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Inclusive Housing Management and Community Wellbeing

A Case Study of Hong Kong

Kwok-yu Edward Lee
Wai-wan Vivien Chan

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Kwok-yu Edward Lee · Wai-wan Vivien Chan

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FOREWORD BY PROFESSOR EDDIE C. M. HUI, MH, JP

This book takes a unique interdisciplinary approach to “Inclusive Housing Management and Community Wellbeing: A Case Study of Hong Kong.” The book aims to examine the roles of housing management sectors and services in the community of Hong Kong, with concepts of urban cities, sociology, business management, psychology, social welfare models and sustainable community development. Specifically, the author argues that the participatory framework and inclusive housing management strategy based on “corporate social responsibility” have been transformed into emerging community-based initiatives in addressing topics such as living quality, community attachment, social cohesiveness and social equity. I trust that this book will offer readers not only a better understanding of inclusive housing management and community wellbeing but also feasible solutions to social and urban challenges.

Professor Eddie C. M. Hui, MH, JP
Professor, Department of Building & Real Estate
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hong Kong, China
Vice-chairman
Property Management Services Authority (PMSA)
Hong Kong, China

FOREWORD BY DR. TSZ MAN KWONG

Having taught the sociology of housing and engaged in housing management programs for over twenty years, I have come across only a handful of quality books using sociological perspectives to study housing management. This book by Lee and Chan is certainly one of them. Dr. Edward Kwok-yu Lee, my former student, has extensive experience in the public sector of housing management. After his retirement from the Housing Department, he actively participates in the Owners' Committee of the housing estate that he lives in. Therefore, he is extremely familiar with the operations and practices of housing management from both managerial and owners' points of view. Combining theoretical considerations and empirical case studies during a unique period of the COVID-19 pandemic, this book provides strong support for the social inclusion approach in managing housing estates. The authors successfully apply their academic training in studying how social inclusion can help build a cohesive and sustainable community. I look forward to seeing this book

as the start of a new era for using a community- and people-oriented approach in managing housing estates.

Dr. Tsz Man Kwong (Ph.D.)
Senior Advisor and Former Head
College of Humanities and Law,
School of Professional
and Continuing Education
The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong, China

FOREWORD BY MR. SANFORD POON

The socially inclusive approach in housing management explored in this book titled *Inclusive Housing Management and Community Wellbeing: A Case Study of Hong Kong* demonstrates valuable lessons from various practical cases of good reference value. The Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) is honored that the author shared the property management practices at one of our managed estates, Prosperous Garden in Yau Ma Tei, illustrating how we strive to attain social cohesion and enhance residents' wellbeing. Leveraging our experience in managing different public and private properties over decades, HKHS provides our residents a more sustainable living environment. To cater for the changing needs of the residents, we prioritize community concerns, adopt smart living solutions with advanced technologies and enhance intergenerational facilities in our service. This book sheds light timely on the challenges and opportunities for housing management in densely populated environment like Hong Kong and offers inspiration for enriching community wellbeing globally. I believe readers will find practical guidance of this book useful and get

insight on how to nurture social inclusion and connectivity wherever they serve.

Mr. Sanford Poon
Director (Property Management)
Hong Kong Housing Society
Hong Kong, China

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a book in partnership with good friend is a rewarding experience. Our mutual support turns the publication into reality.

This book could not have been completed without the help of some very important persons. We are eternally grateful to Professor Eddie C. M. Hui, MH, JP; Dr. Tsz Man Kwong; and Mr. Sanford Poon for their inspiring Foreword.

Our very special thanks to Chair Professor Tai-lok Lui, JP; Professor Ngai Ming Yip; Dr. Lobo Fung; Dr. Winnie Tang, MH, JP; Madam Enid Ng; and Professor Tong Ng for their invaluable book commentaries.

We are grateful to Madam Mable Cheng and Madam Teresa Chan for sparing time in the in-depth interview with inspiring case presentation.

We are very glad that our research-based book to be included into the book series of Institute of Public Policy Studies in the Frontiers of China's Public Policy. We would like to express our thanks to all colleagues there for their warm support. We are also grateful to the support from the University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKUSPACE).

We acknowledge that the research on Covid-19 in Hong Kong and Mainland China is supported by China's National Social Science Fund for Major Project titled "Disaster Culture' and the Construction of a Strong and Resilient Society from the Perspective of Public Health and Safety" (No. 20&ZD152).

We are indebted to all those housing professionals involved in our interviews. Their professionalism and their unconditional support of our research were exceptional.

Our deep appreciation also goes to our friends and supporters both in Hong Kong and in mainland China, especially to Mr. Lap-kin Ross Cheung and Mr. Tik-man Dick Chong for their valuable help and research support for the whole process of book writing.

Finally, our heartfelt appreciation goes to Madam Kitty Chung and all our family members. Their unshakable love, patience, support and care helped us to successfully navigate the long journey of book writing. This book would not have been possible without them.

Kwok-yu Edward Lee
Wai-wan Vivien Chan

COMMENTARIES FOR *INCLUSIVE HOUSING* *MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY* *WELLBEING*

“The authors successfully placed professional housing management at the center of an understanding and the realization of social wellbeing, inclusion and sustainability. They offered a balanced account that drew from their rich practical experience and analytical insights developed out of a synthesis of different social sciences subjects. While no shortage of useful illustrative empirical cases, this title also offers analysis and reflection on salient issues in the broader social environment. Its readership goes beyond aspiring and practicing professional housing managers.”

—Professor Tai-lok Lui, JP, *Adjunct Research Chair Professor, The Education University of Hong Kong; Director, The Academy of Hong Kong Studies*

“This is a timely new book on housing management which is able to reflect on the immense social and health challenges housing management professionals have faced in the last two decades. A particularly welcoming feature is its intensive coverage on managing the neighborhood which is an important but largely overlooked aspect of housing management. This new book would be able to inspire housing management professionals to better manage the social environment and serve the community.”

—Professor Ngai Ming YIP, *Adjunct Professor, Department of Public and International Affairs, City University of Hong Kong*

“This book provides practical recommendations for advancing inclusive and sustainable communities through participatory and accessible housing management strategies. The book draws on interdisciplinary perspectives and offers feasible solutions to cope with diverse urban challenges. The case study of Hong Kong is particularly valuable because it offers lessons that can be applied to other cities with high-density development. This book is a valuable resource for policymakers, housing managers and community leaders.”

—Ms. Enid Ng, *Programme Director, Housing, Transport and Built Environment, School of Professional and Continuing Education, The University of Hong Kong*

“This book not only presents useful theoretical frameworks for academic pursuits in social sciences but also practical strategies for inclusive housing management under compact urban development. To meet urban challenges ahead, the book offers an insightful professional housing management model in addressing community wellbeing with important implications for the sociology of housing and inclusive city governance.”

—Dr. Lobo Fung, *President, Hong Kong Institute of Certified Property Managers; Managing Director, Academy of Professional Real Estates Services Limited; Past President, Hong Kong Institute of Real Estate Administrators*

“This book is a must-read for all property management professionals thirsty to learn more about how to play a significant and innovative role in enhancing the living environment and enriching residents’ capability and neighborhood empowerment. The book gives an interdisciplinary perspective from a case study of Hong Kong, and I believe that it will be a great read for all who want to make a difference in the community. I was particularly impressed by the vision that Dr. Edward Lee and his co-author shares in chapter one about building cohesive and sustainable communities in the Greater Bay Area. Highly recommended.”

—Dr. Winnie Tang, MH, JP, *Adjunct Professor, Faculties of Engineering, Social Sciences and Architecture, The University of Hong Kong; Founder and Honorary President, Smart City Consortium; Founder and Chairman, Esri China (Hong Kong) Limited*

“A sophisticated city such as Hong Kong calls for quality service from Housing Management and Community Wellbeing. This marvelous book has made great contributions to building an inclusive global city, and its excellent research work is commendable.”

—Professor Tony Ng, *Founder Chairman, Hong Kong & China
Institute of Chartered Economists & Entrepreneurs*

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Dr. Wai-wan Vivien Chan is an Associate Professor at Beijing Normal University–Hong Kong Baptist University United International College (UIC). She completed her Ph.D. at the School of International Studies, University of Technology Sydney. She has published a total of 5 monographs jointly or solely including *Female Chinese Bankers in the Asia Pacific: Gender, Mobility and Opportunity* (Oxford/New York: Routledge, 2020) and *Mobile Chinese Entrepreneurs* (with Chan Kwok-bun) (New York: Springer, 2011). Her research interests are transnational migration, mobile entrepreneurs and Chinese professionals, world cities and the Greater Bay Area.

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Introduction: Housing and Community Building

As one of the world's most significant financial centers and commercial ports, Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated places in the world. Professional housing management is one of the most pronounced sectors in Hong Kong's capitalist service economy. Although professional housing management practices have been recognized as the cornerstone of a quality-built environment, liveability and community building, the study of the roles of housing management in maintaining community wellbeing and its social impacts as a grassroots negotiation mechanism for everyday life in Hong Kong is far behind. This book aims to explore, investigate and evaluate the multiple and dynamic roles of professional housing management services for Hong Kong society in the rapidly changing economic and political era. By repositioning professional housing management as an important driving force in community building, this book argues that the participatory framework and inclusive housing management strategy based on "corporate social responsibility" (CSR) have been transformed into newly emerging community-based initiatives addressing living quality, community attachment, social cohesiveness, social equity, neighborhood involvement, sectorial integration and environmental health through "people-oriented caring services" in meeting the changing needs of local residents.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach from the perspectives of urban sociology, housing management and sustainable community development, this book contributes to a deep understanding of social conflict management from grand-level daily encounters. In addition to the policy perspective, the focus on concrete local community initiatives will provide deep insight for feasible solutions and down-to-earth management practices to cope with diverse urban challenges associated with worldwide pandemics and many other new difficulties emerging from the new wave of political and economic constraints. The case study of Hong Kong resituates research on the nature of urbanization, modernity and capitalism by revealing the ideologies and practices for a better built environment and balanced community wellbeing. Therefore, the Hong Kong experience will benefit any city with high-density development in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and beyond.

INCLUSIVE HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Building an inclusive environment for community wellbeing is recognized as an important pointer of social sustainability from ecological frameworks (Anderson et al., 2020; Awang et al., 2022; Hamstead & Quinn, 2005; Ma, 2018; Mouratidis, 2018; Prochorskaitė & Maliene, 2013; Raffestin & Lawrence, 1990; Sallis et al., 2006). How to enhance community wellbeing, social cohesiveness and environmental sustainability through social and built environments has been a common concern of governments, community leaders and scholars. As the home represents a comfortable, secure and safe place and is central to our happiness and sense of belonging in the community, ensuring everyone living in a safe, secured, affective, customer-oriented as well as well-managed built environment and neighborhoods with balanced social, cultural, commercial and community facilities can be a major propeller for empowering people, nurturing a sense of belonging and securing their active participation in communal as well as social and economic activities. Therefore, the cultivation of social relationships and proper management of the built environment entail not only the enhancement of living quality but also other community benefits (Winston, 2022). How to achieve the social targets of community wellbeing, such as residential satisfaction, community support, social integration, local connectivity, neighborhood cohesiveness, cultural transformation, social capital, place attachment

and sense of community, is closely linked with the service quality and leadership of housing management (Underwood, 2010).

The study of Malek et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of social inclusion in nurturing social wellbeing for building smart cities. The notion of social inclusion has emerged as an important social strategy in Hong Kong in nurturing harmonious relationships between man and his fellow man, fostering social integration, cultivating social connectivity, respecting diversity, promoting social engagement, building social capital and developing a caring community (Chan et al., 2014). It is imperative to build up an inclusive community taking into consideration the growth of population, the rise of social conflicts, the challenges of urbanization and cultural diversity in a locality where East meets West. The urban community in Hong Kong is a complex multigroup society with a high-density living environment characterized by heterogeneity, diversity and complexity. While urban living can be liberating with opportunities for individualism and autonomy, Wirth (1938) and Simmel (1950) identified the negative aspects of urbanism of high-density living in generating impersonal and secondary relationships between residents. The negative impacts of poor liveability and building-block density have contributed to the depression of occupants in Hong Kong (Sarkar et al., 2021). The study of Mouratidis and Poortinga (2020) found that although compact urban form has higher levels of urban vitality, it has lower levels of social cohesion when compared to low-density development, as residents living in densely populated neighborhoods are characterized by impersonal neighbor ties. Since different residents may have differential needs and unique preferences, social division is therefore a natural social phenomenon, as people living in the urban community come from different backgrounds with unique cultures, customs and values. In the capitalist society of Hong Kong, the keen competition for social resources, the unequal aspects of social life, the negative pressure from work-life conflicts, the disintegration of families, the increasing social polarization, the crowding and deteriorating housing conditions in general and the rising social and cultural division are reflections of social tensions and cultural conflicts among different social sectors of the population.

The rise of serious social conflicts in recent years in Hong Kong indicated that our urban community replaces consensus with dissension. The conflicting urban landscape is characterized by disorganization and anomie as a reflection of the structural contradiction in social, economic and cultural aspects. As Hong Kong is encountering political eclipses,