

CHINA CROSSROADS

Monday, July 15th, 2024, 19:30 – 21:00

Which Chinese Cities Are Overbuilt? Insights from Urban Complexity Science

Huang Kangning

Assistant Professor of Environmental Science
NYU Shanghai

WhiteSpace | Jianing Building 5F | 500 Yanan Xi Lu
150rmb admission with drink | FREE for members
Scan to RSVP or email editor@shanghai-review.org



China's housing market bubble and staggering debt of local governments pose significant risks to economic stability. Cities with excessive housing and infrastructure development are particularly vulnerable, impacting both households and local governments. This talk examines whether overbuilt cities can be identified by simply comparing their housing and infrastructure per capita against national averages. My analyses using urban complexity science reveal that this approach is insufficient. Instead, I will introduce the "City Mass Index" – analogous to the Body Mass Index for individuals – as a novel metric to analyze and identify overbuilt cities in China. This innovative tool aims to provide a clearer understanding of the scale and implications of overbuilding, shedding light on urban development patterns and their environmental impacts across the country.

[Huang Kangning](#) is Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at NYU Shanghai. He received his PhD degree from Yale University, School of the Environment in 2020. Prior to joining NYU, he was an Advanced Study Program Postdoctoral Fellow at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. His research and teaching focus on the overarching question of: How does urbanization affect climate change? The urbanization-induced land cover changes affect the regional climate by altering the surface hydrometeorological processes, and the urbanization-induced life-style changes affect the global climate by increasing fossil energy consumption. However, the cross-scale impacts of urbanization on climate change are not constant; instead, these impacts depend on where and how we will build cities of the future. By developing global-scale urbanization scenarios, his research explores a broad range of possible urban climate futures and the interventions needed to achieve the more sustainable ones. His research has been funded by NASA, the NSF, and other sponsors.

[China Crossroads](#) hosts talks on all topics related to China, including business, foreign policy, and other areas as they relate to China, the idea being that China is both already a "crossroads" of the world and itself at a "crossroads" in terms of its future global influence. For more information, contact Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org.