Research on the Economic Transformation of Resource-Based Cities: A Case Study of Yulin City

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Abstract: As an important strategic base for energy and resource security in China, resource-based cities are a crucial support for the sustained and healthy development of the national economy. The sustainable development of resource-based cities will impact the health of the urban economy and the development and construction of the ecological environment. Promoting the sustainable development of resource-based cities is conducive to accelerating the transformation of the economic development model, promoting coordinated regional development, and building an ecological civilization. Therefore, taking Yulin City, a representative city developed by relying on resources, as an example, this paper studies its economic transformation and development, identifying the problems existing in the process. Finally, specific suggestions for transformation and development are proposed in response to the identified issues.

***Keywords*:** Yulin City; resource-based city; economic transformation

1. Introduction

Resource-based cities serve as vital strategic bases for ensuring energy and resource security in China, forming a crucial pillar for the sustained and healthy development of the national economy. The sustainability of these cities significantly influences urban economic vitality and ecological environment construction. Promoting their sustainable development is therefore essential for accelerating the transformation of economic growth models, fostering coordinated regional development, and advancing ecological civilization. This paper focuses on Yulin City, a representative resource-dependent urban center, to examine its economic transformation and development. The study aims to identify key challenges encountered during this process and, based on the findings, propose targeted recommendations to facilitate its transition and sustainable growth.

2. Related Concepts

A resource-based city refers to a city where resource processing industries dominate,based on the region's abundant natural resources such as minerals and forests [1]. Common characteristics of resource-based cities include abundant natural resources like oil, minerals, and forests, a high level of socio-economic development, and energy security assurance. However, these cities currently face numerous development obstacles and a series of derived problems: lack of development momentum, production capacity constraints, and inventory barriers. Therefore, economic transformation is needed as a breakthrough to solve development difficulties and achieve long-term development [2].

Table 1. Measuring Resource-Based Cities by Contained Natural Resources

Resource Type	Measurement Standards	Characteristics
Oil	(1) Proportion of mining industry in city's total industrial output value >10%; (2) Mining industry output scale: County-level city >100 million RMB, Prefecture-level city >200 million RMB; (3) Proportion of mining employees in total employees >5%; (4) Mining employee scale: County-level city >10,000 people, Prefecture-level city >20,000 people.	(1) High dependence on oil resources (2) Rapid development speed, but overall development duration is not very long. (3) Relatively loose urban organization, low concentration, inefficient land use.
Coal	(Same standards as above)	(1) Industrial singularization. (2) High pollution. (3) Faces many sudden incidents and industry is relatively scattered.
Forestry	(Same standards as above)	(1) Diverse tree species within the forest area. (2) Long development history of the forest area. (3) Local economy constrained by the level of forestry development. (4) Relatively high latitude of forestry resources and high-quality forest resources.

Source: "State Council Notice on Issuing the National Sustainable Development Plan for Resource-Based Cities (2013-2020)"

3. Analysis of the Current Situation of Economic Transformation and Development in Yulin City

3.1 City Introduction

Yulin City is located in the northernmost part of Shaanxi Province, bordering the Yellow River and Shanxi Province to the east, Ningxia and Gansu Province to the west, Inner Mongolia to the north, and Yan'an City to the south. It administers 9 districts, 155 townships, 29 sub-district offices, 1 county-level city, 2 districts, and 2967 administrative villages, with a registered population of 3.858 million. According to the unified accounting results of the regional GDP, the GDP in 2021 was 543.518 billion RMB, a year-on-year increase of 7.9%. Calculated based on the resident population, the per capita GDP was 149,899 RMB, equivalent to 23,511 USD.

3.2 Resource Endowment Conditions of Yulin City

The city has identified 48 types of minerals across 8 major categories, with a potential value exceeding 46 trillion RMB. The levels of minerals, especially coal, oil, natural gas, and rock salt (accounting for 86.2%,43.4%,99.9%,and 100% of the provincial total reserves respectively), are abundant and distributed in sheets. In Yulin City, the reserves of oil, coal, and natural gas per square kilometer reach very high levels: 14,000 tons, 6.22 million tons, and 100 million cubic meters respectively. The integration is excellent, rare both domestically and internationally, with huge development potential. Coal reserves are estimated at 280 billion tons, with the Shenfu coalfield being one of the world's seven largest coal reserves. The predicted natural gas reserves are 6 trillion cubic meters, forming the core component of the largest on Shore gas field discovered in China to date. The underground wealth per square kilometer in Yulin amounts to 1 billion RMB, with the potential value of mineral resources exceeding 46 trillion RMB, accounting for one-third of the national total. On average, there are 6 tons of coal, 140 cubic meters of natural gas, 40 tons of salt, and 115 kilograms of oil per square meter underground. Additionally, there are abundant natural resources such as kaolin, bauxite, limestone, and quartz sand.

4. Social Infrastructure

Yulin is located at the junction of Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Shanxi provinces, in the convergence zone of central and western China, connecting east, west, north, and south. The double-track Xi'an-Baotou Railway, the Taiyuan-Zhongwei-Yinchuan Railway, and the Qingdao-Yinchuan and Baotou-Maoming Expressway sections in Yulin have all been completed and opened to traffic. Yulin Yuyang 4C-level airport is operational. The total expressway mileage ranks first in the province, and the total railway mileage reaches 1,021 kilometers, with direct train services to cities like Beijing and Urumqi, and 26 air routes to 29 destinations including Shanghai and Kunming opened nationwide. Leveraging its locational advantages and combined with a three-dimensional transportation network, Yulin City is gradually becoming an important transportation hub, laying the foundation for developing its transportation and logistics industries.

Yulin City has actively adjusted its industrial structure in recent years, vigorously developing modern service industries, logistics, commerce, tourism, and other tertiary industries. From the perspective of overall industrial structure changes, Yulin has achieved relatively good results in its economic restructuring efforts.

First, the secondary industry is the leading industry. As a resource-based city, the secondary industry accounts for about 62.5% of Yulin's total economic output, primarily due to the region's abundant natural resources and mature supporting industrial facilities.

Simultaneously, Shaanxi's economic growth has also been mainly driven by the secondary industry, but its pulling effect has been declining in recent years, and its contribution rate to GDP has also decreased: since 2015, a major shift occurred in Shaanxi's industrial structure, with the tertiary industry replacing the secondary industry as the main driver of economic growth. During this period, Yulin City faced the dilemma of overall structural adjustment, especially the transformation and refinement of traditional pillar industries, leading to a decrease in the contribution rate of the secondary industry and an increase in that of the tertiary industry. Although economic growth has slowed, the overall economy remains stable, continuously moving forward and seeking its own path of economic transformation. This is a manifestation of a stable and healthy economy.

5. Continuous Development of Modern Service Industries

Due to its unique geographical location, Yulin plays a pivotal role in transportation and trade. Currently, in areas such as grain, agricultural products, by-products, and building materials, multiple logistics parks have been established, enabling functions like processing, packaging, transportation, and warehousing within the parks, laying the foundation for Yulin to

serve as a trade center in the future. However, as the main allocation platform for the modern service and transportation industry, it needs continuous development and improvement to achieve a comprehensive logistics system comprising multiple modes of transport.

Within the modern service industry, besides commercial logistics, another advantageous sector is characteristic tourism. Taking the Suide Red Revolution Education Base as an example, as a provincial key project and an important part of Yulin's tourism development, it has initially formed a new tourism development model integrating natural landscapes, cultural relics, folk culture, and red culture. Over time, its competitiveness and development potential have increased year by year, driving the development level and potential of Yulin's tourism industry and even the tertiary sector.

In summary, every industry in Yulin City is actively adapting to economic transformation and structural adjustment, exploring based on their respective industrial foundations, and fully utilizing their comparative advantages. However, Yulin also faces many practical problems during its economic transformation process.

6. Conclusion

Second, the government and enterprises should update their concepts regarding talent. Firstly, implement talent attraction strategies, strengthen the regulatory and promotional role of government functional departments, actively respect knowledge and talent, and promote innovation across society. Secondly, enhance management efficiency, conduct deeper management research to enable continuous talent attraction. Finally, build a sound talent functional department, improve) laws and regulations, and create an open, complete, competitive, orderly, and favorable new talent management market.

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Author Bio

Huming Niu, born in October 1979, male, Han ethnicity, from Hengshan, Shaanxi Province, holds a master's degree, has an associate senior professional title, and specializes in energy economic development.