

# Thinking and Research on County-level Territorial Spatial Plans in the Territorial Spatial Plan System: A Case Study of Jiangxi Province

SUN Yuxi

(College of City Construction, Jiangxi Normal University, Nanchang, Jiangxi 330022, China)

**Abstract** The establishment of the territorial spatial plan system is an important space reform act to meet the new era in China. The reform of territorial spatial plans according to classification is in line with the characteristics of China's current territorial spatial administration and urban development. At present, China's provincial and municipal territorial spatial plans have been publicized, and county-level territorial spatial plans are being approved one after another, while the compilation of township-level territorial spatial plans is being carried out in an orderly manner. In this paper, based on the historical background of the establishment of territorial spatial plan system integrating "multiple plans", the background of territorial spatial plans and the important role of county-level territorial spatial plans were first elaborated, and then the progress of the compilation of county-level territorial spatial plans in Jiangxi Province was sorted out. Finally, the problems existing in the compilation were discussed, and corresponding suggestions were put forward to provide a certain reference for the construction of a scientific and reasonable territorial spatial plan system.

**Keywords** Territorial spatial plans, County-level plans, Jiangxi Province

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In several opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The State Council on the Establishment and Supervision of the implementation of a territorial spatial planning system issued in 2019, it is pointed out that it is necessary to construct the territorial spatial planning system and supervise the implementation, integrate functional zoning planning, land use planning, urban and rural planning and other spatial planning into unified territorial spatial planning, and strengthen the guiding and restraining role of territorial spatial planning on various special planning, which is a major deployment made by the Party Central Committee and The State Council<sup>[1]</sup>. China actively promotes the construction of the ecological civilization system, builds a unified territorial spatial planning system, and integrates the original functional zone planning and land use planning of different departments. It is an important way to improve the efficiency of China's territorial spatial management, an important means to put people first and achieve high-quality development and quality of life, and an inevitable requirement for realizing the "two centenary goals" and the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Territorial spatial planning is the guide for national spatial development and a spatial blueprint for sustainable development, and the basic basis for various development, protection and construction activities in China<sup>[2]</sup>. The national natural resources system and planners are trying to explore the establishment of

territorial spatial planning and the integration of "multiple plans". In order to speed up the preparation and approval of territorial spatial planning at all levels and strengthen the supervision and management of planning implementation, the Ministry of Natural Resources issued the Notice on Further Strengthening the Preparation and Implementation Management of Territorial Spatial Planning (Ziranzifa[2022] No.186) on October 18, 2022. The notice clearly requires that county-level territorial spatial master plans should be examined and approved by each province (autonomous region and municipality) before the end of June 2023. At present, more than 90% of the 350 city-level master plans and 2,220 county-level master plans have been submitted to the examination and approval authorities, and more than half have been examined. The compilation of county-level territorial spatial plans has entered the final phase.

## 1 Status and significance of county-level territorial spatial plans

China's territorial spatial planning system is summarized as "four beams and eight pillars". Vertically, according to the content of administrative management, territorial spatial plans are divided into five levels: national, provincial, municipal, county and township plans. Horizontally, according to the type of the plans, they are divided into three types: overall, detailed and special plans (Fig.1). The preparation subject, content focus and depth of each type of plans

are different. In general, this system has "five levels and three types"<sup>[3]</sup>. County-level territorial spatial plans belong to the lower-level plans in China's planning system with "five levels and three types". County-level administrative units are the foundation of local power in China, and are responsible for managing and serving the local residents. County space is the main spatial unit of grass-roots governance, and also an important implementation level of various kinds of plans. In county-level territorial spatial plans, the planned transmission content by superiors should be undertaken, detailed and implemented, and township spatial arrangement should be planned as a whole. Besides, it is needed to guide scientific and reasonable implementation of spatial plans, promote coordinated development of townships, and accept feedback. They act as a bridge and a link in the territorial spatial planning system, connecting the national plans and grass-roots implementation needs.

## 2 Compilation of county-level territorial spatial plans in Jiangxi Province

Jiangxi Province is a large economic province in the middle of China, with a vast territory. There are a large number of counties, and social governance is complex. Therefore, it is particularly important to carry out scientific and orderly county-level territorial spatial planning and promote the overall and coordinated development of society and economy. Jiangxi Province has jurisdiction over 61 counties, with a total area of 166,900 km<sup>2</sup>, and the permanent

population was about 45.279 8 million by the end of 2021. The county economy of Jiangxi Province is relatively developed, and the regional GDP of 61 counties in 2021 accounted for 44.01% of the province's total regional GDP, but the development level of counties varied greatly. In 2021, the GDP of Nanchang County was the highest, reaching 119.6 billion yuan, 23 times the minimum (Zixi County) (Fig.2). The development of county units in Jiangxi Province has the general universality of the central regions, and can provide reference for the development of other regions.

Jiangxi Province has explored the compilation of overall territorial spatial plans for cities and counties in an early period. In March 2020, the Department of Natural Resources of Jiangxi Province issued the *Technical Guide for the Compilation of Overall Territorial Spatial Plans for Counties of Jiangxi Province (Draft for Comments)*, which is the first province in the country to issue the technical guide for the compilation of county-level territorial spatial plans. In December 2022, Jiangxi Province issued the *Technical Regulations for the Compilation of Overall Territorial Spatial Plans for Counties of Jiangxi Province (Trial)* (hereinafter referred to as the technical regulations), and it should be consistent with the planning objectives of the higher level. On the basis of the current "one base map", according to the actual situation of each county and district, combined with their own characteristics and management needs, it is needed to carry out the the compilation of the plans as a whole. The government of Jiangxi Province proposed that by the end of 2023, it is necessary to fully complete the compilation and approval of municipal and county-level territorial spatial plans, basically complete the compilation of township territorial spatial plans, fully complete the compilation of village plans, carry out the compilation of detailed control plans, establish and improve the system of laws and policies, technical standards and implementation supervision of territorial spatial plans, and improve the territorial spatial planning system.

### 3 Research and optimization of plan compilation

In the compilation of county-level territorial spatial plans, it is needed to make specific arrangements for the development, utilization and protection of territorial space within the administrative region in a comprehensive and meticulous manner, and also strictly implement and refine the requirements of the national, provincial and municipal macro national spatial

plans, which plays a very important role in promoting the coordinated development of urban and rural areas, multi-scale transformation and the coordinated development of different systems<sup>[4]</sup>. Due to the vast territory of China and different characteristics of counties, the compilation of county-level territorial spatial plans faces great differences and challenges<sup>[5]</sup>.

Jiangxi Province has a vast area, and there are differences in geographical conditions, resource endowments and development needs among counties. Factors such as topography, climate conditions and land use status in different counties will have an impact on territorial spatial planning. There are differences in the level of economic development and industrial structure among counties in the province. Some counties and cities have relatively developed economy and diversified industrial structures, while others are relatively underdeveloped, and their economy mainly relies on agriculture or traditional industries. Social factors such as population size, population density, urban and rural structure are also different in various counties. Some counties and cities have a concentrated population and a high degree of urbanization, while others are sparsely populated, and rural areas have a concentrated population. The compilation of county-level territorial spatial plans involves a wide range, and needs to consider natural resources, ecological environment, transportation, agriculture, industry and other factors. At the same time, it also needs to follow the national, provincial and municipal macro planning requirements to ensure that the plans are scientific and feasible. This requires the planners to have interdisciplinary and comprehensive knowledge and ability to carry out comprehensive and systematic planning work.

#### 3.1 Control mechanism for three districts and three lines

County level attaches great importance to the implementation of control. In the delineation of "three districts and three lines", it is emphasized that the delineation of "three lines of control" plays a role in the bottom line constraint and boundary control of territorial space. According to the intensity of development and construction control in different regions, the spatial layout of "three districts" is implemented. With the ecological red line, the red line for permanent basic farmland protection, and the urban development boundary line as important contents, the spatial control line system for "three districts and three lines" covering the whole region is constructed. In the compilation

of county-level territorial spatial plans, the delineation of the three districts and three lines is extremely important. Within 15 years of the territorial spatial planning period, land development, project construction, and key projects have certain unpredictability. The implementation of these projects must conform to the delineation of the three districts and three lines, and once the three lines are delineated, they cannot be easily changed within 15 years. Such strict control measures require that it is necessary to improve the rationality and scientific nature of the delineation of the three districts and three lines, introduce specific implementation methods for the control of the three districts and three lines and improve relevant laws and regulations.

In order to scientifically and reasonably delineate the concept of ecological, agricultural and urban spatial zoning, the county-level division plan of ecological space, agricultural space and urban space should be scientifically formulated based on the actual development situation of each city and the analysis of "double evaluation". In the demarcation process, it is needed to clarify the entry and exit rules of the partition, and strictly require the centralized layout. Meanwhile, the three control lines of the ecological protection red line, permanent basic farmland and urban development boundary are evaluated and optimized. To safeguard and maintain the bottom line and lifeline of ecological security, as well as the activities of national food security and the supply of important agricultural products, a scientific "three-line" control mechanism should be established to prevent future urban sprawl and disorderly spread. In the implementation process, it is necessary to adhere to the strengthening of the bottom line control thinking, optimize the "three lines" and other spatial control lines, and put forward the principle of eliminating the contradiction between "three lines".

#### 3.2 Construction of laws and regulations

In the process of plan compilation, the administrative department still carries out the planning work according to the past laws and regulations. After entering the new era, China continues to promote the reform of planning administrative institutions, and the content or scope of government management has changed. There is no clear mechanism for the division of functions and powers, which will inevitably lead to problems such as inadequate planning cohesion and coordination and communication difficulties. The county-level territorial spatial plan system is composed of safety and disaster

prevention system, transportation system, water system, energy system, information and communication system, and environmental health system<sup>[6]</sup>. In the process of plan compilation, all professional departments need to work closely together to formulate planning objectives and policy measures. Various professional systems are interrelated and interact with each other, and need comprehensive consideration and coordination. For example, the planning of the transportation system needs to take into account the requirements of the safety and disaster prevention system, and the planning of the water system needs to be coordinated with the planning of the environmental health system. The scientific and feasibility of county-level territorial spatial plans can be realized only

by the coordination and cooperation among various professional systems.

The compilation and implementation of spatial plans is actually a long-term systematic project, and must rely on solid legal protection<sup>[7]</sup>. In order to ensure the coordination and smooth communication of the plans, it is necessary to establish a clear mechanism for the division of functions and powers in the legal system, and clarify the scope of powers and responsibilities and main contents of different subjects, so as to ensure the scientific and feasibility of spatial plans. Besides, it is needed to establish a scientific coordination mechanism for the plans, carry out planning work in a scientific and reasonable way, and ensure the planning coordination of various departments. At the same time, it is necessary

to strengthen the coordination and cooperation among various departments, promote the data sharing between government departments and the information exchange between the government and the society, establish a sound mechanism of cooperation between upper and lower administrative departments, upper and lower planning units, and form a joint force to promote the compilation of territorial spatial plans.

### 3.3 Plan for optimizing the compilation of county-level territorial spatial planning

At present, the compilation period of territorial spatial plans is long, and the system reform, data changes, leadership changes and other changes during the planning period will affect the compilation process of the plans. Since the compilation of county-level territorial spatial plans, the principle of “Party committee leadership, government organization” has been adhered to, and the phenomenon of “one-level government, one-level power” has caused certain constraints to the plans. When provinces and cities successively launch new work guidelines and compile policy guidance, with the reform of provinces, cities, counties and townships, leaders at different times have new opinions and ideas on the planning work, which often leads to slow progress of the planning unit and affects the implementation of the key transmission content planned by the higher level.

Therefore, the efficient compilation of county-level territorial spatial plans should be vigorously promoted. Besides, it is needed to formulate operational guidelines and norms for the compilation of plans, unify the compilation format and data requirements, and improve the standardization and efficiency of plan com-

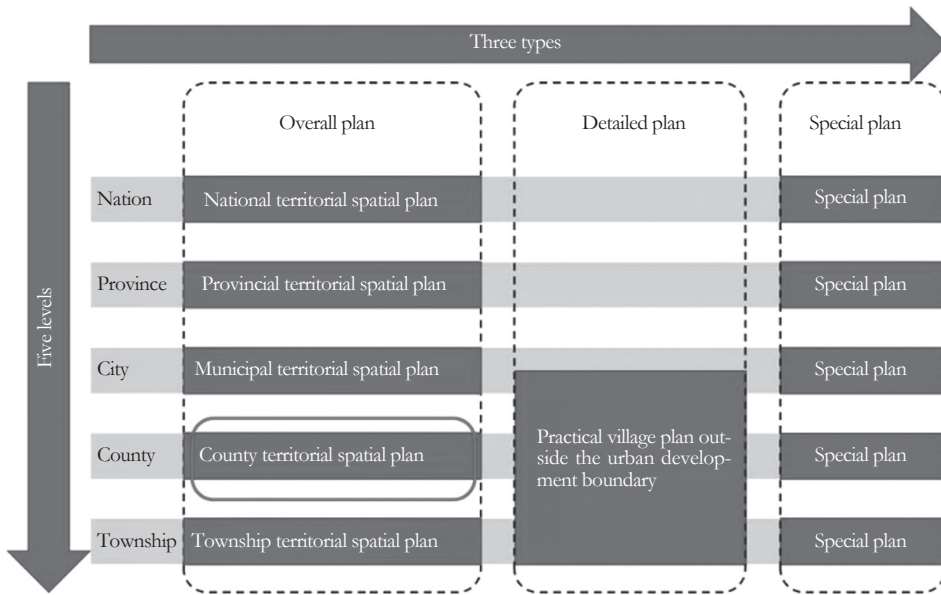
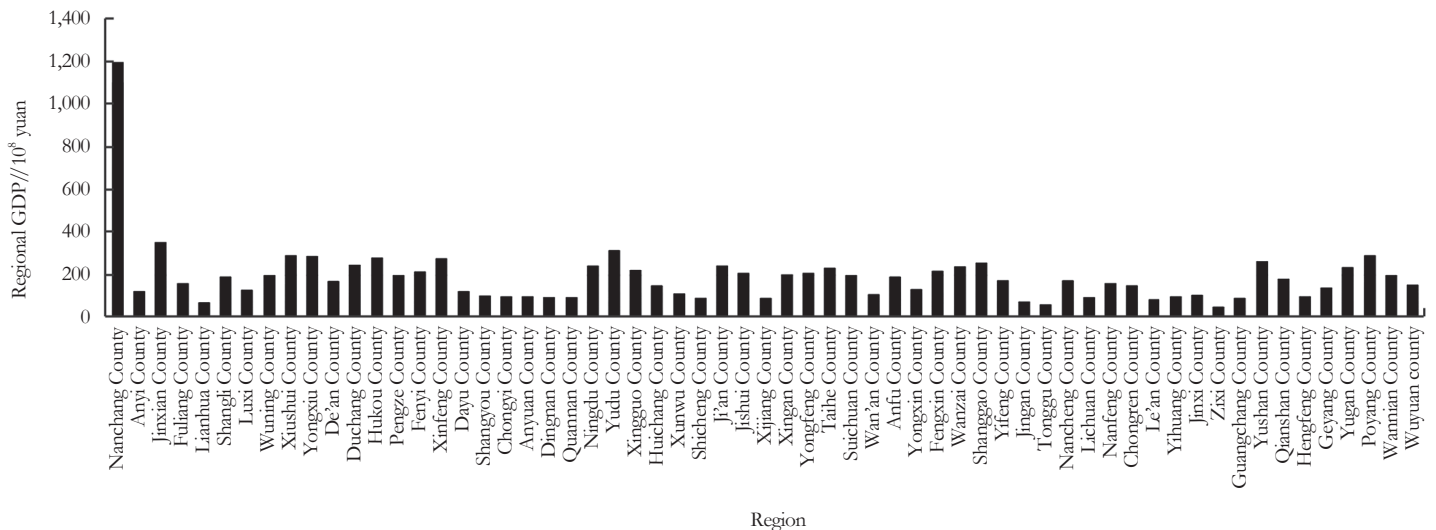


Fig.1 Territorial spatial planning system



Note: Data are from the Jiangxi Provincial Statistical Yearbook in 2022.

Fig.2 Regional GDP of counties in Jiangxi Province

pilation. Meanwhile, it is necessary to strengthen the training and quality improvement of planning personnel to improve their theoretical and practical level of plan compilation, cultivate planning professionals with systematic thinking and comprehensive analysis ability, and enhance the planning ability and level of plan compilation units. At the same time, it is needed to introduce new technical means to support the plan compilation work, use information technology and data management tools to establish the digital platform and database of the plan compilation work to facilitate the information sharing and data exchange of plan compilation units. Remote sensing, geographic information systems and other technical means should be used to obtain geospatial data and resource information to realize scientific and refined planning. Besides, it is needed to strengthen planning supervision and risk management, establish a sound planning supervision mechanism, carry out regular supervision and evaluation of plan compilation work, and timely find and solve problems in plan compilation work.

#### 4 Conclusions

China's social and economic development has entered a new stage. In order to meet the needs of China's high-quality development,

the level of territorial spatial planning and spatial governance needs to be continuously improved. To achieve this goal, it is needed to give full play to the leading role of the national territorial spatial plans as the "general outline" of the whole territorial spatial plan system, and decompose the strategic deployment of the space blueprint step by step. The top priority is to speed up the compilation, approval, implementation and supervision of various types of local territorial spatial plans, so as to ensure that the various arrangements of the national territorial spatial plans can be detailed and implemented. However, there are many problems in the territorial spatial planning work. All parties in society should pay attention to them, jointly find solutions based on the specific conditions and characteristics, strengthen the top-level design of territorial space, promote the construction and improvement of territorial spatial system, and improve the governance capacity of China's territorial space.

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and life roads.

(3) Realizing the efficient layout of the area by multiple compound. On the west side of the Shengming Kang-yuan Area, the CAZ core area, which integrates functions of government affairs, business, art, leisure, health care, sports, education and tourism, is built around Yuanhu Park, and radiates outward to form a group. The buildings in the CAZ core and the Shilichang Mountains surround Yuan Lake. The height of the buildings changes with the height of the Shilichang Mountains, rises slowly from west to east, and creates a tendency of surrounding lake that perfectly matches nature and artificial energy, meaning that the purple air comes from the east. On the east side, based on Nanhang University, it is needed to strengthen the service functions

of science and education and double innovation, and build a highland of urban innovation vitality.

#### 3 Conclusions

Fengshui has long been regarded as feudal superstition and cultural dross, but it is not true. Fengshui theory is a life philosophy that the ancients have worked out after a long time of life. It has a certain scientific basis, and can guide the living, life and urban planning of modern people. The essence of Fengshui theory can be extracted and applied in the space construction of new urban areas, so as to provide people with a good living, leisure and work environment, and realize the harmonious unity of "man-land relationship".

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