

Dean's Roundup

Friday, October 18th, 2013

Roundup: *Ceiling function*, the mathematical operation of rounding a number up to the next higher integer.

Roundup: a term in American English referring to the process of gathering animals into an area, known as a "Muster" in Australia.

Rounding up: when a helmsman cannot control a boat and it heads into the wind

Roundup: the plan for an invasion of northern France by Allied forces during World War II (WikipediA)

Dean's Roundup: part blog, part bulletin; part honour roll, part curatorial [*cu'ra-to' ri-al* (ky^{oo}r^ə-tô^r'ē-əl, -tô^r'-)] *n. nounised by the Dean from curator + editorial*

Dear All,

There are some very impressive achievements listed in this week's Roundup including Koh Tas Yong and John Shens' NSF Key Laboratory funding, Li Xia's TWAS Prize in Earth Sciences and Leung King Kwok's appointment as Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in the HKSAR Government. Three of these people are students (past and present) but makes us no less proud. On the contrary – it is what our students do, think and write that truly endorses our own contributions to society. I have had several of my former students contact me in the last few weeks and it is hugely rewarding to see them pressing on with their intellectual enquiry, however grand or modest their achievements so far. I first met Li Xia, now the best earth scientist in the developing world (he is professor at SYSU Guangzhou) when he was a PhD student studying with Anthony Yeh in 1997. He shared a tiny room on the 8th floor of Knowles Building with Wu Fulong, another of HKU's famous alumni, who later became my post doc fellow and more lately, the Bartlett Professor of Planning – Sir Peter Hall's former position. Who are we investing in at the present time, who will emerge as global prize-winners in 16 years time?

I was in Istanbul last week setting up my Turkish Science and Technology Research Council project led by young Turkish professor Burcu Özuduru. The project has greater significance than I had at first thought. Istanbul is about to embark on what will be the biggest ever urban redevelopment programme based on land readjustment methods. Land readjustment was invented in Germany in the 19th century as a way of re-configuring land ownership in pursuit of greater economic efficiency. It has been used over the decades around the world to readjust agricultural land, peri-urban land and built up land. Basically it requires a law that allows the state, or some other development agency, to take land under private ownership, develop it by demolition, installing infrastructure, and planning and re-building, then returning property *pro-rata* to the original owners less some fraction to recover the cost of reorganization and redevelopment. If the density of the redevelopment is much higher than the original land, then the post-adjustment area and value of property returned can be greater than the pre-adjustment holding. This happens in many redeveloped urban villages in Mainland China, where village households end up with two or more apartments and a stake in a village stock company after redevelopment. In principle, this is a cost-neutral, win-win method of urban regeneration. Indeed, it was considered with some admiration in pre-war Britain as a possible model for urban planning in the UK –along with other models such as the nationalization of land development rights which won the battle of ideas and became the basis of the post war development industry and planning system in that country. The reason why Land Readjustment didn't make it to the post-war statute books was profound: Land Readjustment was invented in Germany!

But in 2009, the Turkish Government (with strong historical ties with Germany) enacted its own version in the Urban Transformation law, thus paving the way for a massive 75% of Istanbul to be reorganized in the coming years. The semi-state agency organizing this is called Turki and it is swiftly embarking on the task of

turning Istanbul's vast acres of well-established squatter and other informal housing, industrial and commercial areas into Asian-style high density suburbs. I am not sure of the percentage of owner assent required under Turkish law. I suspect the state might have allocated itself the right of veto. In principle, however, Land Readjustment is a consensual planning tool, not a coercive one (at least not for the majority of owners in favour of readjustment).

Our project concerns the question of the timing and coordination of residential and retail development and asks the question: 'how does the configuration of space influence the timing of retail development?' (a perennial issue in new urban extensions or new cities). At one extreme, housing areas get built with no retail (or other services). At the other, retail parks get developed without houses. The latter happens on the most accessible part of a city road network (when accessibility is measured at the city scale). The former happens with very inaccessible new residential areas – where there is no existing demand to help support new shops. The question is: in between these extremes, what is the measurable relationship between accessibility and the timing of retail development? We are calibrating what we are calling a retail timing index (RTI) using data for all residential and commercial developments in Istanbul (and Ankara for comparison) over a ten year period.

If anyone is interested in joining in the analysis, taking students to study the city, co-authoring papers, then please come and talk. There will be plenty of data and ideas to go round.

Chris

Department of Real Estate and Construction

1. Dr. Koh Tas Yong
 - his project, titled "Organizational culture and the implementation of the environmental management system (ISO 14001) of construction companies in China", has been awarded NSF Key Laboratory Funding
2. Professor Steve Rowlinson
 - gave one public lecture on "Heat stress on construction sites" on Oct 10th and two invited lectures to the International students on Oct 11th and 15th, 2013 at Chongqing University
3. Mr. John Shen (PhD graduate, Class of 2013, currently a Research Assistant of the Department)
 - his project, titled "Comparative study on construction safety culture in Chongqing and Hong Kong", has been awarded NSF Key Laboratory Funding

Department of Urban Planning and Design

1. Professor Rebecca Chiu
 - invited to speak at the Hangzhou-Hong Kong High-level Public Policy Forum organized by the Central Policy Unit, HKSAR Government and the Hangzhou Normal University, 12-13 October 2013, Hang Zhou. Topic: The Transferability of Hong Kong's Public Housing Policy to Mainland Cities.
2. Mr. Leung King Kwok, Godfrey (MSc in Urban Planning graduate, Class of 1993)
 - has been appointed as the Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development of the HKSAR Government.
<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201309/25/P201309250310.htm>
3. Prof. Li Xia (PhD graduate of Prof. Anthony Yeh in 1996 and Yat-sen Chair Professor and Director of the Centre for Remote Sensing and Geographical Information Sciences, School of Geography and Planning, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China)
 - has won this year's 2013 TWAS (The World Academy of Sciences for the Advancement of Science in Developing Countries) Prize in Earth Sciences for his distinguished contribution to the development of cellular automata and agent-based models for land-use simulation and planning for sustainable land development in China. (<http://twas.ictp.it/news-in-home-page/news/twas-announces-2013-prize-winners>). He is the first person in the field of geographic information science (GISc) and third person in China in winning the TWAS Prize in Earth Sciences since it was established in 2003 (<http://twas.ictp.it/prog/prizes/recipients-of-twas-awards-prizes>). He is one of the researchers in the world who have the highest number of papers and citations on cellular automata (CA) and agent-based models (ABM) in top international journals. His paper "Modelling sustainable urban development by the integration of constrained cellular automata and GIS" published in 2000 in International Journal of Geographical Information Science (IJGIS), the top journal in geographical information science, has been recommended by the journal as one of the classics in 1987-2011.

4. Mr. Wang Jiejing, Jackie (PhD Student)

- published the following paper:

Chen Y. and **Wang J.** (2013), "Multifractal Characterization of Urban Form and Growth: the Case of Beijing", *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 40:5, pp. 884 - 904.