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The Connotation, Internal Logic, and Practical Pathways of New Quality Productive Forces

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Abstract

In the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, Xi Jinping put forward the concept of new quality productive forces and made a series of strategic arrangements for their development. These propositions provide important guidance concerning the direction, mode, and driving forces of China's socioeconomic development. Against this background, the academic community has conducted extensive research on new quality productive forces and produced a substantial body of scholarship. Current research primarily focuses on their scientific connotation, important status, internal logic, and practical pathways.

Keywords

New Quality Productive Forces; Connotation; Internallogic; Significance; Development Pathways

1. Connotation of New Quality Productive Forces

1.1. The "New" Dimension

Scholars generally agree that the fundamental distinction between new quality productive forces and traditional productive forces lies in the former's capacity to enhance production efficiency and effectiveness through the adoption of new technologies, the development of emerging business forms, and the construction of innovative models.

Liu Wenxiang and Zhao Qingsi argue that new quality productive forces are a form of productive forces driven by scientific and technological innovation[1]. In this regard, innovative technologies constitute the most salient feature distinguishing new quality productive forces from traditional productive forces[2]. Singh and Hess contend that digital technologies enhance firms' sensitivity to market changes and enable them to respond more effectively[3]. The relationship between digital transformation and technological innovation has consequently attracted increasing scholarly attention[4]. To promote advanced productive forces and realize digital transformation, enterprises generally tend to adopt digital technologies[5]. Digital

strategies are employed to integrate resources, thereby more accurately demonstrating and strengthening firms' innovative competitive advantages[6]. Jin and Liao explain the internal logic through which new quality productive forces drive high-quality economic development from two perspectives: technological innovation and improvements in factor quality[7]. To increase profits, reduce production costs, and improve production efficiency, manufacturing enterprises pursue critical technological breakthroughs in production tools[8]. This new model of productive-force development also promotes innovation in distribution mechanisms. It enhances both the efficiency and equity of distribution, fully releases society's productive potential, and facilitates the optimal allocation of resources[9].

1.2. The "Quality" Dimension

Within academic discourse, the "quality" dimension is widely interpreted as qualitative transformation. Many scholars understand "quality" as referring to either a qualitative state or qualitative change and maintain that new quality productive forces represent a leap in the qualitative state of productive forces. Innovation plays a decisive role in this process and serves as the key driver of such transformation. Other scholars interpret "quality" as the enhancement of quality itself. Liu Wenxiang argues that improving quality is the core objective of new quality productive forces, whose development is ultimately oriented toward high-quality growth[1].

1.3. The "Productive Forces" Dimension

New quality productive forces signify an upward shift in the developmental level of productive forces. Their constituent elements - laborers, means of labor, and objects of labor - differ substantially from those of traditional productive forces. Laborers are the most dynamic element in the development of productive forces. A highly skilled and high-caliber workforce therefore plays a critical role in fostering new quality productive forces[10]. The means of labor comprise the resources used in production to transform or act upon objects of labor and constitute an indispensable core element of the production process. Dai Xiang argues that the new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation, characterized by digital technologies, will fundamentally reshape the means of labor[11]. Objects of labor are the materials or resources upon which laborers act. Within the framework of new quality productive forces, data resources have emerged as a principal new object of labor.

2. Internal Logic of New Quality Productive Forces

Productive forces possess both historical and dynamic dimensions. According to Li Zheng and Liao Xiaodong, historical development demonstrates that once traditional productive forces reach a particular stage, the emergence of new quality

productive forces becomes inevitable. In the era of new quality productive forces, technological innovation and qualitative upgrading act as principal drivers. They promote economic growth and comprehensive social development while laying a solid foundation for common prosperity[12].

Some scholars argue that new quality productive forces not only uphold the core tenets of Marx's theory of productive forces[13] but also deepen and extend that theory[14]. Their emergence further represents a major milestone in adapting Marxist theory of productive forces to China's national conditions and advancing its modernization[15]. As an innovative theoretical construction, the theory of new quality productive forces constitutes a significant theoretical breakthrough and provides practical guidance for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, thereby advancing both theory and practice.

3. Significance of New Quality Productive Forces

3.1. Promoting High-Quality Social Development

Scholars generally maintain that the emergence and growth of new quality productive forces are not merely consistent with the value orientation of high-quality socioeconomic development; they also continuously catalyze the transition toward such development. Ma Junfeng and Ma Xiaofei argue that new quality productive forces can improve the quality of traditional factors of production through technological innovation and facilitate their optimal allocation, thereby raising total factor productivity and opening new avenues for economic growth[16]. More specifically, because new quality productive forces depend primarily on frontier science and innovative technologies, they can accelerate industrial transformation and structural optimization while substantially enhancing the efficiency and capacity of the economy to transition toward high-quality development. Zou Yaguang notes that their continuous emergence not only gives rise to new industries and business forms but also promotes the transformation and optimization of traditional industries, significantly improving production efficiency and service quality[17].

3.2. Advancing Common Prosperity

According to existing scholarship, the growth of new quality productive forces can effectively support the attainment of common prosperity by expanding society's material wealth and promoting balanced regional development. Pu Qingping and Xiang Wang emphasize that innovation-driven new quality productive forces can generate new sources of economic growth, ensure the sustained and stable appreciation of social wealth, and substantially increase aggregate wealth[18]. In addition, Zhang Jiaoyu and Xu Zheng argue that new quality productive forces can advance the coordinated development of material and cultural-ethical progress across society by raising labor productivity, optimizing resource allocation, and

improving both the quantity and quality of cultural products, thereby contributing to common prosperity[19].

4. Development Pathways for New Quality Productive Forces

4.1. Strengthening Scientific and Technological Innovation and Injecting Innovative Momentum

Scientific and technological innovation is the core driver of the development of new quality productive forces. China must therefore accelerate the attainment of greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology. Zhang Xinning emphasizes that scientific and technological innovation constitutes the central driving force of new quality productive forces. In fostering their development, such innovation plays an indispensable role: it drives industrial transformation, improves the effectiveness of growth drivers, enables the efficient integration of resources, and optimizes the development environment[20]. Accordingly, it is essential to achieve breakthroughs in critical core technologies, substantially increase research investment in disruptive technologies and related fields, and continuously advance scientific and technological innovation.

4.2. Accelerating Industrial Upgrading to Foster New Quality Productive Forces

Scientific and technological innovation markedly facilitates the transformation of production methods and the advancement of productive forces. Furthermore, emerging industries and future-oriented industries constitute the industrial foundation for nurturing new quality productive forces. It is therefore essential to continuously improve the modern industrial system and stimulate new quality productive forces through the development of these industries[21]. Accordingly, development strategies should focus on the sustained cultivation of emerging and future-oriented industries and on accelerating disruptive technological innovation to promote the optimization and upgrading of the industrial structure.

5. Conclusion and Outlook

In summary, since the concept of new quality productive forces was introduced, it has generated extensive discussion and in-depth research within the academic community. Scholars have conducted comprehensive and systematic investigations into its theoretical core, internal logic, practical value, and implementation pathways, producing a rich body of research. These studies offer diverse perspectives and substantive insights that deepen understanding of the field. The continued advancement of research on the theory of new quality productive forces provides a solid theoretical foundation and practical guidance for China to accelerate their development, advance the construction of a modern industrial system, and achieve high-quality economic growth.

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