



PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND ENSURING HUMAN RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to provide a comprehensive and context-specific analysis of the relationship between democracy promotion and human rights protection in the context of contemporary development and international integration, with a particular focus on Vietnam. It argues that democracy is not only a political ideal but also a vital mechanism for ensuring human dignity and advancing sustainable socio-economic development. Employing a theoretical-empirical approach, the study synthesizes major conceptual frameworks on democracy and human rights while critically examining Vietnam's current legal documents, public policies, and available empirical data. The findings reveal that the promotion of democracy is intrinsically linked to the protection of human rights, as democratic institutions create the conditions for rights to be recognized, respected, and fulfilled. In Vietnam, while significant achievements have been made in expanding democratic practices and improving human rights protections, challenges remain. These include institutional constraints, inconsistencies in policy implementation, and insufficient public awareness about civic rights and responsibilities. Based on this assessment, the article proposes several strategic measures to strengthen the interrelationship between democracy and human rights. These include improving the legal and institutional framework, enhancing education and communication on democratic values and human rights, and promoting transparency and accountability in state governance. The conclusion emphasizes that a well-managed relationship between democracy and human rights is a cornerstone for building a modern, equitable, and humane society. By focusing on the Vietnamese experience, the article offers original insights into the practical implications of democratic governance in transitional and developing contexts. It serves as a useful reference for researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in institutional reform and sustainable development, particularly in countries undergoing socio-political transformation.

Keywords: Democracy; Human Rights; Rule of Law; Political Institutions; Equality and Freedom

1 INTRODUCTION

The promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights represent both universal imperatives and context-dependent tasks within the political and social development of every society. These two dimensions are dialectically linked,





converging on the fundamental objective of safeguarding individual freedom. In the era of globalization and deepening international integration, the realization of human rights is inseparable from the cultivation of substantive democracy that prioritizes human beings as its core concern. In Vietnam, the Communist Party and the State emphasize that advancing socialist democracy constitutes a critical driving force for sustainable development and social progress. Nevertheless, practical challenges persist in reconciling the need for political stability with the expansion of democratic space, ensuring that human rights are genuinely respected and protected. Against this backdrop, this study undertakes a systematic analysis of the current trajectory of democracy promotion and human rights protection in Vietnam and proposes viable pathways to enhance the quality of democratic governance and the effectiveness of human rights implementation within the framework of a socialist-oriented market economy.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is anchored in the theoretical nexus between democracy and human rights, asserting that democracy constitutes a fundamental condition for the realization of human rights, while the recognition and exercise of human rights embody the essence of substantive democracy.

To begin with, the study draws upon the works of Beetham (1999) and Diamond (2004), who contend that democracy extends beyond the procedural dimension of periodic elections and must encompass essential attributes such as adherence to the rule of law, freedom of information, political participation, and governmental accountability to the citizenry (Beetham, 1999; Diamond & Morlino, 2004). The notion of accountable democracy further provides an analytical lens for examining the significance of civic oversight in public governance (Fung & Wright, 2003).

In addition, the conceptualization of human rights in this study is grounded in pivotal international legal instruments, notably the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). It also incorporates the theoretical contributions of Marxism–Leninism, Ho Chi Minh’s thought, and the official perspectives of the Communist Party of Vietnam on democracy and human rights, alongside the 2013 Constitution of Vietnam, domestic





legislation, and reports issued by the National Assembly and the Government. Within this integrated framework, human rights are conceived as embracing both liberty rights and welfare rights, thereby capturing the multifaceted demands of human beings in the modern era (Sen, 1999; Donnelly, 2013).

The theoretical framework adopts an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on political science, philosophy, legal studies, and development studies to contextualize human rights within the broader context of socio-political transformation in Vietnam.

This research adopts a systematic review of secondary sources in combination with qualitative content analysis to explore the nexus between democracy promotion and human rights protection within the broader context of Vietnam's development and international integration. The data set encompasses a wide range of materials, including national legal frameworks (notably the 2013 Constitution and subsequent legislation on human rights), international legal instruments (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966), United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reports, scholarly publications, and documents produced by human rights organizations (e.g., Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch) as well as development agencies (e.g., UNDP). By triangulating these diverse sources, the study ensures both analytical rigor and comprehensiveness. This methodological approach is particularly appropriate for diagnosing policy constraints and recommending practical measures to strengthen democratic governance in parallel with advancing the protection of human rights, in a manner that aligns with Vietnam's specific socio-political context.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 GENERAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON DEMOCRACY AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

4.1.1 *Perspectives on Democracy.*

The concept of "democracy" emerged with the formation of the earliest states, particularly during the era of slave-owning societies. In specific socio-economic





conditions, several ancient Western states established republican regimes, notably the aristocratic slave-owning republics (such as Sparta and Rome), and especially the democratic slave-owning republic of Athens (Greece). In Athens, with a developed economy based on industry and commerce, the class of industrial-commercial slave owners and common citizens gained political dominance, creating favorable conditions for democratic ideas to flourish. Athens is thus considered the cradle of democratic republicanism and the starting point for the spread of democratic ideals across Europe. In ancient Greece, the term *Demokratia* derives from two components: *demos* (the people) and *kratos* (power), meaning “power of the people.” From this origin, it can be affirmed that democracy is fundamentally a political concept, reflecting the requirement that political power and state power must belong to the people. In other words, democracy is a form of organizing state power based on the principle that the people are the highest and sole source of authority.

Within class-based societies, democracy assumes a dual character. On one hand, it functions as an instrument for the ruling class to consolidate and legitimize its dominance by codifying civil and human rights within institutional frameworks. On the other, it emerges as a powerful rallying symbol for the oppressed classes in their collective struggle for justice and the defense of legitimate interests. In this sense, the working-class movement inherently embodies aspirations for freedom, democracy, and human rights. As Karl Marx emphasized: “...as long as democratic power has not been achieved, communists and democrats must continue to fight side by side, and the interests of the democrats are the interests of the communists” (Marx & Engels, 1995b, p. 391).

From this standpoint, socialist democracy does not arise spontaneously but represents a historical necessity rooted in the trajectory of human development. Marx highlighted this inevitability, contending that “any other form of democracy can exist only in the minds of learned theorists who are indifferent to real facts and who believe that it is not men and circumstances that develop principles, but that principles develop independently. Democracy has become the principle of the proletariat, the principle of the masses” (Marx & Engels, 1995a, p. 93). In this framework, the emergence of socialist democracy is inseparable from the advancement of productive forces and the socialization of production, which, in turn, make imperative the socialization of the means of production.





Continuing the ideological legacy of Marx and Engels, Lenin in his *Ten Theses on the Soviet Power*, asserted that democracy is an embodiment of freedom, emphasizing: “Democracy is freedom, is equality, is majority rule; what could be higher than freedom, equality, and majority rule?” (Lenin, 2005a, p.414). According to Lenin, democracy is concretely expressed through: Equality before the law; Political freedom; Majority decision-making; and Open voting, the foundation of peaceful and pure democracy (Lenin, 2005b, p.515–517).

Ho Chi Minh inherited and advanced democratic ideology, adapting it to the specific historical and cultural context of Vietnam. For him, democracy was regarded as the most valuable asset of the people, deeply rooted in and continually reaffirmed through the nation’s long-standing tradition of state-building and defense. He conceptualized democracy as the core relationship between the state and its citizens within any political system. In this regard, he emphasized: “Our country is a democratic country. The highest position belongs to the people because the people are the masters” (Minh, 2011b, p.434); and further stated: “Our regime is a democratic regime, which means the people are the masters, and the government is the people’s loyal servant” (Minh, 2011c, p.382). Ho Chi Minh’s democratic thought represents a progressive and humanistic vision, highly relevant in practice, and serves as a foundational framework for building a socialist rule-of-law state in Vietnam. In his perspective, democracy functions both as an ultimate objective and as an essential instrument of national development, ensuring human rights and citizens’ rights while steering society toward justice, democracy, and civilization.

The Communist Party of Vietnam has creatively adapted and advanced Ho Chi Minh’s democratic ideals, particularly since the launch of the Renovation reforms. The 11th National Party Congress emphasized that “socialist democracy is the essence of our regime; it is both the goal and the driving force of national development” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011, p. 84–85). This principle was further consolidated at the 12th National Congress, which underscored the need to “continue to promote socialist democracy, ensuring that all state power belongs to the people. All Party guidelines, state policies, and laws must derive from the will, rights, and legitimate interests of the people, with their input and participation. Democracy must be fully and seriously exercised in all areas of social life. Ensure the people’s participation in all stages of the decision-making process on matters related to their interests, from proposing initiatives, engaging in discussions and debates, to supervising the





implementation process. Focus on building legal documents directly related to the people's right to be masters" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016, p. 169).

4.1.2 Perspectives on Human Rights.

One of the most universally acknowledged principles within the international community is that human rights are inherent to every individual and must be equally respected and protected, irrespective of gender, language, ethnicity, skin color, nationality, religion, place of residence, occupation, disability status, social position, or any other characteristic. These rights are institutionalized through domestic legal systems, international treaties, and customary norms, thereby creating a binding framework that requires all social and political institutions to respect, protect, and fulfill them.

Despite ongoing debates concerning their interpretation, the United Nations maintains that human rights are inviolable, and that states bear the primary responsibility to guarantee their realization for all citizens. Foundational instruments such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) codify non-derogable standards that all states are obliged to uphold (United Nations, 1948; United Nations, 1966).

The position of the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam on human rights is deeply rooted in Marxist–Leninist theory, Ho Chi Minh's thought, and national cultural traditions, while also selectively integrating universally recognized international norms. Within the socialist framework, human rights are conceived as an organic whole, encompassing civil, political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. They embody the unity of individual and collective rights, the balance between freedom, equality, and justice, and the interconnectedness of human rights and citizens' rights. As articulated in V.I. Lenin's *Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People*, these principles constitute the fundamental values underpinning the new social order.

Marxism–Leninism acknowledges the historical role of bourgeois revolutions in establishing human rights but also highlights the formalism and class-based limitations of these values, which primarily served the interests of the bourgeoisie. Karl Marx emphasized that humans are products of both society and nature and thus, human rights must be examined within specific historical contexts: "Rights can never be higher





than the economic structure and the cultural development of society conditioned by that structure.” Friedrich Engels argued that human rights are not innate but are the result of historical development. Genuine equality, therefore, requires not only the elimination of class privileges but the abolition of class divisions themselves.

Ho Chi Minh’s ideology skillfully integrated Marxism–Leninism with Vietnamese patriotism. His view on human rights represented a synthesis of socialist humanism, patriotic tradition, compassion, and the practical experience of Vietnam’s revolutionary struggle. He asserted that national independence and sovereignty are the essential preconditions for realizing human rights and for liberating the individual. After independence is achieved, socialism must be built to fully realize human rights, since socialism is “a regime that enables working people to live in warmth, happiness, and fairness,” in which people are “liberated in economic, political, cultural, and social dimensions.” He wrote: “If we achieve freedom and independence but the people still die of hunger and cold, then freedom and independence are meaningless. The people only appreciate their value when they are well-fed and clothed” (Minh, 2011a, p.175), and “If the country is independent but the people do not enjoy happiness and freedom, then independence has no meaning” (Minh, 2011a, p.64).

Building upon Ho Chi Minh’s ideological foundation, the Communist Party of Vietnam has consistently underscored the inseparability of democracy, human rights, and the responsibilities of citizenship. The 12th National Congress reaffirmed this principle, stating: “To implement human rights and the fundamental rights and obligations of citizens following the spirit of the 2013 Constitution; to link rights with responsibilities and duties, and to uphold social ethics. To further promote grassroots democracy, to improve the legal system, and to respect, guarantee, and protect human rights and citizens’ rights and obligations” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016, p.169).

Further advancing this commitment, the 13th National Congress emphasized the consolidation of institutional frameworks, legal systems, and policy mechanisms to safeguard and promote people’s sovereignty. It declared: “Human rights and the fundamental rights and obligations of citizens have been more comprehensively defined in the 2013 Constitution and in newly promulgated and amended legal documents” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.166).

The Relationship Between Promoting Democracy and Ensuring Human Rights

Promoting democracy and ensuring human rights represent a dialectical process in political philosophy, in which democracy is not only a prerequisite for the realization





of human rights but also a criterion for measuring the extent to which these rights are actualized. Only when democracy is fully promoted can human rights be comprehensively guaranteed in social life. Conversely, only when human rights are equitably and effectively realized does democracy have a solid foundation for development, becoming the basis for a progressive, just, and humane society.

First, democracy constitutes the fundamental condition and institutional foundation for the protection of human rights. From the standpoint of Marxism–Leninism and social democratic theory, democracy is not merely a set of political rights such as voting or freedom of expression; rather, it is a system of institutions and mechanisms designed to guarantee citizens’ equal participation in policymaking, ensure accountability in governance, and secure fair access to social resources and development opportunities. Marx and Engels emphasized that democracy is inseparable from the broader project of human emancipation, serving as both an instrument and an outcome of the working class’s struggle against oppression and exploitation. Genuine democracy, therefore, can only exist on the basis of social justice, free from the dominance of narrow class interests. This perspective is echoed in the orientation of the Communist Party of Vietnam: “Strictly implement the principle of ‘the people are the root’; truly trust, respect, and promote the people’s right to mastery” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 96).

Second, human rights provide the essential benchmark for assessing the authenticity and maturity of a democratic system. Democracy acquires substantive meaning only when it is intrinsically connected to the respect, protection, and promotion of human rights across all dimensions of social life. These rights extend beyond basic freedoms to encompass meaningful participation in governance, equality before the law, and the assurance of living in a society free from oppression, exploitation, and discrimination. A democracy that exists only formally, without the effective realization of these rights, remains superficial and incomplete.

Ho Chi Minh’s thought further underscores the inseparability of democracy and human rights, particularly in their linkage to national independence and the rights of the working class. He asserted that national liberation is the indispensable foundation for safeguarding human rights, which only acquire true meaning within a just, democratic, and humane social order. In the 1945 Declaration of Independence, he proclaimed: “All men are created equal... they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”





(Minh, 2011a, p. 64). Consistent with this perspective, the Communist Party of Vietnam has emphasized that the protection of human rights and the people's right to self-determination must be accompanied by organizational discipline and collective responsibility: "Practicing democracy within the Party must go hand in hand with strengthening the Party's discipline and rules" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 181).

Third, the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights are fundamental to sustaining political stability. The interplay between democracy and human rights is not merely a theoretical construct but is reflected in the practical realities of governance. Democracy provides the structural conditions necessary for the fulfillment of human rights, while human rights constitute both the substance and the ultimate aim of democracy. For democracy to be enduring, human rights must be safeguarded comprehensively at both the individual and collective levels, and across political, economic, cultural, and social spheres. Conversely, the effective protection of human rights requires a democratic environment in which citizens are empowered to oversee the exercise of power, participate in policymaking, and contribute to constructive social critique. This principle is affirmed by the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, which declared: "The people are the center and the subject of the renewal process... All guidelines and policies must genuinely originate from the people's lives, aspirations, legitimate rights, and interests, with the people's happiness and well-being as the goal of all efforts" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.28).

In conclusion, promoting democracy and ensuring human rights are interrelated and inseparable processes. A strong democracy provides the foundation for the protection of human rights, while the full realization of human rights serves as a criterion for assessing and advancing substantive democracy.

4.1.3 Achievements in Promoting Democracy and Ensuring Human Rights in Contemporary Vietnam

Over the past four decades of renovation and international integration, Vietnam has recorded notable achievements in advancing democracy and safeguarding human rights. These successes have been essential in both the construction of socialism and the defense of national sovereignty.





First, within the political sphere. The development of socialist democracy in Vietnam today is evident through diverse expressions, particularly in the expansion of the people's right to self-determination and the institutionalization of human rights in political and social life. A central illustration of this progress is the constitutional guarantee of citizens' participation in state and social governance a fundamental political right that has been further clarified within Vietnam's legal framework. Specifically, Article 28 of the 2013 Constitution stipulates: "1. Citizens have the right to participate in the management of the State and society, to engage in discussions and make recommendations to state agencies on matters concerning local and national affairs. 2. The State shall create conditions for citizens to participate in the management of the State and society and shall ensure transparency in receiving and responding to citizens' opinions and recommendations" (National Assembly, 2013, Article 28).

On this constitutional basis, various forms of direct and representative democracy have been implemented and increasingly expanded. Simultaneously, civil and political rights are proactively safeguarded through the promulgation and enforcement of appropriate legal policies. For instance, Vietnamese law strictly prohibits violations of the right to life, including bans on torture and corporal punishment, and imposes the death penalty only for particularly serious crimes. The 2015 Penal Code abolished the death penalty for eight criminal offenses and stipulates that the sentence shall not be applied to individuals under 18 years of age, pregnant women, mothers of children under 36 months, or individuals aged 75 and above at the time of the crime (Kien, 2022).

Second, in the economic domain. Socialist democracy in the economic sphere is demonstrated through the State's recognition, respect, and facilitation of citizens' exercise of fundamental economic rights, including the right to free labor, lawful ownership, enjoyment of the fruits of one's labor, and access to development resources. These rights are institutionalized in the 2013 Constitution and further elaborated in various sectoral legal documents, thereby establishing a robust legal foundation for protecting and promoting human rights within the context of a socialist-oriented market economy.

The rights to work, to choose occupations, and to conduct business activities following the law have been increasingly ensured. The State has introduced numerous policies to foster entrepreneurship, support small and medium-sized enterprises, and





protect workers' rights, especially amid deepening international economic integration. Citizens have access to land through mechanisms such as land allocation, leasing, and legal recognition of land-use rights. Property rights are protected by law, and access to information and public services has been progressively expanded, thereby enhancing the economic capacity and living conditions of the population.

Evidence of the effectiveness of these policies includes Vietnam's impressive economic growth rates. At certain periods, the country has maintained an average annual growth rate in double digits. Currently, Vietnam ranks as the fifth-largest economy in ASEAN, among the top 40 largest economies globally, and is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. It ranks 48th out of 132 countries in the Global Innovation Index and has made significant improvements in global indicators such as the Global Competitiveness Index.

Moreover, the right to life is guaranteed in both economic and social dimensions. The State has prioritized the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, improved access to maternal and child healthcare services, and launched emergency relief programs in regions severely affected by natural disasters and epidemics. The multidimensional poverty rate has significantly declined over the years, thanks to microfinance development policies, support for household economies, and the promotion of social enterprises as key instruments in securing livelihoods and sustainable development for the population.

Third, in the socio-cultural domain. Freedom of the press and freedom of expression are legally protected in Vietnam and have been progressively expanded within the existing legal framework. Policies aimed at universalizing education, promoting gender equality, and protecting vulnerable groups have been widely implemented, affirming the central role of human beings in the development process. The rights to access information and to enjoy creative freedom in the fields of culture and the arts have been broadened, enabling citizens to express their views and participate actively in socio-cultural life. Mechanisms of direct democracy, such as people's conferences and community consultations on socio-economic development projects, have been effectively implemented, contributing to the strengthening of social consensus and enhancing the accountability of public authorities at all levels.

At present, the living standards of the majority of the Vietnamese population have improved significantly and continuously. For socially vulnerable groups, the Party and State have prioritized the allocation of national resources to protect and promote the





rights of children, women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and people living in remote, isolated, and especially disadvantaged areas. The multidimensional poverty rate dropped markedly, from 58% in 1993 to just 1.93% in 2024, positioning Vietnam as one of the leading models for poverty reduction among developing countries.

According to the *UNDP Human Development Report*, Vietnam's Human Development Index (HDI) in 2024 advanced by eight positions, moving from 115th to 107th among 193 nations. Over the past three decades, average life expectancy has risen from 65.5 years in 1993 to 74.5 years in 2023, exceeding the global mean of 73 years. In the same period, Vietnam's ranking in the *Global Happiness Index* improved by 11 places, reaching 54th out of 143 countries, while its standing on the *Sustainable Development Goals Index* climbed one position from 2023, ranking 54th out of 166 countries (Van, 2024).

4.1.4 Limitations and Challenges in Promoting Democracy and Ensuring Human Rights in Contemporary Vietnam

Despite significant achievements in promoting socialist democracy and protecting human rights across political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions, Vietnam still faces notable limitations and challenges that need to be addressed to advance toward more sustainable and inclusive development.

First, in the political domain. A key limitation lies in the insufficient depth and effectiveness of democratic practice in political life. Although the 2013 Constitution explicitly affirms citizens' right to participate in state and social management (Article 28), in practice, genuine public participation in policy-making and law-making processes remains limited. Community consultation mechanisms are often formalistic in many localities, which hinders the effective incorporation of citizens' voices. The implementation of grassroots democracy regulations in some areas remains superficial and lacks coordination and monitoring. Furthermore, the awareness of local authorities about the role of people as sovereign agents in this process has not been adequately strengthened (Son & Hanh, 2025).

Second, inequality in access to economic rights. While the socialist-oriented market economy has created new opportunities, disparities in income and access to development resources such as land, credit, and technology persist. According to the





2023 Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey conducted by the General Statistics Office, there remains a significant income gap between urban and rural areas. People living in remote and isolated regions face major challenges in accessing market information and production support services. Notably, workers in the informal sector, accounting for approximately 56% of the national labor force, are still inadequately protected in terms of rights, working conditions, and social security (ILO, 2022). This highlights the urgent need to strengthen mechanisms that safeguard the economic and labor rights of this group.

Third, disparities in development across regions and vulnerable groups. Despite sharp reductions in poverty rates, persistent inequalities remain between regions and demographic groups. Ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and women in remote areas continue to face difficulties in accessing education, healthcare, and employment services (UNDP, 2023). Implementation of support policies in these areas is sometimes fragmented, lacking sustainability, and effective monitoring.

In addition, international integration and the rapid development of digital technologies present new challenges in ensuring human rights, especially the rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy protection. The proliferation of misinformation and harmful content on digital platforms negatively impacts public awareness and poses serious challenges to state governance. Legal regulations on cyberspace management must strike a delicate balance between ensuring information security and protecting citizens' legitimate rights to free expression. At the same time, enhancing digital access and literacy, particularly among vulnerable populations, is essential to ensure that no one is left behind in the digital transformation process.

4.1.5 Solutions for Promoting Democracy and Ensuring Human Rights in Contemporary Vietnam

To substantively realize the relationship between democracy and human rights in line with the goal that “every citizen enjoys a prosperous, happy life, with opportunities for development and wealth creation; contributes increasingly to peace, stability, and development in the region and the world, for the happiness of humankind and global civilization,” Vietnam must implement the following groups of solutions in a comprehensive and synchronized manner:





Raising public awareness of democracy and human rights. Human rights education must be considered a foundational element in fostering a democratic civic consciousness across society. Human rights and citizenship education should be integrated into school curricula at all levels and extended to capacity-building programs for public officials and civil servants. This approach not only cultivates generations of citizens with a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities but also helps develop an administrative apparatus capable of effectively implementing human rights standards. In parallel, communication and legal dissemination efforts on human rights should be intensified, especially targeting vulnerable groups such as women, the poor, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities. Through legal counseling, access-to-information support, and life skills training, these groups can participate more actively and equally in social life, thereby deepening the dialectical relationship between democracy and human rights.

Promoting sustainable socio-economic development in conjunction with equity and social progress. Sustainable development serves as a vital material foundation for realizing economic, social, and cultural rights. Vietnam should continue to build a comprehensive social security policy system that guarantees every citizen's right to education, healthcare, employment, and a minimum standard of living, particularly for vulnerable populations. This embodies the convergence of development goals and the principles of human rights protection.

In addition, focused investment is needed in remote, isolated, and ethnic minority areas to reduce regional disparities, one of the key barriers to equitable access to basic rights. Improving the Human Development Index should be treated as a guiding indicator in the formulation of national programs and policies. In this process, administrative reform and digital transformation should be vigorously implemented to enhance public service delivery and increase citizen satisfaction with governmental institutions.

Improving the socialist democratic system and building a rule-of-law state for the people. The promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights must be grounded in a socialist democratic institutional framework that places people at its center. Vietnam should continue to refine its legal system on human rights by fully embodying the spirit of the 2013 Constitution and incorporating international human rights treaties to which the country is a party. Laws must ensure consistency,





feasibility, and transparency, thereby enabling citizens to fully exercise their rights and fulfill their obligations.

Simultaneously, building and operating an effective socialist rule-of-law state is essential. This involves establishing a rationally organized state power structure with mechanisms for the delegation, coordination, and oversight of authority. Such a system not only enhances public accountability but also lays a solid foundation for protecting citizens' legitimate rights and interests in a fair, transparent, and effective manner.

Promoting grassroots democracy – a foundation for ensuring human rights at the root. Grassroots democracy is where democratic values are most tangibly realized and directly linked to the practical rights and interests of the people. Effective implementation of the principle “people know, people discuss, people act, people monitor, people supervise, and people benefit” should be pursued through forms of direct democracy such as community meetings, regular government-citizen dialogues, and public consultations. These are essential conditions for genuine citizen participation in decision-making and for strengthening social consensus and governance effectiveness.

Particular attention must be paid to enhancing the transparency and accountability of local authorities, especially in sensitive areas such as land management, budgeting, and policy support. Such information should be publicly accessible, verifiable, and easy to obtain. In tandem, it is crucial to improve the competence and integrity of grassroots officials and civil servants, ensuring they become effective intermediaries between the State and the people, thus contributing to the realization of democratic governance and the protection of human rights from the lowest administrative level.

Enhancing international cooperation to promote human rights in the context of globalization. In the context of deep international integration, Vietnam should continue to honor its international commitments to human rights and proactively engage in shaping and improving global human rights institutions. This demonstrates Vietnam's global responsibility while also creating opportunities to improve its domestic legal and institutional frameworks.

International experience should be adapted with respect for national sovereignty and in alignment with Vietnam's unique historical, cultural, and political contexts. Furthermore, human rights diplomacy should be strengthened to refute distorted





narratives about the human rights situation in Vietnam and to affirm the country's genuine efforts and progress in harmonizing the promotion of democracy with the protection of human rights.

Harnessing science and technology in state governance to support human rights.

The digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution offer significant opportunities for improving the protection of human rights. The development of digital government and e-governance not only enhances the quality of public services but also helps realize key rights such as access to information, the right to be served, and the right to provide feedback and oversight. The use of technology in managing, receiving, and responding to citizen feedback increases public sector transparency and accountability. Moreover, digital data and intelligent analytics empower the state to formulate evidence-based policies that better serve the people. This contributes to reinforcing social trust and promoting equitable and inclusive development.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between promoting democracy and ensuring human rights should not be conceived as a dualistic or parallel undertaking but as an interdependent and mutually reinforcing process that constitutes a fundamental driver of sustainable development. This dynamic is particularly salient in the context of globalization and deepening international integration, where democratic governance and human rights protection are increasingly viewed as inseparable dimensions of national progress. In Vietnam, this relationship acquires unique significance as it is intrinsically tied to the strategic objective of building a socialist rule-of-law state—one that places human beings at the center and is grounded in the principle of serving the people. By harmonizing universal human values with national traditions and its own development trajectory, Vietnam has achieved notable advances in institutionalizing, concretizing, and realizing human rights through the steady expansion of democratic practices.

Nonetheless, for the nexus between democracy and human rights to function in a genuinely substantive and cohesive manner, further institutional strengthening remains imperative. This entails refining the legal framework, enhancing law enforcement capacity, deepening grassroots democracy, fostering greater public





awareness of human rights, and aligning human rights promotion with sustainable socio-economic development. Active engagement in international integration also plays a vital role in this process. Reforming governance paradigms, modernizing public administration, and institutionalizing mechanisms for social oversight provide the structural foundation for ensuring that human rights are respected, protected, and advanced across all spheres of life. Ultimately, the interconnection between democracy and human rights serves not only as a measure of national progress but also as a vital factor in consolidating social trust, strengthening national solidarity, and enhancing Vietnam's international standing. This trajectory reflects Vietnam's consistent commitment to building a just, democratic, civilized, and sustainably developed society.

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