



The Universalities and Particularities of the Chinese-Style Modern Production—Based on the Perspective of Five Characteristics

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Abstract

This paper compares the Chinese-style modern production with that of other countries and analyses its universalities and particularities thoroughly. Firstly, in terms of universalities, China and capitalism share common features such as large-scale socialization, improvement of people's livelihoods, automation of production, digitization of operations and emphasis on market orientation. Secondly, in terms of specificities, Chinese-style modern production insists on the leadership role of the Communist Party of China, emphasizes the survival and development of the working people, closes the gap between rich and poor to realize common prosperity, pursues the coordination of material and spiritual civilizations, promotes the concepts of harmony between human beings and nature, as well as the concept of a community with a shared future of mankind, which has unique advantages over that of the capitalism. Finally, this paper also puts forward brief suggestions.

Subject Areas

Social Sciences, Political Economy, Sustainable Finance

Keywords

Modernization, Production, Universality, Specificity, Five Characteristics

1. Introduction

The term “Modernization” is firstly put forward by Europeans in the mid-19th century. It is a multifaceted movement involving various fields such as economy,

politics, society and even ideology, culture and institutions, and a long-term historical process involving different stages in different countries. Therefore, the modernization of any country is of great uncertainties.

Among various aspects of modernization, the modernization of production is undoubtedly the most important, which is not only an indispensable approach for enterprises to achieve high-quality, high-efficiency, and sustainable development, but also a powerful support for the promotion of national economy. For instance, the Industrial Revolution from the late 18th century to the early 19th century was a milestone in modern production. Through the introduction of mechanization and factory systems, industrial production has shifted from handwork to mechanization and large-scale production. This transformation has improved production efficiency, reduced costs, and promoted economic development and social change. Moreover, the Internet Revolution of the 1990s completely changed information dissemination and business models. Through the popularization of the Internet and the application of information technology, enterprises can achieve modern production methods such as online sales, remote collaboration, and global supply chain management, promoting the development of globalization and digital economy. In the process of promoting modern production, developed countries have successful experiences, such as promoting industrialization, urbanization, informatization, marketization and so on (Anonymous, 2022) [1], which have reference significance to China. However, China is still in the primary stage of socialism, and it is still the largest developing country in the world, which requires the formulation of a strategic development plan having Chinese characteristics and in line with its national conditions (Wang, 2022) [2]. The Chinese-style modern production can be understood as the sum of specific socio-economic relations formed under the leadership of the Communist Party of China according to China's national conditions. It encompasses production methods, social relations of production and specific socio-economic forms, embodies the people-centered development logic, and demonstrates the uniqueness of Chinese-style modernization in several aspects (Feng, 2023) [3]. Therefore, the Chinese-style modern production has the common features of modernization of all countries but also has Chinese characteristics based on its national conditions, i.e., both universalities and specificities. The marginal contribution of this paper is to simultaneously analyze the universalities and specificities of Chinese-style modern production, intending to make up for the shortcomings of the existing literature, such as insufficiently comprehensive analysis.

2. The Universalities of the Chinese-Style Modern Production

Universality means that all things have a wide range of common features and are not limited by space and time (Hogan, 2022) [4]. Overall, the modern production, whether capitalism or socialism, has the following common features.

Firstly, the most significant shared characteristic is socialized mass production. For cities to develop rapidly, they need a concentration of population, production, capital, and demand (Teryayeva, 1959) [5]; for scientific and technological progress to be translated into corresponding achievements, they need to organize strong material forces; and for achieving high efficiency in resource allocation, they need to use the invisible hand of the market. Developed capitalistic countries drive economic and social development through the unrestricted capital proliferation, the most important step of which is to acquire raw materials and labor to organize socialized production on a socialized scale, thereby creating surplus value. China also concentrated surplus wealth in 1950s, used the national system to organize the strength of the whole society to build a modern productive forces system, fundamentally solved the problem of industrialization from scratch, and completed the great achievements of both the three major socialist transformations and the socialist industrialization under the basic conditions of a backward agricultural country, established the systemic and economic foundation of China's socialist modernization. Therefore, the modern production must make full use of capital to organize social production, which is a common feature of modernization in all countries of the world and a positive factor of capital.

Secondly, another common feature of the modern production lies in the improvement of people's living and development situation brought by socialized mass production. On the one hand, from the point of view of domestic characteristics, socialized mass production has brought about five major transformations, which have been reflected in the development of both capitalistic countries and China. Firstly, the industrialization of material production has led to a huge increase in social productivity and a significant improvement in people's material standard of living; secondly, the marketization of economic activities has raised the efficiency of resource allocation in society, improved the competitive awareness and overall competitiveness of enterprises, increased consumer welfare, thus promoted economic growth; thirdly, the democratization of political life has improved citizens' opportunities and ability to participate in decision-making and strengthened the social and economic conditions. Thirdly, the democratization of political life has increased citizens' opportunities and ability to participate in decision-making, thus enhancing social cohesion and stability; fourthly, the liberalization of ideological concepts has stimulated citizens' independent thinking and creativity, and promoted social and cultural diversity, openness and inclusiveness; Finally, the social division of labor force has boosted the process of urbanization, thus facilitated the upgrading of the industrial structure. On the other hand, in terms of international characteristics, socialized mass production has promoted economic globalization and the internationalization of finance, leading to the gradual deepening of economic exchanges and mutual influence between different countries.

Finally, there are other general aspects, including, but not limited to, the adop-

tion of automation technologies, which leads to the standardization and flow of production processes; the use of information technology support to intelligent, networked and digital operations, thus improving production efficiency and reducing production costs; emphasis on market orientation, which determines product design and production plans through market demand, thus improving efficiency and quality; emphasis on intellectual property protection, encouraging enterprises to carry out independent research and technological innovation, so as to maintain their competitiveness in the market; and emphasis on policy level support, including tax incentives (Tang, *et al.*, 2022) [6], financial and technical support, and so on.

3. The Particularities of the Chinese-Style Modern Production

Particularity means that each modern production has its unique features and manifestations. As the world's largest socialistic developing country, China has successfully promoted and expanded its modern production with Chinese characteristics after long-term exploration and practice. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out five major features of Chinese modernization, including modernization with a huge population and common prosperity (Zhang, 2022) [7], modernization in harmony with material and spiritual civilization, modernization with harmonious coexistence between man and nature, and modernization on the path of peaceful development. These five features are consistent with the essential requirements of Chinese modernization, and together distinguish the Chinese-style modern production from that of the capitalism.

First, Chinese modernization is a modernization with a large population, which is based on the survival and development of the working people. The reason why Chinese modern production has been steadily vibrant and has created many glorious achievements is inextricably linked to China's huge population, its people-centered organization of production, and other advantages. Traditional capitalism drives production and economic development through unlimited capital proliferation. For this purpose, it adopts a multi-party competitive electoral system manipulated by monopolies, exploiting the surplus value of the working people, and realizing an unreal democracy. The deviation of economic power from people's interests has led to lingering economic crises, forcing capitalistic countries to reorganize their social production and wealth distribution, thus making it impossible to break out of the historical periodic law. In contrast, the advantage of the Chinese-style modern production lies not in the degree of socialized mass production, but in its form of organization. Chinese modernization not only organizes socialized mass production with the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the people-centered development philosophy, and the principle of democratic centralism, but also makes reasonable use of the value created by the working people to constantly solve their problems and satisfy

their needs. In addition, China has insisted on ensuring and improving people's livelihoods in development, strengthening, and innovating social governance, and endeavoring to break free from the constraints of the historical periodic law. It is precisely in this way that China has been able to successfully realize great achievements such as becoming the world's second-largest economy and having the world's largest foreign exchange reserves.

Secondly, Chinese modernization is a modernization of common prosperity, aiming at closing the gap between rich and poor. There is no doubt that the traditional capitalist mode of production has exploitation and oppression, resulting in the accumulation of poverty among workers. It also produces transmission and amplification effects, resulting in aggravating social contradictions, which is not conducive to global stability and development. In contrast, although Chinese modernization also involves making full use of capital to organize social production, the process of capital concentration may lead to a potential problem of polarization between the rich and the poor. However, common prosperity serves as our orientation. Through the provision of high-quality public goods such as infrastructure, health, and the environment, China has accomplished the task of eradicating absolute poverty and realizing a moderately affluent society in all respects and has formed a bottom-up mechanism to prevent polarization. In addition, supply-side structural reform has fully utilized the power of people-centered socialism to overcome the drawbacks brought about by the endless capital expansion and accumulation, as well as the problem of imbalance and inadequacy in the process of economic development. At the same time, China has created a new distribution system, so that all people have promotion opportunities. This modernized mode of production provides secured incentives, meeting the people's need for a better life and giving a powerful impetus to the development of a modernized economic system.

Thirdly, Chinese modernization incorporates the subjective spirit of human beings into the modernized production system, pursuing the unity of improving material conditions and sublimating spiritual life. Therefore, it is a modernization that harmonizes material and spiritual civilization, corresponding to the essential requirements of enriching people's spiritual world and creating a new form of human civilization. The production process of modernization is a unity of material and spirit, and requires active productive forces, the most important of which is the subjective will and initiative of human beings. The traditional capitalist spirit and mode of production incorporate all human relations and human social behaviors into the process of capital proliferation, which makes money fetishism the dominant ideology (Liang, 2021) [8]. This ideology of emphasizing materialism over spirituality will lead to the pursuit of realistic utilitarianism over basic moral principles. Worse still, this leads to phenomena such as lack of integrity and self-interest, as well as money worship, hedonism, extreme individualism, and historical nihilism. These ideas can seriously affect people's thinking and the atmosphere of social opinion, to the detriment of social har-

mony and stability. In contrast, the Chinese modernization production attaches importance to incorporating the human spirit into the production system and constructs the spiritual genealogy of the Chinese Communist Party, which demonstrates the spiritual strength of the Chinese people in their hard work and enterprising spirit. The Chinese-style modern production is guided by the theories of Marxism, adheres to the unity of material and spiritual civilization, and develops advanced socialist culture with the Chinese Dream and socialist core values as the leadership. At the same time, Chinese-style modern production provides a constant support for promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of the excellent traditional Chinese culture, providing people with positive public spiritual products, thus modernizing material production.

Fourthly, Chinese modernization insists that the ecological environment is the productive force, from changing and conquering nature to respecting, adapting to and protecting nature, so it is a modern production mode of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, corresponding to the essential requirement of “promoting harmonious coexistence between man and nature”. The ecological environment is a kind of public goods, which cannot be compatible with the goal of profit maximization pursued by capitalism. The capitalistic mode of production requires the maximization of profit and incorporates natural resources into the process of modern large-scale production as much as possible. As a result, a vicious cycle has been formed between capital expansion and ecological crisis, resulting in resource depletion, environmental pollution, the fracture of ecological cycle chain and other problems. Although the developed capitalistic countries have put forward measures to achieve the coordination between human development and environmental protection, they still transfer backward industries to developing countries by occupying the international industrial and financial chains for maintaining their own beautiful environment and rich life at the cost of consuming other countries’ ecological environment, resources, and energy. At the same time, through carbon tariffs and the sale of emission rights, carbon emissions that should be borne by developed consumer countries are transferred to developing producers. Therefore, from a global perspective, this does not fundamentally solve the balance between modern production and ecological environmental protection. In contrast, the Chinese-style modern production advocates green manufacturing. Under the guidance of the construction of beautiful China, China adheres to the concept of “lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets”, pays attention to respecting, adapting to, and protecting nature, and adopts advanced technologies such as energy saving and environmental protection to control waste emissions. China also integrates the idea of protecting the ecological environment into the production process, raises the protection of the ecological environment to the level of protecting productive forces and raises the improvement of the ecological environment to the level of developing productive forces, so as to gradually

realize the harmonious coexistence between man and nature (He, 2022) [9], without generating negative environmental externalities or harming the environmental interests of other countries. Relevant data show that the current industrial pollution indicators (such as industrial ammonia nitrogen emissions, etc.) have declined significantly compared with a few years ago, and industrial added value has also risen steadily, which is the best reflection of “green water and green mountains” to “golden and silver Mountains”. In addition, China has actively engaged in green finance practices, providing assistance to green manufacturing through launching carbon reduction support tools, designing green finance products (carbon neutral bonds (Bai, *et al.*, 2023) [10], green derivatives, etc.), and improving the trading mechanism of carbon emission allowance market (He, *et al.*, 2022) [11]. These have accelerated the process of industrial green transformation and the achievement of the “dual carbon” goal.

Fifthly, in the globalized productivity system, Chinese modernization abandons the hegemonic international order with the concept of a community of human destiny, so it takes the path of peaceful development, corresponding to the essential requirement of “promoting the construction of a community of human destiny”. China has not fallen into the trap set by hegemonism and has made great achievements in modernization on the road of peace without plundering other countries’ resources. Under the influence of China’s excellent traditional culture and the background of once-in-a-century global changes, the Chinese-style modern production focuses on human relations, trust and cooperation, promotes the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, and develops modern productive forces through friendly ways such as international cooperation and mutual benefit, successfully provided a new development path for human and the future of the world to escape the threat of hegemonism.

Finally, the fundamental condition and driving force for the realization of the Chinese-style modern production is to adhere to the wise leadership of the Communist Party of China, which is also the most essential requirement and principle of Chinese-style modernization.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper compares the Chinese-style modern production with that of other countries and analyses its universalities and particularities thoroughly. Firstly, in terms of universalities, China and capitalism share common features such as large-scale socialization, improvement of people’s situation, automation of production, digitization of operations and emphasis on market orientation. Secondly, in terms of specificities, Chinese-style modern production insists on the leadership of the Communist Party of China, emphasizes the survival and development of the working people, closes the gap between rich and poor to realize common prosperity, pursues the coordination of material and spiritual civilizations, promotes the concepts of harmony between human beings and nature, as well as the concept of a community with a shared future of mankind, which has

unique advantages over that of the capitalism.

Currently, China has entered a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics and is in a new stage of comprehensively building a modern socialist country. The development environment has undergone profound changes. Externally, the number of predictable and unpredictable challenges has increased, such as trade barriers, technological blockades, the COVID-19 pandemic, and geopolitical conflicts. Internally, some prominent problems of unbalanced and inadequate development have not been solved, and there are still some defects in the application and promotion of modern production methods, such as the immaturity of artificial intelligence technology and the lag of digital infrastructure construction. Therefore, we must heighten our awareness of potential hazards, persist in the great struggle under the leadership of the Party, endeavor to safeguard the unique advantages of Chinese-style modern production, uphold the principles of people-oriented development, common prosperity, unity of material conditions and spiritual life, harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature as well as a community with shared future for mankind. We should mitigate the negative impact of external shocks through international communication and negotiation. Moreover, as the universalities and particularities of contradictions can transform into each other, China can share its innovative concepts of Chinese-style modern production through extensive international cooperation, which will provide valuable insights for other countries' efforts to reform their own production modes.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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