

CALL FOR PAPERS -- INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Vietnamese Communist Party's 13th Congress: Dilemmas of Development and Global Integration

September 3-4, 2020, Singapore

US-Vietnam Research Center, University of Oregon in collaboration with ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

As the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) prepares for its 13th National Congress to be held in 2021, critical decisions about personnel and policy are on the agenda. About half of current Politburo members will have passed retirement age. There is no heir apparent for the position of Party General Secretary, and the question whether the two positions of State President and Party Secretary will remain merged is still open. Economic trends appear positive but tensions in the East Sea/South China Sea remain high. The recent violent crackdown on Dong Tam villagers reveals deep fissures behind the authoritarian edifice.

This two-day symposium examines not only possible scenarios at the Party Congress but also broader issues about the dilemmas of development and global integration in Vietnam. As Vietnam becomes increasingly integrated into the global economy, rapid economic growth in the last decade has been accompanied by rising corruption, environmental degradation, social inequality, and political conflicts. Despite many such problems, Vietnam continues to attract billions of foreign investment that greatly boosts its trade and exports.

Scholarship on Vietnam's contemporary political economy has grown considerably since the late 1980s when market reforms began. Yet research continues to be hampered by limited information, restricted access, and the small number of researchers worldwide. This symposium hopes to promote a better understanding of Vietnamese politics and economy by addressing four sets of questions below:

- 1) **Vietnamese Communist Party's 13th Congress:** What changes in personnel and policy can be expected at the Congress? How strong is the pressure from within the Party for change, especially for more fundamental reforms? Will there be major changes in Vietnam's economic and foreign policy toward the major powers and the ASEAN? Who among the upcoming leaders that China and the US wish to be elevated at the Congress, and what kinds of policies may be expected from them?
- 2) **Causes of Growth and Nature of the State and the Economy:** What has driven Vietnam's continuing growth? What has been the role of resources, foreign investment, remittance, and regional economic climate? How have international trends such as rising protectionism, globalizing production networks, free trade agreements, and the internet economy affected Vietnam? What role have Vietnam's two largest trade partners, namely the US and China, played in its growth? Does Vietnam have a market economy? How have the public-private boundaries, if they ever exist, shifted or continued to be negotiated? What role, if any, has

the state played in economic growth? What is the nature of the state in Vietnam today? Is it predatory, developmental, or something in between?

- 3) **Political Impact of Growth:** How has growth and globalization transformed Vietnam's authoritarian politics? How have key communist institutions and organizations in politics (e.g., the communist party, the People's Army, law & the judiciary system, the National Assembly, the Communist Youth League); in economy (e.g., state-owned enterprises); in culture and education (e.g., state-owned media, public universities) adapted to a changing environment? What kind of civil society, and what role do civil society and social movements play in Vietnamese politics today? Is economic growth contributing to Vietnam's political stability, or is it destabilizing? What are the root causes of rising corruption, environmental degradation, social inequality, and political conflicts? Are these problems the consequences of neoliberalism or "market Leninism"? How successful has the VCP been in solving these problems?
- 4) **Vietnam in Comparative Perspectives:** Does the Vietnamese case validate modernization theory, or does it offer evidence for authoritarian resilience? Can this communist country remain stable while growing as its leaders wish, or is it heading for major political changes? How are the experiences of its neighbors such as South Korea, China, and Indonesia compared to that of Vietnam?

We welcome paper proposals from international and Vietnamese scholars from any disciplines, as well as professionals and practitioners, that address the above questions and other issues of relevance to the political economy of development in Vietnam. **Please submit a 250-word abstract and 1-page CV by April 15th, 2020 to Tuong Vu, Department of Political Science, University of Oregon, at <SymposiumVietnam2020@gmail.com>.** Authors whose abstracts are selected will be notified by April 30th, 2020.

A draft of the proposed paper is due by July 30th, 2020. Paper presenters will be provided with funds for travel and accommodation during the symposium. We expect to edit and publish symposium papers with ISEAS Publishing.