



# Evolutionary Characteristics of China's New Urbanization Policies (2012-2023) --Based on quantitative analysis of policy texts

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**Abstract.** New urbanization plays an important role in supporting the construction of Chinese-style modernization, and working documents at the government level reflect the contents and tasks of new urbanization construction at different stages. This paper takes 143 policy documents issued at the national level from 2012 to May 2023 as samples, quantitatively analyzes their governmental attributes and policy contents with the help of ROST software, and divides the new urbanization policies into three phases according to the year of the national plan release. The study shows that the development trend of new urbanization is changing with the change of time, and the objectives of new urbanization policies are also changing, striving to satisfy people's wants and enhance the standard of urban development.

**Keywords:** new urbanization policy, 11 years, evolution, quantitative analysis

## 1 Introduction

The past decade has seen great progress toward the long-awaited goal of scientifically comparable urbanization measures, thanks to the combined efforts of multiple disciplines<sup>[1]</sup>. Modernization requires urbanization, which is also a key strategy for eradicating the split structure between cities and rural areas. As urbanization continues to advance, with the rapid expansion of large, medium-sized, and small towns, traditional urbanization has been the driving force behind rapid economic and social development. At the same time, deep-rooted contradictions and problems keep surfacing, and traditional urbanization is no longer adapted to the needs of China's economic and social development. New urbanization is a new concept based on China's national conditions. Premier Li Keqiang urged the government to build and enhance the system and mechanism for the integration and coordination of urban and rural areas when he made a government work report at the Second Session of the 12th National People's Congress. Since the release of the 13th Five-Year Plan, China's new urbanization has played an active role, and in 2021, China's urbanization rate has reached 64.72%. Macro-level

urbanization, playing an irreplaceable role, and reflecting the contents and tasks of new urbanization at different stages.

This paper takes 143 policy documents issued at the national level from 2012 to May 2023 as samples, and quantitatively analyzes their governmental attributes and policy contents with the help of ROST software, in an attempt to answer the following questions: what is the evolution history and characteristics of China's new urbanization since 2012? What is the direction and optimization path of its policy evolution? In theory, it is helpful to provide certain research references and inspirations for China's new urbanization, and in practice, through the systematic analysis of China's new urbanization policies, it can better guide and promote the development of various industries, and can help various industries to better understand and control the development strategy of the central government, and to clarify the focus of the work, to better accomplish their development tasks.

## 2 Literature Review

New urbanization is an significant tactic and direction for the development of urbanization in China <sup>[2]</sup>, which is a sign that urbanization construction has entered a new era. Urbanization is not only a complex strategy, but also a key factor in sustainable socio-economic development. The important position of new urbanization makes the new urbanization policy a hot research topic in academia. At present, the research on new urbanization policy in academia mainly focuses on the evaluation of policy content and the effect of policy implementation.

The first is the research on the overall policy of new urbanization. Some scholars have evaluated China's new urbanization policy, the New Urbanization Plan (2014-2020) <sup>[3]</sup>. Wang Xinrui points out that the New Urbanization Plan (2014-2020) ignores local government fiscal reform and the issue of rural collective land <sup>[4]</sup>. Some scholars have studied the influential role of new urbanization policies, Peng Jing (2021) and other scholars have shown that The creation of new pilot urbanization areas plays an important role in promoting local urbanization<sup>[5]</sup>. Huanhuan Li and Wei Song (2020) conducted an in-depth analysis of Impact of the new urbanization policy on the development of rural areas<sup>[6]</sup>; Some scholars have also studied the evolution of China's urbanization policy orientation <sup>[7]</sup>. Battersby(2006) did a book review on New Urbanization: the urban-rural dichotomy<sup>[8]</sup>. Arouri(2017) proved that urbanization can reduce rural poverty<sup>[9]</sup>.

The second is the research on the pilot policy of new urbanization. In terms of population, Li Jing et al.'s (2023) study showed that the pilot policy of new urbanization can significantly improve the long-term settlement intention and social integration of the floating population<sup>[10]</sup>; in terms of ecology, Feng Yidai et al. (2023) and Chen Haibo et al. (2020) explored the impact of new urbanization policies on the ecological environment based on the comprehensive pilot policy of new urbanization in China<sup>[11]-[12]</sup>. Gao Feng et al. (2023) found that the pilot "smart city" policy significantly promotes green technological innovation of enterprises <sup>[13]</sup>; in the social aspect, Ji Xiaoqing et al. (2023) showed that the pilot new urbanization policy has a positive impact on the

promotion of common wealth<sup>[14]</sup>; in the land aspect, Guo Jie et al. (2022) showed that the pilot new urbanization policy has a positive impact on the promotion of commonwealth through modeling. (2022) explored the impact of new urbanization policies on future changes in rural settlements through model simulation<sup>[15]</sup>; in terms of industry, Shao Kun's (2022) study found that new urbanization policies can promote the optimization and enhancement of industrial structure<sup>[16]</sup>.

A review of previous research literature reveals that scholars' research on new urbanization policies is relatively rich, focusing on the evaluation of policy content and the study of policy implementation effects. However, research on new urbanization policies has yet to be expanded. Therefore, the contribution of this study is reflected in three aspects: first, a comprehensive compendium of new urbanization policies; second, the application of quantitative analysis methods to provide an in-depth summary of the policy texts; and third, through the study of the history of the development of China's new urbanization policies, it reveals the inherent laws of its development

### **3 Research Design**

#### **3.1 Sample Source and Data Selection**

The research object of this paper is the 143 new urbanization policies issued at the national level from 2012 to May 2023. The main sources of data were selected from the new urbanization policies published on the website of the Central People's Government, the official website of NDRC, and the official website of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China, and supplemented by the official websites of other relevant departments and the database of laws and regulations of Peking University Faber. To ensure the representativeness of the sample and the operability of the study, only policy documents issued at the national level were retained. After screening, 143 valid research samples were finally obtained.

#### **3.2 Research Methods**

This paper takes the policy text as the research object and conducts in-depth research on it through content analysis. ROST text content mining software is a content analysis software designed for humanities and social disciplines developed by Prof. Shen Yang of Wuhan University, and it is one of the tools for humanities digital research. In this paper, ROST CM6 software is used to construct the social semantic network of new urbanization policy text, to grasp the main issues and intensity of concern of new urbanization policy.

## 4 Quantitative analysis of the evolution of China's new urbanization policies

### 4.1 2012-2015: Initial Growth Stage

The period of 2012-2015 is classified as the initial growth stage of new urbanization, which is mainly based on the proposal of the 18th CPC National Congress, "Adhere to the road of new industrialization, informatization, urbanization and agricultural modernization with Chinese characteristics." New urbanization is actively explored.

In 2011, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 17th CPC Central Committee passed the 12th Five-Year Plan, which proposed to follow the path of urbanization with Chinese characteristics, and new urbanization began to comprehensively guide the construction of urban and rural areas across the country. 2012, China's urbanization rate reached 52.57%. In 2012, China's urbanization rate reached 52.57%, and the 18th Party Congress affirmed the construction of China's new urbanization, pointing out that "the level of urbanization has been significantly improved, and the coordination of urban and rural development has been enhanced". However, overall, China's urbanization is still lagging behind, with problems such as weak urban infrastructure and low levels of public services.

As can be seen from the keywords in **Fig. 1**. Content Analysis of China's new urbanization policies, 2012-2015, words such as "urban and rural areas" and "houses" appear in the center layer, indicating that rural and urban development and housing security are important issues of national concern. At the same time, various government departments have paid great attention to the construction of low-income housing and the housing difficulties of low-income residents. According to the NNUP (2014-2020), 234 million migrant workers were counted as urban population in 2014 due to the household registration system that separates urban and rural areas, but they and their families do not have stable homes in cities. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and The State Council mentioned several ways to solve the housing problem of migrant workers in the NNUP (2014-2020). At this stage, the administration seeks to promote the integration of urban and rural development and is committed to broadening the channels for housing security.

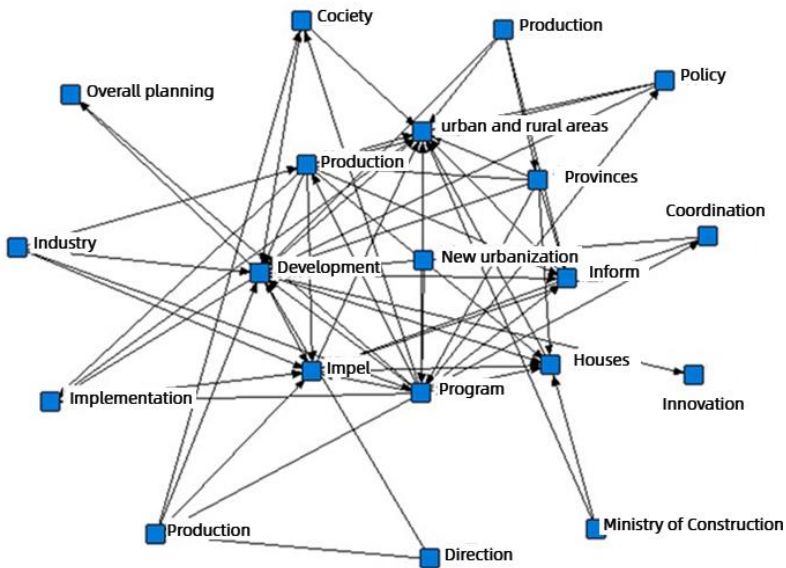


Fig. 1. Content Analysis of China's new urbanization policies, 2012-2015

#### 4.2 2016-2020: initial maturity stage

The period from 2016 to 2020 is classified as the preliminary maturity stage of new urbanization, and this stage is a gradual deepening of the preliminary growth stage. Since the release and implementation of the National Plan for New-Type Urbanization (2014-2020), all regions and sectors have seized the time to act according to the plan and actively carry out reforms and exploration. As of 2016, positive progress had been made in the various aspects of new urbanization, but there were still problems such as the slow progress of citizenship of the agricultural transfer population, the low quality of urbanization, as well as the fact that the role of the main driving force for expanding domestic demand had not yet been brought into full play. To cope with the economy's downward pressure, The State Council's executive meeting highlighted four initiatives in a bid to push forward people-centered new urbanization more vigorously in 2016 and unleash the potential of domestic demand more fully.

As can be seen from Fig. 2, this phase emphasizes the need to strengthen coordination among sectors, enhance the synergy of policy formulation and implementation, and achieve mutual support among policies and reform measures. The Chinese government launched a comprehensive pilot program for new urbanization in 2014 to explore key institutional reforms for new urbanization. In 2018, the tasks of the first batch of national pilots for new urbanization were completed. At that stage, the policy emphasized that a synergistic mechanism should be established among various sectors to form a policy synergy to promote new urbanization. It also emphasized the acceleration of comprehensive pilot projects for new urbanization.

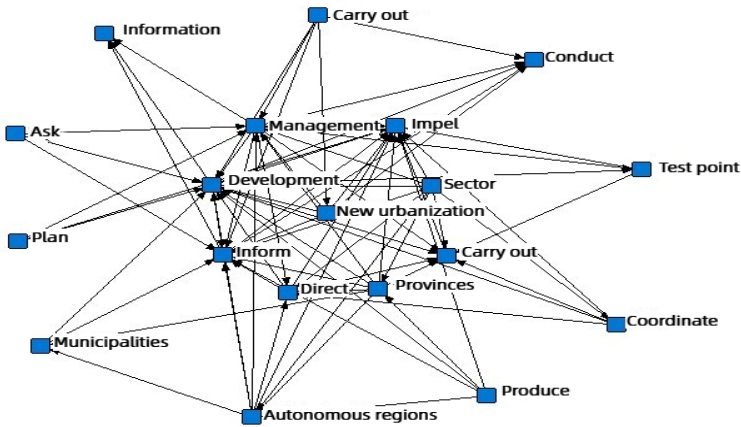


Fig. 2. Content Analysis of China's New Urbanization Policies, 2016-2020

### 4.3 2021-present: Deep development stage

The period from 2021 to the present is classified as the stage of in-depth development of new urbanization. Under the leadership of the new urbanization strategy, the goals set in the NNUP (2014-2020) have been achieved and the implementation of the plan has achieved remarkable results<sup>[17]</sup>. By the end of 2020, the urbanization rate of the national resident population had reached 63.89%, and the urbanization rate of the household population had reached 45.4%. During the "14th Five-Year Plan" period, the development of urbanization was faced with abundant opportunities and momentum, but at the same time, it was also necessary to meet the problems and challenges. The NDRC and relevant departments formulated the "Implementation Plan for New Urbanization in the 14th Five-Year Plan", which specifies the main objectives and tasks and major policy actions for promoting new urbanization in the 14th Five-Year Plan period.

As can be seen from **Fig. 3**, keywords such as "funds", "special" and "enterprises" appear in this period. This phase emphasizes strengthening the people-centered impetus for new urbanization, deepening the work process of urbanization of the agricultural population, promoting the urbanization layout of synergistic development of large, medium-sized and small cities and towns. Explore and improve the construction investment mechanism for county-level cities, and give full play to the power of public financial funds to provide assistance for the urbanization of county-level cities.

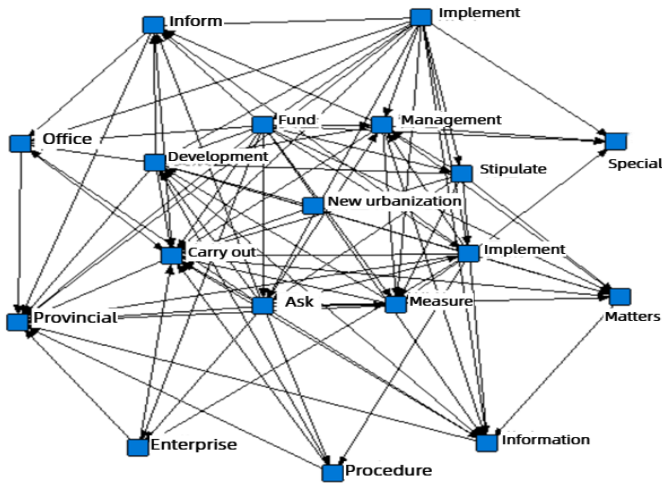


Fig. 3. Content Analysis of China's New Urbanization Policies, 2021 - Present

## 5 Conclusions

The purpose of new urbanization is to enable urbanization to develop in a healthy, sustainable, and inclusive manner. A number of issues that arise throughout the urbanization process are intended to be resolved by new urbanization policies, such as population transfer, employment, housing, public services, environment, etc., and play an important guiding role.

The development characteristics of new urbanization in different periods determine the content orientation of new urbanization policies. In the resolution of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, it was put forward that the dual structure of urban and rural areas has become the main obstacle restricting the integrated development of urban and rural areas. At this stage, relevant policies focus on coordinating the reform of the household registration system and the equalization of basic public services and are committed to breaking the urban-rural dichotomy. The State Council proposed the creation of a single household registration system for both urban and rural areas in its Opinions on Further Promoting the Reform of the Household Registration System, published in 2014. The document also emphasized the need to effectively protect the rights and interests of other resident populations, including the agricultural transfer population. The overall management and coordination of government departments is an important support to ensure the effective implementation of policies. The initial development stage emphasizes that various policymaking departments should strengthen coordination to ensure strong cooperation in policy implementation. In 2021, various policy initiatives for new urbanization took root, and various tasks were completed, and the national policy shifted from focusing on the speed of new urbanization to emphasizing the quality of new urbanization, through the issuance of special corporate bonds for the construction of new urbanization in counties, investors

were guided to pay attention to the field of new urbanization construction, and new urbanization in counties was supported. This will enhance the quality of new urbanization construction and promote economic and social development.

New urbanization policies are oriented to the urbanization of people and the improvement of urbanization quality. The new urbanization centered on people is a new concept of urbanization strategy put forward by the Party Central Committee since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, and it is also a new concept adapted to the reality of China's national conditions. The relevant policies emphasize, on the one hand, raising the level of basic public services for rural residents and improving the social security of migrant workers and their families who have moved to the cities; on the other hand, realizing the citizenship of migrant workers through the reform of the household registration system. In the new stage of development, promoting integrated urban and rural development is a key strategy for improving the quality of urbanization. The optimization of the spatial pattern of urbanization greatly affects the quality of new urbanization. The goal of new-type urbanization has changed from unilaterally pursuing the expansion of town scale and space in the past to focusing on improving the quality of town development.

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