

MARX'S ETHICS THEORY AND ITS MEANING IN BUILDING MORALITY FOR VIETNAMESE TODAY

[A TEORIA ÉTICA DE MARX E SEU SIGNIFICADO PARA A MORALIDADE DOS VIENAMITAS NA ATUALIDADE]

*Bui Xuan Dung **

Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, Vietnam

ABSTRACT: The more developed society, the more confused people become about the deviant values affecting each individual and organization. Evils, theft, war, crime, and social inequality increased. That confused people with the moral values people want in society. What people want is a good life that people respect and believe. Therefore, morality is a guideline to help people act rightly and is a driving force for human progress. Living ethics help us avoid mistakes in work and life while simultaneously avoiding social evils and contributing more to building and developing society. The article uses materialist dialectics and analytical and synthetic methods to clarify Marx's moral views on the nature of morality, the relationship between interests and morality, moral progress, and forecasting about morality. The formation of communist morality. The article clarifies the content of education and the role of moral training and fostering because each individual in society must live and act according to the principles and standards that society has prescribed to bring certain benefits to themselves and everyone.

KEYWORDS: Ethics; Marx; Interests; Individual; Society

SUMÁRIO: Quanto mais desenvolvida for uma sociedade, tão mais confusas as pessoas se tornam em relação aos valores que afetam cada indivíduo e cada organização. Com isso, tendem a aumentar os males, os roubos, as guerras, os crimes e a desigualdade social. Considerando esse cenário possível, podemos afirmar que ele confundiu as pessoas quanto aos valores morais que elas deveriam escolher. O que desejam as pessoas? Desejam uma vida boa e respeito. Com isso, dizemos que a moralidade é uma diretriz que pode ajudar as pessoas a agirem corretamente, tornando essa ação uma força motriz capaz de favorecer o progresso humano. A vivência ética nos ajuda a viver corretamente no trabalho e na vida cotidiana, ao mesmo tempo em que evita males sociais, contribuindo para a construção e para o desenvolvimento da sociedade. Na construção deste artigo usamos como método a dialética materialista e métodos analíticos e sintéticos para esclarecimento das visões sobre a moral de Marx, bem como sobre a natureza da própria moralidade, sobre o progresso moral, interesses dos indivíduos e previsão sobre a moralidade. O artigo trata, ainda, do conteúdo da educação e do papel da formação e fomento moral, assumindo que os indivíduos na sociedade devem viver e agir de acordo com princípios e padrões que a própria sociedade prescreve, a fim de alcançar certos benefícios para todos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ética; Marx; interesses; indivíduo; sociedade

Acknowledgements: This research is funded by the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, Vietnam

* Doctor of Philosophy at Faculty of High Quality Training, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Email: dungbx@hcmute.edu.vn.

INTRODUCTION

Today, society is becoming more diverse with the real and virtual worlds of the 4.0 technology revolution. People face more complicated problems posed by life, so they have thoughts and actions about life that are hedonistic, depraved, and toxic. That is because moral values do not orient people to train and nurture to beautify a civilized society. The morality of extreme individualism is about satisfying the needs of personal entertainment, consumption, and enjoyment. Morality expresses through self-conscious attitudes and behaviors of people. Ethics is the regulation of human attitudes and behavior in each situation and not far from the law. The article uses the materialist dialectic method with comprehensive principles and specific historical principles to clarify morality from Marx's point of view. The report explains that in social development, morality is an essential form of social consciousness in people's social life, making society stable and develop. The moral thought of Marx shows creativity and changes people's perception of morality associated with economic benefits and social ethics related to personal morality. From this perception of Marx is the motivation to educate people to become ethical people to build a system of ethical standards and identify measures for moral education for Vietnamese people, which will contribute to raising the value of people. Moral values of the Vietnamese people.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is Marx's ethics?
2. What are the contents of Marx's ethics?
3. Did Marx's ethics make socio-economic development?

METHODOLOGY

This paper uses dialectical materialist methodology with a comprehensive approach to considering morality as a form of historical and practical value (Solinas, 2022). Specific historical principles to realize the content of character associated with social relationships, such as morality with moral relations and ethics with the relationship of individual interests with collective interests. The article uses analytical and synthesis methods to realize that Marx's ethics has inherited and improved more than previous philosophers. And the moral perspective of Marxists is the basis for social orientation and individual education toward building a civilized and developed society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethics is a form of social consciousness, a synthesis of principles and social standards for people to voluntarily adjust their behavior to suit the

interests and happiness of people with progress in society, in person-to-individual and individual-to-social relationships. Ethics are regulations and standards of human behavior towards others and work with nature and the living environment, which many acknowledge and voluntarily implement. Different philosophers have different conceptions of morality:

The morality of Confucius is in the doctrine of legitimacy (Li, 2022). He believes that a gentleman usually has five crucial human social relationships, called human decency, which places the character in the relationship of the three realms and the five commons for people to cultivate and cultivate. Confucianism believes that a gentleman seeks justice and a petty man seeks profit. Morality is the obligation to serve the community to serve society, while benefits are trivial material benefits. Thus, for Confucianism, a virtuous person is a person who realizes and fulfills his obligations to society. And so, Confucianism has established a whole system of requirements and ethical standards (humanity, righteousness, ceremony, wisdom, faith, loyalty, filial piety, respect, discipline, ...) to bind people to work. Serve the interests of society (of course, this interest is, first and foremost, the interest of the feudal class). In Confucian ethics, there is no room for personal gain.

The morality of Claude Adrien Helvétius has a relationship with self-interest (Kaitaro, 2022). He even argued that self-interest is the defining principle of all morality. Of course, for Helvétius, self-interest was fully understood as the interest exercised in the capitalist relations of capitalist society, law, and justice. That interest is, in many cases, opposed to the interests of the working people. Ethics derived from the principle of utility is that class interests limit morality. Even so, acknowledging the link between welfare and morality is a step forward in moral awareness. It shows that character has a basis in real life of people. Inherit and develop this thought.

The morality of Kant considers morality to be the sole responsibility of man because ethics are things under each individual's control (McManus, 2022). The results of actions are not under the control of each person. Therefore, each person is not morally responsible for the consequences of their actions. Kant observes that the fundamental assumption for moral responsibility is that human ideas attach moral law to will. A Man consciously tells morality: This is the right thing to do, so I will do it. According to Kant, we do not know how freedom determines our will, but we must be able to do so if we consider ourselves morally responsible human beings. In Kant's view, the obligors also hold that it is not individual happiness (i.e., personal gain) but the fulfillment of obligations that is the supreme ideal. For obligatory theory, ethical behavior is an act of performing a duty, bringing benefits to others and society; behavior that benefits the individual does not have the status of ethical behavior. That is expressed most centrally in Kant's ethics.

In contrast, happiness theorists consider the natural human tendency to reach for happiness. Personal happiness is life's supreme ideal, purpose, and meaning. The happiness of others and society is only a means to realize individual happiness. The egoism of the welfarist view manifests itself in the emphasis on personal interests and the disregard for moral obligations.

Hegel asserted that morality is the spiritual consciousness of man. G. Hegel said that the concept of morality is the result and the highest form in the development of the legal concept. It means that, to a certain extent, G. Hegel noticed the connection between moral and legal ideas and the development of ideas from legal to natural legal form. However, the idealism and mysticism of his conception of development and his closed philosophical system did not explain moral progress satisfactorily. On the contrary, G. Hegel has metaphysically defended the existence of the Prussian state as the most highly developed form and, therefore, the fullest expression of the idea of morality.

The morality of Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach's ethical views Although starting from people consider morality as a relationship between people and people; they do not see the social nature of people, so L. Feuerbach has recognized morality as relationships, abstract and immutable virtues of purely human nature. Humanism made him ignorant of moral progress.

The morality of Ho Chi Minh considered ethics as the criterion to evaluate the civility and nobility of society and people (Pham, 2022). A virtuous person is noble; a nation that, although economically backward, has the virtues of diligence, thrift, integrity, and integrity are still worthy of being civilized. According to Ho Chi Minh, the morality of Vietnamese people is loyalty to the country, and filial piety to the people must have a love for people. It must train itself in virtues of thrift, integrity, impartiality, and international spirit. Pure to fight all his life and devote his whole life and career to the ideals and goals of national liberation, class liberation, social liberation, and human liberation. Therefore, Ho Chi Minh's morality is revolutionary morality and action ethics. Morality was pointed out by Ho Chi Minh from the perspective of the long-term historical formation while inheriting Eastern moral thought and the moral quintessence of humanity. Essential is the moral ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, as well as the pure, honest examples they left behind.

Morality of Marx is associated with personal and social interests; one of the other fundamental ethical issues that Marx was very interested in was the issue of moral progress. Moral theories before Marx did not recognize or acknowledge moral progress (Chrysis, 2022). According to Marx, If the right interest is the principle of all morality, then it is necessary to strive to make the particular interests of the individual man consistent with the interests of the whole human race. For him, the problem is not in the separate opposition between interests and morality but in how to deal with the relationship between individual interests and social interests so that behavior realizes the interests of individuals. People become ethical behavior. When consistent with social interests, personal interests become part of social interests; in that case, the conduct for self-interest is moral. However, in the condition that society still divided into classes, it is difficult for individual interests to be universally compatible with social interests. Therefore, to strive to bring the claims of particular people in line with the interests of humanity as a whole means to fight for the formation of a communist society where individual interests are complete. Entirely consistent with the interests of society as a whole and of humanity. Thus, through historical epochs, morality has been mentioned since

the birth of philosophy, and the views of morality associated with training and cultivating people such as loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, righteousness, need, thrift, integrity, purity... in Confucianism. The rights of a moral person are democracy and freedom justice, the charity of ancient Greek philosophy.

CONCEPT OF MORALITY

The ethical category, familiar to the Vietnamese for a long time, introduces new content and adds concepts and violations. Ethics of the new era is why the new moral values have been integrated with the traditional moral values of the nation, making each Vietnamese feel close (Lovin, 2022). Moreover, traditional moral values have been raised to new heights, enabling him to combine tradition with modernity. Combining tradition, modernity, nation, and humanity is a prominent feature of Marx's moral thought. Absorption of the moral quintessence of humanity has enriched Marx's thought.

Ethics are associated with practical life, so in each era, moral values have different changes to suit the times and the nation. Marx argued that morality is a part of social consciousness, which social consciousness determined social existence. Therefore, any mode of production is associated with that morality and has an intimate relationship with all human activities and society. Because society is a vivid system of diverse phenomena and elements, each element, each social phenomenon, has its characteristics and internal development laws. Moreover, Marx asserted that it is impossible to correctly perceive such phenomena only from their characteristics and internal rules. Social phenomena, such as the state, law, religion, art, morality, etc., despite their specific features, in the end, all originate from the material base and are regulated by the establishment—material of society. After all, the formation of a new morality must manifest in moral personalities, the subjects of human relationships and activities. The ethical issues express the value and role of a character in social development. Therefore, moral education to form and develop individual moral capacities to meet the requirements of society has always been a concern of ethical theories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Firstly, ethics is associated with human nature in the totality of social relations

Marx also pointed out the determinism of people's socio-economic conditions and moral education with the formation of personality and moral character. In the Preface to Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, According to Marx, The mode of production of material life determines the

process of social, political and spiritual life in general. It is not human consciousness that determines their existence; on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness (Remmling & Marx, 2022). This thesis is the key to realizing the nature of all social phenomena, including morality. With the discovery of the determinism of the mode of production of material life, morality (and other mental phenomena) is no longer a manifestation of a specific force outside society, outside the human system, nor is it the manifestation of the a priori, enduring powers of man. Morality is a form of social consciousness that reflects and is conditioned in social existence. That is to say, conceptions, opinions, principles, standards, ideals, beliefs, moral sentiments, etc., the whole moral consciousness is, after all, an expression of a particular state or level of development of the material living conditions of society. Thus, morality has a social nature.

Second, Ethics has standards for evaluating human behavior, but it is class, national and epochal

Continuing and concretizing Marx's thought on the determinism of social existence for social consciousness in general and morality in particular, Engels argued for the social nature of character by showing the epochal, national, and class characteristics of personality. In *Anti-Dühring*, along with a critique of Ö. Dühring's conception of eternal moral truths, Engels asserts that, in essence, and the end, principles, norms, and views of Moral concepts are nothing more than the product of economic systems and economic epochs. At the same time, he also showed that, along with the determinism of the epochal factor, morality is also influenced by national characteristics. They recognize the difference and value transition in the pair of the most fundamental concepts of ethics, the concept of Good and Evil (Kangal, 2022).

Engels paid particular attention to the class character of morality and the epochal and national character. According to him, in a society with class division, each moral system expresses the interests of a particular class. There is no universal morality that stands above all class distinctions. Criticizing attempts to justify the classlessness of character, Engels pointed out specifically that, in a capitalist society, that is, in the advanced countries of nineteenth-century Europe, there are at least three ethical systems. These are the Christian feudal ethics, the bourgeois ethics, and the future proletarian ethics. Each of these ethical systems reflects and protects the interests of a corresponding social class. From that, he asserted: Humans, whether consciously or unconsciously, ultimately draw their moral conceptions from the practical relations that underlie their class position, that is, economic relations in which people produce and exchange (Fisher, 1984).

Third, Ethics has a dialectical relationship with interests and is to place in social relationships

Ethics does not directly reflect socio-economic development but shows the level of socio-economic development, showing the division of benefits in society. However, according to Marx, morality is not a direct reflection of the economic basis, and the relationship between economics and morality is not a one-way relationship. Thus, not every change in the monetary base necessarily leads to a corresponding shift in morality. Recognizing morality as a form of social consciousness, Marx not only pointed out the determinism of economics to morality but also showed the influence of philosophy, politics, science, art, religion, etc., that is, of the whole spiritual life on morality. At the same time, he also pointed out inheritance as a rule of the formation and development of morality and ethics. In the condition of society with class division, in which class owns the means of production, that class has the right to decide to build moral values to demonstrate its social domination. Therefore, according to Marx, moral progress does not coincide with economic-technical growth. Economic-technical growth can, under certain conditions, lead to a decline in certain aspects of morality. For example, Marx said that this dissimilarity is most evident in the states of free competition of capitalism, showing the race to apply technological progress for actual income. Much profit. According to Marx, Everything seems to contain its opposite side. We see that machines have a miraculous power to reduce human labor and make human labor more productive. But technical triumphs seem at the cost of mental decline. It seems that the more man conquers nature, the more man becomes a slave of others or a slave to his meanness (Khurana, 2022).

The basis of moral standards in capitalist society is the mode of production that determines social consciousness. When science and technology change, the method of production changes, so it is imperative that morality is to built up by the ruling class in society. Affirming moral progress and pointing out the regularity of moral development, the founders of Marxism predicted the emergence of a new morality - communist ethics. This morality is the continuation and expansion of the proletarian character that arose with the proletariat in the heart of capitalist society. Although appearing like a capitalist society, common decency contains the greatest number of factors that promise a long existence and represents the future. With the victory of communism, communist morality establishes as a truly human morality, above class antagonisms and above all recollection of them (Santilli, 1973).

Fourth, In moral education, Marx advocated combining two aspects: communicating and setting an example

Ethical examples are living embodiments of values and ethical standards. As a result, they can sensitize and naturally penetrate human consciousness. That requires the moral educator to be an example of morality. But to be role models, they must have qualities that meet education requirements. Therefore, according to Marx, educators themselves also need to be educated. Thus, for the first time in history, Marx gave the concept of moral education a broad

generalization as the process of forming and developing a person's ethical competencies and qualities. People, thus making it more complete and rich in content. Moral education, in a broad sense, is moral formation, not simply about imparting and teaching principles, social norms, and behavior between people according to the most demanding requirements determination (the ethical education systems before Marx only stopped at this process). Socio-economic development is associated with new human needs, so it is necessary to orient people's morality by educating them into socialist people. Thus, all the most fundamental problems of ethics: from the nature of righteousness, the relationship between interests and character, and moral progress, to predictions about the formation of communist morality Marxism (through the cause of building communism and moral education), were scientifically explain Marx. These ideas have created a revolutionary turning point in ethics and made Marx's theory of ethics a lasting value (Anderson, 2013).

Fifth is the moral construction of socialism in Vietnam today

In the current fourth technological revolution, science and technology will affect all aspects of Vietnamese life, thereby changing moral values in society. In the cause of building socialism, Vietnam is constructing a new morality.

Indeed, suppose morality is, after all, regulated by the socio-economic basis. Building a new character is part of the cause of innovation and public performance industrialization and modernization of the country under the influence of *Đổi Mới*. Rich people, a strong nation, fair, democratic, and civilized society are the overall goals of the renovation cause. Ethics must contribute to realizing those goals and be the driving force of that cause. Everything contributing to the realization of the goal of the country's renewal should be considered ethical. That means we must take the requirements and goals of the innovation as a basis to establish new values and ethical standards; at the same time, as a criterion for evaluating, inheriting, and renewing traditional values, as well as absorbing the cultural and moral values of humanity in the process of international integration. With that methodological perspective, we will have a more concrete, realistic, and practical way of seeing and solving ethical issues; overcome the dogmatic view of absolute moral values, lacking a reasonable basis (Croissant, 2022).

When we switch to a market economy, in solving practical problems and in theory, we are often confused by the influence of traditional views imbued with Confucianism with the choice of choices. Interests and ethics have a dialectical relationship with each other. They unify and transform each other in the market economy's relationship between individual and national interests. But if we look at the relationship between interests and morality according to the spirit of Marx, then people who seek personal interests in market activities are not entirely selfish. They can still be virtuous people if the goods they pursue do not interfere with the interests of others in society because that

benefit is also part of the social interest. In the current market economy conditions, that perspective will encourage people to have the will to rise, establish a business, and enrich themselves, their families, and society. At the same time, through their dynamic activities, people positively affirm their moral character, taking the effectiveness of activities to ensure morality. However, under the influence of the negative side of the market economy, private interests in the absence of control (both legally and morally) can be opposed to social interests. Therefore, for a person's claims to be compatible with the interests of society, to be consistent with the interests of the whole human race, as Marx asserted, the socialist orientation should be applied to the economy. A market economy is an inevitable and optimal solution in today's conditions (Leiter, 2022).

Marx's thought on the possibility of incompatibility between economic-technical development and moral progress has special warning significance in development in general and in moral development in particular. The requirements of the market economy itself in the direction of the knowledge economy and the requirements of integration are vigorously promoting the application of technological advances. Today, we face a moral hazard society because society has many insensitive, selfish, and individualistic people because of the negative side of the market economy and the harmful entertainment games of technology. That is why our Party advocates: Implement social progress and justice right in each step and each development policy; economic growth goes hand in hand with the development of culture, health, education, etc., and well solve social problems for the sake of human development. That policy aims to ensure stability and sustainability for development, including overcoming the dissimilarity between economic and technical development and moral progress (Vilkov, 2022).

For moral education, Marx's concept of creating "human circumstances," i.e., conditions worthy of human nature, is also being grasped by the human-centered perspective. Center in the planning of social policies and the policy of bringing culture into development, "making culture penetrate deeply into each residential area, each family, each person... Enhancing culture in all economic, political, social, and people's activities on morality, and at the same time affirms the meaning in Marx's concept of moral education.

CONCLUSION

Thus, today some Vietnamese has deviations manifestations in social terms. Inheriting Marx, the Vietnamese identify morality as the root of man, the foundation for building a developed society. But morality does not fall from the sky; each individual in the community must cultivate, struggle, and practice daily to build and strengthen himself. In thinking and action, ethical people associate personal interests with social interests. For the sake of society, they dare to fight against the negative, the selfish, and the self-interested. Only then the new community is humane and reasonable. Therefore, understanding

Marx's morality is the basis for Vietnam to build a modern civilized society and a new human. The morally perfected person is the root of human education. This study proposes to:

Firstly, each individual in society must be self-disciplined in learning and self-study to improve their awareness and regularly and continuously.

Second, the State needs to develop working regulations, clearly defining the rights and responsibilities of each individual and organization; at the same time, strengthen inspection and supervision of the performance of functions and tasks of each individual and organization.

Third, the State needs to continue to improve mechanisms, policies, and laws in association with further strengthening the strictness of party discipline and the State's laws.

Through research, this article shows that in the current conditions in our country, it is necessary to promote further the creative application and development of Marx's moral views to apply creatively in work innovation in Vietnam today. Only then will Vietnamese people be progressive, modern, civilized, and affectionate.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, J. R. (2013). Human symbol manipulation within an integrated cognitive architecture. In *Cognitive science* (pp. 313-341). Routledge.
- Chrysis, A. (2022). Marx as a Thinker of Communism: Communism as a Social Formation (Strategy). In *The Marx of Communism* (pp. 117-164). Springer.
- Croissant, A. (2022). Vietnam: The socialist party state. In *Comparative Politics of Southeast Asia* (pp. 401-441). Springer.
- Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communications Monographs*, 51(1), 1-22.
- Kaitaro, T. (2022). The Nature of Morality: Diderot, Helvétius and Rousseau. In *Language, Culture and Cognition from Descartes to Lewes* (pp. 127-140). Brill.
- Kangal, K. (2022). Engels' Conceptions of Dialectics, Nature, and Dialectics of Nature. In *200 Years of Friedrich Engels* (pp. 77-90). Springer.
- Khurana, T. (2022). Genus-Being: On Marx's Dialectical Naturalism. In *Nature and Naturalism in Classical German Philosophy* (pp. 246-278). Routledge.
- Leiter, B. (2022). Marx's Economics and the Transition from Capitalism to Communism. *Forthcoming*, Jamie Edwards & Brian Leiter, *Marx* (Routledge Philosophers series).
- Li, Y. (2022). The Confucian concept of human dignity and its implications for bioethics. *Developing World Bioethics*, 22(1), 23-33.
- Almeida, M. R. (2016). Um olhar crítico sobre o jusnaturalismo subversivo de John Finnis. *Aufklärung*, 3(1), p.135-144. <https://doi.org/10.18012/arf.2016.23065>
- Lovin, R. W. (2022). Moral theories. *Encyclopedia of Religious Ethics*, 17-25.
- McManus, M. (2022). Kant's Theory of Human Dignity. *Philosophy Now*, 150, 16-19.
- Pham, K. T. (2022). HO CHI MINH'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND ITS MEANING IN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION IN VIETNAM TODAY. *Aufklärung: Revista de Filosofia*, 9(1).
- Remmling, G. W., & Marx, K. (2022). On social existence and consciousness. In *Towards the Sociology of Knowledge* (pp. 131-134). Routledge.
- Santilli, P. (1973). Marx on species-being and social essence. *Studies in Soviet thought*, 13(1), 76-88.
- Solinas, M. (2022). The Young Engels and the Critique of Capitalism: His Influence on the Young Marx. In *Friedrich Engels for the 21st Century* (pp. 127-144). Springer.
- Vilkov, V. (2022). Modernization of Marxism in Modern China: Alternative Philosophical and Social Studies Interpretations. *Ukrainian Policymaker*, 10(10), 69-84.