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Some directional solutions in building a developmental state in Vietnam

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Abstract

The developmental state is the state that brings the most results and efficiency to society, first of all high economic growth and great social, health, cultural and educational indicators, etc. Therefore, the assessment of a developmental state needs to be based on specific and practical social development achievements, which is the main trend of every country and people, and is an issue that leaders strategic planners, and governments must consider. It is not only a process, a political trend in contemporary society, but also an objective need of every country today. The article focuses on clarifying the connotation, characteristics, and form of the developmental state; Identify the main challenges in building a developmental state in Vietnam and propose some directional solutions to build a developmental state for Vietnam in the current context.

Keywords: Policy, orientation, developmental state, development, Vietnam

Introduction

The developmental state is a new step in the qualitative development of the state's role in new conditions, starting from promoting the state's control function to promoting governance and creating opportunities for development. The important role of the developmental state is to focus on the economic development process, where the state issues reasonable macro policies, plays a leading role in orienting the economy and holds the task of creating development for economic entities. For a developmental state, the process of perfecting institutions and laws is a prerequisite; At the same time, focus on synchronous development among all areas of social life and equality of opportunities between regions, between urban and rural areas. The developmental state is also a new way of governance that shares responsibility and mission through empowerment mechanisms and the active and large participation of people and social groups. Up to now, Vietnam has quite different approaches to the "developmental state" with different focuses. Outstanding is the approach of looking at the "developmental state" not as a state model but just a general governance model, which is separate from fundamental issues of political power organization. Such a new concept would convey the new organization of governance; looking at the "developmental state" as a model/operating method of the Government whose core is to shift from ruling to serving, which means being more business-friendly, eliminating the asking-giving mechanism, creating equal competitive environment, ensuring macroeconomic stability, etc. This new concept aims to convey a new spirit in state management; seeing the "developmental state" as a model of proactive intervention in the Government's economy, especially in providing a development vision as well as policy priorities to create development breakthroughs and mobilize enough resources to make that breakthrough. Faced with the current requirement for comprehensive integration in Vietnam, building a "developmental state" is becoming increasingly urgent. This article focuses on clarifying the concept and characteristics of a developmental state, identifying key challenges and suggesting some directional solutions to build a developmental state in Vietnam in the context of current context.

Research methods

The article uses specific research methods such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, combining history and logic in studying theoretical and practical issues about the state's developmental role and the implementation of this role of the state in Vietnam;

Inheriting secondary documents on building a developmental state in a number of developed countries, thereby orienting solutions to implement the developmental role of the Vietnamese state in the current context.

Research results

The concept of a developmental state

Johnson (1982)^[9] introduced the term Developmental State to describe the characteristics of Japan's economic development model after World War II, later introduced by Amsden (1989)^[11], Wade (1990)^[17], and Evans (1995)^[6] further developed and applied to analyze the cases of miraculous economic development of Taiwan and Korea. According to author Johnson, Japan essentially follows the Western democratic model, but has significant differences from both the mainstream Western and Soviet models. In Japan, the state does not play a passive role of "regulation" like the British and American models; But the state also does not play a sole role as in the system of countries with the same socialist ideology. The Japanese state has the role of directing and focusing resources on key economic sectors consistently and over a long period of time. Author Johnson uses the concept of "developmental state" to describe this difference (Ngo Huy Duc, 2017)^[15]. In terms of organization, UNDP believes that: "The developmental state, in a simple sense, is a state that plays a strong role in the national economy with the goal of promoting economic development" (UNDP Ethiopia, 2012)^[16]. Meanwhile, Ingham (1993)^[8] said: "A developmental state is a state that has power and is properly organized to achieve its development goals". H. Schmitz (2005)^[7] believes that: "A developmental state is a state that has the capacity to design and implement its development goals in an oppressive and authoritarian manner to create economic growth.

It can be seen that the above viewpoints all emphasize that a developmental state is a state that gives top priority to economic development. To achieve that goal, the state actively intervenes in the market, through direction, setting rules, coordination, resource allocation and using other diverse policy tools. In short, it can be understood that the Developmental State is a state management model in which the state proposes development-oriented institutions, creating an environment and conditions for economic sectors, people from all walks of life develop their full potential in a competitive and internationally integrated environment, and at the same time the state strengthens supervision to detect and promptly correct possible imbalances to ensure sustainable development.

Some main characteristics of the developmental state

Firstly, the state proactively guides development, proactively intervenes and is consistent with the market. In his studies, Johnson (1982)^[9] analyzed the specific context of Japan and pointed out quite special features in this country. Accordingly, this is a country that industrialized quite late, facing disadvantages because the global market is basically divided and dominated by countries that have industrialized before. Latecomer countries like Japan will encounter some difficulties due to the challenges created by the predecessor countries. If countries that industrialize later follow the path chosen by earlier countries, their chances of success will be very small. Therefore, countries that industrialize late need to choose a separate path. Furthermore, at that time, nationalism was on the rise in Japan. This shows that Japan has a clear,

common aspiration to promote the country's development in parallel with, and surpass other nations. That mentality contributes to creating political legitimacy for state intervention. Theoretically, it seemed that state intervention in the market went against the principles of free-marketism that dominated Western countries at the time, which was to promote the role of the market, limiting state intervention. However, from Johnson's perspective, free markets are not actually free, but also involve political intervention, that is, the state. With such an understanding, a developmental state must be created first, and then the state determines development priorities. The state creates the state based on development priorities to suit the concept of a limited intervention state. From the above arguments, Johnson believes that a developmental state needs to meet the following specific conditions (Ngo Huy Duc, 2017)^[15]: i) Regarding organization: The state administrative apparatus is compact but economical, professional and effective; ii) Regarding position and politics: The administrative apparatus is independent, capable and competent, not manipulated or influenced by interest groups, and has enough trust and respect from the public. both from state agencies as well as from businesses when coordinating resources towards breakthrough development priorities; iii) Regarding the method of operation: The State must ensure that economic intervention does not go against the fundamental principles of the market.

Secondly, in the developmental state, the political factor is the dominant factor with a guiding role. Based on research on many developmental state models, especially East Asian models (Leftwich, 2008), we have emphasized the role of political factors in ensuring the effectiveness of the developmental state. Accordingly, the scholar emphasized that in the developmental state, political factors occupy the most important position. It is expressed through basic characteristics: i) The state must be under the leadership of a team of elite officials, aiming for development goals, emphasizing economic growth. This team is also capable of leading, influencing and facilitating the development of the private sector; ii) It is a state with a team of professional, skilled and neutral civil servants, less affected by different political trends; iii) This state often appears and develops in a weakly developed political and civil society environment. Because the intervention and direction of the state is quite strong, if a country has a developed civil society, there will certainly be certain conflicts with the state itself; iv) In a developmental state, the state has good economic management capacity and is able to create harmony in the economic development process between the public and private sectors, and harmonize interests between the two sectors, rather than standing on one side to protect the interests of the state alone; v) In order to consistently implement the state's policy of mobilizing resources for development, placing emphasis on priority goals, the state will also ignore or lightly invest in other areas. Therefore, it can be said that in a developmental state, the state will use its power to impose a certain level on society; and that also means that individual freedoms will not be given the same priority as in Western societies.

Thirdly, the developmental state is based on a balanced development philosophy. In liberal Western countries, people believe in the theory of the invisible hand with the self-guiding capacity of the market. In that model, the state only intervenes to a limited extent, mainly to overcome market

failures. Meanwhile, institutional political economy not only emphasizes the regulatory intervention role of the state, but more importantly, the state also actively creates and directly influences the market, intervening the market to a certain extent. Chang (2002) ^[4] pointed out the paradoxes in the world's economic development, when rich countries seek to prevent the development of poor countries. From there, he formed a system of viewpoints to strengthen the developmental state model, including differences with neo-liberal ideology that, according to him, are not necessarily true for developing countries. Chang's system of argument emphasizes that to develop a national economy, the state must be able to create and adjust economic and political relationships so that they together ensure a sustainable industrialization process – which requires a constructive and developed state. Author Chang also clearly stated the important functions that the state is capable of performing, including: (i) the State has the ability to proactively coordinate and connect investment plans within the country under its management; (ii) the State has a national development vision for long-term goals; (iii) The State has the ability to be proactive in building institutions that promote growth and development; and (iv) the State plays an important role in harmoniously resolving conflicts of interest between groups and elements with different interests in society. Chang (2002) ^[4] also affirmed that in developing countries, the state needs an even greater role. To achieve the goal of tectonic development, for the developmental vision of the whole country, the state needs to impose its goals on the people and society. From an economic perspective, the state's support action is essentially an action to contribute to overcoming market failures.

The nature and forms of the developmental state

The developmental state is not a type of state, however, from the perspective of national governance, it can be completely considered a state model, like the free market state mode, centrally planned state, welfare state, etc. In practice, to clarify the characteristics of the developmental state, domestic and foreign researchers often compare it with other state models as mentioned above. Some authors argue that placing the developmental state between the free market state model and the centrally planned state model means that it does not have the characteristics of both a capitalist state and a socialist state (Andrzej Bolesta, 2007) ^[2]. Theoretically, that statement is correct, because as mentioned, the concept of developmental state refers to a governance model, not a type of state, so it is "neutral" both in class factors and economic regimes. In fact, the post-socialist transition in some Eastern European countries, such as Poland, shows that it is not necessary to establish an economic system in the style of capitalism or socialism, but a system consisting of markets capable of rapid socio-economic development and stable socialist welfare (Andrzej Bolesta, 2007) ^[2]. However, some other scholars believe that, in essence, the developmental state is an interventionist state. This is the opposite model to the free market state. In this model, the state intervenes in economic activities to "correct" market defects and promote fairness and welfare of social groups (Ludwig von Mises, 1999) ^[11]. The reason why the state creates and develops has the nature of the state intervention because it "is the expression of a moral standard or aspiration to use the interventionist power of the state to guide investment in a way that promotes a certain vision of integration of the

national economy" (MU Juul Loriaux, 1999) ^[14]. Another author explains that this is simply because economic development is the core of a developmental state, and that factor "... requires the state to create and regulate economic and political relationships that can support continued industrialization" (Chang, Ha-Joon, 1999) ^[3]. However, it should be noted that the intervention nature of the developmental state is said to be different from the economic function of socialist states (the state intervenes comprehensively and plays the role of the main subject of the economy) but only to "support the development trajectory" (Andrzej Bolesta, 2007) ^[2]. According to Chalmers Johnson, this intervention is aimed at coordinating the private economy and the government, or between the private sector and the public sector (Johnson, Ch, 1999) ^[10]. In the developmental state, the private economy is an important subject, a partner with the government in development efforts (Andrzej Bolesta, 2007) ^[2]. Therefore, from another perspective, the developmental state is also essentially a capitalist state (Andrzej Bolesta, 2007) ^[2]. But as mentioned, the developmental state is different from the neo-liberal capitalist states, and in fact this state model is considered impossible to be created in an economy of a neo-liberal nature. That is explained because it is difficult to achieve broad development goals in an environment where governments have very limited power to direct investment, regulate intensity, and influence institutions, businesses, and communities to follow a strategy certain overall development (Andrzej Bolesta, 2007) ^[2]. According to UNDP, there is no common, typical model of a developmental state (UNDP Ethiopia, 2012) ^[16]. The concept of developmental state is a term to distinguish and compare with other forms of state, including minimal state forms, classical liberal state, new liberal state, regulatory state, welfare state (UNDP Ethiopia, 2012) ^[16]. In reality, developmental states develop quite differently in a number of aspects. Therefore, there is a high consensus in international academic circles when dividing the developmental state into two main types, based on the timeline. The first type are the developmental states that developed in the second half of the 20th century, characterized by the "East Asian Tigers", and the second type are countries considered to follow the developmental state model in the 21st century, for example Mauritius, Botswana (UNDP Ethiopia, 2012) ^[16]. The first type is also considered a classical developmental state with a tendency to be dictatorial and authoritarian, while the second is an emerging democratic state (UNDP Ethiopia, 2012) ^[16]. From the perspective of motivation for development, according to UNDP, while most of the developmental states are in East Asia (for example, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand) and some countries in other continents, for example, Brazil, for example, achieved high economic development by applying measures such as creating macroeconomic stability, export-oriented industrialization, promoting social welfare, and developing infrastructure,.. the Nordic countries and Japan use other tools (UNDP Ethiopia, 2012) ^[16]. For example, according to Chalmers Johnson, the miracle of Japan's economic development is mainly due to the Japanese culture that helps them collaborate with each other in all activities, as well as in maintaining product quality. Chalmers Johnson believes that the most important cultural contribution to Japan's economic life is the consensus between the Government, political parties, leaders of industry, and the Japanese people, about the goals and ways

to implement the nation's economic goals (Johnson, Ch, 1982)^[9].

Some key challenges in building a developmental state in Vietnam

Firstly, the Vietnamese legal system is not complete. The Communist Party of Vietnam has had the orientation to build a socialist rule-of-law state since 1991. In particular, since the 11th Congress of the Party and the 2013 Constitution, it has mentioned and gradually specified the principle of control between the three legislative, executive and judicial powers. The role of Congress is increased. However, the quality of law promulgation is still low due to the small number of full-time National Assembly deputies. Most laws are prepared and submitted by different Government agencies. The legal system lacks independence, so preventing abuse of power by state officials is very difficult. This is reflected in the measurement results of the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index, whereby this index of Vietnam in 2015 reached a total score of 0.05, ranking 12/15 countries in the region, and 64/102 countries in the world. Notably, among the eight factors used to evaluate the rule of law index, Vietnam scores quite low in the factor of limiting state power, with a score below the average (0.42), of which the component scores for restrictions on judicial powers (0.28) and checks on government activities (0.38) are among the lowest in the Asian region (World Justice Project, 2015)^[18]. Furthermore, the judiciary lacks relative independence, leading to the inability to control abuse of power by state agencies. Control of state power between the legislative, executive and judicial powers, mainly the control of the legislature and judiciary over the executive. However, in Vietnam, the judiciary can still be influenced by many different power relationships, so preventing abuse of power by state officials is very difficult. In fact, although the principle of judicial independence has been officially recognized in the Constitution and many other legal documents, it has not been fully respected and complied by the Party and State agencies. The phenomenon of interference in the trial activities of courts and judges still occurs at many levels and in many forms, making it impossible for courts and judges to decide cases objectively, impartially, only obeying the law. This is the reason why international independent organizations assess the level of corruption in Vietnam as quite serious and showing few signs of improvement over the past 20 years (2006 - 2016). According to Transparency International, although the corruption situation in Vietnam has improved somewhat recently, increasing from 26 points to 31 points in the period 2006 - 2014, but overall, this index shows that people's concerns about corruption are still very large. Vietnam's Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) has never surpassed the average mark and Vietnam's ranking is in the bottom group of countries with the lowest PCI (ranked 119/175 countries) (Dinh T. M and Pham T. A, 2017)^[5].

Secondly, the state administrative apparatus is not professional. Vietnam is in the third phase of administrative reform, each lasting 10 years, starting in 1990. The determination to reform was further strengthened after the 12th Party Congress, the new government with determined to build a "development creation" apparatus, creating motivation for individuals and businesses. However, in Vietnam, employing people still depends heavily on mechanical qualifications. Vietnam's thinking on personnel planning still has points that are not consistent with the

practical environment, the nature of human development goals, departs from good international practices, and easily encourages interest groups early on, has weakened the sense of commitment to new, groundbreaking ideas, while encouraging excessive caution, self-absorption, etc., which leads to not fully promoting human potential. Reality shows that there are unclear standards that are a basic standard for introducing, nominating, and appointing responsible positions, which does not really encourage Vietnamese hearts and talents nationally and internationally in building an administrative system that brings together elites and talents. In a survey for Vietnam's Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) in 2016, 54% of interviewers said they had to pay to work for state agencies, and nearly 40% believes that more money must be paid for better public services, such as education and health. It seems that the further down the hierarchy, the more the enthusiasm of a "developmental" apparatus alienates the people.

Thirdly, the state intervention apparatus lacks consistency. History has proven that the most successful market economies cannot develop spontaneously without state intervention and support. In developed market economies, the state has three distinct economic functions: intervention, management and welfare regulation. Accordingly, a free market in its true sense cannot exist, except in economic theories. Indeed, in Vietnam it is impossible to deny the role of the State in stabilizing the macroeconomy through financial and monetary policies, strengthening national defense and security, providing public goods, and combating environmental pollution, developing education to increase income and improve social welfare, create a social framework governed by law, etc. State economic management has fundamentally transformed into a management method mainly by laws, mechanisms, policies, strategies, planning, plans and economic resources; to maintain macroeconomic stability, create and develop fully and synchronously all elements of the market economy. However, Vietnam's legal system in managing the market economy is not yet complete. The effectiveness and efficiency of state economic management is still low, on the one hand, because state intervention is not consistent with market movements. On the other hand, the State lacks tools and monitoring and sanctions mechanisms to ensure that subjects participating in market relations comply with the set "rules of the game". The State's planning work in many fields is still inadequate and not consistent with reality. In addition, there is confusion between the functions of the state and the market. The market economy operates with the participation of three main subjects: producers, consumers and the state. But in Vietnam's current economic management, there is still confusion about the positions and roles of these three subjects. Many things the State needs to do, but does not do or does not do enough. The State still argues that many functions that the market can perform more effectively while not paying enough attention to the functions that the State must complete.

Fourthly, local government agencies are still weak. The results of the 2016 PAPI survey and practical observations can be seen that local government accountability in some issues in Vietnam is currently not high. Specifically, according to the general survey results on this issue, only 15 provinces achieved the highest index and accounted for 25.4% of the total 63 provinces and cities nationwide. What is worrying is that this index does not increase, and even

shows signs of decreasing when in 2013, 17 provinces achieved this index, accounting for 27%, higher than the level in 2016. The level of interaction between people and government rights are low. The main forms of explanation by local governments today are basically through newspapers, local radio channels and electronic information websites. At the grassroots level, mainly through loudspeaker systems and bulletin boards. But the effectiveness of using these means is low, the explanation content is not rich and the way of operation is not scientific, not attracting the attention of people, even the commune and ward radio systems are sometimes counterproductive. Many agencies and units apply forms of information explanation through agency websites, intranets or electronic devices, but the content is comprehensive, perfunctory, and does not get to the right questions of people. Many explanatory documents even try to complicate things with technical and scientific terms that are difficult for the general public to access. This has caused the accountability activity to exist in form, but not bring about the desired effect of society.

Some solutions to build a developmental state in Vietnam in the current context

Firstly, it is necessary to build a specialized judicial system that respects the law. In a rule-of-law state, all state agencies must operate within the framework of the Constitution and the law. The problem is that there needs to be inspection and supervision of compliance with the Constitution and laws of these agencies. In the Party's resolution, there was a decision to establish a constitutional court to judge violations of the Constitution by any state agency or organization. That is one of the manifestations of the determination of the Party and State of Vietnam in building a rule-of-law state. Fighting for the principle of judicial independence is also a long-term struggle in many states around the world. The principle of independent courts is an important principle in the organization and operation of the state apparatus and should be stipulated in the Constitution as a constitutional principle. For Vietnam today, perhaps first of all it is necessary to adjust the concept of justice to be consistent with international practices, and then find measures to ensure that the principle of independence is implemented in practice. The Procuracy needs to return the function of impeachment to the executive, or vice versa, if the Procuracy is still allowed to perform the function of impeachment, the Procuracy must be subordinate to the executive. The Procuracy should not also have the function of supervising and adjudicating. Also related to the above aspect, it is necessary to research and change many legal regulations on organizational structure, operating regulations, relations with other state agencies, etc. of the court system to minimize intervention and influence, both direct and indirect, of external entities, thereby ensuring the true independence of the courts. This is a huge and difficult change, because it involves a series of issues, including those affecting the relationship between Party committees at all levels and courts and judges. However, change is essential, and the level and depth of change are proportional to the effectiveness of the court system.

Secondly, it is necessary to have a professional state administrative apparatus. It is necessary to immediately separate the two functions of the executive apparatus: the political executive function - building policies and designing administrative regulations; public administrative functions. There is a need to strengthen technocracy in both policy

formulation and public service functions, especially with the function of building and implementing economic development policies. The policy-making function should be assigned to a department composed primarily of politically appointed officials. They are chosen by ministers and can only serve for that minister's term. In policy advisory agencies, there are also people with "payroll" positions. The function of performing public administration is performed by professional administrative civil servants, recruited through examinations and only following regulations and procedures. People with appointment authority should be given the right to proactively select personnel. Party committees only need to supervise through their votes in elected bodies. Judicial positions also need to be selected from reputable people in society, instead of being self-trained and only provided by internal sources.

Thirdly, it is necessary to reduce state intervention in the economy. Faced with the inadequacies in the relationship between the state and the market in Vietnam today, the 12th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed that it is necessary to continue to resolve the relationship between the State and the market and only when the role division between the State and the market is clarified, regulated by law, and with specific functions and tasks, then the relationship between the State and the market will be dialectical and compatible and supportive of each other. This is also one of the main contents of the 5th Central Resolution (term XII) on perfecting socialist-oriented market economic institutions. In a socialist-oriented market economy, the State plays the role of orienting, building and perfecting economic institutions; creating a fair, transparent and healthy competitive environment; Use tools, policies and resources of the State to direct and regulate the economy, promote production, business and protect resources and the environment; develop cultural and social fields. The market plays a key role in mobilizing and effectively allocating resources, and is the main driving force to liberate production; State resources are allocated according to strategies, planning, and plans in accordance with market mechanisms.

Fourthly, it is necessary to improve the accountability of state agencies. To promote accountability, the State needs to be organized in a way that ensures genuine checks and balances between the executive, legislative and judicial branches. The National Assembly must become a professional agency and supervise all State activities. Besides, the State also needs to provide a legal framework to promote citizen rights; Require public agencies to be transparent and create mechanisms for people to interact effectively with the State through increasing access to accurate and timely information and enhancing the role of mass media agencies. To improve the level of accountability of the public sector in Vietnam today, first of all, there needs to be regulations requiring state administrative agencies and civil servants to ensure accountability. Such regulation should include: i) a legal framework that ensures accountability; ii) people's demands for accountability. To do so, it is necessary to improve the law in the direction of promulgating the Law on Access to Information, the Law on Promulgation of Administrative Decisions and regulating the accountability of administrative agencies in the process of making administrative decisions; Amend specialized laws to ensure transparency in the operations of administrative agencies; Amend the State Budget Law to clearly define the authority of the central

budget and local budgets; Central and local government agencies need to always innovate, strengthen capacity, work more effectively, efficiently and transparently; Provide better information and services to people, businesses and organizations, creating more favorable conditions for people to exercise their democratic rights and participate in state management; Increase the participation of social organizations in promoting transparency and accountability; Mobilize the participation of social organizations, communities and the press in promoting state administrative agencies to be open, transparent and enhance accountability.

Conclusion

The state creates a strong and long - term commitment of the state in economic development policy making, through effective intervention tools, especially development policies in strategic fields. The model of a state - owned development system has been tested through the success of Southeast Asian countries and a number of other countries in the past. Building a developmental state in Vietnam is an extremely necessary task and requires a lot of time and conditions to carry out. Hopefully, with the wisdom of the entire political system, the successful work of building a State for Economic Development in Vietnam will achieve multiple goals: rich people, strong, democratic, fair and civilized country, towards the prosperous and powerful development of a country with thousands of years of history that is on par with the powers of five continents in the era of the 4.0 industrial revolution.

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