# Temporal politics and injustice in mega urbanization: Lessons from Yangzhou, China

Yunpeng Zhang

yunpeng.zhang@kuleuven.be

Division of Geography and Tourism, KU Leuven, Celestijnenlaan 200E, Leuven 3001, Belgium

## Abstract

This article examines the hitherto overlooked temporal politics and resultant injustice in theorizing urban transformations in China. Through a micro-level, in-depth case study of the lifespan of Guangling New City, it unravels the complex and at times conflicting ways in which different temporal dimensions of this mega project were manipulated, exploited and experienced. In particular, it unravels the organization of, and the divisions within, the dominant elites, and illustrates how their conflicting and changing interests in time shaped the trajectory of the new city project. Residents caught up in the urbanization process were not completely opposed to the dominant project temporalities. Some of them submitted partially to project promises and visions; whereas others had gained some marginal degree of control over project temporalities, both of which contradictorily reproduced their submission to dominant interests and power in the urban development game. Time thus played a critical role in enabling and sustaining land-based accumulation, despite injustice therein. On this basis, this article calls for a more grounded approach to bring out the messy and contradictory temporal politics of urban development in order to improve the planning and delivery of megaprojects.

## H1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, mega urbanization has drastically transformed the landscapes of Chinese cities. A vast body of literature has generated considerable insights into the rise of a

debt-driven urban-centric land-based accumulation strategy in China and the conflicts arising from land-use changes and property dispossession (Hsing, 2010; He et al., 2019; Wu, 2019; Wu et al., 2020). Compared to the large amount of work on spatial changes and spatial conflicts, inquiries into the temporalities of China's urban change amount to a handful (Nguyen, 2017; Chien and Woodworth, 2018; Shin et al., 2020). This is a surprising gap given that the temporalities of China's urban transformations, especially the speed, not only feature prominently in sensationalist reports of Chinese cities but are integral to the visions of elite politicians (Clissold, 2007; Chien and Woodworth, 2018). As time is an important object of political struggles (Bourdieu, 2000; Adam, 2004), this neglect misses an opportunity to bring out important relations of power and causes of injustice.

This article addresses this gap through an in-depth examination of temporal politics and resultant injustice in building Guangling New City in Yangzhou. Despite the ambition of the local government of "achieving a grand transformation in five years" (Wang, 2010: 156) after the project officially broke ground in 2006, much land within the planned 8.5 km$^2$ area remained vacant or to be redeveloped during my last fieldwork in the summer of 2019. Instead of simply viewing it as yet another example of failed megaprojects or an outlier of fast cities, following Lauermann (2018), I move backward to map out the project's lifespan in order to provide a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between project temporalities and project outcomes. My analysis disaggregates this megaproject into smaller components and examines the ways they were temporally related, as a result of power struggles *over* time between different actors *in* time. For Bulmer (2009), struggles to control time (politics of time) is different from political activities and events unfolding in time (politics in time). In this article, I do not make this distinction and lump them together under "temporal politics", because these transactions over the project's temporalities also take and evolve in time.

Through this micro-level analysis of temporal politics, I demonstrate that the project's temporalities are much more incoherent, messy, contradictory and improvisational than has been depicted in the debates on fast or slow cities (Weber, 2015; Datta, 2017). Whereas countering acts of affected residents and communities in destabilizing and disrupting project times are well discussed in the extant literature (Harms, 2013; Aalders et al., 2021), as I illustrate further, such acts played a rather limited role in building Guangling New City. In fact, time had been effectively manipulated and exploited by more powerful urban builders – elite politicians, developers and their allies – to conceal power asymmetries in land development and manufacture consent to land dispossession and displacement. The disruptions and

improvisations, I suggest, were mainly caused by conflicts within urban political elites, and between them and the developer. These conflicts arose from their differentiated and evolving interests in not simply the speed of the project but also its timing, sequencing, timescale and so on.

Although I started to observe this megaproject in 2006, the article mainly draws upon empirical materials obtained during three field visits between 2017 and 2019. During these visits, I consulted local gazettes, publicly accessible land transaction records, government reports and newspaper articles. I also conducted interviews with 18 state officials and grassroots cadres, two managers from the major land developer, two real estate agents and 45 residents. The residents were recruited from two sites – 35 from the resettlement apartment blocks and ten from the remaining rural settlements.

In the next section, I review the discussions that have informed my understanding of time, temporal politics and resultant injustice in urban development, especially the sources of messy and contradictory project temporalities. I then examine the timing of this megaproject, focusing on the effects of the political cycles in the Chinese state. Following this, I pivot the analytical lens to the private land developer which, in partnership with the governments, oversaw land development of the entire megaproject. There, I investigate how business elites' changing positions vis-à-vis political elites shaped the project temporalities. In the final section, I bring in the diverse experiences of affected residents to draw out the role of time in (re)producing domination.

## H1. Messy temporal politics and injustice in mega urbanization

Following Lauermann (2018), I use mega urbanization to refer to large-scale mixed-function land development that drastically reconfigures the landscape of a city or a region. Despite its geographical diversities, one of the salient features of mega urbanization as discussed in the literature is its fast speed (Lauermann, 2016; Datta and Shaban, 2017; Mosciaro, 2021). The combination of speed with scale intensifies worries about project ambitions and outcomes. Following many critical scholars on fast cities, the logical response is then to decelerate so that projects can be planned and developed on the basis of more reliable information and more meaningful participation (Jessop, 2016); not only for just futures (Laurian and Inch, 2019) but also for the "preservation of difference and environment, and place attachments" (Weber, 2015: 188). However, while accelerated urbanization may privilege urban actors "who may operate within compressed time scales" (Jessop, 2016: 228) and thus consolidate existing political and

economic structures (Shin et al., 2020: 244), research of Raco et al. (2018) in London and Arican (2020) in Istanbul demonstrates that slow planning and development may not necessarily lead to more equitable, just outcomes but instead, work to the advantage of more resourceful urban builders and elites.

The contrasting positions and evidence on speed demonstrate the messiness and contradictions inhering in urban temporal politics (Degen, 2017; Raco et al., 2018), which, I suggest, come primarily from two sources. The first is concerned with different dimensions of time. In this regard, I am inspired by Adam's (2004) notion of timescape, which conceives time as a cluster of layered temporal dimensions. Entwined with space, a timescape is context-dependent and consists of time frames, temporality (e.g. process, irreversibility), tempo, timing, time point, time patterns (e.g. rhythmicity, periodicity), time sequence, time extensions (e.g. duration, continuity), and time modality (e.g. past, present, and future) (Adam, 2004: 144). As Adam (2004) argues, each temporal dimension is implicated in one another but not necessarily of the same importance in each instance.

Thinking with this notion of timescape, important to recognize is that the game of temporal control may revolve around temporal dimensions in which speed is implicated but not necessarily of the utmost importance. This is particularly relevant when we unpack the mega-ness of mega urbanization and disaggregate it into smaller components. How these different components are temporally related is not simply a matter of speed but also of sequencing, duration, timing, timescale and so on. Some arrangements may be technical – new construction cannot proceed without land clearance first. Others however are highly tactical and politicized. For instance, decelerating some activities within one period of time may be a deliberate strategy for accelerated value extraction at a later stage. In this case, the sequence of activities and the timescale of the overall process are at least as important, if not more so, than the speed of individual activities.

The second source consists of struggles to control time between multiple actors in urban development. The capacity to control time is highly unevenly developed in societies (Bourdieu, 2000; Bear, 2016). Given their control of material and symbolic resources, urban builders – political elites, developers and their allies – dominate urban project temporalities. The extant literature has painted a complex picture of temporal domination, or techniques of time (Bear, 2016), and diverse responses of affected residents (Lombard, 2013; Wallace, 2015; Koster, 2020). In many instances, temporal domination operates in an exclusionary mode which,

similar to what Fabian (2014: 31) terms "denial of coevalness", relegates residents in valuing, representing and controlling time based on the belief that their time is different, irrelevant, peripheral or inferior. Some have shown that residents whose futures are at stake may be completely excluded from, or only symbolically involved in, the inception and planning of urban projects (Sakizlioğlu, 2014; Xu and Lin, 2019). In other cases, land clearance may involve tactics that disrupt or ignore temporal routines of residents to pressure them to move out (Herzfeld, 2009; Hsing, 2010). In addition to coercion and exclusion, temporal domination may also operate through seduction. Affected residents may subscribe, partially or fully, to planned interventions and promised project benefits (Koster, 2020; Shin et al., 2020). In this instance, affected residents are kept invested in the land development game. Time serves a disciplinary device to cultivate docile, patient and/or hopeful subjects. This said, as much of the existing literature shows, time may also become a weapon of affected residents to fight back (Harms, 2013; Nguyen, 2017; Aalders et al., 2021). As seen in the study of Harms (2013: 357) in Ho Chi Minh City, some residents who could afford to disengage with project temporalities and wait "on their own terms" posed a challenge to project financing and stalled the urbanization project.

While the effects of residents' countering actions on project temporalities are important to acknowledge, it is also crucial not to over-state their agency. For Bourdieu (2000), temporal domination may be more effectively sustained and obscured by instilling a sense of temporal control in the subordinated actors rather than making their lives completely uncertain and unpredictable, thus subjecting them to absolute temporal power. Writing on the double-truths of labor exploitation, for instance, Bourdieu (2000: 202-204) shows that labor arrangements such as flexible working hours may engender subjective experiences of temporal control, which is conducive to intensified objective exploitation of labor. This leads to misrecognized injustice, a hidden and corrosive form of injustice, as the very actors harmed by unjust power relations fail to recognize the manipulation and exploitation of time by those in power, and become complicit in the reproduction of dominant, oppressive temporalities (Bourdieu, 2000). In the context of urban development, residents may ostensibly regain some degree of temporal control through acts like bargaining over resettlement arrangements but these actions may contradictorily reproduce the land-based accumulation and the underpinning power structures.

Compared to the attention dedicated to affected residents, the extant literature seems less sensitive to temporal experiences of dominant urban builders and the tensions within them (Raco et al., 2018), thus risking over-simplifying temporal politics and fetishizing dominant

project temporalities. While more resourceful and reflexive than residents, urban builders operate within temporal constraints as well, structured not only by specific projects but also by other fields that they are part of. For politicians, their temporal orientations and horizons to a great extent are molded by political rhythms of elections and bureaucratic routines within the state (Goetz and Meyer-Sahling, 2009). As a highly differentiated group, developers' temporal preferences and interests may be shaped by temporal patterns of real estate industry, the macro-economic cycles, and temporal patterns of the capital market (Guy et al., 2002; Raco et al., 2018; Ballard and Butcher, 2020). Like any other social group, both of them are also bound by time institutionalized in policies, regulations, and laws. These extra-project temporal patterns, structures, demands and markers, existing harmoniously or otherwise, may influence dominant project temporalities and cause further conflicts.

Linking the two sources of messiness and contradictions in project temporalities together and responding to the limits of the extant literature, this article seeks first to analyze project temporalities from the perspectives of dominant urban builders, drawing particular attention to divisions within them. In so doing, this article unpacks opaque processes of state-dominated mega urbanization in China and the otherwise black-boxed real estate industry (Theurillat, 2017; Brill, 2021). After a thick description of inter-class struggles, I then shift the lens to affected residents, focusing in particular on the roles of temporal manipulation and misrecognition of it in taming and paralyzing their agency. For analyses of both sides, this article moves beyond the narrow fast/slow binary. Speed matters to understand the politics of urban transformation. So are other interrelated temporal dimensions, especially timing, sequencing, timescales and duration. By broadening the scope of inquiry in this way, this article offers a new entry point to explore obscure and hidden relations of domination and injustice in urban development.

## H1. Bureaucratic rhythms and the timing of Guangling New City

I begin my analysis with the conception and initiation of the Guangling New City project. In the Chinese context, decisions concerning the initiation of urban mega projects are made primarily by city leaders and experts. The temporal patterns and power struggles within the bureaucratic field thus significantly affect a project's timing. Although elections are largely symbolic above the grassroots levels in China, as Chien and Woodworth (2018: 723) claim, the personnel review system of the Chinese party-state introduces similar temporal patterns to the bureaucratic field and by extension, to what they call "urban speed machine". Focusing on

the central-local dynamics, they (2018: 729) suggest that local city leaders, with an interest in advancing their political careers, are strongly incentivized to accelerate urban growth during their appointments in order to excel in the performance evaluation system organized by upper-level authorities, which until recently placed a great emphasis on local economic growth.

The analysis of Chien and Woodworth (2018) misses two dynamics within the local bureaucratic field that may lead to malfunction of the urban speed machine. First, despite their shared interest in economic growth, local city leaders do not always form a united front. Bureaucratic fragmentation and power hierarchy on the local level may lead to differences and conflicts in ordering time and space (see Zhang, 2013). Second and relatedly, these tensions may be further influenced by the bureaucratic rhythms of the elite appointment system. Whereas most elite politicians are promoted within a city or a region, a small number of them on the very top of the power hierarchy may be promoted and reassigned across cities and regions (Zhou et al., 2018). Although the timing is unpredictable and uncertain, cyclic geographical transfer of elite politicians, whose interests are less territorially bounded, may disrupt and reconfigure power relations within local governments and change urban agendas.

Guangling New City provides a telling example of how bureaucratic rhythms and resultant conflicts may affect urban development priorities and trajectories. The idea of building this project was floated in the bureaucratic field as early as 2002. However, it was not until 2006 when it finally received the greenlight. An important reason for the delayed approval is that the conditions necessary for accelerated urbanization – an entrepreneurial state and access to capital (Datta, 2017; Chien and Woodworth, 2018) – while not entirely absent, were not optimal, when it was first proposed. According to Chen, a senior official, before 2000s, local authorities were better captured by their "lateness", always "a step behind other cities" that saw economic boom because of entrepreneurial growth strategies (interview, 2018). The bureaucratic ethos also seemed unfavorable to capital investments. An official recalled that an investor had spent several years trying to get administrative clearance (interview, 2019).

The reassignment of Ji Jianye from Kunshan to become Yangzhou's mayor in 2001 accelerated the entrepreneurial turn of the local bureaucratic field. Keen to replicate his 'successful' career in fast-growing Kunshan, he promoted the classic recipes for land-based accumulation (Hsing, 2010). The territorial boundaries of different districts were adjusted so that each district government had control of rural hinterlands. This adjustment enabled district governments to capture a large portion of land rent when rural land was expropriated for urban expansion. It

also leveled the playing field for district governments so that the competitive growth strategy of Kunshan, a county-level city, could be imitated in Yangzhou, a city of a far larger scale, allowing for what Chen called, "a group dance of dragons" (interview, 2018). To overcome the problem of capital shortage and improve the visibility of Yangzhou to investors, Ji forced state officials to act more proactively, or maybe aggressively, to attract external capital and serve investors. Local state agents were expected to "visit 100 big corporations and 1000 medium and small sized companies, and distribute 10,000 marketing materials" (China Central Television, 2002). Place-marketing activities, targeting mainly Taiwan-based investors due to Ji's networks developed in Kunshan, were rewarding. Foreign direct investment more or less doubled every year during his mayorship (Yangzhou Statistics Bureau, 2005).

While temporalities of the local state and capital became more synchronized after Ji's appointment, it was the change of national land policies at that juncture that gave the urban speed machine in Yangzhou a huge thrust. In 2002, in view of rapid arable land loss and pervasive illicit land uses (Ho and Lin, 2003), the central government made it mandatory for all land planned for commerce, tourism, entertainment, commercial housing and other businesses to be traded via auction, bidding or quotation (Ministry of Land and Resources of the People's Republic of China, 2002). Extracting rent from land was no longer an option but a legal requirement. According to Chen, this regulatory change opened a "magic box" for district government officials: "some leaders were very excited. Just by selling land, all of a sudden, there was so much money. This was completely unbelievable" (interview, 2018).

These transformations triggered the rush for mega urbanization in Yangzhou. Plans for several new towns or cities were proposed within Yangzhou around 2002, including Guangling New City in Yangzhou's eastern side. From its inception, Guangling New City was promoted to speculate on land and real estate developments under the plan of the district government. However, despite the strong interest of the district government to move it forward, Guangling New City lacked political support from above and was bottlenecked in the bureaucratic field. The consensus among municipal leaders since the 1990s was to build a new urban center on Yangzhou's western side, where land was mostly flat and cheaper to acquire (interview, Chen, 2018). This trend was consolidated during Ji's mayorship when a mega urbanization project was built on Yangzhou's western wing. For planners with the bureaucratic field, eastward urban expansion via Guangling New City was too costly, because of the water networks and the resultant challenges for infrastructure development (interview, a state official, 2019).

<insert figure 1 here>

Figure 1: Guangling New City, Yangzhou

Source: Based on Google Map

Leadership transition and subsequent power reshuffling within the local bureaucratic field resuscitated Guangling New City. In 2004, Wang Yanwen was reassigned from Nanjing as mayor of Yangzhou to replace Ji, who was then promoted to the position of the secretary of the communist party committee of Yangzhou. Wang's vision for Yangzhou was path-dependently shaped by institutional legacies of her predecessor and normalized the land-based accumulation. Yet, instead of consolidating urbanization in western Yangzhou, Wang pushed for eastward expansion, in which Guangling New City was integral. As Chen remarked on the politics behind Yangzhou's changing development priorities and directions, "Chinese leaders will not lay new bricks onto the foundations of their predecessors. They always want to set up a new kitchen and achieve something during their own term" (interview, 2018). What Chen meant is that elite politicians are not simply concerned with economic growth and urban development in aggregate terms, but also and perhaps more importantly, with the visibility of their individual achievements during their terms.

Wang's vision was not well received by other leaders. As Chen recalled, for Ji, then party-secretary and on a higher rank than Wang, the priority of Yangzhou's development remained in Yangzhou's western side (interview, 2018). For planners inside the bureaucratic system, southward expansion would be a better option. Although the transport networks were less developed back then, it could balance and catalyze developments of both western and eastern sides while at the same time better integrate with the historic center (interview, Chen, 2018). However, Wang had a star planner on her side. Liu Thai Ker, known as the master planner of Singapore in the 1970s and 1980s, was commissioned by the municipal government to conduct a new masterplan for Yangzhou. In Liu's plan, Yangzhou's future development would expand its eastern and western wings to integrate with urban clusters on both ends. Guangling New City lies at the core of the eastbound expansion. Instead of simply being a district-level real estate dominated project, this masterplan elevated Guangling New City to Yangzhou's new central business district (CBD) and the new urban center. According to Bourdieu (2000: 103), legitimation is more effective when visible relations of interests between actors concerned become invisible. Liu's relative autonomy from the local bureaucratic field helped remove

Wang's personal interest in altering Yangzhou's development priorities by endorsing Guangling New City, while avoiding open confrontation with other city leaders.

The conflicting visions between leading politicians put state agents at lower ranks in an uneasy position. According to Chen, a vice mayor who was appointed to Guangling New City chose not to physically work from the office of the project company in order not to offend either the party secretary or the mayor (interview, 2018). This vice mayor's lack of commitment and interest, which may as well be a frontstage performance, is however indicative of Guangling New City's ambiguous and delicate positionality in the local politics. Although Guangling New City would host a new CBD for the metropolitan region, the managing committee set up to govern it remained a sub-district-level agency, whereas the project was a district-level mega-urbanization project. As Cartier (2016) points out, a matrix of ranks of cadres and territorial units shapes the flows and distributions of capital in China. This mismatch between the future strategic role and the territorial ranking of Guangling New City structured and over time, disrupted the temporalities of this new city, which will be examined in the next section.

**H1. Sequencing land development in Guangling New City: From profits to images**

Local governments in China arguably dominate land development processes. However, they also rely on developers for their capital, expertise and network. The main developer for Guangling New City is Yangzhou TEDA Development Construction Co., Ltd (hereafter Yangzhou TEDA). It is a shareholding company owned jointly by Guangling New City Investment and Development Co., Ltd (GNCID) and Nanjing Xincheng Development Co., Ltd (hereafter Nanjing Xincheng). The former is a financing platform of the district government whereas the latter is a private firm. As with the political elites who were concerned not only with the speed but also the timing of this mega urbanization project, as I illustrate in this section, temporal interests of the business elites went beyond speed as well. In particular, I highlight the significance of sequence and timescale to their business strategies. While patient, sequential development model may enable them to extract higher values from land development, it can also become their weakness, making their plans more susceptible to the influence of evolving powers and interests within and beyond this megaproject.

Resembling patient investors aimed at more sustainable profits in the long term (van Loon, 2016), the business elites based their investment decision on the long term prospect of Guangling New City. According to Qian (a witness to the investment deal) and Lin (a manager from Yangzhou TEDA), the district government did not inject any actual money but used "raw

land" (i.e. land before clearance and necessary infrastructure installation) within the planned new city as their capital investment in the joint venture (interviews, 2018 and 2019). Nanjing Xincheng on the other hand provided funds for the initial rounds of land clearance and infrastructure development. In return, land-related taxes and fees from land development in the planned new city would be turned over to the joint venture. In this way, it was expected that the joint venture would grow financially and by then, the land market would already take off. More projects could then be rolled out by the joint venture more easily.

Such arrangement means that Nanjing Xincheng absorbed the risk of market uncertainties while its government partners could take a cut of profits without committing financial resources. In retrospect, according to Qian, this was a flawed agreement but it was deemed acceptable by the business elites at that time (interview, 2018). Their patience was as much a choice as a necessity, derived from their experiences of the real estate industry and perceived position in this megaproject. As Qian explained, first, it was the prevailing model of mega urbanization project financing and land development at that time (interview, 2018). Second, Nanjing Xincheng mitigated the risk by controlling the tempo of the land market within the new city, as the government was contractually required to supply land of at least 500 mu ($0.34 \text{ km}^2$) to sell on the market every year (interview, 2018). Third, importantly, the business elites trusted their government partners (interview, 2018). They had reasons to, as there seemed a strong commitment from local politicians, at least from then mayor. As disclosed by Qian, Wang Yanwen, who endorsed Guangling New City and moved it forward in the bureaucratic field, also played a critical role in brokering the investment deal. After she was reassigned from Nanjing to Yangzhou, Wang told the CEO who was a shareholder of Nanjing Xincheng and served a political position in Nanjing to "do something in Yangzhou and do no limit his business focus in Nanjing" (interview, 2018). Further reinforcing their trust was the fact that the business elites took the leading position in deciding when and where to build what, in the early years of this megaproject (interview, Qian, 2018).

When slicing Guangling New City into smaller pieces and sequencing different projects, the business elites chose a strategy that might be characterized as "productive waiting" (Harms, 2013: 357), postponing projects of higher profitability in anticipation of greater wealth in the future. Instead of opting for housing and commercial real estate projects right away to extract money fast, with an acute awareness of the ICT sector restructuring in Southeast Asia, they decided to first cultivate an industrial cluster of call centers, meaning a longer turnover time for investment and slow development as well as financial loss in the short term. This strategy

was adopted for a couple of reasons. As Qian explained, first, compared to housing projects that could only generate a one-off income, fostering an industrial sector could generate recurring rental and tax revenues (interview, 2018). Second, once the industrial sector started to operate and grow, it could bring traffic and boost land values within the whole planned new city (interview, 2018). This could avoid the typical problem of housing dominated urbanization projects: local governments would have already run out of land to accommodate new projects once the land value of new cities skyrocketed (interview, 2018).

However, temporal imaginations and practices of the business elites remained out of sync with Liu Thai Ker's masterplan for the metropolitan region abstracted at another spatial and temporal scale. In Liu's original plan, the CBD to be built in Guangling New City would occupy around 3.5 km$^2$, including two big lakes. This was almost half the size of the planned new city. According to Chen's recollection, when presenting his plan to local politicians and bureaucrats and justifying the size of the CBD, Liu claimed that he was planning for the future, 50 years ahead at least. As Chen recalled, "Liu Thai Ker put it metaphorically, 'I serve you a big bowl of rice. All you need to do is to take one bite each time'" (interview, 2018).

The conflicting time horizons has its roots in the ambiguous positioning of Guangling New City from its inception – as mainly a land development project for the district or as a CBD for the metropolitan region. For business elites, the main problem was not to have a CBD in Guangling New City but the CBD's sheer size and development intensity in the masterplan. As Qian explained, this was partly due to the fact that their financial calculations were largely based on the percentages of each type of land and real estate projects in the planned new city rather than the potential rent of every specific land parcel (interview, 2018). As long as the percentages and locations of different types of projects remained stable, it mattered little whether a land parcel would be used for a CBD, commercial housing or other kinds of development projects. The business elites expressed their concerns to Liu and as the supplier of capital, they convinced Liu to shrink the size of the CBD (interview, 2018).

Because of the sequential development strategy and the absence of concrete plans for every land parcel, temporalities of Guangling New City were highly manipulable and malleable. In recent years, the municipal government sited major public facilities along the main road running through the CBD in Guangling New City – a conference center, a science and technology exhibition center, a sports park, a public library, a gymnastics hall and several parks. These public facilities were a double-edged sword. They could potentially inflate land values

but at the same time, they reduced the amount of land available for profit-driven development projects. Moreover, the siting choices of these facilities had been increasingly driven by an interest in spectacles. Referring to the rationales behind the development of the technology exhibition center and the public library, Chen ridiculed,

> The original plan was to build the science and technology exhibition center by the Slender West Lake because it was related to tourism. Even the detailed designs were ready…. If the leaders want to do something somewhere, they would dedicate the best resources to that place. So, first the science and technology exhibition center. Then the public library. Why a library? Because the land across the exhibition center was empty for too long (interview, 2018).

<Insert Figure 2 here>

Figure 2: The Science and Technology Center

Source: The Author, 2017

The shift from profit to image in sequencing land development was reflective of, and perhaps because of, another political cycle, and consequently the gradual marginalization of Wang Yanwen and the business elites. In 2012, Wang, after replacing Ji Jianye as the party secretary of Yangzhou in 2009, left for a higher position at the provincial government. Her successor, Xie Zhengyi, who became mayor in 2009 and party secretary in 2012, set a different tone for Yangzhou at a time when the business elites of the Guangling New City were to reap profits from their waiting. Dubbed a mayor of parks among the local citizens, and tapping into the discourse of ecological civilization promoted by national leaders, Xie's urban vision led to the construction of hundreds of parks of different sizes across Yangzhou. Following his vision, three parks were built along the waterfront of Guangling New City, which was originally planned for high-end real estate projects. Moreover, building on but also distinguishing from his predecessor's legacies, another municipal-level mega urbanization project themed on ecology and sustainability was launched to the east of Guangling New City, competing for institutional and financial resources.

Within the project, the relations of interests and powers had also evolved over time, and the position of the business elites had been weakened. Whereas the expectation of the sequential development strategy was to allow the project company, Yangzhou TEDA, to grow and become financially independent, this extended development model also enabled state units and

their corporate arms involved to learn the craft of the real estate industry and mature professionally over time. The district government's own financing platform, GNCID, had already taken over many primary land development projects from Yangzhou TEDA. The district government itself also took Yangzhou TEDA to court to settle their disputes over the ownership transfer of public facilities within Guangling New City, which were constructed and financed by Yangzhou TEDA. The experience of being devalued and marginalized over time by the government partners was felt by business elites as a betrayal. As Qian remarked,

> There is this saying from the CEO of the Eastside Group (the shareholder of Nanjing Xincheng), when you propose an 'industry first, real estate later' strategy to the government, they think you are fucking stupid. When industrial development starts to bring tax revenues and make big money, they think you are a magic monkey. When Guangling New City started, the local government had no resources, no visions, no methods. After they have got money, learned the methods and accumulated resources, they started to wonder why bother working with you [business partners] at all when they are perfectly capable of doing it all by themselves?... No one reviews the history. Working with the government is like dancing on the edge of a knife (interview, 2018).

Although the *ad hoc* coalition between the state and market players may indeed dominate the land development process, as I attempted to demonstrate in this section, this coalition was produced, often involving informal networks and tacit political knowledge. Neither the state agents nor the business elites occupied a fixed position in the process. Instead, there was a complex dance between them, due mainly to changing bureaucratic cycles. This micro-level account challenges the neat, static characterization of state-market relations in the context of urban development (Wu, 2018). It also inserts a temporal dimension to explore fragmented interests within the Chinese state and resulting effects on the interactions with market players (Zhang, 2013).

### H1. Time stolen, manipulated and bargained

In this section I examine the diverse ways in which time of affected residents was manipulated and exploited by urban builders. While their time was frequently devalued and ignored, rarely were residents made victims to absolute temporal power (Bourdieu, 2000) and denied any predictability. In fact, as I illustrate, they had gained some degree of temporal control over different dimensions of project temporalities within the constraints of urban builders. This marginal temporal control and misrecognition of temporal domination, I argue, played a

significant role in manufacturing consent to dispossession and displacement, the precondition for expedient capital accumulation via megaprojects.

## H2. Manipulating and denying time by urban builders

The conception and planning of this mega project systematically excluded residents. Similar to the technique of time as discussed by Fabian (2014), political and business elites denied residents as equals in valuing the time they had invested in this planned area before the megaproject and in shaping project temporalities that mattered a great deal to their livelihoods. The planned area was treated as if it were empty and devoid of history, subject to wholesale erasure and redevelopment. There was no public participation or consultation in any form. Project time was thus imposed on residents in the sense that they had no choice but to give up their land and homes to allow a modernist city to emerge.

Injustice in land dispossession however is not limited to denial of residents' time. Land-taking was turned into a real state-organized crime by ignoring bureaucratized time and fast-tracking dispossession, land clearance and construction of certain projects. When land was monetized as capital investment in Yangzhou TEDA in 2006, rural households and their collectives remained *de jure* owners. Much land was still classified and used as agricultural land under strict legal protection. Converting it for urban construction and transferring ownership must comply with a hierarchically managed land use plan and receive approval from the provincial government. The municipal government of Yangzhou simply had no legal title. If legal construction is a necessary condition to turn land into a fictitious commodity (Polanyi, 2001[1944]), land invested in Yangzhou TEDA was literally fictional without legal approval. It was simply stolen from residents.

Worse, this crime was committed repeatedly. In many instances, land dispossession and clearance were carried out before obtaining all necessary approvals from the provincial government. According to many interviewees working at the frontline of displacement and evictions, some instances of dispossession violated regulations or rested on a weak legal basis. This typically happened in two scenarios. One, it was considered problematic to leave behind only one or two households of a to-be-demolished rural settlement. Second, for the sake of maintaining the image of a modernist city and attracting investments, residents were prevented from using the remaining agricultural land for subsistence farming. In this case, land was 'rented' out to Yangzhou TEDA but not legally expropriated. Published records on land transactions and expropriation collected until the end of 2018 revealed a similar but nuanced

pattern. Expropriation of agricultural land and construction of public facilities and resettlement housing were often completed several years before the approvals came through. This is in sharp contrast to land sold for profit-driven real estate projects, which fully complied with legal and administrative procedures. The exception is understandable, given that no developers of the secondary land market would purchase land without documentation of clear property ownership.

It is tempting to consider these bureaucratic procedures simply as rubber stamps or administrative formalities (see Nguyen, 2017). This was certainly the rationale of local political elites. Compressing time against the regulatory frameworks and temporarily denying the rights of rural households were based on the calculation that it was only a matter of time before acquiring clearance from the provincial government. As an official, Zheng, explained, since the decision of the provincial government would be based on submitted documents by the local governments, it would be safe to assume positive decisions (interview, 2018). The opportunity cost of waiting for legal recognition would be much higher than bypassing the regulation temporarily and "seizing a development opportunity" (interview, Zheng, 2018). The cost of impatience was indeed negligible. According to available records, in 2018, Yangzhou TEDA received four penalties, totaling only around 300,000 RMB for illegally using 48,364 $m^2$ of rural land. It was ordered to return all land in question to rural collectives whereas built structures on such land were confiscated. This may appear serious in text but is unlikely to alter the spatial patterns of Guangling New City. As an interviewee from the state agency issuing the fines explained, "confiscation…only applies to those structures built on land planned for development…. As long as they comply with urban planning, they will not be demolished. They are confiscated by the municipal government, only for now. It will be dealt with internally. Eventually, the paperwork will be sorted out" (interview, 2018).

Although bureaucracy is negatively associated with inefficiency, incompetency and oppression (Herzfeld, 1993), within a fragmented bureaucratic field, bureaucratic approvals and procedures also constitute what Bourdieu calls "circuit of legitimation exchange" (Bourdieu, 2000: 103), synchronizing the interests of state actors in land development. The time that these procedures take also provides a means for the upper-level authorities to intervene in the local land markets and balance competing priorities of different timeframes (e.g. ecological preservation, food security, macro-economy stability) (Xu and Yeh, 2009; Rithmire, 2015). Moreover, it also has real consequence for residents. In legal texts, land tenure corresponds to social security entitlement (see Andreas and Zhan, 2016). Expropriation of land from rural

residents changes their social security status accordingly, especially the entitlement to pension. This means that residents who have lost their land to urban development projects would remain uncountable as land-deprived farmers before official recognition, thus ineligible for the social security system designed for them. The theft of land by bypassing the law is then also a theft of time. Time spent in waiting for paperwork to be sorted out is invisible, valueless and unrecognizable in the eyes of the state when calculating residents' entitlements.

H2. Experiences of time and temporal domination

When I presented my finding to many residents, including college graduates and rural cadres whom I expected to be more politically savvy, no one reacted with anger or shock. In fact, many even ridiculed my question. This was partly due to a sense of powerlessness. As Jin (female, 40s) remarked, "the government wants your land. With or without documents, you cannot just say no…. Municipal governments, provincial governments, they are all governments" (interview, 2018). For some residents like Zhu, it was a matter of being pragmatic. Unlike urban builders, residents lacked cultural capital and dispossession was a disruptive event to their lifeworld structured by times of multiple fields. With competing temporal demands, many residents treated compensation as the bottom line. As Zhu revealed, "you have to know, in this town, no one has the knowledge to investigate this kind of stuff. No one has the time, either. The seniors barely know a few characters. For people like me, I went to work during the day. When I got home, I negotiated with them [the dispossession crew], about compensation" (interview, 2018). Zhu's view was affirmed by senior residents I interviewed. Representative here is the view of Tang (male, 70s): "I don't even recognize many characters. I don't understand a thing about these rules or laws. As long as there was compensation, I don't care" (interview, 2018).

Another important reason is that many residents strongly identified with the vision of the mega-urbanization project, which erodes their political agency and leads to "impossibility of justice" (Shin et al., 2020: 248). Some residents talked with great pride about the involvement of the star planner, Liu Thai Ke, in Guangling New City, and defined the identities of this new place by its globality. For instance, Wu (50s, male) kept referring to "the planner from Singapore" to underscore the "high standard of Guangling New City's planning" and hence "a better new city in comparison to others", even though he did not know the exact name of Liu Thai Ker (interview, 2017). Other residents identified with the project but was more concerned with the material gains than the grand narrative of modernity. Unlike gentrification-induced

displacements when residents of inner city neighborhoods are often relocated afar, most residents were resettled within or next to Guangling New City (see Figure 1). Their territorial interests were thus effectively tied with the future of this new city. Dong (30s), who kindly offered to drive me around the new city every time I visited, introduced the government's plans for vacant land with excitement, telling me how different life would be once these projects were fully completed. Despite the fact that some of these plans were later modified, canceled or delayed, hope of displaced residents like Dong, in the last resort, was concretely validated by rising housing values. Land development, fast or slow, carried a reward.

<insert figure 3 here>

Figure 3: The New City Seen From a Resettlement Apartment

Source: The Author, 2017

Finally, misrecognition through time bargaining also contributed to diffusing tensions. Through the mediation of their villagers' committees, residents who had lost their land but was not yet recognized by the state as land-deprived farmers, eventually got them a deal and no longer had to waste their time waiting for paperwork. Known as *yu jin bao* (pre-enrollment to social security in literal translation), unrecognized rural residents above the legal retirement age were enrolled in an informal system and could receive a monthly allowance of a similar amount to that of recognized land-deprived rural residents (interview, a rural cadre, 2019).

This kind of bargain over time was in fact a common practice in this land-based social security system. It is worthwhile to take a closer look at this system, which critically contributes to manufacturing consent to, and misrecognizing injustice involved in, land dispossession. In this system, the durational time of the residents is more systematically managed. Financed mostly by compensation to rural residents for their land loss and partially by revenues generated through land sales, this system functions like a compulsory, local-state-managed savings scheme. Only minors at the time of expropriation would receive one-off payments. The rest, upon recognition as land-deprived farmers, will have a personal account set up under the land-based social security system. Money deposited in these personal accounts will contribute to pension installments if they are above the legal retirement age. If they are of working age and have mandatory social security accounts, they could cash out personal land-based accounts before 2014, or have their personal contribution to the mandatory social security reimbursed annually under the new regulation. Otherwise, they are required to open mandatory social security accounts and similarly have their personal contribution reimbursed annually.

This system thus individualizes the right to compensation in time and institutionalizes patience by design. It has a strong appeal among the residents, especially those near or above the retirement age. One interviewee's comment is representative here: "Before [land expropriation] I had to work in the field the minute I opened my eyes until the lights were on. Now I sit at home and can still receive some money every month. The money is not much but enough to live on" (interview, female, 60s, 2018). To be clear, very few households relied on agricultural activities as their main source of income. Farming was mostly for subsistence. For a typical household of three or more generations, only the senior generations (in their 50s or older) were involved in agricultural activities. Many of them also had other jobs but no mandatory social security accounts. Although limited in amount, the land-based pension promises them financial security and autonomy once they reach the retirement age. This also indirectly reduces the financial burden that would otherwise fall on the shoulders of younger generations.

This system was made more attractive by the sequential enrollment into the land-based social security scheme in practice. As Tomba (2014: 165) argues, multitude of interactions in the space of neighborhoods enable consensus to emerge through political bargains while "tools of domination" to adapt "as they move closer to everyday life". Although rural residents and their collectives could not affect the sequence of land development nor opt out of this scheme, within the bounded spaces of their collectives, they had the freedom to decide collectively who to enroll in this scheme first. Mediated by villagers' committees, household representatives of production teams discussed their arrangements. Nested futures at different scales – individual, household, community and the urban – collided and economic rationality prevailed in these collective bargains over time. As interviews revealed, whereas rights to the to-be-expropriated land mattered in these decisions, age of residents received a higher priority. Senior generations of households were enlisted into the system first, including those from households whose land was not being expropriated at that point. Younger generations had to wait for their turn. A grassroots cadre explained, since all land within the planned new city would be expropriated eventually, it was a matter of time that all residents would be incorporated into the system (interview, 2018). Sequential enrollment based on age could allow senior residents, most of whom had no social security coverage, to withdraw pensions immediately (interview, 2018). Future members of the collectives such as newborn babies or newlyweds would also benefit as long as there was still land in their collectives to be expropriated (interview, 2019). In this way they could take advantage of the system collectively and maximize economic interests for every

household. Even for politically astute residents I interviewed, this was considered a good system (interviews R1, R3, Zhu, 2017 and 2018).

Such collective bargains over time was possible because the local governments only controlled the number of residents to be incorporated each time. It may indeed contribute to the well-being of the dispossessed individually and collectively in differentiated timeframes. At the same time, it contributes to obscuring and misrecognizing the power and interests underpinning this system. By trading present compensation for monthly installments in the future, residents contributed to deferring the fiscal pressure of the local governments. With the finance of this system tied to land revenues, their interests also became reliant on the land market prospects and the overall fiscal health of the local governments in the long run.

Another common theme of residents' narratives on time was forced waiting, caused by the sequential land development model. However, their experiences of submission to power by being made to wait (Auyero, 2012: 4) varied considerably, due largely to policy shifts in resettlement, enacted by the municipal government and further adapted by the developers; and partly to misrecognition of temporal domination in waiting. For residents who were displaced before 2014, each household on average could receive three apartments (totaling 300 m$^2$) but must wait for three-to-four years on average before moving into their new apartments, much longer than what had been promised. This delay caused problems for some families to plan life projects, marriage for instance. In order to save money, some also rented housing of substandard quality and tolerated a temporary decline in quality of life. A few senior interviewees jokingly remarked that if they had died while waiting, they would have become homeless ghosts. This waiting experience was moderated by a sizable extra compensation, which many households used to finance interior decoration and furniture for their new apartments. Several residents even wished for a longer delay in delivering resettlement housing. For them, there was a delayed gratification at the end of their waiting. Such views fail to recognize the exploitative relations underpinning the delay. The time gap between displacement and resettlement, with residents complicit in sustaining and legitimating it, allowed Yangzhou TEDA and the governments to speculate on land development with borrowed money from the residents, because costs of resettlement – compensation to the residents – were largely transferred to contractors of resettlement housing who only received full payments upon housing delivery, while land occupied by their families had been surrendered and cleared for development.

Residents displaced after 2014 spoke of waiting with more resentment and bitterness. In 2014, the municipal government canceled in-kind compensation, which significantly disrupted the cash flow of the main developer (interview, Lin, 2018). As a result, displaced residents were forced to calculate strategically and think not as families who lost their homes but as investors. Their only option was to delay compensation collection for two or three years in exchange for interest income. The longer they agreed to wait, the higher the interest rate was offered (around 6% - 8%). Instead of demanding immediate compensation, many residents were seduced by the gamble and went for the longer term and in doing so, deferred the financial burden of the developer. What they had not foreseen was the impact of this policy on the overall housing market. With a manufactured housing demand from displacees, housing prices went up drastically. Even in the resettlement neighborhoods within Guangling New City, for instance, the price of a three-bedroom apartment in 2018 had almost doubled from that of 2015. Interest income was simply insignificant when compared to what residents could have gained from the housing value inflation. Many informants regretted their choice and complained about the government for shrinking their family wealth.

For many residents whose homes had not yet been demolished, they were also in a prolonged process of waiting but for being dispossessed and displaced. It would be a mistake to classify them as "welcoming" displacees, however. Their hope was labored partially by the understanding that land clearance was inevitable and partially by everyday experiences of living inside a giant construction site. Without losing their homes yet, they were displaced *in situ* (Wang and Wu, 2019), enduring nuisances such as noises, dust, pollution, damaged or blocked roads, etc. This was made worse by the lack of incentives to maintain or upgrade collective goods in their neighborhoods planned for demolition (interview, a grassroots cadre, 2018). Displacement therefore offered a way out of the "limbo-land" (Wallace, 2015) but its timing remained at the mercy of the governments and developers. Their experiences further reveal the divisive effects of the sequential land development model. Phased development created new divisions among residents in addition to cleavages along gender, generational and community lines, thus preventing large-scale organized resistance from emerging. Moreover, by leaving some neighborhoods behind and making residents suffer from environment degradation either by planning or by unintended delays, it manufactured support for expedited land expropriation and property dispossession, and reinforced the dominance of urban builders and the sequential development model.

**H1. Conclusion**

In this article, I have sought to explicate the hitherto overlooked temporal politics and injustice in China's mega urbanization through a micro-level case study of Guangling New City in Yangzhou. The project's temporalities were dominated by political and business elites. Yet, as highlighted in this article, the divisions and conflicts within these dominant actors ought not to be downplayed. Complementing the literature on the politics and political economy of China's urban transformations (Lin, 2009; Xu and Yeh, 2009; Hsing, 2010; Wu, 2018), this article has directed particular attention to the effects of the cyclic evaluation and appointment system upon the relations of power and domination within the local state. The changes of mayors and subsequent shifts in urban agendas played a critical role in the project's initiation and sequential development. While sharing the interest of political elites in land development, the business elites operated within a different set of temporal constraints and for different goals. Speed of land development was important to their calculus. So was the question as to how sub-projects, with varying timeframes for return on investments in different sectors, could be phased in a way to maximize profits to be extracted from the project as a whole. Their temporal practices and imaginations were not always compatible with the expectations and interests of elite politicians, leading to project delays, adjustments and improvisations. As the article shows, the business elites deliberately prioritized projects with longer turnover time of capital in expectation of higher returns and fast cash elsewhere. Yet, their attempts were frustrated by conflicting visions of the elite politicians. To summarize in the terms of Chien and Woodworth (2018: 723), the "urban speed machine" was frequently jammed in building Guangling New City.

Critical to make this megaproject work is land acquisition. In this regard, this article has unraveled the role of time in sustaining the land-based accumulation and reproducing relations of domination in land expropriation, despite apparent injustice. Whereas urbanization may be driven by "a powerful ideological commitment to urban growth as the 'royal road' to modernity" (Sorace and Hurst, 2016: 305), and provide a fix to cyclic crises of capital accumulation via dispossession (Harvey, 2003), it also finds legitimacy by aligning with people's desires for a better life in the future and conceals domination through offering a certain degree of temporal control. This is most evidently shown in the case of the land-based social security system, both the formal state-run one that targets recognized land-deprived farmers and the informally managed one set up to pacify grieving residents whose land was robbed but was not recognized by the state due to the failure of local governments to acquire formal approval. Unlike boosterism discourses of urbanization projects promising benefits in uncertain, distant futures,

the land-based social system assures financial security and autonomy in the foreseeable future with certainty. Collective bargains on sequential, fast-tracked enrollment into the system engenders a sense of control of their own futures and project time among affected residents. The informally managed one, financed by the developers, further demonstrates the flexibility and adaptivity of techniques of time (Bear, 2016) on the level of everyday life (Tomba, 2014).

These analyses of temporal politics concur with the views of Raco et al. (2018) and Degen (2017) that project temporalities are incoherent, messy and contradictory. Social actors have varied temporal interests and orientations, and as such, may experience and seek control of different temporal dimensions in diverse ways in development processes. The implications of this finding are two-fold. First, as Raco et al. (2018) argue, we need to examine time and struggles to control different dimensions of it in a holistic way. Speed is an important part of this endeavor and arguments for deceleration are certainly reasoned. Yet, fixating attention on speed alone is likely to overlook injustice inflicted through manipulating other dimensions of time. As I illustrated in this article, for instance, sequencing of development activities may also be manipulated for private gains. The layered and complex temporal relations and arrangements need more careful unpacking. Doing so can also help decision-makers plan and deliver megaprojects in a better and just way that harnesses the potential of megaprojects for ends unachievable at other scales (Lauermann, 2018). Second and relatedly, uncovering the complexities and messiness requires a micro-level approach grounded in the experiences of not only affected residents (Koster, 2020), but also urban elites in these power-laden development processes (Raco et al., 2018). This may help refine existing theories of urbanization, especially in the tradition of political economy, that often prefer clear-cut categories and explanations (Degen, 2017) and filter out the fuzziness and ambiguities in the embodied processes of capital accumulation via the production of the built environment. More importantly, it can help to lay bare the otherwise intangible yet insidious workings of power and domination in and through time, opening up new avenues to conceive justice in cities in critical urban theories.

## H1. References

Aalders JT, Bachmann J, Knutsson P, et al. (2021) The Making and Unmaking of a Megaproject: Contesting Temporalities Along the Lapsset Corridor in Kenya. *Antipode* 53(5): 1273-1293.

Adam B (2004) *Time*. Oxford: Polity.

Andreas J and Zhan S (2016) Hukou and Land: Market Reform and Rural Displacement in China. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43(4): 798-827.

Arıcan A (2020) Behind the Scaffolding: Manipulations of Time, Delays, and Power in Tarlabaşı, Istanbul. *City & Society* 32(3): 482-507.

Auyero J (2012) *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Ballard R and Butcher S (2020) Comparing the Relational Work of Developers. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 52(2): 266-276.

Bear L (2016) Time as Technique. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 45: 487-502.

Bourdieu P (2000) *Pascalian Meditations.* Cambridge: Polity.

Brill F (2021) Governing Investors and Developers: Analysing the Role of Risk Allocation in Urban Development. *Urban Studies*. DOI: 10.1177/00420980211017826. 1–19.

Bulmer S (2009) Politics in Time Meets the Politics of Time: Historical Institutionalism and the Eu Timescape. *Journal of European public policy* 16(2): 307-324.

Cartier C (2016) A Political Economy of Rank: The Territorial Administrative Hierarchy and Leadership Mobility in Urban China. *Journal of Contemporary China* 25(100): 529-546.

Chien S-S and Woodworth MD (2018) China's Urban Speed Machine: The Politics of Speed and Time in a Period of Rapid Urban Growth. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42(4): 723-737.

China Central Television (2002) Dialogue （对话） *Eight questions for Yangzhou* （八问扬州）.

Clissold T (2007) *Mr. China.* London: Robinson.

Datta A (2017) Introduction: Fast Cities in an Urban Age. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities, New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. London: Routledge, pp.1-27.

Datta A and Shaban A (2017) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State.* London: Routledge.

Degen M (2017) Urban Regeneration and "Resistance of Place": Foregrounding Time and Experience. *Space and Culture* 20(2): 141-155.

Fabian J (2014) *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Goetz KH and Meyer-Sahling J-H (2009) Political Time in the Eu: Dimensions, Perspectives, Theories. *Journal of European public policy* 16(2): 180-201.

Guy S, Henneberry J and Rowley S (2002) Development Cultures and Urban Regeneration. *Urban Studies* 39(7): 1181-1196.

Harms E (2013) Eviction Time in the New Saigon: Temporalities of Displacement in the Rubble of Development. *Cultural Anthropology* 28(2): 344-368.

Harvey D (2003) *The New Imperialism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

He S, Zhang M and Wei Z (2019) The State Project of Crisis Management: China's Shantytown Redevelopment Schemes under State-Led Financialization. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 52(3): 632-653.

Herzfeld M (1993) *The Social Production of Indifference: Exploring the Symbolic Roots of Western Bureaucracy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Herzfeld M (2009) *Evicted from Eternity: The Restructuring of Modern Rome.* Chicago, Ill. ; London: University of Chicago Press.

Ho SPS and Lin GCS (2003) Emerging Land Markets in Rural and Urban China: Policies and Practices. *China Quarterly* 175(September): 681-707.

Hsing Y-t (2010) *The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Jessop B (2016) *The State: Past, Present, Future.* Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Koster M (2020) An Ethnographic Perspective on Urban Planning in Brazil: Temporality, Diversity and Critical Urban Theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 44(2): 185-199.

Lauermann J (2016) Temporary Projects, Durable Outcomes: Urban Development through Failed Olympic Bids? 53(9): 1885-1901.

Lauermann J (2018) Geographies of Mega-Urbanization. *Geography Compass* 12(e12396): 1-12.

Laurian L and Inch A (2019) On Time and Planning: Opening Futures by Cultivating a "Sense of Now". *Journal of Planning Literature* 34(3): 267-285.

Lin GCS (2009) *Developing China: Land, Politics and Social Conditions.* London: Routledge.

Lombard M (2013) Struggling, Suffering, Hoping, Waiting: Perceptions of Temporality in Two Informal Neighbourhoods in Mexico. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 31(5): 813-829.

Ministry of Land and Resources of the People's Republic of China (2002) Provisions on the Assignment of State-Owned Construction Land Use Right through Bid Invitation, Auction and Quotation (招标拍卖挂牌出让国有建设用地使用权规定).

Mosciaro M (2021) Selling Milan in Pieces: The Finance-Led Production of Urban Spaces. *European Planning Studies* 29(1): 201-218.

Nguyen V (2017) Slow Construction: Alternative Temporalities and Tactics in the New Landscape of China's Urban Development. *City* 21(5): 650-662.

Polanyi K (2001[1944]) *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Raco M, Durrant D and Livingstone N (2018) Slow Cities, Urban Politics and the Temporalities of Planning: Lessons from London. *Environment Planning C: Politics and Space* 36(7): 1176-1194.

Rithmire ME (2015) *Land Bargains and Chinese Capitalism: The Politics of Property Rights under Reform.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sakizlioğlu B (2014) Inserting Temporality into the Analysis of Displacement: Living under the Threat of Displacement. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 105(2): 206-220.

Shin HB, Zhao Y and Koh SY (2020) Whither Progressive Urban Futures? Critical Reflections on the Politics of Temporality in Asia. *City* 24(1-2): 244-254.

Sorace C and Hurst W (2016) China's Phantom Urbanisation and the Pathology of Ghost Cities. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 46(2): 304-322.

Theurillat T (2017) Financing Urban Growth in China. A Case Study of Qujing, a Medium-Sized City in Yunnan Province. *China Perspectives* 2017(2017/1): 57-68.

Tomba L (2014) *The Government Next Door: Neighborhood Politics in Urban China.* US: Cornell University Press.

van Loon J (2016) Patient Versus Impatient Capital: The (Non-) Financialization of Real Estate Developers in the Low Countries. *Socio-Economic Review* 14(4): 709-728.

Wallace A (2015) Gentrification Interrupted in Salford, Uk: From New Deal to "Limbo-Land" in a Contemporary Urban Periphery. *Antipode* 47(2): 517-538.

Wang X (2010) Introduction: Guangling New Town (广陵新城 综述). In: The Compilation Committee of Local Annals of Guangling District of Yangzhou (ed) *Annals of Guangling (广陵年鉴).* Yangzhou: Guangling Shushe, pp.156.

Wang Z and Wu FJA (2019) In‐Situ Marginalisation: Social Impact of Chinese Mega‐Projects.  51(5): 1640-1663.

Weber R (2015) *From Boom to Bubble: How Finance Built the New Chicago.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Wu F (2018) Planning Centrality, Market Instruments: Governing Chinese Urban Transformation under State Entrepreneurialism. *Urban Studies* 55(7): 1383-1399.

Wu F (2019) Land Financialisation and the Financing of Urban Development in China. *Land Use Policy.* DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2019.104412. 104412.

Wu F, Chen J, Pan FH, et al. (2020) Assetization: The Chinese Path to Housing Financialization. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110(5): 1483-1499.

Xu J and Yeh A (2009) Decoding Urban Land Governance: State Reconstruction in Contemporary Chinese Cities. *Urban Studies* 46(3): 559-581.

Xu Z and Lin GCS (2019) Participatory Urban Redevelopment in Chinese Cities Amid Accelerated Urbanization: Symbolic Urban Governance in Globalizing Shanghai. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 41(6): 756-775.

Yangzhou Statistics Bureau (2005) *Yangzhou Statistics Yearbook 2005 (扬州统计年鉴 2005).* Beijing: China Statistics Press.

Zhang Y (2013) *The Fragmented Politics of Urban Preservation : Beijing, Chicago, and Paris.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Zhou X, Ai Y, Ge J, et al. (2018) Stratified Mobility in Chinese Bureaucracy: A Model and Empirical Evidence. *Chinese Journal of Sociology(in Chinese Version)* 38(3): 1-45.