

Implementing the Mechanism of Party's Leadership, State's Management and People's Right to Mastery in Vietnam in a New Context

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Received 25 October 2019; published 25 June 2020

Abstract: *In taking action on national strategic target in alignment with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a core list of sustainable development indicators for the Southwest region of Vietnam shall make a significant contribution. It is the basis for monitoring and evaluating the sustainable development of the Southwest region in relation to other economic regions and the whole country. The paper focuses on assessing the current system of the statistical indicators based on data disaggregation of each indicator related to sustainable development at regional, provincial/municipal levels; and thereby propose a list of statistical indicators for the Southwest region.*

Keywords: Statistical Indicators, Sustainable Development, Agenda 2030, Southwest, Vietnam

1. Introduction

Throughout the process of renovation, building, and developing the country in the period of transition to socialism, together with a renovated economic mindset, the Communist Party of Vietnam has revamped the political mindset in terms of building and perfecting Vietnam's political regime. Accordingly, the mechanism of "Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery" was adopted by the Party since the fifth People's National Congress (1982) and the sixth People's National Congress (1986) as an overarching operational principle of Vietnam's political system.

This mechanism is a result of the creative application and development of Marxism - Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on the role of the Party, the State, and the people in the revolutionary history and practice of Vietnam and the world.

2. Awareness developments of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the mechanism "Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery"

Albeit early recognition, the awareness and implementation of the mechanism of "Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery" was a lengthy process. Theoretically and practically, the questions on when and where the awareness

and implementation of this overarching mechanism remained obscure, insufficient, and inadequate. Entering into the transition period, Vietnam transformed from centrally commanded bureaucratic mechanism to a market economy with socialist orientation, from centrally planned economy with two principal economic sectors - state and collective - to multi sectors economy based on market economy principles with State's management, therefore the implementation of this mechanism at the initial phase encountered numerous bottlenecks and limitations. From the point of unclear delineation between the Party's leadership and the State's management, the pervasive mindset of overprotection of party units, after the first years of the renewal, Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery have been increasingly elucidated.

The Political Program for National Construction during the transitional period to socialism (1991) points out: "The Party leads by strategic undertakings, gives orientation in policies and guidelines; by propaganda and persuasion, mobilization, organizing inspection, and exemplary conducts of party members. The Party introduces highly qualified members with competence and qualities into governmental bodies and organizations. The Party does not do the work in place of other bodies in the political system. Leading the political system, at the same time the Party is also a part of it. The Party has a holistic relationship with the people and operates within the framework of the Constitution and laws" (The Communist Party of Vietnam, 1991: 21). With an emphasis on the leadership of the Party, the Program also elucidates the management mandates and responsibilities

of the State with a novel mindset, that is "total abolishment of centrally commanded bureaucratic and planned mechanism, formulation of a market economy with the management of the State by laws, plans, policies, and other devices, etc. Reform and heighten efficiency in guiding, controlling, and adjusting activities of the State" (The Communist Party of Vietnam, 1991: 12). The Party affirms that the State represents the will and power of the people, and is the representative of the people, it thus enjoys sufficient power and capacity to formulate the law, and organize and manage every aspect of social life through the law. It, therefore, is needed to amend state apparatus, reform administrative bureaucracy, strengthen law-based bodies to effectively carry out State's management mandates (The Communist Party of Vietnam, 1991: 19).

After 25 years of reform, the comprehensive operational mechanism of the political system continues posing the need for elucidation. Accordingly, the key issue is to delineate mandates, duties, enforcement mechanism, and responsibilities of every actor within the political system. The eleventh National Congress (2011) of the Party identifies "Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery" is one of the major relationships in need of elucidation in times of transition to socialism because this is the most essential and vital relationship among the three actors of the utmost importance within Vietnam's political regime.

It remains a pressing need to delineate the role, responsibilities, and mandates of the Party and State's management, as well as the relationship between Party's leadership, State's management, People's

right to mastery. The Political Program for National Construction during the transitional period to socialism (amended and supplemented in 2011) continues to reaffirm the leadership model of the Party over the State and society, at the same time it supplements Party's leadership through party units and members within the political system, strengthening of individual's accountability, particularly the head of an unit. On the nature of the State, the Program affirms: "Our State is the rule-of-law State of the people, by the people, for the people. All State powers belong to the people whose foundation is the alliance between the working class and the peasantry and the intelligentsia, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam. State powers are unity with the delegation of power to, and coordination and control among State bodies in exercising legislative, executive and judicial powers. The State enacts laws; organizes and manages the society by law and increasingly enhances socialist legality" (The Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011: 85).

Besides the need to elucidate the content of the mechanism of "Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery", the comprehension and identification of the role of every actor in this overarching mechanism have been set out. In academic research and discourses, there are disparate opinions on the position and sequence of each actor in light of this overarching mechanism. It is contended that "People's right to mastery" must be placed first since all powers belong to the people who are the owners and masters. The Party is the leadership core of the State and society, it thus should be put in the central position. Others posit that the State is the pillar and centre of the political

system, all social relations are subject to the law, in other words, the management of the State, especially in the climate of building socialist rule of law State in Vietnam, therefore, "State's management" should come first.

In actuality, it is hard to emphasize to the fullest extent the role and importance of any actor in the three-pronged relationship among the Party, the State, and the people. Among the three there are holistic and dialectic relationships, they are interdependent and equally important, cannot exist in a vacuum, or be subject to arbitrary absolutism. In light of procedural sequence, however, procedures for enactment and implementation of undertakings, guidelines, policies in a Communist-led country, considering also responsibilities and interests, objectives of Party's leadership, State's management, it is all designed for the gains of the people, by the people and for the people, it thus deems appropriate to have it the way "Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery".

3. The Practice of the implementation of "Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery" in Vietnam and lessons learnt

It can be said that with the implementation of the mandate, power and responsibility of every actor in the overarching mechanism "Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery", Vietnam's political regime has operated consistently and stably, and continued to be consolidated and developed over the time.

(1) With the ruling and leadership through creative and sound revolutionary undertakings and guidelines, the Communist Party of Vietnam has led the revolutionary path of Vietnam to victorious

milestones with enormous achievements and historic significance. Hitherto the Party has asserted and established mode and methods to lead the State and society concretely and manifestly. The Party's leadership over the State and people is done through undertakings, strategies, orientations on major policies and plans; through propaganda, mobilization, and persuasion; through organization, inspection, supervision, and exemplary conducts of party members. The Party consolidates leadership over personnel management affairs in the political system. Party unit system is established on a par with the State apparatus. The Party leads the political system of which it is also a part. The Party has a holistic relationship with the people, respects and promotes people's right to mastery, relies on the people to strengthen itself, is subject to the supervision of the people, and operates within the framework of the Constitution and laws. Party's leadership is the decisive factor of the revolution. Party's leadership and ruling serve the people's interests. Party's leadership is the precondition for the effective operation of the mechanism "Party's leadership, State's management, People's right to mastery".

During the reform period, the organization of party units were arranged and strengthened to meet new demands and requirements. Mandates, tasks, and relations among organizations in the political system were delimited and adjusted more logically. Many major undertakings, principles, viewpoints, and solutions on personnel affairs were institutionalized and concretized in regulations, rules, and procedures to ensure democracy and strictness. Party's leadership over the political system

continues to be renovated. The Party issued several working regulations, rules, and procedures to implement and ensure firmly its leadership, and at the same time to promote the role, initiative, creativity, and responsibility of organizations in the political system, especially the role of the State and the Fatherland Front. The innovation of the working style and manner of the Party's leading agencies from the central to grassroots levels made progressive steps. The Party made innovations in resolution-making, attaching importance to leading and directing the implementation, inspection, supervision, preliminary and final conclusion of the Party's resolutions and directives. With these results, the Party has firmly maintained its political prowess, revolutionary and scientific nature, steadfast in its goals, ideals of national independence and socialism, and persisted in the line of innovation and deserved to be leading force of the State and society.

However, besides the victories and achievements, the Party's leadership practice in the overarching operational mechanism of the political system has taken place the following propensities: The party committees encroach on, justify, do the work in lieu of the government; party committees loosen their leadership roles and responsibilities, or the party committees and organizations fail to properly and fully play the roles and responsibilities as the nucleus leaders over the political system and other fields of social life. The organizational structure of the Party is still cumbersome with many red tapes; Some mandates and tasks of some organizations are overlapping. The model of party organization in some areas is not sound. The consolidation of the organization,

apparatus of agencies and organizations associated with the downsizing of the payroll, and the improvement of the quality of cadres and civil servants remain slow. The renovation of the Party's leadership mode over the State, the Fatherland Front, and socio-political organizations is still slow with some confusing content; unclear content and mode of the ruling; not really promoting the role of party organizations, party members, and committee-level members operating in state agencies, the Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations; In some resolutions, there are issues lacking in feasibility, inadequate gauging of resources and implementation conditions, and slow to come into life. Many party committees have not focused on leading and directing the implementation, inspection, supervision, preliminary and final conclusion of the implementation of the resolution.

(2) After more than 30 years of reform, the building and perfection of the socialist rule-of-law State of Vietnam has made important achievements, marking a development milestone of the new state-building - the State of the people, by the people and for the people. The role, mandates, and responsibilities of the State have been adjusted in accordance with the requirements of the transition from subsidized central planning to the socialist-oriented market economy and international integration. The mandates, duties, and powers of the state apparatus have been gradually restructured, with the enhancement of the role and duties of the community; The relationship between the State and its citizens gradually shifted from the leadership mindset of authority - obedience to the one on State at people's

service; clearly defining management tasks, the State's orientation with production and business roles of enterprises.

Viewpoints on and institutions of the socialist rule-of-law State were supplemented, completing an important step. Awareness of all levels, sectors, cadres, party members, and people on the building of a socialist rule-of-law State of the people, by the people and for the people has shown developments. The principles of state power organization are more comprehensively regulated in the 2013 Constitution. The mandates, tasks, organizational structure and operational mechanism of the state apparatus are more clearly defined and show progress in operation. The role of the law is increasingly promoted in the organization and operation of the State, in social management. The mechanism for delegation, coordination, and control of power in the organization and operation of the State has been more clearly defined and the implementation thereof has made certain progressive steps. However, the performance of the State's management mandates and tasks in the political system still shows inadequacies, with unclearly defined, incoherent and ineffective mechanism of delegation, coordination, and control of state power at all levels. The overlap and bottlenecks in mandates and tasks between institutions have not been addressed yet, affecting the unity of power and operational efficiency of the State. The legal system is inconsistent, many contents have not met the requirements of building a rule-of-law state and are still overlapping; Publicity, transparency, feasibility, and stability are still limited. Discipline and order in state management and public duty performance

are still weak. Administrative reforms are still slow, asynchronous, and administrative procedures remain complicated and cumbersome, which are a major barrier to creating a healthy, transparent, and effective social and business environment for development.

(3) During the years of implementing the reform policy, the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam issued many guidelines, policies, and laws to promote socialist democracy and ensure the exercise of people's right to mastery. The awareness of citizen's rights and obligations, people's competence to master, and participate in social management has been heightened. The implementation of the Grassroots Democracy Regulation and the Ordinance on the Enforcement of Democracy in Communes, Wards, and Towns has progressed. People's right to mastery is better promoted in all areas of social life through the forms of direct democracy and representative democracy. Many party committees and governments have listened, enhanced contact, dialogue with the people, and respected different views. The political system has attached great importance to the care for the well-being of all people, the protection and guarantee of their legal rights and legitimate interests, respect for and implementation of international treaties on human rights to which Vietnam is a member State.

However, awareness of democracy of a body of cadres, party members and people is still limited. People's right to mastery in many places and areas is still being overridden. At multiple times, in some areas, the exercise of democracy is limited or symbolic; there are situations of abusing democracy to sow divisions, internal

disunity, and disturbance, affecting national security, social order, and safety.

From the development and implementation of the mechanism of "Party's leadership, State's management, and People's right to mastery" in Vietnam in recent years, some lessons can be learned as follow:

First, persevere on matters of principle to ensure the existence and operation of the mechanism. The overarching operating mechanism of our country's political system is also a major principle. For effective performance of the mechanism, the first and also thorough to grasp is to persevere on matters of principle, including affirming the leadership, ruling role of the Party, persevering and establishing the content, mode of leadership, mode of ruling of the Party; building a socialist rule-of-law State of the people, by the people and for the people, and the State manages society by law; The people are the owners and master it through many mechanisms, statutes and regulations of the law.

Second, clearly define the roles, rights and responsibilities of actors in the political system. The actors in the overarching mechanism have different roles, powers and responsibilities. To overcome the situation of encroachment, overprotection, displacement, and at the same time, the loosening of leadership, management, or misuse, abuse of power, or undue democracy in the exercise of roles, responsibilities and rights of mastery, the prerequisite is to clearly define the roles, rights and responsibilities of each actor in the political system and for the people.

Third, perfect the Party's rules and regulations, the legal system and institutions promoting the people's right of mastery, ensure the Party's regulations and rules, and

the State's laws, and regulations and rules of the Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations do not overlap and conflict. In the climate of building a rule-of-law State and the ruling party by law, the people's exercise of mastery on the base of the law, the elaboration and completion of legal provisions, rules and regulations governing activities of the Party play the decisive role in the effective operation of the mechanism of Party's leadership, State's management and People's right to mastery.

Fourth, consolidate the organization in the direction of synchronization and unity. Mechanisms include not only rules and regulations that create the framework for the operation of an organization, but also by the organization itself, in the structure and organizational design. Implementing the mechanism of "Party's leadership, State's management and People's right to mastery" does not mean carrying out actions with absolute independence, each actor has a separate organizational system of operation, but may concur with each other in terms of organization, apparatus, leading manpower at a certain level or sector. Therefore, when building and operating the mechanism, attention should be paid to strengthening the organizational structure, not bureaucratization of party units and mass organizations, and at the same time not "politicize" state agencies and avoiding people's tax payments to nourish a cumbersome party and state apparatus.

Fifth, conceive people as the root, rely on the people to build the Party and the political system. Conceive the people's interests as the basis, motivators and operation of the mechanism. The basis of the overarching operating mechanism of the political system is to guarantee the legitimate rights

and interests of the people. It is also a yardstick to measure the correctness and suitability of all guidelines and policies of the Party, policies and laws of the State. Departing from that goal and basis, the nature of the Party, the State and the logic and revolutionary features in the operating mechanism of the political system will fade and lose true values.

4. Solutions for better implementation of "The Party's leadership, the State's management and People's right to mastery"

To better implement the mechanism of "Party's leadership, State's management and People's right to mastery" in Vietnam in the new context, it is necessary to synchronize solutions, including the following major solutions:

(1) Adequate awareness of the relationship among the Party, the State and the people in the mechanism of "Party's leadership, State's management and People's right to mastery"

To contribute to clarifying the scientific basis of the mechanism of "Party's leadership, State's management and People's right to mastery", answering the question whether this is a political slogan or a true overarching operating mechanism of the Vietnamese political system, we need to consider the dialectical, coherent, uniform features among the actors of this relationship.

With the role and responsibility of the sole ruling Party, leading the State and society, the Party's leadership is to guide the revolutionary cause, builds and develops the country with socialist orientation, towards building a prosperous, democratic, just and civilized Vietnam. The Party's leadership serves to build a socialist rule-of-law State of the people, by the people, for the people, and the State

manages society efficiently and effectively by law. The Party's leadership serves to promote the strength of the great national unity bloc, effectively use and promote the resources, potentials and strengths of the country, combining the national strength and the strength of the times, carrying out successfully the renovation, industrialization, modernization and international integration. The Party's leadership serves to ensure the freedom and happiness for the people, to ensure that all power belongs to the people and that the people can exert their true mastery.

Vietnam is a socialist rule-of-law State of the people, by the people and for the people. The State manages society by law, under the leadership of the Party. The State institutionalizes the Party's viewpoints, undertakings, guidelines and resolutions into policies, laws, and social management programs and plans in accordance with the Constitution and laws. Performing state management to effectively utilize and use social resources for the cause of building and defending the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The State's management does not go contrary to the Party's guidelines, lines, resolutions and regulations; at the same time, it does not limit the lawful and legitimate rights and interests of the people. The State's management on the one hand aims to organize the effective implementation of the Party's guidelines, lines and political views; on the other hand, it ensures democracy, fairness, publicity and transparency of all activities in social life.

In Vietnam, the Party leadership, State management also aims to exercise the people's right of mastery. The people's right to mastery is both an inseparable element in the mechanism of "The Party's leadership,

the State's management and People's right to mastery", and is the highest end in the implementation of that mechanism itself in practice.

The common thread, the "adhesive" glue, as a factor to ensure the natural maintenance of the operation and the relationship among the Party, the State and the people in the overarching operation mechanism of the Vietnamese political system lies: in the unity of the Party's goals and ideologies, the leadership and management objectives of the State; in the nature of the Party and the State; in the body of cadres, party members, civil servants and public employees in the apparatus of the Party, the State, the Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations; in the inextricable relationship among the Party, the State and the people.

(2) Strengthen the Party's leadership and ruling capacity, perfect rules and regulations on the organization and operation of the Party

First, heighten the political spirit, intellectual level and morale of the whole Party and each cadre and party member, above all, key leading and managing officials at all levels; Do not waver in any situation. Maintain the nature of the working class of the Party, the pioneering role and role models of cadres and party members. Persevere matters of principle in building the Party. Improve the Party's ruling capacity and ensure efficient and effective Party leadership. Improve capacity to formulate guidelines and policies in accordance with the objective laws and characteristics of Vietnam, making a breakthrough for development.

Second, continue to renovate and strengthen the organizational structure of the Party. Attach the innovation and consolidation

of the organizational structure to the completion of mandates and tasks, improve the quality of cadres and party members. Focus on consolidating and improving the leadership and morale of grassroots party organizations. Build a body of party members who are truly pioneering, exemplary, respectful and close to the people, understand the people, learn from the people, with high responsibilities in the work, political spirit, revolutionary ethics and sense of organization, discipline and competence to fulfill tasks, stand firm against all difficulties, challenges, and strive for the Party's goals and ideologies. Third, improve the personnel quality. Continue to promulgate and implement new rules, regulations and mechanisms in personnel affairs to ensure uniformity, synchrony and coherence among stages and interconnections between levels. Renew intra-party elections, methods of recruiting and appointing officials to select people with strong political spirit, good moral character, dynamic, audacity to think and act, take responsibility while holding leadership, especially heads. Focus on building a body of officials, especially those at the strategic level, competent and qualified, on a mission level. Fourth, continue to renovate, improve the efficiency of the mobilization activities, strengthen the close relationship between the Party and the people. Renew the Party's leadership model on the mobilization of people in terms of socialist-oriented market economy development and international integration. The contingent of cadres and party members must truly believe in the people, respect and stay close to the people, understand the people and learn from the people, rely on the people and

take responsibility for the people. Timely and effectively address people's pressing needs and legitimate recommendations, complaints and denunciations of citizens. Promptly institutionalize the Party's lines and undertakings into policies and laws that are suitable for reality and meet the legitimate interests and aspirations of the people.

Fifth, renovate the Party's leadership mode over the political system, especially the State. Continue to concretize the Party's leadership mode defined in the Political Program for National Construction during the transitional period to socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011) at all levels by specific rules, regulations, and procedures. Continue to renovate and improve the quality of the making and enactment of the Party's resolutions, the State's laws and policies. Focus on leading and guiding resolutely and conclusively the concretization, institutionalization and implementation of resolutions; regularly inspect, supervise and renovate methods for thorough grasping, preliminary and final conclusion of the implementation of the Party's resolutions and directives, ensuring their effectiveness. Promote intra-party administrative reform.

(3) Continue to build and perfect the legal system, renovate the organization and operation of the state apparatus

In the coming years, it is imperative to promote the perfection of laws together with law enforcement bodies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the socialist rule-of-law State. Promote the law as a tool for the State to manage the society as well as a tool for the people to master, inspect and supervise the state power. Manage the country according to the law, while at the

same time attach importance to building a social-ethical foundation. It is necessary to clearly define the mechanism of delegation and coordination in the exercise of state power, especially the mechanism for controlling power among state bodies in the exercise of legislative, executive and judicial powers on the basis of that State powers are unified; further define rights and responsibilities of each branch.

Perfect the organization and improve the quality and efficiency of the operation of the state apparatus. The state apparatus needs to be organized compactly and clearly, specifically in terms of powers and responsibilities; the organization and operation of the state apparatus from the central to local levels must create favorable conditions for people to have easy access, dialogue, control and supervision; mobilize to greatest extent people's intellect, initiative and contributions to the management of state and society.

(4) Perfect the democratic mechanism, improve the people's right to mastery competence

Concentrate on the making of legal documents related to the people's right to

mastery. Continue to develop and perfect mechanisms, rules and regulations so that people can advance their right of mastery in all areas of social life. The Party and the State must ensure and promote the true ownership of the people, especially the right to participate in the making of guidelines, policies, the right to choose their representatives and the right to own lawful property. Renew awareness and action on the relationship among the Party, the State and the people, in which the people must be placed at the central position in all activities of the Party and State apparatus, the entire operation of the apparatus of The Party and the State must be organized on the basis of "serving the people" □

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