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**THE LEADERSHIP OF PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL
PARTY COMMITTEES IN THE MEKONG DELTA IN PROTECTING
THE IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY
OF VIETNAM IN THE CURRENT PERIOD**

**DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACT
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INTRODUCTION

1. The urgency of the topic

Since its establishment, alongside formulating and implementing political guidelines, the Communist Party of Vietnam has always placed great importance on protecting the Party's ideological foundation and resolutely combating wrongful and hostile viewpoints. This task is considered a fundamental and vital component of Party building and rectification work. After five years of implementing Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW, the Politburo issued Conclusion No. 89-KL/TW to continue enforcing Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW dated October 22, 2018 on strengthening the protection of the Party's ideological foundation and countering wrongful, hostile views in the new context. The Conclusion requests that all Party committees and organizations enhance leadership and direction in effectively fulfilling the task of protecting the Party's ideological foundation.

The Mekong Delta holds a crucial geo-economic and geopolitical position. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious region with a complex historical background. Hostile forces have taken advantage of these characteristics, colluding with disgruntled and opportunistic elements to form opposing forces, incite separatism and autonomy, and sow distrust, thereby undermining national unity and potentially creating “hot spots” of political and social unrest. At the same time, despite significant achievements, the region faces major developmental challenges, such as climate change and rising sea levels causing increasingly serious consequences. Given these realities, the Mekong Delta (Southwest region) – one of the “Three West” (alongside the Northwest and Central Highlands) – has become a focal point in the “peaceful evolution” strategy of hostile forces.

In recent years, the provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta have actively led, directed, and organized efforts to protect the ideological foundation of the Party. These Party Committees have promulgated leadership documents, built dedicated forces, renewed the content and diversified the forms and methods of ideological dissemination. They have also implemented specific programs and action plans, promoted role modeling among Party members, enhanced the involvement of the political system and the people, and conducted inspection, supervision, preliminary and final reviews.

However, the leadership of provincial and municipal Party Committees regarding the protection of the Party's ideological foundation still reveals limitations. A number of cadres, Party members, and even some Party Committees do not fully grasp the importance of this task. The leadership in building and coordinating the ideological protection forces remains inadequate, and there is a lack of skilled experts capable of timely and effectively countering wrongful and hostile views linked to complex emerging issues. Political

theoretical education has not kept pace with practical developments, and teaching methods remain outdated. The development and implementation of programs and plans have not always aligned with local realities. Leadership through state agencies, especially in terms of investment in facilities and technical infrastructure for ideological struggle, is still lacking. The inspection and supervision of the implementation of Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW remain irregular in some grassroots Party organizations.

In the coming period, the task of protecting the Party's ideological foundation in the Mekong Delta faces numerous challenges. Hostile forces will exploit global and domestic developments, as well as advances in science and technology, to escalate sabotage efforts in increasingly sophisticated and complex forms. Sustainable development in the new era, resolving long-standing practical bottlenecks, and implementing groundbreaking, revolutionary policies require Party members and cadres to remain ideologically steadfast, actively summarize practice, and develop theoretical foundations. In light of this, the Party Committees must strengthen their leadership to build on strengths, overcome weaknesses, and effectively implement the task of protecting of the Party's ideological foundation. Therefore, the doctoral candidate has selected the topic: ***“Leadership of the Provincial and Municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta in the Protection of the Party’s Ideological Foundation in the Current Period”*** for his doctoral dissertation in the field of Party Building and State Governance.

2. OBJECTIVES AND TASKS OF THE DISSERTATION

2.1. Objective

Based on clarifying the theoretical and practical issues related to the leadership of the provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta in protecting the Party's ideological foundation, the dissertation proposes orientations and key solutions to strengthen their leadership in this area through 2035.

2.2. Tasks

Firstly, to review relevant scientific works, distill valuable academic insights for inheritance, and identify areas requiring further research.

Secondly, to clarify theoretical and practical issues related to the leadership of the Party Committees in the Mekong Delta in protecting the Party's ideological foundation.

Thirdly, to investigate and evaluate the actual situation of such leadership from 2018 to 2024, identifying strengths, limitations, causes, and lessons learned.

Fourthly, to forecast favorable and challenging factors, and propose key directions and solutions to strengthen leadership in protecting the Party's

ideological foundation through 2035.

3. RESEARCH SUBJECT AND SCOPE OF THE DISSERTATION

3.1. Research Subject

The research subject of the dissertation is the leadership of the provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta in protecting the ideological foundation of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

3.2. Research Scope

Spatial scope: The dissertation focuses on 13 localities in the Mekong Delta, including 12 provinces—Long An, Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Dong Thap, Tra Vinh, Vinh Long, An Giang, Hau Giang, Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, Kien Giang, and Ca Mau and Can Tho City.

Temporal scope: The dissertation examines and evaluates the leadership activities in protecting the Party's ideological foundation from 2018 (the issuance of Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW by the Politburo of the 12th Central Committee) to 2024. The proposed orientations and solutions are projected to be applicable through 2035, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Vietnam's Doi Moi (Renovation) process.

4. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FOUNDATIONS, RESEARCH METHODS

4.1. Theoretical and Practical Foundations

The dissertation is grounded in the theoretical foundations of Marxism–Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's Thought, and the guidelines and policies of the Communist Party of Vietnam on Party building in general, and ideological work in particular—especially the protection of the Party's ideological foundation.

The practical foundation includes leadership practices of provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta from 2018 to 2024, as well as reports on preliminary and final reviews of the implementation of tasks related to protecting the Party's ideological foundation in the region.

4.2. Research Methods

The dissertation employs the Marxist–Leninist methodology and several key methods, including the historical–logical method; analysis–synthesis; surveys and field investigations; and practice-based summarization.

Firstly, the analysis–synthesis method is applied across all chapters, particularly in the literature review, theoretical and practical content, and Chapter 3 (current state analysis).

Secondly, the historical–logical method is used in Chapter 2 to explore theoretical issues and again in Chapter 3 (causal analysis) and Chapter 4 (forecasting and proposing solutions).

Thirdly, the statistical–comparative method is applied in the literature review, and in Chapters 2 and 3 to analyze regional data and evaluate the leadership reality.

Fourthly, the sociological survey method gathers information from 388 respondents including Party members, officials, and citizens in the Mekong Delta via online questionnaires. Results are incorporated into Chapters 2 through 4 to support assessments and enhance persuasiveness.

Fifthly, the practical summarization method is used in Chapter 3 to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the leadership of ideological protection and to extract relevant lessons.

5. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation introduces the concept of leadership by the provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta in protecting the Party’s ideological foundation, clarifies the content and leadership methods applied in this area.

It extracts five key lessons learned from over five years of implementing Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW by the Politburo concerning the protection of the Party’s ideological foundation in the Mekong Delta.

Additionally, the dissertation proposes six primary solutions to enhance the leadership role of provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta in protecting the Party’s ideological foundation through 2035.

6. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation contributes to further clarifying theoretical issues concerning the leadership role of provincial and municipal Party Committees in protecting the ideological foundation of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Its research findings provide scientific grounds for provincial and municipal Party Committees and Party organizations in the Mekong Delta to strengthen their leadership in ideological protection through 2025.

Additionally, the dissertation can serve as a reference for teaching, learning, and scientific research on Party Building at Political Academies in Regions II and IV, as well as political schools in provinces and cities across the Mekong Delta.

7. STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation includes: Introduction, four chapters, nine sections, Conclusion, a list of published scientific works by the author relevant to the dissertation topic, a list of references, and appendices.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STATUS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

1.1. VIETNAMESE RESEARCH WORKS

1.1.1. Studies Related to the Leadership of the Communist Party and Provincial and Municipal Party Committees

The dissertation reviews various scholarly works addressing the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, such as its leadership over the State, the Vietnam Fatherland Front, and political-social organizations, including those by Tran Khac Viet, Nguyen Van Giang, and Pham Tat Thang; over the political system by Bui Dinh Bon; over the State by Nguyen The Trung; and Party leadership in the ideological struggle against “peaceful evolution” by Tran Quoc Duong. Other significant works on the Party's ruling and leadership capacity include those by Lam Quoc Tuan, Vu Trong Lam, and Duong Trung Y.

In relation to the leadership role of provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta, studies have addressed their leadership in building new-style rural areas (Le Quoc Khoi), transforming agricultural economic structures (Duong Trung Y, Bui Van Nghiem), developing cadres of Khmer ethnicity (Tran Hoang Khai), as well as comparative regional leadership efforts such as rural development in the Red River Delta (Dao Thanh Luong), human resources development in the Central Coast (Tran Van Phuong), mass mobilization in the Central Highlands (Vu Xuan Thuy), and local defense in Military Zone 1 (Bui Van Thanh). These studies have generally focused on leadership concepts, contents, and methods.

1.1.2. Studies on the Protection of the Party’s Ideological Foundation

The dissertation examines a group of works in the form of scientific research projects, monographs, reference books, conference proceedings, doctoral dissertations, and journal articles on protecting the ideological foundation of the Party. These include contributions from the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, Le Quoc Ly, Nguyen Ba Duong, the Central Propaganda Commission of the Ministry of Public Security, the Central Theoretical Council, Dinh Ngoc Giang, and Le Van Loi. Particularly notable are studies specific to the Mekong Delta, including those by the Party Committees of An Giang and Hau Giang, and authors such as Nguyen Thanh Son, Tran Hoang Khai, and Dinh Van Thuy.

1.2. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH WORKS

1.2.1. Studies on the Leadership of Political Parties and Ruling Parties

The dissertation reviews relevant works by international scholars such as Ha Quoc Cuong’s book “Constantly Enhancing Leadership and Governance

Capacity, Strengthening Anti-degeneration Capabilities, and Risk Management”; Xom Nuc Xom Vi Chit on “Renewing State Leadership Methods in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic”; Bounthong Chitmany's dissertation on “The Lao People's Revolutionary Party’s Leadership in Building New Rural Areas”; Thongbanh Sengaphone on “The Party’s Leadership in Safeguarding National Security”; and Mayphone Her on “Leadership of Provincial Committees in Northern Laos in Poverty Reduction in the Current Period”.

1.2.2. Studies on Ideological Foundations and Their Protection and Development

The dissertation analyzes works mainly from Chinese and Lao authors such as Ly Shen Minh and Tran Chi Hoa in “Anticipating Risks: Reflections After 20 Years of the Soviet Communist Party's Collapse”; Bun Duong Cay Son's dissertation on “The Quality of Ideological Work of Provincial Party Committees in Central Laos in the Current Period”; and articles by Zhao Wenyu, Zhang Weidong, and Li Biao on “How to Effectively Conduct Ideological Work in the New Era”. Other significant sources include: the Party Building Research Institute, the Organization Commission of the Communist Party of China (2019) with the book “The Communist Party of China: Five Years of Strict and Comprehensive Party Governance”; an article by Cheng Enfu titled “The Struggle for Marxism-Leninism Perseverance and Innovation Among Chinese Communists”; and an article by Shang Ming Shui and Fan Bo Sa titled “Key Features and Response Measures in the Ideological Struggle in the New Era”. Also included are English-language works by authors such as Johanson, Katya, and Glow, Katharine Dommett.

1.3. ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND REMAINING ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE DISSERTATION

1.3.1. Achieved Research Results

First, the reviewed studies have analyzed and clarified the leadership role of the Party in general and of provincial and municipal Party Committees in particular, concerning various aspects and sectors of social life. These works describe leadership methods such as issuing resolutions, decisions, and guidelines; leadership through personnel work; propaganda, persuasion, and mobilization; coordination with the State, local government, Fatherland Front, and political-social organizations; exemplary conduct by cadres and Party members; and through inspection, supervision, and summarization.

Second, the reviewed studies have addressed various dimensions of ideological protection and development.

Third, a number of studies have specifically examined the protection of the Party's ideological foundation in the Mekong Delta and the leadership roles of Party Committees at different levels in this regard. These studies have, to varying extents, described the regional characteristics that influence ideological protection work, assessed task implementation by specific levels and sectors, and reviewed the roles of provincial Party Committees, Steering Committee 35 units in the Mekong Delta. They also proposed tasks and solutions linked to regional realities.

1.3.2. Issues Requiring Further Research by the Dissertation

To date, no comprehensive and dedicated research has been conducted on the leadership of provincial and municipal Party Committees in protecting the ideological foundation of the Communist Party in the uniquely complex region of the Mekong Delta.

Therefore, the dissertation must address the following issues: First, clarify theoretical constructs to build the conceptual framework of the dissertation.

Second, based on that framework, analyze achievements and limitations in ideological protection leadership since the issuance of Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW by the 12th Politburo, determine the causes, and draw practical lessons to enhance future leadership efforts in the region.

Third, analyze contextual factors at global, national, and regional levels impacting ideological protection in the Mekong Delta, to develop orientations and propose comprehensive solutions for strengthening the leadership role of provincial and municipal Party Committees in this field.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL PARTY COMMITTEES IN THE MEKONG DELTA IN LEADING THE TASK OF PROTECTING OF THE PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES

2.1. THE MEKONG DELTA AND PROVINCIAL/MUNICIPAL PARTY COMMITTEES IN THE REGION

2.1.1. Characteristics of the Mekong Delta

2.1.1.1. *Geographic, natural, and historical features:* The Mekong Delta is located in the southwestern region of Vietnam and is the largest alluvial plain in the country. This area has undergone complex historical transformations with various entities such as Funan, Chenla, and the Vietnamese. The region was also used as an administrative and military base by French colonialists and American imperialists. The people of the Mekong Delta have a strong tradition of patriotism and resistance against foreign invaders.

2.1.1.2. *Ethnic and religious characteristics:* The Mekong Delta is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious region. The ethnic groups and religions here possess distinct characteristics, with sensitive elements such as the close ties between ethnicity and religion. Each ethnic group often has a dominant religion that significantly influences their spiritual and material lives. Many ethnic minorities have bloodline, cultural, and religious connections with communities in neighboring countries. Historically, attitudes toward the revolution among different ethnic and religious groups in the Southwest have varied.

2.1.1.3. *Socio-economic, defense, and security characteristics:* The Mekong Delta is one of Vietnam's six key economic regions, known for its strength in agriculture and potential in renewable energy. In recent years of reform, the region has grown by 1.6%, contributing about 31.37% to Vietnam's total agricultural output, accounting for 95% of the country's rice exports, 65% of seafood exports, and 70% of fruit exports. However, the region also faces multiple challenges, including unsustainable growth in agriculture, serious climate change impacts, and a relatively high poverty rate. Strategically, the Mekong Delta is vital for national defense and security.

2.1.2. Functions, tasks, working relations, and characteristics of Provincial and Municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta

2.1.2.1. *Functions of Provincial and Municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta:* The Executive Committees of provincial and municipal Party organizations (hereafter referred to as Party Committees) are the leading organs of Party organizations between Party Congresses. Their functions include leading

the implementation of the resolutions of provincial and municipal Party Congresses, Central Party guidelines and resolutions, and State laws and policies; and proposing recommendations to the Politburo and the Secretariat regarding issues of Central leadership over the localities.

Firstly, the Party Committees perform the function of Party building: organizing the study and implementation of Central resolutions, conclusions, and directives on Party building, and concretizing and effectively leading their implementation in the local Party organizations. Based on the actual situation, they issue and lead the execution of resolutions on political, ideological, ethical, organizational, and personnel work to build clean and strong Party organizations, thereby improving leadership capacity and combat strength.

Secondly, the Party Committees perform a leadership function: leading the political system and all aspects of social life. This includes strengthening local governments, political-social organizations, and mass organizations to effectively implement Party policies and State laws.

2.1.2.2. Tasks of the Party Committees in the Mekong Delta

The tasks are stipulated in Regulation No. 10-QĐi/TW dated December 12, 2018, by the Central Executive Committee of the 12th Party Congress:

Firstly, to thoroughly understand and concretize the resolutions of provincial Party Congresses and Central resolutions to identify specific tasks and measures for each period.

Secondly, to lead, direct, and organize the review and summarization of resolutions and directives of the Central Executive Committee, Politburo, Secretariat, and provincial Party Committee resolutions, contributing to completing the renovation policies in the region.

Thirdly, to guide or decide, within their authority, matters related to Party building, organization, personnel work, inspection, supervision, and discipline in accordance with the Party Charter and Central regulations.

Fourthly, to lead local governments in fulfilling their state management functions and duties according to law.

Fifthly, to lead mass mobilization work, implement grassroots democracy regulations, and promote the people's mastery.

Sixthly, to decide issues related to financial and asset management of the Party organization; review and comment on the tasks handled by the Standing Committee between Party Committee meetings; and decide important matters proposed by the Standing Committee. The Party Committees also carry out other tasks assigned by the Politburo, the Secretariat, or the Central Executive Committee.

2.1.2.3. Working relations of Party Committees in the Mekong Delta

With superior Party leadership agencies: Provincial and municipal Party Committees must strictly comply with the comprehensive leadership and direction of the Central Executive Committee, especially the Politburo and the Secretariat. With Party organizations, agencies under the Central Government, and Military Region 9 Party Committee: the relationship is one of coordination. With subordinate Party organizations and advisory bodies: the Party Committees provide comprehensive leadership and direction over all activities.

2.1.2.4. Characteristics of Party Committees in the Mekong Delta

Over the past two terms, the Party Committees in the region have ensured adequate numbers, with a relatively high proportion of female and ethnic minority members. The professional qualifications of provincial-level Party Committee members have significantly improved compared to previous terms. These members inherit the revolutionary tradition, maintain close ties with the people, and possess cultural characteristics typical of the riverine Mekong Delta region.

2.2. PROTECTING OF THE PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION AND THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL PARTY COMMITTEES IN THE MEKONG DELTA

2.2.1. protecting of the Party's ideological foundation

2.2.1.1. Definition and content of ideological safeguarding

Protecting of the Party's ideological foundation entails the comprehensive mobilization of forces and measures to preserve, maintain, and reinforce the revolutionary and scientific nature of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought, creatively developing their core values. This also involves combating distortions and misconceptions by internal and external forces, thereby deepening the Party's ideological foundation and ensuring its guiding role in society's spiritual life.

The main contents include: (1) thoroughly grasping and enhancing awareness and responsibility among political system members and the public regarding ideological safeguarding; (2) concretizing resolutions and superior directives into programs and tasks aligned with each unit's functions; (3) organizing and coordinating forces such as the Steering Committee, secretariat, expert groups, collaborators, and core personnel in ideological protection; (4) implementing tasks related to education, propaganda, theoretical development, situation forecasting, and identifying and countering hostile views; (5) conducting inspection, supervision, and periodic preliminary and final reviews.

2.2.1.2. The role of protecting of the Party's ideological foundation

Firstly, protecting the Party's ideological foundation contributes to building and rectifying the Party to become increasingly pure and strong.

Secondly, safeguarding the ideological foundation serves as a solid basis for the Party to maintain and enhance its leadership and ruling capacity.

Thirdly, protecting the Party's ideological foundation strengthens the great national unity bloc, thereby contributing to national development.

Fourthly, it contributes to the revolutionary cause and the global struggle for democracy and progress.

2.2.2. The Leadership of Provincial and Municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta in protecting of the Party's ideological foundation: Concept, Content, and Methods

2.2.2.1. The Concept of Provincial and Municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta Region Leading the Protection of the Party's Ideological Foundation

Based on the above analysis, the concept can be defined as follows: The leadership by provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta Region in protecting the ideological foundation of the Party comprises all activities undertaken by these committees in thoroughly grasping leadership directives from higher levels in order to formulate objectives, directions, organize forces, and implement tasks to safeguard Marxism–Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, and the viewpoints and lines of the Party, thereby contributing to political stability and sustainable development in the region.

From this concept, the leadership of the protection of the Party's ideological foundation by provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta Region includes the following components:

First, the leading entity in protecting the Party's ideological foundation is the provincial or municipal Party Committee, with the Standing Committee playing a direct and regular role.

Second, all Party organizations and members within the Party Committee, local government, Vietnam Fatherland Front, political–social organizations, armed forces, public service units, and local people are both the implementing force and the subjects of leadership in carrying out this task.

Third, the leadership objective is to ensure the Party's lines and policies on protecting its ideological foundation and combating false and hostile viewpoints are effectively realized, thereby building a clean and strong Party Committee and successfully fulfilling local political missions.

Fourth, leadership tasks involve issuing policies, resolutions, programs, and action plans that define the orientation, objectives, and solutions for protecting the ideological foundation. The Committees also lead, direct, and organize Party organizations and members to implement the resolutions and plans of the Central Committee and the provincial or municipal Party Committees; conduct inspections and supervision; draw practical lessons; and lead government bodies, the Fatherland Front, mass organizations, and other forces in implementing the protection tasks through appropriate and effective methods tailored to local characteristics.

2.2.2.2. Leadership Content

The provincial and municipal Party Committees lead the protection of the Party's ideological foundation through the following main content areas:

First, thoroughly grasp the Party's viewpoints to set specific objectives, orientations, tasks, and solutions for the protection of the ideological foundation.

Second, equip cadres with knowledge and skills, and build and coordinate the forces involved in this work.

Third, conduct propaganda, education, and dissemination of Marxism–Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought; summarize practical experiences; and supplement and develop theories in relation to the Mekong Delta region.

Fourth, organize efforts to combat and refute false and hostile viewpoints.

Fifth, monitor and guide public opinion, and publicize achievements and exemplary models in socio-economic development.

2.2.2.3. Leadership Methods

The provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta Region exercise leadership over the protection of the Party's ideological foundation through the following methods:

First, leadership through resolutions, decisions, directives, and orientations related to ideological protection.

Second, leadership through the organization and personnel work of the provincial Party Committees.

Third, leadership via state agencies at the provincial level in institutionalizing and concretizing Party resolutions and policies on ideological protection.

Fourth, leadership through promoting the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and political–social organizations in participating in ideological protection.

Fifth, leadership through promoting the exemplary role of Party Committees and members in safeguarding the ideological foundation of the Party.

CHAPTER 3

THE LEADERSHIP OF PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL PARTY COMMITTEES IN THE MEKONG DELTA IN PROTECTING OF THE PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION: CURRENT SITUATION, CAUSES, AND LESSONS LEARNED

3.1. CURRENT SITUATION OF THE LEADERSHIP OF PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL PARTY COMMITTEES IN PROTECTING OF THE PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

3.1.1. Strengths

3.1.1.1. In implementing leadership content:

Firstly, the provincial and municipal Party Committees have thoroughly grasped the Central Committee's Resolutions and Guidelines, thereby identifying goals, orientations, tasks, and solutions for implementation within each local Party organization.

Secondly, emphasis has been placed on equipping cadres, Party members, and the public with knowledge, skills, and coordination mechanisms to safeguard the Party's ideological foundation.

Thirdly, the quality of education, dissemination, and promotion of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought has improved, with attention given to summarizing local practices to contribute to theoretical development.

Fourthly, the fight against hostile and distorted viewpoints has received significant attention and has yielded initial effectiveness.

Fifthly, provincial and municipal Party Committees have consistently captured and proactively guided public opinion while promoting notable achievements.

3.1.1.2. In implementing leadership methods:

Firstly, the Party Committees have promptly issued policies, orientations, directives, and action programs to implement the task of protecting of the Party's ideological foundation.

Secondly, they have emphasized leadership through organizational work and personnel appointments to carry out this task.

Thirdly, they have effectively led provincial state agencies in institutionalizing and operationalizing the Party's resolutions and directly implementing ideological safeguarding.

Fourthly, the Vietnam Fatherland Front, socio-political organizations, and the public have been mobilized to actively participate in safeguarding the ideological foundation.

Fifthly, attention has been given to promoting the exemplary role of Party Committees and members in ideological protection.

Sixthly, inspection and supervision of Party organizations and members regarding their performance in ideological safeguarding have been strengthened, with periodic preliminary and final reviews conducted.

3.1.2. Limitations and shortcomings

3.1.2.1. In implementing leadership content:

Firstly, some Party Committees still define tasks and solutions in a general and ineffective manner.

Secondly, the knowledge and skills of core forces for ideological safeguarding remain insufficient to meet growing demands.

Thirdly, political theory education has been slow to innovate in content and methodology, and practice-based theoretical development remains ineffective.

Fourthly, the combat against hostile and distorted viewpoints lacks sharpness and persuasiveness.

Fifthly, the ability to grasp and guide public opinion is sometimes delayed, inaccurate, or insufficient.

3.1.2.2. In implementing leadership methods:

Firstly, many Party Committees have not issued separate resolutions on ideological safeguarding, relying mainly on Central documents, while their programs and plans lack quality.

Secondly, leadership through organizational and personnel work remains ineffective, with limited roles for Steering Committee 35 members and expert groups.

Thirdly, leadership through state agencies, the Fatherland Front, and socio-political organizations has limitations, failing to fully leverage the “people’s will” in ideological safeguarding.

Fourthly, some cadres and Party members, including provincial-level Party Committee members, are not exemplary in fulfilling this task.

Fifthly, inspection and supervision of Party organizations and members on ideological safeguarding remain ineffective, and the quality of preliminary and final reviews is still low.

3.2. CAUSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

3.2.1. Causes

3.2.1.1. Causes of the strengths

First, the task of protecting the Party’s ideological foundation and combating wrongful and hostile viewpoints has received strong attention from the Party.

Second, institutional frameworks for protecting the Party's ideological foundation have been gradually established, contributing to strengthening the leadership of the provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta region.

Third, in recent years, the socio-economic situation of the country as well as the Mekong Delta region has made significant progress.

Fourth, the ideological protection work of the provincial and municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta has been effectively supported by the Steering Committee 35 and core forces at all levels.

Fifth, the Party Committees and subordinate organizations in the Mekong Delta have actively promoted their roles and responsibilities in the task of protecting the Party's ideological foundation.

3.2.1.2. Causes of the limitations

First, although awareness of the importance of ideological protection has improved significantly, it remains insufficient among some Party members, including a number of provincial-level Party Committee members.

Second, the competence and capacity to implement ideological protection work among some provincial and municipal Party Committee members, advisory personnel, and core forces have not yet met the required standards.

Third, the policy regime for members of the Steering Committees and full-time ideological protection staff remains inadequate, with limited physical infrastructure and support.

Fourth, certain limitations and weaknesses in Party building and rectification have been slow to overcome. Some state agencies, the Vietnam Fatherland Front, and mass organizations have not taken effective measures to participate in ideological protection work.

Fifth, the schemes and tactics of hostile forces opposing the Party's ideological foundation in general—and particularly in the Mekong Delta—are becoming increasingly sophisticated and cunning.

Sixth, the Mekong Delta region has many objective and specific challenges related to history, ethnicity, and religion, along with development constraints, all of which significantly impact the task of ideological protection.

3.2.2. Key Lessons Learned

First, building clean and strong Party Committees—especially the provincial and municipal Party Committees—as cohesive centers and core leadership nuclei is a decisive factor in the quality of leadership in ideological protection work.

Second, developing a strong, sharp, and capable force for ideological protection is a pivotal element in organizing effective activities to safeguard the Party's ideological foundation.

Third, leadership and guidance must regularly stem from the local context and closely follow emerging practical issues to devise appropriate tasks and solutions.

Fourth, it is essential to ensure close, coordinated cooperation among all actors and apply a variety of measures to enhance the effectiveness of ideological protection.

Fifth, it is necessary to carry out regular inspections, supervision, and mid-term and final reviews to promptly address shortcomings and promote effective, innovative practices.

CHAPTER 4

ORIENTATIONS AND KEY SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE LEADERSHIP OF PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL PARTY COMMITTEES IN THE MEKONG DELTA IN SAFEGUARDING THE PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION TOWARD 2035

4.1. FORECAST OF ADVANTAGES, CHALLENGES, AND ORIENTATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE LEADERSHIP OF PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL PARTY COMMITTEES IN THE MEKONG DELTA IN PROTECTING OF THE PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION TO 2035

4.1.1. Forecast of advantages and challenges

4.1.1.1. Advantages

Firstly, international developments offer positive impacts on national and regional development.

Secondly, the Fourth Industrial Revolution creates favorable conditions for the Party's ideological work.

Thirdly, achievements in the renewal process enhance the nation's position and affirm the Party's leadership.

Fourthly, the Mekong Delta receives increasing attention and achieves socio-economic progress, strengthening public trust.

Fifthly, revolutionary policies and the Party-building efforts nationwide and in the Mekong Delta will be strongly implemented.

Sixthly, after five years of implementing Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW, Party Committees in the Mekong Delta have drawn valuable leadership lessons.

4.1.1.2. Challenges

Firstly, global developments will continue to be complex and unpredictable.

Secondly, negative impacts of science and technology pose challenges to ideological safeguarding.

Thirdly, implementing Resolution No. 18-NQ/TW requires high standards for ideological work at all levels.

Fourthly, the Mekong Delta still faces socio-economic and security challenges, making it vulnerable to exploitation.

Fifthly, hostile forces are intensifying efforts with increasingly sophisticated tactics.

Sixthly, political, ethical, and lifestyle degradation, along with signs of “self-evolution” and “self-transformation” among some cadres, erode public trust.

4.1.2. Orientation

The draft documents for the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam have defined the following orientations: Ideological work must be conducted proactively, vigorously, regularly, and in close alignment with practical realities. There is a need to intensify extensive communication and dissemination of the Party's guidelines and resolutions, as well as the State's policies and laws, while promoting revolutionary traditions of the Party over more than a century of its formation and development. The study and thorough understanding of Marxism–Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's Thought, and the Party's line and policies must be significantly renewed to ensure practicality and effectiveness. Greater efforts must be made to protect the Party's ideological foundation. The quality of public opinion research and citizen satisfaction assessment must be improved; it is essential to proactively grasp, research, and forecast ideological trends and developments, promptly address information, and provide orientation for public opinion and ideological discourse. There should be a strong emphasis on summarizing practical experiences and conducting theoretical research, with the goal of continuously supplementing and perfecting the theoretical system on the renovation path, socialism, and the path toward socialism in Vietnam, taking the people's happiness and the country's rapid, sustainable development as the ultimate objectives.

4.2. Key Solutions to Strengthening the Leadership of Provincial and Municipal Party Committees in the Mekong Delta Region over the Protection of the Party's Ideological Foundation through 2035

4.2.1. Continuing to Raise Awareness and Responsibilities of Party Committees, Party Organizations, and Political System Entities Regarding the Protection of the Party's Ideological Foundation

A correct understanding by Party committees, authorities, officials, and Party members serves as the foundation for each individual and organization to define their responsibilities and proactively and creatively fulfill the task of protecting of the Party's ideological foundation and refuting distorted, hostile viewpoints. To contribute to enhancing the awareness and responsibilities of Party committees, Party organizations, and entities within the political system concerning the protection of the Party's ideological foundation, the following solutions should be implemented:

First, thoroughly grasp and implement the Party Central Committee's resolutions, directives, and regulations on the protection of the Party's ideological foundation.

Second, diversify and enhance the effectiveness of communication and dissemination campaigns related to the safeguarding of the Party's ideological foundation.

Third, strengthen the sense of responsibility among members of the Standing Committees, Executive Committees of Party organizations, and leaders of other entities in the political system across the Mekong Delta region in fulfilling their duties in protecting the Party's ideological foundation.

4.2.2. Enhancing the Quality of Provincial Party Committee Members and Advisory Bodies of the Party Committees in the Mekong Delta

4.2.2.1. Improving the Quality of Provincial Party Committee Members in Leading and Organizing the Protection of the Party's Ideological Foundation

First, concretize, thoroughly understand, and strictly implement the standards for provincial Party committee members in accordance with Party regulations and the particular characteristics of the provinces and cities in the new context, in association with the restructuring of the political apparatus and the national and regional development goals in the new era.

Second, improve the quality of all stages of the personnel work process to build a competent team of provincial Party committee members in the Mekong Delta, especially in the selection and appointment process during apparatus streamlining.

Third, strengthen the political will, morality, and lifestyle of provincial Party committee members; proactively prevent ideological degradation, moral decline, and manifestations of “self-evolution” and “self-transformation.”

Fourth, reform working styles and methods of Party committees at the provincial level to meet increasingly demanding leadership requirements in the new era, aligning with the Party's key decisions.

4.2.2.2. Improving the Quality of Advisory and Supporting Agencies for Provincial Party Committees in the Mekong Delta

First, continue to thoroughly grasp and build consensus on the position and role of advisory bodies in enhancing the leadership capacity of provincial Party committees, especially implementing Regulation No. 137-QĐ/TW dated December 1, 2023, issued by the Secretariat.

Second, review and concretize the functions and advisory responsibilities of Party-affiliated commissions according to the general regulations of the Central Committee.

Third, invest in upgrading the infrastructure and equipment, particularly digital infrastructure, of advisory and supporting bodies under the provincial Party Committees in the Mekong Delta.

4.2.3. Leading the Building and Coordination of Specialized Forces to Meet the Increasing Demands in protecting of the Party's ideological foundation

4.2.3.1. Leading the Development of Specialized Forces for the Protection of the Party's Ideological Foundation

First, clearly identify and assign responsibilities to each specialized and core force from the provincial level to grassroots in the task of protecting the Party's ideological foundation.

Second, focus on selecting and building a team of experts and pioneering personnel who are qualified to carry out the assigned tasks.

Third, regularly strengthen capacity-building by organizing training courses and thematic workshops to enhance the qualifications and expertise of specialized and core personnel.

Fourth, develop appropriate mechanisms, policies, and working conditions for the specialized and core forces engaged in protecting of the Party's ideological foundation.

4.2.3.2. Leading Inter-Provincial Coordination in the Protection of the Party's Ideological Foundation

First, the provincial Party Committees shall lead the promotion of the role of the Provincial Steering Committee 35 in coordinating relevant forces.

Second, inter-agency coordination must be based on the strengths and responsibilities of each unit, aligned with their assigned functions and tasks.

Third, implement strict routines for briefings, reporting, and regular information exchanges among forces involved.

Fourth, develop and institutionalize coordination mechanisms by signing inter-agency regulations on protecting the Party's ideological foundation.

4.2.4. Promoting the Role of Governments, the Vietnam Fatherland Front, and Socio-Political Organizations in Actively and Effectively protecting of the Party's ideological foundation

4.2.4.1. Promoting the Role of Government Agencies at All Levels in the Protection of the Party's Ideological Foundation

First, direct government bodies at all levels to concretize the Party's guidelines, resolutions, and plans on safeguarding ideological foundations in line with those of the provincial Party Committees in the Mekong Delta.

Second, maximize the role of state agencies in investing in technical equipment and resources to modernize the forces tasked with protecting the Party's ideological foundation and countering hostile viewpoints.

Third, build clean and strong local governments that can manage and promote socio-economic development while ensuring political security and public order—an essential basis for ideological protection.

Fourth, local governments and public officials in the Mekong Delta shall directly carry out the task of protecting the Party's ideological foundation.

4.2.4.2. Promoting the Role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and Socio-Political Organizations in Defending the Party's Ideological Foundation

First, the Party Committees in the Mekong Delta shall enhance the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations in building a great national unity bloc, mobilizing people to implement Party policies and State laws.

Second, lead the Vietnam Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations in mobilizing their officials and members to actively participate in protecting of the Party's ideological foundation and refuting hostile arguments through appropriate methods.

Third, encourage the Vietnam Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations to mobilize artists, intellectuals, religious dignitaries, and respected community figures to engage in ideological protection efforts.

Fourth, enhance their role in building a clean and strong Party and political system in the Mekong Delta.

4.2.5. Continuing to Promote the Exemplary Role of Party Committees and Party Members; Strengthening Inspection, Supervision, and Preliminary Reviews of the Leadership of Provincial Party Committees in Protecting the Party's Ideological Foundation

4.2.5.1. Continuing to Promote the Exemplary Role of Party Committees and Party Members in Protecting the Party's Ideological Foundation

First, Party committees and members must strictly uphold and implement the Party's regulations on the exemplary role of Party cadres.

Second, take the lead in fulfilling assigned tasks relating to the protection of the Party's ideological foundation in accordance with their official duties.

Third, Party committees must instruct agencies to regularly care for the material and spiritual wellbeing of their staff and civil servants, thus fostering internal unity and commitment to the ideological mission.

4.2.5.2. Strengthening Inspection, Supervision, and the Preliminary and Final Review of the Leadership Role of Provincial Party Committees in Protecting the Party’s Ideological Foundation

First, the provincial Party Committees shall organize inspections and direct their Inspection Commissions to conduct regular and thematic inspections, as well as develop supervision plans regarding implementation.

Second, Party Committees shall inspect Party organizations and members working in local government bodies.

Third, Steering Committee 35 at all levels must regularly conduct briefings, reviews, emulation movements, commendations, and disciplinary actions against collectives and individuals who fail to effectively implement Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW of the Politburo.

4.2.6. Fostering Socio-Economic Development, Preserving and Promoting Cultural Values, Ensuring National Defense and Security, and Improving All Aspects of People's Lives in the Mekong Delta

First, continue to thoroughly grasp and effectively implement the Party's guidelines and the State's policies and laws on regional development. Priority should be given to organizing the implementation of Resolution No. 13-NQ/TW on “Directions for socio-economic development and national defense and security in the Mekong Delta region to 2035, with a vision to 2045.”

Second, effectively implement ethnic and religious policies; deploy socio-economic development programs and targets aimed at poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, and cultural value preservation. Efforts should focus on nurturing and promoting the rich cultural identities of local communities, including ethnic minorities and religious groups.

Third, ensure public security and social order. Party Committees and local authorities must focus on resolving urgent and emerging issues concerning public order and safety at the grassroots level, particularly in key areas related to national defense and security—such as remote areas, border regions, islands, and ethnic minority communities.

CONCLUSION

1. Protecting of the Party's ideological foundation is an especially important and urgent task carried out throughout the revolutionary process. Given the unique political, economic, cultural, and social characteristics of the Mekong Delta region, this task has been given significant attention by the Provincial and Municipal Party Committees. The leadership of the Mekong Delta Provincial and Municipal Party Committees in safeguarding the ideological foundation encompasses all activities of those Committees in thoroughly grasping directives from higher levels, formulating goals, orientations, missions, organizing personnel, and implementing actions to defend Marxism–Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought, and the viewpoints and policies of the Party—contributing to maintaining political stability and ensuring the region's sustainable development.

2. The Party Committees in the Mekong Delta have led, directed, and organized the implementation of protecting of the Party's ideological foundation with notable results, characterized by sound leadership content and appropriate leadership methods.

3. In addition to these achievements, there remain limitations in the leadership of some Party Committees in the region. The understanding of the importance of safeguarding the ideological foundation is not yet profound among some Party leaders, leading to a lack of decisiveness in implementation. The number and qualifications of dedicated personnel remain insufficient and inconsistent; their skills and methods are still limited. Coordination in confronting hostile and erroneous viewpoints lacks cohesion and timeliness, and persuasive effectiveness remains low. Some officials and Party members fail to uphold exemplary conduct, with manifestations of political and ethical degradation and even signs of “self-evolution” and “self-transformation,” which undermine leadership effectiveness. The role of certain levels of local government remains vague. These shortcomings stem from both subjective and objective causes, with the primary reason being limitations in the leadership of the Provincial and Municipal Party Committees.

4. To meet the demands of rapid and sustainable development in the Mekong Delta in the coming period, Provincial and Municipal Party Committees must strengthen the building of the Party and the political system, with special emphasis on enhancing the safeguarding of the Party's ideological foundation. To effectively carry out this task, it is essential to raise awareness and responsibility while promoting the pioneering and exemplary roles of officials and Party members; improve the quality of each Committee member and advisory staff; and

develop a capable and coordinated ideological force. This must go hand in hand with the activation of all political organizations to create a robust ideological defense. Most importantly, protecting of the Party's ideological foundation must be rooted in the trust, support, and participation of the people. This requires the successful implementation of the Party's and State's resolutions, policies, and guidelines—advancing economic development, resolving social issues, fostering culture, and ensuring national defense and security—so that every citizen in the Mekong Delta enjoys the fruits of renewal, contributing to ushering both the region and the entire nation into a new era of prosperous and thriving development.

LIST OF PUBLISHED WORKS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

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