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Special Workshop: Private Rental Housing

Organiser: Mandy Lau (The University of Hong Kong)

Over the past few decades, housing policies in many developed economies have focused on home ownership as the dominant housing tenure. In comparison, the private rental sector has been more or less a silent partner in meeting housing needs. Nevertheless, in recent years, there have been signs of a shift in the relationship between these tenures.

On one hand, younger households are finding it increasingly difficult to access home ownership, and have become more reliant on private renting. Indeed, young adults who have little hope of getting on the property ladder have been dubbed “Generation Rent”. On the other hand, in countries like Australia, researchers have identified an increase in the number of long-term renters in the private sector, including elderly renters.

Growing demand for private renting has raised two major concerns. One concern relates to the housing conditions of private tenants, including rental affordability and housing quality issues. In Hong Kong, for example, there is a growing body of literature on inadequate conditions in the low-end rental market, where substantial numbers of households live in bedspaces, shared housing, or sub-divided flats. In Guangzhou and Shenzhen, there has been much research on the housing experiences of migrant households in urban villages.

The other concern is how to stimulate supply of private rental accommodation. In cities with large student populations, for example, there have been debates about the need for purpose-built student accommodation. In other cities with shortages of rental dwellings, there has been revived interest in incentive policies that could attract institutional investment in the private rented sector.

This workshop welcomes papers which address the above issues and other related topics, such as affordable rental housing development for lower-income households.

Special Workshop: High Density Living

Organisers: Ngai-ming Yip (City University of Hong Kong) and Bill Randolph (The University of New South Wales)

The cities of the Asia Pacific rim are growing at unprecedented rates. The bulk of this growth in many cities has been in the form of higher density apartment accommodation. This has led to a revolution in the way we live in our cities, with a major shift into higher density that has transformed urban living in little more than a generation. All over the Asia Pacific region, millions of new apartment dwellers now characterise an increasing share of urban populations. In many new cities, such higher density communities form the majority of the population.

The move into 3-dimensional living has resulted in major changes in the way we live and conduct our lives, prompting many questions about the outcomes achieved and the conceptual basis for such development.

The 3rd APNHR Higher Density Living Workshop will be held at this year's conference. We invite abstracts on research relating to higher density living. There are no proscribed issues, but the range of topics could include the following:

- Do these new higher density housing forms deliver environmentally sustainable outcomes – how do they really perform in terms of energy and water use, urban heat island effects and transport efficiencies?
- New forms of local urban governance and management have emerged to support these new forms of housing and the life styles they generate. Owners corporations, often led by unelected amateurs drawn from the ranks of unit owners, comprise a substantial and growing body of new urban managers, presenting ever smaller fragments of the city. What new political demands and associations are emerging from the unit owner community?
- A new urban professional cohort of strata and unit managers has emerged to support this new market – who are they and what are their backgrounds, motivations and expectations?
- Households have been brought together to live in increasing propinquity, yet it remains unclear as to how far these new communities form close bonds or simply remain as increasingly larger concentrations of unconnected individual households. How have individuals and households adapted the conditions and are there any indication that longer term social connectivity is emerging for the increased togetherness of high density living?
- In what way does high density living create compact cities and what impact does it produce on the urban and social landscape of the city?
- How, and by whom, are these new apartment complexes planned, designed, built and then sold on to end users? What proportion is built for sale or rental? How are they financed? What are the economics of the process and how does the political economy of higher density compare to more traditional urban forms?

- What outcomes are there for urban housing needs in terms of affordability, availability and appropriateness? Is appropriate infrastructure integrated with the new developments?
- How is the renewal and redevelopment of existing higher density housing being undertaken? Who wins and who loses? How do the redevelopment economics stack up and what replaces older higher density stock? How far do governments get involved?

These and many more questions remain to be fully explored by the growing body of research in higher density housing markets. This workshop session offers an opportunity to focus on the emergence of the high density city as a specific field of urban research.

The workshop will provide an opportunity for a range of perspectives to be brought to bear on this issue with the only proviso being that participants focus on new research into higher density housing markets as a specific housing form in the 21st century Asia-Pacific city.

Special workshop: Elderly Housing

Organiser: Wan Nor Azriyati Wan Abd Aziz (University of Malaya)

The changing patterns of elderly population cross-national have given a global concern on various issues and challenges in the context of housing. Elderly around the world have diversified backgrounds and becoming more independent and active in their later life. This phenomenon has created greater challenges in terms of meeting the housing needs of the ageing community. The increasing number of elderly is expected to create a whole new market for elderly lifestyle services and facilities especially for those who may not have children or relatives to look after them. This raises the question of to what extent the economic and demographic changes are affecting cultural norms and traditional living arrangement from a different perspectives across the nation. Are their existing houses and living arrangement suitable to cater the need of elderly communities? What kind of living arrangement the elderly population are seeking for in their later life. Is it right to assume that the longer elderly communities stay in the house and community, the less likely they are going to move. Is ageing in place their preferred option due to the psychological benefit of remaining in the same, familiar and less uncertain environment?

This workshop will discuss on issues and challenges of meeting the housing needs of the elderly population not limited to these highlighted questions. The work-shop will raise awareness about the housing needs consequences of the increasing elderly population. Perhaps, there is a necessity of an interdisciplinary approach too and how much there is to be learned from different disciplines, which will definitely make an important contribution to national and international policy.

Special Workshop: Urban housing policies and governance in Global South

Organiser: Dr. Urmi Sengupta (Queen's University Belfast)

For many cities in global south, the future of housing is now. The region is facing grand challenges such as rapid urbanization, massive population growth, widespread poverty and widening inequality in housing provision between the rich and the poor. In the past few decades, private sector involvement in housing delivery has been considered a panacea in line with World Bank and UN-Habitat's enabling housing policies to address the endemic mismatch in housing supply and demand. Whilst private housing supply, public-private partnerships and stronger governance with corporate ethos and ambitions have been able to address partly the housing demand of the top percentile of the population, housing condition of the urban poor has not changed much. Majority of the urban poor continue to live in slums and squatter settlements, and rely on self-help strategies for housing and basic infrastructural facilities. This prompts us to question how far the enabling housing market principles have been able to address the housing needs of the bottom half of the population in the region. How do various interventions of previous decades over housing have fared and what explains the particular shape they take? More importantly how can the current housing challenges push the planners, policy makers and governments to go beyond their economic focus and re-imagine a new housing paradigm that could help to turn the 'housing for all' rhetoric to reality?

This session invites presentations focusing on housing governance, policy and performance that could explain the evolving adjustments, alignment and calibration in policies and their usefulness to address the grand housing challenges in the global south. Potential topics include (and not limited to): Review of housing policies and markets; Social housing; Public private partnerships; Private rental housing; The role of private sector in supplying affordable housing; Urban informal housing; Slum real estate; and supply and demand-side instruments.

Special workshop: Housing and Speculative Property Development

Organizers: Cecilia Chiu and Shenjing He (The University of Hong Kong)

This special session will explore the role of speculative property development in the current and ongoing reshaping of cities and housing landscapes: What is speculation development? Who are the agents involved in speculative housing practices? How has speculative property development changed the ways in which we value what exists in the present environment and what assumptions are associated with projected visions of the future? And who are the beneficiaries and losers in a speculative city? We posit that such questions are fundamental not only for understanding contested urban processes amidst the accelerating financialization of properties, but also for evaluating evolving paradigms of urban planning and design that increasingly need to confront the growing tensions between the short-termism of capital and long legacy of the built environment. By considering speculative property development in a range of contexts, this session aims to understand how the interplay between asset inflation, global capital flows, and emerging types of urban forms and landscapes have played a key role in mediating social relations and everyday struggles, as well as providing new spaces of hope and collective aspirations for the future.

Special workshop: Green housing and healthy communities

Organiser: Xiaoling Zhang (City University of Hong Kong)

Debates over ‘green’ and ‘sustainable development’, has been fueled by increased global concern over environmental degradation and widespread failure of conventional rapid development models to spur ‘modernization’ in third-world societies including China throughout the 1970s and 1980s, it has now expanded in recent years to embrace a multitude of theoretical perspectives, practical and policy applications. With a disciplinary core that embraces human–environment relations and regional difference, housing & built environment is taking a proactive role in shaping environmental alternatives as mounting evidence suggests human-modified places such as homes, workplaces, parks, industrial areas, farms, roads and highways are important environment habitats. However, due to the broad definition of the term, it is often applied in a wide range of situations - mostly addressing a host of issues arising out of, or related to, some aspects of environment. Many researchers & practitioners at the cusp of the human–environment interface have begun to question the usefulness of ‘sustainability’ & ‘green’ as a way to re-think about social, economical and ecological problems and to organize responses to environment and development dilemmas. Some of the emerging questions like “What is green housing?”, “how does it affect urban residents’ living quality?”, “green housing for whom?” remains unanswered.

We therefore invite abstracts on research relating to green housing and healthy urban communities. There are no proscribed issues, but the range of topics could include the following:

- What are the fundamental elements of green housing? How do human-modified places such as housing forms deliver environmentally ‘sustainability’ outcomes – how do they perform in terms of resource efficiency, energy efficiency, and healthy indoor environments?
- What are the main factors that affect green housing development? How much do market factors affect the development of green housing to date? Will buyers/tenants of the benefits involved encourage developers to “go green”? What and how much will policies affect green housing market in both developed and developing economies?
- The extent to which real estate firms actually engage in the ‘green’ trend is vigorously disputed. Some argue that green housing is merely ‘window-dressing’ or ‘green washing’. Are they willing to pay higher to be green? Do green housing really turn into gold in the conventional rapid development model market?

- Is green housing necessarily healthy urban living? In what way or form will green housing contribute to sustainable urban community living? While green design and green practices are touted as being good for the built environment, what are the value to residents' health & community living lifestyle in terms of differentiated benefits between urban inhabitants and their rural counterparts? Will green, healthy housing and neighborhoods can profoundly affect health outcomes?

This workshop session offers an opportunity to focus on the above-mentioned research questions & issues as a specific field of housing research. We also wish to submit the workshop proposal to a housing or sustainability related SSCI/SCI journal to be included as one special issue.

Organizer contact information:

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