



From Cultural Community Reunion to Multicultural Integration: A Quanzhou Economy and Industry Development Modality

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Abstract. Among the many grand narratives of pursuing prosperity, Quanzhou's success has been always a unique legend. The currently article manages to reinstate the peculiar adventure Quanzhou underwent during the past 10-15 years from economical perspectives. By chronologically presenting the events that contribute to Quanzhou's flourish, this article explains how Quanzhou navigates in difficulty and eventually comes up with a cultural oriented developing solution. It provides insights on Quanzhou's secondary industry development and her urbanisation process where cultural identification intimately interacts with policy making and legislation. Also, it involves analysis of procedures Quanzhou's took to cope with her globe development strategies and reflections regarding how Quanzhou triumphantly filled culture and religious into her business canvas. Incidentally, the article discusses how culture works as a key feature that continuously facilitates Quanzhou's developing and how Quanzhou will maintain its culture power for her ongoing internationalization.

Keywords: Cultural Community Reunion; Multicultural Integration; Development Modality

1 Introduction

Quanzhou, a coastal city in southeast China has a mysterious development story. The productive textile and apparel industries made the city was well-known as “China Shoes Capital” and “China Cloth Capital”, with which, Quanzhou is always being perceived as a traditional export-oriented city. However, with recent names the city is granted as “Museum of World” and “Starting point of Silk Route”, the city's identity is questioned. Indeed, Quanzhou, since its early beginning, is developed with culture and historical advantages, distinguishing itself from traditional development mode in

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China. Nevertheless, the prosperous secondary industry development draw too much attention to looking into its development root.

2 Culture as A Life-saving Straw

Quanzhou suffered and prospered with cultural identity. Quanzhou, has a glorious past historically, out of our vision field because of its geographical location proximity to Taiwan since the establishment of PRC. Before the open-up reform, Chinese Central Government paid disproportionately low attention to Quanzhou, trading Quanzhou as only a node of coastal defense. The much diminished city' revival began only with China's open-up reform. Under the guideline of 'industry first', Quanzhou begun to peruse its revitalization. Even though the cities in special economic zone has exemplified how export-oriented economy drive regional development, Quanzhou, neighboring to less developed and populated cities (such as Fuzhou), cannot duplicate the success of Shenzhen but explore a new way of being recognized internationally. By catching up the kinship factor (the ancestral connections between Taiwan and Quanzhou) and geographical advantages, Quanzhou find out the cultural identity is the way of promoting its secondary industry development and internationalization in the initial stage. Successfully, Quanzhou attract Taiwanese investment. The Taiwanese labor-intensive industries are poured into the city. Its cultural-oriented development mode drew Chinese Central Government attention since 2009. By relying on cultural identity, Quanzhou was further developed by being cooperated into the national Western Taiwan Straits Economic Zone in 2009. Meanwhile, its ancestral connections to Southeast Asia win its position internationally as the starting point of 21st century Maritime Silk Route in 2013. By grabbing the marine advantages, Quanzhou is well-prepared to open itself to the more prosperous international markets and revive its past thriving trade.

2.1 Cross-Straits Relations and Secondary Industry Development

The large diasporic population overseas was leveraged by Quanzhou as a strategy to liberalization and industrialization since 1979. 7 out of 10 in Forbes' Taiwan Top Ten Richest Men^[2] have ancestral relationships with Quanzhou. Meanwhile, many politicians and economic tycoon are also originated from Quanzhou. The similar dialects-"Hokkien" is one of the factor in affecting Taiwanese to trade with their townsman rather than other clannish groups. Further, the common faith, reflecting in the same deities, (i.e. Goddess Matsu) Quanzhou and Taiwan worship, links Taiwanese and Quanzhou together. By leveraging these soft advantages, Quanzhou attracted heavy investments from overseas. Taiwanese investment dominate. Back to year 2020, Taiwanese investment totaled 1251.71 billion USD^[10]. Quanzhou, therefore, found its way of industrializing textile, apparel, craftwork, mechanical manufacturing and so on in the initial open-up stage.

In order to strength partnership in economics, Quanzhou is seeking ways to maintain cross-Straits relationships. It is enthusiastic in pursuing cultural events, academic

interaction and cross-strait cooperation forums. Beyond various activities, construction of Fujian-Taiwan Kinship Museum is devoted into creating nostalgia atmosphere. The inaugurated direct flights from Quanzhou to Taiwan helps for more closer and more frequent communications. Taiwanese Investment Zone was built up under government support in form of tax privileges since 2009, where 232 enterprises were settled down. The performance of selected economic indicator, such as, GDP rocked up from 780 million yuan in 1978 to 1,007,366 million yuan in 2020^[10], allows to take a glance of how fast Quanzhou was industrialized under the cultural-economic mode.

The secondary industry spring-up allows Quanzhou to seek to transfer from the orthodox manufactory to an international brands and high-tech cluster. Quanzhou has ranked as the top manufacturing base in China, under the support of influx of Taiwanese and overseas^[3]. Secondary industry share increased at thousandfold speed from output of 256 million yuan in 1978 to 322,703 million yuan in 2013, and accounted for 1.3% of national GDP in 2013^[5]. The prosperous manufacturing industries laid a solid foundation for the subsequent transformation. Response to national policy 'Made in China 2025', Quanzhou proposed its own development master plan, aiming to branding itself in a global market through launching Quanzhou's own brands. The dynamic and innovated private economy also shifted the emphasis from traditional industries, i.e. textile to high-tech industries, involving in Petrochemical, Electronic information, Ship building, Automobiles and Biopharmaceutical fields.

2.2 Cultural Affinity and Unique Urbanization Mode

Quanzhou is less populated but fast urbanized, under the cultural-oriented development mode. The change in population size provides a powerful proof in how Quanzhou differentiates from Shenzhen in development. Quanzhou had a population of 5.7 million in 1990 and 8.1 million in 2010. Whilst, population in Shenzhen jumped from 1.7 million in 1990 to 10.4 million in 2010^[9], from which, a high labor-density economic mode can be peeked. By comparison, Quanzhou, with more population than Shenzhen initially, gradually fade its labor advantages. However, low population increase rate did not affect much to Quanzhou's urbanization speed. By seeking the cultural-oriented development mode, Quanzhou's urban land expansion rate is closer to Shenzhen. Since 2005, Quanzhou's urban land development was increased at 3.8%^{[6][9]}. Contemporarily, Shenzhen's increase rate was also 3.8% in 2005-2010^[1]. Without any doubt, Shenzhen's rapid urbanization was heavily promoted by the inflow rural migrants. However, rural population in Quanzhou stay in wherever they were born, forming the unique In Situ urbanization mode^{[7][12]}. It refers to the phenomenon in which the rural residents transfer themselves to urban or quasi-urban settlements without rural-urban migration. By consuming ethnic and kinship ties, rural Quanzhou absorbed foreign investments from Taiwan and overseas Chinese relatives, building up the family owned workshops, which latterly were developed into mushroom-like booming TVEs in the scattered towns. The cultural identity makes Quanzhou out of bundle of traditional development mode, which relies on spatial proximity to suppliers and markets. The scattered spatial structure in 1995 reflected the booming TVEs. The moderate foreign policy allowed more Taiwanese investment in Quanzhou, promoting the set-up of Taiwanese invest-

ment zone and a series of industrial zones as already narrate. By leveraging agglomeration economies, the scattered TVEs were then gradually concentrated and moved to the planned zones, speeding up the urbanization.

2.3 Quanzhou's Future Global Reach beyond Its Past Heyday Achievement

Quanzhou has already obtained international position before the modern period, when other cities start to seek internationalization. Quanzhou's marine traffic emerged since Jin Dynasty. The superior shipbuilding skills in building robust oceangoing vessels enabled the people to undertake voyages overseas since 711 A.D., remarking as the starting point of Quanzhou's internationalization. In Tang Dynasty, Quanzhou was involved in the four international trade center in China. The booming exportation of silk, porcelain, copper and iron, sugar alcohol, tea, and paper won it as the dominated trading center in China in Northern Song Period (960 A.D.-1127 A.D). Governmental administration system was then set up in order to manage business ships. The skilled shipbuilding, experienced sailors mastering in use of compass, and privileged tax exempt policies contributed to Quanzhou's great prosperous international trading. It became the largest port in East, trading with around 100 countries in Yuan Dynasty (1271 A.D.-1368 A.D.). The flourishing trading won it high foreign reputation that Marco Polo praised it as an international metropolis. However, Maritime trade was gradually banned since Ming Dynasty (1368 A.D.-1644 A.D), diminishing Quanzhou's economy and global reach. The glorious past was gone. However, the Arabs, Indians, Persians and Southeast Asians left the city with diverse culture heritage. The Buddhist temple, Islamic mosque and Christian Church can be easily found, making Quanzhou as the "Museum of World Religious".

The past maritime trade is expected to be revived under 'Belt and Route' Policy. The historical legacy win Quanzhou a chance to appear in the field of vision internationally again. In line with national policy, Quanzhou was encouraged by provincial government to take full use of kinship relationships in countries along Maritime Silk Route by observing their huge Hokkien population. The pull and push strategies are put forward, such as: network extension by encouraging Hokkien Business Associations in ASEAN countries to set up agency in Quanzhou; 72 hours visa-free entry policy to promote tourist and global recognition; catching up the power of belief in forms of helping and funding overseas Chinese to set up Matsu temple; and taking advantages of cheap labor and sources in foreign countries to relocate the traditional manufacturing industries, all of which are devoted to give impetus to Quanzhou's trading and business industries.

Meanwhile, by leveraging the historical reputation, Quanzhou is expected nationally to be the "21st Maritime Silk Route Pioneer". Quanzhou Port is reviving with the opportunity. Financed by government, it is expanding to a deep water container terminal, constructing logistic hub and warehouse concentration area along the coastal line (i.e. Quangang, Shishi and Jinjiang), and proposing to open 20 new routes to East Asian countries. These efforts ensure Quanzhou to be the water gateway to East Asia Countries.

Further, in order to create the opportunities to cooperate with Middle East Countries, culture identity was again referred by Quanzhou. Indeed, besides Hokkien ethnics,

Muslims are also a predominant group in Quanzhou. The rise up of Islamic group can be traced back to post maritime trading period, when Arab and Chinese created extensive networks across the Indian Ocean^[4]. In the new era, Quanzhou is expecting to trade with Arab countries in terms of petroleum, stone and minerals to exceed a total trading volume of 13 billion USD in 2020. In this regard, Silkroad Petroleum Park is set up in Quangan District, while Annan District is upgrading to a stone and mineral trading center, concentrating the scattered exploration-related industries.

By now, Quanzhou has rebuilt its international reputation overseas. Because of 'Belt and Route' policy, Quanzhou's internationalization is no more dependent on Taiwan and adjacent countries, extending to more overseas countries. In 2014, total trading volume with countries along Maritime Silk Route has reached 15.8 billion USD, among which, trading with ASEAN countries and Middle East countries account the lion's share. In addition, Quanzhou is well-renowned in the Silk Route, home to 1,426 foreign enterprises^[8]. By all accounts, Quanzhou has responded enthusiastically to this international opportunity. A bright future is foreseen.

2.4 Maintain its culture power for further internationalization

Many of the historical heritage are being restored in a new effort to sustain future growth. So far, culture and historical legacy are the dominant factors in affecting Quanzhou's dynamic internationally without any doubt. In line with culture and historical heritage preservation, Quanzhou put forward 'Culture and History Renaissance' plan. The philosophy is derived from the ancient prosperity led by multi-culture and multi-religious. A thriving global city owes much to its religious tolerance and culture development. As a culture and history plan, it encompasses renovation of Fengcheng historical site and old downtown, beginning with the promotion of multi-religious resurgence. The innovation part of plan is to combine tourist and culture, setting up Silk Walking Street and various culture-tourist site to refresh visitor's memories about glorious past. Upgraded on current Marine Transportation Museum, China Maritime Silk Route Museum is under process, aiming to become the platform of international culture exchange^[11]. The Renaissance contributes to Quanzhou's development in diplomacy in the long-run.

3 Conclusion

From the initial investment brought by Taiwan's Hokkien community, to the 13 billion USD trading volume with Arab countries and 15.8 billion USD trading volume with ASEAN and Middle East countries, culture integration has changed Quanzhou magnificently. Acknowledged as a multicultural economic-central, Quanzhou has attracted an increasingly growing amount of regional and foreign investors with different religious backgrounds. Whereas, various cultural elements guarantee more investment-friendly policies that enables Quanzhou's industry reformation and technology upgrades. Simultaneously, Quanzhou's cultural-oriented development mode determines her particular

path of accomplishing her skyrocketed speed of urbanisation. A 1/3 of Shenzhen population growth but a 3.8 % urbanisation rate similar to Shenzhen manifests the achievement attributed to this legendary developing mode. Quanzhou's culture integration has never been only about the Hokkien and neighbourhood communities, it always involves with people from different cultural contexts, which promises a highly-internationalised, thriving future.

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