



# The Development of China's Economic Geography in the Past Three Years

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**Abstract:** With the rapid development of China's economy, the relationship between regional and international development and geographical factors has attracted increasing attention from scholars. This article combs through the literature of China's economic geography in the past three years, trying to summarize the economic geography under the background of China's new economic normal. The development context in each direction provides a reference for possible future research directions.

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As early as more than 2,000 years ago, records concerning the term economic geography already appeared. It was not until the 1950s that economic geography was studied in detail as a subject. Economic geography has typical interdisciplinary and comprehensive discipline characteristics. On the one hand, the influencing factors of the agglomeration and diffusion of economic activities are diverse, including various natural elements as well as economic, social, political, cultural, and other human elements; on the other hand, human production and living activities change the natural geographical environment pattern, resulting in Environmental changes at different spatial scales.

As the only developing country that has completed the urbanization process which took Western developed

countries 200-300 year only in 40 years, China has a unique economic geography development background, such as the inconsistency of industrialization and urbanization, and the sharp contradiction between population and resources. Regional economic development varies greatly, with unique economic systems and cultural traditions. In this context, China has formed a unique economic geography research based on practice and policy-oriented. In the recent development of Chinese economic geography, there are research results from mainstream economists and geographers. Economists focus on the economic research of spatial distribution and equilibrium, emphasizing concepts such as increasing returns, transportation costs and other trade interdependence, while geographers focus on studying economic geography from social, political and cultural perspectives. The following summarizes the research results of geographers in the past three years, mainly from the following four aspects.

## 1 Economic globalization

The development of globalization and production technology has further triggered the transformation of social production organization. The new international division of labor has penetrated into the product level. The concepts of "global value chain", "global commodity chain" and "global production network" provide a better theoretical framework to explain the new changes in today's global production organization. The fragility of the local economy and how to deal with economic crises and achieve common development have become new topics of concern to global economic geographers. Chinese economic geographers should actively explore the extent, form,

and ways of globalization and the financial crisis on the world economic structure, emerging economies, and especially on China's regional development on the basis of summing up a lot of experience.

From an international perspective, research on economic globalization in recent years has mostly started with the Sino-US trade war and the One Belt One Road policy. The main point of view is that the United States imposes tariff restrictions on China and other major trading partners, which seriously harms the global economic and trade order and is not conducive to the global economy and sustainable development. The One Belt One Road policy is both an opportunity and a challenge for countries along the route. It is necessary for China to carefully grasp economic development opportunities and meet economic challenges under the premise of fully considering both international and domestic backgrounds<sup>[1]</sup>. From a national perspective, after the 2008 international financial crisis, the momentum of economic globalization has been strongly impacted, trade protectionism has risen, and the tide of anti-globalization has risen. Facing the new situation of economic globalization, China will unswervingly continue to promote economic globalization and contribute Chinese wisdom to it. China adheres to the concept of innovation, coordination, green, open and shared development, and promotes the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind<sup>[2]</sup>. From an enterprise perspective, there is no doubt that economic globalization has brought unlimited opportunities and possibilities for the development of Chinese enterprises. However, economic globalization has brought opportunities for China's economic development while also bringing Chinese enterprises risks and challenges. Scholars also discussed the development strategies and development models of enterprises under market competition risks, product competition risks, and talent competition risks<sup>[3-4]</sup>.

## **2 Regional sustainable development research**

Sustainable development is the golden key to solving many major issues facing the world. It is a time-honored topic and the goal of the common struggle of the people worldwide. Looking at the world today, new changes are brewing in the global economic structure and governance system. Environmental issues are also gradually evolving from a purely regional environmental issue to a complex issue involving world economy,

international trade, and international politics. Therefore, studying the relationship between economy and environment is very important in the current economic geography field. Specific topics include low-carbon economy, circular economy, green manufacturing, environmental control methods, environmental carrying capacity, etc. In addition, scholars have also evaluated and predicted China's sustainable development capabilities. Some scholars select specific regions to evaluate the regional sustainable development capabilities<sup>[5]</sup>, and some scholars analyze the process and level of China's sustainable development based on existing research<sup>[6]</sup>, and further study its regional spatial differences<sup>[7]</sup>. Regarding the relationship between economy and environment, the Chinese government has always adhered to the development concept of "green water and green mountains are golden mountains and silver mountains", adheres to the path of green economic development, and resolutely wins the three major defenses of blue sky, clear water and pure land to achieve sustainable development.

## **3 Research on coordinated regional development and local economic development**

At present, our country's regional relations are relatively complex. On the one hand, the breadth and depth of regional economic integration have been significantly expanded, and on the other hand, the coordination mechanism for inter-regional interest relations has not been fully established. Therefore, how to fully respect the laws of the market to ensure the maximization of the interests of a single region, and realize the coordinated development of a larger area, has become an urgent question in China's economic geography. Regional coordinated development involves many aspects. In the past three years, scholars' research has mainly focused on the game process of regional stakeholders<sup>[8]</sup>, the division of rights, responsibilities, and benefits between regions<sup>[9]</sup>, and regional interest coordination and compensation mechanisms and models<sup>[10]</sup>. And other aspects.

Since the 1980s, topics such as regional innovation systems, learning areas, the formation of new industrial districts, the development of metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations, and the revitalization of old industrial areas in the new regionalism have become global hot issues. Since the reform and opening up, especially in the past ten years, major changes have taken place not only in the fields of agriculture and

manufacturing, but also in the cultural and creative industries, R&D and consulting financial industries, and retail industries. How to reveal the formation of new industrial areas in China and the decline and revitalization of old industrial areas from the paradigm of system, relationship and evolution, coordinate urban and rural development, reconstruct agriculture and rural spaces, and put forward instructive policy recommendations will remain an important direction of learning in China's economic geography. Throughout the literature on local economic development, scholars have found that in addition to natural factors such as terrain, soil, and climate, social and economic factors such as local officials, land finance, local policies, high-speed railways, universities, and cultural industries also affect The development of local economy.

#### 4 Township and Village Enterprises

From the reform and opening up to the beginning of the 21st century, China has basically completed the nationwide reform of privatization of township and village enterprises. As an important part of our country's industrial economy, the production efficiency of township and village enterprises is related to the development of rural economy and the process of urban-rural integration. According to existing research, the main factors affecting the development of township and village enterprises include the market structure<sup>[11]</sup> and policy environment in addition to the level of regional economic development. With the development of the national economy and the optimization and upgrading of the industrial structure, township and village enterprises have gradually exposed the disadvantages that restrict their development, such as low production technology, extensive production methods, and serious environmental pollution. In addition, the regional differences of township and village enterprises are obvious. Wenzhou, Southern Jiangsu and other regions have formed the "Wenzhou model" and "Southern Jiangsu model" based on the good urban-rural linkage model and the level of industrial foundation<sup>[12]</sup>. As our country's economy enters a new normal, it has brought opportunities and challenges to the upgrading and development of township and village enterprises. Some township and village enterprises have innovated development models, promoted their own economic system reform, and realized the integrated development of industry and city in combination with the actual situation of the township<sup>[13-14]</sup>. As a unique

economy, township and village enterprises are the key to improving people's living standards, especially the economic level of rural areas. With the implementation of our country's rural revitalization strategy and the continuous development of urban-rural integration, township and village enterprises will surely usher in new development opportunities and challenges.

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