

Study on the Spatial Coordinated Development of Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region from the Perspective of New Regionalism

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ABSTRACT

Guanzhong -Tianshui Economic Region, being one of the national economic development zones along the "Belt and Road", holds a crucial geographical position and possesses substantial economic strategic value. Drawing upon the connotation and viewpoint of "new regionalism", this paper analyzes the current situation and contradictions in the spatial development of the Guan-Tian economic region, and explores its mechanism for spatial coordinated development. In the future spatial development of the Guan-Tian economic region, it is essential to eliminate administrative barriers and establish regional coordination mechanisms. Furthermore, attention should be given to constructing a public participation mechanism in the planning process, promoting the building and sharing of infrastructure to enhance multi-field connectivity, balancing regional development goals, and diversifying regional coordination mechanisms.

KEYWORDS

New regionalism; Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region; Spatial coordination; Mechanism

1. INTRODUCTION

With the deepening of economic globalization and regional integration, expanding the opening up of inland and border areas has become a new advantage for China's economic development. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Western development, on June 25, 2009, The State Council approved the construction of the national Guanzhong - Tianshui Economic Region, which clearly built it into a "strategic highland for the development and opening up of the national inland economy" [1]. After Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Region and Beibu Gulf Economic Region, Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region has become the third national strategic economic zone, which means that Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region has become one of the three key regions of China's western development and a new engine of western economy. The Outline of the National "Twelfth Five-Year Plan" and the Central Urbanization Work Conference call for "accelerating the development of Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region and cultivating it as one of the new economic growth poles in the western region" [2]. Guanzhong-tianshui Economic zone is located in the center of Eurasian land Bridge. In the new historical period of the country's opening to the west, its economic development is related to the effectiveness of opening to the outside world in the whole northwest region and the prosperity and stability of the whole country. At the same time, with the implementation of the national "One Belt, One Road" strategy, as a part of the "Silk Road Economic Belt", Guanzhong - Tianshui (hereinafter referred to as Guan-Tian) economic zone has ushered in another important period of development opportunities.

New regionalism is a new theory of regional integration which arose gradually with the process of European integration in the 1980s. At present, new regionalism has become an important theory of urban and regional development planning in Western countries. Based on the theory of new regionalism, this paper discusses the problems and mechanisms of spatial coordinated development of Guan-tian economic zone in the new era.

2. THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONNOTATION OF NEW REGIONALISM

2.1. The Evolution from Traditional Regionalism to New Regionalism

Regionalism originated in the European continent in the 1950s. In order to promote the free flow of economic factors and control wars at the same time, European countries during the Cold War began to drive the establishment of formal economic organizations and political alliances, seeking regional integration among economically interdependent, geographically close and culturally similar homogeneous countries. A single political and economic integration organization was established, such as the European Economic Community, the Committee for Mutual Economic Assistance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Warsaw Pact. [3] In order to maintain political power and develop national economy, the newly independent nation states in Latin America, Africa and other regions also began to explore the road of regionalization. Scholars refer to this wave of global regionalization as traditional regionalism. From the early 1970s to the mid-1980s, due to the influence of geographical scope, ideological restrictions and changes in the power of great powers, the development of regionalization became quiet. In the late 1980s, with the end of the Cold War, the promulgation of the Single European Act, the economic transformation of developing countries and the impact of economic globalization, people's enthusiasm for regional integration was unprecedented, and new regionalization activities swept the world, which was called new regionalism in form and connotation and was different from the previous wave of world activities. That is, it advocates the third road of regional economic development and the new regionalism theory of regional cooperation and regional institutional mechanism innovation. New regionalism theory is the enrichment and development of regionalism theory. Although it has not formed a complete and rigorous theoretical system, new regionalism contains many theories and practices of regional integration development, and has developed into a new trend of thought in regional studies [4].

Compared with traditional regionalism, new regionalism makes an interactive analysis of globalization and regionalization, and emphasizes more open and diversified international cooperation. In the context of the bipolar Cold War, traditional regionalism pays more attention to the interests of major powers, is mainly dominated by countries, and defines a certain functional regional identity within the scope of geographical proximity through a top-down approach, with obvious formality and protection. New regionalism stems from political multipolarization and economic globalization. Emerging nation states spontaneously integrate into regions through natural economic and political interactions. Government, enterprises and society are extensively involved under the market mechanism, and cooperation issues have also expanded to various aspects such as humanities, environment and society [5]. Compared with traditional regionalism, the mechanism form of new regionalism has changed greatly. In addition to the formal treaty mechanism, informal "soft regionalism" has begun to emerge. Some scholars divide the manifestations of new regionalism into outward looking and open regionalism and compound regionalism, which reflects the characteristics of new regionalism in terms of openness, inclusiveness and pluralism. If traditional regionalism is described as endogenous protectionism, new regionalism responds to interdependent changes in the world pattern with an open attitude. While focusing on intra-regional development, new regionalism also allows and encourages member states to participate in extra-regional cooperation. Some regional organizations have established an open system to the outside world with the value of freedom.

2.2. Connotation and Characteristics of New Regionalism Theory

As a new term in the field of regional governance, "new regionalism" was first proposed by scholar Norman Palmer to describe the new trend of regional cooperation in the world at the end of the 20th century. On this basis, sociologists have made a more detailed elaboration on regional governance, describing the regional development trend in various fields such as politics, economy and culture under the influence of industrialization. After entering the 1990s, with the in-depth development of regional theory, new regionalism has been widely defined and applied. The theory of new regionalism advocates that, starting from the overall interests of the region, multiple stakeholders such as the government, market, non-governmental organizations and the public should communicate and cooperate to solve the problems in regional development, so that all stakeholders can fully participate and play their roles, and enhance the comprehensive competitiveness of regional development [6]. The characteristics of the new regionalism are mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, it advocates the openness of regional space, opposes to regard regional space as static and closed, believes that regional space boundaries should be flexible, and strengthen inter-regional relations and cooperation; Second, integrate regional political, economic, cultural, social, ecological and other goals to promote regional balanced and sustainable development; Third, we should emphasize the participation of multiple stakeholders and conduct coordination and cooperation for the common interests of regional development. Fourth, promote the realization of the bottom-up governance structure of the hierarchy in the region, and the relationship between regions is no longer the relationship between management and management, but the relationship of equal consultation.

In terms of form, both new regionalism and traditional regionalism focus on coordination and integration at the regional level. But in essence, the new regionalism is very different from the previous regional management model. In the new regional concept, the regional scope has penetrated from the objective geographical space to the subjective humanistic system, and the comprehensive regional governance model has become the mainstream mode of regional management, forming a unique theoretical center of gravity and basic propositions, that is, the open regional scope, multiple governance subjects, and multi-forms of cooperation.

3. OVERVIEW OF SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF GUANZHONG - TIANSHUI ECONOMIC REGION

3.1. Study Area Profile

Guanzhong-tianshui Economic Region, referred to as "Guan-Tian Economic Region", was jointly prepared by Shaanxi Province and Gansu Province in 2007, and officially established in 2009 with the approval of The State Council. Its scope includes Guanzhong Plain area of Shaanxi Province (Xi'an, Tongchuan, Baoji, Xianyang, Weannan, Yangling Demonstration Zone, part of Shangluo district and county) and Tianshui City of Gansu Province, with a total of 7 cities and 1 district. The total area is 79,800 km². Guanzhong-tianshui Economic Region, located in the inland center of China, is an important fulcrum of the Eurasian land Bridge, where a number of railways, highways, routes and pipelines converge, and is an important hub of the national transportation and information channel and an important gateway for the western region to connect the eastern and central regions. The region has strong scientific and educational strength, with more than 80 institutions of higher learning, more than 100 national and provincial key research institutes and more than 1 million scientific and technological talents, the comprehensive strength of science and education ranks in the forefront of the country, and the industrial foundation is good. With 21 national and provincial development zones, 5 high-tech industry incubation bases and 3 university science and technology parks, Xi'an is the national defense military base, comprehensive high-tech industry base and important equipment manufacturing industry gathering place. Urban belt has initially formed in the region, and the megacity of Xi'an has played an obvious role in radiating and driving the surrounding areas, and the

urbanization process in the region has been accelerating. The overall objective positioning of Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region is as follows: It will become a "leading area for open development" in the western and northern inland regions, "a concentration of advanced manufacturing with high-tech as the guide, a concentration of modern service industries with tourism, logistics, finance and culture as the main focus, an innovative area supported by modern science and education, a leading area for urbanization and coordinated development between urban and rural areas, a comprehensive economic core area, and a national comprehensive reform experimental demonstration area " [7]. From the perspective of the long-term goal of the establishment of the economic zone, through the regional overall planning, Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region should be built into a high-tech as the guide of advanced manufacturing, tourism, logistics, finance, culture based modern service industry, modern science and education as the support of innovative areas, it will fill the northwest region has not formed a city cluster development gap.

The economic region has formed a system pattern of coordinated development of points, axes and planes, and built a spatial development framework system of "one core, one axis and three radiation". "One core": Xi'an (Xianyang) metropolis is the core of the economic region and plays a leading and radiating role in the western and northern inland regions. "One axis": Baoji, Tongchuan, Weinan, Shangluo, Yangling, Tianshui and other sub-core cities as nodes, relying on Longhai Railway and Lianhuo Expressway, to form a developed urban agglomeration and industrial agglomeration belt in the west. "Three radiation": that is, core cities and sub-core cities rely on the outward radiating traffic arteries to strengthen economic cooperation with the radiation region, promote the reasonable flow and optimal allocation of production factors, and drive the development of the north and south wings of the economic region. The radiation to the north drives the development of Yan 'an, Yulin and other areas in northern Shaanxi; It radiates to the northwest to drive the development of Pingliang, Qingyang and other areas of Longdong; The southward radiation drives the development of Hanzhong and Ankang in southern Shaanxi Province and Longnan in Gansu Province.

3.2. Contradictions and Problems of Regional Spatial Development

3.2.1. The Overall Strength Is Weak, and the Level of Development Varies Greatly within the Region

Although Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region has achieved rapid development in recent years, the overall economic strength of the region is still weak. As an important region of the "Belt and Road", it has not played its role in driving the development of surrounding areas, and there is still a big gap with the development of the eastern region. Among the seven prefectural level and above cities in Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region, except Xi 'an, the economic aggregate of two cities (Baoji Xianyang) exceeded 200 billion yuan in 2018, while that of other cities was lower than 200 billion yuan. Xi'an's economic aggregate (834.986 billion yuan) was 55.5 times that of Yangling Demonstration Region (15.046 billion yuan), which was the lowest. In the region, due to long-term economic backwardness, there are a large number of poor people in rural areas, the gap between urban and rural areas is large, and the dual system structure is obvious. The infrastructure in the region is relatively perfect, and there are only a handful of cities that can absorb industrial transfer, which seriously restricts the improvement of the overall economic level of Guantian District. Therefore, we should break the urban-rural dual system structure, vigorously develop small and medium-sized cities, improve rural infrastructure construction, promote the transfer and re-employment of rural surplus labor force in the region, and improve the overall comprehensive capacity of the region [8].

3.2.2. Economic Zones Are Inconsistent with Administrative Divisions, and There Is Local Protectionism

Protectionism is a long-standing phenomenon, the essence of which is the non-cooperative game between local governments. Guantian stretches across two provinces, creating an even more visible form of local protectionism. Influenced by the local government's pursuit of maximizing local

interests, the implementation of the development plan of Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region inevitably involves the coordination of interests between Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, as well as the coordination of interests between major cities in Guanzhong. The main problems are that local governments use administrative means to set up barriers to restrict labor flow; In order to pursue short-term interests, local governments develop low-level extensive industries, homogenize development, duplicate project construction, and participate in competition between local enterprises and other local enterprises. Therefore, eliminating local protectionism, coordinating regional development and realizing economic integration have become the primary problems that must be solved [9].

3.2.3. The Functional Structure between Cities Is Similar, and the Industrial Correlation and Integration Degree Are Low

Scientific and reasonable industrial planning is conducive to improving the socialization level of production, improving production efficiency, and avoiding resource waste and vicious competition. For example, the layout of cultural industry and equipment manufacturing industry, electronics industry is one of the advantageous industries of Xi'an, Xianyang and Baoji, textile is the pillar industry of Xi'an and Xianyang, machinery is the pillar industry of Xi 'an and Baoji, coal energy is the pillar industry of Tongchuan and Weinan. Such industrial convergence structure among cities intensifies the competition and friction among cities, especially the competition for resources, factors and markets, which makes it difficult to establish a reasonable industrial cluster, weakens the absorption capacity of each city for labor, restricts the development of the tertiary industry, and leads to a very low proportion of the tertiary industry in some cities in Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region, with a small industrial scale. Therefore, it is necessary to coordinate the industrial layout in the region, reduce the repetitive layout, and form the "upstream and downstream" relationship between the complementary industries among the multi-layout urban areas, so as to promote the social development of production [10].

4. SPATIAL COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM OF GUAN-TIAN ECONOMIC REGION BASED ON "NEW REGIONALISM"

4.1. Break Down Administrative Barriers and Establish Regional Coordination Mechanisms

The most common administrative barrier is the administrative division barrier at the spatial level, which is commonly referred to as local protectionism. In order to protect the interests of the region in regional competition, local governments set up restrictions on the inter-regional flow of commodities, capital, labor, technology and other factors, and artificially divide the unified market by demarcation of administrative districts. As a strategic plan spanning Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, Guan-Tian Economic Region should play the coordinating function of the government and improve the synergistic effect of policies. Since the promulgation and implementation of the Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region Development Plan, Gansu and Shaanxi provinces have strengthened communication and cooperation, jointly promoted the implementation of the plan, and achieved phased results.

Centering on the development goals, the Guan-Tian Economic Region will continue to give full play to the respective advantages of Shaanxi and Gansu provinces and the spirit of mutual respect, equal consultation, interaction and win-win, and determine to carry out deeper cooperation in major infrastructure construction, modern agricultural development and ecological environment construction, industrial development and scientific and technological innovation, cultural tourism, modern logistics industry and social development. It also defines the joint meeting system, contact person system and information notification system for cooperation between the two sides, the cooperation mechanism between departments directly under the province, urban areas in the

economic zone and enterprises, investment and trade cooperation mechanism and other working mechanisms. Speed up the traffic docking work, open up the fast channel between the city and the city, and between the county and the county in the Guan-Tian Economic Region, and create convenient conditions for further close the flow of people, logistics and information. Give full play to their comparative advantages, break down administrative divisions, speed up industrial docking, jointly implement major projects, and achieve industrial integration and development. Further establish and improve the multi-level coordination mechanism between the two provinces to provide an important guarantee for promoting the long-term and stable development of the economic zone [11]. Through the joint efforts of both sides, Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region will become a new growth pole in the coordinated development of national regional economy.

4.2. Attach Importance to the Construction of Public Participation Mechanism in the Planning Process

The regional management mechanism advocated by the new regionalism is different from the completely top-down national planning process of Keynesianism and the completely bottom-up free market process of Thatcherism, but based on the bottom-up coordination and cooperation process under the spontaneous macro-control of regions. New regionalism extensively involves various forms of organizations, including non-profit organizations, business associations and civic organizations, to participate in regional policy making and reach the most rational decision of regional governance. Participation in planning is the inherent right of the public, and it is the implementation of democratic rights such as the right to know, the right to speak, the right to supervise. And the public is also the most aware of what problems the planning needs to urgently address and in what areas improvements are needed. Therefore, in the process of spatial development of the Guan-Tian Economic Region, the management and participation mode of a single subject of the government must be broken, the traditional idea that regional development and planning are only related to the government must be abandoned, and the communication and exchange between the planning department, non-governmental organizations, schools, enterprises and ordinary people must be strengthened. The development of coordination research on spatial planning based on new regionalism in Guan-Tian Economic Region should enhance the public's awareness and sense of identity of planning by creating different forms of dialogue and cooperation mechanisms, and formulate relevant institutional guarantees for public participation in planning [12]. Only in this way can the planning come from the masses to the masses, and promote the integration of various divisions, estrangement and conflicts in the region. Thus, a set of sound and mature spatial planning system is established to speed up the regionalization process.

4.3. Jointly Build and Share Infrastructure to Promote Connectivity in Various Fields

The Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region Development Plan puts forward the tasks of "building Greater Xi'an, driving Greater Guanzhong and leading Greater Northwest", and requires "accelerating the integration construction of Xi'an and striving to build Xi'an into an international metropolis". The linkage and radiation among various regions requires the strengthening of infrastructure construction within the region, the construction of an infrastructure network with reasonable layout, advanced facilities, smooth and convenient, and shared by urban and rural areas, the full play of the advantages of various modes of transport, the expansion of the scale, the improvement of the network and the optimization of the structure, and the construction of a modern comprehensive transport network. Accelerate the construction of railway passenger dedicated lines, coal transportation channels, Guanzhong urban agglomeration intercity railway and Xi'an railway hub, and build a developed railway network with Xi'an as the center. Speed up the highway network in Shaanxi and Gansu provinces and the construction of roads connecting central towns and resource-rich areas and connecting counties and townships (towns) villages, improve the grade and accessibility of highways, and strive to form a "two ring, three horizontal, four vertical and six radiation" highway network

centered on Xi'an. At the same time, the hub function of Xi'an Xianyang International Airport will be further strengthened, and regional airports will be built in an orderly manner, laying a solid foundation for strengthening economic ties within the economic zone and expanding internal and external opening-up.

4.4. Balance Regional Development Goals and Promote Diversification of Regional Coordination Mechanisms

New regionalism is opposed to a single and narrow goal of security and economic development, and tends to reconcile multiple value goals such as "economic efficiency, social equity, environmental friendliness, and cultural integration". Each city has its own advantages and industries can be bigger and stronger. For example, Xi'an, relying on the advantages of high-tech industrial development zones and dense colleges and universities, vigorously develops high-tech industries and tertiary industries. Yangling as a national agricultural high-tech demonstration zone, accelerate the development and promotion of biotechnology and agricultural science and technology [13]; Guanzhong region depends on rich tourism resources, has a huge tourism market development potential.

At the same time, the spatial planning of the urban agglomeration in the Guan-Tian economic zone should take into account both development and protection, and pay attention to the realization of multiple value goals such as economic development, social equity, ecological protection and cultural integration. The spatial planning system under the integration of multiple objectives should also take into account development planning, such as overall land use planning, conservation planning, etc., such as the development goals of important ecological function protection zoning, and take "efficient economic output, equal public services, ecological environment friendliness, social and cultural integration" as the common goals of regional development.

5. CONCLUSION

The development of the Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region requires the establishment of a spatially coordinated development mechanism with clearly defined responsible entities, rigorous linkages, and effective procedural norms. At present, due to institutional constraints within local governments in the economic region, issues such as local protectionism, low levels of public participation, and redundant industrial layouts exist, to some extent impeding the coordinated development of the economic zone. To fully leverage the role of the Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region as a new engine of western economic growth and seize the important development opportunities, it is imperative to coordinate the spatial planning system of the Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Region from the perspective of new regionalism. Specific strategies include breaking down administrative barriers and establishing regional coordination mechanisms, emphasizing the development of public participation mechanisms in the planning process, promoting the construction and sharing of basic infrastructure to facilitate multi-sectoral connectivity, and balancing regional development goals by establishing a diverse regional coordination mechanism.

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