



UrbaChina Newsletter



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LSE-PKU Summer School 2013

edited by Monique Abud

The course “Urban Asia: Cities, society and development” is taught by Dr Hyun Bang Shin of the London School of Economics’ Department of Geography and Environment, a specialist in Asian cities with particular interests in cities in East Asia including China.

The course explores the contemporary dynamics of urbanisation in Asia, with special emphasis on cities in East and Southeast Asia that have experienced rapid urban development with strong state intervention in city-making and economic development. Re-making of Chinese cities will also be highlighted in the course, benefiting from the geographical advantage of having the summer school in China.

<http://urbachina.hypotheses.org/?p=4447>

Street vendors: poor and undesirable in the city

edited by Monique Abud

Solinger, Dorothy J. (2013). Streets as suspect: State skepticism and the current losers in urban China. *Critical Asian Studies*. 45(1) pp.3-26

Abstract

The Chinese Communist Party has been suspicious of people engaged in commercial activity on the streets ever since it took over the country in 1949, but the reasons for this have shifted in a paradoxical way over the decades. In the years when Mao Zedong ruled the nation according to his understandings and beliefs about socialist values and for several years after his death the suspicion in the main concerned the capitalist practices that business entails – profit making, inequalities, price-consciousness, class differentiation.

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The lesson from the Ya'an earthquake

written by Miguel Elosua

Ya'an is situated 120 kilometers southeast of Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan. The city is also known as the rainy city (yucheng – 雨城), as its fertile land is blessed with more annual rainfall than any other area in the region. The city was the capital of Sikang (xikang – 西康) before the province was dissolved in 1955. This area marks the end of Han territory, and the beginning of the Tibetan universe. Ya'an bridge is one of the few examples of veranda, or porch, bridges in China. The veranda serves not only as a place where locals can linger at their leisure, protected from the rain or the summer sun, but also as a market where local specialties are sold.

<http://urbachina.hypotheses.org/?p=4380>

Holding Chinese investors to account: environmental impacts

edited by Jacqueline Nivard

With toxins in the air and dead pigs in the rivers, environmental destruction has become a huge topic in China. The government has closed down hundreds of polluting factories, banks have refused lending for polluters, and protests have derailed numerous destructive projects. For Chinese companies, environmental risks have become business risks.

The same is true internationally. Chinese banks, mining and hydropower companies have faced protests and lost contracts when their projects destroyed the environment. China Southern Power Grid pulled out of Cambodia after concerns emerged about the social impacts of its dam projects, and China Power Investment lost a multi-billion dollar contract for the Myitsone Dam in Burma.

<http://urbachina.hypotheses.org/?p=4345>

The long battle over “White Pollution”

edited by Jacqueline Nivard

In the past weeks, Chinese citizens have learned that the styrofoam boxes from which they eat their lunches will soon be legal. On February 16, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), China's highest economic policy-making body, changed the Industrial Restructuring Catalog (2011) and removed disposable foam plastic tableware from the list of banned products. On May 1, the fourteen-year ban will be formally removed

<http://urbachina.hypotheses.org/?p=4330>

Chinese cities and informal street vendors

written by Sebastien Goulard

When they settle in cities, many migrants become itinerant vendors. This requires little investment, but because of its informality, this activity is often sanctioned. In China, itinerant vendors have to deal with “Chengguan” controls. “Chengguan” refers to the municipal inspectors in charge of fighting



UrbaChina Newsletter



delinquency and petty crimes. Recently, several incidents of conflicts involving street vendors and Chengguan have been reported in Chinese cities.
<http://urbachina.hypotheses.org/?p=4318>

Kunming - a strategic “bridgehead city” facing Southwest Asia
written by Chi-Han Ai

Kunming occupies a strategic position. It is the Chinese city which is nearest to several ASEAN countries (479 km from Vietnam, 789 km from Laos, and 858 km from Myanmar). Because of this geographical advantage, the Chinese government has put a great deal of effort into the construction of transportation networks connecting Kunming with its foreign neighbours. In 2011, the construction of the Trans-Asian Railway (with Kunming as a starting point) was officially begun.
<http://urbachina.hypotheses.org/?p=4289>



UrbaChina Newsletter



*Funded under the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme, **UrbaChina** is a collaborative project managed by a consortium of 11 leading Chinese and European research institutions. **UrbaChina** analyses China's urbanisation trends for the next 40 years and define possible future scenarios with reference to concepts of sustainability.*

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