

Building Social Consensus and Practicing Grassroots Democracy in the Context of Globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Nguyen Thi Hoa

Thu Dau Mot University

ABSTRACT: As Vietnam enters the "era of national ascendancy," the cause of national construction and defense faces profound dialectical impacts from globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0). Grounded in the methodological foundations of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought, and combined with a systematic analysis of the guiding perspectives from the Draft Political Report of the 14th National Party Congress, this article provides an in-depth examination of the structural transformations of social strata after 40 years of Doi Moi (Renewal). Through qualitative and historical-logical research methods, the study elucidates both the opportunities and non-traditional challenges posed by the digitalized cyberspace, as well as the institutional bottlenecks constraining grassroots democracy. By reviewing both domestic and international literature, the article juxtaposes theories of digital democracy and modern governance with Vietnam's realities. On this basis, the article proposes a system of breakthrough solutions aimed at thoroughly realizing the principle of "The people know, the people discuss, the people do, the people inspect, the people supervise, the people benefit." These solutions are intrinsically linked to the process of streamlining the political system's organizational apparatus, transitioning from an administrative management model to developmental creative governance, with the ultimate objective of consolidating the strength of great national unity and propelling Vietnam toward the status of a developed nation by 2045.

KEYWORDS: Social consensus, grassroots democracy, era of national ascendancy, globalization, Fourth Industrial Revolution, great national unity, developmental creative governance, digital democracy.

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The history of nation-building and development across the world has demonstrated a defining principle of our era: Social consensus and the strength of great national unity are immutable constants that determine the survival and prosperity of any political regime. As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, the global landscape is undergoing unprecedented and profound transformations, shifting toward multipolarity, multi-centrism, and intensifying fragmentation and realignment. The convergence of deep globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution—particularly artificial intelligence, big data, and the Internet of Things—has not only fundamentally altered the modes of material production but also exerted direct and powerful impacts on social structures, human cognition, and the modalities of interaction between the state and its citizens (Schwab, 2016).

For Vietnam, after 40 years of implementing the Doi Moi (Renewal) process, the nation's stature, potential, standing, and international prestige have been elevated to new heights. The country has accumulated sufficient momentum and capacity to enter the "era of national ascendancy," advancing firmly toward peace, independence, democracy, prosperity, and affluence (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure, 2025). However, this trajectory is not strewn with roses. Cyberspace and the information explosion, on the one hand, open a vast environment for transparency and the exercise of democracy; on the other hand, they also nurture risks of social polarization, disinformation, and the sophisticated "peaceful evolution" schemes of hostile forces aimed at fracturing national unity. In this context, the pursuit of effective institutional mechanisms for building social consensus and thoroughly practicing grassroots democracy—where all daily civic interactions take place—has become an urgent imperative from both theoretical and practical perspectives of national governance. This article seeks to address the core question: How can a robust mechanism for social consensus and effective grassroots democracy be constructed amid the tempest of globalization and Industry 4.0, thereby contributing to the national development goals through 2045?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To thoroughly and scientifically address the problem at hand, this article employs the methodological system of Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism as its guiding compass. This methodology permits the examination of democracy and social

consensus not as static categories, but as reflections of the continuous dynamics between the base (market economy, digital technology) and the superstructure (political institutions, law) in Vietnam.

Regarding specific research methods, the article primarily employs documentary analysis and theoretical synthesis. The primary data sources subjected to in-depth analysis include the Draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee presented to the 14th National Party Congress (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure, 2025) and the thematic report on promoting great national unity by the Secretary of the Party Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front (Bui Thi Minh Hoai, 2024). Through the historical-logical method and comparative analysis, the study deconstructs the evolution of the Party's leadership thinking over 40 years of Doi Moi, subsequently juxtaposing it with empirical sociological data on the working class, peasantry, entrepreneurs, and contemporary demographic characteristics to produce systematic, objective, and scientific interpretations. Additionally, the systems-structural method is employed to analyze the relationships among actors within the grassroots democratic framework, thereby delineating a comprehensive picture of social consensus.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW: DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The issues of building social consensus and practicing democracy, particularly grassroots democracy, have attracted substantial scholarly attention both domestically and internationally, especially in the context of globalization and the rise of Industry 4.0.

3.1. International Literature Review

On the international plane, research on democracy and social consensus in the digital era has generated a rich body of theory. Schwab (2016), in *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, warned of social fracture caused by technology, as automation and AI transform the labor structure, posing a direct threat to consensus on wealth distribution. In terms of public governance, Castells (2012), in *Networks of Outrage and Hope*, analyzed the power of digital networks in constructing social movements, while also identifying the dangers of "filter bubbles" and "echo chambers" that intensify political polarization (Sunstein, 2017).

Regarding modern governance models, Osborne (2006) proposed the concept of "New Public Governance," emphasizing the shift from hierarchical administrative management to inter-organizational networks, where citizen participation and stakeholder engagement are central. This model was reinforced by Rhodes (1996) through the theory of "network governance," which posits that consensus cannot be achieved through administrative command but rather through negotiation and interaction among actors. More recently, UNESCO (2021), in its research on digital democracy, highlighted the role of e-government in promoting transparency while also cautioning that the "digital divide" may exclude vulnerable groups from decision-making processes.

3.2. Domestic Literature Review

In Vietnam, the theory of grassroots democracy and social consensus has always been closely tied to Ho Chi Minh Thought and the line of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Nguyen Van Thao (2020) provided a profound analysis of the necessity of renovating the Party's leadership methods vis-à-vis the Vietnam Fatherland Front in the context of a market economy and international integration, emphasizing that social consensus is the product of harmonizing interests. Pham Hong Thai (2022) elucidated the substance of the Law on the Exercise of Democracy at the Grassroots Level (2022), regarding it as a crucial legal instrument for institutionalizing the principle of "The people know, the people discuss, the people do, the people inspect, the people supervise, the people benefit." Concerning the impact of Industry 4.0, Nguyen Phu Trong (2021), in addresses delivered at Central Committee conferences, underscored the imperative of proactively applying information technology in Party building and social governance, while warning of distortions in cyberspace targeting national unity. Dang Quoc Bao (2019), approaching the issue from a public governance perspective, argued that the key to grassroots democracy lies in transforming the mindset of cadres from "ruling" to "serving," from "management" to "developmental creative governance." Empirical research such as that conducted by the Institute of Sociology (2023) also demonstrated that public trust in grassroots authorities is directly proportional to the degree of transparency in administrative procedure resolution and land management.

3.3. Research Gap

Although the domestic and international literature has extensively addressed democracy, governance, and the impact of technology, there remains a paucity of studies that comprehensively integrate the dialectical relationship among: (1) The transformation of social class structure in Vietnam after 40 years of Doi Moi; (2) The concurrent impacts of globalization and Industry 4.0 on the grassroots democratic space; and (3) The governance model transition in accordance with the six-component principle "The people know... the people benefit" as oriented by the 14th National Party Congress. This article aims to fill that gap, contributing a systematic perspective on the modalities of constructing social consensus in the "era of national ascendancy."

4. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND THE LANDMARK ADVANCE IN THE PARTY'S THINKING ON GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY

The core philosophical and political-scientific foundation of the process of building social consensus in Vietnam has been nourished by the Marxist-Leninist theory on the role of the popular masses. The classical Marxist thinkers consistently affirmed that the popular masses are the genuine creators of history, the agents of material wealth production, and the decisive force in every social revolution (Marx & Engels, 1848/2010). Inheriting this great intellectual legacy, President Ho Chi Minh distilled and elevated it into a

philosophy of action: "The people are the root." In his words, "Under heaven, nothing is more precious than the people. In the world, nothing is more powerful than the united strength of the people" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, p. 54). Throughout the course of revolutionary leadership, the solidarity and unity of the entire nation under the banner of the Party has always been the "red thread" running throughout, the decisive factor that carried the country from the triumph of the August Revolution of 1945 to the comprehensive Doi Moi process initiated in 1986.

The practice of grassroots democracy is precisely the materialization and institutionalization of the thought "The people are the root" in the life of social governance. Viewed through the lens of political philosophy, the grassroots level is the tier of government closest to and most intimately connected with the people, where all the Party's guidelines and the State's policies are put to the test of practice. Through successive National Party Congresses, the theoretical thinking of the Communist Party of Vietnam on democratic practice has been continuously developed, supplemented, and refined. The defining breakthrough in the orientation of the 14th National Party Congress is the Party's continued deepening of its democratic perspective, perfecting the principle from the traditional four components to six: "The people know, the people discuss, the people do, the people inspect, the people supervise, the people benefit" (Bui Thi Minh Hoai, 2024).

The addition of the categories "supervise" and especially "benefit" is not merely a lexical expansion but reflects a profound paradigm shift in the developmental creative thinking of the political system. It affirms that the supreme purpose of socialist democracy does not stop at conferring procedural political participation rights; rather, all fruits of socioeconomic development must be equitably distributed and directly serve the enhancement of the people's material and spiritual well-being. The viewpoint of respecting, ensuring, and protecting human rights and citizens' rights—and especially of taking the satisfaction and trust of the people and businesses as the highest criteria for evaluating cadres (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure, 2025)—represents the pinnacle of the process of practicing substantive democracy, eradicating the vestiges of an imposed, top-down ruling mentality. This shift is entirely consistent with the theory of New Public Governance (Osborne, 2006), where the value of the state is measured by the outcomes of public service rather than by compliance with internal procedures.

5. THE DIALECTICAL IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION AND THE DIGITAL ERA ON THE PROCESS OF BUILDING SOCIAL CONSENSUS

In the contemporary politico-economic context, no nation can erect an absolute barrier of isolation against the vortex of globalization and the digital age. The Fourth Industrial Revolution continues to advance at breakneck speed; the new productive forces associated with the digital economy, digital society, and artificial intelligence are generating an interactive environment that brings both tremendous developmental impulses and complex ramifications for maintaining political stability at the grassroots level.

5.1. The Impetus from Digital Democracy and E-Government

From a positive perspective, the development of digital technology provides powerful tools for deepening direct democracy. The national digital transformation process and the construction of e-government have shattered all spatial barriers to public administration. The right of "The people know" is now exercised transparently through the national online public service portals (National Public Service Portal, 2024), where all planning documents, land-use plans, and investment projects can be readily accessed. Technology has endowed citizens with an immensely powerful form of "soft power"; through field-reporting applications (exemplified by the smart hotline systems in major urban centers such as the Intelligent Operations Center [IOC] in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi), every citizen becomes a valuable "social sensor," helping grassroots authorities swiftly detect and resolve bottlenecks and civic incidents. This digitized transparency is the core foundation for eliminating suspicion, thereby reinforcing public confidence in the governing capacity of the state apparatus. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023), Vietnam's E-Government Development Index has registered notable progress, contributing to enhanced citizen satisfaction with public services.

5.2. Non-Traditional Challenges from Cyberspace

On the other hand, viewed dialectically, cyberspace is posing extraordinarily fierce non-traditional challenges to the bloc of great national unity. The algorithms of cross-border social media platforms (such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok) operate through mechanisms that create "filter bubbles" and "echo chambers" (Sunstein, 2017). These mechanisms confine users within streams of opinion that conform to their personal biases, eroding the capacity for multi-dimensional dialogue and empathy, and accelerating the process of social polarization. Exploiting the open nature of the internet, hostile forces and political opportunists continuously wage information warfare—disseminating disinformation, distorting history, defaming leaders, and inciting flashpoints over land and religious issues at the grassroots level—aimed at destabilizing social order (Steering Committee 35 of the Central Committee, 2023).

More alarmingly, the disparity in access to technological infrastructure and digital skills is creating a pronounced "digital divide" between urban areas and remote regions, and between the younger generation and the elderly. According to the General Statistics Office (2023), internet penetration in urban areas exceeds 85%, while in rural areas—particularly in remote communes—it hovers around only 65–70%. This phenomenon harbors the risk of excluding a segment of the vulnerable population from the margins of the digital democratic process, thereby fracturing the principles of equality and fairness in the process of social construction. When

citizens lack the ability to participate in the digital democratic space, consensus will crack from the grassroots, creating "democratic deserts" in the very midst of the information age.

6. THE STRUCTURAL SHIFT OF SOCIAL STRATA AND THE PRACTICE OF GREAT NATIONAL UNITY IN VIETNAM

Social consensus is not a static state but the outcome of continuous dynamics aimed at harmoniously resolving interest relations. An assessment of 40 years of Doi Moi reveals that Vietnam's social stratification has undergone profound shifts, diversifying in scale, quality, and social psychology. The design of democratic policies requires sharp calibration closely aligned with the characteristics of each constituent segment of the nation.

6.1. The Working Class, the Peasantry, and the Intelligentsia: The Steadfast Foundation

The most steadfast foundation of the national unity bloc continues to be affirmed through the alliance among the working class, the peasantry, and the intelligentsia under the Party's leadership. At present, Vietnam's working class has grown to over 15 million people, accounting for 15% of the population while serving as the principal productive force generating nearly 70% of total social product value (Vietnam General Confederation of Labour, 2024). The process of industrialization and attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI) has driven a powerful intellectualization of this class, gradually forming a corps of highly skilled workers capable of mastering modern technologies. However, Industry 4.0 also poses significant challenges in terms of job displacement due to automation and robotization, necessitating that grassroots democratic policies be closely linked with reskilling programs and social safety nets for affected workers.

Concurrently, the peasantry, with its vast ranks distributed across more than 9.1 million rural households, continues to affirm its role as the central subject in the process of building ecological agriculture, modern rural areas, and firmly safeguarding national food security (Vietnam Farmers' Union, 2023). The practice of democracy in rural areas currently revolves around such core issues as democratic land management, new-model agricultural cooperatives, and the application of smart agriculture technologies.

6.2. The Entrepreneurial Class: The Breakthrough Driving Force of the Market Economy

Furthermore, the Doi Moi process has given rise to the entrepreneurial class—a breakthrough driving force of the socialist-oriented market economy. The private economic sector currently comprises over 940,000 enterprises and approximately 5 million business households, contributing roughly 50% of GDP, over 30% of state budget revenue, and creating employment for 82% of the total labor force (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure, 2025; Bui Thi Minh Hoai, 2024). The role of entrepreneurs today extends far beyond wealth creation; they are also the vanguard of innovation, bearers of social responsibility (ESG—Environmental, Social, and Governance), and drivers of international integration. The institutionalization of policies protecting property rights and fostering an equitable business environment constitutes the most vivid manifestation of democracy in the economic sphere. Social consensus with this stratum can only be achieved when the state genuinely respects freedom of enterprise, ensures transparency in licensing, and eliminates the petty corruption that creates harassment.

6.3. Demographic Impacts and Special Groups

From a demographic standpoint, social consensus is under significant pressure from the process of generational structural transition. Population aging in Vietnam is proceeding faster than projected. By 2023, the elderly population had surpassed 16 million, accounting for nearly 17% of the total population (Tap Chi Cong San [Communist Review], 2023), placing enormous strain on the social safety net, the healthcare system, and community care institutions. Democratic practice must ensure that the elderly are not left behind in the digitization process, through policies such as digital green health cards and home-based access to public services. Meanwhile, the contingent of over 20 million young people harbors aspirations and ambitions to break through and assert themselves in the digital space. Harmonizing the interests between a generation that serves as the pillar preserving traditional heritage and life experience and a generation that pioneers the digital space is an extraordinarily delicate governance challenge. A survey by the Institute of Sociology (2023) found that Vietnamese youth have a very high demand for participating in policy oversight through social media but lack institutionalized dialogue channels from the government.

Moreover, the picture of great national unity cannot be complete without the cohesion of the 53 ethnic minority groups (with over 14.4 million people inhabiting three-quarters of the national territory, predominantly in areas of strategic importance for national defense and security), religious organizations (encompassing 16 religions and 28 million followers), and the community of over 5 million Vietnamese living in 130 countries and territories (Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs, 2023). The practice of democracy in these areas requires the Party and the State to implement flexible policies that respect freedom of belief while resolutely employing infrastructure investment leverage (the National Target Program for Socioeconomic Development of Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas) to eliminate development gaps, thereby neutralizing all risks of hostile forces exploiting ethnic and religious issues.

7. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS IN DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE AND SOCIAL CONSENSUS BUILDING AT PRESENT

Despite the great achievements attained, measured against the orientations set forth in the Draft Political Report of the 14th National Party Congress (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure, 2025), the practice of democracy and the

building of social consensus at the grassroots level still reveal numerous structural limitations and weaknesses. If these "bottlenecks" are not promptly resolved, they will become barriers obstructing the nation's development aspirations.

First, the "bottleneck of bottlenecks" in the legal-institutional framework. The legal-institutional system, while improved to a certain degree, still exhibits contradictions and overlaps in some localities and at certain times (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure, 2025). The institutionalization of the people's right to mastery is at times inconsistent. The practical application of the principle "the people know, the people discuss" in some local governments remains heavily formalistic and perfunctory. The process of soliciting public input on land-use planning projects and resettlement compensation sometimes lacks information transparency from the outset, leading to protracted mass petitions that erode community trust. The phenomenon of "flowing down from above while parching below" in policy communication means that citizens do not truly understand their rights, turning "the people discuss" into an administrative procedure rather than a process of substantive political participation. According to the governance principles articulated by Osborne (2006), when the participatory process becomes a pre-filled form rather than genuine dialogue, the legitimacy of policy is diminished.

Second, the uncertainty in social oversight and critique. The oversight, social critique, and people's rights protection activities of the Vietnam Fatherland Front system and socio-political organizations are at times uncertain and of a quality incommensurate with requirements (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure, 2025). The "administrativization" pathology—bureaucratism and alienation from the masses—persists among a segment of mass organization cadres. Critique of policies with far-reaching social impact (such as urban planning, land pricing, and environmental fees) sometimes lacks genuine independence and acuity, tending toward "defensiveness" rather than "proactiveness." This results in the failure to provide timely counsel to the Party in addressing incipient sources of instability at the grassroots. Rhodes (1996) cautioned that within the network governance model, if intermediary organizations (such as the Fatherland Front) become "administrativized" and lose their relative independence, they will no longer possess the capacity to link the state and citizens, leading to a rupture in social trust.

Third, "institutional inertia" and the deterioration of grassroots governance human resources. The human resources and public service attitudes of a segment of cadres and Party members face serious problems. The phenomenon of cadres who lack self-cultivation, who shirk responsibility, who are "afraid of making mistakes," who dare not act, and who dare not innovate is generating enormous inertia within the administrative system (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure, 2025). When cadres dare not make decisions to resolve pressing civic concerns, the legitimate rights and interests of citizens and businesses are left in limbo, dragging down the social consensus index severely. The Development Policy Advisory Council (2024) has pointed out that the fear of punishment (punitive accountability) is overwhelming the motivation for innovation (innovative accountability) at the grassroots level. Additionally, the struggle against corruption and negative phenomena—particularly petty corruption at the grassroots level (colloquially termed "mosquito corruption" by the masses)—continues to confront numerous difficulties, with increasingly sophisticated schemes causing public indignation. Petty corruption directly strips citizens of their right to "benefit," hollowing out the substance of grassroots democracy.

8. A SYSTEM OF STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONALIZING GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY IN THE NEW PERIOD

To realize the aspiration of building a powerful nation and thoroughly address the limitations outlined above, the political system must closely adhere to the orientations of the 14th National Party Congress and synchronously and resolutely implement the following strategic solutions:

First, expeditiously perfecting the legal-institutional framework and ensuring that the Law on the Exercise of Democracy at the Grassroots Level deeply permeates the practice of national governance.

The promulgation of the Law on the Exercise of Democracy at the Grassroots Level in 2022 represents a legal-historical milestone (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2022). However, to prevent the law from remaining merely on paper, it is necessary to establish mandatory sanctioning procedures for accountability on the part of heads of grassroots-level governments. All decisions pertaining to local budgets, resettlement compensation, or environmental projects must be subjected to open debate and substantive public consultation from the project inception phase. When citizens' opinions are adopted—or if rejected—there must be transparent, well-reasoned written explanations. A "Democratic Impact Assessment" mechanism should be developed for all local policy projects prior to promulgation. Only when such a two-way information feedback loop is established can the elements of "the people inspect, the people supervise" exert genuine practical force, transforming citizens from subjects "affected by policy" to subjects "co-creating policy" (Castells, 2012).

Second, undertaking a revolution in streamlining the political system's apparatus, decisively transitioning from the administrative management model to developmental creative governance.

The renovation of the political system must continue to adhere to the spirit of "reorganizing the nation" as oriented by the Central Committee (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure, 2025). The operation of two-tier local government must be resolutely finalized, thoroughly eliminating the intermediary stages that cause unnecessary burdens. This streamlining enables directives from higher levels to reach the grassroots directly while increasing resources available for social welfare. In particular, to break through "institutional inertia" and the "fear of making mistakes" mentality, the Party and State must promptly

institutionalize provisions protecting cadres who dare to think, dare to act, and dare to innovate for the common good (a "regulatory sandbox" mechanism for public governance). Cadre evaluation in the new period must be resolutely based on "concrete outputs," using the transformation of local conditions and citizen satisfaction (measured through the SIPAS—Satisfaction Index of Public Administrative Services) as the ultimate yardstick. This is precisely the core of "developmental creative governance" thinking (Dang Quoc Bao, 2019).

Third, harmoniously resolving interest relations, implementing inclusive development policies, and placing the emphasis on the "benefit" component for vulnerable groups.

Political consensus can only take deep root on a foundation of economic fairness. In the 2026–2030 period, national resources must be prioritized to definitively resolve pressing livelihood issues. A vivid and highly symbolic example of realizing the "benefit" component is the Politburo's strategic decision to complete the construction of 248 inter-level boarding schools for ethnic minority students in border areas before August 2026 (Bui Thi Minh Hoai, 2024), along with the effort to eradicate all temporary and dilapidated housing nationwide. Robust investment in grassroots healthcare, expansion of health insurance coverage, and the establishment of social housing funds for workers (targeting the construction of one million social housing units by 2030) constitute the most solid guarantee for the philosophy of "leaving no one behind" (UNDP, 2023). Social consensus cannot be merely rhetorical when workers still struggle to find accommodation or when ethnic minorities still lack properly equipped schools. The distribution of development outcomes is the most profound practice of democracy.

Fourth, comprehensively reforming the organizational apparatus and operational methods of the Vietnam Fatherland Front. Under the impact of the new era, the Fatherland Front institution must be renovated to truly function as a robust political alliance. The implementation of Resolution 18 on the establishment of the Party Committee of the Fatherland Front and Central Mass Organizations represents a breakthrough step in strengthening centralized leadership (Bui Thi Minh Hoai, 2024). The key task is to urgently review and amend Decision No. 304-QĐ/TW (targeted for completion in 2025) to optimize the functions of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front. The administrativization pathology must be thoroughly combated; Fatherland Front cadres must be those who are closely embedded at the grassroots and deeply understand the people. Greater capacity and legal corridors must be provided for the Fatherland Front to effectively exercise independent social critique and state power oversight functions, particularly in sensitive areas prone to corruption such as land management, bidding, and planning. The Fatherland Front should serve as a "social filter" that appraises policies before promulgation, similar to the community consultation model of the Nordic countries.

Fifth, accelerating the construction of digital government in conjunction with protecting the Party's ideological foundation in cyberspace. The grassroots-level political system must proactively establish digital democratic spaces. Artificial intelligence (AI) platforms should be deployed to serve public service delivery, and real-time feedback loop systems should be built through platforms such as iGov and government Zalo Official Accounts. The National Digital Transformation Program must be vigorously implemented, aiming for the digital economy to account for 30% of GDP by 2030 (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2020). In parallel with enjoying digital conveniences, the entire Party and people must strengthen their "digital literacy immunity" to proactively identify, expose, and reject disinformation. The strength of the political system and the popular masses must be combined to build a people's security posture in cyberspace, resolutely applying the law to organizations and individuals who exploit the guise of democracy to undermine great national unity. "Made in Vietnam" social media platforms that are safe and secure should be developed to become healthy dialogue spaces between the government and the people.

9. DISCUSSION

An in-depth analysis of social consensus building in Vietnam reveals a paradox characteristic of our era: The deeper the integration and the more advanced the technology, the more urgent the need for a stable, cohesive political foundation. As Castells (2012) argued, the network society does not abolish the role of the state; on the contrary, it demands that the state adapt by becoming transparent and engaging in continuous interaction with citizens. The emergence of the "supervise" and "benefit" components in the principle of democratic practice is not merely a theoretical supplement; it directly addresses the crisis of trust unfolding in many democracies around the world today, where economic growth is not accompanied by social progress (Schwab, 2016).

The shift from the concept of "state management" (characterized by top-down command imposition) to "developmental creative governance" (emphasizing interaction, dialogue, negotiation, and service—network governance) reflects a maturation in the art of leadership and governance of the Communist Party of Vietnam (Rhodes, 1996). However, this process requires overcoming an enormous barrier: the mentality of clinging to privileges and vested interests among a segment of cadres. The antagonism between the old governance model and the demands of the digital era is the root cause of institutional "bottlenecks." Therefore, linking grassroots democratic practice with the streamlining of the state apparatus and the anti-corruption campaign (metaphorically referred to as "stoking the furnace") constitutes a strategy with very tight internal logic. Only when the political system is genuinely clean and institutional knots are untied can the nation's aspiration to ascend remain unimpeded by group interests or bureaucratic indifference.

Furthermore, developmental creative governance must not stop at resolving complaints but must take a step ahead (anticipatory governance) by using Big Data to forecast social flashpoints, thereby enabling early policy intervention. Social consensus in the

digital era is not a consensus of silence but rather a consensus constructed through multi-dimensional dialogue, where disagreements are resolved through reason, law, and mutual respect. The model of "The people know, the people discuss, the people do, the people inspect, the people supervise, the people benefit" is precisely the roadmap for Vietnam to realize this vision.

10. CONCLUSION

The cause of building a prosperous and happy Vietnam along the socialist orientation is not a predetermined, automatically unfolding trajectory but the crystallization of effort, a synthesis of immense endogenous resources, among which the strength of great national unity is the most powerful driving force. Confronted with the complex flux of globalization and the profound impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the modality of social governance in Vietnam faces the imperative of undergoing a historic transformation. By formulating a strategic vision at the 14th National Party Congress, the Party's supplementation and perfection of the principle "The people know, the people discuss, the people do, the people inspect, the people supervise, the people benefit" has established a modern governance standard, elevating human rights, citizens' rights, and the interests of the people to the supreme position. Through upholding the rule of law via the Law on the Exercise of Democracy at the Grassroots Level, courageously undertaking the revolution of "reorganizing the nation" to streamline the political system's apparatus, harmoniously resolving the interests of all social strata, reforming the operational methods of the Fatherland Front, and thoroughly harnessing the achievements of digital technology, the Party and the State are progressively establishing an unshakeable mechanism of social consensus. This mechanism serves not only as the most effective vaccine to neutralize all schemes of sabotage but also as an immense driving force to awaken patriotism and the aspiration for self-reliance, propelling the ship of Vietnam confidently through great waves, advancing firmly toward becoming a country with a modern industrial base by 2030 and ascending to the status of a developed, high-income nation by 2045.

REFERENCES

- 1) Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 13th tenure. (2025). Political report of the 13th Central Committee at the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (Internal draft document). Hanoi.
- 2) Steering Committee 35 of the Central Committee. (2023). Protecting the Party's ideological foundation in cyberspace in the digital era. Tap Chi Cong San [Communist Review]. <https://www.tapchiconsan.org.vn/web/guest/bao-ve-nen-tang-tu-tuong-cua-dang>
- 3) Ministry of Information and Communications. (2024). National digital transformation index report 2023. E-Portal of the Ministry of Information and Communications. <https://mic.gov.vn>
- 4) Bui Thi Minh Hoai. (2024). Thematic report: Promoting the strength of great national unity in the cause of national construction, development, and defense in the new era (Document of the Politburo's dissemination conference). Hanoi.
- 5) Castells, M. (2012). Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the internet age. John Wiley & Sons.
- 6) Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. (2020, June 3). Decision No. 749/QĐ-TTg approving the "National Digital Transformation Program through 2025, with orientations toward 2030." E-Portal of the Government. <https://chinhphu.vn>
- 7) National Public Service Portal. (2024). Core digital platform for citizen interaction. Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. <https://dichvucong.gov.vn>
- 8) Dang Quoc Bao. (2019). From "administrative management" to "developmental creative governance"—A paradigm shift in state management thinking. Tap Chi Quan Ly Nha Nuoc [Journal of State Management], (3), 15–22.
- 9) Hoang Chi Bao. (2019). On the principle "The people know, the people discuss, the people do, the people inspect, the people supervise, the people benefit"—The development of the Party's theoretical awareness. Tap Chi Ly Luan Chinh Tri [Journal of Political Theory], 5(1), 5–11.
- 10) Ho Chi Minh. (2011). Ho Chi Minh toan tap [Ho Chi Minh: Complete works] (Vol. 5). National Political Publishing House – Su That.
- 11) Development Policy Advisory Council. (2024). Report on assessing innovation drivers in the state administrative apparatus in the current period. Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM).
- 12) Vietnam Farmers' Union. (2023). Report of the 7th Central Executive Committee of the Vietnam Farmers' Union presented to the 8th National Congress of the Vietnam Farmers' Union, term 2023–2028.
- 13) Le Duc Thinh. (2022). Grassroots democracy and the issue of resolving complaints and denunciations in rural Vietnam today. Tap Chi Nong Nghiep va Phat Tien Nong Thon [Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development], (15), 10–17.
- 14) Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2010). The communist manifesto (G. Stedman Jones, Ed.). Penguin UK. (Original work published 1848).
- 15) Nguyen Minh Duong. (2021). Developmental creative governance: Theory and practice of application in Vietnam. Tap Chi Quan Tri Cong [Journal of Public Administration], 21(2), 12–20.
- 16) Nguyen Phu Trong. (2021). Resolutely and persistently fighting corruption and negative phenomena, contributing to building an ever-cleaner and stronger Party and State (Vol. 3). National Political Publishing House Su That.

- 17) Nguyen Van Thao. (2020). Renovating the Party's leadership methods vis-à-vis the Vietnam Fatherland Front in the conditions of developing a socialist-oriented market economy and international integration. Tap Chi Cong San [Communist Review]. <https://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn>
- 18) Osborne, S. P. (2006). The new public governance? Public Management Review, 8(3), 377–387. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719030600853022>
- 19) Pham Hong Thai. (2022). The Law on the Exercise of Democracy at the Grassroots Level—An important advance in institutionalizing the people's right to mastery. Tap Chi Cong San [Communist Review]. <https://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn>
- 20) National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. (2022, November 10). Law No. 10/2022/QH15—Law on the Exercise of Democracy at the Grassroots Level. E-Portal of the Government.
- 21) Rhodes, R. A. W. (1996). The new governance: Governing without government. Political Studies, 44(4), 652–667. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1996.tb01747.x>
- 22) Schwab, K. (2016). The fourth industrial revolution. Crown Publishing Group.
- 23) Sunstein, C. R. (2017). #Republic: Divided democracy in the age of social media. Princeton University Press.
- 24) Tap Chi Cong San [Communist Review]. (2023). Population aging in Vietnam: Challenges and solutions. Tap Chi Cong San [Communist Review]. https://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/web/guest/van_hoa_xa_hoi/-/2018/1019302/van-de-gia-hoa-dan-so-o-viet-nam--thach-thuc-va-giai-phap.aspx
- 25) General Statistics Office. (2023). Report on the results of the 2023 living standards survey. Statistical Publishing House. <https://www.gso.gov.vn/du-lieu-va-so-lieu-thong-ke/2024/09/ket-qua-khao-sat-muc-do-song-dan-cu-nam-2023/>
- 26) Vietnam General Confederation of Labour. (2024). Report at the National Scientific Conference "Building a Modern and Strong Vietnamese Working Class," November 22, 2024. Tap Chi Cong San [Communist Review]. <https://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/web/guest/thong-tin-ly-luan/-/2018/1005802/xay-dung-giai-cap-cong-nhan-viet-nam-hien-dai%2C-lon-manh.aspx>
- 27) Tran Nham. (2020). Building the bloc of great national unity in the new context—From the perspective of social interests. Tap Chi Xay Dung Dang [Journal of Party Building], (6), 22–28.
- 28) Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs. (2023). Statistical data system on 53 ethnic minorities in Vietnam. E-Portal of the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs. <https://ubdt.gov.vn>
- 29) UNDP. (2023). Human development report 2023/2024: Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world. United Nations Development Programme. <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2023-24>
- 30) UNESCO. (2021). Digital democracy: The challenges of changing technologies for democracy and democratic participation. UNESCO Publishing. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377415>
- 31) Institute of Sociology. (2023). Social trust and factors affecting political stability in Vietnam today. Social Sciences Publishing House.
- 32) Vu Dam, T. (2022). The Fourth Industrial Revolution and its impact on the class and social stratum structure in Vietnam. Tap Chi Ly Luan Chinh Tri [Journal of Political Theory], 8(4), 45–52.
- 33) World Bank. (2023). Vietnam: Digital transformation and inclusive growth. World Bank Group. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/vietnam/overview>