



The Social Science of Infrastructure: Singapore's Residential High-rise History

Speaker: Professor Jane M. Jacobs
Urban Studies, Yale-NUS College

Chair: Dr Kamalini Ramdas
Department of Geography, NUS

Date/Time: Friday 12 October, 3.30pm

Place: Earth Lab (AS2 #02-03), Department of Geography, NUS

Abstract

This paper examines the role of social science in stabilizing the Singaporean adoption of the high-rise typology in its state-led scheme of housing a nation.

Drawing on in-depth interviews with former officers and archival research, the paper shows how generating social scientific facts was central to the proper calibration and legitimation of the large socio-technical transformation realised through housing.

The paper details the institutional framing, individuals and instruments of this social scientific effort, and explores how it functioned as a supplementary technique that helped to actualize Singapore's post-independence housing infrastructure.

About the Speaker

Jane M. Jacobs (BA Hons, MA, PhD, CFBA) is Professor of Urban Studies at Yale-NUS College, Singapore.

She is the author of *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City* (Routledge, 1996), *Cities of Difference* (Guilford, 1998), *Uncanny Australia* (MUP, 1998), and *Buildings Must Die: A Perverse View of Architecture* (MIT Press, 2014), as well as numerous peer review papers. Trained as a cultural geographer, the enduring concern of her scholarship has been the relationship between society and space, including the social shaping of urban built environments, the politics of heritage, and the practices of everyday habitation at both the city and the domestic scale.

Her current research is a history design innovation in Singapore's large-scale housing provision system, 1960-1995.

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