

Seven Decades of China's Foreign Trade: Growth and Structural Improvement

Yue Yunxia

Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS), Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China

Abstract: *Over the past seven decades since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China has continuously increased its import and export volumes along with improving its trade structure, becoming a major trading nation and making progress toward a trading power. In the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020), China has experienced acceleration in its foreign trade structural adjustment under its opening-up strategy, and the function of foreign trade has shifted from being a driver for growth to being a way to balance development. China is expected to continue its trade growth momentum and structural improvement and strengthen its trade competitiveness. In achieving this vision, China should make efforts to increase structural equilibrium, create a favorable external trade environment, and pave the way for trade growth and sustainable development.*

Keywords: *foreign trade, trade growth, qualitative improvement, trade structure, trading power*

JEL classification code: F13, F14

DOI: 10.19602/j.chinaeconomist.2019.7.03

Over the past seven decades since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, foreign trade has played a positive role in China's economic growth and opening-up. With its growing import and export volumes and its improving trade structure owing to constant trade policy adjustments, China has developed into a large and increasingly more competitive trading nation.

1. Evolving Philosophy on Foreign Trade and Trade Growth in China

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, foreign trade has played an increasingly more important role in China's economy. China's trade growth has been accompanied by a changing trade philosophy.¹ After reform and opening-up in 1978, in particular, China integrated itself to the global value chain of specialization, which enabled its foreign trade development (Pei, 2009; IMF, 2004).² By integrating into the East Asian manufacturing network, China increased its trade volume along with improving its trade structure (UNCTAD, 2007).³ In this process, China's institutional development and policymaking went hand in hand. By increasing its trade openness and developing free-trade systems in line with international standards, China has brought about synergy between reform

Correspondence: yueyx@cass.org.cn

¹ Pei Changhong: "Basic Theme of China's Foreign Trade in 65 Years: Transformation and Growth," *Researches In Chinese Economic History*, p.23-33.

² Pei Changhong: "China's Foreign Trade: Six Decades of Evolution and Forecast," *Reform*, Vol.7, 2009, p.5-12; Eswar Prasad (ed.), *China's Growth and Integration into the World Economy: Prospects and Challenges*, IMF, 2004, p.1.

³ UNCTAD, *Trade and Development 2017: Regional Cooperation for Development*, <https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationArchive.aspx?publicationid=2146>, 2018.

中国对外贸易70年:量质并进

岳云霞

中国社会科学院拉丁美洲研究所

摘要:新中国成立70年以来,中国对外贸易经历了四个阶段的发展历程,持续保持了进出口的数量扩张,并推动了进出口结构的质性改善,形成了贸易量变和质变的有机结合和良性互动,使得自身成长为全球贸易大国,在向贸易强国发展的道路上取得了实质性进展。“十三五”规划以来,在中国对外开放的总体战略性布局下,中国对外贸易近年来的结构性调整加速,其功能逐渐由增长驱动器转向发展平衡器。未来中国对外贸易有望继续实现贸易数量与质量并进,推动自身实现由贸易大国向贸易强国的晋级。而在此进程中,应当通过相关保障性措施的出台,促进结构性平衡,为中国进出口创造良好的外部环境,并为对外贸易的平稳增长和可持续发展打下坚实基础。

关键词: 对外贸易; 量变; 质变; 结构; 贸易强国

JEL 分类号: F13, F14

新中国成立70年以来,对外贸易在中国经济增长与发展中始终发挥着积极作用。伴随中国经济发展和对外开放战略的调整,中国对外贸易政策不断演变,而进出口总体保持了持续增长趋势,结构性调整也在稳步推进,这促使中国实现向贸易大国的转变,在向贸易强国的跃升方面也已经取得了一定进展。

一、中国对外贸易的思想演化与数量增长

自1949年中华人民共和国成立以来,对外贸易在中国经济中的作用不断提升。在“变革与增长”主线下¹,中国对外贸易的指导思想与数量增长同步演变。特别是改革开放以来,中国逐步融入全球专业分工的价值链,实现了对外贸易的快速发展(裴长洪,2009;IMF,2004)²,并通过融入东亚地区生产网络,深度参与区域一体化,推动对外贸易规模扩张和升级(UNCTAD,2007)³。在这一过程中,制度建设和政策制定同步进行,通过不断提升开放水平,建设对标通行国际准则的自由贸易制度,中国实现了改革与开放相互促进,为对外贸易和经济的持续增长提供了动力(UN,2007)⁴。

¹ 裴长洪:《中国对外贸易65年的基本线索:变革与增长》,《中国经济史研究》2013年第3期,第23—33页。

² 裴长洪:《中国对外贸易60年演进轨迹与前瞻》,《改革》2009年第7期,第5—12页; Eswar Prasad (ed.), *China's Growth and Integration into the World Economy: Prospects and Challenges*, IMF, 2004, p.1

³ UNCTAD, *Trade and Development 2017: Regional Cooperation for Development*, <https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationArchive.aspx?publicationid=2146>, 2018.

⁴ Murray Gibbs, "Trade Policy", United Nations Policy Notes, https://esa.un.org/techcoop/documents/pn_trade policynote.pdf, 2017, p.13..

and opening-up that has fueled its sustained trade and economic growth (UN, 2007).⁴

1.1 Philosophical and Institutional Evolution on Foreign Trade in China

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China experienced a development journey that started with isolation followed by openness and further opening-up in the context of changing domestic and international environments. China's foreign trade philosophy evolved over different stages, in which imports and exports played different roles.

Stage I (1949-1978): Trade protection at the inception of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Adopted in September 1949, the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference states that "the People's Republic of China may, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, restore and develop trade relations with governments and peoples of all countries." In this stage, China's economic development relied on its own efforts and domestic market, while foreign aid and trade played a supplementary role. The purpose of foreign trade was to "exchange goods with other countries to make up for each other's deficiencies." During this period, China enacted the *Interim Regulations on the Administration of Foreign Trade* and other administrative rules and regulations, which formed an administrative framework for foreign trade. In this stage, China's foreign trade system was characterized by state dominance.⁵ The State and a few trade companies held sway in foreign trade operation and administration. The State enforced strict foreign exchange control and imposed plans on imports and exports in various categories.

Stage II (1978-2001): Trade control was relaxed at the inception of reform and opening-up. The Third Plenum of the 11th CPC Central Committee adopted an overall strategy for reform and opening-up as China's basic national policy⁶ and called for "proactively developing equal-footed and mutually beneficial economic cooperation with all countries on the basis of self-reliance and striving to adopt advanced technology and equipment from other countries." In this stage, the Chinese government vigorously developed imports and exports as an important way to "leverage both domestic and overseas resources, open up both domestic and international markets, and foster skills to develop our economy and international economic relations." In 1992, the 14th CPC National Congress declared that the goal of China's economic reform was to establish a socialist market economic system, further reform the foreign trade system, create economic operational mechanisms in line with international rules, and open up on all fronts.⁷ With the enactment and implementation of the *Foreign Trade Law* and other laws and regulations, China started to increase its trade openness, created special economic zones and various special customs regulation areas, devolved foreign trade operation rights subject to a new review and approval system, and launched various strategies to pursue market diversification, quality superiority and trade development through technology advancement. These measures led to an improvement in China's trade volume and quality.

Stage III (2001-2013): Development into a major trading nation. The *Outline of the 10th Five-Year Plan* identified the "going global" strategy to expand foreign trade. Imports and exports are a vehicle for a country to deepen and broaden its participation in international division of labor and utilize factors and resources on a global scale. After its WTO entry, China amended and enacted its new *Foreign Trade Law*, *Administrative Regulations on the Import and Export of Goods*, as well as supporting departmental rules. The foreign trade system continuously improved in a more open, stable and transparent process

⁴ Murray Gibbs, "Trade Policy", United Nations Policy Notes, https://esa.un.org/techcoop/documents/pn_tradepolicynote.pdf, 2017, p.13..

⁵ The *Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference* states that "China adopts foreign trade control and trade protection policies".

⁶ Hu Yaobang: "On External Economic Relations", speech at the Central Secretariat meeting on January 14 1982, from the *Party History Records of the CPC Central Meetings*, <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/151935/176588/176597/10556282.html>.

⁷ *Decisions of the CPC Central Committee on Matters concerning the Establishment of Socialist Market Economic System*, adopted at the Third Plenum of the 14th CPC Central Committee on November 14, 1993.

（一）中国对外贸易思想与制度演变

新中国成立之后,由于国内外环境的变化,中国经历了“封闭—开放—扩大再开放”的发展历程,对外贸易思想逐步演变,对进出口的定位也进行了阶段性调整。

第一阶段(1949~1978年)为新中国成立初期的贸易保护期。1949年9月通过的《中国人民政治协商会议共同纲领》指出,“中华人民共和国可在平等互利的基础上,与各外国的政府和人民恢复并发展贸易关系”。这一时期,中国经济建设以“自力更生为主,争取外援为辅”,以“国内市场为主,对外贸易为辅”,进出口的目标是“互通有无,调剂余缺”。此间,中国先后颁布了《对外贸易管理暂行条例》等行政规章和条例,确立了对外贸易的管理框架。这一时期的对外贸易制度以国家统制为特色⁵,外贸经营管理权一律集中于国家和少数外贸专业公司,国家严格外汇管制,以计划和划分经营范围控制进出口贸易。

第二阶段(1978~2001年)为改革开放初期的贸易管制放松期。党的十一届三中全会确立了改革开放的总体战略,提出将对内改革和对外开放作为基本国策⁶,并明确提出,“在自力更生的基础上积极发展同世界各国平等互利的经济合作,努力采用世界先进技术和先进设备”。进出口成为“利用两种资源——国内资源和国外资源;打开两个市场——国内市场和国际市场;学会两套本领——组织国内建设的本领和发展对外经济关系的本领”的重要路径。1992年党的十四大提出建立社会主义市场经济体制,进一步改革对外经济贸易体制,建立适应国际经济通行规则的运行机制,形成全方位开放格局⁷。此后,《对外贸易法》等法规陆续颁布和实施,中国转向对外开放型的贸易,设立了经济特区等特殊经济功能区和各类海关特殊监管区域,逐步下放外贸经营权,确立了外贸经营权的审批制度,并先后推出了“市场多元化战略”“以质取胜战略”和“科技兴贸战略”,采取综合措施,促进进出口的数量和质量提升。

第三阶段(2001~2013年)为贸易大国的形成期。《十五计划纲要》明确写入“走出去”战略,提出要扩大对外贸易空间。进出口是提高参与国际分工的深度和广度、在全球范围内进行要素整合与资源配置的媒介。“入世”后,中国按WTO规则修订出台了新的《对外贸易法》《货物进出口管理条例》及配套部门规章,对外贸易体制在更加开放、稳定、透明和符合市场经济规则的进程中不断完善。

第四阶段(2013年以来)为贸易强国⁸成长期。后金融危机时代,中国提出了以“一带一路”为引领,构建开放型经济新体制、推进新一轮高水平对外开放的理念。进出口有助于缓解外部国际贸易保护主义和内部经济调整双重压力,在中国整体外交和经济发展中的功能性定位更加突出。同期,一系列贸易政策开始配套实施:一是自由贸易区战略。党的十七大报告明确提出实施自由贸易区战略,加强双边、多边经贸合作;党的十八届三中全会提出以周边为基础,积极推进“一带一路”沿线的自贸区,形成面向全球的高标准自由贸易区网络。截至2018年底,中国已同全球25个国家/地区签署了17项自由贸易协定,并在国内设立12大自由贸易试验区,

⁵ 《中国人民政治协商会议共同纲领》规定,“实行对外贸易的管制,并采用保护贸易政策。”

⁶ 胡耀邦:《关于对外经济关系问题》,1982年1月14日中央书记处会议上发言,转引:《中国共产党中央会议党史记录》, <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/151935/176588/176597/10556282.html>。

⁷ 《中共中央关于建立社会主义市场经济体制若干问题的决定》,中国共产党第十四届中央委员会第三次全体会议1993年11月14日通过。

⁸ 李钢(2018)、裴长洪等(2017)和赵蓓文(2013)等学者认为,中国成为世界贸易大国之后,贸易不平衡加剧、高投入、高污染,但收益较低,仍处于价值链的低端,实现从贸易大国向贸易强国的战略升级是新时期中国贸易发展的总体战略。

consistent with market-based economic rules.

Stage IV (2013-present): China's growth as a trading power.⁸ In the era after the global financial crisis, China put forward a new concept of creating an open economic system for a new round of opening-up at a higher level. The promotion of imports and exports, which is conducive to mitigating dual pressures from international trade protectionism and domestic economic adjustment, took center stage in China's diplomacy and economic development. Meanwhile, a swathe of trade policies started to be implemented, including:

The strategy of free trade areas. The Report to the 17th CPC National Congress identified the strategy to create free trade areas for bilateral and multilateral economic and trade cooperation. The Third Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee in 2013 called for creating free trade areas along the Belt and Road routes to form a high-standard global network of free trade areas. By the end of 2018, China had signed 17 free trade agreements with 25 countries and regions and created 12 free trade pilot areas for institutional innovation in the field of investment and trade.

The implementation of a proactive import policy helped China rebalance trade. China launched the China International Import Expo, modified the Catalogue of Encouraged Imported Technology and Products, offered import discount interest funds, increased import credit, and improved the import and export structure.

China adopted trade and investment liberalization and facilitation policies in line with international standards. China started to comprehensively implement a pre-access national treatment plus negative list system, substantially eased market access, increased service sector openness, and supported integration of its firms into the global industrial, value and logistical chains.

China began to encourage the new business model. The modes such as cross-border e-commerce and procurement trade grew rapidly and become new growth drivers.

1.2 Growth of China's Foreign Trade

With its improving foreign trade mechanism and policy implementation, China's import and export volumes have been growing over the past seven decades. As Figures 1 and 2 show, China's foreign trade has been growing by different degrees in 56 out of 70 years since 1949, and its trade growth outpaced the world average in 47 years. After reform and opening-up in 1978, China achieved miraculous trade growth by expanding its openness and taking an active part in the international division of labor and competition in all fields. China's total import and export volumes reduced only briefly four times, and led the world trade growth in most years.

According to the General Administration of Customs, China's total import and export volume amounted to 4,622.8 billion U.S. dollars in 2018, up 223 times over 1978, or 14.5% annually. Specifically, China's export volume grew by 254 times with an annual average growth rate of 14.9%, and its import volume increased by 155 times, up 14.1% annually.⁹ Yet China's trade growth also exhibited phase characteristics in different stages due to its different development goals and external environment.

Stage I (1949-1978): China's foreign trade developed amid apparent volatility. Due to the blockade and embargo imposed by Western countries and its domestic political and economic situations, China adopted an import substitution industrialization (ISI) policy with limited external openness - a common approach among developing economies at the time.¹⁰ Under this system, China used imports to meet its needs of industrial production and exports to earn foreign exchange. In about three decades before

⁸ Li (2018), Pei (2017) and Zhao (2013) et al. believe that after China became a large trading nation, its trade imbalance deteriorated. With poor efficiency and environmental performance of industrial activity, China remained at the bottom of the value chain. Strategic upgrade from a large trading nation to a strong and competitive one marks the overall strategy for China's trade development in the new era.

⁹ Calculated based on data from UNCTAD *Handbook of Statistics 2018*.

¹⁰ From the 1950s to the early 1980s, import substitution industrialization (ISI) was widely adopted in the developing world, including Latin America and most African countries, as well as South Korea, Singapore and the Philippines in East Asia (from 1952 the early 1960s).

在投资贸易领域进行制度创新。二是实施积极的进口政策,逐步实现进出口平衡。中国推出了“国际进口博览会”,调整《鼓励进口技术和产品目录》,完善进口贴息政策,并加大进口信贷支持力度,积极扩大进口和优化进口结构。三是对接国际高标准,实行高水平的贸易和投资自由化与便利化政策。中国开始全面实行准入前国民待遇加负面清单管理制度,大幅度放宽市场准入,扩大服务业对外开放,支持企业深度融入全球产业链、价值链和物流链。四是鼓励新业态的升级和壮大,跨境电子商务、市场采购贸易等新业态快速增长,成为新的增长点。

(二)中国对外贸易的数量增长历程

伴随对外贸易机制的完善和政策的落实,中国进出口在过去70年中保持了总体增长趋势。图1和图2显示,新中国成立70年来,中国对外贸易在56年中有不同程度的增长,有47年超出了世界贸易的平均增长率。特别是改革开放之后,中国通过扩大开放,全面参与国际分工和竞争,实现了对外贸易“奇迹式的增长”,中国进出口总额仅有四次短暂下滑,在多数年份中领跑全球贸易。据中国海关总署统计,与1978年改革开放之初相比,2018年中国进出口总额达46228亿美元,增长了223倍,平均年增长率达14.5%。其中,出口额增长了254倍,年均增长率达14.9%;进口额增长了155倍,平均年增长率达14.1%⁹。但是,受到不同阶段发展目标与外部环境的影响,中国对外贸易的数量增长也呈现出一定的阶段性特征。

第一阶段(1949~1978年)的中国对外贸易有了一定发展,但增长具有明显的波动性。这一时期,受到西

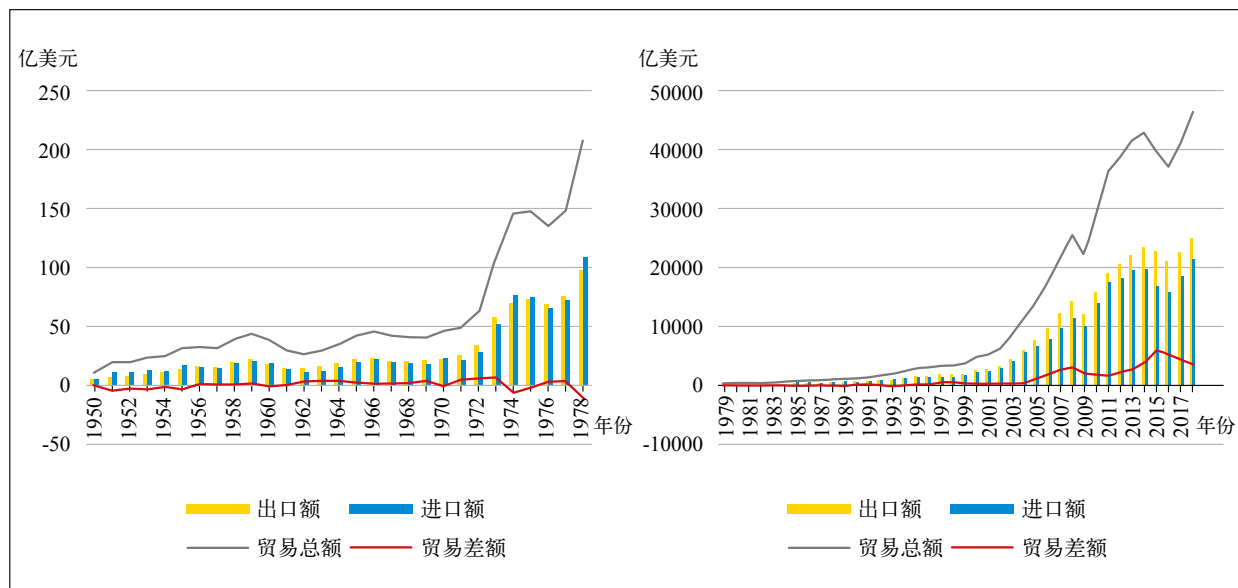


图1 1950~2018年中国对外贸易发展

注:鉴于改革开放前后,中国对外贸易的规模有了明显的数量级变化,本图分阶段绘制了中国对外贸易进展。

资料来源:CEIC中国经济数据库。

⁹ 根据UNCTAD《2018统计手册》数据计算。

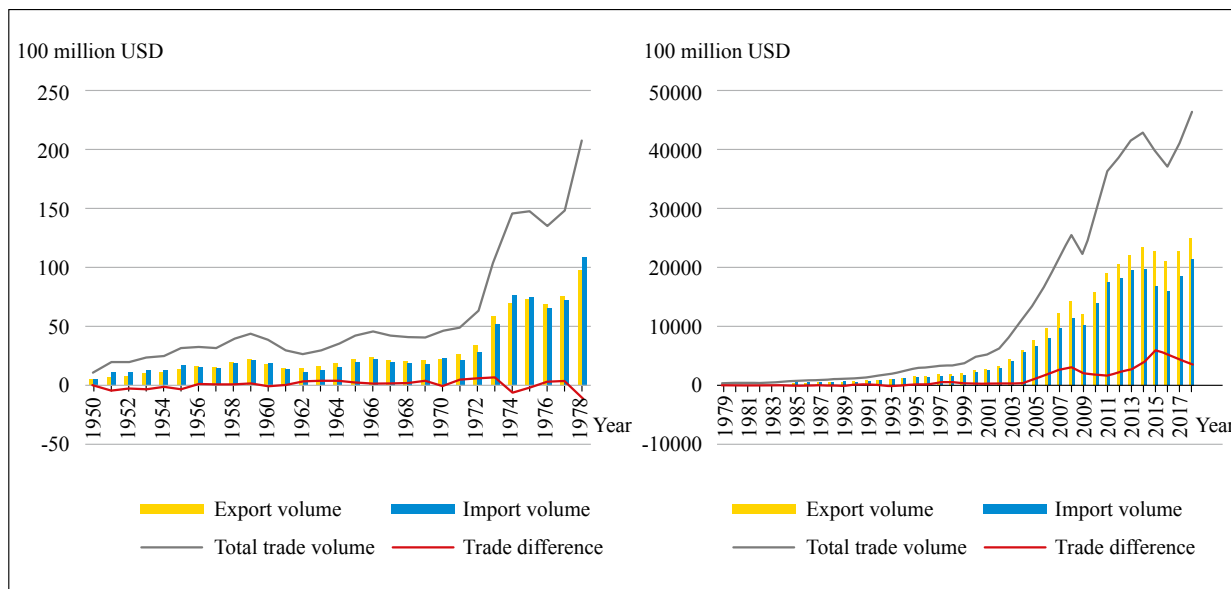


Figure 1: China's Foreign Trade Development from 1950 to 2018

Notes: Given the exponential growth in China's foreign trade after 1978, we illustrate China's foreign trade development in two charts representing two stages.
Source: CEIC China Economic Database.

reform and opening-up in 1978, China's total import and export volume rose from 1.13 billion US dollars in 1950 to 21.09 billion US dollars in 1978, up 11% annually and slightly below the annual average world trade growth rate of 11.5% (see Figure 2).¹¹ Given the roles of imports and exports, China's trade imbalance was limited during this period, but its import growth outpaced its export growth in most years. Despite the export growth, China's exports as a share in total world export volume peaked at 2.69% in 1959 and dropped to 0.76% in 1978. China's ranking in world export volume also fell from 12th in 1959 to 32nd in 1978.

Stage II (1978-2001): Foreign trade became an important part of China's economy and maintained rapid growth. After 1978, China became a major destination for the third wave of global industrial relocation. From 1979 to 1991, the Chinese mainland served as a destination for the relocation of light and traditional processing industries from Hong Kong, including fabrics and accessories, toys, clocks, consumer electronics and small home appliances. From 1992 to 2001, China became a destination for the relocation of low-end processing and assembly activities of electronics, communication and computer industries from the Taiwan region, Japan and South Korea. As a result, processing trade became a key form of China's foreign trade, driven by overseas-funded firms, and underpinned China's surging export growth.

In 2001, China's total import and export volume reached 509.65 billion US dollars (accounting for 4% of world trade and ranking sixth globally), up 24 times over 1978 or 15% annually. This growth rate far surpassed the annual world trade growth rate of 7% during the same period.¹² In this stage, China's exports grew by 15.5% on an annual average basis, exceeding its annual average import growth rate of 14.5%. After 1994, China's exports surpassed imports, leading to trade surplus that lasts till today. Consequently, China's international reserves have accumulated rapidly. In 1996, China's foreign exchange reserves exceeded 100 billion US dollars, which increased to 212.16 billion US dollars in 2001.

¹¹ Calculated based on data from UNCTAD Data Center.

¹² Calculated based on data from UNCTAD Data Center.

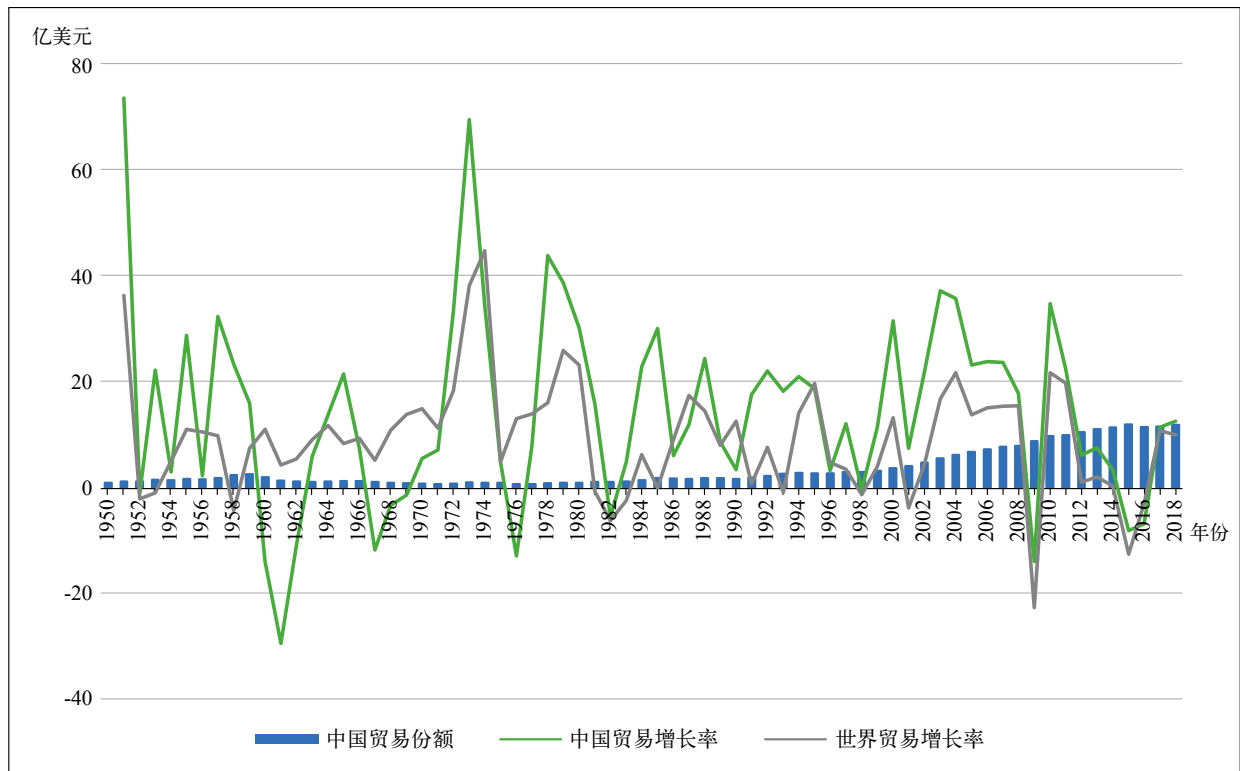


图2 世界贸易中的中国(1950~2018年)

资料来源:UNCTAD Data Center。

方国家的对华封锁以及禁运政策和国内政治经济形势的影响,中国采取了当时发展中经济体普遍采用的进口替代工业化发展模式¹⁰,对外开放度较低,进口用于满足工业化生产和升级,而出口主要用于换取外汇。在改革开放前近30年的对外贸易发展过程中,中国进出口总额由1950年的11.3亿美元增至1978年的210.9亿美元,年均增速为11%,略低于世界贸易11.5%的年均增长率¹¹(见图2)。同时,由于进出口的定位,这一阶段中国的贸易不平衡现象并不突出,但多数年份中,中国进口的增速高于出口。因此,出口规模虽有所扩大,但中国出口占世界出口总额的比重1959年为2.69%(阶段性峰值),1978年为0.76%,在世界出口贸易中所居位次,也由1959年的第12位降为1978年的第32位。

第二阶段(1978~2001年),对外贸易成为中国国民经济的重要组成部分,出现了较快的持续增长。自1978年改革开放起,中国成为全球第三次产业转移的主要承接地,1979~1991年承接了来自香港地区的轻纺、玩具、钟表、消费电子、小家电等轻工和传统加工业,1992~2001年期间承接了来自台湾地区、日本、韩国的电子、通信、计算机产业的低端加工和装配业。在此过程中,加工贸易成为中国对外贸易的主要形式,三资企业成为对外贸易的主力,带动进出口迅速增长。2001年,中国进出口总额达到5096.5亿美元(占世界贸易的4%,在全

¹⁰ 20世纪50年代至80年代初,进口替代工业化发展模式在发展中世界得到较为广泛的运用,如拉美和非洲多数国家,东亚地区的韩国、新加坡和菲律宾等(50年代至60年代初)。

¹¹ 根据UNCTAD DATA Center数据计算。

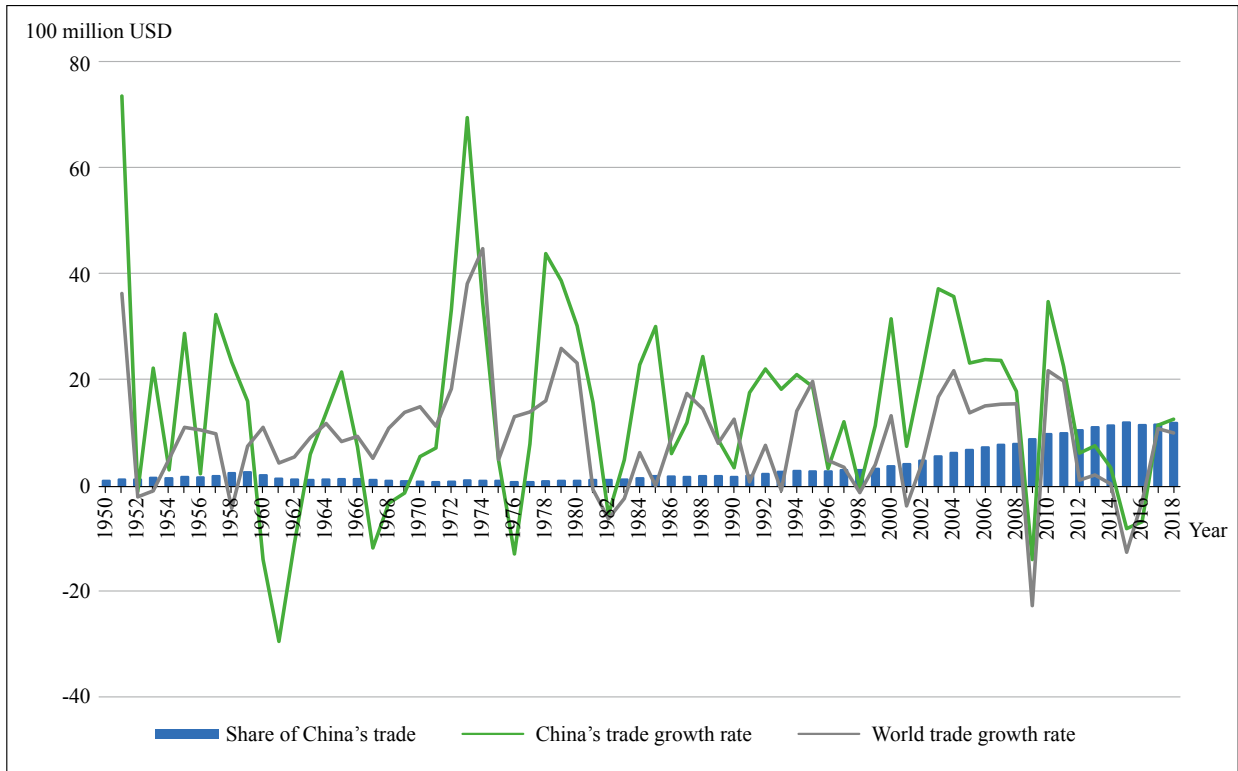


Figure 2: China in World Trade (1950-2018)

Source: UNCTAD Data Center.

Stage III (2001-2013): Trade developed by leaps and bounds. China's accession to the WTO in November 2001 marked a new era in China's trade development characterized by wider and multidimensional openness and an export-oriented economy¹³. China's foreign trade dependence, especially export dependence, increased rapidly, exceeding 50% in 2002 and peaking at 67% in 2006, and its export dependence reached 36.9% in the same year. Under such a development model, China's total foreign trade increased to 4.2 trillion US dollars by 2013 at an annual average growth rate of 19.1%; in comparison, the annual average world trade growth rate was 9.6% during the same period of time. By 2013, China's share in global trade of goods expanded to 11%, making it the largest goods trading nation in the world. Specifically, China's export growth rate (19.3%) still outpaced its import growth (18.9%). In 2009, China's export volume as a share in the world total rose to 9.6%, making it the world's largest exporter of goods and cementing its position as the "world's factory."

Stage IV (2013-present): China's trade development started to focus on quality upgrade. In the era after the global financial crisis, although China's status as a major trading nation has strengthened, its economic growth has become less dependent on trade. In 2018, China's trade dependence was about 33.7%, and its export dependence reached roughly 18.1%.¹⁴ With its falling trade dependence, China's annual trade growth slowed to 2.1% but it was still above the world average of 0.7%. In 2018, China's total trade volume reached 4.6 trillion US dollars, and its share in global trade climbed to 11.8%.

¹³ "Communiqué of the 5th Plenary Session of the 15th Central Committee of the CPC" and "Communiqué of the 6th Plenary Session of the 15th Central Committee of the CPC", <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64569/65414/index.html>

¹⁴ NBS: *Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2018 National Economic and Social Development*, http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201902/t20190228_1651265.html, cited on April 1, 2019.

球居第6位),较1978年增加24倍,年均增长15%,远超世界贸易7%的年均增长率¹²。在此阶段,中国出口年均增长15.5%,超出进口14.5%的年均增速。1994年之后,中国出口规模超过进口,开始出现持续至今的贸易顺差。这使得中国国际储备快速累积,1996年外汇储备突破1000亿美元,2001年增加至2121.6亿美元。

第三阶段(2001~2013年),中国对外贸易进入了跨越式发展期。2001年11月中国加入WTO,标志着中国对外贸易进入了新的阶段,中国进入全方位、多层次的对外开放时期¹³,经济呈现出极高的外向化特色,对外贸易依存度(尤其是出口依存度)快速增加,2002年突破50%,2006年达到67%的历史高点,而出口依存度同年高达36.9%。在此种发展模式下,中国对外贸易总额以19.1%的年均增速(世界贸易同期年均增速为9.6%)增至2013年的4.2万亿美元,在全球贸易中的份额扩大至11%,成为全球第一大贸易国。其中,中国出口增速(19.3%)仍高于进口(18.9%),特别是2009年中国出口占全球出口比重上升至9.6%,成为世界第一出口大国,奠定了“世界工厂”的地位,贸易规模实现“跨越式发展”。

第四阶段(2013年以来),中国对外贸易进入质量升级期。后金融危机时代,中国的世界贸易大国地位得以巩固,但经济增长对贸易的依存度逐步调低,2018年中国外贸依存度约为33.7%,出口依存度约为18.1%¹⁴。在这一调整下,中国对外贸易的年均增速降为2.1%,较前一阶段大幅调低,但仍高于全球贸易0.7%的平均增速。2018年,中国对外贸易总额增至4.6万亿美元,在全球贸易中的比重上升至11.8%。同期,中国出口主导产业向装备制造业、高新技术产业等资本、技术密集型产业升级,在稳定出口增长的基础上更加重视扩大进口,进出口的增长情况开始发生变化,2017年和2018年中国进口增长16.1%和15.8%,明显超出同期出口的增长(7.9%和9.9%)。

整体而言,在新中国成立以来的70年中,尽管对外贸易在国内外环境的影响下有所波动,但是其适应了不同阶段经济增长与发展的需要,保持了年均13%的增长速度,远高于世界贸易的增长(8%),而进出口的同步高速增长(12.8%和13.2%,世界进出口年均增速均为8.8%)推动中国成为全球贸易大国。

二、中国对外贸易的质性演变

新中国成立以来,直至2013年成为全球第一大贸易国的发展进程中,在中国对外贸易量化积累的同时,进出口结构性也在相应变化。尤其是改革开放以来,中国加入全球化浪潮,在比较视野下的对外贸易结构发生了显著变化,逐步走向贸易强国。

(一) 改革开放之前的贸易结构

改革开放之前,在以进口替代为导向的内向型发展模式下,中国对外贸易力图保持经济的独立性,贸易

¹² 根据UNCTAD DATA Center数据计算。

¹³ 《中国共产党第十五届五中全会公报》《中国共产党第十五届六中全会公报》, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64569/65414/index.html>

¹⁴ 国家统计局:《2018年国民经济和社会发展统计公报》, http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201902/t20190228_1651265.html, 引用语2019年4月1日。

Meanwhile, China's exporting industries started to upgrade toward capital- and technology-intensive industries such as equipment manufacturing and technology industries. While maintaining steady export growth, China attached great importance to increasing imports. In 2017 and 2018, China's imports grew by 16.1% and 15.8%, respectively, substantially outpacing export growth rates during the same period (7.9% and 9.9%, respectively).

Despite trade volatility due to the impact of domestic and international environments over the past seven decades since 1949, China's foreign trade supported its economic growth and development priorities over different stages, with an annual average growth rate of 13%, far above the world average of 8%. Rapid growth in both imports and exports (12.8% and 13.2%, respectively, compared with the world's average of both at 8.8% during the same period) turned China into a major trading nation.

2. China's Qualitative Trade Evolution

From 1949 to 2013, the year China became the world's largest goods trading nation, the country not only achieved trade growth but improved its trade structure as well. By joining the tide of globalization since reform and opening-up in 1978, China has transformed its trade structure and evolved into a trading powerhouse.

2.1 Pre-Reform Trade Structure

Under its inward-looking development model of import substitution prior to reform and opening-up in 1978, China's trade was positioned to maintain its economic independence, and trade functions were relatively uniform. While imports were meant to supply much-needed industrial equipment, the role of export was to earn foreign exchange. In this stage, seeking international recognition was a primary goal of China's diplomacy, and official trade was restricted to the countries with which it had diplomatic ties. In terms of product structure and flow, China's trade lacked diversity and developed in a closed loop. With limited export competitiveness, China was yet to exhibit any significant international influence as a large market. Prior to reform and opening-up, therefore, China's trade was largely isolated from the international division of labor and exogenous from international trade.

Prior to reform and opening-up, China's import and export structure was in consistent with its industrial growth did. As Figure 3 shows, during this period, China's exports were dominated by primary products and resource-intensive finished products, with a rising share of finished products. At the inception of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, agricultural and sideline products represented more than half of China's exports - a typical trait for agricultural countries, of which the processed agricultural and sideline products accounted for more than three-fifths; industrial and mineral products made up for less than 10%. With the creation of China's industrial system, the shares of processed agricultural and sideline products and industrial and mineral products surged, peaking at 45.9% and 34.7%, respectively, in 1962.

Subsequently, however, domestic political and economic turbulence dealt a blow to China's industrial activity, and agricultural produce, byproducts and finished products once again dominated China's exports. The share of industrial and mineral products in China's exports declined and did not recover until after 1974. To strike a balance between foreign exchange earnings and the necessity of industrial production, priority was given to the import of industrial raw materials. Capital goods dominated China's imports before reform and opening-up, with an average share of 80.4%.¹⁵ Consumer goods, however, accounted for less than 20% of China's imports most of the time, with the exception of economic hardships during 1959-1961, when the share of consumer goods in China's imports briefly expanded, peaking at 44.8% in 1962, which still paled in comparison with the share of capital goods.

¹⁵ Calculated based on data from *China Statistical Yearbook* (1981).

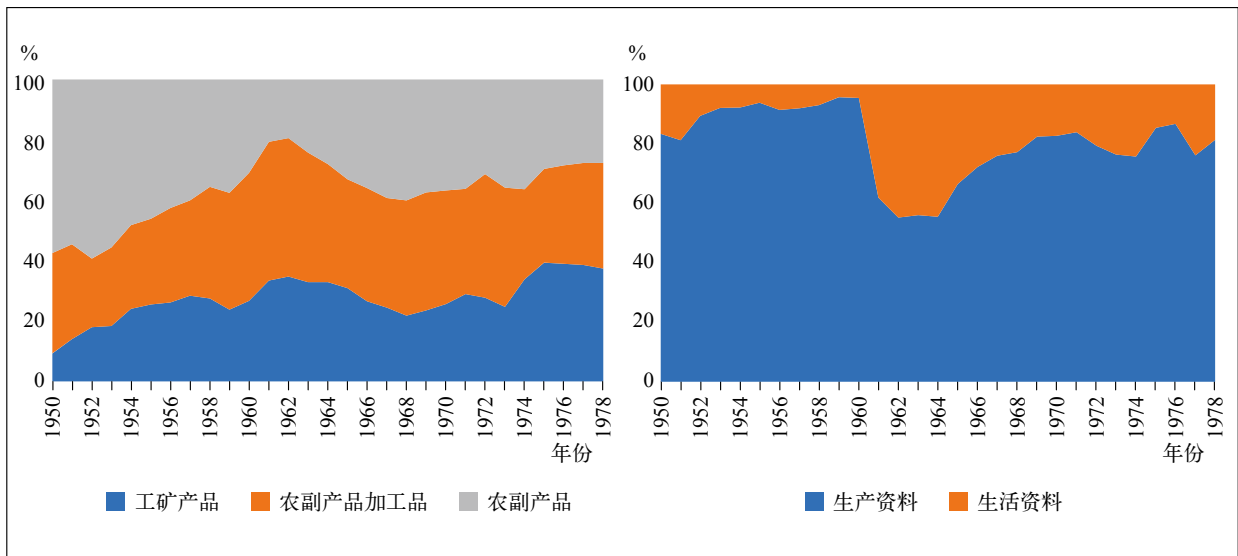


图3 中国对外贸易结构(1950~1978年)

资料来源:《中国统计年鉴》(1981),中国统计出版社1982年版。

功能定位相对单一,进口主要用于调剂余缺和引进国外设备,而出口则用于换取外汇。同期,中国外交仍以获取国际承认为目标,官方对外贸易受限于建交范围。这使得中国对外贸易在产品结构和流向结构上呈现了一定的单一性和闭环式发展特征,出口竞争力有限,而进口也尚未显现庞大市场的国际影响力。因此,改革开放前,中国对外贸易整体上游离于国际分工体系之外,在世界贸易中的外生性特色明显。

在贸易的产品结构上,改革开放之前,中国的进出口结构与工业的成长路径相一致。如图3所示,在这一时期,中国的出口以初级产品及资源密集型制成品为主,制成品的比重不断上升。新中国成立初期,与农业国的发展特质一致,中国出口中农副产品占据半数以上,其中农副产品加工品的份额超过了30%,而工矿产品的不足10%。随着中国工业体系的逐步建立,农副产品加工品和工矿产品一度出现了明显的上升态势,1962年时达到了这一时期的峰值,即45.9%和34.7%。但在此之后,由于国内政治经济形势发生了变化,正常的生产组织活动受到了冲击,农副产品及其制成品再次成为出口换汇的主力,而工矿产品的份额下降,直至1974年后才再度进入上升轨道。同期,在进口方面,为了实现外汇和生产的平衡,中国以工业原材料作为优先进口产品,生产资料始终是主导性的进口产品,在改革开放前的中国进口中平均占到了80.4%¹⁵,而生活资料作为调剂余缺的主要方向,在进口中的比重多数情况下不足20%,仅在三年经济困难时期(1959~1961年)后出现过短暂扩大,最高时仅为44.8%(1962年)。

在贸易的流向结构和贸易方式上,中国对外贸易在这一时期的变化与外交形势密切相关。新中国成立初期,中国70%的进出口是与苏联和前南斯拉夫等东欧社会主义国家之间发生的,贸易方式以易货贸易和港澳转口贸易为主。1961年中国开始进口粮食后,对外贸易的重心转向西方国家,贸易流向结构明显多元化,对外

¹⁵ 根据《中国统计年鉴》(1981)数据核算。

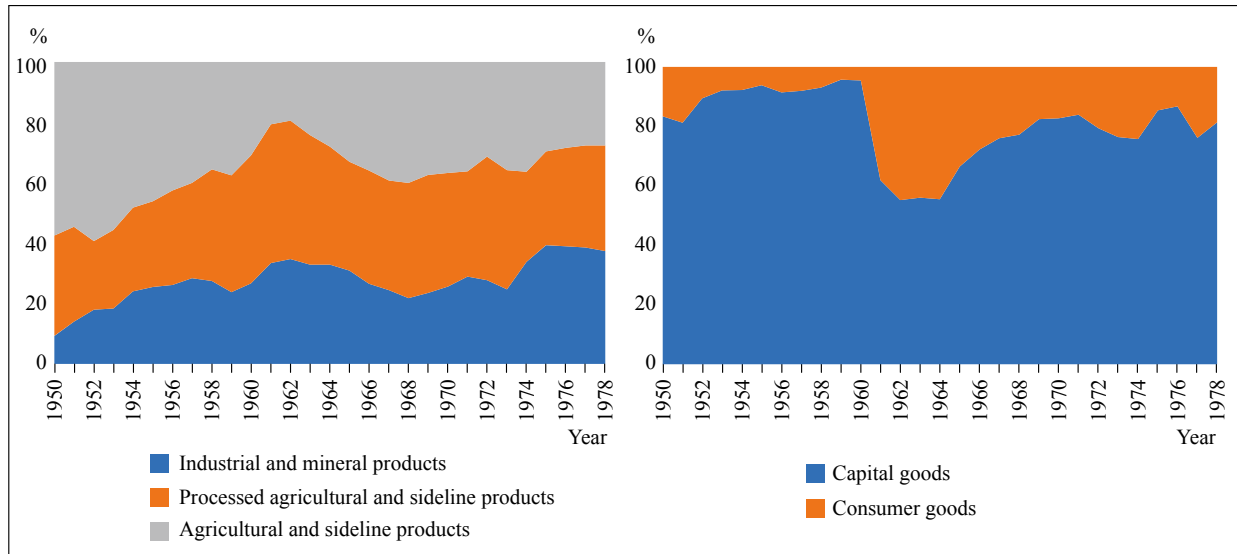


Figure 3: China's Foreign Trade Structure (1950-1978)
Source: China Statistical Yearbook (1981), China Statistics Press, 1982 Edition.

During this period, China's foreign trade was closely related to its diplomatic situation, as manifested in trade flow, structure and form. At the inception of the founding of the People's Republic of China, 70% of the Chinese mainland's imports and exports were with the USSR and other socialist countries like the former Yugoslavia in Eastern Europe through barter trade and transit trade via Hong Kong and Macao. After China started to import grain in 1961, its trade focus shifted toward Western countries, with significant diversification in trade flow and structure and a transition to cash-settled trade.

Before reform and opening-up, China's trade structure was dominated by domestic production, thus making endogenous factors a major source of shocks. Despite overall stability in the import and export structure, it was difficult for China to realize continuous improvement and upgrade solely on its own strength. Trade growth had a limited effect on the improvement of trade quality.

2.2 Trade Structure after Reform and Opening-up

After reform and opening-up in 1978, China swiftly became integrated into the international division of labor. After its accession to the WTO, China emerged as the "world's factory" and a major market. As China's trade became increasingly endogenous to the global trading system, its import and export quality improved in sync with its trade growth.

First, China's trade expansion was accompanied by an improving export structure. Qualitative trade improvement became evident in Stage II, when labor-intensive finished products replaced primary products as China's main exports. In 1991, the share of primary products in China's exports dropped to 22.5%, down from 50.3% in 1980, while the share of industrial finished goods rose to 77.5%, up from 49.7% in 1980. Textiles, shoes and other fabrics and accessories became China's major export products.¹⁶

In Stage III, China's exports upgraded from labor-intensive products to capital-intensive products, with an above-average growth of exports in electromechanical products. In 2003, electromechanical products, for the first time, represented more than 50% of China's total export value. In 2011, China's exports of electromechanical products exceeded 1 trillion US dollars.

¹⁶ Jiang: "Three Decades of China's Foreign Trade," China Financial & Economic Publishing House, 2008 Edition.

贸易方式也转向国际通行的现汇贸易方式。

可以看到,在改革开放之前,中国对外贸易结构主要是由国内生产所主导,内源性因素是主要的冲击来源,因此,进出口结构总体平稳,但难以形成不断优化的自我升级模式,贸易扩大对贸易质量提升的推动作用有限。

(二)改革开放之后的贸易结构

改革开放以来,中国加速融入国际分工体系,尤其是在加入WTO之后,中国作为“世界工厂”和大市场的功能性作用日益突出。这使得中国对外贸易在全球贸易体系变化中的内生性特色愈见突出,进出口的质量提升与数量扩大呈现出同步性特质。

第一,中国出口产品的结构随着规模扩张呈现阶段性跃升。新中国对外贸易的质性改善自第二阶段起趋于明显。第二阶段中,出口结构实现了从初级产品向劳动密集型制成品的转变。1991年,中国初级产品的出口比重已由1980年的50.3%下降到22.5%,工业制成品的出口比重已由1980年的49.7%上升到77.5%,纺织、鞋类等轻纺产品开始成为新的出口主导类产品¹⁶。第三阶段中,出口重心由劳动密集型产品向技术密集型产品跃升,机电产品的出口增速超过了出口平均增速。2003年机电产品出口首次占中国出口总值的50%以上,

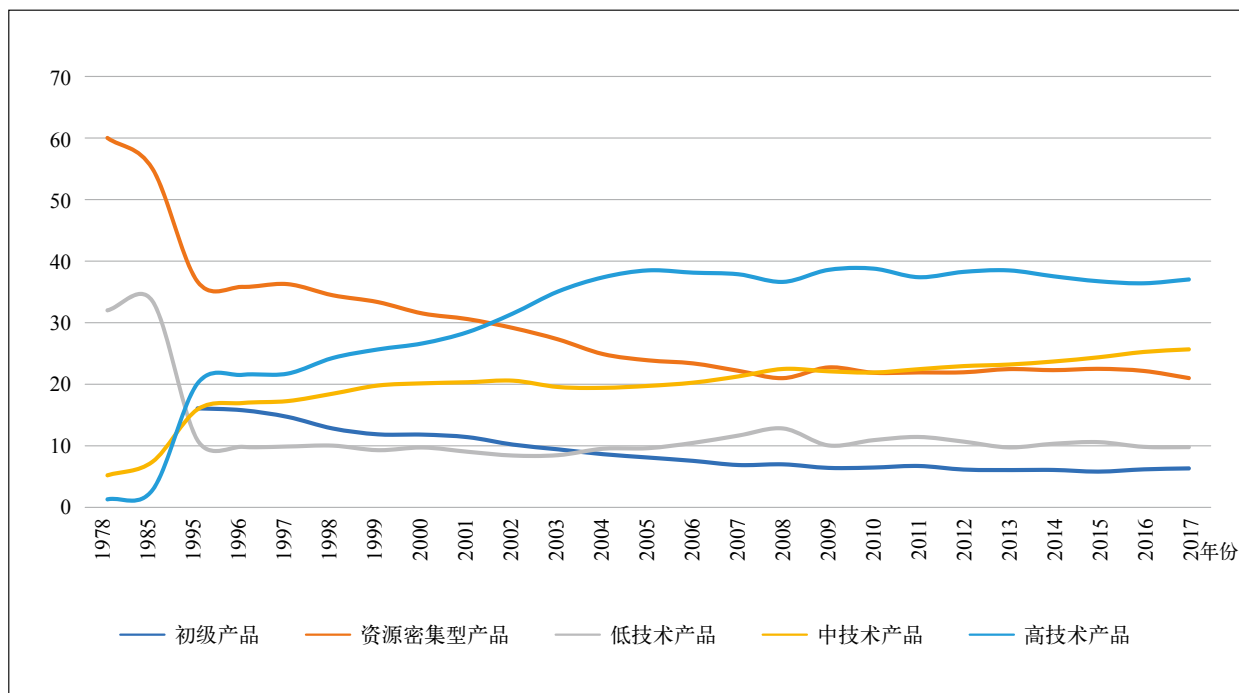


图4 中国出口产品的技术构成

注:技术分类采取Lall(2000)的方法。

资料来源:作者核算。1985年前数据来自“1962~2000年美国全国经济研究所—联合国贸易数据”(NBER—United Nations Trade Data 1962~2000, <https://cid.econ.ucdavis.edu/nberus.html>),1985年以后数据来自世界银行世界综合贸易解决方案(WITS, <http://wits.worldbank.org/>)。

¹⁶ 江晓娟:《中国对外贸易三十年》,中国财政经济出版社2008年版。

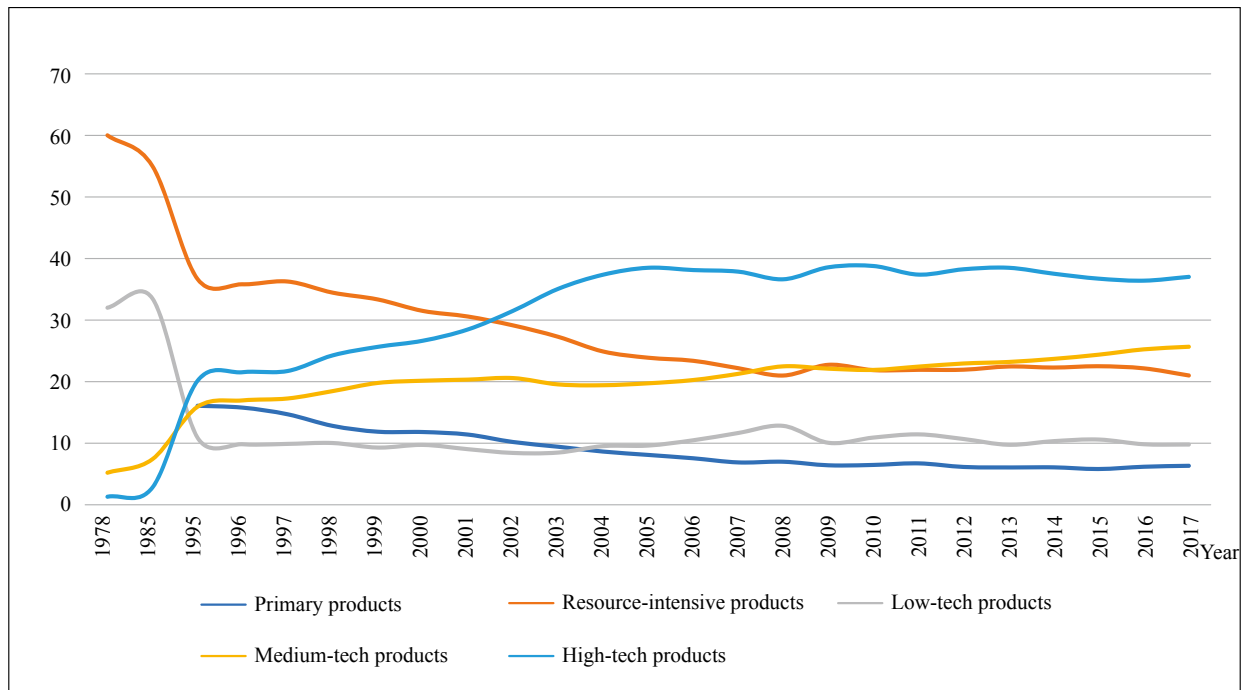


Figure 4: Technology Composition of China's Export Products

Note: Lall (2000) method is adopted for technology classification.

Source: Calculated by author. Data before 1985 are from the NBER-United Nations trade data 1962-2000, <https://cid.econ.ucdavis.edu/nberus.html>; data after 1985 are from the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS, <http://wits.worldbank.org/>).

In Stage IV, China's exports became even more tech-intensive, with electromechanical products as an export stabilizer. Significant improvement in the level of China's export technology was accompanied by an upgrade in its product structure. After 1995, resource-intensive products, especially labor-intensive products, decreased proportionally in China's exports, while the share of technology products increased in relative terms. Since 2002, medium- and high-tech products have represented more than 50% of China's exports. High-tech products replaced labor-intensive products to become the biggest category of China's exports (see Figure 4). China's export sophistication is positively correlated with its increasing export volume. The implication is that after reform and opening-up, trade growth contributed to a qualitative improvement in China's exports.

Second, China's import growth drove an improvement in import functions. Around 1978, China's import structure transformed significantly to meet the needs of China's industrial development. In Stage II of China's trade development, processing trade growth was accompanied by a rising share of raw materials and intermediate inputs in China's imports. In Stage III, raw materials, parts and components, as well as advanced equipment, became China's major import products. Meanwhile, rapid growth in the import of energy and resource products such as petroleum, iron ore and nonferrous metals undergirded China's development into a global manufacturing powerhouse. In Stage IV, China experienced robust growth in its consumer power and consumer upgrade, as manifested in spikes in the imports of consumer goods like gold and pearls, along with high-end consumer goods such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, dry fruits and nuts.

Another change was the technology composition of imported products. In parallel with rapid growth in the imports of high-tech and primary products since 2000, low-tech and resource-intensive products as a share in China's imports were reduced substantially (see Figure 5). With its efforts for GATT

2011年机电产品出口突破万亿美元大关。第四阶段中,出口产品的技术成分进一步上升,机电产品出口发挥了出口稳定器的功能。在产品结构的跃升过程中,中国出口的技术含量显著提升。1995年之后,资源密集型产品(特别是劳动密集型产品)在中国出口中的比重开始下降,而技术型产品的出口比重相对上升。2002年以来,中、高技术产品在中国出口中的份额超过了50%,高技术产品超过劳动密集型产品,成为第一大类出口产品(见图4),中国出口复杂度与规模的提升呈正相关关系,表明改革开放之后,量变推进了中国出口的质变,带来了出口的主动改善。

第二,中国进口产品的结构随规模扩大而推动了功能提升。改革开放前后,中国进口的结构性变化显著,其调剂性功能不断提升。在新中国对外贸易的第二阶段,随着出口加工贸易的扩大,中国进口中原材料和中间产品的份额上升。第三阶段中,中国原材料、零部件、先进技术设备成为主要进口产品,同时,石油、铁矿石、有色金属等能源资源产品进口额快速增长,推动中国成为全球制造业大国。第四阶段中,黄金、珠宝等消费品以及医药、美容化妆品、干水果、坚果等高端消费品增速较快,凸显出中国消费能力的增加以及消费等级的上升。在进口的结构性变化中,进口产品的技术构成也在发生变化,高技术产品和初级产品的进口量自2000

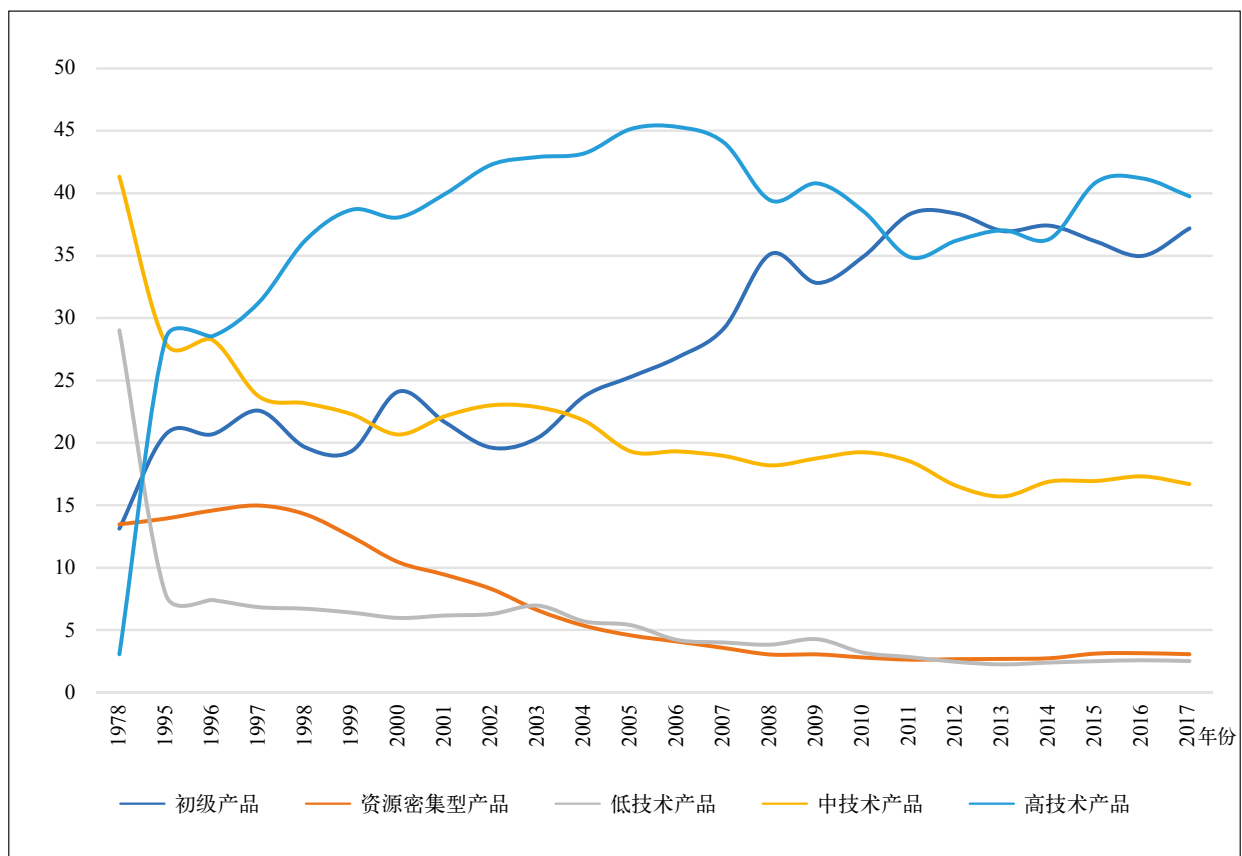


图5 中国进口产品的技术构成(%)

注:技术分类采取Lall(2000)的方法。

资料来源:作者核算。1985年前数据来自“1962~2000年美国全国经济研究所—联合国贸易数据”(NBER-United Nations Trade Data 1962~2000, <https://cid.econ.ucdavis.edu/nberus.html>),1985年以后数据来自世界银行世界综合贸易解决方案(WITS, <http://wits.worldbank.org/>)。

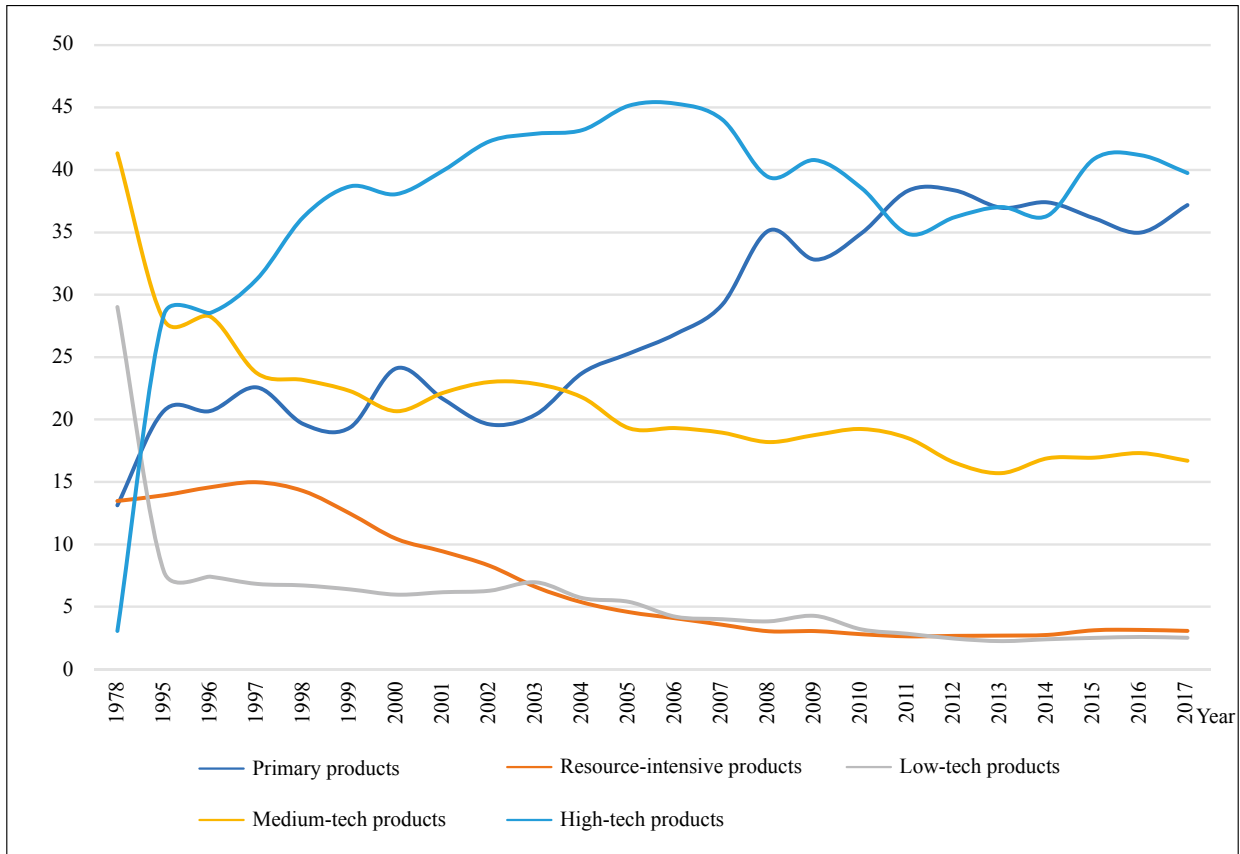


Figure 5: Technology Composition of China's Imports (%)

Note: Lall (2000) method is adopted for technology classification.

Source: Calculated by author. Data before 1985 are from the NBER-United Nations trade data 1962-2000, <https://cid.econ.ucdavis.edu/nberus.html>; data after 1985 are from the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS, <http://wits.worldbank.org/>).

membership, China faced diminishing trade barriers and imported a growing share of tech products around 1995. Before and after its WTO accession, China's trade form shifted toward intra-industry trade. In this stage, import facilitated China's integration into the global value chain and provided much-needed resources for its industrial development - a consistent function since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Moreover, China also started to import bulk commodities and more and more agricultural and sideline products to meet its consumer needs. Such a functional transformation of China's imports enhanced China's role as a major supplier and consumer in the global market with increasing influence in world trade.

Third, China's trade competitiveness increased in tandem with its trade growth. Since 1978, China's trade volume has increased along with its overall trade competitiveness and improving trade structure. By creating an international competitiveness index for various sectors, Table 1 shows how the competitiveness of various sectors changed along with China's import and export structure. China reversed its unfavorable competitive position in medium- and high-tech product categories in 2005 and 2006, respectively, and ramped up exports. In the primary product category, however, China's growing competitive disadvantage resulted in a trade deficit. As a result of its economic restructuring, China's competitiveness in resource-intensive and low-tech product categories diminished, an indication that China exported fewer and imported more products in these categories.

年以来加速增长,而低技术产品和资源密集型产品的进口比重则出现了较大下滑(见图5)。结合出口结构的变化,可以看到,1995年前后,伴随中国的“复关”努力,中国的贸易壁垒减弱,技术型产品的进口上升。而“入世”前后,中国对外贸易的形式向产业内贸易快速转变,进口推动了中国在全球价值链中的融入,在生产性需求方面延续了新中国成立以来一贯的特征。同时,中国进口的初级产品中涵盖大宗商品和不断增加的农副产品,进口在满足生活需求方面的功能在提升。通过上述功能的转变,中国在全球市场中的“供给者”和“需求者”身份得到了同步提升,在全球贸易中的影响力增强。

第三,中国的贸易竞争力随数量增加而提高。改革开放以来,中国对外贸易的扩张中,贸易的整体竞争力也在不断提升,且体现出了竞争力的结构性优化趋势。表1通过构造国际竞争力指数,描述了各部类的竞争力变化情况,可以看到,1995年以来,伴随中国进出口结构出现较为明显的调整,各部类竞争力对比情况发生了变化。在中、高技术产品部类,中国的竞争力不断增强,分别于2005年和2006年彻底扭转了不利的竞争地位,出口规模也相应增加。在初级产品部类,中国处于整体竞争弱势,且弱势有扩大之势,使得中国在此部类处于整体逆差地位。而在资源密集型产品和低技术产品部类,中国均具有较强优势,但随着中国经济结构调整,这种优势有变小趋势,表明中国对此两类产品的出口相对减少,而进口规模却有所扩大。

第四,中国的贸易扩展伴随着在全球价值链中的深度嵌入。中国对外贸易自第二阶段以来,出口中加工贸易的比重越来越大,产业内贸易的比重也不断扩大,尤其是中、高技术产品的产业内贸易指数长期高于0.5,低技术产品部类的产业内贸易指数¹⁷在2005年之前高于0.5,而初级产品和资源密集型产品的产业内贸易指数则在进入21世纪前高于0.5,表明各部类均曾出现过以产业内贸易为主的情况,而这种贸易形式逐渐转向了中、高技术产品部类,说明中国通过参与国际贸易,逐步实现了产业链的升级。这种产业贸易的转换和推移模式使中国的全球价值链参与度不断上升(见图6),在21世纪成为亚洲价值链¹⁸的中心,而这又进一步促进中国进出口的持续增加。中国的对外贸易和产业升级已经在增长与发展中形成了良性互动,贸易量的增加

表1 中国贸易国际竞争力指数

年份	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017
初级产品	-0.07	-0.30	-0.46	-0.65	-0.64	-0.62	-0.65
资源密集型产品	0.50	0.54	0.72	0.80	0.81	0.81	0.79
低技术产品	0.22	0.29	0.35	0.59	0.70	0.67	0.65
中技术产品	-0.22	0.04	0.08	0.13	0.32	0.32	0.31
高技术产品	-0.11	-0.13	-0.01	0.06	0.10	0.08	0.07

注:技术分类采取Lall(2000)的方法。国际竞争力指数用该商品的净出口额与总贸易额的比值表示,取值在0~1,取值越大,竞争力越强。

资料来源:作者核算。数据来自世界银行世界综合贸易解决方案(WITS, <http://wits.worldbank.org/>)。

¹⁷ 产业内贸易指数=1-|国际竞争力指数|,反映各个产品部类内部的交易情况。取值为0~1,大于0.5时,意味着有较多的产业内贸易发生。

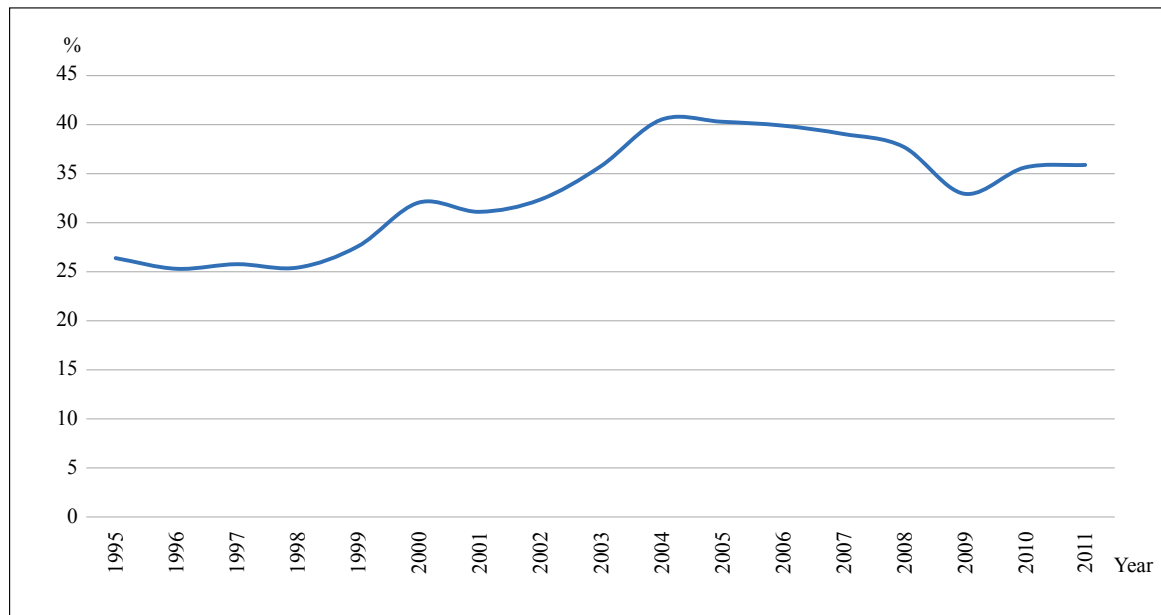
¹⁸ 就贸易格局而言,全球形成三大区域价值链:亚洲价值链、欧洲价值链和北美价值链。

Table 1: China's International Trade Competitiveness Index

Year	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017
Primary products	-0.07	-0.30	-0.46	-0.65	-0.64	-0.62	-0.65
Resource-intensive products	0.50	0.54	0.72	0.80	0.81	0.81	0.79
Low-tech products	0.22	0.29	0.35	0.59	0.70	0.67	0.65
Medium-tech products	-0.22	0.04	0.08	0.13	0.32	0.32	0.31
High-tech products	-0.11	-0.13	-0.01	0.06	0.10	0.08	0.07

Note: Lall (2000) method is adopted for technology classification. International competitiveness index is expressed by the ratio between the net export volume and total trade volume, and the value range is 0~1. Higher value denotes stronger competitiveness.

Source: Calculated by author. Data are from the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS, <http://wits.worldbank.org/>).

**Figure 6: China's Global Value Chain Participation Index**

Source: OECD-WTO Trade Value-Added Database (TiVA, <http://oe.cd/tiva>).

Fourth, China's trade expanded in sync with its integration into the global value chain. Since Stage II, processing trade had represented a growing share in China's exports, and so did the intra-industry trade. The Intra-industry Trade Indices had long been above 0.5 for medium- and high-tech products, above 0.5 for low-tech products before 2005, and above 0.5 for primary products and resource-intensive products before the dawn of the 21st century,¹⁷ an indication that intra-industry trade once dominated all sectors. This form of trade later came to dominate the medium- and high-tech product categories,

¹⁷ Intra-industry trade index = 1 - |International competitiveness index|, which reflects internal trade within each product category. When it is greater than 0.5, the implication is more occurrence of intra-industry trade.

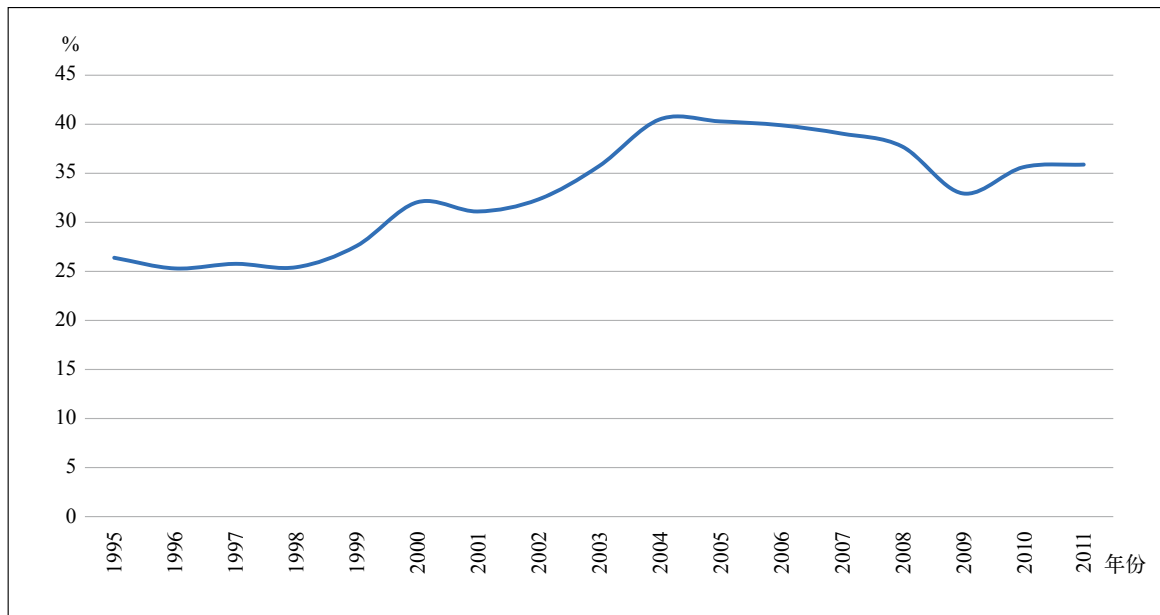


图6 中国全球价值链参与度指数

资料来源:OECD-WTO Trade Value-Added database (TiVA), <http://oe.cd/tiva>。

和贸易的提质升级具有一致性。

贸易结构的持续改进使得中国在全球贸易中的竞争力不断上升,在数量扩张的同时,取得了质的突破。整体而言,近期中国对外贸易的结构性改善体现为进出口产品结构的多元化与技术化,功能性改善则体现为进出口的庞大规模促使中国深度融入全球一体化中。在出口与产业竞争力形成良性互动的同时,进口则成为中国影响国际市场的重要渠道,二者共同推动中国由贸易大国向贸易强国发展。

三、比较视野下的中国对外贸易差距

在70年的发展历程中,中国对外贸易在量变和质变的协同中取得了明显进步,贸易大国的地位得以夯实,贸易的全球竞争力也在增强,这使得中国能够实现贸易与经济增长、产业发展之间相对良性的循环与互动,尤其是进入21世纪以来,通过主动调低外需在经济增长中的贡献率,中国实现了对国际市场保持较大影响,同时能在一定程度上规避经济的外部风险。但是,2018年以来中美贸易摩擦产生的冲击,表明中国的对外贸易还存在某些结构性不足,使得中国与传统的贸易强国之间存在一定差距。

一是贸易量的平衡问题。自新中国发展对外贸易第二阶段起,中国出口增速长期大于进口,直至2017年才出现逆转。进出口的这种相对增长趋势,使得中国贸易自1994年以来一直处于国际贸易的顺差地位,这在

¹⁹ 根据WTO统计,截至2017年底,在全球5529项反倾销调查中,中国占23%,而美国、日本、欧盟和德国等贸易大国仅占5.1%、3.9%、2.2%和2%。

suggesting that through participation in international trade, China gradually upgraded its industrial chain. The evolving industrial trade deepened China's participation in the global value chain (see Figure 6), transforming it into the center of the value chain in Asia¹⁸. This further led to a continued growth in China's imports and exports. In this manner, China benefited from the benign interaction between trade and industrial upgrade.

The improving trade structure enhanced China's competitiveness in global trade. Overall, China's trade structural improvement is manifested in the diversification and technology sophistication of its imports and exports, and the functional improvement is reflected in China's deep integration into the global economy, driven by its colossal imports and exports. In the mutual enhancement between exports and industrial competitiveness, imports have become an important way for China to influence the international market, and both have contributed to China's transition from a large trading nation to a strong and competitive one.

3. Comparative Perspective on China's Trade Gap

Over the past seven decades of its development, China has achieved significant progress in trade, both in volume and in quality. China's status as an increasingly competitive trading power enabled it to form a benign interaction between trade, economic growth and industrial development. By taking the initiative to reduce the dependence on external demand for its economic growth after the dawn of the 21st century, China has exerted a significant influence on the international market while avoiding external economic risks. Yet shocks from China-U.S. trade tensions since 2018 point to structural drawbacks in China's trade, which set it apart from traditional trading powers.

First, trade imbalance: Since Stage II, China's export growth long outstripped its import growth until 2017. Robust export growth had allowed China to enjoy international trade surpluses since 1994, which, to some extent, subjected China to the biggest anti-dumping claims since the WTO's founding in 1995.¹⁹ Trade surplus triggered the recent China-U.S. trade frictions. Despite the Chinese government's repeated pledges that it would not pursue trade surplus and its proactive initiatives to increase import, China still has one of the highest trade surpluses in the world and is the largest source of U.S. trade deficit. China's trade surplus with the U.S. stems from computers and electronics, electrical equipment, mixed manufacturing, apparels, machinery, furniture, metal products, leather, plastic and rubber products, textiles, among others. China's trade deficit with U.S. is related to agricultural products, transportation equipment, petroleum and natural gas, waste materials, mineral products and ores, as well as forestry products. Such a typical trade imbalance indicates that China remains at the mid- and down-stream links of the global value chain. Under the conventional international trade accounting system by the flow of finished goods, China's current account imbalance exaggerates its actual gains from trade and creates an excuse for target countries to resort to trade protection.

Second, regional trade imbalances: China has taken steps to bring its geographical trade flows to a relative equilibrium, but its trade structure is highly heterogeneous. Specifically, China has relative dominance in trade with advanced economies like the U.S., Japan and the EU for finished products. but when it comes to trade with the emerging and developing economies, China's trade structure is yet to improve. For instance, the Latin American market has seen the fastest growth of trade with China since the dawn of the 21st century, but it is also a major source of anti-dumping claims against China. Countries like Argentina and Brazil are among the top 10 countries with anti-dumping claims against China.

¹⁸ As far as the trade pattern is concerned, there are three regional value chains in the world: the Asian value chain, the European value chain and the North American value chain.

¹⁹ According to the WTO, by the end of 2017, China made up 23% of the total 5,529 anti-dumping investigations in the world. In comparison, other trading powers such as the U.S., Japan, the EU and Germany only made up 5.1%, 3.9%, 2.2% and 2%, respectively.

一定程度上使得自1995年WTO成立以来,中国始终是全球反倾销最大的对象国¹⁹,也是近期中美贸易摩擦的直接诱因之一。尽管自2016年以来,中国政府已经多次公开表示贸易不以追求顺差为目标,也采取多种措施,主动扩大进口,但中国仍是全球主要的顺差国,尤其是美国逆差的第一大来源。以中美贸易为例,可以看到,中国的贸易逆差主要来自电脑和电子产品、电气设备、混合制造业、服装、机械、家具、金属制品、皮革、塑料及橡胶制品和纺织品等制造业部门,而在农产品、交通设备、石油及天然气、废物废料、矿物矿石和林业产品等部门,中国抱有一定的逆差。这种典型的贸易量的失衡结构表明中国还处在全球价值链的中下游,在以制成品流向为传统口径的传统国际贸易统计下,中国经常项目的账面失衡夸大了其在贸易中的实际利得,还为对象国采取贸易保护措施提供了口实。

二是贸易的局部结构性平衡问题。中国在对外贸易的地理流向方面,逐步实现了相对平衡,但是在不同地区的贸易结构具有显著性差异。具体而言,中国在与美、日、欧等发达经济体的贸易中,制成品占据相对主导地位,而与发展中经济体的贸易中,进出口产品的结构性平衡还有待改善。以拉美市场为例,该地区均属于21世纪以来中国对外贸易扩展最快的板块,但也是对华反倾销的主要来源地,阿根廷、巴西等国是前十大对华反倾销来源国。表2显示了中国与美国同拉美地区之间的贸易结构,能够看到,中国在与拉美贸易中存在进口过度集中于初级产品和矿产原料,出口过度集中于不同技术构成的制成品的情况,相比而言,美国自拉美进口的主要是中、高技术产品,而美国的出口散布于中高技术产品和初级产品、矿产原料。由此可见,相较于中国,美国在拉美形成了较好的价值链分工,扩大了贸易的实际利得。而中国当前与拉美以产业间贸易为主的贸易模式,加之贸易产品的高度集中,加大了中拉贸易摩擦的可能风险。

三是对外贸易的保护机制问题。中国共产党的十七大把自由贸易区建设上升为国家战略,这促进了中国

表2 中国与美国对拉贸易比较

单位:%

	进口		出口	
	中国	美国	中国	美国
初级产品	72.39	17.59	2.96	13.36
资源密集型产品	1.12	7.92	22.35	6.00
低技术产品	1.08	3.92	11.61	5.26
中技术产品	2.64	37.79	28.29	26.59
高技术产品	5.96	18.25	31.29	20.42
矿产原料	16.55	10.01	1.63	20.23
其他	0.26	4.51	1.87	8.68

注:技术分类采取Lall(2000)的方法。

资料来源:作者核算。数据来自世界银行世界综合贸易解决方案(WITS,<http://wits.worldbank.org/>)。

Table 2: China-Latin America Trade versus U.S.-Latin America Trade (%)

	Import		Export	
	China	U.S.	China	U.S.
Primary products	72.39	17.59	2.96	13.36
Resource-intensive products	1.12	7.92	22.35	6.00
Low-tech products	1.08	3.92	11.61	5.26
Medium-tech products	2.64	37.79	28.29	26.59
High-tech products	5.96	18.25	31.29	20.42
Mineral raw materials	16.55	10.01	1.63	20.23
Others	0.26	4.51	1.87	8.68

Note: Lall (2000) method is employed for technology classification.

Source: Calculated by authors. Data are from the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS, <http://wits.worldbank.org/>).

Table 2 reveals China's trade structure with the U.S. and Latin America. Obviously, China's imports from Latin America are mainly primary products and mineral raw materials, while finished products with different degrees of technology composition make up a lion's share of China's exports to Latin America. In comparison, the U.S. imported medium- and high-tech products from Latin America and exported medium- and high-tech products, primary products, and mineral raw materials. By developing a reasonable value chain division of labor in Latin America, the U.S. has increased its actual gains from trade. China's trade with Latin America, dominated by inter-industry trade, along with the highly concentrated trade goods, has increased potential risks for trade frictions.

Third, trade protection mechanism: The 17th CPC National Congress elevated the development of free trade areas into a national strategy. By the end of April 2019, China had signed 16 free trade agreements involving 24 countries and regions. In comparison, the EU has executed 48 regional trade arrangements. The U.S. network of free trade areas covers a broad scope of regions including China, the U.S., the Caribbean region and some South American and Asian countries. Japan has signed free trade agreements with 15 economies including the EU. Among the free trade deals that have been reached, advanced economies like the U.S. have attached great importance to new international trade issues such as e-commerce, whereas the free trade agreements inked by China are yet to increase the coverage of new trade issues.

4. Conclusions and Outlook

Over the past seven decades since 1949, China has achieved tremendous trade growth and structural improvement, becoming a major trading nation. The *Outline of the 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development* enacted in 2015 identifies China's development priorities for the subsequent five years, including creating a new pattern and improving the strategic layout and system for opening-up on all fronts, as well as progressing the Belt and Road Initiative.²⁰ By the end of 2016, the Chinese Ministry

²⁰ The Outline of the 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016lh/2016-03/17/c_1118366322.htm, cited on February 19, 2019.

自贸区的建设。截至2019年4月底,中国已签署16份自由贸易协定,涉及24个国家和地区。相比而言,欧盟对外签署48份区域性贸易安排,美国的自由贸易区网涵盖中美、加勒比的广泛地区,也涉及部分南美和亚洲国家,日本则同包含欧盟在内的15个经济体签署了自由贸易协议。同时,在已达成的自由贸易协定中,美国等发达经济体近年来注重覆盖电子商务等国际贸易新议题,而中国签署的自贸协定仍以传统议题为关注重点,在国际贸易新议题方面的覆盖面不足,约束了自由贸易协定的效率。

四、结论与前瞻

回望新中国成立70年以来的发展,中国对外贸易实现了量变和质变的并进,成长为全球贸易大国,在向贸易强国发展的道路上取得了实质性进展。2015年颁布的《中华人民共和国国民经济和社会发展第十三个五年规划纲要》明确了构建全方位开放新格局、完善对外开放战略布局、健全对外开放新体制、推进“一带一路”建设的未来五年发展重点。²⁰2016年底,中国商务部印发了《对外贸易发展“十三五”规划》,提出实现外贸调结构转动力,向优质优价、优进优出转变,巩固贸易大国地位,推进贸易强国进程的对外贸易总体目标²¹。

在对外贸易的新战略下,中国对外贸易近年来的结构性调整加速。在贸易产品的构成方面,高技术产品贸易和消费品进口增多,表明对外贸易的功能逐渐由增长驱动器转向发展平衡器。在贸易流向方面,“一带一路”倡议提出以来,中国与合作伙伴之间的贸易增长明显快于进出口的整体增长,这显现了中国在对外贸易中向主动构建方向的进展。未来,在中国对外开放的总体部署和对外贸易发展战略下,中国对外贸易有望继续实现贸易数量与质量的良性循环,推动自身实现由贸易大国向贸易强国的晋级。

在向贸易强国发展的过程中,中国还面临着局部结构性失衡问题,在未来的发展中,应当通过相关保障性措施的出台,促进结构性平衡。为此,中国应当在如下方向做出努力:一是积极推动“一带一路”共建走深走实,并利用此契机,加强中国对外贸易的主动构建,通过政策沟通等努力,加速中国自贸区战略的实施,为贸易的平稳增长与发展提供更大的自由贸易网络空间和制度性保护框架;二是把握生产链和价值链的调整节奏,加速向全球价值链的上游移动,推动贸易的可持续发展;三是进一步完善进口的多重功能,在其满足生产性和消费性需求的同时,适当发挥其公共产品的功能,通过与新兴经济体之间的价值链协调,为其提供市场,并通过贸易、投资和金融的综合运用,为其工业化提供一定的空间,以此推动消除中国对外贸易量的失衡问题,主动降低贸易传导的外部风险,并促进消除在局部市场面临的结构性摩擦;四是在妥善解决中美贸易摩擦等外部风险的同时,主动推动贸易自由化和贸易便利化,促进对外贸易壁垒和成本的下降,为中国进出口创造良好的外部环境。²²

²⁰ 《中华人民共和国国民经济和社会发展第十三个五年规划纲要》, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016lh/2016-03/17/c_1118366322.htm, 引用于2019年2月19日。

²¹ 商务部:《对外贸易发展“十三五”规划》, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2017-01/09/content_5158270.htm http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016lh/2016-03/17/c_1118366322.htm, 引用于2019年2月19日。

of Commerce released the 13th Five-Year Plan for Foreign Trade Development, calling for improving China's trade structure, with a greater focus on quality and competitiveness and enhancing its status as a major trading power.²¹

Under its new trade strategies, China has accelerated its trade restructuring over recent years. By increasing imports of high-tech products and consumer goods, China is shifting its trade function from being a growth driver to being a way to balance development. Since the announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China's trade growth with BRI partners has significantly outstripped its overall trade growth, a testament of China's increasing initiative in trade promotion. Under its overall trade strategy, China is expected to foster an enhancing cycle between trade growth and structural improvement and strengthen its trade competitiveness. In such, it is expecting to upgrade from a major trading nation to a trading power.

To develop into a trading power, China should make the following efforts to address its structural imbalances:

- Take the initiative to promote trade under the Belt and Road Initiative, implement its free trade strategy in policy communication, and create a broader free trade network and institutional protection framework for steady trade growth and development.

- Keep a proper pace of production chain and value chain adjustments and move towards the upstream links of the global value chain to promote sustainable trade development.

- Further improve the functions of import. Import should not only meet the needs of production and consumption, but it should also serve as a public good. China should offer market opportunities to emerging economies through value chain coordination and assist their industrial development through trade, investment and financing. Industrial development in emerging economies will help China adjust its trade imbalance, reduce external trade risks, and eliminate structural frictions facing regional markets.

- While addressing external risks such as China-U.S. trade frictions, China should take the initiative to promote trade liberalization and facilitation to bring down trade barriers and costs and create a favorable external trade environment. ■

References:

- [1] Hu Angang et al.. 2015. *The "13th Five-Year" Strategy*. Beijing: The People's Press.
- [2] Jiang Xiaojuan. 2008. "Three Decades of China's Opening-up: Review and Outlook." *Social Sciences in China*, No. 6.
- [3] Jin Linbo et al. 2015. *China's Mid-and Long-Term Trigger Strategy*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.
- [4] Li Gang. 2018. "Strategic Pathways for China to Become a Strong Trading Nation." *Journal of International Trade*, No.2.
- [5] Liu Guoguang, Zhang Zhuoyuan, Dong Zhikai, Wu Li. 2006. *Research Report on China's 10th Five-Year Plan*. Beijing: The People's Press
- [6] Pei Changhong, Liu Shuhuai. 2017. "How Can China Become a Trading Power: A New Analytical Approach." *Economic Research Journal*, No.5.
- [7] Pei Changhong. 2007. "60 Years of China's Trade Evolution and Outlook." *Reform*, No.7.
- [8] Pei Changhong. 2009. *60 Years of Foreign Trade for the People's Republic of China*. Beijing: the People's Press.
- [9] Shi Guangsheng. 2013. *History of China's Economic and Trade Reform and Development*. Beijing: The People's Press.
- [10] The World Bank. 2011. *Growth and Development in the Postcrisis Era: G20 Development Agenda*. Beijing: China Financial Publishing House.
- [11] Zhao Beiwen. 2013. "China's Strategic Trade Upgrade: from a Large Trading Nation to a Competitive One." *World Economy Studies*, No.4.

²¹ Ministry of Commerce: 13th Five-Year Plan for Foreign Trade Development, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2017-01/09/content_5158270.htm, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016lh/2016-03/17/c_1118366322.htm, cited on February 19, 2019.

参考文献

- [1] 胡鞍钢、清华大学国情研究院:《“十三五”大战略》,浙江人民出版社2015年版。
- [2] 江小涓:《中国开放三十年的回顾与展望》,《中国社会科学》2008年第6期。
- [3] 靳林波等:《中国中长期贸易战略》,中国社会科学出版社2015年版。
- [4] 李钢:《中国迈向贸易强国的战略路径》,《国际贸易问题》2018年第2期。
- [5] 刘国光、张卓元、董志凯、武力:《中国十个五年计划研究报告》,人民出版社2006年版。
- [6] 裴长洪:《共和国对外贸易60年》,人民出版社2009年版。
- [7] 裴长洪:《中国对外贸易60年演进轨迹与前瞻》,《改革》2009年第7期。
- [8] 裴长洪、刘洪槐:《中国怎样迈向贸易强国:一个新的分析思路》,《经济研究》2017年第5期。
- [9] 石广生:《中国对外经济贸易改革和发展史》,人民出版社2013年版。
- [10] 世界银行:《后危机时代的成长与发展——20国集团发展议程》,中国金融出版社2011年版。
- [11] 赵蓓文:《实现中国对外贸易的战略升级:从贸易大国到贸易强国》,《世界经济研究》2013年第4期。