

Innovativeness and creativity in Ho Chi Minh's political thought

Dr. Ong Van Nam

Ho Chi Minh University of Banking

Abstract: *Ho Chi Minh's political thought is a system of perspectives formed and developed throughout his extensive political career. It is a distinctive political ideology that has profoundly influenced Vietnam's history and politics. Ho Chi Minh absorbed the Marxist-Leninist theory, creatively and flexibly applying it to Vietnam's specific context, emphasizing the integration of theory with practice and advocating the necessity of struggle for national independence and the people's freedom. This article analyzes and evaluates the central points of Ho Chi Minh's political thought, demonstrating its creative and innovative adaptation to Vietnam's revolution.*

Keywords: *Ho Chi Minh; political thought; innovativeness and creativity.*

1. Introduction

Ho Chi Minh's political thought embodies innovativeness and creativity, reflecting the strategic vision of a revolutionary leader who seamlessly connected theory with practice through unique revolutionary methods. President Ho Chi Minh adopted Marxist-Leninist principles, not merely applying them but tailoring them to Vietnam's context. The core creativity and innovativeness in his political thought involves national independence and socialism, creatively combining traditional national political methods with global political theories. President Ho Chi Minh skillfully combined elements from both sources to build a political system tailored to

Vietnam's context. His selective succession not only addresses the challenges of the time but also creates a solid foundation for the development of the revolution and nation-building in the current period.

2. Innovative and creative thought on the path to national salvation

Since the early 20th century, President Ho Chi Minh sought a path for national liberation, engaged in international revolutionary movements, founded the Communist Party of Vietnam, led the resistance wars against colonialism, then subsequently built the government and developed the country. His thoughts and actions profoundly

Received:

June 26, 2024

Revised:

August 28, 2024

Accepted:

December 21, 2024

<https://doi.org>

10.59394/JSM.48

influenced Vietnam and contributed to national liberation movements worldwide. Regarding the path to national salvation, President Ho Chi Minh transcended the limitations of traditional patriotism, narrow doctrines, and contemporary bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democratic trends by taking a more comprehensive and creative approach.

President Ho Chi Minh integrated Marxist-Leninist theory with Vietnam's specific conditions while emphasizing national unity and solidarity. This enabled him to develop a flexible political mindset suited to the needs and objectives of national liberation without being constrained by traditional stereotypes and teachings. His selection of the appropriate revolutionary path became the foundation for developing political thought and revolutionary philosophy. Approaching Russia's October Revolution and Marxist-Leninist principles provided him with the theories and strategies to establish a path for national independence and socialism. This reflects the "mastery" in applying theory to practice and demonstrates the strategic vision in "shaping" the path of liberation for the Vietnamese people.

President Ho Chi Minh inherited revolutionary methods from his predecessors and employed Marxist-Leninist principles to determine the path of violent revolution. He argued that revolution could only succeed through political and armed struggle, with flexibility in choosing and combining forms of struggle depending on specific circumstances. His thinking emphasized the judicious and skillful use of revolutionary violence to achieve the goal of national liberation. He stated: "In the arduous struggle against the enemies of the class and the nation, it is necessary to use revolutionary violence against counter-revolutionary violence, seize power, and protect power" (Furuta, 1997).

President Ho Chi Minh overcame the limitations of earlier patriotic Vietnamese scholars by expanding the concept of

revolutionary forces. He asserted that the revolution was the cause of the entire people, encompassing all social classes; anyone with a patriotic spirit, regardless of age, gender, or social class, could contribute to the revolution. This created a strong foundation of national unity essential for the struggle for independence and nation-building. In particular, he affirmed the Communist Party of Vietnam's role in the revolution: "A strong party ensures revolutionary success, just as a steady helmsman ensures a steady ship. Such a party must have its core ideology that is well understood and followed by every one of its members. A party without a core ideology is like a person without intellect, or a ship without a compass" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol.2).

In 1930, the Communist Party of Vietnam was founded by integrating Marxism-Leninism with workers' and patriots' movements, marking a significant step in forming a revolutionary force capable of leading the struggle for independence and building socialism in Vietnam. President Ho Chi Minh intensely studied Marxism-Leninism and applied its principles to develop a revolutionary theory suited to Vietnam's conditions, emphasizing the role of the worker and peasant class in the revolution while adjusting theories to meet the Vietnamese people's specific aspirations and conditions. In the "Political Report at the Second National Congress of the Vietnam Labour Party," Ho Chi Minh stated: "The Vietnam Labour Party must be the wise, resolute, and loyal leader of the working class and laboring people of Vietnam, to unite and lead the resistance to complete victory, to implement the new democracy. In this period, the interests of the working class, the laboring people, and the nation are unified" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol.7).

His view thus demonstrates innovative and creative thinking, asserting that the Communist Party of Vietnam is that of the working class, being its vanguard and representing its interests and aspirations,

leading the working class and laboring people in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism while building socialism. President Ho Chi Minh also emphasized that the Party represents not only the working class but also the entire nation, including the other social classes such as farmers, intellectuals, and other patriotic forces. This reflects the "mastery" in applying theory to practice and demonstrates the strategic vision in "shaping" the path of liberation for the Vietnamese people.

When addressing the Communist Party of Vietnam as the revolutionary leading force, Ho Chi Minh also highlighted the close relationship between the Party and the People. He asserted that the Party could not exist and develop without the people's support and consensus. He wrote: "Being a cadre means being a loyal servant of the People for the whole life. Yet not everyone can master this simple rule. Mastering it requires continuous learning, even for a lifetime" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol.15). To achieve this, the Party must understand the people, learn from the people, ask the people, and be close to the people. "If you do not learn from the people, you cannot lead them. Only by being students of the people can you become their teachers" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol.6). Great importance was placed on the selection, training, evaluation, and utilization of cadres because he understood that those form the decisive factor for the success of the revolution.

Immediately after the country's independence, he wrote numerous articles to indicate and criticize the "diseases" that cadres are susceptible to, including:

(1) Individualism and corruption: He criticized cadres who exhibited corruption and abused their positions for personal gain, harming the common interests and the Party's reputation.

(2) Bureaucracy: He warned of the dangers of bureaucratic attitudes, irresponsibility, and inefficiency in management.

(3) Lack of ethical and ideological standards: He stressed that cadres must possess good ethics and strong ideological foundations and serve as role models for the people.

(4) Abuse of power: He condemned power abuse, which undermines not only fairness and democracy but also public trust in the Party and the State.

These writings aimed to raise awareness and responsibility among cadres, contributing to building a clean, efficient, and people-oriented leadership apparatus, emphasizing the importance of preventing and combating officials' corruptions by seriously and resolutely enforcing strict disciplinary measures to ensure the integrity and efficiency of the leadership apparatus, thereby maintaining the People's solidarity and trust towards the revolution.

3. Ho Chi Minh's innovative and creative thought in building the State of the People, by the People, and for the People

For President Ho Chi Minh, it is critical not only to gain power but also to determine who it belongs to and how to build it. He argues that the revolutionary government must be that of the People, that is, the government belonging to the workers, peasants, and the other labouring classes, rather than representing merely a small group of powers or particular interests. Such a government must take the people as its root, listen to their opinions and needs, and, at the same time, build a system of government that is close to and serves the people.

President Ho Chi Minh emphasized the importance of organizing a democratic, just, and efficient government. This was first reflected in his insistence on the necessity of a general election to ensure the People's freedom and democracy: "... In the past, we were ruled by an absolute monarchy and then followed by colonial regimes that were no less oppressive. Our country thus had no

constitution. Our people were denied democratic freedoms. We must now establish a democratic constitution. I propose that the government organize a general election as soon as possible under universal suffrage. All citizens, male and female, aged eighteen and above, regardless of their wealth, religion, or ethnicity, have the right to run for office and vote” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol.4). In such a state, “all benefits are for the people; all power belongs to the people; all reform and construction work are the people's responsibility; the people elect governments from the commune to the central level; and the people establish organizations from the central to the commune level. All authority and strength come from the people” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol.5).

President Ho Chi Minh also required that all guidelines, policies, laws, and regulations originate from the people's interests. Thus, he prioritized the immediate needs of the nation upon gaining independence as follows: “Firstly, ensuring the people have enough to eat. Secondly, providing clothing for the people. Thirdly, securing housing for the people. Fourthly, ensuring education for the people” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol.5). This illustrates that his concerns extend beyond simply gaining the power to defining its essence and constructing a government that meets the people's aspirations, serves the common interest, and maintains social solidarity.

For President Ho Chi Minh, in a state ruled by law of the People, by the People, and for the People, ethics and law must be unified and intertwined. He not only valued the role of law in establishing and maintaining social order but also emphasized the necessity of combining law with ethics to ensure the State's legitimacy and effectiveness. Ethics and the law must be considered two inseparable factors in building the socialist state ruled by

law with the former laying the foundation for the latter's legitimacy, while the latter enforces and safeguards ethical values in society. This unity between ethics and law is essential for building a fair and efficient state that serves the People.

In view of renewing the mindset of building a government of the People, by the People, and for the People, President Ho Chi Minh also emphasized the importance of innovative and creative thinking in developing various aspects of state activities. Specifically:

Regarding domestic affairs, President Ho Chi Minh asserted that the goal of national independence is inseparable from the construction of socialism. His political strategies and thoughts reflect this, from achieving national independence to establishing a solid foundation for equitable society and sustainable development. He combined democratic and socialist ideals to create a new political system that both guarantees the nation's right to self-determination and works towards a just society without discrimination and injustice. The close connection between national independence and socialism is the guiding thread running through all of his activities and policies. For President Ho Chi Minh, education is the key to cultural development and intellectual advancement. He called for building an educational system aligned with societal needs, focusing on personality education and patriotism, preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of the nation, and considering it an essential factor in building a socialist culture.

Regarding foreign affairs, President Ho Chi Minh stressed that Vietnam must maintain its independence and autonomy in all foreign relations. He stressed the importance of building relationships based on equality, ensuring that no country could interfere in Vietnam's internal affairs. At the same time, he

built close ties with such socialist countries as the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern European nations to gain political, economic, and military support during the anti-colonial resistance. In all circumstances, Ho Chi Minh sought to resolve conflicts peacefully and urged the international community to support peaceful solutions to global issues. His foreign policy thinking laid the foundation for Vietnam's development and international integration in the modern era.

Renewing the mindset is not only a starting point but also a continuous process, essential for all aspects of social life, as well as the construction and development of the nation. Notably, in the context of the country facing numerous challenges and hostile, erroneous viewpoints, applying the political thought of President Ho Chi Minh has significant strategic importance for Vietnam to seize opportunities, overcome challenges, and confidently advance in building a socialist rule-of-law state of the People, by the People, and for the People.

However, alongside achievements, there remain specific issues such as the gap between rich and poor, environmental pollution, and unsustainable development. Hostile and distorted views against the Party, State, and revolution have become increasingly complex and sophisticated, with widespread dissemination of misinformation on social media and online platforms.

Therefore, in the coming time, President Ho Chi Minh's political thought should be applied to the practical context of Vietnam's revolution. The focus should be on educating the younger generations about his ideology and improving economic development policies to ensure both economic growth and political stability. Additionally, efforts must be made to strengthen the great unity of the people, encouraging the participation of all social classes in building and defending the nation, thereby fostering social consensus.

Party organizations must also continue to consolidate and enhance their leadership capacity, advance administrative reforms, and improve transparency in state management, thereby building public trust. It is crucial to actively counter erroneous and hostile viewpoints, safeguard Ho Chi Minh's ideology, and uphold the Party's directions. Furthermore, the peaceful diplomatic ideology should be applied by diversifying and multilateralising international relations, promoting cooperation for sustainable development, and steadfastly protecting the nation's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

4. Conclusion

Ho Chi Minh's political thought uniquely combines traditional and modern, national and international elements. This reflects his sophistication in applying theoretical frameworks and his acumen in adapting and developing policies and strategies suited to the conditions and aspirations of the Vietnamese people. Examining the enduring vitality of Ho Chi Minh's political thought not only reinforces trust in the Party's ideological foundation but also clarifying his ideas' sustainable and precise value. This effectively counters distorted and opportunistic political views while affirming the relevance and appropriateness of Ho Chi Minh's thought in addressing the realities and aspirations of the nation.

Ho Chi Minh's ideology has played a crucial role in guiding the Party, State, and people of Vietnam in building a prosperous, strong, democratic, fair, and civilized country. Studying and researching his thoughts are significant for improving theoretical knowledge, cultivating political resilience, enhancing revolutionary ethics, and boosting operational capacity. The study and application of Ho Chi Minh's thought form not only an essential task but a vital requirement to meet the needs of national development

and defense in the new context. This demands continuous efforts to advance theoretical knowledge, cultivate ethics, and creatively and flexibly implement his ideas into policies and practical actions.

References:

1. Furuta, M. (1997). *Ho Chi Minh - National liberation and innovation*. Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

2. Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Ho Chi Minh collected works* (Vol. 2, p. 268). Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

3. Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Ho Chi Minh collected works* (Vol. 7, p. 175). Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

4. Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Ho Chi Minh collected works* (Vol. 15, p. 670). Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

5. Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Ho Chi Minh collected works* (Vol. 6, p. 432). Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

6. Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Ho Chi Minh collected works* (Vol. 4, pp. 7, 175). Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

7. Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Ho Chi Minh collected works* (Vol. 5, p. 232). Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

Further reading:

1. Anh, V. Q., Hung, V. Q. (2023). *Ho Chi Minh's thought on politics in building the Communist Party of Vietnam*. Retrieved from <https://lyluanchinhtrivatruyenthong.vn/tu-tuong-ho-chi-minh-ve-chinh-tri-trong-xay-dung-dang-cong-san-viet-nam-p27085.html>.

2. Chin, D. T. (2023). *Building the party according to Ho Chi Minh's thought and its application in the current period*. Retrieved November 9, 2023, from <https://www.quanlynhanuoc.vn/2023/11/09/xay-dung-dang-theo-tu-tuong-chu-tich-ho-chi-minh-va-su-van-dung-trong-giai-doan-hien-nay/>.

3. Ha, Q. V. (2023). *Building a style of independent, autonomous, and creative thinking of Ho Chi Minh for students in military schools*

today. Retrieved June 1, 2023, from <https://www.quanlynhanuoc.vn/2023/06/01/xay-dung-phong-cach-tu-duy-doc-lap-tu-chu-sang-ta-o-cua-ho-chi-minh-cho-hoc-vien-o-cac-nha-truong-quan-doi-hien-nay/>.

4. Hong, L. N. (2020). *Ho Chi Minh's thought on professionalism in management and administration of government agencies at all levels*. Retrieved May 14, 2020, from <https://www.quanlynhanuoc.vn/2020/05/14/tu-tuong-ho-chi-minh-ve-tinh-chuyen-nghiep-cua-cong-tac-quan-ly-dieu-hanh-cua-bo-may-chinh-quyen-cac-cap/>.

5. Kien, L. T. (2023). *Independent, autonomous, and creative thinking of President Ho Chi Minh on the path to independence, freedom, and happiness for the Vietnamese nation*. Retrieved November 9, 2023, from https://www.tapchiconsan.org.vn/web/guest/van_hoa_xa_hoi/-/2018/827615/tu-duy-doc-lap%2C-tu-chu%2C-sang-tao-cua-chu-tich-ho-chi-minh-voi-con-duong-doc-lap%2C-tu-do%2C-hanh-phuc-cua-dan-toc-viet-nam.aspx.

6. Luan, D. V., & Hong, H. N. N. (2024). *Ho Chi Minh's thought on democracy in social field and its application in Vietnam during the renovation period*. Retrieved from <https://www.quanlynhanuoc.vn/2024/07/25/tu-tuong-ho-chi-minh-ve-dan-chu-trong-cac-linh-vuc-xa-hoi-va-su-van-dung-o-viet-nam-thoi-ky-doi-moi/>.

7. Luan, D. V., & Trang, V. T. H. (2024). *Applying Ho Chi Minh's thought on developing Vietnamese people today*. Retrieved from <https://www.quanlynhanuoc.vn/2024/12/12/van-dung-tu-tuong-ho-chi-minh-ve-phat-trien-con-nguoi-viet-nam-hien-nay/>.

8. Ngan, D. T. (2024). *Training political theory for cadres according to Ho Chi Minh's ideology to meet the requirements of current situation*. Retrieved from <https://www.quanlynhanuoc.vn/2024/10/08/dao-tao-ly-luan-chinh-tri-cho-can-bo-theo-tu-tuong-ho-chi-minh-dap-ung-yeu-cau-tinh-hinh-hien-nay/>.