

**Editorial**

**Urban Futures in the Asia Pacific**

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It is with great pleasure that I welcome our readers to the 9<sup>th</sup> Volume of the Graduate Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies. After taking a hiatus in 2013, a new editorial team began working on revitalising the journal and reconnecting with graduate students and their work on the Asia-Pacific. Further to this, the journal will continue to involve itself with artists from across the Asia-Pacific – celebrating as well as providing critical study of artworks with an Asia-Pacific focus or flavour.

Moving to the theme of our current issue, the works within this special issue of GJAPS all consider different aspects of urban futures in the Asia Pacific. Considering the unprecedented rates of growth found in many urban places within this the most populous region of the world, a call for papers exploring urban issues was seen as a great place to reintroduce the journal. Fittingly the papers presented in this volume come from research conducted in the two most populous countries of Asia: Xiaoyuan Wan provides a review of the broad processes of China's continued urbanisation and the closely related post-1978 public-administration reforms. Michelle Kung focusses her attention on two large commercial buildings in one of China's largest urban areas, Shanghai, and examines the effectiveness of its building energy efficiency policies. Lastly, we move to India's third largest city, Bangalore also known as the "Silicon Valley of India" where Suneel Jethani takes a closer look at digital mapping and its provision of alternative conceptualisations of urban governance and representation.

While already being the world's most populous continent, Asia's rapid growth is set to continue unabated and increase by 44% within the next fifty years (Mishra, 2002). Cities will of course be centre stage for this dramatic increase and it is the processes and policies developing now that will frame this future reality. Indeed, it is within China's current five year plan that for the first time its urban population is predicated to outnumber its rural population 51.5% to 47.5% (The Stage Council, 2011: 10). It is within this rapid urbanisation that Wan gives her comprehensive account of the public-administration reforms that have both contributed to and attempted to manage China's changing and diversifying social fabric and economic structure. It is argued that a strong rationale for

these changes has been the devolution of responsibility to not just local governments but to private and social sectors, and ultimately individuals.

Moving focus to the results of these Chinese policy changes in one city, Kung's paper gives an impression of the current city-level policies regarding building energy efficiency and CO<sub>2</sub> production in Shanghai. This paper builds on research that has posited Shanghai's existing stock of commercial buildings as a key challenge to improving the city's future energy efficiency and reducing the level of pollution produced. Kung's contribution to this field of study comes with the analysis of two case study buildings through a "co-benefits" framework.

Meanwhile, our third article in this volume takes as its case study efforts to raise awareness to urban pollution by a politically-motivated group working outside the realm of governmental power and policy in Bangalore, India. Answering the call of Shah and Jansen (2011) to develop a better understanding of the role of digital technologies in urban transformation by activist and advocacy groups, Jethani takes the art project 'Bangalore: Subjective Cartographies' as an appealing example of digital activism. Using this particular art project as a foundation, the article questions our current (limited) understanding of these contemporary dimensions to urban politics and contemplates their transformative potential.