

# Challenges and Solutions for Promoting Urban-Rural Industrial Integration in the Context of Rural Revitalization

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**Received:** 20 November 2023; **Accepted:** 12 December 2023; **Published:** 22 December 2023

## Abstract:

This paper delves deeply into the pivotal theme of promoting the integrated development of urban and rural areas within the county domain. Initially, we revisit the historical background and the current state of urban-rural integration at the county level, emphasizing its paramount importance in the revitalization of rural areas and the modernization journey. Subsequently, the paper scrutinizes the significance of establishing robust institutional mechanisms and policy systems for urban-rural integrated development. A primary focus is placed on strategies to facilitate the fluid movement of urban-rural elements and coordinated urban-rural planning and construction. Building on this foundation, we conduct a profound analysis of the primary issues and challenges faced in the current urban-rural integration development within the county domain, such as urban-rural disparities, uneven resource allocation, and cultural differences. In light of these analyses, the paper proffers a suite of specific and pragmatic countermeasures and recommendations. These include bolstering the construction of central town municipal and service facilities, advocating for the coordinated construction and management of public service facilities like power supply, gas supply, telecommunications, and postal services across urban and rural areas, and promoting financial services for migrant workers. The research presented in this paper aims to offer comprehensive theoretical backing and practical guidance on urban-rural integrated development within the county domain for policymakers and researchers, thereby advancing rural revitalization and sustained growth.

## Keywords:

County Domain, Urban-Rural Integration, Development Strategies

## 1. Introduction

With the continuous development of China's socio-economic landscape, the urban-rural disparity has become increasingly prominent. The county domain, as the bridge and link for the development of urban-rural integration, has gradually revealed its

significance and position. It serves not only as the convergence point of cities and rural areas but also as the hub for economic, cultural, and social activities within the region. The development status of the county domain not only affects the economic structure and living standards of surrounding villages but also reflects the overall effectiveness of urban-rural integrated development. In the dual context of globalization and modernization, promoting urban-rural integration in the county domain is not only essential for rural revitalization but also crucial for promoting balanced regional development, improving people's livelihood, and strengthening the construction of ecological civilization. As such, determining effective strategies and measures to enhance the comprehensive strength of the county domain, promote the flow and sharing of urban-rural elements and resources, and improve the quality and benefits of county domain development has become a significant topic in current social development. This paper aims to delve deep into the current situation, challenges, and opportunities of urban-rural integrated development in the county domain. By doing so, it aims to underscore its key role in rural revitalization and regional coordinated development, providing valuable theoretical references and practical insights for policymakers and researchers.

## **2. Current Status and Issues of Urban-Rural Integration Development in the County Domain**

With rapid economic growth, China has made notable strides in urban-rural integration, achieving collaboration and connectivity in areas such as transportation, communication, industry, and education. In some fast-developing regions, the gap between cities and rural areas is gradually narrowing. Rural areas are establishing closer connections to the outside world through the internet and modern transportation. Agricultural products can swiftly access markets, and rural culture is being disseminated and promoted. Cities are also gradually recognizing the concepts of green, ecological, and sustainable development, absorbing the lifestyles and wisdom from rural areas. However, at the county domain level, despite some achievements, there are still evident challenges and issues due to geographical, economic, and cultural reasons. These include, but are not limited to, lagging infrastructure development, an imperfect public service system, and imbalances in urban-rural development. Addressing these challenges is vital for achieving genuine urban-rural integration [1].

- **Unbalanced Infrastructure Development:** In recent years, while county towns and some townships have seen rapid infrastructure development like roads, communication, water, and electricity, many remote areas have lagged behind. For instance, in a particular county in Jiangxi, while the infrastructure in the county center is comparable to that of major cities, remote villages, especially those in mountainous regions, suffer from narrow roads and inconvenient transportation, hindering local economic growth.

- **Significant Disparities in Urban-Rural Public Services:** Efforts have been made to establish public service platforms across urban and rural areas, but there remain considerable gaps in areas like healthcare, education, and culture. For example, in a county in Hubei, while schools in the county town are well-equipped and offer high-quality education, some rural schools grapple with a shortage of teachers and outdated facilities.

- **Slow Urbanization Process for Migrant Workers:** A significant number of rural workers have migrated to cities for work. However, they still face challenges related to household registration, medical insurance, and their children's education. In a county in Zhejiang, for example, even though many rural workers migrate to the city each year, most live in the suburbs in simple rented houses, and their children struggle to access quality education.

- **Irrational Allocation of Rural Public Resources:** There's an imbalance in resource allocation across rural areas. Some villages, due to their strategic location or higher population density, receive more resources, while others are left behind. For instance, in a county in Henan, while some villages close to the county town receive substantial investment and development, those farther away struggle due to lack of adequate resource support [2].

### **3. Recommendations for Promoting Integrated Urban and Rural Development in the County**

The integrated development of urban and rural areas in the county has become the core content of China's rural revitalization strategy in the new era. With the continuous transformation of economic structure and technological advancement, county-level development is increasingly demonstrating its strategic, forward-looking, and holistic characteristics. Against this backdrop, the integration of urban and rural areas in counties is no longer just an economic integration, but a deep integration of culture, ecology, technology, and institutions. How to effectively advance this process in practice, bridge the gap between urban and rural areas, and achieve genuine integration is a crucial topic of current research. In the following, we will discuss in detail how to refine the institutional mechanisms and policy framework for integrated county-level urban and rural development based on real-world cases, as well as how to ensure the effective implementation of these policy measures.

#### ***3.1. Refining the Institutional Mechanisms and Policy Framework for Integrated County-Level Urban and Rural Development***

Establish mechanisms and policies that promote equal exchange of urban and rural elements and balanced allocation of public resources, ensuring institutional guarantees for the integrated development of urban and rural areas.

##### ***3.1.1. Institutional Construction and Policy Optimization***

**Innovative Mechanisms:** Tailor reforms in administrative management, economic systems, and land policies to the unique characteristics and realities of counties. For instance, Dashiqiao City in Liaoning has pioneered a model centered around rural land circulation and integrating modern agricultural industrial chains, aiming to break traditional administrative and economic boundaries to allow for free flow of resources. **Policy Continuity and Support:** Strengthen policy linkages across county, township, and village levels, ensuring policies take root and are effectively implemented. In Luzhou City, Sichuan, a tri-level policy coordination mechanism has been established, adapting policies to the distinct needs and characteristics of different areas.

##### ***3.1.2. Integration of Capital and Technology***

**Capital Interface Platform:** \*Encourage collaboration between counties and major enterprises and financial institutions, guiding more social capital into county-level

urban-rural integration. Suqian City in Jiangsu has successfully attracted major enterprises such as Alibaba and Tencent to participate in its modern agricultural construction, forming a complementary trio of technology, funds, and market, significantly enhancing the market competitiveness of local agricultural products. Technological Guidance and Training: Actively introduce advanced technologies in agriculture, industry, and services, and enhance training and skills upgrading for rural human resources. Zhumadian City in Henan has initiated a series of technical training courses focused on new agricultural technologies, such as drones and big data in agriculture, boosting local farmers' skills upgrading and transformation [3].

### ***3.1.3. Balanced Allocation of Public Resources***

Enhanced Infrastructure Construction: Devise appropriate infrastructure layouts based on the geographical, economic, and social characteristics of counties. In Xinzhou City, Shanxi, given its unique mountainous terrain, a distinct set of transportation and water infrastructure has been planned, like constructing a series of mountain roads and tunnels, catering to the local geography and promoting the flow of goods and people between urban and rural areas. Optimizing Public Service Provision: Realign public service resources like education, healthcare, and culture based on resident needs, achieving balanced allocation between urban and rural areas. Lishui City in Zhejiang has launched the "Urban-Rural Shared" public service program, integrating educational and medical resources from both urban and rural areas, ensuring rural residents also have access to high-quality public services [4].

### ***3.1.4. Policy Implementation and Impact Assessment***

Strengthening Policy Publicity and Interpretation: Utilize various channels to enhance residents' understanding of urban-rural integration policies, improving policy implementation efficiency. Ningde City in Fujian has organized a series of policy publicity weeks and on-site interpretation sessions, aiding farmers and businesses in gaining a deeper understanding of policy content and benefits. Regular Policy Impact Assessments: Collaborate with third-party institutions for regular evaluations of the effects of urban-rural integration policies, providing a basis for policy adjustments. In partnership with a renowned university, Qiannan Buyei and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Guizhou conducted a comprehensive impact assessment of its urban-rural integration policies, offering a scientific foundation for subsequent policy modifications [5].

## ***3.2. Enhancing the Construction of County Cities and Central Towns to Promote Urbanization Development***

As China's economy continues to grow, county cities and central towns have increasingly become pivotal nodes for regional economic development and urban-rural integration. They serve as vital bridges connecting larger cities with rural areas, playing an irreplaceable role in bridging urban-rural disparities and promoting rural revitalization. Optimization of Planning and Construction: It's essential to improve the planning and construction of county cities and central towns to make them more rational and efficient, meeting the growing demands of the residents. For instance, in a particular county in Guizhou Province, which was previously underdeveloped due to its mountainous location, a new urban planning strategy was devised in recent years. Taking into account its unique geographical and cultural characteristics, the county emphasized creating a scenic avenue connecting the county city with surrounding

villages, aiming to boost tourism. Through this plan, the county successfully attracted a significant number of tourists, invigorating the local economy. Enhancing Carrying and Service Capacities: Emphasizing the construction of infrastructure and perfection of public service facilities is critical to meet the increasing needs of the residents. An example can be seen in a county in Hunan Province, which, being remote, has always lacked medical resources. In recent years, the county government collaborated with major medical institutions to establish a modern hospital. With the introduction of telemedicine, the residents of the county now enjoy medical services on par with those in major cities. Guiding the Rational Flow of Population and Resources: Policy guidance should be used to encourage population aggregation in county cities and central towns, while ensuring that rural areas are not neglected. In a central town in Henan, a unique measure was taken by setting up a base for migrant workers to return and start businesses, offering technical training and start-up funds. Encouraged by this initiative, many migrant workers chose to return to their hometowns, starting various small enterprises like handicrafts and organic agricultural product processing, significantly boosting the local economy. Promoting Industrial Upgradation and Innovation: In county cities and central towns, there should be an emphasis on promoting industrial upgrading and technological innovation, forming an industrial chain that complements larger cities. An example from a county in Shandong illustrates how industrial upgrading can stimulate economic growth. Originally dominated by traditional agriculture, the county shifted its focus in recent years to the development of modern agricultural industrial parks. This attracted a host of agri-tech companies to set up operations. These companies provided local farmers with technical training, introducing new agricultural technologies and planting patterns, substantially increasing the value-added of agricultural products [6].

### ***3.3. Enhancing the Urbanization of Migrant Workers and Elevating the Level of Basic Public Services***

The urbanization of migrant workers is a vital link in the integration of urban and rural development within counties. As the number of migrant workers increases, their status and rights in cities have garnered increasing attention. Deepening the urbanization process for migrant workers not only concerns their quality of life and safeguarding of rights but also relates to the harmony and stability of counties and society at large. A people-centered service mechanism: In the context of urban-rural integration, this means we must closely monitor the actual needs of migrant workers and their families, providing them with tailored public services that align with their lifestyles and requirements. For instance, in Hanjiang County, Yangzhou, Jiangsu, to better cater to the needs of resident migrant workers, the local government utilized big data technology to set up a “Migrant Workers Service Management Platform.” This platform allows for real-time understanding of migrant worker statistics, distribution, professions, etc [7]. Thus offering more targeted public services. Expanding educational opportunities for migrant workers’ children: The education of migrant workers’ children touches upon the core of fairness. These children often face various educational barriers due to the household registration system, economic conditions, and unstable housing. To ensure they have equal educational opportunities as urban children, adjustments in policies and mechanisms, such as relaxing household registration restrictions, providing financial assistance, or building schools specifically for this mobile population, are needed. In Wuyi County, Jinhua, Zhejiang, by guiding and subsidizing private education, the proportion of migrant workers’ children attending urban schools has increased annually. Moreover, there are several

schools within the county dedicated to migrant workers' children, with teaching quality and facilities comparable to regular schools. Enhancing medical protection: The aim here is to provide migrant workers with fair, high-quality, and accessible medical services. Beyond the provision of medical services, this also concerns the burden of medical costs. To ensure that migrant workers can afford medical expenses, it may be necessary to adjust current medical insurance policies, such as reducing premiums, increasing reimbursement rates, or offering specific medical subsidies. For example, in Gaocheng District, Shijiazhuang, Hebei, the region launched a "Health Record" service for resident migrant workers. Those with chronic diseases receive free regular check-ups, and they also receive drug subsidies. Targeted financial products: The essence of targeted financial products is to identify the unique financial needs and challenges of migrant workers and provide tailored solutions. As migrant workers may have unstable incomes, lack fixed residences, or lack comprehensive credit histories, they might struggle to access loans or other financial services from traditional financial institutions. Targeted financial products, like low-interest microloans, simplified approval processes, or savings plans designed for migrant workers, can address these challenges. A bank in Tancheng County, Linyi, Shandong, introduced "Blue-Collar Loans" – low-interest, small-amount loans with quick approval to assist migrant workers in addressing short-term financial needs in the city. Financial literacy promotion: Against the backdrop of urban-rural integration, many migrant workers may be encountering the complex financial environment of the city for the first time and might lack adequate understanding of various financial products and services. Insufficient financial knowledge could lead to detrimental financial decisions, such as excessive debts, selecting unsuitable financial products, or becoming victims of financial fraud. Huangpu Town, Zhongshan, Guangdong, collaborated with local financial institutions to organize a series of financial lectures and practical training sessions, helping migrant workers better understand the operation of financial tools and learn how to protect their rights. Enhancing the labor inspection system: During the urbanization process, migrant workers often face a multitude of challenges related to labor rights, such as wage arrears, excessive working hours, unreasonable working conditions, and lack of essential welfare benefits. The enhancement of the labor inspection system aims to offer solutions to these issues, ensuring that the rights of migrant workers are not infringed upon. Dayi County, Chengdu, Sichuan, established a "Migrant Worker Rights Protection Station." Not only does the station have resident labor inspectors, but it also involves lawyers and psychological counselors, providing all-around legal consultation and psychological support for migrant workers. Quick resolution mechanism for labor disputes: In the context of urban-rural integration, as migrant workers gradually integrate into urban life and work, handling labor relations becomes paramount. Labor disputes, which might concern wages, working hours, and welfare benefits, often arise in this setting. To safeguard the rights of migrant workers and maintain social harmony, establishing a rapid resolution mechanism for labor disputes is essential. Yueyang Tower District, Yueyang, Hunan, to reduce labor disputes, specifically set up a "24-hour Labor Dispute Green Channel", ensuring that the legal rights of migrant workers are upheld promptly [8].

### ***3.4. Optimizing Public Resource Allocation to Promote Integrated Urban-Rural Development***

In the context of integrated urban-rural development at the county level, the optimization of public resource allocation and the promotion of integrated urban-rural

development have become core issues. To ensure that urban and rural residents receive fair and balanced public services, especially in key areas such as education, medical care, and elderly care, in-depth and systematic adjustments and innovations are essential. **Setting Unified Standards:** Differences in public resource allocation often exist between urban and rural areas, potentially due to historical, geographical, or economic factors. To eliminate these disparities, it's crucial to establish unified standards, ensuring that both urban and rural residents have equal rights and treatment when receiving services. **Strengthening Resource Integration:** Through cross-departmental and cross-domain collaboration, resources can be better integrated and allocated. For instance, establishing cooperative relationships between rural medical centers and urban hospitals, sharing medical resources and information, can lead to mutual benefits. **Developing Urban-Rural Interactive Mechanisms:** For example, encouraging city schools to share educational resources with rural schools, initiating interactive educational projects, or urban medical institutions regularly conducting free clinics in rural areas and providing medical training. **Enhancing Public Transportation Network:** Infrastructure development is vital for promoting urban-rural integration, with the public transportation network being especially critical. Efforts should be made to improve urban and rural roadways, rail transportation, and other infrastructure, ensuring that rural residents can conveniently access better public services in cities. **Promoting Community-based Elderly Care Models:** Considering the increasing issue of aging in rural areas, it's feasible to promote community-based elderly care models in these regions. This not only provides nearby elderly care services but also attracts urban seniors to choose rural areas for their retirement, facilitating a two-way flow of resources. **Establishing a Dynamic Adjustment Mechanism for Public Resources:** As socio-economic conditions evolve, the demand for public resources also changes. Therefore, it's necessary to establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism to periodically reallocate and reconfigure resources based on actual needs [9].

### ***3.5. Implementing Pilot Projects for Rural Revitalization to Foster Urban-Rural Integration***

In the new era, rural revitalization stands as the overarching direction for China's rural development, encompassing holistic enhancements across cultural, economic, environmental, and social dimensions. The strategy of establishing pilot projects aims to lead broader areas by demonstrating advanced urban-rural integration tactics in specific villages or key regions, inspiring other areas to follow suit. **Field Segmentation and Pilot Selection:** Firstly, it's imperative to specify the sectors and emphases for pilot projects, such as specialized agriculture, rural tourism, rural education, and green energy. Subsequently, representative villages or regions within these sectors should be chosen for comprehensive reform and innovation. **Resource Integration for Synergy:** These pilot projects should not solely be the jurisdiction of local governments but require collaborative participation from enterprises, social organizations, villagers, and scholars. For example, businesses could be incorporated for rural industry upgrades, or collaborations could be established with universities for technology R&D and talent development. **Deepening Institutional Innovations for Long-term Mechanisms:** Beyond infrastructural investments, the crux lies in fostering innovations in management and regulations. Enhancements in rural land, finance, and tax systems can ensure resources are efficiently and justly distributed. **Prioritizing Cultural and Ecological Preservation:** While propelling rural rejuvenation, it's vital not to overlook the rural cultural heritage and ecological surroundings. Development

should preserve rural characteristics, safeguard ecological balance, and simultaneously promote economic, social, and environmental development. Feedback and Evaluation Mechanism: The establishment of pilot projects is an ongoing and long-term endeavor. Regular evaluations and feedback are essential for experience summarization, problem identification, and timely adjustments. Enhance Domestic and International Collaboration: Learning from successful global rural revitalization models and importing advanced technologies and management philosophies are beneficial. Meanwhile, it's advantageous to promote successful local models, exchange experiences, and collectively drive China's rural revitalization. In summary, implementing pilot projects for rural revitalization not only offers villages swift and holistic development opportunities but also significantly bolsters integrated urban-rural development across the county [10].

## 4. Conclusions

Advancing integrated urban-rural development at the county level is not merely a contemporary necessity but a pressing need for rural revitalization. Given the accelerating socio-economic transformations, the bond between villages and cities is tightening. To ensure a smooth, efficient, and equitable progression, it's vital to continually refine related strategies and measures. This directly affects every rural inhabitant and pertains to the nation's long-term growth and societal stability. The practice and exploration of integrated urban-rural development is intricate and enduring, requiring collective efforts from the government, businesses, and society. We must remain problem-oriented, constantly learn from advanced models, and establish a development pattern resonating with China's uniqueness. Only by genuinely grasping and deeply implementing urban-rural integration can we genuinely achieve harmonious coexistence and mutual growth between villages and cities, laying a robust foundation for a more prosperous, affluent, and harmonious new era.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

## Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

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