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THE EVOLUTION AND PATH OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLANNING AND MARKET SINCE THE REFORM AND OPENING-UP: BASED ON THE LOGICAL PROGRESSION AND PARADIGM SHIFT IN CPC COGNITION

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ABSTRACT **DOI No: 10.36713/epra18867** **Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra18867**

The relationship between planning and market mechanisms, a core issue in China's economic reform, has evolved since its direct proposal by Deng Xiaoping. Since the reform and opening-up, amid shifts in the paradigms of CPC cognition, this relationship has followed a logical progression focused on "unity," moving through a logical starting point established by the CPC, then through a constructed logical intermediary, and a foundational support, progressing through an abstract theoretical level, the goal level of economic reform, the level of institutional and mechanism guarantees, and eventually reaching an inevitable dialectical-material relationship. Thus, it reaches the logical conclusion within the forty-five years of reform and opening-up. In the new era, as China's socialist market economy advances to a new stage, the relationship between planning and market mechanisms will continue to evolve with changes in CPC cognition and practice.

KEYWORDS: ***planning; market; CPC; logical progression; paradigm shift***

I. INTRODUCTION

Under socialism, correctly understanding and handling the relationship between planning and the market is a significant theoretical and practical issue left by Marx and Engels. At different historical stages, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Zedong explored this relationship with varying degrees of theoretical and practical inquiry, achieving some results yet facing limitations. At the pivotal Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee, the decision was made to initiate the reform and opening-up process, bringing forth a recurring question for each subsequent CPC leadership: "How will reform proceed?" Over the past forty years, the strategic positioning of economic reform has shifted from influencing China's economic outlook, to addressing the entirety of socialist modernization, then to key transformations in the economic development approach, and finally to comprehensive deepening of reform. Throughout this period, the CPC has consistently identified understanding and managing the relationship between planning/government and market as a central issue in China's economic reform. On the 120th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping's birth, re-examining the origin and evolution of the planning-market relationship, exploring the CPC's logical progression and paradigm shifts in this relationship over the past forty-five years of reform and opening-up, and grasping the logic behind this evolution, all carry significance for advancing economic reform at this new historical juncture and for profoundly understanding and mastering the laws of socialist construction with Chinese characteristics.

II. THE PROPOSAL AND EVOLUTION OF THE ISSUE OF PLANNING AND MARKET RELATIONS

At the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee, the Party shifted its focus to economic development. In January 1980, Deng Xiaoping began "seeking an economic development path suited to China's reality," which included a combination of "planned regulation and market regulation" (Deng, 1994). In October 1982, Deng Xiaoping explicitly raised the issue of the relationship between planning and market, asserting that the successful resolution of this issue would directly impact China's economic future. As he stated, "How should the relationship between planning and market be resolved? If resolved well, it will greatly benefit economic development; if not, it could be disastrous" (Deng, 1993). In the report to the Fourteenth National Congress, Jiang Zemin underscored from a strategic perspective that the core of China's economic reform is a correct understanding and management of the relationship between planning and the market (Jiang, 2006). In 2010, Hu Jintao emphasized the core issue of economic reform as understanding and managing the government-market relationship from the perspective of transforming the economic growth model, a point later reiterated at the Eighteenth National Congress (Chinese Communist Party, 2010). In 2013, at the Third Plenary Session of the Eighteenth Central Committee, Xi Jinping reaffirmed this at a new historical juncture focused on deepening reform (Xi, 2017).

III. THE LOGICAL PROGRESSION AND PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE CPC'S EVOLUTION OF PLANNING-MARKET RELATIONS SINCE THE REFORM AND OPENING-UP

From the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee to the Twentieth, the CPC has consciously engaged in theoretical and practical exploration, driving the development and evolution of planning and market relations. Throughout this process, leaders like Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping adapted logical paradigms based on the changing conditions of China's socioeconomic development. Yet, the core principles and pathways of this progression, along with the paradigmatic logic guiding this evolution, remain discernible.

(A) From the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee to Deng's Southern Tour: Establishment of the Logical Starting Point and Its Paradigm

From the close of the Third Plenary Session in 1978 to Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour in early 1992, the CPC, led by Deng Xiaoping, conducted over a decade of gradual exploration, leading Deng to put forth a definitive assertion establishing the logical starting point for the evolution of planning-market relations. This transition marked a shift from traditional opposition to a unified theoretical abstraction. This logical starting point was based on the triadic form of logic applied by Marx.

1. The Establishment of the Logical Starting Point and Theoretical Unity: Scientific Definition of Their Basic Attributes

After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee, the CPC, led by Deng Xiaoping, embarked on a new journey to explore planning-market relations. By early spring 1992, Deng's insights in the Southern Tour established a starting point for the evolution of this relationship, transitioning from a pre-reform dichotomy to a theoretical unity at the abstract level. This transition took place in three stages.

First, the traditional opposition between socialism and market economy began to dissolve. In November 1979, Deng Xiaoping refuted the erroneous view that "the market economy exists only in capitalist societies and is exclusive to capitalism," arguing instead that "socialism can also employ a market economy" (Deng, 1994). The Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee proposed "implementing a planned economy based on public ownership while leveraging the market's regulatory role as a supplement" (Chinese Communist Party, 2010). The Twelfth National Congress formally established the principle of "planned economy as primary, market regulation as supplementary," thereby breaking the previous opposition between socialism and the market economy.

Second, a redefinition of the roles and attributes of planning and the market took place. The Third Plenary Session of the Twelfth Central Committee characterized the "socialist economy" as a "planned commodity economy based on public ownership," confirming commodity economy as an attribute of the socialist economy. However, debate arose over the respective roles of "planned" and "commodity economy." To build consensus and dispel confusion, Deng Xiaoping shared his perspective in February 1987, stating that "market and planning are both methods" and that it was time to move beyond the previously emphasized "planned economy as primary" (Deng, 1994). The Thirteenth National Congress defined the "socialist planned commodity economy system" as an "inherently unified system of planning and market," removing the distinction between primary and auxiliary functions and emphasizing the concurrent application of both methods. From 1989 to 1990, the combination of planned economy and market regulation was emphasized four

times. In June 1989, Deng Xiaoping reiterated the importance of combining planned economy with market regulation, with flexibility in practical implementation. The Fifth Plenary Session of the Thirteenth Central Committee, convened in November of the same year, reaffirmed this combination. In December 1990, Deng once again stressed that "both planning and market are necessary," warning that rejecting the market would result in an ignorance of global information, isolating and rendering oneself "willingly backward" (Deng, 1994). The Seventh Plenary Session of the Thirteenth Central Committee proposed "initially establishing an economic system and operational mechanism that combines a planned economy with market regulation suitable for a planned commodity economy."

Third, the scientific definition of the essential attributes of planning and market resulted in theoretical unity between the two. Recognizing the empirical reality that "socialism can have a market economy and capitalism can have planned control," Deng Xiaoping in December 1990 proposed that "the distinction between capitalism and socialism should not be based on planning or market" (Deng, 1994). During his January 1991 visit to Shanghai, Deng criticized the view that equated planning with socialism and market with capitalism, stating that "both are methods, and markets can also serve socialism" (Deng, 1993). In February 1992, Deng articulated a definitive assertion that the extent of planning or market does not constitute an essential distinction between socialism and capitalism. He further elaborated that "planned economy does not equate to socialism; capitalism also has planning; market economy does not equate to capitalism; socialism also has markets" (Deng, 1993). In other words, planning and market are not attributes of social systems and should not be considered elements of basic social structure; rather, they are economic tools. Consequently, the theoretical unification of planning and market as economic instruments was realized, and the logical starting point for their relationship's evolution was established.

2. Paradigm for Establishing the Logical Starting Point: Marx's Triadic Formal Logic

A key question to explore is how Deng Xiaoping was able to break free from traditional ideological constraints and find a breakthrough in understanding and handling the relationship between planning and market mechanisms. By examining Marx's logical analysis of competition, we find that his use of the triadic logic—"thesis–antithesis–synthesis"—provided a paradigm for establishing the logical starting point in the evolution of planning-market relations.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx first pointed out that modern monopoly arises from competition itself, which in turn originates from feudal monopoly. Thus, competition initially opposes monopoly, not vice versa; therefore, modern monopoly is not a mere antithesis but a synthesis (Marx & Engels, 1995). Marx used this triadic logic to articulate their relationship as follows:

Thesis: Feudal monopoly preceding competition.

Antithesis: Competition.

Synthesis: Modern monopoly; because it presupposes the rule of competition, it is the negation of feudal monopoly, and because it is a monopoly, it also negates competition.

Following this triadic logic, Marx reached the conclusion that modern monopoly, or bourgeois monopoly, is a synthesized monopoly—a "negation of negation," a unification of opposites, a pure, normal, and rational monopoly (Marx & Engels, 1995).

Similarly, Deng Xiaoping argued that the market economy, as a method of developing social productive forces, is not exclusive to capitalism; it even began to germinate in feudal societies, and socialism can equally adopt a market economy (Deng, 1994). In other words, the market economy originated in feudal society and developed within capitalist society. Applying Marx's formal logic, we can infer that the market economy was initially the antithesis of socialism; thus, the socialist market economy is not a mere antithesis but a synthesis. The triadic logic can be expressed as follows:

Thesis: Pre-socialist capitalist and feudal market economies.

Antithesis: Socialism.

Synthesis: Socialist market economy; since it presupposes the rule of socialism, it is the negation of capitalist and feudal market economies, while as a market economy, it also negates socialism.

This leads to the conclusion of a socialist market economy. This insight aligns with Deng Xiaoping's emphasis that socialism and the market economy are not fundamentally incompatible (Deng, 1993), and their combination carries a logical inevitability.

(B) From the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth National Congress: Constructing the Logical Intermediary and Its Dual Paradigm

Under the leadership of Jiang Zemin, the CPC transformed the issue of planning and market relations by following a dual paradigm of theoretical and historical logic. This approach led to the core positioning

of "the market playing a fundamental role in resource allocation," a position that has become increasingly stable as the CPC's understanding deepens, thereby constructing the logical intermediary for the evolution of planning-market relations. This intermediary has guided their relationship toward the unification of the market's fundamental role with the goal of planning in socialist economic reform.

1. Constructing the Logical Intermediary and Unification at the Reform Goal Level: Positioning the Market's Fundamental Role

In June 1992, Jiang Zemin designated the fundamental task of economic reform as establishing a new socialist economic system, emphasizing that the key was to "correctly understand the relationship between planning and market and their interrelationship" (Jiang, 2006). Specifically, the task was to "pay greater attention to and give greater play to the role of the market in resource allocation within the framework of national macro-control" (Jiang, 2006), thus reframing the issue to focus on the relationship between national macro-control and market influence. Jiang Zemin noted three representative perspectives within academic and theoretical discussions on the economic system: "First, to establish a socialist commodity economy combining planning and market; second, to establish a planned socialist market economy; and third, to establish a socialist market economy" (Jiang, 2006). To unify the Party's understanding and actions, Jiang suggested that the Fourteenth National Congress adopt the third option as a more scientifically sound proposal.

Since "the socialist economy is planned from the outset" and "capitalism is not without planning" (Jiang, 2006), Jiang Zemin expressed a personal preference for the third option, indicating that regardless of which approach was ultimately chosen, it was essential to clarify the new socialist economic operation system as one that organically combines the advantages of both planning and market mechanisms. The Fourteenth National Congress established the third option as the target model for China's economic reform, emphasizing the market's fundamental role while strengthening and improving the state's macro-control. Specifically, the goal was "to enable the market to play a fundamental role in resource allocation under the macro-control of the socialist state" (Jiang, 2006).

The Third Plenary Session of the Fourteenth Central Committee further specified the basic framework for establishing a socialist market economy, detailing the goals and principles of economic reform. Jiang Zemin, in his speech, addressed the issue of balancing macro-control with market influence, presenting his views on the relationship. He identified both state macro-control and the market mechanism as intrinsic requirements of a socialist market economy, believing that they are unified, complementary, and mutually reinforcing. Establishing a socialist market economy requires both aspects to work together to balance each other. On one hand, it is necessary to capitalize on the market's efficiency in resource allocation and incentive provision to reform the traditional planned economy; on the other, the market's inherent weaknesses and limitations require state macro-control to mitigate and overcome them (Jiang, n.d.). The Fifteenth National Congress report stressed the need to "fully leverage market mechanisms and improve the macro-control system" (Jiang, 2006). The Third Plenary Session of the Fifteenth Central Committee proposed "fully utilizing the market's fundamental role in resource allocation under state macro-control," which was later modified to "to an even greater extent" by the Sixteenth National Congress. This progression indicates the CPC's evolving and increasingly mature understanding of planning-market relations, constructing the logical foundation for the evolution of their relationship. It further stabilizes the unified relationship between the market's fundamental role and planning within the goals of socialist market economic reform.

2. Dual Paradigms in Constructing the Logical Intermediary: Theoretical and Historical Logic

Unlike Deng Xiaoping, who followed a formal logic paradigm to establish the starting point of planning-market relations, the CPC under Jiang Zemin pursued both a theoretical logic paradigm—"practice-theoretical understanding-practice"—and a historical logic paradigm—"historical facts-summary of experience-new historical starting point." This dual approach continually deepened the CPC's understanding of the market's fundamental role, constructing the logical intermediary for the evolution of planning-market relations and unifying their roles at the level of reform goals.

In June 1992, Jiang Zemin, referencing historical experience and Deng Xiaoping's ideas on socialism's compatibility with a market economy, criticized the mistaken notion that too much reliance on the market would lead to capitalism. He further discussed how, as previously outlined, both Engels and Lenin adapted their views in response to changing historical conditions under different social systems, emphasizing the need to study the evolving nature of capitalist economies and distinguish between essential characteristics of capitalism (Jiang, 2006). Jiang also examined historical experience, particularly the increase in macro-control by Western capitalist countries over their economies after the 1930s, highlighting that Western capitalist economies had integrated planning at both the micro-

level within firms and the macro-level within the state, with formal macroeconomic planning becoming prominent in the 1960s (Jiang, 2006). Jiang concluded that thought should not remain confined to abstract concepts and outdated beliefs. In other words, one should not view planning as unique to socialism or market mechanisms as unique to capitalism. Similarly, based on historical evidence that demonstrates both the market's positive impact on economic development and its evident limitations, Jiang Zemin advocated for abandoning outdated views and biases against the market, reinforcing the importance of the market mechanism while fully leveraging the advantages of the socialist system in macro-control.

Based on these theoretical and historical paradigms, the CPC established a concrete model for economic reform in China, creating a unified relationship between planning and the market at the reform goal level and thus constructing the logical intermediary in the evolution of their relationship.

(C) From the Seventeenth to the Eighteenth National Congress: Constructing the Logical Support and Its Practical Logic Paradigm

In advancing the reform of China's microeconomic foundation within a socialist market economy, the CPC under Hu Jintao not only transformed the nature of the issue but also expanded its understanding to the level of institutional and mechanism guarantees for both government and market roles. This constructed the logical support for the evolution of planning-market relations, guiding them toward unification at the institutional and mechanistic levels.

1. Constructing the Logical Support for the Evolution of Relations and Unification at the Institutional and Mechanism Level

In December 2006, Hu Jintao highlighted two key tasks related to economic development: "transforming the economic development model and improving the socialist market economic system" (Hu, 2016). He argued that advancing these two tasks ultimately required deepening reform, specifically by "leveraging institutions to better enable the market to play a fundamental role in resource allocation and establishing an effective macro-control system" (Hu, 2016). This established the institutional guarantee for the market's fundamental role, reiterated in the report to the Seventeenth National Congress. In December 2010, Hu Jintao raised the issue of "managing the relationship between government and market," emphasizing that the roles of market influence and government regulation are "complementary and indispensable" (Hu, 2016). He suggested that the extent of each role should depend on the macroeconomic situation, stressing the need for further improvement of related systems and mechanisms, and he once again reaffirmed the institutional guarantee for the market's fundamental role.

In the Eighteenth National Congress report, Hu Jintao elevated the handling of government-market relations to the core issue of economic reform, emphasizing "greater respect" for market principles and "better fulfillment" of the government's role. He also proposed "institutionalizing the goals and policy tools of macro-control" (Hu, 2016). Consequently, the institutionalization of market roles expanded to include the mechanistic support of government roles. This built the two logical supports needed for the evolution of planning-market relations, establishing a unified relationship between the market's fundamental role and the government's role at the institutional and mechanistic levels.

2. Paradigm for Constructing the Logical Support: Practical Logic

In summary, the construction of the logical support under the leadership of Hu Jintao emerged from the practical logic of advancing the reform of the market economy's micro-foundations. Specifically, as Jiang Zemin noted, "Enterprises are the micro-foundation of a market economy" (Jiang, 2006). After the Fourteenth National Congress established the goal of a socialist market economy, the Third Plenary Session of the Fourteenth Central Committee identified the reform of state-owned enterprises as the core focus and challenge of economic reform. Consequently, the Party and government addressed it as a significant economic and political issue. Over more than a decade, these efforts yielded substantial breakthroughs in reforming state-owned enterprises, and the basic framework of a socialist market economy was established. Yet, as Hu Jintao emphasized, "The reform tasks for the micro-foundations of the market economy remain substantial, with fiscal, tax, financial, and administrative management systems still needing reform, while realizing scientific development faces numerous systemic obstacles" (Hu, 2016). Therefore, the emergence of these systemic obstacles in the economic system signals that optimizing government and market functions alone is insufficient for advancing the micro-foundational reforms of the market economy, necessitating corresponding institutional and mechanistic support.

(D) Since the Eighteenth National Congress: The Logical Conclusion of the Evolution of Relations and Its Dual Paradigm

Based on a dual paradigm of empirical and dialectical logic, the CPC, led by Xi Jinping, reaffirmed the core

issues of economic reform at the Third Plenary Session of the Eighteenth Central Committee and promoted three shifts, arriving at a significant new conclusion. The relationship between planning and market has thus evolved into a unified dialectical-material relationship at the level of the market's decisive role and government function, reaching a logical conclusion in the CPC's trajectory.

1. Reaching the Logical Conclusion of the Evolution of Relations and Dialectical Unity

On the issue of reforming the socialist market economy, the Third Plenary Session of the Eighteenth Central Committee of the CPC adopted the *Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reform* (hereafter referred to as *Decision*), which emphasized three points: First, it reiterated and specified the core issue of economic reform, namely, "properly handling the relationship between government and the market," which Xi Jinping clarified as the need to "determine whether the decisive role in resource allocation is played by the market or the government" (Xi, 2017). Second, it articulated a general principle of market economies, elevating "the market's role in determining resource allocation" to the status of a general principle of market economies, emphasizing that economic reform should "closely focus on enabling the market to play a decisive role in resource allocation" (Chinese Communist Party, 2014). Third, it underscored the importance of government function, with Xi Jinping pointing out that while the market plays a decisive role, it is not the sole role, advocating for "scientific macro-control" and "effective government governance" to enhance the government's role (Xi, 2017).

These three points indicate that the CPC, under Xi Jinping, implemented the following three shifts: first, shifting the focus from whether planning or government and market functions play the primary role to determining the decisive function in resource allocation; second, promoting a fundamental shift in market function by positioning it as "decisive" rather than merely "fundamental," based on respect for the general principles of a market economy; third, redefining the role of government from a managerial to a service role, based on the agency of subjective action. This led to the clear statement that "the market plays a decisive role in resource allocation, while the government's role is optimized" (Xi, 2017). Consequently, based on the dialectical unity of objective principles and subjective agency, the organic unification of the decisive role of the market and the function of the government is inevitable, marking the CPC's progression toward the logical conclusion of their evolving relationship.

2. The Dual Paradigm of Reaching the Logical Conclusion: Empirical and Dialectical Logic

Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, the CPC's progression toward the logical conclusion in the evolution of planning-market relations is a result of applying a dual paradigm of empirical and dialectical logic.

Firstly, Xi Jinping emphasizes that the theoretical and practical proposition of "enabling the market to play a decisive role in resource allocation while optimizing government functions" embodies a problem-oriented approach (Xi, 2017). Specifically, this approach addresses practical issues that have persisted over more than two decades of China's socialist market economy. Among these, the major concerns are inefficiencies in the functioning of market mechanisms and inadequacies in government roles, which constrain the vitality of China's market entities and impede the full function of market and value laws. Solving these issues relies on a balanced analysis of the roles of government and market, fostering a comprehensive understanding of their respective functions.

Xi Jinping thus reveals the general laws and essence of the market economy, defining the decisive role of the market, and emphasizes the improvement of market systems and rules. He advocates entrusting the market with economic activities that it can effectively regulate and leaving matters that do not require government intervention to the market. At the same time, Xi highlights the inherent strengths of China's socialist system, stressing the need to harness the advantages of the socialist market economy, especially in serving enterprises and promoting economic and social development. Consequently, by addressing the real issues within China's socialist market economy and advancing its reform goals, the CPC under Xi has introduced a significant theoretical and practical proposition regarding the respective roles of government and market. This proposition is thus both a theoretical necessity and a practical imperative for deepening reform within China's socialist market economy and optimizing the economic system.

Secondly, Xi Jinping emphasizes that handling the relationship between market and government roles requires not only dialectical thinking and a "dual-point approach" but also persistence. In *On Contradiction*, Mao Zedong specifically underscored the importance of analyzing the particularity of contradictions, especially examining two types: "primary contradictions and secondary contradictions, as well as the principal and non-principal aspects of contradictions" (Mao, 1991). At the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee, Mao used straightforward language to refer

to the two opposing aspects of a contradiction as "two points," while he called the method of analyzing contradictions the "dual-point approach." In a speech on January 27, 1957, Mao emphasized the CPC's enduring strategic policy of "coordinating all forces and ensuring each aspect achieves its proper function," encouraging the mobilization of all positive forces to build socialism. Based on this dual-point approach of dialectical materialism, Xi Jinping and the CPC articulated the reciprocal relationship between the roles of market and government on both theoretical and empirical levels.

On the theoretical level, government and market have distinct functions and advantages that are complementary and mutually reinforcing; thus, the two should not be separated or opposed. Xi Jinping underscored this point by stating, "We cannot replace or even negate government functions by the decisive role of the market, nor should we replace or negate the market's decisive role by maximizing government functions" (Xi, 2017). On the empirical level, while the socialist market economy system is already in place and market mechanisms can largely function independently without government intervention, reliance on the automatic regulation of market mechanisms is not sufficient in all areas. Certain sectors, such as national defense and strategic energy, must necessarily fall within the government's purview.

IV. CONCLUSION

Since the reform and opening-up, the relationship between planning and the market has undergone two major changes. First, the focus of this relationship shifted from planning and market to government and market; second, the specific question evolved from emphasizing the market's fundamental role to addressing whether government or market should play the decisive role. In terms of the evolution of planning/market relations, the issue of government and market relations has remained central to economic reform. Amid shifts in the CPC's cognitive paradigm, these relations have followed a logical progression focused on "unity." This progression has traversed from the CPC's established logical starting point, through a constructed logical intermediary and support, moving from the theoretical level, through economic reform objectives, to the institutional and mechanistic levels of guarantee, and ultimately reaching a dialectical-material conclusion. This culmination aligns with Mao Zedong's insight that "when one reaches this stage, the cognitive process concerning a specific objective development may be considered complete" (Mao, 1991). However, as Mao further remarked, "the cognitive process regarding the progression itself is never complete" (Mao, 1991). As China advances with further reform and enters a new stage in market economy development, the CPC's theoretical and practical inquiry into the relationship between planning/government and market continues to deepen and expand. With the ongoing development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, this cognitive process will advance, leading to further evolution in the relationship between planning and the market (Xi, 2017).

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