



UEE Seminar Series

Hosted by department of Urban & Environmental Engineering

Shrinking Cities and Their Happiness

Speaker: Prof. Park, Yunmi
Ewha Womans University

This lecture is giving a brief introduction to the leading causes of urban decline and current planning responses. To urge the future planning paradigm shift to right-sizing, the findings from two previous research articles that explored the planning strategies in shrinking cities, and the happiness retrieved from Twitter will be briefly presented. This lecture urges future planners and engineers to acknowledge the population loss and respond sound, not being swayed by political motivations.

The first examines the mismatch between the reality of a city's population loss and the planning strategies they have adopted. Thirty-five depopulating U.S. cities' comprehensive plans are analyzed to determine whether they acknowledge past depopulation trends, how they are projecting future population changes, and what planning strategies they are pursuing in light of their depopulation trends. Findings illustrate that most cities acknowledge depopulation; however, a mix of planning strategies, ranging from smart decline to pro-growth, are used regardless of a city's acknowledgment/acceptance of population loss.

The second paper demonstrates the spatial distribution of sentiments, topics of tweets that appeared, and the association between neighborhood conditions and the level of happiness using 123,144 geo-tagged Twitter, census, geospatial data on Detroit, Michigan, which is one of the well-known shrinking cities in the US. The downtown area holds both positive and negative hotspots, which are clustered around sports arenas and bars, respectively. Neighborhoods with young and well-educated residents, situated close to amenities (i.e., recreation facilities, colleges, and commercial areas) and less crime tend to be happier.