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Research Progress on the Synergistic Path Between China's New Urbanization and Industrial Policy

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Abstract:

Nowadays, the Chinese government focuses more on high-quality economic development than before. Still, some problems have also become more outstanding, like the imbalances between urban and rural areas and among different industries. The traditional model of urbanization, with the core of scale expansion, is likely to result in industrial hollowing out and inequality of public services. In the meantime, the structural upgrading industrial policy is also facing challenges such as regional imbalances and inefficient allocation of factors. The collaboration between the two has become crucial for the next stage of development for urban-rural integration and economic structure optimization. Focusing on the collaborative path between new urbanization and industrial policy, through literature review and logical analysis, this paper systematically constructs a comprehensive framework of "problem diagnosis-- path construction-- cultural empowerment", that is, to identify core conflicts, put forward collaborative strategies, and strengthen endogenous power through cultural empowerment. The results provide practical guidance for formulating coordinated development plans in line with specific situations, theoretical support for exploring China's plans, and useful insights for developing countries facing similar challenges.

Keywords: New Urbanization; Industrial Policy; Synergistic Path; Cultural Empowerment; China Solution.

1. Introduction

The new urbanization development strategy proposed in the 14th Five-Year Plan, as one of the core strategies for China's modernization development, is gradually shifting from the initial phase of scale expansion to a second phase that prioritizes both quality improvement and structural optimization[1]. The important task at this stage is to promote the application of green technology, build a model of low-carbon, intelligent, and humanistic urbanization,

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and further the construction of the Xiongan New Area and livable cities in the Yangtze River Delta region. However, in this process, there are also issues such as technological bottlenecks, lagging industry transformation, and a lack of synergistic mechanisms, which have prevented local urbanization development from being tailored to local conditions and from utilizing its own strengths. Instead, it has simply replicated successful models, leading to a lack of diversity, which appeared like "a thousand cities with one face", the separation of local urbanization development from advantageous industries, population loss, and urban vacancy[2]. These issues have attracted the attention of the government. Furthermore, in the process of new urbanization, promoting China's excellent traditional culture and deeply integrating it with urbanization construction and industrial development can not only solve the dual dilemmas of "a thousand cities with one face" and "industrial hollowing out" but also provide a unique China Solution for urbanization in late-developing countries globally.

Focus on the core demands of high-quality development of new urbanization. With the core theme of "Collaborative Mechanism and Practice Path of New Urbanization, Low Carbon and Intelligent Transformation, and Cultural Integration", this study focuses on examining the coupling logic of low-carbon technology application, smart city construction, and industrial transformation and upgrading, and analyzes the problems existing in the internal integration and collaborative development of regional demonstration projects. Thus, a new urbanization development model of "humanistic low-carbon intelligence" that is suitable for China's national conditions can be constructed. Existing research explores collaborative paths from multiple dimensions: at the planning level, emphasis is placed on the connection between national spatial planning and industrial planning, promoting the integration of industry and city in spatial layout [3]. At the element level, attention is paid to the coordinated allocation of factors such as population, land, capital, and industrial policies, promoting orderly labor flow and precise matching with industrial demand [4]. At the mechanism level, explore a collaborative mechanism that combines market dominance with government guidance, and improve cross regional and cross departmental coordination mechanisms [5]. It is worth noting that excellent traditional culture, as an important core of the development of Chinese characteristics, is increasingly valued in the collaborative path. Research generally believes that through the integration of cultural tourism industry and the industrialization of traditional skills, traditional cultural resources can be transformed into unique driving forces for urbanization and industrial development, achieving a win-win situation for economic value and cultural inheritance [6].

The research method of this study is the literature research method. It systematically reviews domestic and foreign policy documents (such as the "14th Five-Year Plan for Scientific and Technological Innovation in Urbanization and Urban Development"), theoretical achievements, and research reviews related to new urbanization, low-carbon smart cities, and cultural heritage to clarify the theoretical basis and core variables of the research[7].

This study aims to explore the innovative coupling relationship between culture, low-carbon technology, and intelligent construction in new urbanization, focusing on three innovative points: firstly, to analyze the fundamental reasons for "one city for every thousand" and "industrial hollowing out", and propose systematic solutions based on the background of traditional Chinese culture. The second is to propose an innovative "trinity" collaborative development model, integrating traditional culture, low-carbon technology, and intelligent governance to promote urban-rural integration and regional coordinated development. The third is to construct a theoretical framework of "culture driven intelligent low-carbon urbanization", provide a globally applicable "Chinese solution", and provide innovative support for urbanization and sustainable development. The research fills the existing research gap and promotes sustainable and culturally rich urban transformation through the deep integration of culture, technology and social governance.

2. Current Status and Challenges of Synergy Between New Urbanization and Industrial Policy

2.1 Synergy Status

Guided by policies, practical explorations of synergy between new urbanization and industrial policy have been carried out in the Xiongan New Area with its "green and low-carbon" core, the Yangtze River Delta region relying on "industrial clusters" in metropolitan areas, and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area leveraging "cross-border sci-tech innovation" for industry-city synergy.

The Xiongan New Area is implementing ultra-low energy consumption building standards across the entire region, with such buildings accounting for over 80% of new residential and public buildings, and piloting near-zero energy consumption buildings (e.g., the Xiongan Intercity Station in the Start-up Area, using photovoltaic facades, ground-source heat pumps, etc., reducing annual energy consumption by over 65% compared to traditional buildings). Simultaneously, it is constructing a "blue-green intertwined" ecological space, with ecological restoration of the Baiyangdian Lake basin and urban water system construction advancing together, forming a livable environment of "city in the forest, water in the city," laying the foundation for attracting talent for low-carbon industries and subsequently promoting the development of industries like intelligent transportation[8].

The Yangtze River Delta region has formed an industrial layout with "clear division of labor and close linkage"

- Shanghai focuses on R&D and design for new energy vehicles (e.g., Tesla Shanghai R&D Center, NIO Global Headquarters), Jiangsu (Suzhou, Changzhou) emphasizes the manufacturing of core components like power batteries and motors (CATL Suzhou Base, BYD Changzhou Factory), Zhejiang (Hangzhou, Ningbo) specializes in vehicle assembly for new energy vehicles and production of energy-saving and environmental protection equipment (Geely Hangzhou Bay Factory, Ningbo Fotile Energy-saving and Environmental Protection Industrial Park). In 2024, the Yangtze River Delta's new energy vehicle output accounted for 38% of the national total, and the output value of the energy-saving and environmental protection industry exceeded 1.2 trillion yuan. It uses "metropolitan area integration" to solve the industry-city separation problem. For example, the Shanghai Metropolitan Area connects cities like Shanghai, Suzhou, Wuxi, and Nantong via rail transit, building a "1-hour commuter circle." The Suzhou Industrial Park implements a "job-housing balance" model, supporting talent apartments, schools, and hospitals around the industrial park (e.g., in the Hudi area of the park, the ratio of industrial land to residential land is controlled at 1:0.8, with 12 primary and secondary schools and 3 branch campuses of tertiary hospitals located within 3 kilometers), achieving "work in the park, life in the community." In 2024, the job-housing balance rate in the park reached 75%, an increase of 28 percentage points from 2019[9].

As a benchmark for an open economy, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area promotes urbanization and industrial synergy through „sci-tech innovation driven + cross-border collaboration," relying on the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Macao Science and Technology Innovation Corridor to lay out „sci-tech park + livable new city" complexes in places like Dongguan's Songshan Lake, Shenzhen's Nanshan, and Guangzhou's Nansha. For instance, around the Shenzhen Nanshan Science and Technology Park, the Shenzhen Bay Super Headquarters Base and talent housing communities were built simultaneously, attracting headquarters of companies like Huawei and Tencent, and research institutions like the Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, forming a complete ecosystem of „R&D - transformation - production - living." In 2024, the output value of high-tech industries in Nanshan District accounted for 68% of GDP, and the proportion of professional and technical personnel in the resident population exceeded 35%[10].

These practices have accumulated certain experience for the synergy between new urbanization and industrial policy.

2.2 Challenges

2.2.1 Technological bottlenecks

In areas such as green building materials and smart operation and maintenance, the relatively weak foundation restricts the widespread application of green technologies in new urbanisation construction. For instance, certain regions, when constructing low-carbon buildings, are compelled to utilise traditional high-energy-consumption materials due to a paucity of advanced green building materials, which ultimately impacts the building's energy-saving performance. Moreover, the scarcity of intelligence operation and maintenance technologies poses a significant challenge to enhancing the operational efficiency of urban infrastructure[8].

2.2.2 Lagging industrial transformation

Resource-based cities face significant difficulties in their industrial transformation. These cities have long been dominated by resource extraction and primary processing industries, relying excessively on the traditional high-energy consumption model, which has resulted in a single industrial structure and low added value in those industries. New urbanization requires that the city's industries shift towards low-carbon, high-value-added industries. For these cities, this transformation will disrupt the existing industrial structure and profit model, potentially leading to increased costs for businesses, decreased profits, and even unemployment in the short term. As a result, there is insufficient motivation for enterprises and cities to transform, leading to severe population outflow[9].

2.2.3 Lack of synergistic mechanisms

The problem of „a thousand cities with the same face" in urbanization development is quite serious. Due to the lack of systematic planning, in the process of urbanization development across various regions, there has been a failure to adapt to local conditions and leverage their own strengths. Many cities blindly imitate the models of other cities during planning and construction, neglecting their own cultural heritage and resource endowments, causing the loss of unique urban charm. Simultaneously, the unreasonable planning of industrial parks and urban living areas means the living needs of industrial workers are not met, thereby affecting population agglomeration and urban development[7]. Moreover, neighboring cities have also failed to work together, leading to severe issues such as population loss and vacant cities.

3. Integration of Chinese Culture with New Urbanization and Industrial Policy Synergy

3.1 Reconstructing the „Industry-City-People-Culture" Balanced Spatial Governance Logic

The fundamental element of a city is people. Their thinking and understanding determine the level and height of urban development. It is imperative to popularize education in excellent culture, enhance the happiness index of the people, increase mental motivation to stimulate poten-

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tial, and break through the underlying logic of the unity of knowledge and action. Rich wisdom in spatial governance is contained within China's excellent traditional culture, such as the classical culture left by the great sages and the Yangming School of Mind. Ancient urban planning emphasized the "harmony between man and nature," focusing on the symbiotic coexistence of humans and the natural environment; the layout of traditional villages reflected the organic combination of clan culture, geographical environment, and production/livelihood. In the process of new urbanization, this wisdom can be drawn upon to integrate cultural elements into urban spatial planning [11].

Taking the Kunqu opera manufacturing and Kunshan red tea cultural tourism linkage as an example, Suzhou's Kunshan, leveraging Kunqu opera—a world-class intangible cultural heritage—has created a Kunqu opera cultural industry park. The park is planned to create a space with a traditional culture atmosphere by incorporating aesthetic elements of Kunqu Opera, such as the curving eaves and corners of the buildings, as well as winding garden paths. At the same time, the local black tea industry has also been integrated into it to develop the cultural tourism fusion industry. By allowing visitors to experience the production process of black tea while admiring the Kunqu opera performance, it promotes the purchase of relevant cultural and creative products. This model promotes industrial development, protects and promotes traditional culture, and optimizes urban spatial layout, thereby achieving an organic balance of "industry - city - people - culture"[11].

3.2 Establishing a „Low-Carbon - Innovation - Culture" Multi-dimensional Evaluation System

When evaluating the synergy of new urbanization and industrial policies, the protection and inheritance of traditional culture should also be included in the system of evaluation[11]. When assessing the quality of a city's urbanization, evaluation indicators for the protection of historical and cultural blocks and the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage should be added.

The Yunnan Central Urban Agglomeration, in its development process, accounts for 62% of its GDP on 28% of its land, achieving remarkable results in improving energy efficiency. Thanks to the development of zero-carbon construction and intelligent operation and maintenance technologies, energy efficiency has been improved by more than 20%. Meanwhile, this urban agglomeration emphasizes the protection and utilization of traditional culture. Traditional cultural forms like Kunming's Dian opera and the Yi ethnic group's Torch Festival have been well inherited and developed. In the evaluation of the Central Yunnan Urban Agglomeration, these traditional cultural factors are taken into account, forming a "low-carbon - innovation - culture" multi-dimensional evaluation system that promotes the characteristic development of cities[12].

3.3 Promoting Industrial Innovation and Upgrading by Leveraging Traditional Culture

The excellent traditional culture of China provides abundant material and inspiration for industrial innovation. In the cultural creative industry, tourism, handicrafts, and other fields, the integration of traditional culture helps enhance the added value and competitiveness of industrial products. Many tourists will buy relevant cultural and creative products as tourist souvenirs, such as city refrigerator stickers, plush toys to collect back home, or give to friends and family as a gift.

3.3.1 Cultural creative industry

The Palace Museum's cultural creation is a successful example of the cultural creative industry. The Palace Museum Bo Wen Yuan combines traditional culture elements with modern design and launches a series of popular cultural and creative products, such as the Palace Museum lipstick, the Palace Museum adhesive tape, and cultural creative books. These cultural products not only bring great economic benefits, but also let more and more people know and appreciate Chinese traditional culture. In the process of new urbanization, other localities can also tap local traditional culture resources, develop cultural and creative industries with local characteristics, and build urban cultural brands[6].

3.3.2 Tourism industry

Traditional villages, historical and famous cultural cities are important resources for the development of the tourism industry. These traditional villages and historical cities usually retain some ancient buildings, local living customs, characteristic festival culture, and rich personalities. For example, Hongcun and Xidi in Anhui Province have become popular areas for tourism in recent years. Because of their well-preserved Hui-style architecture and rich traditional culture and customs, many tourists come to visit and experience the local customs. By developing the tourism industry, the local area has driven the development of related industries such as catering, accommodation, and transportation, thereby promoting industry-city integration. Simultaneously, the development of the tourism industry also provides financial support for the protection of traditional culture, forming a virtuous cycle.

3.3.3 Handicraft industry

Traditional Chinese handicrafts such as ceramics, embroidery, and wood carving possess extremely high artistic and cultural value. In the process of new urbanization, these handicraft industries can be relied upon to build characteristic industrial clusters. For example, Jingdezhen in Jiangxi is renowned for its ceramic industry. By constructing a ceramic cultural creative industry park, it has attracted numerous ceramic artists and enterprises, promoting the innovation and upgrading of the ceramic industry while also protecting and inheriting ceramic culture.

3.4 Optimizing Livelihood Services with „Embroidery-like Micro-renovation“ and Integrating Traditional Cultural Elements

When conducting “embroidery-like micro-renovation” on urban old residential areas and historical and cultural blocks, integrating traditional cultural elements can both improve the living environment of residents and protect the historical and cultural features of the city[13]. For example, the renovation of Beijing’s hutongs, while preserving the original architectural layout and traditional cultural atmosphere of the hutongs, upgraded the infrastructure, such as laying permeable pavement and installing energy-saving lighting equipment. Meanwhile, sculptures and murals reflecting old Beijing culture were placed in the public spaces of the hutongs, allowing residents to feel the charm of traditional culture while enjoying the convenience of modern life. This method of transformation and renovation has improved the quality of people‘s livelihood services and strengthened residents‘ sense of cultural identity and belonging.

4. Practical Exploration and Effectiveness of Synergistic Paths

4.1 Xiongan New Area: a Model of Integration of Traditional Culture and Modern Low-Carbon City

In the process of building a modern, low-carbon and livable city, Xiongan New Area focuses on folk cultural elements and local traditional culture to build the local characteristics of Xiongan New Area. Paper cutting and pottery sculpture are incorporated into the urban landscape. At the same time, Xiongan New Area vigorously develops cultural and creative industries, builds traditional culture exhibition and experience centers, letting citizens and tourists feel the charm of traditional culture at the same time, while experiencing the convenience of modern urban construction and infrastructure[14]. This not only enhances the cultural content of the city but also helps the development of diverse industries in the region, attracting more talent and resources[11].

4.2 Yangtze River Delta Region: Integrated Cultural Tourism and Synergistic Industrial Development

The Yangtze River Delta region has actively promoted the construction of a new type of urbanization by developing the comprehensive cultural and tourism industry. The Yangtze River Delta region is rich in traditional culture resources, such as Jiangnan water culture, Wu and Yue culture. Suzhou, Hangzhou, and other cities, through the Suzhou Garden Culture Festival, Hangzhou West Lake International Expo, and other activities, attracted a large number of tourists. These activities not only promote the local traditional culture, but also help the development of tourism-related industries, such as specialty agricultural products processing, handicrafts manufacturing. This development model, which integrates cultural tourism and related industries, effectively promotes the construction of a new type of urbanization, promotes the integration of industry and urban characteristics, increases the income of local residents, and improves their living standards.

4.3 Yunnan Central Urban Agglomeration: Traditional Culture Empowering Industrial Upgrading

In the process of urbanization, the rich traditional culture is fully utilized in the Yunnan Central Urban Agglomeration. Yunnan Province has a large number of ethnic minorities, and the costumes, songs, festivals and cultural customs of various ethnic minority groups have played an important role in promoting industrial upgrading. For example, the songs and dances of Yi ethnic group are skillfully applied in the development of cultural and creative products. An industrial cluster with distinct ethnic characteristics has been formed in Yunnan. At the same time, traditional culture is used to develop the eco-tourism industry; for example, tourism activities held during the Yi Torch Festival effectively drive local economic development[15]. By empowering industrial upgrading through traditional culture, the Central Yunnan Urban Agglomeration has successfully achieved a win-win situation for economic development and cultural protection.

5. Conclusion

This study delved into the synergistic path between China’s new urbanization and industrial policies, and achieved preliminary research results. By reconstructing the spatial governance logic of “industry city human culture” balance and constructing a multidimensional evaluation system of “low-carbon innovation culture”, this study successfully proposes a path to promote industrial innovation and upgrading through traditional culture, and optimizes livelihood services through “embroidery like micro transformation”. This theoretical framework not only effectively solves the dual dilemma of “one face in a thousand cities” and “industrial hollowing out”, but also improves energy efficiency, optimizes people’s livelihood services, and provides a “Chinese solution” for urbanization in developing countries around the world.

This research work underlines the distinct significance of the antique culture in assisting the upgrading of industries and the refining of social administration in regard to the policies involved. It is suggested that the authorities and businesses should make more attempts to discover and adopt the traditional cultural resources and to push the engagement of culture and industry to the fullest extent possible. Furthermore, the novel use of digital technology, mainly the mixture of virtual reality and artificial intelli-

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gence, opens up fresh avenues that can more impressively and easily bring the ancient culture close to the people's everyday lives.

Nonetheless, this article comes with some constraints as well. To begin with, while the research introduces a conceptual framework for cultural and industrial synergy, it does not address the exact application routes and the variety of local customs and practices at all. Secondly, the emphasis in the research is laid on theoretical analysis and it does not completely embrace real-world cases, thus lacking a comprehensive assessment of policy impact. Hence, researchers of the future can narrow down their studies to the exact use of the cultural and industrial policy synergy, carry out an in-depth investigation into the practical experiences within the different regions, and assess their feasibility in the context of globalization.

In the future, research should continue to increase investment in the exploration and technological innovation of traditional cultural resources, especially in the research and development of digital protection and application technologies for traditional culture. At the same time, more comprehensive measures are needed at the policy level to encourage all parties to actively participate in the deep integration of traditional culture and new urbanization. I believe that with the joint efforts of all parties, China's new urbanization will usher in new opportunities for higher quality development, and traditional culture will also radiate new vitality in the new era.

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