Fundamentals of China’s Urbanization and Policy*

Kam Wing Chan

Abstract

This paper analyses the fundamentals of China’s urbanization in the last two decades, focusing on the administrative and economic structures and policy which form the basis of the configuration of China’s urban system and urbanization policy. Two basic determinants of the Chinese spatial system are examined: the administrative hierarchy and the restriction of population mobility. This is followed by an empirical study of recent urbanization trends and the patterns of population growth of individual cities, based on data from the 1990 and 2000 censuses. The paper examines various features associated with China’s “incomplete urbanization” at the national and individual city levels. The concluding section discusses implications for policy and research.

Kam Wing Chan is Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Washington. His research interests include China’s urban and economic geography, migration, the labour market, and the household registration system.

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