

# *Asia-Pacific Network for Housing Research*

## *Newsletter*

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## NEWSLETTER

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### *The informal dynamics of affordable housing development*

As an important redistributive means to improve the well-being of marginal groups, affordable housing has long been the focal point of academic research and policy making worldwide. The 2008 global financial crisis centralized on housing economy once again brought housing affordability into the limelight of social economic research. The importance of affordable housing concerning homelessness, quality of life, social mix has been widely recognized. In developed countries, affordable housing has been used as a governing and planning tool to tackle the problems of residential segregation and sociospatial inequality. Nonetheless, after the collapse of the welfare state and the rise of neoliberal policies in advanced capitalist economies, affordable housing development has been subordinated to the imperative of economic growth, and has lagged far behind the pressing needs of the low-income groups.

In the Chinese context, skyrocketing housing price in large cities and limited provision of affordable housing make homeownership an unachievable dream for many. Adding to this problem is the urban-rural dichotomy that institutionalizes and perpetualizes the inferiority of rural migrants in the city, who have amounted to more than 260 million in recent years. One major obstacle faced by rural migrants is housing affordability. Consequently, the majority of them are trapped in substandard housing in urban villages, factory dormitories, dilapidated old neighborhoods, and subdivided apartments. Even for migrants who managed to climb up the career ladder, homeownership remains as an unachievable dream, especially for those working in first tier cities. Central to the housing affordability problem haunting many Chinese cities is the predominant land revenue-driven urban growth model, or the “land-centred urban transformation” termed by George CS Lin (2007). In most cities where land development contributes to more than 50% of local revenue, local government is naturally captivated by the booming real estate market and pays little attention on affordable housing development.

Against this backdrop, different strategies have been developed both from top-down and bottom-up. On the one hand, the central government has announced an unprecedentedly large-scale affordable housing development plan to construct 36 million units of affordable housing during the 12th five year plan (2011 to 2015). However, despite a large quantity of affordable housing having been built or being built by governments, accessibility remains as a major problem in terms of the remote location of this new state-supplied housing and its stringent criteria, which exclude the large majority of rural migrants in the city. On the other, informal housing strategies are thriving on the collective land owned by villagers whose farmland has been encroached by the waves of urban expansion in the past three decades. Urban villages have sheltered millions of rural migrants. Meanwhile, a distinctive mode of semi-illegal housing development, namely Small Property Right Housing (SPRH) has quietly taken up a considerably large proportion of existing housing stock in China. By the end of 2007, the total construction area of SPRH had reached 6.4 billion square meters, accounting for about 20% of total housing stock in the whole country and providing housing for more than a quarter of a billion people (Wang and Sun, 2010). In Shenzhen, as of December 2011, the total number of SPRH units reached 379,400, covering an area of 405 million square meters, or 49.27 percent of the city’s total construction area. These homes were selling for only 25 percent of the formal market price. Some estimations even put SPRH as providing more than 60 percent of Shenzhen’s housing stock (Sun and Ho, 2015). In Beijing, according to some unofficial statistics, SPRH represents about 20 percent of the entire real estate market, with average prices being about 25 percent of homes in the formal market. In Xi’an, SPRH prices are reported to be about 40 percent of the market norm and accounting for 30 percent of total housing stock. SPRH can therefore be seen as an informal countermeasure responding on the one hand, to the deficit of formal sector affordable housing supply and on the other, to towering housing demand from low-income groups and rural migrants.

SPRH’s controversial legal status mainly stems from the dual ownership structure in China’s land regime, which stipulates the state ownership of urban land and collective ownership of rural land. By law, collective land cannot be used for urban housing development but this has not stopped it becoming home for hundreds of million. There have been several historical public sanctions attempting to prohibit SPRHs, the latest being in November 2013, when the Ministry of Land and Resources and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development jointly issued a circular ordering a halt in the sale of SPRH. However, the attitudes of local governments toward enforcement of this regulation are inconsistent and the development of SPRH is highly uneven at both city level and national level. This presents a unique natural experiment for the study of risk, uncertainty, land tenure and unclear property rights in the provision of informal lower cost homes at a mass scale. SPRH has clearly become a highly effective and popular affordable housing strategy and its institutional mechanisms, market structure and market efficiency has never before

been studied systematically.

Most recently, a team of researchers at the Faculty of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong is embarking a new research project on Small Property Right Housing Development in China. The research team is led by Dr. Shenjing He, Prof. Chris Webster, and Prof. K W Chau, involving two inter-departmental research centers, namely the Ronald Coase Center for Property Rights Research and the Affordable Housing Research Network under the Center of Urban Studies and Urban Planning. The team will work with scholars in the University of Chicago, University of Washington, People's University of China, Zhejiang University, as well as in the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Business and Economics at HKU to look at the dynamics of SPRH in China. In particular, the Chicago-based Ronald Coase Institute, an international network of New Institutional Economists including four Nobel economics Laureates is eager to work with the team at HKU in investigating this unique experiment in low cost housing provision. This research considers SPRH development as a rational economic strategy employed by the local village in response to the rising demand for affordable housing under the current dualistic land rights regime. In the coming three years, the research team will collect and analyze two sets of data, including a national-scale database on SPRH prices and in-depth case studies in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Chongqing, and Chengdu.

The peculiar characteristics of SPRH set it apart from similar phenomenon around the world and deserve study to assess its efficiency as both a Chinese model and potentially scalable model for other countries. Research on SPRH can also inform affordable housing development policies, because the mechanisms of both formal and informal affordable housing provision are closely hinged upon the dual land system and land provision issues and can actually complement and learn from each other in many ways. It is our hope that the project on SPRH launched by the Faculty of Architecture at The University of Hong Kong can inspire more research on the informal dynamics of affordable housing development worldwide.

Shenjing He

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## REPORT

### *Report on 2015 APNHR Conference in Gwangju, Korea*

The 13th APNHR (the Asia-Pacific Network for Housing Research) conference was successfully held in Gwangju, South Korea, 9-12 April, 2015. This conference was hosted by the KHA (Korean Housing Association), which is a leading organization in housing research related to architecture, urban planning, and housing culture. This is the second APNHR conference hosted by KHA, after the successful first conference hosted in 2007.

This conference was co-organized by LH (Korea Land and Housing Corporation) and KRIHS (the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements). LH is a main public sector in Korea and was established to improve the quality of life and development of the national economy through the realization of stable housing for the country's citizens and the efficient utilization of the national land. KRIHS is a leading research institutes under the supervision of KCESRI (the Korea Council of Economic and Social Research Institutes). KRIHS leads a creative territorial policy in the areas of national territorial development, environmental, regional and urban development, infrastructure, land use, transportation and geographical information system.

Other major research institute and research team such as Housing Welfare System R&D Project Consortium and KICT (Korea Institute of Civil Engineering and Building Technology) also participated in organizing the special programs. The international organization such as IAPS (International Association People-Environment Studies) and UHS (Urban Housing Science, Japan, the Association of Urban Housing Sciences, Japan) sponsored the conference. Many domestic sponsors such as Korean Housing Welfare Forum, Korea Appraisal Board and Gwangju Convention & Visitors Bureau also lent their support to the conference.

**Conference Theme :** [Housing 2.0: Search for New Paradigms for Collaborative Housing].

Our world encounters more and more problems such as climate change, economic crises and natural disasters that threaten people's lives and the natural environment. It is predicted that, in the next 30 years, world's population will reach 10 billion. The population problem has increasingly become a critical issue in housing studies. Issues of high density living have mainly occurred in cities and towns in less

developed regions, where significant social problems emerge in the slum environments. These social issues are likely to change the meaning and value of housing at local levels. On the other hand, developed countries have shifted their focuses from dealing with housing shortages to improving quality of living. This shift triggers new paradigm in the pursuit of housing and housing solutions.

Housing 2.0 is a platform originated from the CITY 2.0 of TED 2012, which allows people all around the world to participate to solve the current housing problems. The theme of this conference is how government and capital market limit the approaches to housing how this problem could be tackled. So we ask, what kinds of new approaches or systems could help overcome the current housing problems?

At this conference, we discussed above issues with international participations, and informed housing and urban academia and governments the divergence and the convergence in dealing with housing issues in the increasingly borderless world.

### *Conference Program at a Glance*

On the first day of the conference (April 9th, Thursday), Young Researchers' Workshop was held as a pre-conference program and we offered two filed trips to entertain whom arrived early in Gwangju. On the second day (April 10th, Friday), the conference dealt with the issue about Housing Economy and Policy issues, specially programed with KRIHS. On the third day (April 11th, Saturday), the conference focused on Housing Welfare and Urban Regeneration issues, a special program organized by LH. On the fourth day (April 12nd, Sunday), as a post conference program, we offered the tour to visit traditional buildings in suburban areas.

For the keynote session 1 on April 10th (Friday), we invited Kyung-Hwan Kim, president of the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements (KRIHS), to present "Housing as an Intergenerational Issue." Christine Whitehead, professor of Housing Economics in the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, presented "Owner-occupation: Its Benefits and Risks in Different Market Contexts." Mitsuo Takada, Professor at Kyoto University and president of the Association of Urban Housing Sciences, Japan, presented "Global Environmental Issues and Local Lifestyle Culture."

For the keynote session 2 on April 11h (Saturday), we invited In Keun Lee, president of the Land and Housing Institute (LHI) of the South Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH), to present "Reorienting Korean Public Policy: Housing, Welfare and Urban Regeneration." Ricardo Garcia Mira, professor at the University of A Coruña in Spain and president of the International Association People-Environment Studies (IAPS), presented "Social Sustainability: Values and Environmental Culture." Jake Maguire, director of Communications and Thought Leadership at Community Solutions, presented "Ending Homelessness and the Role of Supportive Housing."

As a total, the conference program consisted of 3 Plenary Sessions, 3 Special Workshops, 19 Parallel Sessions and 2 Poster Sessions.

	9 April (Thursday)		10 April (Friday)			11 April (Saturday)	12 April (Sunday)
Morning	Pre-Conference Program: Young Researchers' Workshop		Opening Ceremony & Keynote Session 1			Keynote Session 2	Fieldtrip 3: Traditional Architecture Tour
			Plenary Session 1 Co-organized by KRIHS			Plenary Session 2 Co-organized by LH	
Afternoon	Registration		APNHR General Meeting			KHA General Meeting	
	Fieldtrip 1: City Tour	Fieldtrip 2: Public Housing Visit	Special Workshop 1: Vertical Living	Special Workshop 2: Elderly Housing	Special Workshop 3: Long-life Housing	Keynote Session 3 Plenary Session 3	
			Parallel Session 1			Parallel Session 2	
Evening	Welcome Dinner		Gala Dinner			Closing Ceremony	
	APHNR Steering Committee Meeting		KHA Committee Meeting				

### *Conference Statistic*

During the conference, 166 papers from 19 different countries were presented. We invited 13 scholars, two from Britain, one from Spain, one from Japan, one from USA, an 8 from Korea, to give a special presentation. Among the 166 papers, 81 papers (53%) were presented orally and 72 papers (47%) papers were presented with posters. To encourage more participants to join the conference, we held a special poster presentation session.



## Field Trips

The conference offered three field trips.

### 1. Gwangju City Tour

We offered a walking tour in Gwangju City which brought people to the major attractions including Yangrim historic district and Gwangju Folly.

As people walked through the Gwangju downtown city, they observed various pieces of Gwangju Follies. ‘Gwangju Follies’, which are scattered in downtown Gwangju, represents designs for urban public facilities built as part of the Gwangju Design Biennale event. The Follies, designed by many famous architects and artists from various countries, are a series of artful and monumental sculptures as symbols of Gwangju City.



Figure 1. Group Photo at ACC

### 2. Public Housing in Gwangju

We visited the representative public housing projects in Gwangju. We experienced the conditions and unique identities of Korean public housing. This tour was specially organized and supported by Korea Land & Housing Corporation (LH).



Figure 2. Bakwoon Humansia Public Housing

### 3. Korean Traditional Architecture

We visited the suburban areas of Gwangju such as Damyang and Gurye areas located in national mountain areas. We toured ‘Soswaewon’ which has beautiful gardens and gorgeous traditional cottages built in Chosun dynasty. We also visited ‘Unjoru’, a Korean traditional mansion and ‘Hwaeomsa’, Korean traditional Buddhist temple which has lots of beautiful wooden buildings built around thousand years ago in Baekje dynasty. People can experience the old years of Korea through this tour.



Figure 3. Soswaewon Visit

Seo Ryeong Ju  
Chair of Scientific Committee, 2015 APNHR,  
Professor of Kyung Hee University, South Korea

## HOUSING NEWS FROM THE REGION

### AUSTRALIA

After years in the political wilderness housing is now on the Australian political agenda thanks to a house price boom in Sydney and Melbourne and some ill-judged comments by the Australian Treasurer about the boom.

As summarised in the last newsletter the last eighteen months has seen substantial increases in dwelling prices in Sydney and Melbourne with the popular media seizing on this to raise questions about a housing bubble and the impacts on the future of home ownership. At that time there appeared little awareness of the issue, or concern, by the major political parties. But this has now changed. Another six months of continued dwelling price increases has now begun to worry even the Reserve bank of Australia despite the latter being part of the problem in that they have cut interest rates to record low levels but have been unwilling, unlike their equivalents in many other countries, to introduce the prudential controls to stop excessive borrowing for property purchases.

Both the Labor and Greens opposition parties have also for the first time suggested that the negative gearing tax provision (which many see as the cause of the boom) be modified to send better investment signals e.g. to new construction. The Federal government (Liberals) have rejected any such policy proposals and denied there was any boom with the Treasurer saying if properties were unaffordable people would not be buying them and that for those that could not afford current prices all they had to do was get a good job that pays good money. This was seen as insensitive toward first home buyers particularly given the evidence that it was investors including foreign ones that were pushing up the market not ordinary home seeking households. Uncomfortably for government the emergent debate has not only brought into the open the politically problematic negative gearing but also the capital gains tax discount on residential property introduced by the Liberal government in the 2000 whereby capital gains (essentially an unproductive income source) is taxed lower than incomes on wages and salaries. The government's decision to exclude negative gearing and capital gains taxation from any analysis in the government's own white paper on Taxation reform is now beginning to undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the white paper. Having suppressed it for so long the housing genie is now out of the policy bottle and is likely to have many unanticipated side effects in the coming months and years.

A senate enquiry on housing affordability commissioned in response to the affordability problem reported in late May. The all party report is extremely large with some 460 pages of evidence and analysis, provided by 231 submissions from major stakeholders in the housing sector and housing experts. The report makes many recommendations for reform with many being around the policy and governance architecture i.e. a need for a national housing policy and an appropriate government department. Arguably one of the problems with the report is that equal weight was given to the views of rent seekers i.e. those pushing for subsidy or financial gain from government interventions, as to those of actual housing experts. And even despite this balance the Government members of the committee dissented from many of the report's recommendations rejecting most on the grounds they were inconsistent with the Government's small government agenda or they were 'a state and territory issue and not relevant for a national Government. The governments unwillingness to engage with affordability issues as raised by the Senate report may however be undermined by the fact, as indicated above, that it has now forced its way onto the national political agenda. For details on the senate report see a related issue bubbling away is that of foreign investment which actually translated in the minds of the public to Chinese investment. The concern is that such investment is pushing up prices and making dwellings unaffordable for ordinary Australians. The concern is underpinned by a belief that much of the investment is illegal i.e. purchase of existing rather than newly constructed properties. Governments have been a bit more comfortable with a narrative that it is foreign investors causing the bubble as it offends fewer domestic interests and therefore is less politically problematic-indeed it might swing a few domestic votes. Thus the national government in April announced that foreign investors who have illegally bought Australian properties face tough new penalties including three years' jail and fines of up to A\$637,500 while third parties, including real estate agents and developers, who knowingly help those buyers will also be penalised with fines of up to \$42,500 for individuals and A\$212,500. The national Government has also confirmed it will push ahead with plans to impose a A\$5,000 fee on all foreign investment applications for residential properties valued up to \$1 million and \$10,000 plus an additional \$10,000 fee increase per additional for those over \$1 million in property value. At much the same time the State government of Victoria introduced a land transfer duty surcharge on foreign buyers of residential property. They will pay a surcharge of 3% on the greater of the purchase price or the market value of the property, in addition to any other stamp duty payable. Moreover for any absentee landowner there is to be additional 0.5% land tax payment in addition



to any other land tax payable.

Despite the fact that it is very low income earners that have the greatest affordability problems the emergent political debates are never about social housing which is the most obvious solution to a deep affordability problem. In principle with interest rates at record lows housing bonds would be an ideal mechanism for rebuilding a declining social housing sector and while they were a recommendation in the senate report no political party has picked up the idea for further policy exploration. Meanwhile the social housing sector is slowly withering away despite ever greater need with the only substantive discussions about the sector being ones of management and administrative reform, e.g, whether public stock should be better managed by the community sector via a process of stock transfer.

Terry Burke  
Professor of Housing Studies  
Swinburne University of Technology

## CHINA

### *The New Stimulus Policy of Housing Market*

Since 2013, China's real estate market has been experiencing turbulence. In 2014, sales area of commercial housing dropped 9.1%. This has been the first time sales area declined since 2008 and the second time since 1989. In all major cities, housing sale declined prominently in the second half of 2014.

On 29-30 March, 2015, the Ministry of Housing and Rural-Urban Development, People's bank of China, the Ministry of Land and Resources, the Ministry of Finance etc. jointly proposed series of policies to stimulate the property market. These policies include constraining land supply and permitting land use adjustment, reducing the basic payment requirement for the second-home purchasers, and shortening the period of exempting second-hand housing transaction tax from 5 years to 2 years.

However, observers have found that the new stimulus policy only produced a short-term effect. Immediately after the "3.30 New Policy" was introduced, the growth rates of sales area of commercial housing climbed to 36.24%. However, in the third week after the "3.30 New Policy", the sales area of commercial housing prominently declined by 27.32%. It indicates that the influence of the new stimulus policy towards housing market is negligible. Housing sales dropped quickly, with only a short-term rise after the policy was implemented.

What is even worse is that the "3.30 New Policy" only stabilized the housing market of those large cities, whereas small cities remain unchanged after the policy implementation. For those large cities where population continued growing, relaxation of housing loan and tax incentives were able to enhance the capability of potential housing buyers. The positive attitude of government, as indicated in the new policy, towards property market also helped to rebuild the market confidence. To this end, the new policies can produce effects in these cities for a short while. Nevertheless, for those small cities where population is shrinking, housing supply far exceeds the actual demand. Such supply-demand imbalance of housing also constrains local industrial development and impairs the confidence towards local housing market. This is aggravated by local banks who generally improve their risk prevention, control real estate loan, and shrink credit scale in these areas. Although the New Deal could improve housing affordability of local citizens, it hardly change the circumstances fundamentally

In 2015, the newly completed commercial residential area is 1 billion square meters and the new construction of commercial residential area is about 1.2-1.4 billion square meters. With the annual growth of 20 million new urban citizens, there are around 6 billion square meters residential areas could be consumed. This is based on the assumption that each new urbanite can afford 34 square meters. That is to say, about half of newly supplied housing should be consumed by extra demand of existing urban residents. However, the reality is that the demand gradually declines and is very sensitive to price.

Presuming that new construction of commercial housing is 1 billion square meters yearly in the next five years, China's urban housing stock will exceed 36 billion square meters until 2020. This means that housing area per urban resident will be 43 square meters, which is even higher than the average level of most developed countries. China's housing market is overheated and far beyond its actual demand.

Overall, there is an oversupply problem in China's urban housing sector and in some regions the issue of oversupply is very serious. Similar to the "9.30 New Policy", a previous attempt to stimulate the property market, the "3.30 New Policy" only produced a short-run effect on propping up the market, with the effect decaying quickly. This reflects the current down trend of China's property market, which is difficult to reverse. Obviously, the oversupply problem cannot be solved by government policy in short time. The

Chinese government should leave the market to adjust the imbalance by price mechanism. Although the adjustment process would be painful, it is probably the only long-term effective solution.

Hongjie Chen & Jie Chen  
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## **Hong Kong** *Public Housing Development*

In the past two years, the Hong Kong government has stepped up efforts to increase both land and housing supply by adopting a multi-pronged strategy with various short, medium and long-term measures. The Chief Executive announced in his 2015-2016 Policy Address that increasing and expediting land supply is a fundamental solution to resolve the land and housing shortage problems in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Special Administration Region Government, 2015).

A related study entitled ‘Job-Housing Imbalance and Mobility of Social Housing Residents in China: The Case of Guangzhou’ was conducted from 2011 to 2015. Interestingly, it provides some major Chinese findings relevant to Hong Kong. The location of social housing estates was the most significant factor affecting jobs-housing imbalance and immobility for social housing residents. This is also the case for the administrative intervention on social housing planning programme, particularly by ways of land acquisition and fiscal support. On the other hand, a single land use pattern and spatial mismatch would exacerbate the accessibility to jobs and fragmentation of activity spaces. People’s travel behavior likewise changed with the built environment they were provided. Evidence suggests that low-income groups, with passive residential options, in social housing communities are often more vulnerable to socio-spatial isolation than those in private housing. Hence, social housing in China is somehow considered a “culprit” that reinforces existing spatial disparities and worsens the geographically concentrated poverty in the suburbs.

These findings offer some useful insights into a phase of new public housing development for Hong Kong. First, it is urged the government to plan its new development areas (NDAs) in tandem with the growth of population and economy. Not only should planners and policy makers consider housing needs, but also the importance of creating suitable job opportunities and people’s travel patterns in the NDAs. It is interesting to note that the “Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy” has long recommended NDA developments to address the long-term housing demand and provide employment opportunities. A good example is that the Hung Shui Kiu New Development Plan will provide more than 60,000 housing units and create 150,000 jobs (Planning Department, 2015), enabling most of residents to work in the same district, as well as ameliorating traffic pressure on the existing infrastructure and air pollution.

Hong Kong is a city with successful public housing programmes. Yet, this poses a number of challenging questions to the territory: how to make communities more liveable; how to create sustainable neighbourhoods; and more importantly, how to achieve a sustaining public housing development socially, economically and environmentally. To address these, first, the Government should put their efforts not only on supplying more housing, but also focusing on livability and vibrancy issues of the community. Second, they should take the account of urban development concepts with more emphasis on mixed-land use in developing sustainable public housing. Third, the government should invest sufficiently in transportation to connect between locations of residence and the workplace. The rise of income and living quality would facilitate overall well-being in society and hence increase social mobility. This helps further foster a better community whereby all people will benefit, while diminishing economic and residential segregations in Hong Kong.

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## **JAPAN**

Ageing population and population decline are by no means new topics for the Japanese society. Traditionally, rural areas as well as small and medium size cities suffered more in terms of population ageing problems, whereas metropolitan areas of Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya centres suffered much less. However, the recent demographic change affects Japan’s urban areas as well, notably in Tokyo and its surrounding prefectures. This produced tremendous impacts on people’s lives, particularly on housing. National Institute of Population and Social Security Research launched a long-term project which show

that the share of older population continues rising in many rural areas but in a slower speed and that ageing population in urban areas almost catch up with that in the rural. National statistical data show that Japan's ageing rate (65+) has already amounted to more than one fourth of the population. It is also estimated that the number will grow to about 30% by 2025; and In Tokyo, 65+ population will increase to about 25%, while the percentage in its surrounding prefectures will reach 27 to 30. The total number of older people in Tokyo metropolitan will then reach 10 million.

This ageing population problem is largely caused by Japan's baby boom (also called dankai sedai) shortly after World War II between 1947 and 1949. In this short period, more than 2 million babies were born each year. At the end of 2014, these babies were all 65 years or older. Today, the dankai sedai still accounts over 5 per cent of Japan's population. In fact, this baby boom generation produced great impacts on Japan society, particularly on housing. Most of them were born in rural areas but then moved to urban centres such as Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya for higher education or work during Japan's economy boom, with their parents stay in the rural areas. They contribute to the increase of the urban population significantly. In contrast to the stem families that continued to remain in rural areas, the majority of them formed nuclear families with strictly divided gender roles. They became the inhabitants of the mass housing estates around the urban centres. With wealth accumulation, many were able to fulfil their dreams to afford a detached house in the commuter towns. These commuter towns gradually evolve to surrounding prefectures around Japan's metropolises in the 1970s and 1980s. The ageing of this generation entails enormous challenges to housing in these areas.

Now, housing price declines at the edges of commutable distanced areas, ageing inhabitants grew rapidly in mass housing estates, and vacant houses increased prominently. Worse still, with the ageing dankai sedai and dramatic population shrinkage, the trend is likely to continue within a short period of time. At the same time, as much research shows, Japan's baby boomers are expected to have a formative influence—as they had in their earlier life stages—on the life styles of older people in years to come. However, their opportunities might be rather restricted as a result of Japan's demographic and economic situation. About 86 per cent of the dankai sedai own their houses, which are detached houses. In 2025, the baby boomers will be 75 and older, the share of people aged 75+ will amount to 18 per cent of the total population in Japan. In Tokyo and its adjoining three prefectures, the 75+ population will be about 5.7 million and the rate will be between 15 to 18 per cent, According to surveys of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, today, majority of the older generation prefer ageing in place, supported by their spouses and, if necessary, by professional care staff (by making use of the public care insurance—leading to a drastic lack of care staff in a few years). Only minority of them expects their children to live with them. According to projections, the total number of households is going to shrink in 2019 and onwards. Even in Tokyo, despite a further increase of single households, the total number is going to decline about 5 years later. Even for those houses with a distance of 30 to 50 km to the centre, where prices were still affordable, there were no exception. For younger people, however, these areas become less attractive as housing supply nearer to the centre is sufficient and their working patterns are always changing especially for young women. As a result, housing vacancies, which have already reached 13 per cent at the national level in 2014, will continue rising dramatically in these areas. One can assume that in the near future, many of the municipalities with rapidly growth ageing population will not be able to afford the necessary infrastructures or to adjust them to meet the needs of older citizens.

Maren Godzik, Fukuoka University

## **SINGAPORE**

### ***Updates on Public Housing Development***

The Housing and Development Board (HDB), the statutory authority responsible for the provision of public housing in Singapore has continued to implement policies aimed at ensuring that public housing remains affordable over the last few years. This is achieved in two ways. First, increasing the supply of Build-to-Order flats from an average annual take up of about 10,000 to more than 20,000 in the last 3 years. This ramp up in supply has certainly given new households much choice and a higher chance of obtaining their flat and within a shorter time frame. The second is to delink the price of the new flats from the prices being fetched in the secondary or re-sale market. As the residential market in Singapore comprises a large base of public flats and higher priced private housing on top, rapid increases in the prices of private housing would have a cascading effect downwards and led to an increase in the prices of the resale HDB flats. The delinking therefore meant that prices for new HDB flats would remain affordable to the majority of new households.

Apart from satisfying the increasing demand for housing, the HDB also introduced two new policies

which would prove significant in the future. The first is the relaxation to allow singles who are 35 years old and above to buy new BTO 2-room flats. Prior to this, this group of Singaporeans was only able to buy from the resale market. With changing demographic profiles and characteristics, Singaporeans are marrying later and indeed, increasingly, not marrying at all. This change in policy addresses this growing demand. Since its implementation, the overwhelming number of applications which far exceeded supply has proven that indeed there is a new growing demand for public housing.

The second is a revision of the Lease Buyback Scheme introduced in 2009. In the context of an ageing population, the scheme was an option for the retired elderly to monetize their HDB flat. By allowing them to partially liquidate their flats through selling a portion of the lease to HDB whilst retaining only 30 years for their own occupation, it provides the elderly financial independence and an additional avenue to boost their retirement savings. At the same time, it allows them to age in place. The HDB has made enhancements to the scheme this year by allowing more households (from 3-room flats and smaller to 4-room flats and smaller) to participate. The revision also provides greater flexibility to suit different preferences and needs. This will hopefully help to attract more participants and offer a partial financial solution to the retired elderly.

Apart from policies to address demand, the HDB has also continued to focus its efforts on creating a sustainable and enhanced living environment as well as building an active and cohesive community. For the former, it has taken on greater involvement in the planning and design of new housing estates as well as test-bedding green and smart technology in an existing precinct. For the latter, it has always been mindful that housing is not just about the provision of the physical roof over one's head but creating homes and building communities. It has rolled out many programmes to encourage responsible communities with understanding, trusting and caring neighbours and activities to promote vibrant neighbourhoods.

Shi-Ming YU  
National University of Singapore

## UPCOMING HOUSING EVENTS

### URBAN AFFAIRS ASSOCIATION 46th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

\*\*\*Special Track: Urban Issues in Asia and the Pacific Rim\*\*\*

Conference Date : March 16-19, 2016  
Location : Hilton San Diego Bayfront Hotel—San Diego, California, U.S.A.  
Abstract/Proposal Deadline : October 1, 2015  
Website : <http://urbanaffairsassociation.org/conference/conference2016/>  
Email : [conf@uaaemail.org](mailto:conf@uaaemail.org)

#### *Conference theme*

The Urban Affairs Association (UAA) is North America's leading urban policy research association. In light of the growing importance of Asia and Pacific Rim and because of the conference location in San Diego, the 2016 UAA conference will include a special Track on Urban Issues in Asia and Pacific Rim.

For complete information about this track: <http://urbanaffairsassociation.org/conference/conference2016/submit-a-proposal/>

#### *Track Committee*

Cathy Yang Liu, Georgia State University, USA (Chair)  
Bligh Grant, UTS Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, Australia  
Canfei He, Peking University - Lincoln Center for Urban Development and Land Policy, China  
Richard T. LeGates, San Francisco State University, USA  
Xuefei Ren, Michigan State University, USA  
Lin Ye, Sun Yat-Sen University, China



## NATIONAL HOUSING CONFERENCE 2015 IN AUSTRALIA

Conference Date : 28-30 October 2015  
Location : Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, Australia  
Conference convenor : Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURi) in partnership with  
Department of Housing, Government of Western Australia  
Website : <http://www.nhc.edu.au/>  
Email : [anthony.smeaton@ahuri.edu.au](mailto:anthony.smeaton@ahuri.edu.au)

### *Conference theme*

The biennial National Housing Conference is the largest cross-sectorial housing meeting in Australasia. Affordable housing is the theme of the National Housing Conference in Perth. The conference targets the policy-maker, builder, financier, researcher, planner, developer or housing and allied service provider.

The NHC 2015 program has been designed to meet the diverse interests and preferences of NHC 2015 participants, and to respond to feedback from the last National Housing Conference in Adelaide. The program includes four 'experience streams', each of which will cover different issues and provide different ways for delegates to engage with those issues. Participants may choose to follow a particular experience stream throughout the conference, or to explore a range of the key topics by selecting relevant sessions across the three-day program.

## THE SECOND HABITECHNO INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

Conference Date : 11 November 2015  
Location : East Hall – Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia  
Conference convenor : School of Architecture, Planning and Policy Development Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB)  
Conference theme : Public Housing and Technological Innovations for Sustainable Urbanization  
Website : <http://habitechno.info/>

This biennial seminar will focus on technological innovations, and their diffusion and adoption, that can respond to contemporary challenges in the development of public housing in developing countries, ranging from "hard technologies" (e.g. appropriate building technology) to "soft technologies" (e.g. institutional aspects) primarily in relation to achieve sustainable urbanization.

### *Background*

Based on UN-Habitat's data, today, more than 50 percent of the world populations live in urban areas. In 2050, the figure is estimated to grow to 66 percent. Cities become magnets that trigger urbanization owing to the globally common conception that a city can offer better livelihood and better chance for the improvement of people's economy compared to rural areas.

The seminar is expected to discuss three major correlating points intended to be in the corridor towards sustainable urbanization:

- Technological innovations of public housing developments which cover various aspects ranging from hard technologies to soft technologies such as institutions.
- Experiences in diffusing technological innovations in public housing developments, and
- Experiences in adopting technological innovations into public housing developments, from the problems faced in adopting the innovations to the successes gained, and the benefits for the present and the next generation.

### *Important Dates /*

- Early Bird : 28 August 2015 (28/08/2015)
- Abstract Submission deadline : 5 July 2015 (05/07/2015)
- Notification of Abstract acceptance : 10 July 2015 (10/07/2015)
- Full Paper Submission deadline : 24 August 2015 (24/08/2015)
- Notification of Full Paper acceptance : 25 September 2015 (25/09/2015)
- Revised Full Paper submission : 23 October 2015 (23/10/2015)



## RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON HOUSING IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

### Australia

Bullen, J. 2015. Governing Homelessness: The Discursive and Institutional Construction of Homelessness in Australia. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 32(2), pp.218-239.

Cheshire, L. & Fitzgerald, R. 2015. From Private Nuisance to Criminal Behaviour: Neighbour Problems and Neighbourhood Context in an Australian City. *Housing Studies*, 30 (1), pp.100-122.

Natalier, K. & Johnson, G. 2015. No Home Away from Home: A Qualitative Study of Care Leavers' Perceptions and Experiences of 'Home'. *Housing Studies*, 30 (1), pp.123-138.

Nethercote, M. 2015. Operationalizing a Responsibility Agenda in Australia's Indigenous Communities: Confused, Doubtful and Subversive Public Housing Tenants. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 32(2), pp.171-195.

Yang, J. & Yang, Z. 2015. Critical factors affecting the implementation of sustainable housing in Australia. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 30 (2), pp.275-292.

### China

Chen, M., Zhang, W. & Lu, D. 2015. Examining spatial pattern and location choice of affordable housing in Beijing, China: Developing a workable assessment framework. *Urban Studies*, 52(10), pp.1846-1863.

Chen, W.Y. 2015. The role of urban green infrastructure in offsetting carbon emissions in 35 major Chinese cities: A nationwide estimate. *Cities*, 44, pp.112-120.

Cheung, P.T.Y. 2015. Toward collaborative governance between Hong Kong and Mainland China. *Urban Studies*, 52(10), pp. 1915-1933.

Deng, Z., Lin, Y. & Wang, S. 2015. Collaborative planning in the new media age: The Dafo Temple controversy, China. *Cities*, 45, pp.41-50.

Fu, Q. 2015. When fiscal recentralisation meets urban reforms: Prefectural land finance and its association with access to housing in urban China. *Urban Studies*, 52(10), pp. 1791-1809.

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Huang, H. & Yin, L. 2015. Creating sustainable urban built environments: An application of hedonic house price models in Wuhan, China. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 30 (2), pp.219-235.

Hui, E.C.M., Wu, Y., Deng, L. & Zheng, B. 2015. Analysis on coupling relationship of urban scale and intensive use of land in China. *Cities*, 42 (Part A), pp.63-69.

Kong, H., Sui, D.Z., Tong, X. & Wang, X. 2015. Paths to mixed-use development: A case study of Southern Changping in Beijing, China. *Cities*, 44, pp.94-103.

Lennon, H.T., Choy, W., Ho, K.O. & Mak, S.W.K. 2015. On FDI-led growth and the price of residential properties in Guangdong. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 30(1), pp.39-51.

Li, T., Long, H., Liu, Y. & Tu, S. 2015. Multi-scale analysis of rural housing land transition under China's rapid urbanization: The case of Bohai Rim. *Habitat International*, 48, pp.227-238.

Lin, Y., Hao, P. & Geertmen, S. 2015. A conceptual framework on modes of governance for the regeneration of Chinese 'villages in the city'. *Urban Studies*, 52 (10), pp. 1774-1790.

Liu, T., Su, C.W. & Jiang, X. 2015. Is economic growth improving urbanisation? A cross-regional study of China. *Urban Studies*, 52(10), pp.1883-1898.

Quan, B., Bai, Yijun., Romkens, M.J.M, Chang, K., Song, H., Guo, T. & Lei, S. 2015. Urban land expansion in Quanzhou City, China, 1995–2010. *Habitat International*, 48, pp.131-139.

Shen, L., Zhou, J., Skitmore, M. & Xia, B. 2015. Application of a hybrid Entropy–McKinsey Matrix method in evaluating sustainable urbanization: A China case study. *Cities*, 42 (Part B), pp.186-194.

Smith, N.R. 2015. Beyond top-down/bottom-up: Village transformation on China's urban edge. *Cities*, 41 (Part B), pp.209-220.

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Wang, L. 2015. Forging growth by governing the market in reform-era urban China. *Cities*, 41 (Part B), pp.187-193.

Yan, J., Xia, F. & Bao, H.X.H. 2015. Strategic planning framework for land consolidation in China: A top-level design based on SWOT analysis. *Habitat International*, 48, pp.46-54.

Zhang, S. 2015. Land-centered urban politics in transitional China – Can they be explained by Growth Machine Theory? *Cities*, 41 (Part B), pp.179-186.

Zhou, S., Deng, L., Kwan, M. & Yan, R. 2015. Social and spatial differentiation of high and low income groups' out-of-home activities in Guangzhou, China. *Cities*, 45, pp.81-90.

### **Hong Kong**

Chan, D.W.M. & Choi, T.N.Y. 2015. Difficulties in executing the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) for existing private buildings in Hong Kong. *Habitat International*, 48, pp.97-105.

Li, L.H., Cheung, D. & Sun, H. 2015. Does size matter? The dynamics of housing sizes and prices in Hong Kong. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 30 (1), pp.109-124.

Lo, A.Y. & Jim, C.Y. 2015. Community attachment and resident attitude toward old masonry walls and associated trees in urban Hong Kong. *Cities*, 42 (Part B), pp.130-141.

### **Indonesia**

Das, A. 2015. Autonomous but constrained: CBOs and urban upgrading in Indonesia. *Cities*, 48, pp.8-20.

### **Japan**

Izuhara, M. 2015. Life-course Diversity, Housing Choices and Constraints for Women of the 'Lost' Generation in Japan. *Housing Studies*, 30 (1), pp.60-77.

### **Korea**

Jung, T.H., Lee, J., Yap, M.H.T. & Ineson, E.M. 2015. The role of stakeholder collaboration in culture-led urban regeneration: A case study of the Gwangju project, Korea. *Cities*, 45, pp.29-39.

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Kim, H.M., Han, S.S. & O'Connor, K.B. 2015. Foreign housing investment in Seoul: Origin of investors and location of investment. *Cities*, 42 (Part B), pp.212-223.

### **Thailand**

Anantsuksomsri, S. & Tontisirin, T. 2015. The Impacts of Mass Transit Improvements on Residential Land Development Values: Evidence from the Bangkok Metropolitan Region. *Urban Policy and Research*, 33(2), pp.195-216.

### **Malaysia**

Mahmoudi, M., Ahmad, F. & Abbasi, B. 2015. Livable streets: The effects of physical problems on the quality and livability of Kuala Lumpur streets. *Cities*, 43, pp.104-114.

### **Singapore**

Belle, I., Wang, T. & Hassler, U. 2015. Age of land as parameter for sustainable transformation of Singapore's building stock. *Habitat International*, 48, pp.20-29.

### **Vietnam**

Huynh, D. 2015. The misuse of urban planning in Ho Chi Minh City, *Habitat International*, 48, pp.11-19.

Phuong, T.T., Zhu, Dajian & Le, N.P. 2015. Factors influencing waste separation intention of residential households in a developing country: Evidence from Hanoi, Vietnam. *Habitat International*, 48, pp.169-176.

## **ENQUIRY AND MEMBERSHIP**

For enquiry and membership, please contact the Secretary of APNHR at [apnhr@hku.hk](mailto:apnhr@hku.hk), or write to the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2859 2721

Fax: (852) 2559 0468



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Position Held: \_\_\_\_\_ Address at Work: \_\_\_\_\_

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