

TRA VINH PROVINCE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE
TRA VINH UNIVERSITY

VO VAN SON

TIEN GIANG MARKETS
FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

DOCTORAL THESIS IN CULTURE

Major Code: 9229040

THESIS SUMMARY

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Thesis will be found at libraries:

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INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

With the prime location, convenient natural conditions, the region of Tien Giang early attracted a great number of emigrating residents such as Vietnamese people, Chinese people, etc. to settle down and set up their career. From this time, a system of Tien Giang markets were also in turn established. In the 17th and 18th century, My Tho big city (My Tho big city market) became one of the busiest economical centers in the South up till then. Up to 2020, there were 9.000 markets the whole nation, of which there were **177** markets in Tien Giang.

In the life of Vietnamese people in general and those in Tien Giang in particular, markets play an important role. Markets are not only a place of business and trade but also a characteristic cultural space associated with cultural identity of each region and ethnic community. Investigation into Tien Giang markets demonstrated the whole historical and cultural period of a region, the whole life of residential generations as well as lively expressions of this featuring cultural space.

In the planning of general development of national markets up to 2025, the foreview up to 2035 of the Government emphasized that: “developing a market network according to civilized and modern trends; simultaneously, preserve and improve traditional factors which are typical and characteristic of markets”. As a result, the investigation “Tien Giang markets from a cultural perspective” was also not out of the purpose of maintaining and enhancing traditional values of the nation.

2. Research aims and research tasks

2.1. *The general research aims of the thesis* is to deeply investigate and feature the position, role, meaning of market cultures in Tien Giang (culture of organization, culture of behaviour, culture of spirit) in the material and spiritual life of local residents.

2.2. *Research tasks*: (1) Systematize and clarify theoretical and practical foundation matters about markets and cultures of markets; (2) Investigate culture of perception, culture of organization, culture

of behavior and culture of spirit of Tien Giang markets in the life of residents, contributing to the investigation of traditional culture in general and trading culture in particular of the residents in Tien Giang; (3) Study evolving and changing trends of Tien Giang markets according to market regulations; suggest some practical solutions to solve inadequate matters of the markets in the region of Tien Giang in the near future.

3. Subjectives, participants, scope of the study

3.1. Subjectives: Investigate the role, position, meaning, cultural values of markets in the material and spiritual life of people in Tien Giang.

3.2. Research participants: Livelihood activities (goods trade and exchange) of locals in markets in the region of Tien Giang.

3.3. Scope of the study

3.3.1. Spatial scope, the scope of the thesis was markets with based administrative geographical boundaries of Tien Giang province at present. To create favorable conditions for the survey, the researcher focused on investigating 5 wholesale markets: floating Cai Be market, Cai Lay market, Gao market, Go Cong market and My Tho market representative for other markets of the whole province.

3.3.2. Temporal scope, the thesis investigated the activities of markets in Tien Giang presently. The surveyed data were carried out in 5 years (from 2015 to 2020) and mentioned the markets in the provincial region before 2015 to identify changing trends, making 1986 as a point of time to divide the system of markets before and after the innovation, since then clarifying the changes of market cultures in Tien Giang in the period of market economy.

3.3.3. Content scope, the thesis focused on researching roles, positions, meanings, cultural values of markets (culture of perception, culture of organization, culture of behavior, culture of spirit) in the material and spiritual life of residents in Tien Giang. Simultaneously, this thesis also focused on investigating the reality of activities, changing trends and problems posed in the process of developing a network of markets in Tien Giang in particular and the whole nation in general according to market regulations; Suggest appropriate

solutions to exploit cultural values of markets (economy, culture and society) for the sustainable development of Tien Giang.

4. Scientific questions and hypotheses

3.1. Research questions

In order to help the study effectively, some research questions were raised and the thesis focused on dealing with:

- The first question: what are the cultures of markets? Which role do they play for the material and spiritual life of the people of our country generally and Tien Giang in particular?

- The second question: How are the cultures of markets in Tien Giang (culture of perception, culture of organization, culture of behaviour and culture of spirit) with their values at present?

- The third question: What can be done to improve beautiful traditional values of market cultures in Tien Giang in the process of urbanization and newly rural construction at present?

4.2. Research hypotheses

From the objectives of the study, the researcher suggested some hypotheses as follows:

- Cultures of Tien Giang markets play important roles in the material and spiritual life of residents, contributing to the development of local economy, culture and society.

- Cultures of Tien Giang markets contain many values, being “prism” which reflects culture of perception, culture of organization, culture of behavior, culture of spirit of the residents in Tien Giang from the past to the present.

- In the urbanization and developing new countryside today, markets in Tien Giang markets need some changes to exist and develop according to international integration trend.

5. Research method

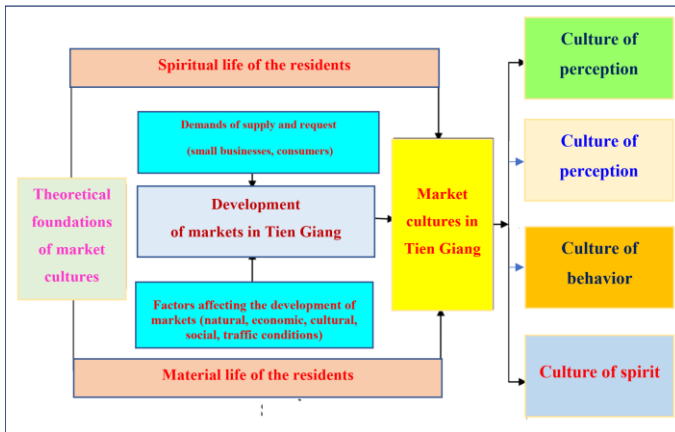
Although the research topic from a cultural perspective is the main approach of the thesis, but in cultural research, an interdisciplinary approach plays an important role because of its effectiveness. Therefore, with the topic, the PhD student used the

following specific approaches: Cultural studies, Sociology and Anthropology.

In addition, the topic also applied research methods such as methods of analyzing and synthesizing data; Ethnographic fieldwork methods; Sociological investigation methods; Expert method; Case study method; Historical method; and Methods of analysis, synthesis, comparison and contrast.

6. Research frame

Based on the identified contents and factors affecting the development of markets generally and market cultures in particular, the researcher suggested the research frame represented as below:



Research frame

“Source: The Ph.D. candidate’s design (2020)”

7. Source of research materials

7.1. *Stored materials of agencies*: legal texts of state management agencies over markets.

7.2. *Materials are monographs*: monographs, dissertations, theses, conference proceedings and specialized journals.

7.3. *Fieldwork materials*: materials collected from fieldwork trips at typical markets of Tien Giang.

8. Scientific and practical significance of the dissertation

8.1. Scientific significance of the thesis

- The thesis systematizes and contributes to clarify theoretical issues about markets according to a number of approaches to cultural research.

- The thesis contributes to the explanation of the formation and development of market culture, in the context of traditional and contemporary society, pointing out the changing trend of traditional markets in the current social context.

- The thesis contributes additional arguments about the position, role and value of traditional markets in local economic, social and cultural development.

- The thesis sketches a colourful cultural picture of Vietnamese markets in general and Tien Giang in particular, contributing to supplementing research on markets and traditional cultural values of the nation in the current integration period.

8.2. Practical significance of the thesis

- The research results of the thesis are a reference source in issues related to markets and market culture from tradition to present, in the fields of economics, culture and society.

- The research results of the thesis contribute to affirming that markets and market culture in Tien Giang have a role, position and meaning in the material and spiritual lives of Tien Giang residents in the past and present.

- The research results of the thesis are also a scientific basis for orientation and solutions to promote the cultural values of markets in Tien Giang, helping policy makers; managers and businesses; advisory agency; research, economic and social organizations; and reference individuals.

- The research results of the thesis are a source of reference materials for research and teaching about history, economy and culture of the South in particular and the country in general.

8.3. New contributions of the thesis

- Systematize a number of theoretical issues about markets and market culture, clarify the concept of markets, criteria for classifying markets, and factors that determine the formation and development of markets in our country in general and in Tien Giang in particular from tradition to modern.

- Analyze and clarify the formation process, current status of operations, characteristics and roles of Tien Giang markets in the material and spiritual lives of people according to diachronic and synchronous slices, especially the issues of market culture in particular and commercial civilization in general of the locality.

- Identify trading activities and characteristics of livelihood culture, communication culture and behavioral culture in the spiritual life of Tien Giang people. The results of this study also explain the reasons for the development of Tien Giang markets during the urbanization process, as well as clarify the changing trend in the functions of local markets.

- Analyze and clarify market activities that have stimulated and promoted economic production in many aspects. Therefore, the thesis also processes solutions to sustainable development of Tien Giang markets in the coming time and suggests further research on markets for other localities in the process of urbanization and newly rural construction today.

9. Organization of the thesis

In addition to the introduction, conclusion, reference list and appendices, the content of the thesis consists of 4 chapters:

Chapter 1. Literature review, theoretical and practical foundations

Chapter 2. Operational organization of markets in Tien Giang

Chapter 3. Cultural characteristics of markets in Tiền Giang

Chapter 4. Role, value and change of markets in Tien Giang.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FOUNDATIONS

1.1. Literature review

Up till now, the number of studies on markets of authors in Vietnam and in the world have been vast and presented from various approaches: research on markets and cultures of markets in the world in general and Vietnam in particular.

1.1.1. Research on markets in foreign countries: (1) role of markets for economical and social life of nations around the world; (2) influence of supermarkets on the development of traditional markets in the process of urbanization of countries in the world; (3) solutions to preserving and developing markets in the process of urbanization of countries in the world.

1.1.2. Reseach on markets in Vietnam: (1) role of markets to economical and social life of a society of Vietnamese people; (2) role of markets to economical and social life of a society of the people in the south; (3) development and challenges of markets in the urbanization.

1.1.3. Research on markets in Tien Giang: (1) role of markets for economical and social life of the people in Tien Giang; (2) role of markets in the delivery systems and retail systems in Tien Giang; floating markets and tourism at Cai Be floating market in the integration period at present.

Generally, the situation of markets and cultures of markets in the world and in Vietnam has been paid a lot of attention from many perspectives and study results have been possibly collected from different approaches: value approach, behavioral approach, value approach combined with behavioral approach and innovative approach in order to be enough to develop the theory of market cultures.

1.2. Theoretical foundations of the dissertation

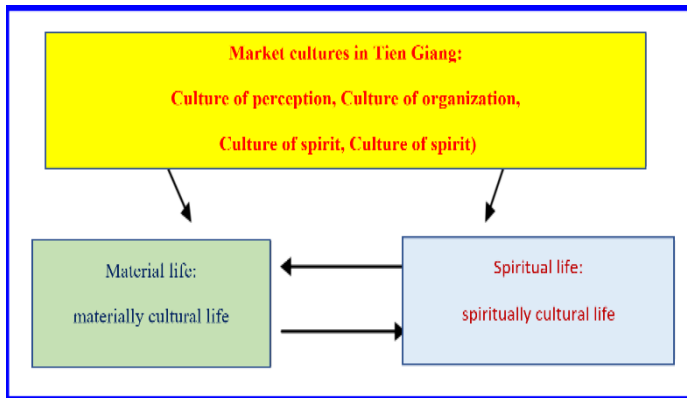
1.2.1. Some basic notions:

- *Notions of markets:* from the opinions of markets of earlier authors, in the scope of contents of this dissertation, the researcher draw a notion of markets as: “*a type of commercial business which is traditional, hold at a public place, meeting many people’s goods trading and exchanging demands operating according to certain periods of time and managed according to current laws of the State*”.

- *Classification of markets in Vietnam:* classify markets based on environmental conditions; classify markets according to the number of businesses, positions and surfaces of markets (according to size: type 1, type 2 and type 3); classify markets based on trading feature (wholesale and retail); classify based on the goods of business (collection markets and specialized market); administrative geographical boundaries (urban and rural markets); and classify markets according to characteristics and construction size (permanent markets, semi-permanent markets, temporary markets).

- *Notion of culture:* definitions of culture at present are vast, each definition mentions various types or fields. Originating from the research objectives of the dissertation, the researcher employed the term of culture with a narrow meaning: “*culture is a system of material and spiritual values created by humans in the process of labor and production, accumulated from one generation to another generation*”.

- *Notion of market culture:* Market culture is the synthesis of behavioral relationships between people in the process of buying, selling and exchanging goods, expressed in cognitive culture, organizational culture and behavioral culture. Spiritual culture, associated with market activities to meet the material and spiritual needs of the population in a certain region.



Constituents of Market Cultures in Tien Giang

(Source: Ph.D. design, 2020)

- *Notion of tradition*: notion of tradition was defined in some dictionaries, Vietnamese dictionary defines: “tradition is a habit which is long established in the lifestyle and thinking and spread from one generation to another generation”. Therefore, tradition is a repeated habit which is agreed and followed by the community.

- *Notion of change*: change is a characteristic and simultaneously a manner of existing of all things and phenomena in the objective world. Change is also known as a change of form and content of things, phenomena or certain matters, making the following change be different from the previous change.

1.2.2. Research theory

1.2.2.1. *Theory of relational Choice Theory*: In the scope of this thesis, PhD student applied the theory to analyze and explain forms of market cultures in Tien Giang from the tradition up to now.

1.2.2.3. *Theories related to change of culture*: In the scope of this thesis, PhD student viewed culture from culture of behaviour in the activities of trading at markets. Hence, the change of culture is also understood as change of trading culture.

1.3. Conditions for forming a markets system in Tien Giang

1.3.1. Natural conditions: geographical positions and topography, climate, water resource, oil resource, forest resource, animal resource and plant resource.

1.3.2. Residential conditions: Tien Giang is home to many ethnic groups (Vietnamese, Chinese, Khmer and Cham...). the majority of the residents in Tien Giang are Vietnamse with the proportion of 96,89%.

1.3.3. Economical and social conditions: with the feature of agricultural province, Tien Giang is an important trage gateway of agriculture, aquatic products among regions, especially in Ho Chi Minh City and vice versa.

1.3.4. Sea and road travel conditons: is a province which is located near Tien river and has a intersection position between Melta Delta and Eastern South region, Tien Giang has convenient traffic positions, both sea and road.

Summary of Chapter 1

This chapter is one which consists of theoretical foundations and geographical contexts of the dissertation. In this chapter, the researcher introduced the literature review on markets and cultures on the world in general and Vietnam in particular; theoretical foundations on markets and cultures of markets (some basic notions): markets, classification ofmarkets, culture, cultures of markets, tradition and change; some research theories: *relational Choice Theory*; factors affecting the developepment and operation of markets in Tien Giang (natural conditions, economical and social conditions, residential conditions, travel)..., in order to have an overview of research subjectives.

CHAPTER 2

OPERATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MARKETS IN TIEN GIANG

2.1. Overview of the process of establishing and developing markets in Tien Giang

History of establishment and development of markets in Tien Giang: Markets in Tien Giang in the period before 1861; markets in Tien Giang in the period of 1861 to 1975; markets in Tien Giang in the period of 1975 - 2020.

2.2. Types of markets in Tien Giang

According to geographical positions and forms of trading organizations: 01/177 markets hold on rivers (Cai Be floating market) and 176/177 markets hold on land (land market). Among them, markets hold in rivers are type of market meetings typical in the South in general and Tien Giang in particular.

2.3. Features of markets in Tien Giang

2.3.1. Name of markets: The names of Tien Giang markets are very rich and diverse: not only according to village names but also many traditional/folk names, based on topographical characteristics, economic and cultural activities.

2.3.2. Market meeting time: unlike markets in the north which has session markets, markets in Tien Giang are met every day. Depending on types of markets, there are markets hold all day or just one session, but there is one common feature that it is very crowded in the early morning for the people to exchange and trade goods.

2.3.3. Place of market meetings: In Tien Giang, markets are formed in densely populated areas; Locations with convenient transportation, especially waterway transportation... operated according to the rule “on the wharf, under the boat”, creating favorable conditions for people to buy and sell.

2.3.4. *Goods purchased and sold*: The items purchased and sold at the market in Tien Giang today are mainly: fresh food (especially fruit), dried agricultural products, groceries, clothes, shoes... accounting for more than 70% of the total number of business households.

2.3.5. *Price of goods*: In the markets of Tien Giang, there exist two prices: wholesale price and retail price to apply to the same item.

2.3.6. *Components of purchase and sale*: Tien Giang is a multicultural and multi-ethnic land (Vietnamese, Chinese, khmer, Cham). Therefore, the participants in buying and selling at markets in Tien Giang are very diverse, market-goers come from all genders, all ages, and occupations, most of whom are women.

2.3.7. *Market architecture*: Currently, most of Tien Giang's markets have gradually been upgraded and expanded (area ranges from 1,000 – 3,000 m²), markets houses are built of concrete, reinforced steel, corrugated iron roofs and planned according to each commodity area.

2.3.8. *Regarding the small business community of markets in Tien Giang*: Within the scope of this thesis, the PhD student has analyzed and clarified: Origin of small businesses; Social relations of small traders; Relationship between small traders and small traders in the market; Relationships between small businesses and consumers; Relationships between small traders and barn and garden owners; The relationship between small traders and market management agencies...

2.4. Current reality of development of market system in Tien Giang

2.4.1. *Distribution of markets*: According to statistics by the end of 2020, the entire Tien Giang province has 177 markets. The market network is distributed relatively evenly among 11 districts, towns and cities of the province, consistent with population density as well as local characteristics and trading practices.

2.4.2. *Regarding area, density and service radius of markets in Tien Giang*: Statistics in 2020, the total market area in Tien Giang

province is 13.42 km². There is average 2.936 km² /market; 16.1 markets/districts/towns/cities; 1.08 markets/communes/wards/towns.

2.4.3. *Regarding the infrastructure of markets*: The overall market infrastructure is often divided into two main spaces: the main market space and other roofed construction items, and outdoor trading space. However, issues of traffic safety, fire prevention, and food safety and hygiene at markets still have many limitations and shortcomings.

Summary of Chapter 2

This chapter presents an overview of the organization of market activities in Tien Giang: Overview of the process of market formation and development in Tien Giang; Types of markets in Tien Giang (markets held on the river – Cai Be floating market, fixed markets held on land – dry market); Characteristics of the market in Tien Giang (market name, market time, market location, goods traded, prices of goods, trading components, market architecture, about the small business community of the markets in Tien Giang); Current status of the market system in Tien Giang (about the distribution of markets, the area, density and service radius of the markets, and the infrastructure of the markets).

CHAPTER 3

CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MARKETS IN TIEN GIANG

3.1. Cognitive cultural characteristics

3.1.1. Concept of the sales profession: Small businesses in our country in general and Tien Giang in particular, have a correct understanding of the sales profession for economic and social development.

3.1.2. Concept of the art of business: Small businesses in Tien Giang as well as small businesses in other regions and regions are deeply aware of the word “trust” – an expression of sales ethics.

3.2. Organizational cultural characteristics

3.2.1. Forms of trading: Small traders at markets in Tien Giang have two forms of trading: “buôn” and “bán”: fixed on-site selling and street selling.

3.2.2. Principles of buying and selling: Small traders at markets in Tien Giang often buy and sell very quickly and concisely “one hundred sellers, ten thousand buyers” and value the word “trust”.

3.2.3. Method of measurement: Small businesses in the South in general and Tien Giang in particular have a quite rich and complex measurement system that is diverse in weighing, measuring, counting goods.

3.2.4. Forms of goods transportation: In Tien Giang markets, small businesses transport goods by a variety of means such as: boats, dinghies, motor boats, tricycles, motorbikes, trucks.

3.2.5. Forms of market management in Tien Giang: Currently, Tien Giang’s markets are organized and managed according to 4 models: Management Board (9 markets type 1 and type 2); Management groups or communes, wards and towns directly manage (153 type markets); management enterprises (12 markets); Individual management (3 markets).

3.3. Characteristics of behavioural culture

3.3.1. Buying and selling style of the market: The buying and selling principles of Tien Giang people are often fast, concise and

respectful, expressed through: the selling psychology of small traders, the buying psychology of consumers.

3.3.2. Methods of pitching and offering: Pitching and offering in the common language of sellers and pitching and marketing products using “beo tree” at Cai Be floating port.

3.3.3. The habits of challenging and haggling at the market: This habit has become the business behavioral culture of buyers and sellers at our country’s markets in general and Tien giang in particular.

3.4. Cultural and customary characteristics

3.4.1. Religious practices in buying and selling in Tien Giang markets: Small businesses in Tien Giang focus on worshipping: Tho Dia – God of Wealth, Quan Am, Ba cau, Ngu Hanh Nuong Nuong... worshipping

3.4.2. Taboos in buying and selling at markets in Tien Giang: Small traders at markets in Tien Giang attach great importance to “opening goods”, maintaining ethics in business... Consumers abstain from agreeing on a price and then not buying, abstain from buying early in the morning, ... aiming to minimize risks in buying and selling activities.

Summary of Chapter 3

The market network of our country in general and in Tien Giang in particular not only plays a huge role in the material life, spiritual life and culture of the resident community. From a cultural perspective, the market is a form consisting of different cultural forms, born on the typical landscape of the market. These cultural forms are: cognitive culture, behavioural culture and spiritual culture. This chapter analyzes the characteristics of cultural forms in trading activities at markets in Tien Giang. Researchers analyzes: Cognitive cultural characteristics (concepts about the sales profession, concepts about the art of business); Organizational cultural characteristics (form of buying and selling, principles of buying and selling, methods of measurement, methods of transporting goods, form of market management in Tien Giang); Characteristics of behavioral culture (market trading style, selling style, offering, habit of challenging and bidding at the market); Cultural and customary characteristics (religious practices in buying and selling in Tien Giang market, taboos in Tien Giang markets).

CHAPTER 4

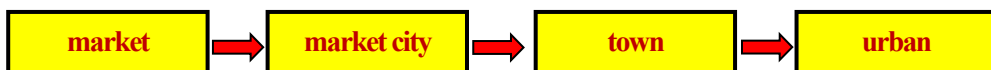
ROLE, VALUE AND CHANGE OF MARKETS IN TIEN GIANG

4.1. Role of Tien Giang markets in the economic, cultural and societal life of local residents

4.1.1. Role of Tien Giang markets for economic life: Currently, the whole country has over 8,528 markets in operation, of which Tien Giang has 177 markets of all types. In fact, the market network is still the main distribution channel for producers and consumers.

4.1.2. Role and value of Tien Giang markets for the development of towns and cities: Formation and flourishing development of the market network or urban areas is one of the manifestations of the commodity economic development of Tien Giang residents.

Figure. Developing trends of Tien Giang markets



(Source: Đinh Văn Liên, 2012)

4.1.3. Role and value of Tien Giang markets in cultural and social life: Markets in Tien Giang has the status of a “cultural space” of Tien Giang residents, with creative activities, cultural preservation and development, including cultural customs related to the market, such as: Offerings to prepare for weddings, death anniversary offerings, Tet market goods, ...

4.2. Value of markets in Tien Giang

Markets are both cultural products and human cultural activities. The market is therefore also considered a cultural space, a miniature society, in which the values are regional cultural nuances of the market are preserved and developed. Tien Giang markets have crystalized basic values, which are cultural values and social values.

4.2.1. *Cultural value*: Markets and market activities in Tien Giang have contributed to the creation of cultural capital, with the status of a cultural heritage, passed down from ancient generations to the present. This cultural capital is displayed through the following cultural phenomena: communication language, folklore (riddles, proverbs, folk songs, chants, rhymes, etc.).

4.2.2. *Social value*: The market subject and its activities have created a social capital, closely linked to human life activities and the development of society: communication and information center; a bridge that connects people together; a place to exchange experiences; preserve and promote traditional cultural values; resources for the tourism industry.

4.3. Change and development of Tien Giang markets

In the new context, the change in the social value system and the impact of new economic factors have changed the way people behave towards the natural and social environment (including: religious values), customs, cultural norms, institutions, community psychology...), markets are not outside the law of change to adapt and develop.

4.3.1. *Current status of development and change*: The traditional market system in Tien Giang has changed the most since our country carried out the reform process and developed a multi-sector market economy. Besides modern supermarkets and shopping centers, markets still play an important role in people's lives.

4.3.2. *Cause of change*: In the trend of globalization of trade and integration into the region and the world, the Tien Giang market network from urban to rural areas has been invested and built quite grandly, spaciouly, and conveniently for buying and selling activities, exchanging goods, and cultural exchanges of many classes of people inside and outside the province.

4.3.3. *Development trends and changes*: Currently, Tien Giang's market network has been changing under the influence of the urbanization process and the integration trend of the times.

- Positive movement and change trend: Tien Giang market network has a positive movement and change trend towards preserving and promoting various types of markets.

- Inappropriate movement and change trends of Tien Giang markets: Currently, a number of markets in Tien Giang have been renovated and newly built but there are no business people buying or selling.

4.4. Improvement of the value of markets in Tien Giang in the innovation and integration period

4.4.1. The existence and development of Tien Giang markets in the present and future: The market is both a place to exchange goods and services, as well as a place for cultural exchange to satisfy the material and spiritual production needs of people, maintained and developed in many places from urban to rural areas. Thus, the market is not only a place to organize economic activities but also a type of cultural activity with national identity, an integral part of socio-cultural and economic life. Through the market, goods are brought from production to consumption, contributing to expanding and stimulating the development of commodity production, serving production as well as the lives of all classes of people. These factors once again confirm that the market still plays an important role in people's lives.

4.4.2. Promoting the values of Tien Giang market in the integration period: Currently, the market network is still the main distribution channel of goods for producers and consumers, it always plays an important role in the cause of socio-economic development of each locality in many aspects. However, the market is competing fiercely with other types of commerce and needs a strong change from thinking to action to survive and develop in the new period. In the area of integration, the roadmap to preserve and promote the value of markets in Tien Giang requires participation and attention from many sides: central and local governments (province and district); Market management board; small business; and tourism agencies.

Summary of Chapter 4

Under the impact of innovation policies, the influence of the market economy and the wave of urbanization, the Tien Giang market network has undergone many changes. This is also the general trend of all markets in our country. Because the market is the place that most clearly shows the economic, social and population aspects of the locality, the transformation of the market in the new social context is inevitable. On the other hand, the transformation process of the market also has impacts on the local economy, culture and society. Along with the development, there are downsides and inadequacies that always arise, but it can affirm the value and role of the market as well as the existence of market culture in the contemporary context. Faced with the situation where the market is gradually being overwhelmed by modern retail channels, it is necessary to have satisfactory, reasonable and feasible mechanisms and policies to continue to rebuild the face of traditional trade channels. The system is in decline.

CONCLUSION

1. Markets/ traditional markets are both a place to exchange goods and services and a place for cultural exchange to satisfy the material and spiritual production needs of people, maintained and developed in many places from urban to rural, remote, border and island areas, with the unique scale and characteristics of each locality. Thus, the market is not only a place to organize economic activities but also a type of cultural activity with national identity, an intergral part of socio-cultural and economic life. Through markets, goods are brought from production to consumption, contributing to expanding and stimulating the development of commodity production, serving production as well as the lives of all classes of people.

2. Tien Giang is a province in the Mekong Delta, and is also a province in the key Economics Southern Region, with advantages for economic, trade and service development. Due to their special geographical location, markets in Tien Giang soon became important “links” for the circulation, consumption and exchange of goods between rural and urban areas, between the Mekong Delta and the Southern region. With the orientation of taking the market as the nucleus of economic, cultural and social development, in recent times, Tien Giang province has focused on developing the market network. Statistics as of 2020, the entire Tien Giang province has 177/1,657 markets (including 5 type 1 markets, 21 type 2 markets and 151 type 3 markets), accounting for 10.7% of the total number of markets in the entire Mekong Delta region and ranked the third in the entire region.

3. Up to now, there has been almost no research on market objects in Tien Giang from a cultural perspective in a focused, in-depth and systematic way. Therefore, the results of the research on the topic “Tien Giang markets from cultural perspectives” are the initial efforts of the PhD student to focus on understanding 5 different markets in Tien Giang, following the approaches of case study and research. Furthermore, the theories of cultural capital, tradition and change are also applied by the researcher to clarify the role, position, meaning and cultural value of the market in the material and spiritual life of residents. Tien giang according to defined time and

geographical space. From the concepts of markets and market culture, the researcher draws some conclusions as follows:

- Tien Giang's market network has been established for a long time, associated with the history of communal markets, bearing the unique mark of the new land. The process of forming a market system in the province is also associated with the trading traditions of the population. Due to the population distribution structure, markets are often located in central areas, river junctions, road junctions, river mouths, sea estuaries and bridge slopes to facilitate the exchange of goods: My Tho market, Gao market, Cai Be market, Cai Lay market, Go Cong market... In particular, Tien Giang's wholesale markets also play a role in connecting intra-regional and inter-regional trade, both as main markets, but also as supplementary satellite markets and support commercial activities in the South, especially Sai Gon - Cho Lon. Goods from Tien Giang markets spread to markets in other regions and vice versa.

- From the cultural perspective, it can be seen that Tien Giang market was born from the time of "reclaiming and establishing hamlets" by local residents. Market cultures represents outstanding aspects of people's lifestyle and trading behavior. These are the trading method and measuring tools which are also very simple; The buying and selling styles of the people here are very sincere and open, not boasting "buy and sell"; The relationship between buyer and seller is very happy, not calculated. Tien Giang market network is not only a place to exchange and trade goods, playing an important role in the material life of local people; but also a place for cultural exchange and spread between regions.

For material life, the role of Tien Giang market network is shown through: types of markets, ways of transporting goods, principles of measurement... All of these factors show that on the basis of traditional market platforms of Vietnamese people in general, Tien Giang people have created for themselves unique feature such as: holding markets on rivers, transporting goods by boat, principles of measurement, the liberal form of advertising and offering by traders in the river region. In addition, these principles also demonstrate a culture of business conduct based on prestige and mutual trust in trade and exchange activities.

For spiritual life, the role of Tien Giang market network is shown through the spiritual activities of Tien Giang people. These are beliefs, customs, taboos in doing business in the market... Those beliefs have given them confidence in life in the new land and “controlled” them within the framework of their buying and selling activities. The most prominent thing is the commercial activities that blend with folk culture, portrayed through very popular daily communication languages as well as expressed through very simple folk culture melodies. These are proverbs, folk songs, rhymes... expressing the thoughts and feelings of local people here. Those factors have kept business activities in the markets bustling, promoting the economic, cultural and social development of Tien Giang considerably.

4. It can be seen that social network is an important capital in the business activities of small businesses in Tien Giang. This capital creates professional reputation and customer relationships. Therefore, small businesses have formed a group or line with the same purpose, supporting each other with capital, sales techniques and forming a professional network to create social capital. The social network of small businesses, especially in trade, is very diverse. That is the relationship between small businesses and small businesses; small businesses and consumers; small traders with store owners, small traders with market management agencies, small traders with tourists. These relationships have mutual influence and direct impact on trade. From these links, small businesses and consumers have come together to create a diverse professional network to form invisible capital in trade (social capital and cultural capital). This is an important factor in the business success of small traders in Tien Giang markets.

5. Compared to markets in other regions, Tien Giang markets has unique features: First, Tien Giang market network was established earlier and is denser than other provinces and cities in the Southern region, typically My Tho big city was considered an international trading port at the end of the 17th century. Second, in addition to the trading function, Tien Giang market system also plays an important role in the process of cultural exchange and acculturation between ethnic groups (Vietnamese, Chinese, Khmer, Chắm). Third, the traditional

products and also the outstanding strength of Tien Giang markets are mainly agricultural products (rice and fruits): Gao market, Vinh Kim fruit market, My Tho fish market, Long Khanh poultry market. Fourth, some markets are also famous for Tien Giang specialties such as: rice snakes (Cai Be market), durian (Ngu Hiep market), duck ‘banh canh’ (Cai Lay market), ‘hu tieu’ (My Tho market), ‘banh beo’ (hang Bong market), ‘bun goi gia’ (Vong Nho market), grilled spring rolls (Gao market), shrimp paste (Go Cong market), ‘vu sua Lo Ren’ (Vinh Kim market), ‘banh gia’ (Giong market), hamsters (Thien Ho market), seafood (Tan Thanh seafood market)...Fifth, most small traders in markets in Tien Giang often organize “market offerings” on the occasion of Ky Yen festival.

5. Under the impact of innovation policies, the influence of the market economy, the urbanization process and the wave of new rural construction, Tien Giang markets have also undergone many changes. This is also the general trend of all markets in our country. Because the market is the place that clearly shows the economic, social and population aspects of the loyalty, the transformation of markets in the new social context is inevitable. On the other hand, transformation process of markets also has impacts on the local economy, culture and society: the commodity economy is increasingly developing, promoting the expansion of the agricultural economy, investing in an intensive direction to create goods that increase in volume and ensure quality; promote exchange and trade between neighboring regions and localities, improve living standards as well as service quality for people in the area. In general, the markets in the province today have had many changes, completely different from the old markets. However, the unique features of market cultures have not been lost.

7. The results of the PhD survey show that: three factors affecting the existence and development of traditional markets are supply, demand and market. Among them, the “demand” factor of culture and consumer tastes has the greatest influence on the existence and development of traditional markets. That shows that the traditional market still maintains its position, role and value. In other words, under any circumstances, there must still be a separate space for the traditional market, meeting the material living needs and rich cultural identity of a

certain community of residents, with the character of an institution in people's daily lives. At the same time, the market will still have a dominant position in the market for many years to come, if the transportation system and infrastructure are synchronous and create convenience for shopping to help habits and increase purchasing power and people's income increased further.

8. Currently, the trend of trade globalization is taking place strongly. The markets of Tien Giang in particular and the country in general are facing many opportunities and challenges. According to forecasts, the number of markets tends to gradually decrease to make room for modern retail channels. Tien Giang needs specific and scientific directions and solutions if it wants to fully develop the potential of the market network in Tien Giang for local economic, cultural and social development. Tien Giang's markets need to be reorganized, upgraded, creating a neat and airy environment, especially ensuring food safety and hygiene... to suit the integration trend to be attractive consumers. The roadmap to preserve and promote the value of markets requires participation and attention from many sides, in which the government needs to promote the leading role according to the 3C mechanism (Government + Experts + Community). At the same time, market management boards, small traders and consumers also need to have certain effective actions, specially to preserve the beauty of traditional market culture in modern society.

**LIST OF PH.D. CANDIDATE’S SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES
PUBLISHED RELATED TO THE THESIS TOPIC**

1. Vo Van Son (2015), “Some landmarks in Tien Giang”, *Scientific Journal of Tien Giang University*, (2), ISSN: 1859-4530, pp.149-160.
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