

Preface

Whether driven by market forces or by the government, urbanization has become an irresistible trend in China. It is reported that more than 274 million peasants are now working and living in cities and towns and the size is growing daily. China's urbanization has attracted scholars in various fields, including humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences in China and throughout the world. It is our responsibility to report this event and analyze the process and influence. This book, created by American and Chinese researchers, is the most recent effort to make contributions to this field.

China's urbanization is a process of multi-dimensional development. This book examines it from a cross-disciplinary viewpoint, covering diverse topics and involving a variety of subjects, including economics, demography, city planning, environmental sociology and politics, cultural studies, anthropology, and history. With four parts, this book is unique not only it provides up-to-date information, reports, and analyses based on most recent events, but it also places special emphasis on issues that have been ignored by prior studies.

Part I, containing three chapters, interprets China's urbanization from macro- and strategic perspectives. Authors in this part explore new directions for urbanization in the future, its interactions with industrialization, and the impact on policy reforms. In Chap. 1, Dr. Gu discusses issues found in the recent development of urbanization, illustrating solutions to these issues as well as strategies that, according to him, should be carried out in the 13th Five-Year National Development Period (2016–2020). First, urbanization in this period should shift from land-centered trajectory to people-oriented in order to overcome problems such as disparities between urban and rural residential registrations or *hukou* systems. Second, it should shift from inefficient development to efficient one, making best use of capitals, labors, land, and other production factors. Third, it should shift from resources-consuming urbanization to green-orientation pattern, getting rid of such issues as big-city disease, urban sprawl, ghost towns, and so on. Fourth, China can take full advantage of the radiation and leading role of core cities, moving away from urbanization based on an unreasonable scale and structure and toward the efficient integration of urban agglomerations and coordinated development. Fifth, it

should shift from state-led development to market-driven one. The market should play a critical role in allocating resources, while the government plays a role in planning, system designing, public service, environmental protection, regulation, and social management. Sixth, it should shift from extensive and scattered cities and towns to intensive urban agglomerations. In this period, urbanization should give impetus to technological innovations and coordinate with rural development and industrialization. As the Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Financial and Economic Affairs, National People's Congress, and a well-known Chinese scholar in urban studies, Dr. Gu's opinions carry a great deal of authority.

While urbanization is influenced by many factors, a key structural determinant is industrialization. In Chap. 2, Dr. Zhang examines how industrial development affects urbanization. Does China's industrialization bring about urbanization? Is China under- or over-urbanized? How does China manage urban development so that the virtuous circle between urbanization and industrialization could realize? This chapter offers explanations to these questions, revealing that China's rapid industrialization is the key driver for urbanization. Being at the right speed, China has avoided over-urbanization problems that appeared in many developing countries and has also successfully promoted economic growth through agglomeration and consumption effects.

Rapid urbanization stimulates demand for residential dwellings and accordingly raises housing prices. In 2008, it was ¥3800/m² on average for commodity houses and jumped to ¥4681/m² in 2009, increasing by 23.2% in just one year. This trend continued in 2010–2011. Quickly, rising prices would exert an adverse effect on urbanization. Therefore, the government intends to introduce real estate tax as a tool to put the housing price under control and improve local fiscal revenue at the same time. In Chap. 3, Dr. Cui, a Professor at Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, analyzes the current situation with real estate market and issues with the local taxing system. She explores possible solutions to these issues and also directions for the taxing system reform in order to achieve the goals set by the government.

Part II in dealing with urban impact on regional development contains two chapters. During urbanization, regional differences have been widened. Authors in Chap. 4 develop a composite index to measure urban development level in five northwestern urban agglomerations during the period of 2005–2014. They analyze spatial gaps and dynamic evolution features in these agglomerations. Revealed by the research, regional differences in urbanization (between areas and within areas) are rather significant and also increasing. Urban development in northwestern regions is largely influenced by the size of population, geographic characteristics, and other socioeconomic factors. The authors conclude that the local governments' strategies and policies play a crucial role in shaping regional urban patterns.

Western China is a region that has not only the lowest level of economic and urban development, but also the most intensive coverage of ethnic minorities, accounting for 72% of China's total minority population. What causes the low urbanization level in this region? Is it special for minority areas as compared with others? What policies and strategies should the government adopt to promote urban

development in minority areas? Dr. Si in Chap. 5 intends to answer the above questions by looking at the overall trend and selected autonomous regions in Gansu and Ningxia. The author discovers that the low urban development level in these minority areas is mainly resulted from their low level in industrialization. The governments at the central, regional, and local levels need to take a series of measures to accelerate industrial development in these areas.

There are four chapters in Part III, involving development in cities and the impact on women and environment. The unprecedented infrastructure development in China has created great opportunities for urban land development and construction activities. During the period of the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011–2015), China invested seven trillion Yuan (\$1.03 trillion) in urban public infrastructure. Chapter 6 provides empirical evidence on how different levels of infrastructure provision influence the process of urbanization. By using a cross-sectional dataset from 650 Chinese cities, the authors examine effects of infrastructure development on urban expansion rates and urban land prices. Their research indicates that both intra- and inter-city infrastructure developments exert a great impact on urban expansion, land prices, and subsequently housing prices. This chapter also discusses the challenges and critical issues associated with the current infrastructure development in China.

China's policies during the post-socialist era have engendered demographic and socioeconomic changes that intersect with gender and class to both enable and restrict women's social mobility, autonomy, and independence. In Chap. 7, Dr. Gaetano evaluates the impact of these changes on the social mobility of women in cities, drawing upon relevant literature and her ethnographic studies of rural migrant women workers in Beijing and educated career women in Shanghai. She illuminates the material and discursive constraints that obstruct these women's achievement of personal goals under conditions of gender and class inequality as China urbanizes.

The rapid urbanization is not without downsides. The average 10 percent annual GDP growth in China for the last decade is taking a toll on its environment. Environmental pollution not only poses serious challenges to public health but also slows down economic development to some extent. In Chap. 8, Dr. Shao examines Chinese perceptions of environmental risk from 1995 to 2015, providing a glimpse into the evolution process by descriptive statistics based on WVS and PEW survey data. The author analyzes geographic distributions of people's environmental views and socio-demographic factors in affecting their perceptions. According to this research, the Chinese people display high concerns to environmental issues. They regard environmental protection more important than economic development, which sends a crucial signal to Chinese political leaders.

Many policymakers and scholars point to urbanization as major culprits in China's ecological decline. However, urbanization can also be powerful engines for sustainable development. Dr. Harrington in Chap. 9 attempts to answer the following questions: First, what factors are driving Chinese urbanization and industrial strategy? Second, what does the concept of sustainable development mean in the Chinese context? Third, what measures are being taken at the national level to

encourage sustainable development? Fourth, what challenges do cities face in promoting sustainable development? Finally, what are the prospects for further deepening sustainable development as an integral part of China's overall revitalization strategy?

Part IV, consisting of the last three chapters, discusses impacts on rural clans, rural clan cultures, and villages brought by urbanization. In an attempt to explore changes in clan traditional culture during the process of urbanization, Dr. Tang conducted two surveys separately in 2009 and 2014 in Anhui rural areas. His research reveals a declining clan influence and identity among villagers, especially those well-educated youths. Meanwhile, a majority of the respondents in his surveys expressed traditional viewpoints regarding to ancestor worship, *xiao* (or filial piety), loyalty, clan rituals, and clan genealogy, reflecting historical continuity of culture. Indeed, urbanization has weakened traditional influence, but the impact is limited in scope and intensity. Migrant workers are still in their rural roots. The current urban development does not completely separate them physically and mentally from their native clan communities due to new technology in communication and transportation. Traditional culture remains not only in their memory but also in their daily life. Urban effects move slowly on them. Cultural changes bear strong Chinese characteristics.

The autocratic monarchy system in ancient China was established on the basis of patriarchal clans. Chapter 11 examines the clan society in the Qin and Han Dynasties when cities expanded and business flourished. During that time, the clan system experienced three major changes as it developed from the ancient pattern to the feudal. At that time, the noble descent influence began to weaken. The further development of cities and business made the local clan societies stable, however, under certain conditions. In the Han Dynasty, Confucianism achieved ideological supremacy. The rituals of ancestor worship became more regulated and rigorous, which gave more power to local clan societies. The great unity in the Qin and Han Dynasties promoted the formation of the cultural melting pot. A new clan culture as well as a unified clan society was born.

With rapid urbanization, settlement patterns are changing dramatically. While there has appeared a large body of research on changes in cities, we know relatively little about the countryside. Now, the traditional settlement in rural villages is being demolished. Villagers are resettled into apartments and urban communities at an astonishing scale and speed. In Chap. 12, Dr. Huang analyzes the dynamics and impact on rural Jiangsu. She argues that local government's thirst for more construction land and the land-based revenue system are the roots for urbanized settlement in rural areas. It is further driven by the central government's policy for developing new rural areas. While villagers may benefit from the improved housing conditions, they suffer serious social and economic consequences. This forced urbanization is especially detrimental to the elderly and the poor, overshadowing the government campaign for a modern countryside and a harmonious society.

This book is made feasible through the support and encouragement of my colleagues and friends. First of all, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the contributors to this book. Without them, this book could hardly

have been completed properly. My gratitude also goes to Dr. Eric Yang, Prof. Eric Sterling, Prof. Yuexin Lan, Dr. Hua Xu, and Ms. Sarah Li for their help from the beginning. It has been made easily legible by the editing of Matthew Shoemaker and Caitlin Celka. A number of friends were helpful specifically with this book. This book has been partially supported by a research grant from Confucius Institute of Auburn University at Montgomery.

Montgomery, AL, USA

Zongli Tang

China's Urbanization and Socioeconomic Impact

Tang, Z. (Ed.)

2017, XII, 227 p. 35 illus., 26 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-981-10-4830-2