



FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL DIALECTICS: FOUNDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAM'S CONTEMPORARY RENEWAL

CARACTERÍSTICAS FUNDAMENTALES DE LA DIALÉCTICA SOCIAL: FUNDAMENTOS E IMPLICACIONES PARA LA RENOVACIÓN CONTEMPORÁNEA DE VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT:

This article analyzes the fundamental characteristics of the dialectics of social life from the materialist understanding of history, with the purpose of clarifying its theoretical meaning and its methodological implications for the contemporary process of renewal in Vietnam. Through a qualitative approach of a theoretical-documentary nature, classic works of Marxism, Vietnamese philosophical studies, and contemporary documents linked to national development are examined. The analysis identifies four essential characteristics of social dialectics: social phenomena and processes are realized through the conscious activity of human beings; creative activity constitutes a distinctive mode of human existence; social development necessarily incorporates the dimension of social progress; and subjective factors acquire growing importance in the transformation of society. On the basis of these foundations, their application to the process of renewal in Vietnam is examined, particularly in the articulation between objective conditions and human action, economic growth and social progress, scientific-technological development and innovation, digital transformation, culture, and human development. It is concluded that the understanding of social dialectics provides a relevant theoretical and methodological basis for interpreting the contemporary transformations of Vietnamese society and guiding sustainable development centered on the human being.

Keywords: Dialectics of society, Human factor, Creative activity, Social progress, Vietnam's renewal process.

RESUMEN:

Este artículo analiza las características fundamentales de la dialéctica de la vida social desde la comprensión materialista de la historia, con el propósito de esclarecer su significado teórico y sus implicaciones metodológicas para el proceso contemporáneo de renovación de Vietnam. Mediante un enfoque cualitativo de carácter teórico-documental, se examinan obras clásicas del marxismo, estudios filosóficos vietnamitas y documentos contemporáneos vinculados con el desarrollo nacional. El análisis identifica cuatro características esenciales de la dialéctica social: los fenómenos y procesos sociales se realizan mediante la actividad consciente de los seres humanos; la actividad creadora constituye un modo distintivo de la existencia humana; el desarrollo social incorpora necesariamente la dimensión del progreso social; y los factores subjetivos adquieren una importancia creciente en la transformación de la sociedad. A partir de estos fundamentos, se examina su aplicación al proceso de renovación de Vietnam, particularmente en la articulación entre condiciones objetivas y acción humana, crecimiento económico y progreso social, desarrollo científico-tecnológico e innovación, transformación digital, cultura y desarrollo humano. Se concluye que la comprensión de la dialéctica social proporciona una base teórica y metodológica relevante para interpretar las transformaciones contemporáneas de la sociedad vietnamita y orientar un desarrollo sostenible centrado en el ser humano.

Palabras clave: Dialéctica social, Materialismo dialéctico, Materialismo histórico, Actividad humana, Progreso social, Renovación de Vietnam.



INTRODUCTION

The dialectics of society constitutes a fundamental component of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, reflecting the dynamics and development of social life in its entirety. While dialectical materialism reveals the universal interconnections and laws governing the movement and development of the material world, social dialectics focuses on the specific characteristics of society as a distinctive form of reality. Unlike natural processes, social processes are inseparable from human activity, because economic, political, cultural, and social institutions emerge, evolve, and transform through the conscious activities of individuals and social groups. However, recognizing the active role of human beings does not imply denying the objective character of social laws. Human beings make history through practical activity, but always within historically determined material and social circumstances (Marx, 1979; Marx & Engels, 1996a, 1996b).

The issue of social dialectics has attracted considerable attention in Marxist philosophical studies. Classical works by Marx, Engels, and Lenin established the theoretical foundations for understanding society as a dynamic and interconnected system driven by contradictions, material conditions, and social practice. Contemporary research has extended these principles to the analysis of culture, human development, education, and social transformation. In the Vietnamese context, Marxist philosophy continues to provide a theoretical framework for examining the relationship between social existence, culture, human agency, and national development (Pham, 2018; Phạm, 2024; Tran Thi Thu & Nguyen Thi Lan, 2026). These studies demonstrate the continuing application of dialectical and historical materialist perspectives to changing social conditions, while also highlighting the importance of human creativity and social relations in contemporary development.

This theoretical discussion acquires particular relevance in Vietnam's renewal process (Đổi mới), where Marxist-Leninist principles have been interpreted and applied in relation to the country's specific historical and socio-economic conditions (Le, 2022). Contemporary scholarship has examined this relationship from several perspectives, including the development of high-quality human resources, the construction of modern culture, and the role of Marxist-Leninist philosophy in higher education (Dinh, 2020; Le & Trinh, 2025; Phạm, 2024). Research has also associated the teaching of Marxist-Leninist philosophy with the development of critical thinking among university students, indicating that its contemporary significance extends beyond theoretical and political education to questions concerning learners' analytical capacities and intellectual development (Nguyen et al., 2025).

At the same time, the contemporary transmission and social reception of Marxist-Leninist philosophy present challenges. Earlier reporting in Vietnam pointed to limited student interest in Marxist studies, illustrating tensions surrounding the teaching and reception of this philosophical tradition (San Diego Union-Tribune, 2016). More recent studies, however, have explored strategies for adapting its teaching to contemporary educational environments, including the incorporation of information technologies and the development of critical-thinking-oriented approaches (Le & Trinh, 2025; Nguyen et al., 2025). These developments suggest that the contemporary relevance of Marxist philosophy in Vietnam involves not only preserving its theoretical foundations but also reconsidering how its concepts are interpreted, communicated, and applied under changing educational, cultural, technological, and social conditions.

This issue is particularly significant as Vietnam confronts challenges associated with sustainable economic growth, institutional modernization, human development, social security, digital transformation, scientific and technological innovation, and international integration. Contemporary studies on Vietnamese culture and human resources emphasize the relationship between socio-economic development and the mobilization of human capacities, creativity, education, and cultural values (Phạm, 2024; Tran Thi Thu & Nguyen Thi Lan, 2026). From this perspective, addressing contemporary transformations requires both an understanding of objective social conditions and attention to the capacity of human beings to act upon, interpret, and transform those conditions.

Nevertheless, existing studies have frequently concentrated on particular manifestations or applications of Marxist philosophy, including socialist construction, culture, education, human resources, and philosophical teaching (Le, 2022; Pham, 2018; Tran Thi Thu & Nguyen Thi Lan, 2026). Other contributions have focused more specifically on student engagement, technological innovation in teaching, and critical thinking in Marxist-Leninist education (Dinh, 2020; Le & Trinh, 2025; Nguyen et al., 2025). Although these perspectives contribute to understanding the contemporary significance of Marxist philosophy in Vietnam, further theoretical systematization is needed regarding the fundamental characteristics of social dialectics and their methodological implications for current processes of social transformation.

Accordingly, this article aims to clarify the fundamental characteristics of social dialectics from the perspective of dialectical and historical materialism and to analyze their methodological implications for Vietnam's contemporary renewal and development process. By examining the relationship between objective social laws, conscious human activity, creativity, social progress, and subjective factors,

the study seeks to provide a systematic theoretical framework for interpreting contemporary transformations in Vietnamese society and their implications for national development.

The second group of studies focuses on the application of dialectical social theory to socialist construction and social transformation. Works examining social contradictions, development dynamics, and methodological issues associated with Vietnam's renovation process have contributed to understanding the relationship between productive forces and production relations, economic development and social progress, and stability and innovation during the transition toward socialism (Dang, 2002; Dinh, 2020; Le, 1991). Other studies have further developed these theoretical and methodological perspectives within the context of Vietnam's renewal process (Pham, 1991; Tran, 2007).

The third group of studies addresses specific dimensions of social dialectics, including human development, socio-economic formations, and social transformation. Notable contributions include the works of Ho (2003) on human development in Marxist thought, Nguyen (2025) on the socio-economic formation theory and the Vietnamese revolution, and Sheptulin (1989) on dialectical cognition. These studies enriched the theoretical understanding of society as a dynamic and interconnected system shaped by multiple objective and subjective factors.

More recently, contemporary Vietnamese theoretical and policy documents have reaffirmed the significance of dialectical thinking in national development. The works of Nguyen (2022), the Communist Party of Vietnam's Resolution No. 57-NQ/TW (2024), and the Documents of the 14th National Party Congress (2026) emphasize the need to creatively apply dialectical principles to address emerging challenges associated with scientific and technological development, innovation, digital transformation, sustainable development, and socialist-oriented modernization.

Despite their valuable contributions, existing studies have primarily examined individual aspects of social dialectics, such as social contradictions, human development, socio-economic formations, or methodological issues in social transformation. Relatively little attention has been paid to systematically identifying the fundamental dialectical characteristics of society as an integrated theoretical framework and analyzing their contemporary significance for Vietnam's ongoing renovation process. Therefore, a comprehensive and systematic examination of the fundamental dialectical characteristics of society and their implications for the current stage of national renewal remains both theoretically and practically necessary. This study seeks to fill that gap by clarifying the essential dialectical features of social development and demonstrating their

methodological significance for Vietnam's contemporary renovation and development strategy.

This study is grounded in the theoretical foundations of dialectical materialism and historical materialism developed by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. These theoretical perspectives view society not as a static aggregation of individuals or institutions but as an organic and dynamic system characterized by interconnectedness, contradiction, movement, and development.

According to historical materialism, social existence determines social consciousness, while the mode of production constitutes the fundamental basis of social development. Social development is driven by the dialectical interaction between productive forces and relations of production, the economic base and superstructure, and objective conditions and subjective human activities. Therefore, society evolves through the resolution of internal contradictions rather than through external interventions alone.

The dialectical approach emphasizes several fundamental characteristics of social development. First, society possesses an objective character because social laws operate independently of individual will, although they are realized through human activity. Second, society exhibits systemic interconnectedness in which economic, political, cultural, and social dimensions influence one another. Third, social development is driven by contradictions that generate change and transformation. Fourth, social progress results from the interaction between objective conditions and subjective factors, particularly human agency, leadership, and social practice.

Lenin further developed this dialectical understanding by emphasizing contradiction as the core of development and by highlighting the importance of concrete analysis of concrete situations in social transformation (Lenin, 2005). Consequently, the study of social dialectics requires the integration of universal laws with specific historical conditions.

Based on these theoretical premises, this study conceptualizes the dialectical characteristics of society through four interrelated dimensions: (1) the objective nature of social laws; (2) the unity and interaction of social structures and processes; (3) contradiction as the driving force of social development; and (4) the dialectical relationship between objective conditions and subjective factors. These dimensions provide the analytical framework for examining the significance of social dialectics in Vietnam's contemporary renewal process.

Within the context of Vietnam's renovation, the dialectical approach offers an important methodological foundation for understanding the relationship between economic

growth and social progress, market mechanisms and socialist orientation, national development and international integration, as well as technological innovation and sustainable development. Therefore, the application of social dialectics contributes not only to theoretical clarification but also to the formulation of effective development strategies in the current period.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative theoretical-documentary approach to examine the fundamental characteristics of social dialectics and their implications for Vietnam's contemporary renewal process. The methodological framework was grounded in dialectical materialism and historical materialism, which provide the conceptual basis for analyzing society as a dynamic system shaped by interconnectedness, contradiction, development, and the interaction between objective conditions and subjective human activity.

The documentary materials included classical works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin; Vietnamese philosophical studies on social dialectics, human development, contradictions, and socialist renewal; and contemporary theoretical and policy documents related to Vietnam's development. Particular attention was given to works addressing the relationship between productive forces and production relations, objective conditions and subjective factors, human agency, social progress, science and technology, innovation, digital transformation, and the Vietnamese renewal process. These sources correspond to the theoretical traditions and contemporary policy materials examined throughout the study.

The analysis was conducted through theoretical analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, and historical-logical interpretation. First, the selected materials were examined to identify recurring theoretical propositions concerning the distinctive nature and development of social life. Second, these propositions were compared and synthesized to determine the fundamental characteristics of social dialectics. Third, the identified characteristics were interpreted in relation to the specific historical and contemporary conditions of Vietnam's renewal process.

Based on this analytical procedure, four interrelated dimensions guided the study: the operation of social processes through conscious human activity, creative activity as a distinctive mode of human existence, social progress as an inherent dimension of social development, and the increasing role of subjective factors. These dimensions provided the analytical structure for interpreting their methodological implications and contemporary relevance to Vietnam.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This characteristic reflects the fundamental specificity

of social life. Society is not an entity alien to or existing outside human beings; rather, it is the totality of relations, activities, and products created by human beings in the process of living, working, communicating, struggling, cooperating, and creating. Marx emphasized that "Society, whatever its form may be, is the product of the reciprocal action of men" (Marx & Engels, 1996c, p. 657). Therefore, all social phenomena, from material production, wealth distribution, and the organization of power to law-making, education, science, art, morality, and cultural lifestyles, are inseparable from conscious human activity. Social laws differ from natural laws in that natural laws operate spontaneously, whereas social laws can only manifest themselves through human activity, although they do not depend on human consciousness or will. Engels pointed out that "in history, the only active agents are men endowed with consciousness, acting with deliberation or passion and pursuing definite aims; nothing happens without conscious intention or intended purpose" (Marx & Engels, 1995b, p. 435). Nevertheless, social laws are not arbitrarily determined by subjective desires, because they arise from real social relations, material conditions, and the necessary connections of social life.

In social life, human beings are real individuals engaged in practical activities under definite material conditions. Marx & Engels (1995a) wrote that the first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals.

The ideas of the classical Marxist thinkers indicate that human existence is inseparable from needs. To understand human social activity, it is necessary to begin with needs, interests, and purposes. Needs constitute the mode of human existence; when needs are consciously recognized and placed within actual conditions, they are transformed into interests. Interests represent the immediate social form of needs and serve as the driving force that motivates individuals to choose goals and courses of action. From interests, human beings formulate purposes, that is, anticipated outcomes consciously projected into the future. Thus, needs, interests, and purposes form the internal motivational chain of social activity.

In practice, human needs always develop more rapidly than the conditions available to satisfy them. The contradiction between needs and the conditions for their fulfillment constitutes one of the driving forces that compel human beings to seek new forms of activity. Once a need is satisfied, it does not mark the end of development but rather becomes the premise for the emergence of higher-level needs. Consequently, social history is also the history of the development of human needs, ranging from the need for survival to the needs for freedom, creativity, and comprehensive human development. Marx & Engels (1995a) affirmed that all that men strive for is connected with their interests. Drawing from the practical experience of socialist construction in Vietnam, the Communist Party

of Vietnam concluded that “attention to the legitimate interests of working people is the direct driving force of production and social development” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 1996). These arguments demonstrate that history is not the product of supernatural forces or purely subjective intentions, but the outcome of the activities of real human beings acting under specific historical conditions. Human beings make history, yet they do so within historically concrete circumstances shaped by particular economic, political, cultural, scientific, ethical, legal, and social traditions.

Implications. This characteristic requires that both theoretical understanding and practical action pay due attention to promoting the human factor and addressing the relationship between needs, interests, and purposes as the fundamental motivational chain of human and social development.

Second, creative activity is the distinctive mode of human existence

Concerning the mechanism of creative activity, human beings do not merely adapt to natural and social circumstances; they also transform these circumstances through labor, knowledge, experience, emotions, willpower, and organizational capacity. Through creative activity, human beings produce material wealth, social institutions, cultural values, scientific knowledge, and various forms of spiritual life. Human creative activity is a two-way process.

On the one hand, human beings, driven by their needs, mobilize their physical energy, intellect, emotions, and will to act upon the external world and create material or spiritual products. This is the process of the objectification of the subject, whereby the internal capacities of human beings are transformed into objective products existing outside themselves. On the other hand, when individuals receive, utilize, and transform the products they have created, these products in turn exert an influence on the subject, reshaping human needs, knowledge, skills, and ways of life. This constitutes the process of the subjectification of the object. For example, a new production tool not only increases labor productivity but also transforms human skills, modes of thinking, and forms of labor organization. Emerging from these new needs, human beings once again mobilize their physical energy, intellect, emotions, and will to act upon the external world, creating new material and spiritual products. This process continues endlessly, generating continuous development and transformation.

Thus, the essence of social dialectics lies in the mutual transformation between subject and object, between the subjective and the objective. Through practical activity, subjective intentions, capacities, and aspirations are transformed into objective products; in turn, these objective products become new conditions, means, goals,

and contents for subsequent human activity. Every creative achievement does not mark the end of development but rather creates new needs and possibilities for further creativity.

Creative activity is inherently social and historical in character. It is always embedded in social relations and conditioned by specific historical circumstances. No individual can create in complete isolation, as all creative activities rely on language, knowledge, tools, institutions, and values inherited from society and previous generations. Consequently, creativity is always realized through the unity of inheritance and innovation, the interaction between individual initiative and collective experience, and the dialectical relationship between subjective factors and objective conditions.

From the perspective of historical materialism, human beings distinguish themselves from all other living creatures precisely through their capacity for conscious and purposeful creative activity. Through labor and creativity, people not only transform nature and society but also transform themselves. Therefore, creativity constitutes both the driving force of social development and the fundamental mode through which human beings realize their potential and advance civilization.

Implications. This characteristic requires that both cognition and practice maintain the unity between the subjective and the objective, as well as between subjective factors and objective conditions. Such unity is manifested in the ability to correctly understand objective conditions, utilize them appropriately, and simultaneously maximize the role of human initiative, creativity, and agency.

Third, the dialectics of society encompasses the content of social progress

When the principle of development in dialectical materialism is applied to social life, development should not be understood merely as quantitative growth or changes in external forms. Rather, it must also be evaluated according to social value criteria. Not every social change constitutes social progress. Certain transformations may accelerate social movement and economic growth, yet they do not necessarily make human beings freer, more equal, more humane, or more comprehensively developed. Therefore, social progress cannot be reduced to economic indicators alone but must be assessed through multiple dimensions, including the level of productive forces, living standards, educational attainment, cultural development, morality, legal institutions, democracy, social justice, environmental quality, and opportunities for human development.

In this sense, social progress is closely associated with the humanization of social life and the continual development of human potential. Scientific and technological achievements can only be regarded as genuinely progressive

when they serve human well-being, reduce arduous labor, expand knowledge, strengthen cooperation, and improve the quality of life. Likewise, social institutions acquire progressive significance only when they protect justice, promote democracy, safeguard legitimate interests, and create favorable conditions for human development. Consequently, the ultimate criterion of social progress is not merely the expansion of material wealth but the advancement of human beings and the enhancement of their capacity for free and comprehensive development.

From the perspective of historical materialism, human beings create history, but they do not do so arbitrarily. Each generation carries out its activities within objective conditions inherited from previous historical periods, including natural circumstances, the level of productive forces, economic relations, political institutions, cultural traditions, scientific and educational development, moral values, and legal frameworks. Therefore, social progress represents the unity of objective conditions and subjective factors. While objective conditions establish the possibilities and limits of development, subjective factors determine the extent to which those possibilities are recognized and realized through conscious social practice.

Furthermore, social progress is not the outcome of an isolated individual's will. Rather, it is the result of the collective activity of broad masses of people. Although outstanding individuals may play an important role in promoting social change, their influence becomes historically effective only when it corresponds to the demands of the age, the interests of society, and the maturity of objective historical conditions. For this reason, social dialectics consistently links development with the historical responsibility of individuals, social groups, and communities in advancing social progress.

From a Marxist perspective, social progress should ultimately be understood as a process through which human beings gain increasing control over natural and social conditions, expand their freedom, and create the material and spiritual foundations for comprehensive human development. Accordingly, social development and human development constitute inseparable dimensions of historical progress.

Implications. This characteristic requires that both theoretical understanding and practical action respect objective social laws while simultaneously promoting the capacities and creative potential of individuals and communities throughout the development process. In the context of Vietnam's ongoing renewal process, it highlights the necessity of harmonizing economic growth with social progress, social justice, cultural development, environmental sustainability, and human development, thereby ensuring that development is both sustainable and people-centered.

Fourth, the increasing role of subjective factors in social development

Subjective factors are not merely individual desires, but encompass cognitive abilities, scientific knowledge, theoretical thinking, practical experience, political acumen, ethics, culture, willpower, beliefs, discipline, organizational capacity, and the ability of individuals, communities, and social actors to act purposefully. Historically, when productive forces were low, people were often more influenced by natural conditions and traditional social relations. With the development of production, science, technology, education, communication, and social management, people are increasingly capable of gaining a deeper understanding of objective laws, predicting development trends, choosing courses of action, and influencing social processes in an organized manner. The role of subjective factors is clearly demonstrated in the development of science and technology and theoretical thinking. In modern society, scientific knowledge not only explains the world but also becomes a direct resource for development. Correct reasoning helps people understand the nature, laws, and trends of reality and orient their practical activities. Marx & Engels (1995a) emphasize that a nation that wants to stand firm at the pinnacle of science cannot do without theoretical thinking.

However, the more important the subjective factor, the greater the risk of subjectivism and voluntarism. When people have more knowledge, tools, and organizational capacity, they can create great achievements, but they can also cause serious consequences if they disregard objective conditions, act against laws, absolutize willpower, or impose inappropriate models. Therefore, promoting the subjective factor must go hand in hand with respecting objectivity, starting from practice and testing through practice. The subjective factor also includes moral qualities, culture, and social responsibility. A society with a high level of scientific development but lacking a moral foundation, civic responsibility, discipline, and humanistic ideals may experience misguided development. Therefore, promoting subjective factors must simultaneously involve developing knowledge, capabilities, ethics, culture, and human character.

Implications. This characteristic requires that both theoretical understanding and practical action promote the role of subjective factors while simultaneously combating subjectivism, voluntarism, conservatism, and stagnation.

In short, the characteristics of social dialectics have profound theoretical and methodological significance. The first characteristic affirms the role of conscious human beings as the direct subjects of all social processes, thereby emphasizing the need to pay attention to human needs, interests, and motivations. The second characteristic clarifies that creative activity is a unique mode of human existence; through creativity, humans not only transform

the objective world but also develop their own capabilities, qualities, and social essence. The third characteristic indicates that social dialectics encompasses the content of social progress, meaning that development must be evaluated not only by material growth but also by the expansion of freedom, justice, democracy, culture, morality, and the conditions for the comprehensive development of human beings. The fourth characteristic emphasizes the increasing role of subjective factors, especially scientific knowledge, theoretical thinking, ethics, culture, political acumen, organizational capacity, and social responsibility in the process of modern development.

Implications of the Fundamental Characteristics of the Dialectics of Society for Vietnam's Contemporary Renewal Process

Vietnam's renewal process represents a profound transformation of social life based on an increasingly comprehensive understanding of socialism and the path toward socialism under the country's specific historical conditions. Renewal is neither a complete rejection of the past nor a mechanical imitation of external models. Rather, it is a process of dialectical inheritance, adaptation, innovation, and development that corresponds to objective laws, concrete historical circumstances, and the strategic goal of combining national independence with socialism.

In this context, a proper understanding of social dialectics is of both theoretical and practical significance. It not only provides a scientific basis for comprehending the dynamics of social development but also offers methodological guidance for policymaking and social practice. The dialectical perspective emphasizes the necessity of proceeding from objective reality, respecting social laws, promoting the central role of human beings, encouraging creativity and innovation, evaluating outcomes through practice, and making timely adjustments in response to new circumstances. These principles have been consistently reflected throughout Vietnam's renewal process and have contributed significantly to the country's socio-economic achievements over the past decades.

The fundamental characteristics of the dialectics of society provide an important methodological framework for addressing the challenges and opportunities arising in the current stage of national development. In particular, they highlight the need to harmonize objective conditions and subjective factors, balance economic growth with social progress, promote human development alongside technological advancement, and integrate innovation with sustainable development goals.

Against the backdrop of rapid globalization, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, digital transformation, climate change, demographic shifts, and increasing international competition, the significance of social dialectics has become even more evident. The successful implementation of

Vietnam's development strategy requires not only a correct understanding of objective laws but also the effective mobilization of human intelligence, creativity, responsibility, and social consensus. Therefore, the study and application of the fundamental characteristics of social dialectics remain essential for strengthening theoretical thinking, improving governance capacity, enhancing policy effectiveness, and promoting sustainable national development.

From the perspective of social dialectics, several important implications can be drawn for Vietnam's contemporary renewal process. These implications are discussed in the following sections.

First, placing human beings at the center, as the subject, objective, and driving force of renovation

The first characteristic of the dialectics of society demonstrates that all social processes are realized through conscious human activity. Accordingly, in the process of renewal, human beings cannot be regarded merely as passive beneficiaries of development outcomes. Instead, they must be identified as the direct subjects who participate in, create, organize, and evaluate the renewal process itself.

Policies, guidelines, and institutional reforms acquire vitality only when they emerge from the legitimate needs of the people, are closely connected to their practical interests, and effectively mobilize their capacities for action. This perspective is consistent with the Communist Party of Vietnam's orientation on human development. The Document of the 14th National Congress emphasizes: "The people are the subject and the center of the cause of renewal, national construction and defense. All policies of the Party and the State must truly originate from the needs, aspirations, rights, and legitimate interests of the people" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026a).

From a practical perspective, this principle implies that all renewal policies must aim at liberating and promoting human potential. In the economic sphere, renewal should create employment opportunities, increase income, encourage legitimate enrichment, protect vulnerable groups, and expand development opportunities. In the political sphere, it should promote democracy, enhance governance effectiveness, strengthen the people's right to mastery, and consolidate social trust. In the field of education, renewal must cultivate self-learning capacity, critical thinking, creativity, civic ethics, and adaptability to modern society.

Placing human beings at the center also requires the harmonization of different types of interests. In a socialist-oriented market economy, interests constitute an important driving force of development. However, if interests are understood solely in narrow individualistic terms, they may lead to social stratification, conflicts, and moral degradation. Therefore, the renewal process must ensure

the harmonious combination of individual interests, collective interests, and societal interests, while safeguarding the legitimate interests of workers, enterprises, communities, and the nation as a whole.

From the perspective of social dialectics, this approach concretely embodies the historical role of human beings as the subject of social development, in which human agency, interests, and capacities become the decisive foundation of sustainable transformation.

Second, combining respect for objective laws with promoting initiative and creativity

The dialectics of society demonstrates that human beings create history; however, this creative activity always takes place under specific objective conditions. In the context of Vietnam's ongoing renewal process, this implies that all development policies must be grounded in the country's concrete realities, including the level of productive forces, the quality of human resources, governance capacity, social structure, cultural traditions, the international context, and the existing contradictions within social life.

Respecting objectivity first and foremost means proceeding from real conditions, accurately understanding practical realities, and acting in accordance with objective laws. Policies that are not based on empirical investigation, that fail to properly assess social impacts, or that are not tested through practical outcomes are prone to formalism, achievement-oriented bias, or subjective imposition. Conversely, an exclusive focus on objective difficulties without sufficient determination for innovation, organizational capacity, and political will may result in missed opportunities for development.

Promoting initiative and creativity among social actors is therefore an indispensable requirement. In this context, the subjects of renewal are not limited to the Communist Party and the State but include the entire political system, enterprises, intellectuals, scientists, workers, farmers, youth, women, and all citizens. Although these actors differ in position, capacity, and responsibility, they all participate in the renewal process through concrete activities.

The Communist Party of Vietnam emphasizes: "To strongly arouse the tradition of patriotism, aspiration for development, solidarity, self-reliance, confidence, resilience, and national pride; and to transform cultural and human strengths into internal resources and powerful driving forces for development" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026b).

In the renewal process, opposing subjectivism and voluntarism does not mean the absence of aspiration or determination. On the contrary, it requires ensuring that aspirations and determination are grounded in scientific understanding. National development aspirations must be accompanied by institutional capacity, implementation

capability, appropriate resource allocation, concrete roadmaps, and mechanisms for monitoring and adjustment. Only under such conditions can political will be effectively transformed into tangible social outcomes.

From the perspective of social dialectics, this principle expresses the unity between objective conditions and subjective agency as a fundamental requirement of historical development, ensuring that creativity is both scientifically grounded and practically effective.

Third, promoting science and technology, innovation, and digital transformation

The characteristics of creative activity and the increasing role of subjective factors have profound implications for Vietnam's current renewal process. In earlier stages of development, economic growth could rely significantly on low-cost labor, natural resources, and capital investment. However, the present stage requires a decisive shift toward a growth model based on productivity, quality, efficiency, added value, knowledge, and innovation.

Resolution No. 57-NQ/TW of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirms: "The development of science, technology, innovation, and national digital transformation is a breakthrough of primary importance and a key driving force" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2024). From the perspective of social dialectics, this orientation reflects the increasing role of knowledge, institutions, data, technology, and organizational capacity in contemporary development.

Promoting innovation in the renewal process does not simply mean increasing investment in science and technology. It also requires the construction of a social environment that encourages new ideas and creative initiatives. Such an environment includes a transparent and enabling institutional framework, controlled experimentation mechanisms, the protection of intellectual property rights, incentives for innovative entrepreneurship, and effective linkages among research institutes, universities, enterprises, and the State. It also requires respect for grassroots innovations emerging from production and everyday social life.

Digital transformation should be understood as a comprehensive social process rather than a purely technical one. Digital technologies generate real value only when they are integrated with procedural innovation, improved data quality, information security, the development of digital competencies among citizens, and the establishment of digital ethics. If digitalization is limited to the mechanistic conversion of administrative procedures without transforming governance mindset, accountability mechanisms, and service-oriented administration, digital transformation will fail to produce substantive change.

Fourth, linking economic growth with social progress, equity, culture, and the environment

The characteristics of the dialectics of society, which encompasses the content of social progress, has direct significance for maintaining the socialist orientation of Vietnam's market economy. Accordingly, economic growth must be closely associated with environmental protection, social progress, and social equity in every stage and policy of development.

The Communist Party of Vietnam emphasizes: "To manage sustainable social development; to ensure social progress and equity, and to improve people's living standards...; to develop the economy in harmony with social progress and equity, environmental protection, and proactive adaptation to climate change" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026b). This reflects a dialectical approach to development, in which progress is not measured solely by growth rates but also by the quality of life and the level of human development.

In the renewal process, a sole focus on short-term economic growth while neglecting social progress, equity, culture, and the environment may generate new contradictions such as income polarization, inequality, environmental degradation, erosion of social trust, and moral decline. Therefore, social progress must be embedded within the development process itself rather than postponed as a post-growth objective.

Linking growth with social progress also requires the development of an inclusive social security system, improvement of education, healthcare, housing, employment, social insurance, and basic public services. At the same time, cultural development must be promoted to foster a civilized, humane, honest, thrifty, responsible, and creative society that respects the rule of law. Environmental protection, climate change adaptation, green growth, and circular economy development constitute essential expressions of social progress in the current development stage.

From the perspective of social dialectics, this integrated approach reflects the unity between economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of development, ensuring that modernization is both sustainable and human-centered.

Fifth, promoting subjective factors, preventing and overcoming subjective idealism, conservatism, and stagnation.

The increasing role of subjective factors indicates that the quality of leadership, management, policy planning, implementation, practical experience summation, theoretical development, human resource training, and the building of political culture are of particular importance to the cause of reform. As the development context becomes increasingly complex, weak subjective factors can

waste opportunities, distort policies, or create bottlenecks in development. First and foremost, it is necessary to improve theoretical thinking; reform is a process that is both principled and creative. Without theory, practical activities easily fall into empiricism, dealing with immediate situations without a long-term vision. If theory is detached from practice, leadership easily falls into dogmatism and mechanical thinking. Therefore, summarizing the practical experience of innovation, supplementing and developing the theory of socialism and the path to socialism in Vietnam is a regular task. The leading guiding principle of our Party is: "Firmly applying and creatively developing Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, and the theory of the reform line; firmly adhering to the goal of national independence and socialism;..." (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026a).

It is necessary to improve institutional capacity, because many development resources today lie not only in capital, land, and labor, but also in the ability to design institutions to unleash these resources. A good institution can encourage innovation, protect legitimate rights, promote healthy competition, reduce transaction costs, and increase social trust. Conversely, institutions that are slow to innovate, have complex procedures, unclear responsibilities, or lack transparency can become obstacles to development.

At the same time, it is necessary to overcome subjective, voluntaristic, and hasty tendencies; conservatism, stagnation, and fear of responsibility; the absolute prioritization of economics while neglecting culture, ethics, and people; the separation of technology from institutions and social capacity; and the lack of mechanisms for practical testing and policy feedback. Overcoming these tendencies will help to achieve more sustainable innovation and development, combining theory with practice, goals with conditions, interests with responsibilities, creativity with discipline, and leadership with the people's right to self-governance.

CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental characteristics of the dialectics of society show that social life is a constantly moving, changing, and developing whole through the practical activities of human beings. Social processes do not occur outside of human beings, but are carried out by real human beings with specific needs, interests, goals, wills, and creative capacities. Therefore, the process of understanding and transforming society must originate from specific historical conditions, from real contradictions, and from the role of human beings as the subject.

For the current reform process in Vietnam, a firm grasp of social dialectics is crucial in formulating guidelines, policies, and practical organization. Reform must be centered on human beings as the subject, goal, and driving force of development; at the same time, it must harmoniously

resolve the relationship of interests, promote democracy and the creativity of the people, combining respect for objective laws with promoting the initiative of social subjects. Based on linking economic growth with social progress and equity, cultural development, environmental protection, science and technology, innovation, and digital transformation, the reform process in Vietnam will continue to develop steadily, meeting the requirements of the new era in the “era of national resurgence”.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The author declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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