

Abstract of the Thesis

VIETNAMESE FOREIGN POLICY: MEMORY AND LEARNING IN THE DOI MOI ERA

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Ever since 1988, Vietnam has successfully diversified and multilateralised its relationships, whilst placing a strong degree of focus on integration into the international political economy. This multidirectional foreign policy is designed to contribute to a peaceful international environment and a stable domestic one in order to promote economic growth and build up the aggregate strength of the country. At the same time, it is designed to boost the country's autonomy, protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as hedge against potential threats. This multidirectional foreign policy has contributed significantly to the economic reformist agenda, formally initiated at the 1986 Sixth Party Congress, otherwise known as Doi Moi. Additionally, it has boosted Vietnam's international profile and reversed the diplomatic isolation it faced as the Cold War came to a close. As such, multidirectionalism has become a fundamental aspect of the Doi Moi process. This thesis traces the learning process since multidirectionalism's inception and argues that this learning process, along with the economic benefits reaped, have evolved into positive memories for the Vietnamese Communist Party. This means multidirectionalism continues to be reinforced and as a result, these memories shape Vietnam's continued expansion of that policy. Additionally, this thesis also offers a conceptual definition to the term multidirectionalism as well as explores the mechanisms through which Vietnam implements this policy.