

## Governance Thoughts and Time Value of Marxism Classics' Authors

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### Abstract

Strengthening governance is a necessary choice of a nation's development progress. Though Marxism classics' authors do not explicitly put forward "governance", their works have contained rich views on governance. They have initially constructed governance system which includes system of politics, culture and education, justice, military and organization; and they have initially discussed the goals, measures, subjects and approaches of governance. In-depth study of these thoughts is significant for advancing the modernization of governance system and capacity.

**Key words:** Marxism classics' authors; Governance; Governance system; Governance capacity

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### INTRODUCTION

It has been put forward on the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China that the general goals of comprehensively deepening reform are to improve and develop socialist system with Chinese characteristics and to advance the modernization of governance system and capacity. How

to advance the modernization of governance system and capacity has become an issue which arouses a heated discussion in Chinese theoretical circles. Though Marxism classics' authors do not explicitly put forward the concept of "governance", they have expressed their remarkable views on governance in relevant classical works like *The Civil War in France*, *State and Revolution* and *The Present Task of Soviet's Regime*. And these views are of great time value.

### 1. MARXISM CLASSICS' AUTHORS' STATEMENT ON GOVERNANCE

In the era of Marx and Engels, though socialist ideas had been spread widely and the socialism movements had surged, socialist countries had not been formally established yet. With regard to the establishment and governance of socialist countries, they paid more attention to issues like "state power" and "state management". On the one hand, Marx and Engels paid heed to how to lead the working class to overthrow the rule of bourgeoisie, making workers the leading class of a country to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therefore, after the breakout of the Paris Commune Revolution, they clearly indicated "Please look at Paris Commune. This is the dictatorship of the proletariat." (*Selections of K. Marx and F. Engels [Vol.3]*, 1995, p.14) On the other hand, they paid heed to the issue of how to govern the country after the working class became the leading class as well. In Marx and Engels' view, in the content of the overthrowing proprietariat, the state management by the dictatorship of the proletariat was the management by people: choosing public servant through general election and supervising them by people; commune, as the smallest political form in village, naturally bringing about local autonomy, making future state management the management by people. Finally, Marxism classics' authors pointed out that though Lenin led Russian Revolution and the construction

of Soviet state, he had not deeply discussed issues about governance in the case of consolidating the rule of the proletariat and strengthening the management of Soviet state.

Throughout Marxism classics' authors, the statements on the word "governance" are very few. In "On the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" in which Marx quoted Louis Bonaparte's remark: "the first issue I should pay attention to was not who would govern France in 1852 but that I must make sure there would not be any trouble in my reign" (*Selections of K. Marx and F. Engels [Vol.1]*, 1995, p.639), the word "governance" was first put forward clearly. Then Marx mentioned "Industry and business, the cause of middle class, should be as prosperous as flowers in the greenhouse in the reign of strong government" (*Ibid.*, p.686). In *The Civil War in France*, Marx mentioned "governance" again with quoting "The bourgeois republicans...demonstrate to many bourgeois royalists and landlord class that they can feel safe to make bourgeois "republicans" govern country and benefit from it." (*Selections of K. Marx and F. Engels [Vol.3]*, 1995, p.53); then in the statement on the Paris Commune, he put forward "commune governance" (*Ibid.*, p.63), thinking that the superiority of commune governance would combine working class with peasant class, leading to a great peasant uprising. In addition, Engels also talked of "governance" in *Dialectics of Nature* and the letter "Engels to W. Borghi Lucius", but "governance" in these two works mainly refers to social governance, the ideas about social environment governance like local river harnessing (*Selections of K. Marx and F. Engels [Vol.4]*, 1995, p.264,731). Throughout Lenin's works, "governance" was only mentioned one time. In "What Is 'Friends of People' and How They Attack Social Democratic Party?", Lenin pointed that "In effect, our bureaucrats in governing Russia form specially forceful reactionary institution, and it has not gained attention by revolutionists." (*Selections of Lenin [Vol.1]*, 1995, p.72). In Lenin's works, when it comes to issues on governance by soviet regime, "administration" was mentioned most; that is, the administration on Russia was by organization, making more people even all people involve in state administration.

To sum up, to some degree what Marxism classics' authors talked about "governance" is similar to "administration" or even to "rule". They spoke more of state governance and administration by the old regime and bureaucrats. However, views on state rule and state administration in classical works were expressed by sublime words but with deep meaning. Especially *The Civil War in France*, *State and Revolution* and *The Present Task of Soviet's Regime* in which some views were on state governance and administration offer important lessons for advancing the modernization of state governance system and capacity; establish correct political stance for discussing today's China's

state governance and provide the direction of moving forward.

## 2. THE SPECIFIC CONTENT OF GOVERNANCE THOUGHTS BY MARXIST CLASSICAL WRITERS

Future governance thoughts and measures are not explicitly put forward in Marxism classics' authors but assumption of future society and administration measures aimed at soviet regime in these works contains ideological sprout of state governance.

### 2.1 To Preliminarily Establish a Comparatively Systematical State Governance System

The Paris Commune stated by Marx in *The Civil War in France* was actually a relatively mature state power. In the course of his statement on such a state power, Marx preliminarily established a systematic state governance system.

#### 2.1.1 Political System: Universal Suffrage, Supervision and Low Salaries

In the respect of political system design, the Paris Commune instituted a new system which was different from the past decadent bourgeois one. It was composed of city counsel members through general election in districts in Paris. These members were accepted representatives of the working class and they were responsible for and supervised by voters; they could be replaced or recalled at any time. The city counsel members carried out low salaries system and from top to bottom public officers' pays were as much as those of average workers. Besides, Marx drew the border between commune general election and bourgeois one, pointing out that bourgeois general election was nothing but "fake people's representatives who belonged to leading class and were elected every three or six years in congress" (*Selections of K. Marx and F. Engels [Vol.3]*, 1995, p.57) while commune general election "served for the people organized in the commune" (*Ibid.*, p.57) In the content of such political system design, the Paris Commune was not parliamentary institution but the unity of administrative body and legislative body. Such political system design could effectively prevent public officers from transforming from the public servants to the master of society.

#### 2.1.2 Culture and Education System: Separating Church From State, Free Education

After realizing the revolution in material force, the Paris Commune eagerly established new culture and education system to destruct oppression and intervention on people's mind through religions by "monk force" which was worked as bourgeois oppression. For this purpose, the Paris Commune destroyed religious force; announced the separation of the church from the state; deprived the properties of the church and made religion a private thing.

Besides, in the respect of education system, it announced the free open of all schools to people and schooling was free of the church and the state, guaranteeing people's right to be educated and releasing science and culture from class bias and the fetter of power.

### **2.1.3 Judicial System: Judicial Election, Judge Responsibility, Judge Deposition**

In the respect of judicial system, the Paris Commune abolished the old one, cancelling the fake independence of judges who flattered the government in the period of bourgeoisie and implemented judicial election system in which judges, inquisitors and other officials were like all the other public officials. They were elected by people, responsible for them, accepted supervision from them and could be recalled or replaced at any time, establishing an objective, fair and responsible judicial system.

### **2.1.4 Military System: People's Armed Forces, People's Police**

In the course of resistance to invasion by Prussia and objection to the restoration of old regime by Thiers' administration, the Paris Commune gradually recognized that bourgeois standing army was just the tool used as maintaining the reactionary rule by bourgeoisie and began to use National Guard which was mainly composed of workers to replace it. Upon the establishment of the Paris Commune, "the first law of commune is to make armed people replace the standing army" (Ibid., p.55) and in the countryside of the National Guard who served a very short time did so. Except the establishment of people's armed forces to protect the Paris Commune, another measure in military system was to institute people's police. In the commune, the police were no longer the tool of central government; their political function was removed but management one was reserved. Like other public officials, the police were elected and supervised by people, responsible for the commune and could be recalled or replaced anytime.

### **2.1.5 Organization System: Democratic Autonomy**

Marx thought that the commune was the opposite of empire and the clear form of republic which replaced class rule, for it abolished bourgeois bureaucracy in the organization system and implemented democratic autonomy by proletariat and all people. The purpose of commune system was to replace old centralized government with self-government of producers and for this the national compendium explicitly announced the organizational system of commune: commune would be the political form of smallest village; in every village commune, representative conferences handled their own common affairs; the representative conferences of every village commune sent representatives to national representative conferences in Paris; every representative was supervised and constrained by people and could be removed anytime. The democratic autonomy of

commune would grab the reasonable functions of the old regime from the authority which was above the society and return them to responsible servants and the social organism.

## **2.2 Having a Preliminary Discussion About Relative Content of Governance Capacity**

Marxism classics' authors had a preliminary discussion about goal, measures and approaches to future governance in their statements on the Paris Commune and soviet regime and these statements formed important content of how to govern the state and how to achieve the modernization of governance capacity.

### **2.2.1 Goal of Governance: Economical Government**

Marx thought that the Paris Commune achieved the goal of economic government which was promoted in all bourgeoisie revolutions for it cancelled two biggest spenders: standing army and state officials. He also thought that the Paris Commune "is the political form which is finally found liberate labor from economy" (Ibid., p.59) and liberation of labor made everyone a worker; public servants in new society replaced bureaucrats in old regime; they collected as much pays as those of average workers, implemented few but very important functions; they replaced corrupt parish councils, councilmen who pursue private interests, violent poorhouse monitors, hereditary country magistrates and so on in the old regime. All these naturally brought about local autonomy and helped to achieve the governance goal of economical government.

### **2.2.2 Measures of Governance: People Hold Power**

Governance must go on the path on which power belonged to people and was held in their hands and the governance measures taken by the Paris Commune fully indicate such tendency. The Paris Commune announced and carried out the measures that workers in bread industry were not allowed to do night works; employers were not allowed to fine workers under any pretext; closed workshops were entrusted to workers' co-ops but entrepreneurs' right to recoup was reserved and their words and acts should be published.

### **2.2.3 Main Bodies of Governance: Multiple Subjects Led by Unified Subject**

Marx explicitly pointed out that the real secret of the commune was: It was actually the government of working class and also the real representative of all sound elements in France society. The reign by the Commune on Paris was reign by working class who was the absolute main subject of commune governance, the leading subject. The governance by the Commune on Paris was governance by France people as well: Different people treated the Commune as the representatives of their own interests and it was firstly the representative of working class; most of the middle class in Paris, shopkeepers, handicraftsmen and businessmen supported the Commune in succession;

the victory of the Commune was farmers' only hope and only the governance of the Commune could benefit them a lot. Therefore, the governance by the Paris Commune was governance by people and workers, middle class and farmers who supported the Commune were the main bodies of commune governance.

#### **2.2.4 Approach to Governance: People's Involvement**

In the course of actual lead in the establishment of soviet regime, Lenin had presented an important task about how to govern the soviet regime: administration on Russia by organization. For this, Lenin put forward the idea that "all people involve in governance" (*Selections of Lenin [Vol.3]*, 1995, p.201) in *State and Revolution* for the first time and further stated the approached to such governance in *The Present Task of Soviet's Regime*. Lenin thought that attracting all soviet men to really participate in governance might prevent them from becoming "parliament members" or petty bourgeoisies; as for the specific steps and measures to attract people to widely involve in governance, Lenin thought that the more diversified the better and that even people's diversified steps of governance could be systemized and be made as laws (*Ibid.*, pp.504-505). To some degree, the idea of all people's involvement in governance was not about the "top-down" government administration but the "bottom-up" governance by people. It is the ideological sprout of governing a country.

### **3. TIME VALUE OF MARXISM CLASSICS' AUTHORS GOVERNANCE THOUGHTS**

Arduous exploration of governance theories and practice by classic writers like Marx, Engels and Lenin provided very rich sources of ideas to advance the modernization of governance system and capacity.

#### **3.1 Preliminary Establishment of Governance System by Marxism Classics' Authors Provided Important Sample to Realize the Modernization of It**

Marxism classics' authors adhered to the idea that governance should be carried out in a systematic and comprehensive system and within the institutional framework. For this, Marx preliminaries established a state system of governance in the course of his draw on experience of the Pairs Commune and his prediction on the future direction of the state. The system included: political system, organizational system, culture and education system, military system and the judicial system. The core of Marx's thoughts on future society governance could be boiled down to two points: the election by people and supervision by people. Preliminary establishment of the governance system by Marxism classics' authors provides important samples to realise the modernization of governance system and is of great reference value. The establishment of a modern country generally is based

on a system including five aspects: the system and the law of economy, politics, culture, society and ecology. Only by building such a systematic governance system will be the modernization of governance capacity and positive governance realise realized. Such a systematic governance system is based on what was established by Marxist classical writers, and the further development and improvement of it.

#### **3.2 Governance Thoughts by Marxism Classics' Authors Provide Important Enlightenment to Advancing the Modernization of Governance System and Capacity: People Holding Power, People's Involvement and Multi-Subjects' Governance**

The first difference between administration and governance is the subject. The subject of administration is government while bodies of governance are government, parties, organizations and individuals. Marxism classics' authors' governance thoughts inherently contain: Multi-subjects' governance, leading people to involve in governance. These thoughts enlighten us that the advancement of modernization of governance system and capacity should be realized in important ways: people holding power, people's involvement and multi-subjects' governance. With reform and opening-up policy being deepened, Chinese Communist Party stresses several times to "speed up the formation of social management mechanism for leadership of the party committee, responsibility of government, social coordination, public participation and judicial guarantee". Such a governance system has virtually reflected the idea of people's involvement, people's governance and multi-subjects' governance. In such a system, government is not the only subject any longer: It is both the subject and the object of governance; society and the pubic are not pure objects of governance any longer: they also the subjects of it as well. Only adhering to people's involvement and multi-subjects' governance can be the incorrect tendency of what Marx was on guard that the public servants are alienated to be the master of society in the course of governance be overcome. If people are led to involve in governance and are motivated to supervise it, drawbacks of current state development can be overcome and the modernization of governance system and capacity can be realized.

#### **3.3 Marxism Classics' Authors' Governance Thoughts Set Up Important Standards for the Modernization of Governance System and Capacity: Honesty, Efficiency and Good Governance**

From state reign to administration, and then to governance, though there are only changes of some words in literal, in essence the value orientation and evaluation standards behind them have dramatically changed. State

reign is to occupy the heart of state power by a class or a part of people and they control the whole country. The value orientation of reign is order and to pursue stable social order. State administration is to adjust and control state affairs by governance subjects like government from top to bottom. The value orientation of administration is equality and efficiency. In the past, China's principle of "giving priority to efficiency with due consideration to fairness" in the field of income distribution had embodied the value orientation under such an administration pattern. State governance is to govern by both social multi-subjects and government and its value orientation is autonomy; the further pursuits are honesty, efficiency and good governance. The goals of low-cost government, public's involvement in governance, calculation and supervision, proposed by Marxist classical writers, are the sources of value of modern governance. It has been over 140 years since the breakout of the Paris Commune, but Marx's hope during the Commune of the value goals of future state governance has not been achieved. Honest and efficient government is still an important goal for current governance. This requires us to set up honesty, efficiency and good governance as standards of value in the course of advancing the modernization of governance system and capacity.

### **3.4 Marxism Classics Authors' Governance Thoughts Point Out Fundamental Orientation for Current Modernization of Governance System and Capacity: State Governance With Chinese Characteristics**

Marx explicitly put forward "the Commune governance" in *The Civil War in France*, holding the view that the Commune governance was different from bourgeois state governance and it could eliminate problems of bourgeois countries and realize the union of working class and peasant class. At present, Chinese governance is different from both the Commune one and western one. Western governance mainly emphasizes the devolving rights to

society from government. Western scholars think that government is just a dimension of society governance, advocating multi-subjects' governance and emphasizing the diversification of governance subjects to realize the transformation from top-down pattern to bottom-up one. But Chinese governance adheres to the principle of starting from the historical tradition and reality of China all the time, not only paying attention to the exploitation and use of institutions and laws but also emphasizing the role played by codes of ethics during the governance; it adheres to the idea of realizing the modernization of governance system and capacity on the basis of Chinese characteristics.

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## **CONCLUSION**

Marxism Classics Authors' governance thoughts are an important theoretical resource for China to advance the modernization of governance system and capacity currently. However, the national conditions and the historical and cultural traditions of China also need to be concerned in order to promote governance orderly. We need to realize the modernization of governance system and capacity in the connections between theory and social reality.

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