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### SOME APPROACH TO HISTORY ISSUES OF THE WORLD AND VIETNAM

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The context of globalization and the industrial revolution 4.0 has had a strong impact on all fields of science and history that are not outside the above rules. In recent years, the history of the world and Vietnam has changed in their approach to historical problems. Towards the above problem, the article mentions a number of research approaches and theory applied by historians of the world today; New approach of Vietnamese history. On the basis of dialectical materialism, Vietnamese historians step by step change their approach and move towards the transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary application in solving historical problems.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Method is a method, a systematic way given to solve a certain problem, always associated with the subject and object of the study. Therefore, depending on the research content, there are appropriate methods and approaches.

To approach historical problems, scientists around the world, in addition to the historical method, they can use a combination of different approaches to support and check each other to confirm the research results. In the scope of this article, we only focus on reflecting a number of methods: positivism; institutionalism; behavioralism; rational choice theory.

For Vietnam, since the renovation until now (1986 - 2020), before the strong development of science and technology and the requirements of society and the country in the context of integration, historical research and teaching activities in Vietnam have had new changes, gradually catching up with the general trend of the times. The approach of Vietnamese history shows new vision and thinking, inherits and develops historical scientific principles, respects historical

truths, is objective, honest in presenting and interpreting history; encourage learners to self-study and self-explore history, thereby developing historical thinking, positivism and critical thinking; building the capacity to analyze and evaluate characters, events, historical processes in a scientific and objective way; Draw rules, lessons of history.

This research is a summary of a number of approaches to historical problems in the world, drawn from our research and teaching practice.

## **SOME APPROACHES TO THE WORLD'S HISTORICAL PROBLEMS**

### ***Positivism***

The positivist method is based on acceptance that the world around us is real and that we can learn about those realities. The positivist method emphasizes empiricism, assuming that all knowledge must have real meaning, see, feel, hear and measure; is “an objective approach that can test theories and establish scientific laws. It aims to establish cause and effect” (Nicholas, 2010: 12). This method is often used in economics, sociology, psychology, politics, history...

The positivist approach emphasizes the theory of cause and effect, because of the ability to test and experiment; follow; save your results. This is also the general trend of scientific research methods in the 19th century, focusing on logical debates, experiences, observations, measurements... to evaluate historical problems. American historians studying modern history also pay close attention to the statistics specific to each war in which America has participated in (Statistical Summary America's Major Wars, 2007).

When applying empirical research methods to approach and evaluate historical problems, scientists obey the following principles: being objective, not dependent on personal values views; based on observable problems and not on the opinion or belief of researchers; based on the research "accurate quantitative data" collected and analyzed by experiment, survey, and statistics. At the same time, applying quantitative research methods, which are applied methods in empirical research, put predictive theories on an experimental - statistical basis (David, 2013: 15). To approach historical problems, the empirical method also requires researchers to conduct some other methods such as collecting data through experiment, survey, and event research; time series analysis...

In the method of empirical research, there are 3 common methods: Institutionalism; Behavioralism; Theory of rational choice.

### ***Institutionalism***

To approach historical issues, on the basis of institutional analytical survey, constitutional history research; the content of the constitution, the legal system, the structure of the government, the change of institutions... institutionalism will contribute to sketching out a picture of institutional history, the state apparatus, the ruling party's activities and the values that institutions bring to the people and the country. From an institutional perspective, historians can approach a

related fundamental research topic, such as the government as a manifestation of state institutions; interaction between institutions and individuals; the process of gaining, holding and exercising power in historical events; the value is shared and disseminated among members and all classes of the people.

“Legislative history research refers to attempts to follow the progress of a bill through the legislative process and examine documents created through that process,” American scientists said. The purpose of conducting such research is to determine legislative intent, which is the legislative purpose as intended by Congress”. To facilitate the institutional research researchers of Congress to form the Congressional Collection that includes congressional hearings that took place from 1817 onwards and to provide digital copies of the report of the Congressional Research Service (and the earlier Legislative Reference Service) from 1916 to present, as well as the National Assembly Commission Printings from 1817 onwards (US Department of the Interior).

### ***Behavioralism***

In researching and teaching history, scientists also apply behavioral methods, apply the theory of orderliness in finding similarities, making predictions; or verify, verify, find political acts that are closely linked; pay attention to phenomena that can be observed; and institutional behavior is individual behavior. Behavioral theory also applies effectively skills: collecting, observing, storing, measuring, and analyzing behavior; quantify; Focusing on values: fairness, democracy, freedom, ethics ... do not fall into the explanation of experience, to verify scientifically. Typical for this school is David Easton, with works: *An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems*, in *World Politics* 9 (1957); *The Analysis of Political Structure*, New York: Routledge (1990); *Divided Knowledge: Across Disciplines, Across Cultures*, (Ed. With C. Schelling) (1991).

Behavioralism focuses on systematizing research theory and the parts that combine closely with each other to develop knowledge, expand knowledge on political society, apply integration (interdisciplinary, transdisciplinarity) such as *Lincoln's Wartime Leadership: The First Hundred Days* (Don, 1987: 2-18).

1. Laws - Generalization and interpretation of laws.
2. Commitment to Verify - The ability to verify generalizations.
3. Engineering - A test attitude toward engineering.
4. Quantitative - Express the results numerically if applicable or significant.
5. Values - Keep ethical evaluation and empirical interpretation distinct.
6. Systematization - Consider the importance of theory in research.
7. Pure science - Defer pure science rather than applied science.
8. Integration - Integrating social science and values.

### ***Theory of rational choice***

Theory of rational choice is an explanation of human behavior and the assumption that “people make decisions with the aim of giving them as much benefit as possible.... Theory of rational choice is the benefit maximization

process” (David, 2013: 23). Therefore, in order to explain behavior, people have to find out the target they come from and stand under the forces of choice, they will learn the information, costs, benefits, and direction of benefits as much as possible - "maximize benefits ". Every behavior is self-centered.

Using the rational selection method in the historical approach, the researcher will analyze and evaluate the method of responding to challenges in political institutions, public policy and other phenomena. And for the sake of it, compromise emerges when it is more beneficial to the group than the maintenance of an individual's point of view, which is the source of political parties; Individuals can make political decisions, but groups cannot. According to this theory, everyone who "plays" knows and accepts the rules of the game (standards, rules). Therefore, using this method, historians can approach and evaluate the history of policy formulation and development, strategic thinking, the lines of the ruling parties, governments, institutions or political system... as well as its impact on the people through its values: freedom, democracy, happiness, development, civilization, progress.

## **APPROACH OF VIETNAMESE HISTORY**

### ***Some principled issues on the innovation of historical research and teaching methods in Vietnam***

The development of the Vietnamese history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was partly influenced by Confucian thought, feudal historical thinking and national views, attached importance to the history of the feudal dynasties attached to that dynasty's territory, absoluteization of the historical role of the Kinh (Vietnamese) nation, did not pay attention to the locality and development history of the community of other ethnic groups (other than the Kinh).

Thus, perceptions about Vietnamese history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries stems from the monarchy tradition, mainly the history of the dynasties, kings, courtiers, and people's history is very fuzzy. The history of ethnic minorities is not mentioned. Vietnamese modern history for a long time also only heavily presented Vietnamese history. Why does our country have 54 ethnic groups that only honor the history of the Vietnamese, leaving other ethnic groups out?

Therefore, all over the country, only the history of the North is presented with its origins from the primitive times to the time of Hung Vuong, An Duong Vuong, from Chinese domination to feudal, contemporary and modern times. And the history of the South Central Coast only started from the sixteenth century, the history of the south only began in the seventeenth century.

History of Vietnam is not only the history of a part of the Vietnamese people but also the history of all the ethnic groups in the great family of Vietnamese ethnic groups, including those who previously had their own state like the

Cham, the Khmer. All cultures that once existed in the Vietnamese territory are the heritage of Vietnamese culture, all forming part of Vietnamese culture.

The popular opinion of Vietnamese historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often focused on presenting the resistance wars against foreign aggression without paying adequate attention to economic, cultural - social issues; some Ho dynasties and Mac dynasties have not been highly appreciated (even some researchers are still dominated by old views, so at times, they even call the Ho dynasty as Nhuan Ho, and call the Mac dynasty Nguy Mac); not yet objectively evaluated the role and historical positions of the Nguyen Lords in Dang Trong; has not clearly and transparently assessed the contributions of the Nguyen Dynasty to the national history, the mistakes and fundamental limitations of the Nguyen Dynasty as well as the responsibility of the Nguyen Dynasty to lose the country to the French colonialists. "This view has played a role to foster the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, to preserve sovereignty, to regain independence" (Momoki, 2019).

In the context of Vietnam's reform and increasingly deep international integration, Vietnamese History researchers and teachers have faced many challenges. According to Professor Ha Van Tan: "History is objective. Historical facts are facts that exist independently of our consciousness. But historical truth is subjective. And people copy history for different purposes... For ancient times, errors are more likely to happen, because the rarer the data, the harder it is to check. In many cases, to recover events, the historian must resort to logical speculation, and even imagination. But in case the fact presented is only a hypothesis, it must be made clear, do not let others believe it is the correct truth. In many historical works today, the new is just a hypothesis with what was the truth is often confused" (Ha, 2007: 30-34).

Therefore, to innovate the scientific research on Vietnamese history is to try to reconstruct a scientific historical picture, objectively, even knowing that "some problems may never be completely resolved; defining the nature of knowledge in social sciences; assumptions about the social structural background as it is reflected in the subject classification; the relationship between social science, practice and social action" (Peter, 2007: 87). Renovate, ensure the nationality of humanity and progress; fostering national pride; have a correct and positive attitude: protect natural resources, nature, environment, and aim for sustainable development. Correct awareness of patriotism and genuine national progress of the Vietnamese nation. Reflect objectively the position of the Vietnamese nation-state in the region and in the world in historical periods. Develop human values, progressive humanism; eliminate social, cultural, ethnic and religious stereotypes and stigma; strive towards the values of tolerance, compassion, respect for differences, reconciliation, harmony and cooperation. Fight for social progress, transparency, justice, rule of law, civilization, and ensure equality between ethnic groups, communities, genders and social groups.

Renovating history research and teaching towards an open, interdisciplinary direction (transdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary...); consider and

evaluate historical issues in a comprehensive and multidimensional way; combine family and society; individuals and collectives - community. Renovating history teaching activities suitable to socio-economic conditions; to pay attention to the interests and abilities of teachers and learners of history, it is necessary to have flexible and flexible solutions to ensure a common level, compatible with the region and the world.

Despite many shortcomings in history training activities in Vietnam, success is also a premise for the Vietnamese history to innovate and develop. Very few history graduates work in jobs they call themselves historians, but the skills they acquire are of fundamental importance in many professions, and those trained in calendars. History has found success in many professions. Typically, the training program in history of Thu Dau Mot University equips learners with a comprehensive education, with general knowledge, experience in locating information and the ability to think and communicate effectively. These are exactly the skills that historical research hone. Students learn to make questions, locate and analyze information and develop answers, write effectively, form coherent arguments, and deliver successful presentations. Equip students with a historical perspective on the development of human society; promote the power of critical thinking and analytical ability in understanding historical events; moving from imparting one-way knowledge to guiding learners to exploit historical data to seek historical truth; decode events, documents, phenomena, artifacts ... historical in order to perceive historical truths, make inferences, assess context, origin, causes. Learning history is learning how to self-study, analyze, comment, evaluate historical problems, and develop personal capabilities.

### *New approach of Vietnamese history*

The new approach of Vietnamese History is deeply demonstrated through two works "The Southern region, 10 volumes" (Phan Huy Le, editor, 2017) and the Vietnamese History Ministry, 25 volumes (National history).

In which, the new approaches of Vietnamese History are clearly shown through the Ministry of National History. "The Ministry of National History aims to build a new understanding of the entire and comprehensive Vietnamese history; has been approved by the Party and State leaders since 2014. The late Professor Phan Huy Le (chief editor of the national history department) has emphasized that he must write completely, comprehensively and objectively. Therefore, this is the most massive national history ever, for the first time mentioning many "historical gaps" that are considered "sensitive" such as land reform, Humanities - Fine work of art, reform creating capitalist business and commerce in the North, bourgeois re-education in the South after 1975, boat people ... The late Professor Phan Huy Le emphasized: "Viewing history must be very objective and something that is objective of history will last. And something that in a certain current situation must honor or lower it, it only exists in a certain condition. History has to fulfill civic responsibility, but the highest mission of

history is how to create historical pages with objective and honest historical data” (Vu, 2017).

**\* *Re-evaluate the roles and positions of some dynasties***

Previously, some Ho and Mac dynasties were not appreciated (Phan Dang Thanh, Truong Thi Hoa, 2012; Tran Hong Duc, editor, 2018), even some researchers are still dominated by old views. Therefore, there were times when the Ho Dynasty was called Nhuan Ho, and called the Mac Dynasty the Nguy Mac, in recent decades, those limitations have been overcome. In the history of Vietnam, the Ho and Mac dynasties were recognized as the orthodox dynasties, the contributions of the Ho and Mac dynasties in the fields of economy, culture and education were highly appreciated, especially the reform of Ho Quy Ly or the great achievements in culture and education of the Mac Dynasty (Nguyen, 2018).

Historical fact shows that, since 1672, the nation of Dai Viet was divided into two regions: Dang Trong and Dang Ngoai, with the Gianh river as the boundary separating the country. With Vietnamese students, to distinguish between Dang Trong and Dang Ngoai is: 1/ Two countries; 2/ Two states; 3/ Two governments; 4 / Being a country, belonging to the Le dynasty, it is not easy.

When studying Dang Trong, Vietnamese History also looks back on the sovereignty over the sea and islands, especially the two archipelagos of Spratly Islands and Paracel Islands. One of the great merits of Nguyen Lords and Nguyen Dynasty is to expand the banks of the country, unify the country, and explore the Mekong Delta. In 1757, Nguyen Lord shaped the territory of Vietnam which was basically the same as the present Vietnamese territory from the North to Ca Mau, from the Central Highlands to the sea, including coastal areas, coastal islands and two Hoang Sa - Truong Sa archipelago (Vu, 2017).

Therefore, the objective, scientific assessment, the historical role and position of the Nguyen Lords in Dang Trong and Trinh Dang Ngoai have been satisfactorily resolved by the Vietnamese historians, through the National History Department, is a new success in the approach of Vietnamese History.

***The role of the Nguyen Dynasty***

The new approach of Vietnamese History is shown through a clear and transparent assessment of the Nguyen Dynasty's contributions to the national history, the fundamental mistakes and limitations of the Nguyen dynasty as well as responsibility of the Nguyen dynasty to lose the country to French colonialism. Regarding the Nguyen Dynasty, a number of historical figures of this dynasty are also evaluated more comprehensively. The issue of public opinion / impeachment is clear and objective.

When researching on the Nguyen Dynasty, Vietnamese History with a new approach: “The Nguyen has great merit in forming and shaping a unified state

and establishing a territory - the living space of Vietnam. The merit of the Nguyen in this regard cannot be denied. It is time to see clearly the merits and crimes of the Nguyen Dynasty” (Vu , 2017). Two major crimes of the Nguyen Dynasty were to lose the country to the French army and be too conservative, to refuse all offers of renewing the country by many progressive intellectuals.

### ***The South China Sea Issue***

Recently, the issue of the South China Sea has been interested in research by domestic and foreign historians, including the Spratly Islands and Paracel Islands, which are of great interest to the society. This is a very important part of the territory and territorial waters of Vietnam. Through the research process, historians have presented concrete and objective historical evidences that affirm Vietnam's long-term and continuous sovereignty over the two archipelagos of Paracel Islands and Spratly Islands.

### ***The 1979 Border War***

Previously, there were some historical studies that often avoided mentioning because of some sensitive issues in Vietnam-China diplomatic relations. However, in the National History Ministry, researchers correctly point out the nature of the war in 1979 and in fact lasted until the mid-80s of the 20th century, it was the war of invasion of Vietnam. South conducted by the Beijing government.

### ***About the puppet army, the puppet government***

In some documents and research works, the concept of puppet army and puppet government is often used to refer to the government of the Republic of Vietnam or the Army of the Republic of Vietnam in South Vietnam. However, up to now, in Vietnamese historians, that concept is not completely accurate when referring to a political regime that has existed in history.

### ***National communities and territories***

Ancient history of Vietnam is perceived to include 3 major cultural centers associated with the formation of the first states in the territory of Vietnam: the state of Van Lang - Au Lac in the North, the state of Lam Ap in Central and Phu Nam state in the South.

New research results have determined that Vietnam's history is history of all communities, ethnic groups (ethnic groups) that has existed in the current territorial space, has contributed to building and protecting the country, creating Vietnamese culture. The Kinh (Vietnamese) are the majority ethnic group, currently accounting for about 86% of the population, of course holding the role of a solidarity center, a key force in the historical process. But all ethnic minorities have their contributions that need to be respected and fully reflected in their history. That is the new approach of Vietnamese History.



### ***Vietnam going South is an inevitable result***

Vietnam's territorial expansion was conducted mainly to the south due to two main reasons: the use of the philosophy of power (the might of China) and the geography factor (the Truong Son range). Vietnam has also tried several times to move to the West, but there is a long and frail mountain range that is not as expected. As a result, Vietnam and Laos continue to maintain traditional friendship despite the historical law of "no good relations between neighboring countries".

Territorial expansion took a long time, starting with the Ly dynasty. Hau Le, the period when the territorial expansion was conducted most extensively and strongly in the history of Vietnam. The expansion of the territory to the south began in 1069. As a result, Chiem Thanh ceded 3 continents: Bo Chanh, Dia Ly, Ma Linh. Based on the land of Dia Ly in Le Ninh district, Quang Binh province, Ma Linh in Ben Hai district, Quang Tri province, Bo Chinh in Quang Trach district, Bo Trach, Tuyen Hoa in Quang Binh province, it can be said that the Ly dynasty extended its southern territory to present-day Quang Tri province. Vietnam's territorial expansion shows that a typical rule in human history is that the great fish eats the small. Vietnam did not cease to struggle in the historical period to survive alongside a stronger China, but in turn proceeded to conquer weaker Chiem Thanh and Chan Lap. This shows two sides in the historical characteristics of Vietnam.

The territorial expansion to the south has boosted Vietnam's economic development, especially in food production. In addition to the tropical monsoon climate with rainfall and a lot of sunshine, this region also has rich resources, fertile and large land. It is also impossible to ignore the contributions made by Chinese immigrants here. While there is not enough manpower to develop, the participation of the Chinese people has reduced the burden on the Vietnamese people, promoted the commercial development of the South and strengthened the multicultural identity - multi-ethnic groups of Vietnam. Regarding the enhancement of the multicultural - multi-ethnic characteristic of Vietnam, it is impossible to rule out Chan Lap's role.

### ***Focusing on economic history, culture and society***

The pages of anti-foreign aggression history should have a worthy position in the national history, but together with the history of anti-aggression, there is a need to attach more importance to the history of national construction with economic, social and cultural achievements... and the history of building the country has always been the permanent foundation of the nation. In recent decades, such a comprehensive conception of Vietnamese history has been confirmed and many studies on socio-economic, cultural, religious, and religious have provided the basis of learn to exercise the comprehensiveness of ethnic history.

## CONCLUSION

To approach historical problems, scientists around the world, in addition to the historical method, they can use a combination of different approaches to support and check each other to confirm the research results. The above approach is often used by American, British, French, German historians... in historical research to explain works in a multi-dimensional and multi-method direction. In recent years, the theoretical systems such as positivism, institutionalism, behavioralism, rational choice theory... have been used and explain the nature of historical events.

In Vietnam, with the background of dialectical materialism worldview, Vietnamese historians have recently had new approaches to research and teaching in a multidimensional and transdisciplinary perspective. The breakthrough changes of Vietnamese history must include research works and projects such as the booklet *The Land of the South and the History of Vietnam (National History)* edited by the late Professor Phan Huy Le... there have been changes in the approach and application of many research theories of the social sciences and humanities in research, explaining historical events and phenomena in the direction of "history is non-stop conversation".

Thus, with the impact of the context of globalization and the industrial revolution 4.0, Vietnamese history has gradually changed in its transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach and applied many theories and research methods of other scientific disciplines, and towards the approach of research methods and theories of many historical schools in the world.

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