

**Urban Development Issues in China's Cities: Part Five**  
**Necessary policy development on the road to social harmony**

"Developing policies to build a harmonious society"

By Yan Jirong

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Abstract: The uneven development of Chinese society has become increasingly apparent in recent years. Differences between urban and rural environments, and between regions and sectors have deepened income disparities and the rich-poor divide. Meeting the costs of healthcare, education and housing is difficult for the average citizen and even harder for the less fortunate; public services such as social welfare and safety measures are insufficient. The party and government have decided to solve these problems through a policy of "construction of a harmonious society". The author asserts that such a shift in development strategy is well-timed, and analyses the concept of a harmonious society and the public policy choices that are required for its success.

According to Yan Jirong, a harmonious society is based on social justice. Basic policies are therefore necessary to ensure equal opportunities and freedom of choice for every citizen. By shifting power from the wealthier classes to those who until now could not improve their lives, these policies would allow all members of society to take their future into their own hands.

In order to promote and guarantee social justice, the author suggests that public policy must: widen access to the free market and to career opportunities, aim to eliminate sector-level monopolies and break monopolistic holdings, respect the principles of a free-market economy, provide legislation to orient those operating on this market, and guarantee free competition. This is more urgent than abolishing the current household registration system. A new framework must be created to provide migrant workers with equal opportunities and freedoms.

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