

HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT ON POLITICAL POWER CONTROL

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Abstract: This article analyzes Ho Chi Minh's thought on political power control, viewing it as the foundation for building a socialist rule-of-law state, aimed at preventing and combatting the degradation of power and the scourge of corruption. Based on the examination of the concept, objectives, content, and methods of power control, the article clarifies the theoretical and practical significance of Ho Chi Minh's thought in ensuring that political power always serves the interests of the people, and does not become a tool for individual or group interests. The application of this thought has profound practical guidance value for the work of anti-corruption in Vietnam, to ensure the mastery of the people in the country's current new era of development.

Keywords: Power Control, Ho Chi Minh Thought, Political Philosophy

1. Introduction

In Ho Chi Minh's thought, political power control is not merely a matter of state management technique, but is the focused expression of revolutionary ethics and progressive political culture, to ensure the legitimate rights and interests of the people, thereby promoting the people's mastery. From the reality of the Vietnamese revolution, Ho Chi Minh soon recognized the downside of power, such as the risk of degradation (alienation), abuse, and turning public power into a tool for self-interest. This was consistently expressed by Him in documents, speeches, and writings from the August Revolution period until his final years.

On the one hand, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the role of political power in building a new society and promoting social progress; on the other hand, He was always wary of the risk of degeneration from within the ruling apparatus, especially when power lacks control. He stated: “Leadership without inspection is vacuum leadership” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, t.5, tr.300), while also emphasizing: “When one has power without being inspected, people easily become corrupt/degenerate” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, t.5, tr.297). That thought became the fundamental orientation for organizing the new type of state – the state of the people, by the people, and for the people, where power is strictly controlled by the people themselves.

2. Addressing the Problem

Ho Chi Minh's thought on power control is a comprehensive and profound ideological system, although it was not presented by Him in the form of modern academic concepts. Instead, Ho Chi Minh's perceptions and guidance are scattered throughout revolutionary documents, speeches, writings, and practical political activities, reflecting a highly realistic and comprehensive view of power and its control.

First and foremost, power control is the constraint of political power through political, organizational, legal, and ethical mechanisms, aimed at ensuring that power is not degraded and always serves the common interest. In Ho Chi Minh's thought, power is not an "emolument" or "privilege," but a responsibility entrusted by the people. Therefore, power must be controlled not only externally but also internally. Ho Chi Minh did not view power control as an act of suspicion toward officials, but as an expression of respect for justice, responsibility, and ethics.

Regarding content, in Ho Chi Minh's political thought, the issue of state power control is considered the core content of socialist democracy, aimed at ensuring that power belongs to the people and serves the people. According to Him, power control is not merely a technical requirement of state management, but is the fundamental issue of the political regime, reflecting the dialectical relationship between "the state of the people, by the people, and for the people". Therefore, the power control mechanism must be implemented in a synchronous, multi-dimensional, and regular manner, in which all organs, organizations, and individuals holding power must be placed under the people's supervision.

First, horizontal power control is the mechanism of control by the people over state apparatus agencies. According to Ho Chi Minh, the National Assembly is the core of this mechanism, with the role of supervising the Government and the Court, while also exercising the supreme legislative power. He affirmed: "The National Assembly is the highest state power organ" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, t.12, tr.375). He particularly valued the people's mastery in supervising the state apparatus. Ho Chi Minh believed that the people have the right to control, criticize, and dismiss those whom they have authorized if they "cannot do the job for the people". He affirmed: "The people have the right to supervise and criticize the Government," "from the President to the traffic officer, similarly, if they cannot do the job for the people, the people no longer need them" (Ho Chi Minh, Vol 6, 2000, tr.365).

According to Ho Chi Minh, the essence of the "state of the people" is reflected in the fact that the power of the state originates from the strength of the people. The state must rely on the people, be closely associated with the people, and be subject to the people's supervision. This thought fundamentally changed the relationship between the state and citizens: the people are the subject of power, while the state is merely a tool to serve the people, no longer a means of domination or subjugation as in the old regimes. The Government is elected by the people through universal suffrage, demonstrating the spirit of direct democracy that Ho Chi Minh always upheld.

Second, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the vertical control mechanism, meaning from the central level to the local level, implemented through the system of inspection, monitoring, supervision, and discipline of the Party and the State. According to Him, this mechanism must be based on the principle that "state power belongs to the people," and must be organized within the framework of the constitution and law. He considered this the fundamental principle of the new type of state in Vietnam, where democracy is the inherent characteristic, and state organs are merely organizations authorized by the people to implement their will and aspirations. Ho Chi Minh called the contingent of officials and state employees "public servants of the people", who must be honest, incorruptible, devoted, and always subject to the inspection of the people. This control mechanism is not only aimed at maintaining order and discipline in the public apparatus, but more importantly, it is aimed at preventing the degradation of power, preventing bureaucracy, corruption, abuse of power, etc., which are diseases Ho Chi Minh repeatedly warned could "ruin an entire regime".

Third, Ho Chi Minh upheld the mechanism of control from outside the state apparatus, meaning the supervision by the people through social institutions. Organizations such as the Fatherland

Front, trade unions, mass organizations, the press, and public opinion have an important role in detecting, reflecting, and combating manifestations of abuse of power, bureaucracy, and legal violations. According to Him, this is a form of direct democratic control, ensuring the substantive participation of the people in political life. The state must create conditions for the people to exercise this right, considering it the measure of the democratic nature of the regime.

Fourth, Ho Chi Minh believed that the people's power must be guaranteed by the Constitution and law. He wrote: “The Constitution guarantees democratic freedoms for all strata of the people, based on the worker-peasant alliance and led by the working class. It must truly ensure gender equality and ethnic equality” (Ho Chi Minh, 2000, Vol 8, tr.322). Ho Chi Minh repeatedly affirmed: “In the sky, there is nothing more precious than the people” (Ho Chi Minh, 2000, Vol 7, tr.368). For Him, only the people, with their supreme position, have the right to decide all issues of the nation and the destiny of the people. This absolute faith in the people became the moral and political foundation in Ho Chi Minh's entire thought on power and state power control.

However, the most profound point in Ho Chi Minh's thought is the method of power control through the self-control mechanism. He believed that revolutionary ethics, self-criticism, and criticism are the most effective methods to prevent degradation (alienation). This control is not administrative imposition or punishment, but is educational, cautionary, and self-aware. He once wrote: “Just as a river must have a source to have water, without a source the river runs dry. A tree must have roots, without roots the tree withers. A revolutionary must have ethics; without ethics, they cannot accomplish the job” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, t.5, tr.298).

Besides, Ho Chi Minh emphasized institutionalization and transparency in power control. The law is not only a tool to punish wrongdoing, but also a barrier to protect power from abuse. He wrote: “The law must be strict, whoever violates it must be prosecuted, without distinction of position or class. Only then will the people believe” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, t.9, tr.259). At the same time, control must be proactive, preventive, and regular, rather than just reacting after the incident occurs.

Finally, a very practical and feasible point in Ho Chi Minh's thought is the establishment of independent inspection organs with sufficient authority and responsibility. As early as 1945, He issued a decree establishing the Special Inspectorate, with the function of “suspending, arresting, and detaining any personnel who commit errors” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, t.12, tr.664). This clearly demonstrates His profound understanding of the importance of institutionalizing control and linking it to accountability, deterrence, and public transparency.

Thus, power control according to Ho Chi Minh's thought is an organizational – ethical – legal system, oriented toward the goal of protecting political power from degradation and protecting the rights of the people. This control method is both theoretically profound and practically feasible, demonstrating the vision of a revolutionary – ideologist – nation builder.

3.2. Universal Significance of Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Power Control in the Global Context

Ho Chi Minh's thought on power control not only provides orientation value for the cause of building the socialist rule-of-law state in Vietnam, but also contains many universal meanings for humanity. This is because the issue of power and power control mechanisms is a common challenge for every political system, whether in the East or the West, whether in socialist or capitalist regimes. At a general level, Ho Chi Minh's thought expresses a humanitarian, democratic, and progressive value system that can offer the world many profound lessons.

Ho Chi Minh explained that corruption is the most typical phenomenon of power degradation, a manifestation of internal loss of control and lack of effective constraint mechanisms. Ho Chi Minh,

very early on, strongly condemned embezzlement, waste, and factionalism as “enemies of the people,” “enemies of the regime,” and simultaneously determined that anti-corruption is a task that “must be done immediately, without delay” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, t.5, tr.275). Corruption not only causes loss of national assets, but also degrades social ethics, loses the people's trust and breaks the legitimacy of the ruling Party.

First, Ho Chi Minh's thought affirmed that power control is a necessary condition for political power to truly belong to the people. According to Him, the nature of power does not lie in possession, but in the responsibility to serve humanity. The view that “The Government is the servant of the people” expresses a profound humanitarian philosophy, consistent with the universal spirit of modern human rights. In any regime, if power is not controlled by the people, it will soon be degraded, lose legitimacy and become a tool of oppression. Therefore, Ho Chi Minh's thought contributes to affirming a universal principle: only when power is placed under the people's supervision does democracy have substantive value, rather than merely being formal. This is a message of global significance in the context where many nations are seeking effective and sustainable democratic mechanisms.

Second, Ho Chi Minh's thought proposed a comprehensive power control model, combining legal institutions and public service ethics. If the West often emphasizes rule of law (*pháp trị*) as the foundation for power control, Ho Chi Minh pointed out a deeper dimension: power control must start from the ethics and self-control of the ruler. The harmonious combination of *rule of law* and *rule of virtue* (ethics) created a governance model with universal applicability, aiming for a political system that is both transparent and humane. In an era where “soft power” and “public trust” are increasingly becoming criteria for evaluating state capacity, Ho Chi Minh's thought on ethics, integrity, self-criticism, and criticism can be seen as a universal value for building a culture of political integrity and good governance.

Third, Ho Chi Minh's thought affirmed that power control is the foundation for protecting justice, peace, and sustainable development of humanity. According to Him, when power is uncontrolled, it will lead to oppression, corruption, and war; conversely, when power is correctly controlled, it will become a tool to build a beautiful and progressive society. This thought has global significance because every nation needs mechanisms of power control to prevent conflict, ensure fairness, and social stability. In the context of globalization, power control is not only an internal affair, but also a requirement for global governance, aimed at protecting human dignity, social justice, and world peace. Therefore, Ho Chi Minh's thought can be seen as a humanitarian contribution to modern political philosophy.

Fourth, the establishment of independent power coordination and supervision mechanisms, especially among judicial, inspection, auditing, and elected organs. This is an urgent requirement in the process of building a socialist rule-of-law state. The State Audit Office, the Government Inspectorate, and specialized supervisory committees of the National Assembly need more independent mechanisms regarding organization and budget, and must be empowered to inspect the assets, expenditures, and decisions of ministries and sectors in a substantive and timely manner. Thus, power control in current conditions is not merely an institutional technical issue, but a composite political, ethical, and social issue. Applying Ho Chi Minh's thought to establish effective power control mechanisms is the most sustainable path to fundamentally, long-term, and comprehensively prevent and combat corruption.

At the same time, it is necessary to build a political culture centered on integrity and ethics. The culture of resignation, periodic evaluation mechanisms, asset disclosure, and accountability must

become common criteria in the public apparatus. The implementation of power control mechanisms according to Ho Chi Minh's thought is not a political slogan, but a comprehensive and sustainable process of institutional reform.

Conclusion

Ho Chi Minh's thought on power control is not only a guideline for Party and State building, but also an ideological legacy with lasting practical value. In the context where the country is accelerating the building of a socialist rule-of-law state and the fight against corruption, the deep study and application of this thought is an urgent requirement. Power control is not meant to doubt or restrict, but to awaken the spirit of responsibility, integrity, and public service ethics within the contingent of officials and Party members. Only when power is strictly controlled will that power truly become a tool serving the people – as Ho Chi Minh once desired.

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