

Original Paper

Reinterpretation of the New Form of Human Civilization: Perspectives on Marx's Thought on Civilization

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Abstract

Marx's philosophy of civilization constitutes the epistemological foundation for comprehending the emergent civilizational paradigm, which embodies both fidelity to and dialectical transcendence of his original theoretical framework. To rigorously delineate their intrinsic organic interconnection, scholarly inquiry must adopt a dual methodological approach: first, reconstructing Marx's theoretical architecture through philological excavation of his textual corpus; second, deploying hermeneutic phenomenology to decode the new paradigm's immanent logic. Marx's systematic interrogation of civilizational morphology—articulated through exhaustive analyses spanning published treatises and unpublished manuscripts that map sociocivilizational evolution—provides the conceptual matrix for engaging the new paradigm's emergence. This dialectical engagement facilitates theoretical advancement by synthesizing Marxian axioms with contemporary historical praxis. Articulating the new paradigm's praxiological significance through its symbiosis with empirically validated developmental trajectories constitutes not merely an epistemic imperative for theory-practice synthesis, but more critically, a strategic mobilization of civilizational forces toward emancipatory progress. The paradigm's profound contemporaneity demands urgent systematic explication.

Keywords

Marx, Civilization Thought, New Form of Human Civilization, Righteousness and Innovation

Since the introduction of the “new form of human civilization”, scholars have carried out in-depth studies on it from different aspects, with fruitful theoretical results. The research on the new form of human civilization has become more and more in-depth in both breadth and depth, but there are still some shortcomings, which are highlighted by the obvious phenomenon of homogenization and insufficient theoretical interpretation. Although some scholars have explored the intrinsic connection between the new form of human civilization and Marx's thought on civilization, there is still an urgent

need to expand the research range through the connection among the text, history and reality. It has become a new academic growth point to re-interpret the new form of human civilization from the perspective of Marx's civilization thought, based on both theoretical and practical concerns, to point out why the new form of human civilization is an upright innovation of Marx's civilization thought, and to explain clearly the logic of the appearance of the new form of human civilization and its value and significance in the direction of the future. By exploring the origins and flows of human civilization and building on the results of existing research, it will help to provide theoretical references for systematically grasping the new form of human civilization.

1. Marx's Understanding of the Forms of Human Civilization: An Interpretation from the Perspective of Ephemerality

Based on the dimension of the development of human society over time, Marx elucidated the process of the evolution of the form of human civilization from the bottom to the top, providing the basis for a correct understanding of the form of society and the renewal of the form of human civilization. There are two main points in Marx's classical writings where he focuses on the evolution of the forms of human civilization, which have been summarized by scholars as the "three forms" theory and the "five forms" theory.

The first theoretical framework pertains to Marx's "Three-Stage Theory" of civilizational development. In *The Economic Manuscripts 1857-1858*, particularly its "Chapter on Money," Marx establishes his foundational analysis of social formations. Based on this text, scholars have systematized three progressive socio-historical stages: 1) "relations of personal dependence," 2) "personal independence founded upon objective dependence," and 3) "free individuality"—each generating corresponding civilizational formations. The second framework concerns the "Five-Stage Theory" of civilizational progression. In January 1859, Marx explicitly articulated in the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*: "In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society." (Marx, 1859) According to this thesis, scholars have summarized the evolution of social forms into the theory of "five forms", i.e., human society has gone through primitive, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist societies in turn. Accordingly, the forms of civilization created by human beings in the course of their long struggle mainly include the civilization of primitive society, the civilization of slave society, the civilization of feudal society, the civilization of capitalist society and the civilization of socialist society.

These two statements have become the most important theoretical basis for understanding Marx's theory of the form of human civilization, a concrete manifestation of Marx's analysis of the change of social form, which contains his profound historical thinking and constitutes an important part of Marx's thought on civilization. It should be pointed out that this is a judgment made by Marx with an eye to Western European society, especially the history and national conditions of Britain, France and

Germany, which cannot be regarded as a universal historical law, let alone applied to countries and regions outside Western Europe, but can only be regarded as a concrete example for the interpretation of his theory of the alternation of social formations. If the evolution of human civilization is examined from the perspective of the evolution of the mode of production and the changes in the organization of production, which are the prerequisites for the survival and development of mankind, and the alternation of social forms is distinguished into pre-capitalist, capitalist and new shape for the future, it is more in line with Marx's theoretical intent. In this sense, the forms of human civilization mainly include the pre-capitalist, capitalist and new forms of civilization in the future, which constitute the historical logic of the evolution of human civilization in Marx's perspective, not only reflecting the trend of civilization's progress and development, but also highlighting the transcendental significance of the new form of human civilization over the capitalist form of civilization.

As the way of human existence, practice has profoundly changed the course of human civilization. Marx emphasized that, as a result of the unfolding of practice, man gradually began to free himself from nature and to rely more and more on his own creation, civilization, in which he became profoundly connected with nature and civilization became the product of man's self-creation and self-formation, and through which he came to understand and view the world precisely in this way. With the Agricultural Revolution as an important symbol, human civilization has made an important leap forward. After the Industrial Revolution, with the evolution of the mode of production and changes in the form of production organization, human beings entered the age of capitalism and created the form of capitalist civilization. In this era, the level of development of the productive forces increased rapidly, the magnitude of social progress accelerated as never before, the division of labor in society became more and more fine-grained, and society as a whole increasingly presented the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Especially after the Second Industrial Revolution, the further development of science and technology, the high level of productive forces, the rapid expansion of capital to the world, the trend of the transformation of history into "world history" has gradually become a reality, capitalism has entered the stage of monopoly from free competition, and capital has become an important force in shaping and defining the shape of society, and the capitalist civilization has become the dominant form of civilization.

2. Understanding the Theoretical Basis of the New Form of Human Civilization: Marx's Idea of Civilization

The emergence of any theoretical framework is underpinned by profound logical foundations, and the new form of human civilization is no exception. To accurately comprehend the genesis of this new civilizational paradigm, it is imperative to maintain a dialectical unity between textual analysis and conceptual essence, historical context and contemporary reality, as well as theoretical exploration and practical implementation. Marx's philosophy of civilization embodies rich theoretical wisdom and

contains profound judgments regarding the trajectory of future societal development, thereby providing invaluable intellectual resources and a robust philosophical foundation for the emergence of this new civilizational form. From a holistic perspective, its proposition constitutes a dialectical synthesis of theoretical logic, historical logic, and practical logic.

First of all, the materialist concept of history is the philosophical basis of Marx's thinking on civilization. Undoubtedly, the philosophical thinking of the materialist concept of history permeates Marx's understanding of and perspective on the changes in the forms of human civilization and serves as the intrinsic basis for the analysis of different forms of civilization. Therefore, it is of great significance to understand and grasp the evolution of human civilization from the perspective of the materialistic view of history. On the hand, the materialist conception of history holds that the development of human society is the result of the contradictory movements of the productive forces and the relations of production, and of the economic base and the superstructure. The study of civilization form must be based on the above contradictory movements, which is not only the choice of historical development, but also the proper meaning of the materialistic concept of history. "The consciousness-forming constituents of the economic base, the productive forces, have no purely material character. Rather, they are forces of nature that humans consciously instrumentalise in order to satisfy their needs." (Otto Bauer, 2017) On the other hand, the evolution of the form of civilization is inextricably and closely connected with the practice of the people. History is created by the masses of the people, and civilization is also created by the masses of the people; all countries and peoples of the world have jointly created colorful human civilizations, each of which exists and manifests itself in a certain form, and is thus a unity of universality and particularity.

Secondly, the diachronic social process constitutes the generative soil of Marx's theory of civilization. While scholars hold divergent views on the evolutionary trajectory and contours of civilization, it is undeniable that civilization serves as the immanent mechanism of social operation and the key to deciphering the transformation of social formations. The history of civilization and the history of social development are mutually constitutive: through diachronic social processes, not only have diverse civilizational forms emerged, but their evolutionary trajectory has also been shaped. To comprehend this trajectory, one must situate it within the developmental process of human society, integrating the understanding of socio-civilizational forms with societal development through the two-way movement of the world becoming philosophical and philosophy becoming worldly. Marx's theory of civilization, grounded in diachronic social processes, situates the comprehension of civilizational forms within specific modes of production and social intercourse, focusing on the dialectical interplay between civilizational history and social development. Adopting a holistic perspective and a world-historical vantage point, it profoundly illuminates the historical genesis of human civilizational forms and their overall developmental trajectory in reality.

Once again, the colourful picture of civilizational exchanges and mutual understanding is an important element of Marx's concern for civilizational thought. There are different civilizations in different

countries and regions of the world, and there are two main modes of exchange: one is violent conflict and the other is peaceful interaction. In violent conflicts, cultural disorders and cultural conflicts often accompany civilizations. In peaceful exchanges, there are friendly exchanges between civilizations. Capitalist civilization as a superstructure is built on the basis of class confrontation and labor confrontation, which determines that it must keep expanding and exporting, which creates obstacles to peaceful exchanges and mutual appreciation among civilizations. The logic of the forced proliferation of capital pushes the capitalist civilization to keep going everywhere, bringing exogenous cultural crisis to different countries and nations. Marx cherished equal exchanges and harmonious exchanges among civilizations, stressing that, in the diversified map of world civilization, equal exchanges are the only way to prosperity and development, and harmonious mutual understanding is the only way to lead the future.

Finally, the state of human existence is the ultimate concern of Marx's civilizational thought. Capitalism is a system unlike any other, and within it, capital is the fundamental force that governs everything and has the power to dominate everything, becoming the basic principle and internal basis for the construction of the civilized form of capitalism. Within capitalism, the relationship among human beings is overshadowed by one among things, and human beings become "things". Marx, who was in such a social relationship, realized the role of capital in shaping human society, and in the process of criticizing capital; he incorporated his understanding of capital society into his holistic thinking, placing the liberation of human beings in a crucial position, explored the realistic way to get rid of the logic of capital and abandon the state of alienation. "Society is a totality in which human practices produce and reproduce economic, political and cultural structures, systems and institutions that dialectically reach into each other." (Christian Fuchs, 2020) In his view, the form of human civilization will never stop at capitalism, but will move forward to a higher form. Marx's idea of civilization is the theoretical manifestation of his practical and ultimate concern for human beings, and expresses the core value of the pursuit of human freedom and emancipation.

In a nutshell, Marx's ideas on civilization are the theoretical basis for understanding the shape of human civilization and the theoretical resources for understanding Marx's important theses on the shape of human civilization. Marx integrated his ideas on civilization with the evolution of human civilization as a theoretical basis for caring for and understanding the evolution of complex societies, using the materialist conception of history as a basis for its construction and emphasizing the unity of lawfulness and purposiveness, which provides an important basis for understanding the new forms of human civilization.

3. The Logic of Appearance of New Forms of Human Civilization

Marx's thought on civilization is full of wisdom and contains his accurate judgment on the future direction of society, offering valuable ideological resources and a solid philosophical foundation for the emergence of a new form of human civilization. Since the reform and opening up, and especially since

the new era, socialism with Chinese characteristics has demonstrated strong vitality and vigor. The bright prospects of the future society envisioned by Marx are gradually becoming a reality in contemporary times. It should be noted that the new form of human civilization is the contemporary embodiment of the future civilization form. It is the abundant fruit borne by the future new civilization form on the soil of our country. Its proposal is the dialectical unity of theoretical, historical, and practical logic.

On the basis of his critique and rejection of capitalist civilization, Building upon Marx's critique and dialectical sublation of capitalist civilization—a philosophical endeavor aimed at transcending the inherent contradictions of capital and actualizing an emancipated mode of human existence—the new form of human civilization emerges as a theoretical construct deeply rooted in Marxian civilizational thought. This paradigm is structurally grounded in the logical matrix and epistemological trajectory of Marx's "new philosophy," operationalizes the foundational axioms of scientific socialism, and manifests itself through distinct epochal particularities imbued with transformative philosophical insight. First, the new form of human civilization inherits the core essence of Marx's civilization thought. Civilization embodies the free and conscious class essence of human. Marx's assertions on the functions of civilization and the relationship between civilization and society are permeated with the main points of the materialist concept of history, which have been integrated into his understanding of the changes in social formations, and show the direction of human society in his critique of the old form of civilization. Second, the new form of human civilization is embedded in the logical framework and theoretical direction of Marx's "new philosophy". The "new philosophy" is a key to understanding the progress and development of society and the change of social forms. Marx's profound analysis of social contradictions, his ardent expectation for change in reality, his socialist conception of human emancipation, and his principles on the interactions between productive forces and relations of production, and between the economic base and the superstructure, etc., are the theoretical foundations for understanding the logic of the emergence of the new form of human civilization, and have become the deep-rooted bases for analysing the evolution of the social form. Third, it embodies the fundamental principles of scientific socialism. The classical Marxist writers systematically expounded the core tenets of scientific socialism. The new form of human civilization has actualized these principles on Chinese soil, empirically demonstrating the validity of socialism with Chinese characteristics through concrete praxis. Through the maturation and refinement of its theoretical framework, the emergence of this civilizational paradigm corresponds to the historical trajectory of societal development, thereby materializing the dialectical unity of theoretical necessity and historical inevitability.

After Marxism was introduced into China, it faced the problem of how to combine itself with Chinese culture. We have always adhered to a scientific attitude, realized the combination of the basic principles of Marxism with the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and stepped out on the road of socialist cultural development with Chinese characteristics, realizing the Chineseization of Marx's ideas on civilization. In the century-long quest to discover the laws of civilization-building., the two have been

mutually reinforcing and complementary, and the combination has been realized mainly because both have an eclectic and open spirit. It can be said that the new form of human civilization is not only an original contribution to the civilization thought of Marx, but also condenses the rich philosophical thought of traditional Chinese culture, and is the product of combining the basic principles of Marxism with the concrete reality of China and with the excellent traditional Chinese culture, which promotes the course of modernization of Chinese civilization. In the practical journey of exploration, Our country has always insisted on combining the basic principles of Marxism with the outstanding traditional Chinese culture, creating a new situation in cultural construction. since the new era, the construction of socialist core values and the promotion of excellent traditional Chinese culture have been put in a more prominent position, and the Party has been committed to realizing the coordinated development of socialist spiritual civilization and material civilization, and to promoting the “renewal” of human civilization by means of a new path of Chinese modernization, creating a new form of human civilization in the course of the practice of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In the practice of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, a new form of human civilization will be created. In the midst of historical changes, the appearance of a new form of human civilization comes at an opportune time.

The practical logic of the new form of human civilization. The vitality of theory lies in practice. The new form of human civilization is one that has emerged and is constantly tested in practice. It has distinct practical creativity, stable practical implementability, and grand practical influence. In short, this new form of human civilization has gradually taken shape in the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, been achieved in the course of reform and opening up, and developed in the process of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It contains the intrinsic logic of people’s free and comprehensive development. For one thing, In order to achieve modernization, the focus of work shifted to economic development and the great practice of reform and opening up was launched. launching the great practice of reform and opening up. In this magnificent historical journey, the Party has united and led the people of the country to forge ahead with determination and dedication, turning our country into the second largest economy in the world, leading the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era to move forward, and writing a new chapter in the development of human civilization. Secondly, in order to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, started the journey of the new era, and a new form of human civilization developed in the course of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. With the continuous achievements in the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the new form of human civilization has increasingly demonstrated its great advantages, and in the practice of realizing Chinese-style modernization, it has shown many advantages over the capitalist form of civilization. Today, the world is facing a major change unprecedented in a century, with the international balance of power changing profoundly and the “East rising and West falling” becoming increasingly obvious. In the face of the reshaping of the international order, China advocates the concept of human destiny, promotes the

common values of all mankind, and has become a promoter and practitioner of the progress of human civilization. When profound civilization practices were promoted at home and abroad, a new form of human civilization has emerged.

“Capitalism’s development and contradictions constitute a space of possibilities for the future development of society.” (Christian Fuchs, 2020) In other words, the new form of human civilization is not only a comprehensive, systematic and scientific theoretical system, but also a critique, abandonment and transcendence of capitalist civilization, as well as a deciphering of its deep-seated limitations and inherent contradictions, embodying the dialectical unity of theoretical logic, historical logic and practical logic, and demonstrating strong vitality and vigor, which is of far-reaching significance in solving the development problems of today’s world.

4. Contemporary Values of the New Form of Human Civilization

The new form of human civilization is a corrective innovation of Marx’s idea of civilization, embedding the concepts of eclecticism, openness and tolerance, and is an important driving force for the progress of civilization. The creation of a new form of human civilization resonates with the practice of Chinese-style modernization, which advocates the mutual learning of civilizations and fully draws on all the beneficial fruits of human civilization, thus demonstrating its significant value and significance.

It confirms the essence of Marx’s view on the change of the form of human civilization. “the world needs new enlightenment or to transcend post-modernization” (Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, 2020) Modernization is one of the important symbols of the progress of human civilization. Modernization is a trend in the development of human society, but there is no uniform standard for its realization. It is the same with the form of civilization. After the Industrial Revolution, developed countries in the West took a Western-style modernization path and created a capitalist civilization, which has become an example of leading the transformation of human civilization. However, modernization is not a Western model, and modern civilization does not stop at capitalism. The key point of Marx’s theory of the development of human civilization lies in the fact that each country “must take into account the institutions, customs and traditions of each country”. (Marx, 1872) In accordance with the civilizational traditions of its own people, it should choose its own path of development, explore modernization with its own characteristics, and establish a form of civilization that is compatible with its own modernization. Practice has proved that, on the road to modernization, each country can make choices that are appropriate to its own situation and can fully follow its own path. Therefore, in this sense, the new form of human civilization carries forward and puts into practice this core principle, confirming to more countries that each country can independently and autonomously explore the path of civilization development in the light of its own reality.

It transcends the linear determinism of social and historical development and protects the diversity of human civilization. The development of human society follows certain historical laws, and such laws

have a constraining effect on the practical activities of human beings, which they must follow in their practical activities. However, the essential characteristic of civilization lies in the fact that it is a creative objectifying activity, a corroboration of man's inner strength, and contains positive and dynamic creativity oriented to the future. This is a profound assertion of Marx's theory of civilization with regard to the theory of socio-historical development. The new form of human civilization, as a transcendence of the linear determinism of socio-historical development, profoundly manifests the theory of Marx's civilization thought on socio-historical development, which, while affirming the inevitability of the laws of history, opens up the future space of man's practical activities and transcends the linear determinism of socio-historical development. It is on this basis that human civilization has not been completely subordinated to linear determinism, but has shown more cultural creativity and diversity in civilizational development. The historical law of human social development is not a natural-scientific determinism. Marx opposed the idea that the historical law should be regarded as an immutable "law of nature" and then applied to all fields of social development, but rather distinguished between external constraints and internal creative factors. Instead, it distinguishes between such external constraints and internal creative factors, and fully affirms human freedom and future-oriented choices. The new form of human civilization confirms Marx's assertion that human civilization is changing the shape, eliminating the either/or opposition between law and freedom, while fully respecting the inherent requirements of civilization development in different regions, promoting exchanges and mutual understanding on the basis of civilizational tolerance, and preserving the diversity of human civilization.

The shortcomings of capitalist civilization have been solved and the development of human civilization has been enriched. At present, the negative effects of the international financial crisis have not yet completely disappeared, and the factors of instability and uncertainty in local regions are gradually increasing, casting a shadow of disasters over the development of world civilization. At the crossroads of the place where human civilization is heading, the new form of human civilization offers a solution. "The productive forces that developed in the womb of bourgeois society created at the same time the material conditions for the resolution of this confrontation. Thus, the prehistoric period of human society ended with this social formation." (Marx, 1859) The so-called "prehistoric period of human society" is a capitalist civilization dominated by the logic of capital and the deformed development of material civilization; under the dominance of this civilization, the economy is the only yardstick, which is obviously the inevitable stage of the development of human civilization. The new form of human civilization, as the abandonment and transcendence of the "prehistoric period of human society", no longer pursues the deformed development of economy unilaterally, and no longer over-emphasizes the economic yardstick, but takes the survival state of human beings and the advancement of civilization as the yardstick, and emphasizes that the advancement of social development must be in line with the development and advancement of civilization, and regards the freedom and emancipation of human beings as the most important purpose. In this sense, the new form of human civilization has deciphered

the shortcomings of capitalist civilization and transformed the beautiful vision of human civilization into reality.

The theoretical purpose of the materialist concept of history has been upgraded and the path of the development of human civilization has been broadened. The mode of development of world history opened up by capital, which was rapidly ushered in Western-style modernization and established the dominant position of capitalist civilization globally, is not once and for all stagnant. The evolution of human social forms is constantly moving forward, and so is the pattern of human civilization. The path of human civilization development does not merely allow a one-way capitalist civilization, but recognizes that a new civilization replaces the old one, and constantly pushes forward the development and progress of human civilization forms. From the dimension of ephemerality, the development of civilization has been characterized by spatial imbalance, especially in the Western world, where the capitalist civilization form occupies a predominant position, which regards capitalist civilization as a transcendent and universal social form, and is bent on exporting its cultural model through hegemony, which has caused many problems for the later-developed countries. China advocates mutual appreciation of civilizations and the common development of all civilizations through exchanges. The materialists' concept of history is a scientific theory for understanding the development of human society, and China is always upholding the methodology of the materialist concept of history, advocating that each country follow its own path in accordance with its national conditions, and actively advocating the building of a community of shared destiny for humankind, thus describing a bright future for the development of human society and promoting the common development of civilizations around the world.

Through his systematic critique and genealogical analysis of the formative processes inherent in capitalist civilization, Marx dedicated himself to theorizing prospective configurations of human civilization—an intellectual project that has fundamentally reconfigured humanity's historical trajectory. In the crucible of the 21st century, marked by epochal transformation unseen in a century of global development, the morphology of human civilization is experiencing qualitative metamorphosis. The emergent civilizational paradigm, crystallizing through dialectical historical processes, now serves as the vanguard of civilizational advancement, generating transformative ripples across global socio-political orders. Historical praxis will substantiate that this new civilizational modality coheres with both the teleological vectors of societal evolution and the axiological universals of humanity, constituting not merely an indispensable catalytic force in epochal progression but equally the historically-grounded actualization of humanity's emancipatory potentialities.

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