
Urbanization Challenges in the People's Republic of China

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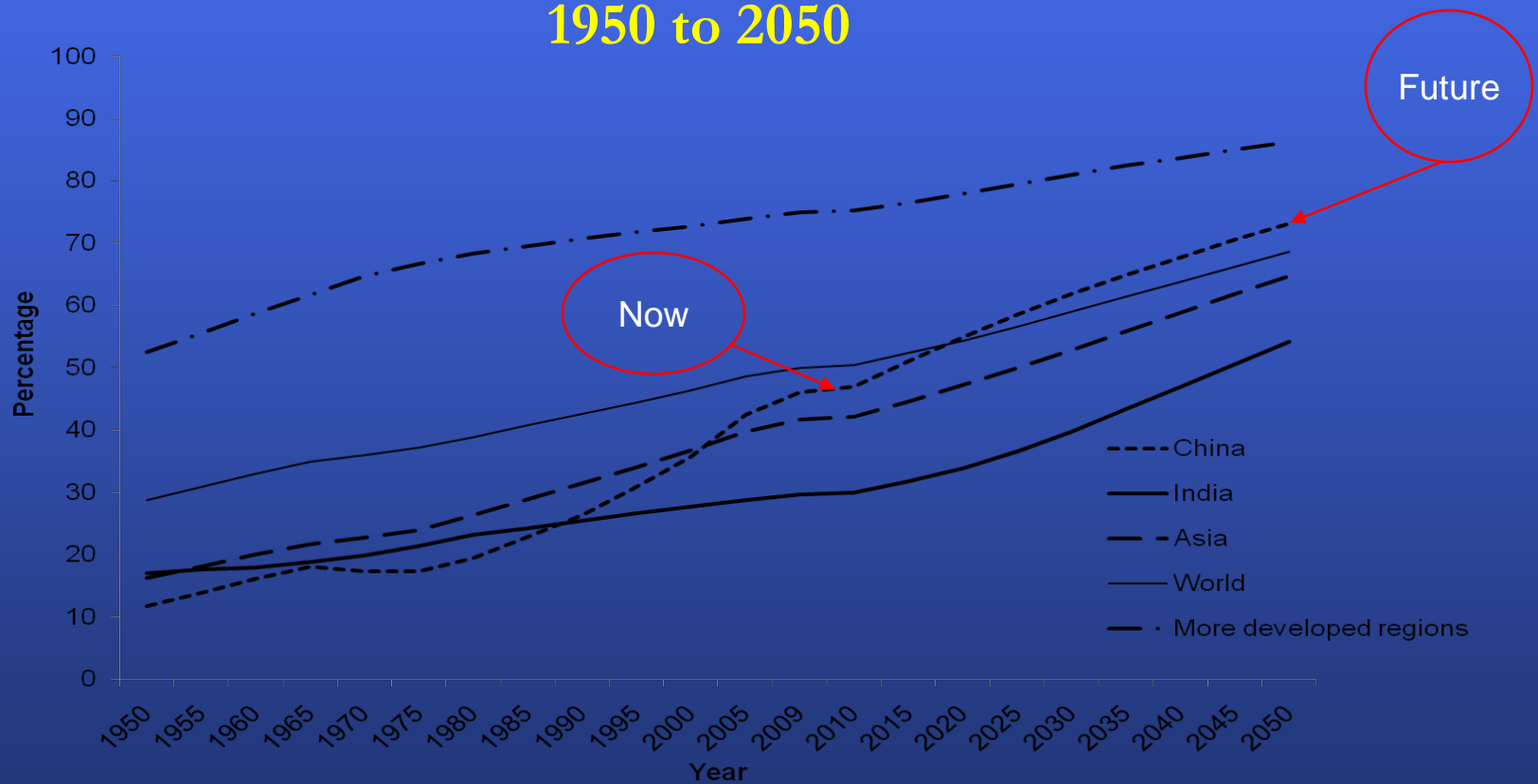
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Scale of Urbanization

Percentage of Population in Urban Areas: 1950 to 2050



Source: United Nations World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009
Revision Population Database

Asian Development Bank
FIGHTING POVERTY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

ADB

Urban Population Growth – 3 Processes

1. Reclassification of census areas
2. Natural population increase
3. Net migration gain

Urban Population Growth (1): **RECLASSIFICATION**

Numbers of Cities and Towns in 1978 and 2008

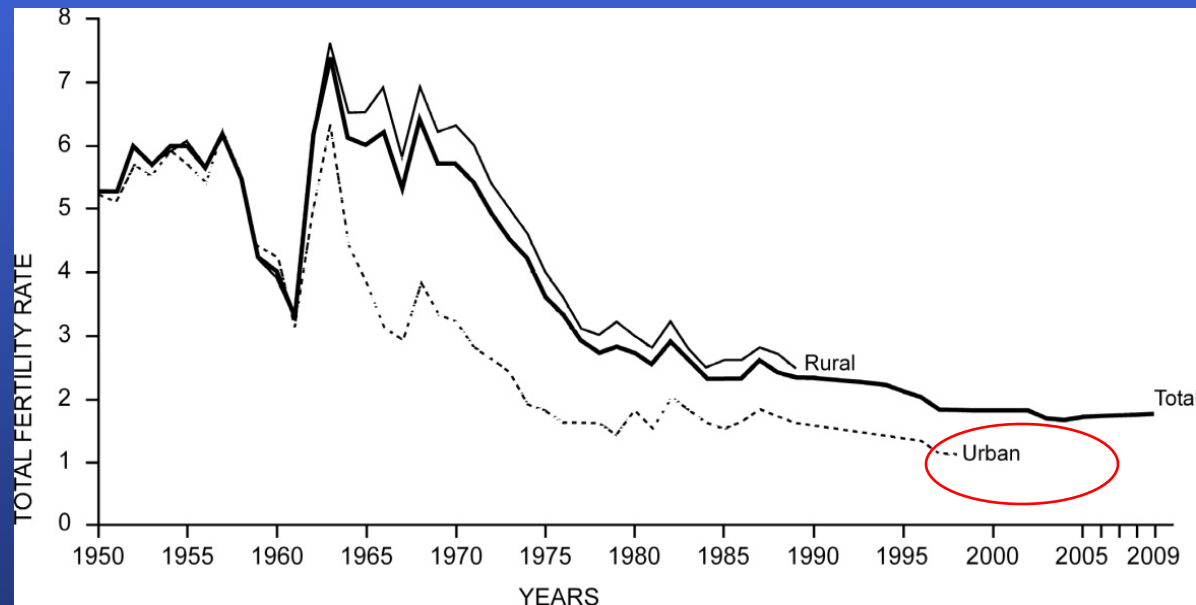
	1978	2008	Percent Increase
Cities	193	655	239.4
Administrative Towns	2,173	19,234	785.1
Total	2,366	19,889	740.6

Source: Tie, 2010, 3

Urban Population Growth (2): **NATURAL INCREASE**

- ❖ BUT natural increase lower in urban than rural areas
- ❖ Declining fertility and increasing life expectancy – natural **DECREASE** in some cities

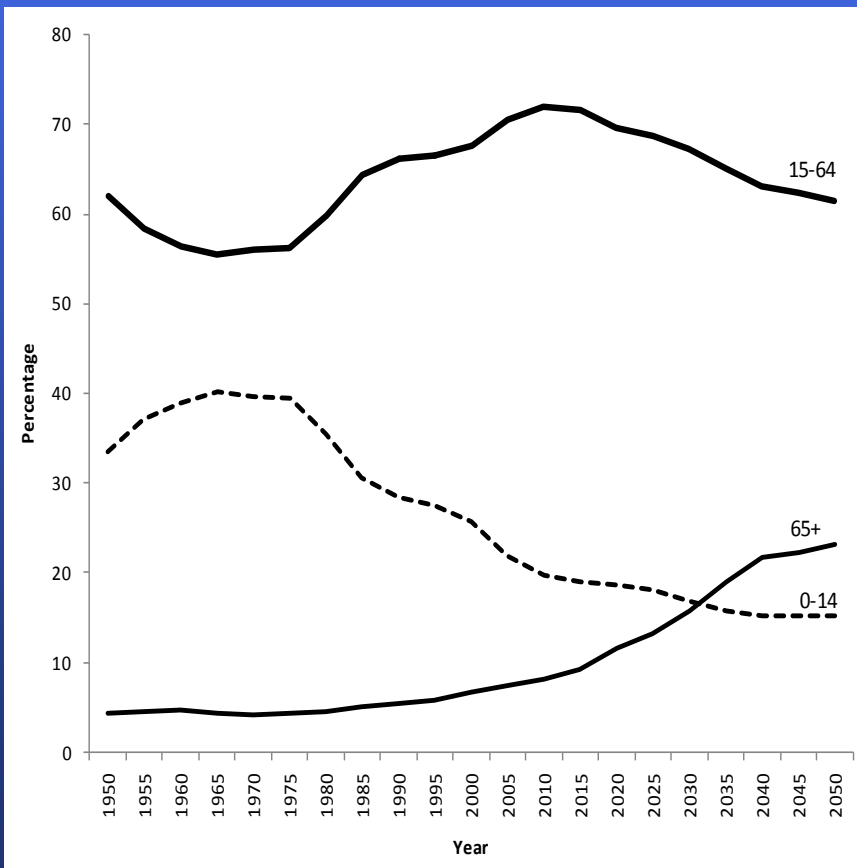
Total Fertility Rate in China, 1950 to 2009



Source: Zhao, 2001; Peng, 2004, 136

Urban Population Growth (2) :

Percentage of the Population Aged 0-14, 15-64 and 65+, 1950 to 2050



United Nations World Population Prospects: 2008

Population is aging

Age 15-64



Age 65+

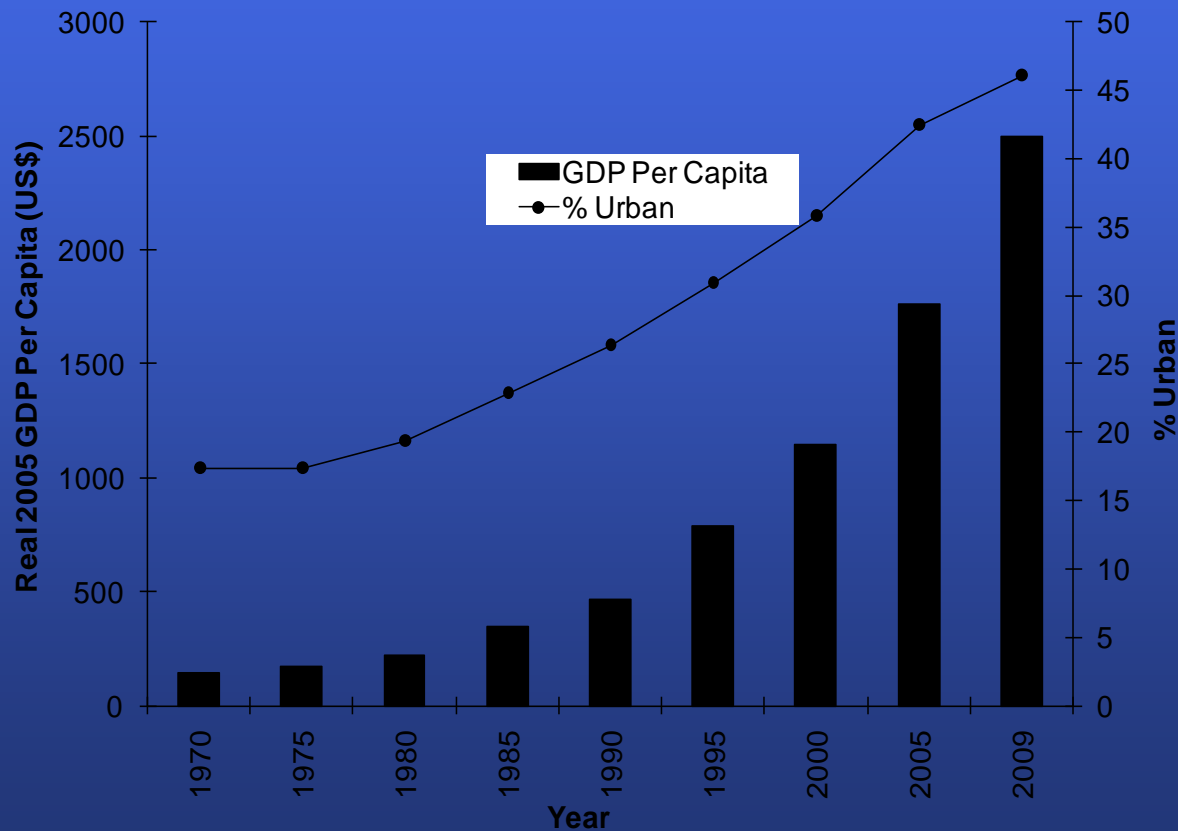


Age 0-14



Urbanization & Economic Development

Percent of the Population Living in Urban Areas and GDP Per Capita, 1970 to 2009



Source: ERS International Macroeconomic Dataset and UN World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision Population Database

Urban Population Growth (3):

NET MIGRATION GAIN

1. Number of Migrant workers increased from 38.9 m in 1997 to 140m in 2008
2. Increase in urbanization not equal to increase in urban population
3. Dissimilar provincial migration rates
4. Cities vs towns migration

Implications on Economic Development and City Administration

1. Urban areas as engines of growth
2. Urbanization as one of PRC's strategic objectives
3. Assessing local governments' performance
4. Tracking PRC urbanization vis-à-vis other countries
5. City hierarchies/jurisdictions
6. Local and fiscal autonomy
7. Residents registration system

Challenges & Policy Choices

1. Rapid urbanization versus moderate growth
2. Selective versus 'distributed' urbanization
3. Reclassification based on economic importance versus traditional administration
4. Large versus small and medium cities
5. Migrants asked to stay versus circular migration

Further Challenges

1. Shift from manufacturing to service industries
2. Converting farmland to construction land
3. Inadequate urban environmental infrastructure

Further Challenges

1. Urbanization disparities between regions
2. Unequal capacity to absorb migrants
3. Hierarchical structure constraints
4. Migrants registration

ADB support to policy choices

Provide government support to

1. Projected pace and spatial distribution of urbanization
1. Emerging urban structural pattern of the city system nationwide
1. Policy and institutional reforms; other interventions needed for sustainable urbanization

ADB Priorities

1. Basic infrastructure for central and western regions, small cities and towns
2. Policy options for social safety nets and migrant workers
3. Technical training and employment services for urban and rural areas

Partnerships and Knowledge

1. Knowledge creation and sharing on sustainable urban development
2. Urban good practices dissemination
3. Establish an Urban Knowledge Hub with Tongji University

Thank you!