

The Interaction between Urban Culture Space, the Stratification Structure of its Subjects and Higher Education Internationalization

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Abstract

According to modern space theory, space and society construct each other through the subject. In modern cities, the subject exists in urban culture in way of time and space. It influences the cultural context of higher education internationalization through constructing stratified urban social space and accelerating the internationalization of higher education's material basis. In return, the development of higher education reacts upon the formation of urban culture space and stratification of the subjects. At the same time, with the development of modern technology, the space expands and "human beings" experience overall extension. Through media and various educational technologies, public space of higher education internationalization forms gradually. Theories for the interaction between urban culture space, the stratification of its subjects and higher education internationalization have provided much inspiration for empirical research.

The extension of the urban culture space primarily comprises that of its subject elements. Against the background of economic globalization, urban culture space and its subject extend rapidly. At the same time, the isomorphism of urbanization and higher education allows the latter subject to extend and, to a certain degree, conduce positive interaction between urban culture space and higher education.

Keywords: Urban Culture Space, Higher Education Internationalization, Subject, Structure, Interaction.

1. A Reading of the Subject of Urban Culture Space

What is space in modern cities?

The question 'what is space?' is replaced by the question 'how is it that different human practices create and make use of distinctive conceptualizations of space?'; relational space comes into its own as an important aspect of human social practice. An understanding of urbanism

and of the social-process-spatial-form theme requires that we understand how human activity creates the need for specific spatial concepts and how daily social practice solves with consummate ease seemingly deep philosophical mysteries concerning the nature of space and the relationships between social processes and spatial forms (Harvey, 1973, p.13-14). "Urban space is fixed, to the degree that the key processes are confined within fixed spaces, and perpetually in flux to the degree that those processes are in motion" (Harvey, 1985b).

Obviously, Harvey was reading "space" in the context of modern culture, which means that instead of being immobile and separated from the things occupying it, space is the product of human beings' practice and its existence means relatedness. This kind of relatedness, just as Harvey believes, is a very complex philosophical concept. However, briefly speaking, it means everyday social practice, including what Harvey called, "urban status", "process", "forms" and so on, which exist in the form of space or depend upon it for their existence. It also means the way human beings produce space and the interaction between space and human existence in urban culture forms. There is no doubt that as one of the important components of social culture, higher education has a close relationship with space, and "human beings" play a crucial role in the interaction between higher education and the production of space. According to Harvey, **physical infrastructures** denote immobilization of value in fixed facilities of long life. Ownership of a fixed capital or having material benefits in using it creates a directly spatial dependency. **Social infrastructures**, on the other hand, are harder to pin down in space. They are confined spatially to the extent that they use the built environment. These social institutions and relations that support life, work and the circulation of capital help consolidate the tendency towards structured coherence within the urban region. They are not created overnight and require a certain degree of stability in order to be effective.

The British Scholar, Doreen Massey, emphasizes even more upon the interactional relationship between space and society. We need to conceptualize space as constructed out of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales...all social (and indeed physical) phenomena/activities/relations have a spatial form and relative spatial location...There is no getting away from the fact that the social is inexorably also Spatial...The spatial is socially constituted (Massey, 1994, p.264-265).

"Human being" is the owner of the society and the constructor of space.

Just like geographical space, space exists with corresponding stratifications in the cultural domain. Therefore spatial forms, at least on our planet, will be produced by human action, as are all other objects, and will express and perform the interests of the dominant class according to a given mode of production and to a specific mode of development. They will express and implement power relationships of the state in a historically defined society. They will be realized and shaped by gender domination and by state-enforced family life. At the same time, spatial forms will also be marked by resistance from exploited classes, oppressed subjects and abused women. And the work of this contradictory historical process on space will be accomplished on an already inherited spatial form, the product of history and support of new interests, projects, protests and dreams. Finally, from time to time, social movements will arise, challenging the meaning of a spatial structure and therefore attempting new functions and new forms. Such are the urban social movements, the agents of urban-spatial transformation, the highest level of urban social change (Castells, 1983, p.311-312).

The inspiration of Castell's idea is incontrovertible. Under a certain production mode, space produces and represents rights. The space structure changes with social strata. In other words, the change of the subjects' stratification and rights, to a certain extent, means the "city to space" turn. In modern society, higher education has great influence upon the subjects' knowledge structure, culture status and social rights. From another perspective, the subjects' change is one of the driving forces for the change of the social space structure or vice versa. The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre also thinks that, in the modern capitalist production mode, the nation's control is mainly mediated through "space plan". In other words, the government, technologist, social groups, and culture constructions, all get involved in the city plan, construction

and residence. And the nation's control infuses into people's everyday life through space. Against this background, higher education seems to be among the most suitable choices.

As Brenner (1999) indicates, could the university which is responsible for the spread of higher education be implicated as a relatively immobile infrastructure in re-territorialising the site of the city and capital? For instance, the internationalisation of higher education often implies that several critical theoretical currents are replaced by dominant, positivist currents, thus re-territorialising the very possibility of education and subjectivity.

The American scholar, E. W. Soja, has made a distinction between "space" and "spatiality". The former, according to him, represents objective material forms and as for the latter, he pointed out, "this physical space has been a misleading epistemological foundation...Space itself may be primordially given, but the organization, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience" (Soja, 1989, p.80). Obviously, Soja's spatiality focusses more on the mutual constructiveness between space and society. As stated above, higher education is an important way of social change, transformation and experience accumulation. Therefore, the exploration of higher education in terms of the ways and significance of its reaction upon modern urban space become extremely necessary. As spatial barriers diminishes, we become more sensitized as to what the world spaces contain. The speed of communication and information has emphasised broadening of space with internationalisation of higher education. However the constraints are experienced as local differences in entrepreneurial ability, investment in higher education, science and technological development, investing in research and development etc. Hence it becomes imperative to discuss on spatiality with changing needs of society.

In summary, it is not hard to see from the above that space and society are inseparable and interact with each other. The research on urban culture space in this article is from a cultural perspective, and urban space is an important part of social space. We believe that the understanding of "human beings" as the subject of society, their structure and extension, in the interaction between urban culture space and higher education internationalization, is crucially important to the solution of the problem of urban culture space, in terms of its relationship with time, the society, the city, urban culture and higher education and so on.

2. As the Subject of the Structure of Urban Culture Space: Higher Education Internationalization's Way of Existence

In modern cities, the subject's influence upon the interaction between space and higher education is represented by the subject isomorphism of urban culture space and higher education. In other words, the structure of urban culture space constructed by the subject is parallel to that of higher education internationalization. The exterior manifestation of this kind of parallelism is the hierarchism of the subject's construction of the two. Hierarchism is the common feature of space existences and thus it represents the systematization and scale-dependence of space. The subjects' difference directly determines the hierarchism of urban culture space and higher education has to meet the demand of different subjects in this background. And it also shows hierarchism in all aspects such as, its levels, major arrangements, degree of internationalization and so on.

Human beings' urban subjectivity is not an intrinsic quality confined in themselves but an essence of the objectified subject. Urbanization or higher education, just from a certain aspect, represents the objectification of the subject. From the perspective of the subject itself, it needs to balance its autonomy because, in this way human beings' own development, their reception of higher education, improvement of initiative and creativity, construction of modern city, the variation of human activities, are all benefited, and then, their own development and that of the society is promoted in the activities of objectification. From the aspect of the relationship between the subject and the objectified subject (or things), the subject needs to distinguish itself from the objectified subject or other related city images. In other words, from the perspective of the city's development, the subject exists in hierarchy and its hierarchism in the social field is mainly represented by the difference of gender, economic, political and cultural status. Only through such difference can the construction of space, the communication between subjects, and the mutual influence between city development and higher education internationalization be possible. The subject's hierarchism or, to some degree, disequilibrium of autonomy is conducive to its initiative and creativity.

The subject's hierarchism determines that of the urban culture space. We can distinguish different levels in the hierarchy of urban culture according to the social hierarchy constructed by the subject. Material and economic basis is on the lowest level and it is the material

aspect of urban culture. On this level, as for the specific urban landscape, the hierarchy of space is very obvious and broad. From a certain street corner to the town, the city, the country and even the globe, the subway underground to the skyscrapers, even the whole earth and the universe, the urban landscape is everywhere, extending to different directions and overlapping in diverse places. From the perspective of abstract social theory, space hierarchism includes links such as, production, circulation, consumption and so on. Production means the formation of the subject and also the generation of regional space; circulation means the transformation, to a certain degree, of the space constructed by the subject; for the subject, consumption means the reproduction of the subject itself and its significance lies in the creation of urban consumption space. As internationalization gradually supersedes urbanization in modern cities, various links of production, circulation and consumption of urban material space become multivariate and internationalized.

The superstructure is on the second level and those aspects which have considerable influence upon the construction of urban culture space are politics, law and ideology. Politics and law control, regulate and integrate the subject's construction of social and cultural space, forming the institutional aspect of urban culture space namely, the institutional space of social culture. Ideology, as another aspect of social culture, mediates between material basis and superstructure, and it creates symbolic space through the subject. This symbolic space is a vivid reflection of the subject's ideology and living conditions, and at the same time reacts upon the material basis of urban culture space. With the appearance of material symbols of internationalization such as, multinational company, sky scrapers and transnational landscapes in the field of urban culture space, the convergence of ideology like, multilingual application, hybridity of different cultures and educational ideas, start to appear and become a fashion.

This kind of spatial structure of urban culture reacts directly upon higher education and its internationalization, the subject playing an active role. Higher education is the method with which the subject participates in the construction of space and realizes their interaction through "bonding" and "sequence order". This is shown in the following aspects:

Firstly, the structure of urban culture space influences the construction of the cultural context of higher education internationalization. The urban culture space influences

the development of higher education and its internationalization in aspects like the politics, law and ideology.

1. The construction of educational policies and system.

With the development of society, educational policy and system gradually get ameliorated. The enacting of the "Higher Education Act" is a good example. With economic globalization and the internationalization of talents training, "the Regulation of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education", "Measures for the Implementation of the Regulation of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education" and "The Education Promotion Act" were enacted one after another to regulate internationalized education. During the process of higher education internationalization, the formation and amelioration of the institution help to regulate subjects' behaviors and promote scientific development of education. When a society decays, early indicators of its decay may first be visible in its universities. On the other hand, when a society evolves, its universities may also flourish as sites of creative thinking and dialogue. Thus, an analysis of the spatiality of higher education has the potential to comment on the nature of civilisational or social space as well. Such an analysis of the spatiality of higher education is, for instance, available in Giroux's (2008) work on the militarisation of higher education. Giroux's basic contention is that the militarisation of the space of higher education in American campuses has led to the erosion of the possibilities of criticism, dissent and critical dialogue.

2. The Formation of Ideas, Specific Strategies and Teaching Methods of Higher Education Internationalization

Ideas of higher education internationalization are the reflection of the subject's ideology in the urban culture space. "Higher Education, which is of large scale, huge in quantity, high in quality and broad in scope, is one of the features of the main cities of developed countries." (Guo, Ling, Bai, & Jin, 2006, p.6). In actuality, with the development and amelioration of the spatial structure of urban culture, higher education inevitably extends in terms of scale, quantity, quality and radiation scope; the key to such extension is to improve the ideas of higher education internationalization and make it conform to the extension of urban culture space. Down to practical level, it is the corresponding specific strategies and teaching methods of higher education

internationalization which vary according to the degree of the city's internationalization, different groups' demand for internationalization and regional service objectives of education.

Secondly, the extension of the urban material culture space accelerates the internationalization of higher education's material basis. In actuality, the construction of urban culture's context is based upon the former and indirectly, the latter. From the perspective of urban material culture space, higher education internationalization has a close relationship with economic globalization, city construction and material culture like the city landscape.

Economic globalization is the material basis of higher education internationalization. It is the incontrovertible trend of development of the world economy and has already shown its profound impact upon social and economic development in many countries. Economy and education are interdependent. Against the background of economic globalization, the former is sure to have a profound and broad influence. (Gao & Li, 2002, p.B4)

The influence of economic globalization upon higher education internationalization is incontestable and urban material culture like, city layout and landscape etc. and its spatial structure, has great significance for and is also closely related to higher education internationalization.

Former researches on higher education internationalization seldom focused on this point. From the aspect of urban culture space, level of the city's development, to a certain degree, determines that of higher education internationalization, and the advantage of geographical position determines the direction of its development. City is the economic center of a region and in the city, material culture is advanced, traffic convenient, modern communication technology developed, population influx huge, talents concentrated. Furthermore, its subjects have considerably better cultivation, higher income and more knowledge, their concept of educational consumption is prone to internationalize. The maturity of the subjects of urban culture material space amasses great intellectual capital for the city's cultural industry and also conduces to higher education internationalization. Urban material culture space is also represented by the city landscape which is the representation of urban spiritual culture. Cultural heritage, culture venues, natural landscape, man-made landscape and all the social and human landscape which compose the resources for tourism, distribute in

the city and its surrounding area, attracting different people. The city landscape is the material representation of urban spiritual culture space and it attracts foreign subjects for its exoticness. As for the subjects going abroad, they carry with them their culture; city landscape means the extension and transportation of urban culture space.

Obviously, whatever the level of urban culture, there is parallelism between the subject's participation in and stimulation to the internationalization of higher education and the construction of urban culture space.

3. To be the Subject Extending the Significance of Urban Culture Space: The Purpose of Higher Education Internationalization

As is known to all, social life distributes in space and society operates through space. All aspects related to society including social stratum, class and other classifications (gender, race and so on) and various social power relations are all imbedded in the space. All metaphors in space reveal the interdependent relationships of the social elements and it is the mechanism of the subject's identification with and construction of the self, and separation from other subjects that mediate this kind of relationship.

This is related to the subject's way of existence and realistic significance in the context of modern urban culture. Like the distribution of social life, the subject also exists in space.

Human beings' materiality necessarily has a spatial and temporal position. In order to ensure their existence, existence of the "I" should first be guaranteed, and the precondition is that the subject becomes conscious of the body's state of existence. The skin which separates him from the outside world produces the distance between inside and outside, the interaction between "here" and "there" and this is the spatiality of existence; the body feels the change of the outside world and this is the temporality of existence. (Wang, 1998, p.237)

In the era when technology is not advanced enough, human beings' spatial and temporal existence is restricted in many ways. For example, human beings cannot be in two places at the same time and their displacement takes time. However, the development of modern technology comprehensively expanded human beings' spatial existence. In the practice of modern internationalized higher education, human beings can "separate" and "transpose" in nonphysical ways, which breaks the

limitation of time and space. For instance, one can learn from the class content recorded by micro phone or camera. Human beings' "transposition" no longer takes time, teachers and students can be any where in the world and even if they are in different hemispheres, communication is not prevented. On the one hand, the teachers communicate with students face to face. On the other hand, through camera devices, teachers and students communicate through the internet. The subject's former constraints of time and space are lifted by modern high technologies in the city. Though inseparable, with high technologies, human beings' senses are extended, empowered, even becoming independent. The spatial and temporal significance of society is reinforced with the extension of human beings and the expansion of their spatial significance.

In modern internationalized cities built with high technologies, the subject varies with development of the media and technologies. Through higher education internationalization, it extends urban culture space and shows its own values.

In fact, media appears with the development of technology and becomes one part of it, and the reason why it is distinguished from technologies is that media plays a more intimate role in human beings' self-realization and their own extension. McLuhan, the famous Canadian expert in communication studies, claimed,

This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology (McLuhan, 1994, p.7).

That is to say, in modern society, human beings and media are interdependent: one cannot live without media and the development and extension of media or new high technologies are intertwined with human beings' own development. Thus, it is not hard to see that one of the prominent characteristics of media society is that human beings and media are subjects of each other, develop together and extend each other. The immediacy of the media exposes the subject's needs in diverse temporal and spatial dimensions. From this perspective, modern media increase the pace of modern life and the metabolism of urban culture space, higher education being no exception. The main purpose of higher education is to extend human beings and expand their living space and that of the whole society. The interaction between

the subject and modern media provides new opportunities for higher education internationalization.

On the one hand, modern media of high technologies satisfies the subject's need for internationalization. In terms of the stages of development of education, modern media education is the continuation and development of traditional media education. It is the product of the industrial and post-industrial society, and the fruit of mass media technologies such as, film, television, broadcast, internet and so on. To a certain degree, in terms of its philosophical significance, it is also the product of the multileveled subject. What is more, it is an ineluctable stage in the development of social culture. It reflects the advancement and dissemination of modern technologies, and manifests the social members' understanding and mastery of them. Briefly speaking, modern media education, with its new media and communication technology, at the same time challenges and sets new standards for the social members.

On the other hand, modern media enables the subject's communication to break limitations of time and space. Just as McLuhan claimed, modern media is the extension of human beings and its advantage is self-evident when higher education crosses the borders of nation and culture. Modern media enables the subject to extend comprehensively in terms of its communication ideas, methods, tools, contents, artistry, teacher training of education and so on. With the support of modern educational technology, education takes on features like, diversification of methods (new methods like distant education with internet and multimedia), heterogeneous material sources, vivid presentation, visualized content, combination of pictures, text and videos in class, or other class refinements and so on. In educational communication and practice, methods are diversified with different technologies, fully realizing the potential of international education cooperation.

Development of technology has great influence upon media's role. Urban culture space develops with technology which enables human beings to become social. From the perspective of education, acquisition or development of technology is the fundamental way for social members to reach consensus on knowledge or achieve goals.

Technology comprises various artifacts, their operational procedures and related knowledge, which enable society to have a certain operation model. Thus, technology actively constructs rather than set passive limitations. At

the same time, it is also an important element which enables a human being to be a 'human being' in a specific society (Wang, 1998, p.236-237).

The positive aspect of technology is that it enables the subject of education in society for acquiring knowledge with its help to reach social consensus. During this process, the subject constructs society, and also assumes sociality which means, firstly, communication between one and another, and the spatiality and temporality in the meantime, becomes its condition and result; second, sociality means the accumulating effect of human activities, we live in a man-made world, or the history and culture, in other words (Wang, 1998, p.237).

On the basis of McLuhan's research, Wang Z. H. specifically analyzed human extension and its spatial effects under the influence of technology. Language means the structuring of human knowledge, and the ability to think and communicate. The effect of its manufacturing of social space and time is the order and endurance of the will transmission. The text extends human beings' sense, memory and communication skills, and it means a more strict order and spatial transmission. Computer extends their memory and central nervous system, and it connects numerous spaces in a moment, expanding comprehensively their spatial existence.

The sociality or the social culture space constructed by human beings, in fact, has provided a public space for the development of higher education. In this space, the subject enjoys more subjectivity, demands for internationalized education and is able to acquire knowledge with related technologies under the stimulation of the city's internationalization. The spatiality of urban culture guarantees role of the media as a mediator. The space's publicity enables participants of urban culture construction to receive education, provoke thinking and achieve consensus on the basis of full communication and extensive debate. This is exactly the purpose of education. Higher education is no longer restricted by time and space in the information age. The extension of the interaction between teacher and student, cross-border and simultaneous sharing of educational resources, and the virtualization of the education receivers' identity through internet provide expansive and multivariate space for education internationalization.

It can be predicted that with speeding internationalization of the modern city and higher education, city will be sure to open itself to its extreme and allow residents from all over the world to enter into its space. Citizens in the future will gradually open their hearts to the unfurling

reality. While the horizon is broadened, constraints on the mind will also be lifted and a generation with such a mind will be a new generation with multifaceted and fluid personality (Zhang, 2003, p.66).

The purpose of higher education is to extend the subject, and the positive multivariate interaction between the subject, urban culture and higher education will necessarily encourage society to develop rapidly. Regular failure of higher education Institution and their repeated efforts to amend working styles in alignment to education policy had been one of the biggest challenges. This has been experienced in various countries due to lack of equal educational opportunities, drop out rates, and discrimination on different basis. At the same time the emerging intersection between urban space and higher education had demonstrated the relevance of social strata in education system.

From the subject's perspective, urban culture space, constructed with high technology according to the stratification of subjects, builds the theoretical frame for interaction between urban culture space and higher education internationalization. Its significance lies in providing a referential model and theoretical methods for the corresponding empirical researches.

Firstly, it inspires empirical researches on the interaction between higher education and the subject's culture identification and institutionalized existence in the urban culture space. The subject's demand for higher education internationalization is influenced by the subject's culture identification. Research on the interaction between urban culture space and higher education internationalization focuses on solving this problem. From a quantitative perspective, in the exploration of the demand for education internationalization, the role of elements like the subject's major selection, foreign language preferences and proficiency, city preferences, comprehension of urban culture and subculture awareness etc. in urban culture structure, and higher education internationalization are issues to be covered in future empirical researches. In terms of the educational system, the subject's choice of cultural values, understanding of and attitudes towards modern curriculum are also related to the interaction between the urban culture space and higher education internationalization.

Secondly, it enlightens empirical researches on the interaction between the material life of the subject in urban culture space and higher education internationalization. The subject's construction of urban

culture space, preference for higher education internationalization and his own extension would be based upon material life. For the individual subject, the development of the regional, family income, and decision on personal investment have a close relationship with higher education internationalization; in terms of the social group subject, the latter is influenced by its material condition and the social practical value derived from its intellectual achievements. From the perspective of material life, empirical analysis of the subject's role in the construction of urban culture and its interaction with higher education is very challenging and formidable.

Thirdly, it sheds light upon empirical research on the interaction between the subject's social stratification in the urban culture space and higher education internationalization. The subjects are socially stratified. Thus, they show obvious difference in their economic material basis in the urban culture space and comprehension of the politics, law, institution and social ideology. This phenomenon arouses attention in the academia. The relationship between social stratification and higher education is a core issue in researches on educational sociology, and it mainly includes two aspects: higher education's influence upon social stratification and the latter's influence upon the former. Social stratification's influence upon higher education is multifaceted, including that upon the latter's goals, policies, content, achievements and other aspects (Yu, 2002, p.44).

However, not much attention is paid to its relationship with higher education. In actuality, with urbanization and extension of urban culture space, opportunities for higher education are multivariate and the subject's demand for education, even more. Higher education internationalization becomes one of the important choices. Thus, to explore issues like the stratification of the subjects, their ways of constructing urban culture in different strata, their understanding about urban culture space, the quantitative index of the demand for education and its internationalization in the corresponding strata, and its interrelationship with urban culture space and higher education internationalization is conducive to the equal participation in urban culture space for different social strata and the healthy development of higher education internationalization.

Fourthly, it offers illuminations to empirical researches on the interaction between higher education internationalization and the subject's extension and self-

realization with high technologies in urban culture space. "Technology has affected or is likely to affect many dimensions of higher education" (Gumport & Chun, 2000, p17). As stated above, modern urban culture space is the product of human being's extension with technology. Therefore, in the field of urban culture, it is very challenging to apply the theories mentioned in this article to solve problems like, the quantitative index of the subject's demand for technology, to what degree and in which dimension technology extends the human being, in what way technologies connect urban culture with higher education and its internationalization, how the latter extends the subject through technology and how "multiple dialectic" development of urban culture space, the subject and higher education internationalization are mediated by technologies.

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