

From Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Propaganda to Contemporary Ideological Work in Vietnam: Continuity, Adaptation, and Innovation

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ABSTRACT: Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda serves as an important theoretical foundation for the ideological work of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). This study clarifies Ho Chi Minh's views on the objectives, role, propagandists, and methods of propaganda, while analyzing how the CPV has applied these ideas in the new era. Based on an examination of the theoretical foundations of Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda and its application by the CPV in practice, the findings indicate that the Party has inherited and further developed Ho Chi Minh's thought by strengthening awareness of the importance of propaganda, building a contingent of qualified propagandists, and renewing propaganda methods in association with digital transformation. These efforts have contributed to improving the effectiveness of ideological work and safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation in the new era.

KEYWORDS: CPV, Ho Chi Minh's thought, Ideological work, Propaganda, Vietnam.

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the course of the Vietnamese revolution, propaganda has consistently played an important role in the leadership activities of the CPV. Even before the establishment of the Party, President Ho Chi Minh placed a high value on propaganda and the dissemination of Marxism - Leninism in order to raise public awareness and establish the ideological foundation for the Vietnamese revolutionary movement. After the Party was founded, his views on the objectives, content, methods, and target audiences of propaganda continued to be applied during the periods of national defense, national development, and national freedom..

Following almost 40 years of Doi Moi policy implementation, the CPV has continued to inherit and develop Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda to fulfill the requirements of national development and international integration. In particular, the rapid development of digital transformation, social media, and multimedia communication platforms has created many opportunities while also posing significant challenges to propaganda work, especially in guiding public opinion, combating misinformation, and safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation.

In recent years, many scholars have examined Ho Chi Minh's thought from various perspectives, including education, culture, leadership, national defense, political communication, and Party building. In addition, several studies have analyzed the application of Ho Chi Minh's thought in the leadership activities of the CPV as well as the changes in propaganda work under the influence of the contemporary communication environment. However, relatively few studies have systematically examined Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda and its inheritance and application by the CPV in the new era. Therefore, this article clarifies the fundamental contents of Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda and analyzes how the CPV has applied these ideas in the current context, thereby contributing to the theoretical and practical foundation for the continued renewal of propaganda work in the coming period.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ho Chi Minh's opinions on propaganda and how the CPV employed it in the contemporary era are examined in this study using a qualitative research approach. The research primarily adopts the document analysis method by collecting, synthesizing, and examining published academic studies, scholarly books, journal articles, Party documents, as well as legal documents and policy papers related to Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda and the process through which the CPV has applied and developed these ideas. The selected sources include both domestic and international studies to ensure the comprehensiveness of the research.

During the research process, The logical approach and the historical approach are employed to clarify the formation and development of Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda, while also analyzing how the CPV has inherited and applied these ideas throughout different stages of the Vietnamese revolution. The combination of these two methods helps explain the relationship between Ho Chi Minh's theoretical viewpoints and the Party's leadership practices in specific historical contexts.

Additionally, in the context of digital transformation, the content analysis approach is used to pinpoint the fundamental principles of Ho Chi Minh's propaganda theory and analyze how these concepts have been incorporated into the Party's directives, policies, and operational initiatives, international integration, and the requirement to safeguard the Party's ideological foundation. The comparative method is also used to compare Ho Chi Minh's thought with its application by the CPV, thereby clarifying the aspects that have been inherited, developed, and renewed in contemporary propaganda work.

The research findings are developed through the synthesis, analysis, and interpretation of academic literature and official documents. The combination of these research methods helps ensure the logical consistency, systematic nature, and reliability of the findings, while providing a basis for evaluating the application of Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda by the CPV in the new era.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, Ho Chi Minh's thought has continued to attract the attention of both domestic and international scholars. Existing studies have focused on clarifying the theoretical value of Ho Chi Minh's thought while analyzing how the CPV has inherited and applied these ideas in the country's leadership practice. In addition to studies on political thought, culture, and education, many scholars have expanded their research to areas such as communication, propaganda, mass mobilization, digital transformation, and national governance. This has provided a relatively rich body of literature for examining propaganda work in the current context.

First, studies on Ho Chi Minh's thought

Studies that are now available generally concur that Ho Chi Minh's philosophy placed people at the core of the revolutionary cause, with moral development, education, and increased political consciousness being seen as critical elements for the advancement of the country. In addition to imparting knowledge, education is seen as a tool for developing moral character, fostering revolutionary ideals, and bolstering societal trust. This perspective has been reflected in numerous studies on education, culture, and human development based on Ho Chi Minh's thought, while also demonstrating the close relationship between education and ideological work (Nguyen, 2023).

Numerous studies have examined Ho Chi Minh's views on leadership and cadre formation in addition to education. Dinh and Nguyen (2025) clarified Ho Chi Minh's system of views on the objectives, content, and methods of leadership, as well as the requirements for the contingent of cadres under new conditions. According to the authors, a leader should combine political steadfastness, moral integrity, and practical competence while maintaining close ties with the people. These ideas continue to serve as an important foundation for the CPV in developing its contingent of cadres and renewing its leadership methods throughout the country's development process.

At the same time, studies on culture argue that Ho Chi Minh regarded culture as the spiritual foundation of society, playing an essential role in building a new type of person and promoting national development Le et al. (2022).

In the field of national defense, Vu (2026) clarified the application of Ho Chi Minh's thought in building an all-people national defense, emphasizing the relationship between national defense strength, the great national unity bloc, and the leadership role of the Party.

Analyzing the transmission and evolution of Ho Chi Minh's thought in the CPV's leadership guidelines has been the subject of another field of study. Lokshin (2021) examined the ideological issues raised at the 13th National Congress of the CPV, emphasizing the need to safeguard the Party's ideological foundation, strengthen confidence in socialism, and address new challenges arising in the context of globalization. In addition, the studies included in Ho Chi Minh's Heritage in Vietnam and Abroad (Kobeleev and Pham, 2020) examined the application of Ho Chi Minh's thought in areas such as the building of a law-governed state, cultural development, youth education, foreign affairs, and national governance. These studies indicate that Ho Chi Minh's thought has not only been inherited at the theoretical level but has also been translated into numerous guidelines and policies of the CPV.

Second, studies on propaganda work

During the wartime period, Hunt (2016) analyzed the role of propaganda in shaping public opinion in rural South Vietnam during the Second Indochina War. The study showed that propaganda had a direct influence on the political awareness and behavior of the population under wartime conditions. Following this line of research, Thuy (2025) examined propaganda and enemy proselytization activities during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in the Spring of 1975, emphasizing the role of propaganda in influencing soldiers and the government of the Republic of Vietnam. Meanwhile, Nguyen (2025) approached propaganda through the system of posters produced during the period 1976 - 1986, highlighting the role of visual communication in the post-war reconstruction process and the building of socialism.

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Other studies have expanded the scope of research to political communication and international discourse. Dror (2022) analyzed the use of Ho Chi Minh's image in Vietnamese discourse on the war in Ukraine, while another study by Dror (2024) examined Ho Chi Minh's image in political theater and propaganda during the Cold War. These studies indicate that Ho Chi Minh's image not only carries historical significance but also continues to be employed in contemporary political discourses.

From a theoretical perspective, Ngo (2024) clarified the role of Nguyen Ai Quoc in disseminating Marxism - Leninism in Vietnam during the period 1920 - 1930. The study argued that theoretical propaganda laid the ideological foundation for the formation of the Vietnamese revolutionary line and the establishment of the CPV. In addition, studies on innovation and the development of science and technology from Ho Chi Minh's perspective have also contributed to the theoretical basis for examining the renewal of propaganda work. The integration of Ho Chi Minh's ideological foundation with modern communication methods has been regarded as one of the key conditions for improving the effectiveness of ideological work in the current period (Ngo and Nguyen, 2024). At the same time, international studies on Ho Chi Minh's legacy have broadened the scope of research from revolutionary history to culture, diplomacy, communication, and academic exchange.

From a practical perspective, Tran (2021) investigated the role of social media in political propaganda activities in Vietnam during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings showed that social media facilitated the rapid dissemination of information while also increasing the risk of misinformation and herd effects. This situation has created the need to innovate propaganda methods and enhance the effectiveness of public opinion orientation in the digital environment. In addition, Quynh et al. (2023) analyzed the distinctive characteristics of Ho Chi Minh's political communication, pointing out that his approachable style of expression, his ability to integrate theory with practice, and his persuasive approach to mobilizing the masses were the most prominent features of his propaganda activities. These findings provide an additional theoretical foundation for research on the innovation of propaganda work in the current context.

Third, Research Gap

Numerous facets of Ho Chi Minh's philosophy, including as leadership, education, culture, national defense, political communication, and party building, have been made clear by earlier research. Simultaneously, a number of studies have looked at how Ho Chi Minh's ideas have been used in the CPV's leadership actions and how propaganda has changed as a result of the influence of digital media and the global environment.

Nonetheless, the majority of current research still looks at these problems independently. Ho Chi Minh's philosophy has mostly been studied in relation to public mobilization, national defense, education, and culture. Propaganda has mostly been studied in relation to political discourse, communication techniques, or its historical evolution. In the meanwhile, studies of the CPV have often taken a more comprehensive approach to ideological study. Systematic research on Ho Chi Minh's ideas about propaganda and how the CPV uses them in the modern era is still lacking, especially when it comes to digital transformation, multi-platform communication, and the need to protect the Party's ideological core. The current work is based on this research gap.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Propaganda Work

During his lifetime, President Ho Chi Minh paid great attention to propaganda work because he regarded it as an important component of the CPV's ideological work. In Issue No. 79 of Su That Newspaper, published from June 26 to July 9, 1947, under the pen name A.G., President Ho Chi Minh wrote the article "The Propagandist and the Method of Propaganda" (CPV Online Newspaper, 2020). This article clearly reflects his thought on propaganda work and provides valuable guidance for the CPV in selecting and training propagandists, as well as in developing and improving propaganda methods to suit different practical conditions and circumstances.

First, the Purpose and Role of Propaganda Work

When studying propaganda work, President Ho Chi Minh defined propaganda as follows: "Propaganda is to explain something so that the people understand it, remember it, follow it, and put it into practice. If these objectives are not achieved, propaganda has failed" (Ho, 2011a, Vol. 5, p. 191). This definition shows that propaganda is essentially the process of communicating information to the people so that they understand the goals pursued by the Party and the State, remember them, support them, and voluntarily implement them. Propaganda is therefore an important activity for strengthening the relationship and unity between the Party and the people.

In his thought, Ho Chi Minh also clearly emphasized the role of propaganda throughout the Vietnamese revolution. He stated that "it is necessary to maintain close contact with the people. One must never become detached from them. To be separated from the people is to become isolated, and isolation will inevitably lead to failure" (Ho, 2011b, Vol. 5, p. 278). Therefore, propaganda serves as an effective means of maintaining close communication with the people during different stages of the revolution. Through propaganda, the CPV disseminates its guidelines and policies among the people. At the same time, it collects information and public

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opinion from the people and reports them to the Party, thereby enabling the Party to formulate leadership guidelines and policies that are consistent with the legitimate aspirations of the people.

Second, Propagandists and Methods of Propaganda

The most distinctive aspect of Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda lies in his guidance on propagandists and methods of propaganda. Specifically, he stated that a propagandist should be "a person who is diligent, hardworking, adaptable, and industrious. Do not think that merely passing through a locality and giving a speech for one or two hours will produce results. Whenever arriving at a locality, it is necessary to visit elderly people, local leaders, and households to build good relationships and understand the local situation" (Ho, 2000, Vol. 9, p. 163). This viewpoint demonstrates that Ho Chi Minh did not regard propaganda merely as the transmission of information or the delivery of speeches to the masses.

According to him, the effectiveness of propaganda depends primarily on the propagandist and the way he or she approaches the people. Propagandists must directly work at the grassroots level, understand local conditions, and meet with local officials and residents to identify the characteristics, concerns, and needs of different target groups. On this basis, the content and methods of propaganda can be adapted to practical conditions and become more effective. At the same time, the idea of "building good relationships" reflects the requirement to establish close, respectful, and trustworthy relationships between propagandists and the people. This is not only a requirement concerning working methods but also reflects Ho Chi Minh's consistent viewpoint of placing the people at the center and considering them as both the object and the subject of revolutionary activities. Therefore, propagandists must possess not only professional knowledge and communication skills but also close ties with the people and a practical understanding of grassroots realities.

In addition, when discussing propaganda methods, President Ho Chi Minh emphasized that propaganda must be closely connected with reality. Theory should always be combined with practice so that propaganda does not become detached from real life and can address the issues that concern the people. He also criticized the tendency to present abstract theories that were not closely related to everyday life. At the same time, he argued that propaganda should be carried out through diverse and flexible methods, while its content should be concise, easy to understand, and appropriate to the educational level of the people. President Ho Chi Minh repeatedly criticized lengthy and empty writing. He required both writing and speaking to be brief but meaningful because the ultimate purpose of propaganda is to transform awareness into action. The language of propaganda should be truthful, avoiding dogmatism and slogans. As he stated, "when speaking about anything, speak simply, quickly, and clearly, as certain as two plus two equals four, without unnecessary embellishment" (Ho, 2011c, Vol. 2, p. 283). This viewpoint reflects the requirement that truthfulness, conciseness, and effectiveness should be regarded as fundamental principles of Ho Chi Minh's method of propaganda.

From these viewpoints, it can be seen that Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda was developed in a relatively comprehensive manner, covering its objectives, role, content, subjects, and methods of implementation. According to him, propaganda is not only intended to disseminate the Party's guidelines and policies to the people but also to achieve unity between awareness and action. The effectiveness of propaganda depends on the propagandists, their close relationship with the people, their ability to understand practical conditions, and their selection of appropriate content and methods for different target groups. At the same time, principles such as placing the people at the center, linking theory with practice, using concise, understandable, and truthful language, and avoiding dogmatism constitute the distinctive characteristics of Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda. These principles also provide an important theoretical foundation for the CPV to inherit, apply, and continue renewing propaganda work throughout different stages of national development, especially in the new era.

4.2. The CPV's Application of Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Propaganda Work in the New Era

Inheriting Ho Chi Minh's thought, the CPV has consistently regarded propaganda work as an important component of ideological work and a regular task throughout the revolutionary leadership process. Across successive Party Congresses, the Party has continuously supplemented and developed its viewpoints on propaganda in accordance with the requirements of each stage of national development. Particularly as Vietnam enters the new era, propaganda work has received increasing attention and has been gradually renewed to meet practical demands.

First, the CPV has correctly recognized the role of propaganda work and has strengthened awareness of its importance among cadres and Party members

Building upon Ho Chi Minh's thought on the position and role of propaganda work, the CPV has consistently regarded propaganda as an integral part of the Party's ideological work. It serves to disseminate Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, the Party's guidelines and policies, and the laws of the State to cadres, Party members, and the people. This is reflected in the issuance of numerous documents guiding propaganda activities in different fields, such as Guideline No. 108-HD/BTGTW dated June 20, 2023, on promoting propaganda for Party building and the political system; Guideline No. 109-HD/BTGTW dated July 17, 2023, on implementing Directive No. 23-CT/TW concerning traffic safety; and Directive No. 58-CT/TW dated January 10, 2026, on strengthening the Party's leadership over political, ideological, and legal education for workers in the new situation. In

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addition, on major national anniversaries and important political events, the Party regularly issues guidance on propaganda themes and methods to promote Vietnam's cultural traditions.

At the same time, the Party has paid close attention to raising awareness among cadres and Party members regarding the importance of propaganda work. This is demonstrated through the regular dissemination of Party resolutions, directives, and conclusions on ideological work; the strengthening of political and ideological education; the inclusion of propaganda content in training and professional development programs; and the recognition that every cadre and Party member has the responsibility to propagate and encourage the people to implement the Party's guidelines and the State's laws and policies. As a result, awareness of the position and significance of propaganda work has gradually improved, contributing to ideological unity and coordinated action throughout the Party. This also demonstrates the Party's consistent inheritance of Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda while meeting the requirements of strengthening ideological work in the context of national development and international integration.

Second, the CPV has developed a contingent of propaganda personnel with both moral qualities and practical competence

Following Ho Chi Minh's thought on the qualities of propaganda workers, the CPV has consistently attached importance to building a contingent of propagandists who possess firm political conviction, sound moral qualities, and professional competence capable of meeting the requirements of each revolutionary period. Ho Chi Minh emphasized that propagandists must remain close to the grassroots, maintain close relations with the people, and thoroughly understand local realities before conducting propaganda activities. This viewpoint continues to be applied in developing personnel engaged in ideological work, propaganda, and journalism, who are regarded as the core force responsible for political education, ideological orientation, and building social consensus.

In recent years, the Party has placed particular emphasis on improving the quality of propaganda personnel through training in political theory, professional expertise, and modern communication skills. Notably, in 2025, the Central Commission for Propaganda and Mass Mobilization issued the Regulation on Party Reporters and Propagandists, which clearly stipulates their duties, rights, obligations, and standards regarding professional competence and moral qualities (The Central Propaganda and Mass Mobilization Department, 2025a). Besides improving professional qualifications, the Party also requires high standards of professional ethics and political responsibility. In the context of rapidly developing information on cyberspace, propaganda personnel are responsible not only for disseminating the Party's guidelines and policies but also for guiding public opinion, combating false and hostile viewpoints, and safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation. Therefore, the development of a contingent possessing both moral integrity, political steadfastness, practical competence, and modern communication skills demonstrates the direct inheritance of Ho Chi Minh's thought while responding to the demands of digital transformation and international integration.

Third, the CPV has renewed propaganda methods in the new era

According to the 2025 Report on Propaganda and Mass Mobilization, the Central Commission for Propaganda and Mass Mobilization recognized significant progress in propaganda work. Specifically, propaganda has shifted from one-way dissemination to learning activities, discussions, open dialogues, and visual exhibitions (The Central Propaganda and Mass Mobilization Department, 2025b). Digital technologies have been widely applied through electronic learning materials, public opinion databases, and the operation of the Information System for Propaganda and Mass Mobilization on mobile platforms, thereby enhancing interaction and expanding public access to Party resolutions.

These developments demonstrate that the CPV has flexibly applied Ho Chi Minh's thought on renewing propaganda methods to suit the requirements of each stage of national development. While Ho Chi Minh emphasized that propaganda content should be concise, understandable, practical, and appropriate for different audiences, the Party has expanded propaganda activities through digital platforms in the new era to improve communication effectiveness and strengthen interaction with cadres, Party members, and the people. The transition from one-way communication to dialogue and discussion, together with the combination of face-to-face and digital communication, has enabled citizens to access information more proactively, exchange opinions, and enhance political awareness. This reflects Ho Chi Minh's view that the people are not merely recipients of information but active participants in propaganda activities.

Furthermore, the application of electronic learning resources, the development of public opinion databases, and the operation of digital propaganda information systems have enhanced the ability to monitor ideological trends and public opinion in a timely manner. These measures enable propaganda agencies to adjust propaganda content, forms, and methods according to different target groups while improving the effectiveness of public opinion guidance in the digital communication environment. Despite significant changes in propaganda tools and methods driven by digital transformation, the core principles of Ho Chi Minh's thought - including grounding propaganda in reality, placing the people at the center, and measuring its effectiveness through changes in public awareness and action have continued to be inherited and applied by the CPV in the new era.

4.3. Evaluation of the CPV's Inheritance, Adaptation, and Innovation in Implementing Propaganda Work Based on Ho Chi Minh's Thought

Throughout the process of leading the Vietnamese revolution, it can be seen that the CPV has consistently inherited the core principles of Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda work. Fundamental principles such as regarding propaganda as an important component of ideological work, placing the people at the center, linking propaganda with reality, emphasizing the role of propaganda personnel, and aiming to transform awareness into action have continued to be applied by the Party in formulating policies, issuing resolutions and directives, and organizing propaganda activities. This demonstrates that Ho Chi Minh's thought continues to provide fundamental guidance for the Party's propaganda work in the current period.

In addition to this inheritance, the Party has also adapted in a timely manner to changes in both the domestic and international contexts. Whereas propaganda work was previously carried out mainly through newspapers, publications, radio, television, and face-to-face communication, it has now expanded into the digital environment with the participation of multimedia communication platforms, social media, electronic learning resources, and digital databases serving propaganda and mass mobilization work. This transformation has not changed the objectives of propaganda work; rather, it represents an adjustment in methods to meet the information needs of cadres, Party members, and the people in the context of digital transformation and international integration.

At the same time, propaganda work has undergone many innovations in terms of content, methods, and implementation. The Party has not only focused on disseminating its guidelines and policies but has also strengthened dialogue, monitored public opinion, promoted interaction between propaganda agencies and the people, and expanded the application of science and technology in propaganda activities. The development of a contingent of reporters and propagandists with strong political commitment, sound moral qualities, and modern communication skills, together with efforts to safeguard the Party's ideological foundation in cyberspace and develop digital platforms for propaganda and mass mobilization work, reflects innovation in applying Ho Chi Minh's thought to the practice of national leadership.

In general, the CPV's present use of Ho Chi Minh's thought in propaganda shows the coherence of innovation, adaptation, and inheritance. While continually modifying the substance, techniques, and formats of propaganda to suit the demands of the new era, the Party has maintained the fundamental principles of Ho Chi Minh's philosophy. Because of this, propaganda continues to act as a link between the Party and the populace, fostering awareness, bolstering public trust, solidifying the great national unity bloc, and defending the Party's ideological core in the framework of both domestic and global integration.

CONCLUSION

Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda work constitutes an important component of his overall thought on ideological work and Party building. His views on the objectives and role of propaganda, the requirements for propaganda personnel, and the methods of conducting propaganda have formed a system of guidance with both theoretical and practical value for the Vietnamese revolution. Although these ideas were developed under different historical circumstances, they continue to provide important guidance for the propaganda work of the CPV in the present era.

According to research findings, the CPV has adopted and used Ho Chi Minh's thought on promotion in numerous ways. The Party continuously views propaganda as a crucial part of ideological work; pays attention to educating cadres and Party members about the role of propaganda; concentrates on developing a contingent of propaganda personnel with strong political commitment, sound moral qualities, and practical competence; and constantly updates the forms, methods, and content of propaganda to meet the demands of digital transformation, international integration, and the advancement of modern communication. The fundamental ideas of Ho Chi Minh's philosophy have been preserved through this application process, which also shows creativity and adaptation to the needs of the modern world.

In the context of continuing changes in the regional and international situation, together with the rapid development of science, technology, and digital communication, propaganda work faces new requirements for the CPV. Therefore, further research, application, and development of Ho Chi Minh's thought on propaganda work are of great significance for improving the quality and effectiveness of ideological work, strengthening public confidence in the Party and the State, enhancing social consensus, contributing to safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation, and successfully achieving the nation's development objectives in the modern period.

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