

# Between Freedom and Order: Evolution logic of urban-rural population mobility Policy from the perspective of historical institutionalism

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## Abstract

Urban-rural population flow is the key element and important driving force for urban-rural integration development and rural revitalization. The pattern of urban-rural population flow in China is restricted and guided by policies. From the perspective of historical institutionalism, this paper analyzes the evolution context, structural logic and dynamic mechanism of the change of urban and rural population mobility policy. The urban and rural population mobility policy has gone through five historical stages: the order reconstruction period at the beginning of the founding of New China, the political call period after the Great Leap Forward Movement, the free flow period after the reform and opening up, the period of making the best use of the situation under the economic system reform and the accelerated integration period under the background of the new era. The institutional choice under different paths, the institutional evolution under the key nodes and the institutional continuation under the path dependence constitute the structural logic of the policy change of urban-rural population mobility. The situation coupling under the action of exogenous variables, the value coupling promoted by the change of ideas, and the subject coupling under the interaction of actors' game constitute the dynamic mechanism of policy change, which promotes the historical change and realistic development of policy.

## Keywords

Historical institutionalism, Urban-rural population mobility policy, Institutional changes, Evolution logic, Dynamic mechanism.

## 1. Problem posing and literature review

In a general sense, the urban-rural dual structure refers to the imbalance of urban-rural development in the process of modernization.<sup>[1]</sup> That is, the dual social form of urban and rural areas due to geographical segmentation, and the dual economic structure shaped by industrial differences. Population mobility mainly refers to the migration of population in space and region.<sup>[2]</sup> The floating population is generally a spatial allocation or transfer as a labor force. Therefore, the urban-rural population flow refers to the labor force moving from the city to the countryside or from the countryside to the city from the perspective of urban-rural dualism. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that it is necessary to adhere to the integrated development of urban and rural areas and comprehensively promote rural revitalization. The development of urban-rural integration needs to build an institutional mechanism for the two-way flow of urban and rural elements. At present, it is generally believed that the elements inherently include three aspects: people, land and finance. The flow of urban and rural population is the key factor and important driving force affecting the development of urban-rural integration and rural revitalization. The integration of people is the core of realizing urban-rural integration and promoting rural revitalization.<sup>[3]</sup> On the one hand, the geometry of urban-rural population flow is the expression

of the willingness of population flow, on the other hand, it is more important to be affected by the state's intervention and influence on population management and service-related policies. It is necessary to explore the logical law of the existence and change of China's urban and rural population mobility policy for the realization of urban-rural integration development and rural revitalization.

From the perspective of the analysis subject, the previous studies have paid more attention to the impact of individual willingness choices at the micro level and government regulation and economic development at the macro level on population mobility and its policies. Scholars based on the perspective of micro individual willingness to choose believe that the motivation of population urbanization does not come from the gap between urban and rural real income, but depends on the gap between urban and rural expected income.<sup>[4]</sup> Farmers' expectation of expected income in cities has prompted them to accelerate the process of urbanization.<sup>[5]</sup> Scholars based on the perspective of macro environment pay attention to the role of political factors and economic and social development in labor transfer and its policy changes. The starting point of the country's policy on rural labor mobility is the country's industrialization and economic transcendence strategy.<sup>[6]</sup> Before the reform and opening up, administrative power was the main moderating variable affecting population migration and mobility.<sup>[7]</sup> After the reform and opening up, although the government still plays an important role in the process of rural population mobility and agricultural labor force transfer,<sup>[8]</sup> with the continuous weakening of policy restrictions, its market-oriented orientation has become more and more obvious.<sup>[9]</sup> From the perspective of analysis content, previous studies have paid more attention to the description of institutional changes and policy recommendations. In terms of the stage division of institutional change status, some scholars have divided the urban-rural population flow since the founding of New China into urbanization 1.0, urbanization 2.0 and urbanization 3.0 stages from the perspective of urbanization.<sup>[10]</sup> There are also scholars from the national perspective. The stage is divided into strict restrictions, gradual liberalization, urban control, and orderly guidance, and finally transformed into taking into account the citizenization of migrant workers and the entrepreneurship and employment of returning migrant workers.<sup>[11]</sup> In terms of policy recommendations, some scholars believe that the key to solving the problem of floating population is to solve the economic, political and social construction of the problem of floating population.<sup>[12]</sup> Some scholars also pay attention to how to promote the scientific flow of population, and believe that it is urgent to promote the reform of institutional mechanisms in various fields between urban and rural areas and accelerate the equalization of basic public services in urban and rural areas.<sup>[13]</sup>

Through the combing of the existing literature, the current academic circles pay more attention to the macro environment and micro subjects than to the meso-institutional, that is, the generation and change of the urban and rural population flow policy itself. And pay attention to the description of the status of institutional change without combining the theoretical perspective to analyze the underlying causes of institutional change. Based on this, this paper uses the perspective of historical institutionalism to examine the evolution process of urban and rural population mobility policy, and puts the meso-institutional in a more macro-scene for diachronic analysis and structural anatomy, trying to explore the changes of urban and rural population mobility policy, internal structural logic, variable influence mechanism and other issues, in order to provide inspiration for the construction of population mobility policy under the current urban-rural integration development strategy.

## 2. Historical Institutionalism and Urban-rural population mobility Policy

### 2.1. An analytical perspective of historical institutionalism

As a branch of new institutionalism, historical institutionalism can be traced back to the 1980s. In 1992, Kathleen Thelen put forward it as a formal concept. The success of historical institutionalism lies in the fact that it draws on the strengths of others and is not limited to simple patchwork. Its attention to formal and informal institutions comes from the critical inheritance of old institutionalism and behaviorism. The analysis of actors and institutional environment also draws on the theory of interest groups and structural functionalism.<sup>[14]</sup>

Historical institutionalism is not a specific theory or method, but an orientation to study political issues.<sup>[15]</sup> Historical institutionalism regards institution as the core issue of political analysis. In the dimension of analysis, historical institutionalism emphasizes the combination of historical view, structural view and institutional view. Firstly, it makes a profound diachronic analysis of the formation and change of the system in the long river of history. Secondly, it analyzes the influencing factors at different stages and nodes of the system from a structural perspective. Thirdly, it pays attention to the role, interaction and game of formal system and informal system at the same time, and analyzes the factors and laws that affect the survival and change of the system in an all-round way; In terms of analytical structure, historical institutionalism has built a framework of macro-institutional environment (concept), meso-institutional level and micro-actors. Among the three research paradigms of the new institutionalism school, sociological institutionalism emphasizes macro situation analysis, and rational choice institutionalism pays attention to individual micro purport, while historical institutionalism adopts a compromise route with system as the core, realizes the effective connection between macro and micro analysis, and its explanatory power and inclusiveness are better. In terms of analysis elements, historical institutionalism focuses especially on the excavation of key nodes and fracture equilibrium, path dependence and gradual changes of the system. In fact, this is also the divergence of historical institutionalists on the source of institutional change. On the one hand, those who hold the view of "fracture equilibrium" believe that institutional change originates from the impact of major events outside the system, resulting in the fracture of the stable state of the system, which leads to the re-equilibrium of institutional change; on the other hand, people who hold the view of "gradual change" believe that institutional change is a more complex process, and the existence and change of different systems will also be intertwined. Affected by endogenous factors such as initial system setting and implementation inertia, institutional change has obvious path dependence characteristics. The combination of the two will avoid the dynamic or static bias of general institutional research, so as to ensure the objectivity and scientificity of the analysis.

### 2.2. Urban-rural population mobility policy

The policy of urban and rural population mobility is a relatively broad concept. In fact, the relevant research on the policy of population mobility is relatively limited. Many studies have neglected or avoided the definition of this concept or category, and turned to the general policy direction and nature characteristics of the party and government for urban and rural population mobility in different historical periods as a vague definition of the policy of urban and rural population mobility in that period. This paper argues that the policy of urban and rural population mobility can be understood from the following aspects:

First of all, at the level of policy object, the policy of urban and rural population mobility is aimed at the group of "floating population" in the context of China. The concept of "migrant population" and "population migration" is generally used in the world. However, due to the existence of China's household registration system, "migrant population" also involves the transfer of household registration places compared with "floating population", and the more

complicated situation is that with the rise of migrant workers after China's reform and opening up, although their household registration has not yet moved to cities, their flow patterns are not the same as those of migrant population. Some scholars did not deliberately distinguish between population migration and population mobility when studying population mobility policies, but used changes in indicators such as urbanization rates to peek into the characteristics of urban and rural population mobility in China. In view of this, based on the perspective of public management, this paper defines the floating population as the population stranded in non-registered places for work, study, life and other reasons. According to the difference of transfer space, it is divided into three types: floating population in counties (cities), floating population across counties (cities) in the province, and floating population across provinces.<sup>[16]</sup> Secondly, at the level of policy purpose, the formulation and change of population mobility policy is a comprehensive consideration of social stability and development, order and efficiency, which is upwardly adapted to the national stage strategic objectives, and to a certain extent, downwardly takes into account the willingness of social mobility. Thirdly, in terms of policy content, a series of management and service provisions involving urban and rural floating population can be incorporated into the scope of urban and rural population mobility policies, including employment policies, household registration management policies, social security policies and agricultural land systems.

Based on the perspective of historical institutionalism, the analysis of urban and rural population mobility policies has a certain degree of fit. First of all, the urban-rural population mobility policy has gone through more than 70 years of development since the founding of New China. Using historical institutionalism to conduct a diachronic analysis of it can grasp the policy context and laws. Secondly, the urban-rural population mobility policy is at the meso-policy level and is an institutional bridge connecting national strategies and social actions. Historical institutionalism takes the system as the research core, which can reflect the impact of the game relationship between macro-environment and micro-factors on policy changes. Thirdly, the attention and discussion of key nodes and path dependence are helpful to understand the change of policy intention of urban and rural population mobility policy in different eras. Taking the policy itself as an independent variable and a dependent variable can further explore the dynamic mechanism, policy effect and development path of urban and rural population mobility policy. Therefore, based on the perspective of historical institutionalism, this paper puts the urban-rural population mobility policy in the history of the development of new China, and makes an in-depth analysis from the three levels of historical view, structural view and institutional view, trying to show the actual pattern and internal logic of the emergence and change of China's urban-rural population mobility policy. Under the new situation and new requirements faced by Chinese modernization, this paper tries to provide policy suggestions on the new road of promoting urban-rural integration development and rural revitalization from the perspective of urban-rural population mobility policy.

### **3. The evolution of China's urban-rural population mobility policy**

#### **3.1. Reconstruction of order: the gradual control of free migration under the planned system (1949-1957)**

On the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Party announced at the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China that the focus of work would be shifted from rural areas to cities, and proposed a policy of autonomous migration of urban and rural populations. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the situation at home and abroad was severe, and everything was waiting to be done. The country was actually in the tension and contradiction between development and stability,

efficiency and order. During this period, the handling of urban and rural population movements under contradictions roughly experienced three stages.

The first stage is the exploration stage of steady progress. During this period, because the national institutional system was still in its infancy, and the characteristics of population mobility were not yet clear, the relevant management policies were in a start-up or lagging state. In order to establish and consolidate the legitimacy of the new regime and quickly restore industrial and agricultural production, the state continued the loose population mobility policy on the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China. People can move freely according to their own wishes. Its legitimacy comes from the 1949 "common platform" and the 1954 Constitution, which stipulates "guarantee the freedom of people to live and move." This period is also the exploration period of China's household registration system. From 1950 to 1953, relevant measures were issued for the investigation, registration and management of key population, urban household registration and rural household registration.

The second stage is the transformation stage of seeking development. Mao Zedong once pointed out that industrialization is the basic way for China to get rid of backwardness, self-reliance and self-improvement. At the historical juncture of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, the establishment of the regime, and internal and external difficulties, China urgently needs to improve its comprehensive national strength, especially the level of industrialization. Therefore, in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially during the "First Five-Year Plan" period, China adopted a Soviet-style high accumulation policy in economic construction, that is, focusing on the priority development of heavy industry. The development of industrialization needs a lot of labor resources. On the one hand, the government supports industrial construction through planned population transfer. On the other hand, the difference between urban and rural development and the saturation of agricultural population make many rural population spontaneously flood into cities. However, at the same time, in order to realize the rapid development of industrialization, the country needs to draw surplus from agriculture and rely on the policy of unified purchase and marketing of agricultural products to reduce the cost of industrial production. Therefore, farmers are more willing to work in cities. In order to ensure the stable supply of agricultural products and prevent the overload of industrial labor force, the state has gradually begun to take policy intervention in the labor force entering the city.

The third stage is the control stage of urban-rural dualism. In 1955, the State Council promulgated the "Provisions on the Criteria for the Division of Urban and Rural Areas," which divided urban and rural organizations and regions from the indicators of population size and non-agricultural population ratio, and the urban-rural dual structure was initially formed. In fact, the Chinese government introduced relevant policies to curb or even control the blind flow of population around 1953, but the strictness of policy wording and the implementation of policies have gradually strengthened. In 1953, the State Council issued the "instruction to stop the blind inflow of farmers into the city" and the "emergency notice to stop the blind inflow of farmers into the city". In 1956, the State Council issued the "instruction to prevent the blind outflow of rural population". From "instruction" to "stop" to "prevention", it not only reflects the change of the state's control mode from post-event to pre-event, but also reflects the strengthening of control in the policy content. By 1957, relevant policies and regulations had required all state-owned enterprises, cooperative enterprises, public-private joint enterprises and all public institutions to stop their own social recruitment, and the allocation of labor resources had gradually changed from marketization to administrative planning. In addition, with the development of the agricultural cooperative movement in 1955, many regions have also begun to mobilize or organize labor to return home.

### 3.2. Political call: strict state-led control of population movements (1958-1982)

With the successful completion of the first five-year plan and the complete establishment of the socialist planned economic system, as a productive resource, the flow of labor force is also highly centralized and coordinated, and the institutional basis of population allocation is the household registration system of urban and rural population. In 1958, China's first household registration system, the household registration regulations of the People's Republic of China, was officially introduced, which marked the rise of the dual household registration system that restricts the flow of urban and rural population to the legal level. This period is dominated by state-led population migration, and the control of population mobility can be roughly divided into three stages.

The first stage is the impact of production tasks on population control during the Great Leap Forward. In 1958, the second meeting of the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China determined that the general line of socialist construction was "Energize, strive for the upper reaches, and build socialism more quickly and better". Since then, "high indicators" and "exaggeration" have prevailed throughout the country, and industrial and agricultural production tasks that are divorced from reality have been formulated. At the same time, due to the decentralization of management authority, local governments have been able to approve the allocation of labor resources. All localities, especially urban production departments, have begun to compete for labor, and the number of rural laborers entering cities and towns has begun to surge. In 1958, the number of urban workers nationwide increased by 85 %.<sup>[17]</sup> Due to the cheapness of the rural labor force, they became the main force of the new urban employment population during this period. The urban population increased by 31.24 million in the three years from 1957 to 1960, of which 20 million came from rural areas.<sup>[18]</sup> Most of the people who flow from rural areas to cities to engage in industrial construction are young and middle-aged groups, which will inevitably lead to insufficient supply of agricultural labor force and pressure on urban population, laying a foreshadowing for the food crisis.

The second stage is to streamline the regulation of urban and rural pressure under the food crisis. The above unreasonable "left" development strategy has seriously distorted the allocation of labor resources, and has a huge impact on the development of industry and agriculture. In addition, from 1959 to 1961, the country suffered a large area of natural disasters, food production plummeted, and experienced a period of "three years of economic difficulties". In this context, China has carried out a streamlining and decentralization campaign, mainly for the repatriation of rural population flowing into cities. First of all, in 1959, the central government issued an emergency notice on immediately stopping the recruitment of new workers and fixed temporary workers, which stipulated that the power of examination and approval and management of labor force should be recovered from the local government, which meant that local recruitment should be reported to the central government for unified examination and approval, which actually blocked the way for rural surplus labor to work in cities. In May 1961, the Central Working Conference promulgated the "Nine Measures on Reducing Urban Population and Reducing Urban Grain Sales", stipulating that the urban population should be reduced by more than 20 million within three years from the base of 129 million in 1960. Since then, the streamlining and decentralization work has been fully rolled out. In addition, the government-led population migration during this period also included large-scale reservoir migration and Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps migration.

The third stage is planned migration under the consideration of national construction and political factors. In the 1960s, due to the tense international situation faced by China, external threats and intrusions continued. In order to ensure the security, stability and development of the country, the government has successively issued a series of strategic population migration

policies. The first is the population migration under the call of the third-line construction. In 1964, Mao Zedong pointed out that the third-line construction should be guaranteed in manpower, material resources and financial resources, and should seize the time. Since then, a large number of industrial enterprises and colleges and universities have moved to the western region, accompanied by a large number of people moving westward. The second is to mobilize educated youth to "go to the countryside". As early as in 1956, the central government issued the "1956 to 1967 National Agricultural Development Program (Amendment Draft)" formally mentioned the educated youth's "going to the countryside". In 1964, the central government promulgated the "Decision on Mobilizing and Organizing Urban Educated Youth to Participate in Rural Socialist Construction (Draft)". This is the first time in China to mobilize and guide educated youth to the countryside in the form of a program. Since then, educated youth "going to the countryside" has ushered in a boom. During the ten-year "Cultural Revolution", instead of "denying" this policy, it has emphasized its political significance. During this period, some of the educated youth were transferred from the countryside through recruitment, college entrance examination, conscription and other ways. After the reform and opening up in 1978, the state gradually began to coordinate the resettlement of the educated youth, and the number of educated youth returning to the city was also increasing. In 1980 and 1981, the state issued "further improve urban labor employment" and "several decisions on opening up the door, revitalizing the economy, and solving urban employment problems", respectively, in which the inflow of rural labor into cities and towns is still strictly controlled and even repatriated.

### **3.3. Free Flow: The Wave of Migrant Workers' Outflow under the Relief of Legitimacy Crisis (1983-1988)**

With the deepening of reform and opening up, China's economic and social system has been continuously transformed, and the government's policy restrictions on population mobility have gradually been liberalized. In particular, in 1983, after the release of the China's No. 1 central document of "Several Issues of Current Rural Economic Policy", it was decided to implement the household contract responsibility system nationwide. The people's commune and the "unified purchase and marketing" system gradually disintegrated, which greatly liberated the enthusiasm and productivity of farmers' production. As a result, a large number of rural surplus labor can get rid of the shackles of land and have the motivation to "enter the city". The population mobility policy in this period can be roughly divided into the following three stages.

The first stage is the lifting of the legitimacy crisis. Since 1984, the state has successively issued a series of policy documents on allowing and encouraging rural surplus labor to work in cities. In 1984, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued the "Notice on Rural Work in 1984", as the China's No. 1 central document for the year, which fully affirmed the right and role of rural labor force to enter the city freely, marking an important change in the population mobility policy. Since then, a series of policies and regulations on the employment of urban enterprises have shown the loosening of control over the transfer of rural labor force. In April and October of the same year, the State Council issued the "People's Republic of China Residents' Identity Card Trial Regulations" and "Notice on the Issue of Farmers' Entry into Towns", which has responded positively to the settlement of the household registration problem involving the identity crisis of migrant workers in cities and towns, and the legitimacy crisis of the free flow of migrant workers has been lifted.

The second stage is the in-situ transfer of "leaving the land without leaving the hometown". During this period, although the state has liberalized the control of population mobility policies, it is still in the stage of policy exploration and exploration. The root cause is that the urban-rural dual household registration system still exists, and most of the "migrant workers" entering cities and towns will still experience the life cycle of "entering cities and returning

home". In 1985, the Ministry of Public Security formulated the "Interim Provisions on the Management of Temporary Residents in Cities and Towns", which implemented a temporary residence permit system for farmers who could not handle urban household registration for various reasons, providing an institutional guarantee for "migrant workers" groups to enter the city. At the same time, the supporting system to encourage population mobility has not yet been perfected, and even there will inevitably be containment and conflict between policies. For example, the ticket system for the planned distribution of materials such as food and industrial supplies still hinders population mobility. On the other hand, under the household contract responsibility system, agricultural production and commodity exchange are becoming more and more prosperous. During this period, rural surplus labor force is more inclined to transfer to the mode of "leaving the land without leaving the hometown" such as setting up enterprises, doing business or working in villages and towns, and the industry and commerce in villages and towns are rising rapidly.

The third stage is the trans-regional transfer of "leaving soil and leaving home". Around 1985, the first step of rural reform came to an end, and the focus of national economic system reform shifted to cities, especially coastal cities.<sup>[6]</sup> The rapid economic development of coastal areas has a huge demand for labor resources, while many inland townships and towns have limited ability to absorb labor resources and cannot bear the transfer of rural labor force for a long time. China's No. 1 central document for 1985 stipulated that farmers were allowed to take care of their own food rations and enter cities and towns for work and business. Driven by the policy dividend, a large number of rural surplus labor began to set foot on the road of "leaving the land and leaving the countryside". The number of floating population has further increased, and it mainly flows to economically developed areas such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou and the southeast coast.<sup>[19]</sup>

### **3.4. Making the best use of the situation: the regulation of the blind flow of population under the economic system reform (1989-2011)**

In the last period, due to the lifting of population mobility restrictions, the labor force continued to flood into urban enterprises and coastal cities to form a "wave of migrant workers", resulting in over-saturation of the urban population. In addition, the corresponding urban management and public services are not in place, making many areas face market supervision, transportation, social security and other pressures. In 1988, China's economy experienced inflation, which led to a wave of national panic buying, and the urban economic system was very fragile. In order to restore the normal production and living order, the state has once again strengthened the control and guidance of population movements, which can be divided into the following three stages.

The first stage is the policy regression of controlling the blind flow of population under urban pressure. In 1989, the State Council issued an "emergency notice on strict control of migrant workers"going out", which defined the "blind flow" of migrant workers from the central document level, and required local people's governments to strengthen the control of local migrant workers. In 1990, the State Council promulgated the "Notice on Doing a Good Job in Employment", which required to guide the local transfer of rural surplus labor force, strictly prevent them from entering the city blindly, and persuade the existing migrant workers to return. In 1991, the relevant documents issued by the state were more stringent. For example, the State Council's "Provisions on the Recruitment of Contractual Workers of Peasants by Enterprises Owned by the Whole People's Ownership" incorporated the recruitment of enterprise labor into the scope of the national administrative plan, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs "Notice on Further Doing a Good Job in Dissuading the Return of Outflow Victims" provides for resolute reception and repatriation measures for long-term blind migrant workers.

The second stage is the policy regulation of the flow order under the market-oriented reform. In 1992, the Southern Talks and the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China opened the prelude to the reform of China's socialist market economic system, and the market-oriented reform of the urban economic system was in full swing. On the one hand, the reform has revitalized the economy, promoted the market-oriented transformation of labor allocation, and created conditions for the accelerated flow of rural surplus labor. On the other hand, state-owned enterprises require streamlining employees and self-financing when carrying out market-oriented reforms, and a large number of employees have been abolished, resulting in a wave of layoffs in state-owned enterprises. Under such convection, cities are facing greater employment pressure. Therefore, the labor mobility policy introduced at this stage emphasizes the order of urban-rural coordination and transfer. In 1995, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council promulgated the "Opinions on Strengthening the Management of Floating Population", requiring local governments to promote the local transfer of rural surplus labor, while focusing on organization and order. In 1998, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council promulgated the "Notice on Effectively Doing a Good Job in the Basic Living Security and Reemployment of Laid-off Workers in State-owned Enterprises", which in fact gave laid-off workers in state-owned enterprises priority in the competition for employment with rural surplus labor.

The third stage is the transformation of government services into fair treatment to remove obstacles. With the gradual deepening of market-oriented reform, the government's role has changed from management to service. During this period, in order to promote the unity, order and fairness of the labor market, the government focused on breaking the institutional barriers to urban and rural labor mobility. In 2000, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued "Several Opinions on Promoting the Healthy Development of Small Towns", liberalized the restrictions on the settlement of migrant workers at the county level and below, and broke a series of discriminatory policies. In March 2001, the National People's Congress promulgated the "Outline of the Tenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China", calling for the abolition of restrictions on the employment of rural laborers in cities and the abolition of regulations that hinder the formation of a unified urban and rural market. In 2003, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Notice on Doing a Good Job in the Employment Management and Service Work of Peasant Migrant Workers", pointing out that it is necessary to effectively solve the problems of salary deduction and children's schooling. In the same year, the "Measures for the Accommodation and Repatriation of Urban Vagrants and Beggars" was abolished, and the "Measures for the Management of Relief for Vagrants and Beggars without Urban Life" was newly introduced. The biggest difference is that from compulsory reception and repatriation to voluntary acceptance of relief. In 2010, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council promulgated the "Several Opinions on Further Strengthening the Foundation of Agricultural and Rural Development by Increasing the Overall Development of Urban and Rural Areas", which called for deepening the reform of the dual household registration system, relaxing the conditions for the settlement of small and medium-sized towns, and improving the social security system for migrant workers.

### **3.5. Accelerated integration: two-way flow of talents under new urbanization and rural revitalization (2012-present)**

At the beginning of the 21st century, although China has broken a series of institutional and institutional obstacles that block the flow of population under the strategic direction of coordinating urban and rural development, the urban-rural dual structure has not been broken. On the one hand, it is still difficult for migrant workers to integrate into cities, especially large and medium-sized cities, and maintain a "migratory bird" migration pattern. On the other hand,

although national policies have been advocating and vigorously supporting migrant workers to return to their hometowns for entrepreneurship, the one-way outflow of rural labor force has not been shaken. In the new era, China is constantly carrying out active policy innovation in promoting the accelerated integration of urban and rural population.

First, the city-led transfer of population "citizenization". In 2012, the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed to accelerate the implementation of the reform of the household registration system and promote the urbanization of agricultural transfer population in an orderly manner, which fully demonstrated the central government's concern about the social integration of agricultural transfer population. In fact, it means that the issue of "end" of migrant workers has been put on the agenda.<sup>[20]</sup> In 2013, the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China made the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Several Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform", which stipulated that the restrictions on the settlement of towns and small cities should be fully liberalized, the restrictions on the settlement of medium-sized cities should be liberalized in an orderly manner, and the conditions for the settlement of large cities should be reasonably determined. In 2014, the State Council promulgated the "Opinions on Further Promoting the Reform of the Household Registration System", which stipulates the implementation of a unified urban and rural household registration system, the unification of agricultural and non-agricultural household registrations into household registrations, and the establishment of a residence permit system as a transitional carrier for the citizenization of rural labor status. In November of the same year, the "National New Urbanization Plan (2014-2020)" clarified the development path of urbanization with Chinese characteristics and established the guiding ideology of coordinating the reform of the household registration system and the equalization of basic public services. In 2016, the State Council issued the "Program to Promote the Settlement of 100 Million Non-registered Populations in Cities", which aims to "citizenize" the rural migrant population with stable jobs by lowering the threshold for settlement.

The second is the "localization" of the rural population with rural areas as the main body. Under the trend of policy guidance, employment and income increase, education and medical care and other advantages to urban concentration, the continuous outflow of young labor force has caused "hollowing" and "aging" in rural areas. Due to the lack of labor force, a large number of farmlands are abandoned and homesteads are idle. Attracting labor return and capital to the countryside has become an important issue. In 2015, in order to support the enthusiasm of migrant workers to return home and reduce the burden of entrepreneurship, the state issued relevant documents such as "Opinions on Supporting Migrant Workers and Others Returning Home for Entrepreneurship", calling for the promotion of human capital and social capital for returning home for entrepreneurship, giving policy and resource support to migrant workers returning home for entrepreneurship, and implementing targeted tax reduction and fee reduction.

The third is the "interaction" of multi-talents oriented by urban-rural integration. In order to break the urban-rural dual segmentation structure and realize the equal and continuous two-way flow of resource elements, it is necessary to jump out of the inherent urban-rural isolation and unbalanced development thinking. Rural revitalization and new urbanization are not contradictory, and urban-rural integration is the breakthrough point for the two paths. Rural revitalization does not blindly emphasize the return of population to the countryside. In fact, the siphon phenomenon of the city to the rural population has never stopped. On the one hand, it is necessary to encourage the citizenization of the agricultural transfer population who can enter the city and are willing to enter the city. On the other hand, it gradually shifts from focusing on the number of talents going to the countryside to paying attention to the structure and quality of talents going to the countryside. In 2021, the Central Committee of the

Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Opinions on Accelerating the Revitalization of Rural Talents", which requires that the development of rural human capital should be put in the first place, not only to train local talents, but also to encourage the attraction of urban talents to the countryside and promote professional talents to serve the countryside. In 2024, the No.1 document of the Central Committee clearly pointed out that the implementation of the rural revitalization talent support plan, the increase of rural local talent training, the orderly guidance of various professional and technical talents in the city to serve the countryside, and the overall improvement of farmers' comprehensive quality. It further highlights the importance and urgency of talents to promote rural revitalization by letting the talents who are really needed for rural revitalization, such as agricultural production and operation, agricultural technology services, industrial integration, governance services, rural planning, etc., play a role in rural areas.

#### **4. The structural logic of the policy change of urban-rural population mobility**

##### **4.1. Institutional choice: mandatory path, induced factors and interactive coordination**

New institutional economics believes that there is a structural motivation for the choice of institutional innovation or change. Yifu Lin divides the path of institutional change into mandatory path and induced path.<sup>[21]</sup> Ruilong Yang and other scholars put forward the intermediate diffusion path to make up for the defects of the original analysis model and form a relatively perfect analysis framework of institutional change model.<sup>[22]</sup> Based on the above viewpoints, this paper holds that the institutional choice path of urban and rural population mobility policy includes the mandatory path of national development order, the induced factors of subject development demand and the interactive coordination of urban development pressure.

In the change of urban and rural population mobility policy, the mandatory path of national development order plays a leading role. This path mainly relies on the authoritative power of the party and the state to implement the reform of policies and systems from top to bottom, which is a supply-led institutional change. China is a multi-ethnic country with a vast territory and a large population. Population mobility is a variable that involves people's livelihood issues, social stability and even the rise and fall of the country. Therefore, the state has always attached importance to policy intervention in population mobility. Throughout the change process of China's urban and rural population mobility policy, the planned migration and control of the blind flow of population in order to achieve industrialization during the period of order reconstruction, the implementation of the third-line construction immigration to resist external threats during the period of streamlining and decentralization and the implementation of the educated youth "going to the countryside" movement to alleviate internal pressure, the relaxation of population mobility during the period of policy relaxation to liberate the productive forces, and the exploration of the two-way flow mechanism of talents in order to realize the integration of urban and rural development during the period of accelerated integration. The formulation and change of various policies are based on the consideration of the efficiency and order of social development, which is in the same frequency resonance with the national stage strategic focus.

The inducing factors of the development needs of the main body in different periods also show the promoting effect on the change of urban and rural population mobility policy. The path of induced institutional change refers to the way to promote institutional or policy changes from the bottom up by relying on the action of micro-subjects at the level of institutional practice. It belongs to the institutional change under the guidance of demand side. Although it is difficult

for practical subjects to participate in the decision-making agenda, the induced factors can enter the vision of decision makers through certain ways, and then form a political agenda or influence policy setting. In the change of urban and rural population flow policy, the realistic demand of rural development and the willingness of population autonomous flow belong to the category of induced factors. During the period of streamlining and decentralization, due to the huge scale of natural disasters in China from 1959 to 1961, the rural grain production decreased significantly, and the Great Leap Forward movement made the rural labor force hollow, and the agricultural production was difficult to return to normal order in a short period of time. The country had to reverse the policy direction and repatriate the agricultural labor force who had been spontaneously or forcibly transferred into the city in the early stage. In the period of policy relaxation, the urbanization path of "leaving the soil without leaving the countryside, entering the factory without entering the city" initiated by farmers is a typical bottom-up model.<sup>[23]</sup> The state's observation of the inducing factors can make the policy more in line with the practical situation, reflect the actual needs, reduce the possibility of incompatibility in the process of institutional downward embedding, and help to establish the legitimacy of the system. Due to the particularity of China's national conditions and system, the formation of the induced path still needs many mature conditions.

The interactive adaptation mechanism under the pressure of urban development has played an important coordinating role in the change of urban-rural population mobility policy. The interactive path can be understood as giving full play to the implementation, coordination and innovation functions of intermediary organizations in institutional change. For the urban-rural population mobility policy, the urban field has an intermediate particularity. On the one hand, as the undertaker and executor of the policy, the city plays an interactive and coordinated role in the transmission of policy information, including top-down interpretation and implementation of the policy and bottom-up information collection and feedback. On the other hand, the city is faced with the top-down maintenance of its own development efficiency and order. The rigid requirements and the bottom-up pressure to receive labor transfer. Under the tension of mandatory path and induced factors, the city level needs to innovate the supply of the system at the same level, and achieve the balance of the system in the game and compromise. Through government work reports, statistical yearbooks, censuses, disaster reports and other documents, city governments at all levels try to obtain an upward channel for "relieving" pressure.

#### **4.2. Institutional evolution: key nodes and fracture equilibrium**

Historical institutionalism holds that if institutional change is viewed from the perspective of diachronic analysis, it will be a cycle process of "balance-break-rebalance". From the perspective of integrity, the reason why the system breaks is that the system is impacted by external key events in a certain period. Historical institutionalism refers to such major events as "key nodes". Key nodes are very few events in the process of institutional development. An institution may break the existing institutional balance under the impact of key node events, form a state of institutional fracture, and promote institutional change.<sup>[24]</sup> Through the diachronic review of the urban and rural population mobility policy, we can find six key nodes: (1) In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, China allowed the free flow of population. However, due to the "five antis" movement in urban industry and commerce in 1952, a large number of industrial and commercial enterprises were rectified and struggled, resulting in the decline of urban industry and commerce, the sluggish market, the sharp decline in the employment situation, and the upsurge of laid-off unemployment in the country. In the case of economic depression, the retention of rural labor force in the city in the early stage will continue to intensify the contradiction between urban and rural areas. Therefore, the state has issued a series of policies to strictly control the blind flow of population.

(2) In 1958, under the planned economic system, China's population mobility is still the implementation of strict restrictions on the flow of policy, but the ensuing Great Leap Forward and the people's commune movement set off a "high index", "blind command", "exaggeration" of the frenzy, inflated food production so that excessive rural surplus labor into cities and towns to engage in industrialization. However, from 1959 to 1961, three years of natural disasters caused a substantial reduction in food production, which plunged the country into economic difficulties and development crises. The state had to once again tighten its labor management authority and use administrative and other means to decentralize the repatriation of rural labor forces stranded in cities and towns.

(3) In the 1960s, China was faced with security threats from the Soviet Union, the United States, India, Japan, South Korea and China's Taiwan. The international environment showed a high-pressure situation. On August 2, 1964, the United States and the Vietnamese Navy fought fiercely. The US military's bombing of Vietnam had burned to the Sino-Vietnamese border and Hainan Island. Mao Zedong ordered the rapid advancement of the third-line construction, and a large number of people moved westward along with industrial enterprises and colleges and universities.

(4) With the gradual deepening of reform and opening up, China's large population flows to cities and towns, especially coastal cities for work and business. In 1988, due to the limited capacity of China's cities and the continuous conflict between the willingness of population inflows, the economy eventually led to inflation. The serious depreciation of the currency triggered a nationwide rush to buy, and the economic operation was chaotic. Since then, the central government has implemented a comprehensive "rectification" of the economy and quickly restored strict population movement control measures.

(5) In 1982, the State Council promulgated the "Measures for the Reception and Repatriation of Urban Vagrants and Beggars", which implemented the reception and repatriation of urban street vagrants. In 2003, the outbreak of the Zhigang Sun incident caused a great discussion on the constitutionality of this system in society and academia. Subsequently, the State Council immediately abolished the reception and repatriation system and introduced a new "Measures for the Administration of Relief for Vagrants and Beggars without Urban Life". Vagrants and Beggars changed from forced reception and repatriation to voluntary relief.

(6) After the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, the country began to shift from the simple problem of urban and rural population mobility to more issues related to the integration of urban and rural population, from breaking barriers for migrant workers to enter cities to accelerating the citizenization of rural labor force in cities, actively seeking solutions to the urban-rural dual structure, and promoting the integration of urban and rural development and rural revitalization.

### **4.3. Institutional continuation: path dependence and gradual change**

Different from the focus on the exogenous variable of key nodes, the analysis of path dependence by historical institutionalism is to show the endogenous mechanism of the inertial influence of the past institutional path on shaping the current institutional choice and influencing the future institutional evolution. The positive feedback generated by the initial system will release positive signals to policy makers. Under the action of this mechanism, the system will follow the initial institutional path and continue to self-reinforce, and the system will also show a state of gradual change, which is actually emphasizing the role of historical factors. In the course of the change of urban and rural population mobility policy, there are three main path dependence:

(1) government-led policy intervention. The great unification thought formed in the history of China is in line with China's vast territory and the national conditions of a large population. China's population base is huge and its structure is complex. Population mobility is more

related to social management, economic development, political stability and other issues. Therefore, the new China still follows the centralized political system, focusing on the use of planning and political means to guide the forced intervention of population mobility, so that the trend of population mobility is adapted to the national strategic purpose.

(2) City-based policy design. The establishment of the household registration system has shaped China's special urban-rural dual structure, and the policy status of urban and rural areas is not equal. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the country is committed to the revival of construction and development. The policy attention is more focused on the city, the policy advantages are more biased towards the city, and the rural areas have actually lost the policy discourse power. In the process of formulating the population mobility policy, we also pay more attention to the urban development labor demand, urban absorption capacity, urban public service and social security pressure geometry, so as to determine the direction and retention of rural surplus labor force.

(3) Policy considerations of efficiency and order. The policy of population flow will eventually settle on the issue of development, and development involves the tension between efficiency and order, because the flow of population as labor force and productivity will inevitably bring fluctuations to the order and efficiency of economic development in urban and rural areas. The rural surplus labor force entering the city can inject labor and market into the development of urban industry and commerce, and improve the efficiency of urban economic prosperity, but the unlimited inflow into the city will cause the pressure of urban development and even disorder. The formulation and change of urban and rural population mobility policies in different periods is the product of this tension. Because the change of the system has institutional stickiness to the above path, the process of change will also show the overall pattern of gradual change.

## **5. The dynamic mechanism of urban-rural population mobility Policy evolution**

### **5.1. Situational coupling: institutional change and exogenous variables**

Historical institutionalism believes that the existence and change of the system should be placed in a more grand historical context for analysis. Macro exogenous variables, including political, social, economic and cultural, have a close coupling relationship with institutional change. Institutional change actually changes with the situation. Institutional change has a decisive influence on institutional innovation and institutional competitiveness. On the whole, the process of institutional change can be regarded as the process of institutional adaptation to the macro environment. In different historical periods, the international and domestic environments faced by urban and rural population movements are different, so the policies also show different historical characteristics.

In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, it faced a historical situation of internal and external difficulties. The international competition between the United States and the Soviet Union was unpredictable. The new domestic regime needed to further consolidate the ruling foundation. The social order that had experienced war turmoil had yet to be rebuilt. The economic foundation was very weak and the construction and development were in its infancy. In order to make the country get rid of the backward state as soon as possible, China has formulated policies conducive to the construction of urban industrialization. The policy formulation focuses on the strategic goal of industrialization development, and makes policy choices between the support of rural labor resources and the cost of industrial production to seek a balance.

After the reform and opening up, the change of China's urban and rural population mobility policy is closely related to economic and social development. With the continuous advancement

of China's socialist market economic system reform, the people's commune system and the unit system have been gradually abolished. The allocation of labor resources is no longer too much interfered by government policies, but focuses on the basic or even decisive role of the market. The full implementation of the household contract responsibility system has liberated a large number of rural surplus labor. The vigorous rise of democracy and legal construction in the field of political system has made the labor force have more guaranteed independent choice space. Under the loose policy environment, the migrant workers who "leave the land without leaving the land" and "leave the land and leave the land" have formed into the urban tide.

Since the 18th National Congress, China's rural areas have faced a decline dilemma. With the continuous deepening of reform and opening up, due to the consideration of economic benefits, social status, education and medical care, the rural labor force, especially the young and middle-aged labor force, continues to flow rapidly, and a large number of villages have become "hollow villages". The problem of population aging is prominent, which brings about a series of problems such as "hollow governance", "land abandonment", "rural old-age care", and "idle homestead". Starting from the top-level design, China has successively put forward new urbanization, rural revitalization and urban-rural integration strategies. On the one hand, it attaches importance to accelerating the "citizenization" of rural migrant population, that is, helping to solve the problems of migrant workers' salary, public service, social security, educational housing and so on. On the other hand, aiming at improving rural areas, public services, infrastructure, living environment, talent to the countryside, industrial development and other issues, the purpose is to make the urban and rural population structure more optimized, better serve the strategic development, and realize rural revitalization and urban-rural integration.

## **5.2. Value coupling: institutional change and conceptual change**

The concept is the actor's judgment of the situation and the choice of the will. It is a process of "input-internalization-output". It reflects the subjective initiative of each actor. The shaping and change of the subject concept will have a regulatory effect on the process of institutional change. Specifically, the generation, dissemination and diffusion of new ideas will give birth to new actors and organizations, thus promoting institutional change.

From the national perspective, the order and efficiency of national development is the fundamental consideration. In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, in order to establish and consolidate the legitimacy foundation of the state power, the free migration of the population was written into the constitution according to its own wishes. Then, in order to obtain the efficiency of industrialization construction, the rural labor force was organized to enter the city, but it also led to the neglect of order and the crisis of labor overload. In order to restore order, the urban-rural dual structure was formed through the control of the household registration system. During the period of the Great Leap Forward, the craze for efficiency was set off, which led to the food crisis, and then the streamlining and decentralization movement was carried out to rebuild the order. Since the reform and opening up, the role of the market in the allocation of labor has become increasingly prominent. The country's policy on the flow of urban and rural population is more to serve the market, and the planned factors have been reduced. However, the market is blind and disorderly, and the market's pursuit of efficiency also makes the fair protection of agricultural transfer labor force neglected. The economic building supported by cheap migrant workers is difficult to stand the test. The outbreak of the economic crisis in 1988, the East China flood in 1991, and the laid-off tide of employees in state-owned enterprises in 1992 was a devastating blow to migrant workers. The government also gradually began to pay attention to the social security of migrant workers.

From the perspective of the city, the city is at the policy junction and pressure junction of urban and rural population flow. On the one hand, cities are the undertakers and implementers of the population mobility policies issued by top-down countries. In the administrative hierarchy, urban governments at all levels need to maintain the isomorphism with the central government in terms of policies. On the other hand, the city is the direct field of the willingness and behavior of urban and rural population mobility from bottom to top, which needs to bear the pressure of employment, public service, social security and other people's livelihood. At the same time, it is also the feedback and reliever of pressure, seeking institutional or policy reform through upward game. Under the planned economy system, the city's administrative migration of the population is almost only inclusive, and all urban construction is co-ordinated by the planned economy. With the establishment of the urban market economic system after the reform and opening up, the scale of the city has been continuously expanded, the basic public services such as infrastructure and the social security system have been continuously improved, and the inclusive ability of the inflow population has been continuously improved. The city also has a certain degree of autonomy in the formulation and implementation of population mobility policies.

From the perspective of floating population, the floating willingness of the people at the bottom of China is influenced by multiple factors such as historical culture, economic development and political orientation. Due to the unequal status and opportunities between citizens and farmers brought about by the differences in urban and rural development in China since ancient times, farmers for generations always want to break away from the land, change the identity, complete the advancement. Farmers' yearning for entering the city is deep-rooted. But at the same time, this tendency is also disturbed by economic and political factors. For example, in the period of inflation when the urban economic development is in chaos, a large number of rural laborers who flow into the city return to the countryside, attach themselves to the production factor of land, and play the role of rural "reservoir". For example, under the political call of the current urban-rural integration development and rural revitalization strategy, the local government has issued a series of rural-oriented talent flow policies with the policy goal of helping and revitalizing the countryside, which has politically strengthened and positively motivated the willingness of urban youth to go to the countryside, return home for young people outside the country, and revitalize the countryside for local youth.

### **5.3. Subject coupling: institutional change and actor game**

Historical institutionalism holds that the power comparison and game between different political groups are the key to understanding the real institutional change. The multiple subjects involved in the institutional change express their own interests through actions. The power structure and game between different subjects play an important role in the generation and change of the system. As far as the urban and rural population mobility policy is concerned, the main actors of institutional change mainly include the central government, local governments at all levels and the floating population.

The central government is the maker of the policy of urban and rural population mobility. Under the democratic and centralized political system of our country, the central government's policy attitude and behavior towards population mobility often play a decisive role in the pattern of population mobility. In the non-equilibrium state where the system supply is divorced from reality, the central government carries out mandatory adjustment through policy intervention to guide or control population mobility. For example, in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the country focused too much on promoting the process of industrialization and adopted an unbalanced population flow policy between urban and rural areas. The rural labor force was forced to outflow under the policy pressure of unified purchase and marketing. In this context, the central government adopted the urban-rural dual

household registration system and the policy of controlling blind flow to seek policy balance. In the state of institutional equilibrium, the central government will grasp the positive feedback of the system and take a series of policy incentives or guidance measures to strengthen the initial institutional path. Since the 21st century, with the continuous relaxation of the policy threshold for rural labor force to enter the city for employment and settle down, more and more agricultural transfer population has settled in cities and towns. The central government has further focused its policy on the basic public services and social security of rural transfer population.

As the connection point between policy and pressure, local governments at all levels, through the interpretation of higher-level policies, formulate their own urban and rural population mobility policies according to local conditions under the political premise of maintaining isomorphism. For the city, the transfer of rural labor force is not only a strong support for development efficiency, but also an unstable factor of development order. For the city, the superior policy is not only the regulation of development order and efficiency, but also the limitation of development autonomy. Local governments at all levels need to create more efficiency and order space for their own development through upper and lower games. The reform and opening up has led to the continuous development of urban industry and commerce. Therefore, the state has gradually relaxed the restrictions on farmers' settlement in small towns. In order to make up for the job gap of labor-intensive industries, major cities have issued a series of policies to attract rural surplus labor. At the same time, with the reform of the tax distribution system, land finance has become the main means for local governments to develop the economy. A large number of real estate needs to be digested by the rural transfer population, so local governments are keen to catch "farmers upstairs".

As the focus of policy, the floating population's flow behavior itself plays a leading role in guiding the policy direction. However, because China's population flow is dominated by the government, people's willingness to move freely can only be put into action within the order stipulated by the policy. Under the urban-rural dual structure, farmers have become the passive recipients of policies and become the tool for the country and the city to achieve the dual balance of efficiency and order. In the 21st century, especially since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the status of "agriculture, rural areas and farmers" has been more prominent in the power structure that shapes policy changes. Rural areas have received more and more policy support in the process of interaction with cities. From "absorption" to "feedback" to "integration", it reflects that the central level is no longer limited to the city-based development strategy. In the complex international and domestic environment, the role of rural "stabilizer" has received more and more policy attention, and the flow of population is not only one-way from rural to urban areas, but also under the policy guidance of urban-rural integration. The two-way flow of urban and rural population has become a new trend of population flow.

## 6. Conclusion and Discussion

The policy change of urban and rural population flow has gone through the period of order reconstruction at the beginning of the founding of New China, the political call period after the Great Leap Forward Movement, the free flow period after the reform and opening up, the period of making the best use of the situation under the economic system reform and the accelerated integration period under the background of the new era. In general, the policy change shows the government dominance that resonates with the national strategy. At the same time, the key nodes play a key role in the institutional non-equilibrium period to promote the institutional change, and the positive feedback in the institutional equilibrium period is easy to form path dependence and strengthen the initial system, so that the system presents the characteristics

of gradual change. The policy of urban and rural population mobility always tries to achieve a balance between development efficiency and order. The process of policy intervention is actually a dynamic adjustment process of the contradiction between productivity and production relations. Through diachronic combing and structural anatomy of policy changes, it is not difficult to find that the top-down mandatory changes led by the party and the state, the induced factors that reflect the actual needs of the main body's development, and the interactive coordination of urban development pressure relief constitute the three paths of urban and rural population mobility policy changes. Institutional change is not accidental, but the result of the coupling of different variables. The coupling force of the change of urban and rural population mobility policy comes from the macro historical situation of politics, society, economy and culture, as well as the power structure, behavior game and the value concept of the state, local government and floating population.

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposes to implement the strategy of urban-rural integration development, and urban-rural population mobility is a key element related to urban-rural integration. Through the diachronic combing and structural analysis of the policy changes of urban and rural population mobility, we can provide some enlightenment for the current path selection: Firstly, We should strengthen the policy's echo to the national strategy and the interaction and coordination with relevant policies. Under the guidance of urban-rural integration development and rural revitalization strategy, the population mobility policy should gradually break the pattern of urban-rural dual split development, and give full play to the maximum utility of urban-rural talent capital from the strategic perspective of county-level urban-rural community. Secondly, To change the past "one-size-fits-all" regulatory approach and a single administrative "command-style" means of regulation, to give local governments and the market more autonomy in development, population control should change the previous political thinking, more release of the population as a labor resource market attributes. Thirdly, it is necessary to change the discourse setting and policy bias of the city standard in the past policies, pay attention to the autonomy of rural development, and treat the urban and rural population flow with equal policy status. At the same time, it is necessary to reflect the structural division of the floating population in the policy, and analyze the actual needs of urban and rural development talents, so as to guide the targeted and accurate flow to give full play to the maximum value of human capital factors.

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