

**TRA VINH PROVINCE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE**  
**TRA VINH UNIVERSITY**

**NGUYEN THUY DIEM**

**PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**  
**FROM CULTURAL VIEWPOINT**

**Major: Cultural Studies**  
**Sector code: 9229040**

**SUMMARY OF PHD DISSERTATION**  
**MAJORS: CULTURAL STUDIES**

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Scientific instructor: Prof. Dr. Mai Ngoc Chu

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## **A. INTRODUCTION**

### **1 Reasons for choosing the topic**

Right from its inception, in addition to the naming function, place names are always vivid and true historical pages recording many social events, depicting daily life, typical cultural features, expressing the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of the people. Although the study of place names from the perspective of language has achieved remarkable achievements, in general, it has not yet fully explained the overall picture of the daily life and mind of the indigenous people. Therefore, the interpretation of place names requires coming from many perspectives, in which, the cultural perspective will be the appropriate approach.

Dubbed as the capital of the West, the land of Tran Giang - Can Tho has deservedly been one of the cultural cradles that influenced the formation of the Southwest cultural region. However, there is almost no research that deeply, comprehensively and systematically studies the culture in Can Tho in general, and the culture through place names in Can Tho in particular. Therefore, research on this issue has become an urgent topic, partly helping to understand the history of the land, community consciousness as well as cultural exchange and acculturation in the land of Can Tho through place names, contributing positively to the management of culture in the locality.

Because of the above reasons, we boldly chose the topic “Place names in Can Tho city from cultural viewpoint” as the research orientation of the dissertation.

### **2 Research question and research hypothesis**

#### ***2.1 Research questions:***

- The place names in Can Tho city contribute to the expression of cognitive culture about nature and society of the people here on what basic elements?

- How are the main characteristics of the organizational culture of collective life and individual life reflected in the place names in Can Tho city?

- What basic aspects of behaving culture are shown through place names in Can Tho city?

#### ***2.2 Research hypotheses***

- Place names in Can Tho city partly represent the knowledge and experiences that local residents have accumulated about the natural environment and social relationships in the community they are living in.

- Place names in Can Tho city can outline the basic features of the organizational culture of collective life in rural as well as urban areas of Tran Giang - Can Tho and the organizational culture of local residents' individual life.

- Place names in Can Tho city contributes to demonstrate the elements of behaving culture with the natural environment and the social environment of people living in this land.

### **3. Research goals**

#### ***3.1. Overall goal***

Theoretically: The thesis contributes to clarifying the relationship between language and culture, deciphering the cultural contents expressed through place names.

In terms of practice: finding arguments to strengthen evidence of cognitive culture, organizational culture, and behaving culture expressed through place names in Can Tho city in relation to the Southwest cultural region. In addition, the research topic on "*Place names in Can Tho City from cultural viewpoint*" contributes to understanding the land and community consciousness, thereby contributing a small part to the management of culture in Can Tho.

#### ***3.2. Detail goal***

- Statistics and classification of place names in Can Tho city.

- Generalize the theoretical and practical basis of place name research; propose the connotation of the terms of place name research from a cultural perspective.

- Decipher the basic cultural elements (cognitive culture, organizational culture, behaving culture) through place names in Can Tho city.

- Suggest some ideas on how to name place names in the area.

### **4. Objects and scope of research**

#### ***4.1 Research objects***

The thesis takes the research object as the place names of Can Tho city to find out the characteristics of the cognitive culture,

organizational culture and behaving culture of the ethnic groups living in this land.

#### **4.2. Research scope**

- Scope of content: survey through written documents, field survey materials; survey existing place names and place names that have now been lost but still contain many valuable cultural elements.

- Scope of space: surveying in Can Tho city, expanding to areas that used to belong to Can Tho province during the French colonial period (Tra On district - now in Vinh Long province, Cau Ke district - now in Tra Vinh province, Phung Hiep district - now in Hau Giang province).

- Scope of time: survey from the time the Nguyen Lords established the headquarters of Tran Giang in 1739 until now.

### **5. Research approach and methods**

**5.1. Approach:** the writer uses an interdisciplinary culturological approach.

#### **5.2. Research methods**

- Data collection method
- Statistical and classification method
- Synthetic analysis method
- Historical research method
- Comparative method
- Field investigation method
- Interviewing method

### **6. Scientific and practical significance of the thesis**

#### **6.1. Scientific significance**

- Basically, the results of the thesis partly contribute to a new approach in the study of place names in general, and place names in Can Tho city in particular from a cultural perspective, then make appropriate suggestions and recommendations.

- The thesis has contributed to clearly defining and generalizing the related issues about place names and the system of approaches, the research theory is quite complete and appropriate, partly reinforcing the trend of cultural research through place name.

#### **6.2. Practical significance**

The thesis contributes to outline the cognitive culture, organizational culture and behaving culture of Can Tho people

through local place names, which is meaningful in proposing, orienting to preserve and promote cultural values exist in place names in Can Tho city in the current context of industrialization and modernization.

The number of place names in Can Tho city collected, statistic, classified as well as the research results of the thesis can have reference value for similar topics when studying place names from a cultural viewpoint.

## **7. Dissertation layout**

Chapter 1: Overview of the research situation, theoretical basis and overview of the research area

Chapter 2: Cognitive culture through place names in Can Tho city

Chapter 3: Organizational culture through place names in Can Tho city

Chapter 4: Behaving culture through place names in Can Tho city

## **B. CONTENT**

### **CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SITUATION, THEORETICAL BASIS AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LOCATION**

#### **1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SITUATION**

##### **1.1.1 Group of research works on place names**

In the world, the initial achievements of European and American toponymy have contributed to establishing the theoretical basis, determining the objects of topography, classifying place names, and initially aiming at a method of research place names scientifically. Some typical works such as: Poyares, *Diccionario de nomes propios* (Italy, 1667); *Dictionnaire géographique – historique de l'Empire de Russie* (Russia, 1923); Longnom, *Les noms de lieux de France* (France, 1929); *Classical Chinese place names dictionary* (Taipei, 1931), J.J. Egli, *Toponymy* (Switzerland, 1872); J.W. Nagl, *Toponymy* (Austria, 1903); A. Dauzat, *Origin and development of place names* (France, 1926), *French Toponymy* (1948)...

The field of world toponymy in its development period recognized the significant contribution of Soviet toponymy: Prinsipy toponimiki (*Principles of toponymy*, Nauka, 1964), *Fundamentals of the study of place names* (A.I. Popov), *On contemporary toponymy* (I.A. Karpenko), *Basic trends of the study of place names* (E.M.

Muzaev), *Chto takoe toponimika?* (What is toponymy? (A.V. Superanskaja),... Thus, the above-mentioned works have contributed certain values to the formation of the field of toponymy in Vietnamese.

In Vietnam, although it was formed later, it has also achieved certain achievements, first of all, the geographical books, followed by the writing of place names such as *Petit cours de géographie de la Basse - Cochinchine* (The sub-textbook of geography in Cochinchina) by Truong Vinh Ky (1875), *The names of Vietnamese villages and communes in the early 19th century (in the provinces from Nghe An onwards)* translated and compiled by Duong Thi The and Pham Thi Thoa (1891), *Nomenclature des communes du Tokin* (Vocabulary of villages in Tonkin).

Through the process of approaching the theoretical system of world toponymy, researchers have applied and developed theories suitable to the situation of place name research in Vietnam. These include: *The relationship of ancient languages in Southeast Asia through some river names* by Hoang Thi Chau (1964), *Try to discuss Vietnamese place names* by Tran Thanh Tam (1976), *The main features of place names in Ho Chi Minh City* by Le Trung Hoa (1990), *The main features of place names in Hai Phong (preliminary comparison with some other regions)* by Nguyen Kien Truong (1996).

A number of dictionaries on place names were born such as *The handbook of Vietnam place names* (1996) by Dinh Xuan Vinh, *The handbook of Vietnamese place names* (1998) by Nguyen Duoc - Trung Hai, *Hai Phong Encyclopedia of place names*, edited by Ngo Dang Loi (1998); *Dictionary of Saigon - Ho Chi Minh city place names* edited by Le Trung Hoa (2003).

Although there have been significant developments, the theoretical basis of place name research only began to be established when Le Trung Hoa's work was published: *Basic principles in the study of place names* (1989), *Basic methods in the study of place names* (2002), *Toponymy in Vietnam* (2006).

In general, the place-name objects mentioned in the works are associated with the cultural, historical, linguistic, social and population factors in a certain locality. Therefore, the study of place name had the first solid foundations. Some typical works such as: *A brief review of the origin of Southern place names* (Bui Duc Tinh),

*Research on Quang Tri place names (Tu Thu Mai), Understanding the origin of Southern place names through stories and theories (Nguyen Huu Hieu), Understanding the origin of Southern place names and Vietnamese literature, Dictionary of Southern place names (Le Trung Hoa), ...*

As can be seen, the group of research works on place names provides an overview of the process of studying place names in some countries around the world, especially in Vietnam.

### **1.1.2 Group of studies on the relationship between culture and place name**

The direction of studying culture through place names has really appeared in the place name research works of cultural studies from about the 2000s to the present. Most of them are master's theses and dissertations such as: *Culture through Vietnamese place names in Dong Nai province* by Vo Nu Hanh Trang (2006), *Cultural aspects of place names in Dong Thap province* by Nguyen Thi Ngoc Bich (2008), *Research on place names in Ben Tre province* by Nguyen Thi Kim Phuong (2009), *Cultural aspects of place names in Tien Giang province* by Nguyen Van Diep (2010), *Culture through place names in Tra Vinh province* by Ly Thi Minh Ngoc (2012), *Place names in Vinh Long province through the viewpoint of folklore* by Ngo Thi Thanh (2017), *Place names in Ninh Thuan Binh Thuan from the viewpoint of cultural studies* by Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy (2018), *The place names of the Southwest region from the viewpoint of cultural studies* by the author Vo Nu Hanh Trang (2020). The research works on culture through place names have basically provided a rather detailed view when gathering, the system of place names according to each specific locality. Theories of geoculture, cultural history, cultural type... have been approached by the above-mentioned master's and dissertations and achieved initial achievements.

### **1.1.3 Group of research works on culture and place names in Can Tho city**

A group of research works on the South and mentioning Can Tho such as: *Gia Dinh Thanh Thong Chi* by Trinh Hoai Duc, *Research on the Nguyen Dynasty's geographical record - An Giang (An Giang, Can Tho, Soc Trang and part of Dong Thap province)* by Nguyen Dinh



Dau, *History of Southern Reclamation, Old Saigon - Impression of 300 years and approach to the Mekong Delta of Son Nam*,...

The second group of research works belongs to the types of review books about Can Tho such as *Old Can Tho* (1966), *Phong Dinh Province's Local Monography* (1956, 1961, 1964), *Can Tho Monography* (2002), *Can Tho Folklore Culture* (To Hoang Vu - Tran Van Nam), *Phong Dien - Can Tho Historical Review* (2007),... Notably, there are a series of works written about Can Tho by author Nham Hung, such as *Cai Rang's formation and development* (2007), *Phong Dien geographical spirit human masterpiece* (2013), *The first step to learn the place names of Can Tho city* (2013), *Can Tho street names* (2015), *Can Tho ancient city* (2017). In general, these works only focus on the history of formation, natural and socio-cultural characteristics of Can Tho, past and present, or approach the place names from a linguistic point of view.

Through the survey of documents, we found that the place names of Can Tho city is mentioned quite briefly in research works nationwide or in the whole Southern region and also more or less intensively studied in the locality, however there are no works that approach from the perspective of cultural studies systematically. Therefore, "*Place names in Can Tho City from cultural viewpoint*" will be relatively new contributions in terms of science and practice to the field of cultural research in Can Tho city.

## **1.2 THEORETICAL BASIS FOR RESEARCHING PLACE NAME FROM CULTURAL VIEWPOINT**

### **1.2.1 The basic concept**

#### *1.2.1.1 About the place name*

##### a. The concept of place name

To determine the content of the place name, avoid confusing the place name with the title and help the process of classifying place names accurately, we choose to define the place name in the direction of synthesizing the types of place names of Le Trung Hoa: "place names are words or phrases used to name natural topography, administrative units, territories and construction works in favor of two-dimensional space" (*Le Trung Hoa*, 2011, p.18). After all, place names are nouns in the common vocabulary of a nation, having the same phonetic, lexical, and grammatical structure as any other sign

language. However, what makes place names different: they are signs with a reason, with a purpose, not purely arbitrary signs.

#### b. Classify

The thesis inherits Le Trung Hoa's point of view classification, however, in order to avoid confusion or ambiguity about the cultural meaning that the place names in Can Tho city brings, *we would like to propose* the following classification:

- The complete structure of a place name includes two elements: a common element indicating the type of place name and a specific element used to name an object, helping to distinguish one object from another.

- A place name may contain one or more cultural values that have been set, selected and preserved by cultural subjects through many different historical periods. Therefore, it is understandable that a place name appears in many cultural elements.

Based on this point of view, we classify place names in Can Tho city into three groups: 1. Place names reflecting cognitive culture; 2. Place names reflecting organizational culture; 3. Place names reflecting behaving culture.

#### c. Functions of place names

From a synchronous point of view, place names have the function of identifying things, personalizing objects, reflecting and reflecting the thoughts, aspirations and feelings of local people. From a chronological point of view, place names have a conservation function. Many political, economic, cultural, social, linguistic events, etc. are kept in place names.

##### *1.2.1.2 Culture overview*

We agree with the concept that “Culture is a symbolic value system created and accumulated by people through practical activities, *in the interaction between people and their natural and social environment*” (Tran Ngoc Them, 2013, p.56). Accordingly, from the model of cultural structure classified by activity, he considered culture as a system consisting of four basic components, which are: cognitive culture, community organization culture, behaving culture with the natural environment and behaving culture in the social environment.

##### *1.2.1.3 The relationship between culture and place name*

First, place names contribute to the transmission of cultural content, can reflect culture, the contents hidden in the place name carry certain cultural values and influenced by the subjective lens of their creator.

Second, in terms of the relationship between culture and place, it can be said that this is the relationship between the general and the particular, between the whole and the part. Culture (the general, the whole) covers, contains the place name (the particular, the part).

It can be seen that culture and place name have a close relationship, close to each other. Place name is one of cultural elements, a product of culture. Culture is expressed through place names, contributing to sketching a picture of nature, society and people in the context in which the place name exists.

## **1.2.2 Theory of studying place names from cultural viewpoint**

### *1.2.2.1 The theory of cultural regions*

On the basis of inheriting the theory of cultural areas, we study place names covering the elements of cultural space, cultural time and cultural subjects. Since then, in this thesis, we also define a cultural region including localities and territories... quite similar in terms of a material and spiritual cultural value system. The boundaries of cultural areas between localities and territories may not be completely identical with the boundaries of administrative units.

The theory of cultural areas contributes to clarifying the issues of place names in Can Tho city from the cultural perspective, seeing the relationship between the local cultural identity and the region, especially the explanation of the reasons for the existence or disappearance of the place names, the erroneous place names, the same place names in many areas of the southwestern provinces, etc., and lay out the laws of cultural development that govern the formation and existence of place names.

### *1.2.2.2 Lí thuyết giao lưu và tiếp biến văn hóa*

Cultural exchange and acculturation is a manifestation of the change in the cultural part of ethnic groups, especially ethnic minorities who are weaker than other ethnic groups in terms of population, economy, politics, etc. in a multi-ethnic society living in

the same territory. It can be said that this is a concept related to the adaptation of ethnic cultures in the process of long-term contact in many forms between different cultures, contribute to creating the diversity and vividness in the ethnic cultural picture of a cultural region.

### **1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LOCATION**

#### **1.3.1 Overview of formation history, natural and social conditions of Can Tho city**

##### *1.3.1.1 About the history of formation*

Since the monarchy, in addition to focusing on developing the land of Tran Giang into the capital in terms of both economy, politics and culture, the imperial court also promoted the policy of expediting the establishment of hamlets, especially the village structure had almost been completed. During the French colonial period, the change in administrative boundaries compared to the monarchy period as well as the colonial exploitation of the French colonialists in Can Tho contributed to the formation of a series of place names bearing the imprint of Western culture. Experiencing two resistance wars against the French colonialists and the American imperialists, the geographical and administrative area of Can Tho changed from time to time. Along with the division and merger of administrative units, many place names in the old Phong Dinh province had many disturbances. Since April 30, 1975, place names in Can Tho have changed to suit the new situation, especially historical place names, new place names appear along with economic and social development, etc., contributing to save many cultural values in Can Tho in the new development period.

##### *1.3.1.2. Overview of natural and social conditions*

###### a. About natural conditions

Can Tho is a large city in the central location of the Mekong Delta, located entirely on alluvial soil cultivated by the Mekong River and is regularly deposited through the alluvial water of the Hau River. The terrain is generally relatively flat, with a network of rivers, canals and canals quite interlaced. The tropical monsoon climate, few storms, hot and humid all year round, no cold season, creates favorable conditions for the rich flora and fauna system in Can Tho.

###### b. About social conditions

According to the 2019 census data, Can Tho has 1,235,171 people, of which 69.66% are urban residents; Kinh ethnic group accounted for 97.47%; population density of 858 people/km<sup>2</sup>, in which the largest is Vietnamese, followed by Khmer and Chinese ethnic groups, accounting for 2.53% of the city's total population. The coexistence of the Vietnamese, Chinese, and Khmer ethnic groups contributes to the diversity and uniqueness of the local culture, playing a very important role in the formation of place names in Can Tho through historical periods.

### **1.3.2 Features of dialects in Can Tho city**

Can Tho is a city in the Mekong Delta (Southwest), a large and fertile land of the Southern Delta. Therefore, the dialect in Can Tho has many nuances and characteristics of the Southern dialect.

**1.3.3 Results of collecting and classifying place names in Can Tho city:** According to the proposed classification in section 1.2.1.1, the author classified place names in Can Tho city according to the criteria shown in the following table:

Table 1. 1 Statistics of place names in Can Tho city

<b>Ordinal number</b>	<b>TYPE OF PLACE NAMES</b>	<b>QUAN-TITY</b>	<b>RATE</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Place names reflecting cognitive culture in Can Tho city</b>	<b>1229</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Place names reflecting organizational culture in Can Tho city</b>	<b>1284</b>	<b>26,2%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Place names reflecting behaving culture in Can Tho city</b>	<b>2392</b>	<b>48,8%</b>
<b>TỔNG</b>		<b>4905</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Nguồn: Nguyễn Thúy Diễm, 2020)

### **1.3.4 Features of place names in Can Tho city**

First: Place names express cognitive culture about the natural environment and the social environment. That is the awareness of the local people about the river environment, the terrestrial environment,

the place of residence; on relationships in the community, especially the role of women in society, is also emphasized through place names.

*Second:* Place names represent the organizational culture of collective and individual life, in which, some place names show the organizational culture in rural and urban areas, others clearly illustrate the organizational culture of individual life through the religious and language art.

*Thirdly:* Place names represent the behaving culture of local people with the natural and social environment, partly demonstrating the attachment and harmony of people with nature, reflect in community psychology as well as the reception of other cultural elements.

### **Sub-conclusion of chapter 1**

A systematic review of documents on place names and culture through place names, cultures and place names in Can Tho is very necessary, partly providing the thesis with general theoretical knowledge. From the collected materials, we can identify the basic concepts used in the thesis, especially the main contents related to place names and culture, clarify the relationship between place names and culture. Research theoretical framework and issues related to the research area are also mentioned. In addition, the practical basis of the study area of Can Tho city is also presented in detail about the history of formation, natural - social conditions and dialect characteristics in Can Tho city. Moreover, through the field investigation process, the writer collected, statistic, and classified 4905 place names that reflect the values of cognitive culture, organizational culture and behaving culture, actively support the decoding of cultural elements existing in local place names.

## **CHAPTER 2 COGNITIVE CULTURE THROUGH PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**

### **2.1 COGNITIVE CULTURE OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**

#### **2.1.1 Cognitive culture about the river environment**

*2.1.1.1 Cognitive culture about the system of rivers and canals:*  
433 place names associated with typical factors such as Rach, Vam,

Kenh, Xeo, etc. in Can Tho contribute to the cognitive culture of people about the favorable natural environment, thereby developing agriculture, exploiting aquatic resources, stabilizing livelihoods.

#### *2.1.1.2 Cognitive culture about waterway traffic*

There are 32 place names related to the aware culture of waterway traffic of Can Tho people, demonstrating the awareness of the laws of movement of the water to organize personal life and serve production: Binh Thuy canal, Nuoc Van junction, Cai Sau river, etc. Since the Nguyen Dynasty, people have set up the rules of shouting Bat (on the right) – Cay (on the left) for convenient movement, avoiding losses and disputes: Nga Bat canal, Nga Bat street, Nga Cay canal, Nga Cay bridge, etc.

### **2.1.2 Cognitive culture about animal and plant system**

#### *2.1.2.1 Cognitive culture about animal system*

##### *a. About terrestrial animals:*

In the beginning, the nature was harshly reclaimed, with many forests and swamps, home to many wild animals, threatening human life, in which tigers, wild buffaloes, and wild elephants have become obsessions in the human memory, recorded through 41 place names: Mieu Ong canal, Mieu Ong bridge, Xeo Trau canal, Lung Tuong bridge, etc. In addition, the ancient land of Can Tho also appeared many deer (Cai Nai canal, Cai Nai bridge), Nhiem (Nhiem bridge, Cau Nhiem canal), Can Duoc (Can Duoc canal, Cang Duoc canal), bird and stork (Lang Chim canal, Ong Co canal, etc.)

##### *b. About aquatic animals:*

The waterway environment with a dense network of rivers and canals brings a significant source of aquatic resources to the people of Can Tho, recorded through 35 place names: Du Tho canal, Can Tho river, Ca Ho canal, Cai Ho canal, etc. The waterway nature is also dual, although it is rich, bringing many economic benefits, but it is also very harsh, with many potential dangers, typically crocodiles: Lung Sau bridge, Dau Sau bridge, Dau Sau fork, etc.

#### *2.1.2.2 Cognitive culture about plant system*

The plant group in Can Tho is also very diverse with many types, growing along rivers and canals, reflected in 172 place names such as: Rung canal, Rach Rung road, Gua canal, Sang Trang canal, Ban canal, Cay Dau canal, etc.

### **2.1.3 Cognitive culture about the place of residence**

Local people have chosen unique types of residence in accordance with natural features and formed the characteristics of each cultural region, reflected in 21 place names. One is to reside along canals where near the market: Cho canal, Kenh Cho canal, Kenh Cho bridge, etc. The other is to reside in a place bordering the water to facilitate the exchange of goods, expressed through place names such as Ba wharf, Ben Ba canal, Ben Ba bridge, etc. The third is to live on floating rafts on rivers and canals: Nha Be hamlet, Con Son Ca Be village, etc. to facilitate livelihood activities.

## **2.2 COGNITIVE CULTURE OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**

### **2.2.1 Cognitive culture about relationships in the community:**

The people of Can Tho have joined together to create craft villages to meet the needs of daily life such as boat building (Ghe hamlet, Trai Ghe hamlet, etc), food processing profession (Lo Banh hamlet, Lo Nem hamlet, etc), knitting craft (Chieu hamlet, Thung village, etc), quite clearly shows that people early recognize community relationships and basically build valuable experiences in the behaving culture with the community in a challenging natural environment.

### **2.2.2 Cognitive culture about relationships with other ethnic communities**

The exchange and contact in terms of language between ethnic groups living in Can Tho is reflected in the following place names:

*2.2.2.1 Homophonic phenomenon:* place names of Khmer origin in Can Tho are recorded by people according to Vietnamese transliteration for easy reading, recording, memorization and administrative management. For example, Th'not is transformed into Thot Not (Thot Not district, Thot Not bus station, ...)

*2.2.2.2 The phenomenon of synonymy:* appears in cases related to Chinese ethnic beliefs. Most of the assembly halls, palaces and shrines worshipping Quan Cong and Thien Hau of the Chinese ethnic are often considered as pagodas by Vietnamese ethnic: Chua Ong street, Chua Ba street, etc.



2.2.2.3 *Mixed phenomenon*: place names are randomly combined, mixed Khmer - Vietnamese place names (Rach Ong Boi road, Rach Ranh road, etc), pure Vietnamese – Sino Vietnamese place names (Ong Tuong canal, Ong Huyen canal, ect), Khmer - Sino Vietnamese place names (Rach Dinh market, Rach Pho bridge, ...). They contribute to affirming the solidarity and cohesion among the Vietnamese - Chinese - Khmer ethnic groups in the same residence area, demonstrating the cohesion in the multi-ethnic community.

### **2.2.3 Cognitive culture about the role of women in the community**

When the influence of Confucianism and patriarchy was somewhat blurred in the new land, the woman in Can Tho was more prominent. There are 79 place names containing the “Ba” element in Can Tho such as: Ba Giam canal, Ba Dong canal, etc. They also made great contributions to the resistance wars against the French and the US, as shown by the names indicating Can Tho street such as Nguyen Viet Hong Street, Ta Thi Phi Street, etc. It can be seen that the people who were once considered the “weak sex” have contributed significantly to the expansion and development of Tay Do land.

#### **Sub-conclusion of chapter 2**

There are 1229 place names showing in both the perception of the natural environment and the social environment. 735 place names show aware culture about waterway environment and plentiful flora and fauna system, contributing to demonstrate the unspoiled, bold nature of waterway and their influence on the place names. In addition, people are also aware of the rules of conduct in relation to members of the Vietnamese-Chinese-Khmer ethnic community co-existing and making a living in Can Tho, as well as the role of women, expressed through 494 place names.

## **CHAPTER 3 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE THROUGH PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**

### **3.1. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF COLLECTIVE LIFE THROUGH PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**

#### **3.1.1 Rural organizational culture**

*3.1.1.1 On the history of the establishment and development of rural organizations:*

Under the Nguyen Dynasty, Tran Giang - Can Tho had many changes in name and administrative boundaries. The most fully recorded village names include 37 villages (villages), equivalent to 37 administrative place names, in which there are village names that still exist to this day such as: Tan An village, Binh Thuy village, etc. Most of them represent the dream of peace and prosperity (09/37 village names have An element, 06/37 village names have Binh elements, 06/37 village names have Thoi elements, 07 village names contain Thanh elements). 09/ 37 village names with Tan elements also partly show that this is a newly reclaimed land. During the French colonial period, surveying at the time when Can Tho had the most villages (in 1888, 122 villages), the place names associated with the village names still showed people's good dreams and ambitions, mainly Sino-Vietnamese place names (118/122 place names, accounting for 96.7%).

#### *3.1.1.2 On the traditional organizational structure::*

The government established the Council of Elders (the Assembly Committee), the Council of Honors to govern the locality. With the place name Can Tho, the titles in this organizational structure are reflected quite a lot because they are familiar to the people, such as: Cai Cang canal, Ca Ky canal, Hao Ngo canal, etc.

#### *3.1.1.3 On spontaneous folk:*

Villages in newly reclaimed land like Can Tho were initially formed mainly on a spontaneous basis, the role of the individual was affirmed and promoted, but the authority of the State greatly influenced the naming for administrative locations. These are mainly Sino-Vietnamese compound words, expressing the dreams and aspirations of people in the new land in general and of the ruling class in particular. In addition, surveying all village names in Can Tho from the Nguyen Dynasty to the French colonial period, almost no village takes the name of an individual to name the village, although in the process of establishing the village, the role of the individual is very important.

### **3.1.2 Urban organizational culture**

#### *3.1.2.1 About the military:*

Tran Giang became a place with a strategic position in terms of military, economy, trade and culture, associated with the merits of

Mac Thien Tich (Tham Tuong canal, Tham Tuong market, etc). Tariff stations were erected to facilitate tax collection and food security (Goi canal, Rach Goi junction, Preak Koi – in Khmer language means tariff station).

#### *3.1.2.2 About urban infrastructure*

a. Waterway traffic: associated with Xang canal, wharf, pier: Xang Xa No canal, Tau Luc Tinh wharf, etc.

b. Road traffic: associated with the names of many streets and roads (Lo Te canal, Lo Chua street, etc), ferry terminals connecting the riverbanks (Bac wharf, Bac bridge - bac in French means ferry, cross boat), horse carriage station (Nguai Dai wharf, Kieng bus station, etc).

c. Air traffic: Vanh Dai Phi Truong street, Vanh Dai Phi Truong residential area, etc.

#### *3.1.2.3. About society – economy:*

Many markets were formed, (there are 14 sites related to the market element such as: Cho canal, Cho Bo Ot street, etc.), activities to build houses for rent (Nam Can House area, 18 Can House area, etc.), casino (Tai Xiu alley), medical services, social welfare (Nha Thuong street, Nursing junction).

## **3.2 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF INDIVIDUAL LIFE THROUGH PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**

### **3.2.1 Beliefs**

*3.2.1.1 Beliefs of Vietnamese ethnic:* include worship of tigers (Mieu Ong canal, Ray canal, etc.), worship of earth gods (Mieu canal, Mieu bridge), Thanh Hoang worship (Ben Dinh, Nga Ba Dinh bridge, etc.), worshipping Ba Chua Xu (Chua Ba street, Ba Bong canal, etc.)

*3.2.1.2 Beliefs of the Khmer ethnic:* the belief of worshipping land and stone, specifically the custom of worshipping Neak Ta (Ong Ta canal, Ong Ta bridge, etc.)

*3.2.1.3 Beliefs of the Chinese ethnic:* The typical belief of the Chinese ethnic in Can Tho is the custom of worshipping Quan Thanh De Quan and Thien Hau Nuong Nuong (Chua Ong Street, Chua Ba Street, Mieu Ong road, etc.)

### **3.2.2 Language arts**

- Respecting the ancient (441 place names) is most evident through the custom of avoiding names to show respect in society: Thai

→ Thoi (Thoi Binh ward), Khang → Khuong (Truong Khuong hamlet), etc.

- Cultural fusion (296 place names): many words of ethnic groups, especially Khmer, are borrowed and widely used by Vietnamese ethnic (Vam Bi canal, Vam Can Duoc street,...), borrowed from the Chinese ethnic (Cong Xi Heo village, Cong Xi Heo bridge), borrowed from the French (Bot So 10 bridge, Saintenoy street, etc.)

### **Sub-conclusion of Chapter 3**

There are 1.284 place names in Can Tho city that reflect the basic cognitive cultural values in the following aspects: the organizational culture of collective life (476 place names) and the organizational culture of individual life (808 place names). In particular, the organizational culture of rural and urban life initially reflects the typical culture in the naming of villages, perfects the organizational structure of villages and basically outlines the urban appearance of Can Tho from the time of reclamation. In addition, the organizational culture of the individual life of Can Tho people is also recognized, especially the beliefs and language arts of the ethnic groups.

## **CHAPTER 4 BEHAVING CULTURE**

### **THROUGH PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**

#### **4.1 BEHAVING CULTURE IN NATURAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**

##### **4.1.1 Behaving culture to land and water**

###### *4.1.1.1 Culture of using land and responding to water*

- In daily life: Local residents are flexible in using land to cope with water in daily life, especially in the field of cooking (ca rang → Cai Rang: Cai Rang canal, Cai Rang market, etc.)

- In production: using aquatic resources from water for exploitation (Cau hamlet, Chai village, etc.), using of natural clay sources to produce bricks and tiles (Lo Gach hamlet, Lo Gach village, etc.) .

- In traffic: bridging to connect roads (Cau Van village, Cau Sat Thom Rom market, etc.), setting up wharfs and ferries to carry people

and goods across the river, connecting roads on both banks: Ben Do Du Du market, Bac wharf, etc.)

#### *4.1.1.2 Culture of using water and responding to land*

- In production, people have taken advantage of the technique of digging ditches, taking alluvium as manure, creating high mounds in low land for gardening (41 place names): Muong Dieu canal, Muong Ngang canal, etc.; digging canals to remove acidity, wash alum and bring fresh water to serve production, irrigation and daily life for local people, contributing to promoting Can Tho's economy, especially agriculture (119 place names): Kenh Moi street, Kenh Nha Lau street, etc.

- In traffic, they use boats, canoes, ships to move, promoting boat-building villages, and wharfs were born (Trai Xuong hamlet, Trai Ghe hamlet, Tau Nam Vang wharfs, ...).

### **4.1.2 Behaving culture to animals and plants**

#### **4.1.2.1 Behaving culture to animals**

Ancient Can Tho was a land with many wild animals, in which, tigers and crocodiles were the most dangerous, profoundly affecting the minds and beliefs of the inhabitants of this land, reflected in 14 place names. People both fear and worship, form a mentality of tiger worship, taboo to name tigers, tiger activities: Mieu Ong canal, Mieu Ong bridge, Rach Ray, etc. In addition, killing crocodiles is also one of the manifestations of the culture of dealing with animals: Dau Sau brige, Dau Sau juntion, etc.

#### *4.1.2.2 Behaving culture to plants*

With weeds (Bang grass, grass slices), Can Tho people creatively create unique handicraft products, clearly showing the culture of using weeds for life and daily activities: Bang canal, Ca Ron canal, Chieu hamlet, etc. With rice, right from the beginning of the twentieth century, rice has become the most famous specialty, most closely associated with the people of Can Tho: Vien Lua road, Rach Ruong market, etc. In addition, fruit has become a specialty of Can Tho agriculture: Chanh canal, Cam canal, Dau canal, ..., contributing to the "garden civilization" on the west bank of Hau River.

## **4.2 BEHAVING CULTURE IN SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH PLACE NAMES IN CAN THO CITY**

### **4.2.1 Reflection of community psychology**

*4.2.1.1 Reflecting people's aspirations:* there are 953 place names in Can Tho that reflect the aspiration for a peaceful, rich, prosperous, long-term, eternal and good life in the new land.

*4.2.1.2 Reflecting the remembrance of the native homeland:* There are 14 place names that reflect this psychological aspect of Can Tho people, the most prominent can be mentioned place names related to the name Phong Dien, Phu Ly village, Hue hamlet.

*4.2.1.3 Reflecting on the preference for using symbols and ordinal numbers:* there are 647 place names in Can Tho city, contributing to the evidence of the subject's preference for using symbols and ordinal numbers in naming objects. Those are mainly the names of hamlets, areas, bridges, roads, canals: 1 hamlet, C channel, B1 hamlet, Nhon Loc 1B hamlet, etc.

#### **4.2.2 Reflection of Buddhist culture**

Although the process of formation and development of Buddhism in Can Tho was not too long, it quickly had a strong influence on the spiritual life of Can Tho people. There are 57 place names associated with the pagodas in the area, showing the respect and worship of Buddhism of the local people: Ngon Chua bridge, Chua canal, etc.

#### **4.2.3 Reflection of Confucian culture**

Many roads in Can Tho bear the names of patriotic Confucians of Can Tho as well as the Southern region, marking the achievements and merits of their contributions to the existence and flourishing of Confucianism once in the southern land: Mac Thien Tich street, Truong Dinh street, etc.

#### **4.2.4 Reflection of Western culture**

Absorbing the achievements of material civilization of the West, Can Tho appeared construction works with advanced technology: Xang Xa No canal, Bac Can Tho wharf, etc. spiritual values that have been deeply influenced by Western culture have also gradually spread widely, one of which is to accept Christianity: Nha Tho bridge, Rach Nha Tho bridge, etc. However, for Western culture, the people of Can Tho have both selectively received advanced scientific and technical achievements for integration and development, but also fought fiercely right from the early days of the French colonial invasion of Cochinchina. Many place names associated with the

names of heroes and martyrs with meritorious services in the two national resistance wars appeared: Le Binh street, Le Nhut Tao street, etc.

#### **Sub-conclusion of Chapter 4**

Regarding the behaving culture to the natural environment, local people have skillfully taken advantage of the values that the natural environment brings to their lives, creating local religious characteristics (534 place names), showing intelligence, creativity and flexibility when living in a new land.

The behaving culture to social environment through place names in Can Tho city is also reflected in the community psychology (1614 place names), in which, the preference for using symbols and ordinal numbers of the identifiers is clearly expressed (647 place names). In addition, the place names reflecting Buddhist, Confucian and Western cultures also demonstrate the flexible reception of values appropriate to the national culture, at the same time protect the typical cultural identity of Can Tho in particular, and the Southwest region in general.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

As a fairly new approach, although learning the cultural values of a locality through a linguistic object (place name) had not yet achieved many outstanding achievements, it basically brought multi-faceted and multi-dimensional perspectives, contributing certain meanings in this research trend. Through 4905 collected and classified place names, on the basis of approaching the theory of cultural areas, the theory of cultural exchange and acculturation, we initially exploited and deciphered the place names in Can Tho from a cultural perspective, thereby generalizing some basic issues as follows:

Firstly, theoretically, we have introduced the main contents of place names, culture, and trends in studying place names from a cultural perspective in order to decipher the place names in a multi-faceted and systematic way. On the basis of absorbing the concepts of place names from linguistics, we propose a way to classify place names according to the structure of culturology. Research perspective according to threefold structure: cognitive culture, organizational culture and behaving culture are also mentioned by the author. In addition, the relationship between culture and place name is basically

determined in the thesis. The research theories that we approach are the theory of cultural areas and the theory of cultural exchange and acculturation.

In addition, the thesis also outlines the research area to consider the impact of historical context, natural, social and human conditions in Can Tho on the formation, transmission and existence of place names here. Indeed, through historical periods with many changes in name as well as administrative boundaries, the land of Tran Giang - Can Tho has gradually affirmed its position as the “capital of the West” with the potential for development in many ways. Moreover, the natural characteristics of waterway in the sweet alluvial sub-region along with the long-term coexistence of the Vietnamese - Chinese - Khmer ethnic groups have had a significant influence on the place names of this land.

From the above theoretical system combined flexibly with appropriate research methods, the thesis has partly deciphered the cultural elements existing in the place names, initially sketching the cultural picture of Can Tho through historical periods by the place names existing in this land.

Secondly: in terms of content, the thesis has presented the cultural values existing in the place names in Can Tho city related to the elements of cognitive culture, organizational culture and behaving culture, that is:

In terms of cognitive culture through place names in Can Tho, the place names that exist in this land partly demonstrate the favorable factors, incentives but no less obstacles and challenges of the natural environment. It is also a condition for Can Tho people to accumulate indigenous knowledge necessary for survival and development in the new land for nearly three centuries. In addition, the community strength cultivated from the codes of conduct among members of the same ethnic group and the process of coexistence between the Vietnamese, Chinese and Khmer ethnic groups is also clearly shown through place names in Can Tho. Moreover, the place names in this land also recognizes and upholds the position and role of women in the process of land opening and land preservation, contribute to expressing the characteristics of cognitive culture about social



environment through place names in Can Tho in particular and the Southwest region in general.

In terms of organizational culture, the place names in Can Tho city basically show the main features in the organizational culture of collective and individual life. The highlight in the collective organizational culture is the organizational structure of villages in the countryside as well as the urbanization process of the land of Tran Giang - Can Tho since the early days of reclamation, which are quite specific in the place names. In addition, the elements of individual organizational culture are also reflected in the place names, which quite clearly reflect the spiritual life with individual nuances of the cultural subject during nearly 300 years of attachment to this land, creating a distinctive feature with other localities in the region.

Regarding the behaving culture through place names in Can Tho city, we recorded the highest number of place names (2392 place names, accounting for 48.8%) compared to the other two sub-systems, mainly in cultural aspects of behaving to the natural and social environment. Place names showing behaving culture to the natural environment contribute to demonstrating intelligence and ingenuity, both taking advantage and obstacles that nature brings, contributing to showing the flexibility and creativity of local residents when residing in the new cultural space. In addition, the behaving culture in the process of exchanging and acclimatizing with the neighboring ethnic groups as well as Buddhist culture, Confucian culture and Western culture has been recorded quite boldly by many place names in Can Tho, partly demonstrating the selective reception of appropriate cultural values, while preserving the typical cultural identity of the local residents in particular, the Southwest region in general.

In terms of the research of the thesis, we found that the place names in Can Tho city have some common features with the place names of the Southwest region, basically delineating the three-dimensional structures that are cognitive culture, organizational culture and behaving culture of Can Tho in particular, and the Mekong Delta in general. However, in some respects, place names in Can Tho also have certain differences: *Firstly*, in the cognitive culture of social environment, we mainly statistic place names that show the relationship between the Vietnamese - Hoa - Khmer ethnic groups, but

we have not found any place names originating from the Cham ethnic appearing in Can Tho. According to the population data presented in Chapter 1, the Cham ethnic hardly settle in this land, so the factors related to the this ethnic group have not been recorded through the place names, which is understandable. *Second*, from Tran Giang under the Nguyen Dynasty to the central city today, Can Tho is considered as one of the localities with strategic position, where the government in historical periods focused on developing the military. urban infrastructure (waterway, roadway, airway), economy - commerce, culture, society, etc., then, the appearance of urban riverland is sketched quite fast and clear. This is also the premise for the exchange and acculturation with French culture in particular and Western culture in general in this land. Therefore, the place-names showing the urban organizational culture and the behaving culture in social environment (the reflection of Western culture) in Can Tho can be recognized more than other localities in the area. *Third*, the behaving culture with animals, especially tigers and crocodiles, has contributed to creating local beliefs. However, only in the place names in Can Tho, we can only count the place names showing the cult and reverence of tigers, tiger worship, and hardly find any place names related to the destruction of tigers. However, the behaving culture with crocodiles in the locality is completely opposite, there are only place names that reflect the killing of crocodiles without the crocodile worshipping religion like other provinces in the Southwest region.

With the hypotheses set out earlier, from the research results of the thesis, we can confirm that: place names in Can Tho city have the ability to reflect elements of cognitive culture, expressing the knowledge and experience that people have accumulated about the natural environment and social relationships in the community in which they live. In addition, the organizational culture's basic characteristics of collective life in rural as well as urban areas of Tran Giang - Can Tho and the organizational culture of individual lives of local people are also partly depicted through the place names. Moreover, the system of place names here contributes to demonstrating the elements of behaving culture in the natural and social environment of the people living in this land. In summary, in

certain aspects, the culture of Can Tho has basically been reproduced and outlined relatively clearly through the existing local place names.

Also from this thesis, we have concluded some contents when studying culture through place names in general and place names in Can Tho city in particular as follows:

1. Place name is clearly one of the products of culture, closely related to culture, but these two categories cannot completely coincide. Place name contains cultural values but cannot fully reflect that culture, in other words, the cultural array reflected in the place name is much narrower than the inherent culture. Accordingly, the place names in Can Tho city only partly illustrate the elements of local culture to a certain extent.

2. The naming of one/many objects of a cultural subject is not necessarily an original copy of the natural, social and human reality of a locality or region into a place name, but rather a choice, reflection the process of perception and selection according to the subjective lens of the cultural subject, therefore, there are cultural factors that are expressed quite clearly, and some are only faintly recognized. Similar to the place names in Can Tho city, the category of behaving culture is most marked by the place name, while the organizational cultural elements (organizational culture in the family – clan, religion, customs, habits, communication culture, discourse art, performing art, visual art) is hardly expressed through place names.

3. Folk place names and place names placed by local authorities contribute to supplementing and perfecting the system of place names in the locality. Although folk place names (mostly pure Vietnamese place names) are not directly appearing on administrative documents, they have little change, exist in a sustainable and long-term way in people's minds and contain many cultural values. Nhiều địa danh dân gian cũng trở thành địa danh chính thức. Many folk place names also became official place names. At the same time, the place names set by the State (mostly Sino-Vietnamese place names) are easy to change when there is a division or merger of units or administrative boundaries to facilitate management, selected according to many strict criteria, while expressing the wishes of the ruling class. However, each type of place name has its own undeniable cultural values. Moreover, the coexistence of these two types of place names helps researchers

gain a more objective and multi-faceted view when recognizing and explaining relevant cultural aspects.

From the above issues, in general, the thesis contributes to prove that Can Tho city belongs to the sub-regional garden culture of the Southwest region and the place names of this land contain many special cultural values, which should be preserved and promoted appropriately. On that basis, we make some suggestions, if possible, the authorities should reconsider some of the following cases:

Firstly, numerical place names currently exist in the area because in terms of meaning, numerical place names almost do not reflect cultural values or do not carry a specific content or meaning. Instead, we propose to use place names that have been handed down in folklore but have not yet appeared in administrative documents to replace them in order to limit their disappearance or loss.

Secondly, it is necessary to correct misspelled place names in the rhyme and consonant parts due to local pronunciation habits, contributing to preserving the purity of the Vietnamese language for future generations. Besides, it is necessary to name many canals, bridges, roads that have not been officially named in the documents, creating more favorable conditions for management and research.

Third, the fact that people do not understand the origin and meaning of place names that exist in the area where they live, even misunderstanding, especially the young generation is very common. Therefore, it is recommended to promote communication (such as contests to learn about place names, radio and television programs introducing place names, etc.), strengthen research activities on place names in Can Tho in order to preserve and promote the cultural values existing in the “historical - cultural steles” in the locality.

**LIST OF SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES DISCLOSED RELATED TO  
THE DISSERTATION THEME**

<b>Ordinal number</b>	<b>Scientific articles name</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>Journal name</b>
<b>1</b>	Learning about the cultural elements of the French colonial period through the place names in Can Tho city	2018	National Conference at Tra Vinh University
<b>2</b>	The cognitive culture about social environment through the place names in Can Tho city	2020	National Conference at Tra Vinh University
<b>3</b>	The cognitive culture about natural environment through the place names in Can Tho city	2021	Scientific Journal of Tra Vinh University
<b>4</b>	Beliefs through the place names in Can Tho city	2022	Journal of Education and Society
<b>5</b>	Urban organizational culture through the place names in Can Tho city	2022	Journal of Education and Society