
On the Role of Traditional Ethnic Minority Culture in Reshaping International Order

Haowei Sun

Joint Science Academy, Shandong University, Weihai, China

Email address:

7206484@qq.com

To cite this article:

Haowei Sun. On the Role of Traditional Ethnic Minority Culture in Reshaping International Order. *International and Public Affairs*.

Vol. 7, No. 1, 2023, pp. 14-17. doi: 10.11648/j.ipa.20230701.13

Received: June 22, 2023; **Accepted:** July 10, 2023; **Published:** July 20, 2023

Abstract: International relations are constantly reshaped with changing interest, relations balancing, and the interplay between the powerful and the weak, center and periphery countries, traditional and modern cultures. The conflicts arising within exert a great influence on the geopolitics and international order. Nowadays the international communications are mainly conducted through education, art and sports and the role of traditional ethnic minority culture has been greatly ignored. However, today's world is still full of varieties and conflicts which made from culture issues. It is hard to simply put down the Russo-Ukrainian War to factors such as economy or geopolitical conflicts while ignoring ethnic culture. In this case, it is inevitable for the public to pay attention to the role of ethnic minority culture in reshaping international order, which is the main purpose of the article. The present article proposes to take its unique strength to break the cultural barrier, alleviate the conflict and opposition of different political groups, increase the deep understanding based on the common interest and to seek a new international lubricant and consensus while emphasizing the necessities and significance of promoting traditional ethnic minority culture. Putting forward specific methods for establishing a more peaceful, in-depth cultural diploma and international order.

Keywords: Traditional Ethnic Minority Culture, International Communications, Reshaping International Order, Mutual Trust

1. Introduction

Differences between core value and historical tradition in the increasingly complex international relationships are lack of tolerance on a certain extent. Somehow, it usually led to increasingly complex international relations and even constant conflicts [1]. However, international relationships unlike interclan relationships, for example, the interclan relationships in Indonesia [2]. Their perspective in the difference between core value and culture are rather tolerant. International conflicts are much more intense and complex while the communication cost is fairly high. To lubricate the intense relationship between some countries and political power, the importance of Traditional Ethnic Minority Culture should be addressed. Previous research has mainly focus on tackling conflicts using integrative strategies [3]. Nevertheless, in the practice process, tackling intervention sometimes failed due to the lack of focuses or succeeded in a short period but remaining enormous potential risks. This article addresses the issue from a different perspective of traditional ethnic minority culture and proposes a new resolution to the current

international conflicts.

Currently, countries have to readjust their interest setup and camp and to reconstruct the communicative common foundation so as to form a new framework of international relation. To achieve this, to have common values and interests is the breakthrough point in which the role of traditional ethnic minority culture to explain a nation's dominant value and view of interests is extremely important.

Basing on this cognition, it is not a rare case that activities such as the traditional costume of hosting country, cultural museum visiting, traditional art performance are arranged at the opening stage in some strategic diplomatic circumstances of G7 Summit and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit. By doing this, the solemn atmosphere could be lightened and the distance between the leaders might be shortened. The problem lies that the traditional ethnic minority culture still plays a cameo role in the international communication and a treasure house of its potentials is waiting for the discovering. Therefore, the present article highly recommends to promote the traditional ethnic minority culture in the cultural diploma to erase the existing

heterogeneous and homogeneous tag, increase mutual understanding, trust and respecting to each other's values and interests, reduce the chances of conflict and to avoid the political opposition arising from this cognitive difference.

2. Necessities and Significance of Promoting Traditional Ethnic Minority Culture

Generally speaking, Traditional ethnic minority culture usually can be defined through the following perspectives. First, it enjoys great vitality and lasts over hundreds even thousands of years. Second, it processes every distinct feature in either the language, costume or life custom which is not easily assimilated by the dominant culture. Third, having born some influential figures it is widely acclaimed in the given circle. Forth, with its secret inward-seeking nature, it has strong influence on its believers that many of them would sacrifice wholly to it. This is also the root of populism. All of the features mentioned above make it an important bridge and secret foundational code to strengthen communication, mutual trust, and consensus in the main cultural communication [4].

2.1. Traditional Ethnic Minority Culture Has Constantly Emerged into Main Culture to Display Its Great Influence to the Latter

American culture is a hybrid one since the colonial era [5]. Besides migrant European cultures, it also absorbed various minor cultures such as African, South American, Southeast Asian and the native American indigenous culture, becoming a complex that has been evolved and developed under specific economic and political backgrounds in different periods. Constituting by several relatively independent cultural and historical heritages, this hybrid embodies many genes of traditional ethnic minority cultures such as individualism, freedom, equality, democracy and competition. And it has showed an enduring impact on the world [6]. Catholic Church, Baptist Churches, Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the Old Order Amish Mennonite Church believe in traditional religion doctrine and respect ethical standards of valuing protection of family, marriage and human life [7]. These religions and distinct traditional cultures have profound influence to mainstream American culture in the aspect of American family values that emphasizing stability and role distribution in which Father is usually regarded as the family economic pillar while Mother caring for the children and family chores. Besides the above mentioned influence on dominant cultural value, those traditional cultures or religions even affect the formation of state laws such as anti-abortion law.¹

Chinese culture also consisted of many traditional ethnic

minority cultures like Qiang, Miao, Yao minority cultures, Daoism, and Jiangyong Nvshu (women's script) which are interwoven and form the sources for the mainstream culture. They all emphasize the importance of ecological protection. For example, Taoist Vegetarianism believes in the unity of Heaven and Earth; Qiang village culture pays great attention to the harmonious coexistence between human and nature highlighting the protection of natural environment and ecology; almost all Qiang stockade villages are built along the streams to let the water of life purify every house and assist the sound sleep of each family [8]. This belief is best reflected in the dominant value system of "green mountains and clear waters are as valuable as mountains of gold and silver [9]."

2.2. Traditional Ethnic Minority Culture Is the Basic Norm Framework of the Social Order and the Foundational Logic of Its Mainstream Culture

Beliefs, values, interests and behavior habitus of the dominant culture are a self-sufficient composite within the inner social structure and the groundwork of outer social communication. All of these are built on the existential structure of the society, pluralistic and unified, absorbing the gist of the traditional ethnic minority culture.

Culture of Chinese women's script is a unique minority culture used solely between sisters, intimate female friends, mothers and daughters. With its own characters and signs, it lasts thousands of years and its life value comes from women's belief, sacrifice, tolerance and heritage. Only through those characters on clothes or ornaments, communications within women could be accomplished [1]. The inward-seeking, silence and perseverance in Chinese women's script melt into and become the foundational code of the Chinese dominant culture together with other minor culture. Therefore, familiarizing Chinese women's script will be conducive to understanding the deep meaning of polyphonic, polysemous and ideographic Chinese characters.

Culture in the Japanese Edo Period has characterized by a light literary atmosphere and comedic rakugo art in which a special culture of a social class called *chōnin* (Japanese "townsman") emerged so that highbrow arts and lowbrow entertainments are juxtaposed. The key features of that period culture such as freedom pursuing, vitality, inward-seeking, being worldly wise and playing safe could easily be found in nowadays Japanese mainstream cultures.

South Korea Cheontae Buddhism, one of the small schools of Buddhism, believes in salvation and moksha through cultivation and advocates translating and commenting classical Buddhist scriptures. Its characteristics of Buddhist meditation, balance seeking in the social communication and cultivation, casual expressions, plain and confined idea are also constantly revealed in the mainstream Korean culture.

Russian, deeply influenced by the nomads' culture, alternately embodies the personal unconscious collectivism and irrational individualistic senses. On the one hand, nomads do not stay permanently in one place but prefer migrating to wherever water and grass are available. On the other hand, they feel deeply attached to the land they are born and grow.

¹ Generally speaking, religion is above culture. The latter, originating from civilization, describes the consensus of a certain group of people at societal level while the former focuses on the pure spiritual beliefs and pursuits. For the convenience of discussion, this paper ignores the above difference and secularizes religion to the same level as culture. And it is hoped not to be viewed as a blasphemy to it.

This “dualism” has been carved into the genes of Russian.

On October 1, 1962, a Russian B-59 submarine with the nuclear bomb sailed from Moscow to Cuba and was detected by the United States Navy. US vessels began dropping depth charges and Captain Valentin of the submarine, believing that a war might already have started, wanted to launch the nuclear torpedo. First Mate Arkhipov alone opposed the launch and eventually persuaded Valentin to surface the submarine and await orders from Moscow. This seemingly coward reaction saved the whole world from devastation. On September 1983, the Soviet Union's early-warning center detected a nuclear attack from the United States. Alarm in the Duty Room was rising. And two minutes after, the computer system announced five inbound intercontinental ballistic missiles from United States bases are launched. Petrov, an officer on duty, suspected that the computer system was malfunctioning and furnished a false warning report while examining program code and hardware.

Above cases from various countries have demonstrated that understanding its traditional ethnic minority culture means the grasping of the country's mainstream cultural codes. And the features of those codes are overt and can be easily detected and learned in traditional ethnic minority culture. Therefore, if the potential power of the traditional ethnic minority culture could be excavated and the force of promoting its role in the diplomatic work is strengthened, it would contribute greatly to increase the mutual understanding [10], narrow the gap and alleviate conflicts, thus solving bilateral and multilateral problems in a more objective and solemn way and achieving a win-win in the international communication [3].

2.3. Encouraging International Communication Through the Traditional Ethnic Minority Culture Promoting Mutual Understandings

Nowadays in the variable world situation, difficulties such as regional conflicts, climate changes and refugee crises have brought great challenges to the modern diplomatic work. Besides, misunderstandings of values and interests have also caused some avoidable confrontations and harms. The first is the divergence and conflict in social behaviors and ways of social communication. Some countries may be more open to family relations and intimate body contact, while some Asian, Middle East and other countries may be relatively conservative [11]. The second is the different understanding of rights and democracy caused by historical reasons. There are also differences in the balance between culture and democracy in different countries. Some European countries (such as France) have always adhered to the concept of liberalism and advocated countries' respecting human rights and cultural diversity, so they refused to compromise on issues such as the prohibition of women wearing Muslim headscarves in their country [12]. In this way, these countries may pay more attention to the protection of individual rights and ignore the rights of some cultural groups, thus causing conflicts and disputes.

Let's take the relationship between the United States and some Islamic countries as another example. Oppositions have been triggered in many Islamic countries because of their

religious and cultural influence and the reasons described above, making some populists joining into the ranks of sacrificers [13]. However, these conflicts in values and interests can be resolved through the traditional ethnic minority culture. Once in-depth exchanges of traditional cultures have been realized, people will reach a common goal of pursuing survival, security, hope and development, so that we can understand each other, bridge the gap and enhance the tolerance.

The diplomatic disputes between Japan and its neighbors are the historical problems left over during World War II [14]. Due to different understandings and interpretations of those historical events, unanimous ways to solve them have always had difficulties to achieve. Another case is the disputes over immigration policies between the EU and Hungary [15]. EU disapproves of Hungary's policies towards refugees and immigrants especially its new immigration law while Hungary believes that they are to protect their national interests and culture.

Due to the above differences in the understanding of values and interests, it is difficult for people from different mainstream cultural countries to understand each other deeply. If these differences are only dealt with in a generous way as “a vast ocean admitting all rivers”, it will not be much of help to the development of diplomatic relations and the search for common ground. Communication through the traditional ethnic minority culture can assist countries with different mainstream cultures to find their common ground. So when the diplomatic work is facing with the challenges arising from differences of the mainstream cultures, it is not impossible to find solutions by exploring in-depth exchanges of traditional ethnic minority cultures.

From the perspective of traditional ethnic minority cultures, we may see the commonness between the more inclusive American culture and the relatively conservative Asian culture. These similarities are displayed in the American and Chinese family member' role distributions, music of Indians and Yao minority, kissing etiquette in Chinese Tibetans and western cultures, etc. Proceeding from the cultural common ground is conducive to promoting further understanding and exchanges between countries, helping us to understand each other deeply and to know that many seemingly different or even conflicting mainstream cultures are sharing the same views of protecting and respecting for family, marriage and human life. So the disputes and conflicts arising from different understandings can be avoided and in-depth foreign cooperation strategies can be explored.

3. Ways to Promote Traditional Ethnic Minority Culture

Because of its uniqueness, communicative attribute, its existing positive feedback in international exchange and its benefit to the society, the present article proposes the following ways to enlarge the roles of traditional ethnic minority culture.

1. To enhance the impetus from the official level to vigorously promote traditional ethnic minority cultural exchanges. To be specific, it could be done from three perspectives. First is to increase the government financial support on cultural projects of this kind so that the cultural communication and cooperation platform can be built for the promotion of the understanding and exchanging the traditional ethnic minority culture. Second is to promote it in internationally well-known activities and festivals. In this way, it may draw more attentions and interest to enlarge its international influence. The third is to add traditional ethnic minority cultural elements in logos, badges, ornaments or gifts through various diplomatic channels.
2. To use social media and internet platform to promote traditional culture and arts. By raising hot and popular cultural topics, etc., the tie with their international audience and fans can be established and the unique traditional culture also could be contacted more conveniently [16].
3. To add some traditional cultural elements such as totem arts, ethnic minority music, etc. in famous scenic spots publicity materials. By doing so, it is to draw more foreign tourists' attentions and increase its chances of being known internationally.
4. To design some cultural tourism projects that combine the traditional culture with tourism activities to provide a unique cultural experience and tourism services for foreign tourists so as to enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the traditional culture.
5. To establish a traditional cultural liaison station or institution in universities and other educational organizations which set up elective courses on traditional cultures for domestic and foreign college students, offer related training lesson in international exchange training program, and contact relevant experts so as to enlarge its international influence.
6. As films and mainstream media are still very important communication channels currently, shooting films and short videos on the traditional ethnic minority culture are recommended. In this way, it can combine it with film art, dig deeply into the stories behind it, and present them to foreign audiences.

4. Conclusion

All in all, in order to expand the influence and popularity of traditional ethnic minority culture in international exchanges, various approaches and methods are required to explore and demonstrate its features as well as pass on it efficiently. In that way, more people will have access to comprehend and commune with traditional ethnic minority culture, thus facilitating its inheritance and development. At the same time, the promotion of it can in turn help countries that are different or even contrary in mainstream culture, based on their own

traditional culture with distinctive characteristics, look for commonality while put aside prejudice, so as to promote mutual understanding, enhance cooperation in policy governance, and create a shared better future.

References

- [1] Chen, Lixin. *The Secret Writing in the Time*. Speech delivered in Wuhan University, 2018.
- [2] Albin, C. (2019), Negotiating Complex Conflicts. *Glob Policy*, 10: 55-60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12693>
- [3] Carlan, and Cecep Sumarna, and Dedi Djubaedi, and Siti Fatimah, and Abdurrahman Mas'ud, and Jamali, and Didin Nurul Rosidin, and Abas Hidayat, (2021) Multicultural Value of Education in Forming the Community's Religious Attitude. *International Journal of Recent Advances in Multidisciplinary Topics*, 2 (8). pp. 168-171. ISSN 2582-7839.
- [4] Lin, Hong. On the Root of Populism, *Academics in China*, 2006 (6): 189-193.
- [5] Crothers, L. (2021). *Globalization and American popular culture*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- [6] Dalio, Ray. The Rises and Declines of the Powers and the Root of Populism, *China Development Forum*, 2019. 3.
- [7] Cajka, P. (2021). *Follow your conscience: The Catholic Church and the spirit of the Sixties*. University of Chicago Press.
- [8] Yuan, li & You Jie. *Disappearing Villages: Study on Buildings and Environmental Spaces of Qiang village Ruins in Sichuan Kitagawa*. Chongqing: Chongqing University Press, 2015.
- [9] Lin, Qitan. Great Power Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era and the Culture of Five Relationships. *Journal of International Relations*, 2019 (2): 113-126.
- [10] Feng, Tao. Exploring the Traditional Culture Dissemination of Confucius Institutes from the Perspective of New Public diplomacy. *Social Sciences in Guangxi*, 2017 (2): 198-200.
- [11] Lockman, Z. (2005). Critique from the right: the neo-conservative assault on Middle East studies. *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 5 (1), 63-110.
- [12] Neuwahl, N. A., & Rosas, A. (Eds.). (2021). *The European Union and human rights (Vol. 42)*. BRILL.
- [13] Li, Ruiqian. Americanization vs Islamization: An Observation of American Madrasa. *Beijing Cultural Review*, 2016.
- [14] Yu, Zhenchong. An Analysis of China's "Identity Label" Constructed by Japan's Diplomatic Bluebook. *Japan Studies*, 2023 (1): 50-51.
- [15] Rokicka, E. (2021). Migration policy in Eastern Europe: the case of Poland and Hungary. *Immigration Policy and Crisis in the Regional Context: Asian and European Experiences*, 185-207.
- [16] Meng, Jian. *On the Modernization and Dissemination of Traditional Culture*. *People's Tribune*, 2022 (2): 119-122.