

THE ROLE OF HISTORICAL–CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL SELF-AWARENESS

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Abstract : This article examines the philosophical and sociocultural dimensions of historical and cultural heritage in the context of global integration. While globalization strengthens intercultural exchange, it simultaneously challenges the preservation of national values and traditions. Using philosophical, ethnographic, and hermeneutic methods, the study analyzes heritage as a dynamic phenomenon linking generations through spiritual, experiential, and material components. The findings show that heritage supports social continuity, stimulates cultural creativity, and embodies both national and transnational characteristics. The article argues for a broader, ontological understanding of heritage beyond material artifacts, emphasizing its existential and developmental functions in modern society.

Keywords: Historical-cultural heritage; globalization; ethnoculture; ethnogenesis; intergenerational continuity; cultural identity; Kantian philosophy; cultural dynamics; social development.

Introduction

Globalization and integration processes have reshaped ethnocultures and social institutions worldwide. While these processes accelerate cultural exchange and elevate local cultures to universal value systems, they simultaneously threaten the preservation of national heritage, long-standing traditions, and cultural identity. The philosophical, sociological, and ethnographic study of historical and cultural heritage has therefore become increasingly important. This research explores the ontological, existential, and social functions of historical and cultural heritage as a dynamic phenomenon transmitting intergenerational continuity and shaping collective identity[1].

The processes of globalization and integration taking place in the world today are having contradictory effects on all ethnocultures and spheres of social life. On the one hand, they expand the ethnocultures, social spheres, and areas of human activity that have previously formed and developed within local, national, and ethno-territorial boundaries, raising them to the level of universal human values; on the other hand, they turn the preservation of national treasures, historical-cultural heritage accumulated over many centuries, and traditions into a problem.

Methods: This study employs a qualitative analytical method based on: Philosophical analysis — particularly Kantian epistemology concerning phenomena and noumena; Comparative cultural analysis — examining ethnocultural heritage across different societies and civilizations; Hermeneutic interpretation — evaluating meanings embedded in historical experience and intergenerational memory; Ethnogenetic analysis — understanding heritage as a phenomenon tied to the origin and development of a people. Primary sources include contemporary academic literature, encyclopedic definitions, and theoretical frameworks from ethnography and cultural studies[2].

Results: The study yields several key findings: Heritage is not merely a material “relic,” but a

dynamic phenomenon containing spiritual, psychological, and epistemic elements inherited across generations. Intergenerational continuity is the essential function of heritage, enabling the transmission of collective experiences and cultural norms. The new generation does not blindly imitate, but creatively transforms and enriches heritage, ensuring social dynamism. Heritage possesses national and transnational characteristics, appearing in architecture, trade, governance, customs, and language. Ethnogenesis is closely tied to heritage, making it a phenomenal reality that evolves in harmony or dialectical tension with societal development. Scientific interest in heritage is growing, especially in the context of globalization, where cultural identity and universal values intersect[3].

Discussion

The findings highlight the need to reconsider simplistic definitions of historical and cultural heritage as mere “remnants of the past.” Heritage must be examined as a living system embedded in human consciousness, social structures, and cultural memory. Kant’s phenomenological argument — that phenomena represent appearances rather than absolute inner qualities of objects — reveals that heritage cannot be reduced to its physical artifacts alone.

Globalization intensifies cultural interdependence, creating both risks and opportunities. While some local traditions face erosion, globalization also facilitates cultural dialogue, innovation, and shared human development. The growing interest in heritage within Uzbekistan, especially since independence, reflects a desire to strengthen national identity while engaging with universal human knowledge[4].

Thus, historical and cultural heritage becomes not only an object of preservation but a catalyst for intellectual growth, creativity, and social progress.

Today, major scientific research centers and universities around the world are conducting studies on the issue of historical and cultural heritage. For example, at the Institute of Ethnography and Archaeology in the USA, the history and archaeological heritage of ancient civilizations are being investigated, while the Institute of Ethnography in Russia studies the culture, lifestyle, historical ethnography, historical-cultural heritage and contemporary democratic transformations in the cultural life of the peoples of the CIS, as well as integration processes between national cultures[5].

Historical and cultural heritage is an object created before the birth of an individual and passed down from generation to generation. Does denying intergenerational reflective connections not lead to a superficial interpretation of historical and cultural heritage? Does perceiving historical and cultural heritage merely as an external object not reduce it to only its material aspect? Is our inner spiritual world only the product of our personal experience and emotions, or does it also include the a priori and gnoseological experiences of our ancestors who created this heritage? In Kant’s view that “phenomena do not express the absolute and inner quality of objects but are the essence of the image of things,” the influence of such internal spiritual experiences is put into question.

Indeed, historical and cultural heritage appears as a unique phenomenon from the perspective of the “two great principles” — time and space. Its traditionalism, continuity, and inheritance demand attention to internal spiritual factors and ethnopsychological influences[6]. Therefore, it is insufficient to view historical and cultural heritage merely as a set of material cultural riches or external artifacts.

One of the most important functional features of historical and cultural heritage is that it preserves intergenerational connections and ensures continuity. Here, the evolutionary development supported by historical and cultural heritage becomes visible[7].

During the years of independence, interest in historical and cultural heritage has increased, and support for scholarly and creative research in this area has become a state policy. Many treatises, books, and monographs have been published on the functional role of heritage in preserving intergenerational ties. However, even in these works, the existential-ontological and social functions of historical and cultural heritage are not fully revealed.

Even in an authoritative source such as the Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan, heritage is briefly defined as “the remnants of the past passed down from ancestors to generations, including scientific, literary, and cultural wealth.” Yet it is not simply a “remnant of the past” as described in the above source; it gives vitality and dynamism to the lives of generations, because the new generation performs its social functions based on the life experiences left by its ancestors, learning from them. This is not blind imitation; the new generation inevitably adds something to the heritage, changes certain aspects, and transforms traditional approaches.

This occurs because social existence is inherently dynamic and inclined toward continuous change.

Therefore, historical and cultural heritage is not a static thing simply transmitted from one generation to another; within it lies a motivating force, energy, and dynamism that encourages future generations to search, create, and innovate. This dynamism turns heritage into a necessary and beneficial asset for social development.

Historical and cultural heritage is a unique reality and phenomenon connected with the ethnocultural monuments and ethno-traditions created by a particular people or nation over centuries. Thus, specialists and scholars study it in relation to ethnogenesis. The connection with ethnogenesis makes historical and cultural heritage a phenomenal reality, appearing in harmony or dialectical interrelation at each stage of development.

The national and transnational characteristics of historical and cultural heritage can be found in nearly all spheres. For instance, transnational elements can also be observed in trade, architecture, state governance, and even in seemingly purely national customs and ethnolinguistics. Due to these commonalities, some literature expresses the idea that all peoples and nations originate from Adam and Eve, emphasizing the unity of human genesis.

Such an approach is necessary in two ways: first, the need for science is becoming global, and the fate of all national development models depends on their relationship with it. It is not without reason that the UN promotes the 21st century as the century of science, knowledge, intellect, and cultural development. Second, today Uzbek philosophy is forming as historical-cultural heritage and intellectual property. Understanding its place in universal human wealth and its relation to it is of significant scholarly importance.

It is axiomatic that science has a universal nature. By their nature, humans are interested in the life, experiences, lifestyle, and culture of other nations and peoples, study them, and gain experience from them.

Conclusion: Historical and cultural heritage is a multidimensional phenomenon that transcends simple material definitions. It encompasses centuries of accumulated spiritual, intellectual, and cultural experience. In a globalized world, heritage serves as a bridge between past and future, enabling societies to preserve cultural identity while adapting to new realities. Its dynamic character motivates innovation, supports social evolution, and contributes to universal human development. Understanding heritage as both national and transnational enriches scholarship and strengthens intercultural dialogue, making it a critical component of contemporary intellectual and cultural progress.

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