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# The Communist Party of Vietnam's Leadership in Youth Work: Theoretical Issues, Practical Realities, and Lessons Learned

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## Abstract

Youth constitute a decisive social force in national development and political continuity. In Vietnam, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) consistently regards young people as a strategic pillar of the revolutionary cause and as a determinant of the nation's future trajectory. This study uses a qualitative, multi-method research design that integrates logical, historical, comparative, and analytical approaches. The article examines the CPV's leadership in youth work by addressing its core theoretical foundations, assessing contemporary practical realities, and distilling key lessons for improving effectiveness in the new development phase. It analyzes the Party's guiding viewpoints, institutional mechanisms, and policy orientations that shape youth mobilization and political education. To provide comparative insights, the article also reviews the roles of com-

munist youth organizations in China and Russia, including the Communist Youth League of China, the Young Communist League, and the Komsomol, under the leadership of their respective communist parties. The analysis demonstrates that, across all three contexts, youth organizations have operated under firm party leadership, serving as instruments for revolutionary struggle, economic construction, ideological defense, and political succession. Ultimately, the study establishes that youth are consistently viewed as a vital reservoir of human resources and as inter-generational carriers of revolutionary ideals, reinforcing the governing capacity and long-term stability of communist parties.

**Keywords:** political socialization, party-youth relations, revolutionary succession, socialist governance, comparative communist studies

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In a speech delivered at the Third All-Russian Congress of the Russian Young Communist League on October 2, 1920, Vladimir Lenin outlined the “Tasks of the Youth Leagues”. In this speech, Lenin discussed the role of the Young Communist League and the nature of youth organizations in a socialist republic, since it was the youth who bore the actual responsibility for building a communist society. Among the tasks of the youth, Lenin argued that they offered new possibilities in a new communist society [1]. In contrast, the older generation of workers who had grown up in an exploitative society was tasked with destroying the existing capitalist way of life [2]. The youth are builders of a communist society, and all young workers and peasants are required to play a central role in its construction [2]. The youth are required to learn communism in every facet of their lives. However, Lenin warned the youth in a communist state against mere book learning and the simple recitation of communist slogans, which would divorce theory from practice. Lenin advised against this way of learning because the bourgeoisie had used it to advance their selfish capitalist interests, creating faithful servants and exploiting others. Lenin argued that the youth could learn communism only by linking every step in their studies, training, and education with the continuous struggle that the proletarians and toilers were waging against the old exploiting society [2]. The youth must be disciplined and must serve as models of organization, unity, training, and discipline in the struggle for communism for the younger generation [3]. They must exemplify the core belief of communism: a society where everything, including land and factories, is communally owned, and where people work as a community. The Young Communist League must be united and disciplined in all its undertakings; otherwise, its members would slip back into the old bourgeois ways [4].

Lenin’s speech was delivered at a time when Russia was struggling with the ravages of war. It was a transitional period from war to peace, Russia’s economy was on its knees, and the people were living in abject poverty. Russia needed to abolish its wartime communist policies, heralding a new era of rebuilding its industries and reviving agricultural production on the basis of prevailing scientific advances, technology, and electricity. Many people, including the youth, identified themselves as communists in theory but not in practice. Lenin attributed this state of affairs to the status quo characterized by the exploitative policies of capitalism. It was a time for the youth to detach themselves from rote memorization of communist books and pamphlets, without putting those theories into practice for the construction of communism [2]. It was also a time for the youth to play an active role in rebuilding Russia in order to address problems such as food and clothing shortages, as well as to ensure education for all [5].

The Vietnam Youth Law [6], in Article 1, stipulates that youth are Vietnamese citizens aged between 16 and 30 years. In Article 4, Clause 1, they are described as “a large pioneering and creative social force that leads the reform, development and protection of the Fatherland; and plays a crucial role in national industrialization and modernization, international integration and socialism advancement” [7].

In Vietnam, youth have consistently been regarded as a core social force and as the nation’s future, making vital contributions to revolutionary struggle, national construction, and defense [7]. From its inception, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) has identified youth work as a strategic priority, emphasizing both ideological education and the creation of conditions that enable young people to fully develop their talents, creativity, and sense of social responsibility [8]. According to Ha [7], over successive historical periods, the Party’s theoretical approach to youth work has evolved, reflecting a deepening and more systematic understanding of the role of youth in national development and political continuity [9]. In the contemporary context, marked by rapid socio-economic transformation and complex domestic and international challenges [9], practical youth work has become increasingly important [10]. The current study aims to systematically examine the Communist Party of Vietnam’s leadership in youth work by integrating theoretical analysis with an assessment of practical realities. Its primary objective is to generate evidence-based insights that can inform the refinement of youth policies in the new era, strengthen the Party’s governing capacity, and enhance the effective mobilization of youth potential in support of sustainable national development.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative, multi-method research design that integrates logical, historical, comparative, and analytical approaches. Methods of analysis, synthesis, systematization, and structural examination are employed to clarify the Communist Party of Vietnam’s theoretical perspectives on youth work and to reveal their internal coherence and evolution over time. These methods enable a systematic understanding of how the Party conceptualizes the role of youth in national development. Historical analysis traces the development and refinement of the Party’s youth leadership across different periods, highlighting both continuity and adaptation in response to changing socio-political conditions. Comparative and contrastive methods are applied to assess contemporary youth work practices, with limited comparative references to other socialist contexts, in order to identify key achievements, existing limitations, and emerging challenges. Finally, generalization and predictive analysis are employed to distill lessons from the Party’s leadership experience and to assess their implications for future youth work. These methods support evidence-based conclusions that strengthen policy

effectiveness and enhance the contribution of youth to Vietnam's sustainable development.

### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S LEADERSHIP IN YOUTH WORK: HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has grown significantly during its 94 years of existence, under the guidance of the Communist Party of Vietnam and President Ho Chi Minh, affectionately known as Uncle Ho. March 26, 1931, was officially selected as its founding date and anniversary during the 3rd National Congress of the Youth Union [9]. The Party and Uncle Ho always regarded the youth as a critical force in the revolution. Over the years, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has demonstrated a strong sense of patriotism, deep commitment, and unwavering loyalty to the Party, the people, and the socialist regime. It has also established a tradition of being a pioneering revolutionary force, willing to undertake challenging tasks, enter difficult areas, and think creatively in order to accomplish assigned missions [10]. Furthermore, it has developed a tradition of diligence and a thirst for knowledge aimed at improving qualifications in political, cultural, social, scientific, technical, managerial, and military fields, as well as a passion for creativity in practical activities [11].

Since its establishment in February 1930, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) has consistently affirmed the decisive role of youth in the revolutionary cause, national construction, and the defense of the Fatherland, conceptualizing youth as an active vanguard of social transformation and a reliable reserve force for long-term Party leadership. In Vietnam, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has been crucial in uplifting communities, living up to President Ho Chi Minh's message that the future of a country rests on its youth and that its prosperity or decline depends on them. Members of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union have been active in community service, helping the destitute, protecting the environment, and developing rural areas [12]. These activities have been recognized not only as important for inculcating a deep sense of patriotism and responsibility in the younger generation, but also for strengthening the role of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union as a bridge between the community and the youth [13]. The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has been entrusted by the Communist Party of Vietnam, through socio-political mobilization, to participate actively in nation-building and to foster future citizens who are loyal to the country and the Party. Essentially, it acts as a conveyor belt that delivers new blood to rejuvenate the Communist Party of Vietnam with loyal members.

This strategic emphasis reflects the Party's recognition that the vitality, creativity, and political engagement of young people are indispensable to sustaining socialist development and intergenerational continuity of leadership. Central to this orientation has been the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union (HMCYU), which serves as the primary institutional mechanism through which the Party educates, mobilizes, and organizes youth in alignment with socialist ideals and national priorities [14]. Contemporary analyses highlight that CPV strategies integrate ideological education in formal institutions, family and civic socialization, and structured organizational recruitment in order to cultivate loyalty, inculcate revolutionary values, and channel youth energy into state-sanctioned development, civic engagement, and political initiatives [15]. These mechanisms are further reinforced by mentorship programs, leadership training, and participatory projects that provide youth with tangible opportunities to contribute to socioeconomic modernization and national defense, thereby embedding the Party's strategic vision into daily youth experience.

**Youth and revolutionary leadership in Vietnam.** During the national democratic revolution, the CPV and President Ho Chi Minh placed particular emphasis on awakening patriotism, disseminating Marxism–Leninism, and cultivating revolutionary consciousness among young people. Dang, Tho, and Nguyet [16] found that youth organizations were established not only to mobilize mass participation but also to identify, train, and nurture outstanding individuals capable of assuming leadership roles within the broader revolutionary movement. Youth participation was therefore simultaneously collective and vanguardist, grounded in mass mobilization while oriented toward cadre formation. Motivated by the aspiration for national independence and social liberation, Vietnamese youth played a decisive role in overcoming colonial domination and wartime adversity. Their contribution was instrumental in securing revolutionary victory and ushering in a new historical phase marked by national independence, reunification, and the gradual transition toward socialism. These experiences laid the theoretical and practical foundation for the CPV's enduring conception of youth work as a strategic pillar of Party leadership and state governance.

Since the initiation of the *Doi Moi* renovation policy in 1986, the Communist Party of Vietnam has continued to elevate youth work as a long-term strategic task within its governance agenda. In the context of market-oriented reforms, integration into global economic networks, and increasing social differentiation, Vietnamese youth have been positioned by Party authorities as both drivers of economic modernization and essential bearers of socialist political culture [17]. This framing reflects the Party's effort to balance the demands of a socialist-oriented market economy with the maintenance of ideological continuity, asserting that young people are the nation's pillars, future owners, and vanguard force in building and defending the socialist Fatherland [17]. Youth are thus conceptualized as agents capable of contributing to

industrialization, social progress, and international engagement while embodying socialist values that sustain the Party's long-term legitimacy. In practice, this strategic view has shaped youth policy and institutional development, reinforcing mechanisms for ideological education, civic participation, and leadership training within Party-affiliated organizations. However, *Doi Moi* has also created new socio-economic spaces in which youth navigate market pressures, cultural diversification, and global norms, thereby challenging the Party to continually recalibrate its youth engagement strategies in order to maintain relevance and authority [18]. In this evolving context, the CPV's youth work continues to function not only as a mobilizing force for national development but also as a socializing project that negotiates the intersection of tradition, modernization, and global influence.

According to Bui Quang Huy, Alternate Member of the Party Central Committee and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, since its inception, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has always been a trusted reserve force of the Communist Party of Vietnam. It has transformed from its initial founding role into a pioneering and vanguard force in defending the Fatherland. Faced with modern-day realities, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has had to adapt to new conditions, including digital transformation as an essential requirement, task, and solution for all levels of the Youth Union. This transformation helps monitor and forecast the ideological situation, sentiments, and aspirations of its members and young people, thereby contributing to improving the effectiveness of Youth Union work and youth movements, while orienting and educating the younger generations to devote themselves to national development in this new era, an era of the nation's rise [19].

The Youth Union has been using its network of public opinion collaborators to gather public opinion data and respond proactively to matters of public concern. In the digital era, public opinion collaborators have resorted to using digital spaces and tools to gather grassroots opinions and consolidate them from the central to the grassroots level. The Youth Union also deploys its network of full-time officials and part-time collaborators to monitor the internet and social media. Using automated software, the Youth Union Central Committee compiles feedback and generates public opinion reports, which are then used to effectively address emerging issues. For example, "any complex, sensitive case or 'hot spot' detected, which affects security and order, will be reported quickly so that they can be resolved promptly" [20].

The Youth Union in Vietnam has also been using artificial intelligence (AI) tools, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT) to monitor, predict, and orient public opinion. Moreover, these tools are applied to personalize communication and educational materials for young Vietnamese, as well as to analyze and predict ideologies and public opinion among Vietnamese youth. The Youth Union's press, radio, television, and publishing organs are used for education, communication, monitoring the political situation, and shaping public opinion [21]. In this endeavor, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has to employ a range of approaches, such as integrating traditional modes of communication and existing infrastructure with digital-era approaches in monitoring public opinion on various issues through collecting, storing, and analyzing data. It also needs to move from the traditional one-way communication approach of disseminating information and directives while organizing activities to an open process that allows brainstorming and obtains feedback from the youth [1].

**Comparative context: youth under Communist Party leadership in China.** The Vietnamese approach to youth work shares significant theoretical and institutional parallels with that of the Communist Party of China (CPC). In China, youth are explicitly regarded as a decisive demographic for the Party's survival, legitimacy, and future development. The CPC has long emphasized ideological and political education within schools and universities as a core mechanism for cultivating political loyalty, moral discipline, and socialist consciousness among young people. This emphasis on youth ideology intensified during periods of ideological contestation and social change, as Party leaders sought to reinforce alignment with socialist values and counter alternative or Western influences in youth culture and thought. The 2022 Chinese white paper, *Youth in China in the New Era*, explicitly recognizes youth as "the most active and vital force in society". It also underscores their central role in national rejuvenation [2]. These developments reflect the CPC's strategic integration of youth work into broader Party objectives, in which political education is not merely curricular but is intertwined with the Party's legitimacy, ideological stability, and long-term governance strategy.

The Communist Party of China created the Communist Youth League of China as a unit for young people to "learn communism in practice", and as an assistant and reserve-force youth organization with a rich history. The Communist Youth League has strong revolutionary traditions. Since its creation, the Communist Youth League of China has been credited with playing a central role in consolidating socialism in China, including in its economic development and politics. It is a source of new Communist Party members and future leaders, thereby serving as the backbone of the Party [4]. Historically, Chinese youth have played a formative role in major political transformations, most notably the May Fourth Movement of 1919, which mobilized young intellectuals around Marxism, scientific rationalism, and cultural renewal, thereby reshaping China's ideological trajectory and facilitating the emergence of communist politics. The youthful character of the Chinese communist movement was evident at the founding of the Communist Party of China in 1921, when its first National Congress comprised delegates with an average age of 28, underscoring youth as a foundational revolutionary force [5]. The establishment of the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC) in 1922 institutionalized youth participation under

Party leadership, serving as a mechanism for ideological training, political socialization, and cadre recruitment [7]. Across successive historical phases, from revolutionary struggle to reform-era modernization, youth have been mobilized in political, economic, and social transformation [8]. Despite disruptions during the Cultural Revolution, the CYLC was revitalized after 1978 and has since been further elevated as a strategic instrument for mobilizing youth in development, governance, and innovation [22]. This trajectory illustrates the CPC's consistent treatment of youth work as an adaptive governance tool, capable of responding to shifting political and socio-economic contexts while preserving ideological continuity. The CYLC's enduring role reflects a deliberate strategy of intergenerational reproduction of Party legitimacy, ensuring that youth mobilization remains central to long-term political stability and state capacity.

The Communist Youth League has, for more than a hundred years since its founding under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, remained true to its solemn oath of always following the Party. The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China, as cited in Yanni Shi, noted:

The vast number of young people must resolutely listen to the Party's words, follow the Party, embrace their dreams and be down-to-earth, dare to think, dare to do and do well, and aspire to be good young people in the new era who have ideals, dare to take on responsibilities, can endure hardships, and are willing to struggle [23].

The founding clarion call for the Communist Youth League of China has always been to follow the Party. The relationship between the Communist Party of China and the Communist Youth League can be viewed as one in which the Communist Party is the brain and the Youth League is the muscle. This argument is founded on the enduring relationship in which the Party formulates policies, while the Youth League has the power to implement them. Yanni Shi posits that the Communist Youth League has continually operated on the philosophy that "the Party has a call; the Youth League has action". The relationship between the Communist Party of China and the Communist Youth League can also be compared to that of a loving and wise father and an obedient and dutiful child: a child eager to learn the ways of the parent and carry those lessons from one generation to the next. As Yanni Shi has noted, one of the founding principles of the Communist Youth League is that it serves as a training ground for youth to take up roles in the Communist Party [24]. Therefore, the youth acquire the Party's communist ideals and aspirations, handed down through their symbiotic political relationship. The Communist Youth League and the Communist Party of China are joined at the hip in their quest for national rejuvenation. Toward this noble task, the Communist Youth League provides "irreplaceable youth power to the cause of the Party" [24]. This relationship is well documented in history, whereby the Communist Youth League has always provided "assistance and support in the revolutionary movements" and has been involved in "leading and following in socialist construction and reform" [25].

Therefore, the core role of the Communist Youth League is to serve as a reliable assistant and reserve force to replenish the Communist Party. The Communist Youth League has the responsibility of highlighting the common pursuits and values it shares with the Communist Party. Such ideals include organizations that have emerged from the implementation of Marxist thought, working toward the rejuvenation of China and the rejection of imperialism and feudalism [23]. The Communist Youth League also has the responsibility of disseminating ideological and political education and guiding young people in China toward moral uprightness and correct political orientation. This role aligns with the Communist Party of China's education policy, which promotes morality by fostering morally upright citizens and developing talent, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labour skills [26]. In this regard, the Communist Party of China has placed moral education at the center of its ideology, and the Communist Youth League has been tasked with disseminating it to the people. The Communist Youth League uses its vast network of members to expand its educational reach, disseminate information, and mobilize young people around the Communist Party [23].

The Communist Youth League of China and the Communist Party of China were also formed with a mandate to work toward the rejuvenation of China and the happiness of the people. The same call remains, and the continued pursuit of China's rejuvenation and of the interests and prosperity of the people remain clear goals. The continued existence of the Communist Party of China is vital for the country. The Communist Youth League of China has the responsibility to ensure this by continuously serving as the Party's reserve force, upholding "the Party's leadership, adhering to the comprehensive leadership of the Party, especially the centralised and unified leadership of the Party Central Committee" [25].

**Youth organizations and revolutionary mobilization in Russia.** The Russian experience provides an earlier historical model of communist youth organization under Party leadership. Youth played a critical role in the 1917 Russian Revolution following the Bolsheviks' decision to establish youth unions aligned with the Party. Young workers were instrumental in armed uprisings and mass mobilization, with thousands joining the Red Guard during the revolutionary period. The All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League, or Komsomol, founded in 1918, became the principal vehicle for political socialization, ideological education, and mobilization of Soviet youth. Membership was open to young people aged fourteen to twenty-eight, and the organization operated under the direct ideological guidance of the Communist Party. Its functions extended beyond political education to include economic reconstruction, industrialization, cultural transforma-

tion, and international solidarity. During the Russian Civil War and subsequent socialist construction, Komsomol members participated extensively in industrial projects, literacy campaigns, and technical training initiatives [25]. Major infrastructure projects, including hydropower stations and industrial plants, relied heavily on youth labour and organizational discipline. During the Great Patriotic War, youth participation reached unprecedented levels, with millions enlisting in the Red Army and contributing to wartime production [24]. The integration of youth into political, industrial, and cultural life under the Komsomol contributed to the creation of a distinct Soviet political identity and helped legitimize Bolshevik rule across generations. However, this process also reflected tensions between top-down ideological control and the agency of youth, whose mobilization both reinforced Party dominance and generated internal dynamics of social engagement and political expectations.

**Institutionalizing youth work in contemporary Vietnam.** In the post-*Doi Moi* period, the Communist Party of Vietnam has drawn on both domestic experience and comparative socialist models to refine its youth-work strategy, embedding youth policy within broader state-party objectives of modernization and social integration. The strategic prioritization of youth work was first formalized in Resolution No. 04-NQ/HNTW (1993) [27], which conceptualized youth work as a decisive factor in the success of the revolution, emphasizing education, talent development, organizational strengthening of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, and the cultivation of a supportive social environment for youth development [21]. As Vietnam accelerated industrialization and integration into the global economy, the Party introduced Resolution No. 25-NQ/TW (2008) to reaffirm youth as a vanguard force in national construction and defense and to position youth development as both a goal and a catalyst for sustainable growth. These resolutions articulate a model of youth work that is collective in responsibility, assigning roles to the political system, society, and Party leadership, with the Party exercising direct leadership over the Youth Union as a key mechanism for political socialization, cadre formation, and civic engagement. This period reveals a strategic recalibration in which youth policy serves both as a response to socio-economic transformation and as a tool for sustaining the CPV's ideological continuity amid cultural and generational shifts. The emphasis on systematic youth engagement reflects an effort to reconcile market-oriented dynamics with socialist orientation, ensuring that young people are both productive contributors to national development and carriers of the Party's core revolutionary ideals.

**Comparative lessons and analytical synthesis.** Across Vietnam, China, and Russia, several common analytical patterns emerge. First, youth are consistently conceptualized as both agents of revolutionary change and carriers of ideological continuity. Second, communist youth organizations function as institutional bridges between the Party and society, enabling political socialization, leadership recruitment, and mass mobilization. Third, sustained Party leadership emerges as a decisive factor in maintaining the effectiveness and cohesion of youth movements. At the same time, differences in historical context and political trajectories highlight the adaptive nature of youth work. While the Soviet experience demonstrates the consequences of weakening Party leadership over youth organizations, the Vietnamese and Chinese cases illustrate the importance of continuous institutional renewal and policy refinement in response to socio-economic change. In Vietnam, the CPV's evolving theoretical framework on youth work reflects an increasingly comprehensive understanding of governance, human resource development, and political legitimacy. By integrating ideological education with practical opportunities for participation in economic and social development, the Party seeks to mobilize youth potential while reinforcing its own governing capacity.

### 3.2. THE CURRENT STATE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM'S LEADERSHIP IN YOUTH WORK

**Youth development under the Party's leadership.** Since the *Doi Moi* reforms of 1986, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) has deliberately shaped a generation of young people characterized by ethical commitment, civic responsibility, intellectual engagement, and dynamic thinking. Under the Party's leadership, youth have been positioned as both contributors to and beneficiaries of national development, expected to uphold patriotism and contribute to economic, cultural, and social progress. Empirical work on youth management in Ho Chi Minh City demonstrates that the Party's ideological and policy frameworks position youth as "the vanguard force", whose skills and creativity are central to modernization and international integration under socialism [28]. Youth engagement in volunteer service, scientific research, entrepreneurship, and community development reflects this strategic emphasis, aligning young people's aspirations with state-led development priorities. Through targeted campaigns and structural investments, the CPV nurtures not only productive capacities but also young people's ideological orientations. These measures institutionalize youth participation across political, cultural, and economic spheres, reinforcing the view that youth work is essential to sustaining socio-political stability.

**Legal and strategic frameworks for youth work.** The Party's youth policies have been translated into a comprehensive legal and strategic framework, including the Youth Law (2020) and the Vietnam Youth Development Strategy 2021–2030, which aim to empower young people to contribute to sustainable national development [28]. These frameworks articulate an integrated approach combining education, vocational training, health, culture, and political participation.

Strong policy systems and youth support programs reflect the CPV's commitment to structuring youth work as a long-term developmental priority. However, challenges remain in inter-sectoral coordination and resource mobilization. This institutional environment enables youth to expand their intellectual and technical capacities while reinforcing their role as agents of the Party's transformative agenda. Coordination between ministries, local governments, and socio-political organizations facilitates unified youth engagement and links youth development to national strategic objectives.

**Ideological, ethical, and cultural education.** The Party places special emphasis on instilling revolutionary values and socialist consciousness among young people. Grassroots mobilization activities, such as volunteer campaigns, patriotic initiatives, community service, and creative youth projects, engage youth in practical development tasks while consolidating shared values around national identity and collective purpose [28]. These campaigns mobilize large numbers of young participants, affirming their vanguard role within communities and the broader national development agenda. Digital transformation strategies are increasingly incorporated into these campaigns to enhance monitoring and influence over public opinion, reflecting the CPV's recognition of ideological challenges in the digital era. By positioning youth as both cultural inheritors and innovators, the Party balances ideological continuity with responsiveness to changing societal conditions.

**Education, training, and intellectual development.** Under Party guidance, Vietnam's education and training system has been reoriented to produce a highly skilled and adaptable workforce. The Youth Union facilitates expanded opportunities for higher education, technical training, and participation in research, contributing to the formation of a new intellectual class [28]. Investment in youth scientific, technological, and innovative initiatives strengthens national human resources and supports sustainable growth. By integrating skill development with ideological education, the Party ensures that young people can meet the demands of a globalized economy while remaining aligned with socialist principles. These measures demonstrate the Party's effort to harmonize technical competencies with values-based education in order to enhance human capital for national modernization.

**Organizational leadership and political socialization.** The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union (HMCYU) serves as a central organizational vehicle for the CPV, linking youth to Party structures and embedding leadership pipelines [21]. Through the Youth Union, young people are recommended for Party membership, ensuring intergenerational continuity and political alignment. Organizational capacity building within the Youth Union reinforces leadership development, ideological coherence, and grassroots mobilization. This model of structured political socialization strengthens Party legitimacy and creates institutional pathways for youth to contribute meaningfully to governance and national development.

**Persistent challenges and limitations.** Despite achievements, youth work faces several challenges. Uneven awareness among local Party committees, limitations in coordination, and shortages of skilled personnel reduce the effectiveness of youth programs [28]. Ideological and ethical education must contend with globalization, digital influences, and shifting socio-cultural norms. Some segments of youth may display individualism or weakened adherence to traditional socialist values. Disparities in educational attainment, vocational readiness, and employment opportunities, particularly in rural and ethnic minority areas, highlight ongoing inequalities. These structural and cultural challenges must be addressed to sustain youth engagement and to realize the full strategic potential of Vietnam's youth population.

### 3.3. LESSONS FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM'S YOUTH WORK

**Youth demographics and the importance of Party leadership.** Vietnam's youth population in 2021 was approximately 22.2 million, representing 22.5% of the total population [15]. The next five years will be dominated by individuals born between the late 1990s and 2012, who comprise nearly a quarter of the population and almost a third of the working-age population. This generation, raised amid the digital revolution, exhibits distinct personality, cognitive, and lifestyle characteristics [30]. Harnessing their potential for national development requires strong Party guidance to ensure that youth activities align with strategic objectives. The Party must enhance awareness of youth work across all committees and treat it as a core leadership task. Leadership should adapt to the specific needs, capacities, and characteristics of youth, recognizing their pioneering and creative potential. Party members are expected to serve as role models, actively participate in youth initiatives, and recommend outstanding union members for Party admission. Such integration ensures that youth are fully embedded in political, social, and economic processes. This study notes that effective youth engagement depends on institutional awareness and proactive leadership; without these, the potential of youth may remain underutilized.

**Strengthening the Youth Union's structure and cadres.** Consolidating the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union (HMCYU) is central to building a pipeline of capable future cadres for the Party and the state. Party committees must focus on organizational consolidation, cadre training, and operational innovation, particularly at the grassroots level and in remote regions [28]. Emphasis should be placed on ideological commitment, leadership capabilities, and innovation capacity. Rotation, talent recognition, and opportunities for young cadres across sectors, including the economy, society, defense, and foreign affairs, are essential for developing a competent and motivated leadership pipeline [13]. The current study reveals that structural and personnel reforms are critical to sustaining organizational resilience and ensuring that the Youth Union effectively nurtures future leaders.

**Promoting revolutionary movements and youth engagement.** The Party must guide the Youth Union in organizing movements that cultivate youth creativity and pioneering spirit. Activities such as “Youth Volunteers”, “Creative Youth”, and “Youth Pioneering to Protect the Fatherland” allow youth to contribute to national industrialization, modernization, and social innovation [29]. These programs provide platforms for exemplary behavior, ethical modeling, and the replication of positive practices. Engagement across multiple sectors, including local and specialized units, strengthens youth participation and demonstrates their leadership potential. Youth movements are strategically oriented toward instilling revolutionary ideals, ethics, cultural values, patriotism, and social responsibility. By combining structured political guidance with practical engagement, the Party ensures that youth are not only skilled and active participants but also carriers of long-term national and ideological objectives. Evidently, integrating revolutionary ideals with practical initiatives ensures that youth are both ideologically grounded and socially productive, thereby enhancing their role as drivers of development.

**Political and ideological education.** Political and ideological education remains a cornerstone of youth development. Party committees are expected to strengthen education in revolutionary history, cultural traditions, and Party ideology through engaging and participatory formats [28]. Education should combine school-based instruction, family guidance, and community activities tailored to specific youth demographics. Emphasis is placed on ethical cultivation, practical application, and patriotic emulation, ensuring that young people can resist ideological subversion and contribute responsibly to national development. Developing politically aware and ideologically grounded youth requires consistent engagement, critical thinking opportunities, and structured support. Youth should be encouraged to cultivate character, knowledge, and creativity in order to meet emerging national and global challenges. Notably, political and ideological education must be adaptive and practical to maintain relevance and effectiveness in the face of globalization and evolving youth aspirations.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Youth work has remained a strategic priority of the Communist Party of Vietnam, cultivating capable, ethical, and innovative generations essential for national continuity and sustainable development. Through decades of policy and practice, from ideological education and cadre development to mobilization campaigns and youth-centered programs, the Party has fostered generations of youth who contribute to economic, cultural, and political advancement. Comparative lessons from China and Russia highlight the value of structured youth engagement for leadership continuity and ideological resilience, which the CPV has adapted in the post-*Doi Moi* era. Despite achievements, challenges persist, including the need for innovative methods, strengthened ethical education, improved coordination between family, school, and society, and responsiveness to globalization and social change. By consolidating the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, bridging theory and practice, and creating avenues for youth to exercise creativity and leadership, the Party can ensure that young people remain a transformative force driving national construction and sustainable development.

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