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Vietnamese cultural value system in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

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(PTOJ) - The cultural value system is one of the core and fundamental value systems in Vietnam and is part of the foundation to ensure the country's sustainable development. This article analyzes the building of a Vietnamese cultural value system in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which has a significant impact all aspects of social life, including the cultural sector.

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Implementing the resolution of the 13th National Party Congress, our country is currently developing four basic value systems: a national value system, a cultural value system, a human value system, and a family value system. The Congress emphasized: “Focusing on research, identification, and implementation of building a national value system, cultural value system and human standards associated with preserving and developing the Vietnamese family value system during the new

period"[1]. These value systems play an important role as a pillar in the process of building and creating the status and stature of the country. In which, the cultural value system is the foundational value system, serving as the basis for other value systems to promote their strength.

This article mainly discusses the building of a contemporary Vietnamese cultural value system, in the context of "Culture really becoming a strong spiritual foundation for society, an important endogenous force to ensure sustainable development and firmly defend the Fatherland for the goal of a rich people, a strong country, democracy, justice, and civilization"[2].

1. The concept of culture and the cultural value system

First of all, to shape and build a cultural value system, it is necessary to be aware of the concept of culture and the cultural value system.

In terms of scientific terminology, culture is derived from the Latin word "Cultus" which originally means to plant and seek (the first stage is used in the sense that Cultus Agri is "land cultivation" and Cultus Animi is "spiritual cultivation" means "education that fosters the human soul"). According to the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679): "Land cultivation is called sowing, and the upbringing of the children is the sowing of the spirit"[3].

Later, along with the development of human civilization, culture is the search for material and spiritual value for the purpose of human life. It is a continuous and endless process, expressed through human perception and evaluation, hence, it depends on people's ability, level of understanding, and corresponds with their living circumstances and conditions.

Cultural value refers to the integration of the natural characteristics of culture, creating superiority, and legitimacy and showing the position and role of culture.

From here, it can be understood that the cultural value system is a combination of cultural values in order to establish a reference system to evaluate and shape the representative face of the culture of the nation or country

Any culture and cultural value system of any era is formed and built on the basis of a specific context. With different abilities and levels of understanding, in different spaces and times, and in different living situations, people will seek different life values. However, some values of life may be suitable for one nation but not necessarily suitable for another. Thus, the cultural value system is not a fixed and immutable but a constant, ever-changing, and evolving value system.

2. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, with its breakthrough developments, has fundamentally and comprehensively changed common perceptions. Professor Klaus Schwab, President of the World Economic Forum, said: "These changes will be so profound that never before in history has there been a time when people were faced with so many opportunities and risks at the same time"[4].

In all aspects of life, substantial chances are taking place, from economics to politics, society, national defense, security, environment, etc., changing the perception, thinking, lifestyle, and habits of people. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has been and will continue to change values in contemporary life, including the cultural value system.

Vietnam is currently in the process of a comprehensive reform of the country. The realms of social life are undergoing profound changes, affecting the spiritual life, and especially the cultural value system.

Among these, the prominent factors are: implementing a socialist-oriented market economy, changing from a kind of agricultural economy to a commodity economy; transition from a closed economy to an open one, associated with the domestic and international division of labor; building and perfecting a socialist rule of law state of the people, by the people and for the people; proactively and actively integrating into the world; participating in the process of the international division of labor in the context of a complex world.

The spread of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the fluctuations of political, socio-economic, cultural, and international conditions inevitably accompany the transformation of the cultural value scale. The fact is that more than 35 years of innovation in Vietnam shows that the cultural value system is undergoing tremendous and complex changes, both positive and negative, with multi-dimensional fluctuations. To take full advantage of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and sustainably develop the country, one of the tasks that Vietnam needs to prioritize is to build and realize a new cultural value system.

3. The Vietnamese cultural value system was created and shaped on the basis of an agricultural civilization associated with the process of building and defending the country. In traditional cultural values, patriotism is considered the most core, basic and sacred value. The spirit of solidarity, the sense of community, the virtue of industriousness, and the faithful way of life are precious values of the Vietnamese people.

However, Vietnam's traditional cultural value system also bears the characteristics of a culture formed on the basis of an agrarian society that often had to wage war against foreign invaders. In which, the fighting quality "against the enemy to protect the country" is highly appreciated; however, there is little attention to the qualities of creative labor, building, enriching and developing the country. Community cultural values are emphasized, while individual cultural values are weak.

At present, globalization and intellectualization, the Fourth Industrial Revolution all have a strong impact on the new cultural value system of the country. Therefore, it is necessary to understand, apply and turn the new cultural value system into a driving force for practical and concrete actions in political - economic - cultural - social life; avoid a conservative attitude, exaggerate tradition, and underestimate or deny the values of innovation and development.

4. Some proposals for building a new cultural value system during the Fourth Industrial Revolution period

Firstly, strengthening the building of new democratic cultural values - intellectual democracy

Democracy is a product that human society has developed to a certain stage, and through different periods of history, the form of democracy has varied.

For most of its history, the Vietnamese nation has been influenced and dominated by feudal ideology - an ideology which is anti-democratic nature, with draconian, autocratic, and authoritarian forms of management and governance, followed by nearly 100 years of colonial rule. Therefore, there were basically no democratic values in Vietnamese culture for much of its history.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam and President Ho Chi Minh, our country has made great strides in instilling democratic values in socio-cultural life. The characteristics of socialist democratic culture in Vietnam have more or less expressed the universal democratic values of mankind, as well as some characteristics that reflect Vietnam's identity and traditional cultural characteristics.

However, there are currently many limitations in the implementation of developing democratic values in

Vietnam. The resolution of the XIII Congress pointed out: "...socialist democracy is sometimes not fully cared for or promoted, etc. The people's right to mastery is sometimes violated and in other places, still manifests formal democracy, separating democracy from discipline and law"(5).

Therefore, the Party requires: "... in all tasks of the Party and state, it must always thoroughly grasp and strictly implement the concept of "people are the root"; truly believe, respect and promote the people's right to mastery, persistently implement the motto "the people know, the people discuss, the people do, the people inspect, the people supervise, the people enjoy". The people are the center and the subject of the renovation, construction, and defense of the Fatherland;..."(6).

It is especially true that during the current time, the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings a significant value, promoting the power of the majority, which is the intellectual power of all classes of people. "Knowledge is the product of intelligence; hence, the strength of our country depends on the ability to mobilize and promote the intellectual power of the entire people. The process of globalization and international integration make the competition for talent and intelligence become a worldwide competition, in which the advantage belongs to developed countries"(7).

Therefore, in order to promote internal strength in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the process of nation-building must be based on true ideological and intellectual democracy. It is necessary for Vietnam to build a culture with new democratic values - intellectual democracy.

Secondly, strengthening the building of humanistic cultural values

In the process of formation and development, humans are increasingly perfecting their personalities, getting rid of their animal instincts to become more and more human, meaning more and more anthropomorphized. When anthropomorphized, people also create their own culture, and when creating culture, they are correspondingly anthropomorphized. The more anthropomorphized, the more cultural people become, and vice versa, the more culture is shaped, the more people are anthropomorphized. Thus, in essence, culture is anthropomorphic.

During his lifetime, President Ho Chi Minh had profound and humanistic thoughts on how to be a human. He said: "In the end, the question of justice, like all other issues at the moment, is a matter of life and of being human"(8). Ho Chi Minh's philosophy of life and as a person is very unique, not only "in line with human conscience and morality", but also clearly presents a new perspective on culture: "culture is anthropomorphic". It means that people are living more and more culturally, more humanely, more lovingly, more meaningfully, and thus, human nature is becoming more and more human.

Deeply imbued with Ho Chi Minh's Thought, the Communist Party of Vietnam discerns and forms the approach of "culture is anthropomorphism" in its leadership of the country's development. This is reflected in the fact that culture must be created by people, for people and on behalf of people. In other words, people are the subject, the driving force, and the purpose of culture. However, in the process of implementation, our Party recognizes: "Compared with achievements in the fields of politics, economy, national defense, security and foreign affairs, achievements in the field of culture are not commensurate; not enough to have an effective impact on building a healthy human and cultural environment"(9).

Based on this awareness, the Party has developed the viewpoint: "Developing culture for the perfection of human personality and building people for cultural development. In building culture, the core is building people with personality and a good lifestyle, and basic characteristics such as patriotism, kindness, affection, honesty, solidarity, diligence, and creativity"(10). On that basis, the Party is required "...to build the Vietnamese people of the new era, closely and harmoniously linking traditional values

and modern values”[11].

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has set the requirement for building and developing a Vietnamese culture that emphasizes the development of human beings, especially humanization so that the humanity within individuals is awakened and strengthened.

Thirdly, practicing the cultural values of the rule of law

With a simple, spontaneous, self-sufficient, self-supplying, fragmented, small-scale farming methods, the cultural life of the majority of rural residents who work in agriculture and live in the countryside (farmers) still upholds gratitude, mainly dealing with issues arising under emotional agreement; rarely shows proper behavior, according to reason and general rules: “one hundred reasons are not equal to a little love”, “the king’s rule loses to the village rule”. Obviously, in traditional Vietnamese culture, there is a lack of rule-of-law culture. The lack of a law-ruled culture in social life has led to a lack of seriousness, fairness, equality and truthfulness in interpersonal and individual behavior within the community, resulting in a society that is underdeveloped or developed unevenly.

When embarking on the building of a new society, President Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam were aware of the role of law: “a hundred things must have the spirit of the rule of law”, so they focused on building the culture of rule-of-law in our country. The 13th National Party Congress commented: “The legal system has been fundamentally completed. The role of law and law enforcement is increasingly emphasized in the organization and activities of the State and social life”[12]. However, the “building of a socialist rule-of-law state has not yet met the requirements of socio-economic development and management of the country in the new situation... The legal system still has some regulations.... The legal system still has some inconsistent provisions that do not meet the practical requirements in a timely manner. Compliance with the law is generally not strict; etc.”[13].

Therefore, to ensure the country’s sustainable development, international integration and meet practical requirements, our Party affirms: “Promoting education to raise awareness, and a sense of respect and observance of the law”[14], “Building a complete, timely, synchronous, unified, feasible, public, transparent, stable legal system, prioritizing the legitimate rights and interests of people and businesses as driving forces for innovation and creativity, ensuring the requirements of fast and sustainable development”[15]; in particular, it is important to “ensure the following requirements: respect for the Constitution and the law. The State is organized and operates according to the Constitution and laws, manages society by the Constitution and laws, etc.”[16].

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is demanding the creation of a civil law (the rule of law to protect people and protect the legitimate rights of citizens, not to establish a criminal law (the rule of law as a form of punishment). The English thinker Henry James Sumner Maine (1822 - 1888) asserted that it is possible to know the highs and lows of a nation’s culture by looking at the ratio between civil law and criminal law... In general, semi-primitive countries have few civil laws, many criminal laws; whereas progressive countries have many civil laws, few criminal laws... Ancient China only had criminal laws but no civil law[17].

Fourthly, establishing the value of development culture

Due to the influence of wet-rice agricultural production methods - a farming method mainly based on experience formed and passed on from generation to generation - stability gradually became a feature of the thinking, doing business and activities of people in traditional Vietnamese society.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is a revolution with a developmental nature, dominating all processes in social life and is the actual driving force for all aspirations to rise, an endogenous source for human advancement. Therefore, to meet the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, contemporary Vietnamese culture must establish a new value - a culture of development, which promotes development aspirations. The 13th National Party Congress set the requirement to "strongly arouse patriotism, national self-reliance, strength national unity and the aspiration to develop a prosperous and happy country; etc"(18).

The aspiration for development is the driving force in the process of building the country in the era of globalization, scientific - technological revolution and deep international integration, as well as a new cultural value that needs to be built in the current context.

Fifthly, building up the creative cultural values

A fundamental, prominent, and pervasive value that Fourth Industrial Revolution brings creativity to all human and social activities. This leads to the inevitable trend that creativity becomes the key driving force and the most appropriate development strategy for all countries in the modern world. "The more modern the society is, the more important the role of creativity is. In the past, in a wet-rice agricultural civilization, or a traditional agricultural society, people did not value creativity, that is, they did not place much value on "new", but only focused on preserving traditions, preserving the knowledge that had been accumulated over the centuries and this led to a closed period. However, in the modern world, in the 21st century, in the era of globalization, people have realized that creativity is very important. From this they can understand that imagination also plays an important role because without imagination, there is no creativity"(19).

In his assessment of the current process of building socialism in Vietnam today, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong affirmed: "Both theory and praxis have shown that building socialism means creating a qualitatively new type of society, which is by no means a simple or easy task. This is a grand and innovative endeavor, full of challenges and adversities. It is a self-driven, continuous, long-term and goal-oriented cause that cannot be rushed"(20).

The 13th Party Congress also pointed out: "Science, technology, innovation, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution are evolving rapidly, with breakthroughs that are far-reaching and have a multi-dimensional impact on a global scale. Science, technology, and innovation are increasingly becoming decisive factors for the competitiveness of each country. Digital technology will promote the development of the digital economy and digital society, changing state management methods, production and business models, consumption and cultural and social life"(21). From here, our Party has determined, "...have a breakthrough mechanism to attract and utilize talents, strong application of science and technology, especially the achievements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, promoting innovation and creativity and creating new impetus for the rapid and sustainable development of the country"(22).

Thus, based on the core values brought by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Vietnam will have to identify and establish a national position with a development model in which breakthroughs and creativity are placed at the forefront, as a universal value in all fields: countries, businesses, communities and individuals. Hence, it is necessary to build a culture with creative values to arouse and promote a creative society, build a creative economy, and promote the application of the core values of the Fourth Industrial Revolution into the practical development of Vietnam.

Sixthly, establishing digital cultural values

The nature of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is a digital revolution, deployed on the basis of digital technology and integrating smart technologies to optimize production processes and methods.

The highlight and inevitable consequence of the digital revolution is the process of digitization and digital transformation in all fields and processes throughout society.

Aware of this, the Communist Party of Vietnam has a very clear orientation on digital transformation: "Accelerating the building of a digital society, focusing on skill transformation, opening mass online courses, training, and improving knowledge and skills in digital technology and digital transformation. Preparing human resources for digital transformation to develop digital society" (23). In that spirit, Vietnam's digital transformation strategy focuses on three main pillars: digital government, digital economy, and digital society. That process will inevitably have a significant impact on agencies, units, localities, and people in all fields.

Thus, it is necessary to have a breakthrough mindset with a strategic vision, appropriate solutions, and methods, but to stick to reality to build programs and plans which focus and prioritize the process of implementing the digital transformation. The digital revolution is setting new requirements in all areas of society, including the indispensable requirement for the daily activities and behavior culture that must form digital cultural values - a new value of national culture.

Seventhly, implementing open cultural values

When discussing the internal strength of culture, researchers have mentioned characteristics of cultural additivity. Cultural additivity is a concept that describes a community's (or individual's) willingness to accept other cultural value systems, despite the fact that the new values may contradict the existing value system(24). In fact, in the traditional religious activities of Vietnam, the phenomenon of cultural additivity is clearly shown through the existence and mutual influence of the three religions (the three religions of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism).

Based on the cultural value loading and unloading mechanism (mind sponge), it can be understood how a community (or individual) absorbs and discards the cultural values that they are exposed to that have a decisive impact on the level of the cultural identity of the community (or individual)(25). A community (or individual) can be considered highly cultural-additive if that community (or individual) accepts the existence and interaction of many different cultural values at the same time. The level of additivity will be reduced if the community (or individual) chooses to eliminate cultural values that conflict with the values they consider to be core cultural values(26).

Under the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the socio-economic development processes as well as the transformation and evolution of humanity must inevitably be based on an open, breakthrough, and fundamental operation connecting knowledge and modern science - technology. The interests of the nation and the people must be based on the common operation of the trend of the era's development: the trend of connecting knowledge and building strategic trust.

Our Party emphasizes that "The Fourth Industrial Revolution requires new thinking on economic management, social management, building and perfecting institutions accordingly. It is necessary to have an open, creative approach, piloting through new practical problems, creating favorable conditions for innovation and creativity"(27). Moreover, when orienting human resource development, education and training to meet the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and international integration, the Party requires: "Training people in the direction of ethics, discipline, integrity, sense of civic and social responsibility; having life skills, work skills, foreign language skills, knowledge of information

technology, digital technology, creative thinking and international integration (global citizens)"[28].

Obviously, there is a need for a new contemporary Vietnamese cultural value so that the nation can develop quickly and sustainably – with an open cultural value.

Eighthly, shaping the source of rational cultural values

Deriving from the cultivation method mainly based on experience, lifestyle, and behavior based on feelings and emotions, the traditional culture of the Vietnamese people is characterized by a sentimental culture. However, in order to carry out the extremely great responsibility to lead humanity forward, culture must truly contain an element of rationality (intelligence).

The British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917) defined culture or civilization in a broad sense as a complex whole consisting of many factors, of which the first element is knowledge. UNESCO emphasizes that culture should be mentioned as a set of characteristics, in which knowledge is an important factor[29].

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought humanity to a launching point, with three factors that both influence and unite, to become new driving forces in the social movement. That is, the emergence and development of the internet helping to "flatten" the world, becoming a "global home". Next, the process of internationalization quickly develops into the process of globalization and integration, along with the intellectualization of all fields: economy, culture, society, and politics. Thanks to intellectualization, countries gained the strength to maintain their independence and connect resources to protect their territorial sovereignty. In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution "in order to promote the industrialization and modernization of the country, Vietnam had to make every effort to build, develop and promote the intellectual resources of the entire people"[30].

Thus, thanks to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, intellectualization has become soft power and the core for a new way of protecting national independence and sovereignty and the source of rational culture as well - intellectual culture is the current social behavior.

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Endnotes:

(1), (5), (6), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), (18), (21), (22), (23), (28) CPV: *Document of the 13th National Party Congress of Deputies*, vol.I, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2021, p.143, 88-89, 96-97, 143, 71-72, 89, 143, 175, 110, 208, 110, 264-265, 232-233.

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(3), (29) See: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

(4) Statement of Prof. Klaus Schwab, President of the World Economic Forum at the World Economic Forum Conference on "Mastering the Fouth Industrial Revolution" on January 20, 2016 as reported by Tri Thuc Tre magazine, April 2016.

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