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**Melbourne
School of Design**

Cover image:

A detail of 'White and Brown Painting' by Louise Forthun
(private collection)

Program design: Michele Burder, Melbourne School of Design

Rethinking Modern Asia-Pacific Architectures

July 6, 2016, 8:45 am-4:00 pm

The postgraduate student plenary, *Rethinking Modern Asia-Pacific Architectures* is hosted by the Melbourne School of Design as part of a collaborative *International Research and Research Training Fund* workshop grant from the University of Melbourne led by Anoma Pieris, with Amanda Achmadi and Sidh Sintusingha from the University of Melbourne and collaborators from the University of Hong Kong and the National University of Singapore. The plenary is linked to the workshop: *Spaces in transition: globalisation, transnationalism and urban change in the Asia-Pacific*, 4-5 July, 2016, at the Melbourne School of Design, and is one of two events focused on Asia that precede the annual conference of the *Society of Architectural Historians of Australia and New Zealand*. John Ting from the University of Canberra, Sidh Sintusingha from the University of Melbourne and David Beynon from Deakin University are the main organisers of the plenary.

The objective of the plenary was to invite students to engage in a rigorous academic process of framing and presenting individual research methodologies to a group with expertise on Asian architecture and urbanism. They include collaborating international academics Cecilia Chu and Eunice Seng from HKU and Jiat-Hwee Chang and Lilian Chee from NUS. Students are also drawn from several institutions in Australia including The University of Melbourne, Deakin University and the University of Adelaide, with accompanying academics.

I would like to thank the students, supervisors and reviewers who have participated in this effort, but in particular the organisers, John, Sidh and David, for leading the plenary.

Anoma Pieris

Organisers

John Ting, University of Canberra (ECR)
Sidh Sintusingha, University of Melbourne
David Beynon, Deakin University.

This event is part of a University of Melbourne International Research & Research Training Fund (IRRFTF) workshop grant (2016) led by A/Prof. Anoma Pieris of the Melbourne School of Design.

PROGRAM

Venue: Japanese Room, 4th Floor MSD Building 133,
The University of Melbourne, VIC 3010

TUESDAY, JULY 5, 2016

5:00-7:00 IRRTF informal introductions between students and
workshop presenters

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2016

8:45 Welcome and Introductions

9:00-9:30 SYLVIA CHAN
Constructing Chineseness Through Translation:
Conceptualization of Modern Architecture in the Chinese
Architectural Discourse in the Late Qing Dynasty

9:30-10:00 MARTA CATALAN
Transitional Architecture:
Narrations of Asian Modernism and Chinese Diplomatic
Buildings

10:00-10:30 KE SONG
Modernism in late-Mao China, 1969-76:
Case Studies on Dongfang Hotel and Baiyun Hotel in
Guangzhou

10:30-11:00 YIN-LUN CHAN
Changing Faces of Modernity:
Reconstruction, Relocation, and Remodelling of the Victoria
and Star Theatres, 1911-1936

11:00 - 11:15 Morning tea

- 11:15-11:45 RINA PRIYANI
Postcolonial Bandung:
 Ethnic Identity, Planning Practice, and the Making of an Indonesian City
- 11:45-12:15 NIRODHA DISSANAYAKE
Evaluating new towns in the context of mega projects:
 A case study of the Mahaweli Architectural Unit, Sri Lanka
- 12:15-12:45 KENG KHOON NG
Architecture and intermediation:
 Rethinking the interplay between agency and urbanism
- 12:45-1:45 Lunch
- 1:45-2:15 KIM ROBERTS
Hi-ro-shi-ma space:
 post-memorial navigations of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park
- 2:15-2:45 ANINDA MOEZIER
Minangkabau Houses:
 Intersectional Spaces within Entangled Modernities
- 2:45-3:15 DONGSEI KIM
Visceral Borders:
 Spatial Implications of Bordering Practices in the Korean Peninsula
- 3:15-3:30 Afternoon tea
- 3:30-4:00 Concluding discussion

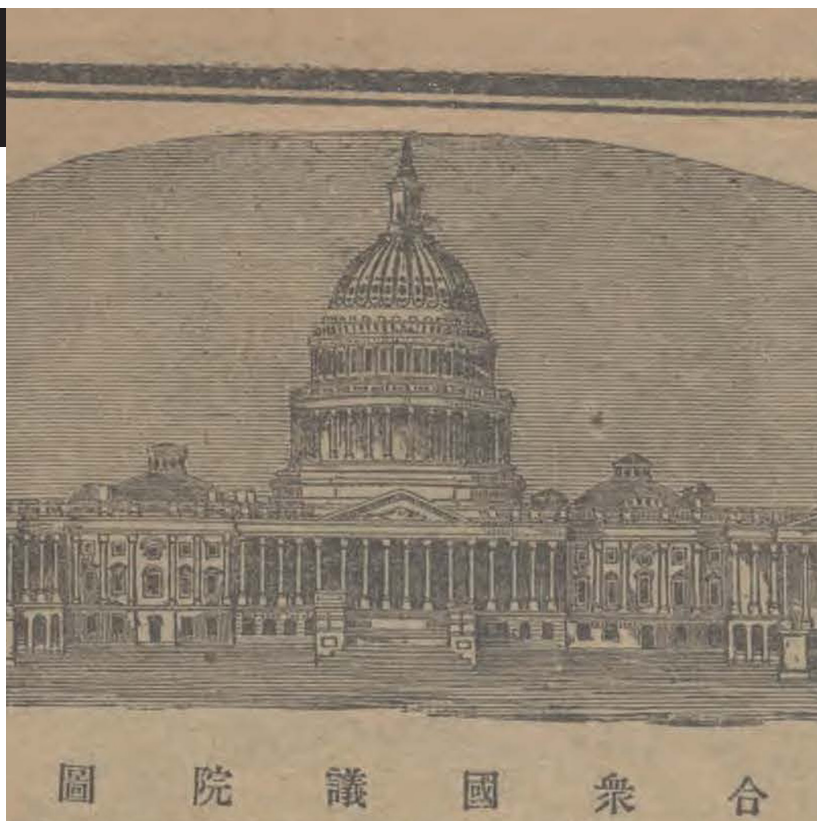
CONSTRUCTING CHINESENESS THROUGH TRANSLATION: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN THE CHINESE ARCHITECTURAL DISCOURSE IN THE LATE QING DYNASTY

SYLVIA CHAN

The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

The idea of architecture as a discipline, involving not only construction of buildings but also ideology and knowledge production through discourse, was imported into China from Europe, the US, and Japan from the mid-nineteenth century following China's defeat in the First Opium War in 1842. Current scholarship on the formation of the modern Chinese architectural discipline largely focuses on construction, while the early architectural discourse in China remains largely unexplored. Through periodicals published by the Qing government, local reformers, and foreign missionaries, this paper examines how foreign architecture informed the conceptualization of modern architecture in China in the last years of the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1912). This paper examines texts, drawings, and photographs circulating in the late Qing architectural discourse, delineating how modern Chinese architecture was first conceptualized in different terms. Architectural texts examined in this research conceptualized modern architecture with a set of intangible parameters other than form or style. In contrast, architectural images focused on a tangible expression of modern architecture and translated classical Western architecture as the Chinese equivalent of modern architecture. By reevaluating architectural texts and images in equal terms as buildings, this paper provides alternative narratives of the conceptualization of modern Chinese architecture. This paper challenges the prevailing research framework that largely focuses on construction, arguing that an architectural discourse that engaged the general public was formed in late imperial China, shaping public consciousness of architecture as a discipline and serving as an agency for disseminating ideologies. This architectural discourse marked modernity in Chinese architecture in late imperial China.



The Capitol Hill, Washington, in *Review of Times* 17th issue 1890

Sylvia Chan specializes in research, writing, and public relations in architecture. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Hong Kong, and her research interests include architectural representations, translations in architecture, and the concept of Chineseness.

Sylvia is the author of *Writing In(to) Architecture: China's Architectural Design and Construction Since 1949* (Hong Kong: East Slope Publishing, 2012). She has published in *Singapore Architect* and *Indesign Australia*. She is a regular contributor of *Indesignlive Hong Kong*. Her essay "A Singular Chinese Style for a Unified China" will be published in *Style: In Defence of...* (Machine Books, edited by Austin Williams) in 2016.

With training in architecture and journalism, Sylvia was the Communications Representative of OMA Asia Pacific for four years. She led OMA's public affairs activities in the region.

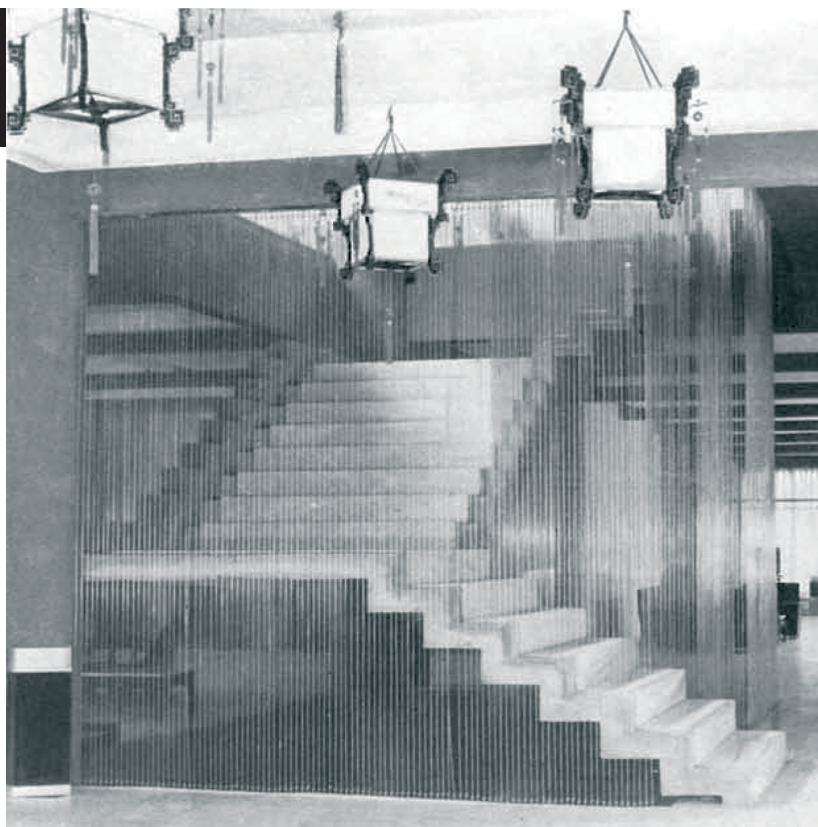
TRANSITIONAL ARCHITECTURE: NARRATIONS OF ASIAN MODERNISM AND CHINESE DIPLOMATIC BUILDINGS

MARTA ERASO

The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

The current world order with China leading the global economy was preceded by a period in which the United Nations (UN) recognized the Republic of China (ROC), while the People's Republic of China (PRC) remained outside of the UN Security Council (1945-1971). In this transitional period, the Taiwan-based ROC government made significant efforts to formalize international ties with numerous countries by engaging with the design and construction of diplomatic architecture. The perceptions of these buildings changed as political alliances between the PRC and the rest of the world shifted, leaving behind a collection of buildings inscribed with competing meanings that communicate the ambitions and anxieties behind the realignment. To interpret these changing perceptions, this paper examines the typologies of diplomatic architecture and considers different ways in which these have been narrated through the media. The analysis of Taiwan's diplomatic architecture, begins with a study of the Chinese Student Hall Siao-Sin, built in Madrid to formalise diplomatic relations between Spain and the ROC, before turning to the projects of diplomatic infrastructures built by the ROC in the decades that followed – and lastly by looking at the current PRC embassy in Madrid under economic neoliberalization. By examining these buildings in their shifting political contexts, I aim to bring new insights into the relationship between diplomacy and architectural modernism in Asia and how this has played out beyond the border of the nation state. The study aims to cover an existing gap in the scholar research of diplomatic architecture and disclose some of the continuities and discontinuities in the architectural discourse. It will further consider how developments in this period intersected with a global regime of influences as well as their roles in shaping contemporary international relations and the nature of Taiwanese diplomatic buildings across the world.



Marta Eraso obtained her Bachelor and MSc in Architecture from the Polytechnic University in Madrid. She finished her studies at Tohoku University in Japan, where she also joined Abe Hitoshi Atelier. She has worked for firms including Sancho Madridejos Architecture Office and Izaskun Chinchilla Architects. In 2006 she became a founding member of Zira02, and began working on housing and hospitality renovations, architecture and urban competitions. Some of these projects were awarded with the European, Sika and Iberdrola Prizes. In 2012 she moved to Hong Kong where she has been lecturing and working as an interior designer. Here she was also awarded with the 1st Prize Workstation Design for the Jockey Club Design for Innovation Competition. Since 2014, under the Postgraduate Scholarship (PGS), she is a PhD candidate in the Department of Architecture of The University of Hong Kong. Her current research interests explore the relationship between global flows and urban forms.

MODERNISM IN LATE-MAO CHINA, 1969-76: CASE STUDIES ON DONGFANG HOTEL AND BAIYUN HOTEL IN GUANGZHOU

KE SONG

University of Melbourne

Abstract

This paper investigates the architectural modernism in the late-Mao China (1969-76). The seven years, still within the officially defined period of Cultural Revolution (1966-76), but after the first three years' turmoil, saw the "climax" of modernism in Mao's China (1949-76). The shift of state politics and ideology from the extreme emphasis on communism and revolution in the 1950s-60s to the more pragmatic balance between economic development and ideological education in the 1970s, together with the changing international politics, brought new tasks and opportunities to the architects. A group of large-scale modernist buildings funded by the state were first built in Beijing and Guangzhou, to accommodate the increasing foreign visitors in the early and mid-1970. A conceptual framework centred on the form-politics-knowledge triangulation was proposed to re-examine the modernism in this period. This paper tests the conceptual framework in the case of Guangzhou, where the "new architecture" first emerged, by focusing on the two hotel projects - Dongfang Hotel (1973) and Baiyun Hotel (1976) and concludes that both the western and the indigenous architectural knowledge were mixed to create new forms in response to the increasing emphasis on the expression of Chinese national identity in the 1970s, and the architects' "responsive and adaptive" design strategy should be acknowledged as the key to success.

Ke Song is currently undertaking the PhD research on modernism in late-Mao China at the University of Melbourne. He obtained Bachelor of Architecture (2011) and Master of Architecture (2013) from Tsinghua University in China. His Master thesis studied the relation between contemporary architecture in China and Chinese ancient philosophies especially Zhuangzi's philosophy. He worked as architectural designer at several renowned design firms and design institutes including CPG Corporation (Singapore, 2011), Teamminus of Design Institute of Tsinghua University (Beijing, 2011-13) and Lab Architects (Melbourne, 2014). He also tutored several design studios and theory subjects at the University of Melbourne.



Dongfang Hotel, Guangzhou, 1973

Image source: Editorial Committee, ed. *Guangzhou Jianzhu Shilu: Beijiao Bufen Xinjianzhu*: (Guangzhou Architectural Record: New Buildings in the Northern Suburb) (Guangzhou: Guangzhou Design Institute, 1976).

CHANGING FACES OF MODERNITY: RECONSTRUCTION, RELOCATION, AND REMODELLING OF THE VICTORIA AND STAR THEATRES, 1911–1936

YIN-LUN CHAN

The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

In 1911, the Victoria Theatre was reconstructed over the same site of its predecessor, the Victoria Cinematograph, and became one of the very first “permanent” cinema theatres in Hong Kong. However, within less than ten years of its operation, the Victoria Theatre was taken down in 1920, and was relocated across the Victoria Harbour to become the Star Theatre, which opened in 1922. After another fourteen years, the Star Theatre again underwent another major surgery in 1936—following global trends of cinema architecture, the cinema’s earlier Edwardian façade was completely transformed into the style of Streamline Moderne. What propelled these multiple iterations of the same cinema building? What can these architectural forms and processes reveal about Hong Kong’s developing modernity? In attempting to answer these questions, this paper starts by situating Hong Kong’s early film exhibition practices within the global development of the movie industry. It positions that the early cinema theatre, being the physical site where western films were exhibited and consumed, was instrumental in introducing a global modern experience to the audiences of the colony. This cinema theatre was situated within the urban milieu, in which its continuous relocation and formal renewal was driven by the dynamic interactions among the film industry’s imperative to express newness, the owners and architects’ desire to keep up with global architectural trends, and the development of the colony’s real estate. The study explores four periods of the early film industry, namely, the arrival of moving pictures, the appearance of purpose-built cinema structures, their development into more permanent movie theatres, and their stylistic transitions into modern architectural forms, a time which coincided with the introduction of sound films. By focusing on the reconstruction, relocation, and remodelling of one representative example of these early movie theatres, namely the Victoria and the Star Theatres, and by looking at the key agents surrounding their construction and operation, this paper studies how the combined workings of the entertainment business and the real estate market had contributed to the construction of the Hong Kong’s urban landscape in the early twentieth century.



Yin-Lun Chan is a landscape architect and urban historian based in Hong Kong. He obtained his Master of Landscape Architecture at The University of British Columbia, Canada, with a background in cultural geography. He is the Secretary of The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, and is editor of the interview collection *The History of the Landscape Profession of Hong Kong, 1978-2015*. He is interested in the studying of modern Asian cities as cultural landscapes, and is currently working towards a PhD at The University of Hong Kong. His working thesis explores the intersection between cinematic space and the physical spaces of the cinema theatre.

POSTCOLONIAL BANDUNG:

ETHNIC IDENTITY, PLANNING PRACTICE, AND THE MAKING OF AN INDONESIAN CITY

RINA PRIYANI

University of California, Berkeley

Abstract

My research project aims to examine the representation of ethnic identity through the production of a built environment in a capital city. Working under the premise that the built environment has been designed in the service of politics, this research looks at building and city planning not only as a passive container of political power but also as an active agent of change. Urban historians of Southeast Asia often overlooked plans of Dutch East Indies capital city in transferring the government seat from port city of Jakarta (Batavia) to the highland of Bandung (Bandoeng) in early twentieth century. Through the case study of Bandung, capital city of west Java, this project will examine the process through which ethnicity is formed through the building, destroying, and preserving the urban space. Specifically, I will explore how the architectural plan of Bandung's colonial government complex, radio station, and technical college as embodiment of Dutch colonial ethical policy (1901-1942) that promoted education and welfare for the natives.

This research interrogates the origin of colonial city during three periods of transformation: first, late Dutch colonial period in 1930s, second, Japanese occupation and national revolution in 1940s, and third, the post-Independence period, marked by the Afro-Asian Conference, known as Bandung Conference, in 1955. I follow works and networks of architects, builders, city planners, government officials, politicians, and private estates as well as insurgency of citizens to understand the appropriations, changes, and conflicts in each period. This project employs archival research in Indonesia, the Netherlands, and the United States as well as oral history in the site.

This paper examines the transformation represented in three sites: the government complex in the heart of the city, radio station in southern side, and technical college in northern side. In the first part, I examine the planning discourse in 1920-1930s of the new headquarters for Colonial Public Works and Department of Post, Telephone, and Telegraph in *Gouvernement Bedrijven* (Government Building Complex), as well as its connection with the radio station and technical college. In the second part, I situate the voices of natives who had lived and worked in the site through the insurgency of Public Works Union and the Bandung Fire in 1946. In the third and final part, I examine the embodiment of colonial power in ideas of city planning in post-revolutionary era.



Government Building Complex in Bandung circa 1925

Image source: KITLV.

Rina Priyani is a Ph.D. Candidate in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, with a focus on Environmental Design and Urbanism in Developing Countries. Her research interests are architectural and urban history, cultural geography, politics of heritage, and Southeast Asia. Prior arriving to Berkeley she has taught at Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia and has worked at heritage preservation community in the city. She received her professional degree in Architecture and Master of Engineering, both from Bandung Institute of Technology in Indonesia and trained as a cultural heritage preservationist at the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO in Nara, Japan.

NIRODHA KUMARI MEEGAHAKUMBURA DISSANAYAKE

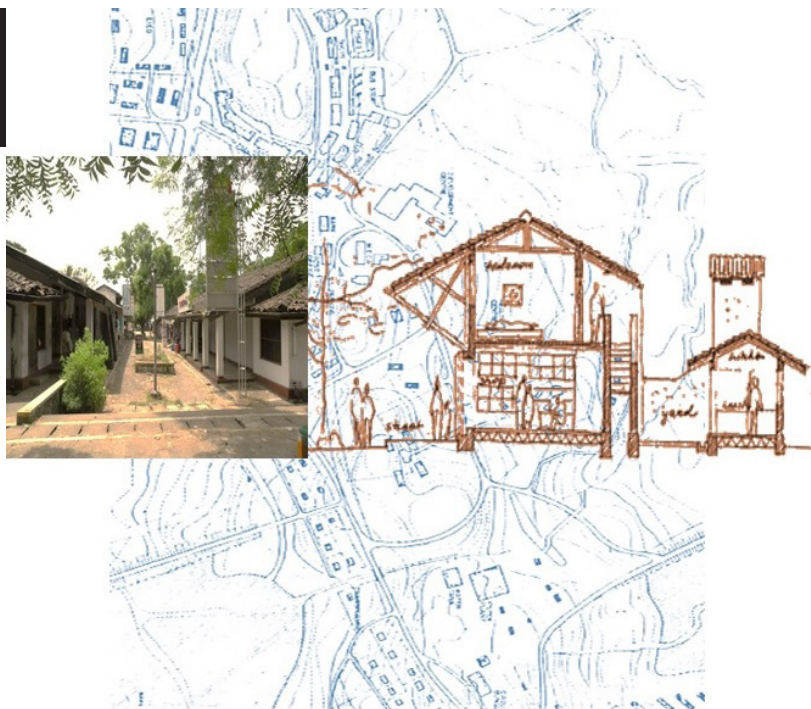
University of Adelaide

Abstract

This research examines new towns constructed as part of the Mahaweli Development Project (MDP). The MDP was a major Sri Lankan infrastructure project begun in the 1970s with the key goal of sustainable agricultural reform, powered by hydro-electricity, to generate national economic stability. The research focuses on towns designed and/or constructed by the Mahaweli Architectural Unit (MAU), an MDP initiative which flourished between 1983 and 1989. The MAU, which engaged local and foreign architects, instigated a new paradigm of urban design practice in Sri Lanka. The MDP has attracted significant local and international interdisciplinary scholarship. However, this scholarship tends to focus on the economic aspects of this mega-project; only a handful of studies examine the design of the new towns. Given the increasing number of major infrastructure projects in developing countries and the concomitant displacement, redistribution and resettlement of entire communities, the aim of this research is to evaluate the lessons that can be learned from the MAU from the original perspective of architecture and urban design.

To evaluate these lessons, this research analyses the design of the MAU new towns in relation to the principles, policies and aspirations of the MDP, prior settlements designed under the umbrella of the MDP and, most significantly, Social Impact Assessment (SIA) reports produced between the late 1970s and the early 1980s which were comprehensive in their scope. These reports made specific recommendations about physical planning principles and identified concerns about the social cohesion of the new towns and the full implications of population redistribution amidst established multi-ethnic settlements in the Dry Zone. These same reports underpinned the revised brief presented to the MAU. To evaluate the new towns in the light of these recommendations, this research is based on a series of case studies based on archival research conducted at the Mahaweli Archives in Colombo and field work in four new Mahaweli towns: Girandurukotte, Dehiattakandiya, Digana and Karalliyadda. The research concludes that the new towns designed by the MAU failed to address the stated recommendations in a substantial way, despite the rigor of the SIA reports and despite the architect's argument for a people-centred approach.

With the escalating number of mega-projects today—which force displacement, resettlement and redistribution of impoverished rural people—the findings of this research can inform understanding of sustainable planning, design and implementation practices and policies in developing countries.



The works of the Mahaweli Architectural Unit

Image source: Archives of the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, Colombo, accessed 2015.

Nirodha Kumari Meegahakumbura Dissanayake obtained her Bachelor in Science in Agriculture and Master of Science in Floriculture and Landscape Architecture from the University of Peradeniya Sri Lanka. She worked as a Research Assistant with the National Science and Technology commission, a Trainee Landscape Architect with the Rukshan Widyalandara Private Limited and a Landscape Architect with the Urban Development Authority in Sri Lanka. She is currently a Master of Philosophy Candidate in the University of Adelaide, Australia. Her current research interests are urban design and sustainable settlements.

KENG KHOON, NG

National University of Singapore

The central aim of this presentation is seeking for methodological renewals in the studies of new agential power, architecture and urbanism. In particular, this presentation responds to Donald McNeill's recent calls of 'tracking the global urbanists' (2015). He argues for the need of new analytical lens in examining the shifting role of built environment professions, and the transformed mode of development practices. By taking McNeill's comments as point of departure, this presentation is made to reflect further on the analytical approaches which can contribute to the critical studies of transnational urbanism.

To begin with, this presentation invites us to ponder on two questions: how do we deal with the emerging and evolving role of building professionals? To what extent do their performances affect the production of space and built environment? To answer these questions, I suggest that research focus should be given on the analysis of intermediaries, and intermediation processes. In principal, this analytical lens looks at the in-between role and operation; also, the process of mediating and translating knowledge between different agents and places. There are two theoretical standpoints in this proposed perspective. Firstly, this analytical approach evokes a challenge to the conventional logics of 'development triad', which is often informed by the role of local authorities, developers and consultants (architects as the key agents). Instead, it argues that more research attention should be paid to those new actors that work in-between the major development agencies, or those who do not fit neatly into the existing professional coalitions. Secondly, the relationships between development agents are neither prescribed nor hierarchical, but rather un-stratified and contested. In this light, the proposed approach encourages more relational analyses across different built environment actors and consortia, for uncovering the shifting power geometries in current political economy of urban development.

The discussion will be evident by illustrating a case study of global real estate project - 'Forest City' in South Johor, Malaysia. Forest City is a city-scale development that is led by a joint venture partnership between a China-based master developer - Country Garden Holding Ltd (CG), and Esplanade Danga 88 - an investment company owned by Johor State Government. In the presentation, I will showcase a set of intermediary actors and relations, which include the local state's private partners, environmental specialists and sales & marketing consultants. These relatively new agents have been integral to facilitating development process and mediating planning decision of the development. By exploring their agential performance and relations, we can gain more understandings about the dynamic interface between agency, autonomy and urbanism. Lastly, the presentation will be concluded by sharing some personal fieldwork experiences and challenges in probing the politics of agency and urban development.

* McNeill, D. (2015). 'Tracking the global urbanists'. *Global Networks*, 15(3), 379-384..



Keng Ng is currently undertaking his PhD degree at Department of Architecture, School of Design and Environment, National University of Singapore. Before joining NUS, he studied BA in architecture at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and further on a master's degree at Oxford Brookes University in the UK. He had been working as an architectural assistant in Malaysia, Singapore and London for the previous five years. Keng's research interests are in the areas of architecture, urban planning and urban studies. In his master thesis, he examines the politics of heritage revitalization and management in Kampung Morten – Melaka, the historic capital of Malaysia. While in the current doctoral research, he pays attention to the accelerated waterfront developments in South Johor Malaysia, and across the Straits megacity regions. This research aims to interrogate the transnational planning and development processes, relating to the new roles of real estate experts and built environment professionals.

HI-RO-SHI-MA SPACE: POST-MEMORIAL NAVIGATIONS OF THE HIROSHIMA PEACE MEMORIAL PARK

KIM ROBERTS

Deakin University

Abstract

Seventy years after the bombing of Hiroshima those who visit the official site of the event's commemoration – the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park – find themselves in a liminal landscape. This landscape is at once concrete: a set of architectural artefacts composed by a team lead by modernist acolyte, Kenzo Tange, and thought: a landscape caught between history and memory.

This paper details the conceptual frameworks and mixed set of methodological tactics for a body of research that asks how this landscape is navigated by international tourists. These are visitors who, like the researcher, have an exemplarily distal and previously unexplored 'post-memorial' relation to the site.

Discussed is a two-way observation of the Park and the challenges that opposing methodologies pose. Understandings of the site gleaned through the use of architectural history methodologies are examined. These understandings are contrasted with the preliminary findings of an ethnographic cum grounded theory study of the pathways and perceptions of Park visitors and users. It is argued that this combination of methods ultimately promotes a re-thinking of the site.

Kim Roberts is an architect and heritage consultant with 18 years post-graduate experience. She works at the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services as a Heritage Planner and is a PhD candidate in the School of Communication and Creative Arts at Deakin University.

With honours degrees in both architecture and literature her scholarly research is multidisciplinary drawing on professional and academic interests in architectural cultural landscapes, memory, affect, communication and user-based production of space. Her PhD thesis focuses on the way in which foreign visitors navigate the physical and conceptual space of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.



Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, 6 August 1959.

Image source: Hiroshima Municipal Archive, Image: 45_I-1-517.

ANINDA MOEZIER

University of Melbourne

Abstract

Recent studies have conceptualised modernity as an entanglement of varied perspectives on past, present and future. Pertaining to this concept is a greater awareness of intersectional social identities subject to varied forms of oppression and opportunity. This paper examines how these entangled modernities and changing intersectional social identities have impacted local attitudes towards the Minangkabau houses of a West-Sumatran village in Indonesia. It argues that existing studies overlook these entanglements, instead reproducing houses through familiar formal binaries of modern vs traditional spaces, with limited attention to how indigenous people have understood or differentiated their houses over time. This prevailing binary perspective excludes modern houses from discussions of the Minangkabau spatial tradition and overlooks the deeper material transformations and spatial practices that highlight their co-dependence with customary houses. This paper reveals the persistent entanglement of these different patterns of modernity through spatial transformations observed in Minangkabau houses.

Aninda Moezier is currently a PhD student in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning; the University of Melbourne. She teaches history of architecture and architectural theories in a university in Jakarta, Indonesia. Her PhD research is undertaken as part of her research interest in the interrelations between architecture, history, and gender politics.



A Minangkabau Customary House beside a Modern Non-Customary House. Examining Minangkabau houses through a formal modern/traditional binary would overlook deeper socio-spatial transformations take place in these intersectional spaces. [Image source: Author]

VISCERAL BORDERS: SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS OF BORDERING PRACTICES IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA

DONGSEI KIM

The University of Melbourne

Abstract

This paper discusses the research methodologies of the PhD research, "Visceral Borders: Spatial Implications of Bordering Practices in the Korean peninsula." This thesis illustrates how different subjectivities spatially approach state bordering practices in Northeast Asia. This research analyzes the Korean peninsula's borders through four distinctive spatial case studies. Methods used in this thesis address the three pertinent gaps identified in current border studies.

First, the thesis engages the growing interest in the Northeast Asian geopolitical context. Largely dominated by Euro-American centrism, this region has been mostly overlooked in 'border studies,' especially within spatial design discipline's border discourses. Kuan-Hsing Chen's 'Asia as Method' that encourage 'dialectical interaction between the colonizer and colonized' helps us to frame this shifting dynamics.

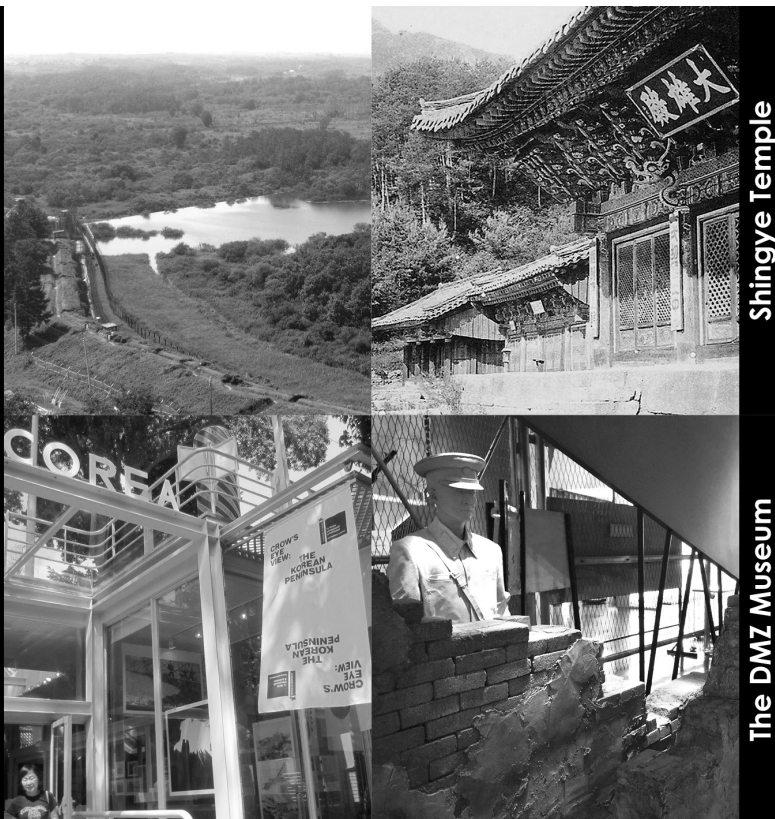
Second, the thesis simultaneously engages four spatial case studies that are vastly different in scale, type, and context. The four cases, 'DMZ World Peace Park,' 'Restored Shingye Buddhists Temple,' 'Korean pavilion in Venice,' and the 'DMZ Museum' illustrates how state borders are inscribed into different subjects through spatial apparatuses, and vice versa. These juxtaposed cases provide us with multiple perspectives that avoid reductive generalizations that are often universalized under an isolated geography, scale, historical period, or a narrow disciplinary concern.

Third, 'spatial ethnography' forms a major way of analyzing these case studies. Drawing on the work of spatial theorists such as Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, and recent spatial ethnographers, the overlooked lived experience of state border inhabitants in spatial design discipline are amplified for analysis.

The paper concludes with three preliminary findings from the eighteen interviews conducted in South Korea in 2015. It reveals the potential of spatial ethnography and the interviews that foreground human subjectivity. This discussion highlights how this new method engenders an alternative way of framing state borders and human agency in such spatial practices. This Northeast Asian case study allows us to carefully consider the complexities of state border spaces beyond its immediate materiality.

DMZ World Peace Park

Korean Pavilion Exhibition



Shingye Temple

The DMZ Museum

The four cases, 'DMZ World Peace Park,' 'Shingye Buddhists Temple,' 'The DMZ Museum' and the 'Korean pavilion in Venice.' In clockwise order from top left corner.

Image source: All photos are by author, except for Shingye Temple, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shinkeiji.png>.

Dongsei Kim is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne. He is an architect and educator and maintains an active teaching role at RMIT University. His work on the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) of Korea was invited to the Golden Lion Award winning "Crow's Eye View: The Korean Peninsula," at 14th *Venice Architecture Biennale* (2014), and *REAL DMZ PROJECT* (2015) in Korea. He has taught architecture and urban design at Columbia University and Korea University. He holds master degrees from Harvard and Columbia Universities, and a B.Arch (Hons) from VUW. He is a registered architect with NZRAB and architect member of NZIA.

NOTES

