

Cross-border Urban Growth: the Case of Jiangyin Economic Development Zone in Jingjiang*

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Abstract

In recent years, some cities or towns in the Yangtze River Delta region have used-up their own resources. Thus joint industrial development zones have emerged between cities or towns. Cross-border urban growth is characterized by the transfer of local administrative power of a development zone from one city's government to another. It is an innovation of intercity cooperation in response to the increasing urban competition in the world. From governance perspective, cross-border urban growth involves a number of actors and intense interaction between them.

This paper chooses Jiangyin Economic Development Zone in Jingjiang (JZJ) as a case study. The basic concept of urban growth coalition theory is applied in this case study. Four categories of actors (local governments at various levels, business sectors, local media and rural communities) are identified and their interactions in the coalition building are analyzed in detail in this study. It is found that a state-big business coalition dominates Chinese urban growth in the context of industrial zone construction. The case of cross-border urban growth highlights the intense interaction between governments at various levels. The active role of county-level governments and the steering role of the provincial level government reflect the persistent power structure and peculiar administrative hierarchy in the transitional China.

* This paper was presented to the 15th Biennial Conference on the Asian Studies Association of Australia in Canberra 29 June-2 July 2004. It has been peer-reviewed and appears on the Conference Proceedings website by permission of the authors who retain copyright. The paper may be downloaded for fair use under the Copyright Act (1954), its later amendments and other relevant legislation. The paper is based on research funded by Urban China Research Network, USA and Postgraduate Research Studentship of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (2002/03-2004/05), Hong Kong.

1. Introduction

Since the launch of economic reforms in the late 1970s, some coastal regions and cities have undergone dramatic economic growth, becoming the most urbanized and developed areas in China. In recent years, in some cities or towns in the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) region, there are increasing demand and pressure on various resources such as land, ports, river bank due to rapid industrial and urban growth. These areas are forced to seek alternatives in their less developed neighboring cities or towns to meet development needs. As a result, new phenomena of cross-border urban growth, characterized by a transfer of local states' administrative power from one city to another across the city boundary, have emerged in the YRD region. Such cross-border urban growth takes place between cities at different administration levels, such as pro-provincial city Hangzhou and county level city Haining, county level city Jiangyin and Jingjiang, Nanzhan town and Meicun town in Wuxi city.

In our views, there are two patterns of cross-border urban growth in YRD region. The first is a semi-market pattern symbolized by cross-border urban growth between Hangzhou and Haining. In 2002, Hangzhou Municipal Government purchased a piece of land, 200 ha., from its neighboring city Haining at the price of RMB 0.9 millions per ha. In this case, Hangzhou Municipal Government obtained not only the rights of land development and land use from Haining, but also the administrative powers of the area. All benefits generated from the land development would belong to Hangzhou Municipal Government. On the other hand, Haining Municipal Government would still keep some administrative powers, such as industry and business registration and levying local revenue generated (The 21st Century Reports, Jan. 2, 2003).

The second is a cooperation pattern represented by Jingjiang and Jiangyin, Jiangyin and Suining. Although this pattern does not involve land transaction that was the case in the cross-border growth of Hangzhou, it usually involves the transfer of administrative power between cities. The case of Jiangyin and Jingjiang is representative of this cooperation pattern.

The cross-border case in this study refers to inter-jurisdiction relationships within a country rather than between national boundaries. Cross-border developments between countries have been the focus of many studies (Perkmann & Sum, 2002). Even in the cross-border case within a country, the internal border still have many important implications for local governments, enterprises and residents especially in China where the power decentralization, market fragmentation, inter-city competition and control on migration prevail (Shen, 2004).

Study on such cross-border urban growth and politics not only is helpful for government to formulate appropriate policies to promote cross-border urban growth in those cities, but also provides useful experiences for other similar cities. In addition, the empirical study based on Chinese cities will further deepen understanding of Chinese urban growth coalition. At the same time, urban growth machine and urban regime theories may be extended to the case of cross-border urban growth. The study on the cross-border urban growth in China may contribute to the growth coalition theory in the context of accelerated globalization.

Under the framework of urban growth coalition theory, this research attempts to explore urban growth coalition and cross-border growth politics in China by tracing the formation process of Jiangyin Economic Development Zone (JEDZ) in Jingjiang (JZJ) in details. After analyzing actors' interaction in the urban growth, this paper argues that a business-government coalition is emerging in urban China while acknowledging the difference between China's urban growth coalition and its western counterparts.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. After briefly discussing the relevance of urban growth coalition in Chinese context, the study area is introduced. Then the construction process of JZJ and the formation of growth coalition are analyzed, assuming that a growth coalition composed of three broad sectors, local governments at various levels, business sector and local media. Meanwhile, the negative impact of the growth coalition on peasants is also addressed. Main findings and theoretical implications are discussed and summarized in the final section.

2. The Relevance of Urban Growth Coalition in Chinese Context

In the study of urban economic development and the role of various actors, two most influential perspectives are urban growth machine and urban regime theory that have been developed mainly in the context of American urban development. They have considerable impact on the study of urban growth politics. Although some analysts argued that these two theories are quite different from each other in terms of leading role played by political or economic actors in a given coalition (Rosentraub & Helmke, 1996), some scholars, such as Logan et al. (1997), see them 'more similarities than differences'. In our view, these two theories are closed related, as urban growth machine emphasizes that urban development is driven by a pro-growth coalition that underlines one kind of urban regimes in urban regime theory. In a pro-growth coalition, political or economic elites play leading roles.

After the introduction of economic reforms and open door over more than two decades, the dynamics of urban growth in China is becoming close to that found in some developed countries, making it feasible to apply growth coalition theory to urban China (T. Zhang, 2002; Zhu, 1999). Firstly, the triple processes of globalization, marketization and decentralization have generated considerable impacts on China's urban restructuring (Wei, 2001; Wei and Li, 2002; Shen, 2004). In the pre-reform era, the central government played monopolistic roles in all aspects of society, economy and politics. The central planned economy was a unique redistributive mechanism. However, in the post-reform period, due to the process of decentralization, many powers have been transferred to local governments that gain more and more autonomous power. Marketization not only pushes state owned enterprises (SOEs) to reform, but also creates good climate for non-SOE sectors, such as township and village enterprises (TVEs) and private businesses. The influences of these non-SOE sectors on urban development are increasing. With the accelerating of globalization, FDI is also playing an important role in the urban development of some coastal and developed regions in China.

Secondly, the development state in transitional China is a 'growth machine phenomenon' (Zhu, 1999). Under Maoist China, class struggle and ideological battles were at the heart of politics and economy, while a development-oriented strategy has been adopted by Chinese governments at various levels in the post-Mao era. The socialist political state has given way to an economic development-centered state, which are clearly demonstrated by notions of local governments as industrial firms (Walder, 1995), local state corporatism (Oi, 1992) or entrepreneurial cities (Wang, 1996; Shen, 2001) at local level. It is clear that the transition in China and shifting from state socialism to development state have incubated an urban development context that is similar to the counterpart in U.S. It is in this sense that growth coalition theory is applicable to Chinese context.

The role of city government in Chinese urban development has been extensively documented for the last twenty years. Some argue that local governments are ineffective in terms of urban development control (Ng & Xu, 2000; Zhu, 2003; 2004). Others turn their focuses to China's changing urban governance (Shen, 2001; 2004). From the perspective of urban growth politics, the studies by Zhu (1999) and Zhang (2002) represent an initial step in recognizing China's urban growth coalition. Despite different perspectives, one on urban land reform (Zhu, 1999) and the other on decentralization and destatization (T. Zhang, 2002), their studies on urban growth coalition emphasize the leading roles of local state in the coalition. These initial studies contributed to the understanding of urban growth politics in China. Their studies focused on two most advanced cities of Shanghai and Shenzhen. Whether the same process of coalition building

is taking place in less powerful and developing county-level cities remains unanswered. Thus much research is still needed on urban growth politics in less powerful developing cities especially the inter-governments relationship in a cross-border coalition. Under the existing power structure and administrative hierarchy, governments at different levels are expected to play different roles. In this sense, the empirical study on Jiangyin Economic Development Zone in Jingjiang would be helpful to enhance our understanding of China's urban growth coalition.

3. The Study Area and Research Method

Jiangyin and Jingjiang are two county-level cities located in the south and north of Yangtze River respectively. They are under the administration of two prefecture-level cities of Wuxi and Taizhou respectively in Jiangsu province. Jiangyin has a higher development level than Jingjiang. The JEDZ in Jiangyin was named as a provincial level economic development zone by Jiangsu province government in 1993. Due to its rapid economic development since 1999, it was granted the same administrative power as national level economic development zones by the provincial government in 2002. Before the launching of JZJ, JEDZ consists of 8 sub-zones such as High-tech Zone, Logistics Zone, Shizhuang Zone, Xiangang Zone, Huangtu zone. Each sub-zone has a similar status of JZJ but all are within the Jiangyin city. The interesting case of JZJ is that JZJ is located in Jiangjiang city but is administrated by JEDZ that is in Jiangyin city.

JZJ is located in the southern part of Jingjiang city and lies to the north of Yangtze River and the west of Jiangyin Bridge of Yangtze River (figure 1). It has a planned area of 60 km². The area had a population of 53376 in 15754 households in 2003. There are two designated towns, Dongxing and Bawei, consisting of 21 administrative villages (*xingzheng cun*) and 3 resident committees. There are 18 enterprises in the area. The River bank in JZJ is 11.1km long with water depth up to -13m. Currently, only 4.3 km of the bank is utilized and 6.8 km is available for further development. The first phase of JZJ covers an area of 8.6 km² with 6 administrative villages and a rural population of 14843 in 4697 rural households.

In the study of urban growth coalition, many researchers have focused on four actors including the local business community, the local state, the national government and the national business community (Broadbent, 1989). They are conceived as dominant actors in urban growth politics. However, others argue that other actors such as civil movements and media are also crucial in the formation of coalition (Kabashima & Broadbent, 1986; Molotch, 1976). Thus it is essential to incorporate them in the analysis of a growth coalition dynamics. In order to provide a panorama of power dynamics, this study focuses on four main categories of actors involving in

the process of cross-border urban growth including local governments at various levels, business sectors, local media and peasants due to the specific context of this case. The first three actors are the main players in the growth coalition in JZJ while the peasants are affected negatively by the growth coalition.

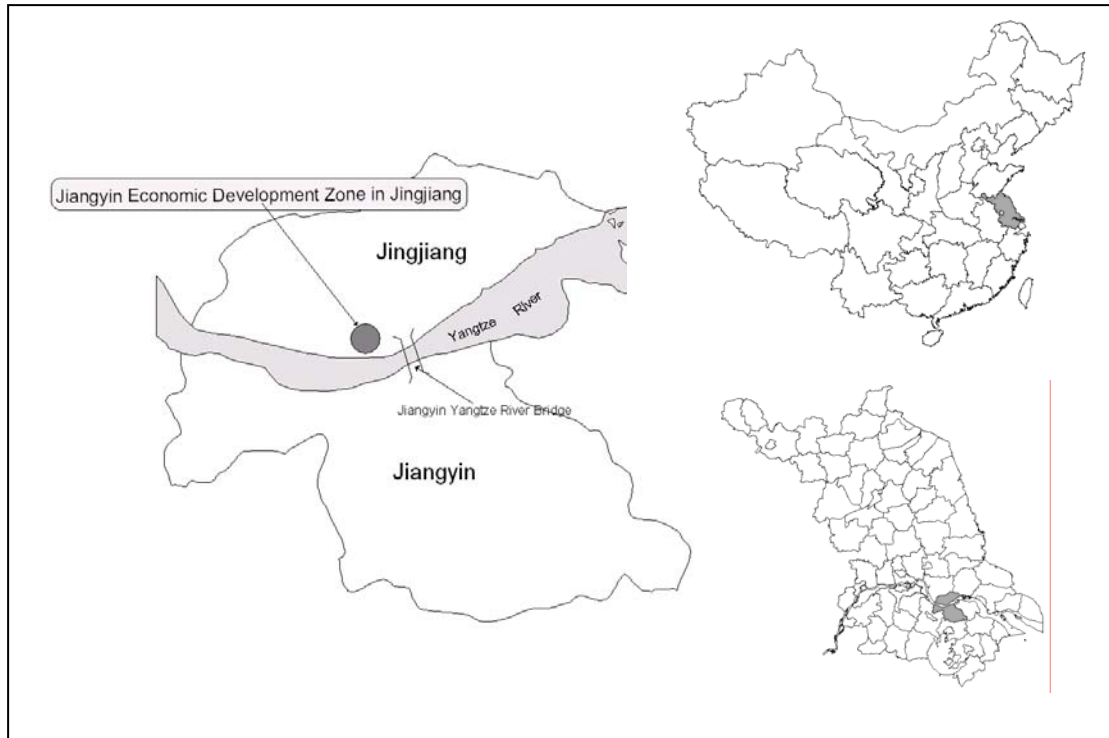


Figure 1 The location of Jiangyin Economic Development Zone in Jingjiang

In order to reveal the formation of JZJ and its effects, initial attention will focus on the start-up area of JZJ in the first phase. Questionnaire survey and interviews, mainly targeting businessmen and peasants, have been conducted in the start-up area. Other local officials of two cities involved in the JZJ are also interviewed. Much information is also collected about the area through the fieldwork.

As part of this study, fieldwork was conducted in Jingjiang and Jiangyin in Jiangsu province in China in August 2003 and June 2004, including over 50 interviews and a study of 443 rural households affected by the intensive economic and land expropriation of JZJ. Among these, there were 20 rural households in 6 villages covered by the first phase of JZJ whose houses were cleared for industrial development. In addition to interviewing key local officials and businessmen who are involved in JZJ, peasants were also interviewed to get additional information for the case study. In addition, newspapers, government documents, and provincial census and other statistical data are collected.

4. The Formation of Urban Growth Coalition of JZJ

To understand the trajectory of JZJ's growth coalition formation, this section will examine the need for and origin of cooperation, activities of political elite and business elite in the process.

4.1 The Need for and Origin of Cooperation

The cooperation between Jingjiang and Jiangyin for the River-side area development has a good social, economic, and cultural foundation and wonderful possibilities. Two cities have many historical and cultural links. As Jingjiang was once under the jurisdiction of Changzhou, currently a prefecture level city in southern Jiangsu, in Ming dynasty, it is much influenced by the culture of southern Jiangsu. In addition, with convenient transportation by ferries and the Jiangyin Bridge, Jiangyin and Jingjiang have established close economical and social relations.

Indeed, the cooperation for the River-side area development was initiated from the cooperation and conflicts of some local enterprises rather than government officials. Since the construction of Jiangyin Bridge of Yangtze River in 1999, the cooperation of enterprises from two cities has been greatly enhanced. Some new industries in Jingjiang are due to transfer and investment from Jiangyin, such as Hailan Group and Shuangliang Group. Mainly due to infrastructure improvement, the available River bank in Jingjiang, and the lower production cost in Jingjiang (table 1), investment from Jiangyin to Jingjiang has increased greatly in recent years.

These cross-border activities of enterprises inevitably resulted in the involvement of local governments as local governments not only have to fight for their own interests such as the power for approving projects, levying administration fees and taxation for local revenues, but also, in many cases, have to tackle problems faced by cross-border enterprises as service providers. For example, a cross-border enterprise registered in Jiangyin city submits its administration fee to Jiangyin government according to the regulation of business registration. However, it actually uses services provided by Jingjiang government. This inevitably results in Jingjiang's complaints. For another example, an enterprise from Jiangyin acquiring a piece of land in Jingjiang for development may pose negative impact on their neighbors. Such contradiction cannot be solved by one single government.

Some unpredictable conflicts have also emerged between the enterprises in two cities. For example, the scrapheap of a coal-fired power plant in Jiangyin located at the riverside was flushed by water into the river and generated adverse impacts on the businesses in Jingjiang on

the other side of the River. In this case, the enterprises concerned had to seek help from their respective governments that acted as coordinators.

To solve the conflicts among businesses and governments and to improve their investment environment, the officials of two cities need to cooperate. Thus it is clear that intercity cooperation caused by the cross-border investment and business conflicts in the first instance. Then the governments are also involved to act as coordinators and facilitators. This is also confirmed by the interviews with local government officials.¹ The interaction among various actors, including local governments at various levels, business sector, local media and others, leads to the formation of a cross-border urban growth coalition. The following analysis will focus on actors' interactions.

Table 1 Production costs in Jingjiang and Jiangyin

Item	Jingjiang		Jiangyin
Land price	Investment (US\$ million)	Land price (RMB/m ²)	140-150 (RMB / m ²)
	10 or more	free	
	6 -10	45	
	1-6	90	
	0.5-1	120	
	Less than 0.5	150	
Administration fee	Exempting first five years that making profit; and 50% off for the following three years (<i>wu mian san jian ban</i>)		Information not available
Profit tax of production enterprises	Exempting first five years that making profit; and 50% off for the following five years (<i>wu mian wu jian ban</i>)		Exempting first two years that making profit; and 50% off for the following eight years (<i>liang mian ba jian ban</i>)
Average salary of a manufacturing worker (RMB/month)	460		600-800
Water price (RMB/m ³)	1.50		1.22
Electricity price (RMB/Kw.h)	0.24-0.47		0.50-0.66

Sources: Investment Guide of Jingjiang Economic Development Zone, 2003 and Investment Guide of Jiangyin Economic Development Zone, 2003.

4.2 Interaction among Local Governments

¹ China Interview 06080302.

The process of coalition formation could be divided into three stages in the following. Detailed analysis of this process helps to identify the roles and interactions of various local governments.

4. 2. 1 FERAD and the Port-based Corporation

The launch of FERAD represents the first stage in the formation of growth coalition. FERAD stands for the “Forum for the Enhancement of Jiangyin-Jingjiang River-side Area Development”. It was initiated by the local leaderships of the two cities on 15th December, 2001 as a new mechanism to effectively eliminate or alleviate the conflicts mentioned above. The forum is a regular meeting to be held twice a year hosted by two cities alternately. In the first meeting of the forum, the top officials of two cities shared the consensus that enhancement of cooperation and association is essential for the prosperity of both cities. Some general ideas for cooperation were generated based on this consensus. These include regular information exchange to enhance cooperation and communication of towns and enterprises in both cities; jointly developing the River bank; and coordinating the plans for River-side development of two cities. As mentioned before, the cooperation and conflicts among local businesses necessitated the establishment of FERAD. The launch of FERAD symbolizes formal participation of local government in the cooperation of two cities.

After the first meeting of FERAD, two major projects were carried out by the governments. One is the exchange plan for local officials. The other is the cooperation of ports in two cities. The port cooperation is an important and substantive cooperation between the two cities. Jiangyin Port is a first-class national open port (guojia yilei kaifang kouan) designated by the State Council. It enjoys preferential policies and government services such as custom, export and import’s inspection and quarantine. It is also supported by special service institutions such as foreign ships agencies and supply center for foreign ships. On the other hand, as a local port, Jingjiang Port does not enjoy above favorable policies and institutions. In view of the differences between two ports, the second meeting of FERAD held in April 2002 focused on port-based cooperation. An agreement was reached that Jingjiang Port will be incorporated into the system of Jiangyin Port as a sub-port to gain access to facilities and special policies of Jiangyin Port. In this case, Jingjiang city gains many benefits while Jiangyin city does not have any significant loss. The win-win situation provides a good start for other operations.

At this point, the provincial government began to be involved in the inter-city cooperation. The port-based cooperation attracted the attention of Liangyu Hui (currently a vice Premier of the State Council), who was then the secretary of the Committee of CCP (Chinese

Communist Party) of Jiangsu province (JCCP). He encouraged that *'the port-based cooperationis a good try..... Our provincial government and related departments should give their green lights and supports (Taizhou Daily, Aug. 30, 2003).'* Given the support of the provincial party secretary, the provincial government began to participate in the cooperation between Jingjiang and Jiangyin enthusiastically. Several departments of the provincial government held a joint meeting on the spot to deal with various matters concerned with port cooperation.

4. 2. 2 Local Governments' Working Groups on the Construction of JZJ

The formation of working groups on JZJ represents the second stage in the formation of growth coalition. Although the port-based cooperation was successful and gained support from the secretary of JCCP, the cooperation remain focused mainly on the issues arising from businesses' cooperation and conflicts. It is difficult to achieve cooperation in other areas largely due to the limitation of different jurisdictions. Fortunately, the cross-border experiences of Hangzhou and Haining brought insights to Jingjiang-Jiangyin cooperation. The local leaders recognized the importance of breaking down the administrative barriers in deepening their cooperation.

One major step was taken in another meeting of FERAD on 18 Aug. 2002. The leaders of two cities declared to jointly launch a development zone in Jingjiang under the administration of Jiangyin Economic Development Zone, i.e., constructing JZJ in a most innovative way. Various issues such as the location and JZJ planning was also discussed and negotiated preliminary in the forum. Initially, a site to the east of the Bridge was chosen for JZJ. But there are no roads and other infrastructures in this site. Mr. Weicheng Wang, the secretary of the Committee of CCP of Jiangyin, therefore, suggested that JZJ should be located to the west of the Bridge in close proximity to roads, Jingjiang city proper and the River, in addition to good infrastructure. As Jingjiang government had a strong desire to drive its economic development, it conceded the land use right of this land parcel to Jiangyin city. But the area of the land was reduced to 2 km².

In the subsequent months, however, there was no rapid progress in the construction of JZJ. Then, Mr. Yuanchao Li, the new party secretary of Jiangsu, made an inspection visit to Jingjiang and Jiangyin and highly praised the innovation of JZJ on 29 January 2003. He also proposed a new regional development strategy of Jiangsu province focusing the River-side region development. The strategy emphasizes the construction of industrial zones along the Yangtze River, aiming to promote economic development of southern Jiangsu and middle Jiangsu, and

² China Interview 07080302.

eventually northern Jiangsu. With Mr. Li's strong support, the pace of JZJ development speeded up. Thus some local officials maintained that JZJ was actually stimulated by provincial government, especially the provincial leaders, rather than local governments of two cities³. Although this notion did not reveal the whole situation of JZJ, the visit by the new provincial CCP secretary mentioned above did show some evidences.

It is after Li's inspection visit that the officials of prefecture-level cities of Wuxi and Taizhou met for the first time in Jingjiang to discuss the case of JZJ and gave their explicit approvals to Jingjiang and Jiangyin. Since then the frequency of contact between Jingjiang and Jiangyin governments for JZJ has increased. The two city governments made an *agreement on the construction of JZJ* on 15 February 2003. The agreement not only laid down the principles of cooperation such as market-oriented cooperation and achieving win-win situation, but also enlarged the area of JZJ from 2 km² to 60 km². The agreement also stipulated various issues concerned in details (table 2).

Table 2 Agreement between Jingjiang and Jiangyin regarding JZJ

Item	Jingjiang Municipal Government	Jiangyin Municipal Government
JZJ Management	Provide infrastructure and services from outside to the zone, such as roads, energy and water supply, communication network, etc.	Responsible for social affairs and administration in the zone
Investment	Establish investment corporation and contribute 10% of the principal	Establish investment corporation and contribute 90% of the principal
Promises	No local administration fee will be collected as Jiangyin is in charge of administration.	Encourage Jiangyin's manufacturing enterprises and finance companies to invest in the zone
Project Management (proposal and approval, etc)	Report directly to provincial government without the need for any approvals from the county-level cities and prefecture-level cities	
Statistical data collection	Double counting, count JZJ's social and economic statistics in both two cities	
Revenue distribution	Not distribution of revenue in the first 10 years and another agreement about the distribution to be made after 10 years	

Source: Based on Jiangyin Municipal Government document No. 2003 (62).

³ China Interview 07080305; China Interview 07080301 and others.

According to table 2, it is clear that Jingjiang government concedes many administrative powers and interests to Jiangyin government largely due to its strong development intentions, which pave the way for successful cooperation. In a meeting of FERAD, the leaders of Jingjiang were confident that JZJ would generate great benefits, when Jiangyin's industries made investment in JZJ. Depending on the construction of JZJ, Jingjiang will make rapid progress in its strategy of urban development towards south⁴. As Mr. Jinhua Qian, a vice mayor of Jingjiang and an important figure in the formation of JZJ, said,

“..... we (Jingjiang) do not demand any benefits from JZJ, but the existence of JZJ is enough for us (bu qiu suoyou, dan qiu suozai). The construction of JZJ could improve our city's competitiveness, speeding up the pace of urban growth towards the south and the River-side area. Ultimately, it will bring long-term development to Jingjiang (JJTV, 13 Aug. 2003).”

After this FERAD, each city government forms a working group for the construction of JZJ. This represents another major progress of the growth coalition. The working group in Jingjiang is named as the coordinating working group, functioning as a coordinator and a provider for services outside JZJ, while that in Jiangyin is named as construction working group, committing Urban Planning Institute of Tongji University to formulate a plan for JZJ. After setting up the working groups, more efforts have been made to improve the infrastructure and services, such as constructing a power plant and a sewage treatment works by Jingjiang, establishing the JZJ Agency of Jiangyin Maritime Safety Administration by Jiangyin.

4. 2. 3 PCDYRR and the Administrative Committee of JZJ

The launch of PCDYRR (Jiangsu Province Conference on developing Yangtze River-side Region) and the Administrative Committee of JZJ represent the third stage of the formation of growth coalition. The provincial governor and the secretary of JCCP made inspection visit to Jingjiang and Jiangyin in May and June 2003 respectively. They urged the local governments to accelerate the construction of JZJ, so as to set a model of the River-side region development. Their experiences could be introduced to other cities along the River on the coming PCDYRR to be held in Taizhou on 25 June 2003.

As a model of the River-side region development, JZJ was backed up by the provincial government not only in terms of preferential policies, but also financially. The provincial government revised the plan for the northern River-side Highway so that it passes through JZJ. It

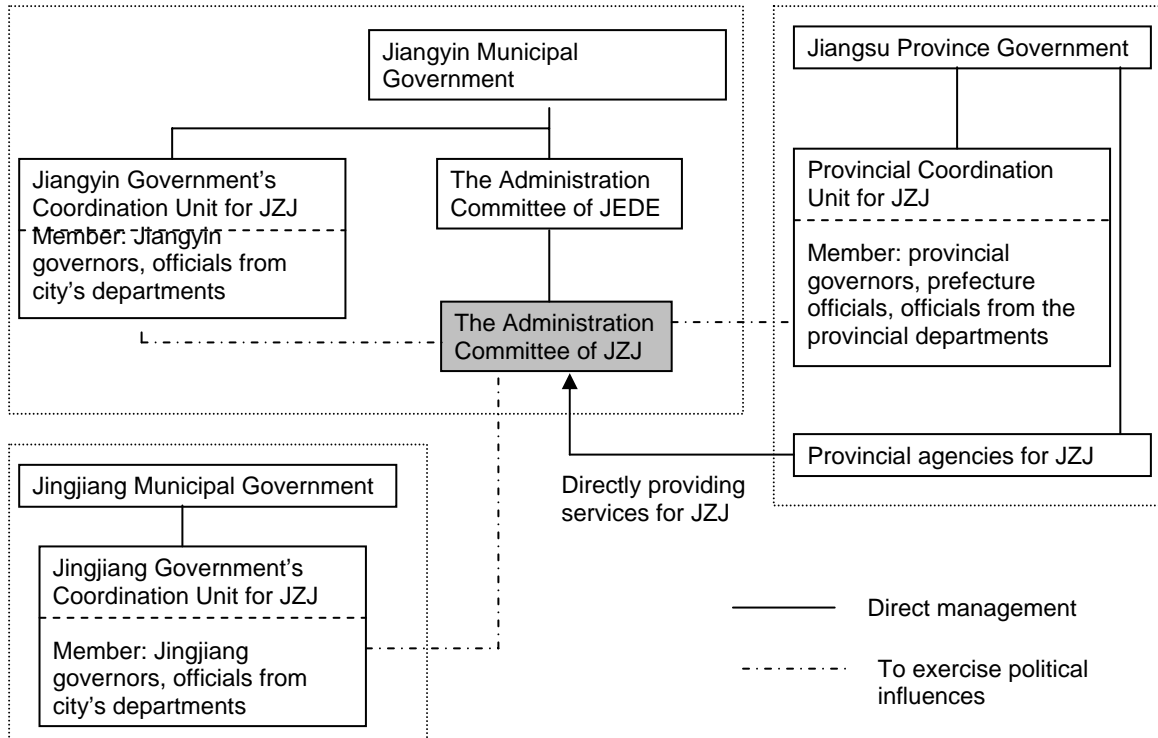
⁴ China Interview 07080302.

also helped to organize the opening ceremony of the project in JZJ, with the attendance of the JCCP secretary and the provincial governor. The provincial government also provided a loan for the 5 km-long highway in JZJ. Finally, it also made a compensation of RMB 3 million per km for the highway construction, RMB 54 million in total (JJTB, 2003).

PCDYRR was a high-level provincial conference attended by the provincial governors, all local leaders of the River-side cities ranging from prefecture-level to county/district-level. Eventually, PCDYRR became a herald of the provincial strategy of developing the River-side region and share experiences of Jingjiang-Jiangyin. As Mr. Dingzhi Jiang, the executive provincial governor, requested in the conference,

“.....like Jiangyin and Jingjiang, river-side cities must establish their own working groups on developing the River-side region, formulating their developmental objectives and taking concrete measures. (in addition) the departments provincial government must provide more services, less intervention, more encouragement, less criticism to JZJ as well as other River-side cities.....”

It is clear that the construction progress was speeded up when JZJ fits into the higher level officials' intention—the provincial strategy of developing the River-side region. After the PCDYRR, the leaders from Jingjiang and Jiangyin met again to formulate detailed operational regulations of JZJ. At the meantime, they also proposed several favorable policies on project approval and land use, many of which have been supported and approved by the provincial government subsequently. In August 2003, the administration committee of JZJ was formally established to take charge of the construction and the provision of services and management. The committee is under the umbrella of the administration of JEDE and consists of a director and three vice directors. To affirm the decisive role of Jiangyin government in JZJ, most officials of JZJ come from Jiangyin except a vice director from Jingjiang who, however, only plays the role of a coordinator to liaise with two governments for unexpected problems. In addition, the working groups of Jingjiang and of Jiangyin remain to help tackling those momentous issues faced by JZJ, especially cross-border issues. Furthermore, at the provincial level, a coordination unit for JZJ was also established with members from provincial and prefecture-level governments. Finally, under the instruction of the provincial leaders, the Industrial and Commercial Management Department and Land Administration Department of the province set up offices in JZJ. Figure 2 shows the governance structure of JZJ that involves various governments.



Source: Drawn by the authors according to Jiangyin municipal government's document No.2003 (62).

Figure 2 The governance structure of JZJ, 2003.

4. 2. 4 Prefecture-level governments and town governments in the coalition building

Previous analysis shows the important role of city governments and provincial governments in the development of JZJ. The leading and supporting roles of the provincial leaders are outstanding. This is important for such innovative JZJ project under the existing political and power structure in transitional China. On the other hand, according to in-depth interviews with local officials, the prefecture level governments and town governments play passive roles in the formation of the growth coalition, different from the roles of the provincial and county-level city governments. The prefecture level and town governments have been weakened and their administrative power has been transferred or reduced to a certain degree. As a result, they are losers in the process of coalition building in JZJ.

However, the governments of prefecture-level cities are subordinated to the provincial government and the political careers of prefecture level officials are decided, to a large extent, by officials of the higher-level provincial government. This usually means that the prefecture level officials would have to support JZJ strongly to show that they are following the policy directions of the provincial government. Thus the officials of prefecture level governments are in a

dilemma, either to challenge the views of high-level officials for the interest of their own areas or to remain silent to gain personal advantage for their political career. In practice, the later is usually conceived as a wise political choice. A vice secretary-general of the Office of Taizhou government said, “Although many departments of the city government have lost a lot of administrative power in JZJ, we have to obey the decisions made by the provincial government.”⁵ Same situation also occurs in county-level cities. An interviewee revealed that, “the provincial government entitled us (Jiangyin and Jingjiang cities) many preferential policies and administrative powers. However, we still need to seek approval from the governments of prefecture cities for projects that can be approved by ourselves occasionally. By doing so we can pay respect to governments of prefecture cities and to avoid trouble.”⁶

The town governments are at the lowest level of the administration hierarchy. They have the least power on JZJ matters although it is located in their towns. They are not sure about their legal position that depended on the decision of Jingjiang government out of their control⁷. Like the prefecture governments mentioned above, town governments also have to obey their political bosses.

4.3 Local Government and Businesses Sectors

The strategy of the River-side region development as well as the construction of JZJ has significantly stimulated Jingjiang’s economic development. The actually used foreign investment, domestic investment attracted and fiscal revenue in the period of January to May 2003 were 778.9%, 63.8% and 37.1% higher than those of the same period of the previous year respectively. They reached new peaks in recent years. By the time of the fieldwork, eight companies had been established in JZJ. At the opening ceremony of JZJ, six companies signed their investment contracts with total investment reaching over US\$ 600 million. To uncover the role of business sector in the growth coalition building, 6 businesses were selected for in-depth interviews with their managers. The interviews focused mainly on the reasons of investment in JZJ, local governments’ service provision and the business development plan. Since it is not necessary and possible to depict all interviews one by one, several representative interviews are selected that as evidence to sketch out the position of the business sector in Chinese urban growth coalition. The selected cases represent two typical types of enterprises, namely newly-established companies (A

⁵ China Interview 26080301.

⁶ China Interview 07080305.

⁷ China Interview 08080306.

Da Ni Shipbuilding Co., Ltd.) and existing industries that expanded after the launch of JZJ (Jiangsu Changbo Ship Engineering Co. Ltd.).

A Da Ni Shipbuilding Co., Ltd. (ADN), a joint venture by Jiangsu Sumeida Shipbuilding Company and A Da Ni company from Singapore, is one of the earliest companies established in JZJ after its launch. The total investment of the company was US\$ 8.16 million. Regarding the reasons for locating in JZJ, Ms. Hu, the general manager, summarized three driving forces in Chinese old-saying: Good macro-policy context (*Tianshi*), a favorable location (*Dili*) and support from local officials with developmental consciousness (*Renhe*). She further elaborated that,

*“Tianshi, dili and renhe have fostered a favorable investment climate in JZJ. Firstly, tianshi refers to preferential policies that facilitate investors for business development. Currently, the consensus on the River-side region development strategy by the provincial government and the city governments of Jiangyin and Jingjiang, as well as many special attractive policies for private investment have created a good investment environment. Secondly, dili is also an important factor in attracting investment, referring not only to favorable locations, but also good condition of infrastructure. Last but not the least, renhe, supportive local officials keen in development and service provision, is another factor in attracting investment in Jingjiang. For example, in order to levy more tax from the company that is a major tax contributor, the planning department of the local government revised its urban plan to meet the company’s development needs under the pressure of the mayor. A large plot of land designated as public-green space in the original urban plan was reclassified as heavy industrial land. Certainly, it is worth noting that the above three factors are not independent. They are interrelated and jointly affect investors’ decision-making.”*⁸

It should be pointed out that many businessmen in JZJ⁹ and elsewhere (Wei, 2002) share similar views with Ms. Hu.

The case of land acquisition of ADN is a good example. Local officials from various government departments held a meeting on the spot, and authorized ADN to use 20 ha. land with a river bank of 286 meters long. According to the land lease regulation of Jiangsu province, only 5.44 ha. of the leased land could enjoy a preferential price of RMB 450 thousand per ha., and the remaining area were priced at the land preparing cost of RMB 1.5 million per ha. to cover such

⁸ China Interview 11080301.

⁹ Interview with Mr. Lu Jianlin, the general manager of Jiangsu Zhongran Oil Store and Transporting Co. LTD by JJTV on Aug. 13 2003

costs as farmland compensation and replacement costs. Considering the possible rapid increase of land price in JZJ with the participation of Jiangyin, ADN acquired more land than its actual needs. The manager of ADN firmly decided to expand its operation.

Jiangsu Changbo Ship Engineering Co. LTD (CSE), a private enterprise, is an existing company that expanded after the launch of JZJ. CSE acquired a piece of land over 13 ha. adjacent to the River to develop a warehouse although its headquarter was located in Jiangyin at that time. In August 2002, it moved and registered headquarter to JZJ. There are three major determinants underlying the manager's decision-making on this important matter. First, in order to broaden its tax base, the mayor of Jingjiang lobbied the company to change its registration from Jiangyin to Jingjiang in 2001 by offering attractive investment incentives to CSE, such as tax deduction and land use. Secondly, active participation of the government of Jiangyin, a more developed city and the strong support of the provincial government was expected to improve governmental service provision and infrastructure condition in JZJ significantly. Finally, the gap in the provision of governmental services between the two cities was narrowed and Jingjiang's major local officials made great efforts to create an attractive environment for investment, regarding it a primary task. If Jingjiang government was still headed by the former 'ruffian' mayor¹⁰, CSE would not have selected JZJ for capital investment¹¹.

The manager of CSE, like the manager of ADN, also predicted that the cross-border development from Jiangyin city and the provincial government's active participation would, in no doubt, significantly drive up JZJ's land price. Therefore, despite the prevailing high land expropriation fee due to a great deal of clearance and resettlement, CSE still invested RMB 550 million to acquire a land plot of 200 ha. with river bank of 1500 meter long in JZJ to construct a logistic center to serve the whole industrial zone. It should be mentioned that the newly-built logistic centre of CSE pays tax to JZJ while the Ship Engineering Company of CSE still a tax payer of Jingjiang government. To be sure, this arrangement protects Jingjiang's existing interests, paving the way for the successful cross-border cooperation.

During the process of growth coalition formation, some property speculators, like their counterparts in advanced capitalist societies aiming to maximize benefits from land transactions, have emerged pushing up the land price. These activities on land speculation can be found on edges of JZJ. For example, Jingjiang government released two land plots (No. 2 and 3) planned as commercial and residential use for sale by public auction in June 2003. Suzhou Zhongtian Real

¹⁰ The former mayor of Jingjiang has been sentenced for defalcate, bribe and other crimes.

¹¹ China Interview 11080302.

Estate Company successfully purchased these land plots at the cost of RMB 169.2 million, 100 million higher than the base price. This created the historical highest land price (JJTV, 21 June 2003). Obviously, as a pet of local city governments, JZJ has become a magnet to not only manufacturing industries, but also property speculators. JZJ brings huge land revenue to the local government.

As dominant state ownership in socialist China has given way to diversified ownerships due to the rising importance of private-owned businesses and joint ventures, the economic controlling power of the state has been weakened considerable compared to the pre-reform era. The local state has many governance resources such as land use control and the power of policy-making while the business sector determines investment and production. To attract either foreign or domestic investment, the local state and business sector have forged an alliance to foster urban development by mobilizing their respective resources as bargaining chips. Taking land expropriation as an example, enterprises can acquire land at the lowest price that is regulated by the State Council. They have considerable freedom to build anything at anywhere they wish, generally speaking, sometimes even changing the urban plan with the support of government¹². The case of Qiaoli Company is a good example to illustrate the local government's concession to investors. To avoid the large cost of land expropriation caused by a large number of rural houses clearance, the company selected a large land plot with just 26 rural houses in JZJ. The local city government took less than one month to settle the land expropriation and housing clearance. Because of the forced land expropriation and clearance, severe conflicts have been induced between the local city governments and peasants, which will be discussed in the next section.

In the advanced capitalist societies, small business sector also exerts, to different degree, influence on coalition building (Broadbent, 1989). It is, thus, interesting to examine the role of small business sector in the formation of the growth coalition in JZJ. Through interviewing people in the Small Businessmen Association of Jingjiang (SBAJ) and a few small businessmen, it can be argued that, unlike those in the big business sector that play major role in urban growth coalition as discussed above, those in small business sector are passive actors. They are not the real actors in coalition building. This may be due to the fact that the local government controls the small business sector by taxation and registration management. The institution arrangement of SBAJ means that it is not independent. It is under the supervision of Jingjiang Industrial and Commercial Bureau (JICB,) and is chaired by the head of JICB. Only one of the two vice-chairmen of SBAJ comes from the small business sector.

¹² As discussed above, urban plan is sometimes changed under pressure of local leaders. For other related cases, see (Xu & Ng, 1998).

According to one interviewee in SBAJ, “Despite the fact that SBAJ is a nongovernmental organization, not belonging to the public sector, it functions as a good helper of local government by informing small businessmen about new policies and dealing with minor daily matters for JICB.”¹³ For this reason, SBAJ acted simply as a middleman to convey investment policies to small businessmen by organizing forums on JZJ and the River-side development strategy. According to small businessmen who were interviewed, as the JZJ-related policies have taken little account of their interests and local governments impose many restrictions, such as taxation and registration, on small business, they have to be cautious in investing in JZJ.

4.4 Local Government and Local Media

This section explores the relationship between the local government and local media and the role of media in the formation of growth coalition in JZJ. Unlike the media run mainly by private enterprises in capitalist societies, Chinese media are tightly controlled by the state and CCP from the central to local levels. Hence, media have become propaganda machinery of the state and CCP to large extent. In recent years, the control over the communication system by the state and CCP has been weakened (Smith, 2002), which is partly due to convert several official media organizations as companies and the establishment of new commercial media companies in China. But these media are still overseen by the state and CCP at various levels. In Jingjiang city, there are only three local media—Jingjiang TV, Jingjiang Daily and Jingjiang Web. It is noted that all of them are under dual track controls, the Committee of CCP of Jingjiang and Jingjiang municipal government. Although Jingjiang TV (JJTV), Jingjiang Daily, and the department of propaganda of CCP in the city belong to different administration systems, two vice secretaries of the local CCP department of propaganda were appointed as heads of JJTV and Jingjiang Daily respectively. It is clear that most media are controlled by the local CCP.

Since the early of 2002, the local party-state of Jingjiang has initiated massive propaganda campaign. Local media have been required to focus news on the River-side region development and JZJ, to keep tracking of the provincial strategy and serve local leaders in their policy-making on JZJ.

In order to promote JZJ, Jingjiang CCP’s Department of Propaganda launched a series of debates on *inspiring diligence and enhancing the River-side development* in April 2003. In addition, two local CCP newspapers (*dang bao*), Jingjiang Daily and Jiangyin Daily, cooperated to release a series of news report named *cooperating for the River-side region development* in

¹³ China Interview 07080304.

July 2003. In response to the speedy progress of JZJ, a series of news report, *golden river bank and the tide of development*, was released by the cooperative efforts of Jingjiang and Jiangyin newspapers in August 2003. The news reports covered the latest progress of JZJ and, the opinions of some local political figures as well as the successful economic development experiences of southern Jiangsu (*sunan*).

According to our analysis of the news reports by JJTV and Jingjiang Daily, news reports on the River-side region development, local economic development and other news related to economic development accounted for over 60% of local daily news from July to August 2003. Although there were reports on life of urban residents and peasants who benefited from local economic development, reports on the negative effects of economic development on those feeble groups were rare. During the interviews, some peasants, whose houses have been cleared or land have been occupied due to the construction of JZJ, said that local media often pick up their good words or just report lies to serve their purpose rather than report the true life of peasants.¹⁴ In brief, the local media are spokesmen of the local party-state. It is an inseparable arm of the local state in the growth coalition in JZJ. They have much closer relation with the government than the business sector.

5. Growth Coalition and Peasants: The Negative Effects of Growth Coalition

Compared with local governments, business sector especially those big businesses, and local media, peasants in JZJ can be seen as a feeble group and the recipients of the negative effects of growth coalition. This section examines the situation of those rural households in the first phase of JZJ, including 6 administrative villages with a population of 14843 in 4697 rural households. A questionnaire survey was conducted and 423 samples were obtained among all households including 20 respondents who lost their entire land with their houses cleared¹⁵. Apart from the questionnaire survey, interviews with village heads and villagers were also conducted as additional information. By analyzing the major concerns of peasants with regard to the formation of growth coalition such as living condition, job opportunities, house clearance and resettlement, the impacts of the growth coalition on peasants can be identified.

In the field survey, it is found the number of peasants engaged in non-agriculture sectors accounts for 33.5 percent of the total population in 423 rural households. The major income of

¹⁴ China Interview 15080301.

¹⁵ There were 26 rural households in the same situation. As some respondents were unwilling to answer the questionnaires or cannot be reached, the valid sample includes only 20 households.

most rural households is from non-agricultural activities. This can be further manifested by the cost and benefit of farming. Generally speaking, the annual cost of farming a paddy field is about RMB 500 per mu, including the cost for most inputs such as agriculture tax, pesticides, and fertilizers. However, in a harvest year, peasants can only slightly benefit from their farmland with an income of around RMB 650 per mu.. They will suffer a loss in their pockets in miserable years¹⁶. Farmland, therefore, is no longer a major source of income to peasants, and sometimes even a debt. Despite the burden of their farmland, they still have indispensable affection to their land. According to our survey, peasants' survival and living standards have been considerably impacted by land expropriation for JZJ. Over 50 percent of the respondents, whose farmland were either partially or not converted to industrial use, indicated that land loss had caused various negative effects or potential negative effects on their survival and living. All respondents who suffered complete land expropriation admitted the existence of enormous negative impact due to land loss. The importance of land to peasants lies in the fact that land is not only a basic resource for living, but also a type of social security when peasants have no access to the system of urban social security. Land loss led peasants into a state of bummers without three necessities (*san wu youmin*), meaning no farmland to farm, no job and no social security, to protect themselves.

Most importantly, peasants had little bargaining power in the expropriation of collective-owned land (Ho & Lin, 2003). The fixed land compensation was based on government's land regulation rather than market mechanism. This implies that peasants could not engage in speculative activities to gain benefits in China while peasants in the west could (Pacione, 2001). But the worst was the low compensation and the unreasonable means for distributing compensation. In JZJ, land compensation, including land subsidy, fee for labor force deployment and emblem damage, was at a low price of RMB 24000 per mu on average. Further, compensation was not directly distributed to rural households. Instead, it was managed by local government or enterprises that acquired land from the peasants. Peasants who lost land only would receive annual interests of the compensation, less than RMB 200 per household a year, from the local government or the enterprises. This unreasonable compensation arrangement resulted in not only living hardships for the peasants, but also many complaints and conflicts. Some interviewees revealed that peasants whose lands were lost formed several self-organized villager groups. Some intensive conflicts occurred between them and the local government as well as enterprises, similar to counter-coalitions in the urban growth (Pacione, 2001). Finally, it should be pointed out that land problems caused by land expropriation are not unique issues at

¹⁶ China Interview 16080301, China Interview 15080301 and others. One mu is equal to 0.067 ha..

JZJ. They are pervasive issues facing urban growth in all parts of China. According to the statistics of the State Administration of Land and Resources, the number of complaints about land issues accounted for 73 percent of all appeals registered with the government in the first half of 2002, of which 40 percent were related to land expropriation issues. As many as 87 percent of land expropriation issues were concerned about land compensation and displacement (Ying, 2003).

Apart from land issues, job opportunity is another concern for peasants. Lower education level and poor skills, as well as the discriminative employment policy against the peasants placed them into unfavorable positions in the job market. First, according to an official survey, skilled-worker accounted for 48 percent of over 2000 planned new recruits in 2003, while manufacturing jobs accounted for 14 percent. In addition, over 80 percent of jobs required employees to hold university qualifications and over 80 percent of occupations required that the age of employees was below 35¹⁷. However, according to our survey, the number of population aged 18 to 35 just accounted for 33 percent of the total and only 0.7 percent received higher education. Among all peasants aged 18-35, 13 percent were skilled workers. It would be extremely difficult for those unskilled elderly to find a job. On the other hand, employment regulation by Jingjiang Government restricted those peasants who lost land to seek non-agricultural jobs. The local government has implemented SOE reforms and those SOEs with poor performances have been closed. About 2000 to 3000 SOE workers are laid-off each year¹⁸. In order to avoid political instability, the highest priority of government's employment policy has been given to urban residents who have been laid-off. Therefore, peasants who do not have urban *hukou* (household registration) were excluded from the urban labor market and the system of social security. In short, the growth coalition has generated negative impacts on peasants, although we cannot deny that peasant would benefit from economic development in the long run.

Compared to land issues and job opportunities, house clearance and resettlement are also closely related to the effects of growth coalition. Because at the early stage of construction, there were just 26 households were affected by resettlement in JZJ, there were no mass clearance and displacement activities. According to the principle of cash compensation and housing replacement, houses were cleared and new flats for replacement were under construction. Because a slightly greater compensation level for house clearance, at RMB 200 to 250 per m²,

¹⁷ China interview 06080303, the interviewee is an official in Jingjiang Labor and Social Security Bureau.

¹⁸ Unemployment is a common issue faced by almost all Chinese cities, which is a result of urban and SOE reforms. Since the mid 1990s, labor supply has been much greater than labor demand in Chinese urban labor market (Cai, 2002). According to Taubmann's estimation (2003), half of urban labor forces were unemployed in 2001.

than the cost of house construction was adopted, most peasants preferred to accept the clearance and replacement agreements with the local government. Only several households that had newly-built and luxury houses did not accept the arrangement. Moreover, using apartment buildings to replace and clear peasants' houses can prevent the formation of urban villages (*Chengzhongcun*) (L. Zhang, Zhao, & Tian, 2003). Thus the peasants could not become landlords who can lease housing to gain benefit from urban growth in the area. Although there was no mass dissatisfaction with the compensation and replacement, there were sporadic resistances in the resettlement process due to unreasonable operations of the local government. In order to clear the land for Qiaoli Company quickly, the local government cleared peasants' houses by force before the new houses for replacement were completed for peasants. Rural households displaced have to lodge in friends or relatives' houses¹⁹. However, an official in charge of the housing replacement who was interviewed said that the local government had to carry out the replacement by force as peasants did not follow the resettlement agreements reached with the government previously²⁰. It is likely that there was misunderstand and distrust between the peasants and the governments. It is possible that the resettlement program of the government gave more consideration to the needs of investors rather than peasants. While court hearings are proper mechanism to deal with such conflicts, they are rarely used in China. It seems that there is a long way to nurture a highly civilized society that is ruled by the law.

6. Conclusions

Urban growth coalition is a broad concept developed in the western context. It has received scholarly attention in the study of urban China. Scholars argued that Chinese cities and western cities share similarities in the urbanization and urban growth process. Both Zhu (1999) and Zhang (2002) applied urban growth coalition theory to urban China, but they had different findings due to varying perspectives. Zhu (1999) argued that a local state-business coalition, especially between the local state and local SOEs, has emerged in the post-reform era. In such urban coalition, local governments mobilize their land resource to pursue economic returns and to protect SOEs from bankruptcy. On the other hand, after applying urban regime theory in a study of Shanghai, Zhang (2002) concluded that the western concept of urban regime works well with

¹⁹ China Interview 16080302.

²⁰ China Interview 08080305

the economic dimension but not the political dimension in China. Both studies found that local states play a predominant role in coalition building.

This paper is an empirical study of cross-border urban growth in JZJ from the perspective of urban growth coalition theory. The study tries to examine the relationship of local state and business sector in urban growth and development, as well as to gain more understanding of urban growth coalition and urban growth politics in China. Moreover, the case study on cross-border urban growth of this paper also contributes in extending the traditional urban growth coalition theory.

The paper has four main findings. First, the results of this study also support Zhu (1999) and Zhang's (2002) argument that local states play a predominant role in coalition building in China. However, through a detailed analysis of the interaction of various actors in JZJ, it is found that local government played different roles in various stages. At the initial stage of JZJ and land expropriation, local government was indeed a predominant actor as a sole land owner and policy maker. However, at the stage of construction and investment promotion, a local state-business coalition, led by local governments emerged. As investors and business sector had the market power to decide the destination of their investment, it is necessary for local governments to work with such investors through bargaining and offering of favorable policies.

Second, the local state-business coalition has successfully transferred their part of the growth cost to higher level governments. In this sense, there are similarities between urban growth coalition in China and its western counterparts. There are also differences between China's urban growth coalition and western counterparts. For example, the development consciousness and the mindset of local officials and lack of election-based politics have resulted in a very different process of coalition building in China. For example, local media play a role more as spokesmen of local governments than as voice of communities, further enhancing the dominant role of the local states in China.

Third, the JZJ case represents a new urban growth phenomenon, cross-border urban growth, that administrative power is transferred from one city government to another without a change in the city boundary. It is argued that the explanatory power of urban growth coalition is limited for the case of cross-border urban growth. Some new insights and experiences can be drawn from the case of JZJ for possible extension of the existing urban growth coalition theory. In the context of accelerated globalization, it is possible for different cities to mobilize their respective strong governance resources to forge cross-border urban growth and coalition among city governments. The coalition building of cross-border urban growth is a result of bargaining between different authorities. In this process, the greater concession made by one of the

participants may contribute to more successful cross-border urban growth and coalition formation. Furthermore, active involvement of governments at higher levels also significantly contributes to the successful formation of growth coalition. Last but not the least, as some authorities (for examples, prefecture governments and town governments in this study) are losers in the process of coalition building, they may tend to oppose or retard the formation of coalition, playing a passive role in most time. The active role of county-level governments and the steering role of the provincial level government reflect the persistent power structure and peculiar administrative hierarchy in the transitional China.

Fourth, the empirical study on JZJ found the existence of resistances of rural community against the growth coalition, although many studies argued that community power is a missing player in Chinese urban development (T. Zhang, 2002). As mentioned before, such anti-coalition like resistances are ubiquitous phenomena in Chinese urbanization. Peasants are a feeble group, recipients of the negative effects of growth and with few and restricted job opportunities. It is clear that anti-coalition (rural community and peasants) has strengthened in China because peasants are facing with unreasonable house clearance and replacement. Thus policy makers and academic community need to pay more attention to the issues of peasants in urban growth so that the urban growth coalition is not jeopardized.

The insights and experiences drawn from the case study of JZJ could shed light on other similar cases of cross-border urban growth. However, cross-border urban growth coalition is colored not only by its political and cultural institutions, but also by its cross-border pattern. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further case studies of cross-border urban growth taking place in China and elsewhere in order to enrich our understanding of these new phenomena in the globalizing world today.

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