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**DRAFT VERSION**

# **SOME THOUGHT ON THE SOCIALIST MODEL IN VIETNAM**

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In this paper we would like to share some of our reflections on the socialist model in Vietnam. The paper is divided into two parts. In the first part, before addressing the socialist model the Vietnamese are developing now, we will concentrate on our understanding of the concept of socialist model. And in the second part of our paper we will talk about the conception of socialist model in Vietnam, about the goal of building socialism in Vietnam.

## **1. On the concept of socialist model**

In the years of the pre-renovation period people in Vietnam and socialist countries often mentioned about the concept of socialist model. At that time the socialist model of the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries became an ideal model for developing nations to admire and strive for. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Unions and socialist countries in Eastern Europe, Marxist theorists in Vietnam analysed the objective and subjective causes of the collapse and came to conclusion that that was the

collapse of a concrete model of socialism but not the collapse of the scientific theory of socialism. For a period of about 20 years, people talked less about socialist model. However, in recent years with the successes of the Cause of Renovation, Marxist scholars in Vietnam have been reposing the question of socialist model. So what are the characteristics of the Vietnamese socialist model? In our understanding the question of socialist model can be understood in the relation to the concept of social development model in general. Therefore, before coming to the Vietnamese socialist model we would like to talk about different conceptions of social development model.

### **1.1 Conceptions of social development model**

First of all, in order to understand about socialist model, we need to clarify the concept of social development model

*Social development model* is a concept to indicate the subjects of social activities, who use methods and resources in order to achieve development goals in the practice of social development. It is a most general concept on the goal and the way or method to realize the process of transformation and change a society from a low level of development to a high level of development.

Generally speaking, social development model includes the following main aspects: *first*, from the aspect of essence, social development model is the unity between *development goal and the way of its realization*; *second*, from the aspect of content, social development model is an organic whole of development models in concrete spheres of the social life, such as economic development model, political development model, social development model and cultural development model; *third*, from the formal aspect, social development model is various in its manifestation depending on political, economic, social and cultural conditions of specific nations states.

In reality, the world has evidenced two most typical social development models,

which had realized and come into being parallelly: *the capitalist model and socialist model*. However, within each model there exist different concrete types. For example, within the capitalist model, apart from the most general characteristics distinguishing it from the socialist model, we can list some concrete types of that model as follows:

### **1.1.1 Capitalist development models**

First, **the capitalist model of the traditional Europe**. It is the model of some developed nations in Western Europe with the goal of attaching social development to the development of productive forces. The basic feature of that model consists in: the development of social market economy, the attention to the importance on the vision and the regulation of the state toward economic development, the healthy and stable operation of the economy, emphasis on just market, priority on construction of social welfare...

Second, **the Americal model of free market economy**. The foundation of that model is the priority given to the regularization of market but with the acceptance of macro regulation, including the interference of the state and regulation of the government. The characteristic feature of that model is to emphasis on the proactiveness and interest in protection of private business, and therefore the subjects of that model are under the control and influence of private sectors, sometimes is manipulated by the private, at the same time the state has the duty to serve the development of private economy.

Third, **the government-led model in Japan**. The specific feature of that model is to take market regulation as a premise, on the basis of which emphasis is put on the role of the government on leadership and guideline of the economy. The distinction of that model in comparison with that of other developed countries can be seen in the two following points: first, the government plays an important role in the operation of the economy; second, the democratic character of decision-

makings can be seen in that all decisions are made publicly with the consideration of public opinions and guarantee of the interests of all concerned parties. Basically all decisions are made with the consideration of the interests of the nation, state and democracy.

Forth, **the East Asian model**. In economic terms, this model is to give priority to the view on economic development in order to build the country to the path of economic prioritization, utilize export-oriented strategy ; at the same time to maintain market economy under the leadership of the state. In political terms, this model uses the political regime based on authoritarianism and at the same time uses the method of governance through the talented people and laws, promotes the gradual process of democratization. The executive branch plays a leading role in the relation between executive and judicial branches of those countries following that model. In fact, the executive branch even plays decisive role in legislation and judiciary processes.

### **1.1.2 Socialist development model**

*Socialist model; Socialist mode; Socialist pattern* is the concept to indicate the various types and forms of socialism practiced in different countries in the world. It means that those countries, in their course of constructing socialism, have their own forms, methods and ways. Due to economic, political, social and cultural differences as well as differences in population, natural conditions....there exist different socialist models in different countries and even within a country there have been different forms with various characteristics of socialism in different period of its development. Based on its concrete practical conditions each socialist country proposes its specific goals and methods of development in different concrete periods of its development.

Socialist model can be understood both in a broad and narrow senses. In a broad sense, socialist model includes a whole of thoughts, concepts on goals, methods and ways towards socialism in general. In a narrow sense, socialist model includes a

whole of theories, views on goals, methods and ways towards socialism within a period, a concrete historical circumstance of a country.

In recent years there have existed various **socialist models** which could be generalized into two typical forms as follows:

First, **the socialist model of the Soviet Union (the representative of the countries of Eastern Europe)**. In this socialist model we can see two distinctive periods: Lenin's period and Stalin's period. **The Lenin's socialist model** contains following features: *first*, the state, in the name of the society, directly owns and utilizes means of production; *second*, the state decides development plans, controls the process of production and distribution of products of the whole society, all working people work together, share and enjoy common labor's criteria and conditions, *third*, the cause of national construction is converted into a top-down management mechanism. Before the emergence of the Soviet Union all socialist models proposed by the utopists of the 16 century or the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels had not yet been realized. The Soviet socialist model was the socialist model, which had been realized for the first time.

**The Stalin's highly centralized socialist model (or highly centralized model)** includes following typical features: *first*, the implementation of unitary common ownership and elimination of all other sectors; *second*, the construction of a barter economy but not market economy, the highly centralized model was used in order to manage the economy; *third*, the dictatorship of the proletariat was implemented in the political life with the view that the driving force of the socialist society was the struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie class. This socialist model contained the characteristics of war's time, which was based on the theoretical principle and ideal of revolution.

*Second, the Chinese socialist model. The Chinese socialist model* can also be divided into two period – the Mao Tse Tung period and the period of reformation and

openness. *First*, the **Mao Tse Tung socialist model** is the socialist model of highly centralized planning and administrative regime. That model was able to create some specific features of socialism with Chinese color but it was under some influence of the old Soviet Union socialist model and could not overcome the framework of the old Soviet Union socialist model, especially in terms of economic development. *Second*, the current **socialist model with Chinese characteristics** is the model of social development closely attached to Deng Xiao Ping theory of three represents and the view on scientific development. The focus of that model is the strong renovation in thought, concentration of resources for economic growth, or as Chinese scholars call, the development of productive forces. One of the most important theoretical breakthroughs of Deng Xiao Ping was the establishment of the theory of socialist market economy. That establishment was a breakthrough not only in the theory of traditional planning economy – the very theory that denies good-exchange relation, money and the role of market economy, but also a breakthrough in the theory of traditional market economy that regards market regulation is the matter within private ownership. After Deng Xiao Ping theory and Jang Zemin thought of three Represents, the Hu Jin Tao thought on harmonious society is considered as a new development in the awareness of socialism and the way toward socialism in China.

The basic contents of the view on a harmonious society can be seen in four following features: first, “ the harmonious society is the essential attribute of the Socialism with Chinese characteristics, the most important guarantee of the country's prosperity, national rejuvenation and the people's happiness; second, the harmonious society is the continuous aim of the Communist Party of China and all its people; third, the construction of the harmonious society is the uninterrupted process of harmonization of social contradictions; fourth, a socialist harmonious society is a harmonious society constructed by all the people together and be

enjoyed by all the people together. The current socialist model with Chinese characteristics has achieved great successes and recognized by the world.

Apart from the two above-mentioned models, there exists a **model of the “third way”** in the context of economic globalization, which attracts a lot of attention. The model of the “third way” contains the following key contents: first, the balance between the influence of market and the regulation of the state is the principle for constructing a new economy; second, the balance between rights and duties is the principle for building a new welfare system; third, the balance between economic efficiency and social justice is the principle to propose new policies; forth, the balance between nationalism and internationalism is the principle for implementing foreign policies.

At the moment there has not been yet a rigorous theoretical system on the model of the “third way”. The “third way” emerges due to the practical conditions of capitalism during the process of globalization, left parties in the West have to propose solutions to deal with actual problems of capitalism. It reflects the phenomenon and left-oriented tendencies of the form of political consciousness of the countries in the West. In its essence, it is a political compromise between liberal capitalism and democratic socialism, an ideological movement of capitalism going beyond both the right and the left in the context of globalization in order to overcome its inner problems. Though that model contains some new features and contents, but in its essence, it bases on the premise of protection of capitalism, focuses on the adjustment of the method of management and governance of the country.

As far as for Vietnam, in the past we often talked about the socialist model we would like to build, which was similar to the socialist model of the Soviet Union and countries of Eastern Europe. This was the socialist model based on characteristics proposed by K. Marx and F. Engels and implemented by Stalin.

However, after the collapse of the real socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Vietnam has proactively carried out the cause of national comprehensive renovation and has been gradually perfecting a new socialist model with certain goals and means to achieve the goals.

## **2. The socialist model in Vietnam**

In our socialist model human beings are put at the centre of the development. Thus human beings are not only the subjects, the driving forces of our development but also the goal of our development. In other words, human development is the goal of the cause of building socialism in Vietnam.

Before talking about that specific goal of the cause of building socialism in Vietnam we would like to clarify our understanding of human development as well as the relation between socialism and human development.

### **2.1 Human development and human essence**

First of all, we would like to state clearly that we will follow the K. Marx's view on human nature, in which we can see the specificity of human development, the very development that intimately related to human nature. In Marx view, as the human development as the upholding of the human nature by human beings themselves, the world history is the history of the process of continuous development of human essence or human nature through the process of labor. The biggest difference between human beings and animals consists in the fact that while animals are unconscious of their nature and their activity, and behave themselves instinctively and passively, the life activity of man is active and conscious. This is because "Man is a species-being, not only because in practice and in theory he adopts the species (his own as well as those of other things) as his object, but – and this is only another way of expressing it – also because he treats himself as the actual, living species;

because he treats himself as a *universal* and therefore a free being”<sup>1</sup>. When man adopts the species as his object “ Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness. He has conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he directly merges. Conscious life activity distinguishes man immediately from animal life activity. It is just because of this that he is a species-being. Or it is only because he is a species-being that he is a conscious being, i.e., that his own life is an object for him. Only because of that is his activity free activity”.<sup>2</sup> Thus the universality and freedom of man is closely related to the fact that man *adopts his species as his object, makes his life activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness*. The universality of human nature could be understood as the existence of human nature as the original ground, the inner source of human potentialities. The making human nature (species essence – *Gattungswesen*) as an object confirms the proactiveness and creativity of human beings in their life activity: through the reflection on their nature, their essence human beings can see their potentialities and the ways to realize them. Human development is the way human beings realize their nature. And here human developments as the concrete and various manifestations of human nature in different forms of cultural development are the specific expression of the universal human essence.

For Marx human nature has both constant and mutable elements; that is, he maintains that human beings are characterized not only by universal qualities (of species essence or human nature), constant across history and between cultures, but also by variable qualities, reflecting historical and cultural diversity. So in *the Capital* Marx talked about ‘human nature in general’ and as ‘human nature as modified in each epoch’.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>

“Human nature in general” could be understood that all human beings share a common human nature, but it does not mean that human nature as something fixed or a priori given or a potential to be made actual. On contrary, human nature should be understood *ontologically* as the original source and infinite potentiality for human development. As such human nature offers both possibility and commonality for human development. It is the point of reference and shared background of all kind of human existence and offers both a dynamic feature and unity of the whole process of human development. The full development of human nature, or the full realization (or unfolding) of human nature could serve as the ideal and ultimate meaning for human striving. The idea of all-round human development mentioned in Marx writing also means the full development of human powers and capacities “The cultivation of all the qualities of the social human being, production of the same in a form as rich as possible in needs, because rich in qualities and relations—production of this being as the most total and universal social product for, in order to take gratification in a many-sided way, he must be capable of many pleasures, hence cultured to a high degree.”<sup>3</sup>

As infinite potentiality, human nature is open for human beings to interpret and choose. The variety of interpretation means the expressions of human creativity in development of human nature in different cultural contexts or traditions. Here we can see about how human nature is developed and “modified in each epoch” or culture. A cultural tradition is both the manifestation of human creativity and the particularization of human nature in concrete historical contexts.. Human creativity here is much to do with human self-awareness, the very awareness of the potentiality of human nature and the ability to choose a particular option and act in particular situation to unfold further (the potentiality of) human nature. Of course self-awareness is not given to human beings at the moment of birth but the result of

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<sup>3</sup> K. Marx. *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973. p. 409

education and socialization in the form of social life of a certain community. As such human creativity is the cultivation and manifestation of human nature in a given community but it also the driving force contributing to further developing of human nature and transforming of the cultural tradition in which it was formed. So, it is the openness of human nature as infinite potentiality that contributes to the dynamic character of human development and the diversity of cultural traditions.

Thus, through the creative process of human development, human nature is made defined and concretized in the various forms of culture (or cultural tradition). In other words, human nature does not exist apart from cultural traditions but realizes or embodies in them through the creative activity of concrete human agencies. The concrete realization or embodiment of human nature in a specific cultural tradition can be seen in the way people of a community organize their collective life. As such the embodiment of human nature is the *emerging quality* in the life of a community. It serves as a pattern of organization that gives order, co-ordination and stability to the life of the people of that community and consequently to help the people of the community to develop their talents and abilities to the fullness. As the pattern or form of organization of a given community, the manifestation of human nature offers both opportunities and limitations for the people of the community to develop their potentiality.

So we can see that human development, as the process of unfolding of human nature, is mediated through different stages and in different historical contexts of cultural traditions. Cultural traditions here serve as the historical and social space, within which human individuals are born and they become human persons during the process of socialization, through education and training that initiate and engage them into the social life of the community. Thus the formation of human beings as social beings is conditioned by traditional cultures but once they are (more or less) formed, they can continue to develop further the potentiality of human nature and transform

the traditional culture in which they are born and being socialized. Human beings, therefore, are in a constant dialogue with their own traditions to be formed and educated as well as in a dialogue with human nature to transform their own traditional culture.

While being located between a given cultural tradition and human nature, human beings are both the passive receiver of that tradition and the active agencies who can change and transform the given tradition. Here we can see the dialectical relation between cultural tradition as a normative *system (structure)* of values, customs and norms...and cultural tradition as a living *social practice* for human development. Thus system determines the formation of man: in order to become a member of a given cultural community, an individual has to undergo a process of learning and training (cultivation and self-cultivation) to obtain necessary social skills and faculties. But only through the course of the social practice of these very members the system can exist and renewed or changed. As C. Taylor writes “Social tradition can continue to exert an influence through individuals only to the extent that it is continually renewed by them – like all structures, it continues to exist by virtue of practice.”<sup>4</sup> That practice, as C. Taylor rightly points out, “relies on a never exhausted background which can simultaneously be the source of innovative statements and articulations”<sup>5</sup>.

Thus in order to maintain and develop further cultural tradition human beings must be properly cultivated and developed through the process of learning and training, through the practical engagement in real life. The real knowledge or standards of truth based on which one can strive to cultivate and improve oneself can only be given, accepted and transmitted by cultural tradition in which one lives. Through the

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<sup>4</sup> C. Taylor . *Language and Society*, in *Communicative Action*. Edited by Axel Honneth and Hans Joas. MIT Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 25

<sup>5</sup> C. Taylor . *Language and Society*, in *Communicative Action*. Edited by Axel Honneth and Hans Joas. MIT Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 25

self-cultivation man can learn to know how to relate meaningfully and properly to other human beings and things to the world around him. It is the cultural tradition that serves the foundation for individuals to cultivate themselves and engage in the world but only through the active engagement of human individuals that cultural tradition is transformed and renewed constantly. The renovation and transformation of cultural tradition is, at the same time, the further unfolding and development of human nature, which serves as the original source and the ultimate purpose for human striving. As J. Grondin rightly says, “What distinguishes our humanity, is not a rational capacity that would catapult us into a divine world of pure ideas. Rather it is the ability to go beyond our particularity by taking account the heritage that can help us grow above and beyond our limited selves”<sup>6</sup>.

So we can see how human development as the unfolding of human nature is mediated through different cultural traditions. While being located within that dynamic process of human development, cultural traditions are the concretizations of human nature. So here we can see the dialectical relationship between human development and cultural traditions: without cultural traditions human nature remains potential and formless, only through the formation of cultural traditions that human nature is given shape and form (or being determined), however, human nature serves as the source and condition of possibility for cultural traditions to be developed. The concrete contents of cultural traditions are the manifestations of human nature in different contexts. The human character of cultural traditions is the product of the creative interpretation of human beings about human nature.

## **2.2 Socialism and human development**

Human development as the development of human essence can be seen in many levels: as an individual with its animal instincts for survival or as a member of a specific community with a distinctive form of life or culture or as a member of a

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<sup>6</sup> J. Grondin. *Sources of Hermeneutics*. State University of New York Press, New York, 1995

larger community of humanity. As a member of any community and culture, formation of man as a social being is a process of socialization, in which human individuals engage with the world and participate in the living social practice. It is a continuous process of transformation of the self both ethically and ontologically, the very process in which self-openness (self-discovery) and the disclosure of the things and the world around are taken place simultaneously. Cultural development (education or cultivation) is the “properly human way of developing one’s natural talents and capacities”<sup>7</sup> and thus through the process of human *development* man overcomes his own particularity and rise to the universal. So human development is the process of gaining both the sense of himself and the sense of the world around him. The sustainability of human development should be founded on cultural traditions, not only on a specific cultural tradition but also on the very culture of humanity. In this context, human development is also the process of learning from others, the process of dialogue aiming at sustaining and further unfolding of human potentiality. The Good Life or the Life in Peace as the goal of human life that serves as the guiding principle for human development understood as a kind of growing about and beyond one’s limited selves. This is a kind of self-transcendence can be archived through an active activity of human development understood both in moral and ontological senses. We can say that the noble goal of good life, the life in peace determines the formation and development of human beings but only through the active self-cultivation of human beings that the concept of good life can be realized. So far we can see that cultural traditions serve as the historical and social space, within which human individuals are born and they become human persons during the process of socialization, through education and training that initiate and engage them into the social life of the community. Thus the formation of human beings as social

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<sup>7</sup> H. Gadamer. *Truth and Method*. Second Revised Edition(Translated by J.Weinsheimer and D.G.Marshall, Continuum , New York. 2003) p. 10

beings is conditioned by traditional cultures. Here for man to develop his human nature some necessary conditions to be made. Man as a social being always lives in a concrete community, concrete society. Human development thus always takes place in concrete conditions of certain historical context (of human development) as Marx stated clearly his Materialist Understanding of History “The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity”<sup>8</sup>.

The ideal or humane society is the society when conditions are provided for man to develop fully its nature. In this context we can understand the relation between human development and socialism. Because while capitalism is a society when human development is alienated, man can only has a “dehumanized life”, a life does not corresponding to the human nature. Capitalism is the society in which “complete working out of the human content appears as a complete emptying-out, this universal objectification as total alienation, and the tearing-down of all limited, one-sided aims as sacrifice of the human end-in-itself to an external end”<sup>9</sup> Capitalism, therefore is being “condemned for its inhuman effects: for stunting human life and hindering the development of human powers and capacities (particularly but not exclusively those of the working class)”<sup>10</sup>.

In Marx thought of socialism we can see that socialism is the society that could provide opportunity for human to develop, for all people including working class the proletariats and not just not capitalists (and those with private properties). This is the society that meets the requirement of a meaningful human life, the life in accordance to human nature. As Marx says in the *Grundrisse* “What is wealth other than

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01a.htm#a2>

<sup>9</sup> K. Marx. *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973. P. 488

<sup>10</sup> S. Sayer, *Marxism and Human Nature*, London, 1998, p. 165

the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity's own nature? The absolute working out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a predetermined yardstick?"<sup>11</sup> . Thus socialism is the place in which all human potentials and essential powers are used for the satisfaction of human needs and to serve the all-round development of human nature, because socialism "...is higher form of society, a society in which full and free development of every individual forms the ruling principle"<sup>12</sup>

### **2.3 The view of Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam on human development and socialism**

Ho Chi Minh had his own way of articulation of the essence of socialism, Ho Chi Minh thought that the goal of socialism is to bring about opportunities and conditions for all people to develop, i.e. socialism must deal with the problems of people's livelihood, bring welfare, freedom and happiness to all the people of Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh said that people are the root of revolution. He often reminded our cadres "to remember that people are masters. People are water; we [cadres] are the fish. All our power and strength are relied on people"<sup>13</sup>. "the government is people's servant. What government does is to achieve the only goal of bring

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<sup>11</sup> K. Marx. *Grundrisse* ,p. 488

<sup>12</sup> K. Marx. *Capital* Vol. 3. Ed. F. Engels. p. 592

<sup>13</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 4. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.101

freedom and happiness to the people. Therefore people's government must always give the highest priority to people's interests. We should do what is benefit for the people and avoid what is harmful for the people"<sup>14</sup>. The rights the Vietnamese gained are the right to live, the right to be happy and free. His only desire is "how to bring full freedom and independence to the people. And such kind of freedom and independence should be enjoy by all the people like the way all creatures enjoy the light of the Sun"<sup>15</sup>.

He affirmed that "I have only one desire, a most earnest desire - to achieve complete independence for our country, complete freedom for our people, and opportunities for all our countrymen to have adequate food and clothing and education. On my part, I need only a humble shelter, where there is green mountains and a river to fish and grow flowers so I can all day long befriend with old woodsmen and children and be far way from fame and weath"<sup>16</sup>

However, among the rights the people can enjoy, Ho Chi Minh paid particular attention to the right to live and the way to improve people's living standards. To the question "what is socialism?" Ho Chi Minh wrote "the goal of socialism is to

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<sup>14</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 4. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.22

<sup>15</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 4. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.45

<sup>15</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 4. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.121

<sup>16</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 4. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.161-162

improve constantly people's living standards"<sup>17</sup>. Therefore the policy of the Party and Government is to take *utmost care of people's life* "If the people suffer from hunger, the Party and Government are guilty; if the people do not have enough clothes, the Party and Government are guilty, if the people cannot have access to education the Party and Government are guilty, if the people are sick, the Party and Government are guilty"<sup>18</sup>; "what the Party struggle for? For people to have adequate food, shelter and be free. What every Party's member struggle for? For people to have food, shelter and be free too. What is socialism? People can have food, shelter, be happy and free"<sup>19</sup>.

Thus, socialism for Ho Chi Minh is first of all the problems of people's livelihood, or how to deal with the necessary needs of the people. Without proper solutions to those needs the construction of socialism is meaningless and the people will not care about socialism. As Ho Chi Minh said to your cadres "with an empty stomach people pay no attention to what you say, regardless of how you may attractively speak"<sup>20</sup>. The goal of socialism is to bring welfare, education and happiness to the people "Briefly and plainly speaking, socialism first of all is to liberate the

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<sup>17</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 10. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.31

<sup>18</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 7. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.572

<sup>19</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 8. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.396

<sup>20</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 8. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.411

working people from poverty, bring employment, welfare and happiness to the people”<sup>21</sup>

So far, while talking on socialism, Ho Chi Minh always stressed, first of all, the need to improve people’s living standards and provide all people with adequate foods, shelter and education “To sum up, particular attention should be paid to the works that can promote material and spiritual life of the people”<sup>22</sup>. Ho Chi Minh affirmed that “we has gained independence and freedom but independence and freedom have no significance at all if our people still suffer from hunger and shortage. The people understand clearly the value of freedom and independence only when they are provide with adequate food and shelter”<sup>23</sup>

Those thoughts of Ho Chi Minh have been inherited and further developed by the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Based on the Documents of the Communist Party of Vietnam, especially the Documents of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Congresses of the Communist Party of Vietnam, we can outline the Vietnamese socialist model with following main contents:

*First*, the overall goal, which expresses the essence of the socialist society the Vietnamese are building, is to build a Vietnam with “*wealthy people, strong, democratic, just and civilized country*”

*Second*, this goal is concretized through a series of basic features in all spheres of the social life. This is a society:

1. In which the people are masters

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<sup>21</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 10. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.17

<sup>22</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 8. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.396

<sup>23</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 8. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.396

2. With a highly developed economy based on modern productive forces and adequate and progressive production relations.
3. With an advanced culture imbued deeply with national identity.
4. In which man has a happy, free and well-off life and can have chance to develop comprehensively.
5. In which nationalities of Vietnam community are equal, unified, respectful and helpful to one another to co-develop.
6. With a socialist rule-of-law state of the people, by the people and for the people under the leadership of the Communist Party.
7. To have relationship and cooperation with countries in the world

Those specific features express comprehensively the basic characteristics of various spheres of a society: from political to economic, cultural, social and sphere of international affairs. Those features are the inheritance and continuation of the view of the Party stated in the 10<sup>th</sup> Party's Congress and at the same time with supplementations and new developments to make them appropriate to a new practice.

Importantly, we can see that the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress clearly indicates that the society the Vietnamese are building is the one in which man has a happy, free and well-off life and can have chance to develop comprehensively. In comparison with the 10<sup>th</sup> Congress the clause (man) "is liberated from unjust oppression" was left out. This way of expression may be shorten but seems not to be logical with the indication about the shortcomings of Capitalism mentioned in the Platform for national construction in the transition period towards socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011). When evaluating on capitalism, the Platform writes: the capitalism has potentials for further development, but in its essence, it remains a

regime based on *exploitation, oppression and injustice*<sup>24</sup>, (emphasis mine). Capitalism will certainly be replaced and humanity will certainly advance to Socialism. Thus, a new society replacing capitalism will necessarily be better than capitalism, i.e. in which there will no more exploitation, oppression and injustice. Therefore, the clause (man) “*is liberated from unjust oppression*” is necessary and appropriate to the evaluation mentioned in the Platform. Thus in socialism, as a better and more progressive socio-economic formation, human beings must be all liberated from unjust oppression and have opportunity for their full and free development. In other words, our Party understands well that human development must be the goal of building socialism in Vietnam. This goal is concretely implemented in our strategy of fast and sustainable development. The standpoint of rapid and sustainable development has been being implemented steadfastly, especially in respect to *human development*. Man has been posited into the central position, both as *the goal and the driving force* of our national development. We can say that in Vietnam today, sustainable development aims for no other target than creation conditions for all people of Vietnam to develop their potentialities to improve the quality of their life and pursue happiness.

The ultimate goal of our Revolution is the happiness our people can enjoy in their life, the very life in which human potentialities have real changes for developed and unfold. This is what Ho Chi Minh thought about the goal of building socialism in our country “socialism first of all is to liberate the working people from poverty, bring employment, welfare and happiness to the people”<sup>25</sup>. Here we can see the very close relationship between socialism, sustainable development and human development in Vietnam.

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<sup>24</sup> The Communist Party of Vietnam. *The Documents of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress*. The National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011 p. 68

<sup>25</sup> Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works* Vol 10. National Political Publishing House. Hanoi, 1995, p.17



