

A Decentralized Centralization in Cultural Heritage Management of Singapore

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Abstract

In view of the importance of cultural heritage management, this paper aims to review and critically think of a cultural heritage management structure combining decentralization and centralization, by examining the managerial issues associated with architectural heritage conservation in Singapore. Its heritage management structure is interpreted around statutory boards and their grassroots support, drawing a clear picture of how Singaporean cultural heritage is preserved and managed in a decentralized-centralization structure. On this basis, a critical thinking about Singapore's structure of cultural heritage management is developed. This paper found out that Singapore with a typical centralized managerial structure set up statutory boards as governmental agency to enhance the flexibility of operating conservation projects, avoiding possible weakness of state-centered management framework. In addition, this paper argued that a management system in combination with centralization and decentralization seems commonplace around the world, on the grounds that a pure centralized structure is often accompanied by cumbersome bureaucracy and the function of a pure decentralized structure is generally constrained due to possible stereotyping behaving and thinking way of civil servants with professional backgrounds.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Management, Centralized Structure, Decentralized Structure, Architectural Heritage Conservation, Singapore

1. Introduction

Heritage conservation, as a fascinating meditation on the ways we remember who we are and where we are from, has become one of the top cultural responsibilities for us, a shared common view in the world. This leads to numerous practices in communities around the world. Despite our superhuman efforts, the loss of historical memory still is hardly unique to our age due to rapid sociocultural mutations during our lifetime, such as globalization, climate change and massive urbanization. This sets a growing concern for cultural heritage management, as a comprehensive knowledge of diverse management structures of cultural heritage can assist heritage practitioners better define issues and identify possible solutions to the problems emerged in their conservation projects. Such a concern imposes management demands on the state to set up policies and administrative programs as well as financial incentives, guaranteeing the quality of preserving and caring heritage resource.

Given that heritage conservation has been an important public responsibility of the state (Pendlebury, 2015), the governments at different levels of many countries are all working within a defined structure oriented toward effective preservation and management of heritage resource. Their structures have received attention by scholars researching on the principles of hierarchical control in heritage management from an administration perspective. In reference to their result, it can be argued that the structures of cultural heritage management can either be defined as hierarchically centralized or decentralized (Koren, 2017; Xu & Qian, 2021). Although heritage management structure varies from country to country, there seems no pure centralized or

decentralized structure; but rather, a blend of centralization and decentralization is commonplace (Crisci et al., 2017; Shoup, Baraldi, & Zan, 2014), particularly when a global reform movement in public management has been vigorously underway since the 1980s, under the sway of New Public Management arguing that the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of public sectors can be ameliorated through the instrumentalization of public service, i.e. decentralizing responsibilities (Kettl, 2000; Rosenbloom, Kravchuk, & Clerkin, 2022). Whereas, it would be an astonishing fact that scholars of public management have rarely included the heritage sector in their research agenda, putting their marginal focus on a change in heritage management structure.

In studying these contemporary developments of cultural heritage management affected by varying public management policies, Singapore is an interesting and typical case in point, due to its well-organized practice of preserving and managing cultural heritage inherited from different ethnics and cultures. As a gateway to the East and West, Singapore presents for a multi-cultural integration in heritage field. A long period of non-independence and colonialism: British colonialism (1819-1942), Japanese Occupation (1942-1945), the postcolonial period (1946-1963), and union with Malaya (1963-1965), leaving Singapore a vast cultural heritage, recounting thousands of stories of Singaporean aboriginals and immigrants, as well as European colonial and expatriate families (Figure 1). Although this modern state does not have a long-established tradition of heritage conservation, its cultural legacies are preserved and managed effectively in a systematic structure. Above all, Singapore is typical for its centralized governance, but since 1980s the trend of decentralization aiming to increase the degree of specialization in public service has been emerged; statutory boards specialized in heritage conservation and planning were established, a close response to a change in Singapore's public management. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the set up of statutory boards serving for cultural heritage conservation of



Figure 1. Pre-Colonial and Colonial Architectural Heritage in Singapore

(a) Malay Houses are typical pre-colonial heritage building. They were built on stilts and raised above the ground (or water, depending on their location) (b) Colonial building: Old Parliament House built in 1827 (c) Colonial building: Caldwell House at CHIEMES built in 1840-1841

Source: National Archives of Singapore

Singapore, facilitating a comprehensive knowledge of the interaction between decentralization and centralization in cultural heritage management.

2. Emerging Decentralization in Centralized Heritage Management

After the separation from Malaysia in 1965, Singapore had continued to apply British colonial legacy in the formation of its overall governance, establishing the parliamentary government modeled after the Westminster system (Lam, 2000). Consistent with the overall parliamentary system of governance, the Singapore Parliament set up various standing committees to carry out its duties, including the House Committee, the Estimates Committee, the Committee of Selection, and so on (Tay, 1999). The parliament system is originally set up to guarantee political neutrality, centralized structure, loyalty-based attitude, and so on (Haggard & Kaufman, 2021). Counter-productively, however, new-established government of Singapore was confronted with many challenges especially housing shortage, population expansion and overcrowding in slums, after its independence. In this case, a series of urban renewal projects must have been launched in the 1970s and 1980s (Boey, 1998; Eng, 1992). At that time, construction projects concerning urban renewal move like a tornado, taking everything in its wake. There are many architecturally-significant buildings being torn down, such as the Adelphi Hotel at the junction of Coleman Street and the Central Police Station at South Bridge Road, giving way to urban redevelopment (Chang, 1997; Pheng & Wong, 1997) (Figure 2).



Figure 2. The Disappearing Past for the Present

The Adelphi Hotel: (a) The Adelphi Hotel was demolished in 1979; (b) The Adelphi Complex, a 10-storey hotel, retail and office block, was completed in 1985, standing on the site of the old Adelphi Hotel.

The Central Police Station: (c) The Central Police Station at South Bridge Road was demolished in 1978 to make way for the widening of Upper Pickering Street; (d) South Bridge Centre, a shopping and office complex, was built near the former site of police station in 1985.

This might be a resigned choice that the “displace, destroy, replace” tactic was favored by the government, as historic building conservation was regarded as unaffordable due to the scarcity of land resources in Singapore (Huang, 2013). In effect, during this immediate period after its independence, the Ministry of National Development (MND) was the only authority that is given the duty to protect built environment on land; whereas, its role-playing in architectural heritage conservation appeared to be merely an utopia, considering that Singapore’s central government did not put their focus on architectural heritage conservation, but rather intensive urban construction accompanied by demolish of historic buildings.

Until in 1985 Singapore experienced its first post-independence recession, the government had to introduce a slew of cost-cutting measures to beat the recession (Wilson, 2015). In this context, the government also appeared to rethink previous urban redevelopment strategies and realized that the preservation and restoration of historic buildings can not only suffice the need of space for urban renewal but protect its cultural roots for Singaporeans and make the country more attractive (Kong, 2000). Since then, the importance of cultural heritage conservation especially the preservation of architectural heritage has been receiving its due attention (Huang, 2013). As a chain reaction, the Singapore government had moved towards decentralizing responsibilities, the establishment of intergovernmental statutory boards serving as governmental agency and taking charge of building conservation was on the table and fiercely discussed. From then forwards, a trend of decentralization has begun to emerge in Singapore’s centralized system of cultural heritage management, more or less. In Singapore’s case, it is noteworthy that decentralization in its state-centered system does not refer to the devolution of all powers, instead, national or supreme authorities still can control their local or subordinate authorities by remaining some decisive powers with varying degrees.

3. Establishment of Statutory Boards in Centralized Heritage Management

Singapore inherited a Westminster system of government from the British to establish a parliamentary republic, as mentioned above, where the executive power lies in the hand of the cabinet composed of fifteen ministries. Of them, there are two ministries responsible for preservation and protection of cultural heritage: the Ministry of National Development (MND) and the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY). In response to the trend of decentralizing responsibilities, the ministries delegated most of their specific duties to their statutory boards (Saunders, 2005). In the field of heritage conservation, the MND set up the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), the MCCY set up the National Heritage Board (NHB) that has delegated all relevant responsibilities for building conservation to its Preservation of Sites and Monuments division (PSM). The internal statutory boards have more flexible powers than other governmental departments, but the members of these statutory boards were appointed by corresponding ministries and their autonomy was constrained by the central government to some extent.

Meanwhile, two enforceable laws on conservation issues, the Planning Act 1998 and the

Preservation of Monuments Act 2009, provide legal bases to the work of relevant statutory boards. The majority of Singapore’s architectural heritage are designated as Protected Historic Building by URA under the Planning Act. The conservation and restoration of these listed buildings must be conducted in accordance with specific conservation guidelines issued by URA, in order to integrate building conservation with the needs of urban planning. Comparatively, remarkably significant architectural heritage with national significance can be designated as National Monument by PSM under the Preservation of Monuments Act. The national monuments are subject to considerably more stringent rules and regulations, non-compliance with conservation guidelines on national monuments may cause large fines and a jail term (Figure 3).

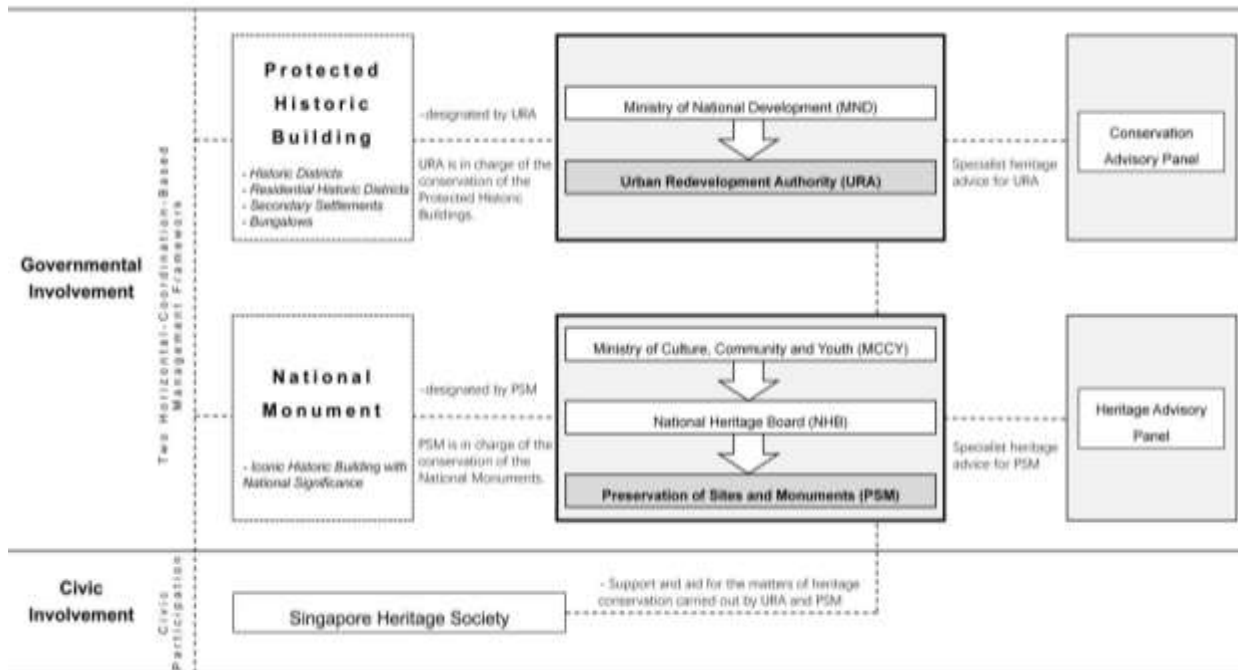


Figure 3. Singaporean Structure of Cultural Heritage Management

Source: Author

3.1 Heritage Practice Implemented by URA

As the national planning and conservation authority, the URA’s approach is to list architectural heritage as Protected Historic Building in the legal framework provided by the Planning Act. To date, there are over 7,200 buildings in more than 100 areas that have been designated for conservation (Urban Redevelopment Authority, 2021). The listed Protected Historic Buildings comprise largely shophouses (Note 1) and bungalows and are located mainly in the city center and around its fringes.

The building conservation and restoration is guided by the fundamental 3R principle, namely Maximum Retention (Note 2), Sensitive Restoration (Note 3), and Careful Repair (Note 4).

Meanwhile, for the works on protected historic building in conservation areas, specific conservation and façade restoration guidelines must be complied with in order to ensure the quality of building conservation. There are four types of conservation areas: Historic Districts (Note 5), Residential Historic Districts (Note 6), Secondary Settlements (Note 7), Bungalows (Note 8) (Aygen, 2013; Urban Redevelopment Authority, 2017) (Figure 4).

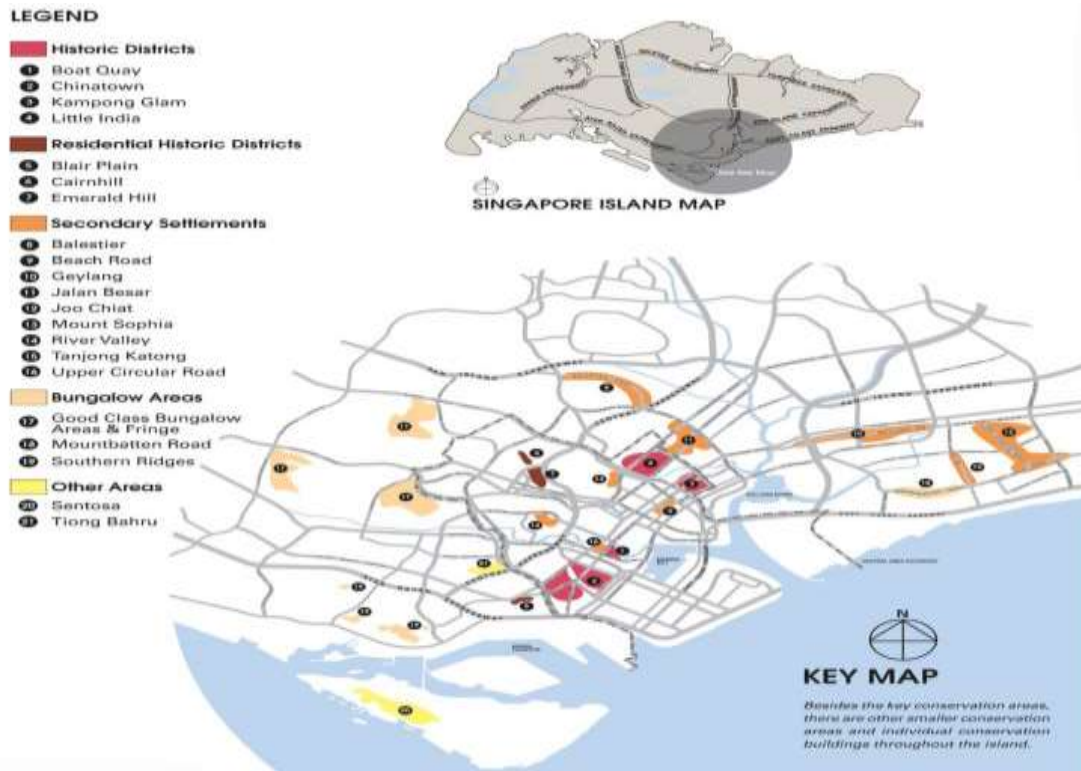


Figure 4. Key Conservation Areas with Listed Buildings in Singapore

Source: Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore

Taking into account that policy incentive setting has a direct impact on technical innovation in conservation and restoration of architectural heritage, URA launched a program annually since 1995, Architectural Heritage Awards (AHA), in order to recognize a high quality and sensitive restoration to listed buildings (Table 1) Here, it should be emphasized that this scheme concerns not only protected historic buildings designated by URA but national monuments designated by PSM (Urban Redevelopment Authority, 2021). In 2020, this award scheme was paused and then relaunched in 2022 under a comprehensive consideration combined with more facets of skills and efforts in the upkeep and management of heritage buildings.

Table 1. Architectural Heritage Award-Winning Projects 2016-2022

Year	Award Categories	Winning Projects
2022	Award for Conservation	Raffles Hotel
	Award for Conservation & Innovation	St James Power Station
2019	Award for Restoration	Temasek Shophouse
2018	Award for Restoration	Jurong Town Hall
		28, 30 & 32 Madras Street
	Award for Restoration and Innovation	2 Mactaggart Road
2017	Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts	Kwek Hong Png Wing and Riverfront Wing, Asian Civilisations Museum
	Award for Restoration	Cathedral of the Good Shepherd
	Award for Restoration and Innovation	320 Havelock Road
	Special Mention	The Red House
2016	Award for Restoration	13,15 & 17 Stamford Road (Capitol Singapore)
		Church of Saints Peter & Paul (225A Queen Street)
	Award for Restoration and Innovation	Sultan Mosque (30 Muscat Street)
		72 Club Street
	Special Mention	30 Beach Road (South Beach)

Source: Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore

In the designation of protected buildings and their conservation practice, URA must be in consultation with the Conservation Advisory Panel that consists seventeen members appointed by the minister of MND. As URA must designate protected buildings under careful consideration for the needs of urban planning, the members of advisory panel are mainly composed of architects and urban planners. There are some other consultation commissions being established to provide advice in their expertise, such as the International Panel of Experts, Design Advisory Committee, and Design Guidelines Waiver Committee (Ling & Kog, 2013), which can aid URA consider the specifics of every conserved building, and balance the conflicting interests between

building conservation and urban development.

3.2 Heritage Practice Implemented by PSM

PSM put more attention on architectural heritage with national historical and cultural values as well as symbolic significance (Lim, 2017). According to the Preservation of Monuments Act, any buildings can be protected as a national monument with the prerequisite that PSM recognizes the historic, traditional, archaeological, architectural and artistic values of such heritage. As of August 2022, a total of 75 architectural heritage has been designated as National Monument or Historic Sites (National Heritage Board, 2021) (Figure 5).

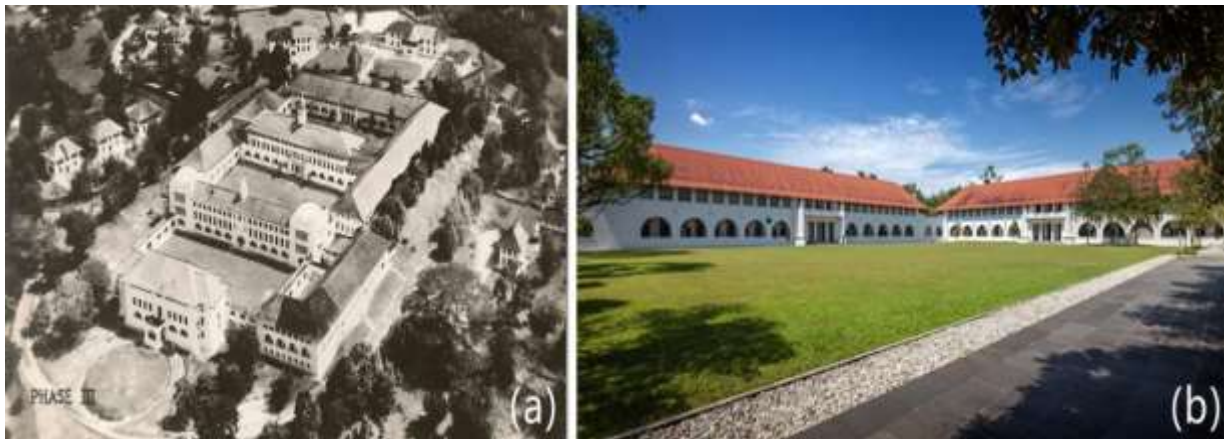


Figure 5. An Example of National Monuments: Bukit Timah Campus founded in 1928

Source: National Heritage Board of Singapore

National monuments are accorded the most stringent measures of protection. According to the Preservation of Monuments Act, the owners and occupiers of national monuments should take all reasonable measures ensuring that the national monument is properly maintained at all times under specific technical guidelines issued by PSM, and any demolition, reconstruction, alteration, repairs, renovations or repainting with prior written permission by PSM is forbidden. PSM must be informed of any repair or upgrading works in National Monument as early as possible, as the permission from PSM is a requisite for such work (Table 2).

Table 2. Works Required for Permission from PSM

Type of Work	Description
Demolish	Demolishing of any parts within the gazette boundary.
Reconstruction	Rebuilding any part of the National Monument that was historically present.
Alteration & Addition	Any building extension, alteration or addition to the monument.
Repairs or Redecorations	Repairs or re-decorations of structural elements such as columns, roofs etc., of non-structural elements such as stained glass, tiles, doors, etc.
Repainting	All painting works, both interior and exterior.
Façade Cleaning	All facade cleaning works.
Other Building Enhancement Works	Permanent building signage, façade lighting, repair of damage caused by vandalism and accidents, installation of a complete system.
Change of Use	When an owner has intention to apply for change of use, the owner must inform PSM in writing prior to an application to URA.
Change of Property Ownership	When a owner intends to deal with a monument building and its land affected by the Preservation Order, the owner must notify PSM in writing at least two weeks prior to the change.
Signage Installation Tentage & Stage Set-up	To ensure main facades of National Monuments are not excessively covered by signage and tentages, owners must seek PSM's permission prior to installation on site.

Source: A brief guide for owners and occupiers of National Monuments (2nd ed., pp.6-7), by Preservation of Sites and Monuments, 2022.

In order to advise PSM in the discharge of its functions and assist it with the quality of conservation practice and, after the Committee of Supply 2015 Debate, NHB set up a Heritage Advisory Panel (Lee, 2016). In addition, there are some consultation commissions responsible for advising heritage issues, such as Preservation of Sites and Monuments Advisory Board,

Indian Heritage Centre Advisory Board, Malay Heritage Foundation, Heritage Advisory Panel, National Collection Advisory Panel. Their advisory service may vary in scale and scope, ranging from minor repairs, restoration of specific heritage features, to a full-scale conservation project that calls for engaging a multi-disciplinary team and authority submissions.

4. Grassroots Support for Statutory Boards in Heritage Management

From a perspective of public administrative, Singapore's centralized system of heritage management originally represents some degree of administrative elitism with its considerable expert involvement in the policy- and decision-making process, especially in terms of formulating and managing heritage preservation projects. Moreover, since the 1980s, the trend of decentralizing responsibilities accompanied by the set up of statutory boards leads to the fact that a considerable number of officials serving for the preservation and management of architectural heritage have entered public service with professional backgrounds such as urban planning, architectural conservation and design. This trend is unproblematic if the performance of these civil servants serving for statutory boards is qualified, however, their professional background seems to have triggered them to give somewhat priorities in their policy-and decision-making from their own disciplines.

Heritage management is usually perceived as a public service with the aim to maintain social cohesion, meaning that heritage issues must be deemed to have enacted in the public interest (Carter & Grimwade, 1997; Logan, 2011). Here, in a broadest sense the public must be seen as the body of taxpayers who are financially contributive to survey, conservation and presentation of heritage, then the tourist public who makes a substantial contribution to maintenance and promotional costs through entrance fees, and the public who is associated with educational and academical purposes (Blake, 2011; Jokilehto, 2011). Given the differing demands of these public groups, it is tricky to achieve a trade-off between the public and the civil servants of statutory boards. From a perspective of expertise exchange, sufficient communication and knowledge exchange can make different sectors better informed and skilled, enabling the statutory boards to make effective decisions and initiatives sustaining the preservation and management of cultural heritage (Hill, 2016; Xu, Qian, & Wen, 2022). In this regard, various ways promoting civil engagement in heritage practice have been set up, assisting statutory boards with the performance of their duties in heritage conservation.

4.1 Private Sectors

From the 1980s onwards, the government has launched a series of initiatives to promote the engagement of private sector in the field of heritage conservation through heritage sale program (Ooi, 2002; Stubbs & Thomson, 2017). In 1987, URA carried out Singapore's first conservation program regarding to shophouses located in the Tanjong Pagar area where a total of 220 old dilapidated shophouses were required for renovation. As a majority of this area is privately owned and the rest is state-owned land, URA conducted intensive talks and meetings with building owners to persuade them to restore their buildings. As a result, URA restored 32

buildings of them as a template, and the remainder was released by URA for sale to private sector. Private sectors taking charge in building restoration were allowed to make a profit from renting after the completion of restoration. At the same time, their restoration costs can also be compensated through some incentive measures, such as phasing out rent control, permitting rezoning, and investing substantial amounts into the infrastructure (Kong, 2011). Since then, an increasing number of private sectors have been involved in the preservation of historic buildings. For giving extra impulse for private sector participation, in 2018, URA also announced a new partnership, Heritage and Identity Partnership, that promotes positive interface between public and private sectors.

4.2 Civic Organizations

In Singapore, there is a short history of the engagement of civic organizations in heritage field, as the preservation and management of cultural heritage is centralized at state level. Following the spreading trend of decentralizing responsibilities, an enormous effort is given by the government for wider public interest in heritage conservation, for instance the Heritage Festivals and Harmony Walks regularly organized by NHB and the Architectural Heritage Season by URA. As a natural outcome, local residents have been increasingly becoming keen in contributing to Singapore's heritage conservation and identity, giving way to the establishment of various civic organizations (Han, 2016; Koh, 2010). One typical example is the Singapore Heritage Society (SHS) founded in 1987, a non-profit and non-governmental organization. In Singapore, in fact, civic organizations work not only on the dissemination of conservation programs and relevant policies, but on the collection of public opinions concerning specific conservation projects. To take SHS as example here. It works not only in concern with historic building conservation, but assists URA or PSM with collection of public opinion about conservation and increased public support (Kong, 2011). In proceeding the preservation and renewal work of Chinatown Historic District by URA, for example, SHS as intermediary had provided potential opportunities for a communication between different sectors, greatly contributing to successful implementation of this project.

5. Discussion

After looking into the complex mixture of decentralization and centralization in Singaporean heritage conservation and management, a wisdom came out naturally that it would be impossible and certainly meaningless to adopt a pure centralized or decentralized system. Both positions – the integration of national resources into cultural heritage conservation within the centralized system and the set up of statutory boards in response to decentralization – have their seductive intellectual attractions. Generally, centralization can be thought of as bringing power and duty more inward toward an internal governmental decision-making body, such as the MND and MCCY in Singapore's parliament, and decentralization can be thought of as bringing delegating duty and associated power more outward toward an internal even external decision-making body, such as the statutory boards URA and PSM subordinate to MND and MCCY.

It is plain that in Singapore the conservation responsibilities are centralized at state level and specific tasks are taken by statutory boards, a system of heritage management blending decentralization and centralization. Participation at community level plays a supporting role with the aim to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of heritage conservation projects implemented by the statutory boards. This finding provides evidence to help suggest that centralization and decentralization are often simultaneously operating in the same national or subnational contexts (Andrews et al., 2009; Hutchcroft, 2001). Whereas, in which case heritage management structure should be designed as centralized or decentralized is still a key consideration for effective heritage conservation, since how cultural heritage is preserved and managed has much to do not only with administrative efficiency but also with ability to respond to new demands and changing circumstances (Andersen, 2004; F. Yuksel, Bramwell, & A. Yuksel, 2005). In Singapore's case, it would be an undoubted fact that a state-centered management framework fits its practical situations, since in this city state without local government level a centralized control system can lead to more efficient utilization of resources necessary for heritage conservation (Peters & Savoie, 1996). However, there are two sides to everything, creating paradoxes in practice. Centralized framework can provide for a maximum of control and ensure all the work done is performed efficiently in accordance with the same general policies and principles, but a lack of flexibility in administration often constrains its function as it would be (COX III, Buck, & Morgan, 2016; Neck, Houghton, & Murray, 2020). The decentralization trend gradually emerged after the first recession in 1985 may be an illustration for the vulnerability of centralized system in resource management. In terms of promoting efficiency and performance by decentralizing responsibilities, Singapore established two statutory boards as governmental agency, aiming to offset administrative pressure from overloading with the implementation of conservation duties. In doing so, the designation and conservation of cultural heritage is actually in charge of the statutory Boards. Flexible and independent executive powers are delegated to them, avoiding the weakness of centralized structure, meanwhile, their work are still overseen by the government, optimizing its function as much as possible via top-down monitoring. In this sense, decentralization appears to have become a antidote to cumbersome bureaucracy usually emerged in centralized administrative structure.

Although the combination of centralization and decentralization is a rational and intelligent choice for effective cultural heritage management, the extent to which heritage management structure is centralized or decentralized is still a key consideration, since how cultural heritage is preserved and managed has much to do not only with administrative efficiency but also with ability to respond to new demands and changing circumstances (Coombe, 2012; Letellier, 2015; Vakhitova, 2015). In Singapore's case, there seems no clear clues drawn on; but that the engagement of private sectors and civic organizations are highly encouraged seems a evidence to suggest their strong willingness to strengthen the degree of decentralized in current system of heritage management. On the other hand, of course, the encouragement of grassroots participation is somewhat linked to the ownership of private heritage buildings. As a young independent nation, Singapore made efforts to critically view and draw on possible experience

from western countries, such as the sale of heritage building by URA. In the West, heritage sale is often deployed as one important approach to building conservation and restoration. For example, in Italy the state-owned heritage buildings can be sold to private sectors (e.g. investment company) that must undertake statutory conservation duties and necessary expenditures. Such a scheme can help alleviate financial pressure of the government, thus, Singapore employed this measure in its practice of architectural conservation. But in Singapore it is tricky to tackle a sale program of heritage building, as most conserved buildings are privately owned shophouses and bungalows. In this case, active engagement of civic organizations appears to provide a base for effective communication between the government and building owners, assisting with the performance of these statutory boards in practice and making the decentralized centralization in heritage management further firm.

6. Conclusion

As a product of national political and administrative history of a country, the structures of cultural heritage management vary from country to country. Singapore's heritage management framework can be viewed as a special case, on the grounds that its heritage management system and relevant policies are somewhat similar to western countries and moreover blends decentralization and centralization in its heritage practice. This study aims no to make a simple judgement on either centralized or decentralized administration, but rather to comb through the emerging trend of decentralization in Singapore's case for figuring out how statutory boards as governmental agency work on architectural heritage conservation issues, meanwhile to describe how the grassroots support given by private sectors and civic organizations benefits the work of statutory boards, from a perspective expertise exchange.

In existing literature, at theoretical level, the studies concerning Singaporean cultural heritage issues mainly directed at conservation projects (Yeoh & Huang, 1996; Yuen, 2006) and the link between heritage and tourism (Chang, 2000; Henderson, 2003). Although there are a sprinkling of scholars making efforts to analyze the preservation policies of cultural heritage and urban environment (Kong, 2000; Lee, 1996; Tan & Ti, 2020), more or less involving the discussion of administrative structure where such policies are implemented, their research is mainly conducted from a perspective of policy effectiveness, allowing no profound knowledge of how cultural heritage management is structured in Singaporean context. In this sense, the results of this study not only bridge the gap that there so far has few ad hoc research to address the framework for cultural heritage management of Singapore, enriching relevant studies associated with the preservation and management of cultural heritage in Singapore. Above all, this study employed Singapore's case to make a critical thinking of how decentralization could be integrated into a state-centered cultural heritage management structure, which has been frequently discussed in the context of western countries (Baraldi, 2014; Dubini, Leone, & Forti, 2012; Placek et al., 2022), contributing to the enrichment of relevant studies in the context of eastern countries. As practical level, this study can open the door to understanding diverse systems of cultural heritage management in the East, from which possible lessons could be drawn on for effective cultural

heritage management. In return, this study can also somehow make contributions to the practice of cultural heritage conservation of other countries especially the ones sharing similar status with Singapore, providing them a fresh perspective to review or promote their performance of heritage conservation.

All in all, this study made its own contributions at theoretical and practical level, but the results mainly direct at theoretical level nevertheless, which can be improved in future research. In other words, the actual effectiveness of Singapore's decentralized centralization structure in heritage field could be explored via qualitative or quantitative method; in doing so, more deeper insights could be obtained.

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Notes

Note 1. Shophouses are a prevalent building type in Singapore's architectural heritage. They are mostly constructed between the 1840s and the 1960s, with generally two- to three- stories high, and built in contiguous blocks with common party walls.

Note 2. Maximum retention indicates that selective replacement should be considered only when absolutely necessary.

Note 3. Sensitive restoration indicates that buildings should be restored seriously according to relevant conservation guidelines.

Note 4. Careful repair indicates that any alteration or addition to structural elements should be done in the most sympathetic and unobtrusive way.

Note 5. The historic districts refer to the oldest areas in city, where most buildings are still intact.

Note 6. The residential historic districts refer to the areas that developed close to the city center.

Note 7. The secondary settlements refer to the areas that developed later when people started to move out of the crowded city center to live at the fringe.

Note 8. The bungalows are detached buildings which come in a variety of architectural styles and are primarily for residential use.

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