K.C. Ho

Neighbourhoods for the City in Pacific Asia

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For Poh Ling, Fei, Xiao and Ren Jie

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Preface

A 2017 *New York Times* article on the late Clive Davies quoted Melissa Manchester on Davies: "He always wanted me to be current and I always wanted to be timeless."

These two time frames are a good way of describing my intentions for writing this book. The title "The Neighbourhood for the City" is timeless in urban studies research. Simmel, Weber, and the Chicago School have all dealt with the problem of social relations in the city. And the literature is enormous.

And yet the book is current because many of the old issues refuse to die, like the question of localised collective action and the issues and impacts this raise. I have taken a more materialist concept of community by focusing on neighbourhood projects and how these pull residents together and how these projects create amenities that critically add to the liveability of cities. New forms of urban development emerge in the political and economic changes faced by Pacific Asia's largest cities. And new forms of urban governance are created by local state and neighbourhood partnerships.

The book makes three contributions to urban studies. First, this book is one of the few in Asian urban studies adopting a multi-sited comparative approach in studying local action in five important cities (Bangkok, Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore, and Taipei) in Pacific Asia. This approach enables comparisons across a number of key issues confronting the city: heritage (Bangkok and Taipei); community-involved provisioning of amenities (Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore); and placemaking versus place marketing (Hong Kong and Taipei). Second, my focus is on local community efforts at the neighbourhood level as an increasingly important third way. This is a sustainable and equitable alternative to state and market avenues of provision in a contemporary urban environment that sees declining state funds for services and amenities and where market provision creates unequal outcomes. And third, most studies ignore city governments, or view them as antagonistic (rights to the city and social movements literatures), or consider them in terms of efforts at planning and economic development (global cities and urban economic competitiveness literatures). My focus is on the collaborative efforts city governments establish with local communities and how this ultimately speaks to the liveability and progressivity of cities.

Acknowledgements

Whoever said research is a solitary activity has never considered the true effort of fieldwork. A multi-sited comparative approach cannot work without the insights and assistance rendered by local experts from these field sites. I take seriously the advice provided by Chabal and Daloz regarding the role of local experts in helping the researcher develop a better understanding of the local context. These friends gave generously of their time and advice. They are: Pornpan "Noi" Chinnapong, Tanaradee "Gai" Khumya and Orana Chandrasiri in Bangkok; Lui Tak Lok, Stephen Chiu, and especially Lam Kit in Hong Kong; Myungrae Cho, and Jiyoun Kim in Seoul; Im Sik Cho, my collaborator for the neighbourhood project in Singapore; and Huang Liling, Chen De-jun, Tai Po-fen, Kai Chiang and Hsieh Yun-Shuian in Taipei. I also thank Dr Paul van der Velde (Publications Officer), and Mary Lynn van Dijk (Assistant Publications Officer) at IIAS, as well as Dr Saskia Gieling (Commissioning Editor) and Drs Jaap Wagenaar (Production Editor) at AUP. I especially thank those who accompanied me for the first field site walk: Lam Kit in Langham; Myungrae in Sungmisan; and Liling in Tangbu. Dr Orapim, we did not do the walk in Rattanakosin, but you pointed out Fort Sumen to me and asked me to "take a look". That look, in turn, brought me to Fort Mahakan and I consider this visit as the starting point of the book project.

The final phase of the fieldwork was conducted during my sabbatical spent first in Taipei. Thanks to Sandra Ma for settling me into National Chengchi University. And to the late Huang Su Ren and the late Lu Yia Ling. The memories of our walks and talks are all the more precious with your passing. The Hong Kong portion of the sabbatical was eased thanks to Stephen Chiu and his gang of comrades at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

And at an earlier time, my teachers who pointed me to urban studies: Bob Cooper; Eddie Kuo; Ed Laumann; and the late Gerald Suttles. It was as a University of Chicago doctoral student that a deeper engagement with the neighbourhood and the city emerged. These were lessons that burrowed deep and which I bring to Asian urban studies.

Then, there are those with whom I had the type of conversations that stretched over many, many years. Chua Beng Huat, Mike Douglass and Anne Haila, I hope you see the fruit of our exchanges in this book.

1   Neighbourhoods for the City

Abstract

As the introduction to the book "Neighbourhoods for the City" takes a broad sweep of the urban studies literature to highlight the issues that are linked to the process of neighbourhood mobilization: relationships between neighbours; the tension between moving versus staying; place-making; and the organization of local interests. Externally, the possibility of a collaboration between the neighbourhood and the city government exists and such partnerships are important for sustaining local action. Following Castells (1983), we see another possibility of how social movements will enlarge the local capacity for action. The factors enabling local participation at the neighbourhood level allow a conceptualization of neighbourhoods as the third way (Fallov, 2010) to city building, an alternative to state and market alternatives. The neighbourhood-based approach may play a special role in building a more diverse and liveable city.

Keywords: neighbourhood interests, placemaking, social movements, neighbourhood relations, urban partnerships, neighbourhood as community

Neighbourhoods for the City represents a systematic attempt to understand the Asian city from the viewpoint of its neighbourhoods. By focusing on the neighbourhood, the book incorporates three distinctive features. The first is an approach that examines the types of relationships in which the neighbourhood are implicated, including, most importantly, their relationship with the city government. In particular, I will examine why city governments need to manage the social and political dimensions of their relationships with city residents and not just focus on managing the economic interests of the city. It is at this level that Asia becomes meaningful in the analysis. In particular, East Asia is a region of sustained economic development. This implicates its largest cities, which are the engines of growth and also of middle-class consumption. It also places an enormous strain on its neighbourhoods

because of the pressures of gentrification and redevelopment, as well as the influx of new migrants to the city. At the same time, East Asia is also a region marked by political change in the form of democratic developments and pressures to decentralize authority from the central state. This, in turn, makes city governments more receptive to the aspirations and demands of its neighbourhoods.

Secondly, by taking a perspective on collective action at the neighbourhood level, this book posts an answer to Tilly's (1973) famous question "Do Communities Act?" Here, drawing on a long tradition in urban studies on the neighbourhood, I look at a set of considerations that are likely to propel the neighbourhood to act in accordance with its perceived interests. It is important to note from the onset that the reference point is the contemporary urban neighbourhood. It is in the contemporary urban neighbourhood where relationships with neighbours tend to be superficial, because so many daily activities are spent outside the neighbourhood — in our workplaces, schools, and elsewhere for our social and recreational activities. Yet, the neighbourhood is where the home is located, and where residents physically spend much of their time after work and school, where they typically stay for years at a stretch. The neighbourhood therefore becomes a depository for memories. Within the neighbourhood, even the less significant relationships that are developed in everyday lives have meaning in shaping affiliations to place. These less significant neighbourhood relations may be the building blocks for collective action. It is this potential for action that turns a neighbourhood of residents into a community that acts based on a common interest.

Thirdly, as the title suggests, this book seeks to examine the ways in which the neighbourhood and the city are interconnected. It is this book's contention that many issues such as liveability, heritage, identity, social sustainability, and even citizenship (through participation), are produced and therefore should be addressed at the neighbourhood level. The more specific way in which neighbourhoods are connected to the city is through the use of their amenities. By drawing on the case studies of collective action on a neighbourhood level in five Asian cities, I intend to show, through examples of neighbourhood activism, how the neighbourhood is connected to the city. This set of connections involves both the learning process with external resource persons and non-government organizations that help the neighbourhood. Significant relationships between the neighbourhood residents and the city government are formed over the co-production of neighbourhood amenities. The neighbourhood remains connected with the city after the completion of the project, in terms of how the experience is

shared with other neighbourhoods and interested organizations. Officials from key neighbourhood organizations may also go on to help the city in other capacities. Neighbourhood activism arises from efforts by residents to organize themselves to enhance or defend their neighbourhoods. These efforts are organized around neighbourhood projects (e.g. neighbourhood enterprises, a cultural park, the community annex [see Table 3.1 row 3]) and may be supported by government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The book will show how neighbourhood projects should be treated as social amenities that support the social life of the neighbourhood and, through amenity use by residents and visitors, link the neighbourhood to the city.

Processes that begin at the neighbourhood level can scale up to the level of the city. The diversity of aspirations expressed at the neighbourhood level critically build up the social life of the city and enable a conception of urban liveability beyond the narrow confines of city indicators, which are popular in city ranking exercises. Neighbourhoods also build up the political life of the city. The collective action taken in the neighbourhood represents decisive steps in citizen action. This is an important local link in the shaping of city politics and a factor to consider in the accounting of urban constituencies by national political parties.

1   Co-operative Elements in Neighbourhood Collective Action

Peterson (1981: 20-21) points out that it is possible to identify city interests because the work of city governments link them in a network of relations to city residents and businesses. City governments are involved in a range of housekeeping and development functions that bring them into direct and regular contact with neighbourhood residents. In many instances, this makes them partners with the local residents of the city.

There is, however, a range of local government responses to neighbourhood activism. At one end of the spectrum of the neighbourhood-government interaction, resistance and local collective action are an outcome of conflicting goals and divergent interests between communities and government. At the other end, there are the types of partnerships that require collaboration for the construction of neighbourhood projects. From the government's end, this can come in the form of funding, regulatory approvals, and other types of advice and support. Somewhere in the middle of this spectrum is a mutual avoidance position. Neighbourhoods may embark on their own

neighbourhood enhancement projects, largely ignoring the local government. However, more common is the situation in which local governments provide fairly basic services, ignore local neighbourhood aspirations, and perhaps pay a bit more attention to the local electorate when elections are near.

Within the broad spectrum of neighbourhood-government relations is the possibility of collaboration. It is here that this book is situated. I argue that there are both conceptual and empirical bases for the alignment of interests between neighbourhoods and governments. There are good reasons why city governments will want to partner neighbourhoods in their projects. Bowles and Gintis (2002) point out that local residents are effective partners in neighbourhood projects because the proximity and inevitable contact among residents in daily life enhance the ability to enforce local norms and reduce free-rider problems. With proper government and legal supports, neighbourhood-level governance can be an effective agency to solve a class of problems at the local level. Likewise, Evans (1996) goes on to suggest productive ways in which the state can co-operate with communities through a complementarity of motives and tasks as well as an embedding of government-neighbourhood relations. Embedding comes about with the establishment of co-operative relations through the operation of state-funded projects. The embedding of government-neighbourhood relations is especially important to Evans (Ibid.) because the sustainability of local projects requires the active participation of residents.

Classics on the work of city governments, such as Peterson's (1981) *City Limits* and Clarke and Gailes' (1998) *The Work of Cities*, focus on the critical developmental work of city governments in making cities more competitive. Instead, the focus of this book is the critical ties between cities and the neighbourhood. Competent city governments spend much time tending to their networks to make the city competitive. Much of the economic planning that cities do, creates the landscapes that make the cities iconic. This strengthens local industry against the vagaries of the global economic climate and ensures skilled labour remains and contributes to the city's economy. But in terms of the city government's relationship with neighbourhoods, it is the last mile of provision — using a telecommunications provision analogy, the directing of resources to local areas and empowering residents and small businesses — that makes cities liveable.

This last mile of provision requires city governments to listen to what neighbourhoods want. On 21 December 2011, I interviewed a neighbourhood organizer from Sungmisan.[1] At the time of my research, Mayor Park had been

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1   The neighbourhood building projects of Sungmisan are discussed in chapter 4.

elected Mayor of Seoul and the neighbourhood organizer in question[2] was engaged to allow the city government to create more active neighbourhoods like Sungmisan. This opportunity was also a cause for reflection. He told me:

> The thing to remember is that the first generation here were not activists at that time. They just cared about their children's education. However, people who want to copy Sungmisan's model seem to have an activists' identity, so they try to teach how to build a community, meaning they get used to the top-down way. In this context, replication seems to be difficult. So, when I attend the meeting organized by the city government for making communities like Sungmisan, I ask them to think of the reason why they want to make a community and what kind of community. (interview, 19 March 2014)

While city governments remain a central element in this book, other local organizations are also critical resources. Beaumont's (2008) work on faith-based organizations in the city highlights several important points. Firstly, to the extent that welfare expenditures have either remained stagnant or been reduced in cities, both city residents-in-need, as well as local governments with small or declining purses are driven to depend even more on such organizations (Ibid.: 2020-2021). Secondly, while Beaumont touched upon this point tangentially, it is important to argue that faith-based organizations as well as more secular organizations have a history of working alongside the poor and needy, and such organizations have built a reputation and a sense of legitimacy and good relations in such areas. Thirdly, faith-based and secular organizations working in the city not only have bonding capital in the local areas where they work, they also have bridging capital in the form of networks outside such areas (Ibid.: 2021).

An urban network of co-operating social organizations is what makes cities liveable and resilient. Gerald Suttles (1984: 284) reminds us that "local culture is not something that starts full blown but [is] something that accumulates." The idea of a cumulative texture is intriguing in its promise, yet frustratingly difficult to pin down empirically. And while Suttles (1984) described a more general process, our interests are more narrowly circumscribed within the actions of neighbourhood organizers and their supporters, the work of non-governmental organizations in local areas, and the cumulative tendencies these create. In this regard, the city contains a

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2   I have kept the anonymity of officials from government and NGOs unless they appear in other publications.

number of circuits in which knowledge is circulated and adopted. At one end, there are more informal circuits, where tacit knowledge circulates as a result of the loose networks and forums that permeate throughout the city (McFarlane, 2011: 361). At the other end, the more formal and often government-initiated circuits are better resourced in terms of technical advice and project financing. Successful programme outcomes circulate under the positive-sounding term "best practices". These practices often form the work of the government and the output of these circuits become urban policy. The exact nature of this transfer and its associated changes describe what McCann (2011) terms "urban policy mobilities". While McCann (2011) clearly looks at policy that travels beyond cities, my focus is again on the city and its local areas, with the realization that many of the ideas that NGOs bring with them travel from other places and are modified in the process.

The discourse of being efficient and competitive means that government agencies charged with improvements to the city create avenues for such learning among different organizations, providing the supply to match this demand (McFarlane 2011; McCann 2011; McCann and Ward 2012). Unlike government agencies, poorly resourced neighbourhoods with a stronger and more immediate local orientation tend to rely on informal networks as a source for ideas. They also tap into local and regional alliances to gain solidarity. To the extent that successful projects result in physical changes like a neighbourhood park or other local amenities, these are used, celebrated, and stand as an example for other aspirants. Organizers of neighbourhood projects and NGOs are often tied to loose networks. Within such forums, successes and progressive ideas are circulated in the city. Fine and Harrington (2004: 350) point out that "while the mere existence of small groups does not a civic arena make, a high density of independent small groups can provide individuals with multiple, and often cross-cutting, opportunities for affiliation, exposing individuals to varied experiences and points of view". I see this at the level of neighbourhoods, where interests over a broad set of common issues encourage these informal, episodic connections that make the city, in McFarlane's (2011) phrase, a "learning machine".

2   Neighbourhood Interests and Social Movements

The urban social movements' literature work at a scale beyond the specific neighbourhood. Castells (1983), for example, mentions the cumulative effects of coalition building, suggesting that successful movements require a larger, more widespread support base. Mayer (2006: 203) reviewing Castells' *The*

City and the Grassroots, pointed out that, over time, urban movements shift courses and embrace the new issues of the day. While urban movements certainly have their bases in the city, they are not tied to particular cities because their fundamental energies come from national and international connections. Hamel, Lustiger-Thaler, and Mayer (2000: 4), for example, pointed out that "broad-ranged movements have long harboured, at their core, a global dimension linking movement actions within different national contexts, to other collective actors". And when these take on more formal organizational features, the goals of the organization become sharper, but, in their definition, may not connect as well to some of the neighbourhood's other interests. Thus, over time, new issues take hold, leaving older issues, which may or may not be resolved.

And while this is essential for city-wide change, to focus on such effects is also to ignore the other processes that are specific to particular neighbourhoods. While Castells (1983) is interested in understanding the victories at the level of the city, understanding the effects at the level of neighbourhoods is important in the context of the particular diversity of results successful neighbourhood action creates for the city. Not all neighbourhoods want the same thing, even in terms of improvements and additional public amenities. Understanding this diversity of aspirations and outcomes is important for the social life of the city.

Placemaking

A focus on neighbourhood motives requires an examination of placemaking, moving from the Castellian spotlight on episodic moments of protest resistance to more everyday forms of interaction and co-operation. In *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, Lefebvre (1968/1971: 24) notes:

> the quotidian is what is humble and solid, what is taken for granted and that of which all the parts follow each other in such a regular, unvarying succession that those concerned have no call to question their sequence […] and it is the ethics underlying routine and the aesthetics of familiar settings.

This statement forms the very foundation of our call to study the neighbourhood. While neighbourhood activities are humble and unassuming, we follow Lefebvre (1971/1991), who points out that the spaces of the neighbourhood are a sort of container, shaped by external forces (notably capitalist production modes and state practices) but containing the embodied logics

of thought and action. The two parts of this dynamic are both important. Firstly, a top-down approach should note how external forces are inscribed (Merrifield, 1993: 521) and sedimented (Massey, 1984: 120) in place. And, as chapter 2 will show, this set of powerful economic and political forces is accounted for within East Asian cities. Secondly, the bottom-up perspective requires an understanding of "place specific ingredients" that create the propensity for action. What are these place ingredients?

Aside from its concrete physical coordinates, place has both a design and a built form that shape interaction and behaviour, as well as a range of sentiments that its residents develop for it (Cresswell, 2004: 7). Commenting on the buildings (and this can apply more generally to the built environment of the neighbourhood as well), Gieryn (2002: 35) suggests that "buildings incorporate both agency and structure in the sense that we have implemented plans which result in the places we live in, and these in turn influence our behavior". And placemaking can be seen as a diverse range of practices enacted by residents and small businesses. Some of these are just common everyday routines. In discussing the facets of placemaking, Harney (2006) makes the useful distinction of highlighting the quotidian (common everyday routines shared by the group), calendrical (specific dates, events, festivals celebrated or commemorated by the group), and monumental (statues, plaques, and other monuments that commemorate the work of its pioneers, or the collective experience of the group).

Other efforts at placemaking include collective action focused on the neighbourhood. In thinking of collective action, it is important to contextualize neighbourhoods as places of choice for the majority of residents and places where they spend much of their family time and rest time. This character of the neighbourhood is captured in the neo-Marxist argument taken by Storper and Walker (1983: 6-7), that neighbourhoods provide the critical supports for the reproduction of labour:

> a measure of stability is necessary for workers' sanity, nurture and happiness […] it takes time and spatial propinquity for personal support systems to evolve out of the chance contacts of daily life. More time is needed for the central institutions of daily life – family, church, clubs, schools – to take shape. The result is a fabric of distinctive, lasting local 'communities' and 'cultures' woven into the landscape of labour.

The idea, then, that residents and businesses want good for their neighbourhood forms a minimum but important basis for action. The outcomes of such placemaking actions may be modest when compared to the grand plans at

place marketing the city. Through the use of trophy buildings (Olds, 1995), nevertheless, such local actions create some unity at the neighbourhood level, and the completed projects are a shared reminder of this unity (Ho, 2006).

In thinking about the efforts and objective of placemaking, I am also informed by the concept of social sustainability as it applies to neighbourhoods. Social sustainability focuses not on the optimal but the minimum that is necessary for the social life of neighbourhoods. These activities and processes are not episodic but enduring. Social sustainability also relates to a localized and collective well-being in terms of the shared feeling of a sense of place. It is also powered by social capital needed for interaction, participation, and governance (Dempsey, Bramley, and Brown, 2011: 291; Neamtu, 2012: 125).

Chaskin and Garg (1997: 634) point out that neighbourhoods act when they perceive an inability of local governments to solve local problems and issues. Charles Tilly (1973: 213) points out that "a group can't exert collective control over resources without both social relations and some minimum of common identity". And so, it is important to at least sketch out the conditions in which these conditions apply in the context of spatial communities. The fundamental assumption is whether proximity and co-residence have a special role to play in the building of the places of the city. The likelihood that residents in a neighbourhood have the potential to work together and act collectively is premised on the following elements:

Boundaries of the Neighbourhood: Residential neighbourhoods are places where, apart from work and school, residents spend most of their lives and are arguably one of the most intimate of spaces encountered. Kearns and Parkinson (2001: 2103) identify the home area of the neighbourhood as the smallest unit in the neighbourhood:

> typically defined as an area of 5-10-minute walk from one's home. Here residents would expect the psycho-social purposes of neighbourhood to be strongest [...] the relaxation and recreation of the self; making connections with others; fostering attachment and belonging; and demonstrating or reflecting one's own values.

This informal boundary between the self and the neighbourhood is important because it demonstrates how much of the self, and indeed the selves of those who live in the same household unit, is resourced as well as shared within the neighbourhood. It is the neighbourhood where everyday routines are found and also where significant moments are experienced. The daily

routines of residents take them around the home area and perhaps a bit beyond to where the local amenities are: the convenience store; the market; the bus stop; the metro station; the park.

Icons: Within the neighbourhood, which is an essential part of daily routine, residents build memories and attachments that are part and parcel of everyday lives. Hull, Lam, and Vigo's (1994: 109) observation that "the urban fabric contains symbols (icons) that tell us something about ourselves and something about those to whom the symbols belong" aptly applies to the neighbourhood. Osborne (2001: 4) points out that "people produce places, and yet they derive identities from them". Because residents regularly traverse the neighbourhood, they know it intimately and come to identify elements of this neighbourhood fondly, creating a local language made up of the symbols of the place: meeting places; rest places; food stops; and landscape and built environment features (the hill, the clock tower, the red house). I have noted earlier that neighbourhood icons tend to be humble compared to the monumentality of city icons (Ho, 2006). In contrast to city icons, neighbourhood icons (including neighbourhood schools and religious buildings) work to tie place histories to individual and family biographies and such projects are shaped by a shared experience of place and reinforced by shared values that went into the making of such projects.

Relations among Neighbours: While attachment and sociability can be features of the urban neighbourhood, they represent, at best, communities of limited liability where commitments to the present neighbourhood may be given up if needs and aspirations are better met in a different locality (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974: 329). While there are clearly social relations among neighbours, it will be difficult to find the type of strong community relations approximating Toennies' Gemeinschaft.[3] Without the economic co-operation and cultural beliefs binding the place-based community, everyday relations tend to be minimal as residents balance these with those at the workplace and school. It is also important to note Laurier, Whyte, and Buckner's (2002) description of neighbouring as an occasioned activity, primarily because being a good neighbour also means respecting the privacy of others living closest to you. And so, neighbours should be helpful when the occasion calls for it, otherwise to be neighbourly is to be considerate and not to intrude.

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3   For a review of the community studies tradition which began with Toennies, see Brint (2001).

The neighbourhood relations literature paint a realistic view of the role of such relationships in the contemporary city. The notion of neighbouring as an occasioned activity references Mann's (1954) useful distinction between manifest and latent neighbourliness. The type of overt activities often attributed to relations between neighbours such as greetings and chatting or visits to the home are associated with manifest neighbouring. The latent neighbourliness on the other hand, taps into the cognitive dimension and involves a positive attitude towards neighbours and a predisposition to act if and when the occasion requires it. Working with these two concepts, Mann (1954: 164) makes the point that "a high degree of latent neighbourliness suggests reliability coupled with respect for the privacy of other people's lives and therefore appears more likely to be generally acceptable". In thinking about the nature of neighbourly relations in the contemporary city, another useful distinction is made by Henning and Lieberg (1996: 8, 17) about the nature of weak ties. Terming neighbouring relations 'weak ties', Henning and Lieberg are careful to point out that neighbourly relations are more akin to Granovetter's absent ties, which are relations in our everyday lives that are casual and sustained by nodding or greeting. However, such relations should not be dismissed as unimportant. Significantly, Henning and Lieberg's (1996: 20, 22-23) findings from Sweden suggest that such superficial forms of weak ties are easy to maintain at the neighbourhood level and in everyday life. These encounters allow for the conversation that flows within such relationships to maintain a life of its own and, in the process, create feelings of home and security among neighbours.

Manifest forms of neighbouring are likely to be minimal in the contemporary city because of other attachments and responsibilities that remain outside the neighbourhood (Mann, 1954; Henning and Lieberg, 1996). However, even minimum manifest forms of neighbouring, such as the regular exchange of greetings in our daily neighbourhood routines yield important social benefits. Such minimal social forms of encounter in our everyday lives make for a sociable environment. And because residents (especially owners) stay in the neighbourhood over a longer duration, they typically develop a responsibility to help their neighbours and are prepared to lend support should the occasion demand it.

Move versus Stay: While the community of limited liability recognizes the potential for residents to move, do residents differ in their desire to stay? One way to understand the propensity of residents to act in relation to their neighbourhoods is from the framework of the exit, voice, and loyalty literature stemming from Albert Hirschman's (1970) book of the same name.

One feature of this literature is the need for a trigger at the neighbourhood level to gauge the propensity for action. Such triggers would include a change in socio-economic status or ethnic composition (Feijten and Van Ham, 2009). Feijten and Van Ham (Ibid.: 2104, 2106) suggest that when faced with a trigger, those who move likely have the resources to do so and thus avoid the problems associated with the trigger. Permentier, Van Ham, and Bolt (2007: 207) note that the propensity to move is often weighed down by the sunk costs (both transactional and emotional) associated with place. They (2007:209-210) also point out that loyalty (choosing to stay) is likely to be linked to voice options. A useful way of thinking about the issue is from Donnelly and Majka's (1996) two seven-year gap surveys of the impact of changes on the ethnic composition of a neighbourhood in Ohio, following high population turnover and increased crime. While they do not have information about the residents who chose the exit option, their observations about those who stayed and those who moved in are insightful. They (1996: 282) found that residents who stayed "are more connected in a variety of ways to the neighbourhood and to neighbours [...] new residents of the neighbourhood expressed an even greater appreciation of diversity". Thus, if some level of residential mobility and housing choice is assumed, then some evidence of Tiebout's famous model[4] holds, i.e. that residents will move to where there is a fit between neighbourhood characteristics and their preferences for the neighbourhood. For the purposes of this book, what is more important are the viewpoints of those who stay. Their preferences and behaviour suggest that the stayers are likely to depend on social capital and networks to effect positive change. The potential of using the voice option represents the basis of an active neighbourhood.

For stayers, the routines of everyday life and the power of residence create a stakeholder mentality, which fosters co-operative behaviour while respecting norms of privacy. These sometimes create NIMBY (not in my backyard) tendencies but stakeholder attitudes also produce positive effects. As Hunter (1979: 285) points out "it is the sentiment that inheres in personal relationships of proximity, the common fate of shared space that defines the neighbourhood's essential social bond". Everyday forms of trust and

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4   Tiebout's (1956:418) assertion that "the consumer-voter may be viewed as picking that community which best satisfies his preference pattern for public goods" is mentioned by Dowding, John and Biggs (1994: 767) as one of the most-quoted paragraphs from one of the most-cited articles in urban politics. Their systematic review of over forty years of research suggests that at the general level, Tiebout's work has important insights into residential consumer behaviour, but because the elaborations tend to be couched within economic modelling, much of this discussion tends to stay within the urban economics literature.

co-operation and sociability are created through co-residence. Weak ties that are loosely connected provide the basis for collective action based on affiliation and a shared sense of meaning and destiny. Minimal forms of courtesy and casual talk create the starting conditions for awareness and mobilization.

As suggested earlier, the mobilization process represents, in its formation, the idea of the *neighbourhood as community*, a coalescing of a shared identity and purpose around an issue or project. When the successful development of the project allows the project to become an amenity in the neighbourhood (school, park, museum, etc.), the element of identity continues to be shared through involvement in the amenity. Urban neighbourhoods are punctured by many external relations that keep residents occupied in their daily lives. If the idea of community only applies to the neighbourhood when common elements are realized by fragments of the neighbourhood, then in other moments, the neighbourhood exists as a community at rest and in waiting. In thinking of the community at rest and in waiting, it is helpful to think about what Hirschman (1984: 42-57, quoted by Abers [2000: 174]) terms "social energy", elements of collective identity and the episodes of past efforts, successes, and even failures that are capable of being conserved for a long time during which actors may not be involved in collective action.

The Neighbourhood and the Organization of Interests: The next chapter will provide in greater detail the political changes at the national level in East Asia and the effects these have on local government and neighbourhood action. In East Asia, governments set up "outposts" at the level of the neighbourhood and these organizations have both the ability for co-optation, but also representation of various grievances (Read, 2012). The presence of such grass-roots level state units does not prevent other neighbourhood groups from forming. Groups are most likely to be created through the loose networks that already exist at the neighhourhood level if individuals come to associate with a particular issue. Oldenburg (1989), for example, mentions that sociable places that draw in a regular crowd (the neighbourhood provides many good examples such as the park, playground, and café) allow co-associates to talk about a set of common topics in their lives and their surroundings, including the possibility of developments that they are not happy about, thus providing an informal forum for discussion. Fine and Harrington (2004: 345) suggest that through mutual association, framing occurs where local issues not only gain some elaboration, but these are framed within a larger context, connecting these issues with "broader ideologies, symbols and movements". McFarlane's (2011) notion of the city

as a learning machine is a useful concept for understanding these forms of referencing as local issues gain some understanding and momentum through their alignment with circulating ideas. And to the extent that such forms of informal associations result in neighbourhood associations, Tilly (1973: 214) suggests that such associations create some stability of purpose via the storage and disposal of pooled resources. These mechanisms allow for the reproduction of belonging, identity, and sociability and work as a placemaking mechanism that builds and reinforces a sense of the local.

Neighbourhoods for the City

A prime focus of this book concerns the relationship between the neighbourhood and the city. The kinds of urban change I wish to examine start at and have some resolution at the neighbourhood level. This resolution is important for two reasons. To the extent that the outcome of neighbourhood organization and change are amenities that improve the social life of neighbourhoods, then these amenities also benefit the city in the sense that other residents and visitors to the city can have access to these shared amenities. The five case studies I examine cover a range of these amenities, from an alternative school, thrift shop, and food co-operative in the Sungmisan (Seoul) case, heritage sites in Tangbu (Taipei) and Mahakan (Bangkok), and a playground and café in Tampines (Singapore). With the exception of the Sungmisan school and the co-op, which require paid membership, the rest of the examples from these five cases can be termed social amenities because of their ability to be enjoyed by a wider group of visitors, beyond the residents of the neighbourhood. The case of heritage elements in Mahakan and Tangbu, in fact, do more. Because these are unique and represent an important part of the history of the city, their preservation goes some way in defining the nature of their respective cities.

The resolution of these projects also relates to the city in another way. The neighbourhood is connected to other civic organizations in the city. The process of mobilization is often attempted with the help of other organizations and the successful outcome becomes an example for other aspirants. Organizers in a successful locality share their experiences in a city learning network. Besides the benefit of sharing amenities and knowledge, such localized participation brings other significant benefits to the city and country. The idea of a neighbourhood and city government partnership allows for local level aspirations to be discussed. The diversity of these aspirations is important. Not everything that is proposed can be realistically executed and the city must form councils to deliberate and select the more

noteworthy projects that would bring value to the city. The results of these projects create the social liveability of the city, as this adds to the enhanced life spaces of the city. While some amenities of the city, such as museums and botanical gardens, are important in making the city attractive to visitors, it is the amenities of the neighbourhood that matter to its residents. Lastly, as will be detailed in the next chapter, providing opportunities for residents to participate in a collective project allows participants to learn citizenship. This is the case if citizenship requires citizens to contribute to the making of the country. And participation in their neighbourhoods represents a humble start and the project allows for the development of skills and experiences that are essential to an engaged citizenry.

Fallov (2010: 790) suggests that the diverse sets of actions initiated by neighbourhoods may represent the "third way" as an "alternative to 'state-centered' Keynesian universalism and to 'market-centred' neoliberal strategies". According to Fallov (Ibid.: 791), the third way involves an active citizenship developed through local collective action and capacity building at the neighbourhood level. I am mindful of making such a claim in terms of capacity and broad effects because neighbourhood level actions are sporadic. They are often inward-looking and, most of the time, they are poorly resourced and require support from local governments and NGOs. That said, the stakeholding frame of neighbourhood residents creates a set of more permanent interests that can result in collective actions. These collective actions first change the neighourhood, and through these changes they bring something to the city, as the following cases will show. One key but cautionary argument I will make in this book is that the initiatives created at the neighbourhood level create a fresh alternative to state-driven and market-driven ventures and, in this sense, it is a third way. The second key argument made in this book is that such neighbourhood initiatives do not remain local but impact the city in different ways. As will be introduced in chapter 3, the five cases detailed in this book act as examples that motivate and spur others to follow: as neighbourhood resources and public amenities for other city residents and visitors to learn and enjoy (Langham, Tampines, and Tangbu); as heritage projects that embody a fuller sense of place and city histories (Mahakan and Tangbu); and as social enterprises that are creative alternatives to market and state created ventures (Sungmisan).

These represent the additive effects of neighbourhood-level changes on the city. So, understanding how these neighbourhood-level changes are then linked to the city is my way of forging ahead in examining city building and city effects. Therefore, *Neighbourhoods for the City* is an invitation to focus on neighbourhoods and their varied relations to the city. The position

I take in this book is to accept the increasing social complexity in cities as the result of globalization, but to insist that at the grass-roots, at the level of neighbourhoods, there is a set of elements in place that enables sociability and sharing in the midst of a growing diversity, which creates the potential for collective action. And urban neighbourhoods, more than their counterparts in the suburbs, have a dynamic relationship with the city and perhaps, as a result of this, face more challenges. Neighbourhoods in large cities are at the forefront of change, in terms of migration, economic restructuring, and as stages for national politics. Urban neighbourhoods are regularly mobilized in city-wide efforts to improve the city, to reduce crime, or to beautify it; at the same time, they face the threat of a range of externally driven efforts: deindustrialization; gentrification; and redevelopment. This dynamic external environment confronting urban neighbourhoods requires them to be active in the shaping of the life spaces of its residents. While other external agencies, including the local government, can help, neighbours also need to act collectively. And to the extent that neighbourhoods are active, they have a special role to play in the building of a liveable city.

My last reference to Castells (1983) is to say that our ultimate goals are similar, showing how organizing at the local level can lead to important returns in terms of the quality of urban social life. Castells (1983: 105) highlighted this by using San Francisco to point out that "the city became a space of co-existing interests and cultures, unthreatened by any major project", most city residents "concentrated on this local existence, on the neighbourhood's life, and on their home's comfort and beauty".

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