

# Problems and Reasons of the Urbanization of China's Population

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**Abstract:** China's population urbanization has made remarkable achievements in the past 60 years since the founding of New China. However, there are still some problems, such as the simplicity of the conditions and standards for setting up cities and towns, the lack of gradual development model, the lack of effective government control over the development of cities, the lack of sustained urban development, the decline of the core of large cities, and the excessive growth of small and medium-sized cities. A series of problems, such as the low quality of urbanization, the convergence of industrial structure among cities, and the lack of coordination of urban functional system, have profound political and historical reasons for the emergence of these problems.

## 1. Introduction

Population urbanization is a phenomenon of population migration accompanied by industrialization and socio-economic development in all countries of the world. It is a sign of social development and civilization progress. Since the beginning of the 20th century, a remarkable feature of population change is that a large number of rural people have moved into cities, urban population has grown rapidly, and population urbanization has become a global phenomenon. In today's China, the development of population urbanization is entering a relatively active period. In the next 20 to 30 years, China will face the test of "the coming of urban society" and "the end of agricultural society". The number of cities will grow from more than 600 to more than 1300, the urban population will increase from 30% to 65% of the total population, and more than 500 million farmers will enter the city. This is a great social change in the history of human development. Contemporary China is facing a new pattern of social change and population migration, and the traditional mode of urbanization and the theory of agricultural development are challenged. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to analyze the problems and causes of population urbanization in China.

## 2. In the process of population urbanization in China, the main problems are as follows:

The conditions and standards for setting up cities and towns in China are too single and lack of guidance of classification. There are three distinct characteristics between urban and rural areas, namely, population aggregation, economic aggregation and infrastructure aggregation. For a long time, only the first feature has been used in dividing towns and villages in our country. Using the proportion of total population and non-agricultural population in a certain region to set up cities and towns is an important factor in the process of urbanization in our country. However, the study on the characteristics of economic agglomeration and infrastructure agglomeration is insufficient. China has a vast territory, and the natural and socio-economic conditions of different regions vary greatly. It is difficult to accurately guide the process of urbanization in China by setting a single standard for cities and towns.

The mode of urban development lacks progressiveness, the concept of urban entity region is becoming increasingly blurred, there is no unified criteria and statistical indicators in the whole country, and the process of urbanization is difficult to accurately reflect. With the implementation of the model of upgrading county-level cities to prefectural-level cities, the administrative regions and physical regions of cities and towns are chaotic, and the urban population, which reflects the process of urbanization, has expanded. A large number of rural population has not been transferred

by occupation and space, but only because of the change of the administrative structure of the locality, it has become the urban population overnight. At the same time, some prefectures and counties blindly expand the non-agricultural population in an improper way in order to meet the standards of setting up cities or upgrading, resulting in a series of urban problems such as relatively inadequate urban infrastructure and increasing number of mobile unemployed persons.

The government lacks effective control over the development of cities. For a long time, China has been carrying out the policy of controlling big cities and developing small and medium-sized cities. This has its positive side in a specific period, but it is not compatible with the whole process of social and economic development.

The imperfect land market restricts the normal development of urban real estate industry. The development zones are set too fast and too much, and the sustainability of urban sustainable development is insufficient. Real estate is one of the main industries of cities in western developed countries. Because the land needed for urban construction is allocated by administrative means and used indefinitely without compensation, it excludes the regulating effect of land rent price on the demand of urban land. As a result, on the one hand, land is idle and wasted, on the other hand, it fails to play a great role in raising funds for urban construction.

The core of big cities is declining, and small and medium-sized cities are growing too fast. In many mega-metropolitan areas, the speed of economic development in urban areas is not as fast as that in suburbs and counties. State-owned enterprises are losing money in large areas. The population in the core areas of some mega-metropolitan cities is beginning to decline. Affected by the "development zone heat" and "real estate heat", the land use in urban fringe is growing rapidly and there is an obvious tendency of suburbanization. The rapid growth of small and medium-sized cities is another prominent problem in the process of urbanization in China, including the growth of the number of cities, the blind expansion of the scope of urban built-up areas and the sharp increase of urban population, which has resulted in a series of complex contradictions between urban development and regional development, and between departments and departments.

The development of urbanization is concentrated on the scale of the city, ignoring the improvement of the internal structure and infrastructure of the city, resulting in the very low quality of urbanization. From the current situation, the level of urbanization in China is relatively low, but under these low levels of urbanization, there are phenomena similar to "hyper-urbanization", such as high unemployment rate, serious hidden unemployment, inadequate urban infrastructure, traffic and housing shortages.

The industrial structure converges among cities, and the function system of cities and towns is not coordinated enough. In recent years, in order to arouse the enthusiasm of the local government, we have implemented the financial system policy of "financial contracting, separate cooking" and expanded the contracting and investment rights of the local government. However, the functions of the government in managing enterprises have not disappeared, the market is not well developed, the price system is distorted to varying degrees, and various regions are competing to develop high-priced processing industries, duplicate construction and duplicate importation. When it is serious, on the one hand, it causes waste of land. On the other hand, the same kind of enterprises in many cities compete for raw materials and markets seriously, which reduces the efficiency of the original urban factories with good economic benefits. As a result, the functional division of cities and towns is not clear, and the functional system is confused.

The standard of urban land use is low and the structure of land use is unreasonable. In China, the average occupancy standard of urban population is only 80 square meters. At the same time, China's urban interior land use structure is quite unreasonable, the proportion of industrial land is too high, generally up to 25%-30%; living land, commercial land, public facilities land is low; roads, squares, greening, sports and other land is seriously inadequate, so it is very difficult to adjust and improve the land use structure. Many cities have reached the limit of population density and building density. To continue their development, cities must expand outward and occupy surrounding farmland.

### **3. China is one of the earliest cities in the world. Urban civilization once occupied the leading position in the world in history.**

However, in the process of urbanization in the modern world, it lags far behind. Compared with developed countries, China's current urbanization level is at least 20-30 years behind. The development of cities in old China was difficult. The urbanization of China originated from the development of socialist industrialization after the founding of New China in 1949. During the 50 years from 1949 to 2000, the level of urbanization in China increased from 10.64% to 30.6%, an increase of nearly 20 percentage points, most of which was the result of the development after the reform and opening up.

Based on the econometric model of the relationship between urbanization and industrialization, it is found that the industrialization rate of Asian countries and regions has increased by 1% annually, while the urbanization rate has increased by 1.88%. For more than 50 years since the founding of New China, the industrialization rate has only increased by 1.075%, which is much lower than the average level of 1.88% in Asia. According to this model, China's industrialization rate in 1988 was 22.6%, and the urbanization rate should be 42.5%. In fact, China's urbanization rate is only about 30%, lagging behind more than 10 percentage points.

The slow progress of urbanization in China is attributed to many reasons. Objectively speaking, it is due to the restrictions on household registration, housing, employment and commodity grain under the old system, the role of the four-in-one barrier between urban and rural areas, and the over-emphasis on the industrial development strategy of giving priority to the development of heavy industry, which results in the low ability of cities to absorb labor force. Subjectively speaking, for a long time, the state has curbed urban development. The strategic thought of exhibition is in the leading position and has formed a strong binding force on the urbanization process of our country. Two unforgettable examples are: in the early 1960s, more than 20 million urban workers were condemned to the countryside; in the late 1960s, more than 20 million young urban students were sent to the countryside. This strategic thought of curbing urban development has its complicated historical roots, profound socio-economic background and important political and institutional background.

In terms of the mechanism of urbanization, the non-economic factors of the main driving force of urbanization in China have seriously distorted the role of urban gravitational field. For example, developed countries have highly developed commodity economy and perfect market mechanism, the transfer of capital, technology and the flow of labor force are free, the pull and thrust of urbanization are the same, and there is a virtuous cycle between urban and rural areas. Generally speaking, the higher the level of urbanization in developed countries, the greater the degree of urban civilization shared by the countryside, the more prosperous the countryside itself. This is the case in both the United States and Canada. The motive force of urbanization in China is the government, so it has obvious super-economy. How to develop urbanization depends more on the government's behavior, that is, to achieve the political goals of the country. Therefore, the guiding ideology only counts political accounts, not economic accounts, which leads to neglect of economic laws, regardless of costs, and astonishing waste.

In the industrialization strategy, one-sided emphasis on the priority of the development of heavy industry, this heavy industrial structure has seriously hindered the city's ability to absorb labor.

In dealing with the tertiary industry, policy makers have long held a natural economic idea that the service industry is a non-material production field and should control its development, thus ignoring circulation and giving full play to the economic roles of commodity center, financial center, information center, science and technology center and cultural center of the city, which makes the tertiary industry in our country quite underdeveloped, while the tertiary industry. Often it is labor-intensive industries, which further affects the exertion of urban gravity and hinders the process of urbanization.

On the aspect of urban financial system, because of the state's economic subsidy policy to cities, the financial burden of the country is becoming heavier and heavier. On the one hand, it is not

conducive to the development of urban economy. Cities can not create employment opportunities to absorb rural surplus labor force, and even the natural increase of urban labor force is difficult to absorb. On the other hand, long-term financial subsidy makes urban residents become accustomed to it. At low prices, with the deepening of reform and opening up, the government gradually reduces subsidies, often causing dissatisfaction among residents, and the phenomenon of "eating meat from the bowl and cursing the mother when you put down your chopsticks".

From the perspective of rural promotion, the state has long implemented the policy of low-price purchase of agricultural products to accumulate industrial capital and realize industrialization. As a result, industrialization has not been fully realized, and the development of agriculture has also been greatly restricted. So far, the foundation of agriculture has not been stable and strong.

#### **4. At present, accelerating the pace of urbanization in China has become the consensus of all sectors of society, but the experts and scholars have different opinions and opinions on what kind of road should be chosen for urbanization.**

There are three most representative viewpoints: one is the key theory of small towns; the other is the leading theory of large and medium-sized cities; and the third is the key theory of small and medium-sized cities. All these arguments are useful explorations on the road of urbanization in China, and they all have certain reasons. The key development strategy of small towns has achieved remarkable results in the practice of our country for more than ten years. The most prominent one is that it has greatly alleviated the pressure of surplus rural labor force, avoided the agricultural recession that many developing countries have generally experienced, and accelerated the process of urbanization in our country's rural areas. However, when China's social and economic development has reached a new stage, small towns have exposed the weaknesses of low aggregation efficiency and poor social and economic effects, such as serious waste of land resources, extensive township enterprises causing great damage to the ecological environment, and not becoming the base of rural population transfer. Especially since the 1990s, this urbanization strategy has obviously not accorded with the trend of tertiary industry to a higher level, nor with the establishment of a socialist market economic system. The author believes that in the long run, small towns should be the logical starting point rather than the end point of urbanization; the urbanization development path dominated by large and medium-sized cities can give full play to the agglomeration and diffusion effects, and promote regional economic development, which is the trend of urbanization development in western developed countries, and also the advanced stage of urbanization development. This trend is caused by the highly developed productivity level and the rise of the new technological revolution. In China, the implementation of this strategy is more suitable for the more developed eastern coastal areas, but the central and western regions do not yet have the conditions for implementation. The urbanization road of medium and small cities is superior to that of small towns in scale benefit, but inferior to that of big cities; it is superior to big cities in avoiding and reducing urban diseases, but inferior to small towns. To achieve urbanization in China, of course, we need to build a number of small and medium-sized cities, but only by building small and medium-sized cities can not solve the problem, there is a degree of grasp of the problem. The scale of a city depends on the objective requirements of economic and social development and the comprehensive effects of natural geography, historical evolution and other factors. Need and able to build a large city but artificially limit its expansion scale, or only suitable for the construction of small towns but forced expansion scale will have a negative impact on economic and social development. In a word, our country has a vast geographical area and unbalanced economic and social development, which often coexists with different stages and objectives of urbanization. Therefore, it is difficult to be a unified model of the whole country whether it is the focus of small towns, the focus of small and medium-sized cities, or the dominant theory of large and medium-sized cities. It is more feasible to choose different urbanization paths according to the reality of regional differences in China's economic development and the trend of future development.

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