

DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE RULE OF LAW IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION: A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the development of socialist democracy in Vietnam through the lens of legal theory and constitutional practice within the broader context of international integration. It aims to clarify the legal foundations of democratic governance and propose solutions to enhance the effectiveness of the rule of law and people's sovereignty. The study adopts a legal-institutional and multidisciplinary approach, combining the analysis of Party documents, constitutional texts, statutory frameworks, and implementation reports with dialectical reasoning, historical-concrete methods, and comparative legal analysis. Findings indicate that Vietnam's democratic development has increasingly been institutionalized through legal mechanisms that protect citizens' rights and reinforce accountability. However, limitations persist, including formalism in implementation, weak enforcement mechanisms, and inconsistencies in the legal framework. Advancing democracy in Vietnam requires deepening the legal basis of socialist democracy, ensuring that all state power genuinely belongs to the people, and aligning domestic law with international legal standards. Strengthening legal consciousness, refining legislative quality, and enhancing judicial independence are essential to realize the dual goal of democracy and the rule of law in the era of global integration.

Keywords: socialist democracy; rule of law; legal reform; international integration; Vietnam; constitutional development.

DESENVOLVIMENTO DEMOCRÁTICO NO CONTEXTO DA INTEGRAÇÃO INTERNACIONAL: UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA

RESUMO

Este artigo examina o desenvolvimento da democracia socialista no Vietnã sob a ótica da teoria jurídica e da prática constitucional, no contexto mais amplo da integração internacional. Visa esclarecer os fundamentos jurídicos da governança democrática e propor soluções para aprimorar a eficácia do Estado de Direito e a soberania popular. O estudo adota uma

abordagem jurídico-institucional e multidisciplinar, combinando a análise de documentos do Partido, textos constitucionais, marcos estatutários e relatórios de implementação com raciocínio dialético, métodos histórico-concretos e análise jurídica comparada. Os resultados indicam que o desenvolvimento democrático do Vietnã tem sido cada vez mais institucionalizado por meio de mecanismos legais que protegem os direitos dos cidadãos e reforçam a responsabilização. No entanto, persistem limitações, incluindo formalismo na implementação, mecanismos de execução fracos e inconsistências no arcabouço jurídico. O avanço da democracia no Vietnã exige o aprofundamento da base jurídica da democracia socialista, a garantia de que todo o poder estatal pertença genuinamente ao povo e o alinhamento do direito interno com os padrões jurídicos internacionais. Fortalecer a consciência jurídica, aprimorar a qualidade legislativa e aprimorar a independência judicial são essenciais para concretizar o duplo objetivo da democracia e do Estado de Direito na era da integração global.

Palavras-chave: democracia socialista; estado de direito; reforma jurídica; integração internacional; Vietnã; desenvolvimento constitucional.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era marked by globalization and profound international integration, the pursuit of democratic development has evolved into not only an internal imperative for individual nations but also a critical benchmark for assessing a country's level of civilization, socio-political progress, and its capacity for integration within the global community.

For Vietnam, democracy constitutes both the fundamental nature of the socialist political system and a central driving force behind its ongoing processes of renewal, sustainable development, and strategic engagement with the international order. Throughout the period of renovation and global integration, Vietnam has recorded significant achievements in fostering democratic practices, mobilizing popular unity, enhancing intellectual engagement, and steadily improving the population's living standards.

Nevertheless, as Vietnam deepens its participation in international frameworks, the trajectory of democratic development encounters both promising opportunities and multifaceted challenges. On the one hand, integration offers access to diverse political and cultural values, encourages institutional innovation, improves the efficiency of governance, and expands citizens' rights to participate in decision-making. On the other hand, it necessitates comprehensive adaptation in leadership models, legal systems, and administrative mechanisms to maintain a balance between democratic expansion and the imperatives of legal discipline, political renewal, and socio-political stability.

From this vantage point, the present study undertakes a systematic analysis of the

theoretical underpinnings and practical realities shaping Vietnam's democratic development amid global integration. Anchored in the foundational principles of Marxism–Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's political thought, and contemporary democratic theories, the research aims to clarify the conceptual framework, defining features, and intrinsic values of democracy as practiced in Vietnam today. At the same time, it critically examines the real-world implementation of democratic processes, identifies the prevailing issues and tensions, and offers forward-looking policy solutions to advance socialist democracy in a manner that is coherent, effective, and sustainable in the global era.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 International Studies

Democracy has become a central topic in political and legal studies at both national and global levels. In the context of international integration, democracy is not only approached as a universal value but also as an essential condition for ensuring sustainable development, enhancing national governance capacity, and increasing citizen participation in political and social life.

Democracy is a significant topic studied from various theoretical and practical angles globally. Huntington (1991), in *The Third Wave*, analyzed the three waves of global democratization, emphasizing the role of economic, cultural, and institutional factors in the democratic transition process. Diamond (1999) further developed this idea with the concept of "developed democracy", highlighting the relationship between democracy and sustainable development, where elements such as the rule of law, transparency, and accountability are central to an effective democracy.

Another approach, as suggested by Sen (1999), posits that democracy is not only a basic human right but also a tool for promoting development, helping citizens engage in decision-making, controlling power, and minimizing authoritarianism. Held (2006) introduced the concept of "global democracy" in the context of transnational issues like climate change, migration, and the global economy, suggesting that democratic models should transcend national borders. Fukuyama (2011) and Acemoglu & Robinson (2012) focused on the role of political institutions in strengthening or weakening democracy, emphasizing the importance of inclusive institutions to ensure meaningful participation from all social groups. Fukuyama (2020) extended the study on the relationship between individual identity and

politics in modern democratic societies, indicating that the current political crises and social polarization stem from a lack of dignity and failure in traditional democratic models, while proposing solutions to address these issues.

Mounk (2021) and Runciman (2022) studied the decline in the quality of democracy in the context of globalization and the rise of nationalism. These authors pointed out the threats from anti-democratic forces and the growing mistrust in democratic institutions, offering measures to protect freedom and democracy. Runciman (2022) argued that democracy cannot "die" due to political crises but may evolve into new models, requiring democratic societies to adapt to the changing international environment.

Mazzucato (2023) emphasized the role of public policy and markets in developing the economy and strengthening democracy. She argued that the combination of free markets and state intervention is a key factor in fostering sustainable development and reinforcing democratic institutions within the global economic context.

From the above studies, a common trend can be observed: the conception of democracy is shifting from formal mechanisms (such as elections and separation of powers) to more substantive aspects (such as equitable participation, social fairness, and effective governance), particularly in the context of globalization and international integration.

2.2 Domestic Studies

In Vietnam, socialist democracy is consistently affirmed as the core nature of the political system and a pivotal objective throughout the country's renewal (*Đổi mới*) process. General Secretary Nguyễn Phú Trọng (2011) has repeatedly underscored that Vietnam's democratic model is inherently inseparable from the leadership role of the Communist Party and must be grounded in principles of discipline, stability, and development. Building upon this foundational understanding, numerous scholarly works have explored the theoretical and practical dimensions of socialist democracy, identifying both opportunities and challenges posed by international integration, and proposing contextually relevant policy responses.

Oanh (2020) posits that socialist democracy represents not only the ideological essence of Vietnam's governance model but also both a developmental target and a dynamic catalyst for national progress. According to her, the distinctiveness of socialist democracy lies in its capacity to transcend bourgeois democratic forms by abolishing private ownership and class antagonisms, thereby ensuring the people's authentic right to self-determination.

Son (2021) highlights the importance of correctly interpreting democracy and human

rights in Vietnam's context, asserting that such clarity is essential for countering external ideological impositions and for safeguarding national sovereignty. He further explores how shifts in the global political landscape and evolving international relations exert significant influence over Vietnam's democratic development.

Thoi (2023) emphasizes that advancing socialist democracy and safeguarding citizens' self-governance are decisive elements in driving forward Vietnam's renewal. He stresses that establishing a comprehensive, democratic, and modern legal system is critical for enhancing the performance and accountability of state institutions, enterprises, and civic organizations.

Thang (2023), in turn, addresses new challenges arising from international integration, particularly in areas such as digital transformation and the development of e-government systems. His analysis focuses on the importance of institutional power checks and the reinforcement of democratic norms within the framework of efficient and transparent governance. Further, in-depth investigations by scholars such as Đường (2015) and Hung (2023) delve into grassroots democracy and its role in constructing a socialist rule-of-law state. Hoa (2020) offers a critical perspective on the disruptive effects of social media platforms on democratic discourse, citing phenomena like "information noise" and "emotional democracy" as pressing issues that developing countries like Vietnam must actively address and adapt to. Most recently, Trang (2024) provides a comprehensive synthesis of Marxist–Leninist theory, Ho Chi Minh's thought, and the Communist Party of Vietnam's strategic orientation regarding socialist democracy. Her work evaluates its practical implementation and recommends concrete measures to reinforce democratic practices in Vietnam's current socio-political climate.

Despite this expanding body of research, there remains a notable gap in examining the dynamic interplay between democratic development and the processes of international integration in the Vietnamese context. This gap calls for further scholarly inquiry to better understand how globalization influences domestic democratic trajectories and institutional adaptation.

The question that arises is: How can democracy be developed while ensuring political stability, preserving national cultural identity, and enhancing national competitiveness? This paper selectively inherits theoretical approaches from both domestic and international perspectives to analyze and compare them with Vietnam's practical situation, proposing appropriate directions for the development of socialist democracy in the age of globalization.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Foundation

Democracy stands as one of the most significant and complex socio-political concepts in human history, with its interpretation and application evolving across diverse intellectual traditions and historical contexts. In its earliest manifestations, democracy was conceived primarily as a political model wherein individuals, whether directly or through elected representatives, participated in the governance and administration of state affairs. Ancient democratic practices, as seen in the Athenian model, allowed citizens to engage in direct decision-making regarding public matters. However, as societies grew more complex, the notion of democracy expanded to include not only the governance processes but also the protection of individual rights, the rule of law, the concept of accountability, and the establishment of a transparent system of political and social control.

In modern political philosophy, democracy has broadened to encompass a wide range of fundamental principles that go beyond mere political participation. These include the upholding of human rights, ensuring the rule of law, fostering transparency in governmental actions, and guaranteeing accountability to the public. Furthermore, modern democratic systems have placed increasing importance on the role of civil society in acting as a counterbalance to state power, providing mechanisms for social checks and balances that ensure that state actions remain in line with the aspirations and welfare of the people. These elements reflect the dynamic and evolving nature of democracy as it adapts to contemporary political environments.

From a Marxist-Leninist perspective, democracy is not viewed as a neutral or purely institutional process but as a system of governance exercised by the ruling class through the state apparatus, often with the aim of maintaining social order and the established power structures. The Marxist-Leninist framework emphasizes that, while democracy in capitalist systems may grant certain freedoms, these are often limited in their scope, serving primarily to perpetuate the interests of the ruling elite. In contrast, true democracy, as envisioned by Marxist-Leninist thought, is understood as a form of governance in which power resides in the hands of the working class, with the state serving to protect and promote the people's right to self-determination and collective progress.

Ho Chi Minh's thought, which creatively extended and adapted Marxist-Leninist democratic principles, introduced a distinct emphasis on the centrality of the people in the

democratic process. Ho Chi Minh viewed democracy not as an abstract political ideal but as a practical and lived experience rooted in Vietnam's revolutionary history and its cultural traditions. His approach was deeply interconnected with the specific historical context of Vietnam, characterized by colonial oppression and the struggle for national independence. In his vision, democracy was not solely about formal political structures but about ensuring that the people, in all their diversity, had the power to shape the nation's future. Ho Chi Minh famously stated: "Our country is a democratic country. All benefits are for the people. All powers belong to the people...", thus affirming that the people's sovereignty lies at the heart of Vietnam's national identity and development trajectory.

Ho Chi Minh's democratic thought emphasized that the people were the ultimate source of power and that democracy should be realized through practical means that directly benefit the masses. This idea went beyond the electoral and institutional forms of democracy to address the tangible needs of the people, including economic equality, social justice, and cultural development. He argued that true democracy in Vietnam would involve not only political freedoms but also the liberation of the working masses from exploitation, as well as the active participation of all citizens in the management of public affairs. In this way, Ho Chi Minh's democratic theory was inextricably linked to the broader goals of national liberation, social justice, and the collective empowerment of the Vietnamese people.

3.2 Research Methods

This study employs a combination of social sciences and humanities research methods, including:

Analytical-Synthetic Method: This method is employed to systematically organize and synthesize theoretical perspectives on democracy, ranging from classical to contemporary viewpoints. It allows for a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of democratic concepts and their application. By integrating various theoretical frameworks, this approach enables the exploration of practical models of democracy currently implemented in Vietnam, offering a broader perspective on how these theories are operationalized in a national context.

Logical-Historical Method: This method is used to explore the historical trajectory of democratic thought in Vietnam, from its emergence during the national liberation struggle to its current stage of integration into the global political system. It provides insights into how democratic ideas have evolved, the socio-political influences that shaped them, and the ways in which these ideas have been adapted to meet the needs of Vietnam's development in both

historical and contemporary contexts.

Comparative Method: The comparative method involves assessing the relationship between democratic theories and their practical implementation in Vietnam, while contrasting this with global democratic trends. This method highlights similarities, differences, and the unique aspects of Vietnam's democratic practices, offering an analysis of how global democratic trends influence or align with the country's approach to governance and democracy. It provides a deeper understanding of Vietnam's position in the broader international political landscape.

Policy Analysis Method: This method focuses on identifying the gaps and challenges in the current democratic practices within Vietnam, particularly in light of its increasing international integration. By critically examining existing policies and their effectiveness, this approach aims to propose actionable solutions for improving the practice of democracy, ensuring that Vietnam's governance structures are more responsive to both internal demands and external expectations. This method is essential for recommending strategies to enhance democratic practices in a way that is compatible with international norms and standards.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Historical Perspective on Democracy

The term "democracy" emerged around the 7th century BCE. In its original Greek language, the term "demokratos" was used to express democracy, where "demos" refers to the people and "kratos" refers to power. Thus, in ancient Greece, democracy was understood as the power belonging to the people or the power of the people. This basic understanding has largely remained intact to this day. Democracy is therefore a concept that signifies the people's right to rule, reflecting the relationship between the people and state power, where state power belongs to the people.

Throughout the history of human society, democracy is a concept that has gone through a complex process of emergence and development. In each mode of production, era, and nation, democracy always carries specific features based on the dialectical inheritance of the general points mentioned above. In slave-owning societies, democracy essentially served the interests of the slave-owning class. In feudal systems, democratic ideas and models were limited and prohibited by the autocratic power of monarchs. The bourgeois democracy established after the bourgeois revolutions emerged as a result of the alliance between the

bourgeoisie and other social classes to overthrow the feudal regime. Thus, the achievements of bourgeois democracy were not solely created by the bourgeois class but were the result of the struggles of the working people, the outcome of their consciousness, and the inevitable progress of society. The declarations of liberty, equality, fraternity, and ideas about the rule of law and civil society were the first elements of bourgeois democracy. However, due to the nature of bourgeois society, bourgeois democracy inevitably faced objective limitations. Socialist democracy, on the other hand, is the democracy of the working people (people's democracy) manifested in all areas of politics, economy, and culture. It is formed and developed through the true cultural values of humanity. As society progresses, and as people's material, intellectual, and spiritual conditions grow richer, the trend toward democracy expands and becomes more firmly established. The Marxist-Leninist doctrine asserts that democracy is not a natural product nor a result of the subjective desires of any individual or class. In social life, democracy exists both as material relations, which can be verified and as consciousness, i.e., spiritual values in thought. Democracy is the long-term development of history according to objective laws. Corresponding to different stages of economic and social development, the history of humanity has experienced various "types" of democracy. Marx wrote: "Each new step in civilization is also a new step in inequality. Society arose along with civilization, and all institutions created by society became institutions that contradicted their original purpose" (Marx; Engels, 1995, p. 198). Hence, throughout history, there have been constant struggles by the people to reclaim their democratic rights. A common thread, from the moment humanity left primitive communist society until the establishment of a civilized communist society, is that democracy has always served the interests of the ruling class. This form of democracy also reflects the level of development of the productive forces, which were not yet fully developed and relied on private ownership of the means of production.

In class-based societies where the state functions as an instrument of domination, democracy is often utilized by the ruling class as a mechanism to institutionalize and safeguard its hegemony through the legal codification of civil liberties and human rights. At the same time, democracy also emerges as a rallying point for the oppressed classes in their pursuit of political emancipation and social justice. Within this dialectical framework, democratic struggles become integral to broader movements for freedom, equality, and human dignity. The labor movement, in particular, has historically represented a collective effort to reclaim democratic rights and human freedoms from systems of exploitation. As Karl Marx emphasized, "...as long as democracy has not been achieved, communists and democrats will fight side by side, and the interests of the democrats are also the interests of communists"

(Marx; Engels, 1995, p. 391). This statement underscores the strategic alliance between communists and democrats in the historical struggle to democratize society and dismantle class-based domination.

In the early 1840s, Marx systematically presented his views on people's democracy through a critique of Hegel's idealist philosophy of rights. Hegel argued that the state created civil society and that the people were merely the material through which the concept of the state was expressed. Marx pointed out that the state does not create civil society; rather, civil society creates the state: "The truth is that the state arises from this majority, which exists as members of the family and members of civil society" (Marx; Engels, 1995, p. 329).

Building upon and advancing the foundations of Marxist–Leninist theory, Ho Chi Minh regarded democracy as the most valuable possession of the people, an achievement shaped through the historical processes of national construction and defense. For him, democracy was not merely a political system but an expression of the essential relationship between the state and the people within a particular socio-political context. Following the triumph of the August Revolution in 1945, President Ho Chi Minh defined the mission of building a new state, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, as one that embodies the ideals of independence, freedom, and happiness for the people.

In his seminal article *Dân vận* ("Mass Mobilization") published on October 15, 1949, Ho Chi Minh asserted: "Our country is a democratic country. All benefits are for the people. All powers belong to the people. The work of renewal and construction is the responsibility of the people. The struggle for independence and nation-building is the work of the people. The government, from the commune to the central level, is elected by the people. Organizations at all levels are established by the people. In short, power and strength lie in the hands of the people" (Minh, 2011, p. 232). This statement encapsulates his enduring vision of a people-centered democracy rooted in the lived realities and collective agency of the population.

A central tenet of Ho Chi Minh's democratic philosophy is his formulation of democracy as a system in which "the people are the masters," standing in direct contrast to hierarchical models of governance where power is concentrated in the hands of rulers. In his view, the phrase "our country is a democratic country" signifies a polity governed by and for the people. Moreover, his inclusive interpretation of "the people" encompassed all Vietnamese citizens, regardless of class, gender, ethnicity, or social background, provided they identified as members of the Vietnamese nation.

Ho Chi Minh consistently emphasized that genuine democracy must prioritize the well-being and empowerment of the people. A hallmark of socialist democracy, in his

conception, is that all material and spiritual achievements brought about by the Party and the State must be directed toward improving the quality of life of the people. In this model, the people are not passive recipients but active participants with both rights and responsibilities in national liberation, the defense of sovereignty, and the construction of a prosperous, equitable society.

Importantly, the people must be able to exercise their democratic rights across all domains of social life, including through the direct election of governmental bodies at both central and local levels. This comprehensive vision of political participation and representation includes workers, peasants, intellectuals, women, youth, ethnic minorities, and religious communities, ensuring that no group is excluded from the democratic process.

For the people to truly be in charge, continuous development of the economy, culture, and society is necessary to improve the people's living standards. Simultaneously, the Party must develop and adjust policies in line with the practical realities and legitimate aspirations of the masses. The state's apparatus must be focused on serving the people, ensuring that the people's ownership rights are genuinely implemented, not just in form but in substance.

An essential component in promoting socialist democracy in Vietnam lies in strengthening the role of political, social, and mass organizations. These entities serve as critical channels for articulating the people's voices to the government while simultaneously disseminating state policies to the public. This dual function establishes a participatory mechanism through which citizens are empowered to “know, discuss, implement, monitor, and benefit” from policies and decisions. Such a mechanism contributes to the formation of a robust democratic model that is capable of meeting the demands of national modernization and international integration.

The recognition and realization of democratic rights must be intrinsically linked to the fundamental interests of all citizens, as well as to the creative and proactive participation of the people. In this spirit, democracy must be developed as both a value and a practice to effectively serve the nation's socio-economic construction and advancement. As Ho Chi Minh affirmed: “To fulfill the revolutionary tasks, our State must develop the democratic rights and political participation of all people to promote the positive and creative spirit of the people, making every Vietnamese citizen actively participate in the management of State affairs, strive to build socialism, and fight for national unity” (Minh, 2011, p. 374).

Ho Chi Minh's democratic philosophy has been consistently inherited and creatively advanced by the Communist Party of Vietnam, particularly during the *Đổi mới* (Renovation) period. The Party has underscored that "socialist democracy is the essence of our regime; it

serves as both the goal and the driving force behind national development" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011, p.84–85). At the 12th National Congress, the Party further affirmed the central role of democracy by emphasizing: "Socialist democracy must be continuously strengthened, ensuring that all state power genuinely belongs to the people. All Party directives, state policies, and laws must emanate from the will, legitimate rights, and aspirations of the people. Democracy must be fully and rigorously practiced in all spheres of social life. The people must participate in every phase of policy formulation, from proposing ideas, engaging in discussions and debates, to monitoring implementation. Special attention must be paid to creating legal frameworks that directly safeguard the people's right to be the true masters of their society" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016, p. 169).

The 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam continued to underscore the state's obligation to respect, guarantee, and protect human rights and citizens' rights. The National Assembly is tasked with innovating and improving the quality of the legislative process, with a focus on consolidating the institutional foundation of a socialist-oriented market economy, and on building a law-based public administration that serves the people and upholds democracy. The judiciary is expected to ensure justice and safeguard human and civic rights (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.175–177). General Secretary Trong (2022) emphasized that the ultimate goal of promoting democracy in Vietnam is to harmonize economic growth with social progress and justice at every stage of development. In this framework, each economic policy must contribute to social advancement, while each social policy must catalyze economic development. Furthermore, the creation of legal wealth must be encouraged in parallel with sustainable poverty reduction and comprehensive support for disadvantaged groups and those who have contributed to the nation.

The foundational principle of socialist democracy is that all state power resides with the people. This is enshrined in the 2013 Constitution, which defines the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as a socialist rule-of-law state "of the people, by the people, and for the people." The basis of this state power is the alliance between the working class, the peasantry, and the intellectuals, reflecting the inclusive and collective nature of socialist governance in Vietnam.

4.2 Results of Implementing Democracy in Vietnam in the Context of International Integration

In the context of international integration, Vietnam has achieved substantial progress in advancing democratic development across various dimensions, including ideological,

organizational, institutional, and socio-political aspects. One of the most significant indicators of this progress is the growing recognition and institutionalization of human rights, understood as the inherent dignity, needs, interests, and capabilities of individuals, which are protected and promoted under the rule of law. Vietnam has established robust legal frameworks and mechanisms to protect a comprehensive range of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups such as the elderly, women, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and religious communities.

Resolution No. 27-NQ/TW, dated November 9, 2022, on building and perfecting the socialist rule-of-law state in the new era, affirms that the human rights and citizens' rights enshrined in the Constitution have been further elaborated through legislation and are increasingly being realized in practice. The resolution also emphasizes the strengthening of both direct and representative forms of democracy (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2022). Alongside this, Vietnam has made significant strides in human rights education, public awareness campaigns, and international cooperation. Efforts to counter misinformation and hostile narratives regarding Vietnam's human rights record have been timely, effective, and increasingly successful.

Regarding ideological work, the Communist Party of Vietnam has implemented reforms in the forms, content, and methods of political communication and education to enhance public awareness and foster social consensus. The public now has greater access to Party and State policies through both official channels and digital platforms, which has significantly enhanced political engagement and contributed to improved policy monitoring and feedback. As noted in the Political Report of the 13th National Congress, "Promoting socialist democracy is an integral component of the political system renovation, aimed at fostering social consensus and mobilizing the strength of great national unity" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 33).

Organizationally, Vietnam has implemented structural reforms to streamline the administrative apparatus, while democratizing personnel management. The institutionalization of personnel management principles has been reflected in regulations governing recruitment, evaluation, training, planning, and utilization of cadres. These reforms aim to enhance transparency, improve human resource quality, and ensure greater democratic participation in public service. Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW underscores the importance of innovation, democratization, openness, and transparency in cadre work under the new conditions.

Inspection and supervision work within the entire political system has been further

strengthened, especially for leaders of Party organizations, government bodies, and political-social organizations. This is an important measure to prevent corruption, abuse of power, and ensure accountability. According to the Central Inspection Commission, in 2023, more than 400 Party organizations and thousands of Party members were inspected, monitored, and disciplined for violations, contributing to strengthening discipline and order within the Party.

In Vietnam, intra-party democracy has been significantly expanded and effectively interconnected with democratic practices within the State apparatus. Practical experience demonstrates that achievements in Party building constitute a fundamental basis for the development of a socialist rule-of-law state that is truly “of the people, by the people, and for the people.” The Vietnamese State has increasingly affirmed its function as a service-oriented institution by facilitating public access to information, encouraging citizen participation in the policy-making process, and institutionalizing mechanisms for public supervision over policy implementation.

At the grassroots level, the implementation of democratic regulations, particularly in areas such as land-use planning, site clearance, and socio-economic development initiatives, has become increasingly prevalent in various localities. These practices reflect the institutionalization of participatory governance, aiming to ensure that development decisions align with the interests and expectations of local communities (Central Commission for Mass Mobilization, 2022).

Concurrently, Vietnam continues to fortify its legislative, executive, and judicial branches as part of its ongoing commitment to building a socialist rule-of-law state. The National Assembly has passed crucial legislation, such as the revised Land Law and the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy, thus advancing the legal framework that upholds human and civil rights. The governing philosophy of "The State serves the people" has been further consolidated through rational decentralization, administrative procedure reforms, and the strengthening of public oversight, all of which enhance the transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of governance. Moreover, the democratic atmosphere in society has increasingly expanded, with citizens not only gaining access to information but also engaging in discussions, actions, and supervision. The practice of democracy across economic, political, cultural, and social spheres has become more visible, particularly after the adoption of the 2013 Constitution, which unequivocally affirms human rights and citizens' rights. Socialist democracy is gradually emerging as a key driver for sustainable development, especially as Vietnam deepens its international integration, solidifying its commitment to both domestic prosperity and global cooperation.

4.3 Limitations in the Implementation of Democracy in Vietnam in the Context of International Integration

Although significant achievements have been made in the development of democracy, Vietnam still faces numerous limitations in practicing democracy at various levels in the context of international integration and the strong demand for innovation.

Firstly, ideological work has not been sharp or convincing enough. Although political propaganda and education have been focused on, the combativeness and flexibility of the methods used in propaganda are still limited and not truly integrated into the reality of social life. One prominent issue is that a considerable number of Party members and officials have deteriorated politically, ideologically, and morally, which partly reflects the inefficiency of ideological work in educating political and ideological awareness and preventing degeneration. According to the Central Inspection Commission's report, many cases of corruption and negative behavior were discovered primarily through public denunciations or press investigations, rather than through the internal monitoring and inspection system of the Party and State (Central Inspection Commission, 2023).

Secondly, while there have been changes in organizational and personnel work, progress has been slow and lacking in synchronization. One of the main reasons is the delay in renewing the selection, training, arrangement, and use of officials. Personnel work still has many shortcomings, such as an oversized bureaucracy, a lack of transparency, and unclear mechanisms for assignment and decentralization. There is still no system for selecting surplus personnel, and the selection and appointment processes are not yet open and transparent. This leads to the underutilization of human resources and talents in society, which affects sustainable development. Personnel work also lacks full public participation in supervision and evaluation.

Thirdly, the Party's inspection and supervision work still has many limitations. The implementation of inspection and supervision of Party organizations, government bodies, and political-social organizations is still formal and ineffective. Some serious corruption and misconduct cases were only discovered through media intervention or public denunciations, not through the Party and State's inspection bodies. This highlights the need to establish an independent and clear monitoring mechanism to ensure the full exercise of the people's right to supervise.

Fourthly, democracy in the State still lacks substance. Although state power is

delegated by the people, in practice, this power is not always exercised properly and effectively. Some state agencies still lack transparency and openness, and do not truly listen to the people's opinions in policy-making and public service implementation. Abuse of power, bureaucracy, and authoritarianism still exist in certain segments of officials and civil servants, causing inconvenience and undermining public trust in the state apparatus. As mentioned in the Government's report (2023), the administrative system still lacks agility and is slow to address issues affecting the people and the country's socio-economic development.

Fifthly, awareness of democracy among some officials, Party members, and the people is still uneven, leading to ineffective implementation of democracy at the grassroots level. Although policies regarding democracy in society have been issued, the institutionalization and practical application of these policies remain slow. Some of the people's rights to self-determination are still not fully respected, while freedoms of speech, listening to differing opinions, and critical thinking are still limited. This reduces the effectiveness of democracy in society, allowing for the persistence of superficial or extreme forms of democracy.

Sixthly, the mechanism for overseeing state power remains unclear, and power does not truly belong to the people. Public supervision of government and administrative bodies has not been fully institutionalized. In practice, public oversight on political and social issues is still weak, leading to bureaucracy and a lack of responsiveness in addressing urgent societal issues. Many important decisions still lack public participation, preventing power from being transparently and effectively controlled.

In the context of international integration, addressing these limitations is a prerequisite for ensuring substantial democratic development, protecting the people's rights, and promoting the sustainable development of the country.

4.4 Solutions to Promote the Implementation of Democracy in Vietnam in the Context of International Integration

In the context of international integration, the implementation of democracy has become an essential requirement for Vietnam. To truly promote democracy in society, synchronized and resolute solutions are needed. These solutions not only help consolidate public trust in the political system but also promote the country's sustainable development. Below are some key solutions:

First, enhance awareness of democracy for officials, Party members, and the people to ensure that socialist democracy develops in the right direction in the context of international

integration. The Party's leadership methods should be renewed towards democracy and transparency; the principle of democratic centralism should be strictly followed in Party activities and decision-making processes. At the same time, strengthen and improve the effectiveness of advisory bodies within the political system to ensure seamless and coordinated operation. Increase political, ethical, and practical training for officials and Party members; promote the exemplary role and the spirit of serving the people. Democracy must be practiced substantively, especially at the grassroots level, avoiding formalism and extremism; it must be linked with responsibility, discipline, and the law. Improving the political system towards efficiency and closeness with the people, along with building a democratic mechanism from the central to the grassroots level, is essential for the people to fully exercise their rights. Every citizen must raise their political awareness and social responsibility, and proactively participate in national defense and development activities; they must also resolutely oppose any abuse of democracy to distort, cause unrest, or undermine the socialist regime.

Second, the continuous improvement and institutionalization of democratic practices should remain a priority. To effectively implement democracy, both the legal system and the mechanisms for practicing democracy must undergo ongoing refinement in line with the Party's guidelines, particularly those outlined in the Platform for National Construction in the Transitional Period to Socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011) and the 2013 Constitution. The promotion of direct democracy, representative democracy, and grassroots democracy should be carried out substantively, adhering to the principle of "The people know, the people discuss, the people do, the people supervise, the people enjoy." This ensures that every citizen has the opportunity to participate in important social decisions and exercise their rights. In this process, authorities must implement democratic practices uniformly across all levels of governance to ensure fairness and transparency within the state apparatus. The goal is to foster the development of a clean, effective political system that truly reflects the will and aspirations of the people, while strengthening the institutional frameworks that guarantee democratic engagement and participation.

Third, enhance awareness of democracy within the community. Propaganda, legal education, and social ethics must be conducted substantively and effectively. Raising awareness of democracy among the people is not only about providing information but also about changing the attitudes and behaviors of individuals. This requires changes in content, methods, and forms of propaganda to suit different audiences. Propaganda should be diverse and attractive to involve the people, helping them understand their rights and responsibilities

in a democratic society. Furthermore, legal education should be closely integrated with activities to enhance citizenship culture, creating a society that understands and respects the law.

Fourth, the legal system of Vietnam must be continuously refined, modernized, and adapted to the evolving context of national development and international integration to fully realize and safeguard the democratic rights of its citizens. This imperative requires a thorough and systematic review, amendment, and enhancement of the entire legal framework. The goal is to ensure that laws not only remain consistent with the Constitution but also uphold the principles of unity, efficiency, and transparency. Legal reforms must create a system that is coherent and harmonized across various sectors, particularly as the country navigates its path towards deeper integration into the global economy and international governance structures. The process of legal modernization must also account for the rapid changes in society, especially the growing demand for greater political participation, social justice, and economic rights from the people. As the aspirations for democracy among the public continue to expand, the legal system must evolve to provide the necessary institutional mechanisms that enable the active participation of citizens in political, economic, and social processes. This includes revising outdated laws, removing legal loopholes, and introducing new legal provisions that reflect the increasing complexity of modern governance and international norms.

Moreover, legal reforms should address the rights of vulnerable groups in society, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are adequately met within the broader democratic framework. In this regard, the legal system must align with the broader trends of democratization across the political, economic, and socio-cultural domains. It is essential to foster a legal environment where citizens' participation is not just a right but a vital component of the governance process. The legal system must also encourage the development of a vibrant civil society, where individuals and organizations can freely express their opinions, participate in decision-making, and hold the government accountable. As Vietnam continues its journey towards becoming a fully developed socialist rule-of-law state, the legal system must be both a reflection of and a tool for ensuring the democratic rights of the people, driving social progress, and maintaining political stability amid global integration.

Fifth, the role of socio-political organizations, especially the Vietnam Fatherland Front, should be significantly enhanced in fostering the development and implementation of socialist democracy. These organizations must be empowered to effectively exercise their functions of supervision and social critique, serving as essential conduits for public

engagement and accountability. In particular, the Vietnam Fatherland Front is expected to play a central role in articulating the voices, needs, and aspirations of the populace, thereby strengthening the linkage between the Party, the State, and the people, and contributing to the protection of citizens' lawful interests. Furthermore, it is critical to mobilize the political consciousness, social responsibility, and creative potential of the public in Party-building efforts and in improving the rule-of-law state. Citizens should be encouraged and enabled to engage in governance through professional associations, socio-political organizations, and grassroots self-governance mechanisms. Simultaneously, attention must be paid to preserving and enriching the nation's cultural and spiritual heritage, ensuring that democratic development remains grounded in the values and identity of the Vietnamese people.

Sixth, strictly and promptly handle actions that exploit democracy to violate the law, disrupt social order, and harm the national interest. Encouraging freedom of speech and expression should go hand-in-hand with building an effective monitoring mechanism to prevent the abuse of democracy to incite, divide, and destabilize political-social harmony. Democracy must always be associated with responsibility and the rule of law to ensure the stability, development, and sustainable integration of the country.

5 CONCLUSION

The development of democracy in the context of international integration is not only an objective requirement but also an inevitable part of the process of building a socialist rule-of-law state in Vietnam. In the context of international integration and the ongoing changes in the modern world order, democracy is seen not only as a goal but also as a driving force to strengthen public trust, promote national internal power, and enhance the country's position on the international stage. From a theoretical perspective, democracy is the core value of progressive politics, and a vivid manifestation of people's power institutionalized into specific mechanisms and policies in the state and social life.

In practice, Vietnam has achieved many significant accomplishments in expanding and promoting democracy in various political, economic, cultural, and social fields. However, the process of implementing democracy still faces certain limitations due to both objective and subjective factors, requiring more synchronized, comprehensive, and effective solutions. In the context of current deep international integration, the development of democracy needs to be placed in a dialectical relationship with maintaining political stability, ensuring legal discipline, and adapting to international standards while still adhering to the socialist

orientation. This is a long, complex but necessary process, which requires high political determination, a renewal of leadership thinking, national governance capacity, and especially the active and proactive participation of the people. The development of democracy in Vietnam in the era of international integration is not only aimed at improving the state model but also at building a truly democratic, fair, and civilized society, where the people are respected, can participate, and enjoy the fruits of the country's development. This is the solid foundation for Vietnam to make steady progress on its path of integration and sustainable development in the 21st century.

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