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Bringing the State Home: Neoliberalism in Global Models of Public Housing

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**Bringing the State Home:
Neoliberalism in Global Models of Public Housing**

By

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Capstone Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of
Arts in Cultural Studies

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Abstract

Global public housing authorities in state versus market capitalism take different approaches to provide housing for multicultural demographics. This capstone project looks at that of New York City and Singapore as case studies of ideologies of welfare, multicultural national identity and public policies representative of their political economies. With special attention paid the spatial relations of ethnic enclaves in both urban environments, focus is placed on a social, lived experience shaped by both 'productivist' versus 'cynical' ideology and privatization versus state authoritarianism. Each political economic system of welfare reaches from larger concepts of national and global economy to the local level, where housing, neighborhoods and their discourses function. By situating the states and their respective public housing authorities within models of neoliberal and global development, we see how inaccessibility to affordable housing and neo-authoritarian policy maintains class power, property ownership and market expansion.

Keywords

public housing, ideology, multicultural demographics, public policy, neoliberalism, global development, market-capitalism, state-capitalism, Singapore, New York City

“The power relations that structure an organization are instantiated in the everyday,
taken-for-granted social practices of that organization.”

(Mumby, 1988, p. 89)

"American popular discourse and public policy equate 'public housing' with the failures of
American urban liberalism, as assume that deconcentration will break the link between housing
assistance and concentrated 'underclass' poverty."

(Wyly and DeFilippis, 2010, p. 82)

"It has combined neoliberalism in the marketplace with draconian coercive and authoritarian
state power, while invoking moral solidarities based on the nationalist ideals of a beleaguered
island state, Confucian values, and, most recently, a distinctive form of the cosmopolitan ethic
suited to its current position in the world of the international trade.”

(Harvey, 2005, p. 86)

Two public housing apartments across the world house very different tenants. One unit in Starrett City, on the south eastern edge of Brooklyn, houses tenants of primarily low income. Recently, the residents of the project had to join with ACORN¹ activists in a "We Shall Not Be Moved" rally to ward of the sale of the entire 46-building public housing project to private equity. (California Attorney General, 2010) The fear of privatization and gentrification shows to have extended the far reaches of Brooklyn, into in the public sector. In Singapore, a different version of this change in the nation's provisions is taking place. The Pinnacle at Duxton, an example of futuristic, post-modern architecture consists of seven connected skyscrapers 50 floors high. An upgrade from the colorful and cheery 60's style buildings that once stood on the site, The Pinnacle entices a new, affluent working class, mostly part of the Straits-Chinese culture of its district, Tanjong Pagar, as well as global expatriates. The upgrade of public housing buildings by Singapore alludes to the upward economic climb the Singaporean housing board plans for its tenants.

Provision of housing by the state reaches far across the spectrum of public to the personal ways of people's lives. It is in this way that the public enactment of housing provision embodies essential relationships to the state, representing expectations of affordable housing and social safety. The United States has about 1.36 million public housing units composing 1.4 percent of the nation's housing stock. These units were built primarily between the late 1940's to 1970's. (Drier and Hulchanski, 1993, p. 48) In Singapore, 85 percent of the city-state's population lives in public housing. (Wang, 2010, p. 369) These towering buildings resemble that of the most politically attacked public housing in the United States, the projects, yet shape all urban space in

¹ Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), was a large community orientated group of activists until 2009, when the group was caught up in controversy. (United States Attorney General of California, 2010)

Singapore. In contrast to the projects of East Harlem and the southern shore of Brooklyn, the planned neighborhoods² of Singapore's massive public housing infrastructure carry a much different connotation.

This project begins with the most fundamental difference between public housing in each context, the varying ideologies of welfare provision. By looking at theoretical frameworks such as Louis Althusser and Peter Sloterdijk, ideology and discourse of public housing is examined through what role the state functions as in the housing sector and how it is discussed. To provide a reflective and self aware examination of public housing from an outside perspective, efforts are taken to imagine the lived experience of being a public housing tenant in Singapore and New York City. While both urban areas are nuanced and historied, major social changes in each context are taken into consideration. New York City is selected due to its relative success in maintaining public housing projects as well as its embodiment and championing of American ideals such as entrepreneurial freedom. Singapore, on the other hand, represents the rapidly developing Asian Tigers, socially and economically. Moving on the public policy, an approach is taken that focuses on how policy has been written and enacted to benefit public housing tenants and attempt to provide equal opportunities. While the benefit of the doubt is given, a critical approach is taken towards what entities are benefited directly by the policy. In conclusion, the public housing authorities of Singapore and New York City are situated as global models, similar to the models of welfare that the analysis begins with. Shaping social order and envisioning the flows of resources and money allow the models to be established. While from an outside

² Referred to as New Towns, the developments embody a multicultural postmodernism in their architectural features such as interconnecting community gardens and open atriums.

perspective, insight is gained on the personal relationship these tenants have with their states and political economies.

i: Ideology

Subsidizing housing is a political and bureaucratic feat; Complexities of housing provision reach far into the personal lives of entire groups of people. State intervention in this sense becomes a manifestation of dominant social and political narratives into a constructed social reality. The way the intervention is mediated through political and social discourse both affords and limits the efficacy of public housing in each context. While the materialization of the ideologies of public housing come in the form of policy that directly affect people's livelihood, it is crucial to begin with comparing the difference in ideologies between these two political economic systems in radically different parts of the world. These consist of what housing ills the state sets out to remedy and beliefs held on how the intervention should be carried out.

This ideological overview begins with looking at the models of welfare that are associated with state and market capitalism, serving different clienteles and differing in connotations. It is important to note these models as ways of looking at the ideological reasoning behind functions the government. These functions elaborate on the generalizations of political-economic systems such as state and market capitalism. Secondly, major distinguishing factors between the two systems must be gone over. Singapore's public housing is an authority that successfully promotes national ideals in terms of family and identity. Public Housing Authorities in the US, on the other hand, face ideologically perpetuating cynicism and disfunction in its trajectory towards being completely removed from the housing market. Last, critical theorists such as Louis Althusser, Pierre Bourdieu, Fritz Van Wel, Peter Sloterdijk and

Slavoj Žižek help us position these extreme examples of public ideology and welfare models as systems that perpetuate themselves.

i, a) Welfare Models: Clientele and Stigma

The different manifestations of public housing's contemporary ideology in state-capitalist Singapore versus market-capitalist New York City are first seen through their clientele of tenants. Important qualities of each clientele here are the amount of people housed by public housing authorities (PHAs) and their income tier. Through these factors, we are able to get an idea on what types of social and economic housing crisis the PHA's set out to solve.

USA's 'Residual' Welfare State

What is commonly known as “public housing” in the United States is federally subsidized housing that is both owned and managed by public housing authorities allocating 100 percent of its units for the very lowest income tier. (Drier and Hulchanski, 1993, p. 48) This type of social safety net never intends to provide long term solutions for each specific tenant, shifting the project from a long term plan of welfare to a last resort, a type of “ambulance service sector.” (Jacobs, 2014, p. 219)

Contrasting the concepts of institutional and socialist welfare, which are primarily concerned with the provision of resources for everyone in society, the concept of ‘residual’ welfare was coined by Wilensky and Lebeaux in 1958. Residual Welfare, defined as services offered as a safety net for those who have no other kind of provision available. It is in this way the served clientele are *leftover* or *residual*. Residual Welfare is stigmatized, leading to a divisive social effect. (Spicker, 2005, p. 347) Based on the proportionally small, economically disadvantaged quality of the United States's public housing program, we can assert that the

provision is situated within a residual welfare model. To take a look at that of Singapore's, a wider scope of capitalist welfare models is needed.

Singapore's 'Productivist' Welfare State

East-Asian Welfare has long been noted as an exception to Esping-Anderson's *Three Worlds of Welfare*, published in 1990, that established taxonomies for liberal-social democratic welfare regimes. It is often criticized as excluding the "Asian Tiger" phenomenon of rapidly developed state-capitalist entities, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore, entering the global financial world. While there are many attempts to establish models for the unique welfare models of the 'tigers', such as 'confucian welfare states' or '*oikonomic* welfare states', I will use Ian Holliday's 'productivist' model to examine Singapore's welfare regime. (Holliday, 2000, p. 706)

Singapore is a 'productivist' welfare state in that all aspects of state activity are subordinated to the ultimate objective of state growth. (Holliday, 2000, p. 709) This includes using all social and economic policy, not just welfare, to expand Singapore's role as a developed global economy. The 'productivist' model is an added model to Esping-Anderson's originally conceived welfare regimes, in that its focus on social rights and stratification is subordinate to the prioritization of the market. By looking at Singapore's immense public housing program in terms of Holliday's model, we can distinguish an underlying interventionist and directive role being played by its respective PHA, the Housing and Development Board along with its counterpart in charge of sourcing foreign investment, the Economic Development Board. (Chua, 1991, p. 29)

i, b) Singaporean Social Control versus American Ideological Shift

In contrast to the proportionally minuscule and under-maintained American public housing stock, the Housing and Development Board (HDB) has achieved a virtually universal provision of public housing. Estimates suggest that by 2030, the now 15% percent of housing stock still directly leased by private entities will be reduced to a minuscule 5%. (Chua, 1991, p. 26)

Singaporean Ideological Objective: Family, Identity and Nation

Looking at the HDB with Holliday's model in mind, we can start to start to map out the types of objectives such a board has in mind. First off, the board has an interest in solidifying the family institution through its criteria of prioritizing housing provision to entire households. This stands in direct opposition to the US public housing's acceptance of singles and even favorability of the elderly. The priority of allocation is given to single men and women aged over 50 years old if they are applying with a joint applicant, as it is argued this can help solidify the family unit. Income ceilings (the highest income one can have and live in public housing) if younger families choose to have older family live with them. This prioritizes applicants who are in the moving in process in their relationships, even more that it favors those already married, imposing an incentive to couple.

Along with other pro-family housing policies held by the government, sometimes argued to relinquish and transfer the welfare responsibilities into the realm of the family, are justified by the ideological bolstering as a social institution, important to economic productivity, nation building as well as adhering to Asian traditions. (Chua, 1993, p. 37) Along with this ideological support of working family households comes an array of values, in return legitimizes the ideologically bolstering policy. Offe argues that the autonomy and capacity of the political

administrative system to act is dependent on “Mass Loyalty.” (Offe, 1984) Administrators of the welfare state are interested in prioritizing family and labor, as this loyalty to the welfare state indirectly sustains it through taxation, tariffs and lending.

The degree of legitimacy granted to the HDB continues to allow for its ideological advantage. Through policy it is granted levels of jurisdiction in terms of ethnic and class politics. A dispersion of ethnicity and class is prioritized through its first-come-first-served rule concerning flat allocation. Concepts of ethnic neighborhood clusters are discouraged this way, as well as through the use of a quota system, maintaining minority population in every housing estate. Preventing ethnic enclaves, it encourages a mixed, multicultural neighborhood make up. (Chua, 1993, p. 36) While including problematic political and social backlash, the interventionist policy is justified by promoting a multicultural sense of nationality. Singapore is not alone on a global scale in terms of public housing in implementing ethnic quota systems, as rules of replacement of ethnic minorities in public housing are at play in other PHAs, such as France’s *Allocation de Logement Sociale*.

Finally, Singapore’s rapidly developed post-colonial status as a city-state has also included an ideological need for partaking in its social and economic national fabric. An element of materiality is included in the 99 year leases often sold by the HDB, allowing for a type of domestic investment by the first century of Singaporean citizens. In 1968, during a decade of extraordinary growth for the HDB, 44% of applicants chose to purchase their flats. By 1986, this percentage those purchasing leases would jump to a staggering 90%. (Chua, 1993, p. 32) While this popular form of financing plays an economic role for the growing wealth of the nation, it

serves an ideological role in giving the public housing tenant a tangible stake in the nascent nation.

Along with legitimacy granting reciprocation by the target demographics, financial and social ideology held the HDB as extension of the Singaporean State, is able to manifest itself as the lived reality of Singaporean public housing tenants, shaping the social landscape of the City-State. All under the objective of national economic productivity, it bolsters the family institution, allocates tangible stake in the nation and encourages its spatially mixed socio-economics, thus shaping the lived reality of its citizen tenants. Singapore's near universal provision of public housing and ideological success is bolstered by its population and catches the eye of developing countries. Singapore's public housing is often exported as model and its success can explain the level of analysis by a global public policy community, especially among other East-Asian welfare regimes.

American Ideological Trajectory

In the United States, public housing programs were attacked from the start. (Lang and Sohmer, 2000, p. 297) Starting with a strong and emphatic message from Franklin Roosevelt shortly after the Great Depression, the public program's main role set out to house the "one third of a nation ill-housed." (Roosevelt, Second Inaugural Address, 1937, line 28) While experiencing periods of optimism in the government's efficacy in solving issues such as housing the poor and clearing slums, such as Lyndon B Johnson's brief funding of programs, the discursive environment of the national dialogue shifted towards political attack and negative stigma. By the mid-70s with Nixon's administration, a reduced federal role in low income housing assistance began with the voucher and project components of Section 8.

Within this arena of political and social discussion on the roles, ideologies and enactments of public housing comes the crafting of what is considered problematic within the housing sector, along with their reasons and potential solutions. (Crawford and Flint, 2015, p. 795) Over time, the solution of reducing the government's role in the housing sector would be favored. "Public housing" evokes images of decrepit, towering urban projects and as Section 8 vouchers mailed those seen as welfare parasites. These notions inextricably serve as signifiers for 'concentrated poverty', a term coined by the urban theorist William Julius Wilson. (Wilson, 1987, p. 251)

Now, in Bill Clinton's words, "The era of big government is over" and "we know there's not a program for every problem." Wilson was one of the main theorists cited in Clinton's proposal HOPE VI, a public program marking a watershed moment in public housing. HOPE VI notoriously lead to systematic dismantling of public housing projects in lieu of affluent residents, a process of gentrification. With these developments came a new urban image of the demolition of affordable housing projects such as *Cabrini-Green* in Chicago. (Jargowsky, 1997, p. 4)

The ideological trajectory began with Roosevelt's altruistic ideological coding of public housing and transformed into public policy skeptical not only of government's efficacy, but of its power to actually manipulate a socio-economic spatial reality. This is a radical shift from a confidence of the public sector that encapsulates the ideology of Singapore's public housing. While on different scales, we can see the different levels of confidence Singapore and the US have on the ability of the state to intervene in housing crisis, as well as what damage it might cause. While Singapore's approach responds to potential ethnic conflict by enforcing an agenda of strict adherences to mixing of households across ethnic and class lines, the United States is

seemingly plagued by ideology concerning the inefficacy of government intervention of social issues and restricted in terms of funding to such programs.

i, c) Positioning to Ideology

The prioritized growth of the HDB contrasted with the ideological shift seen in the United States shows ideology at work in different ways. One can see the Singaporean state using the public housing authority as an apparatus of the state to achieve ideological consensus, especially on issues that surround the provision housing as a social need. This active, functional state of Singapore's housing authority to provide both housing and achieve ideological consensus contrasts with how American housing authorities have been subject of increasing political attack, both an easy target and a demonized image. While Singapore's public housing authority (HDB) *enacts* ideological consensus, American public housing departments and authorities are *acted upon* by the ideological discourses surrounding them.

Singapore *enacts* Ideological Hegemony

The ability of the HDB to serve an active role in provision of housing and manifestation of a social reality relies on its relative appearance of being depoliticized. As near-universal provision, the state effectively depoliticized the collective provision of good and services compared to that of private provision. (Dunlevy, 1979 qt in Chua, 1993, p. 24)

Without overt confrontation of the housing policies being immediately observable, the glossing over of welfare as political issue seems to be successful, allowing for little electoral or political obstacles to enacting policy and manifesting ideology as social reality. The lack of obstacles plays a large role in the maintaining ideological hegemony and helps us understand the amount of loyalty Singapore's housing program affords. Allowing for family growth, integrated

ethnic identity and owning psychical aspect of the state are all parts of this maintenance of social control. A political attack on the housing infrastructure personally affects the owning of an HDB flat and its implications as asset of social security. By controlling the terms of public discussion, ideological hegemony is achieved and by depoliticizing welfare, hegemonic social control supports by an unhindered enactment of policy. (Chua, 1993, p. 39)

As an institution with overarching influence, we can utilize theory from Louis Althusser to help us understand how the HDB functions as a specialized institution, especially in how it is situated within the public and private realm. First, Althusser's concept of Ideology is borrowed from Karl Marx's *German Ideology* and is seen as a dreamy link between reality and the individual's constructed outlook on this lived reality, which is constructed to political influence as well institutions they are subjected to and build their worldview from. Secondly, distinctions are made between Regressive State Apparatuses (RSA) Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), which are extensions of the state with respective influence enforced with violence, coercion and institutional reinforcement of state held ideals, values and norms.

Employed more subtly and consensually than an RSA, the HDB is able to use its framing of the discussion of public housing as its predominant function, characterizing it as an ISA (Louis Althusser, 1970) While using ideology as its predominant function, systems of disciplines can be implemented such as eviction and control of urban spatial relations.

Althusser goes on to mention that these apparatuses are in no way limited to the public sector. As large extensions of the state, work is done in order to maintain the hegemony in a depoliticized fashion. Many of these ideological state apparatuses appear in Althusser's theory as very close to home, including national identity and family as an ideologically proposed

institution. Beyond these institutions of lived, social reality, ideological apparatuses can be seen extending into the private sector in forms of foreign investment and collection of information on tenants.

Althusser tells us that ideological state apparatuses are sites of class struggle, where the ability to maintain hegemony remains in the hands of a ruling class. He adopts the Gramscian notion that the 'above the law' quality of the state is able to extend from the distinction of being public to both bourgeois and subordinate domains as authority. (Gramsci qt in Althusser, 1970) The extension of enactment by state into the private sector, along with the inheritance of power and influence can be directly seen in institutions that operate alongside the HDB, such as the Economic Review Committee (ERC). Authoritative committees such as these consists of government, union and private sectors, many representing transnational corporations. (Wang, 2012, p. 370)

Embodying the 'productivist' qualities of Singapore's state, policy enforcing economic planning is prioritized. While the Singaporean state remains cautious in leasing land to private development, capital accumulation through investment is made possible through programs that show hybrid effort in development, with private production of housing and public leasing. (Wang, 2012, p. 373) Investments, often global, remain encouraged while the state retains its jurisdiction.

Hegemony is never permanently achieved and requires constant ideological work to keep the consensus from being divided. By providing the terms of discourse that public housing is discussed within, it is more possible to maintain this state of *social control*. Similarly, when the

discourse is manipulated in different, more cynical terms, a sector of public housing is able to be consistently *suppressed*.

The US is *acted upon* by Ideological Cynicism

Urban images such as the images of the decrepit projects have curbed American public housing ideologically. The ideologically dreamy explanation of a seen reality iconically induces the cynicism that defunded any federal allocations for the backlogs of repair of housing units. The same urban iconography doesn't plague Singapore. To borrow from Pierre Bourdieu, the continuation of each cultural approach is the same relationship between structures of governance and the categories of perception that sustain them. (Bourdieu, 1991 qt in Crawford and Flint, 2015, p 795) The approaches to public welfare are sustained in both cases, kept in practice by ideologies that support and constrain the respective systems of housing provision.

While this is able to maintain ideological hegemony in the case of the HDB, this continuous relationship is able to maintain consistent attack on a myriad of social provisions in the United States. It is in this way that American public housing departments and authorities are inflicted or *acted upon* by the ideology, or Bourdieu's relationship of structures and perceptions, that surrounds them. It is unlikely that we will ever see federal housing provision on the scale of first half of the 20th century, characterized by confidence in the state's ability to intervene; public housing legislation is too socially and politically unfavorable. (Lang and Sohmer, 2000, p 297)

While we are able to get an idea of this ideological relationship between governance and perception from Pierre Bourdieu, we can look to Frits Van Wel's concept of 'problem configuration' to understand how a housing crisis and realistic solutions for it are constructed. (Van Wel, 1992). Van Wel's theory is that if both one believes in the efficacy of public policy

tools, as well as an understanding of what is wrong, their approach to remedying any ill is defined. Solutions, through the mediation of configuring the problem, is able to be rationally given but can be removed from the social realities of those directly affected. Problem figuration rationally articulates a realignment of why the problems need to be solved in the first place, realigning what is fairness and decency in housing really means. (Van Wel, 1992) The American arrival at such cynicism of the state's ability to intervene as well as how the actual housing crisis is understood is controlled by such ideology.

To then understand how public policy can maintain such consistent deterioration, we can look to Slavoj Žižek's and Peter Sloterdijk's 'cynical ideology'. (Žižek, 1989) (Sloterdijk, 1983) Sloterdijk revisits the Marxist concept the illusory fog of ideology, "They don't know it but they are doing it" as a more self conscious cynic, "They know perfectly well, yet they are still doing it". (Sloterdijk, 1988) Žižek works on this notion of a conscious cynical actor as able to live and act as if the ideological mask and social reality is fact. Where originally ideology was seen as something masking a hidden interest, the cynic in Sloterdijk and Žižek's perspective is about to act and perform the ideology. (Crawford and Flint, 2015, p.798) This level of acting in a ideological, imaginary reality only comes when the problems have been to configured to the point of total influence on understanding of the situation.

In terms of public housing, this is after internalizing the problems and solutions. The proposed narrative about the crime ridden, poverty concentrated housing that the state is facilitating is held as true. We then can use cynical ideology shift our attention to what interests a cynicism in the efficacy in government might mask, as this theory sees the motives as not clouded by illusory fog, but very much in the open.

Images of symbolically infamous projects (such as Pruitt-Igoe, Cabrini Green or Lafitte) are conjured and the problem that such projects sought to intervene is shifted to other, also rational problem. (Crawford and Flint, 2015, p. 798) From the constructed issue, its solution can be perfectly rational. Fifty years after Roosevelt's priority of 'seeing and understanding housing injustice', the injustice is configured to be seen and understood in a different way.

Comparing this to 'cynical ideology,' we can deem that the optimistic role of government in housing viewed as optimistic in improving affordable housing and developing urban spaces, yet makes an ideological turn to the perspective of cynicism in the efficacy of the government. Žižek and Sloterdijk modify the traditional Marxist notion of ideology, "they do not know it but they are doing it." Sloterdijk amends this as, "They know perfectly well, yet they are still doing it," which Žižek describes as reconfiguring nature of ideology, always distorting, intending to mask its real intention behind its official position. While Sloterdijk describes the quintessential subject of cynical-ideology, Žižek sees the position as not just ignoring the real state things, which Roosevelt prioritized to "see and understand", but as knowingly ideologically distorting the real problems at play. (Flint and Crawford, 2015, p. 797-798) Why different cynical subjects likely have different levels of self awareness, such dramatic arching of ideology from hope to cynicism for Žižek contains the motive behind the official ideological position.

Examining the ideology surrounding public housing in these two political-economic systems gives a conceptual idea of how two different states of public housing serve such different clienteles for different reasons. It is important to go over the ideology of public housing first, as the vast majority of Americans never actually experience living in the units of major PHA's and only experience their concepts through urban images, media depictions and over

course, political talking points concerning welfare. Inversely, the reason so much more Singaporeans actually encounter public housing is, again, ideological. Through concepts of nationality, family and identity, an entirely different development of public housing would take place in the region, forming the building blocks that would become the large bureaucratic authorities capable of managing the task of housing a nation. To compare, we delve into the complex history spanning ideological eras of New York City and the example of political resilience that is the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Looking at how these PHAs have come into fruition will help us begin to understand how public housing functions on a ground level.

ii. History

To examine the lived experience of public housing on a street level, with attention made to the demographics and the lived experience of public housing in each case, I have made certain methodological choices regarding the importance of historical and demographic information. Instead of delving into the troubled history of public housing across the US and the nuances of other state-capitalist Asian countries, I have chosen to focus on ways in which the PHA's of Singapore and New York City can be compared and contrasted. Through this focus on New York City as a microcosm of the United States and selective overview of history, insight on how these public housing authorities differ in functionality can be grasped.

Firstly, a parallel must be established between Singapore, as a city-state and “Asian Tiger”, and the powerful western power that is the US. The United States must be narrowed down to a city that would serve as representative of the American trajectory of ideological eras, institutions and multicultural demographics. New York City has stood out due to its maintenance

of public housing throughout the American ideological eras concerning welfare, surviving gradual decay and political attack.

Secondly, a selective history must be established that provides us with the understanding that we need going forward. Singapore and New York City are points of interest for scholars attracted to regional character and dense history. My intention focuses on providing a history conscious of its own selectivity and historicization. This recount puts a selective spotlight on the need for original initiation of public housing, administrating entities and people, as well as their economic models of growth and development. With both this narrowing of research to New York City, as well selecting relevant history, I intend to situate the two differing models of housing provision on a global plane of comparison.

The history that I am concerned with in situating these two case studies consists of the public housing's first stages and what housing crises they attempted to remedy. From these births, government entities such as political parties and government departments allow insight into the way public housing functions on an administrative level. Beyond their local nuance, the PHA's of New York City and Singapore represent extreme examples of their respective political and economic systems. The transition between LaGuardia and Moses represent the ideological trajectory from believe in public programs to a competitive arena of private urban development. Singapore displays a different reality as a post colonial island of thatched roof homes transformed into a epicenter of global investment. The importance of the success of the People's Action Party, formed by Lee Kuan Yew, as well as Singaporean social security and controversial ethnic quotas. This community transformation is important to see the success of Singapore from

the start. Understanding these contrasts and administrative components is to understand both the demographic at stake as well as the political and economic future.

ii, a) Segregation and Integration in New York City

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) represents one of the least politically hindered PHAs in the United States, sustaining through three main eras of public housing's ideology and policy in the United States. Its survival show what wasn't able to happen across the US; New York City continues its relative success in terms of alleviation of housing crisis as well as an instrument of urban redevelopment. Understanding these eras will allow us to understand the American ideological change, but also situate the births of NYCHA and the HDB in Singapore in a parallel of global comparison.

These historical eras of American approach stretched from the period of public housing as a *governmental municipal service*, starting in the 1930s and representing a birth of these large bureaucratic programs. As a way to clearing notorious slums and extending helping hands to the poor, the early years of public housing embody the altruistic message FDR “painted a picture” for us in his 1937 second inaugural address. In this first phase, NYCHA managed housing for a shifting racial demographic, representative of the shaping of many urban spatial relations of race that would take shape in the greater United States. (Dagen Bloom, 2008, p. 54)

From the initiation of public housing in NYC start, we can see the municipal effort ideologically resisting the *residual* welfare model that would come in the 1960s and providing service for tenants of a variety of classes. (Dagen Bloom, 2008, p 77 and 201) The tenant selection constitutes how public housing was functioning as a *municipal service* at the time,

clearing the notorious slums and tenements³ of the city, attempting to alleviate living conditions instead of poverty as whole. This shows that the public housing scheme of New York didn't begin as welfare for the bottom tiers of society, and at one point had a scheme closer to that of Singapore's, providing housing for all.

This era is best seen in NYCHA's first projects, the First Houses⁴ of 1936 and Harlem River Houses of 1937, with their opening ceremonies attended by Eleanor Roosevelt and NYC Mayor, Fiorello La Guardia. Similar to the symbol of the Roosevelt's notion of altruism, La Guardia continuously displayed his admiration for Europe's public housing efforts in cities such as Berlin and Vienna. While his later efforts expanding a massive city funded housing plan in 1938 show Roosevelt's altruistic ideology, this would haunt private property developers into the contemporary.



Children during a lesson in a Nursery in Harlem River Houses on the left. On the right,

Eleanor Roosevelt speaks in front of the First Houses.

³ A *tenement*, well known in the later 19th century in New York City, was a type housing maximizing residential density within a 25 x 100 foot lot system of the city. (Plunz, 2016, p. 13) The term now is commonly associated with historical slums of New York, but as a remains as a practice in contemporary New York City.

⁴ While not completely representative as NYCHA as a whole, the first houses hint at its future. They were relatively low rise and mostly focuses on a healthier living space. (Dagen Bloom, 2008, p. 48)

With the first houses as a model for federally funded housing projects provided to a mixture of skilled and unskilled workers, the Harlem River Houses, while segregated, showed a model for public housing that played a productive role in providing better living conditions and a potential for class mobility to working families. (Dagen Bloom, 2008, p. 54) Limited by racial politics, this era shows an attempt at municipal provision of affordable housing across New York's multi-racial demographics. In this beginning, the tenant selection for development such as the first house included elements such as income, family, employment, present accommodations, previous residence, rent habits and social background. The criteria proved to be successful for the time being, yet the selectivity would be gradually phased out into the the *municipal* era's subsequent *welfare-state* stage. This transition, from the *municipal* era into that of the *welfare* state sheds light into where the ideological turn is linked with NYCHA's historical debut. It's interaction with NYCHA's served demographics and responding policy shows the impact of this transition. (Dagen Bloom, 2008, p. 22)

This municipal era of public housing would be its humble beginning and acceleration. Its mass growth in the 50's with the urban development oriented Major, Robert Moses⁵, corresponds with a soaring growth in United States as a whole. Not necessarily an advocate of public housing, unlike LaGuardia, Robert Moses relied on public housing to house those displaced by his aggressive development plans for the city. He admits to Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the publisher for the New York Times, "...We must have public housing" because "our private capital slum clearance requires public housing to take care of displaced tenants of the lowest incomes." (Dagen Bloom, 2008, p. 118)

⁵ Robert Moses's large scale development plans lead to his approach being called the bulldozer approach. While not used in this article, *The Power Broker*, by Robert Caro is an in depth history of the influence of this NYC mayor.

We can clearly see factors in the way that public housing is functioning at this point; construction of public housing is heavily tied with the development of private interests in terms of urban renewal by way of displaced residents. Housing those displaced by urban development wouldn't be the only instrument that NYCHA would be used for. Housing nearly a half a million tenants by the 1960s, the conservative tenant selection started to be seen as a failure of social justice. (Dagen Bloom, 2008, 201).

Beginning in 1968, the subsequent period of *welfare-state public housing* would begin. New York City's public housing administered racial segregation in its developments along with other American PHA's, which allowed it to retain political support from a dominant American prejudice. However, NYCHA was relatively responsive in allocating housing for those marginalized during this time, while segregated. The racial policies of NYCHA did historically parallel that of other American PHAs, although its tenant selection systems were retained longer than in other cities such as Chicago⁶. Chicago's PHA had been notoriously used as instrument of segregation resulting in similarly embedded ethnic spatial relations. While desegregating the housing projects, while the tenant selection systems were able select those from the New York's slums that had qualities such as employment skills, as well as familial and social background.

Beyond NYCHA's early resistance to a residual welfare model, we learn that the initiated purpose of public housing had much to do with the concept of slum clearance. This concept of

⁶ Maintaining this line between acquiescing to dominant segregationist and racist prejudice and responding to the needs of the poor and disadvantaged marks as a departure to other large US housing authorities. Notable, Chicago's CHA early orientation of public housing to minorities would lead to full radicalized stigma of the projects from the beginning.

municipal administration by the NYCHA as well another department, the United States Housing Authority (USHA⁷) to clear slums and improve living conditions isn't specific to New York City.

ii, b) Multiculturalism and Modernization in Singapore

The objectives of public housing in Singapore have evolved over time, as they were originally to provide basic shelter to the poor living in slums and squatter colonies. This mostly unemployed population lived in congested rental housing or squats⁸. Prior to 1960, the Singapore Improvement Trust (SIT), the British colonial housing authority completed barely a fraction of what the Housing and Development Board(HDB) could accomplish by replacing in the colonial housing board just prior to the full transition to Singaporean independence⁹. Where the SIT could only provide one flat for every 150 families, the HDB could build up to 67,000 units per year by 1984, outpacing the birth rate and growth of new households. (Wong and Yeh, 1985, p. 10, 306) The objective in the early days of the HDB would be two-fold. First, to eradicate slums and free the land for public projects. Secondly, to provide slum dwellers living in squalid conditions with better housing standards.

Along with a improving the living standard, the lived experienced of Singaporeans would be radically changed in the early days of this transition into modernity. This resettlement, or displacement, was an integral part of many of the public projects of the young nation, often encountered with suspicion and hostility. (Wong and Yeh, 1985, p. 306) While some of the

⁷ The United States Housing Authority (USHA) was the created by the Federal Housing Act of 1937 to use federal funds allocated to local housing authorities. NYCHA used the USHA as well as the Public Works Administration (PWA). (Dagen Bloom, 2008, p. 37)

⁸ These squatter colonies were predominantly vernacular shelters made from wood and 'attap' (palm leaf) roofing. (Chua, 1991, p. 33)

⁹ When the present Singaporean government took power in 1959, the Housing and Development Act was enacted the following year, allowing for the shift of housing departments prior to full Singaporean independence in 1965.

benefits of living in the traditional and makeshift housing were lost, the resettlement became known mostly beneficial form of radical urban development.



A traditional kitchen in an 'attap' roofing squat compared to an early HDB unit. (Wong)

The transition from village life to the extensive promotion of home ownership incorporates the population both ideologically and materially into the commitment of the nation and its economy. Increasing the cost of living of every household, resettlement and home ownership was active step in transitioning the population into a working class, now with recorded personal investments in the state through their Central Provident Funds, a form of social security. There was no real financial gain for the HDB in these early years, since it was those in lower income groups that were first to qualify for housing. (Chua, 1991, p. 34)

Economically the tenants benefited, being able to sell off their flats, upgrade (to other, more luxurious HDB units), and invest in their CPFs. The real benefit would be the ruling government, the People's Action Party (PAP), who were essentially fulfilling their promise to improve the living conditions of Singaporeans. This further intensified the ideological and material commitment to them and the system as a whole.

The PAP has held power of Singapore since 1959 without discontinuity. Its power and popularity is inextricably intertwined with the public housing system it has established, as well

as it's CPF system of social security for the residents it governs and houses. (Chua, 2014, p. 520-521) The PAP officially calling Singapore a 'Home-owning democracy,' another Singaporean prime minister, Lee Hsien Loong observed in 2011, "The house in Singapore is also a major way for us to level up the less successful and to give them a valuable asset and a retirement nest egg." (Straits Times, 2011)

A political-ideological tradition of Singapore's "Asset-Base Social Security System" has been held up and maintained as well as the HDB flats that were created in the early 1960s. Lee Kuan Yew, sworn in as Prime Minister in 1959 knew that home ownership would give citizens a tangible stake in the nascent nation, inspiring confidence with the political party. This confidence is of an economically planned future for it's citizens and an attention payed to the multicultural makeup of its planned New Towns¹⁰. Especially with the decision to allow citizens to take from their CPFs to purchase HDB flats, secure home ownership, what could potentially be parallel to early withdrawal from a retirement or 401k in the United States to invest directly back into the state.

iii. Public Policy and Privatization

In urban areas of multicultural demographics and high contrast of wealth and equality, the marginalizations and power dynamics are visible to those who look. Those in the city form opinions on issues that need to be addressed and can weigh in on the policy that shapes the social reality of the city. Policy shaping activism goes beyond the recent the fights to keep

¹⁰ *New Town* come as way to describe the unique formation of satellite housing developments compounds with town centers and helmed by commercial business ranging from education to health care. (Wong, 2011) Similar to gated communities in terms of housing and apartment complexes such as Marina Towers and River City in Chicago, the developments are self contained with residential and commercial space.

housing public in Brooklyn, as both Singapore and New York City experienced demonstrations and riots fueled by passionate views and racial experience.

Race riots between Chinese and Malays broke out in the mid 60's, which influenced Singapore's blossoming national ideals. Using public housing as a tool, community bonding and balanced mixes of ethnic groups were goals of the PAP, along with encouraging state holdership through the social security of the tenants¹¹. (Sim, 2003, p. 296) We see a similar reaction to unrest in New York City earlier, when a 1935 riot in Harlem, preceded by a "don't buy where you can't work" boycott. Mayor La Guardia sent in relief supplies to the area and announced a new public housing project, the Harlem River Houses. (Abu-Lughod, 2007, p. 18) In public programs such as public housing, activism does make a difference since careers and funds are allocated to providing for the people, although limited. Activism throughout the 21st century has shaped the approaches and policy that each state has taken, however many of the programs initiated to help individuals climb to their economic tiers have shifted resources into the hands of private equity.

iii, a) American Redistribution

While public-private-partnerships have always been a part of public housing efforts, with private contractors, managerial positions and even in the case of Starrett City, security enforcement, legislation passed by a Clinton administration in the 90's has normalized and legitimized the dismantlement of public housing. Based on the theory of William Julius Wilson, the housing legislature intended to repair and replace old housing projects in ways that didn't concentrate tenants of low incomes together.

¹¹ By allowing tenants to purchase public flats out of their Central Provident Funds, Singapore citizens in essence reinvest their savings back into the state.

Wilson believed that that problems of crime ridden housing projects came about when vast concentrations of impoverished minority families were isolated from the private housing sector and made vulnerable to economic devastation. (Wilson, 1987, p. 255) While he had never intended for his theory to be used in Clinton's legislation, his ideas fit the cynical narrative that housing provision by the government was in fact harming to the people it sets out to help. Under the guise of breaking up the projects would help low income tenants move out of crime ridden projects, Hope VI transform public housing with other subsidized renting programs, housing vouchers and the low-income housing tax credit system (LIHTC). (Vobornikova, P. 79)

Hope VI started a trend of thinking in policy that extended up to and through the Obama administration, when policy such as the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI), the Preservation, Enhancement and Transformation of Rental Assistance Act (PETRA) and Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) were passed. (Goetz, 2012, p. 461) All public private partnerships, the policies extend the concept of integrating low-income housing with middle-income in hopes of integration with upper neighborhood tiers. The thinking is hopeful, as the division between American neighborhoods in terms of class and race is deeply embedded, however the policy is prone to corruption. In addition, the relocation of people can be seen as a forced integration, similar to how ethnic quotas in Singapore work. Breaking up communities and dispersing them throughout the city can be seen as counterproductive to helping the neighborhoods in question.

The corruption comes not only in the developers and managing of the public housing once it is spread out in the form of vouchers and LIHTC, but in the economic incentive to build upper income housing projects as replacement. Especially during a time when predominantly

white, upper income households and young professionals are seeking time in the city opposed to the suburbs, the value of the location these inner-city housing projects are occupy is higher. Unfortunately, the poorer tenants who live in the space see none of the profit from the increased value and experience the relocation that became normalized with legislation such as Hope VI. The policy direction of public housing in the 1990s asserts a new model of public housing, continuing the shift away from municipal, institutional welfare to one that ascertains value to relocates the living demographic based off of this speculation.

Hope VI changed American public housing on a national level; Mitchell-Lama stands out as a localized subsidy program that shapes the social, lived experience of New York City. Mitchell-Lama started in 1955 and was successful in creating large public housing projects quickly. Its creative use of private incentive leads to some of the property created under the policy to be transferred to the private sector, as the buildings are built by private contractors with a federal loan which they then pay off and then are free to privatize. (Wyly, 2010, p. 81) While creating a housing for many families that would be priced out of NYC throughout the latter part of the 21st century, the ability for the buildings to be bought out and privatized after 20 years makes for dramatic fights to keep housing public seen with the case of massive projects such as Co-Op and Starrett City.

Public housing policy in the US allows us to look at the the larger forces that dictate how its tenants live, showing changes in ideology and responses to market incentives. Of what remains of Mitchell-Lama, more than a quarter of the units classify as housing a black middle-class in NYC, showing some success in providing a chance to stay in the city and climb its economic strata. (Wyly, 2010, p. 81) However, the changes in property value and long term

downsides to Mitchell-Lama show a consistent funnelling of money right into the hands of private equity with the tax breaks associated with public projects. Around the Jamaica Bay area, subsidies for Section 8 go directly to the private landlords of Starrett City, the largest federally subsidized housing development in the nation, or as described by its former manager, the most profitable tax shelter in history.

iii, b) Singaporean Redevelopment

Spreading out housing subsidy in the US in vouchers and tax credit did lead to enormous benefits for the private housing market, but there was an intention to help people break out of cycles crime associated with poverty in the projects. In Singapore, there is a similar policy incentive to help people climb an economic ladder, yet the public and private housing sectors are reversed. Instead of a small public sector housing an economic tier of those who hope to earn *out of*, Singapore has a small private tier at top people who to earn *into*. This small strata of private housing is exclusive to high income Singaporeans and is composed of mostly luxury condominiums. Through reselling 99 year leases of HDB units, mostly purchased through CPFs, aspiring households hope to climb up the economic ladder into this elite tier.

Certain programs such as the Selective En Bloc Redevelopment Scheme (SERS), the HDB is able to choose buildings that will be destroyed and replaced with flats that resemble the upscale, luxury housing that makes up private housing in Singapore. As the primary program to redevelop neighborhoods, it is coupled with the Executive Condominium Scheme (EC) and the Design Build and Sell Scheme (DBSS). SER's shows Singapore's initiative to redevelop itself in an image of global prestige with a form of heavily critiqued state facilitated gentrification. With aestheticization in mind, the SERS sites are close to downtown and the main business area,

bolstered my large social media campaigns. The program replaced older HDB buildings with modern, sleek developments such as the "Sky Villa at Dawson" or the "The Pinnacle at Duxton."

EC and DBSS resemble a private market and benefit developers more directly. The EC program is about as close to complete privatization a public program can get under state-capitalism, allowing developers to hold the 99 year leases and stocks usually held by the tenants and state. While many of the state's ethnic quotas and jurisdiction applies to the building, the developers are able profit immensely from the combination of state subsidy and high incomes that the condominiums attract. Similar to SERS sites, many leases of other HDB flats cannot be traded in for these upper scale units. This hybrid model of public and private sectors was opened originally by the DBSS, giving power and resources to the private market as long as the end result is upper-scale public housing. (Wang, 2012, p. 374) The scheme leads to an enormous amount of control by the state to decide how neighborhoods are shaped and by pooling private development, often through foreign direct investments, the Singaporean state is able to ride the surge of ceaseless development. With private contractors building these new types of HDB projects, the government is able to hold stakes in construction and real-estate financing, placing it in the center of several streams of revenue.

iv: Neoliberalism upon Global Models of Public Housing

When looking at larger hegemonic discourses that have great influence on a lived social reality, theory must be used to describe overarching trends with histories and nuance. Especially from a market capitalist perspective, embedded ideals such as property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets and free trade seem so natural they are barely visible at all. Although, looking at this limitation of perspective critically allows us to get a grasp on the

processes of naturalization these ideals undergo, as well as the institutional frameworks that work to spread the unhindered entrepreneurial freedoms associated with neoliberalism.

iv, a) Forces of Privatization

As many economic and ideological notions as expanding and impactful as neoliberalism, it contains a history of theories building off one another. Neoliberalism¹² is a resurgence of economic theory held by a group of European economists such as Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig Von Mises and Milton Friedman in the mid 20th century. Regarding themselves as "liberals", in a traditional European sense of committed to ideals of personal freedom, they championed neoclassical economics popularized a century earlier by Alfred Marshal, William Stanley Jevons and Leon Walras and stood in opposition to the work of Maynard Keynes. (Harvey, 2005, p. 29) Considering that these economists were displacing classical economic theories held by Adam Smith, we can see that neoliberalism as we see it used today has come from a long tradition of competing ideals.

Neoliberal Theory and the City

The roots of neoliberalism come from a post-war period, where there was need of restructuring economic theory to prevent the catastrophic conditions that lead threatened the capitalist order in the depression as well as the geopolitical rivalries of the war itself. Advocates such as Hayek, Von Mises and Friedman saw the theory as a potential solution to a capitalist social order that would wield too much power over the market. They were deeply opposed to Keynesianism, characterized by interventions by the state in order to dampen the crashes of

¹² Described as the Neoliberal Turn by David Harvey in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, includes a gravitation towards deregulation, privatization and withdrawal of the state from social provision since the 1970s, yet is solidified by the arrangements of global economic institutions scubas the World Band and the IMF through the Bretton Woods agreements. (Harvey, 2005, p. 11, 18)

business cycles and maintain levels of employment. Hayek's text, *The Constitution of Liberty*, predicts a generation long battle of economic ideals against socialism, state planning and the intervention that Keynesians proposed. (Harvey, 2005, p 30-31)

Holding these rights of private property, individual liberties and entrepreneurial freedom as sacrosanct corresponds with the major defenses of market-capitalism and the individualism that we now see applied to even corporations. The theoretical framework doesn't always correspond cleanly however, as the cynicism we see in any power of the state to intervene isn't necessarily warranted if the intervention of the state involves protecting the entrepreneurial freedoms of individuals that neoliberalism holds as such high importance. An embodiment of neoliberal economic theory in New York City is displayed in Rockefeller Center, where John Rockefeller's personal belief in "the supreme worth of the individual" is inscribed in stone.

Rockefeller brings the neoliberal city¹³ into question. Neoliberalism as a global economic trend is typically discussed in terms of global financial institutions and power dynamics between developed and developing countries. As both an oil magnate and a symbol of New York money, Rockefeller represents a duality in neoliberalism's ability to expand into untapped markets on a global level as well as contest the traditional Keynesianism that has been used by American municipalities on a local level. (Harvey, 2007, p. 23) In these municipal areas, urban policy functioned as an arbiter between capital and labor especially during the post-war period. Retaining working class tenant selection prior to the 60s and enacting anti-gentrification measures in neighborhoods such as Hell's Kitchen during this decade are both examples of such. This Keynesian tradition unravelling in lieu of local governments allying with business, often

¹³ Taken from Jason Hackworth's book, *The Neoliberal City*, which has helped visualize neoliberalism in a finite, urban context.

behaving as business themselves in terms of pressure to produce revenue, works to naturalize the public-private cooperation that has dominated public housing policy after the neoliberal turn.

Globalization Theory and Foreign Investment

Dauntingly alluded to by Harvey as a combination of "neoliberalism in the marketplace with a draconian coercive and authoritarian state power," Singapore has been propelled to a top position of international trade with this unique blend of political economic systems. (Wang, 2012, p. 374) Harvey is using Singapore to describe a political economic model of welfare that channels private investment, often foreign, through the public sector. By integrating state interventions and market forces, the projects procures an environment able to sustain a heterogeneous public housing landscape while allocating space for a process of privatization. (Wang, 776) While the foreign direct investments (FDI) play a key factor in Singapore quickly developing into a key economic player in the globe, this dualism of the state and private sectors is crucial to understanding the city-nation as a model for development orientated welfare. As a developmental state, similar to other Asian countries, Singapore uses its public sector and state planning to use corporate capital¹⁴ to promote economic growth. As Hackworth's own book, *The Neoliberal City*, opens with a concepts of globalization and neoliberalism in tandem. For Hackworth, who focuses on the local impacts of neoliberalism and globalization in an urban context, Neoliberalism is more rooted in a very specific set of economic ideas that operate on a global scale through privatization, investment and financialization¹⁵.

¹⁴ These entities often source from foreign and multinational private capital, rather than domestic. (Harvey, 2005, p 79)

¹⁵ In the context of globalization, financialization refers to the growing importance of financial markets and institutional investors. (Palpacuer, 2011, p. 561) In terms of Singapore, this can be seen in the process of bringing local Singaporeans into the market by relocation into public housing from traditional dwellings and non-monetized lifestyle.

Using foreign direct investment in developmental goals situates Singapore among not only the other Asian Tigers, but the largest recipient of FDI of any developing or transitional country, China. (UNCTAD, 2015, p. 5) To not be conceived as a 'third China', Singapore took strides to be a liberal economy. Opening itself up to the world at an earlier stage than China's opening lead by Deng Xiaoping, Singapore differentiated itself to not be seen as a 'third China'. Yet, now with new directions taken by both countries towards rapid development and welcoming of foreign investment and talent, many parallels can be drawn. We can see in both cases of incorporating the market into the transition of a developing country is associated with a parallel shift in class relations, private property and institutional arrangements. (Harvey, 2005, p. 130) The internal transition towards 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' and social reordering of relations of economic power has huge repercussions. While some of these include environmental degradation and social inequality, it seems to be able to deliver dramatic economic growth. (Harvey, 2005, p. 130) States like Singapore, similarly, rely on foreign multinational investment managed by a public sector in order to rapidly develop, which in turn shift the same class relations, property and institutions. The public policy of redevelopment, gearing towards an affluent global and elite class represents the PAP being more loyal to their investors than the early Singaporeans that they had promised housing to during independence.

Understanding these transformations that reorder entire political economic systems of developing countries is crucial to understand neoliberalism on this global level. With this reordering, social backlash against its effects threatens the class power that is instated and reinforced with neoliberalism. While the effects of this are numerous and unclear, leading to massive global protests and a new brand of populist politicians, China's recent history leads Hui

Wang to theoretically associate neoliberalism with discourses of neo-authoritarianism in the state-capitalist context. (Wang, 2006) Wang suggests that coercive state intervention is masked by neoliberal ideological concepts of free and unregulated markets. Especially in extreme transitions such as China's 21st century, a reordering of a socio-political landscape requires a new brand of authoritarianism capable of maintaining class power. This resurgence of power and intervention in China and Singapore, referred to as neo-authoritarianism by Wang, seems to converge with the authoritarianism evident in neoliberal states such as the US and UK.

iv, b) Case Studies in Public Housing

New Yorkers such as LaGuardia had known their historic brick laying of public housing projects were impressive, displaying a rare altruistic allocation of federal funds. However, by building The Pinnacle, the HDB showed an ability to honor their past achievements of the past while adapting to a new global dynamics.

The Pinnacle @ Duxton, Tanjong Pagar

Built on the Duxton Plain, in the Tanjong Pagar district¹⁶, the complex of skyscrapers connected with bridges reshapes the image of Singaporean cosmopolitan lifestyle. (Wang, 2012, p. 374) Two 10-story public housing complexes ones stood on the Duxton Plain, their stones laid by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in 1963, showing that the HDB is actively willing to shape Singapore's image from the homogenous and inclusive principles of public housing into housing modern, individual and exclusive.

¹⁶ While a Chinese District, Tanjong Pagar is home to a emigrating identity known as Straits-Chinese, or Peranakan (West, 2010)



Built on a historical HBD site, The Pinnacle consists of seven interconnected skyscrapers.

The Pinnacle doesn't only stand as an example of a city reshaping itself to welcome globalization and foreign investment, it demonstrates an example of continuously reshaping the lives of its demographic. While it could be seen as a form of state-facilitated gentrification, the lives of Singaporeans have changed so rapidly in the last half century that development projects such as this would continue to showcase new lifestyles, and demonstrate the openness and willingness to project Singapore as a global cosmopolitan nation. (Wang, 2012, p. 374)

The pattern around many cities towards catering to these high-end tastes means something else for a public housing board rather than a typically cycle of gentrification, as the development of the Pinnacle resembles that of private property throughout the entire process, including the competition of 227 global architecture firms to design the complex. While private companies have been historically involved in building and repairing public housing, these new projects advocate individual consumerism in the domain of public housing, offering space for privatization and the reassertion of class power while keeping social forces under political

control. (Wang, 2012, p. 377) The Pinnacle puts a twist on the notion in Singapore that households work up through public housing, using their CPF's as social security to break into the minority private market. The completion of these luxury forms of public housing, aimed to draw in a global elite, allows for a unique blend of private ownership in the controllable domain of the public sector.

Starrett City

The 46 buildings that make up Starrett City as one of NYC's "tower-in-the-park" development represent a story of both privatization and community resistance. While 60 percent of the complex is funded by Section 8, the state of New York provided financing for Starrett through the Mitchell-Lama program. Since the 90s, there has been an increased amount of buyouts of public housing projects from the Mitchell-lama program¹⁷ threatening affordable housing. In 2007, Starrett City entered into an agreement to sell the entire property to Clipper Equity LLC. The equity company would have obtained the project for 1.3 billion dollars, a bid so high that the company wouldn't be able to keep the housing affordable if they had any incentive to.

(Mironova, 2014) The result of a public housing buyout is two-fold. When public housing is privatized, much of the long lists of repairs of the projects are able to be made and the property sees a heightened sense of security. However, affordable rent is seriously threatened in these public private partnerships (PPPs), leading to larger scale displacement of public housing tenants.

¹⁷ Beginning as a housing guarantee by the state of New York, the program often leads to "buyouts", as state legislators who reside out of NYC are able to vote on many whether projects move to rent stabilization in privatization.



Starrett City contains over five thousand apartments in 46 buildings. (Bergman)

Starrett City is a symptom of greater shifts in American public housing policy. With the withdrawal of the state from the provision of public housing, private resources must be sourced to maintain and manage the housing units. As Starrett City is commonly used as a case study for the advocacy of private security, arguments could be made that the future of safe, affordable housing must be transferred out of the public sector. However, transitions of policy tend to not fix the problems they create along the way. With the buyouts associated with the Mitchell-Lama program and the tax credit program that came with Hope VI, an environment of deregulation has lead to welfare benefiting developers instead of the tenants of public housing. The criteria for housing projects to stay affordable and in the public sector is low, showing the market it have expanded into the public sector. Within late-capitalism, Harvey describes neoliberal processes is a way in which is there is no market, one must be created. Here we see a gentrifying expansion

of the housing market reaching into areas previously thought to be unable to be capitalized on, as well as in an area originally designed to be public on principle.

iv, c) Neoliberalism and Globalization in Models of Public Housing

Intervention of neoliberalism and globalization on public housing, and many other public programs such as education and incarceration, operate in cultures with varying ideologies, demographics and enactments of public policy. Within capitalist models, such as the state-capitalist context of Singapore and the market capitalist case of the United States, we can see Harvey's neoliberal notion of a market that expands into social organizations that haven't been previously capitalized on.

In Singapore, we see this in a postcolonial context of the financialization of squatter settlements. Those previously living off the grid make a transition into modern life, supporting and participating in domestic and global economies. As a State capitalist example, the entities benefiting and establishing influence is an apparatus of the government. In order to maintain hegemony and class power, the People's Action Party is able to leverage national ideology and authoritarian control through the Housing and Development Board. As a productivist model of welfare, the housing subsidy as well as social control function with the goal of developing with and for the global economy. Hoping to attract more than just foreign investments, the developmental goals of Singapore share a similarity with market-capitalism's power dynamic and will continue to attract an affluent, upper class.

New York City will remain a front line on community efforts to maintain the residential environments and social organizations of large public housing projects such as Co-op and Starrett City. The alternative is to follow the paths of other American cities, such as Chicago,

where the communities that did live public housing were dismantled in the guise of fighting crime. As a market-capitalist model, the expansion of the private sector reaches into the domain of the public. Fueled by opportunities to benefit from the remainder of tax breaks and housing subsidies that are provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the promise of profit is irresistible. As many territorial power dynamics, the efforts to preserve communities considered the lowest residue of the economy cannot be reconstructed after being dismantled.

By now, we can start looking over these massive projects, housing millions, and get an idea of how these millions of lives are changing. We can understand from an outside prospect how these provisions of housing in different forms of capitalism shape and transform a lived, social reality.

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