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City size and urban labor productivity in China: New evidence from spatial city-level panel data analysis

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Highlights

- This paper provides an updated analysis of the city size-labor productivity nexus in urban China.
- We utilize a newer, longer and larger dataset (a panel of 281 cities over the period 2000-2013) and employ a spatial panel data model to control for spatial interaction and spillover effects among cities.
- We confirm that the scale impact of city size on urban productivity in China appears to have an inverted U shape, but its effect will be larger when the cities' industrial structure becomes more dominated by the service sector.
- There are also significant spatial interactions and spatial heterogeneity of urban agglomeration among Chinese cities.
- Our findings suggest that most Chinese cities are still undersized and should on average expand to accommodate 30-40% percent more than their current labor force.

Abstract

The previous literature has generally found that most Chinese cities were undersized in the 1990s. However, little is known about how urban agglomeration in China has evolved since the country began to experience much faster urbanization and deep marketization after 2000. Based on panel data of 281 cities between 2000 and 2013, our spatial panel data regression results

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