

**HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS**

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**THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN  
CRISIS MANAGEMENT FROM THE WORKING  
PERSPECTIVE RESPONDING TO COVID - 19  
PANDEMIC IN VIETNAM**

**DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY**

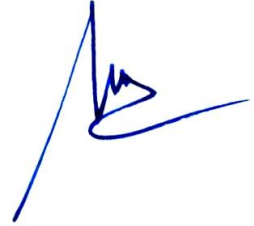
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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. The urgency of researching the topic

Humanity today is witnessing many serious crises. It brings “new challenges” to be solved and the theoretical frameworks that have been developed by various scholars may not be sufficient to solve them. Therefore, the study of crisis management is very important in the current context.

Crisis management is part of the national governance mechanism to deal with urgent, serious, and unusual situations with the participation of many subjects, but the state (more specifically the government) has a special role. Therefore, dealing with crises is the core responsibility of governments because then the government is given special powers and measures, exceptions to take actions or impose measures that are not allowed in normal circumstances to resolve the emergency. Therefore, the role of the government in crisis management needs to be prioritized for research and evaluation.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a typical situation that challenges the crisis management mechanism of all countries in the world, including Vietnam. The pandemic has shown a series of new challenges that have emerged, forcing countries to once again review their governance methods and from here learn many valuable lessons to effectively handle future crises. For Vietnam, when the Covid-19 pandemic appeared and spread, seriously affecting the socio-economic life of the country, the Government, as the leading agency, together with other entities, was very determined and active in directing and operating to prevent and mobilize unified and focused resources to respond in order to minimize the consequences, soon repel the epidemic and bring the country back to a "new normal" state. However, the response process also revealed many weaknesses in the government's crisis management work, such as legal policies, management mechanisms, inspection, supervision, enforcement resources, human resource management, etc., thereby requiring the development of a system of viewpoints and solutions to better promote the role of the Vietnamese Government.

The work of preventing and combating the Covid-19 pandemic also shows certain gaps in the awareness of crisis and crisis management of many countries, thereby posing strong pressure to improve the crisis management system, in which the most important is the role of governments in responding to the complex crises that lie ahead. So the research question here is: In the work of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, how has the crisis management role of the Vietnamese Government been implemented? What is the theoretical basis and practical basis for that assessment from the response to the pandemic?

For the above reasons, the researcher chose the topic: ***"The role of government in crisis management from the perspective of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam"*** as his research thesis.

### 2. Purpose and research tasks of the thesis

#### 2.1. Research purpose

Based on clarifying theoretical issues about the role of the government in crisis management and the practical role of the governments of some countries in the world and Vietnam in crisis management due to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, the thesis proposes viewpoints and solutions to promote the role of the government in crisis management in the coming time.

#### 2.2. Research tasks

*Firstly*, an overview of research documents related to the thesis, thereby clarifying the gaps in research on the role of government in crisis management and more clearly defining the research direction of the thesis.

*Second*, clarify the general theoretical basis of crisis and crisis management, and the role of government in crisis management.

*Third*, research, analyze, and evaluate the current situation of government crisis management in some countries around the world and Vietnam in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic; Point out the results, limitations, and causes of this situation.

*Fourth*, based on research on crisis management experiences around the world, propose solutions from a political science approach to enhance the role, effectiveness and efficiency in crisis management of the Vietnamese government in response to possible future crises.

### **3. Subject and scope of the thesis research**

#### **3.1. Research object of the thesis**

The research object of the thesis is the role of government in crisis management and the practical response to the Covid-19 pandemic of the Vietnamese Government.

#### **3.2. Scope of the thesis research**

3.2.1. *About space*: in Vietnam and some countries in the world

3.2.2. *About time*: from the outbreak of Covid - 19 in the world (December 2019) to 2022.

### **4. Methodology and research methods of the thesis**

#### **4.1. About methodology**

The thesis uses the methodology of dialectical materialism and historical materialism to study issues related to the content of the topic. The thesis is also researched based on the system of theories on crisis, crisis management, theory of rule of law, theory of good governance. In addition, the viewpoints of the Party and policies of the Vietnamese State in responding to the pandemic and recovery and development in the future are also important theoretical bases of the thesis.

#### **4.2. About research methods**

Based on the above mentioned political approach and methodology, the thesis will use the following research methods: analysis - synthesis method; statistical method; method of combining theory with practice; statistical method; historical method; comparative method, case study method... to solve the problems raised in the thesis research.

### **5. New contributions of the thesis**

- The thesis provides a system of concepts, characteristics of crisis, crisis management and the role of government in crisis management.

- The thesis also discusses and evaluates the factors affecting the role of government in crisis management.

- Based on the experiences of some governments in the world in responding to the pandemic and summarizing and assessing the current situation of the Vietnamese government in the Covid-19 pandemic, the thesis proposes viewpoints and solutions to promote the role and governance capacity of the Vietnamese government to identify, respond to and effectively handle crises that may occur in the future.

### **6. Scientific significance of the thesis**

- The thesis has reference value in building and perfecting mechanisms and policies on governance in general and crisis management in particular in Vietnam.

- Has reference value in research and teaching at specialized training units related to the topic and for those interested in the field.

### **7. Structure of the thesis**

In addition to the introduction, conclusion, list of published works of the author related to the thesis and list of references, the content of the thesis is structured into 4 chapters and 13 sections.

## **Chapter 1**

### **OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH RELATED TO THE TOPIC AND ISSUES THAT NEED FURTHER RESEARCH**

#### **1.1. RESEARCH WORKS ON CRISIS, CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

##### **1.1.1. Research works on crisis and crisis management**

The development of the concept of crisis management is not only the result of modern academic research or the practice and experience of organizations and agencies, but also researchers who have delved into finding ways to respond to and manage crises. Some of the typical authors in the world and in the country include: Arjen Boin, Simmon Bennet , Leonard J.Marcus. Eric J.McNulty, Joseph M.Handerson, Barry C.Dorn, Tugba Fener, Tugce Cevik, Doan Duc ; Nguyen Thi Phi Van ; Nguyen Trung Tin .

##### **1.1.2. Research on the role of Government in crisis management includes**

reports in 2015, 2018, works by Nguyen Ba Chien, Le Hai Binh; Vu Cong Giao, Phan Xuan Son ; Stefanie Haeffele, Virgil Henry Storr ; International scientific conference on Law on emergency situations ; articles by authors Nguyen Ngoc Ha, Lai Ngoc Hai, Tran Anh Tuan, Jianying Xiao , Hui Zhang , Lixin Han ...

#### **1.2. RESEARCH WORKS ON RESPONSE TO COVID - 19 PANDEMIC**

##### **1.2.1. Projects related to responding to the Covid - 19 pandemic**

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, there have been many domestic and foreign research works on the issue of response such as: Joshua Gans , Gregor Miloš, Novelli Edoardo, Lilleker Darren, Coman Ioana A, Taylor & Francis ; Proceedings of the National Workshop: Choosing policies to restore and develop Vietnam's economy during Covid-19, National Economics University; International scientific workshop "Sustainable development management in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic", Institute of Leadership and Public Policy (Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics) in collaboration with the Association of Vietnamese Scientists and Experts Global (AVSE Global) ; National scientific workshop "Resources and motivations for socio-economic recovery and development in conditions of safe, flexible adaptation, effective control of the Covid-19 pandemic with national and local visions." , Vo Tat Thang, Vu Trong Lam.

##### **1.2.2. Research group on the role of government in responding to the Covid 19 epidemic**

Ho Chi Minh City Command , Arjen Boin, Allan McConnell, Paul 't Hart, Walid Abbas Zaher , Le Hai Binh , Nguyen Van Quan, Vu Cong Giao , Nguyen Nhu Nghia, Lan Huong - Minh Nguyet, Bui Thanh Nam, Nguyen Thi Thanh Tam .

#### **1.3. GENERAL ASSESSMENT AND ISSUES THAT NEED FURTHER RESEARCH**

##### **1.3.1. Results achieved from published works related to the thesis "The role of government in crisis management from the perspective of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam"**

*Firstly*, in recent years, research on the role of the government (or the state) in governance and crisis management in general has received much attention from individuals and scientific research groups in the world and Vietnam.

Foreign studies on crisis management show a tendency towards quantitative research; multidisciplinary research methods; the scope of research from the military and natural disaster fields is expanded to the economic, political, social and other fields. At the same time, both in-depth and longitudinal research on crises. The field of crisis management is characterized by two main trends: crisis management planning and analysis of unexpected situations of organizations in a crisis. Most of these studies are concerned with management and risk

management of enterprises, organizations or individuals. The studies have presented the concept of crisis, crisis management, processes, methods and models for responding to crises. In addition, many works also analyze the causes of success or failure when facing and handling crises in many different aspects and fields.

There have been many research projects in the world and in Vietnam on the role of government. Each study goes into depth to understand and clarify the role, influence, and methods that the government uses to solve and handle challenges in each specific area of political, economic, cultural and social life... Up to now, there has been almost no scientific research project in Vietnam that has gone into depth on the issue of research on the role of government in crisis management, but that role has only been summarized in a number of research projects and evaluated and summarized from a number of seminars, scientific articles, or integrated into research on the role of national governance of governments in general.

*Second*, since the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, a series of scientific works have been published. In Vietnam, there have been many research works, or scientific conferences organized at international or national scale to assess the impact of the pandemic and at the same time propose solutions to respond and recover, and develop. The studies also agree that the pandemic has caused a very serious crisis in human history, is a global challenge, tests governance capacity and poses many issues for humanity to ponder. Many solutions have been proposed, but most of them are viewed from an economic perspective and are suitable for the scale of each organization and enterprise, and have only stopped at assessing the impact of the pandemic, proposing urgent solutions for Vietnam to handle the consequences and restore economic development, ensuring social security.

### **1.3.2. Issues raised and need to be further researched in the thesis:**

The results of research published domestically and internationally also show that there are still scientific gaps in the study of the role of the Vietnamese government in crisis management. Specifically as follows:

*Firstly*, in Vietnam, there have not been many works that systematize and clarify theoretical contents about crisis and crisis management, influencing factors, the role of stakeholders in crisis management, especially the role of the government as an executive body.

*Second*, in Vietnam, there has not been an in-depth study from a political science perspective on the role of the government in responding to and resolving problems and challenges arising during crises.

*Third*, studies have not yet provided fundamental viewpoints and solutions from a political perspective to promote the role and governance capacity of the Vietnamese government in responding to possible crises.

Therefore, the thesis "The role of government in crisis management from the perspective of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam focuses on solving the following issues:

#### ***In theory:***

(i) Clarify the concept, characteristics, nature, causes and effects/impacts of crisis, distinguish between types of crisis;

(ii) Clarifying the concept of crisis management, theoretical models of crisis management, the meaning of crisis management; requirements set forth in crisis management;

(iii) The thesis identifies the roles of the government in crisis management; influencing factors, requirements and challenges of the government in crisis management.

(iv) Experience in responding, preventing, minimizing impacts and ensuring stable development of some governments around the world through the Covid-19 pandemic.

***In terms of practice:*** The thesis generalizes, clarifies and deepens the role of crisis management through the work of preventing and fighting the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam, including:

- (i) Overview of the causes, developments and impacts of the Covid -19 pandemic in the world and in Vietnam.
- (ii) The role of the Vietnamese Government in crisis management since the Covid-19 pandemic appeared and spread until the pandemic was pushed back.
- (iii) Limitations and challenges facing the role of the Vietnamese government in crisis management due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- (iv) Viewpoints and solutions to promote the role of the Vietnamese government in crisis management in the face of the risk of crises appearing with increasing frequency and becoming more complex.

## **Chapter 2**

### **THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES ON THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

#### **2.1. SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

##### **2.1.1. Concept, characteristics, and causes of crisis**

###### ***2.1.1.1. Concept of crisis***

To have a clearer identification of the crisis, the thesis has introduced the following concepts:

- Timothy Coombs: “ A crisis is a significant threat to operations that can have negative consequences if not handled properly. Thus, a crisis is perceived as an unpredictable event that threatens important stakeholder expectations, can seriously affect organizational performance and produce negative outcomes”

- Rosenthal, Charles and Hart: crisis is “a situation in which there is a perceived threat to the core values or life-sustaining functions of a social system that requires urgent remedial action under uncertain circumstances”.

- Brecher in Crisis Management: From the perspective of the state, a crisis is a situation where three necessary and sufficient conditions converge, arising from changes in the external or internal environment. All three are perceived by top decision makers: a threat to basic values, concurrently or leading to a high probability of engaging in military conflict situations, and a perception of a limited time to respond to external threats to values.

###### ***2.1.1.2. Characteristics of the crisis***

From the above approaches to crisis, it can be seen that crisis often has the following characteristics: Abnormality, surprise , Uncertainty , Large impact, often multi-disciplinary , Widespread, Causing serious consequences and harm in the short and long term.

###### ***2.1.1.3. Causes of the crisis***

Crisis is caused by the accumulation of systemic conflicts due to uneven development, collisions and interactions of factors that to a certain extent will create imbalance and conflict, causing it to turn into an abnormal state. Generally speaking , crisis can arise from two causes: (1) nature; (2) humans. Types of crisis include: *natural disasters, environment , economy , politics and social conflicts, health , technology and cyber security .*

##### **2.1.2. Crisis management**

###### ***2.1.2.1. Concept of crisis management***

- Crisis management is the government's activities in using its management tools and resources to monitor, detect, supervise, prevent and handle crises according to its will and it promotes the role of the state in resolving crises by command and administrative measures and by state tools.

- Crisis management: involves the participation of many subjects in society (party organizations, state/government, socio-political organizations, people), in which the state (government) plays the leading role.

In this thesis, crisis management is understood to include the steps in the process of preparing for and handling a crisis before, during and after it occurs. These processes involve identifying, assessing, understanding and responding to a crisis in order to prevent or reduce the damage that the crisis may cause to a country, a region or an organization and its stakeholders. There are many subjects involved in crisis management, in which the government/state plays a pivotal role. Its purpose is to protect the organization, sector, group of people or stakeholders from damage and prevent or minimize the negative consequences of the crisis”.

#### ***2.1.2.2. Stages of crisis management***

The process of a crisis usually goes through stages:

+ *Pre-crisis*: This stage involves identifying risks, potential vulnerabilities, monitoring early warning signals, and developing emergency response plans.

+ *Crisis response*: government activity shifts from preparation and planning to immediate implementation and rapid action. This phase focuses on dealing with the current threat, minimizing negative impacts, and stabilizing the situation as quickly as possible.

+ *Post-crisis*: organizations and communities evaluate the effectiveness of crisis response, learn lessons from past events, and update plans and processes to improve future response capabilities.

#### ***2.1.2.3. Main contents in crisis management***

*Crisis identification, early warning and prevention*: aims to create an environment in which potential crises are detected and monitored early and remotely, so that crises cannot form and develop.

*Crisis containment*: is understood as the decisions and actions of the government to prevent the crisis from escalating and becoming worse.

*Crisis management*: the new government has the management tools and resources to effectively and decisively handle the crisis.

*Recovery after the crisis*: it is necessary to quickly identify priority areas to return organizations and society to normal, remove restrictions on people's freedoms, support economic recovery and reassure public opinion after the crisis.

#### ***2.1.2.4. Requirements, goals and significance of crisis management***

*Regarding the requirements of crisis management* : First, to recognize the nature of the crisis, Second, to make important decisions. Third, to create changes in awareness and gain people's support for the government's policies, measures, and goals in crisis management. Fourth, to quickly end the crisis. Fifth, to learn lessons from the crisis.

*Crisis management has the following implications*: (i) Governments affirm their capacity and reputation in front of the public, helping to maintain social stability and increase legitimacy; (ii) Improve the capacity to respond to unusual situations; (iii) Contribute to preventing incidents from occurring in a "domino" reaction, helping to minimize the impact and scope of the incident.

*The goal of crisis management* is to bring society back to a normal state, but that state will have different and newer characteristics than the state before the crisis and that will be the "new normal state".

## **2.2. ON THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

### **2.2.1. Government and its general role**

The thesis examines *the role of the government* , the tasks and functions that the



government is assigned and must perform in the management and administration of the country and nation in general and in crisis management in particular.

In its broadest sense, government is understood to mean the state—an organization or system through which a community, society, or nation exercises power, makes decisions, and enforces laws.

The thesis has provided an understanding of the role and role of the government. At the same time, it is clarified that the Government is understood as the executive branch (or executive body) and the administrative apparatus of a country - an important part in the organization and implementation of state power, headed by a president, prime minister or another leader, together with ministers or cabinet members in charge of departments or functional agencies. The 2013 Constitution of Vietnam affirms that the Government is the highest state administrative body of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, exercising executive power, and is the executive body of the National Assembly. The Government holds the unified power to manage all aspects of the country's socio-economic life, first of all deciding on issues of policies, mechanisms, policies, and institutions of state administrative management. The Government performs the following main roles and functions:

*First*, the Government performs the role of planning and implementing national policies.

*Second*, the Government is the highest state administrative body of Vietnam, which means that the Government holds the unified power to manage and operate all aspects of the country's socio-economic life, first of all deciding on issues regarding policies, mechanisms, and institutions of state administrative management.

*Third*, the government is the executive body of the National Assembly, which means the Government executes and organizes the implementation of laws and resolutions of the National Assembly.

### **2.2.2. The specific role of government in crisis management**

In the event that social life has changes due to impacts from natural factors or social factors, that is, in the event of unusual social situations, or even crises, that extremely important and significant role must be placed in a position of special importance and must be highly valued, even an irreplaceable factor. Without the participation of the government, the response to the crisis will hardly be successful. Governments must play a leading, leading role in crisis management. That role is reflected in the following basic contents:

#### **2.2.2.1. Preparing and preventing crises**

Is the best option for crisis management. To do this well, *first of all*, it is necessary to raise awareness of the crisis, which requires the government to pay attention to warning tools, properly assess the political, economic, social and natural environment and, more importantly, predict the drivers that can lead to incidents and resolve them as soon as possible.

*Second*, based on the level of urgency, establish early crisis warning mechanisms and conduct analysis of the possibilities and basic and main types of crises that may occur, as well as their causes and potential harms.

*Third*, strengthen investigation, collection and analysis of information, data and factors that may lead to crisis and thereby comprehensively identify the risk of crisis that may occur.

#### **2.2.2.2. Issue policies and regulations on crisis management**

The government builds a crisis management system by establishing a system of policies, agencies, processes and tools to minimize the impact of crises and ensure social stability, including: promulgating laws, decrees and regulations to guide how to respond to various types of crises and establishing emergency mechanisms, such as declaring a state of emergency or martial law in special cases. The key point is how to identify the "correct" and "accurate" social problems that need to be solved in order to develop regulations and promulgate policies to solve

them properly and promptly. Applying policies to avoid the risk of changing from temporary to indefinite will destroy the democratic foundation of society and make people afraid.

#### ***2.2.2.3. Leadership and coordination role of government in crisis management***

*First, governments use management and research tools to identify and prevent potential crises from certain signs and symptoms.*

The Government can predict and prevent crises through a series of activities: (i) Correctly identifying the most important and fundamental causes leading to the crisis; (ii) Developing appropriate plans to respond, including emergency direction, response, handling, support, investigation, crisis assessment and training, preparing human resources and resources to handle the crisis; (iii) When detecting early signs of a crisis, it is necessary to act immediately to eliminate risks and contain and prevent the crisis as soon as it appears.

*Second, the government develops an action plan to respond to the crisis.*

This is the decisive factor affecting the handling of consequences and minimizing the direct and indirect impacts and damages caused by the crisis. It requires ensuring: 1) Proactively seizing opportunities, responding promptly, acting at the fastest and strongest speed; 2) Making timely decisions, based on the actual situation to decide on the spot, acting decisively, without hesitation, without delay; 3) Grasping the basic, important principles, bottlenecks, key points and priorities.

Contingency or emergency plans can take many different forms: plans for specific organizations or vulnerable locations; plans for specific natural disasters; or plans for each administrative unit. Governments also develop coordination mechanisms among different stakeholders and scaling-up procedures in the event of a crisis that exceeds the response capacity of a given level, and build contingency plans for contingencies.

*Third, the government engages internationally to address new regional or global issues that arise from the crisis.*

The crisis requires governments around the world to join hands, temporarily put aside differences, put aside some local interests to find a common voice, make response plans, provide early warning, overcome gaps and weaknesses in risk management at the national level, and increase information exchange to create trust across borders. Moreover, the role of international and regional institutions is becoming more and more important, as countries must cooperate and coordinate actions to respond to emergencies while restoring economic development.

#### ***2.2.2.4. The government ensures resources for crisis management***

Resource mobilization and preparation are key government activities in crisis management. Governments allocate those resources to support crisis response and recovery efforts. Coordination and mobilization to serve crisis response require appropriate management policies and measures. To ensure resources for crisis management, governments need to have a plan to prepare and mobilize necessary resources, including finance, human resources, facilities and technology. Activities to ensure resources to respond to crises include: i) Building a reserve fund and flexible financial policies; ii) Ensuring human resources and rapid response forces; iii) Maintaining and allocating facilities and equipment; iv) Building a coordination mechanism among relevant parties, between ministries and sectors to use resources effectively; v) Strengthening public-private partnership; vi) Call for help from international organizations when the crisis is beyond control.

#### ***2.2.2.5. The role of government information and communication in crisis***

The role of government communication is particularly important because it directly affects public awareness, behavior and the level of control of the situation. The main contents include: 1) Providing accurate, timely and complete information so that the public can clearly

understand the situation and take appropriate actions ; 2) Controlling rumors and misinformation, preventing fake news; 3) Reassuring public opinion and maintaining trust, communicating with clear messages, demonstrating control of the situation and convincingly guiding the public; 4) Guiding the public on how to respond to the crisis, from safety measures to new legal regulations; 5) Mobilizing community participation, creating opportunities for people to participate in the response process, from contributing opinions to supporting the community; 6) Coordinate with international press and media agencies to ensure that official government information is properly accessed by domestic and foreign press, avoiding misunderstandings or distortions; 7) Evaluate the effectiveness of post-crisis communication to learn from experience for the future, improve communication approaches and methods, and develop long-term strategies to enhance the ability to respond to future crises.

#### ***2.2.2.6. The role of government support and recovery after the crisis***

After the crisis, the government plays a central role in supporting and restoring the country to stabilize society, restore the economy and ensure people's lives.

*first* thing to do after the crisis is under control is for the government to take measures to encourage and heal people's wounds, strengthen people's trust to promptly resolve the consequences and arising problems, and minimize negative impacts on economic development, social psychology and community life. *In addition*, find new opportunities for development from within the crisis. The government's post-crisis support and recovery process often includes: i) Emergency support immediately after the crisis; ii) Economic and financial stabilization; iii) Restoring social life by improving the health and social security systems, quickly rebuilding education, supporting tuition fees, and providing technology.

#### ***2.2.2.7. The Government organizes to draw lessons, forecast the situation and apply solutions to prevent the crisis from recurring.***

This helps the government and stakeholders see more clearly the nature and causes, negative impacts and consequences of the crisis, the advantages and limitations in the way the government directs, manages, assigns and coordinates in handling the crisis as well as the role of forces, the effectiveness of solutions and resources used in handling the crisis.

Conducting crisis forecasting, establishing tools and channels to warn of crises and developing specific plans and scenarios to respond when crises recur, providing strategic directions for sustainable recovery. To make post-crisis forecasts, national governments consider the following factors: 1) Assessing the extent of damage; 2) Assessing the economic recovery trend; 3) Assessing the impacts on society and labor , considering factors affecting people's lives: living standards, gap between rich and poor, social security issues; 4) Assessing the political and security situation , considering the possibility of adjusting management policies and institutional reforms to avoid repeating crises; 5) Recognizing changing trends in international relations; 6) Proposing measures to prevent crises from recurring , building better risk prevention plans in the future, strengthening early warning systems and national reserves.

### **2.3. FACTORS AFFECTING THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

#### **2.3.1. Political institutional factors**

Structural features within the political system such as institutions and forms of government influence the ways and means by which governments exercise state power. In highly centralized countries with strong top-down mandates and uniform governance structures, crisis response policy measures can be more easily implemented and strictly implemented nationwide, while in countries with shared, decentralized power, recommendations are often made and policies that are imposed, coercive, and restrictive on individuals are rarely introduced by governments of these countries.

### **2.3.2. Factors of cultural differences between countries**

From practice, it is shown that the government's response and prevention of crises is significantly affected by the cultural values of different countries. Citizens in different countries have different compliance with social norms, which then affect their perception of responsibility in interactions between citizens and the state. For Western countries, it will focus on encouraging flexibility and accepting possible risks due to individual behavior. On the contrary, in Eastern societies, people tend to fully comply with government interventions, and people also show concern for others and the community in a harmonious way. In this region, society has generally reached a very high consensus in complying with measures restricting personal freedom such as "isolation", "containment" and "closure" when a crisis occurs.

### **2.3.3. Government administrative capacity and the capacity of the head of government**

*First, about the government's governance capacity.* Different countries have different crisis management capacities, depending on their economic conditions, socio-political circumstances, culture, and traditional customs. Four types of governance capacity can be distinguished: (i) coordination capacity is a set; (ii) analysis and advice-giving capacity as well as risk and vulnerability assessment; (iii) institutional capacity; (iv) provision capacity is crisis management, power enforcement, and public service provision. As the trend of crises increasingly shows complexity and unpredictability, higher requirements and demands on crisis management capacity must be raised regularly to keep up with changes.

*Second, about the capacity of the leader.* Crisis management is a complex issue, requiring the leader to be steadfast in character and have outstanding capacity to lead through the crisis. That capacity is demonstrated in the following aspects: psychology, understanding, ability to choose goals, and choose appropriate and effective measures.

### **2.3.4. Public support for government crisis management.**

People expect effective leadership from their government in planning and managing crises. People believe in and support crisis management in many ways, such as supporting and working with socio-political organizations, non-governmental organizations, and participating in crisis communication strategies. If people do not have trust in the government but only follow it by force, coercion, or enticement, then the government's measures and policies become difficult to implement and less effective. On the contrary, if they have the trust and support of the people, the government can implement policies smoothly, on a large scale, and with high efficiency.

### **2.3.5. Infrastructure resources and information technology development**

In crisis management, the factors of resources and infrastructure are the conditions to ensure and are the key to the success of policies. If crisis management policies are not based on the actual resources and existing infrastructure systems of the country, the policies will be vague, unrealistic and unfeasible. Moreover, during the implementation process, if it is not possible to mobilize enough resources or have a flexible and appropriate plan to use the infrastructure system, it will be difficult to bring about the expected good management results.

Today, with the development of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, there have been impacts that have changed the role and activities of governments. Governments have the technological power to strengthen their leadership role with systems to monitor and control technology infrastructure. The ability to adapt to rapid changes in technology and transformation determines the role and position of the government itself. Governments are using technology to provide public services to better perceive and adapt to the changing needs of the people and the complex changes of the world, especially the ability to respond to crises. Moreover, with the strong development of information technology, it has been helping

governments detect early crisis risks to deploy preventive measures or provide solutions to respond to and handle crises quickly, promptly, accurately and effectively. However, control of security, defense, economy and society becomes more difficult and complicated, especially for non-traditional issues.

## **2.4. EXPERIENCE IN MANAGING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS OF GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE WORLD**

### **2.4.1. Overview of the pandemic crisis**

A pandemic is an outbreak of an infectious disease that spreads over a large area, affecting a significant portion of the population, caused by new strains of viruses or bacteria to which humans have little or no immunity, resulting in widespread illness and, in severe cases, significant mortality. A pandemic crisis can be understood as a situation of serious unrest resulting from an infectious disease that spreads and affects a large number of people, posing a public health risk to other countries. It typically results in severe public health impacts, causing social and economic disruption and has a number of distinctive features: (i) Widespread impact; (ii) Duration; (iii) Uncertainty and evolving information ; (iv) Health care system strain ; (v) Economic disruption; (vi) Public fear and anxiety ; (vii) Behaviour change ; (viii ) Global coordination .

### **2.4.2. Causes, developments and impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic**

#### **2.4.2.1. Cause and development**

The Covid-19 pandemic is an infectious disease pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its variants; the epidemic is global. The first epicenter occurred in Wuhan City, China in late December 2019. The speed of spread and the potential for death from this epidemic is terrible. As of August 26, 2020, the epidemic has spread to 214 countries and territories, with a total of over 24 million infections (of which more than 6.6 million are currently infected) and the death toll is over 823 thousand. By October 31, 2022, the world had 630,151,861 infections and 6,589,068 deaths from this pandemic.

#### **2.4.2.2. Impact of the Covid - 19 pandemic**

The Covid-19 pandemic is a catastrophic epidemic that has had a comprehensive and profound impact on all countries in the world, many countries have fallen into a dual crisis of health, economy and society. This pandemic is a once-in-a-century health crisis, its impacts will last for decades to come . Even developed countries with abundant economic potential and modern national governance systems are suffering serious damage and losses from this crisis.

##### *First, the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on the health system*

The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented global health disaster in history, with many countries' health systems paralyzed due to overload, medical equipment, and the ability to supply human resources and medical supplies is not guaranteed, leading to a decrease in treatment capacity, and an uncontrolled increase in the number of severe cases and deaths. The number of deaths from Covid-19 far exceeds other viral epidemics in the 21st century. In society, mental illnesses are increasing and becoming more severe: causing brain damage, anxiety, fear, and stress for patients as well as the community.

*Second, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the world economy;* creating unprecedented pressure on economic growth and development worldwide; paralyzing all economic activities, holding back the development of major economies, disrupting the global supply chain, causing severe damage to the economic sector, especially the service sector , aviation , and transportation; increasing mutual pressure in strategic competition and trade wars.

There are four aspects of the economy and international trade that are directly negatively affected by the pandemic: (i) Global supply chains are locally disrupted, with the risk of falling into stagnation or even recession; (ii) reducing consumption of people and society, affecting the

tourism and service sectors the most. (iii) reducing the enthusiasm of investors and entrepreneurs; (iv) economic and trade cooperation in the world is stagnant.

*Third, the impacts of the Covid-19 epidemic on social life*

affecting cultural and spiritual life, disrupting human life, changing the behavior and lifestyle of each individual and the whole community. Unemployment rates have increased, underemployment, reduced working hours, wages and falling below the poverty line, increasing inequality. Children's education has also been interrupted or had to be transferred online.

*Fourth, the impact of Covid-19 on security and politics of countries around the world*

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the political landscape, tilting the balance of power. The Covid-19 pandemic has rapidly spread and devastated almost all countries and territories in the world, the epidemic has become a global non-traditional security threat. In particular, the complicated and prolonged pandemic has given rise to a wave of racism, xenophobia, riots, protests... destabilizing social order and disrupting the psychology, lifestyle, and work of people in countries, especially Asian and Western countries. The epidemic has impacted and deepened the gap between rich and poor among social classes.

**2.4.3. Crisis management during the Covid-19 pandemic: experiences from governments around the world.**

As the pandemic began to spread, governments around the world had to face and find ways to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic, an emergency epidemic situation whose severity and damage were unprecedented in human history. Each country, during and after this pandemic, needs to draw valuable lessons in responding to emergencies in general, and emergency epidemic situations in particular, from many different perspectives.

**2.4.3.1. The case of China**

As the first major epicenter of the virus, China has been criticized by some parts of the international community for its handling of the crisis. There have been mixed opinions regarding transparency and early response to the pandemic. However, China has made great efforts to contain this unprecedented public health crisis. What China has done is also thanks to its very special style of crisis management: *First, China quickly adjusted its institutions, promptly issued a chain of command, and made decisions to respond to the epidemic. Second, directed the administrative apparatus to respond to the crisis using the "carrot and stick" method. Third, mobilized huge material and human resources during the crisis. Fourth, mobilized people and society to fight the epidemic.*

However, the prolonged social distancing in the country and isolation from other countries has made it more difficult and less objective to assess China's governance capacity and post-pandemic recovery. Moreover, this has also had a significant impact on people's psychology during and after the pandemic. This is also China's limitation in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

China's case illustrates that centralized leadership and strong government apparatus coordination are compatible with the country's policy style, creating certain effectiveness in responding to crises.

**2.4.3.2. Singapore case**

Considered a bright spot in the success of maintaining economic development and containing the spread of Covid-19, Singapore's way of managing the crisis is a lesson worth learning for many countries: First, the timely response of the Singapore government; Second, the synchronous and smooth coordination between government agencies is the key to success in handling the epidemic crisis. Third, the government has promptly launched a vaccine strategy; Fourth, the Singapore government has made decisions to respond to the epidemic based on consultation and recommendations from the scientific and medical community; Fifth, the Singapore government's crisis management capacity is regularly strengthened and improved.

#### ***2.4.3.3. The case of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)***

The country has been ranked among the top 10 countries worldwide for its leadership and proactive approach to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the Global Infectious Disease Response Index. Factors contributing to the success of the UAE in preventing and combating the Covid-19 pandemic include: First, the UAE was well prepared before the crisis; second, responded promptly to limit damage; third, responded and recovered positively after the crisis.

#### ***2.4.3.4. The case of the US Government under President Donal Trump***

In the United States alone, the devastating toll of the pandemic can be measured by the millions of Americans infected with the virus and the 500,071 deaths from Covid-19 (as of February 22, 2021). The Trump administration's failure to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic can be explained by the following main points : *First, the vague perception of the dangers of the crisis; Second, the slow response to warnings about the crisis; Third, the political bureaucracy and failed experiments in responding to the crisis; Fourth, the Trump administration's policy responses to the Covid-19 crisis were dominated by an overly packed agenda.*

#### ***2.4.3.5. The case of the European Union (EU)***

The European Union (EU) - a typical regional integration institution in the world, is a region that has been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with many unprecedented fluctuations and challenges in history, leading to many consequences and multi-dimensional impacts on many fields, with forecasts that it may continue for many years. The EU's response mechanism to the Covid-19 pandemic has received much public attention : *First, the legal mechanism for the EU to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic; Second, the operating mechanism and regulations for responding to the pandemic; Third, the different actions of each EU member state in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.* The EU also lacks a common, open health policy while being bound by many restrictive regulations in its operations. Meanwhile, in important policy areas to address the Covid-19 pandemic, such as health, border control and fiscal policy, EU member states are not ready to share decision-making power. That is one of the reasons why Europe is not prepared in time for a "crisis" that crosses borders.

#### ***2.4.3.6. General assessment of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic by governments around the world***

The practical response to the Covid-19 pandemic of countries around the world shows that whether a country is successful or has limitations and failures in this epidemic crisis, it also shows whether the government of that country has done its role well or not. The reason for success or failure largely comes from how the governments of these countries have managed the crisis caused by this epidemic.

According to the author's observations and assessments, countries that are successful in preventing and fighting this epidemic are due to their governments:

(i) Has ensured its leading role right from the stage of forecasting the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic; promptly recognized the risks and proposed measures to prevent the disease from spreading widely;

(ii) There has been thorough preparation through the establishment of a complete management system and the development of response agencies when a crisis occurs;

(iii) The government's responsive and timely response ;

(iv) The Government has resolutely proposed and used strong measures such as isolation, social distancing, entry restrictions, etc. to prevent and minimize the consequences of the epidemic;

(v) Effectively use management tools and maximize resource mobilization for disease prevention.

(vi) The Government has mobilized and received the support of the majority of people in the process of implementing and implementing policy measures and actively participating in disease prevention and control activities.

For countries and regions that have not been successful in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, there are many reasons:

(i) The government had vague, subjective awareness and responded slowly to warnings about the risk of the epidemic and the government's response capacity.

(ii) Institutional and policy barriers and ineffective coordination among stakeholders in responding to the pandemic.

(iii) The Government has not yet proposed an effective solution, has not yet found a high consensus, and there are still many differences in methods and ways of acting between government agencies or from member states (for the EU);

(iv) The governments of those countries have not clearly identified priority goals and developed action plans to achieve those goals while responding to the crisis.

(v) The absence of appropriate government policies to mobilize resources for epidemic prevention and control.

Looking back at the experiences of responding to Covid-19 in the world, we can see that in terms of crisis management, failure or success reflects the management and operational capacity of the government. Avoiding or minimizing damage and serious threats caused by the crisis depends largely on the comprehensive understanding, development, selection and action, and planned management of the government in the crisis management process.

### **Chapter 3**

## **THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN MANAGING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS IN VIETNAM**

### **3.1 . DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON VIETNAM**

#### **3.1.1. Developments of the Covid-19 epidemic in Vietnam**

On January 23, 2020, Vietnam identified the first case of Covid-19 infection. The epidemic has been very complicated and can be summarized in 3 stages with 4 outbreaks; *Stage 1 (from January 23 to July 24, 2020) with 2 outbreaks; Stage 2 (from July 25, 2020 to April 26, 2021); Stage 3: From April 27, 2021 with the fourth outbreak of the epidemic, with the focus being Ho Chi Minh City and the southern provinces.*

#### **3.1.2. Impacts of the pandemic on the domestic situation**

*Firstly, the Covid-19 pandemic has a direct impact on the country's socio-economic development, especially investment, production, business and social security activities: Vietnam's economic growth in 2020 and 2021 only reached 2.91% and 2.58% respectively, the lowest levels in the period from 2011 to 2021. In 2021, the industrial and construction sector grew by 4.05%, about half the growth rate compared to before the pandemic. Notably, many sectors were heavily affected and had a sharp decline, such as tourism and transportation. Small and medium-sized enterprises faced many difficulties, had to reduce production or temporarily suspend operations. Along with unemployment and underemployment, workers' income tended to decrease.*

*Second, the Covid -19 epidemic affects political and diplomatic relations and the country's national security and defense situation.*

The complicated and prolonged development of the epidemic has negatively affected political and diplomatic relations with partners around the world, especially strategic partners, and many foreign affairs activities have had to be postponed or canceled. The work of ensuring security and order, national defense and security has also been deeply affected and impacted. Border security management and immigration activities have been extremely complicated, posing high requirements, both ensuring timely monitoring and detection of infections, ensuring



national defense, security, social order and safety, and preventing illegal immigration and exit, in order to prevent the epidemic from entering the country.

*Third, the outbreak and spread of the Covid-19 epidemic has affected the people's ideology and psychology, such as anxiety, insecurity, and even discrimination and alienation against people from epidemic areas. Some organizations and individuals hostile to Vietnam have taken advantage of the pandemic as an opportunity to distort, spread fake news, fabricate, and slander Vietnam's epidemic prevention and control policies, and attack the organizational and leadership roles of the Party, State, Government of Vietnam, and the social regime, with the intention of disturbing public opinion, causing confusion, suspicion, and undermining people's trust, thereby inciting opposition, non-compliance with instructions, and non-compliance with policies and measures to prevent and control the epidemic.*

### **3.2. THE ROLE OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT IN RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC : ACHIEVEMENTS AND CAUSES**

#### **3.2.1. Identify risks and forecast the situation and developments of the Covid-19 epidemic**

It can be seen that the Vietnamese Government has quickly recognized the danger that the epidemic can bring, and proactively developed a plan to implement prevention and control work to stop the spread of the epidemic in the community. With a proactive spirit and the motto "All for the health of the people". Immediately after detecting the first positive cases in the country, the Government determined that it could sacrifice some economic benefits but was determined to protect the health and lives of the people.

Along with that, the Vietnamese Government also quickly established the National Steering Committee for Covid-19 Prevention and Control; mobilized the entire people and army to "fight the epidemic like fighting the enemy". Under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Vietnamese Government responded very quickly and promptly, closely following hourly information and promptly activating the epidemic prevention and control apparatus according to the principle of handling national emergency situations.

#### **3.2.2. Deploying prevention and control of the Covid-19 pandemic in the national territory**

Vietnam has immediately taken drastic actions with mandatory measures to respond to the level of development of the epidemic in the country. In addition, Vietnam has also issued support policies, creating conditions for people to feel secure in fighting the epidemic. This is both to create momentum for repelling the epidemic nationwide and effective measures to reassure the spirit of all people and businesses.

Drastic measures have been taken such as: "requiring everyone to strictly wear masks in crowded public places", temporarily suspending visa issuance for foreigners entering Vietnam, restricting flights from epidemic areas, and issuing Directive No. 16 of the Prime Minister "on implementing urgent measures to prevent and combat the Covid-19 epidemic". Thanks to that, the number of Covid-19 infections in Vietnam has not increased continuously.

The Prime Minister issued Directive 19/CT-TTg "on continuing to implement Covid-19 prevention and control in the new situation", which is a transition to a longer-term phase of the country's epidemic prevention and control, with restrictive measures being relaxed and socio-economic activities gradually restored. The Government has issued policies and decrees on support, meeting the practical needs of people's lives and business development such as Resolution 42/NQ-CP dated April 9, 2020.

#### **3.2.3. Develop and promulgate institutions, regulations, and policies to prevent, combat, and repel the Covid-19 pandemic**

Institutionally, the National Steering Committee was established early (January 30, 2020 under Decision No. 170/QĐ-TTg) and is considered the highest steering body for the Covid-19 prevention campaign. Based on the actual situation, the Vietnamese Government

issued directives and decrees with urgent and drastic actions: Directive No. 05/CT-TTg; Directive No. 06/CT-TTg, Directive No. 15/CT-TTg, Directive No. 16/CT-TTg, Directive No. 19/CT-TTg, Resolution 128-NQ/CP.

These documents are identified as legal documents that are mandatory for all citizens to comply with, have a nationwide scope of application, and have sanctions to handle violations of regulations. It can be affirmed that thanks to the urgent and timely direction and coordination of the Government, in stages 1, 2, and 3, the outbreaks were quickly and completely extinguished, the number of infected cases accounted for a very small proportion compared to the national population and was recognized and highly appreciated by the international community. The rapid, timely and correct issuance of legal regulations has met the level of development of the epidemic in Vietnam.

#### **3.2.4. Mobilizing and using resources to prevent and fight Covid-19 epidemic**

The Government has proactively mobilized the strength of the entire political system nationwide to fight the epidemic. Covid-19 epidemic prevention activities, in addition to the forces of the Ministry of Health, also require the synchronous coordination of many related ministries and branches, in which the core forces in coordination are the army and the police.

The Government has requested to cut at least 50% of the remaining conference and domestic and international travel expenses of ministries, central and local agencies to focus resources on epidemic prevention. At the same time, it will save an additional 10% of other remaining regular expenses in 2021.

People not only directly participated in the fight against the epidemic but also proactively promoted the response to social security measures proposed by the Party and the Government. People did not hesitate to donate money and goods to join hands with the country to repel the epidemic. This strong mobilization of human resources created an important turning point so that in just a short time (3 months), Vietnam controlled and stabilized the epidemic situation in the southern provinces while many places in the world took 6 to 9 months.

The mobilization of international resources for the fight against the pandemic has also been effectively implemented by the Vietnamese Government. Typically, since mid-August 2021, the Government has supplemented the strategy of promoting vaccine diplomacy, deciding to establish a Government Task Force on vaccine diplomacy to achieve "the fastest and largest number of vaccines possible". By September 29, 2021, with a suitable and effective vaccine diplomacy strategy, Vietnam has received 52.2 million doses of vaccines, ensuring and preparing for large-scale vaccination to minimize the rate of infection, severe illness requiring hospitalization, and death.

#### **3.2.5. Information and communication on prevention and control of Covid-19 pandemic**

In the context of the complicated developments of the epidemic, the Vietnamese Government always ensures that all information on the epidemic developments, prevention and control instructions and intervention measures are widely disseminated to individuals and the community. Providing timely information not only helps people understand the real situation but also helps reduce panic and unverified rumors, helps raise awareness of self-protection and disease prevention at the individual and community levels, stimulates self-awareness, social responsibility and solidarity, creating a combined strength to overcome the crisis. Communication work also helps guide people's behavior, creating conditions for close coordination between authorities at all levels and the community during the epidemic prevention period. The Government has organized widespread propaganda, fully and clearly announced all information related to the Covid-19 epidemic and epidemic prevention and control activities for easy access and understanding by all people, building people's trust in the epidemic prevention and control work.

### **3.2.6. Promote discipline and order, focus on inspection and supervision in the prevention and control of the Covid-19 pandemic**

Agencies under the Vietnamese Government must strictly implement the directives and be responsible to the Government, and explain to the Government and the Prime Minister issues in the process of disease prevention. In fact, central ministries, departments, branches and local authorities have strictly implemented the above directives. The Government and agencies have explained thoroughly and fully so that people strictly comply with a number of new and unprecedented measures (such as social distancing, regional isolation, etc.).

In addition, handling violations by heads of units during the epidemic prevention process (most notably the case of Viet A Company and violations in the process of organizing "rescue" flights to bring Vietnamese people back home from abroad) is one of the ways to more clearly demonstrate the government's accountability. The government has organized inspections, checks, and supervision to promptly correct and overcome limitations in epidemic prevention and control work, with timely leadership, direction, and adjustment.

### **3.2.7. Overcoming the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring social security and restoring the country's socio-economic growth**

Vietnam has had a fair approach in responding to the epidemic, with people infected with Covid-19 being treated free of charge without any discrimination or stigma. The Government has issued many timely policies and guidelines, in which the care, protection of health, life and stabilization of people's lives are put first and foremost, even "having to sacrifice economic benefits to protect people's health ", implementing very humane measures such as: providing many flights to bring overseas Vietnamese back to the Fatherland; supporting the business community to overcome difficulties; cutting many fees to create favorable conditions for workers.

The Vietnamese Government has issued many policies and measures to control the epidemic, restore economic growth and ensure social security. During the implementation process, although the goal of epidemic prevention and control is the top priority, the Government always focuses on the dual goal of ensuring economic development while ensuring the health and safety of the people. To overcome difficulties, promote production and business development, and restore the economy, the Government, the Prime Minister, ministries and branches have issued many policies, solutions with a comprehensive set of measures to promptly respond to the epidemic.

### **3.2.8. Reasons for the results achieved**

In general, when looking back at the results from the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, it can be seen that the Vietnamese Government has made many efforts to perform well its role in crisis management. These results were achieved due to: (i) The drastic and timely direction of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam; (ii) The centralized direction from the central government combined with the synchronous implementation in localities has created a flexible and timely response network, contributing to limiting the spread of the virus; (iii) The Government has determined to put the lives and health of the people first and foremost; taking the people as the center and the subject in epidemic prevention; (iv) The Vietnamese Government has effectively applied digital technology in the prevention and control of the Covid-19 epidemic; (v) The Government's epidemic prevention work has received active support and participation from the Vietnam Fatherland Front, socio-political organizations, localities, and especially great support from the people.

### **3.3. LIMITATIONS IN THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROCESS DUE TO THE COVID - 19 PANDEMIC BY THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT**

#### **3.3.1. Not fully aware of the potential risks in the crisis**

At the time before the 4th outbreak in Vietnam (April 27, 2021), the world also had information about the spread of the Delta virus variant from the Indian case. However, the work of capturing information to forecast and build epidemic prevention and control scenarios and prepare response resources in the worst case scenario by the Government and localities at this time was not really good, leading to the outbreak in Ho Chi Minh City and the southern provinces.

#### **3.3.2. The lack of institutional consistency and unity leads to ineffective work in preventing and containing the spread of disease on a large scale .**

Some directive measures are not yet close to the reality of each region and locality and have not taken into account the needs of the people and the ability of the government to respond on the spot. Legal regulations have not covered all outbreak situations of the epidemic; some documents are not close to reality, not feasible, and are somewhat favorable to the management agency but difficult for the people and businesses. When issuing documents with a large scope of influence on many subjects, some places have not done a good job of impact assessment, have not done a good job of communication, making implementation difficult; some regulations are contradictory, change quickly, causing frustration in society.

In addition, the legal framework and administrative management mechanism of the Government are still rigid, sometimes not flexible enough to adapt to the rapid changes of the pandemic. Complicated administrative procedures and suboptimal decision-making mechanisms have created many barriers in the implementation, adjustment and application of necessary emergency measures.

The mechanism for monitoring, checking and evaluating the effectiveness of epidemic prevention measures is not truly independent and objective. This means that errors and limitations have not been detected and corrected in a timely manner, reducing the flexibility of response strategies.

#### **3.3.3. Resource mobilization for epidemic prevention is limited.**

There has been no thorough and complete direction and preparation of resources, facilities, and medical equipment to respond to the epidemic when Covid-19 spreads. The distribution of resources is uneven, the health system has revealed many limitations and weaknesses, especially in primary health care and preventive medicine. Many localities have not ensured the "4 on-site" in preparing resources for epidemic prevention and control. The Government has also not had measures to mobilize and effectively use private health resources and public-private partnership in epidemic prevention and control while the public health system is overloaded.

#### **3.3.4. The direction, management and coordination in responding to the epidemic is sometimes ineffective.**

The Government has not yet directed timely and effectively the treatment and medical examination when the Covid-19 epidemic began to spread strongly in Ho Chi Minh City and the southern provinces. Information work and management of information technology applications in the prevention and control of the Covid-19 epidemic have not been synchronous and consistent. Vaccine policies are still limited, inappropriate, and have not been consulted by experts.

#### **3.3.5. Limitations on ensuring the rule of law and controlling power in the process of crisis management due to the Covid-19 pandemic**

In a state of emergency or crisis in a state, especially the executive branch (government) is empowered to take actions or impose measures that would not be allowed under the Constitution in a normal context. However, during the Covid-19 outbreak, the Vietnamese

Government has not declared a state of emergency but has deployed special management tools and measures, different from usual, to respond nationwide. That partly makes the applied measures illegitimate, affecting the legal effectiveness and management effectiveness of the government.

Furthermore, in the process of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, the management and operation of the government and localities have also seen many cases of abuse of position and power, carrying out acts of self-interest that affect the reputation, transparency and accountability of the Government and ministries, branches and localities: the Viet A Company case or violations from giving and receiving bribes when organizing nearly 2,000 flights to bring citizens from more than 60 countries and territories back to the country.

### **3.3.6. Limitations on building recovery policies after the Covid-19 epidemic is controlled**

The development of some policies has not ensured comprehensiveness, and has not fully covered the nature, scale, and urgency of the Covid-19 pandemic. The implementation of some policies has been slow and ineffective; processes and procedures are cumbersome and inflexible. Many policies are still short-term responses, and there are no policies focused on specific sectors and fields on a large scale.

Furthermore, the direction and implementation of social security policies during and after the pandemic has not been timely, strict, and effective, and the low disbursement rate has affected people's lives.

### **3.3.7. Causes of the limitations of the Vietnamese Government in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic**

Firstly, subjectivity, negligence, and lack of vigilance in epidemic prevention lead to loss of control and slower response compared to the level of spread of the epidemic; Secondly, the system of policies and laws in our country lacks uniformity, consistency and strictness, especially the lack of a Law on Emergency Situations, complicated administrative procedures, sanctions are not strong enough to be a deterrent, the law still has many loopholes, the management mechanism still has many weaknesses for subjects to take advantage of, the asset management mechanism and asset transparency are not effective and strict, creating loopholes for officials with power to take advantage of and abuse; Thirdly, the coordination between government levels and related units is still ineffective; Fourthly, resources and investment in necessary medical infrastructure (such as medical equipment, professional staff) have not fully met the scale of the pandemic; Fifth, the management of cadres, party members, civil servants and public employees in general and the inspection and supervision of the performance of tasks and responsibilities of cadres in the work of preventing and fighting the Covid-19 epidemic in particular are still limited, the mechanism for monitoring power in emergency situations is not good enough to allow officials in positions to take advantage of the epidemic for personal gain, corruption and bureaucracy; Sixth, the socio-economic pressure and the impact of the media environment.

## **Chapter 4**

### **VIEWPOINTS AND SOLUTIONS TO PROMOTE THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN VIETNAM**

#### **4.1. IDENTIFYING CRISIS RISKS FOR VIETNAM**

Rapid, complex, and unpredictable developments can cause serious crises in the future in many areas such as: political security, war, economic crisis, natural disaster crisis, climate change, environmental crisis, epidemic crisis, information technology crisis. These risks can indirectly or directly affect Vietnam:

*Firstly*, strategic competition between major countries and local conflicts continue to take place in many forms, becoming more complex and fierce, increasing risks to the international economic, political and security environment, which will have a significant impact on the domestic situation and require the Vietnamese government to always have contingency plans to respond and handle the situation in the most timely manner.

*Second*, the world economy is increasingly unstable and is being affected in the long term by the Covid-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions, global supply chains are broken, and strong adjustments are being made. These are factors that can create a world economic crisis at any time, and at that time, Vietnam will also have to face many difficulties to maintain its current growth and development momentum.

*Third*, one of the current global challenges that can cause serious crises with serious consequences is the problem of natural disasters and climate change, which is becoming more and more dangerous to the development of any country, especially natural disasters (storms, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.). It can be seen that crises caused by climate change are risks that Vietnam has, is, and will have to directly face and handle.

*Fourth*, one of the most dangerous, unpredictable and difficult-to-predict crisis risks is the pandemic crisis, and responding to it is extremely difficult and complicated for the world in general and Vietnam in particular.

*Fifth*, the process of deep integration and the transition to a digital economy also raises new issues regarding information security, requiring the Vietnamese government to focus on building and preparing effective solutions.

## **4.2. VIEWPOINTS ON PROMOTING THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN VIETNAM**

### **4.2.1. Thoroughly grasp the Party's leadership and direction in crisis management**

In Vietnam's political system, all major, important or dangerous issues of the country are led and directed by the Party for the activities of the system of executive agencies and it is highly political, ensuring unity and clarity in building goals and action guidelines. Specifically:

*Firstly*, the Party sets out policies, viewpoints, and development directions to create a basis for the Government to build and perfect the legal system and effectively control and manage risks, challenges, and consequences of crises, leading to sustainable development of the country.

*Second*, the Party leads through the Government to request scientific agencies and policy advisory agencies to identify and propose management policies and solutions.

*Third*, under the leadership of the Party, the Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations should strengthen activities of providing comments, supervision and social criticism on policies, laws and the management of the Government to reduce the possibility of mistakes and the risk of abuse of power.

### **4.2.2. The government must be both “resolute” and “flexible” in crisis management.**

“Resolute” means to deal with the situation decisively, quickly and with drastic measures that may not follow the usual management methods, in order to achieve positive results. In addition, there must be “flexible” measures, enhanced communication, listening to the opinions of all parties, protecting the interests of the community and maintaining general stability. The government has increased the use of scientific methods to achieve sophisticated and differentiated management.

### **4.2.3. Ensuring the rule of law in crisis management**

Crisis management requires governments to make unusual decisions, decisions that are often contrary to the Constitution and laws of the country, and can affect human rights. Practice shows that even in emergency and crisis situations, the implementation of the rule of law must

be emphasized. The essential thing in crisis management is to carry out three contents: *One is* to act within the scope of the law; *Two is* to use ethical guidelines to restrain and control behavior, never lie or provide false evidence; *Three is* to promote the role of the law in preventing, stopping, handling and overcoming the consequences of crises.

#### **4.2.4. Always put people at the center of action in responding to crises**

Protecting people's lives and health must be the top priority to minimize mental and physical damage, especially for vulnerable groups in society. Theory and practice both show that public trust plays an important and decisive role in the success or failure of emergency response. The government needs to pay special attention to addressing the concerns and questions of target groups. Publicizing what is being done to respond to the crisis will be very effective and help people understand, care about, support and assist the government's activities.

### **4.3. SOLUTIONS TO PROMOTE THE ROLE OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

#### **4.3.1. Complete legal documents on emergency situations in a synchronous, effective and efficient manner.**

Strengthening the development and improvement of laws in general management areas and in the management of emergency and crisis situations is an urgent requirement. Currently, legal documents on emergency situations in Vietnam have not yet ensured unity, synchronization and strictness. In the process of perfecting the legal system on emergency situations, it is necessary to note: 1) It is necessary to clearly stipulate the issue of "limiting rights" and "temporary suspension of rights" for civil rights in emergency conditions; 2) Clearly specify the authority to issue and the authority to make decisions belonging to the government; 3) It is necessary to clearly stipulate the principles that the government must comply with when a state of emergency is declared; 4) Clarifying the position, role, functions and tasks of government agencies and local authorities; increasing the authority of crisis handling agencies; clearly defining the coordination mechanism; clearly defining the authority and responsibility of heads of agencies and units in crisis management; 5) It is necessary to establish a monitoring and remedial mechanism; 6) It is necessary to be unified, unambiguous, clear and strict.

#### **4.3.2. Strengthening the government's crisis management capacity**

*First, build a crisis identification and warning system at all levels "early and from afar", focusing on "prevention" rather than "control".*

Research, development and operation of a crisis warning system are very important. This system must be organized at both central and local levels, and in ministries, departments and branches of the Government. Advances in science and technology have led to major improvements in early warning systems, both at the national and international levels. Crisis managers must ensure the effective use of these information systems to promptly advise decision makers. In addition, this system is also responsible for monitoring, supervising and evaluating the crisis handling process, summarizing practices and drawing lessons in crisis handling, and developing standard procedures in crisis handling.

*Second, improve the crisis response capacity of the government and local authorities at all levels.*

(i) Focusing on research and systematic training in crisis management, especially crisis management in the public sector, is very important to create competent crisis management leaders and crisis handling processes appropriate to each country and locality .

(ii) Proactively grasp information about emergency and crisis situations , visualize possible scenarios, and agree on response strategies and methods.

(iii) Research and develop a common response process for all crises; periodically organize inter-sectoral scenario drills to test coordination between relevant agencies and

organizations; establish a permanent Crisis Response Office with the right to convene relevant parties before, during and after a crisis.

(iv) Quickly identify priority areas, carry out activities to return society to normal, remove restrictions on people's freedoms, support economic recovery and reassure public opinion after the crisis.

(v) Develop an index to assess crisis response capacity, organize annual assessments, compare across regions and make public announcements.

***Third, develop a research strategy and systematic training on crisis management for civil servants in the Vietnamese political system, focusing on:***

Train staff in crisis management skills, build a team of experts to respond to crisis situations to advise the government on decisions, carry out coordination activities and connect necessary resources to handle crises.

Improve crisis management capacity for heads of agencies and units through: developing training and fostering programs, rotating cadres, especially strategic cadres to positions with many challenges and difficulties to practice and improve skills in handling unusual and crisis situations. Develop a working mechanism for leaders to create a legal corridor so that in the event of a crisis, leaders dare to make decisions, dare to act and make decisions appropriate to the specific context to solve urgent problems.

***Fourth, promote the application of information technology in crisis management.***

The good application of information technology will greatly support, save resources, make better forecasts, and manage the process of handling crisis and emergency situations more effectively. The Government and people need to make more efforts to promote digital transformation to improve socio-economic efficiency in the following basic directions: (i) raise awareness of digital transformation; (ii) build institutions and legal environment for information technology development; (iii) develop digital infrastructure, develop infrastructure; (iv) develop digital platforms; (v) build trust, ensure safety, network security, develop digital culture, preserve ethical values, network security; (vi) promote international cooperation, encourage innovation in the digital environment, transfer and deploy new technologies in Vietnam, prioritizing breakthrough technological advances; (vii) improve the capacity of information technology human resources, especially high-quality human resources.

***Fifth, diversify mobilization channels, focus resources on crisis management, and promptly respond to emergency situations at different levels.***

For Vietnam, in crisis management activities, it is necessary to follow the principle of "The Party leads, the Government operates, sets unified goals and action programs, implements the spirit of support and accompanies businesses and people, and focuses all efforts in dealing with emergency situations, risks, and instability", specifically:

*First*, build coordination and support mechanisms between the Government, businesses and the community to mobilize resources in response to emergency and crisis situations, especially large-scale and prolonged situations.

*Second*, mobilize and effectively use resources in crisis response in a multi-dimensional manner, ensuring "fast, sufficient, and durable".

*Third*, effectively implement social security policies while responding to crisis situations, including the following main pillars (policy groups): (1) employment and life stabilization policy group; (2) social insurance policy group; (3) social assistance policy group, (4) basic social service policy group.

**4.3.3. Promoting the role of staff in the system of government agencies and local authorities at all levels**

To have a good team of cadres in crisis management, it is necessary to synchronously deploy many solutions, both in terms of political qualities, ethics,



professional capacity and organizational mechanism. It is necessary to constantly foster the political qualities, ethics and sense of responsibility of cadres. It is necessary to equip cadres with a system of modern crisis management knowledge and skills. Build a scientific, democratic and decisive leadership style. The work of inspection, supervision and evaluation of cadres must be carried out seriously, practically, and linked to the effectiveness of crisis response. It is necessary to promptly replace weak cadres, at the same time commend and reward dedicated, brave and effective individuals in practice. Special attention must be paid to the planning, training and use of the next generation.

#### **4.3.4. Promoting the role of communication and strengthening information security measures in crisis management**

In times of crisis, it is necessary to take advantage of social media channels and grassroots radio channels to spread the fastest and most communication messages to the people; at the same time, the media must act as a channel to provide information for authorities at all levels to grasp and resolve people's concerns; thereby relieving people's concerns and caring for their mental health; effectively resolving social security policies and supporting people. Focus on foreign propaganda, building the image of the country and the Government towards the people; support policies, and removing difficulties for domestic and foreign enterprises.

In general, to implement good communication and ensure information security in crisis management, the government needs to: i) Diversify communication channels, focusing on channels with large, direct and easily accessible interactions; ii) Provide information that is timely, accurate and relevant to crisis issues, developments of the crisis, measures being applied by the government and measures that people need to take; iii) Communication must create trust and cooperation between people and the government, minimizing false information, information with bad intentions, hindering the government's efforts in handling the crisis, causing confusion in society; iv) Focus on making people and society more aware of the risks, consequences and harms of the crisis; v) Government communication strategies must be clear in terms of language, and messages must be consistent to avoid misunderstandings, leading to completely different views and actions from the people and society.

#### **4.3.5. Strengthen international cooperation to effectively respond to global challenges and promote sustainable development**

In the new context, crises have some new characteristics and manifestations, requiring the international community to join hands for the common goal of safety for the whole society and for everyone. International cooperation needs to be further strengthened in areas such as joint response planning, early warning and awareness building through information exchange and joint exercises and drills. Participation with the international private sector in strategic crisis management activities is necessary to develop a common crisis management culture and create cross-border trust. For countries with weak economic potential like Vietnam, this condition is even more important, and must be paid attention to and promoted from the beginning, in order to:

(i) Strengthen diplomatic relations, friendship and cooperation with advanced countries in the world to cooperate responsibly with the global community to respond to emergencies.

(ii) Raise awareness of civil and social responsibility, further promote one's own ability to find ways to respond to emergencies in the most appropriate and effective way.

(iii) Strengthen human resources and equipment serving medical scientific research to achieve more medical achievements in the field of treatment and life-saving, and have effective contingency plans to respond to possible social emergencies.

#### **4.3.6. Focus on promoting inspection and supervision activities in crisis response**

Inspection and supervision must be carried out within the scope of assigned functions, tasks and authorities in the spirit of superiors inspecting subordinates. Strengthening inspection and supervision is not only through conventional administrative measures but will be more effective through the application of achievements in information technology. First of all, inspection is carried out when there are signs of violations and must be carried out strongly, regularly and continuously. Second, perfecting the legal and institutional framework for inspection and supervision to ensure that it is suitable for the characteristics of crisis situations. Third, establishing a multi-layered, multi-dimensional supervision mechanism: from top to bottom, from bottom to top, horizontal supervision. Fourth, strengthening the capacity and promoting the role of independent inspection and supervision agencies such as the Government Inspectorate, the State Audit, the National Financial Supervision Committee, etc. to ensure effective and transparent operation in the context of crisis. Fifth, pay close attention to promoting the role of social criticism and public supervision of the government's policies, decisions, regulations and rules in responding to the crisis .

### **CONCLUDE**

Now that the world has passed a quarter of the way into the 21st century, more and more citizens and leaders are aware of the changing nature and constant presence of crises. Crises always pose challenges to the governance capacity of governments. And humanity seems to be more awakened after the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, spreading to become a global crisis.

Vietnam has also achieved certain successes in the work of preventing and fighting the pandemic to demonstrate to the world the superiority of the regime, the ability to govern the country well, the courage and ability to respond to the challenges caused by the crisis of the Party and Government. The Vietnamese Government has not only fully met, but also flexibly and effectively applied the criteria for good governance in the Covid-19 pandemic in accordance with the country's characteristics. More specifically, the management and administration of the Vietnamese Government under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam and with the strength of national cultural traditions, experience and response capacity are key factors for Vietnam to overcome unprecedented global challenges. This is something that not every government can do, even the governments of strong developed countries have failed.

However, the Vietnamese Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed significant limitations and shortcomings, requiring effective and specific directions and measures to overcome and better promote the role of the Vietnamese Government in general and its role in crisis management in particular. Moreover, in the current context, crises are becoming increasingly complex, difficult to control and difficult to predict, increasing risks to the international economic, political and security environment, posing global challenges . Crises can be controlled, contained, prevented and their consequences minimized when governments proactively take action to come up with ways and measures to forecast, handle and overcome them for good governance. In that view, the Vietnamese Government under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam also needs to have thorough preparation, build a governance model suitable to the country's reality, develop strong crisis management frameworks to deal with the complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty of many modern crises to move towards building the country towards stable and sustainable growth.

## **LIST OF PUBLISHED WORKS OF THE AUTHOR RELATED TO THE THESIS**

1. Ngo Thi Xuan Quynh (2024), “Crisis management: The role of government in the current context”, *Journal of Political Theory*, (558), pp.125-131.
2. Ngo Thi Xuan Quynh (2024), "Factors affecting the role of government in crisis management and experiences for Vietnam", at <https://lyluanchinhtri.vn/>, October 8.
3. Ngo Thi Xuan Quynh et al. (2021), “Impact of Covid-19: Current situation and recommendations for economic recovery in Vietnam”, Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference “Adjusting the sustainable development process in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic”, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, Association of Vietnamese Scientists and Experts (AVSE Global).