

Chapter 6. Regional Industrial Development along the Yangtze (Jiangsu and Anhui) and Zhujiang (Guangdong and Guangxi) Rivers, ca. 1850-2014

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Studies on industrial development of China are plentiful. Yet, most of them focus on sectors (e.g. textiles) or industrial characteristics (e.g. modern industry). Unfortunately, studies covering regions within China are scarce. The main reason is the extremely fragmentary sources. This implies that for every estimate that is provided, many sources need to be added together. A second problem concerns differences in classification of industry across regions. Third, reporting of industry changed over time from traditional/modern in the Republican period, to commune and brigade in early New China, Xiang and cun in later New China. Today there are various levels of production required to be reported in surveys. These problems have caused even today discussions about the trends in Chinese industry (see e.g. Carsten Holtz and Harry Wu). In this paper, we aim in providing 5 benchmarks, that is 1850, 1915, 1933, 1955 and 2000, with regional industrial data by sector. Whereas the first two benchmarks only provide provincial level data, the latter are on a prefectural level. Our focus is on the Yangtze and Zhujiang river delta's, two regions that experienced fast economic development.