

# Preface

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Three great phenomena of the modern era are the rapid increase in the global population (particularly in developing countries), urbanization (particularly the migration of rural people into cities and peri-urban areas), and modernization (particularly the shift from traditional agricultural-based economies to global industrial and post-industrial economies). In the developing world these three phenomena have led to an explosion in the number and size of cities and an enormous gap in wages and living conditions between urban and rural areas. While urbanization and modernization bring higher wages and sometimes access to urban services, the urban–rural interface of virtually every country suffers from environmental, social, economic, and political problems. Solid and liquid waste is dumped illegally, contaminating surface and underground water (aquifers). Wood and other construction materials are being used up. Open space is disappearing. Habitat and species are threatened. Farmers left behind in traditional villages and poor migrants lack infrastructure and services comparable to their urban counterparts, including basic education, health, and social security. There is a huge wage differential between what people working in the traditional and modern economy can earn. Working conditions in factories and assembly plants are often very bad. Local governments are fragmented and lack the capacity to plan and manage the tsunami of urban change engulfing them.

Developing East Asia, and particularly China, is at the epicenter of this enormous change. Because of its vast size (a fifth of the world's population), rapid urbanization (from about 18% urban to 51% urban in the space of 30 years), and lack of arable land, China must plan and manage the forces its economic miracle has unleashed.

The literature on urbanization, peri-urbanization, and modernization is full of examples of problems and bad practices. This book references dozens of studies from China and other developing countries documenting the problems urbanization presents and the failure of governments to plan and manage urbanization successfully. In contrast, the literature on successful examples of governments' positive responses to the challenge of urbanization is sparse.

Chengdu, China, is a notable and exemplary exception. During the

decade 2003–2013, Chengdu has been engaged in a complex process of coordinating urban and rural development. While other cities in China are also experimenting with urban–rural coordination no other city has been bolder, more innovative, or successful than Chengdu.

While Chengdu's coordinated urban–rural development plans and policies are a work in progress and the jury is still out on how successful they will ultimately prove, Chengdu has been designated a model pilot region for coordinated urban–rural development and, as this book goes to press, several thousand visitors a year are visiting Chengdu to learn about coordinated urban–rural development.

The literature in Chinese about Chengdu's coordinated urban–rural development reforms is sparse and the literature in English nearly non-existent. The purpose of this book is to remedy this situation.

YE Yumin, Dean of the Renmin Department of Urban Planning and Management is China's leading academic authority on coordinated urban and rural development. She has studied the evolution of Chengdu's program from the very start and has visited nearly every city in China involved in coordinated urban and rural development reforms. Dean YE has lectured extensively on this subject in China and also the United States, Russia, Japan and Indonesia, but has not written about this material in English. During 2011, Professor YE decided that an English language book on Chengdu's coordinated urban–rural development reforms would be valuable and organized a team and secured funding for the study which has resulted in this book. Richard LeGates, a Professor Emeritus of Urban Studies and Planning from San Francisco State University enthusiastically joined the Renmin team. During 2011 and 2012 the team of faculty and students from Renmin University of China under the direction of Dean YE and Professor LeGates carried out research and wrote the book.

This book is based on YE's years of experience and encyclopedic collection of materials related to coordinated urban and rural development supplemented by Chinese and English language literature searches by LeGates and the Renmin faculty, multiple field visits to Chengdu for observation, interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions. Professor LeGates has worked with the team to help make the material accessible to a Western audience.

While we are academics who studied Chengdu objectively, we agree with many aspects of their approach and believe other countries can benefit from them.

We believe in holistic, comprehensive planning and policy. For us that means regional planning and policy that integrates economic and social needs with physical planning and design. We believe planning must be

based on data analysis and systematic thinking rather than conjecture and politics – scientific planning in the sense that term is used in Chengdu. Other cities in China and elsewhere in the world can benefit both from Chengdu's approach and from Western theory and practice in economic analysis, research methodology, data analysis, and social science and policy analysis. We value transparency in government, collaborative planning, grassroots democracy and citizen participation. Other cities can learn from Chengdu's experience in these areas.

While we believe that urban planning is intrinsically normative and probabilistic, that there is never a single best solution to any planning problem and the future is always uncertain when a society confronts clear challenges, we favor action over inaction. That said, we believe that it is important to think deeply and formulate clear plans before launching bold new programs. Pilot and experimental programs to test approaches are often useful. Urban planning, governance, and policy reform need to proceed in stages and cities will ultimately benefit from investing time up front in administrative and process reforms.

We believe that in their urban development processes cities should devise systems that provide reasonable returns on investment, encourage entrepreneurship, reward appropriate risk taking, and distribute the profits that come from development to meet human needs. Most cities in the world, including those in China, have failed to develop such systems and Chengdu's use of urban–rural land-linking and related policies are particularly significant. While we are less sanguine than Hernando DeSoto about the power of markets to unlock dead capital, we agree that clear, transparent, legally enforceable land ownership and use rights are important and that farmer-owners who sell or lease rights in land must receive adequate compensation.

Chengdu is a pilot region for coordinated urban–rural development. The story we will tell in this book is a work in progress. But the issues Chengdu has chosen to address are fundamental issues of modernization and urbanization and their vision is sound: creating a modern, global city in which there is no income or service gap between urban and rural areas, people throughout the metropolitan region have equal access to excellent transportation, education, health, and social security; assuring development is sustainable and as close to carbon neutral as possible, free of air and water pollution, with a greenbelt and access to nature. Chengdu is seeking to create a physical structure with high enough density to support the urban population and preserve agricultural land, attractive, human-scale new villages in the peri-urban area consistent with Chengdu's history and vernacular architecture, industrialization in consolidated zones, and modernization of agriculture. We believe that other cities in China and

throughout the world can learn from the concepts and programs that Chengdu has developed. The appendix provides an alphabetical list of the most important of Chengdu's coordinated urban–rural development concepts and related concepts used throughout China. We hope it will provide a convenient reference for scholars and practitioners interested in understanding coordinated urban–rural development and adapting Chengdu's plans and programs for their own cities. The index provides a reference on where additional information on all of the concepts and terms can be found throughout the book.

Our hope is that *Coordinating Urban and Rural Development in China: Learning from Chengdu* will be well received by Western scholars and practitioners and English-speaking scholars and practitioners in other countries who do not read Chinese as well as Chinese readers. It should be of interest to academics interested in urban studies, urban and regional planning, architecture and urban design, public administration, development studies, China studies, and other social sciences and applied public-policy programs. It is a fascinating story. Enjoy!