China’s Urban Statistics on the Basis of Different Levels of Official Statistics

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Outline

Urban statistics on the basis of different levels of official Statistics is the only nation-wide system that adopts city as the basic statistical unit.

- Development of Urban Statistics in China
- Contents of China Urban Statistics
- Data Collection for China Urban Statistics
- Main difficulties and problems of urban statistics
1. Development of Urban Statistics in China

Urban statistical work in China started in the early 1960s. A one-time survey of 39 cities was arranged in 1962.

The basic situation of the national economy card survey of all cities was arranged in 1974.

The survey of the urban basic situation of the national economy card was further strengthened in 1979.
The Urban Basic Situation of the National Economy Card was renamed as the Basic Urban Statistical Yearbook in 1982. Up to then, the China urban socio-economic statistical system had been formally established.
The development of the statistical indicator:

The number of indicators had been increasing gradually and then progressing to better though less indicators. At present there are about 275 indicators.

The indicator system has been changed from one taking priority on industry to a more comprehensive and sustainable system.
2. Contents of China Urban Statistics

China urban statistics adopt two statistical systems for different level cities:

- prefecture-level and above cities
- county-level cities
2.1 Statistics of prefecture-level and above cities

Statistics of prefecture-level and above cities adopt the Urban Social Economy Basic Information Statistics Form System. The target of the statistics cover the 288 prefecture-level and above cities all over the country, and are further divided into “whole city” and “urban districts”.
The indicators include city population, employment, resources, economic and social development, and environment, etc. The detailed contents include five sub-systems that reflect:

- urban administrative division, population, labor and land resources. It includes 41 indicators;
the situation of urban economic development. It includes 127 indicators;
the urban social development. It includes 59 indicators;
the information of urban infrastructure, It includes 22 indicators;
the urban environmental protection. It includes 12 indicators.
2.2 Statistics of county-level cities

Regarding statistics of county-level cities, the *Statistical Reporting System of Basic Socio-economic Information in County-level Cities* is employed. It consists of 182 indicators. This system covers 374 county-level cities nationwide, with breakdown by “whole city” and “urban districts”.
3. Data Collection for Urban Statistics

3.1 Channels of Data Collection

There are three data collection channels for urban statistics:

- statistical bureaus in the government.
- other relevant statistics of government departments.
- administrative records of relevant government departments and organizations.
3.2 Work-flow of Data Collection

3.2.1 The Department of Urban Survey of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) is in charge of formulating and revising the urban statistical indicators for county-level and above cities. This system is distributed to bureaus of statistics in provinces and is then further distributed to every city.
3.2.2 The statistics from cities on and above prefecture-level are reported to the Department of Urban Survey of the NBS from a bottom-up approach.

Cities → provincial bureau of statistics → Department of Urban Survey of NBS.
3.2.3 The Department of Rural Survey of NBS is in charge of formulating and revising the System for Report Forms of County Socio-economic Information Statistics.

NBS → provincial Bureau of Statistics → prefecture-level city → county-level.
3.2.3 County-level cities statistics are reported to the Department of Rural Survey of the NBS from a bottom-up approach.

Bureaus of statistics of County-level cities → prefecture-level cities → The provincial level bureaus of statistics → the Department of Rural Survey of the NBS.
3.2.5 Some indicators are provided to city-level statistical department by the upper level statistical department. These indicators mainly include those from sample surveys, such as population, or cross-city (e.g. region) indicators.
4. Main difficulties and problems of China’s urban statistics

China's urban statistics were established and developed adapting to the development in China's urbanization process, and alongside to the improvement of people’s cognition of cities. But China's urban statistics are subject to limitations of the current administrative system and the statistical system. There are many difficulties and problems that need to be further enhanced and improved.
4.1 Indicator system should be further improved

Faced with the limitations of report form of different specialized statistical systems, the urban statistical system is still not completely in the statistical methods, coverage.
4.2 The lack of urban statistics at county level

It is often difficult to differentiate statistical data of urban area at the county level as the county-level city doesn’t have the information following a "pure" city concept. Hence, this will affect the comparability of cities’ statistical data.
4.3 Accuracy of splitting of statistical data in strips

Some strip units, such as railway transportation, finance, implement management system that cuts across industries and administrative regions. The urban statistical data should be split by administrative area. Sometimes the splitting criteria are different, and as a result the splitting results are different, affecting the accuracy of the split data.
4.4 Inconsistency between government statistics and department statistics

- **Statistical definition is not consistent**
  Some statistical definitions, coverage and methods will be inconsistent between the department statistics and government statistics.

- **Lack of department statistics**
  There are many gaps in department statistics. Some departments failed to provide some data and information about urban economy.

- **Difficulty of departments’ cooperation**
  China’s urban statistical work involves nearly 30 related departments. The difficulty of seeking departments’ cooperation is always an important problem to statistical workers.
Thank you!