

Preface

China has experienced an unprecedented urbanization process over the last two decades, characterized by a high rate of urban land expansion and rural–urban migration. Recently, urbanization has been regarded as the most important economic engine for boosting China’s development. Some predictions suggest that a hundred million people will move from the countryside to cities by 2020. Although China’s government has launched an initiative of a new-type urbanization plan and an eco-civilization construction guideline, the most sustainable and smart way forward for urban development in China is still unclear. This includes where, when, and what types of cities should be built across the country in the next several years. Therefore, it is imperative to explore options for the most suitable urban development pathway for China.

Other countries’ experiences of urbanization processes, challenges, and opportunities, and the strategies used to respond these situations, can provide valuable lessons for China. However, urbanization pathways in different countries are distinctly diverse on the account of their unique historical, political, economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Consequently, there is no simple way or single indicator to compare the urbanization pathways for different countries.

The purpose of this work is to provide an overview of urbanization pathways in selected Asian countries (namely, Japan, South Korea, Russia, India, Indonesia, Israel, and Pakistan), and to analyze the characteristics of their urban development. For these countries, we analyze and compare the temporal sequence of the urbanization process, urban spatial layout, urban scale structure, dynamic mechanisms, industrial sector employment, the level of economic development/activity, urban–rural relations, and the coordination of development. On the basis of the analysis and comparison, we generate implications for China’s urban development. The experiences of other countries and the lessons gained therefrom are able to shed light on China’s new-type urbanization.

The authors claim full responsibility for any errors appearing in this work.

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Qian Zhang
Xiangzheng Deng

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Zhang, Q.; Deng, X.

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