

International Conference on China Urban Development
The University of Hong Kong
7-8 December 2010

China is experiencing an urban revolution, both the scale and speed of which are unprecedented in human history. For almost thirty years all major cities of the country have been huge construction sites. Both brown-field redevelopment and green-field expansion to surrounding countryside have been rampant. Dominating the urban landscape today are imposing public squares, glamorous opera houses, state-of-the-art office towers and shopping malls, and luxurious condominium apartments. Yet, at the same time unruly urban villages persist on former urban-rural fringes. Tremendous efforts have been made to modernize the public transport systems. Almost all major cities have built and continue to expand extensive metro systems. Yet, at the same time the universal ownership of the private car is well under way. Severe traffic jams clog all thoroughfares days and nights. Concomitant with rapid economic growth, improvements in urban housing conditions have been most impressive, irrespective of the tripling of the urban population. Yet, rising housing price is now a major source of discontent.



Group Photo at the Opening Ceremony

To unravel the enigma behind China's ultra-rapid urbanization, the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning (CUSUP) of the University of Hong Kong and the Centre

for China Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) of Hong Kong Baptist University joined force to hold the “International Conference on China Urban Land Development” on 7 and 8 December 2010. The main venue was at the University of Hong Kong, but one of the conference dinners was held at Hong Kong Baptist University. The Conference also served to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of CUSUP and the 10th Anniversary of CURS. The two research centres have a long history of collaboration. Back in November 1997, as a precursor to the founding of CURS, the Department of Geography at Hong Kong Baptist University and the then Centre of Urban Planning and Environmental Management (now CUSUP) jointly organized a highly successful conference on “Marketization of Land and Housing in Urban China”. In this previous conference, the main venue was at Hong Kong Baptist University; the Hong Kong University side hosted a cocktail reception.

Co-chairing the Conference Organizing Committee were Professor Anthony Yeh of CUSUP and Professor Li Si-ming of CURS. Other members of the Organizing Committee included Professor Roger Chan of CUSUP, Professor Wang Donggen of CURS, Professor George Lin of the Department of Geography at the University of Hong Kong, and Professor Shen Jianfa of the Department of Geography and Resource Planning at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.



The Co-Chairs of the Organizing Committee, Professors Anthony Yeh and Li Si-ming, delivered the welcoming speech

Exemplifying the spirit of inter-institutional collaboration, in the opening ceremony both Professor Tsui Lap-chee, Vice Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, and Professor Albert S. C. Chan, President and Vice Chancellor of Hong Kong Baptist University gave their respective welcome addresses. Underscoring the importance of China’s urban development, Mrs Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet Ngor, Secretary for

Development of the Hong Kong SAR Government, also delivered her opening address.



Professor Tsui Lap-chee, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, presented a souvenir to Professor Li Si-ming of CURS



Professor Albert S C Chan, President and Vice Chancellor of Hong Kong Baptist University, presented the souvenir to Mrs Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet Ngor, Secretary for Development, HKSAR Government

Three keynote speeches were delivered at the conference. Dr. Qiu Baoxing, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the People's Republic of China, gave the first keynote on "New Trends of Urban Development and Planning in China". Professor Zou Deci, Academician, Chinese Academy of Engineering, and Senior Consultant, China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, China, gave the second keynote address on "An Overview of Urban Development in China". The third keynote, given by Professor Logan, John R., Director of the Spatial Structures in the Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Brown University, USA, was titled "The Essence of Chinese Urbanism: A macro-historical Interpretation".



Dr. Qiu Baoxing delivered his speech



Professor Deci Zou delivered his speech



Professor John Logan delivered his speech.

More than 150 paper presenters and other participants from Hong Kong, mainland China, Taiwan, USA, UK, France, Australia, and many other countries contributed to the conference's 25 paper sessions. (See Table 1 for a breakdown of paper presenters.) In addition to the three keynote speakers, attending the Conference included other

leading figures in China Urban Studies, such as Professor Wu Fulong from the United Kingdom, Professors Cui Gonghao, Gu Chaolin, Ning Yuemin and Du Debin from the mainland, Professors Laurence J. C. Ma, Jack Williams and Cindy C. Fan from the United States, and Professor Carolyn Cartier from Australia. Of note was the presence of a large number of young researchers, which demonstrated the vitality of China Urban Studies as a field of study. Lively and intensive exchange of ideas and research findings, carried not only during paper sessions but well into the coffee breaks and luncheon/dinner times, characterized the Conference.



Delegates gathered at the Registration Desk

Table 1. Country and Number of Participants

Country	Number of Paper Presenters
Australia	5
Canada	4
China	40
France	1
Germany	4
Hong Kong SAR	44
Japan	2
Macao	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	3
United Kingdom	6
United States of America	12
Total	123

A total of 78 papers were presented in 25 sessions, covering various aspects of China's urban transformation. A summary of the paper topics is given in Table 2. Included in the electronic proceedings were 18 full papers and all paper abstracts. The Organizing Committee is currently actively examining the possibility of publishing selected papers from the Conference as theme issues in refereed journals.

Table 2. Sessions and Number of Presentations

Session	Number of Presentations
Keynote Speech	3
Urbanization and Administrative Hierarchy	3
China's Mega-Urban regions	9
Migration and Labour Market Segmentation	6
Urban Villages	3
Rural Industrialization and Small Towns	3
China's Changing Urban Economy	9
China's World Cities	3
Neighbourhoods and Social Network	6
Planning and Governance	2
Citizenship and Social Exclusion	6
Social Services Delivery and Urban Poverty	3
Sustainable Development and Quality of Life	7
Transport and Urban Spatial Structure	3
Urban History and Heritage	6
Urban Housing	6
Total	78

Two Conference dinners were held. The first one, held at Jumbo Kingdom Restaurant, was hosted by CUSUP. The second dinner, which also served as the Closing Ceremony of the Conference as well as a dinner to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of CURS, was held at Renfrew Seafood Restaurant at Hong Kong Baptist University.



Lion Dance Performance at Jumbo Restaurant



Closing Ceremony at Hong Kong Baptist University

Surely, the outreach of the Conference is far beyond academia. In addition to having leading government officials from the Central People's Government of China and from the Hong Kong SAR Government delivering keynote speeches and opening address, delegates from the Planning Department and the Central Policy Unit of the Hong Kong SAR Government also attended the Conference.

Two post-conference field excursions were held. CUSUP organized a local day tour to visit the Hong Kong Urban Renewal Authority and the Hong Kong Planning and Infrastructure Exhibition Gallery to learn more about urban renewal and the planning process in Hong Kong. CURS held a two-day fieldtrip to Guangzhou to see how the latter attempts to reposition itself as a world city. Delegates visited the new Guangzhou Opera House and the Central Axis at the Zhujiang New Town, the Guangzhou Toyota Motor Co, Ltd, and an urban village in Tianhe. In addition, delegates had a ride of the Guangzhou-Wuhan High-Speed Train.



**Technical Tour to PRD –
Guangzhou Opera House**



**Technical Tour to PRD –
Guangzhou Toyota Motor Co. Ltd.**

By all measures the Conference was a great success. In addition to epitomizing inter-institutional collaboration among universities in Hong Kong, the diversity of theoretical perspectives present also demonstrated the need for inter- and multi-disciplinary studies in making sense of China's unprecedented urban transformation. The Conference, moreover, successfully exploited the city's cultural and geographic proximity to the mainland and the city's long tradition as the meeting point between the East and the West. There exists a critical mass of well-trained academics of various disciplinary lineages, Geography, Urban Planning, Sociology, Political Science and Economics, in universities in Hong Kong working on urban

China. The Conference further established Hong Kong's hub position in China urban research.

The Conference Organizing Committee would like to thank the Urban and Environmental Studies Trust Fund and the Strategic Research Themes on Contemporary China Studies of the University of Hong Kong, and the Research Committee of Hong Kong Baptist University, and to express its sincere gratitude to all support staff and students of CUSUP and CURS. Without the formers' generous financial support and the latter's dedicated assistance, the holding of the Conference would not be possible.