

The Difference between Weber and Marx's Modernity Thoughts under the Rationalist Tradition

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ABSTRACT. *“rationalization” is the general proposition throughout Weber's theory. Through this proposition, the whole of Weber's modernity thought can be clearly delineated. Weber explores the historical formation of modernity from the perspective of “rationalization”. Reveal the “crisis of meaning” and “dilemma of freedom” in the modern world. On the issue of modernity, “rationalization” and “alienation” as the theoretical starting point of Weber and Marx, both continue the rationalist tradition of modernity, but they belong to different paths in the rationalist tradition.*

KEYWORDS: *Rationalism, Modernity, Weber, Marx*

1. Introduction

To analyze the difference between Weber and Marx's modern thought, we must first understand the traditional origin of Western rationalism and the relationship between Hegel's philosophy and the rationalist tradition. Hegel initiated the rationalist tradition of modernity. Weber's theory inherits part of Hegelian factors. Although “rationality” is regarded as the internal law and essence of all realistic things, in Weber's opinion, the basic starting point of western modernization is the change of people's social behavior mode. Different from Marx's production mode theory, Weber makes a perspective of the changes of modernization through “social behavior”.

2. Hegel's Tradition of Rationalism

The foundation of Hegel's philosophy is “absolute spirit”, which takes “absolute” as the decisive force to overcome the difficulties of modernity. Hegel believes that rationality can be regarded as the reconciliation force of the crisis of modernity and overcome the crisis of modernity itself.

In contrast to Hegel's principle of subjectivity, Weber believed that some fields of western society, such as religion, science, morality and art, all went on the path of rationalization and embodied the principle of subjectivity. In contrast to Hegel's divergent epistemology neo-Kantians share a Kantian dichotomy between reality and concept. Reality is not a derivative of the concepts conceived by Hegel. Reality is irrational and incomprehensible, while concepts are only abstract constructs of our minds. Nor is the concept a matter of will, intuition or subjective consciousness.

Weber is a neo-Kantian sociologist. On the one hand, he insisted on Kant's “theoretical reason” and connected it with natural science and technology research. On the other hand, he sought a breakthrough from the perspective of “practical rationality”. But Weber's way of understanding Kant seems to be through the conceptual templates set forth in moral psychology and philosophical anthropology. Kant believes that moral behavior is principled and self-disciplined, showing real freedom and autonomy. In this Kantian view, freedom and autonomy are found in instrumental control over the self and the world, based on a law made entirely from within.

3. The Rationalism from Weber's Perspective

We can understand weber's relationship with rationalism from his methodology. In addition, Weber provided an important impetus for the reorientation of religious studies, and his methodology helped to establish the self-identity of modern social science as a unique research field; Weber's two famous propositions, one is “rationalization proposition”, the other is “Protestant ethic”, as the main content of modernity.

Weber's philosophy, inspired by the profound crisis of the European Enlightenment, is characterized by its rejection of positivist rational knowledge, its glorification of subjective consciousness and intuition, and its longing for the new Romantic spirit. Weber encountered his pan-european cultural crisis of the time, and take place in all areas of human life, from religion, law, to music, architecture, rational means a kind of driving force of the history, toward a "one can master everything" by calculation principle, This search for precise computing power underpins innovative institutions such as monetary calculation, workers and production, and tight control of factories, which differ from all other organizations in the way they live economically. The increased computability of production processes hinders predictability in the socio-political environment of industrial capitalism.

The growing control of social and material life is prevalent in Weber's rational view. Scientific and technological rationalization has greatly increased the human ability to grasp the nature and the institutionalization of disciplines, the results of this kind of modernity makes people become "a cog in the machine", freedom and power have been severely weakened, and the efficiency of the cage is irresistible and produced at the expense of substantial rational form of rationalization. Most people who cannot even act on their beliefs live as "cogs in a machine", contributing to the inertia of modern people, and their failure to take principled moral action can also be called a loss of modernity.

4. Marx and Weber's Different Way

Weber's attempt to reconcile historicism and positivism is to help a practical researcher make a fair and acceptable judgment of practical value in the face of excessive subjective values when selecting and processing historical data. Marx, through The intermediary of Hegelian dialectics, took different paths in the framework of modernity. Marx believed that the crisis of modernity could be solved in the historical progress, while Weber's paradox of rationalization held that the crisis of modernity could not solve its own contradictions.

Weber pointed out that modern science is an extremely nihilistic enterprise, and any scientific achievement worthy of the name must "require in principle to be surpassed and eliminated". Modern science mercilessly deconstructs other sources of value creation, in the process, its own meaning has dissipated beyond recovery. As you can see, Weber does not subscribe to Hegel's views, either religious or scientific. The crisis of modernity, in Hegel's case, is the result of the understanding; For Weber, it's just a form of rational negativity.

Different from Hegel's rational dialectics, the relation of labor and production is the basic framework of Marx's analysis of modernity. Marx elevated "labor" to the basic principle of modernity, the modern world is the era of the rule of abstract labor (capital), "alienated labor" is Marx's criticism of capitalist exploitation of labor point of view. "It means resistance and criticism of alienated labor." By contrast, Marx believed that in the course of history, classless communist societies would eventually replace capitalist ones. Marx attributed the "alienated labor" to the self-contradiction of capitalist economy.

5. Conclusion

For the crisis of modernity, Weber, the way to solve the problem is different from change in the way he thinks that Marx advocated the economy, and can not overcome the contradiction of modernity, "Marx hastily over the antithesis to enter the final for the synthesis of faith, in weber's view is to escape reality situation - fled the merciless social conflict, in the hope of totalitarian wonders of the country and its unwarranted optimism is irresponsible." In his view, the crisis of modernity may not be improved by the change of economic mode, the transition from a capitalist society dominated by the bourgeoisie to a communist society dominated by the proletariat. Therefore, Weber puts forward two sets of ethics, belief ethics and responsibility ethics that should be cultivated in correct political education.

In different ideological and methodological lineages, the thoughts of Max Weber and Karl Marx will continue to be a deep source of reflection on modernity. On the issue of modernity, we can simply conclude that the theoretical nature of Weber can be expressed by "sticking to the paradox" and "pessimism", while Marx can be expressed by "optimism" and "dialectical mediation", so as to understand the fundamental difference between Weber and Marx in the framework of modernity.

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