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WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF:

College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Tongji, CHINA
Institute of Urban and Demographic Studies
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, CHINA
Rationale

‘Diffuse cities’ extend over large areas, have average low density, and juxtapose built and unbuilt spaces, including agricultural, natural, and open spaces. They are a major but controversial form of contemporary urbanization throughout the world. For instance, diffuse cities ‘consume’ a large amount of soil and increase distances to be covered by motor vehicles. However, they have advantages: for instance, they can stimulate original urban forms that combine nature and the city; and they can shorten food chains if agricultural space is close to commercial and residential areas. Diffuse cities have been widely criticized by scholars, planners, and policy-makers (Nessi 2013) who have accredited the ‘compact city’ as the most suitable spatial pattern to achieve sustainable development (Jenks and Burgess 2000). However, other authors (inter al. Secchi and Viganò 2011; Viganò 2004,2013) have described the qualities of the diffuse city; it is ‘porous’, ‘permeable’, and ‘open on the territory’ (Baratucci 2006). Planning has to enhance these qualities and give shape to original and liveable urban territories that efficiently manage flows and resources.

Inter-regional context & comparative perspectives

Over the last 30 years, Asia has been experiencing intense urban growth: in particular, urban sprawl, the formation of ‘extended metropolitan regions’(McGee 2009), and of urban corridors that link and absorb urban centres (Sui and Zeng 2001). During the same period, many European cities have been subject to low, zero or even negative growth. But planners and urban theorists from Europe, and more broadly from the North, have explored how to cope with diffuse urbanization while taking into account environmental and ecological concerns (Mostafavi and Doherti 2010; Piccinato and Sartore 1990; Waldheim 2006).

While knowledge production about urban sprawl has mainly been based on studies of North American contexts, this seminar series aims to compare and confront processes of diffuse urbanization in Asian and European cities. Cities across Europe and Asia are facing partly comparable issues related to diffuse urbanization that concern governance, infrastructure, mobility, urban morphologies, and environmental balance. However, comparisons between Asia and Europe are rare: scholars and planners in each region have developed specific concepts, vocabularies, and knowledge to describe urbanization processes and to explore urban futures; researchers have sometimes emphasized the singularities of Asian cities and have argued that ad hoc urban tools should be established in Asia (Yokohari et al. 2000); and the same goes for European cities (cf., e.g., Herrschel and Newman 2002; Kreukels et al. 2002).
Contemporary diffuse cities and diffuse urbanization challenge or affect:
- Urban governance, political and institutional organizations.
- The distribution of economic activities.
- The configuration of social practices, e.g., daily mobility, leisure, housing and work strategies.
- The construction of adequate urban infrastructure.
- The maintenance of the environmental balance.
- Dominant forms of architectural and urban design, as urban diffusion leads to substantial transformations of built shapes and urban landscapes.

The seminar series on ‘Diffuse Cities’ aims to deepen our understanding of the processes and implications of urban dispersion in Asia and Europe, to explore the commonalities and specificities of these processes between the two regions; and to confront successful or failed experiences in territorial planning, governance, policy and management. Hence, it will point to possible applications in the field of planning, but will also contribute to academic debates and knowledge production surrounding the phenomena of diffuse urbanization. We will question the relevance of the research and concepts that have been forged to describe urban dispersion in an international perspective. And we will analyse the vocabularies, the concepts, and the analytical categories that have shaped and underpinned discourses about the diffuse cities; we will question the ideas (and the ideals) that are associated with these forms of urbanization.

Hence, urbanization in China and in Asia more generally over the last 30 years has led to the formation of “extended metropolitan regions” (McGee 2009) and diffuse urban territories. These are the objects of investigation for this series of international seminars. Drawing on the case of Indonesia, McGee has forged the expression desakota (desa = village; kota = city) to describe “regions of an intense mixture of agricultural and non-agricultural activities that often stretch along corridors between large city cores”, characterized in particular by the extreme fluidity and mobility of the population, an intense mixture of land use, with agriculture, cottage industry, industrial estates, suburban developments and other uses existing side by side, and constituting to some extent “invisible” or “grey” zones from the viewpoint of the state authorities (McGee 2007). Sui and Zeng (2001) have further documented how these diffuse urban shapes develop along corridors that link urban centres. Xie, Batty and Zhao (2005) have explained that desakota mainly results from bottom-up processes of urbanization of rural landscapes that generate unexpected morphologic transformations. Only a posteriori is the process moderated by urban policies.

Yokohari et al. (2000) have argued that desakota is a typical “Asian urban figure”. For this reason, it would be inadequate to apply “Western planning tools”, such as zoning or greenbelts, to regulate this “spontaneous” phenomenon. Such instruments would erase this original mix of functions, land use and built forms that has “both negative and positive effects” (McGee 2007) and may therefore prove worth preserving. However, according to Xie, Batty and Zhao (2005), “an equivalent of desakota has existed in parts of urban Europe for the last half century as [primarily automobility-based] urban growth has put flesh on the polycentric network of towns and cities established over 500 years ago” (p.4). Other concepts have been developed in the context of regional or international comparisons, e.g. the concept of post-suburbanization, Phelps and Wu 2011).

More generally, researchers and urban planners working on European cities have studied processes of diffuse urbanization since the 1960s (among al. Piccinato and Sartore 1990; Piccinato, Quillici and Tafuri 1962; Roux 1993; Burgel 1993; Indovina 1990) and have analysed
the hybrid and elusive morphological characters of diffuse urbanization throughout Europe. As Nessi explains (2013), many of them have “demonized the diffuse city”. They have criticized the breakdown of the traditional distinction, and even balance, between the city and the countryside, fearing that excessive and uncontrolled urban sprawl might -- in the long term -- generate ecological problems (overuse of arable land, soil sealing, greenhouse gas emissions associated to automobility, etc.). The criticisms and fears associated with diffuse urbanization now emerge for Asian cities. Some authors promote “compact cities” as promising solutions for achieving sustainable development in emerging countries (inter al. Jenks and Burgess 2000), and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (that acts as a disseminator of “good practices” in Southeast Asia) pledges for the development of “low carbon compact cities”. In contrast with this line of thought, some authors have given shape to ideas of planning that perceive diffuse urbanization as a positive quality. They have imagined new ways to allocate resources and organize flows. For instance, examining the similarities of urban dispersion in Veneto (the Italian region where Venice is located) and in other European cities, Secchi (1993) has designated the “European diffuse city” (città europea diffusa), as a permeable urban pattern that is waiting for a project. Ecological urbanism (Mostafavi and Doherti 2010) and landscape urbanism (Waldheim 2006) have developed strategies of non-dense urbanization (Corner 1999) that take into account the environmental and ecological concerns in the development of new, dispersed urban patterns. Secchi and Viganò (2008) have recently imagined the spatial pattern of a “horizontal metropolis” for Paris and Brussels that would take full advantage of porosity, hybridity, and diffusion.

If these ideas of planning have been elaborated in an international perspective, they have used case studies mainly located in Europe. To some extent, European and Asian cities face (or have faced) comparable challenges related to diffuse urbanization that concern, e.g., governance, infrastructure, mobility, morphologies, and environmental (im)balance. In spite of this, authors have predominantly elaborated specific concepts, vocabularies, and knowledge to describe urbanization processes and to explore urban futures in European vs. Asian contexts. And indeed, many researchers working on Asia have put the accent on the singularities of Asian cities, arguing that specific urban tools should be established in Asia to steer processes of rapid urbanization. This dialectic between commonalities and specificities is the object of the international seminars “Diffused Cities: waiting for a project?”

This series of seminar develops comparative perspectives between Asian and European contexts with the following main objectives:

1) Questioning the complex relation between global, shared, trends of urbanization, and local processes, and addressing the evolution of the ideas of the cities in Asia and Europe.

For instance (with no claim to be exhaustive):

- Are there common/comparable key drivers and challenges faced by Asian and European cities as regards diffuse urban development? Is it possible, and to what extent, to ‘learn from each other’ in the fields of governance and planning? On the other hand, what are the key regional and sub-regional specificities and singularities of the cities examined?

- How are diffuse territories shaped and reshaped, produced and reproduced, by multiple stakeholders? E.g. construction of infrastructure, establishment of economic activities, land use, etc. Are diffuse urbanization processes specific in any respect as regards the proportions of, and relations between, planned and unplanned urbanization?

- What is the role and the status of urban centres in the context of diffuse urban territories? Do new urban centralities result from the processes of urban diffusion? How could diffuse
urban areas be restructured? How are the boundaries of the cities (re)defined for diffuse cities, not only from the administrative point of view, but also from the point of view of the inhabitants and the users of the city? Within general context of lack of financial resources at the local level, how can cities finance the extension and the improvement of their urban networks and services (i.e. transport, water supply, etc.)?

- Does the study of Asian and European diffuse urbanization processes shed new light on "sprawl theory", which has been heretofore largely based on the study of North-American urbanization?

2) Testing the broader relevance of the concepts and analytical categories invented to describe processes/shapes observed in Asia or in Europe.

For instance:

- The panorama of research on diffuse Asian cities has been widely influenced by McGee’s concepts of desakota and “extended metropolitan region”. Other concepts and designations, such as “dispersed metropolitan concentration” (Castells 1998) and “post-suburbanisation” (Pheips and Wu 2011) are primarily based on studies of urbanization in Western Europe and North America, but are claimed to have universal purchase. Are these concepts useful for studying the urban processes in such diverse geographical and cultural areas as Western Europe and East and South East Asia? How broad is their relevance? To what extent do they help accounting for, and understanding, actual processes of planned and unplanned urban development?

- How do the ideas of the city evolve with the emergence of diffuse cities? What are the words, notions, and concepts used to describe and account for diffuse urbanization? What are the similarities between the processes and the phenomena described by the terms “diffuse city” and desakota? Do the terms “diffuse city” and “compact city” perceive the city (and its multiple expressions) from the same perspective, and at the same scale? How is the traditional distinction between notions of “the city” and “the countryside” affected by diffuse urbanization?

- McGee (2007) notes about the forging of the word desakota that “there was a need to look for terms and concepts in the languages of developing countries that reflect the empirical reality of their societies. Reliance solely on the language and concepts of Western social science, which have dominated the analyses of non-Western societies, can lead to a form of “knowledge imperialism”. The discussion here should take into account the long-standing Eurocentric urban history that has sharply distinguished the city from the rural environments, as well as the political and administrative implications associated with the idea of the city in different contexts.

3). Exchanging knowledge about planning instruments, urban models and urban policies that might help framing the processes of diffuse urbanization in Asia and Europe.

For instance:

- How do public policies integrate the environmental dimension into the planning of the diffuse cities? Can diffuse cities be sustainable, and how do we (re)define sustainability by drawing on the case studies from Asia and Europe?

- In Europe, urban studies have long believed that the cities’ suburbs depended on urban centres. However, recent research (Davezies 2009 and Talandier 2011) has shown that they establish a relation of interdependence, and that the urban economies rely on minor poles and dispersed urban territories. This “awareness” leads to question the role and the status of the urban poles in the diffuse cities, with direct consequences in terms of planning and future urban development. How does the shifting role of urban centralities influence
planning in Asian and European contexts?

- Knowledge production on diffuse urbanization has mainly focused on metropolis; however, medium-sized cities are also concerned by these processes. Do these cities experience processes similar to metropolitan areas?

- Are urban models and patterns exportable from Europe to Asia, and under which conditions? The idea of building a horizontal metropolis “that gives urbanity to suburbs”, “establishes ecological and infrastructural connexions” and “breaks down every barrier which makes movement difficult” (Secchi and Viganò 2008) has been shaped with reference to European contexts...can it, and to what extent, inspire approaches of planning for Asian cities?

- Are planning, governance or other policy “models” circulating between the two regions? Based upon what justifications, with what effects, and what effectiveness? Does the international circulation of urban or planning models have a strong influence on the actual urban planning and development of the diffuse city?
References


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WORKING SEMINAR PROGRAM

5TH APRIL TUESDAY

08.30-09.00 **REGISTRATION-WELCOME COFFEE**

09.00-09.10 **GREETINGS**
Christopher J. Webster
Dean, Faculty of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong

09.10-09.25 **THEMES INTRODUCTION AND PROSPECT**
Adele Esposito
CNRS Researcher, Ipraus (Umr AUSser), FRANCE

Andrea Palmioli
PhD c. EDVTT University of Paris-Est, FRANCE
Visiting Fellow, Division of Landscape Architecture, The University of Hong Kong

09.25-10.10 **KEYNOTE PRESENTATION**
Terence G. McGee
Prof. Emeritus, Department of Geography, The University of British Columbia, CANADA

10.10- 10.40 **Q&A**

10.40- 11.00 **COFFEE BREAK**

11.00-11.45 **KEYNOTE PRESENTATION**
Andrew M. Marton
Professor, Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives, Department of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Victoria, CANADA
“Diffuse Cities in China: Hybridity, Porosity and Eco-Urbanisation in the Lower Yangzi Delta. Preliminary ideas for a comparative project on diffuse cities in Asia and Europe”

11.45-12.15 **Q&A**

12.15- 13.15 **LUNCH BREAK**
13.15-14.00 **KEYNOTE PRESENTATION**

Bénédicte Grosjean  
Assistant Professor, École Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture et de Paysage de Lille, FRANCE  
*“Diffuse urban territories (Belgium & Europe) : concepts, forms, processes.”*

14.00- 14.30 **Q&A**

14.30-14.50 **COFFEE BREAK**

**SESSION 1**

Discussant: **Andrew M. Marton**  
14.50-15.10 **Jian Zhuo**  
Deputy Head, Urban Planning Department CAUP, Tongji University  
*“Suburbia in Shanghai 2040: Through Urban Mobility and Transport Perspective”*

15.10-15.30 **Qiyu Tu**  
Deputy Director, Institute of Urban and Demographic Studies, Shanghai Academy of Social Science, CHINA  
*“Shanghai 2040: Global City? Global City-Region? Global City Agglomeration!”*

15.30-16.00 **Q&A**

16.00-16.10 **COFFEE BREAK**

**SESSION 2**

Discussant: **Jian Zhuo**  
16.10-16.30 **Béatrice Mariolle**  
Assistant Professor, ENSA Paris-Belleville, Researcher Ipraus (Umr AUSser), FRANCE  
*“Dispersion futures”: Soil fragmentation is not an enemy of living landscapes*

16.30-16.50 **Peng Zhenwei**  
Chairman, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, CHINA  
*“Metropolitan Suburbanization in Shanghai”*

16.50-17.20 **Q&A**

18:30 **WELCOME DINNER**
6th April Wednesday

09.00-09.20 Registration & Coffee

Session 1

Discussant: Terry McGee
09.20-09.40 Andrea Palmioli
PhD c. EDVTT University of Paris-Est
Vising Fellow, Division of Landscape Architecture, The University of Hong Kong
“Intertextures. Polarization and Diffusion in Yangtze River Delta: social ties, environment, economy.”

09.40-10.00 Etienne Monin
Lecturer, Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis University
Researcher, Prodig UMR- CNRS, FRANCE
“Agro-industrial development in metropolitan desakota: agricultural trajectories of towns and economical integration in Shanghai rural areas”

10.00-10.30 Q&A

10.30-10.50 Coffee Break

Session 2

Discussant: Andrew M. Marton
10.50-11.10 Dorothy Tang
Assistant Professor, Division of Landscape Architecture, The University of Hong Kong
“Negotiating the Urban and Rural: Village-based transformation strategies in Panyu”

11.10-11.30 Qinyi Zhang
PhD c. IUAV School of Doctorate Studies in Urbanism, University of Venice, ITALY
“The Horizontal Metropolis”

11.30-12.00 Q&A

12.30-18.00 Lunch & Fieldtrip: Zhaotun Town, Qingpu District, Shanghai
SESSION 1
Discussant: Bénédicte Grosjean
09.20-09.40 Adele Esposito
  CNRS Researcher, Ipraus (Umr AUSser), FRANCE
  "Diffuse and Dispersed Urbanization: State of the Art on Southeast Asia"
09.40-10.00 Joel Idt
  Assistant Professor, UPEM, University of Paris-Est Marne-La-Vallée, FRANCE
  "Public Policies in Diffuse Cities: the case of France"
10.00-10.30 Q&A

10.30- 10.50 COFFEE BREAK

SESSION 2
Discussant: Qiyu Tu
10.50-11.10 Chen Yang
  Associate Professor, Department of Urban Planning CAUP, Tongji University, CHINA
  "Building environment and Social Network Reconstruction in the Large-scale community in Shanghai"
11.10-11.30 Yao Cheng
  Assistant Professor, Department of Urban Planning, Tongji University, CHINA
  "The emerging of Shanghai global city region: centrality and diffusion"
11.30-12.00 Q&A

12.00- 14.00 LUNCH BREAK

14.00-16.00 ROUNDTABLE: RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES AND FURTHER COLLABORATIONS

16.00-16.20 COFFEE BREAK

16.20-16.35 CONCLUSION:
  Andrea Palmioli
  PhD c. EDVTT University of Paris-Est
  Vising Fellow, Division of Landscape Architecture, The University of Hong Kong
Adele Esposito

Adele Esposito, PhD, is an architect, researcher at the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). Her research mainly deals with the contemporary development of Southeast Asian cities and, in particular, with the use of heritage as an argument of conservation and a source of reference for architectural and urban design. Crossing the analysis of spatial transformations with the analysis of social behaviours, political strategies, and collective meanings, her research considers cities and human settlements as complex cultural phenomena that give account of the evolution and legacies of Southeast Asian societies.

Diffuse and Dispersed Urbanization: State of the Art on Southeast Asia

This paper questions how academic research has dealt with urban diffusion and dispersion in Southeast Asia. It examines the main avenues of investigation, notions, disciplinary approaches, and thematic focuses of existing literature. The purpose is to ask how research in the field may evolve in the future and unfold new perspectives that would be able to grasp the rapidly evolving urban condition and spatial realities of Southeast Asian cities.
Bénédicte Grosjean is civil engineer, architect (Ecole Polytechnique de Louvain), with a doctorate in Urban Design (univ. Paris8). Her dissertation was awarded Grand Prix de la Thèse sur la Ville 2008 in France and was published in 2010: Urbanisation sans urbanisme. Une histoire de la “ville diffuse” (éd. Mardaga). She is now associate professor at the National School of Architecture and Landscape of Lille (ENSAPL, F.), and a lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture LOCI (UCLouvain, B.). Researcher at the LACTH (Lille) and associated with IPRAUS (UMR ausser 3329), she continues investigating on the urbanization processes related with mobility, and on new models of territories (in-between, informal, borderlands, etc.). Today she is preparing an HDR, “Le projet post-ville diffuse”, about design modalities under uncertainty conditions (descriptive urbanism, strategic urbanism, “bottom-up” projects).

**Diffuse urban territories (Belgium & Europe) : Concepts, forms, processes.**

This paper questions the theoretical and conceptual models usually employed to understand the forms of contemporary dispersed urbanization. Some urbanized areas, such as main parts of Belgium, do not fit indeed into the commonly used concepts (sprawl, suburbs, etc.). To that purpose, a comparison is developed between new concepts emerging in Europe since the 1990’s, in order to clarify alternative definitions, such as “città diffusa”. These characteristics criteria are then tested on the Belgian territory, through a temporal approach of causal factors and genesis modalities. In this way, the importance of processes (decision making, contributors, scales) in the definition of dispersed forms is highlighted.
Joel Idt

Joel Idt is assistant professor in urban planning, at Urban Engineering Department of University Paris-Est Marne la Vallée, France. His research focuses on urban public action, both urban development projects and “every day” action of public institutions, particularly in diffuse cities. He is particularly interested in relations between techniques and politics in public decision. Member of Labex Urban Futures, he is involved in the organization of transversal seminar “Diffuse cities: Crossroads between Europe and Asia.”

Urban public policies in and for diffuse cities: the case of France

In this paper, we will review the specificities of urban public action in and for the diffuse cities, both development projects and planning devices. We will present the case of France. We will focus on the modalities of production and governance of diffuse cities, showing the difficulties that public stakeholders meet to plan, organize and control their development. We will see that urban planning methods and tools traditionally used in dense cities work poorly, but that public and private stakeholders develop other forms of intervention and cooperation.
FRUGAL is a three years research on French rural territories involving geographers, architects, ethnologists, urbanists and ecologists, financed by the ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche).

The main question is: how scattered urbanization, rural or peri-urban, can contribute to globally more sustainable territories development? Going beyond conventional representations linked to rural and peri-urban spaces by taking into account the reality of their regional dynamism. Sketching alternatives to these spaces’ evolution taking into account their high sustainability and adaptability potentials regarding proximity, alternative mobilities and interfaces between built-up spaces and green or agricultural open spaces.

This research is willing to renew knowledge production and provide urbanists and regional managers with descriptive and operational tools. As far as sustainable development is concerned, low density urbanity, because scattered, should not remain irrelevant as urbanization model by using the argument that it would be incompatible with space saving, functions diversity, social groups mix, energy sobriety, biodiversity preservation, agricultural and green ecosystems as well as landscape heritage.

First thing was to elaborate new concepts able to identify and describe the specificities of these spaces, at the crossroads of analyses of morphological dispersion, of population, employment and services distribution, of mobilities and of interfaces between built-up and open spaces. Second thing was to deal with the knowledge production about scattered urban spaces whose characteristics have rarely been updated since the last rural geography works, whereas transformation process of these spaces has accelerated over the last decades. Third ambition, a methodological and planning one, was to cross approaches coming from different disciplines (architecture, geography, planning, network engineering, ethnology, environment), in order to test original ways of apprehending these spaces.

Fourteen samples of french regional scattered urbanisation, rural or periurban, observed through a multidisciplinary approach.

“Dispersion futures”: Soil fragmentation is not an enemy of living landscapes

Beatrice Mariolle

With a PHD in architecture, Beatrice Mariolle is assistant professor at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture de Paris-Belleville, researcher at UMR AUSSER/IPRAUS, member of AIGP (Atelier International du Grand Paris). Her main research and publication activities are dealing with low density territories in metropolitan and rural situations, among which Great Paris, ecological issues, landscape urbanism, vernacular architecture.

PARTICIPANTS

Beatrice Mariolle

With a PHD in architecture, Beatrice Mariolle is assistant professor at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture de Paris-Belleville, researcher at UMR AUSSER/IPRAUS, member of AIGP (Atelier International du Grand Paris). Her main research and publication activities are dealing with low density territories in metropolitan and rural situations, among which Great Paris, ecological issues, landscape urbanism, vernacular architecture.

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Fourteen samples of french regional scattered urbanisation, rural or periurban, observed through a multidisciplinary approach.
Our multidisciplinary team explored the specific characteristics of different “regional samples” in the form of zones each of them having a 50 kilometers square side. Three criteria were used for the selection of these zones: first, they should not include a city with more than 20,000 inhabitants and they should encompass in the same way rural and suburban spaces. In addition, they cover diversity of landscape and of rural “substrates” (grove landscapes, openfield, Mediterranean landscape, mid mountain areas). Main results can be express as seven breaks which deeply modify the prevailing representations linked to these scattered urbanisation:.

1- First, the dynamic of population density and land occupation is not reducible to the urban sprawl issue or in other terms, what we use to call urban sprawl cannot be summarized to an erratic scattered housing.  
2- Subsequently, the shopping facilities and services offer doesn’t depend on the large distance. Whereas the dispersion of urbanization is often perceived as geographical distance, a relative proximity to shops appears equally for those who live in a village or a hamlet.  
3- Fragmentation and interpenetration of land uses doesn’t jeopardize the landscape sustainability. In these interfaces between dwelling and nature, a familiar diversity, food crops practices and adaptation forms to the climate reveal coexistence between humans and the natural world.  
4- The daily mobility, in order to access employment, is very far from being exclusively dependant on the large distances to be covered; on the contrary, it tends to be characterised by proximity for the large majority of inhabitants.  
5- The companies are not very sensitive to mobility constraints linked to law density and dispersion mainly due to the existence of a good road network and to the loyalty of the labour force because mainly locally hired. However, access to a skilled labour force and to high speed internet network turns out to be crucial.  
6- Transformation of law density territories are not limited to inherited centrality. Today, the actual space rational at work may be a a new way of approaching these territories.  
7- Lastly, city and regional planning principles, largely planned from and for urban areas and applied to national territory are unlikely to seize and enhance the innovative local initiatives in mainly rural areas.
Andrew M. Marton

Andrew Marton is a Professor in the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies, and Director of the Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives at the University of Victoria, Canada. He specializes in contemporary Chinese studies. His research revolves around the study of patterns and processes of spatial economic transformation in China’s mega-urban regions, with a particular focus on the lower Yangzi delta. His other research interests in China include studies of administrative restructuring and urban and regional development, curricular reforms and geographical education, and the emergence of new urban spaces for the visual arts and other creative industries in Shanghai, Beijing and Ningbo.

Prior to his appointment at the University of Victoria in 2012, Dr. Marton held positions at the National University of Singapore and the University of Nottingham. As founding director of Nottingham’s Institute for Contemporary Chinese Studies he led the strategic development of a highly successful Chinese studies teaching and research program which culminated in the creation of the new School of Contemporary Chinese Studies in 2007. From 2007 to 2012 Dr. Marton served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and was also Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning at the University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China.

Diffuse Cities in China: Hybridity, Porosity and Eco-Urbanisation in the Lower Yangzi Delta. Preliminary ideas for a comparative project on diffuse cities in Asia and Europe

This presentation engages the notion of the diffuse city in China through an examination of spatial economic transformation in the lower Yangzi delta. Areas within the extended metropolitan region of the lower Yangzi delta exhibit features of dispersed urbanisation resulting in a shift towards hybrid urban and rural patterns and processes. Specific locally driven development strategies and policies explicitly seek to globalise areas outside large cities in the lower Yangzi delta by directly mobilising international investment and expertise, migrant labour, production linkages and commodity chains. These interactions and interrelationships create an intense transactional environment largely independent of nearby big cities. While urbanization in China as a state project is focused on huge investment in conventional urban forms, a closer examination of porous “territories of metropolis” such as the lower Yangzi delta reveals the possibility of more ecologically friendly urban landscapes. Concepts and approaches emerging from indigenous Chinese scholarship and other commentary which provide alternative ways of describing and understanding the form and functioning of such dispersed urban landscapes in China are highlighted. It is proposed that an examination of these phenomoneon, and the key ideas emerging in China to understand and explain them, provide a worthwhile contribution to a comparative project examining diffuse cities in Asia and Europe.
Terence G. McGee

A leading figure in the field of development studies for some thirty years, Professor McGee’s has also provided important administrative leadership. At the University of British Columbia he was for many years Director of the Institute of Asian Research. He also served as Vice-President, President, and Past-President of The Canadian Association of Geographers.

“Citta Diffusa and Kotadesasasi”: Comparing Diffuse Urbanization in Europe and Asia. A Project in the Making

Terry McGee’s seminal work has had four main foci: the social and economic geography of the Southeast Asian city; the nature of the informal economy in the developing world; the food distribution systems that are essential to the survival of the proletariat of burgeoning third-world cities; and the development of extended metropolitan regions. There have also been important contributions on rural-urban migration and to the understanding of Southeast Asia as a region. This is a large, distinctive, and enormously influential corpus of work, marked by its consistent incorporation (and development) of theory with empirical evidence (garnered from field investigations in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Indonesia and the New Hebrides [Vanuatu] among other places).
Étienne Monin is an agronomist and geographer. Its PhD in geography (2015) has brought the topic of metropolization of agricultural development in Shanghai since the beginning of 2000s.

Key-words : Shanghai, metropolitan development, township, economical integration, agricultural industrialization.

Agro-industrial development in metropolitan desakota : agricultural trajectories of towns and economical integration in Shanghai rural areas

Administrative towns (zhen) and townships (xiang) in the rural peripheries of Shanghai municipality have experienced accelerated urban growth and economical integration throughout the 2000 decade. The metropolitan development, following rural industrialization observed since the beginning of 1980s, results in sharp contrasts between fully urbanized towns and far less differenciated rural areas. Agricultural activities formerly rooted into these desakota spaces nowadays show different patterns of specialization and industrialization. On what resources rely these activities ? What sort of development raises their economical integration ? In analyzing the evolutions of agricultural production in Shanghai in the last two decades, the paper discusses the economical and territorial factors involved in the agro-industrial development of towns and sketches agricultural trajectories of desakota areas in relation with metropolitan development.

Key-words : Shanghai, metropolitan development, township, economical integration, agricultural industrialization.
The current study is designed to examine the spatial relationship between dynamics of polarization and diffusion embedded in rural-urban transformations in China’s urban regions. Scholarship in urban studies have focused on urbanization as a prime agent of economic growth, emphasizing metropolitan areas as catalysts for regional development. In this view the process of urbanization facilitates the transition of rural areas into conurbations of urban sub-urban units scattered in a predominantly rural landscape”.

This urban-centered approach, which focuses on the separation between rural and urban contexts, suggests that the urbanization process would lead to urban sprawl and ongoing encroachment of the countryside. The consequence is spatial fragmentation, which will in turn leads to imbalance of the ecosystem, thereby raising further concerns for ecological sustainability of Chinese mega urban regions.

Using empirical evidences gathered from the Lower Yangtze Delta, this study explores how development patterns in China since the 1950s have been significantly shaped by indigenous practices of guanxi (networks) and the onset of rural reforms. These processes have led to ongoing diffusion of settlements with formation of new networks and functional clusters of enterprises scattered over the countryside. Consequentially, this mode of productivity has in turn reshape the relationship between the natural environment, economy and local communities.

Building upon Vivienne Shue’s hypothesis of intertextures and McGee’s formulation of Desakota, this study draws attention to the spatial and social implications resulting from the overlapping processes of diffusion and polarization. It ultimately argues for an urgent need to reconsider the programmatic sequence that underlie the morphology of the mega urban region through an examination of the interactions between physically disjointed systems.
Zhenwei Peng:

Zhenwei Peng is professor and chairman of College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University. He is member of multiple Academic Committee, and editor of multiple academic magazines. His main research is dealing with urban and regional planning, rural planning and small town development.

Metropolitan Suburbanization in Shanghai

This presentation focuses on dual features of rural development: both the impact of metropolitan core areas on surrounding suburbs and how decisions made in the suburbs themselves affect their development. It describes a model of Shanghai metropolitan suburbs by analysis of how population and land uses are changing in space. Based on in-depth fieldwork and analysis of land, population, and rural communities in Shanghai metropolitan suburbs, the presentation describes common internal and external elements during the process of rural urbanization and a new theoretical model to describe the process of suburban urbanization in China in the 21st century.
Lying at the heart of the Pearl River Delta, Panyu is neither here nor there: an in-between landscape of industrial estates, villages, and farms, superhighways and ancient canals, populated in equal measure by villagers who have deep historical roots in the region, and by more recent migrants who have flocked to Panyu’s manifold workshops, factories, and back offices. Located on the fringes of larger urban centers such as Guangzhou, Foshan, and Dongguan, Panyu’s polycentric, heterogeneous landscape is often overlooked, or worse, discounted as a backwater, filled with antiquated reminders of Guangdong’s rural past that have ‘not yet’ been urbanized.

However, that it is precisely these overlapping ‘in-between’ valences—between rural and urban, between agriculture and industry, and between villagers and migrants—that make Panyu an excellent lens for interpreting broader changes in the social, aesthetic, and economic landscapes of China’s megacity regions. Rather than charting a progressive and irreversible urbanization of the countryside, our study of Panyu demonstrates how the creative juxtaposition of rural, urban, and suburban functions has produced an exceptional heterogeneity of spatial arrangements and village transformation strategies. An exploration of four archetypal forms of village increases awareness of the social and spatial experiments that are conducted on the margins of major urban centers.

Dorothy Tang

Dorothy Tang is an assistant professor in the Division of Landscape Architecture, the University of Hong Kong. Her research investigates the role of landscape strategies at the intersection of everyday operations and large scale systems by exploring the relationships between productive landscapes, infrastructure, and ecological systems through a cultural lens. Prior to joining the Faculty of Architecture, Dorothy was an associate at Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates in New York City where she was a key member of the design team for the award winning Brooklyn Bridge Park. Brooklyn Bridge Park is an 85-acre park located on the post-industrial waterfront of Brooklyn. Dorothy’s work focused on reinventing infrastructure for sound attenuation and stormwater harvesting throughout the park. Dorothy received her Bachelor of Landscape Architecture with Distinction from Iowa State University and her Master in Landscape Architecture with Distinction from Harvard University. While at Harvard, she was the recipient of the Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects and was the alternate for the Charles Eliot Traveling Fellowship.

Negotiating the Urban and Rural: Village-based transformation strategies in Panyu

Lying at the heart of the Pearl River Delta, Panyu is neither here nor there: an in-between landscape of industrial estates, villages, and farms, superhighways and ancient canals, populated in equal measure by villagers who have deep historical roots in the region, and by more recent migrants who have flocked to Panyu’s manifold workshops, factories, and back offices. Located on the fringes of larger urban centers such as Guangzhou, Foshan, and Dongguan, Panyu’s polycentric, heterogeneous landscape is often overlooked, or worse, discounted as a backwater, filled with antiquated reminders of Guangdong’s rural past that have ‘not yet’ been urbanized.

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Qiuyu Tu

Professor Qiuyu Tu is Deputy Director of Institute of Urban and Demographic Studies, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Dr. Tu serves as the Board Member in the Planning Committee of Shanghai Municipality as well as in the Advisory Board of 13th Five Year Plan: 2016-2020 of Beijing Municipality. Since 2014, He has been appointed as one of the 4 Core Experts in charge of drafting Shanghai Master Plan (2016-2040). He was also Official Advisor to the Shanghai World Expo 2010. His international academic records include Marie Curie Fellow, Fulbright Scholar and Harvard-Yenching Fellow. Prof. Tu’s research interests include urban strategic planning, regional innovation system and world city studies. He is the author of 10 books and more than 40 papers. Since 2012, He publishes Blue Book of World Cities annually. He was the First-class Prize Winner of Shanghai Social Sciences Fund in 2000 and the Joint Winner of the First-class Prize for Decision-making Consultation from Shanghai Municipal Government in 2005, and has also been awarded the Excellent Service Prize as Returning Talents from Overseas.

Dr. Tu has joined the Academy since 1992 and served in several research and administrative positions, including Assistant President of the Academy. Since 2007, East China Normal University and the Academy have jointly appointed him Professor of urban studies. Prof. Tu’s visiting research records includes Yenching Institute of Harvard University, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, British Academy, Hamburg Institute for Economic Research (HWWA), East Asia Institute of National University of Singapore and International Institute of Asian Studies at Leiden.

Dr. Tu holds a PhD degree in Economics from the Graduate School of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and a BS degree in Geography from East China Normal University.

Shanghai 2040: Global City? Global City-Region? Global City Agglomeration!

The vision of Shanghai in 2040s should go far beyond its administrative boundary. Only by putting itself in Pan Yangtze River Delta area can Shanghai strategically allocated its capacities and contribute to revival of China. Certainly this ambition, if achieved, will fundamentally change the landscape of a territory as half size of France.
Christopher J. Webster:

Prof. Chris Webster has degrees in urban planning, computer science, economics and economic geography and is a leading urban theorist and spatial economic modeller. He has published over 150 scholarly papers on the idea of spontaneous urban order and received over US$20M grants for research and teaching and learning projects. He was co-editor of Environment and Planning B for ten years. Books include Webster and Lai (2003) Property Rights, Planning and Markets, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar; Glasze, Webster and Frantz, (2006) Private Cities, London, Routledge; Wu, Webster, He and Liu, (2010) Urban Poverty in China, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar; and Wu and Webster (Editors) Marginalisation in Urban China. London: Palgrave McMillan; and Sarkar, Webster and Gallacher (2014) Healthy Cities: Public Health Through Urban Planning. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. Professor Webster has five prize-winning academic papers on urban theory. His present professional mission is to change the way cities are planned in China and his current research agenda is to establish systematic evidence for the relationship between urban configuration (planned and spontaneous) and individual health. He is currently PI on a UK ESRC-funded ‘Transformative Research’ project that is creating 700 built environment morphometrics for each of the 500,000 members of the UK Biobank, the country’s flagship epidemiological study.
Chen Yang

Currently he is Lecturer at the Department of Urban Planning, CAUP, Tongji University. He holds a Doctor degree from EHESS (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, France). YANG’s research field is urban sociology. He focuses currently on history of Shanghai Worker’s neighborhood, housing policy, residential mobility and integration of migrant workers in the urban community.

Building environment and Social Network Reconstruction in the Large-scale community in Shanghai

The development of affordable housing is of great significance as a part of the national urbanization development strategies, and also, an important epitomization of socialist values for equity and justice. However, the current mode of developing large-scale and concentrated affordable communities has produced multiple problems in the aspects of housing policy, community governance and spatial planning. This project, therefore, conducts an empirical study on the fracture of the social network of residents during the process of relocation and resettlement, taking the example of the large-scale residential communities in Shanghai. It aims at, first, figuring out the connection and the mechanism between the willingness of settling down and the construction of social network. Second, it unravels the influence of “construction age” and “spatial elements” (location, block form, commercial spots, public transportation routes and stops, layout of public facilities and housing types) on the social network of residents (typology, scope and values), using mapping and quantitative methods including factor analysis and regression analysis. Third, it finds out the time and spatial factors that hamper the reconstruction of social network of the relocated families, with more accurate spatial planning methods, and thus, to effectively increase the willing of settling down and community recognition of residents as well as help the government advance the quality of urban renewal and community governance.
Cheng Yao

Yao Cheng’s research focuses on three issues in urban and regional planning in China: global city-regions; territorial embeddedness in the context of globalization; land-use policies. There have also been some contributions on urbanization and rural-urban migration in China. In 2015, she graduated from Tongji University, and joined the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University as an Assistant Professor.

PARTICIPANTS

The emerging of Shanghai global city region: centrality and diffusion

Since 1990s, the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) has become one of the most developed regions in mainland China. The significant economic growth is paralleled with rapid urbanization and restructure of urban morphology. On the one hand, as the rise of small cities and towns, a diffuse and sprawling urban area can be observed. On the other hand, as the core city, Shanghai is rapidly gaining its global importance, the population and resources continuously concentrate in this metropolitan city. In this research, by analyzing company’s locative data in the year of 2001, 2008 and 2015, the evolvement of the city network in YRD will be studied. From the empirical study, it is suggested that the processes of concentration and diffusion are concurrent. However, some new trends are also noticed while the core city increasingly connecting to the global city network.
PARTICIPANTS

Qinyi Zhang

Qinyi Zhang (1985, Hangzhou, China) is an architect and urbanist in Studio Paola Viganò since 2009. He serves in Studio as a project architect on projects including Brussels 2040, Masterplan Nieuw Zuid in Antwerp and Schaerbeek Formation masterplan in Brussels. He was also in charge of 4X4 exhibition in BOZAR for Studio. His practice in Studio ranges from architecture, urban design to metropolitan visions in various European cities, for instance Open Theater in Hoge Riel, City Center of Begijnendijk, Grand Paris and Great Moscow Vision. Qinyi Zhang was invited as a jury member and external critic in Master programs and workshops in ULB, IUAV Venezia KU Leuven and GSD in Harvard University. He lectured in TU Delft, Sint-Lucas Gentand KU Leuven. Qinyi Zhang is currently a PhD candidate in Urbanism at IUAV Venezia and a visiting PhD at EPFL Lausanne occasionally. He was educated in the European Postgraduate Master in Urbanism (EMU) in TU Delft and IUAV Venezia. He received the Bachelor Degree in Architecture in Zhejiang University in China.

The Elements of Desakota: Re-examining Rurality in Yangtze River Delta

The research Horizontal Metropolis led by Prof. Paola Viganò, director of lab-U at EPFL and the responsible of the curriculum in Urbanism of the PhD program “Architecture, City and Design” at University IUAV, Venice. It focuses on the form of the contemporary city – the fragmentary spatial condition and dispersed urbanity all over the world. The study on Yangtze River delta is part of its research scope including different territories in Switzerland, Italy, US, and China. The exhibition The Horizontal Metropolis: A Radical Project will be held in the 15th Venice Biennale of Architecture as collateral event.

In the history of Yangtze River delta, the endogenous demand to exhaust the surplus labor has produced an dense village and town system where craft and industries are located, based on a fine network of river and canals. The delta today is a territory with city cores but also a vast dispersed urbanization. The study tries to present a process of different urbanization, and to exam the space built through the urbanization process from an elementary point of view, as a starting point to imagine a transformation of the territory.
Jian Zhuo

He is Professor and Deputy Head of Urban Planning department at Tongji University. He holds Bachelor Degree in Urban Planning and Master Degree in Architecture from Tongji University (Shanghai, China). In 2000, he participated in the program “150 Chinese architects in France” jointly initiated by the presidents of China and France. After obtaining the Diploma of French-registered architect (DPLG) at the Ecole d’architecture, de la ville et des territoires à Marne-la-Vallée, he pursued his research on urban transportation speed regulation at École nationale des Ponts et Chaussées where he was awarded Ph. D degree in 2007. Based in China since 2008, he contributes actively to the exchange between China and Europe. He is member of editorial board of Urban Planning International (Beijing, China), Invited researcher of AMUP of ENSAS (Strasbourg, France), PTSC member of CODATU (Paris, France), and individual member of APERAU International.

Prof. ZHUO secured funding from the National Nature Science Foundation of China, National Social Science Foundation of China, Ministry of Education of China and Shanghai Municipal Government. Focusing on physical and political environment of urban mobility in Chinese cities, his research field covers the interaction between the land use and transport system, the spatio-temporal organization of network city and the social impacts of local transportation policy. In the meantime, he is actively involved in planning practices, such as the integrated design of transportation infrastructure into the urban space, the traffic calming in historic districts, the elaboration of Master Development Plan and the Local Transportation Plan.

Suburbia in Shanghai 2040: Through Urban Mobility and Transport Perspective

The urban transport infrastructure plays an important role in structuring the space of metropolitan area. The previous Comprehensive Urban Development Schemes of Shanghai (1949, 1959, 1986 and 1999) had integrated a regional decentralized model for the urbanization of municipal territory. However, the development of suburban areas has always lagged behind the expansion of central agglomeration. That can be partly explained by the short of public investment in the road system.

During the last two decades, the arrival of rail transit system in suburban area has become a catalyst for local development. How public policies take this opportunity to reconsider the relationship between central city and the new towns? Today, the city of Shanghai is preparing a new planning scheme for the horizon of 2040 and on a new regional scale, that of Yangtze Delta. This presentation will focus on how the new scheme takes urban mobility and transport as a key instrument for realizing the political objectives.
FIELD TRIP ARRANGEMENT

6th April 2016 13:30-18:00
Zhaotun Town, Qingpu District, Shanghai
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Organizing Committee members wish to thank the following individuals for their help:

Cecilia Chu
Maxime Decaudin
Yucong Zhang
Jody Chan
Winnie Yeung

Anderson Lee
Tracy Cui
Hang Su
Yue Wang
Hao Zang