

The Conflict Between Individual Freedom and Social Order in Vietnam Traditional Communities

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ABSTRACT

In the context of a global shift toward the prioritization of individual freedom and human rights, the tension between personal autonomy and social order has become increasingly visible in many societies, including Vietnam. As a rapidly integrating nation in both economic and cultural terms, Vietnam is facing new challenges in reconciling international values of freedom with its traditional societal structures. Rooted in Southeast Asian cultural heritage and shaped by Confucian and collectivist norms, Vietnamese traditional communities place a strong emphasis on hierarchy, communal responsibility, and social harmony. These cultural features have historically ensured order and cohesion but now increasingly intersect—and at times conflict—with emerging notions of individual rights. This paper examines how Vietnam navigates the evolving balance between maintaining its deep-rooted cultural order and adapting to the rising global emphasis on individual freedom in the context of modernization and international integration.

Keywords: Vietnam, Conflict, Individual Freedom, Social Order, Traditional Communities

1. Introduction

The clash and matter of social order and personal freedom have been an ongoing issue, especially in the region of East Asia or South East Asia. Since the bloom of civilization to absolute crown authority and later on the spread of authoritarianism, the tension had led the communities to a circular process of governments: they rise, they reach the absolute crown authority, they lose control of the country or increase it to the level that exceed people's limitation, the people rebel against the government and create a new one, and a new loop starts. However, this is just an example for the lasting social issue, which can still portray the

paramount role of balancing individuals' freedom and social order. In order to analyze the statement, we must define the two main factors—social order and personal freedom.

Social order exists in many forms, wherever there is society, there is social order. To identify 'social order', we can firstly split it into two possible categories: social order as rigid, written law, or even legal system; additionally, it can occur as moral norms in a society, community due to existing cultural, ideological, religious,... background accepted by it or the majority of it. It is consistent that most of the time, the second category plays the role of a foundation for the first category but not the other way: social norms might be enforced by the legal system in specific situations but not that social norms depend on the legal system (Post, 1994, 491-192). However, in this research, we want to focus more on the social orders in the form of social norms and the ones structured in laws might be dismissed. Lawrence K. Frank coherently stated the definition of this form of social order: "social order is not given but arises from the historically developed ideas, beliefs, and patterns of conduct and of feeling which each culture has evolved as the guides to human conduct and the management of group activities". And that this is a large-scale, cosmic force that people in the society have to submit to (Frank, 1944, 470-472).

On the other hand, individual freedom is often considered the opposite, contradicting social order's opposition in the communities. Nevertheless, similar to social order, it can also be categorized depending on the scale and correspondence with structural politics: its existence varies from the free will to do, to say, to a nation's democratic values (Tayal, 2024, 238). Despite the forms, they all come from the foundational belief of "Freedom means being able to make choices without someone telling you what to do" (Tayal, 2024, 238). Alternatively, when being aligned with social orders and commitments, individual freedom is "not only a central social value, but also an undetachable social product" (Sen, 1990, 113). This alternative understanding of individual freedom suggests that social order is not an oppressor of individual freedom or individual freedom is a threat to social order on a social hierarchy but they are both equal products of the society on a scale—which might bias social order or individual freedom, showcasing the importance of finding a balance of the scale from this research.

Social order, or the force of collective values, does not stay the same but varies from traditional communities to traditional communities. For instance, for Egyptians, "young women self-identified religiosity" positively influences gender egalitarianism in the community; in contrast, Islamic religiosity has no effect in the Saudi Arabian community (Kucinkas, 2010, 761). To be specific, in this research, we would focus on Vietnam's society and collective values which consists of traditional beliefs, socialist values from political situations, Confucian and Taoist values from Sinospheric influence, Buddhist values as the dominant religion, and Western values (Nguyen, 2016, 34).

2. Characteristics of traditional communities

2.1. Strong emphasis on communal values and collective identity

Communities that are traditionally organized are characterized by categories of authority (leaders and subordinates) that frame social positions within the community. Traditional societies are typically defined by aspects such as primarily social systems that are historical, supportive to the larger group, and involve ongoing ways of preserving culture (Luo, 2024). As an example, people within the community may perform different social roles shared in common by virtue of shared genealogy, tradition, and common values - a leader, a craftsman, or healing practices. Individuals know a role, and the role creates predictability of life-roles for the community members in predictable ways. In traditional societies, the strength of tradition is palpable - rituals, oral traditions and customs are passed down, serving to engender identity and sustain history for the group.

Generally, a decision is made by consensus, and guided by the experience of elders or people who have earned respect from the community. Individual freedoms will be common, but usually subjected to the needs of the whole to flourish and create a cooperative group and individual peace amongst all community members. Together with the components mentioned above, located self-realized and type of belief systems, as well as indigenous practices, community members will often have a connection with their landscape. The environment is seen not just as a resource but as an integral part of life, influencing their practices and beliefs. This relationship promotes sustainable practices and resilience against challenges, such as external influences or environmental changes.

Native American societies like the Navajo and the Hopi regularly emphasize a close relationship with nature as they consider it a sacred thing, and crucial to their life. Their society is generally egalitarian, and only choices made after consensus from elder members or councils are taken. The East African Maasai emphasize community living and collective identity. Cattle hold a singularly important place in their culture, both economically and culturally, as they symbolize unity and prosperity. These cultures are likely to rely on old traditions and a dense oral tradition for advice. There are similar expectations of cooperation and harmony in agricultural cultures in countries like Vietnam and Indonesia. Family life is generally centered around extended families, and whatever religious or spiritual emphasis—usually Buddhism or animism—tends to blend with social life.

Vietnamese society is commonly anchored in traditions that embrace family, community, and spirituality. The notion of filial piety, often expressed as Confucianism, emphasizes respect for elders and the importance of family (Le, 2018). The act of ancestor worship is arguably the most

significant ritual families partake in. By establishing an altar, families make memorials for their family members that have passed on, which help tie generations together and create a sense of continuous existence (Vuong et al., 2018). Although there are many different forms of Buddhism practiced in Vietnam, Mahayana is dominant, and influences moral beliefs and cultural rituals. At the same time, Taoist and animist practices give the Vietnamese people a sense of harmony with nature and the environment (Le 2018; Vuong et al., 2019). Communal houses are places of cultural or social gathering, embodies repeatedly spoken values related to both cultural and social identity construction (Nguyen, 2020). A Vietnamese society that embraces the collective values of harmony, resilience, and spirituality is upheld by social practices and weaving together the capabilities that are valued by Vietnamese.

2.2. Social hierarchy and respect for authority

Many traditional societies are built on a social hierarchy and respect for authority. Hierarchies are based on a variety of factors, including age, gender, occupation, and genealogy (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). In many societies, elders hold the highest status because as bearers of knowledge and experience they are significant decision makers and protectors of tradition. Similarly, chiefs, shamans and village leaders are respected figures in their communities because they are custodians of the community's well-being and stability. Societies reinforce the social hierarchy and authority through rituals or regalia, such as ceremonial occasions and uniforms, to emphasize the authority of the leaders in the community. Weber (1922) explains that the community provides legitimacy to traditional authority through customs and beliefs, seeing traditional authority as an essential pillar of order and social bonding in society.

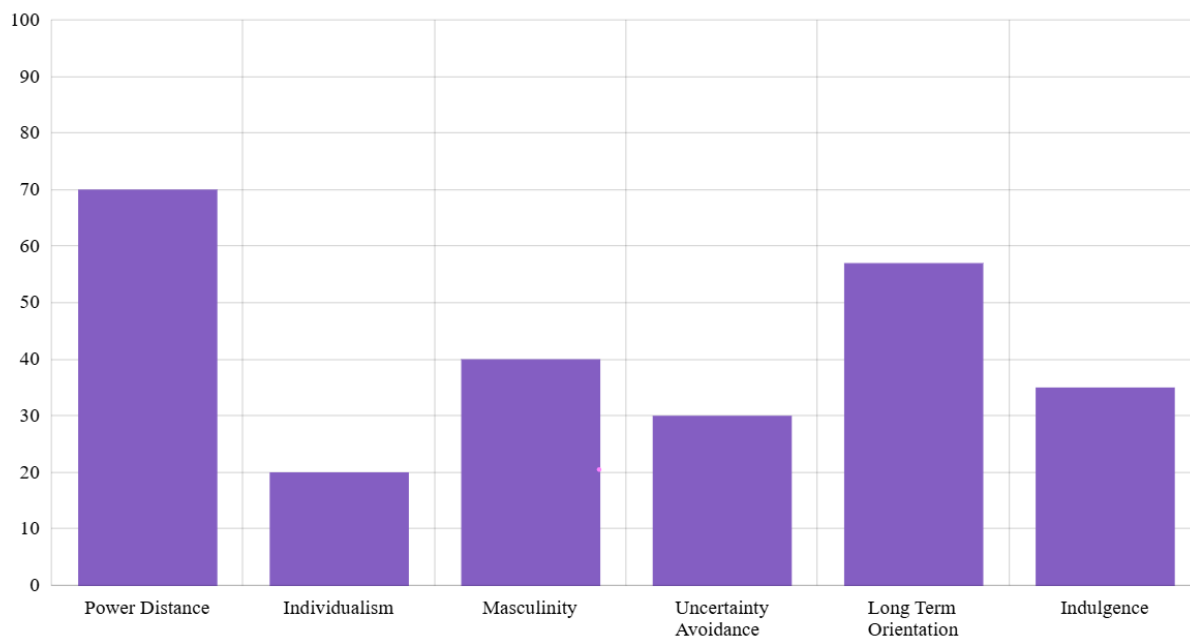
Elders tend to occupy the highest status group in a community because they are considered the keepers of knowledge and experience in a society. Their advice and recommendations are pivotal aspects in decision making, dispute resolution, and adherence to tradition. However, respect for authority figures, such as chiefs, spiritual leaders, and village heads, is layered in a way that they also receive deference to their authoritative status without question. Respect for authority is the result of the perceived role of authority both in their hierarchical status and shared belief in their capacity to act on behalf of the interest of the collective. In other traditions, deference is ritualized through kinds of performance frameworks (e.g., uniforms, ceremonies) reinforce a leader's status.

Hierarchy exists in order to maintain order and stability which helps to ensure fair distribution and access of resources, conflict is minimized, and values are maintained. Due to the supportive structure of hierarchies, the individual is confined to a certain level of autonomy reflecting a social hierarchy or underlying systemic orientation that promotes the difference of others.

Statistics on social hierarchy and respect for authority in traditional communities are often derived from studies on cultural values and governance systems.

Empirical evidence from the Asian Barometer Survey demonstrates that in Confucian-culture countries such as China, South Korea, and Vietnam, respect for authority continues to function as a prevalent cultural norm. In these countries, approximately 70% of respondents strongly expressed agreement that elders and those in authority should be obeyed, showing the enduring legacy of Confucian values. Research on rural governance in South Africa shows that more than 60% of rural people continue to rely on their traditional leaders to mediate disputes and make decisions for their community (Koelble & Siddle, 2014). This shows that hierarchical power is still respected in these societies.

Figure 1. Vietnamese cultural dimension



Source: geerthofstede.com

The concept of hierarchy is firmly embedded in Vietnamese social life. Research shows that respect is predicted by age and position or authority, which also affects how to speak and nonverbal cues are used in communication (Vo, 2020). When speaking to an authority figure or someone older than themselves, younger people are expected to use formal pronouns and courteous terminology, while the elder may respond with conversational language. Additionally, bending slightly or extending both hands when offering something are acceptable ways to demonstrate deference. Such practices indicate deference and respect to others in a hierarchical

social context. These practices keep social harmony, respect for hierarchy, and stability of hierarchical relations in Vietnam's social context (Nguyen-Trung, 2016). This cultural logic of hierarchy not only organizes interpersonal relationships, but also makes sense of values and expectations. According to Hofstede cultural dimension, the power distance in Vietnam is high (80), which means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification.

2.3. Cultural norms and traditions shaping daily life

Cultural norms and traditions are the backbone of daily life in traditional societies, informing behavior, social existence, and day-to-day activities (Hofstede, 2001). Cultural norms convey shared values and collective identity and ensure the continuity and integration of the community. Daily life is often structured around rituals that mark important events, like birth and marriage, and seasonal harvests. For example, sunrise ceremonies are held in Native American communities to greet the day and honor nature, reflecting a deep spiritual connection to the environment. Traditional cultures also have more well-defined gender roles that determine responsibility. In the majority of African tribes, for example, men do the herding or defense of the group, and women typically do the farming, childcare, and domestic work (Mbiti, 1990). Cultural identity is also frequently linked to food preparation. For instance, cooking is frequently a social activity in Southeast Asia, where sharing meals together represents community. Additionally, some foods may have ceremonial meaning.

As an essential aspect of oral traditions, myths and legends communicate values and information across generations. One example is an Aboriginal elder in an Australian Aboriginal community, who told Dreamtime stories to convey their cultural belief of creation, spirituality, and caring for the environment. This is how our cultural identity and communal memory are conveyed (Smith, 2020). Festivals, dances and markets are also an opportunity to reinforce and nurture community bonds and shared heritage. For example, the Indian Festival of Diwali is a time for prayer, food, feasting, and lighting lamps while appreciating light over darkness while strengthening a bond as a community to appreciate culture and tradition.

Historical occurrences and social changes altered the traditional cultural norms and customs in societies over centuries. In the majority of cases, the norms were created as responses to immediate social concerns: survival, resource distribution, and social cooperation. For illustration, in pre-colonial Africa, communal manifestations and oral traditions helped to re-establish unity and convey valuable knowledge. Furthermore, these customs changed to accommodate colonization whereby new governments and systems of culture imposed foreign regulations and customs (Young, 2003). However, many communities fought back by engaging in their rituals and traditions according to acts of cultural persistence. In another instance, during

the 19th Century, assimilation regimes and forced removal processes caused drastic cultural transformations of indigenous tribes. Likewise, Native American communities experienced profound cultural disruption from forced relocation and assimilation policies during the 19th century (Hoxie, 2001). In spite of this, most tribes preserved their spiritual ceremonies and storytelling practices, thereby securing their survival as an identity.

In Southeast Asia, cultures reorganized their agricultural cycles and religious celebrations during colonial and globalization eras, blending local traditions with external ones but insisting on a firm focus on collective values. Vietnam has experienced many cultural changes as a result of colonialism and globalization, similar to other Southeast Asian nations. During the colonial period, French introduced Western-style education, architecture, and law, which disrupted pre-colonial social forms. Some Vietnamese communities resisted changes to their core aspects of life, like ancestor worship and Tet (Lunar New Year) celebration, which remains important to their identity (Nguyen, 2010). We also find evidence of a continued respect for traditional agriculture as a result of economic globalization, because farmers' technologies are evolving to be able to connect to international markets; however, they still carry out communal practice during important seasonal cycles. Globalization and religious interaction (also influenced by European missionaries who were introducing Catholicism) opened up options to integrate new elements of culture, enabling a blending of elements of Vietnamese Buddhism and folk religions with various Western religious practices (Pham, 2015). These changes confirm Vietnam's ability to adapt and transform while retaining parts of their backgrounds.

3. Individual freedom and social order

3.1. Cultural and Religious Traditions vs. Personal Autonomy

Religious and cultural traditions are paramount in shaping the values, behavior, and social expectations of traditional societies (Durkheim, 1912; Geertz, 1973). These traditions are likely to foster collective identity and harmony, with strict rules governing individual behavior for the benefit of the community. Rituals, moral codes, and religious doctrine are pillars for establishing social order, and they often permit restricted room for deviation. Yet this emphasis on tradition can be at odds with individual autonomy. In most traditional cultures, individuals are expected to prioritize family and community obligations over their own desires. For example, the tradition of arranged marriages in certain cultures suggests a communal conception of family life, one in which decisions are made in terms of religious and cultural obligation rather than individual choice.

At the same time, personal autonomy is not always absent but rather operates within the boundaries set by religious and cultural institutions. Freedom, for instance, can be practiced by

individuals in their roles within traditional structures or through religious rituals that allow for personal expression. Nevertheless, those who attempt to challenge or deviate from such norms inevitably suffer social pressures, stigma, or even ostracism. This conflict between cultural traditions and individual freedom highlights the precarious balance of values that underpin social order in traditional societies. While traditions strive to preserve harmony and stability, sometimes they can limit personal expression, triggering controversy about how best to balance collective well-being with individual rights.

Vietnamese society represents a lightweight balance of self-autonomy and its cultural traditions, strongly informed by Confucius' emphasis on harmony, respect for authority, and group identity. Self-autonomy is commonly demonstrated in a shared process with religious and cultural organizations (e.g., ancestor worship creates a relationship among generations as it involves a certain process and rituals) (Chirkov, 2017). In a Confucian framework, hierarchy is embedded within social interactions. The ordering of social interactions is governed by the first principle of *thứ bậc*, which creates language (verbal and non-verbal) toward an individual, in relative age, and respect to their social authority (Vo, 2020). In addition, common "Đình" houses represent cultural government, tie one to a neighborhood group or village identity, and perpetuate shared groups of values and practices (Nguyen, 2020). Understanding both social norms, autonomy, and distinction at this level incorporates aspects of both tradition and autonomy; it reaps the opportunity for social harmony, while ensuring the celebration of aspects of traditions. The score of individualism in Vietnam according to Hofstede cultural dimension is only 20, which is quite low in comparison with other countries, which collectivist culture is paramount and overrides most other societal rules and regulations.

3.2. Restrictions on personal choices

Marriage: Traditionally in many cultures, arranged marriages seem to focus on family and community values rather than individual values. For instance, in South Asian cultures, marriage is seen as a family union rather than an individual relationship. In this view, the family is more important than personal choice. Aspects such as caste, tribe, religion, and social class become important influences in marrying off a child, based on social values. In these societies, the belief is that the coherence and stability of the community far outweigh the individual's choice. Giddens (1992) describes the importance of traditional marriage as social systems that sustain the existing social order, sometimes reneging on the opportunity for the individual to pursue their own goals.

In Tibetan societies, marriage choices can be based upon family and societal decisions. A study in the Tibet Autonomous Region noted that the decision to marry involves personal desires and considerations of a spouse; however, the choice of spouse may reflect family background,

lineage, and societal 'rank' that will maneuver even the most personal consideration of possible marriage material. The rarity of intermarriage among ethnic groups expresses the importance of sustaining cultural affiliation in the community. Among the Abagusii people of Kenya, courtship, as well as the delivery of bridal riches and educating a young couple to adulthood are all part of the traditional marriage ceremony. They are all intended to communicate culturally bound actions and protect relationship stability. Yet because of the role of elders and the community, they also prevent some degree of individual autonomy in partner selection. In tribal societies such as the Banjaras, marriage indicates a social and familial expectation rather than an individual decision. Arranged marriages are the norm, where cultural beliefs and expectations are gobbled in symbols and rituals. While these customs enable social harmony, they may also reduce personal autonomy.

Marriage in Vietnam is often influenced by parents and tradition, with studies showing that family involvement plays a significant role in partner selection. According to a 2020 survey by the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, over 60% of young adults reported that their parents had a say in their choice of spouse. In rural areas, this percentage was even higher, reflecting the continued strength of traditional family structures. Cultural expectations such as marrying within one's ethnic group, social class, or religion remain strong, and arranged or semi-arranged marriages are still practiced in some communities. Moreover, Confucian values, which emphasize filial piety and family honor, further reinforce the role of parents in marital decisions.

Career: Expectations related to community-interdependent and inherited peculiarities influence decisions about a vocation (Hofstede, 2001). For example, in rural agricultural communities, children often assist or work next to parents, and might follow them into the same occupations or trades. Samurai, for example, in a place like Japan in the feudal period, were generally thought of as having obligated their families through a lineage of service and warfare. While these constraints are imposed to foster group stability and solidarity in a community, they also limit freedom of the individual in a situation where an individual does not wish to conform to community behavior norms. The modern phenomena of education and globalization are starting to push against these customs and create more situations where the individual can consciously decide on their own expectations for behavior. Still, the tension embodied in respect to the past vs. autonomy is complex and emotional.

Career choices in Vietnam are often influenced by parents and traditional expectations, particularly in middle-class and urban families. A 2022 survey by Navigos Group, a major recruitment company in Vietnam, found that nearly 50% of young professionals said their career decisions were shaped by parental advice or pressure. In many cases, parents encourage their children to pursue stable and prestigious careers such as medicine, engineering, law, or banking—fields that are traditionally associated with success and family honor. This pattern

reflects long-standing Confucian values, where children's achievements are seen as a reflection of the family's reputation. Additionally, social norms often discourage risk-taking or pursuing non-traditional paths like the arts, entrepreneurship, or vocational training, even when young people express strong personal interest in them.

Vietnam underwent significant changes in its culture during the colonial era. The cultural disturbances appeared during the French colonial era through the application of foreign rules and norms onto a traditional Vietnamese society. For example, the French imposed foreign forms of education, law, and urban planning onto traditional practices that compromised local sensibilities and local governance structures. Also, the imposition of Catholicism conflicted with deeply entrenched Confucian and Buddhist traditions, which ultimately caused substantial frustrations and changes in cultural exchange. Even with such potential for disruption and cultural change, Vietnamese society showed an ability to adapt by fusing foreign elements and practices with its traditional practices to create cultural continuity (Nguyen, 2020). In short, change occurred, especially in urban areas - where colonization had its most profound effects - which created a gap between urban and rural places.

3.3. Moral and ethical codes versus personal beliefs

In communities with longstanding traditions, cultural and religious codes of ethics and morality provide frameworks for acceptable behavior and social cohesion (McKay & Whitehouse, 2015). These codes tend to be based on shared values, including norms for respect for elders, loyalty to family, or adherence to the expectations of a community. These modes of behavior are passed down orally, through religion, or participation in cultural activities. When individuals attempt to act in ways that diverge from community codes and norms, these community codes can impose moral standards that conflict with the individual's beliefs. For example, in patriarchal societies, women may incur social disapproval for behaviors in pursuit of education or careers outside of the home that are in conflict with codes around the role of women in families. Similarly, a community member who expresses a fringe or non-conformist religious or philosophical belief may incur disapproval or ostracism in highly conformist communities.

Communities usually employ mechanisms that apply social or communal pressure, threat of communal sanctions, or spiritual accountability for compliance with community moral standards (Malle, 2023). For example, communities may utilize gossip or public shame to help individuals comply with moral codes, or elders or religious leaders may intervene to encourage compliance for those who have deviated from the accepted moral path. While community moral codes of conduct are intended to sustain order or happiness in communities, these same influences can serve as constraints on personal liberty or thinking outside of the box.

Moral codes and community-derived codes of conduct provide ways to behave in socially acceptable ways and in a way which upholds community cohesion while instilling a moral sensibility around issues like respect, loyalty, and commitment to tradition (Durkheim, 1912). The code becomes problematic when actions occur that are contrary to the code of conduct. For example, in patriarchal societies it is not uncommon for young women to be criticized and shamed for pursuing educational or professional paths that are seemingly incongruent with traditional gender roles at home. Additionally, nonconformist beliefs can create tension and ostracism within social groups. Normative community behaviors are typically reinforced by one or more mechanisms including: gossip, public shaming, social ostracization, or spiritual accountability and often maintain the social order and emotional well-being for the community, yet, at the same time, limit individual freedom and capacities for innovative thought. As Durkheim (1893) suggests, the regulation of moral behavior in societies is a key mechanism for social order, while moral regulation, if excessive, discourages individual development and expression of creativity.

In Vietnam, cultural and religious codes of ethics and morality are central to understanding social behavior as well as active community participation. Consider the following quintessential Engaged Buddhist examples where local, traditional values - fashioned principally by Confucianism address respect, loyalty, and obligation to family and community. Families have a long history of honoring their deceased relatives through ancestor worship that is reflective of moral sensibility centred on respect and loyalty (Nguyen, 2015). Another example of a strong community-orientated tradition is in communal houses where members come together as a community to hold on to the traditions together; hence they are engaged in a local tradition, the continuation of community, a state of a collective, shared identity (Nguyen, 2020). These efforts around the kinds of behavior individuals display in the name of their family unit, social groups, and the preservation of cultural heritage, represents normative implicit decisions made on social and communal behavior that has moral meaning. Further, these strong traditions present challenges to the normative order as Vietnam modernizes away from collective notions towards individual autonomy (Tran, 2020).

3.4. Social ostracism for nonconformity

In many traditional societies, social exclusion is often employed as a powerful tool to enforce conformity and uphold shared values. The process of exclusion is invoked in order to realign individuals with the group, because nonconformity of any kind, with respect to behaviors, beliefs, or roles, is perceived to be a threat to collective harmony and cohesion. In some patriarchal societies, women who defy expected roles, such as furthering an education or not getting married, may be rented and become stigmatized. Likewise, in tight-knit religious groups, an individual who strays from shared moral codes or a member who adopts a conflicting belief

runs the risk of being expelled from that group —as in the common Amish practice of "shunning."

The effects of ostracism can be incredibly significant, resulting in feelings of alienation, guilt, and lowered self-esteem. As traditional communities historically serve as extended support communities, ostracism can also deprive individuals not only of social support but also of resources and connections that are critical for survival. Nonetheless, these traditional communities can begin to adapt as globalization and modernization expose them to new worldviews and new values. In some cases, they may even start to negotiate some of their traditional commitments against increased acceptance of their liberties as individuals. The changing nature of these communities offers an entry point into a more nuanced understanding of tradition against individuality.

Human nature is fundamentally oriented toward the pursuit of freedom. This intrinsic inclination manifests across historical, psychological, and philosophical dimensions. From a historical perspective, movements for emancipation, civil liberties, and democratic governance reflect a collective yearning to break free from oppressive structures and assert individual agency. Psychologically, autonomy is a core human need; numerous theories, such as self-determination theory, emphasize the importance of self-governance in fostering well-being and motivation. Philosophically, thinkers from John Locke to Jean-Jacques Rousseau have posited that liberty is not merely a political right but a condition essential to the fulfillment of human potential. Thus, the desire for freedom is not a superficial or circumstantial impulse but a deep-seated element of the human condition, shaping aspirations, actions, and institutions alike.

In Vietnam, the maintenance of social order has been notably effective, contributing to both societal stability and economic development. The country's strong emphasis on public security and community cohesion has resulted in relatively low crime rates compared to global and regional averages. According to the *Global Peace Index 2023*, Vietnam ranked 41st out of 163 countries, reflecting a high degree of internal safety and minimal incidence of violent conflict. Furthermore, the homicide rate in Vietnam has remained consistently low—approximately 1.5 per 100,000 people in recent years—significantly below the global average of 6.1 per 100,000 (UNODC, 2022). This favorable social climate can be attributed to a combination of state-led governance, cultural norms emphasizing respect for authority and communal responsibility, and localized mechanisms for conflict resolution. Vietnam's grassroots-level security system plays a critical role in preventing minor disputes from escalating and fostering civic engagement at the local level.

Additionally, public trust in law enforcement remains relatively high. A 2021 survey by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reported that over 75% of Vietnamese

respondents expressed confidence in the local police's ability to maintain safety and handle public order efficiently. This trust is reinforced by visible state efforts to combat corruption and improve the transparency of legal and administrative processes. Vietnam presents a compelling case of a society where effective governance, cultural cohesion, and proactive community involvement converge to create and sustain a remarkably stable and orderly social environment.

4. Solutions to balance Individual Freedom and Social Order

4.1. Balancing tradition with modernity

Achieving a harmony between traditional and contemporary principles is essential to reconcile individual liberties and social order in today's world. Harmonizing traditional values and modern principles can be complex; it may involve a balancing act that both respects cultural traditions and recognizes the need for individual autonomy and societal change. Yet, communities can bring together their societies across generations. By creating contexts for open discussions, communities as a whole can find the balance to allow younger members to share their perspectives and come to understand the importance of tradition.

Education will also play a significant role in creating understanding, a necessary step in the process of stability and change, as it allows people to make informed decisions about different views while respecting the community and its values. Many communities are already reviewing and adapting previous practices that have stood for long periods. For example, some rural communities have adopted more flexible gender roles and have allowed members to marry outside their religion. In those communities, there is often a mix of tradition and individual freedom. Finally, we must consider that governments can help promote policies that are informed by the importance of the preservation of one's culture and individual rights. A legal system that protects the personal autonomy of individuals in an informed way demonstrates an engagement in the community while also recognizing the importance of those same cultures. As Putnam (2000) explains, fostering understanding and bridging social capital can build stronger and more cohesive communities that respect diversity."

Modern technology offers tools to preserve traditions, like documenting oral histories or showcasing cultural practices through digital media, while introducing opportunities for individual expression through global connectivity. Communities such as the Maori in New Zealand have integrated modern governance and education while maintaining their cultural identity. Similarly, Scandinavian countries exemplify how societies can embrace individual liberties while preserving traditional cultural elements.

4.2. Legal and policy reforms to protect individual rights

In order to protect individual rights and balance the demands of traditional communities, legal and policy reforms are essential. The goals of these reforms are to guarantee that individual liberties are upheld without compromising cultural values, alleviate systemic injustices, and advance diversity.

Equality and non-discrimination: Reforms that involve prohibitions on discrimination based on gender, race, religion, or any of the other characteristics, are critical for ensuring inclusivity. In Saudi Arabia, there have been legal changes, such as the loosening of male guardianship, that allow women to have more freedom in areas such as travel and employment. Similarly, there are anti-discrimination laws in South Africa that have given people in marginalized groups a way to challenge unjust practices.

Access to justice: Enhancing access to justice by means of legal aid programs and streamlined procedures guarantees that people can pursue compensation when their rights are infringed. For example, India's reforms have improved the legal remedies and support networks available to women who are victims of domestic abuse.

Freedom of expression: For democracies to function, laws safeguarding the right to free expression and knowledge are essential. As demonstrated by numerous international human rights frameworks, reforms that protect journalists, activists, and whistleblowers contribute to accountability and openness.

Economic and social rights: Reforms that address economic and social rights, especially in regard to access to education, health and housing, are vital to mitigate inequalities. Affirmative action policies to establish equal opportunities in the workplace, health and housing, as well as regulating labor standards, have been effective in giving people power and increasing social mobility.

4.3. Education and Awareness in Promoting Coexistence

Education and awareness culturally transform coexistence, both in traditional communities and in other communities. Education and awareness create new potential for connections between cultures and mutual understanding while also creating needed psychological space to put forward alternative ideas and personal autonomy, while also respecting social norms.

Familiarity with culture: Education prompts people to consider varying cultures, beliefs, and histories which provides layers of empathy and lessens biases. For example, teaching indigenous traditions and values in education exposes younger generations to the different traditions, thus creating respect while cherishing their own tradition.

Empowerment of citizenry: Educated citizens are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to express their opinions and make decisions that are community-centered. This type of dynamic encourages individual development while not placing society at risk.

Promoting dialogue: Awareness campaigns and community projects support open conversation that provides opportunities for the exchange of both traditional and modern perspectives. In supporting mutual respect, these initiatives can assist in resolving the differences that can result in arguments or conflict.

Methodology

Information collection of cultural codes, family rules, village customs and state policies relating to community order and individual rights.

Data analysis to identify social expectations and traditional norms, personal autonomy and resistance, role of authority (e.g., family, village leaders) in enforcing order
Theoretical framework to understand how social order is maintained through institutions and norms, to explore tensions and power dynamics between individual desires and community control, Confucian social philosophy – as a cultural lens shaping the Vietnamese understanding of harmony and hierarchy

Policy analysis and suggestion to examine how Vietnamese laws and policies preserve cultural heritage and village regulations

5. Conclusion

The complex relationship between individual freedom and social order is critical to the traditional community, influencing their values, beliefs, and behaviors. By examining communal identity, hierarchies, cultural customs, and traditions, it becomes clear that traditional communities emphasize community, harmony, and cohesion, even if it leads to the expectation to act accordingly to restrict individual freedom and press against counter narratives. While traditional communities have inertia, they are not static, and they continuously adapt and change from external sources or internal needs. Legal and policy reforms and education and awareness are critical first steps in navigating a path between heritage and modernity and the coherence of notions of coexistence, empowerment, and fairness. A society can harmonize faith and modernity. Subsequently, when envisioning our future, this effort represents, and serves, as our pathway not to progress but also as an aspiration, each equally significant community and rights must presume the general notions of appropriate behavior and claims. Working toward a path that fosters intervening understanding promotes, or at least allows-for, an understanding of

coexistence and encourages rights and community identity to live side by side in peacefully promoting justice for an inclusive society.

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