

Well-rounded Human Development Set by Communist Party of China for a New Era and Implications for Vietnam

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Abstract: It can be affirmed that an outstanding theoretical achievement of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was to establish Xi Jinping's thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics in a new era. It consists of a set of viewpoints on China's development targets in the new era which are "to strive for the goals to celebrate two 100th anniversaries and to realise the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation" [11]. To achieve those targets, the Communist Party of China has determined that it is first necessary to focus on well-rounded human development with a people-centred approach". This decisive viewpoint is a combination of traditional ideological values in China's history with the Marxism-based advanced findings on human beings and human development, aimed at making it appropriate to the context in China in the new era.

Key words: Communist Party of China, well-rounded human development, new era.

Subject classification: Political sciences

1. Introduction

Since almost a century ago, when the Communist Party of China (CPC) was born in 1921, followed by the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and especially after China began to implement their open-door policy in 1978, the Communist Party of China and Chinese people have made outstanding historic achievements. By the time of the 19th National

Congress of the Communist Party of China (2017), socialism with Chinese characteristics entered a new stage of development identified by the Communist Party of China as "a new era". Summarising every stage of the development, it was remarked at the 19th National Congress that China experienced the following periods: (1) a period of uprising (China liberated itself from the semi-feudal and semi-colonial regime to build a new China), when leaders

of the first generation succeeded in gaining national independence; (2) a period of enrichment (the open door policy was implemented), when leaders of the second, third, and fourth generations also succeeded in achieving the goals of development; and (3) a period of gaining more power, when China addressed the target of realising the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation and closer to being in the centre of the international arena [11].

Xi Jinping's thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era was initiated during the 18th National Congress of the CPC. After being revised and finalised, it was determined they would become a theoretical output of the 19th National Congress of the Party. Guided by Marxism, Mao Zedong's thought, Deng Xiaoping's theory, Jiang Zemin's theory of "Three Represents", and Hu Jintao's "Scientific Outlook on Development", Xi Jinping's thought was created, contributing to the completion of a theoretical system on socialism, with Chinese characteristics for a new era. The viewpoint on well-rounded human development, which is one of the core contents of the theory on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, was supplemented, developed, and applied creatively at the 19th National Congress of the CPC.

In Vietnam, realising the position and roles of human resources in the country's development especially in the context of industrialisation, modernisation and international integration, the Communist Party of Vietnam has promulgated a number of guidelines, policies and measures. They are aimed at promoting

well-rounded human development, both intellectually and physically, so as to improve the people's working capacity, socio-political awareness, ideals, lifestyle, knowledge, virtues and cultural courage, etc. The purpose is to enable successful delivery in the strategy on development of high-quality human resources to serve the national reforms and the process of industrialisation, modernisation, and international integration. It is always necessary to learn from international experiences of well-rounded human development, including that of the CPC, in order to improve the Vietnamese Party's guidelines and State's policies in the new context. This paper focuses on the content of the well-rounded human development as set by the CPC, and its implications for Vietnam.

2. The viewpoint of the CPC on well-rounded human development

2.1. A new context for well-rounded human development

First of all, the new era is an opportunity for well-rounded human development

It can be said that when socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, China has become more powerful and has found itself in favourable conditions to perform the goals of well-rounded human development, in comparison with the entire period since the foundation of the People's Republic of China.

Firstly, the promotion of well-rounded human development in the new era is shown by a comprehensive summary of new practical experiences of the CPC.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party, China has had many achievements in all areas, resulting in fundamental and multidimensional historic changes. Making assessments over five years since the 18th National Congress, a guideline on the 14 points of perseverance for socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era was raised during the 19th National Congress. Two of the 14 points are considered to be fundamental, including: “People are the fundamental force that determines the Party’s and the country’s future” and “The well-being of the people is the fundamental goal of development” [11]. These two fundamental points reflect the increasingly profound awareness of well-rounded human development. The comprehensive summary of all the new practical experiences helps to deepen the Party’s viewpoints on the rules of governance, socialism building, and development of human society.

Secondly, the promotion of well-rounded human development in the new era is shown by the understanding and taking control over the changes in the contradictions faced by Chinese society. As recognised at the 19th National Congress of the CPC, “the principal contradictions faced by Chinese society in the new era mainly come from the increased material and cultural demands among people and underdeveloped production capacity” [10] that leads to contradictions between unbalanced and inadequate development, and the people’s ever-growing needs for a better life” [11]. This demonstrates that productive forces in China have developed significantly and living conditions, both materially and culturally, have improved

over several decades. At the same time, it shows that “the need for a better life” is considered by the CPC to be a criterion used to value social progress in China.

Finally, the promotion of well-rounded human development in the new era is shown by the new strategic targets determined by the CPC. Aimed at building a moderately prosperous society, the CPC has set up goals to celebrate two 100 year anniversaries (the foundation of the CPC and that of the People’s Republic of China) so that China becomes a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful by the middle of the 21st century. At the same time, a further strategic target has been determined, which is “to reach new heights in every dimension of material, political, cultural and ethical, social and ecological advancement”. The determination of those targets means that the CPC is accelerating the transition of Chinese society from a situation in which people have enough food and average living conditions, to one where people enjoy well-being and prosperity.

Next, the contradictions faced by Chinese society in the new era promote well-rounded human development

As recognised by the CPC, when the country enters a new era, the contradictions in Chinese society are mainly those “between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people’s ever-growing needs for a better life” [11]. The change in principal social contradictions is aimed at the final social goal in Marxism, i.e. all people are well-rounded and the entire society is prosperous.

When socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, the demand of people, who are the very subject of social contradictions, changes from “the growing material and cultural needs” [10] to “the ever-growing needs for a better life” [11]. The need for a better life should be met to a larger extent, not only in the material and cultural conditions, but also in other spheres, such as democracy, rule of law, fairness and justice, security and the environment, so that people pay more attention to the sense of fulfilment, happiness, and safety.

Moving people towards a better life is a goal that socialism with Chinese characteristics tries to achieve in the new era. The process aimed at achieving this goal in the new era is the promotion of well-rounded human development and all-round social progress, which shows the values and orientation of the Marxist theory, namely freedom and well-rounded human development. In the new area, the CPC is determined to pursue the Marxism-based well-rounded human development, by viewing the people’s need for a better life as the target of the Party; considering the people’s interests as the top priority; uniting the national and social development with development of every individual; and attaching the national rejuvenation to the destiny of every citizen. This is significant for well-rounded human development.

To set a foundation for dealing with the above-mentioned principle contradictions, at the 18th National Congress, the CPC decided to continue persistently the people-centred viewpoint, strengthening harmoniously “the five-sphere integrated plan”² and “the four-pronged comprehensive strategy”³, and owing to that many historic achievements

that have been gained in the reforms and the process of socialist modernisation thereby bringing China to a more developed stage. In China generally, the productive forces have improved markedly and the production capacity has increased, so the country is leading the world in many areas. Although China has been successful in dealing with backward production, unbalanced and inadequate development still remains as a principal contradiction.

The unbalanced development is shown by the disparities between different areas, different sectors and different groups of people. Meanwhile, the inadequate development is shown by some aspects as follows: the production of the entire society product is not diversified; the development level is not high; and, development status is not yet sustainable. It is, therefore, affirmed in the political report of the 19th National Congress of the CPC, that development must be further accelerated, focusing on dealing with the issues relating to the unbalanced and inadequate development; performing high quality, more effective, equal and more sustainable development; bringing the fruits of the reforms and development to the people and satisfying their sense of fulfilment, for the purpose of promoting well-rounded development of humans and the riches for all Chinese. As supposed by the CPC, the sense of fulfilment comes not only from the satisfaction of material needs, but also by ensuring the satisfaction of other needs in the political, cultural, social, and ecological spheres etc. The people’s sense of fulfilment is a prerequisite for free development of each individual. Together with the evolution of a sense of fulfilment,

people are more able to achieve free and well-rounded development.

The above-mentioned reality demonstrates that social contradictions in China have changed to focus on the contradictions between unbalanced and inadequate development, and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life. Thus, the solution to problems resulting from the unbalanced and inadequate development is to meet the people's sense of fulfilment by promoting the well-rounded human development.

2.2. Content on well-rounded human development for the new era by the CPC

The 19th National Congress of the CPC made profound emphasis on “the people”; this phrase is found 203 times among more than 30,000 Chinese characters in the political report. The main content on well-rounded human development relies on the people-centred philosophy of development, which is described in the five-sphere integrated plan, the four-pronged comprehensive strategy, and the guideline on the 14 points of perseverance, specifically as follows:

Firstly, it is necessary to ensure a commitment to the people-centred approach

According to the historical materialism, the people are actors of social development; they are the creators of social history and the driving forces for social development. Playing a key role as actors promoting social development, the people also improve themselves, creating a fundamental force to liberate themselves, moving towards free and well-rounded development. Thus, the principle of historical materialism viewing the people as the creators of history means

to consider well-rounded human development as a criterion evaluating how well society has developed.

As clarified by the CPC, to promote well-rounded human development is the start as well as the final destination of all the Party's activities; it is also a key motivator for the Party. Entering a new era, the Party proclaims that it will pursue and develop the basic principle of historical materialism, according to which, the people are the creators of history. In line with this announcement, the people are the very master of the country and the Party rules the country on behalf of the people, for the people. The CPC affirms its fundamental principle, that is: to wholeheartedly serve the people and hold the people's aspiration for a better life as a goal to be strived for.

This people-centred philosophy was initially raised at the 18th National Congress of the CPC with the following viewpoint: “It is necessary to follow persistently the people-centred creative approach to improve the quality of cultural products and bring better non-material food to the people” [10]. Following on from this on, “the 13th five-year Plan for Economic and Social Development” passed at the 5th session of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC, which highlighted: “It is necessary to maintain the people-centred development approach, strengthening the people's happiness, and viewing well-rounded human development as the start and the destination of development” [12]. In a speech at the 28th collective training held by the Politburo on 24 November 2016, Xi Jinping emphasised: “It is necessary to ensure people-centered development thinking. It is a fundamental standpoint of Marxian economics”.

Continuing in the spirit of the previous national congresses, at the 19th National Congress, the CPC reaffirmed: “The people are the creators of history; they are the fundamental force that determines our Party and the country's future. We must ensure the principal status of the people, and adhere to the Party's commitment to serving the public good and exercising power in the interests of the people. We must observe the Party's fundamental purpose of wholeheartedly serving the people and put into practice the Party's mass line in all aspects of governance. We must regard the people's aspirations to live a better life as our goal, and rely on the people to move history forward” [11].

It can be said that the philosophy of people-centred development is an advance in the process of implementing the open-door policy, and building socialism with Chinese characteristics. It inherits and enhances the viewpoint of historical materialism, and improving the guideline on economic development.

Secondly, it is necessary to ensure that the people are the masters of the country

China set a target of building the people's democratic dictatorship with the leadership of the working class through the basis of the union of workers and peasants; however, the power of the state in its entirety belongs to the people. The fact that the people run the country is the distinctive essence of a socialist democratic political system, as highlighted in the political report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Part of China: “Commitment to the organic unity of Party leadership, the people running the country, and law-based governance is a natural element of socialist

political development” and it is necessary to ensure that “the principle of the people running the country is put into practice in China's political and social activities” [11].

To affirm and promote the people's role in running the country and ensure the people-centred development approach, one of the important points underlined at the 19th National Congress of the CPC is the promotion of democracy, as described specifically in this political report: “we must uphold and improve the system of people's congresses and develop the socialist democratic political system”; and, “We should develop socialist consultative democracy, improve our democratic institutions, diversify our forms of democracy, and establish more democratic channels. We must see to it that the principle of the people running the country is put into practice in China's political and social activities” [11].

It can be understood that the socialist democracy in China is an indispensable result of the political process, where Marxism was adapted to the Chinese context by the CPC, and the political institutional reform that has been carried out since the implementation of the open-door policy for the expressed purpose of ensuring the people's interests effectively and practically. The key viewpoint of the CPC is that the people are the master of the country. The Communist Party affirms that it was born from the people, has roots in the people, serves the people, and makes every effort to bring interests of the people as the unique criterion for assessing the success of the Party's activities.

The political report of the 19th National Congress of the CPC proposes a number of

measures to ensure the people's mastership over the country: "We must keep to the path of socialist political development with Chinese characteristics, upholding and improving the system of people's congresses, the system of Party-led multi-party cooperation and political consultation, the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and the system of community-level self-governance, and consolidating and developing the broadest possible patriotic united front and the socialist consultative democracy" [11].

Thirdly, it is necessary to ensure and improve the standard of living through development

Well-being is what the Chinese people are most concerned about, and directly affects the people's lives. The CPC considers the improvement of the people's well-being to be a fundamental goal of development. During the process of development, the Communist Party has always affirmed that it is necessary to thoroughly grasp the people-centred principle and continuously improve the living conditions of the people. Many policies have been promulgated to provide favourable conditions and thereby serve the people in various dimensions. Poverty reduction, education, employment, income, social protection, healthcare and cultural life have been made visibly better. The people's happiness index is getting increasingly higher.

At the 19th National Congress of the CPC, a number of requirements and measures were proposed to ensure and improve the people's well-being, aimed at sharing the fruits of the development reforms among all the people. It is written specifically in the political report of the 19th National Congress that: "We must do more to improve well-being, addressing

the concerns of the people, using development to strengthen areas of weakness, and promoting social fairness and justice"; and "It is necessary to ensure that all our people have a greater sense of fulfilment as they contribute to and gain from development and continue to promote well-rounded human development and common prosperity for everyone" [11]. Aimed at ensuring and promoting the well-being, the report emphasises: "It is necessary to grasp direct and practical issues that the people are most interested in. We have to try our best to deal with every issue year by year" [11]. Regarding well-being, some specific tasks were highlighted at the 19th National Congress of the CPC, such as: social justice, childcare, education, employment, healthcare, elderly care, housing, and social assistance for vulnerable groups etc.

In addition, at the 19th National Congress, a number of policies were suggested to build a complete system of social protection. For example, priority will be given to the development of the educational system with the aim of "nurturing a new generation of capable young people who have a good and all-round moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetical grounding" for the purpose of successful building of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The quality of employment will be improved and incomes will be raised with the aim of "everyone has the chance to pursue a career through hard work". The social protection system will be strengthened with the aim of "developing a sustainable multi-tiered social security system that covers the entire population". It is necessary to win the battle against poverty with the aim of "seeing that poor people and poor areas will enter a moderately

prosperous society together with the rest of the country”. The Healthy China initiative will be carried out with the viewpoint that “a healthy population is a key marker of a prosperous nation and a strong country”.

Fourthly, it is necessary to build a non-material civilisation

Humans make an effort to build a better life not only in the material aspect but also in the non-material one. Aimed at satisfying the people’s non-material demands, the CPC supposes that it is necessary to promote and develop an advanced socialist culture.

Regarding the responsibility for improving the cultural and non-material environment for the people, it was affirmed at the 19th National Congress of the CPC that: “Since its founding, the CPC has actively guided and promoted Chinese advanced culture while keeping Chinese fine traditional culture alive and strong”; and “Today, Chinese Communists and Chinese people should shoulder our new cultural mission, making cultural creations through practice, and promoting cultural advancement along with the progress of history” [11].

With regard to building both a cultural and non-material civilisation, it was also highlighted at the Congress. “We will draw on and develop the vision, concepts, values, and moral norms of Chinese fine traditional culture in a way that responds to the call of the era so that Chinese culture will maintain its appeal and evolve with the times” [11].

To achieve the above-mentioned goals, the CPC supposes that it is necessary to create and ensure greater confidence in national culture, maintaining the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics and building a socialist country with a great

cultural influence, based on the encouraging the role of the people. In addition, it is essential to strengthen ideological and political work, raise public ethical standards, and develop a socialist culture, in order to bring about abundant non-material life to the people.

The CPC affirms that non-material civilisation must be attached to well-rounded development of people. When the living conditions have been improved, the non-material demands of the people increase. Building a non-material civilisation eventually means gathering, guiding, and educating people. The non-material civilisation building depends on public awareness. To improve ideological and ethical standards, it is necessary to respect the role of the people. Outstanding examples should be found among the people so that they can make personal assessments and follow willingly; the people are the creators of civilisation and they should participate widely and voluntarily in leading and education activities so as to raise public awareness and knowledge.

The CPC affirms that its core socialist values represent the contemporary Chinese spirit and are a crystallisation of the values shared by all Chinese people. At the same time, it is essential to start with conceptions of “love, respect, sincerity, and charity”, applying the conceptions of these values in society, transforming them into the consciousness and habits of the people, and making them aspirational non-material objectives among the population.

Finally, it is necessary to ensure harmony between human and nature

Human beings not only live in a social environment, but also exist in a natural one. Nature is, therefore, the origin of life and

enables the development of civilisations. In recent years, the need for a healthy and fresh ecological environment has been increasing. It is, therefore, impossible to carry out well-rounded human development without paying attention to whether it destroys the ecological environment.

Over a long period, China concentrated on modernisation and development of infrastructure, causing severe damage to the ecological environment. Thus, the political report of the 19th National Congress of the CPC mentions the necessity of harmonious combining of social and human development with protection of the natural environment, and highlights the viewpoint on “ensuring harmony between humans and nature” [11].

The viewpoint is described in the political report of the 19th National Congress of the CPC as follows: “We must realise that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets and, acting on this understanding, implement our fundamental national policy of conserving resources and protecting the environment, and cherish the environment as we cherish our own lives. We will adopt a holistic approach to the conservation of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, and grasslands, while implementing the strictest possible systems for environmental protection and developing eco-friendly growth models and ways of life. We must continue the Beautiful China initiative to create good working and living environments for our people...” [11].

Thus, in the period from the 18th National Congress to the 19th National Congress, the CPC initiated and completed its viewpoint on well-rounded human development on the basis of the profound awareness of the people and the central role played by the people. This is the latest

theoretical achievement of the CPC during the process of adapting Marxism to the Chinese context.

3. Implications for Vietnam

In Vietnam, continuing the spirit of the previous national congresses of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the political report of the 12th National Congress emphasised that the “well-rounded development of Vietnamese people must be seen as a goal of the development strategies” [2]. This is also one of the main constructs of the general viewpoint on a development orientation in Vietnam. Based on the thought of well-rounded human development in the new era raised by the CPC, the following conclusions can be drawn for application in Vietnam.

Firstly, it is necessary to summarise and make assessments of human development in practice at the end of every term of the Communist Party. This will deepen the awareness of the role and tasks of the Communist Party, based on which specific targets and guidelines can be enacted for the economic, educational, cultural and non-material sectors. This should also be applied to healthcare, social protection and natural environment etc., in order to provide favourable conditions for all citizens to develop their own potential and benefit from developments.

Secondly, humans are identified to be the actors as well as the targets of development in the context of industrialisation, modernisation and international integration. In Vietnam, the process of industrialisation and modernisation is taking place when international compete-

tion has been never been more difficult. “Accepting [the need] to overcome challenges and risks, all members of the political system are required to have more outstanding virtue and capacity than the past, showing the particular characteristics of Vietnamese people” [5].

To exist and develop in such a context, Vietnamese people have to improve their competitiveness by gathering internal power, drawing on both internal and external factors, and transforming external power into an internal strength. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to have those whose virtue and quality are sufficient to make big career changes via their own hearts, minds and hands and build socialism. The outcome is for people to have free and well-rounded development as proclaimed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the Communist Manifesto in 1848: “the condition for the free development of each is the free development of all” [1].

Thirdly, it is necessary to attach well-rounded human development to socio-economic development strategies. The practical experience from the past 30 years of the country’s *đổi mới*, or renovation, period, and international integration have shown us the great value and the decisive significance of the human factor, as well as the dialectic relationship between human development and socio-economic development. It is, therefore, necessary to strengthen the viewpoint that human development cannot be separated from socio-economic development. Recognising thoroughly the necessity of attaching the human development strategy to socio-economic development strategies, we must have proper and effective strategies for socio-economic development,

acknowledging labour productivity and the quality of the people’s life as criteria for development evaluation. Appropriate economic goals must be set up so as to ensure a social environment of democracy and justice, providing favourable conditions for all people to participate in and benefit from economic achievements; at the same time, it is important to promote cultural development and continuously enhance the quality of the people’s non-material life.

Fourthly, it is essential to promote well-rounded development of the Vietnamese people, reaching international standards of human development and, at the same time, preserving national identity and the traditional culture of Vietnam. In addition to the improvement of living conditions, both materially and non-materially, it is necessary to build Vietnam’s advanced culture imbued with national identity as one of the fundamental measures that contributes to the development of a modern Vietnam. The more modern and civilised a society is, the greater the necessity for satisfying non-material and cultural demands. Culture is “a constituent of the social non-material foundation as well as a driving force for socio-economic development”; it is an important endogenous power for development” [6]. Furthermore, this will contribute to the improvement of knowledge, ethics, and the physical and aesthetic status of Vietnamese people, thereby responding to the requirements of the new era. Cultural development is an impetus for socio-economic development as well as a target for our regime because “cultural development and national identity preservation and promotion cannot be separated from Vietnam’s strategy for modern human development” [6].

Finally, apart from the above-described recommendations, human development should be attached closely to protection of the natural environment. Based on the experience of China over the period of the open-door policy implementation, we can see that it will be extremely costly if we neglect the protection of the natural environment, while focusing too much on economic growth. As a consequence, now and in the coming years, the CPC is making adjustments to China's development policies so that economic development will be carried out with special attention to the natural environment. This is also a development focus for the rest of the developed world. Thus, Vietnam should introduce an appropriate, comprehensive approach to specific periods of development, ensuring harmony between economic development and protection of ecological and living environments, and promoting well-rounded human development. This is necessary to avoid destroying the natural environment for the sake of economic development.

4. Conclusion

Drawing on Marxism and creatively adapting it to the Chinese context, including the theoretical points on human development, Xi Jinping's thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era were determined at the 19th National Congress of the CPC. His aim includes the building of socialism with Chinese characteristics, in which well-rounded human development is seen as an important goal. Although socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era still remains at the initial stage, the

existing conditions, including the theoretical viewpoint, the political system, material facilities, cultural and ideological situations, have been unprecedentedly favourable for well-rounded human development. The guidelines on the well-rounded human development in the new era can be shown in some following main points: ensuring a people-centred approach; ensuring the people are involved in the running of the country; ensuring and promoting living standards through development; and, building a non-material civilisation.

In the context of industrialisation, modernisation, and international integration, the viewpoint that considers well-rounded human development to be a goal of development strategies was also raised at the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam as a guideline for the implementation of all-round development in Vietnam. Due to the requirement of improving the viewpoint on development, based on the practical experience from 30 years of the country's renovation and Vietnam has the advantage of being a country that carried out the reforms after China. Vietnam can, therefore, learn from China's experience to improve its theoretical and practical activities. Vietnam can apply the experience to the actual situation in Vietnam and amend its guidelines and policies so as to achieve the well-rounded development of Vietnamese people.

Notes

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² This concept was initially introduced by China at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party (November 2012). It consists of five pillars, including: socialist market economy, socialist democratic politics, socialist advanced culture, socialist moderate prosperous society, and socialist ecological environment, integrated together as a whole.

³ The four-pronged comprehensive strategy consists of the following contents: deepening comprehensive reforms, building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, advancing the law-based national governance, and strengthening correctly the Party self-governance.

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