

TO CONTINUE TO SUPPLEMENT AND IMPROVE THE MODEL OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT OF VIETNAM FROM NOW UNTIL 2030, WITH A VISION TO 2045

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***Abstract:** In this paper, the author shares his some of his reflections on Vietnam's development management. The author demonstrates that the model has been formed and significantly improved since the start of the Renovation nearly 40 years ago. This model is a distinctive socialist model of Vietnam presented in the form of a system of goals, including general objectives, economic objectives, cultural objectives, social objectives, human objectives, political objectives, and objectives of foreign affairs. Based in his analysis the author argues that, from both theoretical and practical perspectives, the model needs to continue to be perfected in terms of goals, pillars, and the relationships between fields as well as within the same field. These are the issues that need to be studied and tested in practice in the process of perfecting Vietnam's development management model from now until 2030, with a vision to 2045.*

***Keywords:** management of social development, Ho Chi Minh, Communist Party of Vietnam, Socialism, Renovation.*

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the Renovation (Doi Moi) the development management model of Vietnam has always been supplemented and improved. The content of this model is reflected in the overall goals, in 8 characteristics and in the viewpoint

on the three (key) pillars of the society: socialist-oriented economy, socialist rule of law State, and socialist democracy, as well as in the 10 law-like relationships. Vietnam's social development management model is built on the basis of Vietnam's

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development model from now until 2030, with a vision to 2045. Therefore, from theoretical and practical perspectives, what issues need to be researched to further clarify the management model of Vietnam's social development?

2. Content

Based on the Documents of the Communist Party of Vietnam, especially the article written by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, we can envision and outline Vietnam's social development model. It is a distinctive socialist model of Vietnam. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong wrote: "The socialist society that the Vietnamese people are striving to build is a wealthy, strong, democratic, fair, and civilized society; where the people are the masters, with a highly developed economy based on modern means of production and advanced, suitable production relations, with an advanced culture imbued with national identity; the people have comfortable and happy lives, with conditions for comprehensive development; ethnic groups in the Vietnamese community are equal, united, respectful, and supportive of each other's development; there is a socialist rule of law state

of the people, by the people, for the people, led by the Communist Party; friendly and cooperative relations with countries around the world". This is the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Vietnam summarized through many Party Congresses reiterated by the General Secretary. This viewpoint helps us envision a future society of Vietnam and can be said to be a comprehensive socialist model of Vietnam. It is presented in the form of a *system of goals, including general objectives, economic objectives, cultural objectives, social objectives, human objectives, political objectives, and objectives of foreign affairs*. Examining these goals/objectives, we can see that the general goal of the socialist model is *wealthy people, strong, democratic, just, and civilized society*.

Looking at the general objectives, we can see that these objectives creatively incorporate and inherit the achievements and values of human civilization into the conditions of Vietnam. Therefore, Vietnam's social development model is also within the flow of human civilization; at the same time, it reflects the application in a specific manner to the circumstances

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of Vietnamese society. However, in addition to the mentioned values, we believe that three other important values emphasized by Ho Chi Minh and have become the motto of Vietnam need to be further studied and supplemented. These values are *independence, freedom, and happiness*. In fact, these three values have been mentioned in the specific characteristics of Vietnamese socialism. But if they are only placed in specific characteristics, they do not reach the level and position they deserve.

Returning to the history of the Chinese revolution, Sun Yat-sen once put forward a famous theory, that is the *Three People's Principles*: national independence, civil liberties, and people's happiness (Nationalism, Democracy, People's Livelihood). Studying the thought of Ho Chi Minh, we can summarize his development philosophy briefly and concisely, that is independence, freedom, and happiness. These are very profound ideas of Sun Yat-sen and Ho Chi Minh. The profound meaning in Ho Chi Minh's thought of independence, freedom, and happiness is manifested in the following basic aspects:

In Vietnam, since the early years of

the 20th century, with profound practical experiences in the revolutionary movement of the working class and the laboring people of the capitalist countries worldwide, absorbing the quintessence of humanity, especially since approaching the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh has summarized and put forward an extremely correct, profound, and revolutionary thought, that is, (the thought) affirming that *national independence must be associated with socialism*.

First of all, national independence is a prerequisite for happiness and freedom. According to Ho Chi Minh, national independence can only be achieved through the path of a socialist revolution: "Only communism can save humanity, bring to everyone, regardless of race and origin, freedom, equality, benevolence, solidarity, prosperity on earth, employment/jobs to everyone and for everyone, joy, peace, happiness, in short, the true world republic, abolishing the capitalist borders that until now have been nothing but long walls preventing workers worldwide from understanding and loving each other"².

He affirmed resolutely that even if the

Truong Son mountain range had to be burned down, it must be fought for the independence of the nation. National independence is not something new in the history of nations and world history. But national independence according to Ho Chi Minh's thought is entirely new, elevated to a new level, a new essence - National independence is the prerequisite for freedom, happiness, and thus associated with socialism.

Second, happiness and freedom are the values of national independence. According to Ho Chi Minh, a country with independence must ensure that its people enjoy happiness and freedom because freedom and happiness are the measure of the value of national independence. To achieve happiness and freedom, national independence must be associated with socialism because only in a socialist regime can everyone have the conditions to improve their own lives, develop their own personality and talents, take care of human beings and people have conditions for comprehensive development. Happiness and freedom according to Ho Chi Minh's viewpoint mean that the people must fully enjoy material and spiritual life brought about by socialism. Everyone has

food, clothing, and education; those who have enough to eat can become rich, and those who are rich can become richer; people are the masters and people exercise their mastership (rights).

Conceptually, freedom is broader than democracy and is the goal of any nation. Democracy is freedom within a framework, is the concretization of individual freedoms at a certain historical stage. Referring to the goals of socialism, K. Marx affirmed that *the freedom of each person is the condition for the freedom of all*. F.Engels also drew a famous conclusion that the development of society is the process of transition from necessity to freedom.

Third, independence, freedom, and happiness are also the common values of humanity, the measure of the development of human beings as the ultimate goal. The struggle for the liberation of human beings and for the development of human beings is a red thread throughout the history of human development. Through each social revolution, human values are increasingly emphasized and implemented in practice. Especially, entering the 21st century, related to the issue of human development, the

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United Nations has set *Millennium Goals* with 8 specific contents: Eradicating extreme poverty; universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; establishing global partnerships for development. It can be said that these contents, at different levels of intensity, are in the legacy of Ho Chi Minh's thought; at the same time, they have been and are being increasingly solidified in Vietnam's renovation process (Doi Moi). Currently, although GDP is very important (reflecting economic growth), HDI (Human Development Index) is considered more important than GDP because HDI is directly related to human development indicators.

Fourth, in the current context, independence has significant meaning not only in terms of security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity but also in terms of economics and diplomacy, etc. As we know, humanity has been witnessing the trend of globalization, economic integration occurring strongly, directly affecting all nations whether they want

it or not. Independence today is not only/simply about defining borders, sovereignty, territorial integrity... but also about economic independence, and autonomy in foreign affairs - issues of utmost importance in modern society. If the economy and diplomacy of a country depend on another country, then that country cannot be said to be independent. The economy, ultimately, is the determining factor in all other fields. The principle of Marxism-Leninism remains true and retains its value in the present context.

Devoting his whole life to the cause of national liberation, Ho Chi Minh changed the fate of the Vietnamese nation and people, turning Vietnam from a colonial country, half-feudal, into an independent sovereign country; turning the Vietnamese people from slaves into free people, masters and rulers of (their) society. He raised a famous truth: "Nothing is more precious than independence, and freedom". Throughout the history of Vietnam since its inception, after the title of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1945-1975) and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (from 1975 to now), there are three sacred and great values which humanity in

general and the Vietnamese people in particular continuously struggle to achieve: *Independence - Freedom - Happiness*. In that chain of common and consequential values, the preceding value is the prerequisite, the condition for the subsequent value. We see in that order a strict logic and a natural necessity: Without independence, it is very difficult to have freedom, and when there is no freedom, there can be no happiness. This is true both at the macro level (national, ethnic) and micro level (individual human beings). It can be said that independence - freedom - happiness are the fundamental elements, values of the formation, and development of a country in the true meaning(s) of these terms. Especially for countries developing on the path of socialism, the values of Independence - Freedom - Happiness become more and more basic and top priorities.

Furthermore, at the 13th Party Congress, Vietnam's general development goals were further specified and clarified with important milestones for the country from now until 2045. These specific goals are identified with the following milestones: "By 2025: To be a developing country with modern-oriented industry,

surpassing the low average income level. *By 2030*: To be a developing country with modern industry and high average income. *By 2045*: To become a high-income developed country". This is a concrete step in realizing the goals of prosperity, strength, democracy, justice, and civilization that we have been unable to specify for many years. Compared to previous congresses, the 13th Party Congress has clearly articulated qualitative goals into quantitative ones. However, upon examining these specific goals, it can be observed that economic goals are more distinct than goals related to democracy, justice, and civilization; the quantitative orientation of socialism has not been as clearly defined as in previous documents. Goals related to culture, society, individuals, political objectives, and foreign relations have not been quantified clearly.

In addition, in the speech at the first session of the Drafting Committee of the 14th Party Congress, when discussing Vietnam's goals for 2045, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong mentioned the goal of building a Vietnam (which is) "prosperous, thriving, civilized, and happy". The question arises whether these specific

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goals for Vietnam in 2045 are part of the goals of a “prosperous people, strong, democratic, just, civilized country “or are they a replacement for the general goals in Vietnam’s development model presented in the Party’s Guidelines and previous congress documents?

Related to the model of social development management, in the Party’s documents, besides the general model which discusses building a market-oriented socialist economy, there is also the model of a general market-oriented economy during the period of transition to socialism in Vietnam. As stated in the 13th Party Congress’s documents: “The market-oriented socialist economy is the general economic model of our country during the period of transition to socialism. It is a modern market economy, internationally integrated, operating fully and synchronously according to the laws of the market economy, with the management of the socialist rule of law State, led by the Communist Party of Vietnam; ensuring the socialist orientation for the goal of ‘prosperous people, strong, democratic, just, civilized country’ suitable for each stage of the national development”. It can be considered that the notion of

developing a market-oriented socialist economy is a creative theoretical breakthrough of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Just as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed, introducing the concept of developing a market-oriented socialist economy is *a very fundamental and innovative theoretical breakthrough of the Communist Party of Vietnam*, which is an important theoretical achievement over the 37 years of implementing the renovation policy, stemming from Vietnam’s practical experience and selectively absorbing the world’s experiences⁵.

Along with that breakthrough, Vietnam advocates building a socialist rule-of-law state of the people, by the people, and for the people. The socialist rule-of-law state is a tool to implement the people’s sovereignty, ensuring and protecting the interests of the majority of the working people. All policies, laws, and activities of the state are for the benefit of the people, with the primary and overriding interest of the people.

It can be said that the rule-of-law state, along with the market economy, is an achievement of humanity that all countries must adapt to suit

their economic, political, and social conditions for development. However, the essence of the bourgeois rule-of-law state differs from the socialist rule-of-law state in that the essence of the bourgeois rule of law state is a tool to serve and protect the interests of the bourgeoisie, while the socialist rule-of-law state in Vietnam is a tool to manifest and implement the people's sovereignty, protecting and ensuring the interests of the majority of the working people. It is a state of the people, by the people, and for the people, considering the interests of the people as foremost and above all else.

However, after nearly 40 years of renovation, along with the country's development, is it necessary to *consider building a market-oriented socialist economic system*. The reason is that the development of the market economy after nearly 40 years of renovation has reached a new level, and in addition, this expression is entirely logical with the construction of the socialist rule-of-law state. As the principle of Marxist philosophy teaches, the economic foundation determines the superstructure. According to this principle, the socialist rule-of-law state can only be formed and developed

on the basis of the market-oriented socialist economy.

Especially, in the book "*Some theoretical and practical issues about socialism and the path to socialism in Vietnam*", in addition to the general model, as well as the market-oriented socialist economic model mentioned in the Party's documents, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong also referred to Vietnam's political model. According to him, "the political model and general operating mechanism are the *Party's leadership, the State's management and the people's mastery*. Democracy is the essence of the socialist regime, both a goal and a driving force of the socialist construction process, ensuring that real power belongs to the people is a vital and long-term task of the Vietnamese revolution"⁶.

When discussing such specific models, we can imagine the pillars of society, the market-oriented socialist economy, the socialist rule-of-law state under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and the socialist democracy. Perhaps this is a new expression of the pillars of society that are suitable for Vietnam's conditions compared to Western theories about the pillars of society. Western social

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theories also mention the market economy (with various types of market economies), the rule-of-law state, and civil society. Vietnam does not mention civil society and does not advocate building a civil society. What Vietnam emphasizes and builds is a socialist democracy. A socialist democracy is a guarantee for the people's creativity and, at the same time, an important means to control power. The essence of building civic organizations is to implement and promote democracy.

Marxism asserts that the masses are the decisive and creative force in history; building socialism means building a society in which people are for each other, and people are for themselves; the free development of each individual is a condition for the free development of all. That humanistic spirit has been applied and developed by the Communist Party of Vietnam since the renewal era to the present, especially in the first decades of the 21st century. It is also reflected in the three pillars of the socialist model in Vietnam, which are the market-oriented socialist economy, the socialist rule-of-law state of the people, by the people, for the people, and the socialist democracy.

In addition to these theoretical breakthroughs, the Communist Party of Vietnam has summarized into 10 major relationships in building socialism appropriate to Vietnam's reality, which are the relationships (1) between renovation/innovation, stability, and development; (2) between economic renovation and political renovation; (3) between the market economy and the socialist orientation; (4) between the development of productive forces and the gradual improvement of socialist relations of production; (5) the relationship between the state and the market; (6) between economic growth and cultural development, implementing social progress and justice; (7) between building socialism and protecting the socialist homeland; (8) between independence, autonomy, and international integration; (9) between Party's leadership, State's management, people's mastery; and (10) between the implementation of democracy and strengthening the legal system, ensuring social discipline.

However, apart from the 10 relationships reflecting the relationships between fields of social life as well as the relationships between aspects of a social field, there is another extremely

important relationship, which is *the relationship between the goal and the means* of the process of building socialism in general, and of the renewal process in particular.

The relationship between the goal and the means needs to be clearly defined in the process of guiding/leading a revolution. The theory of socialist revolution has pointed out that, in the process of leading a revolution, the leading party must clearly define the goals of each stage of the revolution, the means, and forces to achieve those goals. Confusing the goals and the means can lead to serious consequences or undesired outcomes. Many examples can be provided to demonstrate this. For instance, if traffic police perceive that their goal is to enhance public compliance with traffic laws, then guidance, explanation, and especially fines are just means. However, if punishment is seen as the purpose, then the more fines imposed, the better, without considering whether the fines actually improve public compliance with traffic laws. Similarly, in the field of production, there is a relationship between the productive forces and the relations of production, which is

also a relationship between the goal and the means. If the development of productive forces is seen as the goal and the relations of production as the means, then different types of production relations can be chosen at each time (whether to use private or public relations of production) as long as the productive forces are developed, without the need to rigidly use a certain type of production relations. However, if the development of production relations is seen as the purpose, then it is a completely different matter.

In addition to the relationship between the goal and the means, we believe there is another extremely important relationship, which is the relationship between the central and local authorities. In fact, the years before and after the renovation have shown that innovations in practice often occur at the local level and are consolidated by the central authority into development models. However, for these innovations to truly be innovative and to avoid mistakes, specific regulations on what falls under the authority of the central government and what falls under the authority of local governments are needed. In summary, the issue of

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decentralization and delegation of authority is extremely important in addressing the relationship between the central and local authorities.

3. Conclusion

After nearly 40 years of renovation, Vietnam's development management model has gradually been formed and improved. That model has been and is being operated in practice. However,

from both theoretical and practical perspectives, the model needs to continue to be perfected in terms of goals, pillars, and the relationships between fields as well as within the same field. These are the issues that need to be studied and tested in practice in the process of perfecting Vietnam's development management model from now until 2030, with a vision to 2045.

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