

Marx's Ownership Theory and Its Contemporary Significance

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Abstract: Marx's theory of ownership is an important part of Marx's economic theory. Its content is extremely rich. Like other thoughts and theories, Marx's theory of ownership can be found in different historical periods. Therefore, Marx's ownership theory can be divided into three stages, namely, germination, formation and development, by grasping “the stages or some distinct particles presented in the evolution process of Marx's ownership theory as the basis for the stages”. From his ownership thought, we can feel the great charm of dialectical materialism and historical materialism methodology everywhere. Through systematically sorting out and mining the texts of Marx's ownership theory, its ownership mainly includes: ownership is the sum of production relations, the elimination of private ownership, the establishment of public ownership, and the realization of the future society. A deep understanding of the developed or mature forms of socialist public ownership that Marx elucidated is the key to understanding the real socialist public ownership. Only by adhering to the Marxist theory of ownership can we clarify theoretical confusion and confusion and correctly carry out socialist practice.

1. Introduction

Under the guidance of Marx's ownership theory, China's ownership theory has made a series of significant progress along with the 40 years of reform and opening up. From adhering to the practical principles of “public ownership as the main body, the common development of various ownership economies” and “two unswerving” to the 18th National Congress of the CPC, Marx pointed out that the important realization form of the basic socialist economic system is the mixed ownership economy. In the practice of socialist construction, we have a more scientific and clearer positioning of the public-owned economy and the non-public economy. In the new era, with the transformation of basic conditions of economic development, development stage, resource environment and major social contradictions, how to promote the development of ownership theory has become an important issue. This paper adopts the method of literature analysis, and studies Marx's theory of ownership theory to seek solutions to real problems and further enrich Marx's ownership theory.

2. The Formation of Marxist Ownership Theory

Marx's views on the issue of ownership are historical and dialectical, and they are extremely open to the discussion of the process and mode of public ownership. Marx tightly revolves around the inner relationship between ownership and real economic relations, profoundly reveals the inherent nature of ownership under the bourgeoisie, and depicts the historical trajectory of the ownership movement and its basic laws. Based on the real social and economic life, an in-depth study was conducted and a series of scientific conclusions with universal significance were made. When discussing the ownership theory, it is closely related to his own understanding of the objective relations hidden behind the phenomena of politics, law and economy. By correctly grasping the mutual relations between ownership forms and economic relations, he gradually demonstrated the necessity of abolishing bourgeois ownership. Through such a logical system, we can grasp the “stages or some distinct particles in the evolution of Marx's ownership theory.” Based on this, we can divide Marx's ownership theory into three stages: germination, development and maturity.

2.1. Bud

Marx's thought of ownership was formed in the 1840s. This period can be called the “Rheinische Zeitung” period for the development of Marx's thoughts. He began to be editor of Rheinische Zeitung on October 15, 1842 and withdrew in March 1843. During this period, Marx entered the real social life. The first real problem he faced was the issue of freedom of the press. In order to strive for freedom of the press, Marx launched a series of debates. He wrote a series of debating papers on freedom of the press, in which he began to realize that different levels of thoughts and actions were restricted by certain material interests. In the paper “Defense for Forest Tree Stealing”, Marx began to deeply discuss material interests and their relationship with the grade, the state and the law. But in his defense, Marx turned more to the law than to the analysis of economic relations. Seek help from nature, not from an in-depth analysis of society. This shows that Marx has not yet got rid of the influence of Hegel's philosophy of thought. In the subsequent “Moses Journalist's Defence”, he deepened his views on national issues when examining the causes of peasant poverty in the Moselle region, and observed the objective social relations formed by social interest relations for the state and the law. Activities play a limiting role. During this period of Marx's understanding of ownership, by analyzing Marx's exposition in this period, we can see that Marx has begun to reflect on Hegel's view of state after he has contacted the real society, and pondered the essence of the country and the law. . However, during this period he did not explicitly state that ownership relations were determined by social production, and that the ideas of this period have not deviated from the shackles of old philosophy.

2.2. Development

Marx and Engels specifically discussed ownership in the German Ideology. First of all, Marx and Engels believe that there are two reasons for ownership. First, due to the social division of labor, the community has disintegrated and ownership has begun to develop; the second is that distribution is the direct cause of ownership. Secondly, Marx reveals that the essence of ownership is the domination of individuals and unions to the labor of others, and it is manifested as private. “Private ownership, in terms of its opposition to labor within the scope of labor, has developed from the inevitability of accumulation.” [1] Finally, Marx and Engels also summed up several forms of ownership and the conditions for its demise. According to the joint form of ownership, he classified ownership as tribal ownership, ancient commune ownership, feudal ownership and capital ownership. Among these types of ownership, Marx fully affirmed capitalist private ownership from the perspective of promoting the development of productive forces, commodity economy and the scope of foreign exchanges. Regarding the conditions for the elimination of private ownership, Marx clarified that with the development of productivity and society, private ownership will be eliminated within the “free association”. The communist society is a historical stage of “the association of free people”, a historical stage of classless, undifferentiated and natural extinction of the country. [2] In Form, Marx pointed out the law of social development by analyzing the causes, essence and manifestation of ownership. Although “German Ideology” played a very important role in the development of Marx's ownership theory, it was not published at that time, so its influence was very limited.

2.3. Mature

In order to provide theoretical guidance for the rising proletarian revolutionary struggle, Marx and Engels wrote “Poverty of Philosophy” and “Manifesto of the Communist Party” and other works from 1846 to 1848, further exploring and studying the ownership theory. Marx put forward a point of view in Poverty of Philosophy that ownership is the synthesis of all production relations. “Ownership exists in different ways in different times and develops under completely different social relations. [3] It is not an Abstract concept, and it is inseparable from the real roots and foundations closely related to people's production. In the book, their comprehensive critique of Proudhon's theory fully reveals the economic reasons for ownership and completely shakes off the embarrassment of rationalism.

In 1848, the Communist Manifesto was published. Marx pointed out in this book: “The ultimate goal of the Communists is to eliminate all private ownership.” [4] From this we can see that the distinctive feature of Marx's theoretical research is to serve the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. On the one hand, it objectively evaluates the positive role of private ownership and promotes the development of productivity to a certain extent. It has expanded the economic ties between different countries and objectively promoted the development of civilizations around the world. On the other hand, he also pointed out that private ownership brought poverty and suffering to the proletariat. “Capital comes into the world, dripping blood and dirty things from head to foot in every pore.” In *Das Kapital*, Marx analyzed various forms and structures of ownership under the condition of commodity economy and made a more profound exposition of ownership.

3. The Main Contents of Marx's Ownership Theory

The formation and development of Marx's ownership theory are inseparable from the formation of historical materialism and Marx's criticism of idealism. From the texts of various periods, Marx's ownership theory mainly includes the following three main contents:

3.1. Ownership is the sum of production relations

In the debate on forest theft, Marx was soberly aware that the state and the law were tools of private interest. Later, in his “Moses Journalist's Defence”, he emphasized that “ignoring the objective nature of various relationships and using the will of the parties to explain everything”, [5] is easy to go into the wrong way of studying the phenomenon of national life. Here Marx uses materialistic methods of investigation to try to reveal the objective relationship behind it. In “Poverty of Philosophy”, Marx takes the actual economic relationship and its movement as the starting point for examining legal phenomena. Here he began to use the term “relations of production” to criticize Pluton's “equal exchange theory”, “division of labor theory” and the theory of land ownership. In “German Ideology”, he systematically expounds the main aspects of ownership theory, proposing that “the sum of the productive forces that people can achieve determines the social situation”. [6] In the Manifesto of the Communist Party, he studied the historical movements under different ownership systems and the specific forms of ownership.

3.2. Eliminating Private Ownership and Establishing Public Ownership

In the Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marx further developed the theory of ownership and stated the reason why the proletariat abolished bourgeois ownership. From a historical point of view, he proposed the inevitability of the proletarian revolution to abolish private property and made it clear that the struggle mission of the proletariat is to eliminate private ownership. After the failure of the European revolution in 1848, Marx became more aware of the importance of scientific theoretical research. Therefore, Marx concentrated on the rectification of economics, elaborated the changes of ownership, analyzed the form and structure of various ownership under the conditions of commodity economy, and made the development of Marx's ownership theory develop in depth and breadth.

3.3. The realization form of ownership in the future society

Regarding the realization of ownership in the future, Marx did not specifically discuss it, but through Marx's analysis of capitalist private ownership, it is possible to compare and predict. In the “Critique of the Gotha Program”, Marx said: “In the advanced stage of the communist society, the situation of forcing individual slaves to obey the division of labor has disappeared. Thus the opposition between mental and physical labor has disappeared; It is not just a means of making a living, but it is itself the first need of life. With the all-round development of individuals, their productivity has also increased, and all sources of collective wealth have fully flowed. Only then can they completely exceed the narrow vision of bourgeois rights. The society can write on its own flag: each according to his ability, according to his needs! “[7] Through this passage, it can be seen that according to the theory that productive forces determine relations of production, the ownership

of the future society is public ownership, and the means of production will realize social ownership.

4. The Contemporary Value of Marx's Ownership Theory

Marx's ownership theory has important theoretical value and practical significance in the great practice of China's socialist market economy. Of course, just as Marxism is not a dogma, its ownership theory must be combined with the practice of ever-changing development to show its value.

4.1. Laid an important theoretical foundation for the theoretical innovation of ownership in China

By combing the historical process of Marx's theory of ownership development, ownership has different forms of ownership in different stages of social development, and changes in ownership of various social forms are not transferred by human will. Marx has made such an incisive statement: "People cannot freely choose their own productivity - this is the basis of their entire history. Because any productivity is a vested force, a product of past activities." "Productivity is the historical development of the past." As a result, the productivity that people face determines other social relationships." [8] "Social relations and productivity are closely linked. With the acquisition of new productive forces, people change their own production methods. As production methods change the way they live, people will also change all their social relationships." [9] These discourses provide us with a method of analysis using materialist dialectics, which embodies the unity of history and reality. Therefore, it is recalled that before and at the beginning of the reform and opening up, due to the unclear understanding of the ownership issue, the production relation was taken as the fundamental criterion to judge whether the ownership and its structure were reasonable, resulting in long-term theoretical confusion and setbacks in socialist practice. Therefore, in the new era, how to give full play to the leading and dynamic functions of theory is an important theoretical topic worth our consideration. In addition, it is also a very important issue to theoretically reveal the new forms and problems of ownership practice under the current socialist system.

4.2. Innovating Marx's Ownership Thought Should Further Emancipate the Mind

The 19th National Congress Report pointed out that socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, but compared horizontally and vertically, the process of the primary stage of socialism is still very long. This also determines that the forms of ownership should be diversified. Marx did not give a clear answer on which form of ownership to choose. It is still a very new topic to explore the realization form of public ownership. Marx's ownership theory is the dominant theory and preferred theory guiding our socialist practice. However, Marx's theory of ownership and ownership is not dogma, much less superstition, and is limited by the conditions of the times. Marx's individual judgment on ownership seems to have historical limitations today, so it needs to be continuously tested, revised, supplemented, perfected and innovated according to the requirements of practical development. This is not only a defect of the theory, but also shows that the theory has the characteristics of openness, that is, it has the theoretical character of keeping pace with the times. It should be acknowledged that in the process of upholding and developing Marx's ownership theory and using this theory to study the socialist ownership reform and the legal adjustment of the ownership relationship, China's theoretical circles have made relatively limited progress and there are many weak links. On the other hand, the development of the socialist market economy urgently requires us to scientifically understand the essential attributes of socialist public ownership and establish a property rights system that is compatible with an effective market mechanism. The understanding of Marx's theory of ownership cannot be limited to words, but it is necessary to grasp its basic ideas and methods, further emancipate the mind, and further enrich and develop new theories in light of the practice of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

4.3. Always adhere to the use of productivity as a criterion for judging whether ownership and its structure are reasonable

In the early days of socialist construction, China used production relations as a criterion for judging whether ownership was reasonable for a long time. The ideological understanding of socialism has caused confusion, and the pursuit of “one big and two public” in socialist practice has caused setbacks in socialist construction. An important point in Marx's theory of ownership is the standard of productivity. Marx believes that capitalist private ownership is replaced by socialist public ownership because the outer shell of private ownership cannot accommodate the development of productivity. In the new era of reform and opening up, our party has repeatedly stressed that “the fundamental task of socialism is to develop the productive forces” and “development is the absolute principle”, which is the inheritance of Marx's view on the standard of productive forces. In the practice of socialist construction, we should consciously adhere to the concept of productivity standards. On the one hand, we should see the rationality of the existence of non-public economy in the primary stage of socialism. On the other hand, we should adhere to the dominant position of public ownership, so that the two can be unified in the practice of socialist modernization, promote each other and develop together.

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