Better City, Better Life

The 4th International Association for China Planning (IACP) Conference

International Association for China Planning (IACP),
College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University,
June 19-21, 2010, Shanghai, China

Building the “Nation”: New strategy in Public Housing in Singapore
• Conceptualizing the neo-liberal residential landscape: the state, the self

• Public housing in Singapore: the common bond

• Challenges in neoliberal era and the state’s reaction: From homogeneity to selective heterogeneity

• Case: The Pinnacle

• Conclusion
• The competing process:

  • “privatization of the new rich” and,

    • Hayek and Milton: the self

  • “the state and the governance”

    • Peck: de-regulation and re-regulation
    • Michel Foucault: governmentality

Zukin, 2009; Bray, 2006; Aiwa Ong & Li Zhang, 2009
• Inclusive, homogenous, collective
  • Housing 85% of its population
• Structured and regulated
  • Almost no socio-spatial differentiation

Housing landscape
• The common bond for all

• Inclusive housing policy: the income ceiling

  • 1964: SD$ 1,000
  • 1975: SD$ 1,500 for 5-room units
  • 1996: SD$8000 for 4- and 5-room units, S$10,000 for executive condominiums, and S$12,000 for multi-tier families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(SD$)</th>
<th>1997/98</th>
<th>2002/03</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,322</td>
<td>5,535</td>
<td>7,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st – 20th</td>
<td>1,309</td>
<td>1,104</td>
<td>1,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st – 40th</td>
<td>2,778</td>
<td>2,730</td>
<td>3,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41st – 60th</td>
<td>4,207</td>
<td>4,193</td>
<td>5,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61st – 80th</td>
<td>6,225</td>
<td>6,361</td>
<td>8,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81st – 100th</td>
<td>12,091</td>
<td>13,288</td>
<td>18,472</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Existing model: Building a Homogenous Nation
• The common bond for all

Existing model: Building a Homogenous Nation
• Standardizing the built environment: New Town planning
- Standardizing the built environment: residential precinct model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of planning unit</th>
<th>Number of planning units</th>
<th>Number of dwelling units per planning unit</th>
<th>Population per planning unit</th>
<th>Land area per planning unit (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25 000–50 000</td>
<td>125 000–25 000</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>5–6</td>
<td>4000–6000</td>
<td>20 000–30 000</td>
<td>80–100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precinct</td>
<td>6–7</td>
<td>500–1000</td>
<td>2500–5000</td>
<td>10–15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three-tiers of planning units in Singapore’s new towns

[Diagrams of town, neighborhood, and precinct layout]
Existing model: Building a Homogenous Nation
• Standardizing the built environment: Architectural style
• Decentralizing the population

• The quota system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Ethnic proportion (%)</th>
<th>At neighborhood level</th>
<th>At block level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian/others</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sim et al, 2003
• Decentralizing the population

• The spatial distribution ratio of types of housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit types and proportions</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flat type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1- and 2-room</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-room</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-room</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-room and executive</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dept of Statistics, 2001
• Implementing national policies
• Legitimize the party’s governance
• Regulating residents’ political behavior

The population change and the emerging awareness of “self”

### Households with car/personal computer by type of housing, 2002/2003 and 2007/2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Car ownership (%)</th>
<th>Both desktop and laptop (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HDB Flats</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-room</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 room</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-room</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-room and executives</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Flats</strong></td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landed Properties</strong></td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• The population change and the emerging awareness of “self”
• Higher self-consciousness and self-expressing out of the middle-to-upper class who think alternatively over many social and political issues, and who are the “most vocal in demanding for both a share in political power, and also a shift in the nature of that power”.

• “everyone in Singapore has a good chance to achieve a high standard of living” –26% upper class disagree

• “propensity in political participation”:
  • high propensity --- 21% of upper class, 58% of middle class (average level of 13%)
  • medium propensity --- 59% of upper class, 15% of middle class (average of 56%)

• “participation opportunity” --15% for the upper class and 10% for the middle class, as compared with the average 8%

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Tan, 2004

Challenges in the Neoliberal era
• Immigration of international professionals and talents: making a city as advocated by Florida

• 6.5mil Population in 2030

• “Third... the competition for talent will intensify. Paradoxically, the very forces causing the world to be “flat” are also making the world more “spiky”, a metaphor coined by Richard Florida to describe the cities that claim a disproportionate share of skilled talent, innovative capacity and wealth creation...More importantly, these thriving cities are magnets for highly driven and talented people.”

Goh, Chok Tong, 2009
The State: Supply of controlled aspiration
• Distinctive neighborhoods tailored for particular population segments

Implementation of the ideas within New Housing @ Dawson

SkyTerrace @ Dawson
The Pinnacle: individual and exclusive
• Singapore version of loft living for the new middle class: The Pinnacle is individual, distinctive and exclusive
• An inner city place with an aura of history
The Pinnacle: individual and exclusive
• A place with privilege

The Pinnacle: individual and exclusive
The super high-rise living

- “It can be built up to 50 storeys high, making it the tallest public housing in Singapore.”

- In general, HDB generally builds at a density of 2.8 plot ratio and no more than 30 storeys. More recently, some developments have already been built up to 4.0 plot ratio and 40 storeys at selected locations, such as Toa Payoh. The density and height for the Duxton Plain site was increased further to between 7.4 and 8.4 plot ratio and up to 50 storeys.
• “stylo” architecture with sky-garden and sky-club
• The exclusiveness and its legitimization

• Built-to-Order Scheme in 2004:
  • $288,400 ~ $392,100 for 4-room units
  • $343,100 ~ $451,500 for 5-room units

• In 2008, Ballot:
  • $455,000 ~ 555,000 for 4-room units
  • $545,000 ~ $645,800 for 5-room units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Room Type</th>
<th>Internal sq m (Avg)</th>
<th>New S$ (Avg)</th>
<th>Resale S$ (Avg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000s (b)</td>
<td>4 room</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>$180,000</td>
<td>$230,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 room</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>$240,000</td>
<td>$290,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 room</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>$140,000</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 room</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>$230,000</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>$450,000</td>
</tr>
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2007s sharp rise@2008 (c)

The Pinnacle: individual and exclusive
The exclusiveness and its legitimization

- High-profile campaign: “ideal home second to none”

URA Launches International Design Competition for High-Density, Very High-Rise Public Housing at Duxton Plain

The search is on for the best ideas for possibly Singapore’s first 50-storey public housing blocks at Duxton Plain.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is organising Singapore’s first-ever international architectural design competition for a high-density, very high-rise public housing development at Duxton Plain, Central Area.

The competition which opens on 8 Aug 2001, calls for fresh and innovative approaches to designing high-density and very high-rise public housing to optimise land use and create an attractive living environment that will meet the lifestyle needs and rising aspirations of the residents. The housing development must also be cost-effective in offering the best public housing available within the given budget.

The Pinnacle: individual and exclusive
• The exclusiveness and its legitimization
  • High-profile campaign: “ideal home second to none”

• 480 firms registered... Of these, 61% were overseas firms and 39% local.
• 202 submissions. Of these, 46% were from local firms and 54% from international firms. A total of 277 firms from 32 different countries took part in the competition with 74% of the entries from the Asia-Pacific Region, 15% from Europe and the Middle-East and 11% from the Americas.
• The exclusiveness and its legitimization
  • High-profile campaign: “one-off project”

• “If you're sandwiched between your wallet and yuppie lifestyle aspirations in a downtown pad, this is your only chance”

• “yuppie couples in their 20s formed the majority of the 7,177 people who flocked to the launch of HDB's tallest and hottest flats, fashionably located in Duxton Plain on Cantonment Road”

• Young families as role model to demonstrate what Singapore need for a promising future

The Pinnacle: individual and exclusive
• From homogeneity to heterogeneity: Tolerance of Segregation?

• “privatization of the new rich” and “the state and the governance”

Supply of controlled aspiration
THANK YOU!

Jun Wang
National University of Singapore
Email: sdewj@nus.edu.sg
• The common bond for all

• The ownership

• “My primary preoccupation was to give every citizen a stake in the country and its future. I wanted a home-owning society. I had seen the contrast between the blocks of low-cost rental flats, badly misused and poorly maintained, and those of house-proud owners, and was convinced that if every family owned its home, the country would be more stable...I had seen how voters in capital cities always tended to vote against the government of the day and was determined that our householders should become homeowners, otherwise we would not have political stability.”
• High-profile campaign: “ideal home second to none”

• 1. Capture the significance and historical memory of the first two blocks of public housing flats built in the area;
• 2. Increase the visibility of the existing Tanjong Pagar Community Club building from Cantonment Road and create a meaningful relationship between the Community Club and the housing community;
• 3. Incorporate roof top and mid-level gardens to soften the built environment and promote the greening of high-rise buildings;
• 4. Capitalise on the presence of Duxton Plain Park and the mature trees within the site which are to be retained; and
• 5. Provide adequate communal spaces which should included the covered areas under the housing blocks at the first storey as well as at higher levels.

The Pinnacle: individual and exclusive