

## MARXIST PHILOSOPHY ON CULTURE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN CULTURE IN VIETNAM TODAY

[A FILOSOFIA MARXISTA SOBRE CULTURA E A CONSTRUÇÃO DA CULTURA MODERNA NO  
VIETNÃ HOJE]

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**ABSTRACT:** Marxist philosophy provides an important theoretical foundation for the recognition of the nature of culture as a form of social consciousness associated with social existence and modes of production. In the context of globalization, industrial revolution 4.0 and the modernization process in Vietnam, building a modern culture is not only a requirement for endogenous development but also a condition to ensure national identity and socialist orientation. This article analyzes the views of Marxist philosophy on culture, clarifies the role of culture in social development, and assesses the current situation and proposes solutions to build a modern culture in Vietnam today. The research method is mainly analytical – synthesis, combined with the historical-logical method. The results show that the creative application of Marxist philosophy to the specific conditions of Vietnam is a decisive factor in the development of a culture that is both advanced and imbued with national identity.

**KEYWORDS:** Marxist philosophy; culture; Vietnam; modernization; national identity

**RESUMO:** A filosofia marxista fornece uma importante base teórica para o reconhecimento da natureza da cultura como uma forma de consciência social associada à existência social e aos meios de produção. No contexto da globalização, da Quarta Revolução Industrial e do processo de modernização no Vietnã, a construção de uma cultura moderna não é apenas um requisito para o desenvolvimento endógeno, mas também uma condição para assegurar a identidade nacional e a orientação socialista. Este artigo analisa as perspectivas da filosofia marxista sobre a cultura, esclarece o papel da cultura no desenvolvimento social, avalia a situação atual e propõe soluções para construir uma cultura moderna no Vietnã hoje. O método de pesquisa é predominantemente analítico-sintético combinado com o método histórico-lógico. Os resultados mostram que a aplicação criativa da filosofia marxista às condições específicas do Vietnã é um fator decisivo no desenvolvimento de uma cultura que é ambas avançada e imbuída de identidade nacional.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Filosofia marxista; cultura; Vietnã; modernização; identidade nacional

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the development of human history, culture has always played a central role in shaping the identity, value system and mode of existence of each community. Not only the product of spiritual activity, culture also reflects the level of development of the productive forces, social relations and

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the level of perfection of people as creative subjects (Duyen, 2013). In the theoretical system of Marxist philosophy, culture is not considered as an isolated field, but is placed in a dialectical relationship with social existence, especially the economic basis and mode of production. It is this approach that has created a turning point in the perception of culture, moving from an idealistic perspective to historical materialism, from the absolutization of the spirit to the recognition of culture as a product of social reality, and at the same time having an impact on the practice itself (Phuong, 2022).

In the context of the 21st century, when globalization and the fourth industrial revolution are taking place strongly, culture has become one of the key factors determining the competitiveness and sustainable development of each country. The rapid spread of information technology, social networks, and mass media has profoundly changed the way people access, produce, and consume culture. This creates great opportunities for cultural exchange, adaptation and development, but at the same time poses many challenges, especially the risk of assimilation, loss of identity and crisis of values. In this context, it is more necessary than ever to return to the basic principles of Marxist philosophy to analyze and guide cultural development (Nguyet, 2015).

For Vietnam, culture is not only the spiritual foundation of society but also an important endogenous driving force for socio-economic development. Over thousands of years of history, the Vietnamese nation has formed a rich cultural value system, including patriotism, solidarity, self-reliance and the ability to flexibly adapt to the fluctuations of history. However, in the current period, when Vietnam is promoting industrialization, modernization and international integration, cultural life is also being strongly affected from many sides. The rapid development of the market economy has led to changes in the social value system, including the rise of individualism, pragmatic lifestyles and the trend of commercialization of cultural activities (Truong, 2019).

One of the issues of concern is the imbalance between economic development and cultural development. While the economy has achieved significant achievements, in some fields, culture has not really kept up, and even shows signs of being underestimated. This leads to manifestations such as a decline in social morality, deterioration in certain cultural norms, and a lack of values that guide individual and community behavior. In addition, the penetration of foreign cultural products, including elements that are not in accordance with traditions and fine customs, is posing a great challenge to the preservation and promotion of national cultural identity.

On the other hand, the process of digital transformation and the development of the knowledge economy are also placing new requirements on building people and culture. In the digital environment, cultural values are not only stored and transmitted, but also recreated and transformed at a rapid pace (Do, 2022). This requires a theoretical system strong enough to orient and regulate cultural activities in the new context. Marxist philosophy, with its dialectical materialist and historical materialist methodology, provides an effective tool for analyzing these transformations, and at the same time proposing solutions suitable for the specific conditions of Vietnam.

However, the application of Marxist philosophy to the cultural field in the current conditions cannot stop at repeating classic theses, but requires

creative development, in accordance with the new context. This requires a combination of theory and practice, between tradition and modernity, between national identity and the quintessence of human culture. Building a modern culture in Vietnam is therefore not only a socio-political task, but also a continuous process of awareness and creativity (Hung, 2022).

From the above issues, it can be seen that the study of Marxist philosophy on culture and its application to the practice of building a modern culture in Vietnam is an urgent requirement, with both profound theoretical significance and great practical value. This article aims to clarify the basic contents of Marxist philosophy on culture, analyze the role of culture in social development, and at the same time assess the current situation and propose solutions to build a modern, advanced culture imbued with national identity in the context of international integration today. Thereby, contributing to clarifying the path of cultural development in line with the socialist orientation in Vietnam, meeting the requirements of sustainable development in the new era.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### ***2.1. Literature review***

In recent decades, the issue of culture and cultural development in relation to Marxist philosophy has attracted the attention of many scholars at home and abroad. The research works focus on clarifying the nature of culture as a form of social consciousness, and at the same time analyzing the role of culture in the process of socio-economic development. In the world, many Marxist scholars have emphasized that culture is inseparable from material facilities and production relations, but always reflects the transformations of the social structure. These studies often approach culture from a critical perspective, pointing out the dominance of power, ideology, and social structures on cultural production and consumption (Kha, 2019).

In addition, in the context of globalization, many international studies also focus on the issue of cultural exchange and adaptation, especially the impacts of the market economy and digital technology on cultural life. Scholars argue that the development of mass media and the internet has profoundly changed the way people approach and create culture, and increased the risk of cultural assimilation and loss of national identity. However, there is also a view that globalization is not only a challenge but also an opportunity for countries to assert their identity and enhance their cultural status through the development of cultural industries (Thuong, 2013).

In Vietnam, the study of culture from the perspective of Marxist philosophy mainly focuses on clarifying the views of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought on culture, and at the same time applying it to the practice of building a socialist culture. Many works have analyzed the role of culture as the spiritual foundation of society, as the goal and driving force of development. The studies also emphasize the need to build an advanced culture, imbued with national identity in the context of

international integration.

However, it can be noticed that most of the current studies are still generally theoretical, not delving into the analysis of specific changes of cultural life in new conditions, especially under the impact of digital transformation and the market economy. Some studies still lack the connection between theory and practice, and have not proposed highly feasible solutions. In addition, access to culture from an interdisciplinary perspective, combining philosophy, sociology, economics, and communication sciences remains limited (Tuyet, 2024).

Therefore, this article inherits previous research achievements and adds a new approach when analyzing culture in relation to modern factors such as digital technology, globalization, and sustainable development. The question of building a modern culture in Vietnam on the basis of Marxist philosophy is not only of theoretical significance but also contributes to solving the practical problems being raised.

## **2.2. Research methods**

To achieve the research objectives, the paper uses a synthesis of many different research methods, of which the main methodology is dialectical materialism and historical materialism. This is an important methodological basis for analyzing culture in relation to economic, political and social factors, and clarifying the historicity – specificity of cultural phenomena.

The analytical-synthesis method is used to systematize the theoretical views of Marxist philosophy on culture, and at the same time synthesize the results of previous research to build a theoretical framework for the article. Through the analysis of concepts, categories, and dialectical relationships between elements, the article clarifies the nature and role of culture in social development.

The historical-logical method is used to examine the formation and development of cultural perspectives in Marxist philosophy, as well as the application of these perspectives in the Vietnamese context. This method allows to identify inherited and developed factors, and clarifies the transformation of culture in different historical periods.

In addition, the article also uses a comparative method to compare theory and practice, between international experience and specific conditions of Vietnam. Through this, the article evaluates the similarities and differences, thereby drawing lessons and proposing appropriate solutions.

In addition to the above methods, the article also takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining philosophy, sociology and cultural sciences to have a more comprehensive view of the research problem. The combination of multiple methods not only improves the reliability of the research results, but also facilitates a deeper analysis of the complex issues of cultural life in the modern context.

In short, the flexible use and combination of research methods based on the methodology of Marxist philosophy has helped the article achieve the set goals, and at the same time contributes to clarifying theoretical and practical issues in building modern culture in Vietnam today.

### **3. THEORETICAL BASIS OF MARXIST PHILOSOPHY ON CULTURE**

In the theoretical system of Marxist philosophy, culture is not built into an independent doctrine, but the views on culture are expressed throughout and profound in the theses on socio-economic forms, social consciousness and the role of human beings in history. Therefore, in order to properly understand the concept of Marxist philosophy on culture, it is necessary to place it in the overall methodology of dialectical materialism and historical materialism. Accordingly, culture is seen as a constituent part of social life, closely associated with social existence and subject to specific material conditions (Wang, 2025).

First of all, one of the fundamental tenets of Marxist philosophy is the thesis on the relationship between social existence and social consciousness. Accordingly, social existence – including economic conditions, modes of production and social relations – plays a decisive role in social consciousness. Culture, as a form of social consciousness, is therefore inseparable from the economic basis it reflects. Each historical period, each socio-economic form produces corresponding cultural values, bearing the imprint of material conditions and class interests. This shows that culture is not a hyperhistorical or immutable entity, but always moves and changes along with the changes of social life (Marx, & Engels, 1998).

However, Marxist philosophy also affirms the relative independence of social consciousness, including culture. Although regulated by social existence, culture is not completely passively dominated, but has the potential to re-influence the economic base and social relations. Progressive cultural values can promote the development of society, while backward factors can become obstacles to progress. It is this two-dimensionality that creates the dialectical relationship between economics and culture, requiring a comprehensive and flexible approach to cultural research and development (Lukács, 2014) .

Another important content in the theory of Marxist philosophy is the role of human beings as cultural creators. According to Marx, human beings are not only the product of circumstances but also the subject of changing circumstances through practical activities, especially labor. Labor not only creates material wealth but also the process of forming spiritual values, moral standards, knowledge systems and cultural institutions. It is in the process of labor and social communication that people create culture and at the same time are shaped by culture. Therefore, culture cannot exist outside of humans, but is always associated with human life activities under specific historical conditions (Van, 2022).

Marxist philosophy also emphasizes the hierarchy of culture in a society with class antagonism. In societies such as slavery, feudalism or capitalism, culture often bears the imprint of the ruling class, which serves to maintain and consolidate its power. However, in a socialist society, when the goal is to eliminate oppression and injustice, culture is oriented to develop for the benefit of the masses of the people. This does not mean that culture loses its diversity, but on the contrary, it facilitates the holistic development of human beings, freeing them from alienation and limitations caused by unequal social relations (Huong, 2019).

In addition, Marxist philosophy also emphasizes the role of culture in

comprehensive human development. A progressive culture not only aims to satisfy spiritual needs, but also contributes to the formation of personality, improving people's cognitive level and creative capacity. Marx once emphasized that the free development of each individual is the condition for the free development of all people. In this context, culture has become an important means to realize the goal of human liberation, building a society in which people are comprehensively developed both physically, intellectually and spiritually.

In addition, the Marxist philosophy's view of culture is also clearly historical-specific. Culture does not exist in the abstract but is always associated with certain historical conditions. This requires that when researching and applying the theory of culture, it must come from the specific context of each country and each stage of development. It is not possible to mechanically apply cultural models from other places without taking into account the historical characteristics, traditions and socio-economic conditions of each ethnic group. The theoretical basis of Marxist philosophy on culture is built on the basic principles of dialectical materialism and historical materialism. Culture is seen as a product of social reality, subject to the regulation of social existence but at the same time relative independence and the ability to re-influence society. Human beings are the subject of cultural creation, and the ultimate goal of culture is to serve the comprehensive development of human beings. These views are not only theoretical but also have important methodological significance in the study and construction of modern culture, especially in the current context of Vietnam.

#### **4. THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO MARXIST PHILOSOPHY**

In the theoretical system of Marxist philosophy, culture is not only a field that reflects spiritual life but also plays a particularly important role in the entire process of social development. On the basis of historical materialism, culture is seen in dialectical relations with economics, politics and other areas of social life. Therefore, the analysis of the role of culture is inseparable from the constituent elements of the socio-economic form, as well as the role of human beings as historical subjects (Hy, 2014).

First of all, culture plays the role of the spiritual foundation of society. As a system of values, norms, beliefs and knowledge accumulated through history, culture guides human behavior and creates relative stability for social life. In the view of Marxist philosophy, social consciousness, including culture, although regulated by social existence, has the ability to direct and regulate human actions. A society with a developed and healthy culture will form positive moral standards, contributing to maintaining social order and promoting sustainable development. On the contrary, if the cultural value system is in crisis or deviant, society may fall into a state of instability, moral degradation and disorientation in development (Routledge, 2023).

Secondly, culture plays the role of an endogenous driving force of

socio-economic development. Although Marxist philosophy emphasizes the decisive role of the economic basis in superstructure, it also asserts that elements of the superstructure, including culture, can have a powerful impact on the economy. Cultural values such as work ethic, discipline, creativity and social responsibility can contribute to improving labor productivity, promoting innovation and enhancing management efficiency. In the modern context, as the knowledge economy develops, the role of culture becomes more and more clear, because knowledge, creativity and people – profoundly cultural factors – become the most important resources for growth.

Third, culture is an important tool in maintaining and strengthening the ideology of society. From the point of view of Marxist philosophy, in a class-based society, culture is often classy and serves the interests of the ruling class. Through cultural institutions such as education, media, art, and religion, the values and views of the ruling class are propagated and reinforced in social life. However, in a socialist society, culture is oriented to serve the interests of the vast majority of working people, contributing to building a progressive and humane ideology and towards the comprehensive development of human beings. This makes culture an important tool in shaping social consciousness and promoting common development goals.

Fourth, culture plays an essential role in the formation and development of human personality. According to Marxist philosophy, human beings are the sum of social relationships, and it is in the process of participating in cultural activities that human beings are formed and developed. Through education, social communication and creative activities, people absorb cultural values, thereby forming worldviews, human outlook and behavioral norms. A progressive culture will contribute to the formation of people with knowledge, ethics and creative capacity, meeting the requirements of social development. On the contrary, if the cultural environment is unhealthy, people are easily negatively affected, leading to deviant behaviors and a decline in the quality of human resources.

Fifth, culture plays an important role in preserving and promoting national identity. In the context of globalization, when cultures intersect and influence each other, preserving cultural identity becomes an important task for each country. Marxist philosophy, from a historical point of view – specifically, holds that each nation has its own cultural characteristics formed in the process of its historical development. These characteristics are not only imprints of the past but also a resource for current and future development. The preservation and promotion of cultural identity does not mean being closed or conservative, but it is necessary to harmoniously combine tradition and modernity, between absorbing the quintessence of human culture and preserving the core values of the nation (Mazurkevych, 2024).

Finally, culture also plays an important role in promoting social cohesion and building community. Common values, beliefs, and cultural norms create social consensus, helping individuals to bond together in a unified community. In modern conditions, as society becomes increasingly diverse and complex, this role has become even more important, as it helps to maintain stability and enhance cooperation between individuals and social groups.

In conclusion, according to Marxist philosophy, culture is not only a

part of the superstructure but also a factor that plays a particularly important role in orienting, promoting and regulating social development. Culture is both a spiritual foundation, an endogenous motivation, and a tool for shaping human consciousness and personality. These roles show that the construction and development of culture is inseparable from the overall development strategy of society, especially in the current context when culture is increasingly becoming an important resource for sustainable development.

## **5. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF BUILDING CULTURE IN VIETNAM**

In recent decades, Vietnam has achieved many remarkable achievements in the process of building and developing culture, especially in the context of promoting industrialization, modernization and deep international integration. In terms of institutions, the system of views and guidelines of the Party and the State's policies and laws on culture have been increasingly improved, clearly demonstrating the orientation of building an "advanced, imbued with national identity" culture. Cultural institutions from the central to local levels have been gradually strengthened; literary, artistic, communication, education and heritage conservation activities have had many positive changes. The cultural and spiritual life of the people has generally been improved, and the level of access to cultural products and services has been expanding, especially in the digital environment.

An outstanding achievement is the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values. Many tangible and intangible cultural heritages of Vietnam are registered at the international level, contributing to enhancing the national cultural status and promoting tourism development. Traditional festivals, craft villages, and folk arts have been restored and developed, becoming an important resource in traditional education and community cohesion. At the same time, the exchange and cultural adaptation with the world also took place strongly, helping Vietnam absorb many progressive values in science, art and cultural management.

However, besides the achieved results, the process of building culture in Vietnam today still reveals many limitations and challenges. One of the issues of concern is the imbalance between economic development and cultural development. While economic growth has reached a fairly high rate, in many places, culture has not really been valued proportionately, even considered "auxiliary". This leads to the consequence that a part of society shows a decline in morality and lifestyle; Traditional values such as honesty, responsibility, and kindness sometimes fade.

The rise of individualism and a pragmatic lifestyle is a clear manifestation in the context of the market economy. A part of the people, especially young people, tend to uphold material values, neglect spiritual values and social responsibility. Phenomena such as fraud, school violence, uncultured behavior in cyberspace, or degradation in some fields of arts and entertainment show gaps in the orientation of cultural values. This poses an urgent requirement to strengthen the moral foundation and improve the effectiveness of cultural education in society.

In addition, the impact of globalization and digital media also creates new challenges. The massive introduction of foreign cultural products, including many factors that are not in line with fine customs and customs, is affecting the tastes and cultural behaviors of a part of the people. Meanwhile, the state management of culture in the digital environment still faces many difficulties, not keeping up with the development speed of technology. The control of content, aesthetic orientation and protection of users, especially teenagers, still have many inadequacies.

Another limitation is the disparity in the level of cultural enjoyment between regions. In urban areas, people have access to a variety of cultural forms, from performing arts to modern entertainment services. On the contrary, in many rural, mountainous and island areas, the conditions of facilities are still lacking, cultural activities are not abundant, leading to a growing gap in cultural life between regions. This not only affects the right of people to enjoy culture but also affects the comprehensive development of society.

In addition, the development of the cultural industry – an important sector in the creative economy – is still not commensurate with the potential. Although certain steps have been made, Vietnam's cultural industries still lack professionalism, small scale and have not created strong competitiveness in the international market. The exploitation of the economic value of culture is not effective, meanwhile, investment resources for this field are still limited.

The above facts show that the process of building culture in Vietnam is currently facing many opportunities but also many challenges. This requires a comprehensive approach, based on the solid theoretical foundation of Marxist philosophy, and at the same time associated with the specific conditions of the country in the new context. The correct identification of the current situation not only helps to objectively assess the achievements and limitations, but also is an important basis for proposing appropriate solutions to build a modern, advanced culture and imbued with national identity in the integration period.

## **6. SOLUTIONS TO BUILD A MODERN CULTURE IN VIETNAM TODAY**

In the face of the urgent requirements posed by the reality of national development, the construction of modern culture in Vietnam needs to be approached comprehensively, systematically and based on the solid theoretical foundation of Marxist philosophy. This not only requires a combination of economic development and cultural development, but also innovation in thinking, management methods and the organization of cultural activities in the new context.

First of all, it is necessary to continue to thoroughly grasp and creatively apply the view of Marxist philosophy on the dialectical relationship between social existence and social consciousness. Culture must be placed on a par with economics and politics in the national development strategy, becoming a solid spiritual foundation and an endogenous driving force for sustainable development. This requires all levels and sectors to be more

fully aware of the role of culture, avoiding the situation of considering culture as an “auxiliary” field or only a formality. Policy making needs to ensure harmony between economic growth and cultural development, focusing on investment in the fields of education, art, communication and heritage conservation.

Another important solution is to improve the quality of cultural and moral education in the whole society, especially for the younger generation. Education does not only stop at imparting knowledge but also needs to focus on forming personality, fostering life ideals, civic awareness and social responsibility. In the current context, when the digital environment is becoming a second living space for people, digital culture education, communication skills and the ability to receive information selectively are very necessary. At the same time, it is necessary to promote the role of families, schools and society in building a healthy cultural environment, contributing to the formation of comprehensively developed people.

In addition, the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values need to be carried out in a more creative and effective way. Traditions are not immutable values, but need to be recreated and developed in the modern context. This requires a combination of conservation and innovation, between preserving identity and absorbing the quintessence of human culture. Cultural heritage needs to be exploited in association with economic development, especially cultural tourism and creative industries, in order to create added value and improve people’s lives.

An important direction is to develop the cultural industry as a key economic sector. In the context of the knowledge economy, industries such as cinema, music, design, video games, and digital media not only bring great economic value but also contribute to promoting the national image and spreading cultural values. To do this, it is necessary to have policies to support finance, train high-quality human resources, as well as build a favorable legal environment for creativity and healthy competition. At the same time, the involvement of the private sector and social organizations in the development of cultural products and services should be encouraged.

In the context of globalization, the absorption of foreign culture needs to be carried out selectively, on the basis of maintaining national identity. This requires strengthening the capacity of society’s “cultural immunity”, through raising awareness, aesthetic education and building appropriate value systems. The state management of culture needs to be renewed in the direction of flexibility, efficiency and adaptation to the digital environment. Controlling content on digital platforms, protecting users and orienting the development of a healthy culture need to be more focused.

In addition, it is necessary to narrow the gap in cultural enjoyment between regions. The State needs to increase investment in cultural infrastructure in rural, mountainous and island areas; at the same time, supporting community cultural activities, encouraging people’s participation in creating and enjoying culture. Cultural development is not only the task of management agencies but also requires the cooperation of the whole society, from organizations, businesses to individuals.

Finally, it is necessary to build a new cultural value system suitable for Vietnam’s development conditions in the integration period. This value system must harmoniously combine tradition and modernity, national

identity and human spirit, towards values such as democracy, humanity, creativity and sustainable development. This is not only a goal but also a motivation to build a modern culture, contributing to Vietnam's strong development in the new era.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Marxist philosophy provides a scientific theoretical foundation for a correct understanding of the nature, role and laws of movement of culture in social life. The creative application of these perspectives to Vietnamese practice shows that culture is not only a spiritual foundation but also an important endogenous driving force for sustainable development. In the context of globalization and digital transformation, building a modern culture in Vietnam requires a harmonious combination of economic development and cultural development, between absorbing the quintessence of humanity and preserving national identity. At the same time, it is necessary to focus on comprehensive human development, improving the quality of education and building a value system suitable for the times. Only when culture is truly placed in the right place in the development strategy, Vietnam can promote its soft power, consolidate internal resources and firmly step on the path of long-term integration and development.

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