Internal Causes, Challenges and Realization Paths of Regional Coordinated Development to Promote Common Prosperity

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Abstract: Realizing regional coordinated development is not only conducive to implementing the new development concept, but also conducive to building a new development pattern and realizing the goal of common prosperity. However, at present, there are some problems, such as the gap between the northeast and the east, middle and west, the gap between the north and the south and the internal gap of the "the belt and road initiative", the spatial layout of metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations is dense in the east and sparse in the west, and the cooperation process between regions is slow. During the "Tenth Five-Year Plan" period and in the future, we should focus on cultivating economic growth points, taking county towns and central villages (towns) as important nodes of urban-rural integration and development, and metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations as growth poles to promote the construction of cross-regional economic belts; Focus on the construction of major economic belts and build a criss-crossing regional coordinated development network; Take "the belt and road initiative" as the guide and accelerate the construction of a new development pattern.

Keywords: Coordinated regional development; New development concept; Urban agglomeration construction; Construction of major economic belts; Common prosperity.

1. Introduction

Following the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2017) put forward the strategy of regional coordinated development for the first time [1], and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the Opinions on Establishing a More Effective New Mechanism for Regional Coordinated Development on November 18th, 2018 [2], the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2022) put forward the strategy of regional coordinated development once again [3]. Its fundamental purpose is to fully implement the new development concept, build a new development pattern and achieve high-quality development and common prosperity. In order to speed up the implementation of the regional coordinated development strategy, this paper mainly expounds its strategic positioning, challenges and path selection.

2. Internal Causes of Regional Coordinated Development

If development is always regarded as the Communist Party of China (CPC)'s "top priority in governing and rejuvenating the country" [3], the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has put forward a series of new concepts and ideas related to development in different periods according to the requirements of the situation, such as new development concepts, new development patterns, high-quality development and common prosperity, so as to guide the development of practice. As far as the relationship between regional coordinated development strategy and it is concerned, it is the connotation or realization path.

2.1. Fully implement the inherent requirements of the new development concept

Idea is the forerunner of action [5]. The Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee (2015) put forward the new development concept of "innovation, coordination, green, openness and sharing" for the first time. This new development concept is the basis of guiding China's economic and social development. Among them, "coordinated development" is put in the second place, which shows that the significance of coordinated development is extraordinary. Broadly speaking, coordinated development includes not only the coordinated development of urban and rural areas, regions, primary, secondary and tertiary industries, but also the coordinated development of politics, economy, society, culture and ecology, as well as the coordinated development of internal and external opening. In a narrow sense, it mainly refers to the coordinated development between regions. On the surface, the coordinated development in a narrow sense means the coordinated development in a broad sense. However, if regional economics is regarded as the last frontier of economics, then regional development and the evolution of interregional relations have become the carriers of generalized coordinated development and other development concepts.

2.2. The inevitable choice to build a new development pattern

After General Secretary Xi Jinping first put forward the scientific conclusion of "building a new development pattern with domestic macro-cycle as the main body and domestic and international dual-cycle promoting each other" at the seventh meeting of the Central Financial and Economic Committee on April 10, 2020, influenced by this idea, The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China's
Proposal on Formulating the Fourteenth Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-term Target in 2035 (2020) and the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2022) once again reiterated: "Unswervingly implement the new development concept of innovation, coordination, green, openness and sharing" [7] "We must implement the new development concept completely, accurately and comprehensively" and "speed up the construction of a large domestic cycle as the main body, [3] Whether it is the construction of "domestic grand cycle" or "domestic and international double cycle" system, it will eventually settle on where to engage in production, distribution, exchange, consumption and opening to the outside world, and how to realize it. However, the solution to this proposition naturally rests on the choice of location, region and the implementation of regional coordinated development strategy. Therefore, the establishment of a new mechanism for regional coordinated development has naturally become an inevitable choice for building a new development pattern.

2.3. The only way to achieve high-quality development and common prosperity

After the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2017) put forward "high-quality development" for the first time, the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2022) further put forward "in-depth implementation of regional coordinated development strategy and major regional strategies ... to build a regional economic layout and land space system with complementary advantages and high-quality development." [3] Not only that, but General Secretary Xi Jinping published an important article on "solidly promoting common prosperity" as early as the 20th issue of Qiushi magazine in 2021. Its core essence is that "common prosperity is the essential requirement of Socialism with Chinese characteristics" [3]. As far as common prosperity is concerned, it is mainly to "enlarge", "divide" and "improve" the cake, solve the fundamental problem of insufficient imbalance in economic and social development, and satisfy the people's pursuit of a better life. The solution to this problem obviously lies in the implementation of regional coordinated development strategy. That is to say, only on the basis of adhering to innovative development, green development and open development, giving full play to the advantages of everyone and each region, insisting on the first distribution as the main body, supplemented by the second and third distribution, can we achieve common prosperity. It can be seen that the implementation of regional coordinated development strategy is the only way to implement high-quality development and promote common prosperity.

3. Challenges for Coordinated Regional Development

Although the significance of implementing the strategy of regional coordinated development is extraordinary, from a practical point of view, at present, there are mainly problems such as the large development gap between regions, the obvious internal gap in the domestic section of "the belt and road initiative", the spatial layout of metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations, and the slow progress of cooperation between regions.
yuan. Third, from 2015 to now, the southern region is higher than the northern region. Taking 2019 as an example, the southern region is 17,849 yuan higher than the northern region. This is also the reason why political circles and academic circles have paid attention to the gap between the North and the South in recent years. Although the reasons are complicated, they can be summed up in three main points: First, the northern region is more divided into forbidden development zones and restricted development zones, thus limiting industrial agglomeration and economic growth to some extent. Second, it may be related to the concept of "ecological priority and green development". Because there are many resource-based cities and old industrial bases in the northern region. Under the guidance of this guiding ideology, the northern region is in the stage of comprehensive economic transformation. Third, for a long time, the process of marketization in the northern region has been slow, which has also limited its economic development to some extent. Take the Beijing Stock Exchange, which serves the trading of stocks and bonds, as an example. It is 30 years later than the establishment of Shenzhen and Shanghai Stock Exchanges.

3.1.3. The gap between provinces, cities and districts within the region is more obvious.

As far as the four major sectors are concerned, in 2000, the gap between provinces, cities and districts was not very big except for the relatively strong economic strength of Shanghai in the eastern region, but after entering 2019, the gap between the per capita GDP of provinces, cities and districts in the four major sectors has obviously widened. For example, the gap between the per capita GDP of Hebei Province and Beijing in the eastern region has further expanded from 14,794 yuan in 2000 to 117,872.11 yuan in 2019, with the former being only 28.22% of the latter; The gap between the per capita GDP of Hunan Province and Hubei Province in the central region has further expanded from 1,549 yuan in 2000 to 19,846.28 yuan in 2019, with the former being only 74.35% of the latter. The gap of per capita GDP between Heilongjiang Province and Liaoning Province in Northeast China has further expanded from 2664 yuan in 2000 to 21008.23 yuan in 2019, the former is only 63.27% of the latter; The gap between the per capita GDP of Guizhou Province and Chongqing in the western region has further widened from 2495 yuan in 2000 to 29395 yuan in 2019, with the former only accounting for 61.23% of the latter. This fact shows that to achieve regional coordinated development, we should not only pay attention to the gap between sectors, cities within urban agglomerations and between urban and rural areas, but also pay attention to the gap between provinces, cities and districts, especially focusing on the junction between provinces and regions and special types of areas, and speeding up the construction of economic zones, metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations, which is the fundamental place to achieve regional coordinated development.

3.2. "the belt and road initiative" internal gap is more obvious.

If the area involved in the domestic section of "the belt and road initiative" is regarded as the frontier of opening to the outside world, then it is advisable to investigate the gap between the domestic section of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road, and the areas involved in the domestic section of the Silk Road Economic Belt. As far as "Belt and Road" are concerned, since the 21st century, the gap between their per capita GDP has been expanding, from 6,649 yuan in 2000 to 51,586 yuan in 2019. The per capita GDP of the 13 provinces and autonomous regions involved in the domestic section of the Silk Road Economic Belt in 2019 was only 50.17% of that of the 5 provinces and municipalities involved in the domestic section of the Maritime Silk Road. It can be seen that the Maritime Silk Road is not only the frontier of China's opening to the outside world and the construction of a new development pattern, but also this potential energy has a tendency to be further strengthened.

In addition, as far as the domestic section of the Silk Road Economic Belt is concerned, the economic development level of the three northeastern provinces has been better than that of the six northwestern provinces and four southwestern provinces before 2015, but it has been declining since then. For example, in 2019, the per capita GDP of the three northeastern provinces was 9346 yuan and 5938 yuan less than that of the six northwestern provinces and four southwestern provinces, respectively. In particular, it is worth mentioning that the four provinces in southwest China may have a tendency to catch up and become the leader of the economic development in the domestic section of the Silk Road Economic Belt because of their good ecological environment and advantages of being located along the river and the coast. This fact also shows that during the 14th Five-Year Plan period and in the future, how to "build a new development pattern" through the integrated development of provinces, cities and districts in the belt and road initiative, the overall planning of land and sea in the west, and the opening of inland border areas is in urgent need of theoretical deepening and practical exploration.

3.3. Metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations present a spatial pattern of dense east and sparse west.

If "big cities" with an urban population of 3 million or more are regarded as the central cities of metropolitan areas [9], there are currently 38 metropolitan areas in China (see Table 1). Among them, there are 22 in the eastern region, accounting for nearly 58% of the 38 metropolitan areas. Except for Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, the other seven provinces have an average of 2.7 metropolitan areas in each province. There is only one metropolitan area in each province in the central and northeastern regions, and it is mainly cultivated; In the western region, except that Chengqing is a municipality directly under the central government and Chengdu is a rapidly developing metropolitan area, there are only seven cultivated metropolitan areas in other 11 provinces and regions. The most important thing is that none of the cities like Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia and Tibet can meet the basic requirements of cultivated metropolitan areas.

Further, from the perspective of economic strength, the per capita GDP of Shanghai reached 157,279 yuan in 2019 at the current price, while the per capita GDP of Kunming City in Yunnan Province and Xi'an City in Shaanxi Province were 93,853 yuan and 92,256 yuan respectively, and the gap with Shanghai was 63,426 yuan and 65,023 yuan respectively. Even compared with the per capita GDP of Qingdao in Shandong Province of 124,282 yuan, there is still a gap of about 30,000 yuan. As a result, whether it is the construction of urban agglomerations, the coordinated development of regions, or "building a new development pattern", the western and northeastern regions have become soft spots or blocking points. If one or more metropolitan areas are regarded as the basis for the formation of urban agglomerations, then the
urban agglomerations in the eastern region have entered a period of rapid development and have a tendency to develop in the direction of urban sprawl. However, as far as the central, western and northeastern regions are concerned, except for Chengdu-Chongqing urban agglomeration, Central Plains urban agglomeration and Guanzhong Plain urban agglomeration, which are basically in the embryonic stage to the rapid development period, other urban agglomerations are still in the embryonic stage, and there is still a long way to go before the rapid development period.

3.4. The process of regional cooperation is slow.

Although China has built or is building 20 urban agglomerations [10] at present, many of them span provinces, cities and districts, such as Hubao, Hubei and Yushu urban agglomerations, etc., but from its internal point of view, it is only superficial economic ties and high population density. If we look at the process of its integration, such as the interaction of factors, the formation of industrial chain, the integration of market, the construction of infrastructure, the protection of ecological environment, etc., the practice of cooperation or integration between cities in urban agglomeration will lag far behind the planning. Take Lanzhou-Xining Urban Agglomeration [11] as an example. Although the National Development and Reform Commission has already approved its implementation in 2018, Gansu Province and Qinghai Province have also recognized its five-year plan, there is no consensus at the provincial level on how to jointly build industrial parks, construct industrial chains, protect the ecological environment of the Yellow River Basin, and speed up the construction of transportation infrastructure. This is one of them. Secondly, from the perspective of a city that implements "city governing county", it only plans the industrial space and population urbanization process of districts and counties, but to some extent, it does not plan the equalization of public services, the interconnection of transportation infrastructure, the citizenization of migrant workers, the effective docking of new urbanization and rural revitalization. This not only fails to meet the basic requirements of the original design of "city governing county" and the integration of urban and rural development, but also is not conducive to the coordinated development between urban and rural areas and regions; Thirdly, if the border areas between provinces and autonomous regions should give priority to cross administrative boundaries to realize regional cooperation, then from the perspective of the most typical 10 provincial border areas, not only the industrial cooperation ability is poor, but also the provinces and autonomous regions will limit the flow of various elements between provinces by setting soft barriers to protect their own interests.

In a word, to realize the coordinated development between provinces, urban and rural areas, and regions, we should not only build industrial parks, characteristic towns and towns, metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations, and secondary economic belts, but also form a new pattern including the coordinated development of special types of regions and developed regions through enclave economy, enclave towns and the establishment and improvement of regional coordinated development mechanisms.

4. The Path Choice of Accelerating Regional Coordinated Development

During the Tenth Five-Year Plan period and in the future, we should follow the principles of planning guidance, market integration, urban-rural interaction, industrial integration, transportation connectivity, regional linkage, key breakthroughs, overall promotion, internal and external circulation and common prosperity, take the four major sectors as the foundation, cultivate economic growth points as the foundation, take metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations as the growth poles, take "the belt and road initiative" as the guide, and take several major strategies as the link to promote regional coordinated development.

4.1. Focus on cultivating economic growth point Economic growth point

To some extent, it is a type of industrial layout, which has been reflected in the country's previous five-year plans (plans). After the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1996) and the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2001) used "accelerating the industrialization of high technology" and "promoting tourism as a new economic growth point" for the first time, the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2011) further proposed "supporting Hong Kong and Macao to enhance their industrial innovation capabilities and accelerate the cultivation of new economic growth points". Therefore, we should adhere to ecological priority and green development, set about the layout of urban and rural industries, industrial parks and economic zones in key development zones, optimized development zones and major agricultural products producing areas, break through the boundaries of administrative divisions, accelerate the construction of inter-provincial industrial parks or provincial border economic zones, and promote the transformation and development of existing industrial parks, resource-based areas and old industrial bases to green, intelligent and digital; In restricted development zones, forbidden development zones, old revolutionary base areas, border areas, underdeveloped areas and ecologically degraded areas, industries that are conducive to ecological protection (such as eco-tourism and green vegetation industries) and industries that are conducive to giving full play to resource advantages are not only the inherent requirements for realizing regional development, but also help to "accelerate the construction of a new development pattern" and achieve common prosperity through the establishment of a regional coordinated development mechanism [3].

4.2. Focus on county towns and central villages (towns) to realize the integrated development of urban and rural areas.

As the node of urban-rural integration development and the radiation point of metropolitan area construction, accelerating the development of county towns and central villages will not only help to revitalize the county economy and realize urban-rural integration, but also help to consolidate the nodes of regional coordinated development and build a new development pattern, smooth the internal and external circulation, and realize the coupling linkage between rural revitalization and new urbanization.

Therefore, during the "14th Five-Year Plan" period and in the future, we should focus on the coupling of rural revitalization of county towns and central villages (towns) with new urbanization construction. First, we should guide
financial capital and industrial and commercial capital to flow to the countryside, cultivate and build typical projects of urban-rural integration, and accelerate the process of agricultural and rural modernization. Second, encourage agricultural transfer population and their families to settle in county towns and transfer places to speed up the process of citizenization; Third, gradually improve the development mechanism of "taking the city to lead the countryside and feeding agriculture through industry" and urban-rural integration, and promote the interaction between urban and rural elements and the rational allocation of public resources; Fourth, with industry as the core, through one county, one production, one town, one product, one village and one industry, we will steadily promote rural revitalization and the construction of characteristic towns and towns along the border-thus forming a first-line town corridor along the border; Fifth, conditional areas suggest speeding up the construction of provincial and national pilot zones for urban-rural integration development, instead of "one size fits all" and approving one when it is mature; Sixth, accelerate the extension of urban public services, transportation and other infrastructure to rural areas and rural digital construction, and promote rural revitalization and common prosperity of urban and rural areas.

4.3. Take metropolitan area and urban agglomeration as growth poles, and promote the construction of trans-regional economic belt.

Accelerating the construction of key economic growth poles such as central cities, core cities, metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations is not only conducive to the construction of economic belts, but also conducive to building a new development pattern, and promoting the realization of the goal of common prosperity through internal and external circulation. Therefore, firstly, on the basis of speeding up the national central cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Wuhan, Chengdu, Zhengzhou and Xi’an, the pace of core city construction should be accelerated with the focus on provincial capitals or autonomous region capitals and economically developed cities. The second is to speed up the construction of metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations with central cities and core cities as the core. Metropolitan area, as a "spatial form of urbanization with megacities or large cities with strong radiation-driven functions as the center and one-hour commuting circle as the basic scope", has attracted much attention from academic circles in recent years. From the type, it can be divided into mature type, rapid development type and active cultivation type [9]. Objectively speaking, this is only for the construction of large and medium-sized metropolitan areas. Therefore, in the future, we should also focus on prefecture-level cities with an urban population of 2 million or more, such as Datong, Jinzhong, Yuncheng and Linfen in Shanxi, and accelerate the construction of small and micro metropolitan areas. On this basis, through the construction of transportation and other infrastructure, the linkage of multiple metropolitan areas will be realized, and several urban agglomerations will be formed, creating conditions for building criss-crossing economic belts and building a new development pattern. Third, for cities that implement the policy of "city governing county", it is suggested to speed up the development of urban-rural integration, the pace of urban reform, the equalization of public services and the interconnection of transportation infrastructure, so as to form a new pattern of urban-rural integration. Fourth, regarding the construction of urban agglomerations, the State Council and the National Development and Reform Commission have approved the implementation of urban agglomerations such as the Yangtze River Delta, Lanzhou-Xining, Hubao Eyu, Guanzhong Plain, Zhongyuan, Chengy, the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, Harbin-Changzhoun and Beibu Gulf. During the "Fourteenth Five-Year Plan" period and in the future, it is necessary to speed up the construction of national-level urban agglomerations across provinces, cities and districts, and also to start the construction of provincial-level urban agglomerations with metropolitan areas as the core. This is not only an inherent requirement for achieving coordinated regional development, but also an inevitable option for building a new development pattern.

4.4. Focus on the construction of major economic belts and build a criss-crossing regional coordinated development network.

During the "Tenth Five-Year Plan" period and in the future, it is suggested that the coordinated development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, the cooperative development of the Bohai Rim region, the metropolitan area, the urban agglomeration and the economic zone should be the important nodes, and the secondary economic zones of the great river, the great river, the sea and the land (such as Hanjiang Economic Zone, Huahei Ecological Economic Zone, Liaoan Continental Economic Zone, Chengdu-Chongqing Twin-city Economic Zone, and the zigzag area of the Yellow River, etc.) should be the short axis, and the Yangtze River, Pearl River-Xijiang River Coastal, Jingha-Jingguang, Baokun, Eurasian Continental Bridge Economic Belt or Xinjiang-Shanghai (or Guangzhou, or Beibu Gulf), western border economic belt as the vertical axis, integrated three-dimensional traffic interconnection as the link, and gradually build a new development pattern of land and sea planning, inter-regional opening up and mutual promotion of opening up.

4.5. Take "the belt and road initiative" as the guide, and gradually form a new development pattern of regional opening, opening to the outside world and mutual promotion of domestic and international double cycles.

"the belt and road initiative" is not only the inherent requirement of "building Community of Shared Future for Mankind" and realizing "win-win sharing", but also the only way to realize domestic "land and sea planning" and promote regional coordinated development and common prosperity through interregional opening up and opening up [6]. Therefore, the 14th Five-Year Plan period and its future should be guided by "the belt and road initiative" and "land and sea planning", based on the eastern, central, western and northeastern regions, with industrial chain and innovation chain as the core, metropolitan area, urban agglomeration and economic zone as important nodes, coordinated development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, Yangtze River Delta integration, Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Yangtze River Economic Belt, Yellow River Basin ecological protection and high-quality development, and Pearl River-Xijiang River..
References


