



## THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATION PROCESS ON NATIONAL CULTURAL IDENTITY

**Nguyen Van Hanh<sup>i</sup>**

PhD Student,

University of Social Sciences and Humanities,

Vietnam

Vietnam National University,

Ho Chi Minh City,

Vietnam

### **Abstract:**

The integration process has brought certain advantages in all fields in general as well as in cultural field in particular. Besides, the influence of foreign culture tends to push back traditional cultural values. To overcome those challenges, it is essential to preserve and promote the traditional cultural values of Vietnam in the integration process. Thus, those issues that have been posed for upholding the traditional values of Vietnam can be solved by some solutions such as: Promoting the role of Vietnamese people in preserving the traditional cultural values in Vietnam today; Further enhancing the management role of authorities at all levels in perpetuating and stimulating the traditional cultural values in the integration process; Ensuring infrastructure for preserving traditional cultural values; Further strengthening the role of the law in administration of traditional culture to adapt to the new situation.

**Keywords:** integration process, culture, tradition, promote, preserve

### **1. Introduction**

Culture indicates the level of human development and human society, which is manifested in the types and forms of human's life organization and activities as well as in the material and spiritual values made by human. National culture is an entirely massive and rich whole including knowledge, thought, belief, art, customs...etc. It is both a "sediment" of national sentiment and consciousness in the past and the crystallization of the spirit of the times and future value-orientation.

Preserving national cultural identity in the integration process is a challenging issue and facing a variety of challenges. In order to carry out that goal, it is crucial to closely study the strengths of the indigenous culture while absorbing the global cultural

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<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [hanhnv@ntu.edu.vn](mailto:hanhnv@ntu.edu.vn)

values of humanity. In the process of cultural exchange, such acculturation must take the national culture as the key and the basis to adapt to other cultural quintessence. So as to do that, it is essential to increase citizens' knowledge, thoughts as well as cultural awareness.

To conduct the research, we use the following research methods, namely analysis and synthesis, interpretation and induction, logic and history, comparison and generalization. At the same time, we point out the impact of the integration process on traditional culture in Vietnam in particular and the world in general.

## 2. Content

### 2.1. National Cultural identity

Like the concept of culture, the concept of national cultural identity is extremely diverse and rich. If we understand identity in the traditional way of Vietnamese people, it is the unique basic characteristic of an individual or a community. The author, Tran Ngoc Them, said that the national cultural identity is "*The basic unique values has been passed down in history, which is a sustainable quintessence*". According to this understanding, national cultural identity is the good values of a human community, which has been handed down from generation to generation but has not changed its value.

Tran Dinh Huou claimed that "*The unique characteristics of culture makes each nation appear with its unique features and it can be distinguished from other nations*". With this understanding, the national cultural identity is the cultural values that have the core characteristics of a culture. National cultural identity has been formed in certain social, historical and spatial conditions. More importantly, each cultural identity consists of typical cultural features that show the culture itself in relation to other cultures.

According to the author's point of view, national cultural identity is not something that stands still. This is evidenced through the specific manifestations of cultural identity in the national cultural process. In certain circumstances, national cultural identity always absorbs new cultural elements on the basis of its core. No cultural identity is always good or completely correct in all cases. Hence, identifying the elements of cultural identity requires a specific historical view. Since in each period and depending on the frame of reference, the national cultural identity is recognized from different perspectives. In general, national identity is understood as the unique characteristics for a nation- a country to identify themselves with other nations. Asserting national identity means strengthening a nation's position in the international arena.

The history of each nation is its process of forming and developing in all aspects, which is marked by cultural facts, cultural personalities and cultural works. Therefore, if each nation has its own history, of course it also has its own culture with its own unique identity. Currently, national identity is an enormous issue, attracting the attention and discussion of many scholars with different concepts. According to the author, it is possible to identify the national cultural identity as the inner core, the potential strength that creates the unique distinctiveness of each nation. Also, it is a relatively stable value system in history, which the next generation has inherited and developed traditional

values as well as absorbed modern values to modernize the national culture. National cultural identity has always embedded with humanity and regional characters, which have been diversified, historically transformed, and specifically combined with the national identity that makes the cultural identity of the culture. In terms of a nation, the development of culture is associated with its own development. So, it is impossible to conceive of identity as something inherent, unchangeable or never changing. According to the development of each nation, the national cultural identity also changes according to the epoch and includes epoch characteristics even it has been formed in the tradition and associated with the long cultural tradition of a nation. In other words, the cultural identity is constantly being enriched with new creations of a nation in all fields. Hence, the national cultural identity is not in opposition to modernity. In that spirit, national cultural identity includes both relatively stable and flexible factors.

## **2.2. The Impact on National Cultural Identity**

The integration process affects the national cultural identity. Integration, in the simplest way of understanding, is when countries in the world connect together for development. According to this understanding, the issue of integration appeared very early, it can be seen that this matter associated with the birth and existence of the Roman empire. In the course of its existence, this empire expanded their transportation network, promoted the circulation of goods throughout their vast occupation and imposed their currency on all places. Integration is understood more fully and closely when Béla Balassa proposed it in 1960s and was widely accepted by the scientific community.

Nowadays, integration subject is considered as an inevitable trend of all countries due to its benefits. It is economic development to improve the material and spiritual life of each individual. The integration process will help individuals get out of poverty, getting away their life which is dependent on nature to reach the civilization. Integration helps expand the markets to promote trade and other international economic relations; thereby, it can promote socio-economic growth and development. Integration also creates a driving force to promote economic restructuring as well as improve the business investment environment. Hence, it can enhance the efficiency and competitiveness of the economy, products and enterprises; at the same time, it can increase the ability to attract investment into the economy. Integration helps improve the level of human resources and the national science and technology thanks to the cooperation in education-training and scientific research with other countries and acquiring new technologies through foreign direct investment and technology transfer from advanced countries. Integration increases the opportunities for domestic businesses to access international markets, credit sources and international partners, creating chances for individuals to benefit from products, goods and services with a variety of types, designs and quality at competitive prices. Also, consumers can access and exchange much more with the oversea world, from which there are chances to develop and seek jobs both at home and abroad. Integration can create conditions for policy-makers to better grasp the world development trend and situation, from which they can propose suitable development policies for the country, which are not be customized. It also helps supplement the values

and progress of culture, civilization of the world, enriching the national culture and promoting social progress. Furthermore, integration can create incentives and conditions for comprehensive reform towards building an open and democratic society, which is an administrative nation. It is a condition for each country to find their suitable position in the international order, which enhances their reputation and international position, as well as the ability to maintain security, peace and stability for development. Integration can open the possibility of coordinating efforts and resources of countries to address issues of common concern of the region and the world.

However, integration also brings challenges for preserving the national cultural identity. Integration increases fierce competition on all aspects, including culture. The entry of many different sorts of culture while local people are not oriented and have no critical thinking, all of which leads to the vulnerability of national cultural identity. Integration does not distribute fairly the benefits and risks to different countries and groups in society. Thus, there is a high risk of widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Also, people overemphasize to meet the demand of material needs but neglecting mental factors. In the process of integration, developing countries have to face with adverse natural economic movements, which tends to focus on fields which employ a lot of resources and power, but at low value. As a result, they can easily become landfills and low technological areas which are exploited the natural resources and destroying the environment. Integration can increase the risk that national cultural identity and traditional culture are corrupted by the "invasion" of foreign culture.

Thus, integration also brings both advantages and disadvantages to the national cultural identity. However, it is not natural for integration to fully enjoy all the benefits and bear all the drawbacks as mentioned above. Those are generally in the form of potential and different from each due to the fact that all countries are not the same in terms of conditions, circumstances, level of development ... How advantages which can be exploited and limit disadvantages and challenges depend on many factors, of which the most important issue is the capacity of each country. First of all, these factors are strategies, policies, integration measures and implementation.

### **2.3. The Issues that Need to be Solved in Order to Preserve the National Cultural Identity - Vietnamese Experience**

A culture's true dedication to humanity is not in its own list of considered inventions but in its differentiation from other cultures. In other words, cultural identity itself the greatest contribution of culture to humanity. The civilization of the world will be nothing more than a world-scale fusion of cultures in which each member retains his or her uniqueness. The importance of preserving the national cultural identity will no longer be a matter of debate. The problem is how to preserve the cultural identity of each nation in the trend of expanding exchanges in the current world.

To preserve the national cultural identity, the author claims that first of all, it is crucial that the authorities have specific policies to ensure the material and spiritual life of the people as well as respect the ethnic minorities, and help the ethnic groups understand, sympathize, cooperate and support each other in the development process.

Ethnic group issue is a strategic issue of the Vietnamese revolution - a country with many ethnic groups and religions. In order to well solve the relationship between ethnic groups, in a multi-ethnic country, first of all, this means that we can solve the cultural problem of each ethnic group. Having real respect for the cultures of ethnic minorities is highly regarding ethnic minorities who have created those unique cultures. In terms of ethnic minorities in Vietnam, after the matter of survival, their economic and cultural life has become the center of solving the issue of ethnic group equality, which has become a mainly political content of ethnic group issues. Since showing respect for the traditional cultures of ethnic minorities is to regard the owners of those cultures. In recent years, under the leadership and closely care of all levels of the government, Vietnam has made many positive changes on all aspects, ethnic minorities in Vietnam have actively united and participated in patriotic emulation movements. The most outstanding feature is the movement of hunger eradication, poverty reduction, and the solidarity to help each other for development.

It is vital to constantly emphasize the preservation and promotion of national cultural values. Culture is a phenomenon that covers the entire social life. First, it is manifested in terms of the creative mode of human activities to meet the needs of their own existence and development. Second, culture is the total of material and spiritual values created by human creativity. In human history, all nations have rich life and diverse activities in economics, socio- culture, religions ...etc. The basic distinction between one nation and another one is not economics or politics, but culture itself. Since each nation has its own mode of operation and creates its own distinctive values. In other words, culture has its own identity. National cultural identity is the crystallization of the core spiritual values and unique characteristics of each nation, which is stable and enduring in its history, through which each generation can inherit and immediately develop the value of the past and acquire modern values. At the same time, based on that basis, each nation can orient their future to self-exist and develop without losing oneself. Thus, national cultural identity is the crystallization of the nation's core spiritual values and characteristics with enduring sustainability. It is the factor that ensures the survival and self-development by inheriting and promoting traditional values while absorbing the quintessence of human culture. In addition to the core and unique spiritual value system, the national cultural identity is also manifested abundantly and diversely in the tangible and intangible cultural heritages such as historical - cultural relics, temples, pagodas, temples, customs, customs, festivals, costumes, different forms of art ..etc. Such a concept of national cultural identity is certainly not opposite; on the contrary, it is able to adapt, innovate and develop to bring our country from agricultural civilization to industrial civilization. Recognizing the importance of culture and preserving and promoting cultural identities of ethnic groups in the territory of Vietnam, our Party and State always attach the great significance to the consistent implementation of the policy of equality and solidarity as well as take care of cultural development and always identify culture as the spiritual foundation of the society. Also, culture is the goal and the driving force to promote socio-economic development associated with the industrialization – modernization process of the country. Cultural development policies and strategies have

been increasingly completed, aiming to preserve and promote the national cultural identity, the international exchange as well as build new cultural values together with the adaptation and collectively collecting the quintessence of world culture in order to enrich the Vietnamese national culture. Attaching significance to preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic groups and typical cultures is one of the most important tasks.

Upholding the spirit of cultural conservation and putting it in a state of mobilization and development can make the cultural values of ethnic minorities become a part of the common property of Vietnamese culture. As a multi-ethnic country, Vietnamese culture is the culture of the community of all ethnic groups in Vietnam. In the past and at present, the ethnic minorities in Vietnam have made great contributions to the national construction and defense. Each ethnic group has their own culture that creates their own unique appearance. Therefore, when referring to a nation, people often think about the culture of this nation as well as if anyone has the demand to learn about a nation, the best way is to get to know their culture since it is the unique characteristics, the emotional spirit of a nation and a basic feature to distinguish one nation from another. To build a Vietnamese culture that is both civilized, modern and imbued with national identity, it is impossible not to preserve and promote the cultural values of the ethnic minorities in Vietnam. In order to support the country to enter a new development period with a culture that is both modernized and imbued with national identity, first of all, it is essential to have suitable attitudes to the culture of ethnic minorities, in which Vietnamese culture is the harmony of the culture of ethnic communities in Vietnam. Ethnic groups in Vietnam have right to live in their own cultural space to keep their own cultural identities. Modern civilization of life in the development process must be built on the basis of national cultural traditions. It is vital to build and promote effectively the policies of cultural institutions on the basis of integrating social and political activities ... in order to maximize the community function in cultural institutions and beliefs.

Currently, in order to maintain the endogenous strength of the nation, it is necessary to make ethnic groups clearly understand the identity of other ethnic groups in their territory, making that cultural identity become the common property of the whole nation. It is an essential task to build a Vietnamese culture.

Preserving and promoting the national cultural values is the duty of the whole nation, but first of all, it is the responsibility of each citizen. The current development which has been in the right direction of Vietnam must also be the development which has been mainly based on endogenous motivation of the people. The factors of external support are extremely significant even though, they only act as a catalyst to further sublimate the inherent endogenous strength of Vietnamese people. In order to carry out this task, the cultural and intellectual potential of each ethnic group and large families are so essential. Currently, Vietnamese country is in the process of opening up to industrialize and modernize the country, it is the process of integration with the world economy and cultural exchange. In this process, we have been facing new opportunities and new challenges. Therefore, the preservation and promotion of the national cultural identity has a really vital meaning in the cause of building our country. In the current

conditions of international integration, in order not to be dissolved or to not lose one's identity, apart from the policy lines of the Party and State of Vietnam, there is a really crucial and core factor that plays a decisive role in preserving and promoting national cultural identity, it is the awareness of each ethnic group in preserving and promoting their own cultural identity which are also conserving and enhancing the identities of other ethnic groups - that is the condition to build a strong Vietnamese culture on the common axis of culture of all ethnic groups in the territory of Vietnam.

The preservation and promotion of the national cultural identity have an organic relationship. Only when wonderful traditional cultural values of the nation can be preserved, we can resist anti-cultural factors and some foreign traditions and culture which are not suitable. At the same time, only when the good traditional cultural values are promoted, will there be grounds and basis for cultural conservation. Since national culture is the most quintessence that has been accumulated over many generations. Sometimes only that nation can easily access and understand it in a thorough and profound way. In recent years, Vietnam has continued to educate culture for young people, so that they can see the importance of preserving cultural forms which embed their own national identity as well as invest in restoring and organizing traditional cultural festivals. It is essential to make each individual aware of the historical and traditional cultural values, human values and tourism values of historical and cultural sites associated with the festival. Also, through festivals, it is beneficial to educate people about the meaning, nature, cultural values, beauty, progress of festivals and monuments. Education of national cultural identity follows the path of turning understanding of cultural identity into the needs of the masses when they bring practical benefits in their living activities. It will ensure the national and modern characteristics of national culture. Hence, tradition can only be flourished when it has vitality in the life of the current cultural subject. It is not preserved as an endangered species in zoos, but it must be actively targeted, absorbed, transformed and sublimated by the cultural owner in the process of assimilation with other cultures.

Hence, an extremely significant task at this time is that cultural-makers need to help the people recognize the significance of preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of their nation. Since Vietnamese people are aware of wonderful characteristics in the culture of their nation along with understanding the importance of preserving and promoting that culture as well as the risk of dissolving and losing identity in the context of the current deep and wide international integration, all Vietnamese citizens themselves will be more conscious of preserving and preserving their own cultural identity.

### **3. Conclusion**

In the process of integrating into the global economy, promoting the tradition as well as preserving the national cultural identity have become more urgent and the basis for creating cultural characteristics of a nation. Traditional culture is an invaluable asset of Vietnamese people, so the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values is an

inevitable and objective demand. The process of cultural acculturation not only has created opportunities but also has exposed some certain limitations. Facing that situation, the absorption of human cultural values which can supplement the national traditional culture in order to build a progressive culture imbued with national identity is vital. Preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values in Vietnam currently have been gradually receiving proper attention from all branches and levels. The close relationship between the preservation and promotion of traditional culture is closely grasped and harmoniously coordinated between all levels to improve the quality and effectiveness of this process of traditional cultural values in order to affirm the tradition, identity and bravery of Vietnamese people. The article will be more convincing if we can build the model in practice; however, due to the objective conditions, we will focus on building the model and applying it in the future.

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