



Panel's title : “TOWARD ENVIRONMENTAL URBANIZATION IN CHINA?

Three case studies from conservation to development.”

Titre du panel : “QUELLE URBANISATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE POUR LA CHINE? Trois études de cas, entre conservation et développement du territoire.”

Coordinator (Affiliation, University...) : **Lucie Morand (Université de Paris-Est, ACS).**

Language : Français/ Anglais

Topics : Villes et Territoires, Ecologie, Stratégies d'urbanisation.

Panel presentation:

Massive Urbanisation in China raises urgent ecological issues tied to the massive scale of the process, environmental pollution and sustainable development, which are expanding beyond today's China challenges and become part of the global attention on sustainability. The Chinese lack of responsibility and effective responses seems to be in contrast with worldwide ecological action. In fact, the paradoxical question of China's environmental challenge has to be considered: in one hand, Urbanity is conceived as a central asset of growth from a political and economic point of view, meanwhile, Urbanization is the main process which causes damages to the environment. In this context, the fundamental issue of Urban development in China is to question the feasibility of these contradictory but inseparable tendencies, and their relation to a broader set of values which are the core of an increasing global reflection about urbanity itself: the extension of the notion of urbanity to that one of ecology.

This panel suggests three different perspectives extracting their contextual potential, theoretical implications and urban eco-innovation to highlight responses and reaction toward environmental issues. The Lower Yangtze Delta case explores the question of territorial rural-urban linkages, linked with the evolution of spatial and social dynamics, and resulting in the rethought of their efficient interactions. Hong Kong case engages the discussion on the role of stake holders and the importance of activism in environmental commitment and realization. Despite the current of lack of belief, Xiamen is considered one of the early example of successful Eco-City planning, driven through reforms and planning innovations thanks to design tools the Chinese environmental propositions.

The intention of the proposal aims to offer a critical overview of contemporary Chinese Urban transition in order to widen the debate and understanding of Chinese environmental trends.

Résumé du panel :

Les problématiques environnementales engendrées par une urbanisation intensive sont une question urgente à traiter en Chine, non seulement parce que les impacts dépassent les frontières du pays mais également parce que la pollution de la planète devient une inquiétude d'ordre mondiale. D'autant plus que le manque d'engagement et d'efficacité du gouvernement chinois semble jusqu'à présent contredire l'élan des divers mouvements internationaux d'action écologique. En réalité, le défi environnemental de la Chine pose un problème fondamental: si le développement urbain est considéré d'un point de vue politique et économique comme le “moteur de croissance” incontournable, il exige cependant une exploitation considérable des ressources non renouvelables et cause des dommages irréversibles sur l'environnement. Dans ce contexte, la question du développement urbain en Chine doit questionner ces deux tendances paradoxales et pourtant indissociables, ainsi que leur relation à un ensemble de priorités et de valeurs politiques, économiques et sociales qui sont au cœur de la réflexion sur l'urbanité et l'écologie.

Ce panel suggère trois perspectives différentes présentant des potentiels contextuels, des implications théoriques et des solutions d'éco-innovation urbaine singulières, révélant de possibles réponses aux problématiques environnementales chinoises. Le cas du Delta du Yangtze explore la question des liens territoriaux entre espaces ruraux et urbains liés à l'évolution de dynamiques spatiales et sociales, et à la façon de repenser leurs interactions efficaces. Le cas de Hong Kong engage la discussion sur le rôle des responsables politiques et l'importance du militantisme dans l'engagement et la réalisation environnementale. Tandis que Xiamen présente le rare cas d'une



reconversion urbaine réussie, avec l'exemple d'une planification d'éco-ville suivant des réformes politiques et des innovations conceptuelles.

L'objectif du panel vise à offrir un aperçu critique de la transition urbaine chinoise contemporaine et à ouvrir le débat sur la compréhension des tendances environnementales chinoises.

Key words : Urbanity, Environmental and Sustainable development, Eco-city, Yangtze Delta, Hong Kong, Xiamen.

Participants :

1) **Name(s) (Affiliation, University...) : Lucie Morand (Université de Paris-Est, ACS).**

Communication's title : “How China turns into an example of environmental city design in Asia thanks to master plan innovation. Case study of Xiamen in the Fujian Province.”

Titre de la communication : La Chine comme exemple d'urbanisation environnementale grâce à l'innovation des outils de planification. Cas d'étude sur Xiamen dans la province du Fujian.

Language : Français

Presentation :

According to the *National New-type Urbanization Plan (2014-2020)* released by the Central committee of the Communist Party, China aims to intensify urban growth while improving urban milieu with environmentally friendly path. This goal takes part of a common contemporary issue shared by a large number of fast developing countries: how to boost urbanization, stimulate the economic growth and protect the environment at the same time? The paper intends to explore the current Chinese planning approaches which provide new tracks of environmental strategies with effective planning solutions adapted to the speed and scale of its urbanization.

The particular case study of Xiamen City in the Fujian Province will be introduced, whose city planning is considered as a pioneer and successful environmental development strategy represented within an original *Master Plan Design*. Indeed, the hypothesis is to consider the key role of plans and the impact of design to engage the city into environmental goals and effective built reality. In one hand, Xiamen's plans are used as a central tool for creativity, using graphic codes and design strategies in order to develop innovative city concepts. In another hand, plans are no longer designed only for functional or communication purposes, but are also crossed vision tools between architects, researchers, politicians, private investors and inhabitants.

Xiamen's innovations in terms of environmental performance is based on the evolution of its planning documents, leading to a new vision of urban practice and design. In this perspective, the paper will be introducing China as new international leading model for environmental design.

Résumé :

Le nouveau plan national d'urbanisation (2014-2020) publié par le Comité central du Parti Communiste chinois vise à intensifier la croissance urbaine tout en améliorant la qualité de vie urbaine et la protection de l'environnement. Cet objectif relève une problématique commune à de nombreux pays en développement rapide: comment soutenir l'urbanisation, stimuler la croissance économique et protéger en même temps l'environnement?

La présentation vise à présenter de nouvelles pistes de stratégies environnementales mises en place dans la planification urbaine chinoise proposant des solutions adaptées à la vitesse et à l'ampleur de son urbanisation. L'étude porte sur le cas spécifique de Xiamen dans la province du Fujian dont la reconversion urbaine est considérée comme une réussite en matière de planification environnementale. L'hypothèse est de considérer le rôle clé des plans et des procédés de conception urbaine pour engager concrètement les objectifs écologiques dans le projet puis dans la ré-



alité construite. D'une part, les plans de Xiamen sont utilisés comme un outil de production d'idées, en utilisant des codes graphiques et des stratégies de dessin afin de développer des concepts innovants. D'autre part, les plans ne sont plus produits uniquement à des fins fonctionnelles ou de communication, mais sont aussi des outils de travail médiateurs entre divers acteurs: architectes, chercheurs, responsables politiques, investisseurs privés et habitants.

Ainsi, les innovations de Xiamen en matière de performance environnementale semblent prendre vie avec l'évolution de ses documents de planification, aboutissant à une nouvelle pratique de conception urbaine. Dans cette perspective, nous considérons la Chine comme un nouveau terrain d'expérimentation environnemental performant et optimiste.

Key words : Urban Design, Xiamen, Environmental strategy, Master plan

2) Name(s) (Affiliation, University...) : **DECAUDIN Maxime** (University Paris-Sorbonne -Paris IV)

Communication's title : "Hong Kong's nature: roles and issues in contemporary environmental activism and governmental response."

Language : English

Presentation :

In the contemporary context of identity search and political claims, civil activism for cultural heritage protection and conservation in Hong Kong seems not only to affect architecture, urban forms or language (Cantonese) but also spreads to the environment itself. Initially imported by foreign activists and British politicians during the years of the colonial period, ecological conservation and sustainable development have slowly become government priorities through public reports such as the *Sustainable Development for the 21st Century in Hong Kong (SUSDEV21)* or *Hong Kong's 2030 Vision and Strategy* but also a general public concern through the increasing media coverage of independent organizations such as WWF, Conservancy Association, Save Our Country Parks or Friends of the Earth.

Relying on previous studies regarding urban policy, legal aspects, social representation and education on ecological conservation and sustainable development, this paper proposes to understand the different roles and discourses produced by the main stake holders (the activists, the general public, the local government and the land owners or property developers) around specific projects led by the government as responses to environmental issues such as the conservation zones of Mai Po Nature Reserve (managed by WWF), the Geopark (part of a national geological network) or the rather artificial nature in The Hong Kong Wetland Park (ecological restoration built for educational purposes).

This research serves two goals. Locally, it aims at clarifying the ambiguous position of the government in relation to environmental issues since it seems to simultaneously campaign for environmental conservation through both media coverage and concrete projects, as well as serving land owners and developers interests through expanding further urban areas. Internationally, it nuances the negative perception of China's environmental achievements by situating Hong Kong at the forefront of a nation-wide sustainable development initiative.

Key words : Sustainable Development and Environment / Activism / Hong Kong



- 3) Name(s) (Affiliation) : **PALMIOLI Andrea** (University of Paris-Est and IUAV Postgraduate School of Urbanism, University of Architecture in Venice)

Communication's title : Dynamics of urban diffusion in the Yangtze river delta territory.

Language : English

Presentation :

The current study is designed to examine the spatial relationship between dynamics of polarisation and diffusion embedded in rural-urban transformations in China's urban regions. Using empirical evidence 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 an 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, reshaped the relationship between the natural environment, economy and local communities.

This study draws attention to the spatial and social implications resulting from the overlapping processes of diffusion and polarisation. It ultimately argues for an urgent need to reconsider the programmatic sequence that underlies the morphology of the mega-urban region through an examination of the interactions between physically disjointed systems.

Key words : *Rural-Urban China / Dynamics of Urban Diffusion/ Yangtze River Delta*