2022 | Enactment of the Basic Plan for Artist Welfare Policy (2023–2027) | 2023 will provide 260 units of public housing tailored for artist |

vacant houses in the community as public housing and provided a uniform supply for artists.

4.3. Phase 3 maturity period

From 2016 to 2023, artist housing was formally provided by the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Housing Department as one of the categories of public housing in the city ([Housing Welfare Roadmap 2.0, 2020](#)). Artists were further subdivided by occupation according to the business structure and cultural characteristics of each area with the aim of increasing the total supply while expanding the adaptability of the security policy. In the context of the ongoing economic structural change, culture, and art, as a new economy, require flexibility, adaptability, and the ability to reorganize themselves while also relying on innovation to reorganize factors of production in a more efficient manner ([Kim and Choi, 2019](#)). Housing security is gradually evolving into comprehensive security.

In terms of the development of welfare policy support for artists, the previous support focused on strengthening creative and professional capabilities. From 2016, with the breakdown of the policy, welfare support was expanded to include multiple aspects such as housing, childcare, livelihood, mental health, and legal advice ([Table 4](#)) ([Artist Welfare Act Latest Revision, 2016](#); [Lee, 2017](#)). As a result, housing provision for artists can be redefined as a comprehensive housing security program centered on creative activities and regional development supported by artist welfare policies and regional economic layers.

In terms of the latest policy, the LH Corporation signed a housing project with the Korea Arts Council in October 2022 for the Promotion of Artist Support Housing (59), which aims to expand the cultural atmosphere for local residents while adding a new impetus for artists to build on their stable livelihoods. Previously, the target population and pilot scope of artist housing were focused on the city of Seoul. The advancement of the new LH project represents an affirmation of the public housing project for the arts in the city of Seoul as well as a sign that customized rental housing for artists will be available nationwide.

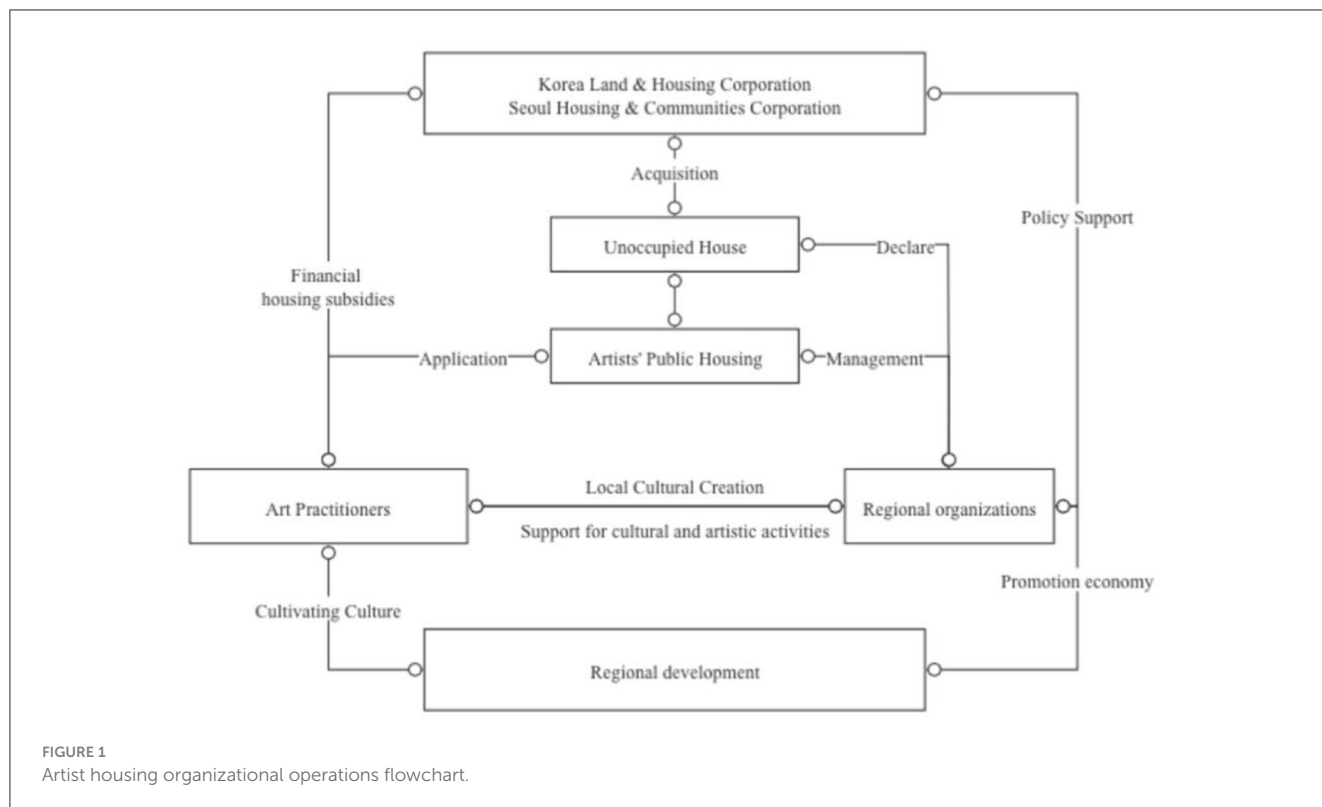
5. Seoul public housing practices for artists

5.1. Current development

This section chronologically summarizes the information on the type, number of households, available rental time, and supply of artists' residences in Seoul over the 10-year period from 2013 to 2023 and their distribution (see [Table 5](#)). First, in terms of the total supply trend, the supply and categories have been decreasing in the past 3 years. The types of housing supply are divided into two categories: construction and rental. The only practice of construction-type housing was the Malli-dong artist housing in 2015, which did not continue to be promoted due to factors related to preliminary construction costs and the limitations of the community model. After the government included art groups within the scope of the public housing supply population, the Jeongneung-dong artists' public housing project was officially put into use in 2016. Starting in 2017, artists' public housing went from being widely oriented toward art groups to a dramatists' house and cartoonists' house, which is provided for cartoonists, dramatists, actors, and other professional practitioners. As of 2021, the total supply of artists' public housing and its breakdown into categories decreased as the policy focus shifted to new categories of public housing. Second, from the perspective of the supply model, since the inclusion of artist housing in the public housing system in 2016, the development model of the regional management organization collocation identifying the type of residents, the supply area, the characteristics of occupancy demand, and other information in each region, and submitting it to the SH, LH, and then the government and the SH or the LH unified to provide support for affordable housing, and regional organizations to provide support for cultural activities has been in use up to the present day ([Figure 1](#)). Finally, with regard to the distribution of supply, supply has a certain direction. As a tool for urban governance and regional economic revitalization, the supply of public housing for artists is concentrated in the northern part of Seoul (i.e., the old city) and less concentrated in the eastern part of the city, where economic development is relatively good ([Figure 2](#)).

TABLE 5 Seoul artist housing statistics.

| Category | Year | Location | House name | households | Audience | Available rental years |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Construction type | 2015 | Jung gu | Manli-dong Makcoop Public Housing | 29 | Arts and culture practitioners | Min 2–Max 20 years Renewed every 2 years |
| Rental type | 2016 | Seongbuk-gu | Jeongneung Artist Village | 19 | Arts and culture practitioners | |
| | 2017 | Dobong-gu | Cartoonist Residence | 11 | Cartoonist | Min 2–Max 6 years Renewed every 2 years |
| | | | Culture and Art Residence No. 2 | 10 | Arts and culture practitioners | |
| | | Seongbuk-gu | Dramatist House No. 1 | 11 | Dramatists | |
| | 2018 | Jongno-gu | Dramatist Mutual Residence No. 1 | 5 | Dramatist (male) | |
| | | | Dramatist Mutual Residence No. 2 | 6 | | |
| | | | Dramatist Mutual Residence No. 3 | 3 | | |
| | | | Dramatist Mutual Residence No. 4 | 4 | | |
| | | | Dramatist Mutual Residence No. 5 | 4 | Dramatist (female) | |
| | | | Dramatist Mutual Residence No. 6 | 4 | | |
| | | Dobong-gu | Culture and Art Residence No. 3 | 13 | Arts and culture practitioners | |
| | | | Culture and Art Residence No. 4 | 6 | | |
| | | | Culture and Art Residence No. 5 | 6 | | |
| | | Seongbuk-gu | Dramatist House No. 2 | 12 | Dramatist | |
| | | | Actors' House No. 1 | 10 | Actors | |
| | | 2019 | Gangbuk gu | Actors' House No. 2 | 18 | Arts and culture practitioners |
| | Actors' House | | | 10 | | |
| | Dobong-gu | | Culture and Art Residence No. 6 | 6 | | |
| | 2020 | Gangbuk gu | Actors' House No. 3 | 10 | Arts and culture practitioners | |
| | | | Actors' House No. 4 | 10 | | |
| | | Seocho-gu | Youth Arts City No.1 | 12 | | |
| | | | Youth Arts City No.2 | 17 | | |
| | | Gwanak-gu | Artist Housing | 6 | | |
| Gangdong gu | | Artist Housing | 16 | | | |
| 2021 | Gangbuk gu | Cultural Art Housing | 20 | Arts and Culture Practitioners | Min 2–max 20 years Renewed every 2 years | |



5.2. Examples of practice

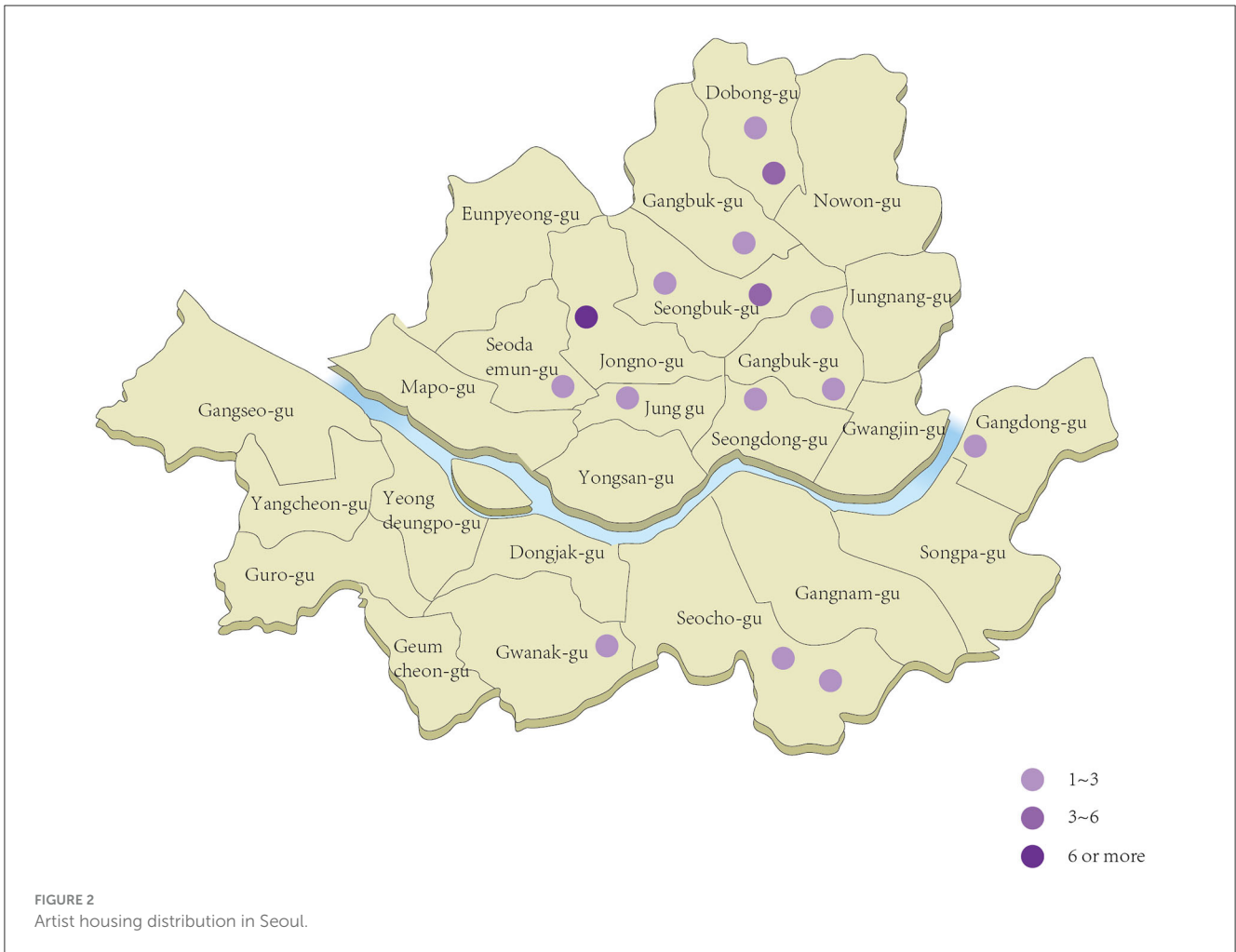
With the government’s first Basic Plan for Artists’ Welfare Policy (2023–2027), housing policy and arts welfare protection policy were further integrated. The concept of public housing for artists has formally evolved from the initial guarantee of housing stability to become a regional economic driver and a part of urban development strategies. As indicated by the previous summary of housing supply trends, the advantage of this allocation of housing to specific targets and specific areas through the public sector is that artists’ public housing serves as a comprehensive governance approach to support the reproduction of arts and culture and efficiently reduce the problem of vacancy rates in cities by maximizing the effectiveness of housing supply through targeted zoning inputs. In terms of specific policy implementation, to systematically summarize the experience of the housing model, representative cases of the construction and rental types will be compared and analyzed from three perspectives: policy rules, infrastructure, and community participation (see Table 6).

First, from the perspective of how to acquire housing, the artist housing in Malli-dong, Jung-gu, as a representative of construction-type housing and the first public housing for artists in Korea, was acquired through the development and reuse of abandoned reservoirs in the city. The residents participated in the entire design and construction process, with a total of 29 newly built households (Artist House Recruitment, 2012). The customized Jeongneung-dong artist housing, which was first supplied in 2016 by the Seoul National Housing Corporation through the purchase of vacant housing in the city for renovation and resupply, was the first customized public housing for the arts

(Jeongneung-dong Artist Public Housing, 2016), with a total of 19 units whose house types retained the original residential design.

Second, from the perspective of the housing application process, Malli-dong is a community-based development model, so the application process is more complicated and time-consuming in terms of procedures. Applicants must go through a total of four evaluation assessments (Manli-dong Artist House, 2018). The first is an objective assessment to review the materials submitted by the applicants; the second is a subjective assessment of the application volunteer letter and professional activity work; the third is a 1-year cooperative education and training for the applicants; and finally, the applicants are interviewed in each of four areas: participation integrity, will and motivation, community synergy, and development possibilities and sustainability. After the residents are identified, they meet with the person in charge of the design to respond to their housing needs and eventually live in the house they participated in designing. The Jeongneung-dong aspect is divided into two parts: data review and on-site publication. The selection method consists of a combination of objective and subjective evaluations, which requires not only verification of the occupants’ income and property but also on-site interviews and, finally, the supply of housing in the order of the total score. This is the unified application process for artists’ residences.

From the community side, the housing management, commercial operation, and community management of Malli-dong residents are composed of the residents living within it. From 2015 to the present, the stairwell, passageway, and exterior walls inside and outside the building have been converted and used as exhibition halls and performance halls under the joint design of the residents. The management of the residents of Jeongneung-dong



is different from that of the Malli-dong Art Residence in that the community is internally occupied by a mixture of original residents and artists, and a third party is entrusted with the unified management of the community. In terms of external community participation, Malli-dong artists act as organizers of regular art exchanges, film screenings, theater, and music and provide art experience programs for local residents and public art events for the community (Figure 3) (Manlidong, 2020). The community’s website also allows reservations to participate in the latest art events and keep up with developments. Jeongneung-dong Artists, on the other hand, act as participants. After its opening in 2016, events were held by the community in communication with artists, such as aromatherapy, painting, filmmaking, and leather goods (Figure 4) (Jeongneung-dong, 2017). It also promoted the artists’ residences and individual artists’ works by regularly holding the Jeongneung Art Village Festival with the support of the Seoul Cultural Foundation (Jeongneung-dong, 2018). The festival is included in the cultural tourism route of the area.

6. Discussion

Originally designed to solve the housing problem for artistic groups, Korean artist-tailored public housing has evolved into

a comprehensive urban governance approach. The housing supply approach of segmenting the supply population through occupational categories has also shifted the supply focus from incremental to demand. The sustainability of the public housing supply system has been promoted. With the signing of the project “Promoting Artist Support Housing” between the LH Corporation and the Arts Council in 2022, which marked the official nationwide expansion of customized public housing for artists, it is necessary to summarize the experience of the Seoul public housing model for artists, which was the pilot, as follows.

First, public housing for artists in the city of Seoul is a system-driven customization and housing supply led by the state and public sector that formalizes and systematizes the supply of housing and ensures housing stability. Unlike the community-based system, the public sector can effectively curb speculation in the market. As Stern noted, artists often function as catalysts for urban gentrification (Stern and Seifert, 2010). For example, in 1961, artists in Soho, New York, founded the Artist Tenants Association to fight for their rights to live in Soho, and the government amended the New York State Multiple Dwellings Law in 1963 to allow “qualified artists” to live in Soho in these spaces. However, with the permission of the policy, the price of art and culture in the area increased, and some artists were eventually

TABLE 6 Construction type and rental type cases.



| | | Construction type Malli-dong artist residence | Rental type Jeongneung-dong artist house |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| Basic information | Site images |  |  |
| | Households | 29 households | 19 households |
| | Housing sources | Reconstruction through abandoned urban buildings | Regional empty house acquisition |
| | Supply area | 20.04–54.18 m ² | 27–53.53 m ² |
| Policy details | Application eligibility | Group application Artists certification | Individual application Artists certification |
| | Review process | Review of information Subjective evaluation of professional activity works One-year educational training for applicants Interview the applicant individually | Review of information Interview the applicant individually |
| Management | Community composition | Composed of art practitioners | Artists and original residents form |
| | Community management | Co-management by tenants | Management by a third party |
| | Development positioning | Urban art commune Organizers of art events | Regional cultural nodes Undertake participating Art activities |



FIGURE 3
Malli-dong artists activities (concert and hand-painted garage).



FIGURE 4
Jeongneung-dong artists activities (leather workshop and exhibitions).

forced to withdraw from the area, which was a timely response but not a fundamental solution (Phillpot, 1992). At present, although the housing market in Korea supplies a large number of houses every year, the unaffordably high housing prices have led to a corresponding increase in the proportion of vacancies, and the housing problem of low-income groups such as artists has become increasingly serious. By unified management, the government can guarantee the basic housing rights of the art community while avoiding speculation caused by the re-entry of vacant houses into the secondary market, thus guaranteeing the sustainable development of the public housing market.

Second, changes in the housing system help transform the social and urban structure by enabling secondary planning of urban housing through the initiative of purchasing vacant houses as affordable public housing. Planning with the goal of supplying appropriate housing and improving the supply of housing quality rather than quantitatively increasing it gradually alleviates urban vacancy rates and the hollowing out of old urban areas, achieving balanced urban spatial development while reducing the burden of land purchase costs for developing public housing projects. After recognizing the positive role of art, the Korean government chose to focus on an approach that differed from that of other

countries, not expanding the scope of art projects but focusing on the basic rights and livelihood security of art groups through public housing, thus indirectly promoting the development of art communities. This new model of housing units based on the public housing system enables urban policies to increasingly focus on residential communities. This can effectively improve the specific problems of a small range of residents' living environments and realize the sustainable development of the public housing supply system.

Third, art is an intensive economy with certain limitations. Artists' housing was initially launched as a subproject of a demand-driven housing project to create a living culture, solve living problems together, and form a community. In the later stage of development, the city of Seoul further developed its strategy of supplying housing through occupational segmentation based on regional economic and planning characteristics. Additionally, its strategy of combining the regional pattern with housing provides a stable living space, drives regional economic development and human flow, and enhances and optimizes regional spatial values. Art and culture stimulate consumption and property development, enhance the image of the city, and revitalize the surrounding declining businesses. These effects provide spatial

benefits to the region in what can be seen as a two-way feedback process: providing housing that matches the regional resources maximizes the synergistic benefits of art, and the aggregated benefits of art help achieve the sustainability of the regional economy.

Seoul's strategy of supplying housing through occupational subdivision based on regional economic and planning characteristics involves providing stable living space to drive regional economic development and human flow to achieve the enhancement and optimization of regional spatial value. This also provides greater spatial benefits for the region, which can be seen as a two-way feedback process: by providing housing that matches the regional resources, it maximizes the synergistic benefits of art; through the aggregated benefits of art, it achieves the sustainability of the regional economy.

Fourth, from the community level, the participation of tenants in community management can serve as one way to restore the community and build an internal platform for good communication. For the artistic community, it is possible to choose housing in the same occupational category or housing in the mixed occupational class for residence. The original community residents regularly participate in the community platform to conduct art experiences and art activities, providing a platform for residents to display and communicate while achieving the utility of community maintenance. Thus, the presence of art groups can further promote the formation of a reciprocal and trusting relationship network and enhance the sense of community belonging formed by georelations. The community is formed and maintained based on the multiple needs of the residents, and in addition to community governance, opportunities for resident participation are increased. In other words, residents' participation is based on their sense of identity to achieve spontaneous and continuous participation in the community. In this way, on the basis of housing security, artists are engaged in community life through regular community interaction and artistic activities. Additionally, the strengthening of collective identity can effectively prevent gentrification while increasing the sustainability of inner-city development.

7. Conclusions

This study described the historical and practical examples of the development of the artist-tailored public housing model in the Korean public housing supply system. Artists' housing was initially oriented toward solving the housing problem and making up for the shortcomings of the original public housing system in three ways: shifting from incremental supply to demand-based supply for the supply population; combining regional cultural and industrial characteristics with housing demand for the supply category; and combining regional cultural and industrial characteristics with housing demand for the supply category, and most crucially, the government's policy support and housing subsidies, which fiercely encourage state practice and the provision of housing. The model has gradually evolved into a comprehensive solution to urban problems, capable of not only ensuring an adequate supply of public housing but

also of providing new ideas for community restoration, regional economic development, and the alleviation of urban housing pressure, as well as serving as a reference experience for the binary opposition relationship between the economic value of art and urban gentrification.

Nevertheless, to further guarantee the sustainability of public housing development, the following three issues should be considered in future development. First, from the policy-making level, the housing model should be developed according to each city's comprehensive consideration of regional development positioning, industrial structure, demographic characteristics, etc. Because the existing artists' public housing model was developed in the context of the Seoul municipality, local governments should develop appropriate regulations based on their own circumstances. Second, since Seoul has a clear siphon effect, the next development plan should take into account the trend of population movement as a factor to consider the housing needs of the "new youth" in the city. Third, it is necessary to connect with the regional culture and art sector and treat public housing for artists as part of the process of cultural production in the new economic production field, increase the support of relevant social resources, and promote the development of regional differentiation and characteristics while maximizing synergy through strategies such as art and culture to showcase the achievements of regional development. By further connecting housing with urban development, regional economies, and cultural characteristics, people will again gather within urban areas and prevent the deepening of social problems such as gentrification and hollowing out through the inclusion of artists' housing in national development planning. Combining urban development with housing policies promotes a qualitative change in urban grassroots units and a virtuous cycle of public housing systems.

Finally, the limitations of this paper and the next research plan will be discussed. This study only analyzed and summarized the development of the public housing system for artists through literature analysis and existing cases. Future research should also involve discussions with relevant stakeholders and specific data, such as focusing on the interrelationship between artists' housing satisfaction and community, analyzing the actual impact of the housing policy on their life, work, and community, and examining the next direction of optimization.

Author contributions

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Supplementary material

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/frsc.2023.1236979/full#supplementary-material>

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