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RELIGACIÓN

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Centro de Investigaciones en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades desde América Latina

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## Religious trends before the impact of globalization and Vietnam's religious policy

*Tendencias religiosas antes del impacto de la globalización y la política religiosa de Vietnam*

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### ABSTRACT

The study of the impact of globalization on religion and the changes in Vietnam's policies in recent years is a difficult task to determine accurately. However, the results that this article brings will partly shed light on the religious trends in Vietnam before the impact of globalization and the changes in religious policy of the Vietnamese state today. This study focuses on clarifying religious life in Vietnam; the impact of globalization on religious life in Vietnam; it highlights common trends in religious life, as well as secularization, modernization of religion, diversification of religious activities, new forms of religion, and the characteristics of new religious phenomena. The study also focused on analyzing Vietnam's religious policies; the advantages and limitations of these policies. It can be seen that the change of religious life in Vietnam in the period of renewal is mainly due to the impact of change in the economic, cultural and social life of the renewal of economic development, in the context of globalization, market expansion, and the international integration of Vietnam. Furthermore, it is a consequence of the restoration and increasing need for religious-spiritual life after years of repression by war. Hence, the need for theoretical and practical research on religious trends and policies, to help improve the policies of the Communist Party and the State on religion, guaranteeing democracy and equality in religious activities in Vietnam.

**Keywords:** Globalization, religious trends, religious policies, Vietnam

### RESUMEN

El estudio del impacto de la globalización en la religión y los cambios en las políticas de Vietnam en los últimos años es una tarea difícil de determinar con precisión. Sin embargo, los resultados que aporta este artículo arrojarán luz sobre las tendencias religiosas en Vietnam antes del impacto de la globalización y los cambios en la política religiosa del estado vietnamita en la actualidad. Este estudio se centra en aclarar la vida religiosa en Vietnam; el impacto de la globalización en la vida religiosa de su gente; que destaca las tendencias comunes de la vida religiosa, así como la secularización, la modernización de la religión, la diversificación de las actividades religiosas, las nuevas formas de religión y las características de los nuevos fenómenos religiosos. También se centró en analizar las políticas religiosas de Vietnam; sus ventajas y limitaciones. Se puede observar que el cambio de la vida religiosa en Vietnam en el período de renovación se debe principalmente al impacto del cambio en la vida económica, cultural y social de la renovación del desarrollo económico, en el contexto de la globalización, la expansión del mercado y la integración internacional de Vietnam. Sin dejar de lado, que es una consecuencia de la restauración y el aumento de la necesidad de la vida religioso-espiritual después de años de represión por la guerra. De ahí, la necesidad de una investigación teórica y práctica sobre tendencias y políticas religiosas, para contribuir a mejorar las políticas del Partido Comunista y del Estado sobre religión, garantizando la democracia y la igualdad en las actividades religiosas en Vietnam.

**Palabras clave:** globalización, tendencias religiosas, políticas religiosas, Vietnam

## INTRODUCTION

Globalization is the word used to describe the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information (Wolf, 2004; Reinsdorf & Matthew, 2009). Countries have built economic partnerships to facilitate these movements over many centuries (Sirkin & Arindam, 2008). But the term globalization is of quite a recent provenance. It first appeared in the business and sociological literature of the 1980s, but by the end of the century, it had become a broadly invoked expression in both academic and popular discourse around the world (Smith, 2007).

In all of these versions, there are those variants that regard the process as a quite recent development and others that locate its beginnings decades and sometimes centuries in the past. There are also differences of opinion as to whether the process is generally good or mostly bad. Much of the literature is in fact quite critical, seeing the global as a kind of homogenizing imposition on the local, a development in which the strong, overtly or insidiously, presume their ways upon the comparatively weak, dominating or excluding the latter (Murray, 2006). A further approach to globalization, however, looks at this contrast of the global and the local differently, laying less stress on homogenizing economic and political institutions that impose themselves from above and rather more on local and global movements (Gowan, 1999). Networks and international organizations that also contribute to making the world more of a single place, sometimes parallel to the more hegemonic institutions, sometimes in consonance with them, sometimes even in express opposition them (Wolf, 2004).

The dialogical approaches to globalization, in conjunction with those that stress globalization from below, are of special significance when it comes to the topic of religion (Peter, 2005). Many people believe that religion is a sensitive issue and often overlooked, rarely mentioned (Scholte, 2000; Thompson & Woodward, 2000). By far the greatest portion of the by now a vast literature on globalization completely or almost completely ignores religion, the partial exception being the attention that Islamicist political extremism receives (Peter, 2005). Consideration of the relation between religion and globalization involves two basic possibilities. There are, on the one hand, religious responses to globalization and religious interpretations of globalization. These are, as it were, part of doing religion in a globalizing context. On the other hand, there are those analyses of globalization that seek to understand the role of religion in globalization and the effects of globalization on religion (Peter, 2005).

Facing such an inevitable trend, every country, whether high or low, has to integrate and find its own place in the inevitable flow of history (Hau, 2006). For Vietnam, due to its characteristics in the East-West exchange area, besides the two great civilizations are India and China, the process of exchanging and receiving international influence takes place early and has the specific characteristics in the process of international integration (Hung, 2004). Currently, Vietnam is subject to significant impacts of globalization on all aspects of social life, including religious life. In fact, the movement, transformation, and development of religious life in Vietnam are closely linked with the movement and development of social, closely linked to the trend of globalization. In the context of many changes, Vietnam's religious policies had to be changed to suit the new situation while still maintaining political stability and social order.

The study of the impact of globalization on religion and the changes in Vietnam's policies in recent years is a difficult and difficult task to determine accurately. However, the results that this article brings will partly shed light on the religious trends in Vietnam before the impact of globalization and the changes in religious policy of the Vietnamese state in the new situation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

After 1986, Vietnam implemented the renovation process, with a view of comprehensive innovation in all areas of social life (Communist Party of Vietnam, 1986), including religion. The market economy has replaced a centrally planned and subsidized economy. All areas of social life have changed in a more positive direction (Thang, 2018), including religious life.

Under the impact of the market economy in the context of globalization, religious life in our country has profoundly changed (Loi, 2019). It is a change in faith, the need for spiritual life, beliefs, religions that increases with the “return to religious beliefs” taking place in all religions, social communities, and parts of the population are at different “dark and light” levels and in all regions of the country.

Regarding the number of believers of religions: Within 16 years (2001-2017), the number of followers of recognized religious organizations increased to 6% in the population (Thang, 2018). That is not to mention that small-group religions (mainly home-based Protestant groups) have not been recognized and new religious phenomena are difficult to statistically count followers. The number of followers of all religions has increased, the fastest growing of which is Protestant Christians, from 670,000 in 2004, 734,168 in 2009 (Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee, 2009) has increased to over 1,2 million believers in 2015 (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2016), which is nearly doubled in 10 years. By 2017, there were 1.35 million people (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2018). The mutant development of Protestantism took place mainly in the northern mountainous areas and the Central Highlands. The province with the most Protestant followers is DakLak province with 188,169 followers (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2018). These are also the two regions where the conversion of religious faith took place most strongly during the renovation period in Vietnam (Loi, 2019).

The change in religious appearance: Along with the increasing demand for religious spiritual life, the return of religious beliefs and the increase in religious followers, the religious appearance has changed with the trend increasingly diversifying (Loi, 2019). That conversion, on the one hand, due to the strong changes in religious beliefs, many new religions have been born. On the other hand, because some religions after a long time of decline have been restored to operation, they are recognized by the State (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2015). Before 1985 in our country there were three types of beliefs and religions, including indigenous beliefs (Worship of Ancestor, Worship of Mother Goddess, Worship of Village’s Tutelary god, Worship of Soul, etc.); religion was introduced from abroad into Vietnam ( Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam) and the religion was formed in the country of Vietnam (Hoa Hao Buddhism, Cao Dai). From 1986 to the present, the fourth type has appeared, which is the “new religious phenomenon”, also known as “strange religion”, with many different names, large numbers, concentrated mainly in the plains and midlands of the North (Loi, 2019).

Regarding religious structure: There is a restructuring of the religious system as well as in each religion. If changing religious appearance, it indicates that the external change of the religious world creates religious types (4 types mentioned above) that reflect the objective development trend of religious life taking place. Under the influence of socio-economic conditions, the restructuring of religions reflects the internal changes of the religious system and each religion, due to the impact of religious policies and laws, changes the legal status of religion (Loi, 2019). In other words, in the restructuring of religion in Vietnam, the role of the subject of the State is crucial (Hau, 2006). Before 1990, Vietnam had only three state-recognized religious organizations: the Vietnam Protestant General Association (the North); the Vietnamese Episcopal Council and the Vietnamese Buddhist Church (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2001). Since the renovation of the religious affairs policy, marked by the establishment of Resolution 24 of the

Politburo (October 16, 1990) (Vietnam Communist Party, 1990) on strengthening religious affairs in the new situation, there have been many organizations state-recognized religion. From 1990 to the time of the Ordinance on Beliefs and Religions (2004), there were 3 more religions, including Islam (2 representative boards), CaoDai (9 denominations), HoaHao Buddhism and the Church Vietnamese Protestant (Southern), increased 6 religions with 16 recognized religious organizations (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2005). From 2005 up to now, there have been 9 more religions with 22 religious organizations and 01 practice methods, increasing to 15 religions with 41 organizations and 1practice methods were recognized (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2019). In particular, there are many small local religious groups also recognized as TuAnHieuNghia, BuuSonKyHuong, MinhSuDao and MinhLyDao.

Thus, changes in the face and structure of religion have made Vietnam's religious activities more diverse and richer, religious pluralism is also clearly shown (Loi, 2019). If the diversity reflects the objective development trend of religious life, the pluralism reflects Vietnam's religious laws approaching the civil religion model (Hau, 2006). On the other hand, religious diversity is an inevitable consequence of the conversion of religious faith, while pluralism is the result of the completion of religious laws in Vietnam.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### *The conversion of faith, the emergence of the new religious phenomenon and the formation of religious-ethnic communities*

The conversion of faith has taken place in many localities of Vietnam (Thang, 2016). In the Northern Uplands of Vietnam, mainly converted from religious traditional polytheism to Catholicism. In particular, the conversion to Catholicism took place from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the formation of Catholicism and Muong communities in province: Thanh Hoa, Ninh Binh, Hoa Binh and Mong people in Sapa (Lao Cai), Yen Bai (Hung, 2004). However, Catholicism development has been slow, after more than 100 years of missionary work, in the northern mountainous region only 45,488 ethnic minorities have been Catholicism people (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2003). While the conversion to Protestantism was later, but there was a spectacular development, especially since the renovation to date. This event started in 1986 when some Mong people in Tuyen Quang province listened to FEBC (Far East Broadcasting Company) from Manila (Philippines) and the enticement of some local subjects was Protestantism under the name VangChu (Hau, 2006). From then on, Protestantism - VangChu quickly spread to other areas of the Hmong people and the Dao people (under the name of Thin Hung) in the northern mountainous provinces, creating a strong movement of faith conversion. By 2015, there were 181,615 ethnic minority people in 927 villages and 13 northern mountainous provinces, who followed Protestantism, not counting over 62,000 Hmong who was Protestantism migrants to the Central Highlands, to Laos and China (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2015). The Northern Uplands became the region with the second-largest number of Protestantism in the country after the Central Highlands. Notably, it also converted to Christian tendencies, but a part of Mong people did not follow Protestantism or Catholicism but chose "the third way", combining Protestantism thought with traditional beliefs to create a strange religion: the religion of Duong Van Minh (Loi, 2019). There is a part converted to Buddhism, but not many (Thang, 2016). At the same time, the phenomenon of conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism and vice versa (Loi, 2019), especially the conversion in Protestantism denominations, is quite common in the Northern mountainous provinces.

In the Central Highlands, the conversion and conversion took place earlier, following many different trends (Thang, 2016). Firstly, from the traditional religion to Catholicism, it took place at the earliest, first in the North Central Highlands (KonTum province), at the end of the nineteenth

century and the early twentieth century, popularly Bana and XuDang Catholicism. Since 1990, Catholicism has flourished, spreading to many ethnic groups, becoming the religion with the largest number of followers in the Central Highlands (Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee, 2019). Second, from religion, traditional beliefs converted to Protestantism in the 30s of the twentieth century, thriving in the period of 1954-1975, specially developed massively after 1990. The Central Highlands became the area with the highest number of Protestantism (51.17%) in the country (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2015). Third, from Catholicism to Protestantism in the early 2000, when Protestantism was recognized and promoted missions to ethnic minority areas in the Central Highlands (Thang, 2016). Fourth, from traditional beliefs to Buddhism, in the 1990s, up to now, there are 20,000 ethnic minority Buddhists (Loi, 2019). Fifth, from Catholicism and Protestantism to new religious phenomena. Sixth, conversion within Protestantism, from one sect to another, is common (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2019).

In addition, the religious conversion also took place in the Kinh people community following many trends, especially the shift to new religious phenomena, in the Northern Plains and Midlands (Loi, 2019). Not only people who follow traditional beliefs turn to religion, but also Khmer people follow Theravada Buddhism in the Southwest Vietnam; Cham people, Bani people, Muslims people, and Brahmins people also have converted to Catholicism or Protestantism (Thang, 2016).

The conversion of religious beliefs has led to the formation of new religious phenomena (strange religion) both in the Kinh people community and ethnic minorities. Among the Kinh people, they are concentrated mainly in the Northern Plains and Midlands; most of them arose within the country, relying on folk beliefs in harmony with Buddhism (Hau, 2006). And in ethnic minority areas following a Christian tendency: DuongVanMinh, Amiara, PoKhapBrau (from Protestantism), CanhTan and HaMon (from Catholicism). The emergence of new religious phenomena has changed the appearance of religion in our country, at the same time posing many problems for state management (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2019).

The religious onversion also led to the formation of new religious-ethnic communities. These are ethnic communities who follow the same religion, united by religion, governed by religious doctrine and law (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2018). Ethnic religious community is strongly expressed in taking religious beliefs as a cohesive element of ethnic groups (Hung, 2004). There, religious factors dominated ethnic factors, religious institutions were often integrated into social institutions (Loi, 2019). The formation of religious-ethnic groups has changed many traditional values of these communities, notably the position and role of the village elders, the village chiefs, the clan heads have been replaced by religious leaders, such as group leader, missionary, pastor (Protestantism).

### ***The trend modernization of religion***

Marx (1970) said that, religion is a reflection of social existence. The religious world is only a reflection of the real world (Hung, 2004). When the economic base of society is changed, sooner or later, religion changes as well (Marx, 1970). For each religion, “the same religion but adapting to each of the different stages of economic development of the people who believe in it, religion changes the nature of its content” (Marx, 1970, p. 273).

Modernization is a historical process that started in Europe, started with the industrial revolution, then spread to other areas and became the world’s trend (Bernstein, 1971). In order to adapt to the process of modernization, religions have changed (Murray, 2006). The first to mention is the appearance of Protestantism. With the renewal of doctrine, ritual, organization, more flexibility in law, the existence and rapid development of Protestantism have proved it is a

religion suitable for the development of modern capitalism. And in that flow, other religions also have changes to conform.

Because the characteristics and development history of different religions are not the same, the method, content, and level of modernization are not the same, but generally have the following basic contents:

Modernizing the internal relationships on the content of doctrine and its explanation, on canonical provisions, on the form of ritual and ritual practice, on the organizational structure and activities of Church.

Modernizing external relations of social doctrine and relations, religious attitudes to social issues, relations with other religions and non-religious people, etc.

Modernizing the facilities for evangelization, mode of mission and religion management in Vietnam, before the modernization of the world's religions and its impact, and before the changes of economic life and social life in the country, religions have different reactions: gradually modernize with different levels to suit the era. Religious modernization in Vietnam is not only different in content, method, and level of modernization, but also in different regions, localities, even among believers, even though they are one religion. In each religion, the modernization process may take place sooner or later differently, but it is most concentrated and noticeable in recent decades when the country has moved from a centralized economy of subsidized bureaucracy to the background of the market economy (Thang, 2016).

What is noticeable in the change of religions towards modernization, in the period of the market economy is the application of religions by the achievements of modern science and technology, including some theories science and a number of scientific means for missionary work (Hau, 2006). Some religious dignitaries use the advantage of new theories to support their religious theory or sought to explain new religious perspectives in accordance with modern science (Thang, 2016). Many modern technologies such as electric lamps of all kinds, loudspeakers, amplifiers, televisions, videos, projectors, computers, etc. are used to promote the effectiveness of evangelizing and directorate religion.

Thus, it can be said that the issue of religious modernization is the reaction of religion to the changes of the times (Loi, 2019). It is not until the present period that the modernization of religion takes place, but before that, each religion has appeared changes to adapt to the changes of the times, whether it may be sooner or later differently. The impact of the market economy and globalization only makes the process of modernization in each religion faster (Hau, 2006). In particular, modern technical means used by religions to promote their effectiveness in evangelization and management religion have become an integral part of the religious modernization process in Vietnam.

### ***The trend the secularisation of religion***

For a long time, the concept of "secularization" has been mentioned by many researchers as a movement of thought, affecting and influencing many aspects of the lives of spiritual practitioners. Recently, secularization has been rekindled by many debates regarding sociological theories of religion and the economics of religion. Bryjak and Soroka (1994) claim that the secularization, resulting from the growing rationality and increasing concern of prosperity within society, reflects the diminishing importance of religion in daily life. How can this decline of religion in society be measured? Since it is historically founded, secularization generally is viewed from the perspective of the churches (Ester et al., 1993).

It can be said that the secularization of religion is closely linked to the development and progress of human society (Bryjak and Soroka, 1994) and today this is the dominant trend that

dominates the world religious life as well as in Vietnam (Hau, 2006, Van, 2019). Basically, the contents of the secularization trend are agreed by scientists at the following basic points: These are the acts of the entry of all religions by participating in non-religious secular activities (society, ethics, education, health, etc) (Bryjak and Soroka, 1994), in order to contribute to the rescue of fellow human beings, the secularization trend is also manifested in the struggle of a progressive part of each religion that wants to eliminate obsolete points in the doctrine, the rigors in canon law, the desire to progress towards the solidarity between religious and non-religious believers, the secularization trend is also common in industrialized countries, especially the in urban dwellers and young people, the role of religion is diminished (Dobbelaere, 1981). The determination of one's life is mainly based on his own life, no, or less dependent on the supernatural, the secular trend is also manifested in the way people seem to leave certain religions (Hau, 2006).

Here, the secularization is understood in the sense of mundane life (Hau, 2006). If the above-mentioned content is understood as the content of secularization, in the religious life in Vietnam, the secularization or incarnation trend has been taking place for a long time but it has only clearly manifested in recent years (Hau, 2006). However, due to specific historical conditions, plus being in the state of socio-economic transformation, the trend of the secularization of Vietnam is also different from other countries, especially compared to other countries.

If the trend of secularization in the West, the people less and less often go to church at church, even though they believe that there is God (Bryjak & Soroka, 1994), there is a Supreme one who still recognizes themselves as some religious believer (Dobbelaere, 1981). In Vietnam, the number of believers taking part in religious activities in places of worship is increasing (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2019). According to the annual Government Committee for Religious Affairs statistics, the number of religious believers visiting religious establishments such as Pagoda of Buddhism, churches of Catholicism and Protestants, mosques of Islam and Cao Dai on important religious holidays very crowded.

The trend of secularization in religions in Vietnam is also reflected in the religions besides practicing the religion, they also do the work of life, which is participating in social activities: politics, medicine, education, poverty reduction, etc in all religions such as Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, CaoDaim, HoaHao, Islam, etc (Van, et al, 2020).

Thus, secularization is the introduction of religion into daily life, truly demonstrating the spirit of attachment to the human life of religious institutions, turning hard dry, focusing only on the personal liberation of religion into vivid lessons that can be applied to building a society lenient, friendly, kindness, etc (Hung, 2004; Van, 2019). With the trend of the secularization of religion in the above point of view, in addition to the effort towards a life of liberation for spiritual practitioners, has completely abandoned the secular life dedicated to spiritual practice. Religious activities also focus on the issues of social life, express the doctrinal spirit of the religions, stick with people and people, accompany the country; promote the patriotic tradition and the spirit of building the country, creating a great mass to unite the entire people, expanding the fields of social activities and humanitarian charity such as raising orphans, participating helping the disabled, providing relief to flood victims, constructing charity houses; participating in projects to enhance the responsiveness of religions in HIV/AIDS prevention activities, etc. On days of the nCovid 19 pandemics spreading, causing serious damage to the country, many Buddhist temples became an isolated place for people coming back from an infected area.

### ***Vietnam's policy on religion***

International integration and globalization create many conditions for missionary work to Vietnam and are promoted through many ways: tourism, culture exchange, seminars, conferences, through sources of books and newspapers, through the media and especially the internet.

People have easy access to new religions, thereby forming new religious beliefs (Thang, 2018; Van et al, 2020). The exchange and interference between nations and ethnic groups facilitate the formation of diverse religions in Vietnam with the interwoven existence of traditional, endogenous and exogenous religions (Thang, 2018). Religious beliefs also change (Van, 2019); the phenomenon of transition from polytheistic beliefs to monotheism or from traditional and endogenous religions to exogenous religions (Hung, 2004). Along with the change of beliefs, the religious practices in Vietnam also have many changes under the impact of globalization (Hau, 2006). The development of social networking sites not only helps people connect with each other anytime, anywhere, making the world more flat and virtual, including religious spiritual life (Thompson, 2000). Internet and information technology have become the most effective means for religions to introduce, disseminate and promote images, to the spiritual life of the people. In this context, there have been changes in Vietnam's religious policy as well.

After more than 30 years conducting the renovation of the country, the Party and the State of Vietnam constantly renewed awareness of religion and state management in the field of religion and belief (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016). This is the foundation to formulate guidelines and policies, create favorable conditions for religious activities and beliefs of the people who have religious and improve the efficiency of state management in this field.

The Politburo's Resolution 24 (1990) "On strengthening religious affairs in the new situation" for the first time affirmed new perspectives on religion and beliefs: i) religion is still a problem that is long term; ii) beliefs and religions are the spiritual needs of a part of the people; iii) religious morality has many things to do with the building of a new society. From here, the state management in the field of religion and belief is also oriented: i) both pay attention to solving the religious needs of the masses in a timely manner, and promptly fight against the abuse of religion; ii) the core content of religious work is the mobilization of the masses; iii) religious work is the responsibility of the entire political system.

In the next directives and resolutions, the Party's theoretical thinking on religious issues continues to be supplemented and completed: Politburo's Directive 37 (1998) clearly stated: "Cultural values, good religious morality is respected and encouraged to be promoted". Resolution of the 5th Conference of the 8th Central Executive Committee (1998) on "Building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity", encourages the idea of fairness, charity, good, etc in religion. In particular, Resolution No. 25 of the 7th Central Committee Conference of the Communist Party's 11th Congress (2003) summarized and developed the Party's theoretical thinking on issues of religion and religious affairs in the period degree of socialism in our country. Accordingly, new awareness on religious issues during the transition to socialism focused on the following main contents:

Firstly, acknowledge the existence of religion during the transition to socialism. This is a particularly important issue, clearly expressing the Party's views on religious issues during the transition to socialism. From the viewpoint of "religion is a long-standing issue" to Resolution 25, the Party has more clearly affirmed, "religion is and will remain with the nation in the process of moving up socialism." This, on the one hand, concretizes the "long-lasting" view of religion, but develops and clarifies the relationship between religion and nationalism and socialism in Vietnam; on the other hand, overcomes subjective ideology, idealism, which religion will quickly disappear in the process of building socialism.

Secondly, religion and beliefs are the spiritual needs of a part of the people (Communist Party of Vietnam 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016). This view is particularly important in renewing the Party's theoretical thinking on religion (Hung, 2004). In the past, religion had only limited access from philosophical and political ideologies, with the classical definition "religion is the opium of

the people” (Mark, 1970, p. 224); beliefs are often associated with customs, superstitions, etc, now, religious beliefs have been recognized as a part of national history, culture and morality and moreover, it is the social entity that has the ability to consolidate the community and stabilize social order and safety (Communist Party of Vietnam 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016). This new perspective lays the foundations for the management of the authorities and socio-political organizations, showing interest and to ensure the close interests of the people of all religions in satisfying their needs of a healthy and legitimate religious life, similar to the guarantee of other human rights such as food, clothing, and shelter, residence, human rights, democracy, etc.

Thirdly, acknowledge and encourage the promotion values of religion in the building of a new society. The religion in the process of existence and development always reveals both positive and negative sides (Hung, 2004). Previously, due to the need for the revolution to focus on the task of national liberation in the condition that hostile forces took advantage of religion to oppose the revolution, we often emphasized the negative aspect of religion, such as cynical ideology, lulls people (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2012). According to the Party’s innovative viewpoint (2011 and 2016), besides the limitations that need to be overcome, it is necessary to respect and promote the positive values of religion, including the positive aspects of morality and religious culture (Hung, 2004). Religion has the function of regulating human social behavior, directing people to the good, the good and the beautiful (Van, 2020). Believers of religion with the belief in the supreme and eternal life after death, fear of punishment or “retribution” for committing crimes or do evil should often have good acts of moral conduct (Hung, 2004). Doctrine and canonically of the religion, has created ethical norms leading people to do good deeds, to avoid evil, to cultivate virtue in order to be liberated (Buddhism), to go to heaven (Christianity, Islam). Religions not only “sanctify” moral norms, but also create social opinion to adjust the behavior of believers towards good and eliminate evil (Nicos, 2012). Thus, religious morality contributes to the regulation of human social behavior. The reality shows that, in places of religious stability, with a large number of followers, the social evils are less, the order is more stable and the moral lifestyle is more orderly (Hung, 2004).

Fourthly, preserve and promote the positive values of the ancestor worship tradition, honoring those who have contributed to the Fatherland and the people (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2018). This view is completely new and creative in our Party’s theoretical thinking on the issue of belief and religion (Thang, 2018; Van, et al, 2020). For the first time, the connotation of religion is officially mentioned in the Party’s document (2001). In the minds of Vietnamese people, worshipping ancestors, honoring people with meritorious services to the people, with water is not only a form of belief but also a morality of “drinking water to remember the source” of the nation (Anh, 2005; Van, 2017 and 2019). The Party’s recognition of the good values of the ancestor worship tradition, honoring the people with meritorious services to the Fatherland and the people is very important, contributing to orienting the religions and beliefs in the field. On the other hand, promote the positive values of the ancestor worship tradition, are also important factors to meet the needs of the spiritual, spiritual and psychological life of the people (Hung, 2004). Besides promoting the positive values of the ancestor worship tradition, honoring those who have meritorious services to the people and the country, the Party (2006, 2011 and 2016) also pointed out that we must respect the law and prohibit discrimination against citizens for religious reasons; It is strictly forbidden to abuse beliefs and religions to operate in contravention of the law and State policies, to instigate division of people, national division, disruption, and national security.

The reality shows that the renewal of the Party’s thinking on religion and belief has created the foundation for creating guidelines, policies and laws of the State, creating favorable conditions for religious activities religious, beliefs the effectiveness of state management in this area

(Hau, 2006; Thang, 2018; Van, 2020). The new laws and decrees on religious beliefs promulgated in 2016 2017, 2018 and 2019 are great steps in the legalization of religious issues in the new situation. However, there are still many unresolved issues that require the formulation of policies and laws on beliefs and religions that need to be supplemented and perfected by all levels and branches in the coming time.

## CONCLUSIONS

The change of religious life in Vietnam in the renovation period mentioned above is primarily due to the impact of the change on the economic, cultural and social life of the renovation of economic development. In the context of globalization, market expansion, exchange and international integration of Vietnam. On the other hand, the change is due to the policy of renewing the religious affairs of Vietnam more and more open. At the same time, it is a consequence of the restoration and increases in the need for the religious-spiritual life after years of repression by the war, now entering a period of renewal, opening up conditions to rise and develop.

Religion will last for a long time (Communist Party of Vietnam 2011 and 2016) because religious needs reflect the legitimate right and freedom of people towards true, good and good values (Government Committee for Religious Affairs, 2018). In fact, many religions have accompanied and actively participated in building and developing society. Religious activities are not far from reality and gradually become secular through many charitable activities - humanitarian, social security, social protection, etc., contributing to the sustainable development of the country. In this situation, it is necessary to have a new perspective as well as appropriate policies and laws in order to properly address the guarantee of freedom of belief and religion and at the same time prevent negative aspects to religion, truly are the resources for the country's sustainable development.

The above-mentioned changes in religious life require a new way of thinking and new views as well as policies and laws to promote the positive aspects and limit negative aspects of religion in the sustainable development of the country. First of all, it is necessary to thoroughly understand religious recognition as a source of development for the country as the Politburo's Directive No. 18-CT/TW of January 10, 2018, on the continued implementation of the Decree Decision No. 25-NQ/TW of the 11th Central Committee of the Party Central Committee on religious affairs in the new situation indicated that Vietnam should continue to improve the policies and laws on religion to promote, make good use of religious resources, especially in terms of charity - humanitarian, social security, social protection as well as in the field of education, training of social human resources, health care for people, contributing to the sustainable development of the country in the era of globalization.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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