Planning for growth: urban and regional planning in China

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Planning, the ‘enemy of business’?

In the UK, planning came under the ‘neoliberal’ attack:

“We are talking on the enemies of enterprises”, including “the town hall officials who take forever with those planning decisions that can be make or break for business” (David Cameron, 2011)

The ‘third spring’ of Chinese planning since the 2000s (Leaf and Hou, 2006)

“Phoenix rising from the ashes” (Wu, 2007)

Three explanations

- Planning adapted well
- Planning is used to solve the problem created by market transition
- Planning facilitates growth and legitimizes the state power
China’s planning tradition
Planning as modernization – learning from the West, but failed

The socialist transition: modernization continued in a strange way - from consumption to production

Stronger state capacity

Industrialization (but with constrained urbanization)
Can the socialist state plan its city?

The city / municipality as state domain

State work-units

State work-units

Residual space

State work-units

State work-units

Rural areas (non state domain)
Planning under urban entrepreneurialism
Figure 11: Master plan divisions of Nanxian.
An urban explosion, where is the fastest growing area? 

globalising mega-cities → peri-urban / suburban areas

The expansion of the built-up area in the Yangtze River delta

Source: Qiu Baoxing presentation in 2007
主办：中国城市规划学会
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## Planning during market transition: adaptation and reorientation in post-reform China

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<td>Branding the place, enhancing economic competitiveness, and serving investment</td>
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<td>Vision of political elites and the professionals, purchased consultant services</td>
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<td>Functionality of planning</td>
<td>Production of internal government documents, development guidelines, coordination among different economic sectors</td>
<td>Production of external statement, slogans, policy recommendations, convincing investors, coordinating lower governments such as districts and suburban counties, justification for exceeding national standards</td>
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“The role of planners is to lobby the government and sell professional knowledge to those cities that wish to adopt its advice; the purpose is to help the client ‘defeat’ other city competitors. This is now the new professional ethics of planners.” (Zhao Yanjing, 2013, director of Xiamen Planning Bureau)

Market-technocratic rationality and inter-referencing
Planning for the market?

Planning for growth is not equivalent to planning for the market.
The future of planning:
go beyond market-technocratic rationality,
think the politics of development
planning for social justice
Professor Sir Peter Hall