Dean's Roundup (Friday, 20 March 2015)

> 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)*
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> *Dean's Roundup: part blog, part bulletin; part honour roll, part curatorial [***cu·ra·to***ri·al** (kyo͞orˈə-tôrˈē-əl, -tôrˈ-) *n. nounised by the Dean from curator + editorial]*

Dear All,

On March 6-7 the Faculty organized a very successful international Speculative City Symposium. Thanks to Cecilia Chu from DUPAD and Eunice Seng and Natalia Echeverri from the Department of Architecture for conceiving of and leading this. I would like to briefly distill my own thoughts on the issue - which are different from what they were before the symposium. That is the mark of good quality open cross-disciplinary debate. Cecilia, Eunice and Natalia will do likewise in a subsequent Dean's Roundup.

The vast majority of human interactions, if not all, are speculative. By speculative, (following the symposium), I mean 'characterized by thinking or evaluation with limited information and in anticipation of some gain'. Investors speculate in the hope of financial return. Architects speculate about the future city and about the social, environmental and aesthetic gains from new designs. Socialists speculate about planned utopia. Libertarians speculate about laissez-faire utopia. Cities owe their existence to the division of labour and the need for people to co-locate in order to exchange specialized skills. In all but the closest personal relationships, such transactions are characterized by incomplete information and speculation, where an individual seeks ways to maximize gain within some bounds. If you think that sounds too Hobbesian and brutish, think about the last labour contract you negotiated and the way you act in it now to maximize whatever it is that gives you greatest satisfaction within the bounds of the contract. Think also of the rental or purchase price on your apartment, which lay somewhere between your ceiling price and the vendor's floor price, the greater share of the difference going to whichever one of you had the higher market power at the time.

So the social and economic dynamic underlying the city is intrinsically speculative. The *built* expression of a city, which accommodates a society's division of labour, evolves by the division of land. First a field becomes a housing plot, then ten, then a hundred and then five hundred. As with labour, each land transaction admits the opportunity of speculation. But land is different. Land accrues value it does not earn. Very rarely can labour do the same. A plot of land derives value from what other people do around it. Imagine that happening with labour. (The reason for the difference is the mobility of labour and immobility of land). So the potential gains from speculation on land are huge. This can cause problems for the many individuals congregating in the city in pursuit of wealth, welfare and happiness.

One of the questions I carried to the symposium was: 'what is the appropriate spatial scale for land speculation?" – both in the sense of financial and ideas speculation. 'Appropriate' in the sense of limiting the social risks to private speculation.

Cecilia opened the symposium eruditely by pointing to the respective objections to land speculation from the traditional left and traditional right. For the former, speculation puts private gain ahead of social gain and is socially pathological. For the latter, land speculation is often inefficient, for example resulting in too few houses for low-income key workers in cities like Hong Kong and London. The solutions from the two sides are also familiar: the left calls for collective organization of necessary land speculation (in the hands of the state) and the curtailment, or in the extreme, outlawing of private land speculation. The right urges voluntary restraint, market corrections or, in the last resort, regulation.

But forget about left and right and just focus on information limitation. Since not even two individuals in a primitive bartered speculative transaction, have complete information, the information deficit for large-scale speculation is scary. Most of the very worst social disasters of the 20th century happened at the hands of large-scale speculative social engineering by powerful governments. This applies to large-scale centrally controlled city building in the West as well as the disastrous economic planning of Eastern states. So there is an *a priori* argument for speculating at smaller scale. I tested this proposition out during the symposium and it was supported by nearly all speakers one way or another. The larger the utopian project being imagined by the designer, the bigger risk of failure. In all sorts of ways: risk of incoherent design, risk of not meeting local needs, risk of cost overrun, risk of sterility, risk of financial failure, risk of political discontinuity, risk of the powerful dominating the less powerful and so on. None of this necessarily through mal-intent, but because of poorer information as the scale of speculative city building gets larger. This line of discussion led to some potentially truly innovative insights about breaking up large master-planned projects into small units for the purpose of design, financing, programming and organization. All to be explored further in the book of the symposium. Next time: speculative city building from a critical perspective and the highs and lows of speculation in architecture.

Congratulations on the achievements listed below.

Chris

Faculty of Architecture

1. Hong Kong PhD Fellowship (HKPF) Scheme 2015-16 Result

   This year, 3 applicants from the Faculty (out of a total of 4 candidates short-listed by Graduate School) have successfully received from The Research Grant Council the prestigious HKPF Award for 2015-16. The names of these 3 candidates, along with their respective supervisors are as below:

   i)   Mr. Chen Zifeng   -   Primary Supervisor: Prof Anthony Yeh
                                                    Co-supervisor: Dr Weifeng Li

   ii)   Mr. Guo Wenbo   -   Primary Supervisor: Dr Weifeng Li
                                                    Co-supervisor: Prof Chris Webster

   iii)   Mr. Zhang Yongping -   Primary Supervisor: Prof K W Chau
                                                    Co-supervisor: Prof Chris Webster

2. The University's Policy Board of Postgraduate Education has informed the Faculty that under the "Central Pool Research Postgraduate Places for Rewarding Internationalization 2015-16" scheme, one **Type A** place has been awarded to a RPG student in the Department of Real Estate and Construction.

Student Name	Mr. Sergei IVANOV
Primary Supervisor	Professor K W Chau
Co-Supervisor	Professor Lawrence Lai

   Apart from the above, in the exercise of bidding for "Central pool Research Postgraduate Places 2015-2016 by Faculties/SRTs/SKLs", one **Type B** place has been allocated to the Faculty for the following project

Title	Bridging BIM and Buildings (BBB), Unbinding Bounded Rationality
Supervisor	Dr. Wilson Lu
Department	Real Estate and Construction

   Another **Type B** place is received by Mr. John Lin as he was awarded the Outstanding Young Researcher Award (OYRA) 2013-2014.

   Altogether, this is another great performance on the research funding front.

Department of Architecture

1. Ms. Tris Kee

    -   presented a research paper at the Ninth International Conference on Design Principles and Practices, University Center Chicago, USA, on 13 March 2015

Abstract: As contemporary societies become more heterogeneous, the practice of architecture evolves with it. Architecture is no longer limited to being an exercise in the manipulation of form and the realization of function; instead, it is taking up an increasingly significant place in the resolution of real-world conflicts and problems. In fact, the practice of participatory design is becoming the core of city and community design via a process that emphasizes involving the community and engaging the public. This paper aims to explore how practice generates new "design dialectic" across professions, and how it can serve as a platform where the community can participate with their design aspirations. It evaluates two case studies in Hong Kong, where the establishment of a design and research unit dedicated to interdisciplinary practice evolves into a complex establishment capable of responding acutely to community needs. The integration between design professionals, seasoned educators, government departments, and community organizations enables a paradigm shift in knowledge exchange. This participatory mechanism has the potential to challenge traditional top-down design practices and prompt change in existing institutional frameworks. The paper examines how the adoption of this approach empowers the design and research unit to become a breeding ground of constructive "design dialectic" that promotes the interaction between institution and community and the resolution of social challenges.

    -   has been invited by the Development Bureau HKSAR and the HK Institute of Urban Design to present a paper at the Urban Exchange Conference in Barcelona, on 10 March 2015

Abstract: As one of the densest cities in the world, Hong Kong is constantly confronted with the shortage of land to develop public spaces. Existing global placemaking literature has been critical of contemporary public spaces on a number of grounds, with most prevalent critiques implying these spaces are neglected, segregated, and overtly privatised. This paper reviews both challenges and opportunities in placemaking paradigm in Hong Kong and proposes a "3E" methodology in this highly urbanized metropolitan: by engaging, evolving and energizing public spaces for its citizens.

1) Engaging space -   An engaged place-making approach is to animate and enrich the public spaces of the city, filling them with life and values and allowing users to exchange ideas and experiences through social interactions. The case study will demonstrate the ideas and experiences of how the local community has been engaged in the process;

2) Evolving space – Space evolves through its life cycle as it is shaped and reshaped through processes of design, development, use and management. This case study of Tamar Park will demonstrate how a civic space has evolved from its original intention to a loci of a more marginal and temporary use, forming a meaning from a 'space' to 'place' ; and

3) Energizing space – This case study will demonstrate the potential roles of public spaces as catalysts for urban renewal; potential arenas for community revitalisation and public participation; and in their more traditional functions as a source of amenities and connecting the urban fabric between the private spaces of the city.

2. Dr. Cole Roskam

   - has published an essay entitled "Practicing Reform: Experiments in Post-Revolutionary Chinese Architectural Production, 1973-1989." *Journal of Architectural Education* 69, no. (March 2015): 27-38.

     Abstract*: This article explores the relationship between architectural praxis and political economic reform in China between 1973 and 1989. It looks specifically at how modifications in the practice of architectural design corresponded to the project of China's economic liberalization. A closer examination of significant shifts in the methods of design, the operative mechanisms through which designs were created and implemented, and the degree of international engagement involved in design production offers new insight into the intertwined dynamics of architectural practice as both catalyst and index in processes of change.*

Division of Landscape Architecture

1. Ms. Dorothy Tang

   - Dorothy was invited to curate a reading list to kick-off Places Journal's new tool for interdisciplinary public scholarship:

     Reading lists https://placesjournal.org/news/places-journal-launches-new-tool-for-interdisciplinary-public-scholarship/

     Her list titled "China's New Landscape" contextualises landscape architecture in the region (https://placesjournal.org/reading-list/chinas-new-landscape/). Other contributors to the list include Nate Berg, kristi cheramie, Brian Davis, Nina-Marie Lister, Shannon Mattern, Amy Murphy, Enrique Ramirez, and Frederick Steiner.

   - Dorothy Tang (with Julia Africa from Harvard's School of Public Health) has published an article in Landscape Architecture Frontiers:

     Dorothy Tang & Julia K. Africa. 2015. Resilient Yueqing: Climate Change, Public Health, and Landscape Infrastructure. Landscape Architecture Frontiers 3(1): 70-83

     Abstract*: The impact of climate change on public health spurs geographically specific and resilient design interventions. Successful landscape architecture, harnesses insights from public health professionals, engineers, and ecologists to synergistically address the complex relationships between the built environment, public health, and climate change. A landscape architecture workshop in Yueqing City, a coastal community in Zhejiang Province, provides an opportunity to explore how urban landscapes might sustainably support human health and well-being. Small-scale interventions are used to test the viability of a tactical approach to design that addresses problems at a global and systemic scale.*

Department of Real Estate and Construction

1. Professor K W Chau

   - launched an online platform on Building Maintenance Cost (BMC) Database and Estimator.

     Most building owners in Hong Kong are vulnerable to exploitative methods such as bid-rigging and price inflation by unscrupulous consultants and contractors when undertaking building maintenance projects. An HKU research team from the Department of Real Estate & Construction, led by Professor K.W. Chau, was commissioned by ICAC to analyse building maintenance cost data of 426 Operation Building Bright (OBB) projects that were managed by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) between 2009 and 2013. An interactive online platform, including a Building Maintenance Cost (BMC) Estimator (http://bmc.versitech.hku.hk/) has been established to disseminate the findings of the project and help building owners estimate maintenance cost.

2. Professor K W Chau, Dr. Daniel C W Ho and Dr. Kelvin S K Wong

   - A research team comprising Professor K.W. Chau, Dr Daniel C W Ho and Dr Kelvin S K Wong appeared in a <u>press conference</u> on 12 March 2015. The press conference was organized by HKU to disseminate their research findings on building maintenance costs in Hong Kong and to urge property owners to participate by providing maintenance cost data to the research team for continuing the study. The research is based on building maintenance cost data of 426 Operation Building Bright (<u>OBB</u>) projects that were managed by the Urban Renewal Authority (<u>URA</u>) and Hong Kong Housing Society (<u>HKHS</u>) between 2009 and 2013. One of the outcomes of research is a building maintenance cost model. The model requires minimal information that can be easily supplied by lay users to produce a preliminary maintenance building cost. The model is intended to give users a rough preliminary estimate of building maintenance cost before engaging a professional consultant. The research is commissioned by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (<u>ICAC</u>) of the HKSAR Government. The purpose of the research is to increase the transparency of price information and reduce transaction costs in the building maintenance market.   A <u>dedicated website</u>, which includes an <u>interactive building maintenance cost estimator</u>, has been launched to disseminate some of the findings of this research.

3. Mr. Leo Chen (A PhD student supervised by Dr. Wilson Lu and Professor Steve Rowlinson), Dr. Wilson Lu and Professor Steve Rowlinson

   - published a paper：

     Chen, K., Lu, W.S., Peng, Y. Rowlinson, S., and Huang, G.Q (2015). Bridging BIM and building: From a literature review to an integrated conceptual framework. *International Journal of Project Management* (IF=1.758). Forthcoming.

     Abstract: *A Building Information Model (BIM) is at risk of being 'blind and deaf' if its contained information cannot be synchronized with ongoing building processes in a real-time manner. Previous studies have attempted to explore solutions to the problem, with a view to making BIM a more useful decision-support system. However, an integrated conceptual framework summarizing these studies and*

structuring future development in the area is missing. Based on an ex post facto critical review of 75 papers of this kind published over the past decade, this paper proposes a conceptual framework for bridging BIM and building (BBB), which highlights the importance of synchronizing information between BIM and real-life building processes. The framework is further illustrated through a case study of prefabricated housing construction in Hong Kong. With this integrated conceptual framework, future research on BBB can proceed on a more solid footing.

4. Dr. FF Ng (as PI), Dr. S W Poon and Dr. Daniel Ho (as Co-Is)

    -   Awarded the Teaching Development Fund at an amount of HK$ 308, 000 for the project titled "Development of a Project Based E-learning Module for the Teaching and Learning of "Introduction to Building Technology""

Department of Urban Planning and Design

1. Dr. Roger Chan

   - was invited to give a presentation entitled "From London's Canary Wharf Group to Shenzhen's Qianhai cooperation zone" to the senior management team of the *"Authority of Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone of Shenzhen"* on 12 March 2015.

2. Dr. Cecilia Chu

   - Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning

   The Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning (CUSUP), the Department of Architecture, and the Faculty of Architecture jointly organized a 2-day interdisciplinary symposium, entitled "*The Speculative City: Emergent Forms and Norms of the Built Environment*" at HKU on March 6-7, 2015. Invited speakers of the Symposium include Kees Christiannse from ETH Zurich, Susan S. Fainstein from Harvard University, Chris Hamnett from King's College London, Hyun Bang Shin from LSE, Chua Beng Huat from the National University of Singapore, and He Shenjing from HKU. The event has provided a valuable platform for cross-disciplinary discussions and attracted participants from universities across Hong Kong. Details of the Symposium and abstracts can be accessed from this link: http://fac.arch.hku.hk/event/speculative-city-hku2015/

3. Dr. Jianxiang Huang

   - Gave a webinar together with Prof. Jack Spengler of Harvard University entitled: *'Assessment and Management of Urban Micro-Climates for the Public Realm'*. This webinar reviewed case studies and publications: assessing the relationship between efficient energy use and levels of resident satisfaction in Boston and Hong Kong, and exploring living at high densities, including the psychological, health, and behavioral impact of urban lifestyle.

     Recordings and PPT slides of the webinar are available at http://research.gsd.harvard.edu/hapi/overview/activities-and-events/webinar-series-2015/assessing-human-comfort-in-urban-public-places-in-china/

4. Dr. Xingjian Liu

   - Dr. Xingjian Liu published a paper with following details:

     Liu, X., Derudder, B., Wu, K. (2015), "Measuring polycentric urban development in China: An intercity transportation network perspective", *Regional Studies*

     Abstract: This paper measures polycentric development in 22 urban regions in China by analysing intercity transportation networks. A typology of Chinese urban regions is identified based on individual regions' functional and morphological polycentricity. Three major sets of processes underlying the typology are discerned: the (mis)match between (governmentally) designated and economically integrated urban regions; unequal interregional economic development; and the impact of city-regional plans and policies. Urban regions along the east coast reach high levels of morphological and functional polycentricity. Many planned urban regions are morphologically polycentric, lacking functional integration. Most urban regions in western China lack any form of polycentricity.

5. Mr. Jianzheng Liu (a PhD student)

- led a group of 45 HKU students to visit Futian CBD, Qianhai and University Town in Shenzhen, Guangzhou Research Institute of Environmental Protection, Guangzhou urban villages, Zhaoqing High-tech Industrial Development Zone, Hengqin in Zhuhai and Zhuhai Institute of Urban Planning & Design from 9 to 12 March 2015. This 4-day large field trip was funded by the "HKU-China 1000 Exchange scheme 2014 (2014 香港大學千人內地交流計劃)" of the Ministry of Education (MoE). It was supervised by Dr. Weifeng Li in DUPAD and co-organized with Prof. Jiansheng Wu from Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School. Ms. Xiwen Zhang (Msc student in Peking University), Dr. Jie Li (senior research assistant in DUPAD) and Ms. Jing Song (PhD student in DUPAD), as well as Daniel Chan and Moonfier Li (undergraduate students in Urban Studies), also helped as supporting staffs in this field trip.

6. Dr. Nam Kyung-Min

   - was awarded a grant from the HKU SPACE Research Fund to contribute to the funding for his newly admitted RPG student.

7. Professor Anthony Yeh

   - published a paper with following details:

     Yeh, Anthony G.O. (2015), "13th 5-Year Plan - Develop Quality Assurance Services to Help Mainland Chinese Enterprises to Go to the World Market", *Bauhinia Magazine*, No. 293, March 2015, p. 15 (in Chinese).

     Abstract*: "China is preparing for the 13th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) for its economic and social development. Before planning for the next Five Year Plan, Hong Kong and China have to evaluate what have been proposed in the last Five Year Plan and to what extent that these proposals have been accomplished. For the unaccomplished proposals, why were they not achieved. It is through such evaluation that more practical proposals can be proposed. In addition to the proposals that were in the Five Year Plans since the 10th Five Year Plan in 2001-2005, such as the traditional four pillar industries in Hong Kong, including financial services, trading and logistics, tourism, and professional and producer services, Hong Kong may consider developing quality assurance industries to help Chinese industries to enter into the world market".*

   - has given a talk on "Smart Cities" to the Rotrary Club of New Territories on 16 March 2015 at the Sheraton Hotel, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon.