Dear All,

Last week I was in Ashley and Dorothy’s Landscape studio review where one of the teams presented on their landscape architecture intervention into a new coal mine in the peninsular part of Myanmar, the site having been opened up by a new Thai-Myanmar highway carved through two national parks. The students analyzed the timing of leached pollutants into the water catchment, finding that the problem gets exponentially worse after 5 years. This led to a very smart design solution, which was also an operational plan for the combined extractive and restorative phase of the mine, which phased extraction such that reclamation, restoration and post-production landscape mitigation all occur within the 5-year period. This would necessitate breaking the mine area into smaller production phases than would otherwise have been the case. In the discussion that followed, someone asked who would compensate the mine owner for loss of profit resulting from extending the overall production period for the sake of leaving behind a more sustainable landscape. The answer comes from asking another question: ‘who benefits most directly?’ The people set to gain the most tangible immediate benefits are the communities down-stream.

A day later I was giving a keynote at a Ronald Coase Symposium, which brought to HKU, faculty from the four research centres that bear the name of the Nobel Economics Laureate to mentor a select group of international PhD students. I shared the coal mine pollution compensation story and made the point that while famous political scientists write their theoretical papers about negotiated solutions to problems of social costs, our students (architects, landscape, planning, REC, conservation) deal with these issues as a matter of routine. Lee Benham, Director of the Chicago based Ronald Coase Institute afterwards said to me ‘what you do and what you know is almost totally new to the faculty in our institute’. That faculty includes four other (living) Nobel Economic Laureates.

We would be daft not to make something of this advantage. I would like to initiate an experiment in the 2015/16 academic year, in which the ‘institutional designers’ in REC and DUPAD (students and staff) have an input into design studios in the Department of Architecture, the Division of Landscape Architecture and the Architectural Conservation Program. We already have one joint studio between REC and DoA. I am thinking, however, of simpler interventions such as studio briefs requiring design students to consult institutional design students and the latter being required to offer analysis and advice to the former. This could be introduced into a studio with very little change to current practices. It might involve having REC or DUPAD students (anyone who has taken a course in institutional economics) join a design studio for a few hours at an appropriate point to ask difficult questions about how
the envisioned programme works in practice. Using the example of the coal mine studio, REC students might have been invited at an early stage to help the landscape students expand their analysis and thereby expand the reach, plausibility and innovativeness of their intervention.

An approach I used with my undergrads in Cardiff University was to ask one group (planners) to contract in another group (architects) to prepare a master plan. They were given real money and had the experience of having to write a contract that protected them in the event of poor performance (assessment grades were at stake) – penalty clauses were introduced by some groups without any suggestion from teachers.

Our architecture students could contract REC students as consultants to advise on institutional aspects of their scheme (management, governance, fiscal, compensation and so on). I was in another great design studio yesterday (David Erdman’s ‘Altered Estates’) where I came away feeling the same thing – the designs were superbly conceived and a lot of the discussion by reviewers focused on how the schemes would work in terms of mixing two local populations and how private and public spaces were configured, organized, governed, managed and financed. The design schemes would have been enriched by having an institutional design input at an early stage of the studio and our institutional designers in REC and DUPAD would have had a rich learning experience having to think through the social, economic and governance dynamics of a very innovative architecture.

I invite colleagues to consider the possibilities and get back to me. At some stage we’ll have a lunch time session to share ideas for 2015/16.

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I was saddened to hear that one of DUPAD’s PhD graduates from 2012, Dr. Sacheen Maharjan, who studied under Dr. Roger Chan’s supervision, lost his beloved wife in the recent earthquake in Nepal. We pass on our condolences, thoughts and prayers via Roger. The devastating earthquake (7.8 on the Richter scale) and many smaller ones that followed, badly hit Kathmandu and the nearby region causing serious wreckage with more than 7000 people dead, 14000 injured, 300,000 houses damaged or destroyed and 8 million people affected. Another of Roger’s students, Dr. Kishan Datta Bhatta, (ADB MUP scholar, PhD graduate in 2014) is involved in supporting the most affected people through emergency building surveys. Another two PhD graduates of DUPAD, Dr. Liu Kaizhi and Dr. Hugo Chan, have also initiated post-quake support programs. We wish them every success in this important post-disaster mission.

Congratulations on the achievements listed below.

Chris
Faculty of Architecture

In the fifth edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject, published on 29 April 2015 at http://www.topuniversities.com/, HKU has 33 subjects that are ranked, 10 of which are ranked in the world’s top 20. One of them is the Architecture/Built Environment, which is ranked as 13th in the world.

| QS 2015 World University Rankings by Subject - Top 20 Subjects of HKU |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Subjects** (except for “Computer Science & Info Systems” all of the subjects listed below are also rank 1st in 2015 in HK) | 2015 world rank | 2014 world rank | 2013 world rank | 2012 world rank | 2011 world rank |
| Dentistry (new in 2015) | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| Education | 6 | 16 | 11 | 8 | - |
| Civil & Structural Engineering | 9 | 10 | 8 | 14 | 25 |
| Linguistics | 9 | 18 | - | - | - |
| Computer Science & Info Systems | 12 | 14 | 10 | 21 | 41 |
| Architecture/Built Environment (new in 2015) | 13 | - | - | - | - |
| Modern languages | 15 | 17 | 18 | 15 | 28 |
| Geography | 19 | 25 | - | - | - |
| Law | 19 | 18 | 20 | 16 | 31 |
| Mathematics | 20 | 45 | 44 | 25 | 51 |

The subject ranking criteria are based on 4 critical factors (viz. Academic Peer Review Survey; Employer Survey; Citations per paper and H index) and the relative weighting amongst the 4 critical factors vary by subject.

The table below shows the relative weights assigned by QS to the 4 ranking indicators for individual subjects in the Arts and Humanities disciplines, the number of participating institutions that have been ranked and the total number that have been scored, as some may have been scored but not ranked for technical reasons explained in the QS website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Group</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Academic Reputation % weight</th>
<th>Employer Reputation % weight</th>
<th>Citations per Paper % weight</th>
<th>H-index % weight</th>
<th>HKU 2015 QS world rank</th>
<th>No. Institutions Ranked/Scored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>Architecture/Built Environment</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100/475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art &amp; Design</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Not ranked due to insufficient survey response</td>
<td>100/1126</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Language &amp; Literature</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>300/490</td>
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<td>History</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>200/507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>200/597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern Languages</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>300/1178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>101-150</td>
<td>200/511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Architectural Conservation Programmes

1. Ms. Winnie Yeung Wing-yin (ACP alumna)
   - Ms. Winnie Yeung, a graduate of ACP’s MSc(Conservation) programme, has been appointed by the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) as the Head of Heritage for the Central Police Station (CPS) Centre for Heritage and Art. Winnie, a former reporter of the South China Morning Post and Deputy Editor of HK Magazine, was hired by Sino Heritage as a heritage project manager for the revitalisation of the Old Tai O Police Station as a heritage hotel, which won a UNESCO award for cultural heritage conservation in 2013. Her appointment as the CPS Head of Heritage was announced by HKJC on 17 April 2015, and was reported in the South China Morning Post: [http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1768888/senior-new-staff-appointed-re-energise-controversial-central-police](http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1768888/senior-new-staff-appointed-re-energise-controversial-central-police).

2. Dr. Selia Tan Jinhua (ACP alumna)
   - Dr. Selia Tan, a graduate of ACP’s MSc(Conservation) and PhD programmes, has been promoted to Associate Professor in the Faculty of Architecture, Wuyi University, Jiangmen City. In March, she was honoured by the Guangdong Provincial Government as one of the 100 outstanding women of the year, a provincial-level award that carries the special title “March 8th Red Flag Bearer” (廣東省「三八紅旗手」榮譽): [http://www.wyu.cn/news/news_xnxw/20153115211068461.htm](http://www.wyu.cn/news/news_xnxw/20153115211068461.htm)

3. Dr. Hoyin Lee (ACP staff)
   - On 22 April, ACP Director Dr Hoyin Lee was invited by the HKSAR Government’s Development Bureau to attend a luncheon meeting with the Under Secretary for Development as part of the consultative process for the review of the built-heritage conservation policy. The meeting focused on facilitating building code compliance for the adaptive reuse and refurbishment of heritage buildings.
4. Professor Lynne DiStefano and Dr. Hoyin Lee (ACP staff)

- On 24 April, Professor Lynne DiStefano and Dr Hoyin Lee gave a lecture on “New Design in Old Buildings: Innovative Revitalisation of Heritage Buildings,” invited by the MTR Corporation for the Executive Continuous Learning Programme, at the MTR Corporation Headquarters; attended by 40 executives and senior managers.
1. Ms. Tris Kee

- was invited to present her Common Core class CCHU 9037 as an exemplar to the Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning & Common Core Curriculum Office. Meeting was attended by Professor Grahame Bilbow, Director of Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, HKU; Professor Dai Hounsell, Professor Emeritus, University of Edinburgh, and Professor Gray Kochhar-Lindgren, Director of the Common Core Curriculum, HKU.

- was invited to be the external design review critic to the second year architecture studio at the HK Design Institute on 6 May 2015.

- was invited as a panelist speaker to share on the topic of “effective approaches to assessment within the Common Core Curriculum”, along with Professor H. Corke from Faculty of Science and Dr. SYW Shiu from Faculty of Medicine. Event organized by the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, HKU.

[http://www.cetl.hku.hk/workshop150512/]
2. Olivier Ottevaere

- received the “40 under 40” award in the Architecture category (Asia-Pacific Design Industry) from Perspective:


3. Mr. Tao Zhu

- has passed his Columbia PhD dissertation defense. His dissertation, titled "Liang Sicheng’s Thought Reform during the Maoist Architectural Movements 1949-1959," maps out Chinese architects' changing patterns of thinking induced by Mao Zedong’s sociopolitical campaigns during the first decade of the People’s Republic of China. It illuminates a turbulent chapter in China’s architectural history and intellectual life.

Division of Landscape Architecture

1. Dr. Bin Jiang

- his article was published on Landscape and Urban Planning


Landscape and Urban Planning. 07/2015; 139:16-25.
DOI: 10.1016/j.landurbplan.2015.02.018

Abstract: Does adding more and more trees to a residential street yield a reliable increase in preference? Or is there a point at which, in terms of preference, additional trees will have minimal effect, no effect, or even a negative effect? To address these questions, we selected 121 community streets in four Midwestern urban areas in the U.S. and produced a panoramic photograph of each site and then measured the density of tree cover visible at eye level (Panorama). We also collected Google Earth aerial photographs to measure the top-down tree cover density (Google) for the sites. Then, 320 individuals provided preference ratings for a randomized subset of the panoramic photographs (15 pictures per person). Through linear and curvilinear regression analysis, we found a power line model best describes the relationship between each measure of tree cover density and preference. The power lines have a similar shape: when sites are relatively barren, a slight increase in tree density yields a steep increase in preference. After tree cover density exceeded those values, however, higher tree densities yielded smaller, but still positive increases in preference. These findings suggest that to ensure a moderate level of preference, tree cover density should be not less than 41% as measured by panoramic photographs or 20% as measured by Google Earth aerial photographs. Planting trees in barren residential areas will result in considerably more impact than if the same trees were planted in already green areas. Still, the findings here demonstrate that, for preference, every tree matters.
1. Dr. Isabelle Chan

- has been invited to deliver a speech ‘Stress Management in Construction’ on the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Annual Safety Conference cum Annual Dinner 2015 – Managing Occupational Health in the Workplace, 24 April 2015. With Ms. Ada Fung, Deputy Director of the Hong Kong Housing Authority, and Mr. Y.K. Leung, Chief Occupational Safety Officer of the Labour Department, as speakers as well, more than 300 delegates attended the event.

Dr. Isabelle Chan in the speech

From left to right: Dr. Isabelle Chan, Mr. Ian Harper (President, IOSH-International), Ms. Gisela Derrick (International Officer, IOSH-International)

2. Professor K W Chau

- The first session of the Joint University Research Seminar Series on Institutional Analysis of the Built Environment was held on 27 April 2015 at HKU. The seminar was Jointly Organized by

Ronald Coase Centre for Property Rights Research, The University of Hong Kong
Centre of Land Resource and Housing Policy, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Network for New Institutional Urban Studies, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Sustainable Real Estate Research Center, Hong Kong Shue Yan University

Hosted and Sponsored by
Ronald Coase Centre for Property Rights Research, The University of Hong Kong

3. Professor Anita M M Liu

- has been invited by the China Engineering Cost Association (CECA) to be one of the members of the expert team for editing the National Standard "Code of Bill Quantities and Valuation for Construction Works" (English Version). Anita attended the workgroup meeting for refining the first draft in Shenzhen recently.

- has delivered an invited speech on "Managing Boundaries: BIM as a Boundary Object in Project Management" at a seminar organized by the School of Construction Management and Real Esatate, Chongqing University, 2 Apr 2015, Chongqing, PRC.

- has delivered an invited speech on "Construction Innovation: Recent Research Development" at a seminar organized by the College of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Zhejiang University, on 8 Apr 2015, Zhejiang, PRC.

4. Dr. Wilson Lu

- led a research group of REC's PhD students and research assistants, including Mr Hongdi Wang, Mr Leo Chen, Ms Xi Chen, Ms Yuhan Niu, Ms Meng Ye, and Mr Diandian Liu, to join the academic exchange event "BIM and BIG DATA: Academic Exchange Tour" to Hang Zhou, China, from 8 to 11, April 2015. The exchange event constituted of two visits to Zhejiang University (ZJU) and Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics (ZUFE), respectively.

- delivered a keynote speech "BIM and BIG DATA for construction management research" during the visit to the School of Urban-rural Planning and Management at ZUFE, on 9 April 2015 (Attended by about 80 students and teachers).

- delivered an open speech about "BIM and BIG DATA" in the workshop of "BIG DATA: BIM vs CIM" to the College of Public Administration at ZJU, on 10 April 2015, and exchanged the ideas on the application of big data analysis in BIM and CIM (Attended by 30 postgraduate students and teachers).
With supervision from Dr Wilson Lu, one group of BSc Surveying students “Smurf Village” (Team Leader: Fung Sai Lung, Members: Leung Yuet Ting, Lee Wing Yan, and Wong Ka Long) entered the Finals of the CIOB Global Student Challenge (GSC) after six rounds of tough competition over the past months. The GSC initiative aims to help identify and mold the construction leaders of tomorrow. More than forty teams from universities in Australia, Hong Kong, China, the UK and the US have signed up for the challenge this year and the top six best-performing teams during the competition will compete in the Grand Final. Members act as financial manager, overhead manager, procurement manager, and construction manager to conduct a construction business game based on the MERIT (Management Enterprise Risk Innovation and Teamwork). After each round, the MERIT system will calculate the score of each team. Another team “Unity” formed by a group of Year 2 BSc Surveying students (Team Leader: Lee Chun Hin Spencer, Members: Leung Hoi Fu, Gee Chun Heng, and Cheng Kwun Sun) also entered the Top Six but unfortunately only one team can represent a university to join the Finals. However, their capabilities to compete against other senior students are certainly much impressive. The final teams will play a further eight rounds competing against each other during 8 to 10 July 2015 in Hong Kong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Leader Board</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Up1</td>
<td>Satire</td>
<td>Glasgow Caledonian University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Up1</td>
<td>The Mighty Ducks</td>
<td>Curtin University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Down 2</td>
<td>Smurf Village</td>
<td>The University of Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Up2</td>
<td>UON Nobby's</td>
<td>The University of Newcastle, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Up2</td>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>The University of Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Up2</td>
<td>JJSV Constructions</td>
<td>Deakin University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>New entrant</td>
<td>SSTW Construction</td>
<td>Loughborough University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Down 3</td>
<td>Tempe Construction</td>
<td>The Hong Kong Polytechnic University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Up1</td>
<td>Team 2 Curtin CM</td>
<td>Curtin University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Down 6</td>
<td>Chongqing University CIOMC</td>
<td>Chongqing University - Faculty of Construction Management and Real Estate and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chongqing University CIOMC</td>
<td>Chongqing University CIOB Student Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Mr. Hongdi Wang, Mr. Leo Chen, Ms. Xi Chen, Ms. Yuhan Niu, and Ms. Meng Ye (REC RPG students and Research Assistants)

- Attended the academic exchange event “BIM and BIG DATA: Academic Exchange Tour” at Hang Zhou, China, from 8 to 11, April 2015.

- Joined the postgraduate academic exchange workshop at ZUFE, and the workshop of "BIG DATA: BIM vs CIM" at Zhejiang University

3. Dr. Koh Tas Yong and Prof Steve Rowlinson

4. Dr. Kelvin Wong

- was an invited panelist for the Hong Kong Property Forum on 21 April organized by Jones Lang LaSalle, an international real estate consultancy. He presented and shared his research findings on how the Residential Properties (First-hand Sales) Ordinance affects the property market. Representatives from over 40 property developers attended the forum.
1. Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning (CUSUP)

- The Centre held a public seminar “The Matter of Fact-ory is… -- Industrial Land Use Changes in Response to Economic Restructuring in Hong Kong” on Saturday 18 April 2015. Funded by the Central Policy Unit's Public Policy Research Funding Scheme, this project led by DUPAD’s Honorary Professor Jimmy Leung aims at providing policy recommendations on industrial premises in the interest of enhancing Hong Kong's sustainability and competitiveness. Prof. Waiman Cheung of CUHK, Dr. Justina Yu of PolyU and Mr. Louis Yu of WKCDA were invited to speak on their respective sector before the research team including Dr. Kenneth Tang and Dr. Catherine Bai reporting on their preliminary findings and recommendations.

- Commissioned by The Hong Kong Association Of Property Management Companies Limited to conduct a research project to investigate the manpower requirements in the property management industry with particular reference to the housing management professionals and practitioners required in the next ten years under the Long Term Housing Strategy and the impending licensing of property management services providers. The project is conducted by Professor Rebecca L.H. Chiu (Principal Investigator), Dr Shenjing He (Co-Principal Investigator), Dr Mandy Lau (Co-Investigator) and Dr Darren Cheung (Co-Investigator).
2. Master of Urban Design

The Master of Urban Design Programme (MUD) Mumbai Studio Final Review took place on May 9, Saturday, 2015.

The review was attended by experts from India, from downtown as well as HKU. The reviewers include Mr. Navin Makhija (Managing Director of the Wadhwa Group, India), Mr. Gurudatta Deshmukh (Vice President of the Wadhwa Group, India), Mr. Venugopal Vedula (Additional Chief Planner of CIDCO, the planning and development authority of the Indian State of Maharashtra), Prof. Chris Webster (Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, HKU), Prof. Anthony Yeh (Chair professor, MUD programme director), Mr. Chris Romanos (Design Leader for Management of Consulting at Oval Arup Hong Kong), and Mr. Laurence Liauw (Part-time Associate Professor, founder and principal of SPADA).
The studio was taught by Dr. Jianxiang Huang (Assistant Professor), Ms. Sylvie Nguyen (Assistant Lecturer), Mr. Guy Perry (Part-time Assistant Professor, Executive Director at AECOM Hong Kong). The class travel to Mumbai India for site visits in March 2015.

3. Professor David Clapham, Professor of Planning at the University of Reading in the UK and Visiting Professor at IBF at the University of Uppsala in Sweden

- was invited as a forth speaker of Distinguished Lecture Series. He spoke on a topic of “Accommodation and support for vulnerable older people: what direction should we take?” on 22 April 2015 (Wednesday). The lecture was well attended by government officials, practitioners, academics and students.
4. Dr. Roger Chan

  - “Shenzhen’s Qianhai: Lessons from London's Docklands”
  - Invited Panelist of Current Events Roundtable: The Occupy Central/Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong

- Invited to a consultative meeting with Secretary of Transport and Public Works Raimundo Arrais do Rosário, Macau SAR, on planning and development issues in Macau on 28 April 2015.

- has a new publication with following details.


  **Abstract**: Urban agglomeration is not an isolated or enclosed system. It is a relatively comprehensive organic whole maintaining close linkage with neighboring districts, especially cities and towns of different sizes in dense area of economically developed regions, which rely on the natural conditions, modernized transportation system and highly developed information network. In terms of new trends including the economic globalization and the new urbanization, every city of the urban agglomeration contributes to the economics of the urban-rural integration district, carrying city function as well as radiating function. The article regards that the dynamic of urban agglomerations of China comes from the highly development of urbanization and analyzes the similarity between urban agglomerations and dense area of cities. Recognition of the basic concepts and the standards of identifying the scope of urban agglomerations of China are also presented for reference and further study.

5. Professor Rebecca L H Chiu

- Invited to make a congratulatory remark and a keynote presentation (The Roles of the Government and the Market in Housing: a comparison between Mainland China and Hong Kong) at the 2015 Land and Real Estate Summit Forum, organized by the Department of Land Management, Renmin University of China, 9 – 10 May 2015, in celebration of the department’s 30th anniversary.

- Interviewed by *Sing Tao Daily* on the planning and development of East Lantau Island, 4 May 2015.

- Made a presented on “The future of home ownership and housing security in Hong Kong: the implications for fast growing Chinese cities” to the Urban Planning and Housing Research Institute at the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, Beijing, on 8 May 2015.
Presented a paper entitled "Creativity syndrome and the political economy of creativity in Chinese metropolises" and co-organized two sessions on "Migration in China" at the 2015 American Association of Geographers (AAG) annual meeting, Chicago, 21-25, April, 2015

Abstract: As creativity becoming a universal panacea for economic stagnancy and urban boosterism, the heavy dependency on creativity fixes and related cultural policies are depicted as a creativity “syndrome” by Scott (2006), which becomes highly contagious and has widely transmitted to cities around the globe through urban networks and neoliberal urban policies preached by international organizations, politicians, academic celebrities and their followers. In the meantime, the formulaic repertoire of urban growth strategies, such as commodified cultural policies, property-led redevelopment, gentrification, has been retrofitted around the theme of creativity to promote the image of creative city. Since the early 2000s, Shanghai and Shenzhen, two economic powerhouses in China, have launched ambitious “creative city making” projects involving various spatialized capital accumulation strategies and policy innovations beyond the formulaic repertoire imported from the west. Utilizing empirical materials from Shanghai and Shenzhen, this study scrutinizes into the creativity syndrome that prevails in Chinese metropolises to critically examine the idea of creative city and to think beyond neoliberalism to theorize the political economy of creativity in the Chinese context. Specifically, it aims to understand to what extents these creativity campaigns become a major constituent of the emerging Chinese urbanism and in which ways they reshape Chinese metropolises; how the creativity syndrome in Chinese cities develops and evolves over time and how it challenges mainstream western theories.

Invited to be the external examiner of a PhD viva for the Department of Geography, Loughborough University, UK. The viva was held at Chicago on 22, April, 2015.

was invited to give a talk entitled "Evolving enclave urbanism in China and its socio-spatial implications" at the Department of Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, May 5, 2015.

Abstract: Enclave urbanism has deep historical roots in China, from the earliest forms of enclave residence, i.e. the walled city and courtyard housing, to the contemporary intricate mosaic of enclaves comprising danwei (work unit) compounds, gated-commodity-housing estates, and migrant enclaves. Yet the evolution of enclave urbanism is not simply a convergence with Western urban forms, nor is it a process of historical succession or cultural inertia. The story of enclave urbanism is far more complicated. Exploring China’s evolving urban enclaves and their socioeconomic implications would add much richness and diversity to the international debates on enclave urbanism. The first half of the paper discusses the evolving processes and dynamics of China’s enclave urbanism with special reference to Guangzhou. The complex dynamics of China’s enclave urbanism are evolving around various socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, and political forces, within which institutional arrangements for urban spatial organisation and social control are playing a fundamental role. To present a fuller picture of the plural socio-spatial connotations of China’s enclave urbanism, the second half of the paper unpacks the heterogeneity of urban fabrics and examines how different social groups perceive and represent the social aspects of their lives. Featuring a high degree of heterogeneity within and between different types of neighbourhoods, enclave urbanism in China has entailed a complex relationship between urban form and social fabric. In addition, for various social groups, urban
enclave living is endowed with very different social meanings. In gated-commodity-housing estates, enclave living is an expression of a safe, high-quality, and privileged lifestyle. In urban villages, it is a compromise choice involving makeshift urban living resulting from suppressed rights to the city. And, in danwei compounds, it is a lingering lifestyle to which people used to be collectively assigned with no exercise of their own choice and from which are now emotionally estranged.

7. Dr. Kyung-Min Nam

- Attended the 2015 Association of American Geographers Annual Conference and presented a paper shown below.

Title: Is the Spatial Distribution of China’s Population Excessively Unequal? A Cross-country Comparison
Author: Kyung-Min Nam
Session: 4262 Spatial Inequality V: China II (10-11:40AM, April 24, 2015)

Abstract: Is the spatial distribution of China’s population excessively unequal? So far, China has strictly controlled domestic migration to slow down the phase of urban growth. Such public action implicitly assumes that China’s population distribution in space is exceedingly unequal, so diseconomies of agglomeration dominate positive externalities from it. The validity of this assumption, however, is subject to scientific testing and requires empirical evidence that the spatial distribution of China’s population substantially deviates from a certain optimal range or a widely accepted reference level. Given the lack of such an empirical test, this study is motived to fill the gap.

In detail, I first estimate a fixed effects model using a five-year panel data set for 65 countries and then test whether the spatial inequality of China’s population distribution deviates upward from that of other countries when controlling for a set of socioeconomic variables. The primary data for analysis (panel data for 65 countries) is 0.25°×0.25° global population grids for five years (1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010). I estimate the grids for China from China’s official census data and county-level statistics, while for other countries I directly use the grids excerpted from the Gridded Population of the World version 3 (GPWv3) dataset (SEDAC, 2014). I consider two measures of spatial inequality of population distribution: one is the spatial Gini coefficient, measuring spatial inequality across cities; the other is Moran’s I index, measuring spatial inequality across clusters of cities.

My preliminary analysis shows that the spatial Gini coefficient for China is not biased upward, while Moran’s I index is. In other words, the distribution of China’s population is not excessively unequal at the grid cell level, but those grid cells with high population counts tend to be highly agglomerated, compared with other countries. This results suggests that the spatial inequality of China’s population distribution is more obvious at the regional level than at the city (or county) level.