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The urban transition and beyond
Facing new challenges of the mobility and settlement transition in Asia

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1. Rural-urban migration and the urban transition in Asia

With a total population of 4.2 billion, Asia is the most populous continent in the world, hosting more than three-fifths of the human population. It has experienced fast socioeconomic development in recent decades.

Migrants not only are the main labour source for labour intensive manufacturing and service industries in these cities but also play an increasingly important role in the industries relating to information technology and cultural development. In Beijing for instance, migrants accounted for half to three fourths of the labour force in the industries ranging from service to households to construction and manufacturing, and nearly half of the labour force in the industries ranging from information transmission, computers services and software to real estate, culture, sport and entertainment, according to the 2010 census (Ma, Hu & Yin, 2014: 340). Furthermore, the inflow of these migrants makes the age structure of major migrant destination cities much younger than it would otherwise be the case, reducing the proportion of the population aged 60 and above from 22.69% of the total population, which would be the case if there had been without migrants, to 14.94% in Shanghai at the time of the 2010 census (Zhang, 2015).

Clearly, the economic booms and agglomeration economies have been the underlying driving force for the inflows of migrants to the cities; at the same time, it is these energetic and hard working migrants who constitute the backbone of these cities, and it is (n)-4(e)- 6aBS 0 Tse

2.2 The mobility transition and new forms of migration in Asia

Another important development that makes the urban transition paradigm focusing on rural urban migration inadequate in Asia is related to the well-known mobility transition theory. In 1971, Zelinsky published his classic paper on the hypothesis of mobility transition, in which he points out that "there are definite, patterned regularities in the growth of personal mobility through space and time" (Zelinsky, 1971). Zelinsky divides human mobility into five forms, namely international migration, domestic migration to the remote areas, rural urban migration, urban urban migration and intra-urban migration, and circulation and its transition into five stages, namely pre-modern traditional society (I), the early transitional society (II), the late transitional society (III), the advanced society (IV), and the future superadvanced society (V). Mainly based on the experiences of western countries, he demonstrates that different forms of mobility exhibit different trajectories in their evolution from the first to the last stage of the mobility transition. Thus while rural urban migration starts to decline in the later period of the late transitional society after its upward trend in the earlier transition stages, urban urban and intra-urban migration, as well as circulation are still active in this period of the mobility transition, and will keep their upward trend in the stages of advanced society and the future superadvanced society.

Examined in the context of the mobility transition theory, many countries in Asia are already in, or approaching quickly the stage of the mobility transition.

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