

PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY IN VIETNAM IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

Practicing democracy in social life is one of the goals of humanity in general and in Vietnam in particular. In Vietnam, the practice of democracy has been addressed from various perspectives, policies, and laws of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the state. However, in some places and at times, the practice of democracy has not truly materialized, leading to social injustice and failing to attract talented individuals, virtuous people, and high-quality businesses, especially in the current context of international integration aimed at improving the people's lives through economic and social tasks. Therefore, in this article, alongside outlining some theories of democracy and its practice, the author discusses the current situation of practicing democracy in Vietnam in the context of current international integration to highlight the positive aspects and existing limitations hindering the current practice of democracy. Based on this, some recommendations are proposed to further enhance the practice of democracy in the context of Vietnam's integration into the global economy, aiming to attract more foreign investors of integrity and competence to compete fairly and healthily with domestic companies and enterprises for the rapid and sustainable development of Vietnam's economy and society.

Keywords: Democracy, integration, international, practice, Vietnam.

A PRÁTICA DA DEMOCRACIA NO VIETNÃ NO CONTEXTO DA ATUAL INTEGRAÇÃO INTERNACIONAL

RESUMO

Praticar a democracia na vida social é um dos objetivos da humanidade em geral e do Vietname em particular. No Vietname, a prática da democracia tem sido abordada em várias perspectivas, políticas e leis do Partido Comunista do Vietname e do Estado. No entanto, em alguns lugares e por vezes, a prática da democracia não se concretizou verdadeiramente, conduzindo à injustiça social e não conseguindo atrair indivíduos talentosos, pessoas virtuosas e empresas de alta qualidade, especialmente no actual contexto de integração internacional que visa melhorar a situação. a vida das pessoas através de tarefas económicas e sociais. Portanto, neste artigo, além de delinear algumas teorias da democracia e sua prática, o autor discute a situação atual da prática da democracia no Vietnã no contexto da atual integração internacional para destacar os aspectos positivos e as limitações existentes que dificultam a atual prática da democracia. Com base nisto, são propostas algumas recomendações para melhorar ainda mais a prática da democracia no contexto da integração do Vietname na economia global, visando atrair mais investidores estrangeiros de integridade e competência para competir de forma justa e saudável com empresas e empresas nacionais pela rápida e desenvolvimento sustentável da economia e da sociedade do Vietname.

Palavras-chave: Democracia, integração, internacional, prática, Vietname.



1 INTRODUCTION

Democracy and the practice of democracy have long been issues addressed throughout human history. Through various historical epochs, the understanding of democracy and its practice has gradually deepened. In today's era, the issue of practicing democracy is always a concern for countries around the world and is implemented in their policies, strategies, and national governance. The goal of practicing democracy is to enhance the people's sovereignty, harness the power of individuals and social-political organizations to build a strong and developed nation, and continuously improve the people's lives.

In Vietnam today, the practice of democracy has been outlined by the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Government through various strategies, policies, and related viewpoints. As a result, Vietnam has achieved many successes in recent years: harnessing the unity and intellect of the people and organizations within and outside the country, continually improving the people's lives, and expanding the people's sovereignty. However, in the context of international integration, the increasingly fierce competition among individuals and organizations both domestically and internationally has brought forth various issues related to the practice of democracy. These include legal policies ensuring fairness among investors, governance policies, market mechanisms that may not always function effectively, some management leaders still having group-interest or personal-interest mindsets, exploiting power to practice democracy in form only, and so on. Therefore, researching and clarifying the practice of democracy in the current context of international integration in Vietnam is a necessary task, significant both in theoretical and practical terms.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In countries around the world, there have been numerous research works related to the practice of democracy in the process of socio-economic development. Some notable works include: The study "Democratization in the Human Development Perspective" by Welzel (2006) asserts that the development of democracy is an inevitable process in the history of social development, leading to increasingly comprehensive societal development. According to this perspective, democracy institutionalizes human development, empowering people on various fronts, thereby enhancing the value of democracy in social life. Margaret L. Anderson's work "Practicing Democracy Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany" (2000) provides an overview of the practice of democracy in the history of Germany. Anderson demonstrates that the practice of democracy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries opened up a space of freedom for the Kaiser's land, gradually leading to a more democratic culture in the decades before 1914.

The article "Democracy Education in the Sociocultural Perspective of Indonesian Society"



(Elly & Zamroni, 2023) outlines the history of elections in Indonesia, starting from the country's reform era, initially electing high-level leadership positions, and later expanding to include local leadership elections. The study "Consensus as Democratic Education on the Village Consultative Body Election in Bangkalan" (Yudi, Encik, Indra, Indah, 2020) analyzes democratic education in local elections in Bangkalan, Indonesia, exploring democratic values such as creating social consensus and using it as a model for local democratic education; The article "Law as a Democratic Means: Deweyan Jurisprudence and Democratic Experimentalism" (Butler, 2012) discusses Dewey's perspective on legal construction and the implementation of democracy through the law, arguing that practicing democracy is an objective requirement of society.

Through an examination of various works on the practice of democracy by different authors worldwide, we can see that democracy is a universal value. The history of democratic development is the history of progressive social development, contributing to enhancing the power of communities and improving quality of life. These theoretical and practical foundations are crucial for authors to substantiate the practice of democracy in Vietnam's current context of international integration.

In Vietnam, concerning the content of democratic practice, there are currently many authors who are interested in researching and addressing various aspects. Some of these authors include: The work "Practicing Democracy in the Context of Building a Rule of Law State, Developing a Market Economy with Socialist Orientation" which presents theoretical issues related to democracy and its practice in a market economy and the establishment of a rule of law state. It highlights the current situation and challenges in implementing democracy, proposing directions and measures to enhance democratic practice in society; "Practicing Democracy in the Conditions of a Single Ruling Party," published by the National Political Publisher in Hanoi, Vietnam, discusses theoretical issues related to democracy, its practice, and the experiences of some countries worldwide. It then suggests solutions for practicing democracy under a single ruling party in present-day Vietnam (Duc, 2015; Duc, 2017). "The Relationship between Democratic Practice and Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Ensure Social Order," by Lam et al. (2023), presents theoretical issues regarding the relationship between democratic practice and laws to ensure legal order in Vietnam today. Alongside this, the authors propose solutions to enhance awareness and democratic practice in the future. "Practicing Democracy in the Activities of the National Assembly," published in the Party Building Journal, briefly outlines the necessity of practicing democracy in the agencies of the Communist Party of Vietnam, especially in the activities of the National Assembly, where policies and laws related to people's lives are decided (An, 2008).

Articles by authors such as "Practicing Democracy in the Theoretical and Ideological Work of the Party" (Toan, 2015), "Ho Chi Minh's Thoughts on Democracy and Democratic Practice under the Leadership of a Single Ruling Party" (Hang, 2014), and "The Party's Awareness of



Democratic Practice and Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Ensure Order" (Duc, 2016) focus on democratic practice within the Party and government of Vietnam. These articles emphasize the importance and role of democratic practice today, proposing necessary solutions to enhance the strength and intelligence of the people in building a progressively developing country.

Moreover, several articles in Vietnam's specialized theoretical journals discuss democratic practice in economic, cultural, political, and social activities. For instance, "Understanding Lenin's Thoughts on Democratic Practice in Theoretical Work" (Hoai, 2015) summarizes Lenin's viewpoints on democratic practice in theoretical and ideological work, highlighting its significance for Vietnam's theoretical and ideological activities.

Democratic practice in Vietnam has been discussed and implemented in various aspects of Vietnamese society, particularly by authors who analyze theoretical issues related to democracy and its role within the Party and societal life. They have identified the current situation, advantages, limitations, and proposed solutions to improve democratic skills among the people and within the state management apparatus.

However, amidst rapid global economic integration, the issue of democratic practice in socio-economic activities poses many opportunities and challenges. Yet, there are few works addressing this topic. Therefore, this represents a gap for authors to fulfill the objectives of their articles.

3 METHODS

To achieve the objectives of the article, the author employs various research methods, including qualitative research methods. The qualitative method allows the author to analyze the necessary content to address the issues at hand. Specifically, from research papers, interviews, and evaluations by experts both domestically and internationally related to democratic practices in general and in Vietnam specifically, the author conducts analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, and draws necessary conclusions to provide a scientific basis for the article.

Additionally, the author utilizes the method of analyzing secondary documents. By analyzing content related to democratic practices from theory to practical application in Vietnam, the author gains a comprehensive overview of the landscape of democratic practices in Vietnam amidst the process of global economic integration. Alongside, the author employs the method of comparison and contrast to observe democratic practices in different historical periods. Furthermore, the logical-historical method is used to analyze objectively the inheritance of values of democratic practices throughout different stages of societal development.



4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perspectives on the Practice of Democracy in Vietnam

Incorporating the values of democracy practiced by humanity, as well as the traditional values of the nation, and summarizing the practical experience of contemporary democracy, the Communist Party of Vietnam has consistently affirmed democracy as one of the societal values, ensuring rights and legitimate interests for the people. Therefore, in recent times, the Party and the State of Vietnam have implemented numerous policies, perspectives, and directives on practicing democracy across various sectors, maximizing the legitimate needs and aspirations of the people, and affirming the people's right to mastery in the process of global economic integration. Some perspectives and approaches of the Party and the State of Vietnam in practicing democracy in key areas include:

Firstly, the Practice of Democracy in the Economic Sector. The economy is the most crucial component of a country, and the practice of democracy in the economic realm is considered the flagship, a prerequisite, and a condition for implementing democracy in other areas. Democracy in the economy must be consistently implemented throughout the country's development process, as any changes in democracy in this field will impact democracy in all aspects of societal life. Therefore, the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State have shown continuous concern and guidance for the practice of democracy in the economic sector, which has been protected by legislation over time.

In response to an interview with Comrade Nguyen Van Linh, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, with the Soviet newspaper *Idovexchia*, he affirmed:

"Since the 6th Party Congress, the Communist Party of Vietnam initiated and led the process of expanding democracy in the comprehensive and profound renewal of Vietnamese society. It cannot be said there is renewal without separating democratization within the Party and in society. Therefore, our Party advocates strong development of democracy, especially economic democracy" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2006b, p. 59).

From the early days of the country's renewal process, it is evident that the Communist Party of Vietnam emphasized the role of practicing democracy in the economic sector as a driving force and a key factor in ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of the people.

Originating from a small economy with various forms of ownership, the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State recognized and implemented national renewal early on to unleash the full potential of the people's right to mastery, stimulating strong development in various economic components. The Communist Party of Vietnam asserted:

"The economic policy of multiple components has long-term strategic significance, with a logical progression from small-scale production to socialism, reflecting democratic principles in the economy, ensuring that everyone has the freedom to do business within the legal framework" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2006a, p. 595).

Respecting the people's right to choose the forms of economic development based on their



abilities, needs, and desires has played a positive role in stimulating the power of entities participating in production. However, the Communist Party of Vietnam does not view the implementation of policies supporting multiple economic components as embracing a multi-element economic approach.

During the process of integrating into the international economic system, the Communist Party of Vietnam has consistently emphasized the role of the economy operating by market rules, under state management and Party leadership. This does not mean that the Party intervenes in the laws of the economy but rather guides economic components to adhere to the rules of the domestic and international markets. At the 13th Party Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, it was affirmed:

"The market-oriented socialist economy is the general economic model of our country in the period of transitioning to socialism. It is a modern market economy, internationally integrated, operating fully and consistently with the laws of the market economy, under the legal management of the socialist state, led by the Communist Party of Vietnam; ensuring socialist orientation for the goal of a prosperous, strong, democratic, fair, and civilized nation, suitable for each stage of the country's development. Vietnam's market-oriented socialist economy has various forms of ownership and economic components, including State-owned economy playing a dominant role; collective economy, cooperative economy continually strengthened and developed; private economy as an important driving force; foreign-invested economy encouraged to develop in line with economic and social development strategies, plans, and plans" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p. 128-129).

Democracy in the economy goes hand in hand with discipline and compliance with the law, rather than democracy being freedom regardless of the law. In economic activities, all citizens have the right to freely choose their forms of economic development without violating the law and are responsible for any violations. At the 13th Party Congress, the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed:

"The state manages the economy through laws, mechanisms, policies, strategies, planning, standards, quotas, and state economic forces appropriate to the requirements and laws of the market economy" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p. 130-131).

The state manages economic components according to the market and the law, while all citizens, and economic entities within and outside the country, have the right to contribute opinions on the Party's and the State's orientations, policies, and laws. Supervision of the activities of management agencies is carried out to ensure transparency and equality for all citizens, with the principle of "people know, people discuss, people do, people inspect, and people benefit"

Secondly, practicing democracy in the political field, along with practicing democracy in the economic field, is essential. Vietnam embraces the values of people's sovereignty from nations around the world as well as its ethnic groups. In the process of integrating into the global economy, Vietnam remains steadfast in its path of building a society where the working people are the masters, always placing the power of the people at the highest level.

In the Party's Document of 1995, Vietnam defined:



"Our state belongs to the people, is run by the people, and is for the people. All state power belongs to the people, and the authority of the state machinery is delegated by the people. The state is established by the people, elected by the people, and subject to supervision and dismissal by the people. It operates for the people, with serving the people as its highest goal. The strength of our state derives from the strength of the people, of the entire people's block; the state must truly represent the will and aspirations of the people, ensuring that in practice all state power belongs to the people" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2007, p.33).

Continuing with the perspectives on practicing democracy within the political system, in the Resolution on Building the Country during the transitional period to socialism (revised and developed in 2011) and the Constitution of 2013, the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed:

"Ensuring that all state power belongs to the people. Implementing direct democracy and representative democracy effectively, especially grassroots democracy. Properly implementing the principle of 'people know, people discuss, people do, people supervise, people inspect, people enjoy'" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p.172).

Based on the observation of the country's reality, approaching the general development trend of democracy in social life worldwide, the Vietnamese state has oriented its strategic development in the coming time to continue:

"Practicing and promoting extensively socialist democracy, the right to mastery and the role of the people; strengthening and enhancing the people's trust, fostering social consensus" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p.38).

At the 13th National Party Congress of Vietnam, significant dialectical relationships were emphasized, particularly highlighting the relationship "between practicing democracy and strengthening the legal system, ensuring social discipline" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p.38). For democracy to be implemented according to principles, as societal values for humanity, it is necessary to build a strong legal state, operating effectively, ensuring that all citizens live and work equally under the law.

Therefore, it can be seen that practicing democracy in the political field aims to ensure the rights of citizens, expanding human rights, where all people have freedoms, and democratic rights according to the law, protected by the law, and allowed to do what the law does not prohibit.

Thirdly, practicing democracy in the cultural and social sphere is crucial. Social culture is considered the spiritual aspect of social life, manifested in various aspects such as creative activities, exchanges, assimilation and dissemination of culture domestically and internationally, and preservation of cultural values both tangible and intangible. In the process of international integration, the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam always pay attention to creating conditions for all citizens to access various cultural values. In the Party's Document, the Communist Party of Vietnam states:

"Developing and enhancing the quality of literature and arts, affirming and appreciating true, good, beautiful values, criticizing and rejecting outdated, inferior, and uncultured expressions. Ensuring citizens' rights to information, freedom, and creativity. Developing synchronous, modern mass media, providing accurate, diverse, timely information to effectively serve the



cause of building and defending the Fatherland" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2010, p. 507).

Practicing democracy in the cultural sphere aims to continuously improve the spiritual life of the people. Therefore, in the process of international integration, all Vietnamese citizens have the right to absorb the cultural values of humanity and the essence of the times to build a democratic, civilized society for the rightful interests and comprehensive development of humanity.

At the 13th National Party Congress, the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam continued to affirm:

"Emphasis is placed on enhancing the value of ideology and art, while ensuring freedom and democracy in literary and artistic creativity, encouraging new explorations to enrich the cultural identity of Vietnam; limiting deviations, and expressions driven by mediocre tastes. Care is given, and favorable conditions are created for the development of the culture and arts of ethnic minorities. Continuously innovating the content and methods of operation of literary and artistic associations, gathering a large number of artists to participate; encouraging freedom of creativity and enforcing copyright" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p.145).

Culture has always been the soft power, the intrinsic driving force of the nation. Therefore, Vietnam always pays attention to and creates favorable conditions for all citizens to unleash their creative potential, as well as to freely access valuable information worldwide to build a prosperous and diverse Vietnamese culture, providing motivation for sustainable socio-economic development.

Regarding society, the practice of democracy in social life is increasingly expanding. Citizens aged 18 and above, with the cognitive capacity and behavior, have the right to vote or stand for election, exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizens in all areas of social life. The rights of citizens to participate in the affairs of the State and society, and to shape important decisions of the Party and the State, are expanding and progressing. The people's level of mastery and capacity is gradually being raised. The major policies and strategies of the state, which affect the lives of the people, are based on the opinions of the people. This aims to harness the strength and intelligence of the people in shaping social development policies.

Some achievements and limitations in the practice of democracy during the international integration process in Vietnam

Some achievements in the practice of democracy in Vietnam during the international integration process:

During the process of international integration and the expansion of the market economy, as well as through exchanges and cooperation with countries worldwide, Vietnam has continuously enhanced the role of the people as masters on all fronts. Therefore, the practice of democracy in recent years has also achieved significant achievements.



In the economic sphere, Vietnam respects the freedom of individuals and organizations to develop their economy following the general provisions of the law. This has stimulated economic entities to leverage their strengths and achieve significant accomplishments. The country's GDP growth has been continuously increasing each year, averaging around 6% annually in recent years, despite the severe impact of the Covid pandemic. In 2020, Vietnam's GDP still belonged to the highest-growing group globally (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p.61). The economic development policies tailored to the country's reality have unlocked the potential of participants in production and business.

"As proven by reality, expanding democracy in the economy has had a significant effect: it has initially unleashed the potential of economic entities, allowing tens of millions of people to freely engage in production and business, with their rights respected... As a result, social production capacity has taken a step forward, the livelihoods of a large portion of the population have improved, and the masses have felt the tangible benefits of our Party's innovation-oriented career" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2006a, p.797-798).

The expansion of democratic freedoms and the assurance of fairness and equality in Vietnam have attracted many competent individuals and organizations, both domestically and internationally, to participate in the production and business processes, contributing to the rapid and sustainable development of the economy.

The multi-sectoral economy is allowed to develop freely, fairly, and equally under the law, fostering healthy competition among domestic and foreign enterprises, which has paved the way for the strong development of the country. Such achievements have been attained due to the democratic practice in the economy becoming increasingly widespread and substantive.

In the political sphere, Vietnam has consistently practiced democracy in all areas of political life. All policies, strategies, and policies affecting the interests of the people are openly discussed and debated through the People's Councils and the National Assembly, allowing representatives to provide direct feedback, minimizing negative impacts on the people's interests. As a result, policies and laws are supported and rigorously implemented by the people in society. Particularly in recent years, Vietnam has implemented "grassroots democracy regulations," ensuring that the rights and interests of the people are closely observed and bringing tangible results, harnessing the intellectual and creative energy of individuals and organizations, and contributing significantly to the political system.

In the cultural sphere, the practice of democracy has achieved many significant achievements. Individuals and organizations have the freedom to create, enjoy, and absorb the traditional cultural values of the era as well as the progressive cultures of humanity. Especially in this era of rapid development in science and technology, the freedom to integrate and absorb the advanced culture of the world has brought significant meaning to people's lives. People continually enhance their cultural knowledge and professionalism in cultural and social activities.

Some limitations in the practice of democracy in Vietnam during the process of international



integration. Alongside the achievements, the practice of democracy in Vietnam during the process of international integration still faces certain limitations, as acknowledged by the Vietnamese state:

"The people's sovereignty in many places and on various fronts is still violated. In many cases, democracy is superficially practiced, or it is exploited to sow division, undermine internal unity, and disrupt social order, and safety. There is still a significant level of bureaucracy, with insufficient genuine respect for democracy and its practice among a portion of officials, party members, and civil servants. Grassroots mobilization work has not been adequately emphasized; the content and methods of mobilizing and gathering the masses still tend to be administrative. The supervision, detection, and rectification of errors and limitations in the practice of democracy at all levels are not thorough and regular.

In terms of the economy, the practice of democracy in the economic sector sometimes remains superficial, with the direction and attention from various levels and sectors occasionally failing to keep pace with the speed of economic development and the process of international integration. The legal system has not been amended promptly enough to attract more investment resources with capability and quality. Some officials have become corrupt, abusing their power for personal or group interests, disregarding the law and equal competition among individuals and organizations both domestically and internationally to pursue their benefits. This makes it difficult to attract the best businesses and individuals with the greatest potential and capabilities for the country's socio-economic development. At the 13th Party Congress, the Communist Party of Vietnam acknowledged:

"The investment and business environment has not truly been open and transparent. Breakthroughs have not been achieved in mobilizing, allocating, and utilizing resources for development effectively" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p.80).

In the political sphere, especially within the current context of international integration, the implementation of democracy within the Party and state management agencies is of utmost importance. However, some party officials lack self-discipline and exemplary conduct, prioritizing personal interests over the common good of society. They may misuse their power to override the opinions of the collective, leading to a lack of democratic concentration or merely a superficial democracy, thereby affecting the legitimate rights and interests of organizations and individuals and undermining the common interests of society. The 13th Congress emphasized:

"Some grassroots party organizations, a portion of officials, party members, civil servants, and public employees have not been exemplary and have not truly respected the opinions and recommendations of the people, nor have they timely addressed the legitimate rights, interests, and aspirations of the people. The people's sovereignty is sometimes violated; there are still manifestations of superficial democracy, divorcing democracy from discipline and law" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p.88-89).

The phenomenon of certain leaders and officials, who are entrusted with power, becoming



corrupt, lacking in self-cultivation and ethical training, and exploiting personal power to dominate collective contributions, undermines democracy or results in a superficial democracy. This trend not only poses an increasing risk but also causes significant damage, particularly eroding the trust of the people in the leadership apparatus of the government.

In the cultural and spiritual sphere, the limitations and shortcomings often manifest in the lack of adherence to the rule of law and democratic principles, violating management, creative, and enjoyment activities, as well as cultural disparities among regions and areas within the country. The XIII Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam acknowledged:

"The cultural and social environment continues to be polluted by social evils, corruption, and negativity. Disparities in cultural enjoyment among regions and areas remain significant; cultural life in ethnic minority areas, and remote and distant areas still faces many difficulties. Cultural leadership, guidance, and management are still hesitant and slow in institutionalizing the Party's viewpoints and policies on culture" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021a, p.84).

Additionally, some individuals and organizations, both domestically and internationally, with an incomplete understanding of freedom and democracy, have exploited various media platforms and the internet to distort the state's policies and directions of Vietnam, aiming to incite certain segments of the population to oppose the government, causing social instability.

In social management, despite the Party and the State of Vietnam's commitment to fairness, equality, and maximizing benefits for the people, the implementation of democracy in these activities has not been fully realized. In some instances, certain units and localities have failed to listen to dissenting opinions from the people, especially the critiques from domestic and international scientists, leading to low effectiveness of social investment and even massive losses and wastage for the country. Many investment projects not only result in significant losses for the local population but also waste billions of Vietnamese dong, which could have been used for socio-economic development purposes, affecting the livelihoods of the people.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The practice of democracy is one of the common goals of humanity, aiming at liberating and developing comprehensive human beings. It can be said that to achieve this common goal, humanity has always struggled for their legitimate rights and interests. However, in reality, there are various perspectives on the practice of democracy, but ultimately, democracy is considered a universal value that humanity strives for. In Vietnam, alongside the achievements that have been made, there are still certain limitations in the practice of democracy. These include instances where democracy is sometimes superficial, and some officials degenerate and abuse power to dominate the collective rights and interests of the people, causing public outrage.

Based on these limitations and shortcomings in the practice of democracy, the author of this



article proposes some recommendations to enhance awareness and practice of democracy in the current context of international integration in Vietnam, as follows:

Firstly, improving the quality of leadership cadres is essential. Throughout the history of societal development, the class holding leadership positions plays the most crucial role in regulating and governing other activities of society. Leadership cadres represent the governing class, managing and implementing policies and strategies that affect the economic, political, and social life of the people. In Vietnam, leadership cadres are entrusted by the people to govern the country, participate in policy-making, and manage the state. Therefore, the role of leadership cadres is immensely important. If leadership cadres lack quality and misuse their power to practice democracy for wrongful purposes, it can harm the people. Hence, enhancing the quality of leadership cadres is an urgent requirement, necessary to improve the quality of serving the people, for their legitimate interests.

To enhance the quality of leadership cadres, training institutions need to improve the quality of training, ensuring authenticity and relevance, and regularly updating domestic and international knowledge suitable for the practical situation of Vietnam. Select individuals with integrity, competency, and high professional qualifications.

"Promote the selection, planning, and training of generations of officials and civil servants with ethics, talents, and political bravery based on competitive mechanisms for recruitment, remuneration, promotion, and fair evaluation. Build incentives to encourage dedication to the country, create motivation and pressure for all officials, and civil servants to fulfill their assigned tasks, wholeheartedly serve the people; and have mechanisms to protect innovative, creative, daring, responsible officers for the common good. Strengthen discipline, administrative discipline, and increase the responsibility of leaders and officials, civil servants" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021b, p.147).

It is necessary to persist in training, retraining, and disseminating knowledge to officials, and party members, especially those in leadership roles, on the importance of integrity and the respect for the rights and interests of the people. Resolutely struggle to eliminate low-quality, uneducated cadres who lack the courage to think and act because their knowledge is not solid. In the current context of international integration, good leadership cadre quality will attract many high-quality domestic and foreign investors competing with each other, thus facilitating the selection of the best investors to serve the common interests of the people. If leadership cadres lack quality and fail to uphold democracy in their management fields, it can lead to abuse of power and obstruction.

Secondly, enhancing the perfection of the legal system in the current context of international integration is crucial. During the process of international integration, the practice of democracy is implemented in all areas of social life, from economy to politics, culture, and society. However, the legal framework, the legal system, is a product of social consciousness and often changes in response to the changes in the socio-economic landscape. Therefore, it is necessary to continue improving legal documents, mechanisms, policies, and management systems to create a competitive environment that is equal, democratic, and fair for all citizens,



both domestically and internationally. The 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam acknowledges: "Continue to perfect the ownership structure, develop economic components, types of enterprises, cooperative economy, cooperative groups, factors, types of markets. Operate synchronized markets such as land use rights market, labor market, real estate market, science and technology market, finance... according to the standards of a full, modern market economy, and international integration. Continue to develop the legal service market, create favorable conditions for people and businesses to enhance risk management in investment and business activities and protect their legitimate rights and interests" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021b, p.98). Concrete implementation of the Communist Party of Vietnam's viewpoints on perfecting the legal system helps ensure that people have clear legal foundations, and the investment environment, political environment, and socio-cultural environment are healthy, operating following the Constitution and laws.

It is especially necessary to supplement and improve the legal system to prevent corruption and waste and hold those in leadership positions accountable for decisions that cause serious consequences to the rights and interests of the people. Currently, although there is a legal system in place, it is not strong enough to deter and prevent abuses of power, lack of democracy, or negative group interests. There should be regulations stipulating that leaders who violate the law, regardless of the severity of the consequences, will be removed from their positions and prosecuted according to the law.

Thirdly, implementing transparency and openness with the motto "people know, people discuss, people do, people supervise, and people benefit" is essential. Transparency and openness are among the solutions aimed at enhancing the role of the people in providing feedback and oversight of the Party's and State's policies. Currently, aside from classified documents as regulated, management agencies need to publicize information through mass media and at their offices or units so that all citizens and businesses, both domestically and internationally, can access information, transparently, and promptly. In the context of international integration, ensuring that people everywhere can access information is a legal requirement and a mandatory task for individuals and organizations. Only then can we attract attention and feedback on the Party's and State's directions and policies.

Furthermore, in investment and construction, transparency of information allows individuals and organizations both domestically and internationally to understand investment strategies and bidding processes, enabling them to choose the best-quality investors. Moreover, publicizing information allows people to supervise, inspect, and provide feedback to maximize their benefits. The practice of transparency and openness, listening to the opinions of the people and experts both domestically and internationally, is a step-by-step realization of the Party's viewpoint:

"People know, people discuss, people do, people supervise, people benefit. Institutionalize the



Constitution's provisions on the basic rights and obligations of citizens to maximize the people's right to mastery in the process of building, protecting, and developing the country. Research and promulgate mechanisms for people to participate in building the Party, building a clean and strong political system, and building a competent cadre team" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021b, p.249).

Fourthly, it is crucial to strictly handle violations of democratic practices. Currently, democratic practices in various fields such as economy, politics, culture, and society, despite their positive aspects, still face certain limitations due to various reasons, with subjective reasons being the predominant factor. Therefore, timely and strict legal enforcement is necessary to deter and prevent negative consequences resulting from violations of democratic practices within organizations and units.

Presently, instances of loss of democracy or superficial democracy often occur among officials and Party members who wield power but have deviated from their responsibilities, using their authority to control groups for personal or group interests. However, these cases are often difficult to detect as they are often disguised as legal activities, and few individuals dare to report them. Therefore, in addition to strictly handling violations, educating consciousness and ideology for officials and Party members within the state management apparatus is of paramount importance to prevent distorted ideologies, loss of democracy, and disregard for the rights and interests of the people.

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