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Ho Chi Minh's Ideology on Establishing a Streamlined, Effective, and Efficient Democratic Administration and its Application to the Construction of the Political System Apparatus in Contemporary Vietnam

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Abstract

This study examines Ho Chi Minh's ideology on establishing a streamlined, effective, and democratic public administration, highlighting its enduring relevance to contemporary Vietnam. Using historical-logical, analytical-synthetic, and comparative methodologies within a dialectical materialist framework, the research traces the development of Ho Chi Minh's administrative thought and its practical application in building a modern political system. The paper discusses key principles such as democratic participation, public service ethics, administrative streamlining, and accountability, linking them to current administrative reform efforts in Vietnam. It argues that Ho Chi Minh's vision remains crucial for creating a public administration that is people-centered, transparent, and responsive in the era of modernization and globalization. The findings provide insights for advancing administrative efficiency while preserving socialist democratic values.

Keywords: Ho Chi Minh, Public Administration, Administrative Reform, Democratic Governance, Vietnam.

Introduction

Problem Statement

Ho Chi Minh (1890–1969), the founder of the Communist Party of Vietnam in 1930 and the leader of the successful August Revolution in 1945, established the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which has evolved into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as enshrined in the 2013 Constitution. Upon founding the People's Democratic State, Ho Chi Minh laid the groundwork for constructing a democratic, effective, and efficient public administration system. Throughout a long process of development, the democratic administrative framework established by Ho Chi Minh has been inherited and continuously refined within the apparatus of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from 1945 to the present day. Nevertheless, Vietnam's public administration system still faces numerous challenges, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, an unwieldy state apparatus, and suboptimal effectiveness. To serve the nation's aspiration to rise in the new era, as articulated in the vision of General Secretary To Lam, it is imperative to first establish a state apparatus that is "streamlined - compact - robust - efficient - and - effective" (Pham Thi Thanh Tra, 2025, p. 85). Therefore, the mission of constructing the state apparatus must begin

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with the development of the public administration system. Accordingly, applying Ho Chi Minh's ideology on building a democratic, streamlined, effective, and efficient public administration system holds both profound theoretical and practical significance.

Research Methodology

Researching Ho Chi Minh's ideology on state administration is a crucial field within administrative science, political science, and Ho Chi Minh's ideology. In order to investigate Ho Chi Minh's ideology on constructing a democratic, effective, efficient, and performance-oriented administration and apply it to Vietnam's current practice, the following main research methods can be used

Utilizing the Methodology of Dialectical and Historical Materialism

Dialectical materialism and historical materialism provide the methodological foundation for objectively perceiving public administration in accordance with its inherent laws, dynamics, and development in response to practical realities. The key principles applied include:

The Principle of Comprehensiveness

Examining the democratic administration not merely from one perspective but across multiple dimensions, namely political, economic, social, legal, etc. Ho Chi Minh emphasized that the administration must serve the people, be rationally organized, streamlined, and ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

The Principle of Historical Specificity

The administrative system is not fixed but develops and improves through historical stages, closely linked to socio-economic development and international integration. In the past, Vietnam's administration had to serve the national liberation and national reunification; whereas now it must focus on socio-economic development within the context of a market economy and international integration.

The Principle of Inheritance and Development

The administration is constantly evolving and developing by inheriting the viewpoints, ideologies, and practices achieved throughout its history. On that basis, innovations are carried out to progressively refine and develop under new conditions. These innovations and developments are based on Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's ideology.

Specific Research Methods

Historical-Logical Method

Historical approach: Ho Chi Minh's ideology on state administration did not form instantaneously but underwent a process of formation and development, closely associated with the nation's revolutionary struggle. Therefore, it is necessary to research Ho Chi Minh's ideological process and leadership practices from the early 20th century until his demise.

Logical approach: Ho Chi Minh's ideology on state administration is systematic and consistent. Therefore, a logical analysis of his conceptualizations concerning the organization of the administrative apparatus, operational principles, the role of cadres, and the relationship between the government and the people is required to grasp its essence and core content fully.

Analytical-Synthetic Method

Analytical method: Separate each content in Ho Chi Minh's ideology on administration, including principles of organization, operation, cadre criteria, accountability, inspection, supervision...

Synthetic method: Combine the analyzed contents to derive overarching lessons for constructing an administrative system characterized by democracy, streamlining, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Comparative Method

Comparing Ho Chi Minh's ideology on public administration with advanced administrative models worldwide to identify both similarities and differences.

Comparing the implementation of this ideology across different historical periods, thereby deriving applicable lessons for the current socio-political context.

Sociological Survey Method

Gathering opinions from citizens, cadres, and public servants regarding the current state of Vietnam's public administration system.

Evaluating the effectiveness of administrative reform policies in alignment with Ho Chi Minh's ideology.

Empirical Research Method

Analyzing the current state of public administration in Vietnam and comparing it with Ho Chi Minh's ideology to evaluate its relevance and identify areas requiring adjustment.

Investigating successful administrative reform models in Vietnam to derive practical lessons and experiences.

Findings and Discussion

Perspectives in the history of philosophy regarding the construction of the administrative system and modalities of government organization

It can be argued that discussions on the establishment of public administration systems and government organization models have been intricately linked to perspectives on the division of state models since the era of Ancient Greece and Rome. Among the earliest contributors to this discourse was Herodotus (485–420 BCE), who conducted a historical inquiry into various systems of governance and identified three principal models of government: democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy. He evaluated the merits and limitations of each model, ultimately concluding that democracy (rule by the people) was the most effective form of governance. According to him, "democracy does not commit excessive errors; decisions are made collectively, and public offices are assigned through voting among those who are deemed to be responsible" (Nguyen Dang Dung 2020a, 173). Although Aristotle mentioned democracy, it was not because he supported popular participation in state governance, but rather because he was concerned with using effective measures to prevent the usurpation of power. As he stated, "The benefits that come with public office make people cling to power indefinitely. We can compare those rulers to sick people for whom the seat of power is the medicine that keeps them healthy."

During the feudal era, under the reign of the King (as the Son of Heaven), democratic ideals were largely forgotten, and governance was characterized solely by absolutism and autocracy.

By the Renaissance, democratic perspectives and modes of democratic governance regained prominence. A notable figure of this period, John Locke (1632–1704), proposed the establishment of a government that serves the people, emphasizing liberty and the rule of law. Locke believed that a government’s legitimacy is contingent upon its service to the people. He introduced the concept of the separation of powers, dividing government into executive, legislative, and judicial branches to check power and prevent abuses, describing this as “*a perfect democracy*” (John Locke, 2007, p. 179). Locke also emphasized the people’s right to overthrow a government that fails to protect their freedoms and property, asserting that “*the people return to a state of nature and have the right to establish a new government*” (Luu Kiem Thanh & Pham Hong Thai, 2001, p. 268).

Locke’s perspective was inherited and further developed by Montesquieu (1689–1755), particularly in his elaboration of the doctrine of *separation of powers*. Montesquieu elaborated this principle more explicitly to ensure that no single branch holds excessive power. He contended that an effective government must maintain a balance among legislative, executive, and judicial functions. According to him, “in order to safeguard essential freedoms, the sovereignty of the state must be divided among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches ” (Johannes Hirscherger 2020, 306). Montesquieu’s political philosophy has had a profound influence on the constitutional frameworks of many modern democratic states.

In his examination of the state and emphasis on popular sovereignty, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) introduced the concept of the “social contract” (Nguyen Dang Dung & Le 2020, 372), asserting that government possesses legitimacy only when it reflects the general will of the people. Rousseau advocated for direct democracy, wherein citizens play a significant role in decision-making. He maintained that the government must serve the common interest, rather than the interests of a select few.

Emphasizing the foundational roles of freedom, the rule of law, and morality in establishing a legitimate government, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) argued that a sound administrative system must be grounded in justice and the respect for human rights. Kant believed that a transparent and democratic government would contribute to lasting peace (Ngo Thi My Dung 2017, 123).

Addressing representative democracy and individual liberty, John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) advocated for a representative democratic model in which elected officials govern on behalf of the electorate. He strongly emphasized freedom of the individual, freedom of speech, and the pivotal role of education in sustaining a democratic society. Mill expressed concern over what he viewed as the conservatism of the middle class, which he feared more than “anything the working class might reclaim” (Mai Son 2007, 436).

A significant advancement in state administration theory came from Max Weber (1864–1920), who formulated the theory of legal-rational authority. In this framework, he outlined the model of modern bureaucratic administration, based on several key principles: hierarchical organization to maintain order, formalized procedures to avoid arbitrariness, and merit-based recruitment to ensure efficiency. However, Weber also cautioned against the risks of excessive bureaucracy, warning that it could lead to administrative stagnation and alienation from the citizenry. Nonetheless, he acknowledged that, due to these principles, “the bureaucratic organization holds absolute technical superiority over all other forms of organization in society” (Le Ngoc Hung 2002, 181).

Advocating for democracy and political freedom as a prevailing trend, Hannah Arendt (1906–

1975) emphasized the necessity of public political participation in sustaining a democratic polity. She warned against the dangers of totalitarian regimes, where the state exerts complete control over individual life. Arendt supported transparent governance that protects freedom of expression and civil rights.

The classical Marxist-Leninist theorists critiqued philosophical views that justified authoritarianism, while simultaneously appreciating the values of democracy. They proposed the establishment of democratic principles in public administration, grounded in the ideal of a state that is truly “of the People, by the People, and for the People.” In articulating the principles of a communal society, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels placed great emphasis on the role of a democratic government (Marx & Engels 1995, Vol. 2: 184).

Ho Chi Minh’s perspective on building a democratic, streamlined, efficient, effective, and high-performing public administration

Ho Chi Minh, who inherited and creatively developed Marxism-Leninism principles to fit the historical conditions of Vietnam in the 1930s. Upon successfully leading the August Revolution of 1945 and founding the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, he placed special emphasis on building a People’s Democratic Regime, with a particular focus on constructing a streamlined, efficient, effective, and high-performing state apparatus. According to Ho Chi Minh, only such a public administration, democratic in nature, streamlined in structure, and effective in both function and performance, would be truly compatible with a government of the People, by the People, and for the People.

“Ours is a democratic country:

All benefits are for the People.

All power belongs to the People.

All undertakings for renovation and nation-building are the responsibility of the people.

The cause of national resistance and reconstruction is the People’s business.

The government, from the commune to the central level, is elected by the People.

All mass organizations, from central to local, are established by the People.

In short, all authority and strength come from the People.”

(Ho Chi Minh 2011c, p. 232)

The state must truly belong to the People, be rooted in the People, and all power must derive from the People. In a state of the People, the People are the supreme holders of sovereignty, empowered to decide on all fundamental matters of the country. Government is merely the instrument to carry out the People’s will and aspirations. As Ho Chi Minh asserted:

“Within the revolutionary apparatus, from the housekeeper, the cook, to the President of the country, all are assigned to serve the People.”

(Ho Chi Minh 2011d, p. 434)

The government serves merely as an instrument to fulfill the will and aspirations of the People: “Within the revolutionary apparatus, from the person sweeping the floor or cooking meals to the President of the country, all are assigned to serve as the People’s servants” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011d,

p. 434). Regarding the construction of a state by the People, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the role of the People in establishing the state apparatus, as well as in electing and supervising the implementation of public administration by cadres and public servants. He reminded cadres that the state is not an entity detached from the people but rather established by the People through democratic elections, representing the interests of society as a whole. From the local to the central level, the administration is organized by the People, and civil servants are sustained by the taxes paid by the People. According to Ho Chi Minh, only a government of and by the People can genuinely be for the People. A state for the People reflects the ultimate goal of the government: to serve the People and ensure their well-being and happiness. As he stated, “Anything that benefits the People, we must do our utmost to achieve. Anything that harms the People, we must do our utmost to avoid” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011a, p. 65). These principles provide a solid foundation, demonstrating Ho Chi Minh’s resolute commitment to building a democratic, streamlined, effective, and efficient public administration system that meets the demands of serving the People. This commitment is institutionalized in the following key aspects:

First, building a democratic public administration system to serve the People

According to Ho Chi Minh, a democratic administration must be one that takes the People as its foundation and guarantees their right to popular sovereignty. He consistently emphasized that “the People are the root,” because, in his view, the People are not only the creators of history but also the decisive force in the existence and development of the nation. The state must place the People at the center. All state policies and administrative actions must originate from and center upon the People’s benefits and aspirations.

In 1948, during the revolutionary struggle in the Viet Bac base, Ho Chi Minh issued ethical guidance to civil servants, emphasizing the importance of living among the People. He proposed a set of twelve behavioral principles (six things to do and six things not to do.” Among the prohibitions were:

“Do not do anything that might harm the People’s gardens, crops, or damage their houses and belongings.”

(Ho Chi Minh 2011b, p. 501)

And among the recommended actions:

“Assist the People in their daily tasks (such as harvesting, collecting firewood and water, mending clothes, etc.)”

(Ho Chi Minh 2011b, p. 501)

The question of state-building, for Ho Chi Minh, belonged to the strategic priority of the revolution. Consistent with V.I. Lenin, who asserted that the state is the fundamental question of any revolution, Ho Chi Minh emphasized that:

“The core issue of government lies in whose hands it is and whose interests it serves.”

(Song Thanh 2005, p. 290)

To ensure genuine popular sovereignty, Ho Chi Minh required that the state implement substantive democracy, not merely formal or symbolic democracy. This meant that the People should not only have the right to vote, but also the right to directly participate in oversight and decision-making on critical national issues. For him, facilitating the People’s involvement in monitoring the activities of the government was not only a duty of the state but also a sincere expression of humility and accountability. He called upon the citizenry:

“I respectfully urge my compatriots to criticize, assist, and supervise the work of the government.”

(Ho Chi Minh 2011b, p. 75)

Popular participation in state oversight, from his viewpoint, was the benchmark of democracy. He wrote:

“Our state promotes democracy to the highest degree. This is because its very nature is that of a People’s state. Only by promoting democracy to the fullest can we mobilize the People’s entire strength to advance the revolution.”

(Ho Chi Minh 2011f, p. 367)

Simultaneously, the state must create conditions for the People to exercise their sovereignty through transparent legal mechanisms, fostering grassroots democracy, and ensuring that all policy decisions reflect the will of the People. Only when the state apparatus is truly of the People, close to the People, attentive and responsive to the People’s concerns, can it unlock the full potential of the masses and generate the impetus needed for the country’s sustainable development.

Alongside constructing an administration that takes “the People as the root,” it is essential to build a contingent of public servants who are genuinely “servants of the People,” wholeheartedly devoted to public service. This, as Pham Van Dong once asserted, is “*a critical and urgent task.*” (*Pham Van Dong 1980, p. 9*). Ho Chi Minh held that cadres are the foundation of all work, and stated:

“We must understand that the government agencies at all levels, from national to local, are the People’s servants. They are tasked with public duties for the People, not to lord over them, as was the case under French and Japanese colonial rule.” (*Ho Chi Minh 2011a, p. 65*)

This means that officials are not to be elevated above the People, nor should they assume the role of “revolutionary mandarins” or “benevolent paternal officials.” Rather, they are to act as public servants, ensuring the administration operates effectively for the benefit of the People.

In constructing a democratic state apparatus, Ho Chi Minh identified diseases that public officials are prone to, such as violating democratic rights, bureaucratic arrogance, corruption, wastefulness, abuse of power, and harassment of the People (*Hoang Chi Bao 2005, p. 211*). Consequently, he issued early warnings about the perils of bureaucratism and authoritarianism, identifying them as the primary causes of public disillusionment with the government.

To be a truly effective public servant, one must not only work efficiently but also be close to the People, listen to them, and respond to their needs promptly and reasonably. In a democratic system of governance, Ho Chi Minh continuously educated civil servants to uphold a high sense of responsibility, dedication to their duties, and avoid detachment from the masses. He stated:

“To serve the People, one must be close to them, learn from them, follow their example. Leadership is about guiding others; one cannot lead if one is distant from the masses.” (*Ho Chi Minh 2011c, p. 370*)

For Ho Chi Minh, a good public servant is not only an efficient administrator but also someone who remains deeply connected to the People, listens to their concerns, and works to resolve their grievances swiftly and justly. He underscored that a strong and enduring government requires a dedicated, People-oriented corps of cadres, who view public service as a sacred duty, and never

place personal gain above collective interest. He insisted that each cadre must engage in continuous moral self-cultivation, becoming a model of ethical conduct, responsibility, and civic virtue. As he famously put it:

“To guide the People, one must be a role model for them to follow.”
(*Ho Chi Minh 2011c, p. 16*)

Hence, civil servants must constantly refine their moral character, avoiding luxury, profiteering, or exploiting public office for private benefit. A good cadre is someone who is inseparably bound to the People, understands their sentiments and aspirations, and translates them into effective, appropriate policies, thereby contributing to the establishment of an incorruptible, accountable, and high-performance public administration system.

Secondly, the administrative apparatus must be streamlined, effective, efficient, and result-oriented.

Ho Chi Minh laid the foundation for building a socialist rule-of-law state that embodies the values of what he referred to as “the core and essence of benevolence” (Vu Dinh Hoe 2001, 325). Only a rule-of-law state can ensure a streamlined administration and avoid bureaucracy and cumbersome structures, through essential principles such as reducing intermediary levels to make the state apparatus more responsive and less stagnant. A benevolent rule-of-law state must operate through a pragmatic, streamlined, and efficient apparatus that minimizes intermediaries, thereby increasing agility and reducing inertia in serving the People.

As early as 1950, in his *Letter to the National Administrative Resistance Conference*, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the issue of “reforming and consolidating the state apparatus; revising and unifying administrative procedures” (Ho Chi Minh 2011c, 323). He later reiterated: “It is necessary to streamline and consolidate the entire apparatus from top to bottom, making it compact, rational, less costly in manpower and resources, yet capable of delivering numerous benefits to the People” (Ho Chi Minh 2011e, 155). According to Ho Chi Minh, the administrative apparatus must be logically organized, simple, and easily accessible, avoiding unnecessary overlaps and complexities among levels of government. He clearly pointed out that a multi-level and hierarchical state apparatus inevitably leads to bureaucratism, waste of time and resources, and a decline in administrative efficiency.

Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the state apparatus must not serve to complicate matters but should be oriented toward serving the People, what Mariana Mazzucato would later refer to as the “entrepreneurial state” (Mazzucato 2020, 57). This can only be achieved when administrative levels are structured in a simple and transparent manner, allowing the People to easily access and engage with government authorities. For this reason, reducing intermediate layers was, for him, a critical measure to ensure the state operates swiftly, efficiently, and more effectively serves the interests of the People. He demanded: “Everything must be arranged neatly and reasonably; everyone must be assigned meaningful, practical tasks” (Ho Chi Minh 2011d, 432).

In line with Karl Marx’s view that “the state plays a critical role in social regulation” (David Held 2013, 194), Ho Chi Minh emphasized the importance of clearly defined responsibilities and specific task assignments, avoiding blame-shifting and lack of accountability. He consistently highlighted that a clear, specific division of labor within the administrative apparatus is key to achieving efficiency and avoiding irresponsibility. He stressed: “There must be an overall plan to resolve each issue step by step. Responsibilities must be clearly assigned” (Ho Chi Minh 2011b, 487). According to him, when responsibilities are well-defined, each

individual becomes conscious of their duties and is better able to fulfill them, avoiding duplication, conflict, and inefficiency.

Ho Chi Minh also criticized the attitude of avoiding responsibility and dependency among officials. He pointed out: “Many committee members, though already assigned clear duties and in charge of specific tasks, fail to proactively seek solutions to implement their responsibilities effectively. Instead, they rely entirely on the chairman or higher authorities, lacking the ability to make decisions independently. How can any work progress under such conditions?” (Ho Chi Minh 2011a, 44).

Third, enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the administrative apparatus

To ensure that the administrative apparatus operates effectively, Ho Chi Minh emphasized three key factors:

Transparency and openness: The government must fully report to the People, without concealing information, so that the People may be informed and able to supervise. Ho Chi Minh placed particular importance on the supervisory role of the People over the administrative machinery, considering it a decisive factor in ensuring a government that truly serves the People. He emphasized that the government must operate transparently and openly in all its activities, including policies, administrative decisions, and matters related to finance and budgeting. To improve the efficiency and performance of the administrative apparatus, the government must act “democratically, fairly, transparently, and with utmost impartiality” (Ho Chi Minh 2011g, 104). Transparency not only enables the People to understand State decisions but also lays a solid foundation for public oversight and accountability. The more transparent a government is, the more likely it is to win the support and trust of the People, while simultaneously reducing corruption and abuse of power.

Accountability: Officials must be held accountable to the People; they must correct their mistakes and be responsible for any misconduct. Ho Chi Minh consistently emphasized the principle of accountability among civil servants to the People. In his view, officials are not merely implementers of decisions; they must also take responsibility for the consequences of those decisions. His perspective is clear: mistakes must be rectified, and wrongdoings must be met with accountability. Any misconduct by the cadres must be promptly identified and addressed to protect the people’s interests. Accountability is not only a moral principle but also a practical requirement for building an incorruptible, strong, and people-centered government. Ho Chi Minh constantly reminded cadres and public servants to remain aware that all their decisions and actions must serve the People’s interests, and if they err, they must proactively correct their mistakes and take responsibility. This approach helps the government maintain the People’s trust and reinforces the legitimacy of the state apparatus.

Reforming working methods: Simplifying cumbersome procedures to accelerate task resolution. Ho Chi Minh placed special emphasis on reforming working methods within the State apparatus in order to improve efficiency and reduce cumbersome administrative procedures. He believed that the State apparatus must operate swiftly and effectively in the service of the People. In the process of state-building, he required civil servants to uphold a spirit of responsibility and scientific working methods, ensuring that administrative procedures do not become obstacles to national development. He firmly opposed bureaucratic behavior, commandism, and formalism, stating: “From ministries to sectors to localities, the apparatus is overly cumbersome and continues to expand. This leads to bureaucratism and wastefulness” (Ho Chi Minh 2011g, 314).

Regarding the scientific nature of organizing and operating the administrative apparatus, Ho Chi Minh likened it to an industrial machine in a production line: “A machine is composed of many large and small parts assembled together. If all the parts work in harmony, the machine operates well and produces a lot. But if even one small part is out of sync, it negatively affects the entire machine” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011c, p. 408). Therefore, it is necessary to reorganize the government apparatus “from the bottom up, starting at the commune level: from the bottom up, starting at the commune level: from bottom to top, and from top to bottom, then everything will naturally succeed” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011c, p. 15).

Fourth, civil servants must maintain ethical conduct, probity, and a service-oriented commitment to the People

Ho Chi Minh placed particular importance on the ethics of public service among cadres. He said that the quintessential virtues of civil servants are diligence, frugality, integrity, righteousness, and impartiality, while abstaining from corruption and the abuse of authority. Ho Chi Minh highly valued the moral character of cadres and public servants within the state apparatus, emphasizing four essential ethical qualities for every administrative cadre: diligence, frugality, integrity, righteousness, and impartiality. These virtues not only reflect the personal character of cadres but also serve as decisive factors in the effectiveness of the state apparatus, particularly in serving the interests of the people.

Ho Chi Minh asserted that cadres and public servants must exhibit diligence and frugality in their work, meaning they should be industrious and avoid wasting time or energy on personal matters or luxurious indulgences. Integrity is demonstrated through honesty and incorruptibility, ensuring that cadres are not swayed by personal gain while performing their duties. Cadres must steer clear of all forms of corruption and misconduct, consistently upholding their moral conduct and ethical standards. Most importantly, administrative cadres must possess a spirit of impartiality, prioritizing the collective interests and the well-being of the people above personal gain. Every decision and action taken by cadres must be free from greed or self-interest, instead reflecting fairness, transparency, and a commitment to serving the common benefits of society.

Application in the practice of building the administrative system in contemporary Vietnam

Continuing the revolutionary career of Ho Chi Minh, the Communist Party of Vietnam clearly affirms the national leadership objective, as stated in the *Platform for National Construction during the Transition to Socialism (Supplemented and Developed in 2011)*: “Advancing towards socialism is the aspiration of our People, the correct choice of the Communist Party of Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh, consistent with the developmental trend of history” (Communist Party of Vietnam 2011, 70). This affirmation suggests the Party’s consistent commitment to the goal and ideal of following the path of socialism, which, in essence, aims at liberating the working People, with the specific content of “a wealthy People, a strong nation, democracy, justice, and civilization; where the People are the masters; with a highly developed economy based on modern productive forces and progressive production relations; a progressive culture imbued with national identity; people living in prosperity, freedom, and happiness with conditions for comprehensive development; all ethnic groups in the Vietnamese community are equal, united, respectful, and supportive of each other’s development; a socialist rule-of-law State of the People, by the People, and for the People led by the Communist Party of Vietnam; and a foreign policy of friendship and cooperation with all countries around the world” (Communist Party of Vietnam 2011, 70).

However, steadfastness does not mean insularity or conservatism, but rather constant renewal and reform, especially of the administrative apparatus, in order to perfect the institutional system that guarantees the People's right to mastery and better serves the People. This is precisely the message affirmed by General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, To Lam, in his resolute statement: "To enter the era of national resurgence, one of the particularly important and urgent tasks that must be carried out is the revolution in streamlining the organizational apparatus of the political system" (To Lam 2024, 1051: 6). From this perspective, the State has set goals, plans, and a roadmap to build the apparatus of the political system to be "Streamlined - Compact - Robust - Efficient - Effective" with the following core points:

First, streamlining the apparatus by reducing the number of focal points and intermediate levels. A comprehensive review and restructuring of agencies and organizations within the political system should be conducted to eliminate overlapping and duplication in functions and tasks, and to reduce the number of focal points and intermediate levels in order to enhance operational efficiency.

Second, clearly defining functions, tasks, and responsibilities by specifying the functions and tasks of each agency or organization to avoid overlap and duplication, while clearly delineating the responsibilities of each individual, especially leaders.

Third, downsizing the payroll while improving the quality of the workforce. Implement payroll downsizing in tandem with restructuring and improving the quality of cadres, civil servants, and public employees to meet the demands of new tasks.

Fourth, institutional improvement and innovation in leadership methods. Continue improving the legal system, mechanisms, and policies; innovate the leadership methods of the Party, the management of the State, and the operation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and political-social organizations to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the political system.

Fifth, promoting the supervisory role of the People. Attract and expand People's participation and oversight roles; strengthen and reinforce close relationships with the People, and promote the People's genuine right to mastery.

These core points aim to build a streamlined, strong, and effective political system capable of meeting the country's development requirements in the new era. Therefore, building a scientific, modern, streamlined, efficient, and effective administrative system that practically serves the People is the consistent objective of the Party and a high-level commitment of the State in leadership and implementation of concrete tasks. The Resolution of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party affirms its determination: "To build a State administration that serves the People, democratic, rule-of-law-based, professional, modern, clean, strong, open, and transparent" (Communist Party of Vietnam 2021, Vol. 1: 176). Therefore, the current task of building, organizing, and restructuring the State administrative apparatus of Vietnam is aimed at the following objectives:

Firstly, reforming the administration towards streamlining and efficiency

The mission of administrative reform falls under the purview of the Government, as clearly stipulated in the 2013 Constitution: "The Government shall uniformly manage the national administration; protect the rights and interests of the State and society" (Constitution 2013, 51). Accordingly, streamlining the workforce and reforming the state apparatus to be more compact by reducing intermediary levels are responsibilities of the state, primarily and directly overseen

by the Government. The current policy of the Vietnamese state on workforce streamlining and reforming the state apparatus toward a more compact and efficient structure, with fewer intermediary levels, has been clearly reflected in various administrative reform policies and plans in recent years. The State has recognized that an overly cumbersome state apparatus with numerous intermediary levels leads to inefficient management, resource wastefulness, and low operational effectiveness. Therefore, streamlining the workforce and reorganizing the state apparatus to be more compact and efficient is an urgent requirement to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of government operations, reduce administrative costs, and better serve the people.

Specifically, the Government has implemented administrative reform programs aimed at reducing the number of unnecessary civil servants and public employees while cutting ineffective intermediate levels to directly serve the needs and affairs of the People. Reducing intermediate levels within the State apparatus enhances decisiveness, shortens work processing procedures, reduces the dispersion of power, and creates a more flexible working environment.

To implement Ho Chi Minh's ideology, the Vietnamese State has carried out numerous administrative reforms in line with specific guiding viewpoints. *Resolution No. 17-NQ/TW (2017)* on the reform of the administrative apparatus emphasizes that the Communist Party of Vietnam aims to build a streamlined, effective, and efficient State apparatus, minimizing overlap and redundancy in functions among agencies. *Resolution No. 76/NQ-CP (2021)* on administrative reform for the 2021–2030 period clearly states that the Government targets the modernization of the administrative system, with strong application of information technology and digital transformation in public service activities. The Comprehensive Program on State Administrative Reform for the 2021–2030 period focuses on institutional reform, simplification of administrative procedures, and improvement of the quality of civil servants and public employees to better serve the needs of the People. These viewpoints manifest the State's consistent approach in building a democratic, transparent administration that serves the People, in accordance with Ho Chi Minh's ideology.

Second, simplifying administrative procedures

The Vietnamese State is a State of the People, by the People, and for the People. The Government carries out administrative reforms to ensure that “the State integrates into the community and does not stand apart from it” (Bui Ngoc Son 2005, 87). In recent years, the Government has implemented strong measures to simplify administrative procedures, enabling citizens and businesses to more easily access public services. According to a report by the Ministry of Home Affairs, between 2016 and 2023, Vietnam cut or simplified more than 3,800 administrative procedures out of a total of nearly 6,200. At the same time, over 60% of administrative procedures have been implemented online at levels 3 and 4, significantly reducing time and costs for the People.

In addition, the Party and the State have promoted the streamlining of the administrative apparatus toward a more compact and efficient structure. Statistics show that from 2017 to 2023, Vietnam reduced 12 general department-level units, 154 departments and agencies under ministries, and nearly 2,000 offices within those departments and agencies. At the local level, more than 7,000 divisions and public service units have been reorganized, helping to ease budgetary pressures and improve operational efficiency.

Furthermore, the Government issued *Resolution No. 76/NQ-CP (2021)* on administrative reform

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for the 2021–2030 period, which sets the goal of further reducing at least 20% of administrative procedures and a minimum of 10% of compliance costs for businesses and citizens. These outcomes demonstrate Vietnam’s strong determination to build a modern, transparent administration that serves the People, in line with Ho Chi Minh’s vision of a democratic, effective, and efficient administration.

Third, accelerating the restructuring of the administrative apparatus

Accelerating the restructuring of the administrative apparatus must adhere to the principle of “popular sovereignty” (Tocqueville 2007, 160). In order to move toward a new era of national development, Vietnam has implemented strong measures to streamline the administrative system, reduce redundancy and overlapping functions, and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of State agencies. This restructuring must be guided by “rational inquiry”. (Plato 2013, 180). Accordingly, *Resolution No. 18-NQ/TW* of the 12th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam emphasizes that administrative restructuring must be carried out by reducing organizational units and intermediate levels, in tandem with downsizing the workforce and improving the quality of civil servants and officials.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Home Affairs, from 2017 to 2023, Vietnam reduced 12 general departments, 154 departments and offices under ministries, and nearly 2,000 offices under those departments. At the local level, more than 7,000 divisions and public service units were reorganized. The merger of departments, agencies, and sectors has also been implemented to optimize the administrative apparatus and use the budget more efficiently. Specifically, many provinces and cities have merged departments with overlapping functions, such as the Department of Transport and the Department of Construction, or the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Foreign Affairs, helping to simplify management units and enhance administrative effectiveness.

At the same time, the Party and the State have promoted workforce downsizing in accordance with *Resolution No. 39-NQ/TW*, aiming to reduce at least 10% of payroll positions funded by the State budget during the 2015–2025 period. As of the end of 2023, more than 79,000 public officials and employees had been downsized, reducing budgetary pressure and improving the quality of the public workforce.

The restructuring of the administrative apparatus not only increases transparency and accountability of State agencies, but also enhances labor productivity and the quality of service for the People. Across all levels of the State apparatus, from central to local, information technology has been applied to handle administrative procedures. The implementation of e-government has contributed to increasing transparency and effectiveness in resolving administrative matters for the People.

Fourth, promoting the application of information technology in State management to reduce costs, enhance transparency, and improve work efficiency.

In particular, State agencies are required to innovate their working methods, simplify complex administrative procedures, and promote the decentralization of management, aiming to create a streamlined and efficient apparatus capable of “serving the People and the global system” (David Held 2013, 505). This reform mindset seeks to meet the demands of socio-economic development in the current context, while also building People’s trust in the government and contributing to the establishment of a public administration system that best serves the People.

Building a digital government and applying information technology to enhance service delivery for the People. The policy of the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam on building a digital government and applying information technology in administrative management is a key step in the reform process and in enhancing service efficiency for the People. A digital government not only helps optimize operational procedures and reduce administrative complexity but also strengthens transparency and openness in State operations. Online public services, digital platforms, and information management systems have been widely implemented to facilitate People's access to administrative services, minimizing direct contact and saving time and costs for both the government and the People.

Notably, the application of information technology in management activities enables the government to respond swiftly to citizens' requests while also enhancing its capacity for supervision, inspection, and timely response to emerging social issues.

According to the Government's report, by 2023, more than 90% of central-level administrative procedures had been publicly listed on the National Public Service Portal, enabling citizens to easily search and monitor them. Additionally, many localities have established community monitoring groups to ensure transparency in public policy implementation. Encouraging public participation not only helps limit negative behaviors and corruption but also creates conditions for People to accompany the government in socio-economic development. This is a precise application of Ho Chi Minh's ideology in building a democratic administration, where the People are not only beneficiaries of policies but also active participants in policy-making and monitoring.

Conclusion

Ho Chi Minh's ideology on building a democratic, streamlined, effective, and efficient public administration system remains highly relevant and holds significant importance in the ongoing process of administrative reform in contemporary Vietnam. The continued application and implementation of these principles are essential prerequisites for enhancing the effectiveness of state governance and meeting the requirements for the nation's sustainable development. This serves as the basis for the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to promulgate Resolution No. 190/2025/QH15 on addressing certain issues related to the reorganization of the state apparatus. This Resolution has been brought into social life and has received strong support and consensus from the People and the entire political system.

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