

Strategic Research on the Void Deck of Residential Buildings in Suzhou Industrial Park —From Physical Space to Social-Spatial Container

Jiawen HAN

Abstract

As a Sino-Singapore joint project, Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP) has incorporated into its own construction Singapore's planning and spatial concepts since the beginning of its establishment, exemplified by the use of void decks in its residential buildings. This study first traces the history and development of void deck spaces in Singapore. Based on the investigation of six residential communities in SIP, it then explores the usage of void decks, their spatial forms and public attributes, and reflects on the essential differences between SIP's void deck and Singapore's. The study finds that, due to a lack of recognition of the sociality and publicness intrinsic to the void deck in Singapore, SIP's planning, design and usage of this specific spatial form is nothing but a mere replication in the physical sense, which stripped the void decks in SIP of any possibility of serving as public space and facilitating communal life. Lastly, this study provides specific ideas and policy suggestions for the renovation of the void deck and the development of residential public spaces in SIP, and proposes to utilise the construction of void deck as an opportunity to cultivate a shift in public space planning that foregrounds the realisation of social dimension of any physical spatial forms in SIP. In sum, by using void deck as an entry point, this paper aims to present new ideas for developing more humanistic and inclusive residential public spaces in SIP in the context of extant high-density residential construction.

Key Words

Void Deck; Residential Community; Public Space; Singapore; Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP)