

# The Value and Approaches of Integrating Pudong Practice of Chinese Path to Modernization with Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education

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## ABSTRACT

The Chinese path to modernization is the core strategy for advancing national development in the new era. As a frontline area of reform and opening-up, Pudong has achieved rich practical results in economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological civilization development. Integrating these practices into ideological and political education in universities can not only provide fresh contemporary examples for political education courses, helping students intuitively understand the theoretical connotations and practical logic of the Chinese path to modernization, but also guide young students to appreciate the implementation outcomes of national strategies through Pudong's development journey, thereby enhancing their national confidence and sense of responsibility for the times. This integration not only enriches the content system of university ideological and political education but also bridges the gap between theoretical learning and practical application, holding significant importance for cultivating a new generation capable of shouldering the responsibility of national rejuvenation. It also offers a practical direction for the reform and innovation of political education courses in the new era.

## KEYWORDS

The Chinese path to modernization; Pudong practice; Ideological and political education in higher education

## 1 Introduction

As a critical link in fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, university ideological and political education must keep pace with the times and continuously enrich its teaching content with reflections on national development practices. Since its development and opening, Pudong has consistently shouldered the mission of pioneering reform, opening-up, and modernization for the country. Its explorations in promoting high-quality development, advancing whole-process people's democracy, inheriting and innovating culture, enhancing people's well-being, and building ecological civilization serve as a vivid microcosm of the Chinese path to modernization. Currently, some university ideological and political courses still suffer from issues such as a disconnect between theory and practice and outdated case studies, making it difficult to fully engage students' interest and encourage deep reflection. Therefore, systematically exploring Pudong's practices under the Chinese path to modernization and identifying effective ways to integrate them into university ideological and political education can not only address the practical challenges in teaching these courses but also enable young students to deeply grasp the distinctive features, essential requirements, and major principles of the Chinese path to modernization through understanding Pudong's practices, thereby laying a solid ideological foundation for their future contributions to national development.

## 2 The Value Implication of Integrating the Pudong Practice of the Chinese Path to Modernization into Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education

### 2.1 Pudong's Core Value Position in the National Strategy of the Chinese Path to Modernization

As a model zone for China's reform and opening-up, Pudong has consistently demonstrated the spirit of being the first to dare since its development and opening in 1990. It has created numerous "national firsts" in market-oriented reforms and models of opening-up, providing replicable and referential experiences for the country's reform and opening-up efforts. Meanwhile, as a leading area in socialist modernization, Pudong leads the nation in industrial upgrading, technological innovation, and urban governance, serving as a primary showcase for China's modernization achievements. Pudong is also a strategic exploration zone for the Chinese path to modernization, continuously making breakthrough progress in new initiatives such as promoting common prosperity and harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, thereby offering practical support for the Chinese path to modernization.

### 2.2 Pudong Practice's Valuable Impact on Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education

Given the pivotal role of Pudong in national strategy, its development and practices have naturally become a crucial topic that must be taken seriously in ideological and political education in higher education during the new era. Incorporating real-life case studies from Pudong into these courses can transform abstract theoretical knowledge into tangible experiences, helping students break free from textbook constraints and truly grasp that the Chinese path to modernization is not an abstract concept but a living reality unfolding before them. For instance, using the example of Pudong's industrial shift from processing trade to high-end manufacturing allows students to intuitively understand the

profound meaning of “innovation as the primary driving force.” Meanwhile, through Pudong’s “people-centered city” initiatives, students can deeply appreciate the “people-centered” philosophy of development. These exemplary cases not only enhance the appeal and impact of ideological and political education but also guide students to closely align their personal growth with the nation’s destiny, strengthening their commitment to the socialist path with Chinese characteristics and injecting vibrant contemporary vitality into higher education’s ideological and political instruction.

### **3 The Ideological and Political Education Curriculum Integrated with Pudong Practice of Chinese Path to Modernization**

#### **3.1 Economic Development Dimension – High-Quality Development Practices**

In terms of economic development, Pudong’s exploratory initiatives in high-quality development have yielded a number of demonstrative results. In the market-oriented reforms, Pudong pioneered the negative list management system, business registration reform, and the separation of licenses and permits to streamline approval processes and lower market entry barriers, significantly boosting the vitality of market entities. To date, Pudong has attracted hundreds of thousands of market entities across various sectors, making it one of China’s regions with the highest degree of marketization and the best business environment. Regarding innovation-driven development, Pudong has focused on cultivating three trillion-yuan industrial clusters in integrated circuits, biomedicine, and artificial intelligence, transitioning its industrial structure from initial reliance on processing trade to high-end manufacturing, the digital economy, and green economy. The establishment of the C919 aircraft assembly base in Pudong demonstrates major breakthroughs in China’s high-end equipment manufacturing sector; leading digital economy enterprises such as Alipay and Pinduoduo have chosen to set up their headquarters in Pudong to promote deep integration of digital technologies with the real economy. The rapid construction and operation of Tesla Gigafactory serve as a typical example of Pudong’s green economic development, all of which can help students profoundly understand that “high-quality development holds the primary position in building a modern socialist country in all respects.”

#### **3.2 Political Construction Dimension – Practice of Whole-Process People’s Democracy**

In terms of political development, Pudong focuses on advancing whole-process people’s democracy, forming a distinctive model of grassroots governance. In the realm of Party-building leadership, Pudong embeds Party organizations into every aspect of grassroots governance, establishing the community service station mechanism to enhance public convenience. By leveraging Party organizations as a driving force, Pudong coordinates government and community efforts, creating seamless connections between policy implementation and public needs. The community service station integrates mediation, cultural services, and other functions, enabling residents to resolve practical issues at their doorstep. Through people-centered initiatives, Pudong has successfully established 1,192 community service stations, including representative liaison points, representative contact stations, and representative homes. These platforms span all sub-districts and extend to buildings and enterprises, where people’s congress deputies gather public feedback through regular site visits and door-to-door outreach. This approach effectively safeguards the public’s rights to information, participation, expression, and oversight, providing a vivid example for students to understand how “people’s democracy is the most extensive, genuine, and effective.”

#### **3.3 Cultural Construction Dimension - Cultural Inheritance and Innovative Practice**

In terms of cultural construction, Pudong not only attaches importance to the protection and inheritance of traditional culture, but also strives to promote cultural innovation and development, and form a unique cultural style. Pudong actively carries out cultural inheritance and innovative practices, which provides a large amount of materials for the ideological and political education work of universities. Pudong has a rich historical and cultural heritage, with many historical relics and traditional customs serving as the main carriers of cultural inheritance. For example, a large number of Ming and Qing Dynasty buildings have been preserved in Chuansha Ancient Town, which is a witness to the historical changes in Pudong and a carrier of the collective memory of the local people. Pudong not only attaches great importance to the inheritance of traditional folk customs, but also organizes various folk activities and inheritance training courses to ensure that these valuable cultural heritages can be continuously inherited and developed, such as intangible cultural heritage such as Gaoqiao velvet embroidery and Sanlin dragon dance. Pudong, as an international financial center and technological innovation hub, attracts a large number of cultural and creative industries and talents. It gathers many art exhibitions, concerts, theatrical performances, and other cultural activities, providing a broad stage for cultural innovation. Cultural venues such as Shanghai Science and Technology Museum and Shanghai Oriental Art Center not only embody the combination of technology and art, but also provide practical places for cultural innovation.

#### **3.4 Dimension of Social Construction - Practice of the “People-Centered City” Concept**

In terms of social construction, Pudong’s further practice of the concept of “people-centered city” provides a vivid example for the ideological and political education work in universities. The concept of “People-centered City”

emphasizes putting people first, paying attention to their needs and happiness, and striving to create a livable, business-friendly, and tourist-friendly urban environment. Pudong's urban planning and construction fully reflect the idea of "people-centered city." By paying attention to the creation of public spaces and building numerous parks, green spaces, and leisure squares, it provides residents with a comfortable living environment. As one of the largest and most natural ecological urban parks in the central area of Shanghai's inner ring road, Century Park has become an excellent place for people to relax and unwind. At the same time, the infrastructure construction in Pudong continues to strengthen, and the public service systems for transportation, healthcare, and education are constantly improving. A convenient transportation network makes residents' travel smoother, high-quality medical resources ensure residents' physical health, and abundant educational resources provide good conditions for residents' learning. Pudong attaches great importance to safeguarding the rights and interests of vulnerable groups and promoting social equity and justice. By establishing a social security system and carrying out poverty alleviation activities, everyone can enjoy the benefits brought by urban development, such as accessible facilities for people with disabilities, employment training opportunities, assistance to impoverished families, educational support, etc.

## **4 The Ideological and Political Education Approaches Integrated with Pudong Practice of Chinese Path to Modernization**

### **4.1 The Establishment of Case-Based Teaching System**

For theoretical instruction, the integration of Pudong practices is prioritized by developing case studies, creating thematic modules, and producing video compilations, which facilitates a profound theory-practice connection.

First, a series of case studies should be developed from Pudong practices, supported by a dedicated teaching and research team. This involves systematically documenting achievements under Pudong's Five-Sphere Integrated Plan to identify exemplars that demonstrate both the universal principles of Chinese modernization and Pudong's unique contributions. For instance, the evolution of its integrated circuit industry—from "following others", "running parallel" and finally to "taking the lead"—showcases the value of self-reliance and strength in science and technology. Similarly, the development of "15-minute convenient living circles" embodies the people-centered philosophy of development. During case compilation, storytelling and theoretical integration should be emphasized, using concrete examples to make cases more engaging. This approach ultimately achieves the teaching objectives of "explaining principles through cases, convincing through reasoning, and touching hearts through emotions."

Second, specialized teaching modules on Pudong should be developed. These modules must align with relevant chapters of ideological and political curriculum and be structured around Pudong's development journey. For instance, within the chapter on "Building a Socialist Economy with Chinese Characteristics," a module titled "The Practice and Enlightenment of Pudong's High-Quality Development" can be designed to explore how Pudong leveraged market-oriented reforms and innovation to achieve economic transformation. Similarly, for the chapter on "Building a Socialist Society with Chinese Characteristics," a module on "Pudong's Attempts in the Construction of a 'People-centered City'" can be created to examine its experiences in community governance and social welfare. Each module should have clear learning objectives, identified key and difficult points, and specified teaching methods, guiding instructors to organically integrate Pudong's practical experiences with theoretical knowledge and facilitating students' systematic understanding of Pudong's development.

Third, the production of ideological and political videos from a Pudong perspective should be created. This involves organizing a professional team to conduct on-site filming of Pudong's landmarks, using micro-narratives to tell the growth stories behind these iconic structures. Examples include filming the skyscrapers of Lujiazui Financial City, the research laboratories in Zhangjiang Science City, and the production lines of new energy enterprises in the Lingang New Area.

### **4.2 The Expansion of Practice-Based Platform with Pudong Characteristics**

Through practical teaching initiatives, two strategies are implemented: establishing a network of practice bases and designing study routes to enable students to step out of classrooms and personally experience the appeal of Pudong's practices.

First, implement a top-level design for a holistic network of practical teaching bases, leveraging Pudong's status as Shanghai's first "Inclusive Ideological and Political Course" key experimental zone. This initiative integrates high-quality resources to establish a comprehensive network across the entire region [5]. Centered around the Pudong Development Exhibition Hall, the network systematically documents the historical process and achievements of Pudong's development and opening-up. Key landmarks such as Lujiazui Financial City, Zhangjiang Science City, Lingang New Area, Expo Houtan Wetland Park, and Xinchang Ancient Town are strategically incorporated, forming a "point-line-surface" integrated layout. Universities and practice bases establish long-term partnerships and develop practical teaching plans, including organizing students to conduct research on "Reform and Opening-up History" at the Pudong Development

Exhibition Hall and participate in scientific research enterprise exchange activities in Zhangjiang Science City, thereby deepening their understanding of Chinese-style modernization through hands-on experience.

Second, carefully plan immersive walking routes for ideological and political education by developing a series of themed study tours under the framework of "Pudong Practice of the Chinese Path to Modernization." These tours are designed according to different fields of Pudong's practices, including Reform Spirit Line, Science and Technology Power Line, People-Centered City Line, and Ecological Livability Line. The Reform Spirit Tour highlights the Pudong Development Exhibition Hall and Lujiazui Financial City, helping students better understand Pudong's development and transformation during the reform and opening-up process. The Sci-Tech Power Tour connects Zhangjiang Science City and the COMAC, showcasing Pudong's achievements in scientific innovation. The People-Centered City Tour features community service stations and Lujiazui Financial City's Rongshufang, allowing students to experience Pudong's livelihood security and community governance. The Ecological Livability Tour focuses on the Expo Houtan Wetland Park and Qiantan International Business District, demonstrating Pudong's ecological civilization construction. Universities organize students to walk along these study routes, where on-site explanations, interactive discussions, and practical experiences enable them to immerse themselves in the essence of Chinese-style modernization embedded in Pudong's practices.

## 5 Conclusion

The Pudong practice of Chinese-style modernization is a vivid microcosm of the country's development in the new era, and also a valuable asset for universities to carry out ideological and political education. Integrating the Pudong practice into university ideological and political education can not only enrich the content system of ideological and political courses, enhance the appeal and effectiveness of teaching, but also guide young students to feel the advantages of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the achievements of Pudong's development, strengthen the "Four Confidences", and establish the lofty ideal of contributing to the comprehensive building of a modern socialist country. In future development, the Pudong practice also needs to be further deepened in integrating into university ideological and political education, with continuous innovation in integration methods, improvement in content systems, and optimization in practice platforms, so that the Pudong practice can play a more important role in cultivating new-era talents and lay a solid foundation for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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