

Editorial

Challenges in Urban Management

Chengri Ding, Shih-Kung Lai

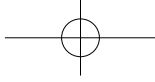
China has more than 670 cities, comprising approximately 50% of the population, making it the world's most rapidly urbanizing country. This trend is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. Despite the comforts and convenience provided by cities, urbanization also generates problems, such as traffic congestion, poor air quality, expensive housing, slums, increased crime rates, and unemployment. These problems must be dealt with through the implementation of sound policy based on scientific research in the field of urban management. The field of urban management was developed to meet these needs through the application of modern management techniques to the planning and regulation of cities.

Urban management is an applied science integrating two seemingly disparate elements: cities and management. Cities represent a collection of individuals, businesses, and their interactions concentrated within a limited area. Developing a deeper understanding of these interactions is crucial to the economic and social well being of all inhabitants. In particular, it is necessary to investigate the role of markets in the formation and dynamics associated with the development of urban centers. Another crucial issue is the connection between urban forms and the competitiveness of cities in attracting investment and talent. Finally, researchers must investigate the relationship between urban geography and problems such as congestion.

Unlike the management of smaller systems, such as businesses, urban management deals with systems of extreme complexity, which require a highly specialized set of tools and sophisticated modeling to examine economic, social, environmental, and transportation-related issues.

The problems scrutinized by researchers in urban management can be roughly divided into the physical and non-physical. Physical aspects include problems related to spatial arrangement that have been the traditional concern of urban planners. These include land use and management, transportation, infrastructure, architecture and construction, real estate, the environment, and disaster mitigation. The non-physical or socio-economic aspects include issues related to economics, sociology, political theory, public management, public finance, crime, taxation, and social welfare.

Urban management deals mainly with planning, governance, and regulations. Planning focuses on making, arranging, and coordinating decisions. Regulations emphasize the restriction,



expansion, and distribution of rights. Governance focuses on collective choices and actions as manifested by central bodies such as local and central governments. For the goals of urban management to be fully realized, all three of these aspects must be dealt with in a balanced manner. With continued research and implementation of concepts related to urban management, urban development can be improved, strengthening national identity and raising the standard of living for all who reside there.

