

**LEGAL BASES AND PRACTICAL CONDITIONS FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENDOGENOUS GROWTH MODEL OF
VIETNAM'S SOUTHEAST REGION IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF
INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

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ABSTRACT

Based on the analysis results of a number of different sources of original materials and secondary documents by qualitative and quantitative methods, the article proves that the Southeast area is not only one of Vietnam's current socio-economic regions that fully converges all the necessary scientific, legal bases, and objective conditions as well as subjective realities to be able to successfully develop their own model of endogenous growth, but also become the ideal growth model for all of other regions, the economic engine of the entire Southern Vietnam, and the main driving force for the country's development in the coming time. The most important of these are the increasing demands for regional connectivity, the fragmentation of local economies, the concentration of regional space, the similarity of socio-economic conditions, and the support of both the central government and the people of the entire country. Nevertheless, the Southeast region's strategic geographic location in the heart of Southeast Asia, the favorable natural conditions, natural resources, and population, the country's most modern infrastructure are the most decisively subjective factors. At the same time, the economic driving force function of the whole country with a potential consumption market and the relatively equal development level among localities of the area is really the lever for the Southeast region's economy to take off in the coming years. However, in order to turn these theoretical opportunities into development practices in the current conditions of Vietnam, the Southeast region's provinces and cities needs a comprehensive regional institution and a system of unified policy mechanisms, specific development strategies, a system of more centralized resources to deal with internal problems, a more rational budget allocation mechanism between central government and local

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administration, and regional economic linkage institutions as well as interregional relationships with other social-economic regions of the entire country.

Key words: *legal basis, scientific condition, endogenous growth model, Southeast region, Vietnam*

1. Introduction:

Vietnam's Southeastern region is administratively composed of six centrally run provinces and cities in alphabetical order of the first letter: Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu, Bình Dương, Bình Phước, Đồng Nai, Ho Chi Minh City, and Tây Ninh. Although this is one of Vietnam's two socio-economic regions with the smallest natural area, it has been the most developed economic center and contributed the most to the national economy as well as the national budget for decades.² With a level of socio-economic development outperforming most of the remaining socio-economic regions of the country and an economic potential which is much stronger than the general level of the whole country, the Southeast region's localities is not only scheduled to become an economic fulcrum for many other regions, but also build their own model of endogenous growth to both promote inherent potentials and advantages and develop unique regional characteristics.³ However, Vietnam's Southeast region cannot develop on its own and solve all the related questions by itself in the ongoing process of industrialization, modernization, and international integration at the present as well as in the future. Therefore, the Southeast provinces must strengthen intra-regional linkages and develop interregional relationships to move forward in a sustainable manner on the one hand, but it is also expected by stakeholders and set its own target to become a driving force for the economic development of the entire Southern Vietnam on the other hand.⁴ Furthermore, the Southeast region is also the largest regional economy, the strongest economic center of the country, and Vietnam's best region with a lot of the most modern socio-economic development indicators. It has in practice not only been the busiest urban center, one of the three growth poles, one of the biggest key economic regions, but also the largest gateway

² Viện Chiến lược phát triển, *Báo cáo nghiên cứu phân vùng phục vụ quy hoạch giai đoạn 2021-2030*, Dự thảo, 33 (Hà Nội, July 2018).

³ Hà Anh, *Phát huy tiềm năng, thế mạnh vùng Đông Nam Bộ và đồng bằng sông Cửu Long*, BÁO ĐIỆN TỬ ĐẢNG CỘNG SẢN VIỆT NAM (Aug. 14, 2019, 23:22 PM), available at: <http://dangcongsan.vn/kinh-te/phat-huy-tiem-nang-the-manh-vung-dong-nam-bo-va-dong-bang-song-cuu-long-531821.html>, accessed on May 5, 2020.

⁴ Xuân Khu, *Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh xây dựng quan hệ bền vững với các đối tác ASEAN*, DÂN TỘC VÀ MIỀN NÚI (Aug. 7, 2018, 16:01 PM), available at: <https://dantocmiennui.vn/thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-xay-dung-quan-he-ben-vung-voi-cac-doi-tac-asean/178636.html>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

for international trade of Vietnam for decades.⁵ Based on the current reality and existing potentials, The Southeast region has been given hope and trusted by both the central government and the local people throughout Vietnam to become an economic engine and driving force for the development of the whole country.⁶ The recent development practice has proven that the Southeast region is completely worthy of the national beliefs, the expectations of both the central and local governments, and its inherent position.⁷ However, in the context of today's extensive regionalization, globalization, and international integration, the Southeast localities have not only excellently finished their functions, tasks, and historic missions of the economic locomotive and driving force of the country, but have also been able to become one of the largest and most modern economic centers of Southeast Asia and even Asia.⁸ In practice, the distance from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi (about 1,719.1 km) is geographically even much farther than that from Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh (around 227.5 km) and almost double the distance from Ho Chi Minh City to Bangkok (867.3 km). Meanwhile, the distance from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi is 1,140 km by air, but this distance to Kuala Lumpur is 1,014 km, to Singapore is 1,085 km, to Yangon is 1,322 km only.⁹ It means that Vietnam's Southeast region is geographically located in a central position and socio-economically possess a lot of favorable conditions to become one of the the leading innovative urban hubs of ASEAN countries.¹⁰ However, what scientific, legal, practical, and subjective bases could offer the Southeast regions enough

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⁵ An Tôn, *Đông Nam Bộ hoàn thiện hạ tầng giao thông để phát triển*, HÀ NỘI MỚI (Apr. 26, 2020, 7:00 AM), available at: <http://hanoimoi.com.vn/tin-tuc/Xa-hoi/965742/dong-nam-bo-hoan-thien-ha-tang-giao-thong-de-phat-trien>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

⁶ VL, *TP.Hồ Chí Minh giữ vững vị trí đầu tàu kinh tế của cả nước*, BÁO ĐIỆN TỬ ĐẢNG CỘNG SẢN VIỆT NAM (July 10, 2018, 18:27 PM), available at: <http://dangcongsan.vn/thoi-su/tpho-chi-minh-giu-vung-vi-tri-dau-tau-kinh-te-cua-ca-nuoc-489955.html>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

⁷ Phan Văn Khải, *Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh đi hàng đầu trong sự nghiệp công nghiệp hoá, hiện đại hoá, tiến kịp các thành phố lớn trong khu vực*, TRANG TIN ĐIỆN TỬ ĐẢNG BỘ THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH (Feb. 16, 2004, 15:07 PM), available at: <https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-vii/thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-di-hang-dau-trong-su-nghiep-cong-nghiep-hoa-hien-dai-hoa-tien-kip-cac-thanh-1076918825>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

⁸ Đỗ Trà Giang, *Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh: Hướng đến trung tâm tài chính khu vực và quốc tế*, TRANG TIN ĐIỆN TỬ ĐẢNG BỘ THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH (Oct. 18, 2019, 07:58 AM), available at: <https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-vii/thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-di-hang-dau-trong-su-nghiep-cong-nghiep-hoa-hien-dai-hoa-tien-kip-cac-thanh-1076918825>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

⁹ *Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh nằm ở đâu?* CÔNG THÔNG TIN ĐIỆN TỬ CHÍNH PHỦ THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH (July 1, 2011, 01:10 PM), available at: <http://tphcm.chinhphu.vn/thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-nam-o-dau>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

¹⁰ Thanh Huyền, *TP.HCM sở hữu tiềm năng để trở thành trung tâm tài chính quốc tế*, ĐẦU TƯ ONLINE (Oct. 16, 2019, 16:05 PM), available at: <https://baodautu.vn/tphcm-so-huu-tiem-nang-de-tro-thanh-trung-tam-tai-chinh-quoc-te-d109202.html>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

conditions to successfully build its own model of endogenous growth in the current context of extensive international integration, worthy of the driving force for the development of the entire Southern Vietnam, the economic leader of the country, and one of the largest economic centers of Southeast Asia and what needs to be done in order for the Southeast region to quickly realize these specific targets and maintained its admirable position in the decades to come? These questions have partly been discussed by the authorities and attempted to answer by scientific communities in many different forms and degrees, but there are still a number of issues that have not been thoroughly resolved and a lot of arguments have not yet really been united by common voices. It is for this reason based on the results of analyzing several different sources of documents by qualitative and quantitative methods as well as the interdisciplinary and specialized approaches, the article points out the outstanding advantages and inherent disadvantages of the Southeast region in the construction of its own model of endogenous growth and in the transformation to the leading economic hub of the entire Southern Vietnam, the whole country, and Southeast Asia and at the same time proposes some policy implication solutions for the development of Vietnam's Southeast region into one of Asian remarkable economic centers in the near future.

2. Literature review and database:

Although the endogenous growth model of Vietnam's Southeast region has not yet been a familiar topic of domestic and foreign scholars, there have been some initial studies on this issue. The most typical of these is the master thesis on *Agricultural Product Consumption Market in the South East (Through a survey mainly in Dong Nai)* by Hoàng Thị Ngọc Loan in 2000,¹¹ the research work on *Finding solutions to develop the Southeast area* of Vũ Nguyên in 2017,¹² the doctoral dissertation on *Factors affecting the attraction of foreign direct investment: Research on the Southeast economic region* of Cao Tấn Huy in 2019,¹³ the articles on *The southern key economic region concentrates all the best conditions for the economic development* of Chí Kiên

¹¹ Hoàng thị Ngọc Loan, *Thị trường tiêu thụ nông sản Miền Đông Nam Bộ (Qua khảo sát chủ yếu ở Đồng Nai)*, Luận văn thạc sĩ khoa học kinh tế, Chuyên ngành: Kinh tế chính trị xã hội chủ nghĩa, Mã số 5.02.01 (Học viện Chính trị quốc gia Hồ Chí Minh, Hà Nội, 2000).

¹² Vũ Nguyên, *Tìm giải pháp phát triển vùng Đông Nam Bộ*, TRANG THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH (Sept. 28, 2017, 16:38 PM), available at: <https://nhandan.com.vn/tin-chung1/tim-giai-phap-phat-trien-vung-dong-nam-bo-305046/>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

¹³ Cao Tấn Huy, *Các yếu tố tác động đến thu hút đầu tư trực tiếp nước ngoài: Nghiên cứu vùng kinh tế Đông Nam Bộ*, Luận án tiến sĩ, Chuyên ngành: Kinh tế chính trị, Mã số: 62 31 01 02 (Học viện Chính trị Quốc gia Hồ Chí Minh, Hà Nội, 2019).

in 2020,¹⁴ and *Tourism development in the Southeast: Taking the people as the center* of Lê Đức Hoàn in 2020.¹⁵ Although all the above-mentioned works have more or less mentioned the formation and development of the Southeast region's economic space, no studies have set out the target and successfully solved the endogenous growth model of the Southeast region in the current context of intensive regionalization, globalization, and international integration as an independent scientific project.

It is therefore along with the inheritance of the research results in the above-mentioned works, this paper utilizes a further system of different primary and secondary sources to give a more comprehensive picture on the formation, development, and future prospects of the Southeast region's model of endogenous growth in the new international context. *Firstly* is the statistics of the authorities and the regional economic development strategy of Vietnam's state management apparatus related to this issue. The most noticeable of these are the *Press Release on the Results of the General Population and Housing Census in 2019* of the General Statistics Office,¹⁶ *The Zoning Research Report for the planning of the period of 2021-2030* by the Institute of Development Strategy in 2018,¹⁷ and *The General Census of Population and Housing at 0:00, April 1, 2019: Implementation organization and preliminary results* of the Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee in 2019.¹⁸ *The second* is the statistics of the authorities and the related research results of foreign scientific circles. The most frequently used of these are *Country Profile: China, August 2006* of Library of Congress in 2006¹⁹ and *Indian States and Capitals - GK in PDF* in 2016.²⁰ *The third* are the sources of updated and diversified information of Vietnam's newspapers and news agencies on the endogenous growth models in

¹⁴ Chí Kiên, *Vùng KTTĐ phía Nam tập trung mọi điều kiện tốt nhất để phát triển kinh tế*, BÁO ĐIỆN TỬ CHÍNH PHỦ NƯỚC CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM (June 19, 2020, 17:20 PM), available at: <http://baochinhphu.vn/Chi-dao-quyet-dinh-cua-Chinh-phu-Thu-tuong-Chinh-phu/Vung-KTTD-phia-Nam-tap-trung-moi-dieu-kien-tot-nhat-de-phat-trien-kinh-te/398478.vgp>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

¹⁵ Lê Đức Hoàn, *Phát triển du lịch Đông Nam Bộ: Lấy người dân làm trung tâm*, TẠP CHÍ TÀI CHÍNH (June 29, 2020, 08:10 PM), available at: <http://tapchitaichinh.vn/su-kien-noi-bat/phat-trien-du-lich-dong-nam-bo-lay-nguoi-dan-lam-trung-tam-324878.html>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

¹⁶ Tổng cục Thống kê, *Thông cáo báo chí Kết quả Tổng điều tra Dân số và Nhà ở năm 2019*, TRANG THÔNG TIN ĐIỆN TỬ TỔNG CỤC THỐNG KÊ (Dec. 19, 2019, 14:43 PM), available at: <https://www.gso.gov.vn/Default.aspx?tabid=382&ItemID=19440>, accessed on Sept. 4, 2020.

¹⁷ Viện Chiến lược phát triển, *supra* note 1.

¹⁸ Ban Chỉ đạo tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở Trung ương, *Tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở thời điểm 0 giờ ngày 01 tháng 4 năm 2019, Tổ chức thực hiện và kết quả sơ bộ* (Nhà xuất bản Thống kê, Hà Nội, 2019).

¹⁹ Library of Congress. *Country Profile: China, August 2006*, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, 28-29 (2006), available at: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>, accessed on May 3, 2020.

²⁰ *Indian States and Capitals - GK in PDF*, ReferenceGlobe (2016), available at: <https://referenceglobe.com/userfolders/RG3397/abc.pdf>, accessed on May 3, 2020.

the Southeast region over the past few years. The most typical of these are the articles on *Dividing the country into 7 regions, Long An and Tiền Giang belong to the Southeast region of Ngọc An in 2019*,²¹ *Southern key economic region: Need a new mechanism to break through by Trần Vũ Nghi in 2016*,²² and *Bringing the whole HCMC region into a major center of Southeast Asia in 2017*.²³

3. Methodology and research methods

After nearly three and a half decades of reform, Vietnam's economy has achieved a number of very positive achievements. Vietnam's current economy is not only an attractive market and destination for many foreign investment flows, but also a bright spot and a new growth pole of Asian nations.²⁴ However, the growth model that relies heavily on exploiting available natural resources and taking advantage of the quantity of human resources in exchange for rapid growth is no longer totally suitable for the current model of green growth and sustainable development.²⁵ At the same time, the development orientation which stresses theoretically first on the national aggregate interests has created serious inequalities between economic sectors and bigger gaps between social strata. In such a situation, localities compete to implement various development policies to protect their inherent interests to the maximum extent possible and simultaneously increase their ability of resistance to negative impacts of the general mechanisms. Nevertheless, Vietnam's division into so many different small administrative units not only makes the bureaucracy even more cumbersome and ineffective, but the national

²¹ Ngọc An, *Chia cả nước thành 7 vùng, Long An và Tiền Giang thuộc Đông Nam bộ*, TUỔI TRÈ ONLINE (Jan. 10, 2019, 17:06 PM), available at: <https://tuoitre.vn/chia-ca-nuoc-thanh-7-vung-long-an-va-tien-giang-thuoc-dong-nam-bo-20190110160514174.htm>, accessed on May 5, 2020.

²² Trần Vũ Nghi, *Vùng kinh tế trọng điểm phía Nam: Cần cơ chế mới để đột phá*, TUỔI TRÈ ONLINE (Dec. 23, 2016, 09:51), available at: <https://tuoitre.vn/vung-kinh-te-trong-diem-phia-nam-can-co-che-moi-de-dot-pha-1240993.htm>, accessed on May 5, 2020.

²³ P.T., *Đưa cả vùng TPHCM thành trung tâm lớn của Đông Nam Á*, DÂN TRÍ (Dec. 26, 2017, 21:06), available at: <https://dantri.com.vn/xa-hoi/dua-ca-vung-tphcm-thanh-trung-tam-lon-cua-dong-nam-a-20171226210412948.htm>, accessed on May 4, 2020.

²⁴ Hoàng Phương, *Kinh tế Việt Nam: Điểm sáng của châu Á*, NGƯỜI LAO ĐỘNG (July 9, 2020, 09:44 AM), available at: <https://nld.com.vn/thoi-su-quoc-te/kinh-te-viet-nam-diem-sang-cua-chau-a-20200708212540933.htm>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

²⁵ Trương Bá Thanh và Bùi Quang Bình, *Đổi mới mô hình tăng trưởng kinh tế Việt Nam trong thời kỳ mới*, TẠP CHÍ TÀI CHÍNH (Nov. 7, 2016, 10:27 AM), available at: <http://tapchitaichinh.vn/nghien-cuu--trao-doi/trao-doi-binh-luan/doi-moi-mo-hinh-tang-truong-kinh-te-viet-nam-trong-thoi-ky-moi-114387.html>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

economy is also seriously fragmented, because each locality functions as an independent and separate economy.²⁶

However, no single locality can fully satisfy all of its own development needs as well as maximize its inherent potentials and advantages for further advancements by itself. It is therefore believed that regional integration has become an indispensable need of all Vietnam's current local economies. In that circumstance, Vietnam's Southeast region emerges as a model for sustainable regional economic development and is capable of becoming a fulcrum for many other regions of the country on the basis of a relatively coherent regional space and a number of similar characteristics in terms of natural conditions, socio-economic structure, infrastructure, cultural traditions, and level of development. Nevertheless, how will the Southeast region's localities build their own endogenous growth models to harmonize all three goals, namely the economic driving force of Southern Vietnam, the country's economic locomotive, and one of Southeast Asian largest economic centers. Based on the analysis of the available natural conditions, the prescribed legal foundations, and recent development practices of the region's localities, the paper compares the existing conditions with the proposed objectives and projects of constructing an endogenous growth model to confirm that the Southeast region not only fully converges the necessary prerequisites to fulfill its objectives, but also becomes an ideal endogenous growth model for both Vietnam and Southeast Asia in the years to come.

To realize those basic goals, the paper uses a system of different qualitative and quantitative methods as well as interdisciplinary and specialized approaches. While quantitative methods allow the research to make claims and conclusions based on specific figures, data, and facts, qualitative methods provide the study's arguments with widely recognized synthetic research results and practically proven laws of development. For example, the claim that Vietnam is not a big country in terms of territorial area, but divided into many provincial administrative units is the result of a comparison of the Vietnamese facts with published research results on government systems of many countries around the world. Furthermore, to conclude that the demand for regional integration is obviously rising in Vietnam is based firmly on recent development trends of localities throughout the country as well as the fragmented practice of isolated local economies of the S-shaped country. Moreover, the research is also conducted by

²⁶ Ngọc Thúy, *Mô hình tăng trưởng của Việt Nam: Để tránh "mỗi tỉnh là một nền kinh tế,"* Vn Economy (May 11, 2010, 09:14 AM), available at: <http://vneconomy.vn/thoi-su/mo-hinh-tang-truong-cua-viet-nam-de-tranh-moi-tinh-la-mot-nen-kinh-te-20100510081437833.htm>, accessed on Sept. 5, 2020.

different interdisciplinary and specialized methods. The most representative of these are the historical and logical methods. For instance, to make the point that the development of the Southeast region's model of endogenous economy is not only a temporary decision, but also a long-term development process, the paper employs a series of state decisions and policies on the development of the southern key economic region from 1997 to 2020 on the basis of chronological order and historical logic.

4. Lawful Bases & Practical Cornerstones of Developing the Southeast Region's Model of Endogenous Growth:

4.1. Objectively scientific, legal, and practical bases

Although regional economy and economic zone development are no longer a strange phenomenon for almost all countries on the earth, but to be able to develop successfully the endogenous growth model of a certain number of regions, it is necessary to meet some basic prerequisites. The most typical of these are the scientific bases and theoretical premises, development strategies and state regulations, and inherent natural conditions as well as the objective factors impacted from the outside. In this regard, there are many objectively scientific, legal, and practical bases to develop the Southeast region's models of endogenous growth, but the most important are the five key conditions as follows:

Firstly, the inevitable need for regional economic development is getting higher not only in Vietnam, but also in many other developed countries of the current world. In the era of globalization of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, almost no country or economic institution can survive normally and thrive on their own without external relationships. The provinces, cities, and localities of Vietnam's Southeast region could not be exempted from these general rules. In addition to transportation and human social relationships in everyday life, no localities or economic institutions can provide themselves with all the necessities and essential supplies for the usual development of a modern economy. It is therefore clear that the expansion of exchange and trade of goods between localities and nations is not only extremely urgent, but is also vital in the current circumstance of the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

Secondly, Vietnam is administratively divided into a number of provinces and cities under the direct management of the central government, but many of these administrative units are relatively modest in terms of natural area, population size, and economic potential. For instance, the whole of China is composed of only 22 provinces (sheng), 5 autonomous regions

(zizhiqu), 4 central cities (shi), and 2 special administrative zones: Hong Kong and Macau.²⁷ The United States of American Government also manages only 50 states,²⁸ while the Russian Federation has locally been administrated by 7 federal districts since 2000 with 89 local jurisdiction areas.²⁹ At the same time, the majestic India also controls only 36 local administrative units with 29 states and 7 alliance regions.³⁰ In such a situation, in spite of having a natural area equivalent to that of Vietnam, but Germany is locally governed by 16 states only,³¹ while Japan is divided into 47 prefectures.³² It means that Vietnam is not a major country on the earth, but the number of local government system ranks among the most of the current world. The fact that localities build their own economies according to their own specific development strategies has partly limited the ability to promote internal synergy as well as maximize the available potentials of each region and the whole country. It is for this reason convinced that regional economic development will partly contribute to limiting the situation of separation and isolation of Vietnam's current system of local administrations.

Thirdly, the regional economy should include many localities located close to each other in a geographical space and is connected by several economic ties. This is an advantage of Vietnam's Southeast region. For example, Vietnam's North and South Central Coast region has a length of more than 1,300 km from North to South. The reality shows that economic linkages and cooperation between the northernmost provinces of the region such as Thanh Hóa and Nghệ An and the southernmost ones such as Bình Thuận and Ninh Thuận have been nearly non-existent. For this reason, the Ministry of Planning and Investment has proposed to separate the North and South Central Coast region into the North Central region and the South Central region to increase the total number of Vietnam's economic regions to seven ones.³³ Similarly, despite belonging to the Central Highland region, Kon Tum's economic links with Đà Nẵng have been

²⁷ Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *supra* note, at 28-29.

²⁸ United Nations, *The United States of America, country profile*, Johannesburg Summit 2002, UNITED NATIONS, 138 (2002), available at: <https://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/wssd/usa.pdf>, accessed on May 3, 2020.

²⁹ Library of Congress, *Country Profile: Russia, October 2006*, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, 20 (2006), available at: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/Russia-new.pdf>, accessed on May 3, 2020.

³⁰ *Indian States and Capitals - GK in PDF*, *supra* note 19.

³¹ Library of Congress, *Country Profile: Germany, April 2008*, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, 18 (2008), available at: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/Germany-new.pdf>, accessed on May 3, 2020.

³² *Local self-government*, WEB JAPAN (2020), available at: https://web-japan.org/factsheet/en/pdf/e10_local.pdf, accessed on May 3, 2020.

³³ Thảo Nguyên, *Phân vùng kinh tế - xã hội: Liên kết để cùng phát triển*, KINH TẾ & ĐÔ THỊ (Feb. 18, 2020, 09:04 AM), available at: <http://kinhtedothi.vn/phan-vung-kinh-te-xa-hoi-lien-ket-de-cung-phat-trien-365440.html>, accessed on May 3, 2020.

more than those of Đắk Nông and Lâm Đồng. By contrast, Lâm Đồng has had more economic ties with Ho Chi Minh City than with Kon Tum for years. This proves that the economic zoning according to regional natural characteristics is not really reasonable. Instead, the economic zoning should be based on key economic regions. In this aspect, Vietnam's Southeast region is not only encapsulated in a relatively close space, but is also a key economic center and the driving force for the development of the whole country. The construction of the Southeast region's model of endogenous growth is therefore also very advantageous.

Fourthly, the policy of developing the Southern key economic region becomes one of the economic locomotives of the whole country. At the end of 1997 and beginning of 1998, Vietnam's Prime Minister respectively approved the Decision No. 747/1997/QĐ-TTg, Decision No. 1018/1997/QĐ-TTg, and Decision No. 44/1998/QĐ-TTg on the master plan on socio-economic development of the three national key economic regions up to 2010. According to these decisions, the Southern key economic region includes: Ho Chi Minh City, Bình Dương, Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu, and Đồng Nai. On the 20th-21st June 2003, the Government of Vietnam decided to expand the boundary of the region by three more provinces: Tây Ninh, Bình Phước, and Long An in the Notice No. 99/TB-VPCP dated on the 2nd July 2003 with a total natural area up to 23,994.2 km² (7.3% nationwide) and 12.3 million people in 2002 (15.4% nationwide). On the 10th October 2007, Tiền Giang was added to the Southern key economic region by the Decision No. 159/2007/QĐ-TTg of the Government of Vietnam.³⁴ On 20th July 2012, the Government of Vietnam issued Decision No. 943/QĐ-TTg on the master plan for socio-economic development of the Southeast region up to 2020.³⁵ This fact shows that the construction and development of the Southeast region's model of endogenous growth has not only derived from the practical needs and available potentials of this region, but has also been part of the overall socio-economic development strategy of the whole country and based on solid legal cornerstones.

Fifthly, the strategic geographical position of the Southeast region is not only within Vietnam, but also in Southeast Asia. The Southeast region possesses a number of significant

³⁴ *Tổng quan về quá trình hình thành các vùng kinh tế trọng điểm*, CÔNG THÔNG TIN ĐIỆN TỬ CHÍNH PHỦ NƯỚC CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM, available at: <http://chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/noidungvungkinhtetrongdiemquocgia?articleId=10000721>, accessed on May 4, 2020.

³⁵ *Báo cáo: Phát triển hạ tầng Đông Nam Bộ - Điều kiện cho sự phát triển logistics của khu vực*, TRANG THÔNG TIN ĐIỆN TỬ LOGISTICS VIỆT NAM (Sept. 22, 2017, 12:54 PM), available at: <http://logistics.gov.vn/nghien-cuudao-tao/bao-cao-phat-trien-ha-tang-dong-nam-bo-dieu-kien-cho-su-phat-trien-logistics-cua-khu-vuc>, accessed on May 5, 2020.

advantages on the path to become an economic hub not only of Vietnam, but also of Southeast Asia and is also able to reach the whole Asian region. Ho Chi Minh City is nearly 1,730 km by road from Hanoi capital, located at the international crossroads between the maritime routes from North to South, East to West, and is the focal point of Southeast Asia.³⁶ On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Ho Chi Minh City named after President Hồ Chí Minh, the city's leaders set out the target of striving by 2020 Ho Chi Minh City must become one of Southeast Asia's major economic, financial, commercial, and scientific-technological centers.³⁷ In 2017, the Government of Vietnam decided to plan Ho Chi Minh City region into an important area and position in Southeast Asia and Asia.³⁸

In summary, Vietnam's Southeast region is one of the most dynamic, modern, and developed key economic regions in the country. These achievements are not only obtained due to inherent natural factors, but the construction of the Southeast region's model of endogenous economy is also based on different scientific, legal, and practical bases and objective facts. On the 23rd January 2018, the Ministry of Construction, the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, and leaders of other provinces in the region announced *the Adjustment of construction planning of Ho Chi Minh City area until 2030 and the vision to 2050*. One of the main goals of this project is to play an increasingly important role in Southeast Asia.³⁹ In practice, Ho Chi Minh City area is currently a major urban center with a high rate of urbanization and good quality of life, a dynamic economic center with high and sustainable growth, and relatively competitive both at home and abroad.⁴⁰ All of the above important prerequisites and bases allow the Ho Chi Minh City area to be able to successfully build its own model of endogenous growth in relation to other economic regions of the country as well as Southeast Asia.

³⁶ *Vị trí địa lý*, THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH (Nov. 2, 2011, 16:00 PM), available at: <http://www.hochiminhcity.gov.vn/thongtinthanhpho/gioithieu/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?List=9efd7faa%2Df6be%2D4c91%2D9140%2De2bd40710c29&ID=5495&Web=9d294a7f%2Dcaf2%2D456d%2D8ca0%2D36b393b8c052>, accessed on May 4, 2020.

³⁷ *TP.HCM phải trở thành một trong những trung tâm lớn của Đông Nam Á*, THẾ GIỚI & VIỆT NAM (July 2, 2016, 12:00 AM), available at: <https://baoquocte.vn/tphcm-phai-tro-thanh-mot-trong-nhung-trung-tam-lon-cua-dong-nam-a-32149.html>, accessed on May 4, 2020.

³⁸ P.T., *supra* note 22.

³⁹ *D.N.Hà, Vùng TP.HCM sẽ là trung tâm kinh tế lớn ở Đông Nam Á*, TUỔI TRẺ ONLINE (Jan. 23, 2018, 13:56 PM), available at: <https://tuoitre.vn/vung-tp-hcm-se-la-trung-tam-kinh-te-lon-o-dong-nam-a-20180123120819994.htm>, accessed on May 4, 2020.

⁴⁰ P.T., *supra* note 22.

4.2. Subjective factual bases

In addition to the external scientific, legal, and practical bases, Vietnam's Southeast region also converges not only enough, but also excessively internal inherent subjective practical conditions in order to build successfully the model of endogenous growth and becomes an ideal regional economic development model for other regions throughout the country. It is at the same time also the bases for the Southeast region to assume its mission and excellently finish the task of an economic locomotive to lead the remaining regions of the country to advance faster and further in the process of industrialization and modernization of the country.

The first is the natural geography, natural resource, and population. Vietnam's Southeast region has a total natural area of 23,564 km² (7.3% of the whole country) and a population of more than 17 million people (18.17% of the country).⁴¹ The natural area of the Southeast region is in practice only larger than that of the Red River Delta region and much smaller than that of Vietnam's remaining regions, but contributes to 35.90% of the country's GDP.⁴² According to the latest proposal of the Ministry of Planning and Investment in 2019, Vietnam's Southeast region would be composed of 9 provinces and cities,⁴³ including: six present Southeastern provinces plus Lâm Đồng, Bình Thuận, and Ninh Thuận. According to this project, it is predicted that by 2030, the population of the whole region would reach the number of about 24-25 million people, of which there would be around 18-19 million urban people and 18-19 million people of working age.⁴⁴ Additionally, Vietnam's Southeast region also possesses rich resources of oil and gas reserves of up to approximately 4-5 billion tons, 485-500 billion m³ of gas, is one of the four key fishing grounds of Vietnam with fish reserves of about 290-704 thousand tons (40% of Vietnam's Southern Sea), and agricultural land strengths.⁴⁵ These are very basic natural conditions for Vietnam's Southeast region to build its own model of endogenous growth.

The second is the infrastructure for the region's socio-economic development. The Southeast region is Vietnam's only current economic zone that fully converges all the necessary conditions and inherent advantages to develop a modern industry and advanced services as well as take the lead in the country's industrialization and modernization. Vietnam's Southeastern

⁴¹ Hà Anh, *supra* note 2.

⁴² Viện Chiến lược phát triển, *supra* note 1, at 33.

⁴³ Ngọc An, *supra* note 20.

⁴⁴ P.T., *supra* note 22.

⁴⁵ *Vị trí địa lý, điều kiện tự nhiên vùng Đông Nam Bộ, DÂN TỘC VÀ MIỀN NÚI* (Apr. 3, 2017, 14:38 PM), available at: <https://dantocmiennui.vn/xa-hoi/vi-tri-dia-ly-dieu-kien-tu-nhien-vung-dong-nam-bo/130930.html>, accessed on May 5, 2020.

economic region not only possesses a fairly synchronous infrastructure system, but is also home to a number of training institutions, research institutes, and healthcare facilities of high quality. In addition to a network of satellite towns connected by modern transportation system, the Southeast region is also Vietnam's leading industrial center with a dense network of efficient industrial parks and advanced leading industries.⁴⁶ It is thanks to the modern infrastructure system that the Southeast region has currently the highest rate of urbanization in the country⁴⁷ with 62.8% of urban population.⁴⁸ With the current rate and momentum of growth, it is expected that the urbanization rate of Vietnam's Southeast region will reach around 70-75%⁴⁹ in the coming years. A solid and modern infrastructure foundation is one of the great advantages for the construction of Ho Chi Minh City region's model of endogenous growth.

The third is the economic basis for the development of the internal growth model. Vietnam's Southeast area is the country's most important driving economic region. In 2017, the Southeast provinces alone contributed to approximately 45% of GDP, nearly 60% of total national budget revenue, and about 50% of total industrial production value, export turnover, and state budget of the whole country.⁵⁰ GRDP per capita of the Southeast region is two times higher than that of the national average⁵¹ and GDP is nearly 2.5 times higher than that of the national average,⁵² while the economic growth rate is always around 1.3⁵³ to 1.6 times⁵⁴ higher than the average one of the entire country. In addition, the Southeast area has also been the region attracting the largest number of foreign investment capital in the country right from the moment the country started the implementing of the renovation policy. As of August 2016, Vietnam's Southeast region has attracted 11,537 foreign investment projects with a total capital of 140.2 billion USD, accounting for 57.4% of the total number of projects and 48.4% of the total FDI

⁴⁶ Báo cáo: Phát triển hạ tầng Đông Nam Bộ - Điều kiện cho sự phát triển logistics của khu vực, *Supra* note 34.

⁴⁷ Hà Anh, *supra* note 2.

⁴⁸ UNFPA Việt Nam. *Kết quả tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở năm 2019*, UNFPA VIỆT NAM (Dec. 19, 2019), available at: <https://vietnam.unfpa.org/vi/news/k%E1%BA%BFt-qu%E1%BA%A3-t%E1%BB%95ng-%C4%91i%E1%BB%81u-tra-d%C3%A2n-s%E1%BB%91-v%C3%A0-nh%C3%A0-%E1%BB%9F-n%C4%83m-2019>, accessed on May 5, 2020.

⁴⁹ P.T., *supra* note 22.

⁵⁰ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ*, SỞ QUY HOẠCH - KIẾN TRÚC THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH (Oct. 2, 2017), available at: <https://qhkt.hochiminhcity.gov.vn/goc-nhin/can-tam-nhin-quy-hoach-moi-vung-kinh-te-dong-nam-bo-114.html>, accessed on May 5, 2020.

⁵¹ Hà Anh, *supra* note 2.

⁵² *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ*, *supra* note 49.

⁵³ Hà Anh, *supra* note 2.

⁵⁴ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ*, *supra* note 49.

capital of the country.⁵⁵ In the period of 2016-2018, Vietnam's Southeast region had an export turnover of 262.7 billion USD⁵⁶ (nearly 60% of the country).⁵⁷ If the openness of the economy is measured by the share of exports to GDP, Vietnam's Southeast region has an openness index of nearly 110%, while that of the whole country is only around 70%.⁵⁸ For this reason, the Southeast region is not only considered as the focal center for services and commerce of regional and international stature, but also as the largest industrial and international integration center of Vietnam.⁵⁹ It is thanks to such a strong economic potential, the development investment rate of Vietnam's Southeast region is up to 50% of GDP. This figure is 1.5 times higher than that of the national average.⁶⁰ On that basis, on the 23rd January 2018, Vietnam's Southeast region was determined to become the center for a modern economy, commerce, finance, scientific research, high quality services, and large-scale high-tech and specialized industries of both Vietnam and Southeast Asia.⁶¹

Fourthly, Vietnam's Southeast region is a large and potential consuming market. In 2019, the region population was amounted to around 17,828,907 people and the population density of the Southeast region was 757 people per km².⁶² This reality makes the Southeast region become the second most densely populated one in the country (757 people per km²), but had the highest average population growth rate of the nation (2.37% per year) in the period of 2009-2019.⁶³ This figure is twice as high as the average rate of Vietnam's population growth.⁶⁴ The Southeast region has been the annual ideal destination for approximately two-thirds of the total number of nationwide internal migrants with 1.3 million people per year.⁶⁵ This is clearly a potential consuming market for commodity productions, but the attractiveness of the Southeast market mainly comes from the size of the economy as well as consumers' spending ability. The Southeast region has been Vietnam's largest consuming market in many fields for decades. For

⁵⁵ Báo cáo: Phát triển hạ tầng Đông Nam Bộ - Điều kiện cho sự phát triển logistics của khu vực, *supra* note 34.

⁵⁶ Trúc Giang, Đánh giá giữa kỳ kế hoạch KTXH vùng Đông Nam Bộ và Đồng bằng Sông Cửu Long, ĐẦU TƯ ONLINE (Aug. 31, 2018, 14:47 PM), available at: <https://baodautu.vn/danh-gia-giua-ky-ke-hoach-ktxh-vung-dong-nam-bo-va-dong-bang-song-cuu-long-d87169.html>, accessed on May 7, 2020.

⁵⁷ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ*, *supra* note 49.

⁵⁸ Báo cáo: Phát triển hạ tầng Đông Nam Bộ - Điều kiện cho sự phát triển logistics của khu vực, *supra* note 34.

⁵⁹ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ*, *supra* note 49.

⁶⁰ Báo cáo: Phát triển hạ tầng Đông Nam Bộ - Điều kiện cho sự phát triển logistics của khu vực, *supra* note 34.

⁶¹ D.N.Hà, *supra* note 38.

⁶² Ban Chỉ đạo tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở Trung ương, *supra* note 17, at 67, 89.

⁶³ UNFPA Việt Nam, *supra* note 47.

⁶⁴ Ban Chỉ đạo tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở Trung ương, *supra* note 17, at 49.

⁶⁵ UNFPA Việt Nam, *supra* note 47.

instance, in two months of November and December 2019, the Southeast region was the largest cement consumer of the country with 1,487,423 tons, while the Red River Delta just stopped at 1,091,497 tons.⁶⁶ At the same time, GRDP per capita of the Southeast region in 2018 was \$5,289 per person.⁶⁷ With its income rate that is 2 times higher than that of the national average, the Southeast region is Vietnam's market of the largest purchasing power. This is in practice one of the most important conditions for the Southeast localities to develop its own model of endogenous growth.

Finally, the level of development is relatively equal among the localities and is higher than that of the national average. In addition to Tây Ninh and Bình Phước, which are in the process of integration, Đồng Nai, Bình Dương, Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu, and especially Ho Chi Minh City have all been strong economic centers of the country and have relatively high levels of economic growth for years. On that general ground, the Southeast region's economic development level is generally higher than that of the whole country in the most key industries and important fields such as high-tech industry, high-quality tourism services, telecommunications technology, finance and banking, scientific research, and human resource training.⁶⁸ Ho Chi Minh City alone is not just a nuclear city and center for economy, knowledge, and modern multi-functional integrated science on a par with Southeast Asia's leading cities,⁶⁹ but is also the host of nearly 40% of the country's scientific staff. This is not only a strategic advantage of Vietnam's Southeast region, but also a place of high-quality human resource training for other economic areas of the nation.⁷⁰ While 23.1% of the country's labor force has been trained from at least the elementary or higher level with degrees and certificates, this rate in the Southeast region is 27.5%.⁷¹ That is in reality one of the core factors for the process of building the Southeast region's model of endogenous growth.

In conclusion, the Southeast region is one of Vietnam's rarest areas which is capable of fully satisfying all the real subjective conditions to successfully build its own model of endogenous economic growth in the context of unpredictable developments of the domestic and

⁶⁶ TPX, *Sản lượng tiêu thụ xi măng cuối năm 2019 của các vùng miền tại Việt Nam*, CÔNG TY CỔ PHẦN XI MĂNG TÂN PHÚ XUÂN (Feb. 8, 2020), available at: <http://tpx.vn/san-luong-tieu-thu-xi-mang-cuoi-nam-2019-cua-cac-vung-mien-tai-viet-nam-id3141.html>, accessed on May 7, 2020.

⁶⁷ Trúc Giang, *supra* note 55.

⁶⁸ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ*, *supra* note 49.

⁶⁹ D.N.Hà, *supra* note 38.

⁷⁰ Trần Vũ Nghi, *supra* note 21.

⁷¹ Tổng cục Thống kê, *supra* note 15.

international situation. Vietnam's Southeast region not only possesses abundant inherent natural resources, but its population is also capable of providing the regional economy with quality human resources as well as a large consuming market. Nevertheless, modern infrastructure and facility conditions also contribute to giving the Southeast region the position of Vietnam's leading center for tourism, industrial services, information technology, telecommunications and logistics... with a system of largest airports and seaports in the country.⁷² However, the remarkable and outstanding development of the Southeastern economic region is the factor which allows the localities in the region to successfully build their own model of endogenous growth. All of these developments prove that Vietnam's Southeast region is not only the nucleus of the South's key economic zone, the economic center of the South Vietnam, and the economic engine of the whole country, but can also establish its own model of endogenous growth in the general development strategy of the country.

4.3. Some suggestions and solutions

Based on the above analysis, the article offers some policy implication solutions as follows:

The first is the mechanism and institutions: there should be regional institutions to govern and manage the development of the whole region. At present, provincial presidents of the region's localities alternately assume the task of operating the common affairs in terms. However, as this is a position of consultation and information synthesis, the actual effect of this operating model is not as effective as expected. One side of the problem is that the current concept of the economic zone is not an official administrative unit in Vietnam's political system,⁷³ but there are on the other hand no clear mechanisms and specific regulations on the role of executive and leadership of economic zones' heads.⁷⁴ It is therefore urgent to build appropriate regional economic institutions in parallel with the issuance of clear regulations on operational mechanisms as well as specific functions and tasks of each position, unit, and agency in the regional institutions as soon as possible.

The second is to identify a number of specific central targets and detailed implementation roadmaps to realize those goals. One of the tasks that need to finish immediately is to clearly rebuild the development plan of the Southeast region on the basis of the general master plan of

⁷² Hà Anh, *supra* note 2.

⁷³ Thảo Nguyên, *supra* note 32.

⁷⁴ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ*, *supra* note 49.

the whole country. It is necessary to determine whether the Southeast region should remain as it is at the moment or develop into the Southern key economic zone or include Ninh Thuận, Bình Thuận, and Lâm Đồng. Weaknesses in the planning are considered as one of the main obstacles for Vietnam's current economic regions, including the Southeast economic region.⁷⁵ Improving the quality of regional planning is therefore of vital importance to the issue of regional resource allocation in order to maximize the inherent advantages within the whole region.⁷⁶ Based on the general strategy of the entire region, the localities can identify their potentials, advantages, and plan their development strategies in a consistent and synchronous manner with the whole region.⁷⁷

The third is to focus resources on solving intense economic problems and pressing social questions within the region. In this regard, Vietnam's Southeast region is facing a number of hot issues. The *first* is the free migration problem with around 1.3 million people per year.⁷⁸ The *second* is the question of the country's lowest birth rate (1.39 children per woman) in Ho Chi Minh City.⁷⁹ The *third* is the degradation and overload of the infrastructure, especially the transport infrastructure and projects of significant regional linkage.⁸⁰ A lot of important roads in the Southeast region have become overloaded⁸¹ with the pace of the rapid economic development of the regions' economies. The *fourth* is the issue of climate change. Ho Chi Minh City is predicted to be one of the country's most negatively affected regions due to climate change. It is for this reason recommended that the Southeast region develop regional space towards balance, sustainability, and adaptation to the maximum extent possible to the negative impacts of climate change in parallel with the strengthening of regional linkages with standards of advanced and synchronous technical infrastructure.⁸² The *fifth* is that the Southeast region's growth rate is tending to decrease gradually and the development gap with other economic areas of the nation is in danger of significant narrowing. There is not as much room to increase capital

⁷⁵ Hà Nguyễn, “*Trong điểm*” của Vùng kinh tế trọng điểm, ĐẦU TƯ ONLINE (July 30, 2019, 15:29 PM), available at: <https://baodautu.vn/trong-diem-cua-vung-kinh-te-trong-diem-d104558.html>, accessed on May 4, 2020.

⁷⁶ Báo cáo: *Phát triển hạ tầng Đông Nam Bộ - Điều kiện cho sự phát triển logistics của khu vực*, *supra* note 34.

⁷⁷ Thảo Nguyễn, *supra* note 32.

⁷⁸ UNFPA Việt Nam, *supra* note 47.

⁷⁹ *Id.*

⁸⁰ Hà Nguyễn, *supra* note 74.

⁸¹ Phương Nam, *Hạ tầng giao thông Đông Nam Bộ: Chủ động giải bài toán khó*, HÀ NỘI MỚI (Jan. 10, 2020, 06:51 AM), available at: <http://www.hanoimoi.com.vn/tin-tuc/giao-thong/955187/ha-tang-giao-thong-dong-nam-bo-chu-dong-giai-bai-toan-kho>, accessed on May 5, 2020.

⁸² D.N.Hà, *supra* note 38.

and labor resources in the Southeast area as in the regions, which have not undergone this primitive period of industrialization.⁸³ If these questions are not paid enough attention soon and challenges are not addressed definitively, they would be significant obstacles in the construction of the Southeast region's model of endogenous growth.

Fourthly, the budget mechanism between the central government and the local administrations should be fairer in order to create more advantageous conditions for positive actors. Although the Southeast region's budget revenue reached 1,639,215 billion VND and contributed up to over 50% of the country's total budget revenue in the period of 2016-2018,⁸⁴ this region was invested only around 18.5% of the whole country's total investment capital. Since 1 January 2017, Ho Chi Minh City has been entitled to retain the budget revenue ratio of 18% only,⁸⁵ Bình Dương 36%, Đồng Nai 47%, Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu 64%, while this rate of Cần Thơ has been 91%.⁸⁶ This investment rate of the central budget is not only incompatible with the great contributions of the Southeast region, but also cannot meet the development investment needs of the largest economic center of the country.⁸⁷ It is therefore suggested that the Government of Vietnam needs to redefine the rate of local budget regulation for the Southeast region to ensure its correspondence to the main contributions of each locality's budgets to the central budget on the one hand, but ensures simultaneously development investment resources for the regions that are on the rise on the other hand.⁸⁸

The fifth is the development of inter-regional relations between the Southeast region and other areas at home and abroad. Although the Southeast localities are located in the region with the country's highest level of economic development, they cannot supply and consume all the essentials of modern life by themselves. It is therefore clear that the integration of the internal region and the linkage with other economic areas is inevitable to the extent that it cannot be otherwise optional.⁸⁹ As for the Southeast region, it is necessary to redefine the internal structure of the whole area of the Southeast region, the Southern key economic region, and the Ho Chi Minh City area. It is essential to emphasize the thinking of regional development and to put the

⁸³ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ, supra note 49.*

⁸⁴ Trúc Giang, *supra note 55.*

⁸⁵ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ, supra note 49.*

⁸⁶ Trúc Giang, *supra note 55.*

⁸⁷ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ, supra note 49.*

⁸⁸ Trần Vũ Nghi, *supra note 21.*

⁸⁹ Thảo Nguyên, *supra note 32.*

development strategy of each locality in the long-term plan of the whole region.⁹⁰ This fact shows that although the Southeast region possessed a lot of favorable conditions for the successful construction of its own growth model, there is also no shortage of opportunities for cooperation and linkage with other regions within Vietnam and overseas.

In summary, the Southeast region plays a particularly important role in Vietnam's socio-economic development.⁹¹ However, in order for the Southeast region to both become a model of endogenous growth and fulfill the mission of the nation's leading economic drivers, the regions' localities need to overcome the current situation of discrete linkage.⁹² It is at the same time urgent to experiment specific mechanisms and policies that are suitable for the promotion of potentials and advantages as well as the long-term economic development strategies⁹³ of the whole region. However, resource shortages, deteriorating infrastructure, and the absence of an appropriate institution for regional cooperation and integration are critical internal problems in the construction of the Southeast region's current model of endogenous growth.⁹⁴ One of the reasons why the regional linkage institutions of the Southeast localities have not been developed corresponding to the economic development level of this region is because the proportion of central budget regulation to major local economies of this area is still largely illogical. However, the increasingly low development space and the shortening development gap with other regions are the greatest challenges for the current construction efforts of the Southeast region's model of endogenous growth.

5. Conclusion:

To conclude, the Southeast area is one of Vietnam's very few current economic regions which are capable of fully converging the necessary factors to be able to successfully build its own model of endogenous growth. Part of this is due to the need for connectivity and cooperation in the context of the globalization of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, but Southeast Asia's central geographic location is the most notable objective factual premise. It should be noted, however, that the state's strategy for regional economic development and key economic regions is decisive, despite the excessive subdivision of the sub-national institutions is the factor

⁹⁰ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ, supra note 49.*

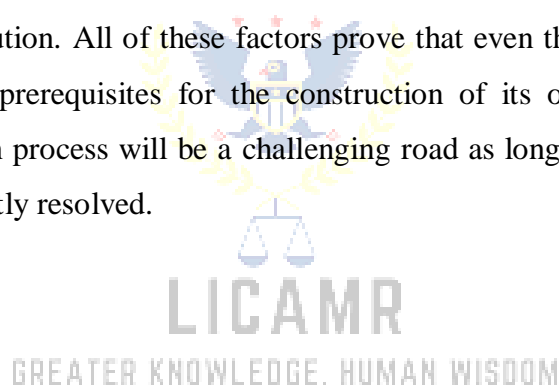
⁹¹ *Trần Vũ Nghi, supra note 21.*

⁹² *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ, supra note 49.*

⁹³ *Hà Anh, supra note 2.*

⁹⁴ *Báo cáo: Phát triển hạ tầng Đông Nam Bộ - Điều kiện cho sự phát triển logistics của khu vực, supra note 34.*

that sets the most pressing and urgent requirements for the formation of regional institutions and relationships. In this regard, Vietnam's Southeast region possesses a certain number of advantages because of the spatial concentration and proximity of the constituent units. Nevertheless, the Southeast localities' modern, synchronous, best-class infrastructure system in Vietnam and its outstanding contributions to the entire national economy are in practice attractive to the strategy of building the model of endogenous growth. Similarly, the relatively equal level of development between constituent parts and the overall economic potential, which is much higher than that of the whole country, are also considerable advantages. However, the situation of limited financial resources in the context of the largest contribution to the central budget has significantly reduced the growth opportunities of the country's economic locomotive. In such a context, clearly defining the driving role of the leading economic center⁹⁵ together with a system of railway and network of convenient transportation to link the local satellite towns⁹⁶ is seen as the optimized solution. All of these factors prove that even though the Southeast region has fully converged the prerequisites for the construction of its own model of endogenous growth, but the realization process will be a challenging road as long as the posed questions are not thoroughly and promptly resolved.



⁹⁵ Thảo Nguyên, *supra* note 32.

⁹⁶ *Cần tầm nhìn quy hoạch mới vùng kinh tế Đông Nam bộ*, *supra* note 49.

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