



Study on the Path of Integrated Development of Urban and Rural Areas in Kaifeng with County Region as Carrier

Yu Si

Henan Kaifeng College of Science Technology and Communication, Kaifeng, China

Email: 2845416994@qq.com

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Abstract

Accelerating urban and rural integration is a beneficial way to address the imbalance and inadequacy of urban and rural development, an internal logic for high-quality economic development, and an important way to realize the rural revitalization strategy. Taking the counties of Kaifeng as the research unit, this paper summarizes the current situation of the integrated development of urban and rural areas in Kaifeng from the aspects of urban and rural income, urban and rural environment and urban and rural infrastructure. In the process of urban and rural integration, there are still many problems, such as uneven allocation of public resources between urban and rural areas, a large gap in the level of urbanization among counties, price distortion of urban and rural factors, and insufficient impetus for sustainable development of rural industries. In view of the above problems, based on the rural revitalization strategy and from five aspects of infrastructure, public services, factor flow, industrial upgrading and ecological environment, specific countermeasures and suggestions for the integrated development of urban and rural areas in Kaifeng are put forward, so as to promote the speed and quality of urban-rural integration in Kaifeng.

Subject Areas

Development Economics

Keywords

Urban and Rural Integration, County Area, New Urbanization, Rural Revitalization

1. Introduction

In 2018, the No. 1 Central Document listed the concept of “adhering to the integrated development of urban and rural areas” as one of the principles for the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy. The integrated development of urban and rural areas is to change the original tradition: the countryside is agriculture + farmers, into the new idea of urban-rural construction, urban-rural sharing, urban-rural equivalence. In the process of implementing the strategy of rural revitalization, urban and rural integration development is the inevitable road, but also the objective requirement of our new era of socialism construction with characteristics. Under the background of rural revitalization and new urbanization construction, Kaifeng is also actively exploring the path of urban-rural integrated development. As the basic unit in the process of urban-rural integration, it is necessary to take the county as the carrier to study the urban-rural integration in Kaifeng [1].

2. Current Situation of Urban-Rural Integration in Kaifeng

2.1. Overview of Social and Economic Development

The permanent population of Kaifeng at the end of 2019 was 4,574,900, among which 2,303,000 were urban residents. The urbanization rate of permanent residents was 50.28 percent, an increase of 1.43 percent over the end of 2018. In 2019, the city’s GDP was 236.414 billion yuan, an increase of 7.2 percentage points over 2018. Of which, the added value of the primary industry was 31.824 billion yuan; the added value of the secondary industry was 94.924 billion yuan; the added value of the tertiary industry was 109.666 billion yuan. The per capita GDP was 51,733 yuan, an increase of 6.9 percent over the previous year.¹ The economic development level of Weishi County is the highest, followed by Lankao County and Qi County. The economic development level of Tongxu County is lower than the average level of the whole city. Among them, the urbanization rate of Lankao County is the highest, as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Economic development level of Kaifeng counties Regional urbanization rate.

Region	Urbanization rate (%)	Gross product (ten thousand yuan)	Proportion of primary industry (%)	Proportion of secondary industry (%)	Proportion of tertiary industry (%)	Per capita disposable income (Yuan)
Kaifeng	50.3	23641447	13.5	40.1	46.4	21795
QiCounty	40.0	3562000	23.6	35.1	41.3	18485
TongxuCounty	39.9	2863888	18.8	39.6	41.6	19056
Weishi County	40.1	4369835	12.3	49.2	38.5	19900
LankaoCounty	43.6	3898655	14.9	45.3	39.8	18228

Data source: Kaifeng Statistical Yearbook 2020.

¹Data source: Kaifeng Statistical Yearbook 2020.

2.2. Current Situation of Urban and Rural Development

2.2.1. Current Situation of Urban and Rural Income

The difference in the living standards of urban and rural residents can be judged from the level of urban and rural income, which is also one of the key points in the process of urban and rural integrated development. With the development of economy, the income between urban and rural areas in Kaifeng City is shrinking. However, from the perspective of income structure, the operating income between counties is not balanced, and the income gap between property insurance is still very large.

If there is a large gap between urban and rural operating income, it shows that there is a big gap between urban and rural development. In particular, agriculture is the main industry in rural areas. If the level of operational income drops, it means that agriculture is difficult to attract capital, and eventually factors cannot flow freely between urban and rural areas, resulting in factor price distortion. As a rural area dominated by agriculture, its main property income is mostly through the lease of land or housing, deposit interest composition. If the income gap between urban and rural assets is large, it means that land can not bring good returns to farmers, and it also means that the reform of rural land system needs to be improved. To narrow the gap between urban and rural property income by deepening the reform of the land system is conducive to the integrated development of urban and rural areas [2].

2.2.2. Current Situation of Urban and Rural Environmental Improvement

In the process of rapid economic development, the ecological environment will be destroyed, so the quality of the ecological environment is the key to sustainable economic development. Therefore, in the process of implementing the urban-rural integration strategy, in addition to ensuring that the ecological environment is not damaged in the process of urban-rural integration, so as to achieve the goal of sustainable development.

From the perspective of urban environment, the green coverage area of the built-up areas in Kaifeng from 2015 to 2019 was 4790 hectares, 5,036 hectares, 5,5858 hectares, 7700 hectares and 8814 hectares,² respectively. In recent five years, the green coverage area showed an upward trend, indicating that the urban greening effect has been significantly improved, but compared with other cities in Henan, there is still a lot of room for improvement. This is also related to the geographical environment of Kaifeng, so there is still a need to improve the urban environment. At the same time, rural areas are carrying out per capita environmental improvement, household garbage treatment, comprehensive utilization of straw, “three powder” treatment, “four water treatment” and other activities to change the rural ecological environment.

2.2.3. Current Situation of Urban and Rural Infrastructure Development

The prerequisite for the free flow of factors between urban and rural areas is the

²Data source: Kaifeng Statistical Yearbook 2015-2020.

integration of infrastructure, so increasing urban and rural infrastructure construction is conducive to the two-way flow of factors between urban and rural areas. Capital, technology and other factors in the city can flow to the countryside, while rural manpower can flow to the city, thus promoting the two-way free flow of factors, realizing the reasonable allocation of factors between urban and rural areas, and promoting the urban-rural integration.

In terms of public transport in Kaifeng from 2012 to 2019, the overall length of paved roads and the length of operational lines increased year by year, but the growth rate of operational line length was slow. Only developed public transportation capacity can provide a good environment for the free flow of elements.

In terms of medical treatment, there was a large gap in the number of beds among counties in Kaifeng in 2019. Lankao County had the most beds (6003), while Tongxu County had the least (2,624). However, compared with 13,861 beds in Kaifeng, the gap in medical treatment level between urban and rural areas was quite obvious.³ Only by integrating the medical level between urban and rural areas can we better promote the integration of urban and rural areas and attract more people to serve the countryside.

At the same time, education is also one of the bases to promote the flow of urban and rural factors. In order to transfer the rural labor force to the city, it is necessary to improve the input of rural human capital and increase the education level of rural residents, so as to ensure that in the process of urban-rural integration, the rural labor force can be smoothly integrated into the city, at the same time, urban high-tech talents should also flow to the countryside, bringing new vitality to the development of the countryside. Only by improving the quality of the labor force can we guarantee the high quality of urban and rural integration and provide impetus for urban and rural integration [3].

3. Problems of Urban-Rural Integration in Kaifeng

3.1. Unbalanced Allocation of Public Resources between Urban and Rural Areas

In the context of comprehensively carrying out poverty alleviation and implementing the strategy of rural revitalization, although all the funds invested in the villages and towns under the administration of Kaifeng City have increased significantly, due to the large historical debts, the infrastructure construction in most rural areas still needs to be further strengthened. For example, the construction of sewage pipes and facilities is a strong urgent demand of many village cadres and rural people. Some areas outside the village centre are still in a dilapidated, decrepit and under-maintained state of infrastructure and are in urgent need of environmental renovation. At the same time, there is still a large gap between rural residents and urban residents in public services, which is reflected in many aspects of social life, such as schooling, medical treatment, elderly care and travel.

³Data source: Kaifeng Statistical Yearbook 2020.

3.2. There Is a Large Gap in the Level of Urbanization among Counties, and the Quality of Urbanization Is Not High

The 4 counties of Kaifeng are mainly agricultural. The urbanization rate of Kaifeng is obviously lower than the national urbanization level or the counties in Henan Province, and the difference between the 4 counties is also large. In 2019, the national average urbanization rate exceeded 60% for the first time, reaching 60.60%, while that of Henan Province was 53.21%, both significantly higher than that of Kaifeng. Among the four counties, the difference between Tongxu County, the lowest, and Lankao County, the highest, is nearly 4 percentage points. There is an obvious gap in the level of urbanization among counties.⁴ After years of efforts to reform the household registration system, the policy environment has been changed to a large extent, but the cost of farmers moving to cities for employment or living is still high. Housing, education and medical care have become another restricting factor on the road of urbanization, so it is difficult to realize the overall relocation intention of rural families.

3.3. Price Distortion of Urban and Rural Factors

In Kaifeng, the flow mechanism of land, talent, capital and other factors in urban and rural areas has not been perfected, especially for urban and rural construction land, the reform of property rights system is not in place, and the market is not sound enough. As a result, the speed of land urbanization is faster than that of the registered population, which ultimately leads to farmers not enjoying the convenience or benefits brought by urbanization, and their property is difficult to be protected. Therefore, the lack of free flow of factors restricts the process of urban-rural integration [4].

3.4. Insufficient Impetus for Sustainable Development of Rural Industries

Through the strategy of industrial revitalization, the agricultural industry in Kaifeng has begun to get on the right track. However, due to the weak foundation in the early stage and the weak industrial foundation, many industries are still in the cultivation and growth stage, and the growth rate of farmers' income is not very obvious. At the same time, due to the weak foundation, it also brings certain difficulties for the extension of the subsequent industrial chain, so it is impossible to develop from primary production to higher-end industries. Moreover, the agricultural industry is mainly dominated by primary products, which are all similar products in the market, without brand effect and weak competitiveness.

4. Kaifeng Urban-Rural Integrated Development Path and Policy Suggestions

The so-called integrated development of urban and rural areas refers to the

⁴Data source: Kaifeng Statistical Yearbook 2020.

two-way interaction between the two regional systems of town and countryside and the process of their interaction in space. The bearing of space plays a crucial role in the process of promoting the high-quality integrated development of urban and rural areas, such as the generation of various ideas, the proposal of various plans, the implementation of various measures, etc. Therefore, in the context of territorial space planning, the integrated development of urban and rural areas should pay more attention to the adjustment and optimization of urban and rural territorial space layout. According to the analysis results in the third chapter, the trend of urban-rural integration in Kaifeng highlights a relatively obvious circle structure with the central urban area as the core. Especially in industrial development, educational resources, public services and other aspects, cities are obviously stronger than rural areas. Therefore, we focus on infrastructure, public services, factor flow, industrial development, ecological environment and other aspects to optimize the overall urban and rural territorial space strategy. Specific optimization strategies are as follows.

4.1. Strengthening Rural Infrastructure

Most of the rural areas within the whole area of Kaifeng City develop rapidly in transportation, communication, power supply, water conservancy, industry, rural market and culture, health and education construction, but there is still a large space for improvement of rural road traffic conditions, it should be targeted to speed up the construction of difficult rural road sections, accelerate the process of urban and rural bus popularization. In addition, according to the situation of field research, the development of heating, gas supply, garbage treatment, sewage treatment and other aspects in rural areas of each county is still lagging behind, which is mainly restricted by natural environment, economy, geographical location and many other factors. Therefore, we believe that we should reasonably plan and coordinate the configuration of gas supply and heating infrastructure according to local conditions, and gradually improve and strengthen the construction and maintenance of sanitation, sewage treatment and other related facilities. In addition, through the analysis above, it is found that the transportation network and information network not only act as the carrier of the flow of urban and rural elements, but also the important condition of communication and contact between urban and rural residents. Inspired by this, we only put forward the following measures for the transportation network and information network: firstly, urban and rural transport network and public transport operation network covering urban and rural areas should be improved and constructed on the existing basis. Secondly, it should accelerate the construction of information network and communication network between urban and rural areas, expand and even popularize the application of Internet in rural areas, and effectively promote the integrated development of urban and rural communication and urban and rural interconnection [5].

4.2. Improving Rural Public Services

The level of equal integration of rural public services in the whole area of Kaifeng City is generally low, and the needs of rural residents in public culture have not been effectively met. Therefore, we propose feasible suggestions in the following four aspects: in the aspect of education development, the policies for remote rural areas should be appropriately more slanted, including increasing the financial expenditure of education within a reasonable range, formulating various preferential policies to attract educational talents, strengthening the introduction of educational talents, using the “Internet + education” model for teaching and other specific measures to narrow the gap in the quality and level of education between urban and rural areas. In terms of medical and health care, we should strengthen the construction of rural medical and health service facilities and personnel by adopting measures such as one-to-one fixed-point pair assistance, so as to solve the problems of difficult and expensive medical services for rural residents. In the aspect of social security, we should give full play to the promoting role of market resources in the construction and development of social security system, so as to improve the strength of social security. In terms of public culture, local governments should establish reasonable policies to actively promote the establishment and popularization of public cultural posts in rural areas, and initially solve the dilemma of lacking cultural talents in rural areas. At the same time, county-level libraries, cultural centers, science and technology centers, museums and other public cultural facilities should give full play to the radiating and driving role. Cultural resources should be gradually discussed, co-built and shared among county-level cultural centers, town-level cultural stations and village-level cultural rooms, so as to improve the popularization of public culture.

4.3. Promote the Free Flow of Factors of Production in Urban and Rural Areas

At present, the flow of urban and rural elements is hindered, showing a single flow status from the countryside to the city. The reasons for the current situation can be roughly divided into the following two aspects: on the one hand, due to the weak attraction of rural areas, urban capital, information, technology, material, labor and other production resources flow less to rural areas; on the other hand, rural areas suffer from a large outflow of human resources. Based on the above two factors, this paper mainly puts forward three measures: first, give full play to the surrounding diffusion effect of the radiation from urban areas to the surrounding rural areas, attract migrant workers, business people, college graduates and other types of people to return to their hometown to start businesses, and encourage talent, technology and other production resources to gradually and efficiently flow into rural areas [6]. Second, on the premise of conforming to the actual local conditions, local government departments should give a series of policy support to rural areas, and vigorously promote rural construction and

land transfer. Third, improve the role of finance in supporting agriculture and poverty alleviation, solve a series of problems that farmers face in the process of agricultural planting and production, such as shortage of funds, and guide industrial and commercial capital to provide industrial, technological and financial support for urban and rural development, especially the development of rural areas. Finally, a virtuous circle of talents, information, capital and land will be formed in rural areas, providing strong support for rural revitalization [7].

4.4. Enhancing Regional Industrial Development Capacity

The imitative products between urban and rural industries and the unbalanced production distribution of various industries are an important factor restricting the economic development and urban-rural integration in Kaifeng City. First, we should determine the direction of industrial development in urban areas. Secondly, rural areas should make full use of their unique advantages to develop characteristic industries. Finally, the cooperation and mutual assistance between districts, cities and villages should be strengthened to promote the development of industries to a deeper level, and the integration of supply, production and sales should be built. Finally, the increase of social wealth can be realized, the income of residents can be increased, and the urban and rural society can also get high-quality development.

5. Conclusion

Supported by key scientific research projects of colleges and universities in Henan Province, this paper closely adheres to the policy orientation of “adhering to urban-rural integrated development” of the central government and the concept of rural revitalization. The innovation point lies in the comprehensive analysis and summary of the current situation of urban-rural integrated development of Kaifeng from multiple dimensions on the basis of in-depth research on the economic and social development of each county in Kaifeng. In view of the prominent problems existing in the process of urban-rural integration, such as uneven allocation of public resources between urban and rural areas, large gap in the level of urbanization between counties, distorted prices of urban and rural factors, and insufficient impetus for sustainable development of rural industries, The paper creatively puts forward four countermeasures and suggestions, including strengthening rural infrastructure construction, improving rural public service level, promoting the free flow of urban and rural elements, and enhancing regional industrial development capacity. It opens up new ideas for further improving the speed and quality of urban-rural integration in Kaifeng, and makes positive contributions to urban-rural integration development and rural revitalization in other areas of our country.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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