

Research on the mechanism of regional integration based on the perspective of planning and development of the Yangtze River Delta city cluster

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Abstract: In recent years, with the development of the Yangtze River Delta city cluster, the regional integration of the Yangtze River Delta has become the focus of scholars' research. Through theoretical exploration, this study compares the current economic development level of different cities and finds that each city has certain deficiencies in urban planning, industrial structure, etc., which leads to the separation of blocks and local protectionism. Therefore, this paper proposes countermeasures for the above problems from the perspective of the Yangtze River Delta city cluster planning.

Keywords: Yangtze River Delta city cluster; regional integration; urban planning; urban economic development; industrial structure

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

As one of the most dynamic, innovative, open and modernized regions in China, the Yangtze River Delta is gradually becoming a "world-class city cluster with global influence".

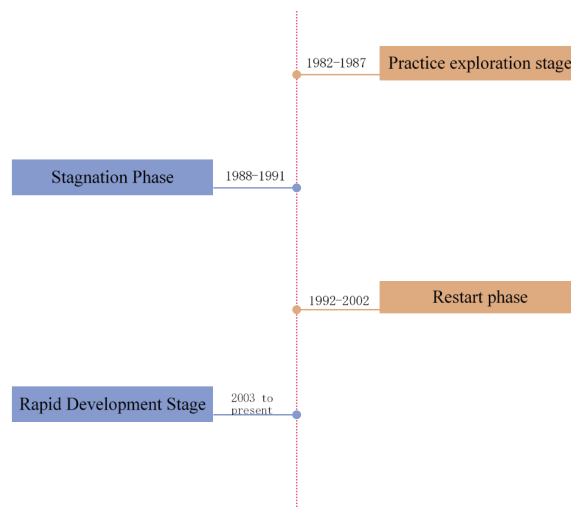


Figure 1: Yangtze River Delta Development Process

The development of the Yangtze River Delta can be traced back to the middle and late feudal society of China and can be divided into four stages, as shown in Figure 1:

First, the practical exploration stage (1982-1987), in 1982, the State Council proposed to establish the Yangtze River Delta Economic Zone with Shanghai as the center, and the synergistic development of Shanghai, Suzhou, Wuxi and other 10 cities as a whole started, but due to the planned economic system at that time, regional fragmentation.

The second is the stagnation stage (1988-1991), the Yangtze River Delta exploration fever cooled with the official abolition of the Shanghai Economic Zone Planning Office by the State Planning Commission in June 1988.

The third is the restart stage (1992-2002), in 1992, the 14th Organization Congress proposed to build Shanghai into an international economic, financial and trade center to achieve Yangtze River Delta and the whole Yangtze River basin area a new leap, to 1997, the establishment of the Yangtze River Delta City Economic Coordination Committee, clearly put forward the concept of the Yangtze River Delta Economic Circle.

The fourth is the rapid development stage (2003 to present), the Yangtze River Delta City Economic Coordination Committee has expanded several times, to today, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, a city and three provinces of all 41 cities above the prefecture level to join the Yangtze River Delta City Economic Coordination Committee, Yangtze River Delta integration The process of Yangtze River Delta integration has been accelerated [1](Figure 1).

1.2 Research content and methods

The Yangtze River Delta region, as the key development object and early promotion area of the national regional integration strategy, has made smashing achievements in economic development, education development, technological innovation development and ecological civilization development. The "Outline of the Yangtze River Delta Regional Integrated Development Plan" points out the goals of the Yangtze River Delta regional integrated development, namely, by 2025, the Yangtze River Delta integrated development has made substantial progress, roughly formed a pattern of coordinated development of urban and rural areas, the basic establishment of a system of integrated development of science and innovation industries, the basic realization of infrastructure interconnection and interoperability, the significant improvement of the capacity of common protection and joint management of ecological environment, the convenient sharing level of public services The institutional mechanism of integration will be more effective.

"High quality" and "integration" are the two key words for the development of the Yangtze River Delta region, which is also a difficult point for development. In today's complex domestic and international situation, the development of the Yangtze River Delta faces new opportunities and challenges. Due to the uneven level of development within the Yangtze River Delta region, there are high and low levels, which brings a difficult problem to the integration that cannot be ignored, namely the system and implementation of cross-regional systems and development measures. How to break through development bottlenecks and barriers to achieve high-quality integrated development is always a question to be considered. In this regard, through theoretical exploration and comprehensive use of literature survey method, we proceed to analyze the current situation and problems of the development of regional integration in the Yangtze River Delta city cluster, the root causes of regional integration, countermeasures and suggestions for development.

2. The development status of regional integration of the Yangtze River Delta city cluster

2.1 Concept of Yangtze River Delta city cluster and regional integration

(1) Yangtze River Delta City Cluster

The full name is Yangtze River Delta City Cluster, referring to the "One Belt, One Road" and the Yangtze River Economic Belt The important intersection zone of the Yangtze River Delta Regional Integrated Development Plan released at the end of 2019 specifies that the Yangtze River Delta City Cluster includes the entire area of Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui provinces and cities, with a total of 41 cities, as shown in Figure 2.g The Yangtze River Delta has been considered as one of the regions with the most dynamic economy, the strongest level of innovation, the highest degree of openness and the largest absorption of foreign population in China, and has a pivotal strategic position in the overall national modernization and all-round opening pattern.



Figure 2: Yangtze River Delta City Cluster

(2) Regional Integration

It is defined in economics as a state or process in which separate economies are integrated into a larger economy. The obvious advantage of regional integration is that it improves the synergy between regions or countries and enhances communication and exchange between regions, not only in economic aspects, but also in the fields of science and technology innovation, education development, and ecological civilization construction, which have likewise entered the stage of synergistic development. Internationally well-known organizations for regional integration include the European Union and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, while domestically there are the Yangtze River Delta, the Pearl River Delta, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, etc.

2.2 Current status of regional integration development in Yangtze River Delta

By today, the Yangtze River Delta region is the fastest growing region in China. In terms of economic development, although it only accounts for 2.1% of China's regional area, it contains 1/4 of China's total economic output and more than 1/4 of its industrial value added, and is regarded as a strong engine of China's economic development, with a total economic output equivalent to 20% of China's GDP and an annual growth rate much higher than the Chinese average.

Table 1: GDP of selected cities in the Yangtze River Delta, 2015-2021 Data source: National Bureau of Statistics

2015-2021 GDP of Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui (billion yuan)				
Year	Shanghai	Jiangsu	Zhejiang	Anhui
2015	26887.02	71255.93	43507.72	23831.18
2016	29887.02	77350.85	47254.04	26307.7
2017	32925.01	85869.76	52403.13	29676.22
2018	36011.82	93207.55	58002.84	34010.91
2019	37987.55	98656.82	62462	36845.49
2020	38700.58	102807.68	64689.06	38061.51
2021	43214.85	116364.2	73515.76	42959.18

As shown in Table 1, from the data of previous years, it can be seen that the GDP of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui has been steadily increasing with the trend of Jiangsu>Zhejiang>Anhui, although Anhui Province has the largest land area in the three provinces, but due to the administrative division, the different policies and financial support around, there is still a gradient gap between the economic development of Anhui and the other three places, while the per capita GDP of Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui is Shanghai> Jiangsu>Zhejiang>Anhui, and there is a large gap between the four regions, and there is still much room for economic integration.

According to relevant experts, the development within the Yangtze River Delta region is not balanced in terms of economic development level, industrial structure, quality of life of residents, income disparity of workers, regional cultural background, and development of modern service industry [2]. In addition, due to the varying degrees of importance and awareness of promoting the economic integration of the Yangtze River Delta, Shanghai occupies a prominent position in the overall development of the Yangtze

River Delta region, with many cities positioning their development as "Shanghai's backyard".

3. Analysis of the problems and root causes of the regional integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta city cluster

3.1 The main problems of the development of the Yangtze River Delta city cluster

(1) Prevailing local protectionism and lack of communication and cooperation

Although several city clusters in the Yangtze River Delta region are close to each other and the relationship between cities is relatively close, local protection and resource monopoly prevails in each region, and the relationship between various sectors and levels is complicated, which leads to more objective reasons and thus affects the coordination of interests of all parties and hinders cross-sectoral cross-regional cooperation to influence the development of city clusters. The infrastructure of land, water, electricity and highways in the region is divided from each other, while the urban construction and economic planning in the region are not closely connected with each other, and the soft resources such as culture, science and technology and education in the region are also fragmented.

(2) Lack of competition rules and monotonous industrial forms

The Yangtze River Delta city cluster is composed of Shanghai as the core, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Suzhou and other developed cities, with a large economic volume and a certain international influence. However, the cities have single development goals, overlapping structures, and insufficient relationship connections, resulting in the inability to integrate resources [3, 4]. For example, the main industries of each city are concentrated in real estate, electronics and machinery, food, textile and related trade industries. The phenomenon of industrial isomorphism is serious, resulting in the waste of resources.

At the same time in each city to compare with each other, the lack of rules, each other to play "price war", the formation of vicious competition, is not conducive to the common development of the cities, is not conducive to the complementary advantages between cities and the mutual integration of urban resources.

(3) The absence of a governance model for urban agglomerations constructed at multiple levels

Multi-level is a form of polycentric governance. Currently, local governments in the Yangtze River Delta region are still the main actors in the management of urban agglomerations, while markets, enterprises and some NGOs have low participation in the management of regional affairs and cannot effectively participate in urban planning. At the same time, the stratification of different levels of the Yangtze River Delta urban agglomerations is not clear enough and the objectives are too homogeneous, which in turn leads to a confusing division of labor within the urban agglomerations and slows down the development among the cities.

3.2 The main problems of the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region

(1) Separate bars and blocks, each closed

Currently, China has a five-level government management system: central, provincial, city, county, and township. The management between them is vertical, the counties are under the management of the municipalities, and the municipalities are under the management of the province. Horizontally, they are divided from each other, independent of each other, and each one of them is responsible for their own administration. Local governments have formed a relatively closed, self-contained economic operation system, and local protectionism and localism prevail. Although there is a high degree of consensus among all parties on the need for cooperation in various fields, there is still no practical solution.

(2) Excessive disparity between cities and uneven distribution of resources

The Yangtze River Delta region is dominated by large cities such as Shanghai, Hangzhou and Suzhou, while the surrounding cities are occupied with land and resources, and talents are attracted, inhibiting the development of small and medium-sized cities in the vicinity, forming an unfavorable situation of "a district to feed a city". It is not conducive to the coordinated layout of the Yangtze River Delta regional integration.

(3) Lack of central subject participation and unequal cooperation between levels

Although the central government intervenes in the development of regional integration of the Yangtze

River Delta through a series of policy measures, it does not participate in the layout from the main level, and the provincial governments remain as the local implementation subjects. In this case, one is likely to lead to local protectionism, and the other is that the provincial governments adjust the local regional integration in a single way, which greatly reduces the efficiency of the regional planning. Meanwhile, in cross-regional cooperation, the differences between cities, counties and communes easily lead to unequal dialogue and cannot be effectively developed in cooperation.

4. Measures for the development of regional economic and social integration

4.1 Optimize industrial structure adjustment, subdivision of diversified industrial division of labor

A mature industrial structure is the primary guarantee of regional integration in the Yangtze River Delta. At present, the biggest problem is that many industries in the Yangtze River Delta region have a single structure, and the industrial structure is homogeneous and serious, without regional characteristics. Through the accurate positioning of each city, subdivision of industrial division of labor, the coordinated development of urban clusters according to local conditions, effective use of regional resources of urban clusters, and accelerate the steady development of urban economy with high quality. At the same time, the integrated development of regional economy also puts forward the requirement for city clusters in the region to refine the division of labor for production links within the industrial chain, a form that is conducive to rationalizing the direction of the industrial chain, improving the upstream and downstream linkage mechanism of the industrial chain, promoting the effect of complementarity of advantages among city clusters, and improving the development of regional integration. In short, all the links of production of products in the industry is no longer limited in one enterprise or in one region. But according to the differences between regions, analyze the development direction from the perspective of the region as a whole, distribute to carry out better regions, form a staggered development, gradient distribution of industrial chain[5-7].

4.2 Play a radiation-driven role to establish core industries

To build an integrated economy, the industrial planning of city clusters should conform to the principle of complementary industrial structure in the region, on the one hand, focus on cultivating the "growth pole" of the regional economy, giving full play to the radiation-driven role of the core cities and driving the steady growth of the regional economy. On the other hand, it is also necessary to develop the core competitive industries of the cities themselves. In the entire Yangtze River Delta region, we will gradually influence the urban planning in the region based on innovative development and the concept of sustainable development. Developing core industries, maximizing the development of regional resources, improving the core capacity of industries and strengthening industrial development are important guarantees to promote regional integration among regions.

4.3 Strengthen the normal supervision and promotion work

The NDRC region is responsible for promoting the implementation of the national coordinated regional development strategy, organizing the formulation of regional plans and policies, promoting the implementation of strategies, plans and major policies for regional integration in various regions, and undertaking the day-to-day work of the relevant regional coordination leading groups, so it is particularly important to further develop the role of this institution to promote the regional integration of the Yangtze River Delta. It is recommended to further strengthen the tracking and analysis of the implementation of the planning outline, gain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and effects, carry out organizational assessments, coordinate and solve problems in implementation, supervise and promote the implementation of the plan, and summarize replicable and replicable experiences in a timely manner. Major issues should be reported to the central government in a timely manner, and the public participation mechanism for the implementation of the plan should be improved to listen to the views of the society extensively, so as to create a good atmosphere for the whole society to jointly promote the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta.

5. Conclusion

By taking the Yangtze River Delta city cluster as the research object, this paper discusses the mechanism of its economic planning and development and regional economic integration, which is a

supplement to the existing research system on the integration of the Yangtze River Delta city cluster, and can also provide the necessary reference basis for the integration of the Yangtze River Delta city cluster. In response to the current problems faced by the regional integration of the Yangtze River Delta, the state should become the main participant, refine the industrial division of labor, and avoid the vicious competition caused by industrial duplication; in industrial planning, focus on sustainable development, and create core industries to play a radiation-driven role; secondly, economic development has a certain role in promoting regional integration, increase regional innovation, and establish relevant mechanisms to promote the Steady development.

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