

# Small-Towns Development Strategies of New Urbanization in Hubei Province<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract**—The steady development of small towns is the footstone for urbanization which has great importance in the construction of small towns organic coordinated and balanced development of urban space network system. Hubei province is in central China with a large agricultural population and numerous small towns, which has a great potential of urbanization. Started with the basic characteristics of the development of small towns in hubei province, this paper explains the new urbanization strategies and choice of mode of the development of small towns, figures out the role of small towns in the urbanization of hubei. Possible strategies and suggestions will be proposed.

**Keywords**—New urbanization, small towns, strategies.

IN the process of urbanization, industrialization makes the less farmland for the farm laborers and more time for the surplus labor, then, the problem of surplus labor is becoming increasing dominant.<sup>2</sup> So, to transfer the rural population into the city is the only method to solve the contradiction of population and land and realize agricultural large-scale operation and industrialization. In spite of the rapid development of large and medium-sized cities, transferring the surplus rural labor into those large cities is still too difficult. So developing small towns is an important method to fix those problems.

Hubei is in the central China with a large proportion of agriculture and a big amount of rural surplus labor force, in which it is a typical case of exporting of rural labor service. Those characteristics determine that Small-towns is an

important part of urban structure system and it is also an important support of the new urbanization.



Fig. 1 Multi-level urbanization development pattern sketch

## I. THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL-TOWNS DEVELOPMENT IN HUBEI

At present, there is 746 towns in Hubei with a population of 13.98 million, among them: 40 urban towns with a population of 5.42 million ;706 normal towns with a population of 8.559 million; 193 special towns with a population of 984000. The current situation and problems of small towns in Hubei mainly are:

### A. Large Distribution But Small Scale

Hubei has the 7th largest population in China with a large population in the east, people reside mainly along the two main river in Hubei province : the Yangtze-river and its tributary Han-river. **In the east**, the city Wuhan has an area of 5.8 sq.km,with 370 small towns in total, small towns the density of small-towns is 63.8 / sq.km. **In the west**, the western-hubei has an area of 12.8 sq.km, with 517 small towns in total, the density of small-towns is 40.4 / sq.km. **In the yangtze economic region and the middle and lower reaches of the han-river**, there is 524 small towns with a population of 7.9338 million which is 83% of the population of small towns in the province. In terms of the scale, the bigger scale is ,the less amount will be, so: 28 small towns with a population of more than 100000 people, 3.8% of the total numbers; 3.89 million people in the Built-up area, 27.8% of the population of small towns.

TABLE I

THE DATA OF SMALL TOWNS IN HUBEI PROVINCE

Population range		50K-100K	30K-50K	10K-30K	below 10K	
Number of towns		33	30	243	405	
Accounted for	per	4.5	4.1	32.9	54.8	
Built up area population		10K	227	115	431	245
Accounted for	per	16.2	8.2	30.8	17.5	

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<sup>2</sup> Zeng-yuan li. Separation and integration: farmers flow change in social and community integration, based on the empirical investigation of Wenzhou [D]. Hubei: central China normal university, 2013.

### B. Weak In The Overall Strength, Poor In The Adsorption Ability

The small towns developed slowly with an unbalanced development of economy, on general, they are short of main industry and leading enterprises. 88 towns has the level of gross value of industrial output over 1 billion yuan and fiscal revenue above 40 million yuan. accounts for 12%; 133 towns has the level of gross value of industrial output over 8 billion yuan and fiscal revenue above 25 million yuan, accounts for 18%; 525 of the rest, 70% of all, basically they are financially relied by the government. Weak in facility construction, Relevant indicators higher than the national average , but we still have a long way to go comparing to the cities such as Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu. In respect of attracting rural surplus labor force, in 2008, 12 million of surplus rural labor, 8 million chose to go outside, 4 million chose to stay in Hubei. On 2012, about 4 million people stayed, 4 million people went out; On contrast. 2 million people from the other province came into Hubei, among which, 1.2 million people from region surrounding wuhan and about 800000 people from the other counties and cities.

TABLE II  
COMPARED WITH DATA OF SMALL TOWNS IN HUBEI IN THE COUNTRY

Indicators		Hubei province level	The national average
Urban water supply penetration	per	82.9	79.8
Urban gas penetration	per	47.5	46.1
Per capita road area	m <sup>2</sup>	12.5	11.7
Drainage density	km/k m <sup>2</sup>	5.2	5.0
Sewage concentration rate	per	13.1	12.0
Hazard-free treatment rate of household garbage	per	18.6	11.0

### C. Lack Of Overall Planning And Distinguishing Characteristics

Start from the end of 2005 in Hubei, a new round of small town planning has basically completed by the end of 2009, because of the influence of urban and rural "dual structure" and small-towns human resources, technology, the objective reasons such as lacking funds etc, overall level and quality of the planning is not too high, lack of regional view and overall consideration, inadequate scientific and forward-looking, which can not adapt to the needs of the current social and economic rapid development. As for planning management , some of the small towns did not attach enough importance to planning, with the lack of managing organization; eg :construction before planning, construction while planning, changing plans, and so on and so forth, causing the overall layout of small towns more messy and chaotic. Specially, Hubei has many types of landscapes. there are plains, mountains, hills, rivers, many places of interest. So local characteristics should be characteristic, styled and varied. But on sharp contrast, the layouts and architectural style of so many towns are all the same, losing its inherent features.

## II. THE ORIENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SMALL TOWNS IN URBANIZATION PROCESS OF HUBEI

Considering the current situation and trend of development, small towns in Hubei have a low level of industrialization, the poor quality of working environment, and management. In a way, we can tell that the development of small towns is of low quality of urbanization, but the small towns is the transition zone of city and country in the process of urbanization, is the key of population urbanization, which bears the responsibility of receiving rural surplus labor force . As a result, small towns is the key of urbanization and the new tendency of the future development in Hubei.

From the cause, speeding up the development of small towns, is not only to avoid the pressure caused by becoming a big city and transferring the population into city, more importantly, it is to follow the law of regular urbanization development, making big and medium cities complement with each other, following the way of of sustainable development. First of all, low cost of developing small towns. Comparing to big cities, infrastructure construction cost is low, farmers' consumption costs in the nearest cities are lower than that of large and medium-sized cities. Secondly, the alignment is high. Chinese farmers have strong emotion of hometown since ancient times, so development of small towns can solve the problem of homesick, and keep the contacts, culture and lifestyle as it used to be. Thirdly, the potential developing space. Small towns with appropriate size have a large amount and a huge space in infrastructure construction, undertaking industrial transferring, development of modern service industry, in the same way the capacity of the environment and resources is also capable. By accelerating the construction of small towns and infrastructure ,public service facilities,we can promote the development of relevant industries, expanding investment and consumption demand, thereby promote the economic growth.

Therefore, we should begin with the perspective of building multi-level urbanization development, promote urbanization process of the small towns, pay attention to the "quality" of small towns development level of ascension, promote the better development of small towns' scale of intensified industry economy. At the same time, strengthening small towns in the multi-level system of urbanization in the role of grass-roots platform as well as the key roles in the development of urban and rural areas as a whole,<sup>3</sup> not to the second industry development and rapid population agglomeration as the goal, and to emphasize its service function of countryside, agriculture and farmers, establish a clear hierarchy, different development path, distinctive, beautiful environment, convenient living, full employment, livable and harmonious small towns.

<sup>3</sup> Deng Qiming. A study of the problem of rural urbanization strategy and management in China: the construction and development of small towns in fujian province as an example [c]. Rational growth and land policy in urban China, the international academic symposium proceedings, 2005:10.

### III. MODE SELECTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL TOWNS IN HUBEI

Small towns are the link between the big cities and the rural, the agricultural production supply center, the distribution center of agricultural and sideline products. The choice of small towns development pattern selection must fully consider the resources, economic, social and historical conditions, adjust to local conditions. General speaking, there are three basic principles: **Firstly, choose pillar industry according to the local unique resource advantage, driving the development of towns by agricultural sideline products or tourism; Secondly, use the advantage of relationship with big cities, undertaking the industrial relocation of large and medium-sized cities, becoming the cities and towns of adsorption; Thirdly, use the traffic advantages, or good conditions of adjacent transport hub to constructing the city around the market .**

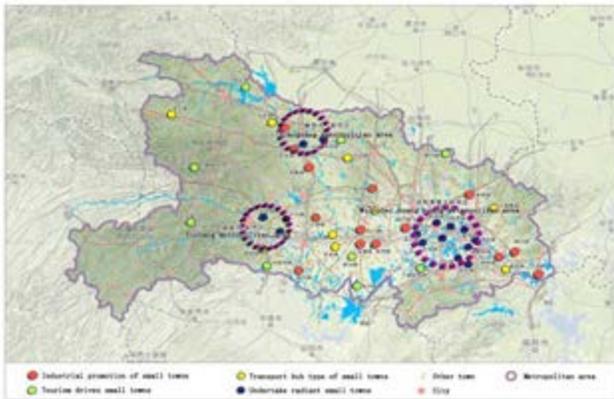


Fig. 2 County, Hubei province development model diagram

#### A. Small Towns Accelerated By Industry

The structure of such small towns generally makes industry as the principal. In the respect of industry, they got the advantage of industrial foundation natural resources. When constructing this type of small towns, various regions of function orientation, development intensity, the ecological environment should be fully considered, Making the resource advantage into commodity advantage, through the development of leading industry and prediction and analysis of market needs, market prospects, making it the leading industry. For example, Yuxian town in district Caidian of Wuhan city has the advantage of rich agricultural and sideline products, and get actively developed in agricultural and sideline products processing industry which get out of the old way of the industrialization of agriculture; In the meanwhile, Daye town in city Huangshi, it need to combine with their own reality, discussion of how to realize the sustainable development is necessary when urban economic resources dry up.

#### B. Small Towns Driven By Tourism

This kind of small towns has places of historic interest or natural scenery, or leisure places. Based on these resources, they become small towns of tourism through the development

of tourism resources and its good facilities construction. The ultimate need to develop such small towns is to make the tourism development layout comprehensive, progressive and open. Offer visitors a better environment and service, enrich the diversity and pay attention to sustainable development.

#### C. Small Towns Of Transportation Hub

Such small towns generally get distributed in areas where there is the highway, railway, water transport, maritime transport hub or coastal areas. Its formation depends on the superior geographical position and factors such as direction, breadth and intensity of the regional space connection. In the construction of such small towns, local traffic advantages should be made full use of, measures should be adjusted to local conditions. For example, towns along the river, the development of industry and modern logistics industry along the Yangtze river, such as wuhan- huangshi band, under the background of financial integration, the construction of small towns should improve the efficiency, speed up the construction of port and development of large industry around the port. In the area along the road, construct the town as a passenger flow and logistics center, in the meanwhile developing a corresponding set of services industry. Such as region xiangyang, improves its traffic position by taking advantage of the background of national comprehensive auxiliary transportation hub.

#### D. Small Towns Of Connections

Such towns generally located around the big cities with a good condition of resource and transportation can be well connected with other cities such as city circle of Wuhan, Yijinjin, Xiangshisui. When constructing towns like this, measures should adjust to its local conditions, taking advantages of the radiation effect of big cities, associating industry with surrounding city, and playing a role in regional centers around the country itself, forming a complete set of service industry to attract the surrounding areas, making them gathered together, promoting the construction of its surrounding rural areas.

### IV. THE GUIDE OF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF THE NEW URBANIZATION OF SMALL TOWNS IN HUBEI

Construction of small towns is the significant support of new urbanization and urban-rural integration. In the process of new urbanization and urban-rural integration, planning and construction management should be well undertaken. On the other hand, to solve the most practical problems such as household register, employment, housing, social security and other issues, namely, how to make farmers get into town, stay in it and get a good life<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Zhao Xunqing. The pattern of small town construction in hubei province and policy research [D]. Hubei: wuhan university of technology, 2012.

### A. Stick To The Scientific Planning, Strengthen The Foundation Of Urban Development

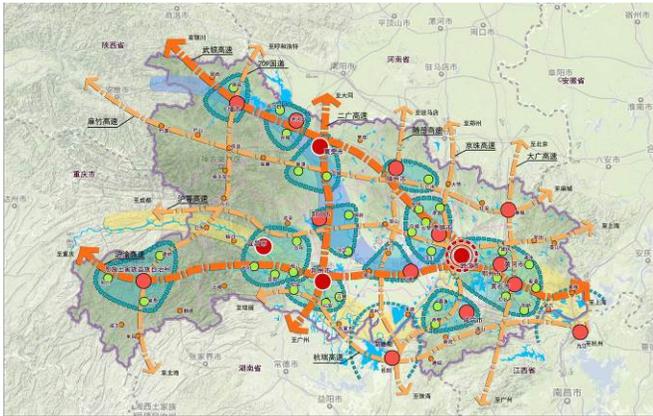


Fig. 3 Hubei urban space pattern

Pay attention to the small town planning implement, strengthen the lead and control function of planning. **Firstly, innovation of planning concept.** Insist on global planning, planning small towns by urbanization concept and standard and accomplish it by "four rules": industry development plan, new towns and rural community planning, land use planning, urban and rural infrastructure and public service planning. **Secondly, highlight the characteristics of planning.** According to the geographical characteristics and development needs, we fully excavate the historical and cultural connotation and ecology advantage, making plans up-to-date which reflect the detailed planning of local features. **Thirdly, strengthen the planning management.** Perfect the system of planning and execution, forbid the construction without planning and arbitrary change while constructing. Strictly investigate and resolutely correct in violation of the planning for the construction, ensure planning with rigid constraint.

### B. Perfect The Public Service, Strengthening The Social Security

Transferring all public services and social security to the small towns, adding its attractiveness. **Firstly, to establish a system of employment equally.** Establish a system of urban and rural public employment service, unite urban and rural laborer's service content and the employment registration, implement the integration management; Strengthen the employment training for surplus labor transferred from rural areas, and a good labor force market of the training result. Encourage self-employment to farmers with preferential policies. **Secondly, to improve the social security system.** Establish a rural endowment insurance fund source structure among individual farmers, rural collective and government, perfect rural endowment insurance mode. Adopt the policy of medical insurance system covering all urban and rural areas, in the meanwhile carry out medical and health system reform, gradually improve rural health care and medical security in cities and towns orderly to form a multi-level medical security system between urban and rural areas. Unemployment

compensation for rural labor force. **Thirdly, to perfect housing security system.** Promote urban housing security system open to farmers. Giving the chance of qualified affordable housing and low-rent housing, low-cost housing to the migrant workers, relieve urban housing problems of low-income class. **Fourthly, the innovation system of safeguard of land-lost farmers.** According to the state, the collective and the individual and the market requisition of land, there are "four littles": retained a little from the expropriation of land income, guide peasants to take out a little from the land compensation funds, the government took out a little from the land operation income, guarantee the land-lost farmers with medical and life support by funds mechanism, make the land-lost farmers into urban social security system; Let land-lost farmers become urban residents, enjoy treatment of urban residents; skill training for those who lost their lands and jobs improve their working ability; Related companies have priority to enroll land-lost farmers, solve the trouble back at home of land-lost farmers to the greatest extent.

### C. Broaden The Financing Channels, Strengthen The Construction Of Infrastructure

Innovation, diversity and all-direction in construction investment system of small town. Focus on the nongovernment investment and bank lending, investment driven by policy, strengthen the investment promotion and capital introduction, expand direct financing, pay attention to overseas financing, use the way such as BT, BOT financing, strive for the business investment between provinces, <sup>5</sup> cities and towns. Make use of government policy to support the construction of infrastructure in small towns. Promote the city bus, gas, sewage and garbage treatment facilities and so on to the surrounding villages and rural areas, promote infrastructure co-construction and sharing between urban and rural. **Firstly, the government should play the leading role.** Governments set up a special fund which use as loan discount for major infrastructure projects of small towns; Increase the proportion of returning tax revenue for infrastructure construction and maintenance in small towns; More preferential policies, possible reduction in administrative fees. **Secondly, new ways on management of the small towns.** Trying to set up companies of construction investment in small towns, make the best use of advantage of town-economy, resource, policy. Construct the small towns by unleashing the old assets, replacing stock assets, transferring management of public facilities, giving specific preferential policies and introducing social capital and foreign capital to participate in urban construction in the way of commercialization. **Thirdly, bold integration of all the funds.** Actively strive for subsidy funds for sewage and garbage, roads, drainage, urban infrastructure projects such as afforest, strive for loans of state policy Banks, commercial Banks,

<sup>5</sup> Deng S, Qiu L F, Wang K, et al. An integrated analysis of urbanization-triggered cropland loss trajectory and implications for sustainable land management[J]. Cities, 2011, 28: 127~137.

international or foreign financial organizations. Make the best use of the funds by integration of agriculture, water conservancy, transportation, urban construction, environmental protection, business department project funding. **Fourthly, to seize the opportunities.** Seize the opportunity that the extension of real estate development into small towns. Corresponding beneficial policy, fee-cuts and reduction of developing cost to enhance their own development ability of small towns.

#### *D. More Reforms And Innovation, More Vitalities*

Take strong measure of economic system and social system reform, plan the construction from the top layer. **Firstly, the innovation of planning and construction management system**<sup>6</sup>. Perfect establishment of system in planning, construction and management, reasonable personnel institutions and security of funding to work in labor service; Streamline administration and institute decentralization, expand the management of township jurisdiction. **Secondly, actively promote the reform of rural property right system.** Explore the realization of the collective and farmers property capitalization. On the practical basis, encourage the exploration of collective property capitalization, active development of new business operators such as cooperative shares. **Thirdly, the household registration management system innovation.** Break the current dual system, introduce the policy "about actively yet prudently push forward the reform of household registration management system implementation opinion" as soon as possible, establish a unified urban and rural household registration system, easy conditions become urban residents, guarantee migrant workers the same rights. Fourthly, the innovation of land system. Make enough and good use of the policy "seven large land expansion measures", fight for land-use indicator; combination of urban and rural land; land-use classified in time and category according to the demand; economical and intensive land use; revitalize the idle land, village relocation to make room for land, reclamation of land; developing the "enclave economy", constructing the "YuanZhongYuan".<sup>7</sup>

#### V. CONCLUSION

Only fully understand the "new urbanization" the policy background, understand the basic characteristics of the development of small towns, reasonable positioning, adjust measures to local conditions of the industrial promotion, tourism drive, traffic hub, connections, thus promote the policy guidance, is the development trend of urbanization in the future. The future of the new type of urbanization of small towns, must be adhere to the scientific planning, laying solid

foundation urban development; We will improve the public service and strengthen social security; Broaden the financing channels, to strengthen the construction of infrastructure; Increase the intensity of reform and innovation, enhance the vitality of urban development strategic approaches, such as to the process of urbanization also accord with the natural role.

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