

Research on the Development and Realistic Significance of the Theory of Labor Commercialization

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Abstract

The thought of commodification of labor force runs through the development of commodity economy. Early scholars conceived the idea of wage labor by observing social production. Marx and Polanyi respectively put forward their own views on the commercialization of labor force on the basis of inheritance. Since the reform and opening up, China has combined the theory of socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics with the commercialization of labor force and achieved remarkable results. However, we cannot deny that there are still many problems in the labor market at this stage, such as excessive income gap and structural unemployment, which need us to pay more attention to the theory of labor commercialization, so as to provide theoretical basis for improving the labor market and speeding up the labor market reform.

Keywords

Commodification of Labor; Socialism with Chinese Characteristics; Labor Market.

1. Introduction

With the deepening of labor commodity research, our country has made great achievements in the economy, but because of the new changes of development forms, the lag of labor commercialization in theory and practice is to a certain extent. Therefore, it is necessary to systematize and standardize the theory of labor commercialization, study and discuss a series of problems such as the development history of labor commercialization theory, conditions of labor becoming commodity, and de-commercialization theory, so as to clarify the development direction of labor commodity at present stage and find the source of labor market problems. Perfect our socialist labor market.

As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, the ultimate goal of the research on the theory of labor commercialization is to benefit the people. We must persist in the people-oriented development ideas, put the interests of workers in the first place, solve the existing problems of informal employment in the labor market, the excessive income gap, labor resources can not be effectively allocated, improve the social status of workers while protecting workers' rights, give full play to the value of Chinese labor, and try to meet the needs of a better life for Chinese workers.

2. The Development and Trend of the Theory of Labor Commercialization

The thought of commodification of labor force runs through the development of commodity economy. In the period of simple commodity economy, namely the primary stage of labor commodity, Liu Yan in the middle of Tang Dynasty, Mondeville in the period of mercantilism and Gu Yanwu in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties made preliminary exploration of labor commercialization. In the period of capitalist commodity economy, Marx formally put forward the concept of labor commercialization and gave birth to the theory of labor commercialization. Polanyi perfected the theory of labor commercialization on the basis of Marx. Entering the

socialist period, New China constantly combines the theory of labor commercialization with reality, which makes the theory of labor commercialization sublimate in practice.

2.1. The Embryonic Stage of the Commercialization of Labor Force

In the period of simple commodity economy, labor force has appeared in the market as a commodity. In this period, the characteristics of the commercialization of labor force are as follows: first, the owners of labor force are not completely free, some of them are attached to the land, some are attached to others. Secondly, the behavior of buying and selling labor as a commodity leads to more individual employers, and it is undeniable that regional small labor markets will also exist, but a larger and more sound labor market has not been formed. Finally, the buyers and sellers of labor force cannot treat each other equally in law or in reality. Due to the existence of feudal factors, people who rely on the sale of labor force are generally at the bottom of the society. They are oppressed and exploited by capitalists and cannot have any means of production of their own. In this period, thinkers and scholars only observed the phenomenon of labor around them, and came up with the idea of labor commercialization. This idea was vague, without concrete basis, and did not form a systematic theory.

2.2. The Birth of the Theory of Labor Commercialization

With the development of capitalist commodity economy, labor force buying and selling has become a common phenomenon, a purposeful and organized labor market has been fully formed in capitalist countries, and labor force as a commodity has frequently appeared in the circulation field. At this stage, the commercialization of labor force has grown from development to maturity, and the thought of labor force commercialization has gradually formed a set of systematic theories. At this time, the workers have been completely free to control their own labor and behavior, in the face of different work they have the choice. But from another point of view, since the laborer and the means of production have been completely separated, as Marx described: "he has no other commodity to sell, free nothing, can only rely on the sale of labor to support himself." [2] With the deepening of the commercialization of labor, laborers and capitalists have respectively formed the working class and the bourgeoisie, and this antagonistic relationship runs through the capitalist society from beginning to end. Based on this opposite relationship, Marx formally put forward the concept of "commercialization of labor force". Since then, the theory of commercialization of labor force was officially born. Its birth enriched Marxist political economy and explained the conditions of labor force as a commodity and the problems encountered in circulation in principle. Polanyi, a British scholar, selectively inherited Marx's point of view and proposed that the commercialization of labor force would eventually be limited in an institutional framework. Polanyi's point of view enabled Chinese and foreign scholars to study the commercialization of labor force from a new Angle and further improved and expanded the theory of the commercialization of labor force.

2.3. The Thought of Labor Force Commercialization in Socialist Period

Entering the socialist period, the exploration and practice of the theory of labor commercialization reached a climax, which is characterized by the combination of the theory of labor commercialization and socialism with Chinese characteristics. From the founding of the People's Republic of China to the reform and opening up, China adopted the planned economic system following the example of the Soviet Union, and scholars generally believed that labor force was not a commodity during this period. Because the combination of labor and the means of production is not carried out through the market, but by a relatively centralized distribution system formulated by the state. As Kang Jingping mentioned in A Study on the Commercialization of Labor with Chinese Characteristics: "... The means of production in agriculture were controlled by the people's communes, and rural laborers were required to

engage in agricultural production in accordance with the model of 'three-level ownership and team-based ownership'. In non-agricultural production in cities and towns, all means of production are controlled by the government, and workers are employed by the labor departments of the government." [9] With the deepening of reform and opening up and the gradual establishment of socialist market economy, the relations of production under the planned economy system were no longer applicable to the social development at that time, so the commercialization of labor force was carried out. The combination of socialism with Chinese characteristics and labor and commodity can be divided into four stages, its process is slow and changeable. In the new era, the socialist market economic system has been gradually improved, and the rapid rise of the Internet economy has combined the workers with the means of production in a new way. Wang Jun believes that the birth of new industries is conducive to the expansion of the scope of labor commercialization, flexible forms, and more hidden means of surplus value production. [10].

3. Research on the Practical Significance of the Theory of Labor Commercialization

3.1. Study the Practical Significance of the Theory of Labor Commercialization

In the 21st century, with the advent of economic globalization, the direct determining role of workers in labor production has become increasingly prominent. The level of labor force determines the speed of economic growth and the process of social development. However, with the change of the development situation and the development of practice in the world, the theory of labor commercialization has lagged behind to some extent, which is manifested in the lack of understanding of labor commodity under socialism with Chinese characteristics. However, western economists analyze the commercialization of labor force from the perspective of human capital and avoid the essence of capitalist exploitation. Therefore, the exploration and innovation of labor commodity in the new era has become the focus of the current research on the theory of labor commercialization. As a part of Marx's theory, the theory of labor commodification is consistent with the purpose of taking Marxism as the guiding ideology of our country. But Marx did not anticipate that in today's socialist market economy, labor force has the nature of commodities. Therefore, it is particularly important to combine the theory of labor commodity with the development of China's social reality. To a certain extent, the research on the commercialization of labor can explore the labor-capital relations in China's labor market from the essence, realize the value of labor commodities, protect the rights and interests of laborers, and solve the contradiction between the people's ever-growing needs for a better life and unbalanced and inadequate development.

3.2. Current Problems

3.2.1. Make Clear Whether Labor Force in Socialist Market Economy is Commodity

Marx put forward the concept of labor commodity for the first time in his Economic Manuscript of 1857-1858. However, the labor force commodity in his opinion refers to the capitalist economic system in particular, while the labor force in the socialist system does not have the nature of commodity. In his opinion, socialism is a planned economy, there is no so-called commodity economy and labor market, so labor force can hardly be called a commodity. However, after the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, our Party combined the Marxist political economy principle with the practice of reform and opening up, and formed remarkable results. Especially in the market economy part, we should develop commodity economy vigorously and strengthen the process of labor commercialization gradually. Then a question was generated: Is the labor force under our country socialist market economy a commodity after all? Objectively, the fact that labor force has become a commodity

has been accepted by people, but theoretically, it goes against the theory of labor force commercialization put forward by Marx. There was some discussion about this issue in the 1990s, but it was gradually forgotten after the socialist market economy entered the high-speed growth, which can also be reflected from the side that scholars intentionally or unintentionally avoid this issue. Since entering the new era of socialism, the labor market has ushered in further reform. At this time, clarifying whether the labor force is a commodity has a guiding role for the direction of reform. There are three views on whether the labor force in the socialist market economy is a commodity. First, the labor force in the socialist market economy is not a commodity. Most of the scholars who hold this view agree with Marx's view that the commodity of labor is a product of capitalism, and the capitalist commodity economy depends on the commodity of labor, which is clearly different from the previous society. Under the socialist system, laborers, as the masters of the country, do not need to get corresponding remuneration by selling labor force, and there is no buying and selling phenomenon, so they cannot be called commodities. Wei Xinghua demonstrated from the flow of labor force and the conditions for labor force to become a commodity, and concluded that labor force under socialist public ownership is not a commodity. [15] Second, labor in a socialist market is a commodity. Most scholars who hold this view start from the realistic perspective, through observing the current situation of the labor market in China, in view of the policies implemented by the labor market, give their own views, that is, the current situation of the labor force under the socialist commodity economy at the present stage has the characteristics of the labor force commodity under the capitalist system, so the labor force belongs to the commodity. Third, labor is a commodity in form, but not in essence. Scholars who hold this view distinguish between the form and the essence of labor. Liu Fengyi believes that, in form, no matter the capitalist market economy or the socialist market economy, the labor force is a commodity, which is the basic requirement for the market mechanism to allocate resources. In terms of content, whether the labor force can become a commodity is determined by the social production relations under a certain mode of production. [16] Obviously, no matter which view is based on the study of the compatibility between labor force and socialism, it analyzes what role labor force plays in the socialist market economy system.

3.2.2. The Problem of Migrant Workers in the New Era

Ackn Migrant workers have always been an important part of China's labor market, whose birth can be traced back to the reform and opening up. As an economic and social phenomenon, migrant workers have made great contributions in the construction process of all walks of life in our country, not only as a bridge between urban and rural areas, but also as a component of factor flow. Now, in the new era of the labor market presents a new form, the labor market urgently needs to usher in a reform, to solve the problem of migrant workers in the new era has become the key of this reform.owledgements.

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Since 2010, the growth rate of the number of rural migrant workers has been slowing down and even reached a standstill. This phenomenon is closely related to the lack of rural surplus labor force. After experiencing household contract responsibility and urban development, rural laborers have been completely liberated from the original land relations. Without the shackles of land, most young and middle-aged people choose to leave the countryside and work in cities. Therefore, the phenomenon of "migrant workers" has also become a major feature of China's socialist market economy. However, with the implementation of family planning, the original accumulated demographic dividend no longer exists, and the quantity of rural labor force continues to decline. Hessler believes that the introduction of quality-oriented education makes more and more children of migrant workers choose to change their fate by studying, and their willingness to work is no longer strong. [17] At the same time, the 16th CPC National Congress proposed to establish a new socialist countryside, solve the problems of agriculture,

countryside and farmers, strengthen rural infrastructure construction, and coordinate urban and rural development. This policy provides rural workers with a large number of local employment opportunities, leading to the decline of rural labor mobility. However, in terms of urban development and construction, the data show that the urbanization rate in our country is only 57.96%, while that in America is 82.06%, that in France is 83.14% and that in Japan is 91.54%. It can be inferred that the demand for rural labor force brought by urbanization will exist for a very long time in the future. Therefore, we get a pair of contradictions, namely, the shortage of surplus rural labor force and the contradiction of urbanization demand for rural labor force, which will undoubtedly hinder the progress of urbanization and trigger a deeper impact.

3.2.3. Discussion on De-commoditization

The so-called "de-commoditization" is defined by Danish scholar Anderson as the extent to which individuals or families can maintain a socially acceptable standard of living outside of market participation. Since the construction of Chinese market economy, the phenomenon of de-commoditization has always existed. However, in the recent decade, chaos has occurred frequently in the labor market. We need to analyze the problem of de-commoditization again from the perspective of today. The discussion of de-commodification in China focuses on the following three points: First, when did the de-commodification movement begin? Some scholars inherit Polanyi's thought and think that the reverse movement is coexisting with the market economy. Wang Shaoguang argues that China's de-commoditization movement began in 1999 with the "Great Western Development", a policy aimed at balancing the development gap between the east and west. [22] Through the index of minimum wage standard, Chang Kai found that after the promulgation of the "Three Labor Laws", de-commercialization had been significantly improved. [23] Second, the subject that promotes the de-commoditization movement. In Polanyi's opinion, the main body of the reverse protection movement should involve all classes affected by the interests of the market expansion process. Wang Juan attributed China's protection movement to the country's legislation and the drive of the elite class. [24] Meng Jie et al affirmed the contribution of laborers in the reverse movement. [8] Third, the future development of the de-commoditization movement. We can make the basic judgment at present. In the coming decades, the degree of commercialization will continue to rise. This is also the manifestation that in the process of the development of human society, the socialist factors are more and more.

3.3. Enlightenment and Policy Suggestions on the Theory of Labor Commercialization

Since reform and opening up, our economy has maintained high growth rate, while the laborer employment condition has been continuously improved, the employment security system of urban and rural laborer has been basically established. The realization of this achievement is inseparable from the development of socialist market economy, the liberation of productive forces after the labor force becomes a commodity and the efficient allocation of resources by the labor market. However, through the above analysis, we know that under the new era, there are still many problems in the theoretical policy of labor commercialization or the current situation of the labor market, such as low income of laborers, unequal labor relations, incomplete security and so on. Therefore, we must take the current situation of Chinese labor market into consideration, deeply explore the theory of labor commercialization, and take it as guidance to improve and perfect the structure of Chinese labor force, thus promoting the further development of productive forces, and building our country into a strong, democratic, civilized and harmonious socialist modernization power.

3.3.1. We Will Continue to Deepen Labor Market Reform under the Guidance of the Theory of Labor Commercialization

For all kinds of problems caused by the labor market in the new era, we should accelerate the pace of labor market reform, all-round, deep analysis under the integrated environment of the future labor market how to develop and what direction to develop. At the same time, we must adhere to the guidance of the theory of labor commercialization, seek how to combine the theory of labor commercialization with the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, and make it clear that under the socialist market economy system, labor is a commodity in form and not necessarily a commodity in content. Always adhere to the people-oriented, adjust the income distribution structure, put the interests of workers in the first place, from the population, employment concept, morality, ideology and other aspects, cultivate and build the right concept of labor, ensure the concept of the hero of the workers, create a healthy labor market environment.

3.3.2. We Will Strengthen De-commercialization in Many Ways and Put People First to Protect the Rights and Interests of Workers

With the progress of social civilization, workers gradually put their own rights and interests in the first place. In our country for a long time in the future, the degree of labor force de-commodification will continue to strengthen. The ultimate goal of the anti-commodification movement is to protect the rights and interests of workers and improve their social status. At the national level, our country should formulate relevant laws and regulations to restrain enterprises, prohibit informal employment, emphasize the importance of signing labor contracts, strengthen the care and protection for workers, raise the minimum remuneration threshold, improve the urban and rural pension mechanism, encourage workers to use legal weapons to protect their rights, improve the evaluation system of corporate social responsibility, and strengthen supervision and management. At the enterprise level, enterprises should promote moral construction internally, improve their own moral constraints, and ensure the fulfillment of social responsibilities. On the part of workers, they have learned to use reasonable means to safeguard their rights and interests.

3.3.3. Adjust Employment, Income Structure, Realize Our Country Laborer COMMON Prosperity

The goals for 2035 and 2050 set out in the report to the 19th CPC National Congress reflect the goal of improving people's lives and achieving common prosperity. Since 2019, China has reached a moderately prosperous level, but there is still a big gap between the average income of Chinese workers and that of developed capitalist countries, and there are problems such as uneven distribution of labor resources and large income gap. Therefore, we should speed up the improvement of reasonable labor information market mechanism and improve the information awareness of workers and employers. We will adjust the structure of income distribution among workers, adhere to a personal income model that focuses on distribution according to work and includes various methods of distribution, increase the proportion of workers' remuneration in the primary distribution of national income, and improve the mechanism for determining wage levels. We should give consideration to efficiency and fairness in the secondary distribution, pay attention to the income of low-income workers, promote economic and social stability, and realize the common prosperity of all workers.

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