Dean's Roundup
Friday, 4 July, 2014

> Roundup: *Ceiling function, the mathematical operation of rounding a number up to the next higher integer.*
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> Roundup: *a term in American English referring to the process of gathering animals into an area, known as a "Muster" in Australia.*
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> Rounding up: *when a helmsman cannot control a boat and it heads into the wind*
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> 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*** (kyŏŏr′ə-tôr′ē-əl, -tōr′-) *n. nounised by the Dean from curator + editorial]*

Dear all,

Two weeks ago I joined the MArch Thesis Public Review. One project particularly intrigued me. It looked into the future to a time and technology when individuals could enjoy common spaces according to their own preferences. It was a speculative project obviously, making use of video techniques, VR, 3D modeling and a lot of imagination applied to particular public spaces in Hong Kong. It imagined a technology that would allow individual users of public spaces to see what they wanted – presumably through the successor technology to VR headsets (glasses, lenses, corneal implants, retinal implants, or perhaps even direct wireless visual cortex stimulation). In my conversation with the student, we explored the impact of such technology on the city as a whole as well as on particular public spaces and people using them. Consider the following ideas, questions and propositions arising from the conversation.

1. **Individualised virtual consumption of public space will allow people to live at higher densities.** The synergistic benefits of living in cities are balanced against the costs of conflict. At some stage in its growth, a city's net average benefits plotted against population numbers stops rising and starts falling as individual and social costs of living in close proximity start to outweigh agglomeration gains. If technologies can be invented that reduce the costs of conflict then cities can be bigger and denser. Most urban diseconomies of scale are related to the costs of competing over scarce resources. Where those scarce resources are shared (co-consumed - technically called 'public goods'), then a city's inhabitants tend to engage in non-price competition to secure access, for example, queuing for spontaneously organized resources and rationing – often by address – for government organized resources (an extreme form being Hukou on the Mainland). So if technology allows different individuals to enjoy the same physical space in different ways with less conflict, then the city will be able to accommodate more people because of less spill-over externalities between competing users.

2. Imagine four types of users all inhabiting the same pocket park in Wanchai. A group in one corner is enjoying a neo-glam rock band strutting an outdoor stage; another is enjoying the string quartet baroquing the same stage at the same time. A lone explorer is on her own in a third corner, sitting in a remote glade of some Amazonian lost world bathed in exotic bird song and tropical scents. In a fourth corner, a group of pro-democracy compatriots is engaged in heated debate with a member of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China. A very important

question for the architect, planner and landscape architect is: '**is this public or private space'?** Or more technically: "Is it a public or private good". The answer to these questions will inform how city managers can best design, supply, govern and manage it. If a piece of land is jointly consumed, then it is technically a public good and will need to be designed, supplied, governed and managed quite differently to a private piece of land.

3. Generally, built environment professionals would regard the Wanchai pocket park as a public good. It is open access and unless it gets too crowded any new user does not generally detract from the enjoyment of other users. Note that when the park gets full to capacity with guest workers on a Sunday, it no longer functions as a public good. It has become a private good for the day, with each individual and friendship group, demarking excludable territory with bags, makeshift cardboard seating and their own persons. Compare the Sunday congestion of the physical space with the virtual space that I have sketched. One answer to my question would be that **the park has become *more* of a public good** as a result of the hybridization of virtual/physical space. It's public goods qualities of non-exclusive consumption have been enhanced. People with very different tastes can now co-consume the physical space, making it less congestible. Herein, perhaps, lies a profound clue for more generally uncovering new technical solutions for the dense, compact, livable cities of the future.

4. **There is a paradox in the park, however**. The park has become more of a public good in the sense of greater and more diverse numbers of occupants being able to share it, but it has done this by an extreme form of private consumption. With many forms of privately consumed good there are public good or 'public bad' spill-overs, for example a nicely designed house is paid for and enjoyed by an owner-occupier but is also enjoyed (without congestion) by neighbours and passers by. But with virtual reality, as with in-ear music, a privately consumed virtual experience is private in the extreme. Such private consumption makes for greater public consumption in the virtualized park. Is this a paradox or just irony?

5. But think through the dynamics in a little more detail. The different groups in the Wanchai park don't even have to be clustered in the way I have described. They can be mixed throughout the space, roquer and rocker, explorer and expositors all mixed up (imagine what it would look like to an onlooker). Imagine, further, that the different users moved around the space in different ways as they enjoyed their imagined environments. Two orderings are possible: sedentary or mobile. If the space tends to be used towards capacity, sedentary ordering will prevail. This really does lead to an ironic result: in order to maximize the utility of the park as a public (shared) good, the park has to be subdivided into individual spatial lots (allocated to individuals by, for example, rent, queuing or rationing). The public park has become private space in order for everyone to co-consume it with minimal cost to others. **The technology has created a new virtual commons that is superior to the physical commons but which requires the physical commons to be subdivided into private spaces.**

6. At less than capacity, and with suitable technology, multiple users, each seeing a different reality, could be ordered dynamically in a way that could let them move around. If they are completely visually immersed in their own virtual worlds, then some kind of automated other-people-avoidance system might keep them from entering other users' private space. The technology might also allow them to experience synchronized physical and virtual contact with users engaged in the same virtual experience. **In this scenario, physical commons and virtual commons can co-exist, the former enhancing the latter.**

As I have often said, physical design (interior, architectural, landscape, urban) should go hand in hand with institutional design. Technology shifts give rise to paradigm shifts in both.

Congratulations to those mentioned below, especially to GRF and ECS grant winners.

Chris

Faculty of Architecture

The Research Grants Council (RGC) has recently announced the results for the General Research Fund (GRF), Early Career Scheme (ECS) and Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS) of the 2014/2015 exercise, lists of successful GRF, ECS and HSSPFS projects are available at http://www.rss.hku.hk/funding/funding-results.

This year, the Faculty has received altogether 9 GRF grants and 4 ECS grants, details of funded projects are as follows:

RGC General Research Fund (GRF) 2014-2015 Exercise

Code	Department	PI	Project Title	Awarded Amount* (HK$)	Duration
17408814	Architecture	Ms. D.S.W. Tang	An Atlas of Gold: Mining, Environmental Change, and Urban Development in Johannesburg	518,494	20
17409714	Architecture	Mr. I.A. Valin	Mud and Jungle: the Tropical Urban Ecologies of Yangon	735,296	24
17200714	Real Estate and Construction	Professor K.W. Chau	The impact of public-sector-led urban renewal projects on nearby housing prices in densely populated areas	500,000	30
17205614	Real Estate and Construction	Dr. W. Lu	Exploring the effects of building information modeling on project-based organisations: A social network approach	500,000	36
17206514	Real Estate and Construction	Professor S.M. Rowlinson	Lowering the curve - construction site safety improvement: culture's consequences	500,000	24

Code	Department	PI	Project Title	Awarded Amount* (HK$)	Duration
17501314	Real Estate and Construction	Dr. R.T.F. Leiringer	Delivering value for money in major infrastructure projects - building client capabilities in the public sector	271,132	24
17209014	Urban Planning and Design	Dr. F. Yang	High Speed Railway Accessibility and the Spatial Restructuring of Producer Services in China	683,562	24
17209214	Urban Planning and Design	Professor A.G.O. Yeh	Unsupervised Short-Term Monitoring of Human-Induced Land Cover Change Using Repeat-Pass RADARSAT-2 Polarimetric SAR Images	500,000	24
17400514	Urban Planning and Design	Dr. R.C.K. Chan	Development beyond growth poles: new districts in the Greater Pearl River Delta Region	580,904	24

RGC Early Career Scheme (ECS) 2014-2015 Exercise

Project Code	Department	PI	Project Title	Project Fund* (HK$)	ECS Grants / Awards (HK$)	Grant Total Awarded* (HK$)	Duration
27400214	Architecture	Ms. M.A. Cate Christ	Hong Kong Stair Archive: Documenting the walkable city	806,355	50,000	856,355	24
27401214	Architecture	Ms. T.Y.C. Kee	What is the Impetus to Move? Cross-border Retirement Migration Plans and Housing Preferences of the Soon-to-be-old Cohort	576,400	50,000	626,400	24
27200414	Urban Planning and Design	Mr. W. Li	Neighbourhood Design and Energy Efficiency in Post-industrial Urban China: Evidence from Shenzhen and Hong Kong	449,106	50,000	499,106	24
27400814	Urban Planning and Design	Dr. C.L. Chu	Speculative Urbanism: Modernist Planning and Housing Practices in Colonial Hong Kong, 1912-1939	459,000	50,000	509,000	30

Architectural Conservation Programme

1. Dr. Hoyin Lee

    -   ACP staff Lynne DiStefano, Hoyin Lee, Katie Cummer, Hal Kalman, and in partnership with CUHK Centre for Architectural Heritage Research (led by Henry Lo), completed the "Consultancy Study on the Heritage Conservation Regimes in Other Jurisdictions" commissioned by the HKSAR Development Bureau as the key reference report for the Review of Built Heritage Conservation Policy. Report completed in April 2014, released on the website of the Antiquities Advisory Board in June 2014: http://www.builtheritagereview.hk/common/info/publication_doc3.pdf.

    -   This is the key reference report for the Hong Kong SAR Government's first major review of the Built Heritage Conservation Policy since the launch of the policy in 2007. Announcement of the policy review on the website of the Antiquities Advisory Board (launch in June 2014): http://www.builtheritagereview.hk/en/about.html; downloadable consultation document for the review: http://www.builtheritagereview.hk/en/condoc.html.

    -   ACP Director Hoyin Lee presented a public lecture "From Moderne to Modern: Architectural Heritage of Art Deco and Bauhaus Traditions or 'What do the Airplane, the Ocean-liner, Ultraman, a Sony transistor radio and the Sony iPhone have to do with Hong Kong's Modern Heritage Architecture?'," invited by the French Consulate General in Hong Kong and Macau for the "Public Lecture Series – The French Connections: Archives, Architecture & Heritage in Hong Kong," organized by the French Consulate General in Hong Kong and Macau and Arts in Heritage Research, as part of the *Le French May 2014* arts festival, held on 28 June 2014, at Salle Segalen of the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong and Macau. See: http://www.consulfrance-hongkong.org/Conference-From-Moderne-to-Modern.

Department of Architecture

1. Mr. Stephen Lau and his team has the following paper accepted for publication

   Journal: Frontiers of Architectural Research

   Authors: Stephen S Y Lau, Zhonghua Gou (PostDoc, UNSW), and Yajing Liu (PhD, HKU Final Year)

   Status: Accepted for Publication (FOAR-D-13-00078)

   Title: Healthy Campus by Open Space Design: Approaches and Guidelines

   Abstract: This paper examines the architectural and landscape design strategies and intentions for green, open spaces design targeting stress alleviation for learning environments such as those of university campuses in a compact urban setting. Literature reviews provide three prevailing perspectives for physical design pedagogical operatives: healing gardens where greenery and plants produce restorative effects; flexible spaces that moderate stimulation and counterbalance hyper-stimulation; green buildings that incorporate open space as a catalyst for integrated ecosystem. Corresponding design approaches (landscape design, spatial design and green design) are scrutinized by case study. Finally, a framework that integrates the three approaches is combined to produce a sustainable design rubric.

2. Dr. Cole Roskam and his team members Melissa Christ, Dr. Cecilia Chu, Professor Lynne DiStefano, Mr. Nicholas Karkings, Dr. Hoyin Lee, Dr. Eunice Send and Mr. Koon Wee

   - have been selected by the Faculty for the Faculty Knowledge Exchange Award this year in respect of the outstanding accomplishments achieved in the KE project "Mapping Modern Architecture in Hong Kong"

Division of Landscape Architecture

1. Ms. Dorothhy Tang

   - was a competition juror for the "International Design Competition of Shenzhen Xiangmi Park" organized by the Shenzhen Urban Management Bureau of Futian District and the Shenzhen Center for Design on 27 June 2014.

Department of Real Estate and Construction

1. Professor Lawrence Lai

   - his project titled "Repeated Planning Applications by Developers under Statutory Zoning: A Hong Kong Case Study of Delays in Private Residential Development" (Project Number: 2013.A8.014.14C) has been approved by the Central Policy Unit with the advice of the Assessment Panel of the Public Policy Research (PPR) Funding Scheme for 2014/15 (Second Round).

Department of Urban Planning and Design

1. Dr. Cecilia Chu

   - has been nominated as a member of the Program Committee for the *16th National Planning History Conference*, sponsored by SACRPH, the Society for American City and Regional Planning History.

   - has been nominated as a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch.

2. Dr. Cecilia Chu and Ms. Natalia Echeverri

   - led a 3-day departmental field trip to Yangon, Myanmar. Participants include students from the programmes of Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies (BAUS), Master of Urban Planning (MUP) and Master of Urban Design (MUD). Participants visited several key urban areas of Yangon, including the historic center (conservation zones and buildings), the Chinatown district and Indian Quarter, and new townships in the greater metropolitan area. Participants also met with representatives of the Yangon CIty Development Committee (YCDC), Yangon Heritage Trust and the U Thant House Trust. While much attention has been paid to deriving conservation strategies for Yangon's downtown historic district, this field trip also stresses the need to consider issues of housing, transportation and the provision of urban amenities, as well as the connections between specific development projects and the rest of the city and their potential long term impacts on the livelihood of local residents.

3. Professor Bo-sin Tang

   - was invited to give a presentation about "Private City and Open Space" in the *2nd Hong Kong Public Space Symposium – "Housing Our Public Space"* organized by the Hong Kong Public Space Initiative and co-organized by Department of Public Policy, the City University of Hong Kong on 28 June 2014.

   - was invited to give a presentation about "Open Space in High-Density City" at the *2014 International Workshop on Sustainable Urban Renewal in High Density Cities* organized by the Department of Building and Real Estate, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University on 28 June 2014.