

Systematizing Government Interventions for Affordable Housing

Developing a Framework for Comparative Housing Policy Analysis

Anthony Boanada-Fuchs

DASH Conference 29.10.26

IHS
Making cities work
Erasmus

Institute for Housing and
Urban Development Studies of
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Agenda

1. The Global Housing Challenge

2. Why Governments Intervene in Housing

3. Research Gap and Objective

4. Research Design and Framework Development

5. The Housing Intervention Toolkit
   - Domain 1: Increasing Housing Supply
   - Domain 2: Reducing Housing Provision Costs
   - Domain 3: Improving Housing Quality

6. Understanding Policy Mixes

7. Applications for Research and Policy

8. Conclusions and Future Research



The Global Housing Challenge

Housing affordability has become one of the defining policy challenges of the 21st century.

Key trends:

- Rising housing costs
- Growing housing shortages
- Increasing rent burdens
- Expansion of informal settlements
- Worsening affordability for middle- and lower-income households

Housing is increasingly understood as a **systemic challenge** rather than merely a **construction problem**.

Governments Already Intervene Extensively

zoning

density regulations

land assembly

Land

subsidies

guarantees

loans

Finance

public housing

social housing

incentives

Production

standards

planning systems

taxation

Regulation

Yet affordability problems persist.

Why do some interventions appear effective while others do not?

Key Question

Research Gap

Housing Researchers Study Individual Trees

Research commonly examines:

- A specific topic (land, finance, etc.)
- One specific housing supply form
- Individual programmes
- Specific countries

Fragmented Knowledge

We still lack a systematic understanding of:

- the full range of government interventions
- relationships among policy tools
- intervention strategies
- policy mixes

Research Gap

No comprehensive framework exists for classifying and comparing government interventions in housing provision.

This Study

Develops a **systematic framework** for **comparative housing policy analysis**.

Research Objective

To develop an analytical framework that:

- **identifies housing policy tools**
- **classifies intervention strategies**
- **links tools to housing production processes**
- **supports cross-country comparison**
- **helps identify policy gaps and policy mixes**

A common language for analysing supply-side housing policies.

Research Design

Structured Literature Review

Literature search and screening of affordable housing scholarship.

Coding Process

Policy interventions extracted and coded.

Synthesis

103 policy tools / 38 intervention strategies / 3 overarching domains

Outcome

An integrated framework of housing interventions.

Understanding Housing Production Costs

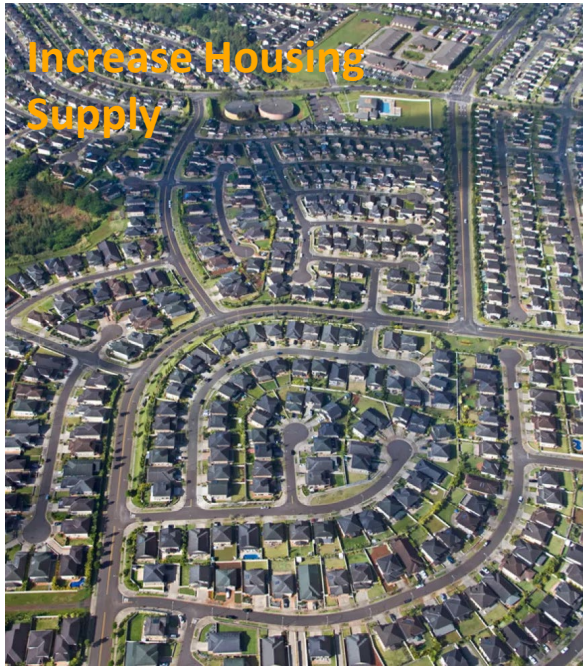
Housing affordability is shaped by:

- Land costs
- Construction costs
- Finance costs
- Legal costs
- Overheads
- Profits

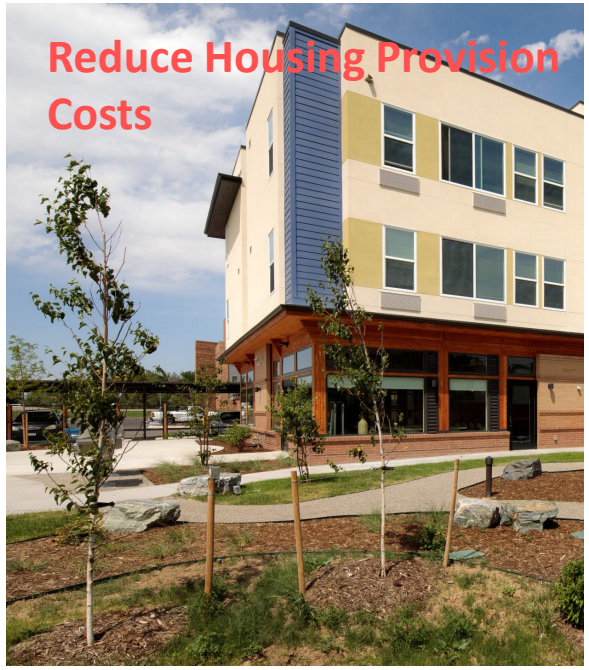
Governments influence each component through different interventions.

Housing affordability is not driven by one factor but by the interaction of multiple cost components.

Framework Overview



Domain 1



Domain 2



Domain 3

Domain 1: Increasing Housing Supply

Five strategic approaches:

- Increasing profitability
- Financial incentives
- Risk reduction
- Regulatory reform
- Activation of existing stock

Main Logic

Increase the quantity of available housing.

inclusionary zoning

public housing provision

community housing

adaptive reuse

Examples

Domain 2: Reducing Housing Provision Costs

Largest intervention domain.

Addresses:

- construction costs
- land costs
- financing costs
- legal costs
- overhead costs
- profit structures

69 separate policy tools identified.

inclusionary zoning

public housing provision

community housing

adaptive reuse

Examples

Domain 2: Reducing Housing Provision Costs

Land Costs Matter

Many successful housing systems intervene directly in land markets.

Strategies include:

- rezoning
- density increases
- public land provision
- land value capture
- leasehold models

Land is often the single largest cost component in housing development.

Domain 2: Reducing Housing Provision Costs

Financing Matters

Strategies include:

- revolving funds
- subsidised loans
- guarantees
- public financing
- development finance

Governments can improve housing affordability without directly building housing.

Domain 3: Improving Housing Quality

Five strategic approaches:

- Housing upgrading
- Infrastructure and service provision
- Neighbourhood development
- Quality regulation
- Design and sustainability innovation

Main Logic

Improve the adequacy, liveability, safety, and long-term performance of housing and neighbourhoods.

Examples

rehabilitation and retrofit programmes

informal settlement upgrading

water and sanitation investments

building codes and habitability standard

energy-efficient housing

The Importance of Policy Mixes

	SUPPLY SIDE	38	103
1	Increase Supply	5	15
2	Reduce Supply Costs	27	69
2a	Reduce Construction Costs	5	19
2b	Reduce Land Cost	5	23
2c	Reduce Finance Cost	5	13
2d	Reduce Legal Costs	5	5
2e	Reduce Overhead Costs	3	3
2f	Reduce Profits	4	6
3	Improve Housing Quality	6	19

No single intervention solves housing affordability.

Successful housing systems combine:

- land policies
- financing instruments
- planning tools
- provider support
- quality measures

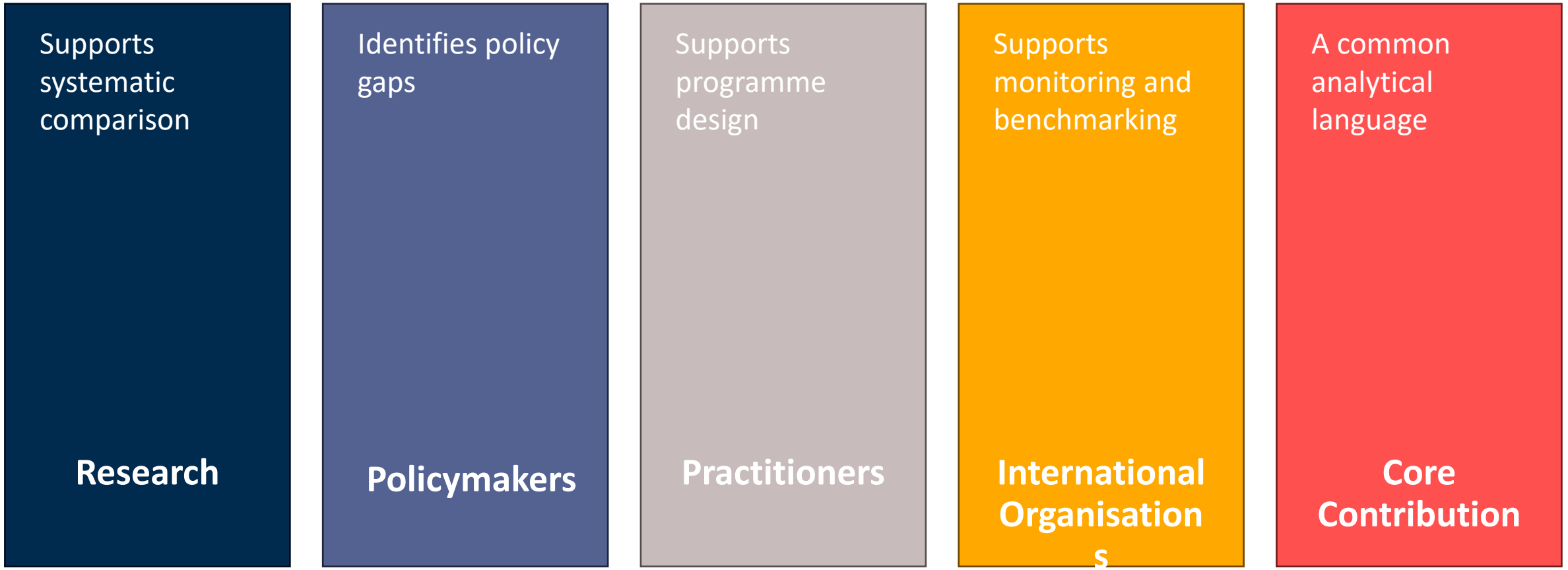
Examples

- Singapore
- Vienna
- Switzerland

Reduce Finance Cost	
Increase Finance Supply	Broadening Finance Supply Structures
	Priority Sector / Obligatory Supply
Enable Financialization*	Stock Market Access*
	Enable FDI into housing*
Reduce Lending Risks	Increase Property Rights
	Create Government Securities
	Mortgage Backed Security Markets
Beneficial Loan Conditions	Lower Interests
	Longer Lending Periods
	Easier Entry Requirements
Reduce Need for Credits	Provide Supply Grants
	Pay as Service Provider
	Enable Joint Ventures with Land Owners

Each combines **multiple interventions** rather than relying on one policy.

Why the Framework Matters



Why Has the Model Been Resilient?

Swiss cooperatives have demonstrated resilience because they combine:

- democratic governance
- affordability
- professional management
- public support
- community engagement

The result is a housing model capable of enduring across generations.

Future Research Opportunities

The framework enables:

- **Comparative Studies** — Compare national housing systems.
- **Policy Mix Analysis** — Study combinations of interventions.
- **Effectiveness Analysis** — Which tools work best under which conditions?
- **Housing System Typologies** — Identify recurring governance patterns.

Main Findings

Main Findings

- 103 policy tools identified.
- 38 intervention strategies synthesised.
- 3 major domains structure housing intervention.

Housing affordability is a systems problem.

Policy mixes matter more than individual tools.

The framework provides a basis for comparative housing policy research.

Conclusion

The affordable housing challenge is often discussed through individual programmes and policy instruments.

This study demonstrates that these interventions can be organised into a coherent framework.

Final Takeaway

To solve housing affordability, we must move from studying individual interventions to understanding housing policy systems.