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Literature Review on the Construction of Economic and Social Development Indicator System of Shaanxi Province in the 15th Five-Year Plan Period

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Abstract: The 15th Five-Year Plan period is a crucial stage for Shaanxi Province to advance Chinese-style modernization, build itself into a demonstration province in western China, and pursue high-quality development. Focusing on the construction of an economic and social development indicator system for Shaanxi during this period, this paper reviews the research background, theoretical basis, and relevant literature both at home and abroad. Shaanxi has made remarkable achievements in economic transformation, livelihood security, ecological protection, and opening-up during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, laying a solid foundation for future development. The new development philosophy, high-quality development theory, and regional economic theories provide support for indicator design. International indicator systems have shifted toward people-centeredness and sustainable development, while a six-dimensional evaluation framework (innovation, coordination, green development, opening-up, sharing, and security) has been formed in China. Given the insufficient integration of Shaanxi's characteristics in existing research, this paper proposes that indicator design should be based on local conditions, highlight distinctive indicators such as regional coordination, Qinchuangyuan, and ecological protection, so as to provide references for high-quality development of Shaanxi.

Keywords: Shaanxi Province; 15th Five-Year Plan period; Economic and social development; Indicator system.

1. Research Background

1.1. Judgment of Shaanxi's Strategic Position in the 15th Five-Year Plan Period

1.1.1. New Breakthroughs in Chinese-Style Modernization

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China has drawn up a grand blueprint for advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization. As an important strategic principle in the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, Chinese-style modernization focuses on modernization in five sectors: economy, culture, politics, society and ecology, while ensuring Chinese characteristics and global influence in this process.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, Shaanxi Province closely aligned with the strategic requirements of Chinese-style modernization and achieved remarkable breakthroughs. First, Shaanxi's economic structure continued to optimize, and industrial transformation and upgrading made important progress. Xi'an and its surrounding areas have become the core of innovation-driven development in central and western China, with national-level industrial clusters such as aerospace, electronic information and high-end equipment manufacturing formed. Shaanxi has gradually realized the leap from "large scale" to "strong strength" in high-tech industries, equipment manufacturing and energy-chemical industries. Second, social and livelihood standards have been greatly improved, and people's sense of gain and happiness has been continuously enhanced. Investment in education, medical care, elderly care and other public services has increased, the urban-rural income gap has gradually narrowed, and the social security system has become increasingly sound. New progress has also been made in ecological civilization construction. Ecological protection in key areas such as the Qinling Mountains has been strengthened, with over 100,000 hectares of ecological restoration completed in the Qinling Mountains across the province, and soil and water loss control in the Yellow River Basin has been continuously promoted. Shaanxi has gradually formed a demonstration effect in regional ecological construction.

These breakthroughs have laid a solid foundation for Shaanxi to further advance Chinese-style modernization during the 15th Five-Year Plan period. As a gateway to northwest China, a major province in science, education, energy and culture, Shaanxi must identify its "provincial position" in the overall modernization drive, shift from "catching up and keeping pace" to "leading in some fields", further promote the in-depth integration of high-tech, green energy and modern service industries, take the lead in breaking through in key areas such as innovation-driven development and industrial transformation, and provide a western model for national modernization.

1.1.2. New Breakthroughs in Striving to Be a Demonstration for Western China

Promoting the development of the western region to form a new pattern in the new era is a major national strategy. As a core province in northwest China, Shaanxi has long shouldered the important task of "striving to be a demonstration for western China" and leading high-quality development in the western region. The strategic mission entrusted by the central government to Shaanxi not only reflects its advantages in location, industry, culture, science and technology, but also provides strategic guidance for its leading position in western China.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, Shaanxi's role as a demonstration for western China has gradually emerged. In terms of opening-up demonstration, the construction and development of Xi'an International Aviation Hub have made Shaanxi an important transportation and radiation hub under

the Belt and Road Initiative; the operation volume of the China-Europe Railway Express "Chang'an" has been among the top in China, boosting Shaanxi's opening-up and forming a diversified export-oriented economic structure. In terms of innovation demonstration, Xi'an has become a scientific and technological innovation center in western China. Relying on abundant universities and research institutions, Shaanxi has accelerated the development of strategic emerging industries such as new materials, new energy and artificial intelligence, and promoted "innovation-led" industrial upgrading. In terms of livelihood demonstration, Shaanxi has continuously improved people's living standards through rural revitalization and equalization of public services. The disaster avoidance and relocation project in southern Shaanxi has resettled more than 300,000 people in total, and the construction of high-standard farmland in the Guanzhong Plain has ensured food security. Especially in rural revitalization, Shaanxi has continuously promoted agricultural modernization, increased farmers' income, improved rural infrastructure, and promoted the integrated development of urban and rural areas.

Facing the 15th Five-Year Plan period, Shaanxi will continue to play its exemplary role in western China, strive to take the lead in achieving new breakthroughs in high-quality development in the western region, become a demonstration zone for all-round development, provide replicable and scalable successful experiences for other western provinces, and truly play the leading role of "demonstration in the west and forefront in the country".

1.2. Evolution Characteristics of the Five-Year Development Planning Indicator System in Shaanxi Province

The five-year development planning indicator system in Shaanxi Province has undergone evolution across multiple stages, gradually shifting from a single economic growth-oriented indicator framework to a multi-dimensional, multi-level development model.

During the 11th Five-Year Plan period, the indicator system centered on economic growth, focusing on traditional indicators such as GDP growth rate and fixed-asset investment. In the 12th Five-Year Plan period, while retaining traditional economic indicators as the core, indicators related to peoples livelihood and resources and the environment were introduced for the first time. Urban and rural residents income, social security, and energy consumption per unit of GDP were incorporated into the assessment system, emphasizing the driving role of economic increment and infrastructure construction. The 13th Five-Year Plan period saw the inclusion of more indicators concerning peoples livelihood, innovation, and ecology, resulting in a diversified indicator structure. Two categories of indicators—anticipatory and binding—were established to implement differentiated target planning. Entering the 14th Five-Year Plan period, Shaanxis indicator system emphasizes high-quality development, sustainable development, and internal and external coordination. While being further expanded, the number of indicators has been streamlined to highlight key constraints. Comprehensive indicators covering multiple fields have been integrated into the plan, with equal emphasis on five dimensions: economic development, innovation-driven growth, peoples well-being, green ecology, and security support. The nature of indicators has shifted from being predominantly anticipatory to equal emphasis on binding and anticipatory ones. Energy consumption, carbon emissions, food security, and other factors have been included in government performance assessment, reflecting an upgraded governance model from "soft guidance" to "hard constraints".

This evolutionary process fully embodies the profound transformation of Shaanxi Provinces development philosophy from "speed priority" to "quality and efficiency" and from "economic growth" to "all-round development".

1.3. A Comparison of the Planning Indicator System Between Shaanxi Province and Other Provinces and Municipalities

Compared with other provinces and municipalities, the five-year development planning indicator system of Shaanxi Province demonstrates distinctive regional characteristics while gradually aligning with national development trends.

In contrast to developed eastern regions such as Guangdong and Zhejiang, Shaanxi's indicators place greater emphasis on catching up, surpassing, and safeguarding the bottom line of security. Although it focused more on infrastructure construction and traditional industrial development in the early stage, Shaanxi has been gradually transitioning toward a more comprehensive and green development model in recent years, adding multi-dimensional indicators including ecological protection, innovation-driven growth, and people's well-being. Compared with central and western provinces such as Sichuan and Henan, parts of Shaanxi's indicator system are more forward-looking. It has an earlier layout in innovation-driven development and green ecology, taking a leading position among western provinces. Shaanxi's indicator system also holds unique advantages in coordinated regional development and the improvement of people's livelihood. In particular, its strategic arrangements in ecological civilization construction and rural revitalization have gradually formed an indicator system with Shaanxi characteristics. However, the weight of livelihood indicators such as the growth rate of residents' income and urbanization rate is lower than that of Sichuan, indicating that Shaanxi still needs to strengthen the orientation of sharing development achievements.

These comparative findings provide an important reference for the optimization of Shaanxi's indicator system during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

2. Theoretical Basis and Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Basis

2.1.1. The New Development Philosophy and High-Quality Development Theory

(1) Core Connotation of the New Development Philosophy

The CPC Central Committee, balancing the strategic overall situation of national rejuvenation and profound changes unseen in a century, has proposed accelerating the fostering of a new development pattern and striving for high-quality development. The Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee first systematically put forward the new development philosophy of innovation, coordination, green development, opening-up, and sharing 学习强国. These five dimensions form an interconnected and supportive organic whole, aiming to resolve deep-seated contradictions and structural problems in development, constituting the

value coordinate for China's economic and social development in the new era. The Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee stressed fully applying the new development philosophy and pursuing high-quality development in accordance with the 20th CPC National Congress. As the guiding ideology for Chinese-style modernization, the new development philosophy is highly strategic, programmatic, and guiding, embodying China's development thinking, direction, and priorities, and addressing theoretical and practical issues concerning the purpose, drivers, methods, and paths of development.

(2) Core Connotation of High-Quality Development

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping has delivered a series of speeches on high-quality development, forming a distinctive high-quality development outlook. High-quality development was elevated to a national strategy at the 19th CPC National Congress and established as the overarching theme at the 20th CPC National Congress. High-quality development is the essential requirement of Chinese-style modernization, rooted in China's national conditions and the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.The five concepts correspond logically to high-quality development:Innovation focuses on the driving force;Coordination on structural optimization;Green on sustainability;Opening-up on external space;Sharing on the fundamental purpose.

Systematically, high-quality development requires a holistic approach, emphasizing mutual reinforcement over isolated actions. In efficiency terms, it means higher output with lower input, efficient resource allocation, low environmental costs, and sound economic and social returns. Structurally, it features the upgrading of the three industrial sectors, rationalization of the technical structure, declining resource consumption, and adaptive labor structure.

(3) Guiding Significance for This Study

The new development philosophy and high-quality development theory provide top-level guidance for constructing Shaanxi's indicator system for the 15th Five-Year Plan period. First, the system must fully cover innovation, coordination, green, opening-up, and sharing. Second, it must reflect Shaanxi's characteristics, highlighting Qinchuangyuan and technology commercialization, with differentiated indicators for Guanzhong, Northern Shaanxi, and Southern Shaanxi. Third, it must prioritize people's well-being to embody sharing.

Innovation: As the primary driving force, innovation should permeate all fields, with breakthroughs in core and disruptive technologies as key to industrial upgrading. China's R&D expenditure and authorized invention patents have grown markedly since 2012. For Shaanxi, converting scientific and educational strengths into industrial innovation capacity is critical.

Coordination: As an inherent requirement, coordination balances urban-rural, regional, and material-cultural development. The urban-rural income ratio and industrial structure have improved nationwide. Coordination is essential to address Shaanxi's internal disparities and advance common prosperity.

Green: As a prerequisite for sustainability, green development adheres to ecological redlines and abandons extensive growth. China's energy intensity and PM2.5 concentrations have fallen significantly. Shaanxi, ecologically vital yet fragile, must prioritize Qinling and Yellow River protection.

Opening-up: As the path to prosperity, opening-up promotes win-win global cooperation and enhances China's voice in global governance. China's foreign trade and FDI have expanded greatly. As an inland province, Shaanxi aims to build a highland for reform and opening-up, guided by the Belt and Road Initiative.

Sharing: As the essence of socialism, sharing ensures development benefits all people. China has eradicated absolute poverty and expanded social security. The indicator system must reflect improved livelihoods and social equity.

2.1.2. Regional Economic Development Theories

(1) Growth Pole Theory

Proposed by François Perroux in 1950, the growth pole theory holds that regional economic growth is unbalanced. Growth poles are fostered via resource agglomeration and policy support, spreading to other regions through radiation and trickle-down effects to drive regional growth. Introduced to China in the 1980s, it guided the development of the Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta, Pudong New Area, and other zones. In contemporary China, it emphasizes knowledge-based growth poles with strong spillover effects.

Shaanxi has clear growth poles: Xi'an (national central city), Qinchuangyuan (innovation pole), and Yulin (energy economy pole). Indicators such as overall labor productivity and the share of strategic emerging industries in Shaanxi's 14th Five-Year Plan reflect agglomeration and diffusion effects. During the 15th Five-Year Plan, Shaanxi will leverage these poles to drive coordinated regional development.

(2) Pole-Axis Development Theory

Developed by Chinese economic geographers by integrating growth pole, central place, and growth axis theories, the pole-axis theory structures the economy around points (central cities/growth poles) and axes (transportation, energy, and water infrastructure). Its logic follows a point–axis–network progression: prioritize development axes, select central cities, match investment to hierarchy, and extend to lower-level axes and peripheral areas to achieve networked development.

This theory fits Shaanxi's spatial economy. Its "米"-shaped high-speed rail, expressway, and Longhai Railway networks form development axes, with Xi'an, Baoji, Yulin, Hanzhong, etc., as key points. In the 15th Five-Year Plan, Shaanxi will develop transport and industrial corridors to advance regional integration.

(3) Core-Periphery Theory

Attributed to Krugman, the core-periphery theory views regional development as a dynamic, unbalanced process dividing urban economic zones into core and periphery areas. The core attracts factors via backwash (siphoning) effect; when diffusion exceeds backwash, the spread (spillover) effect dominates, jointly determining balanced or unbalanced development.

Shaanxi is transitioning from siphoning to a mixed regime with stronger spillover. The Guanzhong urban agglomeration centered on Xi'an remains the core, while Northern and Southern Shaanxi are peripheries. With coordinated development, industrial collaboration between Xi'an and neighboring cities is deepening. Fiscal transfers and ecological compensation support peripheral areas, and Qinchuangyuan facilitates technology spillover. The 15th Five-Year Plan is critical to reversing siphoning dominance and achieving coordinated progress.

2.2. Review of Domestic and International Research

2.2.1. International Research on Indicator Systems for Economic and Social Development

The construction of international indicator systems for economic and social development has evolved from GDP-centered growth to people-oriented and comprehensive development.

In the mid-20th century, the traditional view that "economic growth equals development" was increasingly questioned, and the international community began to emphasize the comprehensive and coordinated development of the economy and society. Although GDP has long been a core indicator of national strength, its inherent limitations prompted the exploration of more comprehensive evaluation frameworks. Since the 1970s, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has proposed the OECD Social Indicators covering economy, education, finance and other fields based on balanced growth theory, aiming to identify positive effects of social indicators, boost economic and social progress, and improve national welfare. However, this system involves a large number of indicators, demands extensive data resources, and relies heavily on the OECD's own database.

In 1983, French economist François Perroux clearly stated in New Concept of Development that development should be based on human needs, values and potentials, emphasizing coordination among the economy, society and nature, laying a theoretical foundation for subsequent people-oriented indicator systems. In 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the Human Development Index (HDI) based on Amartya Sen's welfare economics, composed of life expectancy, education and per capita GDP. The HDI transcended the GDP-only approach, emphasizing basic livelihood security and social equity for cross-country comparison. Nevertheless, the HDI remains focused on aggregate economic output and insufficiently covers resources, environment and social structure.

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) formally put forward the concept of sustainable development in Our Common Future, which profoundly shaped the direction of international indicator systems. In 1991, environmental degradation and personal freedom were incorporated into the UN human development index, with economic indicators added in 1999. In 2000, the UN Millennium Summit adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including 8 goals, 18 specific targets and 48 indicators, reflecting the pursuit of global equity and sustainability.

In the 21st century, inclusivity and sustainability have become international consensus, with sustainable growth as a core issue. In 2007, the Asian Development Bank first proposed the concept of inclusive growth. In 2012, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other agencies released the Inclusive Wealth Report, proposing the Inclusive Wealth (IW) indicator to address GDP limitations. In 2015, the United Nations launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), with 17 goals and 169 targets, expanding the theoretical and practical framework of sustainable development.

In summary, international indicator systems have shifted profoundly from a single economic dimension to an integrated framework. These experiences provide important references for constructing Shaanxi's indicator system during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, especially for building a multi-dimensional and sustainable evaluation framework.

2.2.2. Domestic Research on Indicator Systems for Economic and Social Development

China's research on economic and social development indicator systems has drawn on global trends while emphasizing localized innovation. An analysis of five-year plans reveals a clear strategic transformation of national development concepts. Since systematic indicators were not formed from the 6th to the 9th Five-Year Plan periods, this paper reviews policies and literature on indicator evolution starting from the 10th Five-Year Plan.

First, China's development goals have been upgraded from a GDP-centered single orientation to a people-centered comprehensive framework for high-quality development. Early plans prioritized material output to solve basic supply shortages, with GDP, growth rate and industrial output as core indicators. While boosting aggregate economic volume, this model neglected environmental costs and caused unbalanced, inadequate development. The 19th CPC National Congress established the people-centered development philosophy, which was further deepened at the 20th CPC National Congress, stating that by 2035, "more notable and substantive progress will be made in the well-rounded development of individuals and common prosperity for all", integrating livelihood goals into core modernization indicators. From the 10th to the 14th Five-Year Plan, economic growth targets shifted from high-speed to medium-high speed, reflecting a change in the performance evaluation philosophy toward greater focus on livelihood improvement and a sense of achievement in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

The 10th Five-Year Plan added such livelihood indicators as life expectancy and urbanization rate. The plans issued in 2011 and 2016 further included "ensuring and improving people's livelihood" and "promoting ecological civilization" as independent chapters, gradually forming the initial indicator framework of the five development concepts: innovation, coordination, green development, opening-up, and sharing. Since then, the indicator system has gradually broken through the single economic category, focusing not only on "what has been done" but also on "what has been achieved" and "what benefits people have gained". Academic research has increasingly focused on livelihood dimensions, incorporating household income, employment, education, medical care, elderly care, and social security into the core framework. Ecological and environmental indicators have also expanded from single pollution reduction to average PM2.5 concentration, urban sewage treatment rate and other indicators, which better reflect people's sense of gain from a "blue sky, clear water and pure land".

In recent years, scholars have further constructed sector-specific indicator systems for high-quality development. For example, Xiong Pan et al. proposed a 3-dimensional, 12-indicator performance evaluation system for high-quality development of rural finance from the perspective of agriculture, rural areas and farmers; GUO et al. measured the high-quality development level of the Yangtze River Delta urban agglomeration using entropy-weighted TOPSIS; another study built a comprehensive evaluation system for rural ecotourism with 5 dimensions and 37 indicators. In addition, specialized research on high-quality population development and high-quality social security development

has emerged continuously, indicating that the academic and policy circles have gradually taken human development as the core goal and the supreme criterion for measuring modernization and high-quality development.

Second, in its dynamic evolution, China's economic and social development indicator system has gradually responded to the core question of "how to develop", realizing the transformation from an extensive model to a high-quality development driven by the six-dimensional synergy of innovation, coordination, green development, opening-up, sharing, and security. Emphasis on innovation-driven growth, resource conservation and environmental cost reduction has become the basic direction for indicator design in subsequent plans.

In terms of innovation, since the 12th Five-Year Plan included R&D investment intensity and invention patents per 10,000 people as binding indicators, the status of scientific and technological innovation has been significantly enhanced. Some scholars constructed an evaluation index system for national scientific and technological innovation capacity from four aspects: innovation resources, knowledge innovation, enterprise innovation and collaborative innovation; Yang Xinhong put forward a 37-indicator evaluation system for social and economic development covering innovation, coordination, green development, opening-up and sharing. The 14th Five-Year Plan further introduced the "share of value-added of core digital economy industries in GDP", highlighting the key role of new quality productive forces in high-quality development.

In terms of green, the system has been gradually improved: the 11th Five-Year Plan established energy conservation and emission reduction indicators; the 12th and 13th Five-Year Plans introduced indicators such as carbon emissions, water quality and forest coverage; the 14th Five-Year Plan fully aligned with the "dual carbon" goals. Scholars have also conducted multi-dimensional research: for example, Song Bingbing et al. measured the ecological and development level of the Yangtze River Economic Belt using the entropy weight method; Ma Yu et al. constructed a comprehensive evaluation system for ecological protection and high-quality development in the Yellow River Basin; Zhang Huanbo, Hao Chunxu et al. established provincial-level evaluation systems for green economy and high-quality development.

The dimensions of security and coordination were highlighted for the first time in the 14th Five-Year Plan. Comprehensive grain production capacity and comprehensive energy production capacity were listed as binding indicators. Scholars have also proposed tools such as grain production capacity measurement and industrial chain resilience index. For regional coordinated development, Yang Yongfang, Chen Zixi et al. constructed multi-level coordination evaluation systems covering industry, urban-rural areas and consumption; Li Min et al. and Yang Yikang et al. focused on the coupling between ecology and economy in the Yangtze River Economic Belt and the Yellow River Basin; Li Mengxin et al. measured China's coordinated development in the new era from four dimensions: urban-rural, industrial, supply-demand and regional coordination.

In terms of opening-up and sharing, traditional opening-up indicators mainly focused on total import and export volume and FDI. In recent years, the evaluation has gradually shifted to a trinity framework of "foreign trade dependence – value chain upgrading – institutional opening-up". Studies have focused on trade scale and structural optimization, such as the share of high-tech product exports, the openness of processing trade, trade freedom and market share. For sharing, indicators focus on equal access to public services, social security coverage, per capita income, Gini coefficient, and the measurement of gaps in the sharing of common prosperity outcomes.

In summary, the domestic academic community has formed a relatively complete theoretical and empirical framework around the six dimensions of innovation, coordination, green development, opening-up, sharing and security, providing an important reference for constructing the economic and social development indicator system of Shaanxi Province during the 15th Five-Year Plan period. Shaanxi needs to combine its own resource endowments, industrial foundation and regional positioning, absorb domestic research results, and deeply integrate the six-dimensional indicators with local characteristics, so as to form an indicator system that meets the requirements of high-quality development.

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