Rural Urbanization and Urban Transformation in Quanzhou, Fujian

Chee-Beng Tan *The Chinese University of Hong Kong*
Yuling Ding *Quanzhou Maritime Museum*

Abstract: This article examines rural urbanization and urban transformation in Quanzhou city in Fujian. The administrative urbanization of villages and the impact on the residents are examined. The article shows that the scale and speed of China's urbanization is due to interaction between industrial development, including rural industrialization, and intervention by the state-socialist government. By comparing two localities, Chendai and Shudou, the article examines two distinct kinds of rural urbanization. The first area industrialized and urbanized without being officially classified as urban; the second area industrialized and only recently became urbanized despite having been previously classified as urban.

Keywords: urbanization, rural urbanization, administrative urbanization, China

Résumé : Cet article examine l'urbanisation rurale et la transformation urbaine dans la ville de Quanzhou dans la province du Fujian. Il examine l'urbanisation administrative des villages et son impact sur les habitants. L'article démontre que l'étendue et la rapidité de l'urbanisation en Chine sont le résultat de l'interaction entre le développement industriel, ce qui comprend l'industrialisation rurale, et l'intervention du gouvernement prônant le socialisme d'État. En comparant deux localités, Chendai et Shudou, l'article examine deux types de processus d'urbanisation rurale. La première localité s'est industrialisée et urbanisée sans pour autant être officiellement entrée dans la catégorie des localités urbaines. Quant à la seconde, elle s'est industrialisée et ne s'est que récemment urbanisée même si elle avait déjà été classifiée comme urbaine.

Mots-clés : urbanisation, urbanisation rurale, urbanisation administrative, Chine

Introduction

China has been undergoing many kinds of rapid transformation since 1978, including the expansion and population growth of towns and cities, and the urbanization of villages. The great contrast between urban and rural ways of life and the marked physical separation of urban centres and villages made it very easy to distinguish towns and villages. The policy of classifying residents according to "urban residence" (*chengshi hukou*) and "agricultural residence" (*nongcun hukou*) adopted in 1957 and subsequent strict restrictions against rural residents moving to cities and conversion from agricultural to urban status further reinforced the urban–rural distinction. However, post-Reform modernization of towns and villages and the improvement of transportation and communication systems have reduced the contrast in rural and urban ways of life. Even more significant have been the industrialization of villages and the transformation of farmers into entrepreneurs and workers. The government policy of reclassifying certain villages into urban areas and residents from "agricultural residence" status to "urban residence" status has also had a major impact, particularly on quantitative measures of the urbanization of the population.

Scholars studying urbanization have generally viewed it as a process rather than as a classification, and contemporary anthropologists pay particular attention to the cultural meaning of the urban environment as well as "the transnational aspects of migration, culture-making, and identity management" (Low 1996:402). Apart from the attention paid to globalization and the preference of some scholars to use postcolonial rhetoric, this kind of study is still recognizable as classical anthropology, except that the context is a city with a focus on ethnic dimensions, stratification and conflict, religious groups and so on. This is not to say that the emphasis needs to be on anthropology of the city rather than anthropology in the city, a topic of debate for urban anthropology in the 1970s (e.g., Fox

1977; Eames and Goode 1977), with some anthropologists emphasizing one over the other. Our position is that both are relevant to the study of towns and cities and cannot be strictly separated. For example, Zhang's study (2001) of a migrant population in Beijing focuses on the production of space and the "politics of migrant community-making," but this also contributes to our understanding of a central facet of urbanization in Beijing today.

Compared to the many anthropological works conducted in rural settings in China, there have not been as many anthropological studies in urban China or on China's urbanization. The volume edited by Elvin and Skinner (1974), which focuses on "the transformation and modernization of traditional urban forms" (Skinner 1974:vi) in China, was a path-breaking work by anthropologists and historians.[1] Prior to this, Skinner's well-known study of the role of markets in China's regional geography (1964, 1985a) should be considered an important and pioneering contribution to the anthropological study of towns and cities in China. However, it is in the post-Mao period that anthropologists began seriously to turn their attention to China's urbanization, and in this Guldin (1992 ed., 1997 ed., 2001) and his Chinese colleagues (notably Daming Zhou of Zhongshan University, cf. Zhou 1997) have contributed significantly to drawing attention to studying urban China. Recent interest in studying urban China by anthropologists can be seen in Chen et al. (2001), Jankowiak (2004) and the survey of research by Smart and Zhang (2006). One should of course note the role of the famous Chinese anthropologist, Xaiotong Fei, in calling for the study and development of small towns. His work (e.g., Fei 1985) on this are influential in China.

What urbanization is remains contested. Perhaps reacting to the official tendency in China to see cities and towns in terms of demographic figures, Guldin (1992:5) suggests that "urbanization "should refer to the process of increasing contact and interconnection between the urban and non-urban areas of society." This is not very helpful as it assumes an earlier period of limited or no contact, and as we shall show, this is not accurate. In our opinion, the common sense notion of associating the urban with residence in cities and towns is useful for understanding the nature of the urban,[2] and in this respect, a town or city has a distinct landscape which comprises at least a central business area, a complex transportation system and specialized facilities not found in rural areas. However, the urban landscape is always under transformation due to economic changes, government interventions, urban planning, the influx of migrants and so on. Outside the downtown area, and especially in the urban fringes, where the urban ends and the rural begins is often not clear. This is especially so in China today where many villages close to cities and towns are being transformed administratively and by rural industrialization to become part of towns and cities. Indeed towns and cities are always "urbanizing," so to speak, and in this sense, it helps to understand urbanization as city building in the broad sense that includes town building. Smart and Smart (2003:264) have appropriately used "urbanization" "to include not only the growth of cities, but the transformation of existing urban places."

We find Friedmann's multidimensional construct of the urban into administrative urbanization, economic urbanization, physical urbanization, sociocultural urbanization and political urbanization convenient for the discussion of Chinese cities (Friedmann 2005:37). Administrative urbanization is very important in China, since the central and local governments play essential roles in classifying and developing cities and towns. Ma demonstrates this and explains the different Chinese terms for cities and towns:

> In official statistical analyses "town" (*zhen*) is a level of government in the administrative system of China that falls between "city"(*shi*) or "county" (*xian*) on the one hand and "village committee" (*cunmin weiyuanhui*) on the other hand. In the Chinese administrative system, a "designated town" (*jianzhi zhen*) is under either a city or a county. A town is placed administratively at the same level as a *xiang* ("a subcounty district," formerly commune), but a town government has more cadres than a xiang and also has special funds for public construction in town. When a xiang reaches a certain point in population size and in the percentage of its non-agricultural population, its government can apply to become a town. If all administrative levels agree, then a record of the change will be made at the Ministry of Civil Administration. A town can apply to become a city by a similar procedure. [1992:119]

The criteria for establishing towns and cities have changed over time. For example, by 1984 an area to be declared a town needed only be one which was the seat of a county government or the site of a xiang government where there was over 2,000 non-agricultural population (Ma 1992:120). Even the classification of cities (in contrast to towns) is defined. Today, "small city" (*xiao chengshi*) is one where the non-agricultural population is not more than 200,000. One where the non-agricultural population is 200,000 to 500,000 is a medium-sized city (*zhongdeng chengshi*). Those with a population of more than 500,000 are large cities (*da chengshi*) and those with a non-agricultural population of 1,000,000 or more are called metropolis (*teda chengshi*) (Ye and Lu 2003:14). Thus in

2000, there were 40 metropolises, 53 large cities, 218 medium-sized cities and 352 small cities (Ye and Lu 2003:48). Since the Reform, many towns and cities have been added or re-classified, such as from a *xian cheng* (county seat) to shi (metropolis). We shall have more to say later about administrative urbanization in China.

As to economic urbanization, we shall see that rural industrialization plays an important part in the urbanization of post-Reform China. Economic development in a town or city brings about further urbanization. For example, an increase in investment or business opportunities results in more businesses and work opportunities, while the increase in income spurs more consumption and promotes new tastes, thus transforming the culture of consumption. Urban economic development means the construction of new infrastructure and more modern buildings. Thus economic urbanization has impacts on physical and sociocultural urbanization.

The importance of physical urbanization is obvious from our discussion on urban landscape, which is constantly transformed by the unending process of urbanization. The landscape is continuously changing as more infrastructure and buildings are constructed or modernized or as they deteriorate. The influx of rural migrants transforms an existing landscape, with the development of migrants' quarters and new restaurants catering to their tastes, as is common throughout China. The migrants not only contribute to physical urbanization but also to sociocultural urbanization as they bring with them cultural influences. The cultural transformation of a city is also brought about by globalization, often symbolized in China by the recent presence of Western food chains such as McDonald's, and modern coffee shops which may be Western or Taiwanese in origin. Business signs which feature local and international firms remind people of the globalizing nature of cities. The urban landscape, which is both physical and cultural, is an important part of people's imaginary of towns and cities.

Sociocultural urbanization refers to the cultural dimension of urbanization and urban life. This has been the strength of anthropologists who have studied different facets of urban life. For example, the articles in Chen et al. (2001) mostly deal with cultural dimensions of China's cities. The topics studied by cultural anthropologists in urban settings are as diverse as the field, and the urban settings allow easy linkage with the more recent anthropological interest in globalization and consumerism.

Political urbanization refers to political changes associated with urbanization such as decentralizing decision making to local authorities. The development of neighbourhood associations as emergent civil society in Shanghai (Zhu 2002) is an interesting example of this. What Lefebvre (1996:173) calls the right to the city, namely "right to freedom, to individualism in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit" are relevant topics for the study of political urbanization. Local elections which have been introduced in different parts of China are new phenomena deserving serious study. Political urbanization is still not very apparent in Quanzhou and we shall not deal with it as more research is needed.

Overall, the emphasis on various aspects of urbanization as multidimensional is important because their effects are distinct but interrelated. For example, physical urbanization is closely linked to economic urbanization and, as we shall see, administrative urbanization and economic urbanization are crucial in urban development in China and they, in turn, influence sociocultural urbanization. But for cities to be livable, they have to be managed with vision to ensure the quality of urbanization. Thus, administrative urbanization in response to not just the needs of entrepreneurs but also to the rights of citizens (political urbanization) and ecological concerns is important. How all these dimensions of urbanization interact accounts for the diversity in the nature and quality of cities. Our article demonstrates a common trend in China of an over-emphasis on administrative urbanization in response to economic development and consequently, on economic urbanization and physical urbanization.

Rural industrialization has transformed many villages into industrial zones and when these are close to an existing town or city, it is only a matter of time before improved transportation systems linking them to urban centres and the spatial expansion of the town or city turns these villages into part of the urban landscape. As Wong and Yao (2000:295) point out, the provision of infrastructure "has important effects on urban development and urban land use." In Fujian, road infrastructure plays a crucial role in urban expansion as is evident in such cities as Xiamen and Quanzhou and the nearby townships, as well as when one travels along the highway from Xiamen to Quanzhou. The factories and related modern buildings, supermarkets and many other facilities that cater to the growing population of workers and management create powerful images of urban expansion. The local government, which is interested in urbanization, may designate such villages as urban. But what do the "villagers" think and feel? Do they feel urban? What is the impact of such imposed urbanization on their lives? We shall use our observations of the situation in Quanzhou to explore these rather neglected questions in the study of urbanization in China. In fact, Chinese urbanization has, in effect, proletarianized many farmers—not just those who have left their farms

but also those whose villages have been designated as urban areas.

While we will discuss some sociocultural aspects of urbanization in Quanzhou, our focus is mainly on the urbanization of nearby villages. The scale and speed of China's urbanization is due to the interactive effect of industrial development and state-socialist government intervention. The power of the government to intervene in its interest and in the interest of the industrial sector accounts for the speed and scale of urbanization that is brought about by industrialization and commercial development; such scale and speed are difficult to attain in a society where there is democratic space for people to protest the kind of development that they do not want. Good urban planning by the local government, of course, helps to create well-organized modern towns as Tan observed in the case of Xiaolan in Guangdong and Yuxi in Yunnan. Xiaolan, for example, is modern, clean and well planned, and it attracts foreign investment in security products, household appliances and others (cf. Chow 2001). Most people in the nearby villages have either become entrepreneurs or business people, or work in the factories, but the most menial and low-paying work is left to migrant workers. There are many examples of such towns and cities expanding and modernizing, especially in the lower Yangzi delta, the Pearl River delta and in coastal Fujian.

Quanzhou: Brief Historical Background

Quanzhou is an ancient city in southern Fujian. It was already established by AD 718, at which time it was only 3 *li* (1 li is a half kilometre) in perimeter (*zhouchang*)[3] (Zhou et al. 1990). Since then, the city has been extending from this urban core, albeit rather slowly. In 1922, the official size of the city was almost equivalent to what was found in the 10th century, with a perimeter of about 20 li (Zhou et al. 1990). Even up to the early 1980s, the size of the city had remained more or less the same (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Size of Quanzhou City through History

Period	Area
AD 718	3 li in perimeter
AD 943-957	20 li in perimeter
AD 1658	6.8 sq. km.
1983	6.96 sq km.

Sources: Zhou et al. (1990) and Quanzhou Municipality Planning Bureau (2003).

Although Quanzhou grew slowly geographically, the city had experienced prosperity and fame from the 11th to the early 14th centuries (cf. Skinner 1985b:276), when it was the greatest port of China. The many relics, including tomb stones, left behind by traders from as far as India and the Middle East can be seen today at the new Quanzhou Maritime Museum, which is built on village land (see below). Throughout its history the name of Quanzhou city and its jurisdiction changed many times (cf. Wang 1999). Historically the city had close interactions with its hinterland and with villages, serving as their major commercial centre and the port that linked the region to the world. For instance, Quanzhou was a great exporter of ceramics and porcelains (cf. So 2000), which were made in the hinterland in such counties as Dehua, Cizao and Anxi. Silk cloth, another major item of export, was made in many villages in the hinterland. There were also considerable links between the city and the villages. The rural rich would buy houses in the city which were admired by other villagers, while the urban rich would buy land in rural areas. Furthermore, most urban people belonged to their respective lineages in the villages and they participated in major ritual activities to honour their ancestors. Thus lineage organizations linked urban people to villages.

Scholars who emphasize urbanization as increasing links between rural and urban seem to have neglected the historical links between villages and urban centres. In fact, the strict separation of villages and urban centres was not established by the city walls but by the *hukou* system (permanent residence registration). The classification of people according to urban residence and agricultural residence with restriction on rural-urban migration was like an invincible wall that separated the rural from the urban, and this policy was not relaxed until after 1978. During the pre-Reform period, it was almost impossible for rural people to acquire urban residential status and live in urban centres or to acquire properties there. Because of the advantages of having urban residence,[4] urban people naturally wanted to keep their status. Thus the artificial separation between rural and urban is not age-old but the creation of the policy introduced by the communist government, especially during the Great Leap Forward period (1958-65). With economic liberalization in 1978, the introduction of the household responsibility system (*jiating lianchan chengbao ziran zhi*) allowed rural residents to find jobs in urban centres, thus providing much needed cheap labour for factories, most of which are located in or near urban areas. This has given rise to the now familiar influx of rural population to towns and cities. Since 1984, permanent rural-urban migration

has been officially sanctioned by the central government (cf. Lee 1992:111). Of course improvements in transportation and information technology have made the rural and the urban mutually more accessible. People in Quanzhou and towns in the region can attend a rural function and return on the same day, as we have often observed. However, without an official urban resident status, the rural migrants living in cities are administratively and socially discriminated against. For example, in Quanzhou, students are allocated to schools in their particular area of residence. Children of rural migrants in Quanzhou city are not entitled to study in the schools there because of their official rural residence status unless they pay an expensive fee, which is usually around RMB 20,000 or more. This violates the migrants' "right to the city," or more specifically, the "right to urban life," to use Lefebvre's terms (Lefebvre 1996:158).

Contemporary Urbanization of Quanzhou

A notable feature of the urbanization of Quanzhou since 1978 is physical urbanization, especially the expansion of the city's geographical size, as can be seen in Table 2. This is due not just to economic growth but also to political decisions and administrative planning by the municipal government. The geographical area of the city was 6.96 sq. km. in 1983 and by 2005 it had grown to 70 sq. km., expanding by 63 sq. km in 22 years. This speed of growth is unprecedented. Continued growth at this remarkable rate is expected since the municipal government's 15-year plan (2005-20) considers that the city is relatively small compared to the bigger cities in other provinces, and that this may hinder further economic development of the city and its surrounding areas. It is planned that by 2010, the area of the city will be increased to 175 sq. km. with an expected population of 1.75 million. The government plans to make Quanzhou a modern metropolis (teda chengshi), so that by 2020 the whole city will be modernized (*quan shi jiben xiandaihua*). The government aims to make the city a major manufacturing centre and a major port in China, and to be at the economic forefront on the "western side of the [Taiwan] Straits" (Quanzhou Municipal Government 2005). If successful, this will enable Quanzhou to reclaim its historical glory, but at the cost of many farmers losing their land.

Official urbanization still puts emphasis on hukou classification. The Quanzhou municipal government plans to urbanize Quanzhou city by 60% by 2010 (Municipal Government 2005), meaning that 60% of the urban population will hold *chengshi hukou* or urban residential status. Indeed, the rapid administrative urbanization of Quanzhou since the economic Reform has involved acquiring farmland for industrial development and converting the status of farmers who lost their lands to "urban residence." This development has created "villages in the city" (*cheng zhong cun*) in newly developed urban sectors. These are villages that have lost their lands to government requisition and industrial development and are increasingly surrounded by urban development. However, the villages retain rural administrations even though their names have been changed to "neighbourhood committees." Even basic amenities may remain rural, such as depending on drawing water from wells where there is no supply of piped water. This "Chinese" characteristic of urban development is described by one of our informants from Donghu village (Donghu Cun), one of the "urban villages" in Quanzhou:

> In 1982 each household was given land for cultivation. More than ten years later, the government took over our land to build roads, factories and houses. By 1991, all the lands in our village were requisitioned by the government. Then we heard about "*nong zhuan fei*" (changing from agricultural residence to non-agricultural residence), and later all villagers were given urban residence. [Interviewed on May 8, 2005]

The Quanzhou Maritime Museum is one of the new buildings located on the land acquired from the villagers mentioned by the informants. Cleared of rural landscape and occupied by government and business buildings, this area is now part and parcel of Quanzhou city, and is perceived as such by both locals and outsiders.

The city of Quanzhou has been expanding by absorbing rural areas through administrative measures that facilitate subsequent urban development, as well as the industrialization and urbanization of villages. By 2004, the measure to change agricultural residence to urban

TABLE 2
Geographical Size of Quanzhou City since 1983

Period	Area (sq. km.)
1983	6.96
1988	28
2000	40
2002	49
2004	58.2
2005	70
2010	175 (planned)
2020	450 (planned)

Sources: Quanzhou Municipal Development Planning Managemnent Bureau 1983; Quanzhou Municipal Government 2004, 2005.

residence had reached Shudou village, which is nine kilometers from downtown Quanzhou. It is administratively under the jurisdiction of Jiangnan township which in turn is administratively under the Licheng urban district in Quanzhou municipality. The village has an area of 2.5 sq. km. and a population of 2,598 people. In 2003, all the farmland here were requisitioned by the Quanzhou municipal government for the development of "Quanzhou Jiangnan High-Tech Information Technology Industrial Estate" (*Quanzhou jiangnan gao xinjishu dianzi xinxi chanye yuanqu*), and the residential status of the villagers was changed from agricultural to urban. In line with the implementation of this kind of administrative urbanization, since 2002 the Quanzhou municipal government has been making administrative changes in "urbanized" areas by changing the administrative systems of xiang (an administrative unit comprising villages) and zhen (township) to urban district office (*jiedao banshichu*), and village administration village (*xingzhen cun*) to "neighbourhood committee" (*shequ juweihui*). This change in local administrative structure goes hand in hand with the conversion of agricultural residence to urban residence in Quanzhou administrative urbanization. We shall discuss the impact of this policy on affected residents and their perception of it.

The administrative urbanization of Quanzhou can be seen in Table 3. Before 1997, the administrative centre was Licheng which administered five jiedao banshichu, eight xiangzhen (townships, namely Fuqiao, Jiangnan, Donghai, Chengdong, Beifeng, Luoxi, Majia and Heshi), and two *nongchang* (farms, namely Qingyuan and Shuangyang). In 1997 Licheng was divided into three *qu* or districts, namely Licheng, Fengze and Luojiang. Most of the zhen and the two farms are now jiedao banshichu, along with some new ones (Donghu, Fengze, Quanxiu and Wan'an). Of those not yet classified as urban, Hongshan is a new zhen. The conversion of a zhen to jiedao banshichu indicates administrative urbanization, and the residents' status is converted from agricultural residence to urban residence.

The creation or reclassification of qu, jiedao banshichu and zhen are initiated by local governments and requests via various administrative levels have to be finally approved by the State Council of the central government. Much lobbying is usually needed for final approval. In this way the city and townships in Quanzhou municipality have been re-classified and re-ranked. Shishi was originally a township in Jinjiang county but in 1987 it was designated a *shi* or municipality.[5] The townships of Jinjiang and Nan'an became county-level shi in 1992 and 1993 respectively. In 2000 the northeastern part of coastal Hui'an was taken out of Hui'an county to form Quangang qu, to be administered directly under the Quanzhou municipality. Today, Quanzhou as a *shengxia shi* (a municipality directly under the jurisdiction of the provincial government) administers Jinjiang municipality, Shishi municipality, Nan'an municipality and the counties of Dehua, An'xi, Yongchun, Hui'an, and the urban districts of Licheng qu Fengze qu, Luojiang qu, and Quangang qu. The metropolis plan of the Quanzhou government involves incorporating into Quanzhou city Cidian township, Zimao township and part of Chendai township in Jinjiang county, Fengzhou township in Nan'an county, Dongyuan township, Luoyang township and Baiqi xiang in Hui'an county. The Fujian provincial government had approved this ambitious plan in 1996.

The re-classification of towns has the effect of empowering the local authorities of towns thus promoted. They acquire more administrative power including the power to make more decisions about local economic and urban development, as Marton (1998:13) has described in his study of urbanization in lower Yangzi Delta. However, it can be misleading to talk of administrative urbanization without considering the economic dimensions. In fact

TABLE 3
Administrative Urbanization

	Urban areas (jiedao banshichu) before 1985	Classified as urban areas (jiedao banshichu) in 1985-1997	Classified as urban areas (jiedao banshichu) after 1997	Not yet classified as urban areas (zhen)
Licheng qu	Kaiyuan, Haibin, Lizhong, Linjiang		Fuqiao, Jiangnan	
Fengze qu	Huada	Quanxiu	Donghu, Fengze, Donghai, Chengdong, Beifeng, Qingyuan	
Luojiang qu			Wan'an, Shuangyang	Luoxi, Majia, Heshi, Hongshan

Sources: Compiled from the local governments' websites and interviews with Quanzhou government officials.

industrialization and entrepreneurial development play the crucial role in transforming post-Reform villages and urban centres. It is after some economic urbanization and subsequent physical urbanization that the government tends to adopt policies which bring about administrative urbanization. The interaction of these processes speeds up urbanization as well as intensifying its scale. A good illustration of this is the urbanization of Chendai township, which is about 10 km from downtown Quanzhou.

Traditionally the people of Chendai depended on farming and fishing, including breeding young razor clams (*chengmiao*) for their livelihood. The original market town was rather small, comprising only a few rows of shops.[6] After 1979, taking advantage of opportunities brought about by economic liberalization, the people gradually turned to manufacturing and running businesses. In 1979, there were more than 800 firms manufacturing shoes, paper and plastic materials, as well as making cloth and clothes. By early 1990, local entrepreneurs mostly specialized in manufacturing shoes, consequently the farm labour force decreased from 80% of the total farming and industrial labour force to 20% (Ding 1998). By 2000, Chendai had become a *xiecheng* ("shoe town"),[7] where not only all kinds of modern shoes are manufactured, but all the materials related to shoe manufacturing are produced as well. In fact all processes related to shoe-making including packaging, transportation and arranging exports are handled in Chendai. All the factories and shopping centres were built on farmland. Most farmers have become entrepreneurs or work in factories or shops, and those who still have farms rent them out to the few surviving farmers and some migrants. The amount of agricultural land has decreased because of the invasion of factories. Despite the physical urbanization that has taken place, the people in Chendai are not yet re-classified as belonging to urban households. However, the municipal government has already planned to incorporate Chendai into the planned metropolitan Quanzhou by 2020. This is an example of economic transformation bringing about urbanization, including development that spurs administrative urbanization.

In the case of Shudou mentioned earlier, some villagers had already begun to do business in spare parts for cars even before 1978. The village authorities cooperated by not reporting this "capitalist" activity. After the economic Reform began, family enterprises in Shudou took off and developed rapidly, and many villagers gave up farming. In other words, family enterprises had already developed in many villages before 1978. Villages like Shudou show that there existed ripe conditions for economic development in the few years before economic Reform and that the Chinese themselves including enterprising villagers played crucial roles in the miraculous economic achievement of post-Reform China, alongside foreign investment. After economic liberalization, the enterprising families used farmland for their economic enterprises or bought land from others. Only after considerable rural industrialization did the government decided to requisition the remaining farmland. Villagers who need land will have to buy back the requisitioned lands from the government at a much higher price.

The paradox of Chendai and Shudou results from the politics of local governments. As part of the plan to develop Quanzhou into a metropolis, the Quanzhou municipal government had requested that the State Council incorporate it into Licheng district. However, the Jinjiang local government, which administers Chendai directly, opposed this move. As such the Quanzhou government has not been able to make it administratively urban via the Licheng administration. The politics of local governments aside, administrative urbanization has to do with a local government's plan, which is influenced by genuine concern for development and urbanization as well as the interest of entrepreneurs and developers. Once a local government makes its decision, ordinary citizens under the communist system have little room for opposition. One hears of accusations of *guanshang goudang*, dealings between officials and business people, and this is not uncommon. Furthermore the people perceived to benefit most from this kind of administrative urbanization are the entrepreneurs and corrupt officials. Under the communist system, things can be done fast and effectively under able leaders. If they have vision and take into consideration the interest of ordinary people, the people will benefit, too; otherwise there is the frustration of appeals and complaints unheeded by unsympathetic officials.

The above analysis shows that economic transformation is the primary factor in China's urbanization, including administrative urbanization. The urbanization of villages close to existing towns is brought about by rural industrial development since the Reform as well as by urban expansion. Nevertheless, private enterprise had already emerged illegally in some villages before this. Physical urbanization as a result of rural industrialization, which physically links the villages to the larger urban landscape, makes these villages appear "urban." Whether the affected villagers feel urban or not is another matter (see below). Whatever they feel, it is only a matter of time before this imposed urbanity becomes part of a city's increasing urbanization. This brings us back to the question "what is urbanization?" We feel that this concept is more useful if we keep to the common sense understand-

ing of it as town-building or city-building, processes linked to the development of an urban landscape, rather than treating it as a way of life (urbanism) or an increase in connections between rural and urban. In fact, where villages are not linked to an urban centre by an emerging urban landscape, they remain as distinctly rural villages in both physical and sociocultural terms despite rural industrialization and influx of migrant workers. For example, the village of Shizhen 40 km from Quanzhou, which we have included in an earlier project of ours,[8] is one such village. There, many villagers have either given up farm lives and earn their income from rural enterprises making cloth and clothes or from renting rooms to migrant workers. Shizhen remains a distinctly rural village despite the presence of some factories and the fact that most people do not farm anymore. The villages and villagers' ways of life may change, giving up farm life and enjoying similar amenities as urban people do, but the villages remain rural unless they are incorporated into an existing town or city or they themselves have developed an urban landscape to become towns.

Cultural Influences of Urbanization

In contrast to the official approach of urbanizing villages by re-classifying the villagers as urban residents, the inhabitants of the "urbanized" villages actually care more about their livelihood than whether their status is urban or not. This is reflected in the view of a man from Shudou, who is 44 years old:

> Being re-classified as urban residents has not brought any further improvement in our lives, except that farmland was requisitioned by the government, and the people are forced to find other means of livelihood. Actually it is not better as we do not get any social security from the re-classification, unlike before when we could always rely on farming. Now if we do not have a job, we have no money to buy food. Other than the change in our residential status and that we lost our land, there is no positive change [referring to administrative urbanization]; the condition of village roads and hygiene remains the same. If urbanization helps the village to prosper and there are good jobs, it is alright. As to the change from agricultural households to urban households, I have no opinion, even if I have an opinion it is of no use. This is the decision of the government. What is important is that there are opportunities to earn money and that we can live well. It does not matter whether we have agricultural residence or urban residence. [Interviewed on May 10, 2005]

Overall life in Shudou has improved since 1978, but at the individual level, those who have not benefitted as much are of course not happy about losing farmland. Most of the people in Shudou who are 40 years old or older are sentimental about land ownership, since they had experienced farm life and owning land. They are worried about life without land. An 80-year-old man said bluntly, "If you own a piece of land there is always some guarantee in livelihood, as one can always cultivate crops to get food. When the land is sold and if one does not have a job, one will have no means of livelihood."[9] However younger people have different views. In Shudou where the reclassification to urban status was recent, most villagers when asked about their status say, "we do not know whether we are urban people (*chengli ren*) or agricultural villagers" (*noncun ren*), or "now we are half urban people half villagers" (*ban nongcun ren ban chengli ren*). Younger people in their twenties and thirties are more conscious of the lack of entertainment facilities. An informant of 20 years old said,

> Shudou is not part of the city yet (*busuan chengnei*), as it does not have urban prosperity. In the early evening, it is already dark everywhere. It is not like in Quanzhou city where it is bright with many people even late at night. Shudou people go to downtown Quanzhou (*chengli*) to buy clothes and major items; the transportation is so convenient and one can make a few trips a day. This is like in the past when we attended school in the city. Now we are *jumin* [urban residents], but we also go to downtown Quanzhou to buy clothes or to have fun, as before. [Interviewed on May 10, 2005]

In the case of villages that have become "villages in the city," whether recently like Shudou, or those that had been "urbanized" a decade or so earlier (such as Donghu village), the people generally use the tem *cun* or "village" and are not used to the label shequ juweihui (neighbourhood committee). And they still refer to Quanzhou city as *chengnei* (literally inside the city) or *shiqu* (city area). The attitude towards residential status, of course, has very much to do with social change since 1978. In the pre-Reform period, urban residents had some privileges over agricultural residents (see note 3) who aspired to obtain urban residential status. Now *nong zhuan fei* (reclassification as urban residents) does not bring with it special advantages, and so it does not mean much to the villagers who are naturally more concerned about the overall impact of the policy of administrative urbanization on their livelihoods. However as physical and economic urbanization increases, it is only a matter of time before people will see their locality as part of the larger urban complex.

For existing city residents, urbanization, be it further urbanization of the city or expansion of the city through industrial development and administrative urbanization of nearby villages, is generally welcomed for the convenience that it has brought. There are more shopping centres and there are housing estates built on acquired farmland. As an informant said, "the streets are now broader, and there are more supermarkets, and it is convenient for us to buy things. Also the housing conditions have improved. Last time seven or eight people lived in a small house. Now two or three people live in a big house." New residential areas such as Donghu Xiaoqu, Yungu Xiaoqu and Donghai Bincheng, where the houses are modern and spacious, have emerged as prestigious residential areas for the growing middle-class in Quanzhou. Until recently these new suburbs were farmland and they are now administratively urban, that is, administered by jiedao banshichu. Although still not part of the city proper, they are fast becoming part of the urban landscape of Quanzhou.

The changing modernity of the city is another visible aspect of economic development and urbanization since 1978. The modernity dimension of physical urbanization is marked by new highrises (such as Baoxian Dasha, Zhongyin Dasha, etc., in the new quarter of the city), modern shopping centres owned by local and foreign business people including overseas Chinese (e.g., SM Plaza is owned by a Chinese person from the Philippines), Taiwanese food chains (Taiwanese-owned modern coffee shops are very popular among young people who see them as a symbol of urbanization and modernity), American global food chains (e.g., MacDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut), and others. Indeed, Quanzhou is reclaiming its status as a global city. It still has some way to go when compared to Fuzhou and Xiamen and a long way to go when compared to Shanghai and Beijing, where there are many more direct transnational links with other global cities and there are more transnational residents (people who live transnationally in these Chinese cities and in cities in their original countries of residence). Scholars on urbanization now pay much attention to globalization and transnational connections (cf. Robinson 2004, Smart and Smart 2003). The globalization and modernity of Quanzhou, including the roles played by Chinese overseas and Chinese from Taiwan, is a fascinating topic which we hope to explore further. The 15-year plan of Quanzhou municipality may be ambitious but it is attainable. However, there is a need to make sure that the quality of life is improved too, as is indeed planned (*shixian quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui de mubiao*) (Quanzhou Municipal Government 2005).

Another very visible urban transformation is the influx of migrant workers who seem to have become a permanent feature of the city. While the local people despise or ignore them as a marginal group of people needed by the city's development, these migrants and their descendants will no doubt contribute to the ethnic diversity and cosmopolitan development of Quanzhou, as do professionals and business people from outside Quanzhou. The restaurants they run have become part of the changing urban landscape of Quanzhou and are already contributing to the evolving social diversity and vibrancy of the city. Unlike before the Reform, there are now Sichuan and Hunanese restaurants alongside Taiwanese and Western food chains catering not only to the growing migrant population but also to the changing and diversified tastes of the local Minnan (southern Fujian) people. Indeed, other than their much needed labour contribution, the migrants from outside Fujian have two great social impacts: food and language. Sichuan and Hunanese restaurants have popularized non-local foods to the Minnan people, enriching their tastes. Because the migrants do not speak the local Minnan language, Putonghua has become a common medium between the migrants and the local people. Consequently, as most Quanzhou people have realized, local people themselves now speak more Putonghua than before. It is migration rather than any government policy that has successfully popularized the use of Putonghua among the Minnan people who preferred speaking Minnan to Putonghua. In the rural areas there are still people who do not speak Putonghua well.

Conclusion

An important characteristic of China's urbanization is the industrialization of towns and villages, which has global significance because of China's emergence as "the workshop of the world," producing inexpensive Chinese products that are now sold worldwide. China's rural industrialization actually helps to avoid the growth of primate cities as experienced in most Southeast Asian countries (cf. Mcgee 1967), as the influx of migrants is not concentrated in a core city but is distributed in many industrializing towns and villages. Furthermore, historically China has many market towns. The policy of industrializing small towns to develop rural China was strongly promoted by the leading Chinese anthropologist and sociologist Fei, who passed away on April 24, 2005 at the age of 95. He was the first Chinese anthropologist who paid much attention to the roles of small towns in China's modernization (Fei 1985),[10] in particular in the region of Suzhou and Wujiang municipality in Jiangsu province, where Kaixiangong, the village where he did his doctoral research, was located.

"Rural" industrialization is an important factor in fast urbanization all over China, especially in the provinces along the coast, although ironically its success led to the transformation of these rural areas into urban municipalities. The speed and scale of urbanization are the combined result of industrialization and what may be called administrative urbanization socialist-style. While economic transformation is the primary force of urban development, the intervention of the government plays a major part in further encouraging economic development and urban expansion. The requisition of land from farmers may be unfair to farmers and benefits some corrupt cadres, but it facilitates industrial development and urban expansion. The patterning of these connected but distinct dimensions of urbanization helps to explain the distinct local textures of urbanization.

However, both the Chinese government and scholars need to pay attention to the plight of farmers who lose their land to state acquisition in the name of development and urbanization. In the case of Shudou that we have discussed, the conflict between the villagers and the government is not serious since a number of Shudou residents have become entrepreneurs who own factories in the area and many of those who are not so successful have found work in the nearby factories. Still the local residents are not happy that they had to give up their land and are poorly compensated compared to the high price of land sold by the local government to entrepreneurs (including local ones). Where the local residents receive little benefit from state land acquisition and are left unemployed, this becomes a serious problem that leads to bitterness and even open conflict. In an Overseas Chinese Farm (*huaqiao nongchang*, area settled by returned Chinese from Indonesia) in Quanzhou that we are studying, the acquisition of land by the local government and the conversion of local residents from agricultural to urban status are met with scepticism and bitterness. With the area yet to develop into an industrial site and the local people not having any alternate jobs (except young people who have found work as drivers in Quanzhou and other cities), this animosity is to be expected. The village is about 16 km from Quanzhou city and five km from the nearest town (Luojiang). Without any urban landscape, the village remains rural in appearance and in fact, even though it has been reclassified as urban. This is an example of how, in the absence of an urban landscape and the accompanying facilities of urban living, classification as urban does not make a place urban, although the government may be planning for future urban development.

By comparing Chendai and Shudou, we see both similar and diverse aspects of urbanization. Both have developed from rural industrialization. Chendai has developed from a small market town together with its surrounding villages. It has become urbanized both economically and physically, although it has not been administratively made urban and the residents still hold agricultural residence status (except a minority who work in government service). It is administratively under Jinjiang municipality (which in turn is under Quanzhou municipality), unlike Shudou, which is a single village that is administered directly by Quanzhou city's Licheng urban district office. Shudou is still on its way to urbanization, but the municipal government has already classified it as urban and the villagers as urban residents.

Our article thus shows two kinds of rural urbanization in China. The Chendai case shows one of a township becoming industrialized and urbanized but not yet administratively made urban. Such an urbanized township can remain a separate town, although Chendai will be incorporated into the planned mega-urban Quanzhou city. The case of Shudou shows a village becoming industrialized and on its way to being economically and physically urban and is already administratively urbanized. Our brief mention of Shizhen shows a case of a village where the villagers are leaving their farms for rural enterprises, but which remains a rural village. We see these patterns of "rural" industrialization and urbanization all over China. Urbanization is most significant in cities and market towns, but whether a village is urbanized or not depends very much on its proximity and links to a city or an urbanizing market town.

We also tried to show that in the study of urbanization there is a need to pay attention to the effects of imposed urbanization on the people affected. While the reclassification of farmers as urban dwellers together with other measures of administrative urbanization will, in the long-run, incorporate "the villages in the city" into the larger urban landscape, the affected villagers do not necessarily feel urban or see their villages as urban. They are more concerned about improved livelihood than whether they are urban or not. In the study of rural urbanization, there is a need to pay attention to the nature of villages and towns undergoing transformation and the infra-structure development that links villages to an existing town or city, as well as the views of the villagers themselves.

Quanzhou today is not yet a major city. The 15-year plan of the municipal government may succeed in turning it into a mega-urban region. There is of course much that is needed in economic and urban planning. In this push for development and urbanization, it is necessary to pay attention to the quality of life not only of existing urban residents but also of those who have lost their land to urban-

ization and industrialization. There is also a need to pay attention to environmental sustainability. Laquian (1995:238) described these goals very well in his discussion of the governance of mega-urban regions: "(1) efficiency in the delivery of urban services; (2) equity in the inter-relationships of groups and classes in the urban society; (3) economic development in the mega-urban region; and (4) environmental sustainability in the process of development." In the push for economic development and modernization, the issues of social equity and environmental sustainability tend to be neglected by the government and entrepreneurs. In fact, scholars in China have already pointed out the need to pay attention to the sustainability of the urban ecology (cf. Yang 1998; Ye and Lu 2003). This is, of course, a very important issue to which we hope the government will pay special attention. As McGee and Robinson (1995:350) mention, environmental degradation is perhaps the most challenging of the problems posed by mega-urbanization "because it is the most difficult to predict."

The macro-study of urbanization and the comparative survey of towns and cities are important for our understanding of urbanization. But the study of the local is equally important, especially in highlighting the cultural meaning of urbanization and what local people feel about urbanization. Of course, the study of the local involves studying the global in the local. This is obvious when we discuss the global influences on sociocultural aspects of urbanization. The global can be found in the individual voices of the local, as Mintz (2004:1) puts it, "through the individual voices of life history, the human and cultural meanings of globalization in the recent past can be made manifest." Anthropologists can contribute to the study of local urbanization, urban living and the cultural meaning of urbanization.[11]

Chee-Beng Tan, Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, NT, Hong Kong. E-mail: cbtan @cuhk.edu.hk
Yuling Ding, Quanzhou Maritime Museum, Donghu Street, Quanzhou, Fujian, 362000, China. E-mail: ding_yuling@yahoo .com.cn

Notes

1 For a recent study of China's cities by historians, see Eschenick (2000).

2 Here we are not concerned with urban as virtual or a "mental and social form" as discussed by Lefebvre (1996:131). We are concerned with the sociological aspects of urbanization.

3 *Zhouchang* refers to the length of the outer boundary of an area, in this case the city of Quanzhou. It is like a circumference except that the outer boundary is generally not round, hence we translate *zhouchang* as perimeter.

4 For example, those with urban residence status were eligible to work in government departments or state enterprises. Urban residents could get coupons to buy rice, meat, fish and cloth cheaply. Those with agricultural residence status had no such advantages. The only way they could try to change their residential status was for them to serve in the army and hope that they would be allowed to live in a city after discharge or to get into a university and be given a job in a city after graduation. In actual fact, very few of those with agricultural residence status were successful in changing their residential status.

5 A shi refers to a city and also the areas outside the city proper (*chengli*, *chengqu*) that are under its administration, and so shi is usually translated as municipality.

6 Due to urbanization, most zhen towns are of considerable size and are easily perceived as urban, but in the pre-Reform period many zhen market towns were quite small, more like bazaar towns (called *pekan* in Malay) in Southeast Asia. Smaller ones, made up of one or two rows of simple shops, are actually not perceived by the local people as urban.

7 This kind of economic development whereby a whole town specializes in making one product is common in a number of towns in post-Reform China. Shishan township in Nan'an munipacility, for example, specializes in making umbrellas and it has acquired the name *sancheng* ("umbrella town").

8 Our interest in the urbanization of Quanzhou and villages in the municipality is an offshoot of research we conducted under the research project "Lineage, Migration and Chinese Network: A study of Emmigrant Communities in Quanzhou of Fujian" (2001-04), of which Chee-Beng Tan was the Principal Investigator, and under which Yuling Ding conducted her doctoral field research in Shudou village (see Ding 2004). The other co-researcher in Quanzhou is Mr. Wang Lianmao who focused his research on Shizhen. In 2006 Tan initiated his research on returned overseas Chinese in Nanshan of Shuangyang in Quanzhou. This village is also administratively urban although it is in every respect rural. Our research methodology was participant observation, through which we talked to many people. For the purpose of writing this article, we conducted interviews in 2005 and 2006 with a focus on urbanization, interviewing government officials, local entrepreneurs and revisiting our informants.

9 Interviewed on May 10, 2005.

10 For a description on the development of small towns and China's modernization, see Ma (1992).

11 This article is a revision of the paper presented at the international conference Asian Horizons: Cities, States and Societies, Singapore, August 1-3, 2005. We thank Alan Smart for his comments which were very helpful in making our revisions. The final responsibility rests with the authors.

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