ABSTRACT

Town Councils have been introduced in Singapore to manage and maintain the public housing estates. The Town Councils are effectively assuming the task previously handled by HDB.

Today, some 6 years after its inception, the diverse views on the roles and performance of the Town Councils pose an interesting issue to examine the impact of Town Councils on the physical, social and political environment, which is the main theme of this dissertation.

This dissertation also attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of the Town Councils in achieving the following objectives:

(1) Maintenance of the housing estates and creation of good living environment;

(2) Facilitate participation by residents in policy making and decision making on local estate management matters;

and

(3) Provide duly elected MPs the opportunity to lead Town Councils, with the authority to decide on what should be done on local estate management matters.
The environmental, social and political impact of the Town Councils are analysed through a survey on residents from the nine selected Town Councils. The survey results show that a large proportion of the residents interviewed felt that the Town Councils have done well in improving the physical environment. The Town Councils have provided amenities and environmental improvement works in the estates to meet residents' needs and make the estates more pleasant and beautiful. The majority of the residents also agree that the conservancy works and maintenance services have improved as compared to the management under HDB. However, most of the residents interviewed felt that the Town Councils have yet to achieve the social goal in encouraging community participation and initiating social services in the estates. Most of the residents also indicated that the Town Councils have made no significant difference to the way they voted in the General Election.

Lastly, recommendations are made to enhance the effectiveness of the Town Councils in improving the physical environment and achieving the social and political objectives.