

# GOVERNING IDEOLOGICAL DEVIANCE IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAM

Trinh Van Toan., Ph.D<sup>1</sup>, Nguyen Thi Huyen Chi, MA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Electric Power University, Vietnam; Email: [toanto@epu.edu.vn](mailto:toanto@epu.edu.vn); ORCID: 0009-0002-7870-1774

<sup>2</sup>Electric Power University, Vietnam; Email: [chinth@epu.edu.vn](mailto:chinth@epu.edu.vn); ORCID: 0009-0000-6023-2901

\*Corresponding author: Nguyen Thi Huyen Chi, MA  
[chinth@epu.edu.vn](mailto:chinth@epu.edu.vn)

## ABSTRACT

*This article examines the shift from identification-and-rebuttal approaches toward a governance framework for ideological deviance in the defense of the Party's ideological foundations amid the digital transformation. By clarifying the concepts of ideological norm and ideological deviance as categories anchored in value reference frameworks and political legitimacy, the article traces how the manifestations of ideological deviance have fundamentally changed: no longer confined primarily to forms of direct antagonism, they increasingly infiltrate, interweave with, and propagate across open, decentralized, and highly interactive information environments. From this basis, the article argues that traditional identification-and-rebuttal methods reveal structural limitations – reactive in orientation, delayed in response, and constrained in control efficacy – under contemporary conditions. Building on this diagnosis, the article advances an approach to governing ideological deviance as a mechanism for managing politico-social risk, with the strategic emphasis shifted from addressing surface manifestations to regulating the conditions under which deviant cognitive tendencies form and spread. The proposed governance model is analyzed across four dimensions – actors, content, environment, and policy instruments – and operates through a continuous cycle of detection, analysis, intervention, and adjustment. The article further draws out implications for Party-building work, with particular attention to cadre management, inspection and supervision, and technology application, with a view to strengthening proactive capacity in safeguarding the Party's ideological foundations in the current period.*

**Keywords:** governance of ideological deviance; politico-social risk management; ideological foundations; digital transformation; Party building.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the work of defending the ideological foundations of the ruling Party, the identification and rebuttal of erroneous and hostile viewpoints has long been regarded as a fundamental and indispensable method. Yet in the context of ongoing digital transformation, where ideological life unfolds within an open, decentralized, and highly interactive information environment, this approach has begun to reveal certain structural limits. Manifestations of ideological deviance no longer appear primarily as direct antagonism with clearly defined positions; rather, they increasingly take shape through partial interpretations and one-sided framings of concrete social issues, gradually accumulating, spreading, and reshaping the cognition of significant segments of society.

Under these conditions, a strategy that focuses exclusively on addressing already manifested symptoms cannot achieve durable results in defending the Party's ideological foundations, precisely because the conditions that generate and sustain deviance have not been systematically identified and regulated. The imperative, therefore, is no longer confined to ideological struggle in the traditional sense; it demands a transition toward a more proactive approach, the governance of ideological deviance. This approach does not seek the total elimination of all deviant expressions. Rather, it aims to regulate the conditions under which such expressions form and propagate, thereby maintaining the stability of the normative value framework and curtailing the risk of their conversion into destabilizing tendencies within the politico-social system.

Proceeding from this framework, the article analyzes the governance of ideological deviance as a mechanism for managing politico-social risk in the context of digital transformation, with the aim of clarifying its theoretical foundations, operational model, and implications for contemporary Party-building work.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of ideology has long occupied a central position in political theory and political sociology, for ideology is not merely an abstract body of beliefs but a conceptual framework through which political actors interpret reality, justify power, organize collective action, and sustain political order. In this sense, ideology bears an intrinsic relationship to legitimacy: a political system endures not solely because of its institutional capacity or coercive power, but because significant segments of society accept the foundational values, norms, and expectations the system defines for itself.

Situated within this theoretical lineage, David Easton's systems analysis framework retains considerable analytical purchase for understanding this relationship. Easton distinguishes between specific support, directed at current administrative outputs and policies, and diffuse support, directed at the political system itself (Easton, 1965). Diffuse support carries particular significance because it reflects a deep reservoir of trust, attachment, and legitimacy that enables a political system to weather periods of policy dissatisfaction (Easton, 1965). From this vantage point, ideological stability constitutes one dimension of the broader structure of diffuse support. When foundational values erode, or when the public begins to question the legitimacy of the system's normative value framework, political instability can emerge well before formal institutions face direct challenge (Easton, 1965).

Extending this logic of consensus, John Rawls's account of political liberalism, though elaborated within a different normative context, similarly underscores the importance of shared political conceptions in sustaining social cooperation (Rawls, 1993). In pluralist societies, political order depends upon some form of public reason or common framework through which disagreements can be processed without rupturing systemic legitimacy (Rawls, 1993). For the purposes of this article, the analytical value of Rawls lies not in transposing a liberal model onto a different political context, but in his demonstration that political systems invariably require shared standards of justification and value orientation (Rawls, 1993). Ideological norms, in this sense, function as a system-specific framework for producing political meaning, legitimacy, and collective action.

To sharpen this logic for the contemporary era, recent scholarship on authoritarian legitimacy argues that ruling parties in developmental-state models cannot rely on performance legitimacy alone, encompassing economic output and welfare provision, but must continuously reconstruct ideological legitimacy as a durable defensive perimeter against external informational shocks (Holbig & Gilley, 2010). The erosion of public confidence in the dominant ideological value framework constitutes the pre-crisis phase of systemic political risk (Duckett & Wang, 2020).

Yet the conditions under which ideological legitimacy is produced, contested, and eroded have undergone a structural transformation that classical frameworks of political order were not designed to address. Digital transformation has fundamentally altered the conditions under which political cognition forms. The rise of digital platforms, social media, algorithmic

recommendation systems, and data-driven communication has thoroughly restructured the public discursive space, such that information no longer flows primarily through centralized, top-down channels. Instead, it circulates across networks, communities, platforms, and semi-enclosed media spaces, dissolving the boundaries between official and unofficial communication, between expert and lay interpretation, and between political deliberation and emotional mobilization.

Scholars of digital media have documented how these platforms accelerate information velocity, compress the response time available to administrative institutions, and amplify fragmentation, personalization, and selective exposure, all of which create fertile conditions for partial or emotionally resonant interpretations to gain traction. Crucially, networked publics do not passively receive information; they actively reinterpret, redistribute, and amplify it, such that political meaning is produced interactively rather than transmitted linearly.

These dynamics carry direct implications for ideological governance. In a concentrated information environment, ideological deviance tends to be more readily identifiable because oppositional viewpoints typically appear in relatively stable and explicit forms. In the digital environment, by contrast, deviance can crystallize through cumulative processes: the repetition of partial framings, the selective reinterpretation of social issues, the emotional amplification of grievances, and the circulation of simplified narratives. This propagation mechanism is closely tied to the phenomenon of echo chambers and algorithmic cognitive traps, wherein deviant viewpoints are packaged as entertainment content or decontextualized fragments designed to evade security filters (Sunstein, 2017). Ideological deviance thus no longer concentrates in identifiable nodes but disperses into micro-narratives that work silently on the skeptical dispositions of targeted audience segments (Bennett & Livingston, 2021). Such dynamics may not immediately manifest as overt ideological antagonism, yet over time they systematically reshape public cognition and erode trust in the political system.

It is precisely this structural transformation of the information environment, and the cumulative, dispersed nature of ideological risk it generates, that renders classical models of information control analytically insufficient and demands a reconceptualization of ideological governance in terms of cognitive risk and discursive power. Risk governance theory offers a productive analytical

lens for this purpose. In contemporary governance scholarship, risk is not confined to technical hazards or measurable threats; it extends to uncertain processes capable of generating negative consequences when left undetected, unmonitored, and unregulated. Politico-social risks are especially complex because they typically crystallize gradually through the interactions of institutions, social expectations, media environments, and public cognition. From this perspective, ideological deviance should not be treated merely as a body of erroneous statements requiring correction and refutation, but approached as a risk-generating process. A deviant interpretation acquires political significance not simply because it is factually incorrect, but because it can accumulate, propagate, connect with existing social grievances, and contribute to the erosion of trust or social consensus. Governing ideological deviance therefore demands early-warning mechanisms, contextual analysis, proportionate intervention, and feedback-based adjustment.

This approach is fully consonant with systems theory: a complex political system cannot be governed effectively through unidirectional control mechanisms alone (Easton, 1965). It requires feedback loops that enable governing actors to observe social responses, identify emerging patterns, recalibrate intervention methods, and sustain adaptive stability. The shift toward cognitive risk governance accordingly demands that the state develop scenario-based forecasting capacity, specifically the ability to detect embers of ideological discontent before hostile forces can exploit them and convert them into political violence (Renn, 2020). Ideological governance in the digital age must therefore be understood less as a linear sequence of detection and punishment, and more as a continuous cycle of monitoring, interpretation, intervention, and recalibration.

Equally, the governance of information, encompassing how it is produced, validated, circulated, and mobilized across social and institutional contexts, cannot be severed from discursive power. Michel Foucault's theorization of discourse proves analytically productive here, directing attention to the rules, procedures, and institutional arrangements through which certain forms of knowledge acquire authoritative status while others are marginalized (Foucault, 1980). Although this article does not apply the full Foucauldian framework in a deconstructive sense, it draws on the foundational scholarly insight that governance is not limited to prohibiting or permitting statements, but encompasses the shaping of conditions under which discourses are

produced, circulated, and rendered credible (Foucault, 1980).

For ideological governance, this means the central problem is not only how to refute misinformation, but how to reinforce the interpretive capacity of authoritative mainstream discourse. In a fragmented information environment, the credibility of official discourse depends not merely on factual accuracy, but on explanatory depth, timeliness, social responsiveness, and the capacity to address the genuine concerns of the population. Information sovereignty theory holds that when official discourse fails to proactively account for bottlenecks in socioeconomic life, cognitive gaps will immediately emerge and be colonized by cross-border toxic narratives (Mueller, 2020). Modern discursive power derives not from blocking information flows, but from agenda-setting capacity, understood as the ability to supply compelling, widely resonant meta-narratives capable of attracting broad public uptake (Mueller, 2020).

Taken together, these theoretical strands, spanning systems-theoretic accounts of political legitimacy, digital media scholarship on information fragmentation and cognitive risk, risk governance frameworks, and Foucauldian perspectives on discursive power, illuminate the multi-layered challenge confronting ideological governance under conditions of digital transformation. Yet while the existing international literature has generated substantial insight across these fields, they have largely developed in isolation from one another. Studies of ideology tend to concentrate on belief systems and political legitimacy (Rawls, 1993) while giving insufficient attention to the operational mechanisms of digital governance. Digital media research typically examines misinformation, polarization, or platform effects without consistently connecting these dynamics to the ideological foundations of ruling parties. Risk governance scholarship supplies useful tools for forecasting and regulation but has rarely been applied systematically to ideological work in the context of modern Party building.

This article addresses that gap by conceptualizing ideological deviance as a politico-social risk and developing a governance model that organically integrates ideological work, the digital information environment, political legitimacy, and contemporary Party-building practice. Theoretically, the article extends the analysis of ideological governance beyond the bounds of rebuttal and propaganda, situating it within a broader framework of risk regulation and systems governance. Practically, it advances a model for strengthening proactive capacity in defending the Party's ideological foundations under the

conditions of digital transformation and the Party's contemporary mode of leadership and governance (Tô Lâm, 2024).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article is developed through an integrated methodological approach drawing on political science research methods, public policy analysis, and interdisciplinary frameworks in the study of contemporary social governance. Given the character of ideological deviance in the context of digital transformation, the phenomenon is not treated as a purely ideational matter; rather, it is situated within its relationships to information structure, the social environment, and the governing capacity of the political system. Accordingly, the analytical focus extends beyond describing the surface manifestations of deviance toward examining the mechanisms through which such deviance forms, propagates, and exerts its effects on the stability of the normative value framework and the politico-social order.

At the level of specific methods, the article deploys structural-functional analysis as its primary instrument for clarifying the role of ideological work in sustaining the stability and regulatory capacity of the political system. Through this lens, manifestations of ideological deviance are read not merely as problems of individual cognition but as signals reflecting the movement and transformation of the social environment, the information environment, and the relationship between the political system and society. The article further employs systems analysis to examine the governance of ideological deviance as an operationally interconnected mechanism spanning governing actors, instruments, and environments. This allows the research to move beyond the conventional linear logic of detection and disposal toward a cyclical framework of forecasting – regulation – feedback – adjustment.

The article additionally applies political discourse analysis in examining the conceptual transition from ideological struggle to governance of ideological deviance. This analysis attends not only to shifts in conceptual content but also to transformations in the Party's governing logic and its mode of social regulation under conditions of digital transformation. On this basis, the research traces the displacement of a reactive paradigm by a risk governance paradigm – a shift from managing specific manifestations to regulating the conditions that generate and sustain ideological deviance.

The article further combines documentary research with comparative analysis at an appropriate level of depth. Party documents alongside scholarship in

political science, social governance, and systems theory supply the foundations for the analytical framework. Select perspectives from contemporary political science concerning legitimacy, systemic stability, and information governance are incorporated to extend the theoretical reach of the inquiry. These comparative references are not employed to juxtapose competing political models; their function is primarily to illuminate the distinctive character of ideological governance under the conditions of a ruling party in Vietnam today.

Taken as a whole, the article proceeds by integrating theoretical analysis with practical orientation. Rather than treating the governance of ideological deviance as a matter of propaganda technique or communication strategy, it locates the problem squarely within the Party's overall mode of leadership and governance under the conditions of a digital society and an open information environment.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

##### 4.1. Ideological Deviance within a Systems Governance Framework

In political science scholarship on ruling parties, the ideological norm is not merely a descriptive concept but a theoretical-political category reflecting the normative value framework established and maintained by the social leadership (Rawls, 1993). This framework is constituted through the interaction of theory and practice, of the ruling force's normative orientations and the feedback of social life, gradually solidifying into a value structure that governs how politico-social issues are perceived and assessed. It is, therefore, never static – continuously reinforced or weakened in proportion to governing effectiveness and the degree of social consensus. For the Communist Party of Vietnam, this framework is grounded in Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought, and rendered concrete through the Party's platform, political line, and organizational principles. Crucially, it has been tested, enriched, and consolidated through the actual practice of revolutionary leadership and national construction. Through this process, foundational values are not merely affirmed theoretically but continuously reproduced through socioeconomic development outcomes, governing effectiveness, and earned public trust – generating the practical basis for the ideological framework's stability and legitimacy. In this respect, the ideological norm is understood not only as a belief system but as the constitutive ground of legitimacy and unity in political action. The stability of a political system depends not merely on the operational efficiency of

its apparatus but, at a deeper level, on the degree to which society trusts the governing system and accepts the foundational values and power arrangements it establishes. When that support erodes – whether at the level of ideological values or at the level of how power is organized and exercised – systemic legitimacy is undermined, drawing with it the risk of overall instability (Easton, 1965).

From this understanding, ideological deviance must not be read simply as cognitive error. At a deeper level, it represents the erosion, distortion, or negation of the foundational principles constituting the ruling party's normative value framework – reflecting subterranean shifts in the structure of social values and political belief. For the Communist Party of Vietnam, this framework simultaneously guarantees the legitimacy of the Party's social leadership role. Every manifestation of ideological deviance therefore carries the potential to directly affect the Party's stability and legitimacy, and indeed that of the political system as a whole. Yet this understanding alone is insufficient, for it risks a reductive tendency in which every divergence of opinion is conflated with deviance. In a dynamic society, diversity of views is inevitable. The essential question is not whether differences exist, but whether they move within or outside the shared reference framework. The continuous interaction among competing viewpoints has itself transformed how ideological deviance forms and manifests: rather than appearing as discrete and legible errors, deviance increasingly surfaces in an entangled state with legitimate elements, rendering identification unreliable when confined to the traditional right-versus-wrong criterion. The boundary between norm and deviance thus becomes less distinct – not only in content but in the way deviance coexists with legitimate material. Under these conditions, ideological deviance must be approached as a complex social phenomenon bound up with the transformation of value systems and of information itself as it forms, propagates, and is received in social life. In the contemporary digital space, viewpoints are continuously formed and renegotiated; the credibility of information therefore depends substantially on the modes of exchange and reception among social actors. Ideological deviance can no longer be assessed through a purely binary truth-or-falsity criterion; it must be understood as a drift away from the reference framework within a perpetually shifting information environment.

Viewed through this lens, the transition in the form of ideological deviance – from direct antagonism to infiltration – reflects a new formation

mechanism tied to the transformation of information structures. When information systems were relatively closed, deviant viewpoints typically appeared as identifiable, frontal opposition. The expansion of digital space has weakened the closure of information systems and amplified the accessibility and transmissibility of diverse viewpoints. Within this environment, ideological deviance emerges through a process of interlacing with concrete social issues – particularly those bearing on the immediate interests of distinct social groups – making deviant positions more readily accepted when presented in the guise of policy commentary, academic debate, or news reporting. Simultaneously, in an environment of informational abundance, endogenous and exogenous factors interact and amplify one another, rendering ideological deviance increasingly dispersed, adaptive, and penetrating, blurring the boundary between opposition and consensus.

This transformation of ideological life – from direct antagonism to movement within an open, decentralized, and highly interactive information environment – demands a fundamental methodological recalibration. Where the prior emphasis fell on ideological struggle in the sense of rebutting erroneous viewpoints, the challenge now requires expansion toward a more systemic approach: the governance of ideological deviance. This is not merely a terminological substitution; it reflects a qualitative development in governing thinking – a shift from managing specific manifestations to regulating the processes by which ideological tendencies form, propagate, and mutate within society; a shift from the logic of adversarial struggle to the logic of strategic risk governance (Tô Lâm, 2024).

On this basis, the governance of ideological deviance is defined as the organized process through which public power holders forecast, identify, orient, and regulate social cognitive tendencies, thereby sustaining the stability of the normative value framework and consolidating political foundations under conditions of volatility. The fundamental distinction between governance and struggle lies here: whereas ideological struggle primarily emphasizes the rebuttal of error once it has surfaced, the governance of ideological deviance is directed toward organizing, orienting, and regulating the entire process by which cognitive tendencies form, propagate, and are received within society. The objective of governing ideological deviance is therefore not the total elimination of all error – an aspiration that is structurally unachievable in an open information society – but the maintenance of deviance within

a controllable threshold, preventing its accumulation and conversion into tendencies that threaten foundational political structures.

#### **4.2. The Imperative for a New Model of Ideological Governance**

For an extended period, the defense of ideological foundations was organized primarily along the logic of identification and rebuttal – detecting and addressing deviant viewpoints once they had surfaced. This approach was suited to a context in which ideological systems existed in states of relatively clear-cut opposition, where deviant manifestations were direct in character and their content and objectives could be identified with reasonable precision. Under the profoundly altered conditions of today's ideological environment, however, this method has progressively exposed limitations rooted in the very logic of its own operation.

Examining these systemic constraints, the approach is first and foremost a reactive one, operating on a logic of ex post review rather than ex ante prevention: the system concentrates on managing problems after they have already emerged, rather than establishing mechanisms for proactive interdiction and early-stage orientation. Because identification and rebuttal typically occur only after deviant viewpoints have appeared – and in many cases after they have already spread – the lag between emergence and response grows increasingly disadvantageous in an environment where information moves at high velocity, particularly across digital space. The result is a system perpetually on the defensive, forever chasing the turbulence of its social environment. This not only diminishes the effectiveness of theoretical intervention but substantially inflates the operational costs of defending the Party's ideological foundations.

Beyond this, in an open information environment, the act of rebuttal can generate a counterproductive paradox: rather than suppressing deviant content, it inadvertently amplifies it. This mechanism operates because every act of rebuttal is simultaneously an act of information reproduction – the deviant viewpoint continues to circulate, even if under the form of critique. In certain cases, the repetition of false information can heighten public recognition and retention of that very content, while simultaneously activating cognitive defensive responses – causing recipients to entrench existing beliefs rather than revise them – severely degrading the persuasive efficacy of the traditional method. The identification-and-rebuttal approach also reveals conspicuous difficulty in addressing soft deviance – those forms of ideological deviation that are sophisticatedly camouflaged as

constructive commentary. Under contemporary conditions, deviant positions no longer manifest as direct negations of established stances; they are typically interwoven with legitimate elements and anchored in genuine issues of social life. Identifying the precise object of rebuttal thus becomes considerably more difficult when attention is confined to the erroneous fragment while the underlying rationale or concealed purpose of what appears to be constructive suggestion is left unexamined. Simultaneously, the formation of social groups within closed information ecosystems – where viewpoints are mutually constructed and reinforced – poses a formidable challenge to ideological governance in the absence of an ecosystemic approach.

A further structural limitation is the system's lack of forecasting instruments and any systematic approach to new forms of propaganda and subversive activity. Because the traditional method focuses primarily on addressing already-manifested phenomena, while ideological shifts typically form early and accumulate incrementally before crystallizing into discernible expressions, intervention that occurs only at the point of eruption finds its corrective capacity severely constrained. The absence of monitoring, analytical, and trend-forecasting instruments makes it difficult for ideological work to transition from reactive case management to the proactive governance of cognitive formation processes within society.

From these limitations, the question is not whether to discard identification and rebuttal as a method, but to situate it within a broader and more encompassing framework – that is, to shift from reactive logic toward the governance of ideological deviance as the central modality of defending the ideological foundations of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

To perform this regulatory and orienting function, the governance model for ideological deviance requires coordinated deployment across three structurally critical dimensions.

The first dimension is the governance of actors, focused on developing the cognitive capacity of individuals and social groups. Under current conditions, the subjects of ideological life are no longer confined to the cadre and Party member apparatus but extend across society as a whole – particularly to those groups capable of generating influence within the digital space. Strengthening political resolve and cultivating the capacity for independent information evaluation – thereby building cognitive immunity against deviant influences – becomes a non-negotiable requirement. When the cognitive capacity of social

actors is reinforced and widely diffused, society itself becomes a natural filtering mechanism against misinformation.

The second dimension is the governance of content, whose function is to establish the primacy of the official information system in a context where every individual can become a node of information dissemination. This primacy is not understood as imposition or information monopoly, but as the capacity to orient and shape social cognition by supplying well-grounded, systematic, and compelling explanations of the practical issues that arise. In an environment where divergent viewpoints coexist and compete, if official information fails to lead, cognitive vacuums – spaces where individuals cannot access persuasive explanations – will be rapidly filled by simplified, emotionally driven, or deviant interpretations. Establishing the primacy of the official information system is therefore, in substance, the establishment of explanatory and socially orienting capacity – enabling what is correct to occupy cognitive space by meeting the genuine needs and lived experience of the public.

The third dimension is the governance of the ideological environment, directed at regulating the media space, social institutions, and socioeconomic conditions. In practice, many manifestations of ideological deviance do not arise solely from information itself, but from gaps in social governance, inequities of interest, insufficient transparency, or policy response delays. These gaps generate cognitive vacuums and thereby create conditions for deviant information to infiltrate, eroding trust in institutions and the perceived rationality of policy decisions. When practical shortcomings are not explained in timely fashion, they are readily reinterpreted along extremist lines, amplifying skepticism and fragmenting social consensus. Constructing a healthy ideological environment – one where positive values prevail and where practical problems are transparently reflected and promptly addressed – is therefore the precondition for stabilizing society at its roots and narrowing the generative space for deviance.

This model can only operate effectively when underpinned by a coherent system of four categories of regulatory instruments: theoretical instruments, institutional instruments, communication instruments, and technological instruments. Theoretical instruments establish the criteria for distinguishing legitimate critique from ideological deviance, guarding against arbitrary handling or the conflation of all divergence with error. Institutional instruments construct the regulatory frameworks, procedures, and

coordination mechanisms between political and media institutions, ensuring that regulatory activity proceeds on a stable, principled, and accountable basis. Communication instruments bear direct responsibility for forming and orienting social cognition through credible information channels capable of timely response. Technological instruments, in particular, occupy an increasingly central position, enabling the monitoring, analysis, and forecasting of ideological trends through big data – thereby reducing response latency and enhancing the proactive capacity of the system as a whole.

All dimensions and instruments are integrated within a cyclical operational mechanism progressing through four continuous phases: detection, analysis, intervention, and adjustment. The system proactively monitors for early signals of deviance while tendencies are still forming; proceeds to analyze the nature, scope of impact, and underlying social causation to select a proportionate mode of intervention; and, following intervention, extends the cycle through monitoring social responses and recalibrating governance methods. This dialectical integration defines the general model of ideological deviance governance – one oriented toward shifting the center of gravity from managing manifestations to comprehensive regulation of the conditions under which discourse forms and moves within the social space, understood as 'a tightly organized system of processes for producing, controlling, distributing, circulating, and operating discourses' (Foucault, 1980). This theoretical framework does not supplant ideological struggle; rather, it situates struggle within a broader, more rigorous structure – making it the core measure of the Party's governing capacity in the ideological domain.

### 4.3. Policy Implications for Ideological Governance in Vietnam

Grounded in the approach to governing ideological deviance as a unified system, the operationalization of this model demands the derivation of five policy implications designed to articulate closely with the core pillars of contemporary Party-building work.

The first implication bears directly on cadre organization work, requiring the integration of political-ideological capacity as a core quantifiable criterion within the processes of cadre evaluation, deployment, and assignment. As manifestations of ideological deviance grow increasingly entangled with legitimate policy discourse, cadre work can no longer rest on superficial administrative inspection alone. The regulatory framework must be supplemented with rigorous evaluative criteria assessing political resolve, information resistance

capacity, and behavioral disposition in the face of complex public opinion flashpoints. This fully embodies the Party's standing requirement to continuously elevate the quality of the cadre and Party member corps – those who are genuinely exemplary in political resolve, integrity, competence, and credibility (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026a). When organizational work is designed upon this competency architecture, deviance risk will be identified and preempted effectively at the level of those who operate the Party apparatus itself.

The second implication concerns internal political protection work, with the emphasis on establishing mechanisms for controlling and preventing deviations from within the Party organization itself. The practice of information control demonstrates that risk does not arise solely from exogenous discursive streams; it can form covertly within internal structures when timely filtering mechanisms are absent. Internal political protection work must therefore shift its center of gravity from ensuring mechanical organizational security toward ensuring systemic cognitive security – sustaining positional consensus through the renewal of ideological work methods, the accelerated application of digital technology, and the development of modern political communication capacity, so as to proactively grasp, analyze, and forecast social sentiment dynamics, particularly on sensitive issues (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026b).

The third implication underscores the imperative of comprehensively integrating the ideological risk governance model into the Party's inspection and supervision work, decisively shifting from an ex post case-management model toward a combined mechanism of continuous monitoring and early warning. Under conditions where the digital environment moves at high velocity, traditional inspection forms activated only after violations have become clearly manifest yield severely limited results. The inspection system must establish continuous monitoring channels over the online media space and over the ideological expressions of Party members – proactively preventing, flagging, and addressing violations early and at a distance, preventing minor infractions from accumulating into major ones, while rigorously addressing manifestations of ideological degradation and "self-evolution" and "self-transformation." The governing logic demands root-level prevention as the foundation, control of power as the core, and digital transformation as the focal instrument – proactively identifying, forecasting, and addressing violations before small errors

compound into systemic crises (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026c).

The fourth implication raises an urgent requirement to strengthen multi-institutional coordination capacity among the Party's Commission for Propaganda and Education, the Commission for Organization, the Inspection Commission, and the bloc of state management agencies. Because ideological deviance in the digital era invariably emerges at the complex intersection of political cognition, economic interest conflicts, and practical governance shortcomings, an approach in which each agency engages the problem solely from its own administrative-functional vantage point risks producing fragmented responses and leaving dangerous informational blind spots. Coordinated inter-institutional mechanisms are therefore not merely arrangements for dividing responsibility but represent the integration of analytical and synthetic response capacities – enabling the system to fully excavate root causes, accurately classify levels of impact, and deploy synchronized interventions, thereby elevating the Party's capacity for ideological self-defense.

The fifth implication affirms that advancing the application of technology and data-driven governance is the indispensable precondition for adapting to a cyber environment of high interactivity and amplification. As management methods reliant on intuitive experience or rigid administrative procedure have been rendered sluggish against the velocity of digital information propagation, the harnessing of Big Data and artificial intelligence will enable the system to proactively scan for and detect nascent patterns of cognitive discontent during the pre-eruption phase. Technology here performs the function of optimizing and transforming ideological work methods – from reactive case management toward scenario-based predictive governance – in full alignment with the Party's overarching strategy of advancing digital transformation in Party-building work to consolidate and elevate the leadership capacity and combat strength of Party organizations, thereby deepening the people's abiding trust in the Party.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The profound and comprehensive transformation of the information environment in the digital era is not a purely technical challenge but a structural

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shift – one that fundamentally alters both the forms in which ideological deviance manifests and the mechanisms through which it amplifies. This objective reality imposes a systemic imperative: the Party's approach to defending its ideological foundations must be fundamentally restructured. Under contemporary conditions, the transition from a passive, incident-driven method of identification and rebuttal toward a proactive, coordinated strategy of governing ideological deviance is far more than a change of operational technique or communication instrument. At a deeper level, it reflects an inevitable advance in the Party's governing thinking and capacity – one in which ideological work is anchored within the totalizing, dialectical operating logic of the political system as a whole and of the modern public governance order.

Viewed through the lens of systems theory, the governance of ideological deviance constitutes a structurally grounded macro-regulatory mechanism. Through this mechanism, the Party moves beyond the reactive management of deviant phenomena once they have surfaced, directing its strategic focus instead toward the proactive control, orientation, and regulation of the full ensemble of economic, social, institutional, and technological conditions that directly determine how cognitive currents within society form, move, and disseminate. It is precisely this paradigm-shifting transition in thinking that opens a new theoretical space for organically integrating ideological work with the strategic pillars of Party-building – organization, cadre management, inspection, supervision, and internal political protection. This constitutes the essential foundation for durably consolidating political legitimacy, elevating the capacity and modalities of modern governance, and thereby shielding and sustaining the stability of the mainstream value framework against the complex, fragmented, and multidirectional currents of contemporary digital society.

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