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**THE RENEWAL OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN THE CONTEXT OF
ENSURING POLITICAL STABILITY IN CONTEMPORARY VIETNAM**

Specialty 5.5.2 – Political Institutions, Processes, and Technologies

ABSTRACT

**of the dissertation for the degree of
candidate of political sciences**

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Relevance of the research topic.

The renewal of the political system in the context of ensuring political stability constitutes one of the key issues in the development of modern states, particularly in the face of global transformations that affect all spheres of social life. In the contemporary world, where political, economic, and social processes are closely interlinked and evolving at an accelerated pace, the task of maintaining political stability becomes paramount for any state. This issue is especially relevant for countries undergoing stages of reform and modernization, such as Vietnam.

Firstly, a significant factor underlying the need to examine the renewal of Vietnam's political system lies in the country's unique historical and political trajectory. Following the conclusion of armed conflicts and national reunification in 1975, Vietnam embarked on a gradual yet consistent process of economic and political reform. A pivotal milestone in this modernization effort was the introduction of the Renewal policy in 1986, which paved the way for the country's transition toward a market-oriented economy. Nevertheless, reforms primarily targeting economic growth inevitably initiated transformations within the political system – though these occurred at a more measured and cautious pace. While Vietnam's one-party political structure has remained stable, it raises a critical question regarding the extent to which current political mechanisms are effective in a rapidly changing domestic and international environment.

Secondly, the stability of Vietnam's political system plays a crucial role in safeguarding socio-economic development and national security. Amid conditions of global uncertainty and shifting geopolitical dynamics in the Southeast Asian region, the preservation of political stability has become a strategic priority. Simultaneously, internal challenges – including rising public expectations for political participation, social equity, and justice – necessitate a reassessment of existing modes of political governance. Consequently, questions arise concerning the adequacy of current political institutions and their capacity to adapt to evolving realities without compromising national stability.

The third aspect of the topic's relevance concerns external factors, particularly global political and economic trends that exert influence on Vietnam. The growing regional presence of China, ongoing tensions in the South China Sea, and Vietnam's increasing integration into international trade networks with partners such as the United States, the European Union, and China have generated new challenges for the national political system. Under these circumstances, Vietnam faces the complex task of maintaining internal political cohesion while responding to external pressures, all the while striving to preserve the independence and resilience of its political institutions.

A fourth dimension of relevance involves the challenges posed by digitalization and global integration. The development of digital technologies and the expansion of social media create new avenues for political mobilization, information dissemination, and the shaping of public opinion. These developments call for the modernization of political institutions and governance methods to enable effective oversight of such processes and to ensure continued political stability. In addition, globalization has transformed public expectations, with citizens becoming increasingly engaged in political life and demanding broader rights and freedoms.

In summary, the relevance of researching the renewal of Vietnam's political system in the context of ensuring political stability is determined by the necessity for the country to respond to both internal and external challenges. Formulating a modernization strategy for the political system that meets contemporary demands while simultaneously securing institutional resilience and stability represents one of Vietnam's most critical objectives in the decades to come.

The extent of scholarly research on the topic.

In the academic literature, the study of Vietnam's political system has developed through two principal stages: prior to and following the introduction of the "Đổi Mới" (Renewal) policy in 1986. During the first stage, scholarly attention focused primarily on the formation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), the struggle for national independence, and the establishment of socialist institutions. A significant contribution was made by the works of Ho Chi Minh, presented in the

multi-volume Collected Works, which laid the foundations of the Vietnamese political doctrine – an ideological synthesis of Marxism-Leninism, national patriotism, popular sovereignty, and social justice. Programmatic documents of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) from the 1950s to the 1980s and the 15-volume History of Vietnam compiled by the Institute of History of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences also serve as important sources.

In Soviet scholarship, research on Vietnam prior to 1986 was conducted largely within an ideological paradigm, though this did not diminish its scientific value. Substantial contributions were made by collective works from the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences under the editorial leadership of A.A. Guber, S.A. Mkhitarian, and others, which analyzed political processes, the role of the CPV, and the structure of governance. Western literature, in turn, focused on mechanisms of mass mobilization, international influences, and the administrative structure of the DRV. Of particular note are the works of Bernard Fall and Stein Tønnesson, who attempted analytical approaches to understanding the Vietnamese revolution and political institutions. By the mid-1970s, the concept of two distinct political-institutional models (North and South) had become established in Western academic discourse, providing the foundation for subsequent comparative analyses after Vietnam's reunification.

Since the beginning of the second stage (from 1986 onward), a significant methodological shift has occurred in the study of Vietnam's political system. The scholarly focus has turned toward institutional transformations, political modernization, and the resilience of the one-party regime amid market-oriented reforms. In Russian Vietnam studies, the leading institutions in this domain have included the Institute of China and Contemporary Asia of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAN), the Institute of Oriental Studies of RAN, the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Moscow State University, and the Ho Chi Minh Institute at Saint Petersburg State University. Under the academic guidance of Professor V.M. Mazyrin, the Center for Vietnamese and ASEAN Studies at the ICCA RAN has emerged as an integrative scientific platform that coordinates research efforts among

Russian and Vietnamese scholars, promotes interdisciplinary studies, and supports sustainable development of social science research on Vietnam. The Center's activities are devoted to a comprehensive study of the transformative processes initiated by the "Đổi Mới" policy, including the interplay between economic liberalization and political reform, the roles of the party and the state, and mechanisms of institutional adaptation and governance amid modernization.

Professor V.N. Kolotov, head of the Ho Chi Minh Institute, has concentrated his research on the philosophical and ideological foundations of Vietnam's political model, emphasizing the role of Ho Chi Minh's ideology as the conceptual core of the power structure. His works explore mechanisms of regime legitimation, intra-party consolidation, and Vietnam's adaptive strategies under conditions of global instability and external pressures. Other Russian scholars have also made significant contributions. E.V. Kobelev has studied the transformation of the CPV, anti-corruption policy, and external influences on reform. G.M. Lokshin has analyzed the evolution of party documents and ideological discourse within the CPV. P.Yu. Tsvetov has focused on legal foundations and human rights issues. Other researchers who have expanded academic reflection on the topic include D.V. Mosiakov, O.V. Novakova, E.A. Marchenko, G.F. Murasheva, M.E. Trigubenko, among others.

In Vietnam, since the late 1980s, a distinct school of political science has emerged, reflecting the particularities of the one-party model in the context of modernization. A central figure in this process is the General Secretary of the CPV Central Committee, Nguyen Phu Trong, whose writings articulate the key ideological and strategic orientations of the renewal process. These include the strengthening of party leadership, the construction of a socialist rule-of-law state, and the consolidation of political system stability. Major contributions to the theoretical support of reform have come from the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and the Central Theoretical Council of the CPV, under the leadership of Professor Nguyen Xuan Thang. These institutions play a vital role in developing the theoretical underpinnings of party policy, training administrative personnel, and implementing extensive research projects aimed at improving governance mechanisms and ensuring

ideological unity. Their activities provide a comprehensive academic foundation for the modernization of Vietnam's political system and contribute to the theoretical and methodological basis for building a socialist rule-of-law state. Among prominent Vietnamese scholars are To Huy Rua, Le Huu Nghia, Ta Ngoc Tan, Hoang Chi Bao, Mach Quang Thang, Tran Ngoc Duong, among others, who have examined party leadership, the strengthening of legitimacy, and the sustainability of the one-party model in a context of modernization.

Foreign scholars have consistently demonstrated interest in the political evolution of Vietnam, viewing it as a distinctive model of one-party system adaptation under the conditions of market transformation. In the publications of C.A. Thayer, B.J.T. Kerkvliet, M. Gainsborough, A. Fford, E.J. Malesky, M. Painter, and others, the *Đổi Mới* phenomenon is analyzed as a complex and multidimensional process of renewal, in which economic liberalization is accompanied by a selective and limited transformation of political institutions. Particular emphasis is placed on the challenges faced by the Vietnamese model: the need to ensure stability and governability in the context of globalization, to preserve ideological coherence amid an increasing diversity of interests, and to maintain a balance between administrative efficiency and the expansion of citizen participation.

Despite the breadth of existing scholarship, there remains a lack of comprehensive institutional analysis of Vietnam's political system in its historical evolution – from the mid-20th century to the present – in the context of political stability. This dissertation seeks to address this gap through an integrated study of Vietnam's model transformation from the perspective of system resilience and governance, thereby advancing scholarly understanding of the mechanisms of political renewal under a one-party framework.

The object of this research is the political system of contemporary Vietnam.

The subject of the research comprises the content, characteristics, and principal priorities of the renewal of Vietnam's political system in the context of ensuring political stability.

The aim of the dissertation is to identify and describe the main priorities of the renewal of Vietnam's political system in relation to the objective of maintaining political stability.

To achieve this aim, the dissertation addresses the following research tasks:

1. To describe the formation, consolidation, and institutional development of Vietnam's political system during the period from 1945 to 1985;
2. To characterize the directions and priorities of the renewal of the state apparatus of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) since 1986;
3. To identify the specific features of the renewal of the Communist Party of Vietnam as the ruling party within the political system;
4. To analyze the transformation of the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front (VFF) in the context of political system renewal;
5. To consider the renewal of the political system as a necessary condition for ensuring political stability in Vietnam;
6. To evaluate political stability as a fundamental prerequisite for the development of contemporary Vietnam;
7. To determine the key challenges and prospects for renewing Vietnam's political system in the context of ensuring political stability.

The theoretical and methodological framework of the dissertation incorporates historical, systemic, institutional, and structural-functional approaches, which together ensure a comprehensive and logically coherent analysis of Vietnam's political system. The historical approach enabled the tracing of the stages of institutional formation and evolution; the systemic approach allowed for the examination of the political system as an entity interacting with both internal and external environments; the institutional approach facilitated the analysis of transformations among key actors (the state, the CPV, and the VFF); and the structural-functional approach made it possible to identify functional interrelations and the adaptive capacity of various system components.

The research employs general scientific methods such as analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, alongside specialized political science methods, including

content analysis of normative documents, analysis of political speeches, event analysis of key developments, problem decomposition, comparative method, visualization of statistical data, and the application of forecasting tools. This methodological set has made it possible to conduct an in-depth examination of reform processes, assess their impact on political stability, and develop potential development scenarios through the year 2045.

The empirical foundation of the study is based on a broad array of sources, including statistical data, reports, and analytical materials from research institutes and universities. The dissertation utilizes monographs, scholarly articles, and expert assessments produced by Russian, Vietnamese, and international researchers, as well as publications in the periodical press, online resources, and the author's own observations. Additionally, materials from international organizations and non-governmental institutions were consulted, including research conducted by the United Nations Development Programme, the Center for Scientific Research of the VFF, and the Vietnam Center for Community Support and Development Studies.

The scientific novelty of this research lies in the systematization of scholarly knowledge on the contemporary political system of Vietnam, as well as in the development of original approaches to its renewal within the framework of a one-party model. Firstly, the concept, essence, and substantive content of the “Đổi Mới” phenomenon are clarified, conceptualizing it as a distinct Vietnamese format of politico-institutional transformation. Secondly, given the limited coverage of the Vietnam Fatherland Front (VFF) in Russian-language academic literature over the past decades, this study makes a significant contribution by providing a detailed analysis of its concrete role within the political system of contemporary Vietnam – an important addition to the understanding of real political practice. Thirdly, the study investigates the specific features of interaction among the SRV, the CPV, and the VFF in the process of political system renewal. It substantiates institutional priorities and directions of modernization in the post-reform period (from 1986 to the present). Fourthly, the dissertation advances an original interpretation of the renewal of the political system as a key factor contributing to internal consolidation and societal

stabilization under conditions of controlled institutional transformation. Fifthly, the research deepens the understanding of the interrelationship between political stability and the socio-economic development of the country. Sixthly, the study offers a forward-looking forecast regarding the prospects for the renewal of Vietnam's political system, based on an analysis of expert assessments by both Vietnamese and international scholars.

The theoretical significance of the dissertation lies in the substantiation of a conceptual approach to political modernization as a controlled and gradual process of power adaptation that combines elements of continuity and renewal. The study contributes to the development of both domestic and comparative political science by refining scholarly understandings of institutional renewal within one-party systems undergoing reform. **The practical significance of the research** is determined by the applicability of its findings in analytical, expert, and applied contexts, as well as for educational and academic purposes. The results of the dissertation are of particular relevance to countries with similar political models seeking to ensure sustainable development and political stability under conditions of internal and external challenges.

The following key propositions are submitted for defense:

1. It is established that, since the mid-20th century, a mobilizational-type political system emerged in northern Vietnam – the Democratic Republic of Vietnam – characterized by its capacity for institutional consolidation and adaptation under conditions of anti-colonial struggle, external pressure, and profound social transformation. This system developed under the strategic leadership of the Communist Party, based on a broad patriotic coalition and the principles of popular sovereignty, equality, and representative governance. The resulting model provided legitimacy for the one-party regime and laid institutional foundations that enabled the stable functioning of the political system during national reunification and subsequent reform.

2. It is substantiated that the stability of Vietnam's political system following the collapse of the global socialist system was ensured by the evolutionary nature of

reforms, the controlled modernization of political institutions, and the consistent ideological leadership of the CPV. Unlike several other socialist countries where liberalization was accompanied by institutional collapse, Vietnam pursued a model of gradual institutional adaptation while preserving its one-party system, thereby avoiding systemic crisis. This model of controlled adaptation contributed to maintaining the legitimacy of power and creating institutional conditions for socio-economic development and political stability.

3. It is demonstrated that the CPV remains the central actor of the political system and the source of strategic leadership, playing a crucial role in ensuring regime resilience amid institutional renewal. The combination of ideological development with institutional adaptation, the modernization of leadership methods, the expansion of intra-party democracy, improvements in cadre policy, strengthening of party ethics, and the consistent fight against corruption have enabled the Party to retain control over the reform process, enhance the effectiveness of governance, and maintain political stability during the modernization period. In this context, the anti-corruption campaign known as the “blazing furnace” has been particularly significant in strengthening public trust and preserving the Party’s authority among the people.

4. It is substantiated that the strategic course toward building a socialist rule-of-law state constitutes a core direction in the institutional modernization of Vietnam’s state apparatus. The transformation of key institutions – the National Assembly, the Government, the judiciary, and the procuracy – has contributed to the formation of a governance model characterized by institutional continuity and legitimacy within the framework of the one-party system. Within this strategy, strengthening the independence and effectiveness of representative bodies, the judiciary, and prosecutorial institutions represents a key challenge in enhancing anti-corruption mechanisms, building public trust, and furthering the institutional development of the political system under conditions of controlled one-party modernization.

5. It is argued that the reform of the local governance system – including the expansion of administrative and budgetary autonomy of territories, the development of grassroots democracy mechanisms, and the improvement of procedural

transparency and institutional effectiveness – has created the conditions for enhancing the responsiveness of public authorities to the needs of the population. This has contributed to reducing social tensions and ensuring institutional stability at the regional level without undermining the integrity of centralized governance. At the same time, in recent years, a nationwide initiative has been implemented to consolidate administrative-territorial units and reduce redundant levels of governance in order to increase compactness, manageability, and the efficiency of the state apparatus.

6. It is identified that, within the framework of political system renewal, the powers of the VFF have been expanded in the areas of legislative initiative, public oversight, social critique, and the representation of diverse societal interests. This has contributed to strengthening feedback mechanisms and reducing social fragmentation. At the same time, there remains an institutional challenge related to the need to improve the effectiveness of oversight and critical functions, as well as to enhance the participation of the VFF in political processes – while maintaining coherence with Party leadership and strengthening its organizational and functional capacity as a political institution.

7. It is shown that the process of institutional renewal of Vietnam's political system takes place under complex challenges, the most critical of which include systemic corruption, bureaucratic inertia, limited political participation, weakening ideological legitimacy, and increasing external pressure driven by globalization and geopolitical confrontation. These factors collectively present a potential risk of internal destabilization, necessitating a high degree of adaptability and self-regulation by the political system without loss of governance capacity.

8. It is substantiated that the further evolution of Vietnam's political system depends on its ability to address internal and external challenges within the context of a continuing one-party model. Under a positive scenario, institutional preconditions may emerge for the formation of an adaptive regime that combines the CPV's strategic leadership with governance modernization, elements of transparency, and expanded citizen participation. Such a trajectory could enhance institutional

coherence and ensure the sustainable functioning of the politico-administrative system. However, if reforms are delayed and robust mechanisms for institutionalizing their outcomes remain absent, there is a risk of administrative stagnation, growing public dissatisfaction, and the erosion of systemic stability in the long term.

Approbation of research results.

The content and findings of the research have been presented in twelve scholarly publications addressing various aspects of the stated topic. Seven of these articles were published in peer-reviewed academic journals included in the list approved by the Higher Attestation Commission of the Russian Federation, and one was published in an international journal indexed in the Web of Science database. The research results were also validated through presentations at the following academic conferences: the 27th International Conference “Current Issues in Governance – 2022” (Moscow), the Eurasian Scientific Conference on Sustainable Development (2023, Moscow), the 9th International Conference on the Role of Local Self-Government (2024, Moscow), and the 16th International Conference “Development of Political Institutions and Processes” (2025, Omsk). These platforms confirmed the scientific validity and practical relevance of the dissertation’s conclusions.

The structure of the dissertation includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography.