

The Three Dimensions and Contemporary Enlightenment of David Harvey's Critical Theory of Space

Jingzhou Su and Zuxia Huang

School of Marxism, Shaanxi University of Science and Technology, Hanzhong 723000, Shaanxi, China

Abstract

Based on the essence of capitalist space production, David Harvey's critical theory of space reveals the relationship between contemporary capitalist space production mode and capitalist social space development from the perspective of unique historical-geographical materialism. Focusing on the production of time and space, the space-time thinking is integrated into the utopian conception, and a hope space with human life as the core is constructed. It not only enriches the spatial dimension of Marxism, but also provides reference for understanding and solving spatial contradictions in China's urbanization construction.

Keywords

David Harvey; Critical theory of space; Triple dimension.

1. Introduction

20th century, with the continuous development of urbanization and globalization, spatial theory has become a hot spot of academic research. Based on the excavation and innovation of Marxist space theory, David Harvey explained the essence of capitalist space production by analyzing capitalist space production and the corresponding production methods, and formed a unique space critical theory. A scientific understanding of Harvey's critical theory of space not only helps us correctly understand the new changes in contemporary capitalist society, enriches and develops historical materialism, but also provides reference for understanding and solving the spatial contradictions of China's urbanization construction.

2. The Three Dimensions of David Harvey's Critical Theory of Space

2.1. History-The Construction of Geographical Materialism

2.1.1. The spatial theory dimension of historical materialism

In the 20th century, most scholars of both orthodox Marxism and Western Marxism used a historical perspective to analyze problems, and their spatial analysis was shelved for a long time. In fact, from the very beginning, Marxism contained a strong spatial element, appearing as a practical and critical category. Marx pointed out that the natural world generated in the process of the formation of human society is the real nature of human beings. [1], people's practical activities form a specific social space. In addition, Marx and Engels also revealed the meaning of space from two perspectives. First, in the capitalist process of production, space is embodied as the possibility of horizontal juxtaposition and expansion of labor time within the physical environment of production. Second, the capitalist mode of production and the changes in the spatial structure in the process of capital expansion [2] demonstrate the characteristics of its capitalist spatial critique.

2.1.2. The upgrade of historical materialism

Harvey first fully affirmed the spatial dimension of historical materialism. From "big industry established a world market prepared by the discovery of America" to "the need to continuously expand the market for new products drives the bourgeoisie to run around the world" [3], historical materialism has long pointed out that capital accumulation is spatially expanded. As the premise, his thoughts undoubtedly have reference significance for revealing the new changes in contemporary world history and geography. Harvey aims to restore and develop the spatial dimension of historical materialism by constructing historical geographic materialism. He advocated that from the perspective of the unity of time and space, "reconstructing theory to integrate space as a basic element" [4], grasping the path of social and historical process, adopting a dynamic and theoretical concept of historical materialism, and using process dialectics to accurately Grasp the complex social process of capitalist transformation in postmodern conditions. It is in this sense that historical geographical materialism overcomes the limitations of historical materialism caused by the development of the times, and reconstructs the contemporary meaning and value of Marxism.

2.2. Criticism of Urban Space Production

"how space is produced and how space production is integrated into capitalist dynamics and its contradictions" when he repeatedly studied Capital, revealing the contemporary capitalist mode of production and the development of capitalist social space. relationship between.

2.2.1. Space production under the logic of capital

Harvey's critique of space production is based on the analytical thinking of Marxist political economy, from the perspective of capital accumulation. Harvey pointed out that the way capitalism improves time and space transfers the problem of over-accumulation of capital, mainly in the following ways: "a. Investing in long-term capital to delay the time when it enters the circulation field in the future; b. developing new markets and transferring space; c. combination of the two" [6]. The infinite expansion of capitalist production and spatial production provide the possibility of capital proliferation. "Space-time repair" has played down the capitalist crisis, but in the long run, it contains a deeper crisis, and there is a greater degree of excess. Accumulated risk.

2.2.2. The redefinition of the right to the city

Urban rights are an important angle of Harvey's critique of capitalist urban space, and the connotation is extremely rich, involving people's survival, development, leisure and other fields in the city. He believes that the right to the city "is a right to transform the city according to our wishes and also to transform ourselves" [7]. As urbanization continues to grow, it also constantly transforms us. The bearer of urban rights is said as a group, and only when urban rights belong to the collective subject will it create greater action force.

2.3. "Dialectical Utopian Ideal"

2.3.1. "Space-Space-Time Utopian Form"

Space is a social construction, and the production process of space is the process of people's exploration of their own existence. Utopia itself represents the search for an ideal space, and its discursive history has always been accompanied by the production of space. Harvey took Baltimore as an example to describe the current situation of its urban space production in detail. "The geographic disparity of wealth and power has accelerated to form a cosmopolitan world with long-term unbalanced geographic development" [8]145. Harvey pointed out that the urban "bourgeois utopia" caused by space production has exacerbated the imbalance within the city. It is necessary to change the unreasonable spatial relationship and spatial form in the production of urban space, and strive to seek the realization of the future utopia by criticizing reality. The space of hope replaces the space of capitalist cities.

Harvey reviewed the discourse history of utopia, explored the dialectical unity of time and space dimensions, paid attention to the production of time and space, and integrated space-time thinking into the concept of utopia. On this basis, he proposed the concept of "space-time utopia". This dimension leads from a realistic examination of space to an exploration of an ideal space in the future, a critical reconstruction of the discourse history of utopia, which is continuously embedded in contemporary human practice in the way of utopian criticism and imagination.

2.3.2. Exploration of "Space-Time Utopia"

Harvey explores from the following aspects. First, realize the reorganization of human skill elements. The change of social production mode and social form depends on the combination of skill elements, and Harvey therefore proposed that "the task of socialism must be to find different combinations of all elements from the inside of basic skills" [8] 207 to create a new society Way. Second, Harvey emphasizes human social responsibility and natural responsibility, strengthens the connection between human and nature, and communicates effectively with nature and strives to achieve environmental justice. Third, build collective politics, pay attention to universal rights, and shape social and ecological order. Harvey insists that the connection of universal rights is an important link in the social process of socio-ecological transformation.

3. The Theoretical Contribution and Contemporary Enlightenment of Harvey's Critical Theory of Space

3.1. Theoretical Contribution

Harvey insists on a critical interpretation of capitalism with Marxist standpoints, viewpoints and methods. Using the basic principles and methods of historical materialism in the investigation of capitalist space production, giving full play to the advantages of historical materialism in line with the development of the times, and demonstrating to us the late stage of guarding and developing the basic theories and methods of Marxism from the perspective of space. The case of Marxism creates a new perspective of space for historical materialism, and the spatial dimension of historical materialism is reproduced, which promotes the development of Marxism in the times.

3.2. Contemporary Apocalypse

From the current reality of social development in China, spatial production has also become a problem that must be faced in the current process of urbanization and socialist modernization in my country, and the realization of spatial justice has become an inevitable requirement for the development of new urbanization in contemporary China. The discussion of space justice and space liberation in space critical theory provides new ideas for analyzing and solving the contradictions in the current process of urbanization in my country. On the other hand, the analysis of the contradictions in the development of capitalism by his space critical theory still has reference value for the modern construction of socialism in contemporary China.

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