

## **Illegal Land Use and Construction in China: An Alternative View of Urban-rural Transition**

Wing-Shing Tang and Him Chung  
Department of Geography, Hong Kong Baptist University

### *Abstract*

This paper takes issue with the *desakota* model developed by Terry McGee by investigating illegal land use and construction in the urban-rural transition zone in China, with the additional case study of Tianhe village in Guangzhou. The paper emphasises the need to examine the geography of illegal activities along the approach of geographies of difference. It has shown that illegal land use and construction is prevalent in rural China. In rural area where cultivated land has been converted to non-agricultural purposes, peasants are left with no alternative but using land and constructing buildings illegally. This study has revealed that underneath the positive and integrative picture portrayed by the *desakota* model is its negative and dis-integrative counterpart. Illegal land use and construction is one such example. Unless we have changed the current practices, the geography of illegal land use and construction will be with us for some time.