



## PERSPECTIVE OF MARXISM-LENINISM ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMY AND POLITICS

**Ha Trong Tha**

PhD Deputy Head of Party Affairs, Political Affairs and Public Affairs; Main lecturer - Vietnam People's Security University.

### ABSTRACT

Economy and politics are two basic areas of social life which have direct impacts on human life as well as social development. In researching the motion and development of human society through history, K.Marx, F.Engels and V.I.Lenin presented basic reasoning for identifying and dealing with issues regarding the relationship between politics and economy. This article presents the perspective of Marxism - Leninism on the relationship between economy and politics as one of the important methodologies for leading forces in the world to creatively apply this relationship for sustainable development in each country as well as around the world.

**KEYWORDS** : Marxism-Leninism, economy, politics, base, superstructure.

The relationship between politics and economy is the fundamental relationship of human's social life. How this relationship is perceived and dealt with in practice is crucial to the prosperity or destruction of each country's economy and sociopolitical regime. Therefore, it is necessary to study the points of view of political researchers in history to inherit and apply them in order to achieve the best results, ensuring the development of each nation. Among many, the perspective of Marxism-Leninism on the relationship between economy and politics provides many profound contents which today's generation can learn from, inherit and apply creatively for the development of the country in which they are living, as well as for the development of humanity in the world.

### 1. Politics and economy from Marxist-Leninist perspective

In their works, K.Marx, F.Engels and V.I.Lenin had yet provided complete definitions of politics and economy; however, based on their thoughts, such concepts were studied through rich theoretical and practical activities. Marxism-Leninism considers politics from many angles. In terms of time, according to Marxism-Leninism, politics is born when society is divided into classes and when the state appears. Therefore, politics refers to the relationship between large social groups, first and foremost the relationship between classes, nations and states. V.I.Lenin said that, "politics is the relationship between people, not as individuals but as millions of people." In terms of nature, political relationship refers to special social relationships; among which, the fundamental one is the one between classes, while the relationships between nations and states are political relationships of holistic nature. V.I.Lenin believed that, "politics is the struggle between classes", and "politics is the relationship between classes". Each social class, in the process of gaining its economic interests, always establishes a relationship with politics, especially with the authorities. Therefore, political relationships focus on works of the state (governmental works), winning and maintaining authority and enforcing state power, and determining form of organization, policies and mechanism of the state for the entire social life. The center of political relationships is works of the state, which reflects the particular importance of planning state advocates and policies and enticing the masses to engage in the works of the state. V.I.Lenin said that, "politics is the participation in the works of the state, the navigation of the state and the determination of the forms, duties and contents of activities of the state". The essence of political relationships (between classes, nations and states) is to address the relationship between people in relation to power in order to gain economic interests. Addressing these relationships directly determines the motivation of social development and economic development; moreover, it is also involved in the orientation of development. Thus, from the perspective on relationship with economy, politics is in fact a matter of orientation and motivation for economic development.

When discussing about economy, Marxism - Leninism considers it as all economic relationships associated with the interests of those involved in the process of producing material wealth, based on a certain level of the productive force and acting as the foundation for a certain sociopolitical regime. According to K.Marx and F.Engels, economy refers to the entire mode of production and exchange of a social regime, "the origin of all social transformations and political disintegrations". From their points of view, economy is a scientific category which should be fully comprehended with the following contents: *First*, economy is the combination of relations of production based on a certain level of the productive force, which forms the economic foundation of a certain social regime. The economic foundation is created by the ownership of means of production, organizational relations and production management, and the distribution of products. Changes in the ownership of means of production cause changes in all other economic relations and the entire economy itself; *Second*, economy is ultimately the factor that decides all social transformations and political disintegrations; *Third*, economy in each social regime is the national economy with all of its contents. The essence of economy is resolving interest-based relations through economic relations, thereby creating possibilities for the release of productive power. Although the development of productive force is a revolutionary factor for the motion of the system of economic relations, these relations also have their own role. When economic relations change in a positive or negative trend, social production is correspondingly promoted or inhibited. An essential change in the system of economic relations will lead to a change in the political regime. In political life, classes that rule the economy use state power to address economic relations and economic interest-based relations. When holding state power, the ruling class can alter the system of economic relations, which acts as the basis for political power system to accomplish purposes of interest for them.

### 2. Marxist-Leninist perspective on the relationship between economy and politics

The relationship between politics and economy is the most fundamental relationship of social life. It is the relationship between state power and economic power towards socioeconomic development, in order to protect the political regime and interests of the ruling class. The historical materialist perspective of Marxism-Leninism on politics requires politics to be considered in relation to economy, classes and the state, with political institutions to ensure the realization or disablement of political and economic needs. In the theory of socioeconomic formations, K.Marx and F.Engels profoundly studied the relationship between base and superstructure, and in fact, this is the relationship between economy and politics. In the opinion of K.Marx and F. Engels, the base is always the fundamental element that decides the

superstructure: "The development of politics, law, philosophy, religions, literature, arts, etc. depends on economic development", and "when the economic base is shifted, the entire monumental superstructure will more or less quickly turn upside down". In contrast, the superstructure also has relative independence from and affects the base. In the *German Ideology*, K.Marx and F.Engels pointed out: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" and "The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance".

On the basis of historical materialist conception, K.Marx and F.Engels said that economy - the base - plays a decisive role; at the same time, politics - the superstructure - is also relatively independent and has impact on the base. Developing the perspective of K.Marx and F.Engels on the relationship between politics and economy, V.I.Lenin summarized the nature of that relationship as follows: Politics is the concentrated expression of economy, politics is the condensation of economy, "Politics cannot fail to hold the leading position compared to economy". That relationship manifests itself as follows:

***First, economy is ultimately the determinant of the entire motion of political life in the history.***

Marxism-Leninism asserts that, ultimately, economy is the element that decides the entire political history, from the formation of classes and class conflict to the formation of political parties and their activities, the formation of state power institutions as well as other issues of political life. On the basis of a certain level of the productive force, economic relations motion and develop. The most decisive economic factor affecting political life is the system of ownership of means of production. The motion of society in the history shows that, if the ownership of means of production substantially changes, and along with it are changes in other economic relations, it first of all changes the nature of relations of production. When the system of relations of production of a society has fundamentally changed, it will lead to radical changes in political regime, paving the way for the development of productive force. V.I.Lenin said that: "In material production, people are in certain relationships with each other, i.e. relations of production. These relationships are always consistent with the level of development of productivity that the economic forces of those achieve in that period. All of those relations of production constitute the economic structure of society, that is, the reality on which a political and legal superstructure is built, and in consistence with that base are certain forms of social consciousness. Thus, mode of production determines the general characteristics of social, political, and spiritual processes of life". He also said that, the force or class that holds the economy also holds political power and dominates social life. V.I.Lenin wrote, "Politics is the concentrated expression of economy", politics is the condensation of economy", and "Rule of law can never be higher than economic regime".

Politics is the concentrated expression of economy, which means, economy is the ultimate decisive element. In V.I.Lenin's opinion, economy is after all "the most decisive elements to the victory of social order." Economy is the primary factor, and politics is only the reflection of economy. The formation, survival and development of politics as well as political forms and activities are the necessary outcomes of economic motion. Politics reflects economy in a way that it is the concentrated reflection through political thoughts, policies and institutions. The concentration in political reflection manifests in a way that, politics does not reflect personal needs and interests, but the needs and economic interests of the community and the society. Of course, that does not mean

that politics does not care about the needs and interests of each individual - but because of that "concentrated expression", each individual in the community still see his interest in there. Politics, while reflecting the inevitability of economic laws, is not a passive copy of economy, but through the thinking lens of the system of political organizations, it is reflected in the goals and objectives, strategies, measures, tools and means to control and create motivation for all economic activities towards certain purposes and orientations of political subjects.

Politics is the concentrated expression of economy, the condensation of economy, meaning politics itself must carry within it the objective economic law. Politics must reflect in its own structure the objective requirements of the economic structure, the level of development of productive force, social division of labor, etc. Of course, these are the objective reflection of the nature of politics on the economy. Politics has a general function of pointing out factors that govern the economy, trends of movement and development of the economy, from which finding the best opportunities to influence economic processes in order to achieve the objective interests that are always sought for.

Because economic relations in general, ownership of means of production, organization of labor production and distribution of products in particular are the underlying causes of the abovementioned political phenomena, K.Marx asserted that, the causes of social changes and political disintegration cannot be found in the human mind, but in the changes in the mode of production and mode of exchange; through the mind to discover them in the existing physical conditions of production; politics and history must be explained by economic conditions and the evolution of those conditions, not vice versa.

***Second, the relative independence of politics and the need for prioritizing politics over economy***

Marxism - Leninism while asserting the decisive role of economy to politics, on the other hand, never denied the great and leading role of politics to the economy. K.Marx and F.Engels commented that: "Economic conditions are absolutely not the only proactive cause while everything else only has passive effect". In all influences that social factors have on the economy, the impact of politics on economy is of prime importance. About the role of politics to economy, V.I.Lenin argued: "Politics cannot fail to hold the leading position compared to economy", which represents the following contents:

*First*, political victory is the premise and prerequisite for the changes in quality and economic development to take place. The system of economic relations as well as the basic economic relations established by politics is the foundation for the existence, stability and sustainability of politics. Therefore, politics must first protect the economic achievements it has earned in order to maintain the status of the ruling class.

*Second*, politics has its impacts back on economy in different directions, either promoting or restraining it. K.Marx and F.Engels said that: "The effect of state power on economic development can be of three types. It can be reciprocal - the development then is made faster; it may have adverse effects on economic development - leading to disintegration after a certain period of time; or it may hinder economic development in some certain directions and promote development in others". Therefore, in order for economic development to agree with the impact of politics on the economy, it is required to pay attention to all three aspects: economic policies and guidelines; economic institutions and economic subjects. V.I.Lenin affirmed: "Without a proper political stance, a certain

class cannot maintain its dominance, *thus unable to fulfill its duties in the field of production*".

*Third*, politics plays the role to direct and create stable sociopolitical environment for economic development. The political orientation for economic development manifests itself in all stages of the economic development process: building economic development guidelines, orienting the process of institutionalizing policies, managing the process of economic development and social orientation for economic development, so that all these factors take place smoothly in order for the interests of the ruling class to not be violated. Political stability is a favorable condition for economic development. K.Marx and F.Engels said that: "The motion of economy in general will open the way for itself, but it will also be affected by the political motion that it creates which has relative independence".

*Fourth*, politics not only leads the economy but also participates in strictly controlling the fundamental and key issues of the economy, such as: budget, capital, financial and monetary activities, foreign economic policy, etc. Politics is also involved in managing the economy, adjusting the economic structure and promoting economic development. It can be affirmed that, in the end, politics of societies with classes has the role of protecting and leading the economy, and is a source of economic development. The role of politics in the economy is enormous. If politics does not lead the way for itself and does not contribute to socioeconomic development, then sooner or later it will collapse.

*Fifth*, giving priority to politics over economy is a special issue. This is proved in special historical periods, periods of war and revolution, in which the issue of winning and maintaining authority is fundamental, prioritized and urgent. In such periods, economic development is only a factor that serves political purposes. The argument of prioritizing politics over economy also means that in a special situation and at a certain point of time, economic needs and benefits must be sacrificed for the crucial and long-term premise of economy - upholding the political results achieved. However, Marxism-Leninism also emphasizes that, even in the time of war and revolution, when the issue of winning or maintaining the government is at the top, it must be noted that politics is only a means to achieve economic goals. Therefore, along with each step in the process of approaching political goals, the focus needs to be shifted from political struggle to economic development.

### 3. Significance of the relationship between politics and economy for countries in the world

The perspective of Marxism-Leninism has clarified the relationship between politics and economy on the basis of theory of dialectical materialism and historical materialism. The relationship between politics and economy is dialectical, with cause-and-effect impacts on each other. That relationship needs to be considered and addressed appropriately in specific historical circumstances. The core of this relationship is that economy determines politics and politics has impact on economy. This is the basic, sensitive and complex relationship in social relations of each country and the whole world, which has decisive significance and influences on other social relations. Therefore, recognizing and dealing with this relationship requires proactive and creative ways to avoid making absolute of one side or the other of the relationship, or identifying them with each other. If the role of economy is made absolute, the economy will develop in a spontaneous and anarchist manner, which is not sustainable because it only focuses on economic growth at all costs, but ignores other aspects of social life. If the role of politics is made absolute, the economy will be subjected to interventions and develop in accordance with the subjective

thought and will of the politically ruling force against the requirements of objective laws, especially economic ones. If economic is identified with politics, politics will become rigid and dogmatic. Making any of the abovementioned mistakes can lead to the negative development of the economy in particular and of the society in general. In fact, over time, the theory of Marxism-Leninism on the dialectical relationship between politics and economy has been applied by many countries in the world, both East and West, to bring about success and ensure economic development while maintaining political stability.

**Conclusion:** In short, from the Marxist - Leninist point of view, the relationship between economy and politics is essentially the relationship between the base and the superstructure, which is mentioned in the theory of socioeconomic formations established by K.Marx and F.Engels and protected and developed by V.I.Lenin. This is the most fundamental relationship in social life since it was divided into classes and formed the state. The core of this relationship is that economy determines politics and politics has impact on economy. The Marxist - Leninist perspective on this relationship has been practically proven to be true. Many countries have succeeded in applying Marxist-Leninist view on this issue over the time. Currently, the world's circumstances has changed much compared to the time of K.Marx, F.Engels and V.I.Lenin; however, this relationship is still of profound value. Social leading forces need to take into account characteristics of each country, thus flexibly and creatively apply this relationship for economic development and political stability, ensuring the genuine physical and spiritual needs of each of the people are met, and people in the society are created conditions for comprehensive personal development. That is also the noble purpose that Marxism-Leninism aims at.

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