

Application of center-periphery theory to the study of Vietnam-China relations in the middle ages

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Abstrak

ABSTRAK

Based on the generalizations in international researchers views on the relationship between the center and the periphery, the author maps out a theory on the relationship between Vietnam as the periphery and China as the center of East Asia during feudalism. On the basis of the theory of central peripheral relationships and the realities of a diplomatic relationship between Vietnam and China during feudalism, the article proves not only that China considered itself to be the center of East Asia with the role of educating surrounding peripheries, but also that surrounding countries were influenced by Chinese Confucian ideologies. For example, Vietnam also followed the Chinese centric order. Accordingly, acts such as requesting investiture and tribute from Vietnam to the center China were sustained for a long period, although there was no balance in interest between the two countries. In addition to the subordinate tendency of the periphery in relation to the center, there is a centrifugal tendency because of the asymmetry in interest. In the case of the Vietnam China relationship at that time, Vietnams subordinate tendency was relative and superficial, while the centrifugal tendency was mainstream. The author shows that the strong centrifugal tendency led to the transformation of Vietnams position from a Chinese vassal or peripheral state into a center in relationships with smaller countries in Southeast Asia.