# THE INFLUENCE OF LABOR ALIENATION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE OF KARL MARX

# A INFLUÊNCIA DA ALIENAÇÃO DO TRABALHO NO DESENVOLVIMENTO SUSTENTÁVEL NO VIETNÃ A PARTIR DE UMA PERSPECTIVA FILOSÓFICA DE KARL MARX

### **VO VAN DUNG**

University of Khanh Hoa, No. 1 Nguyen Chanh street, Loc Tho Ward, Nha Trang City, Khanh Hoa, Vietnam vovandung@ukh.edu.vn

#### TRAN NHAT MINH

Ph.D. student, HCMUSSH-University of Social Sciences and Humanities; Lecturers: Academy of Politics region II, No. 99 Man Thien street, Hiep Phu Ward, Thu Duc City- Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam minhtran@hcma2.edu.vn

#### DANG QUANG DINH

Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics Address: 135 Nguyen Phong Sac - Nghia Tan - Cau Giay - Ha Noi <u>dinhhcma@gmail.com</u>

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Corresponding author: vovandung@ukh.edu.vn



Abstract: The influence of labor alienation on sustainable development in Vietnam from the philosophical perspective of Karl Marx is researched by focusing on analyzing the impact of the phenomenon of labor alienation on sustainable development in Vietnam. Vietnam, from the philosophical perspective of Karl Marx. Labor alienation comes from workers only performing monotonous and repetitive work in a production environment, losing control and creativity. According to Marx, this phenomenon causes many negative problems for workers such as: loss of skill diversity; lack of creativity and contribution; poor labor performance; the possibility of social unrest; affects health and psychology. To research this topic, the author has focused on clarifying the views of Marx's labor theory of value, profit rate, surplus value, worker's labor, alienation. From clarifying the above issues, the author will focus on drawing out the alienation in Vietnam's labor force to shed light on issues such as: labor alienation and Sustainable Development in Vietnam; The labor situation and the effects of alienation on workers in Vietnam also provide discussions on this topic.

**Keywords:** Labor alienation. Sustainable development. Karl Marx philosophy.

**Resumo:** A influência da alienação do trabalho no desenvolvimento sustentável no Vietnã a partir da perspectiva filosófica de Karl Marx é pesquisada com foco na análise do impacto do fenômeno da alienação do trabalho no desenvolvimento sustentável no Vietnã. Vietnã, na perspectiva filosófica de Karl Marx. A alienação do trabalho surge quando os trabalhadores realizam apenas trabalhos monótonos e repetitivos em um ambiente de

produção, perdendo o controle e a criatividade. Segundo Marx, este fenómeno causa muitos problemas negativos aos trabalhadores, tais como: perda de diversidade de competências; falta de criatividade e contribuição; fraco desempenho laboral; a possibilidade de agitação social; afeta a saúde e a psicologia. Para pesquisar este tema, o autor concentrou-se em esclarecer os pontos de vista da teoria do valor-trabalho de



Marx, taxa de lucro, mais-valia, trabalho do trabalhador, alienação. Ao esclarecer as questões acima, o autor concentrar-se-á em desenhar a alienação na força de trabalho do Vietname para lançar luz sobre questões como: alienação do trabalho e Desenvolvimento Sustentável no Vietname; A situação laboral e os efeitos da alienação sobre os trabalhadores no Vietname também proporcionam discussões sobre este tema.

Palavras-chave: Alienação trabalhista. Desenvolvimento sustentável. Filosofia de Karl Marx.

### 1. Introduction

In Marx's philosophy, the concept of "alienation" is one of the important issues that addresses the phenomenon of injustice and unsustainability in the capitalist economic system. In Karl Marx's view, alienation of labor is the result of workers being separated from the product of their labor and the general production process. Through work, people express themselves and create value. However, in a capitalist society, the production process becomes the property of the ruling classes and workers are turned into mechanical tools of the production process, losing control and creative thinking. As a result, labor becomes a burden and workers feel alienated from their products and work, causing a loss of satisfaction and self-compassion.

In Vietnam, during the process of economic development and transition from an agricultural economy to a market economy, elements of labor alienation may appear. Isolation of workers from decision-making and control over the production process, disparities in status and income, and job uncertainty are all issues that can contribute to labor alienation. Labor alienation not only affects the satisfaction and work motivation of workers but also leads to inequality and poor development in society. If not addressed properly, it can create long-term negative impacts on the country's sustainable development.

From a Marxist philosophical perspective, promoting sustainable development in Vietnam can be based on principles such as: Improving working conditions and ensuring fairness in workers' rights, ensuring fair wages, reasonable working hours and safe working conditions. Increasing worker participation and control in the production process to improve labor alienation. Equitizing and allowing workers to participate in decisions about work and the overall production process. Developing social policies to reduce disparities and promoting social equality. Promoting sustainable development by reducing inequality and ensuring everyone benefits from economic growth. Creating a favorable business and investment environment to support sustainable development. Promoting investment in sustainable industries and projects, create jobs and



promote long-term economic development. To have a solid scientific basis on this topic, we will conduct more detailed discussion, research and evaluation of the actual situation in Vietnam.

## 2. Theoretical basis

The labor alienation is an important concept in Karl Marx's philosophy, mentioned many times in his works. This is a core concept for understanding his social, economic and political thinking. Since its inception, it has attracted many scientists to research and give different assessments.

When studying Marx, some researchers say that labor is the source of all value in society (Huber, M. T. 2017); (Foster, J. B. 1995); (Gül, H. İbrahim. 2022); (Read, J. 2022); (Economakis, G., & Markaki, M. 2023); (Kordela, A. K. 2023); (Guy-Evans, O. 2022). Through work, people express themselves and create valuable products and services. Yazdanipoor, F., et al. 2022); (Cole, M. 2022); Bousquet, C. 2023); (Zhang, F., & Xiao, Q. 2023); (Najafi, Z. 2022). From many angles, we do not deny the above views. However, we believe that in human labor, people not only create products to feed themselves, but also create people themselves. Labor is the source that makes people abandon their natural nature to form their social nature.

Research on "labor product" in general and labor product from Marx's perspective in particular has attracted a large number of researchers such as (Kordela, A. K. 2023); (Xiaoping, W. 2022); (Chen, L. 2022). Labor products are explained by researchers in a variety of ways. However, in the process of researching works, we generalize about labor product as follows: Labor product is the result of human labor activities in the production process. It is everything that humans create through the application of labor and the use of means of production such as machines, tools, raw materials and knowledge. Labor products can exist tangibly but can also exist intangiblely. Labor products often have economic value because they meet the needs and desires of society. In different economic systems, the way the product of labor is managed, distributed, and owned may vary. Some studies also suggest that, in a capitalist society, labor products are not owned by workers (Varman, R., & Vijay, D. 2022); (Zarębski, T. 2022); (Peters, M. A. 2022) that it is owned by capitalists (Cousins, B. 2022); (Øversveen, E. 2022); (Satgar, V. 2022). This is an aspect of private ownership in which the means of production, such as machinery, raw materials, and factories, are owned by private individuals, businesses, or corporations, and do not belong to the public, workers performing production work. Capitalist society is based on private ownership, in which private owners have the right to control and own the assets they own. Therefore, in production, private

individuals have ownership of the means of production and the final product. When studying Marx, the authors also mentioned profit (Desan, M. H. 2022); (Teixeira, A. L. A., & de Souza Sabadini, M. 2022) and emphasizes the capitalist's main goal of generating profit. Workers are hired to participate in the production process, and their wages are often only enough to meet basic needs, while profits are mainly concentrated in privately owned businesses. We believe that, in a capitalist society, the labor product of workers becomes the property of capitalists and this is the source of social inequality.

Alienation of labor (Sasan, J. M., et al. 2022); (Flohr, M. 2023); (Fei, W. 2023); (Roche, J. 2022) is described as a situation in which workers are isolated from the product of their labor and the general production process. The worker is no longer a creative subject in the production process, but is only a mechanical element performing work. Therefore, they lose control and consensus over their work. Instead, they feel alienated from the product of their labor and feel a sense of self-compassion for their work. The bourgeoisie and the authorities own and control the production process, while workers are just mechanical workers with no right to make their own decisions about their lives and work. We believe that studying the alienation of labor from a Marxist philosophical perspective will contribute to liberating labor from alienation, creating conditions for workers to participate in deciding the production process, improve working conditions and build a socialist s

#### 3. Research methods

To conduct research, we believe that the research problem is the impact of labor alienation on sustainable development in Vietnam from the philosophical perspective of Karl Marx. The research objective of the article is to analyze and evaluate the impact of labor alienation on the sustainable development process in Vietnam. Through that, we will present arguments about the possibility of changing and improving the situation through the perspective of Karl Marx's philosophy. The research will focus on analyzing economic, social, and environmental parameters related to the impact of labor alienation on sustainable development in Vietnam. To achieve the set goals, we use the method of analyzing research documents. Document analysis method is a good approach to master Karl Marx's philosophy on alienated labor. This method will clarify concepts such as labor value, surplus profit, and the status of labor in capitalist society. The document analysis method also allows us to gain a deeper understanding of Marx's philosophy and how it applies to reality in Vietnam. This method helps us determine the situation of labor

alienation and sustainable development in Vietnam through reliable reference sources. In research, determining the correlation between practical factors and Marx's philosophy is extremely important. We must search for information, data, and events that can demonstrate the impact of labor alienation on sustainable development in Vietnam. By mastering knowledge of Marxian philosophy and the actual situation, we can build a basic and logical argument about the impact of labor alienation on sustainable development in Vietnam, from the perspective of Marx. The document analysis method allows us to develop an in-depth study of the effects of labor alienation. We can explore and analyze documents such as books, articles, statistical reports, and other official documents to build a comprehensive view. Document analysis method is used to master theoretical knowledge, understand the real situation and build a strong argument based on highly reliable data. The document collection method used to research the topic "the impact of labor alienation on sustainable development in Vietnam from the perspective of Karl Marx's philosophy" plays an important role. Document collection method allows us to collect documents related to the situation of labor alienation and sustainable development in Vietnam. This method allows us to collect practical evidence. Along with that, using this method helps We rely on proven and published databases and information, which increases the reliability and integrity of our research. The evaluation method used for the study allowed us to present and apply this theory to our research. The research evaluation method allows us to go deeper into analyzing the correlation between labor alienation and sustainable development in the Vietnamese context. We can focus our research on the ways in which alienated labor can affect sustainable development. Using evaluation methods for research helps us evaluate the impact of labor alienation on sustainable development. Using evaluation methods to research helps increase the persuasiveness of the research to readers. The research evaluation method is not only a verification of results, but also an opportunity for us to summarize, analyze and draw new knowledge from data and research results. By doing so, we can complement the theory of alienation in Marx's philosophy and its application to the specific situation of Vietnam.

### 4. Research question

To conduct research on this topic, we pose the following three questions:

(1) How is the alienation of labor from the perspective of Karl Marx's philosophy expressed?

(2) Why does labor alienation impact sustainable development in Vietnam?

(3) Can research help overcome labor alienation to promote sustainable development in Vietnamese society according to Karl Marx's philosophical perspective?

#### 5. Results

Perspectives on labor theory of value (Ferrer-Hernández, J. 2023); (Saad-Filho, A. 2022) appeared quite early in history. However, for the value of labor to be mentioned comprehensively, with the famous quote of William Petty (1623-1687) "Land is the mother of wealth, and labor is the father of wealth" (Zhang, Z. 2023); (Ying, D., & Wu, W. 2023), however, W.Petty cannot explain the quantity and composition of value. Adam Smith (1723-1790) was the successor of W.Petty's value theory. He was the first to introduce the scientific terms use value and value of goods. However, when determining the composition of the value of goods, he said that the value of goods is equal to salary plus profit, plus land rent. Later, when studying this issue, Karl Marx said that the value of goods is equal to: tools, instruments, factories used in production; wages and surplus value - this is a correct view. But when calculating the quantity of the value of goods, he believed that the quantity of the value of goods was calculated by the necessary labor time and stopped there, without showing how to calculate the necessary labor time. to complete the calculation of the value of the goods. C.Marx studies goods with two attributes: use value and value. He studied the process of exchanging goods and explained why two different goods could be exchanged with each other. At the same time, point out that all goods are products of labor (the essence of commodity exchange is the exchange of labor contained in goods); The labor of each person producing goods is also different. He referred to the average labor time (socially necessary labor time); The labor of each person, each profession is different and reduces all labor to a common type of labor - abstract labor.

#### Marx's view on profit rate

First of all, it is necessary to affirm that Marx was not the one who introduced the concept of profit rate, but previous economists such as Willam Petty (1623—1687) studied surplus value as the location of profit. rent and income. He said that Capitalist rent is the difference between the value of the product and the cost of production. Rent is a part of the profit due to the fertility of land and farming location (Naldi, N. 1989); Adam Smith (1723-1790) built the theory of profit on the basis of the theory of labor value (Inoua, S., & Smith, V. 2023); David Ricardo (1772-1823) said that profit is the amount remaining in addition to the wages that capitalists pay to workers

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(Michaelides, P. G., & Papadakis, T. E. 2023). Marx highly appreciated economists when they said that the nature of profit is built on the unchanging foundation of the labor theory of value. At the same time, the trend of averaging profit margins has been seen. Economists have initially shown that profit rates tend to decrease. Revolution, expressed when firmly affirming that the source of profit is the labor created by the hired working class, is the exploitation of hired labor. At the same time, pointing out the inverse relationship between profits and wages is the economic cause of class conflict. However, Karl Marx also frankly criticized the limitations due to historical limits in the theory of profit of classical bourgeois economists. Karl Marx also opposed the arguments of J.B.Say and Manthus when relying on the limitations of the profit theory of classical bourgeois economists to appease class struggles and defend the interests of the bourgeoisie.

On the basis of critical inheritance, Karl Marx added to complete the theory of profit, an important content in "Capital". Profit (P) is the transformed form of surplus value (m), created by living labor, conceived as being produced by all advanced capital. In essence, surplus value is the internal content created during the production process, while profit is the external form expressed through exchange. Profit rate is an indicator to evaluate the efficiency of capital investment. The expression of the law of market value of goods into the law of production price of goods through competition between production and business capitalists in different industries. These rules are increasingly evident in the competition of global companies today. Profit and profit margin are the goals and motives of manufacturers and businesses.

Marx's surplus value (Marx's theory of surplus value) is built on the labor-value theory (Konstantinidis, C., & Vlachou, A. 2023). Marx said that surplus value is dry labor.

#### Labor Alienation and Sustainable Development in Vietnam

Based on the inheritance of previous views and especially the views of Marx, the author believes that labor alienation is a social phenomenon, it appears when workers do not have enough conditions to ensure a good life. their lives and that of their families through work. When the labor market does not have enough job opportunities or there are many temporary jobs that do not guarantee a stable income, workers may have to accept jobs that are not commensurate with their qualifications or skills. An insufficient social support system can make people in difficulty easily pushed into labor alienation. A lack of support in health care, education, and quality of life can make workers feel hindered in improving their situation. Low wages, poor benefits, and poor working conditions can make workers unable to provide for themselves and their families, leading to the need to find other sources of income or work. Lots of work to get through the day. When

workers do not have the skills or qualifications to enter growing industries, they may have limited job options and often have to accept unstable employment. Work in harsh, strenuous, or high-risk environments can make workers feel forced to do work they don't want to do for income.

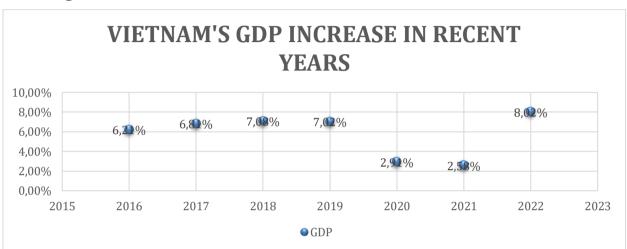
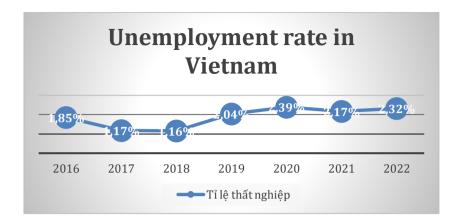


Fig 1. Labor situation and effects of alienation on workers in Vietnam

According to the above data, the growth rate of gross domestic product in Vietnam (GDP) from 2016 to 2019 reached an average of 6.8%/year. Since 2020, Vietnam's economy has been heavily affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, natural disasters and the fluctuations of the geopolitical war in Ukraine. GDP growth in 2020 at 2.91% in this context can be considered quite positive, especially when compared with the economic decline in many other countries. However, this number is still lower than Vietnam's average economic growth in previous years. This can be explained by disruptions in global supply chains, the downturn in many industries, and limitations in business operations due to the epidemic. GDP growth continues to increase to 2.58% in 2021. Although this number is still positive growth, it is lower than many initial predictions. The year 2022 recorded a strong GDP growth of 8.02%, this is a remarkable figure and shows the strong recovery of the economy after a difficult period due to the pandemic. This high growth can be explained by the fact that many industries have begun to return to normal operations and the strengthening of economic stimulus measures from the government.

## Fig 2. Unemployment rate in Vietnam





The unemployment rate in 2016 was 1.85%, which is a low rate and shows that the labor market this year had enough job opportunities for the majority of workers. This low level of unemployment can be considered positive and reflects the stability of the economy and labor market. In 2017, it continued to decrease to 1.17%. This is a low figure and shows continued stability in the labor market. The unemployment rate increased to 2.04% in both 2018 and 2019. This increase is due to many reasons, including labor supply that does not match social needs. During the period from 2016 to 2019, the unemployment rate in Vietnam often remained at a low level, creating a stable working environment for workers. Economic growth and industrial development may have been an important factor contributing to maintaining low unemployment rates during this period. From 2020 to 2022, the unemployment rate will increase slightly and change over time, reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and socio-economic changes. However, the unemployment rate is still maintained at a relatively low level, showing the stability of the labor market during this period.

The 4th industrial revolution is taking place and developing strongly in recent years. This revolution will create a number of new professions, while it will also eliminate some old ones. Robots will liberate human labor. This liberation is only meaningful for high-level workers, but for manual labor, it is a competition to be eliminated. Manual workers are an untrained force that accounts for 73.9% of the population in Vietnam of working age. These workers mainly work in factories and have low incomes. Unstable work and unstable income lead to an uncertain life. If workers want to survive, they have to do many different jobs, and these jobs are of course jobs that require a lot of labor. Thinking time and living expenses are not enough to regenerate labor, becoming a vicious circle of labor alienation.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs, every year the number of graduates working in the right field of training is only 56%, the number related

to the field being trained is 25%, the number not related to the field of training. created is 19%. With the number of 19% of graduates working unrelated to the training industry, it is not large but it is still worth considering. There can be many reasons for this, including a change of perspective after graduation, or even the possibility that the education system does not provide enough information about the realities of the field of study. After graduating, students who do not have a job in their major means they have to accept jobs that are contrary to their expertise, or even general labor jobs after hours to make a living. These jobs not only take up their time and energy but also create a negative effect on the next source of labor. When the younger generation does not perceive universities as a place of quality training, they will turn to choosing new jobs such as exporting labor to other countries. When human resources cannot provide for society, it will affect sustainable economic development. Sustainable development is about creating a future where people and their actions do not cause major harm to the environment and society, ensuring that we can continue to grow and improve our quality of life. Future.

According to Marx, alienation of labor occurs when workers lose control and authority over their work. In manufacturing environments, workers are often compartmentalized and perform only a small portion of the job, resulting in a loss of control and understanding of the entire production process. This can impact sustainability, as labor alienation can lead to resource waste, inefficient management and product quality problems. Marx also emphasized that in the capitalist system, the main goal of production is to make profits, not to protect the environment. The alienation of labor, coupled with a focus on optimizing production and enhancing profits, can lead to natural resources being wasted or degraded without regard for the future. Marx was concerned with the social condition of workers in a capitalist production environment. Labor alienation can cause a loss of morale and social awareness, causing workers to become "machines" in the production process. This can lead to imposition and injustice in society, causing unrest and instability. From Karl Marx's perspective, labor alienation can negatively affect sustainable development in Vietnam because it can lead to waste of resources, environmental degradation and create a wealth gap. poor. To achieve sustainable development, it is necessary to pay attention to human resource.

## 6. Discussion

Is untrained labor one of the causes of labor alienation? Untrained labor often lacks the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the job effectively. This can lead to inefficient

production, wasted resources and even increased risk of incidents during production. When the labor force is not trained, labor productivity can decrease. This can lead to increased production costs as more time and resources are needed to complete the job. Untrained workers often find it difficult to find jobs with stable and safe income. This can lead to unemployment, low income and instability in the economic situation. In an increasingly fierce international competitive environment, untrained labor will find it difficult to compete with more qualified and skilled workers from other countries. Training helps expand employees' thinking and creativity. If the labor force lacks training, the ability to innovate in production and management may also be limited. If a large portion of the labor force is untrained, it is likely that society will face problems of unemployment, increased feelings of social inequality and the possibility of increased crime. To achieve sustainable development, there must be a balance between production capacity and environmental protection, ensuring social justice. If there is not enough untrained labor available to participate in modern and sustainable industries, it will be difficult to achieve this goal.

The fact that graduates cannot find jobs in accordance with their training majors, or even become unemployed, will lead to labor alienation and affect sustainable development. If learners cannot find jobs in the right industry, they may face unemployment or work in unrelated industries. This can cause economic instability for them and their families, affecting their ability to sustain their lives and participate in socio-economic activities. If learners do not find a job in the right industry, the training they have received can become a waste of resources, both in terms of time and money. This could put additional pressure on the education and training system to improve apprenticeship capacity in response to labor market needs. They may be limited in developing their technical skills and ability to advance their careers. This not only affects personal development but also social development, because society needs quality human resources to ensure sustainable development. Mismatches between graduate labor resources and labor market demands can create social inequality and grievances. Those who don't find a job in the right industry may feel left behind and not recognized for their worth. If graduates cannot find a job in the right industry, it can lead to not using their talents and skills to their fullest potential. This can affect the country's ability to develop economically and socially, when human resources are not utilized effectively.

When workers only perform a single, repetitive task in a factory environment, they are limited in developing diverse skills by performing only a single task. This may limit their ability to move between different jobs or to adapt to changes in the work environment. If they only perform a repetitive task, they may not have the opportunity to contribute creative ideas or participate in workflow improvement. This can impact their ability to come up with better solutions and

optimize production processes. Workers may feel a loss of challenge and meaning in their daily work, leading to low productivity and job dissatisfaction. Repetitive work can create mental and health stress for workers. The likelihood of back pain, muscle tension and related psychological health problems may increase in this work situation. With the development of technology and automation, repetitive jobs are easily replaced by machines and robots. This can affect the future of workers when their jobs are easily replaced by technology. Repetitive labor patterns can create imbalance in the community and society, when a large portion of workers are only involved in a specific type of work. Having workers perform only one, repetitive task can negatively affect sustainable development because it can limit skill diversification, limit creativity and contribution, and affect affecting labor performance and health status, creating social imbalance and possibly leading to job loss in the future.

Is alienation in labor the source of inequality, division, and disunity, which has created fertile ground for reactionary forces and the aggression of some countries? So

#### 7. Conclusion

From Karl Marx's philosophical perspective, the phenomenon of labor alienation in the production process affects sustainable development in Vietnam. According to Marx, alienation of labor for workers can lead to loss of control over work, social injustice and lack of skill diversity, whereas in a capitalist production environment, the main goal is often profit instead of protecting the environment and workers' rights. A lack of diversification of skills and innovation, combined with a focus on profits and social instability, can hinder the achievement of sustainable development. These problems not only affect workers but also affect social and economic development.

However, Marx's analysis also opens the door to discussion of how these perspectives can be applied to create a more sustainable production and labor environment. Increased training and job diversification can help overcome labor alienation and create a more positive work environment for workers. At the same time, attention to environmental protection and workers' rights can also help create a basis for sustainable development in Vietnam. In the future, a deeper understanding of Marx's philosophy and how to apply these perspectives to social and economic reality will play an important role in promoting sustainable development in Vietnam.



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