

**UNIVERZITA KARLOVA**

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**TEZE DISERTAČNÍ PRÁCE**

**Vietnamese Political Power, Authority and Legitimacy in the  
Context of Emulation Movements**

Politická Moc, Autorita a Legitimita v Kontextu Hnutí Socialistické  
Soutěže ve Vietnamu

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This dissertation thesis is about the stability and instability of the Vietnamese communist regime and how to understand it today. This problem was explored with the help of an imported political tool which Vietnam adopted from the USSR, through China, in the late 1940s and which is surprisingly in use in modern economically liberalised Vietnam: **emulation movements**.<sup>1</sup> This thesis assumed that historical and present-day emulation movements were designed to control but also to bring legitimacy or a ‘legitimacy effect’<sup>2</sup> (and the related stability) through their different ‘functions’, both ideological and practical (see below). I ask how they succeeded in this task comparatively, in their historic and current incarnations. This dissertation makes three key contributions. Firstly, using a vast amount of primary Vietnamese sources, it explores the under-researched topic of emulation movements in Vietnam, creating a typology for present-day emulation movements, and creating list of functions for both historic and present-day emulation movements. Secondly, it facilitates our understanding of stability and instability through the concept of legitimacy and the novel concept of ‘legitimacy effect’, while considering legitimacy as dynamic phenomenon. Thirdly, it helps to better understand some aspects of the present-day Vietnamese communist regime and its problems.

The thesis is framed in a discussion about the durability of revolutionary regimes invigorated by Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way (Levitsky and Way 2013). As they wrote in July 2013, revolutionary regimes are some of the most durable types of non-democratic regimes. They identified four primary reasons for this stability: destruction of independent power centers, strong ruling parties, invulnerability to coups and enhanced coercive capacity (Levitsky and Way, 2013, pp. 7-14). Levitsky and Way suggest three types of new bases of

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Emulation’ can be tracked back to the writings of Karl Marx however it was developed into a specific Soviet model by V. I. Lenin in 1919. This Soviet imprint gave birth to the notion of ‘socialist emulation’, which we know today from the communist or former communist countries. At the heart of the Soviet-style socialist emulation was the ideal of a worker who would typically work in his free time or over-time to achieve an exceptional work result and increase production voluntarily, based on his or her own initiative. That person then became a model emulated by other workers. Emulation was associated, furthermore, not only with an increase in industrial production but also with the creation of a new socialist morality and a new approach to work. An ‘Emulation Model’ was a person or group of people who embodied the characteristics of a ‘new socialist man’ which became a central theme of Soviet emulation. The phrase ‘Emulation Model’ was often associated with the idea of a ‘hero’ who was to be followed. The characteristics of an emulation hero were expressed in terms of sacrifice, patriotism, initiative, selflessness, hard work, volunteering, modernisation, industrialisation, and ethical standing. This model worker was propagandised by the regime through media, school textbooks, different genres of literature, film, propaganda billboards, slogans, street names, brochures, pictures, stamps, songs, etc. The content of emulation changed over time and throughout its development in different environments, countries, and leaders. The original purposes and functions of emulation shifted and developed to serve different ends. These changes, in Vietnam, are central to this thesis (for details see Chapter 2 of the thesis).

<sup>2</sup> I define ‘legitimacy effect’ as the similar effect that is brought by legitimacy (stability and support), but this effect is caused by some power based strategies. Chapter 1 of this thesis provided detailed discussion.

stability which are employed after the end of the ‘revolutionary period’, in other words, after revolutionary leaders die: institutionalized mechanisms of leadership succession, economic growth and renewing of conflict (Levitsky and Way 2013, pp. 14-15). In a personal conversation with Prof. Lucan Way in Sydney in 2017, he suggested that there may appear no reason to focus on legitimacy when the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) has a powerful coercive apparatus which is stronger than the need for legitimacy – force will win out in the end. Despite, and in opposition to this view, this thesis showed that legitimacy played and still plays crucial role in Vietnam. This is well expressed in the 2012 Resolution of the 4<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Party. The Resolution emphasizes that weaknesses in Party building persist despite efforts to address them, and because it has taken too long to overcome them, this lowers the confidence of people in the Party. “If this will not be fixed it will cause challenges for the Party leadership and even the existence of the regime” (Resolution of the 4<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Party, 2012).

This thesis engaged with the puzzling question of old and new strategies for securing stability in Vietnam (besides coercion) and explored legitimacy and legitimacy effects via the functions of emulation movements.

A central question of this thesis is why Vietnam adopted and still maintains the costly Soviet tool which was primarily programmed for the two goals proclaimed by the Soviets: 1. raising of industrial production and 2. creation of a ‘new socialist man’ (see Chapter 2, Lenin 1919; Fitzpatrick 1999 cited in Yu, 2010, p. 233).

When Northern Vietnam<sup>3</sup> adopted emulation movements in 1948 (Ho Chi Minh 2000, p. 888), it was fighting for her independence with the colonial power France (First Indochina Conflict 1946-1954), industry was non-existent as Vietnam was a predominantly agrarian country and only a very limited number of people were aware of socialism or communism. In present-day Vietnam this Soviet tool seems to be completely anachronistic, abundant and now not suitable for economically-opened country, yet, it was revived a year after the protests in Thai Binh Province.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). In the Chapter 3 of this thesis I explored historical emulation movements (1948-1975) in the Northern Vietnam, however, I acknowledge some emulation campaigns were also exported to the South. After 1975 Vietnam was unified in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), emulation thus was unified as well.

<sup>4</sup> Thái Bình protests were peasant’s protests in Vietnam in late 1997. Among the main causes of protests were ‘compulsory labour, arbitrary fees and taxes (ranging from land use fees to teacher’s fees)’ and overall corruption of local politicians. The protests were considered to be the ‘largest threat to regime’s legitimacy since the early 1980s’ (Abuza 2001, p. 83).

In this thesis I explored the assumption that the answer to this question has to do with the other ‘hidden functions’ of emulation movements (both historical and present) and their possible effect on stability through desired contribution to legitimacy or legitimacy effect (besides control). I concluded that however emulation movements indeed served as a tool for increasing legitimacy and creating positive legitimacy dynamic from 1948-1954, this success was not repeated in present-day emulation movements.

In Chapter 1, I introduced the theoretical tenets of this thesis. This thesis used interpretative methods to examine stability and instability in the Vietnamese political system, framed within the issues of legitimacy and ‘legitimacy effect’. I worked primarily with the concepts of legitimacy of three authors: Max Weber (1921; 1978), David Beetham (1991a; 1991b; 2011) and Robert Lamb (2014). I also explored the works of the contra-pole to Weber, the accounts of Hannah Arendt (1990; 1958; 1961), to highlight certain important ideas which she contributed to the topic of authority and legitimacy. Arendt’s specific historical sense of authority (and related legitimacy) is not suitable for the Vietnamese context, however, her important distinction between authority, power and violence was useful for my conclusive points about the problems of power, authority and legitimacy in Vietnam.

With the help of Max Weber’s *Economy and Society* (1978), I explored the problem of Ho Chi Minh’s charisma which played an important role in Vietnam. Charismatic personality carries a mission (Weber 1978, p. 242), in Vietnam, this mission was primarily the termination of colonialism and defending independence, the first three emulation movements in Vietnam reflect this as pursued through the slogan: ‘Eliminate Hunger, Illiteracy and Foreign Invaders’ (Ho Chi Minh 2000, p. 913). David Beetham, a critic of Max Weber, provided basis for the focus on norms, values, goals and consent (Beetham 1991a; 1991b; 2011). His approach helped me to form the comparative analysis of values in Vietnamese emulation movements between 1948 and current, and relate them to legitimacy. Robert Lamb introduced the question of ‘what has a same effect as legitimacy?’ (Lamb 2014) which helped me to explore ‘legitimacy effect’ and related strategies that have the similar effect on stability as legitimacy (seduction, persuasion, manipulation and habit).

In this thesis I created my own theoretical framework combined with the concepts and approaches above. Firstly, I introduced a distinction between legitimacy and legitimacy effect to show, in emulation movements, that it is often difficult practically distinguish what is the cause and effect of stability, yet, it is important to distinguish the source, as the quality of stability from the different sources seems to differ. To clarify, I argue that we can see it as a

three-level gradient: the quality of stability seems to be strongest and most durable when its source is pure legitimacy; legitimacy effect merely contributes to stability; and coercion, based on fear, creates very ‘unstable stability’. In this thesis, I have tended to assume that legitimacy and legitimacy effects work complementarily with coercion, so that the less legitimacy is secured the more coercion is necessary. I introduced the idea of ‘legitimacy dynamics’ as a combination of legitimacy and legitimacy effects that creates a mixture which is constantly shifting, and interacting with coercion, which is probably why it is difficult to capture them practically or make black and white predictions about them.

Thirdly, legitimacy and legitimacy effects were observed through the ‘functions’ of emulation movements. This thesis made an initial assumption that emulation movements in Vietnam have certain functions which are somehow favourable for the regime. I also assumed that these functions would be somehow related to legitimacy issues, considering that emulation movements are supposed to be, for the ruling VCP, a tool with both ideological and practical meanings (that is, that it is both related to values and self-perceptions, as well as to results). Based on an exploration of emulation movements in Vietnam (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 of the thesis) I created the following list of functions with the two main functional types: Ideological and Practical functions. The concrete functions were presented in the Chapter 5 of the thesis:

Table 2: Functions of Emulation Movements in Vietnam

HISTORICAL FUNCTIONS	CURRENT FUNCTIONS
<b>Ideological</b>	<b>Ideological</b>
Promotion of values	Promotion of values
Indoctrination	Remedy for the degeneration of Communist doctrine/Party’s ideological self-control
<b>Practical</b>	<b>Practical</b>
Mobilisation	Mobilisation
Responsibility sharing	Responsibility sharing
Building Party, Mass organisations and Administrative	Physical control of population
Link between Party and People	

(Source: Author)

In addition to this theoretical contribution, this thesis fulfilled another set goal. The exploration of emulation movements in Vietnam. I examined two periods of emulation in Vietnam: historical (1948-1975) and present-day (2003-2018).

Chapter 3 explored an historical period of emulation movements, which were subdivided according to the three observed ‘phases’: Introductory (corresponding to the First Indochina Conflict 1946-1954), peak (late 1950s and early 1960) and regressive (starting 1964 with the Second Indochina Conflict). I examined the roots, Soviet and Chinese influence, and the general beginnings of ‘patriotic emulation’ in Vietnam, with its connection to Vietnamese tradition, organisational structure, and the National Patriotic Emulation Congresses. For each historical period I selected the major emulation movements of that time. In the Introductory section, Vietnam saw three above mentioned campaigns: ‘Eliminate Hunger, Ignorance (Illiteracy) and Foreign Invaders’. In the Peak phase, I explored four major movements: The largest emulation campaign in agriculture was named ‘Đại Phong Wind’ according to the successful exemplary commune in Đại Phong Village. In Industry, the ‘Duyên Hải Wave’ (named after the Duyên Hải Mechanical Factory) became a model to emulate for workers in different factories throughout the DRV. Concurrently, Vietnam continued with the education movement, though in changed form, and the main campaign during the 1960s was called ‘Bắc Lý’ Drum’ according to a model school called Bắc Lý’. In the last regressive phase, we can see a reverse shift back towards military and defence movements (‘Three Ready’, ‘Two Excellent’, ‘Three Assurances’) after the US got directly involved in the Second Indochina War.

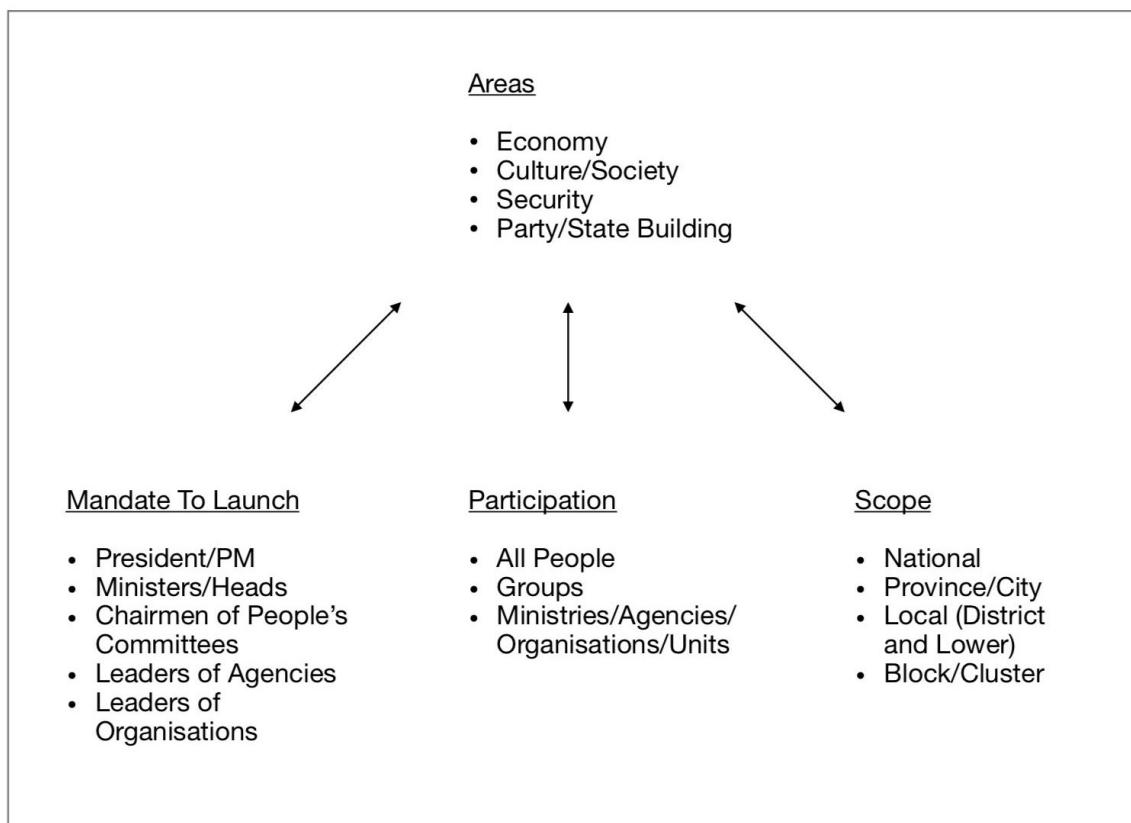
Chapter 4 examined present-day emulation movements. When economic changes were launched in 1986, emulation movements were still present in Vietnam but had largely lost the attention of the Party and were kept in a dormant state. During the late 1980s the VCP greatly relaxed political controls over the population, and by the early 1990s Vietnamese were, for example, now largely free to have contacts with foreigners, had far better access to information and were increasingly free to travel overseas. In the late 1990s the VCP officially called for a revision of this dormancy<sup>5</sup> (Directive No. 35-CT/TW, 1998) and since then

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<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, this ‘revision of dormancy’ in 1998 followed after Thái Bình protests which were peasant’s protests in Vietnam in late 1997. Among the main causes of protests were ‘compulsory labour, arbitrary fees and

resources and attention on emulation movements have reflected attempts to give emulation a new life, and familiar patterns of patriotic emulation re-entered the historical phase of renovation (‘Đổi Mới’). The renewed interest of the Party was coined by the promulgation of the Law on Emulation and Reward in 2003, which I explored in detail. I selected major emulation movements in Vietnam to examine based on their importance (three national-level movements) and several smaller movements which were intended for different goals and groups of people. For the better orientation in the present-day emulation movements in Vietnam, I created a typology which I simplified in the following scheme:

The main division according to ‘Areas’ is completed with three complementary axes: Mandate to Launch (Who can launch emulation movements?); Participation (Who participates in emulation movements?) and Scope (At which administrative level are movements organised?). In a simplified scheme, this typology appears as follows:




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taxes (ranging from land use fees to teacher’s fees)’ and overall corruption of local politicians. The protests were considered to the ‘largest threat to regime’s legitimacy since the early 1980s’ (Abuza 2001, p. 83).

This typology served as a guideline for better understanding of the selected emulation movements. I presented multiple case studies of selected emulation movements: the three largest national movements and several smaller movements in different Areas of emulation: Economy, Culture/Society, Security and Party/State Building, corresponding with concrete movements related to:

- Party and Morality ('Studying and Following Ho Chi Minh's Example') (SFHE)
- Education ('Two No Campaign;' 'Each Teacher is a Moral Example, Self-Learning and Creative;' 'Create Friendly Schools and Active Students');
- Saving ('Saving Money in a Piggy Bank')
- Countryside ('Building New Countryside' (BNC))
- Family ('Cultural Family' and 'Cultural Life')
- Environment ('Green-Clean-Beautiful' and 'Green Summer')
- Security ('All People Protect the Security of the Fatherland' (APPSF), and 'All people Participate in Protection of Territorial Sovereignty and Security of National Borders' (APPPTSSNB))

Each of the movements was considered within the context of expressed problems in Vietnam that the Party policies do not deal with. SFHE was considered within the problem of degradation of ideology, corruption and land grabs; Movements in the Education sector were put in the light of existing debates on the necessary reform of Education; Saving was considered within the problems of Healthcare; BNC was perhaps the most complex movement which included many areas of Vietnamese society, along with family; Environmental movements were considered within the major environmental protests (Bauxite Mining, '#IChooseFish' and Cutting Trees Controversies); and lastly, Security was considered within the context of protests against China. This contextualisation helped me to find the gap between what problems the Party deals with through emulation movements and what some groups of people expressed as their concerns.

Chapter 5 created a list of functions for both historical and present-day emulation movements. Looking at the historical trajectory of emulation movements between 1948-1975 in Vietnam, I argued that we observed two distinct general groups of functions which are identified as ideological and practical tools. Whilst emulation movements can be assessed in this way, they often if not usually, show a mixture of both functions. In the case of the



functions of the historical movements there was a balance between the individual functions - it seems that they mutually supported each other. If we look at the other set of functions, the one of the present-day emulation movements, we can see the shift towards a less balanced list of functions. While historical functions were 'building', 'encouraging' and 'teaching', the present-day functions are 'fixing', 'constraining' and 'controlling'. This shift was best visible when I observed concrete emulation movements (historical and current), analysing and comparing how they served their functions.

Chapter 6 provides analysis. I brought together the discussion of theory in Chapter 1, the discussions of Chapters 2, 3 and 4, and the exposition of probable functions of emulation in Chapter 5. These Chapters allowed me to develop and present my analysis of emulation movements in Vietnam and their political meanings. My analytical entry point was to discuss 'legitimacy dynamics' as this brought out the interactions between Party and population, in a sense of action and response.

Based on analysis, I concluded that Ho Chi Minh gradually managed (up to 1954) to secure a positive legitimacy dynamic by: representing the shared collective norms, values and goals (independence, education and well-being through economic progress), and consequently by achieving to generate the real consent of important parts of population. On top of that, many factors contributed to this positive dynamics: favourable conditions after the Second World War, Ho Chi Minh's charisma, and various legitimacy effects, to name a few. These effects, as I showed were often related to power-based strategies (seduction, persuasion, manipulation) or habit: people were suggestively seduced by rewards or promise of personal prestige, becoming 'hero' or 'fighter' was an important increase in personal status. They may have been persuaded via speeches, the message at a time was that Vietnam only has chance if 'all people' join in. And lastly, people were perhaps manipulated emotionally when they heard about heartbreaking stories involving the bravery of emulation heroes. I suggested that principles of habit seem to be employed in emulation as well, however, it is difficult to find direct evidence, as it is for seduction, manipulation and persuasion. We do have data for the popular acceptance of the regime by people and their enthusiasm after the Proclamation of Independence (for example, Marr 2013, p. 383). However, we do not have data on popular acceptance of the regime in early 1960s. As I suggested, this topic calls for more research.

The functions of emulation movements substantially helped me to see this legitimacy, and legitimizing effects: I suggested that emulation movements served three basic ideological functions: propagation of shared values; indoctrination; and spread of Ho Chi Minh's

charisma. I showed how historical emulation movements provided a platform for appealing to the three crucial values that were generally accepted. I also presented how emulation movements became a vehicle for indoctrination and learning of the principles of communism starting from patriotism, through connecting of old and new to socialism, collective, class struggle, etc. Anyone who emulated could become a hero. Ho Chi Minh's charisma was an inseparable part of emulation. Not only he 'invented' emulation for Vietnam but he travelled to promote it, wrote about it, participated in emulation congresses and was a subject of propagation in the press. Through emulation movements he pursued his mission of termination of French colonialism which was achieved in 1954.

The practical functions of emulation movements were also important for legitimacy and legitimacy effect, among the suggested were: mobilisation; responsibility sharing; building Party, Mass Organisations and administrative; creating a link between Party and people; and achieving practical results. We saw that mobilisation was at the heart of emulation movements, people were mobilised to enter the 'friendly competition' for 'national salvation' and 'national construction', concurrently, they thus provided both consent and 'surrogate consent'<sup>6</sup>, which legitimized regime. Emulation movements were also a platform which spread a principal of responsibility-sharing. According to Ho Chi Minh all people were needed for elimination of foreign invaders, illiteracy and famine, as well as raising production (Ho Chi Minh 2000, p. 888). This responsibility which was, at the beginning, accepted along with the genuine support of the goals of patriotism, later could create an 'alibi' when it came to mistakes. If responsibility is shared, then mistakes are as well. This principle suggestively supports stability in present-day Vietnam, by possibly reducing opposition. Another function that emulation movements served was building of mass organisations, Party and administrative, through mass movements, people could compete for titles and rewards, emulation heroes often were admitted to the Party, gained high functions in state administrative and became loyal to the regime, that provided support for legitimacy. The last function in historical emulation movements was the creation of a link between people and Party, this link was through emulation heroes who as the loyal supporters of the Party travelled around the country and spread the good word. I observed another channel through which this connection was facilitated: travel and speeches of high profile politicians who did

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<sup>6</sup> This expression is appropriated from Beetham (1991). 'Surrogate' consent is consent that is related to the mobilisation of grassroots in the communist regimes. As an evidence of popular commitment, this orchestrated mobilisation of the grassroots (some substantial minority), according to Beetham, served as the surrogate consent of the population as a whole (Beetham 1991, p. 182).

not hesitate to put their hands on ploughs, machines, and other agricultural or industrial equipment, in Vietnamese words, they manage to be perceived as to be 'close to people'.

In sum, this thesis showed that a predominance of successful legitimization, combined with legitimizing effects, helped to stabilize the DRV regime despite the coercion experienced during the Land Reform. In both Beetham's and Weber's sense, I conclude that in the period of 1948-1954 Ho Chi Minh managed to fulfil the criteria of 'legitimate authority'. In later periods this is far more questionable. 1960s was the period of collectivisation and merging 'patriotism' with 'socialism,' however, Ho Chi Minh's charisma and later another conflict which broke out in 1964 perhaps contributed to the stability and willingness to fight further for the popular patriotic values.

My detailed analysis shows foundational aspects of regime legitimacy in the particular context of historical emulation, and so in the absence of a major revision, what was inherited would have to be used in any present-day replication of such movements by the VCP regime.

This thesis provided an analysis of present-day emulation movements showing how the VCP increasingly struggles to use emulation movements as a tool which would increase legitimacy or at least legitimacy effects. There are again many factors which contribute to the negative dynamic. Firstly, this thesis advanced the idea that Vietnam and the VCP are in a completely different situation and so are emulation movements. This includes an absence of war which means a bigger challenge in creating enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the movements voluntarily. Another reason, I argue, is related to the fact that the VCP has ruled Vietnam for a relatively long time now, and the regime is mature and consolidated, this means that has had time to prove itself. Not only has the regime matured but also emulation movements have been employed for a relatively long time, such that their many problems are now clearly visible. Another important aspect is the clash of two different doctrines, communist and capitalist which emerged after Vietnam gave green to economic reforms *Đổi Mới*, the VCP struggles to accommodate them all under the label of communism. And lastly, problems in Vietnam are not succinctly limited to three big tasks, instead, they are much more diverse and complicated, and as the society becomes more and more demanding, the Vietnamese elites need to pursue success instead of primarily survival.

Analysing values in present-day emulation movements also demasked problems. The three simple and broad values from history have transformed into more complex values in present-day Vietnam. While illiteracy was relatively simple to tackle, current problems of

quality of education are much more difficult to address. Independence morphed into security and protection of territorial integrity. Historically, there was a common enemy, France, however currently, China is the country which is of most societal concern, and is generating most of the emotions and fears in Vietnam. The ambivalent stance of the VCP when it comes to China (and punishing its own population when it protests against China) apparently contradicts its historical and current appeal to patriotism. The environment and education became a topic which people in Vietnam care about and can be said to be a part of what could be called 'new patriotism', in this case, the thesis showed that consent seems to be more and more surrogate as the movements do not deal with problems, take people's time and are considered an empty form. Therefore, in Beetham's sense, the VCP cannot be pronounced 'legitimate'.

Concrete functions of emulation movements in present-day Vietnam helped me to understand the details. The Promotion of values function showed that instead of being a representative of the truly shared values, the VCP dictates values that are often not shared. This is closely linked to the Agenda Setting function, by setting the agenda of emulation movements, the VCP 'selects' what problems are 'relevant'. These are however, as I showed, often far from being perceived by some groups of people as relevant. It is not clear what precisely is the problem: whether the VCP struggles to realize what precisely are the values it should represent (as it sometimes contradicts the values it represents) or does not care what the values are that people truly care about and prefers to keep control over values. Alternatively, it can be a combination of the two. The other two ideological functions were related: Remedy for the degeneration of the communist doctrine and Perpetuation of Ho Chi Minh charisma. The official narrative of the Party observed through the emulation movements, claims that it is capitalism with its 'hostile forces' and 'peaceful evolution'<sup>7</sup>, which causes degeneration of the Party's ideology. The VCP tried to treat this situation by launching the movement SFHE, however, in its own self-evaluation, it is not effective (Directive No. 23-CT/TW, 2003; Directive No. 03 CT/TW, 2011; Directive No. 05/CT/TW, 2016). Ho Chi Minh's charisma undoubtedly serves currently as a blueprint of the VCP. The legitimacy and popularity that Ho Chi Minh still holds today in Vietnam is undeniable. The

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<sup>7</sup> 'Peaceful evolution' is a term allegedly developed originally during the Cold War. Currently it is used by China, Vietnam and other countries to express the idea, that capitalist regimes try to undermine socialist regimes by 'peaceful means', particularly by implanting Western ideas, lifestyle and political style in socialist societies (Ong 2007). For details in Vietnam, see Pham Van Son (2015).

question is, for how much longer can VCP sustain this important legitimacy source given many Party members do not behave according to the moral standards of its ‘founding father’? Another problem is that while Ho Chi Minh’s ‘simple’ solutions worked in the past, the new problems of today require more than just training in Ho Chi Minh’s morality.

The practical functions of emulation movements also revealed many problems. The four main functions identified in this thesis were: mobilisation, responsibility sharing, physical control of population and producing real outcomes combined with agenda setting.

Reported corruption and formalism (Nhật Duy 2017; ‘Determination of emulation...’, 2017) of the movements contributes to the habitual participation (to avoid problems). Finding the motivation to participate is the main hurdle. As emulation movements are often discussed as being ‘empty form’ or ‘suffering formalism’, teachers, workers and farmers necessarily have to find it less and less attractive. What seems to contribute to participation is perhaps habit and again ‘power strategies’ (for example creating legitimacy effect via rewards). However, as I showed there are also pressures which lead to the participation of people simply to avoid problems (Võ Thành 2017; ‘Information You Need...’, 2015). Sharing the responsibility is one of the functions that creates a largely positive dynamic. Whilst there is no doubt that some of the responsibility sharing is genuine (people do want to protect Vietnam or contribute to poorer people, we can think to what extent this is example of de facto seduction, manipulation or habit. People seem to accept their responsibility to repair schools, roads and bridges, alleviate poverty, reduce the gap between countryside and cities, protect their streets or borders or plant trees in their communes. This shared responsibility however, does sometimes turn against the VCP, as we saw on the examples where people are ad hoc denied this responsibility. This was most pronounced in the area of international security (South China Sea issues), when the authorities decided to allow the Chinese to mine bauxite, when authorities cut trees in Hanoi, or did not react to the ‘Dead Fish Crisis’. Control of population is a function that can be seen in individual movements (Domestic Security, Family) and also in the logic and organisation of emulation. Producing Outcomes and Agenda Setting were considered together. The analysis of emulation movements showed that the VCP is trying to deal with certain problems via emulation movements, however, firstly, these problems are not what some of the groups of society reflect as the ‘real problems’ and secondly, even in the case of the declared problems, emulation movements fail to deliver outcomes, as was clear from the SFHE or emulation movements in the education sector.

In the Chapter 7 this thesis presented my original field work in Vietnam in 2013 and 2014 concerning power and authority. The analysis of the resulting data, threw light on the prevalent ‘power discourse’ in Vietnam. When asked to explain the terms power and authority, the Vietnamese people interviewed were often unable to differentiate them, they usually interchanged these two expressions and took them as having one common meaning.

This corresponds with the above described analysis of present-day emulation movements. As the VCP lacks the ability to comprehensively represent popular concerns (avoid clashes, synthesize and accommodate some important shared values), it often resorts to dominating power. My analysis then concludes that this power is used to preserve its rule, and to stay in power, however, it cannot do much more, as it appears that the regime needs ‘legitimate’ authority and not just authority with power. This question was addressed in Fforde and Homutova (2017) – because legitimate authority can *govern* as opposed to *ruling*. This means that it can create and implement comprehensive policies that lead towards shared goals while nurturing shared values. For this change, the analysis suggests that Vietnam needs a political reform that includes two major steps. One is to admit that to be able to represent ‘shared values’, a legitimate regime would have to allow people to be able to truly contribute to the debate about these values, what they are, how they develop and what they should be; that is in sum: to treat people as subjects who conferred authority on the regime. Two, Vietnam would need reformed institutions. The current anachronistic old Soviet institutions are maybe suitable for control and propaganda, they are however, unable to deliver practical results and this was clearly shown through my exploration of present-day emulation movements.

To sum up, the biggest weakness of the VCP identified in the analysis of this thesis is that of legitimacy (and dealing with this lack of legitimacy by coercion). As progress and quality of life are increasingly the goals demanded by the population, and the VCP has to deal with a clash between the contrasting values of capitalism and communism, a clash between the value of patriotism and dependence on China, and a clash of the effectiveness of the market mechanism and inefficiency of communist tools and institutions, it is increasingly unable to be a ‘legitimate’ authority representing the shared values and goals of its society. Stability in Vietnam seems to have fragile foundations. The legitimacy-control dilemma can be considered via Hannah Arendt’s claim: “where force is used, authority itself has failed” (Arendt 1961, p. 93).

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