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# *Dialectical Logic and Practical Path of Urban-Rural Integrated Development from the Perspective of Contradiction Analysis*

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***Abstract.*** The urban-rural relationship constitutes an eternal, dynamically evolving core contradiction in the course of human social development. From the integrated coexistence in primitive society, gradual separation in civilized eras, to acute confrontation after the Industrial Revolution, urban-rural relations have always driven the transformation of social structures and shifts in development processes through contradictory movements. Contemporary China stands at a critical juncture of comprehensively building a great modern socialist country, and its urban-rural relations have undergone a historic transformation from rigid confrontation to intensified interaction, culminating in the establishment of the philosophy of integrated development. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has elevated urban-rural integrated development to a strategic height in the overall modernization drive of the country and issued a series of major deployments. Nevertheless, urban-rural integrated development is not a linear, balanced and smooth process, but a tortuous journey riddled with intricate contradictions and dialectical movements. As a scientific methodology revealing the fundamental laws of things' development, Marxist contradiction analysis serves as a powerful theoretical instrument for us to thoroughly grasp the internal logic of urban-rural integrated development, dissect its practical dilemmas and explore scientific pathways, thereby offering theoretical references and practical insights for advancing urban-rural integrated development in the new era.

***Keywords:*** urban-rural integrated development, contradiction analysis methodology, dialectical logic

## 1. Introduction

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, aiming to secure decisive progress in the basic realization of socialist modernization, made strategic arrangements for accelerating agricultural and rural modernization and comprehensively advancing rural revitalization during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, putting forward the requirement to "promote urban-rural integrated development". Faced with new circumstances and requirements for the 15th Five-Year Plan, the task of accelerating agricultural and rural modernization and shoring up

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weak links in modernization construction has become particularly urgent and arduous [1]. As a vital driving force for this progress and a solution to the urban-rural dual structure, urban-rural integrated development constitutes a complex systematic project whose advancement inevitably entails intertwined, fluctuating and escalating multiple contradictions. As an essential component of Marxist social science methodology, contradiction analysis equips us with a sharp theoretical tool to perceive the essence behind phenomena and grasp core priorities amid complex relations. Contradiction analysis demands that we reveal the inherent contradictions of things from their internal and external interconnections, analyze the particularity of contradictions, identify principal contradictions and the principal aspects of contradictions, and study the laws governing the mutual transformation of contradictory sides under specific conditions. Applying this methodology to research on urban-rural integrated development means moving beyond superficial interpretations of policy documents or descriptive analysis of phenomena to delve into the contradictory structure of urban-rural relations and uncover their internal tensions and dynamic mechanisms [2].

## 2. Interpretative dimensions of urban-rural relations based on contradiction analysis

As the core and essence of materialist dialectics, contradiction analysis proceeds from the unity of opposites within and between things to uncover the source, driving force and direction of their movement, change and development. This methodology emphasizes that contradictions feature multiple attributes including universality and particularity, identity and struggle, as well as principal and secondary aspects. Contradictory sides repel and contend with one another while coexisting and transforming reciprocally, jointly propelling the spiral advancement of things. Applying this methodology to the analysis of urban-rural relations enables us to gain profound insights beyond superficial appearances, which can be elaborated from three core dimensions as follows:

### 2.1. Historical dimension: the historical evolution of urban-rural contradictions

Urban-rural contradictions are not innate but historical products. In primitive society with underdeveloped productive forces, cities and villages remained undifferentiated and integrated. With the emergence of social division of labor, private ownership and social classes, cities emerged as political, economic and cultural hubs separated from villages, sowing the seeds of urban-rural confrontation that deepened continuously with civilizational progress, reaching unprecedented intensity in the era of capitalist industrialization. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels profoundly criticized the confrontational nature of urban-rural contradictions under capitalism and its distortion of human development, while forecasting the inevitable trend of "urban-rural integration" in future societies. This reveals that the nature, forms and severity of urban-rural contradictions evolve alongside the contradictory movements of productive forces and production relations, as well as economic base and superstructure, marked by distinct historicity and periodicity. To understand contemporary China's urban-rural relations, we must situate them within the specific historical context of the primary stage of socialism, rapid industrialization and urbanization, and the transformation of major social contradictions [3].

### 2.2. Systematic dimension: the multi-layered nature of urban-rural contradictions

The multi-layered nature of urban-rural contradictions manifests as a compound structure spanning material, institutional and cultural dimensions from surface to depth. At the economic level, contradictions arise from the fundamental tension between the efficiency logic of resource allocation

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and the fairness appeal of distribution justice, centering on the coexistence of polarizing effects generated by the market-oriented flow of production factors (capital, land, labor) across urban and rural areas, insufficient realization of rural values and unfair income distribution. At the social level, contradictions intensify into disparities in identity rights symbolized by the household registration system and unequal access to public services, which not only create vast gaps in basic welfare such as education, healthcare and social security, but also breed identity dilemmas and social integration challenges for migrant populations. At the spatial level, contradictions materialize as conflicts over land use and rigid functional division: urban sprawl encroaches upon agricultural and ecological spaces, while villages suffer from hollowing and inefficient land utilization, reflecting a lack of spatial justice and dual fragmentation in planning and management. At the ecological level, contradictions escalate into deep-seated opposition between broken material circulation and the shifting of environmental burdens: cities concentrate resource consumption and waste discharge, while villages bear ecological supply functions without adequate compensation, threatening the shared foundation of sustainable development. These layers are not isolated but interwoven and mutually reinforcing: economic inequality shapes and solidifies social stratification and spatial patterns; social policies and spatial arrangements in turn restrict resource mobility and value distribution; ecological crises constitute the natural threshold for the evolution of contradictions at all other layers [4].Such multi-layered and systematic contradictions collectively form the complex realistic context and core challenges for shifting urban-rural relations from dual confrontation to integrated development.

### 2.3. Developmental dimension: the dialectical negation of urban-rural contradictory movements

The movement of urban-rural contradictions follows the developmental law of dialectical negation. Urban-rural relations evolve from the "affirmation" of primitive integrated coexistence, through the "negation" of class societies (especially capitalist societies), and ultimately toward the "negation of negation" in a more advanced future society. This stage of "negation of negation" does not simply revert to the undifferentiated integration of primitive society; instead, on the basis of highly developed productive forces and profound transformations in social relations, it sublates the confrontational urban-rural divide—overcoming maladies including unbalanced development, social injustice and ecological fragmentation caused by antagonistic urban-rural contradictions, while preserving and elevating the unique values and functions formed by cities and villages respectively in civilizational evolution. This gives rise to a new type of relationship characterized by complementary strengths, integrated functions, shared interests and coexisting civilizations. This law demonstrates that urban-rural integrated development is not a makeshift policy but an inherent requirement and historical inevitability of social progress, whose advancement will inevitably be a tortuous spiral ascent fraught with contradictions and struggles.

## 3. The dialectical logic of urban-rural integrated development

Promoting urban-rural integrated development is essentially a conscious practice that follows the laws of urban-rural contradictory movements and drives the transformation of contradictory sides from the old unity of opposites to a new one. Its dialectical logic is profoundly embedded within the analytical framework of contradictions.

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### 3.1. Unity amid opposition: the inevitability of urban-rural integrated development

Despite numerous oppositions and disparities between cities and villages, such conflicts are not absolute or rigid, but premised on inherent connections and mutual dependence—this embodies the identity of contradictions, which forms the internal basis and realistic foundation for integrated development.

#### 3.1.1. Functional complementarity and interdependence

Cities and villages undertake distinct yet indispensable socio-economic functions. As hubs of innovation, economic growth and modern service industries, cities boast agglomeration and scale effects; villages meanwhile bear vital responsibilities including agricultural product supply, ecological protection, cultural inheritance and space provision, serving as the foundation for urban survival and prosperity. Within the modern economic system, industrial upgrading in cities relies on raw materials, labor and ecological products supplied by villages; rural modernization in turn urgently demands capital, technology, talent and market radiation from cities. Such functional complementarity determines that cities and villages form an organic community of shared destiny, as the decline of one side will inevitably undermine the sustainable development of the other. For instance, urban prosperity cannot be sustained without stable rural supply and ecological safeguards; rural revitalization and modernization will face insurmountable obstacles without urban support and feedback.

#### 3.1.2. Two-way factor mobility and unified markets

With deepening market-oriented reforms and improved infrastructure, the mobility of production factors including labor, capital, land, technology and information across urban and rural areas has markedly increased. Migrant workers seek employment and business opportunities in cities, injecting vitality into urban development, while their remittances and return entrepreneurship drive rural growth. Urban capital flows to rural areas for investment in modern agriculture, rural tourism, pastoral complexes and other sectors. Technology diffusion and information networks gradually narrow knowledge gaps. Such increasingly active factor mobility breaks traditional urban-rural dual barriers, creating conditions for optimized resource allocation on a broader scale and constituting the market-driven impetus for integrated development.

#### 3.1.3. Objective requirements of the developmental stage

When industrialization and urbanization advance to a certain stage, urban-rural relations generally enter a new era featuring industry supporting agriculture and cities driving villages toward integration—a universal pattern observed in the modernization processes of numerous countries. After decades of rapid development, China has generally entered a phase where industry feeds agriculture and cities support villages, with substantially expanded national financial capacity laying a material foundation for advancing urban-rural integrated development. Meanwhile, the principal social contradiction has evolved into the people's ever-growing needs for a better life against unbalanced and inadequate development, with the most prominent imbalance lying in uneven urban-rural development and the most striking inadequacy manifesting in insufficient rural development [5]. Resolving this principal contradiction inherently necessitates taking urban-rural integrated development as a strategic priority.

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### 3.2. Opposition amid unity: practical contradictions and challenges facing urban-rural integrated development

While acknowledging the identity of contradictions in advancing urban-rural integration, we must clearly recognize that long-standing urban-rural contradictions have not been fully resolved, and new contradictions continuously emerge amid development, presenting severe obstacles to integration—this reflects the persistent struggle of contradictions.

#### 3.2.1. Imbalanced mobility of core production factors

Despite enhanced factor mobility, high-quality resources generally exhibit a one-way siphon effect. Young and prime laborers as well as high-caliber talents continuously agglomerate in cities, resulting in severe rural population aging and hollowing. Financial resources tend to favor high-return urban and non-agricultural sectors, leaving rural areas subject to persistent financial repression. Cities capture the majority of land value-added gains, while rural collectives and farmers receive an insufficient share [6].Such imbalanced factor mobility widens the gap in development capacity between urban and rural areas, acting as a primary barrier to integrated development.

#### 3.2.2. Disparities in public resource allocation

Marked gaps persist in the allocation of public resources such as education, healthcare, social security and infrastructure between cities and villages. Although rural conditions have improved considerably in recent years, they still lag far behind urban standards. Unequal public services not only impair rural residents' quality of life and sense of fairness, but also restrict the upgrading of rural human capital and the industrial development environment, hindering social integration and two-way population mobility between urban and rural areas.

#### 3.2.3. Disordered spatial development

In many regions, uncoordinated urban-rural spatial planning leads to unregulated urban sprawl encroaching on high-quality farmland and ecological spaces, while rural construction land is extensively and inefficiently utilized with scattered industrial layouts, generating prominent conflicts among production, living and ecological spaces. Concurrently, homogenization of urban and rural landscapes coexists with the loss of regional characteristics; the ecological value and cultural identity of rural regions fail to receive effective protection and promotion. Spatial disorder undermines the overall efficiency and sustainability of territorial spatial development.

#### 3.2.4. Divergences in cultural development

Tensions exist between modern industrial civilization represented by cities and farming civilization and ecological wisdom carried by villages. Mechanically transplanting urban models to rural areas may lead to maladaptation and the erosion of rural identity, while rigid conservatism cannot adapt to modernization demands. Facilitating dialogue and mutual learning between the two civilizations, extending the fruits of modernization to rural areas while preserving rural nostalgia, inheriting cultural heritage and protecting ecosystems to realize the co-prosperity of urban and rural civilizations, constitutes a profound issue at the cultural integration level [7].

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## 4. Systematic practical pathways for urban-rural integrated development

Contradiction analysis requires us to recognize both the struggle and identity of urban-rural contradictions; dissect the systematic composition of contradictions while identifying principal contradictions and their principal aspects in different periods; acknowledge the universal existence of contradictions while specifically analyzing the particularity of urban-rural contradictions in specific historical stages and regions. Based on an understanding of the dialectical movements of urban-rural contradictions, advancing urban-rural integrated development cannot rely on fragmented, symptomatic solutions. Instead, we must adopt systematic thinking, prioritize principal contradictions and their principal aspects, persist in deepening reforms and institutional innovation, and promote coordinated progress to drive contradictory sides toward unification conducive to integration.

### 4.1. Deepen market-oriented factor reforms to promote free and equal two-way mobility

Deepening market-oriented factor reforms and enabling free, equal two-way mobility of factors across urban and rural areas constitutes the core task and key mechanism for breaking bottlenecks in urban-rural integration. At present, institutional barriers create profound asymmetry in urban-rural factor mobility: labor mobility is constrained by public service segmentation anchored in the household registration system, leaving large numbers of rural migrant workers in a state of "semi-urbanization", while incentive mechanisms for urban talents to move to rural areas remain imperfect. Capital allocation suffers stark urban-rural imbalance, with rural areas enduring long-term financial repression and barriers to social capital entry, restricting industrial upgrading and innovation vitality. The dual urban-rural rights system undermines the efficiency of land resource allocation, as the scope for market transactions of rural collective construction land remains limited and land acquisition compensation mechanisms are incomplete, hindering the full realization and intensive utilization of land property rights [8].Accordingly, systematic institutional innovation must dismantle institutional barriers: deepen household registration reforms, improve incentive mechanisms for urban talents to pursue careers and entrepreneurship in rural areas, perfect the rural financial service system, develop inclusive finance and innovative rural financial products and services, and advance integrated urban-rural information infrastructure construction to bridge the digital divide. Establish a sound agricultural technology extension system to facilitate the transformation of scientific and technological achievements in rural areas, and develop smart agriculture and digital villages. Only through these measures can smooth factor circulation be truly realized, enabling talents, capital, technology, land and other resources to flow freely, exchange equally and be optimally allocated across urban and rural areas in accordance with market rules. This will inject sustainable endogenous momentum into urban-rural integrated development and ultimately foster a development pattern featuring complementary urban-rural strengths and shared prosperity.

### 4.2. Advance equalization of public services to forge a community of shared urban-rural living quality

Promoting equalized public services serves as the fundamental pathway to resolve challenges in urban-rural social integration and realize inclusive shared development outcomes. Significant gaps still separate urban and rural public services: high-quality education and medical resources are highly concentrated in cities, while rural areas face bottlenecks in service accessibility and quality.

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Disparities in treatment standards and institutional connectivity persist in social security and public cultural services. These gaps not only directly undermine rural residents' current livelihood well-being and sense of fairness, but also perpetuate human capital gaps across generations, weakening rural endogenous development momentum and social attractiveness. Therefore, systematic reforms and sustained investment must be implemented: strengthen fiscal tilts toward rural areas, prioritizing the shoring up of weak links in basic education, primary healthcare, elderly care and childcare; advance alignment and institutional integration of urban and rural public service standards to gradually shift from formal inclusiveness to substantive equity; innovate digital tools to facilitate the downward flow and efficient coverage of high-quality resources, alongside sound long-term management and dynamic adjustment mechanisms [9]. The core objective is to deliver institutionally standardized equal public services, ensuring residents regardless of urban or rural residency can access predictable, equally entitled basic public services. This substantially eliminates the social rights divide between cities and villages, laying a foundation for people's all-round development and free mobility, and ultimately shaping a community of shared living quality with mutual recognition and shared welfare.

### 4.3. Optimize territorial spatial patterns to shape symbiotic and complementary urban-rural forms

Systematic optimization of territorial spatial patterns and construction of symbiotic, complementary urban-rural spatial forms require integrated pathways as follows. First, implement the principle of unified multi-plan coordination. Formulate and implement territorial spatial plans covering all administrative levels to strengthen the binding force of spatial control thresholds including ecological protection redlines, permanent basic farmland and urban development boundaries, so as to holistically coordinate and allocate urban and rural production, living and ecological spaces. Second, guided by functional complementarity, orderly relocate non-core urban functions to peripheral villages and small towns, while fostering characteristic rural industrial systems to reinforce their diverse functions including ecological conservation, cultural inheritance and leisure services, turning villages into sustainable development units with interactive functions and coordinated landscapes alongside cities. Third, advance integrated urban-rural infrastructure construction, uniformly planning, collaboratively building and efficiently managing urban-rural transportation, water conservancy, energy, information and logistics networks to construct an interconnected, resilient urban-rural infrastructure system [10]. Fourth, prioritize the protection and shaping of distinctive rural landscapes, implement holistic landscape governance, and safeguard traditional villages, ethnic hamlets and other geographically distinctive rural spaces to avoid simplistic and homogenized construction models, sustain regional cultural heritage and highlight local rural characteristics.

### 4.4. Facilitate cultural exchange and mutual learning to cultivate a new integrated urban-rural civilization

To advance urban-rural cultural integration and civilizational coexistence, efforts should be made to eliminate cognitive biases, activate cross-cultural mutual learning and foster a new rural cultural ecosystem. First and foremost, overcome dualistic ideological divides, transcending contempt for rural civilization and blind admiration for urban civilization. Fully recognize the ecological ethics, moral heritage and aesthetic values embedded in farming traditions and rural culture, establishing a cognitive foundation for equal exchange between urban and rural cultures. Second, promote two-

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way circulation and transformation of cultural resources: channel modern urban cultural achievements and scientific knowledge to rural areas to enrich rural public cultural supply; simultaneously support the display and dissemination of fine traditional rural culture in cities, forming a positive interactive pattern of urban-rural cultural elements. Building on this, leverage rural cultural heritage, natural landscapes and folk customs to develop cultural tourism, creative design and other characteristic industries, realizing creative transformation and economic appreciation of cultural resources to enhance rural cultural self-confidence and sustainable development capacity. Finally, advance rural cultural ethics construction, integrate core socialist values into rural governance and daily life, and foster new rural customs that carry forward traditional virtues while keeping pace with the times through customs reform. This comprehensively elevates rural cultural literacy and cohesion, providing profound spiritual support for urban-rural integration.

## 5. Conclusion

Urban-rural integrated development constitutes a long-term, complex and systematic social project permeated with dialectical contradictory movements. Examining this process through Marxist contradiction analysis enables us to thoroughly grasp its historical inevitability, practical complexity and developmental orientation. Urban-rural integration does not eliminate disparities; rather, on the premise of acknowledging differences and respecting developmental laws, it continuously resolves old contradictions hindering integration and properly addresses new contradictions emerging amid development through sustained institutional innovation, policy adjustments and joint social efforts. This drives urban-rural relations to evolve from one unity of opposites to a more advanced form defined by complementary coexistence, equitable sharing and sustained common prosperity. This process is essentially the concrete realization of the Chinese path to modernization in the field of urban-rural relations, aiming to enable cities and villages to each radiate their unique charm while flourishing together, and ultimately advance people's all-round development and comprehensive social progress. We must uphold systematic thinking, grasp developmental laws, foster a fighting spirit and strengthen the capacity to address contradictions, continuously advancing urban-rural integrated development amid conflict resolution to lay a solid urban-rural foundation for comprehensively building a great modern socialist country.

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