

China's Urbanization and Socioeconomic Impact

edited by Zongli Tang
Singapore: Springer Nature, 2017
ISBN 978-981-10-4830-2
Hardcover 93,59€, 225 pp.

Reviewed by Qiyan Wu
Jiaotong University and Simon Fraser University

Referring to the rapid growth of urbanization in China and great achievements in the economy and social and environmental change since the 1978 reforms, there are a plenty of literatures to reveal the history and geographical change from diverse angles. This book explores the shift of China's urbanization through a cross-disciplinary viewpoint, which covers diverse topics and involves a variety of subjects, including economics, demography, city planning, environmental sociology and politics, cultural studies, anthropology, gender, and history. Certainly, this book tries to provide up-to-date information, reports, and analyses based on most recent events; meanwhile, it also places special emphasis on issues that have been ignored by prior studies.

The book is valuable to different scholars in urban studies, sociology, and cultural studies, and to activists and policy-makers through providing up-to-date information on Chinese urbanization, a strong grasp of theoretical/empirical debates, and useful case studies.

This edited book is organized in four parts. It is organized in such a way that it starts with exploring new directions for urbanization in the future, its interactions with industrialization, and the impact on policy reforms in Part I. Within this part, chapter 1 highlight some issues China's urbanization is confronting, e.g., regional disparities and uneven income, and the conflict between environmental protection and economic growth. Chapter 2 examines how industrial development affects urbanization, and chapter 3 touches the issue of relationships between real estate market and the local taxing system under the rapid urbanization of China. Then, Part II deals with urban impact development at a regional perspective, which involves the case studies of northwestern urban agglomerations and Western China.

Naturally, in Part III authors delve into social-economy issues within urban areas, such as the relationships between urban development and the impact on women and environment. However, this part seems to overload beyond the main theme of this book. Chapter 6 provides empirical evidence on how different levels of infrastructure influence the process of urbanization. Chapter 7 evaluates the impact of these changes on the social mobility of women in cities, drawing upon relevant literature and the ethnographic studies of rural migrant women workers in Beijing and educated career women in Shanghai. Chapter 9 tries to suggest that urbanization can also be a powerful engine for sustainable development.

Part IV, consisting of the last three chapters, discusses impacts on rural clans, rural clan cultures, and villages brought by urbanization. For instance, chapter 10 attempts to explore changes in clan traditional culture during the process of urbanization. Chapter 11 examines the clan society

in the Qin and Han dynasties, when cities expanded and business flourished. Chapter 12 analyzes the dynamics and impacts on rural Jiangsu. These topics seem interesting independently, but their loose organization may jeopardize the coherence of the whole book.

Despite my inherent interest in the book's premise, I was a little disappointed with the general issue of the edited book for the coherence of the chapters. It's undeniable that this book not only provides up-to-date information and but also tries to stress missed issues in prior studies. However, some chapters in parts III and IV are distressing to readers from the main theme of China's urbanization and socio-economic impact to unsubstantiated details.