

CAUSES FOR TRANSFORMATION OF SACRED SPACES OF TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS IN THE RED RIVER DELTA

Abstract: *Based on the analysis of survey findings in some provinces of the Red River Delta, the article points out the causes leading to changes in the sacred spaces of traditional religions. Accordingly, the spiritual needs of the people is the main cause led to the transformation of sacred spaces. Moreover, the economic development along with the needs to protect sacred spaces against encroachment as well as to preserve cultural traditions for community cohesion are the cause of the transformation of sacred space. Finally, the transformation of sacred spaces in some localities is also associated with the need for economic development associated with tourism and spiritual services.*

Keywords: *Transformation; sacred space; traditional religions; Red River Delta.*

Introduction

In the spiritual activities of people in the Red River Delta region, traditional religions play an important role in the life of each individual, family, and community¹. Since Doi Moi, there has been a rapid and strong revival of this type of religion, not only in religious activities but also in the aspect of sacred spaces. Sacred spaces, also known as worship spaces, are understood as places containing sacred objects and sacred symbols created by humans, ascribed to their sacredness, and legitimized that sacredness. This is

* Institute for Religious Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

also an intermediary place for people to communicate with the divine through religious rituals.

Through these spaces, collective knowledge, memories and identities have been preserved and transferred through generations. These spaces have been transformed through different periods. The transformation is closely related to political, economic, cultural, and social contexts². Transformation of sacred spaces is understood as a change in structure, function, scope, etc. of worshiping spaces in the family or in the locality. There are various forms of sacred space transformation such as restoration of lost sacred spaces; repairing and renovating degraded sacred spaces or upgrading and building new sacred spaces to serve the needs of the people in the new context. The transformation of the sacred spaces is observed through the changes in the material spaces of these religions.

According to Hoang Van Chung, from a micro perspective, “the transformation of sacred spaces can therefore be understood as the result of a series of external and internal influences that make sacred spaces no longer the same”. From a macro perspective, “transformation of sacred spaces can be understood as an arrangement and rearrangement, a re-creation of sacred spaces in a community or an area, therefore, the overall sense of sacred spaces become more in association with the needs and demands of the new context. Transforming the sacred space is also a change in the way of thinking and conception of its meaning, position, and function”³. The transformation of sacred spaces has happened in recent years due to the crisis of belief in society, the population growth or the process of rural-urban migration, the increase of living standards, the need to protect the cultural traditions on the way of gradual disappearing and the need for community cohesion, etc., And, in the context of society starting to have the idea of a religious economy or religious economic trend, the investment in these spaces as a form of “profitable investment” is a raised question. The human impact on sacred spaces, on the one hand, shows the

belief of the practitioner, on the other hand, from the cultural aspect, it also shows the level and needs to enjoy the spiritual culture of the people.

There are many objective and subjective causes leading to the transformation of sacred spaces. Objective causes can be mentioned as the deterioration of the ancient sacred spaces; the crisis of belief in modern society makes people tend to seek support from religions; population growth or rural-urban migration leads to the need to expand sacred spaces; an increase in living standards; the need to protect the cultural traditions and community cohesion, etc. Many factors lead to the need for larger or even more modern worship spaces to meet the needs of people in worshipping in particular as well as participating in religious ceremonies and religious activities in general. Based on data analysis from the survey of the topic “The transformation of sacred spaces in the context of Doi Moi in Vietnam: A case study of traditional religions in the Red River Delta”, this article indicates and analyzes the causes leading to the transformation of the sacred spaces of traditional religions in the Red River Delta.

Regarding of the research sample

The topic conducted a quantitative survey in 3 localities in the Red River Delta with 600 samples to find out the current situation and changes in sacred spaces of traditional religions in these localities in the past 15 years. The general characteristics of the survey participants are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents

Characteristics of respondents	Frequency (person)	Rate (%)
Locality		
Hà Nội	200	33.3
Bắc Ninh	210	35.0
Vĩnh Phúc	190	31.7

Place of residence		
Urban area	249	41.5
Rural area	351	58.5
Gender		
Male	324	54.0
Female	276	46.0
Family type		
Nuclear family	102	49.0
Extended/traditional family	106	51.0
Age group		
Up to 50 years old	191	31.8
Over 50 years old	409	68.2

This study was conducted in Hanoi, Bac Ninh, and Vinh Phuc with the proportion of participants being 33,3%, 35%, and 31,7% respectively. Out of 600 survey respondents, 41,5% of respondents live in urban areas and 58,5% of respondents live in rural areas. This rate is relatively consistent with the current reality when the process of rural-urban migration has strongly taken place for many years which changed the regional population structure and affected many other social issues including religious issues and demand for religious spaces.

The above table shows that the gender structure is relative with a negligible difference of 54% of men and 46% of women.

Regarding the age group, the survey showed that people over 50 years old accounted for a high proportion with 68,5%, and the group under 50 years old accounted for a lower proportion with 31,8% of total respondents. This data is also consistent with other studies on religion and people who participated in responding to religious studies tend to belong to the older group. In addition, this age group also reflects the fact that issues of “sacred spaces” often receive more attention from the elderly in the family and community than other age groups.

The survey results showed that there were many causes leading to the transformation of the sacred spaces of traditional religions.

The causes of sacred space changes are divided into 7 groups as follows: The need for worship; Better economic conditions; To protect sacred spaces; To protect cultural traditions; To strengthen relationships; For economic development; The policies and laws of the State. In fact, these causes are not always separate from each other but may have an interrelationship, cause-and-effect, with one cause becoming the driving factor of another.

These groups of causes are analyzed *in two dimensions*: *private sacred spaces* (sacred spaces in family and clan) and *public sacred spaces* (common sacred spaces of the community). Particularly, causes stemming from the State's policies and laws are mainly analyzed in the scope of public sacred spaces.

1. Causes of the transformation of private sacred spaces

In the traditional spiritual culture of Vietnamese people in particular and occidental people in general, worship is a sacred and important activity. Therefore, the worship space is always a sacred place, has great significance in the spiritual life of people, and is inviolable for any reason. People often reserve a solemn position for these spaces, as well as, limit the “transformation” of this place to avoid “disturbing” the objects of worship, affecting the “blessing” or “disaster” to families and clans. If they need to repair or change, people will choose the date, time, and appropriate direction.

However, currently, the transformation of sacred spaces is more and more popular and becomes a need of a part of people. The survey results showed that up to 61% of the respondents said that their families and clans have changed their worship spaces in the past 15 years. The causes of the transformation of private sacred spaces are as follows:

Table 2: Causes of the transformation of private sacred spaces

Causes of the transformation	Frequency (person)	Rate (%)
<i>Due to the need to worship</i>		

The previous worship space was too small, it could not meet the needs of the family and clan	237	62,6
The addition of a new object of worship	17	4,6
Difficulties in life	20	5,5
<i>Due to better economic conditions</i>		
Better economic conditions	221	60,4
repair or change residence	83	22,7
<i>To protect sacred spaces</i>		
The deterioration of the original worship space	199	54,4
<i>To protect cultural traditions</i>		
To remind and educate the next generation about the origin and filial piety	201	54,9
<i>To strengthen relationships</i>		
To bring individuals and families closer together	188	51,4

Causes related to *the need for worship*, 62,6% of the respondents said that the transformation was “due to the previous space not meeting the worshipping needs of the family or clan”. In addition, a few (4,6%) said that their family “has a new object of worship” (such as a deceased relative, or worshipping Uncle Ho, Buddha, Mother goddesses, etc.) or “due to the difficulties they encountered” (5,5%), resulting in the transformation of the original sacred spaces.

Causes related to *better economic conditions* (accounting for 60,4%), they are able to take care of their spiritual life- which is reflected in the remodeling of sacred spaces of the family, and clan. In addition, the repair or change of accommodation also comes from the increase in living standards, leading to a change in the

family's worship space (22,7%). In fact, in recent years, the increase in living standards has led to a change in religious life. Along with this process, worshiping spaces in both private and public spheres have been built and renovated spaciouly. The transformation of the private worship spaces can be found through the family altars as follows:

Changing the location of the altar: Previously, the altar was often placed in the common living space of the family. Placing the altar in the middle of the living room, facing the main door, is relatively common among families in the Red River Delta. Currently, when the economy has increased, many families arrange the altar in a separate room for worship or move to the top floor.

Replace old altars with new solid altars: In the past, altars in families were mainly placed on top of cabinets or small shelves attached to the wall. Recently, altars are placed separately in families with good economic conditions

In the context of urbanization, the living space of Vietnamese people has changed to suit the needs of the family as well as their financial ability. Religious life is an integral part of the common life of each individual and family. In many cases, observing the altar and the layout of the family can provide an assessment of the family's economic condition. The houses with modern architecture, the layout of the altar, and worshiping objects also need to change to suit the structure of the house but still retain the sanctity of the place of worship. In general, the increase in living standards has significantly changed the sacred spaces in Vietnamese families today.

In addition to the two groups of aforementioned causes, the transformation of the private worship spaces also aims *to protect the sacred spaces and the traditional culture*. Because economic conditions are improving, people have time and economic conditions to the protection of sacred spaces (with 54,4% of the

respondents). Moreover, the protection of sacred spaces also reminds and educates the next generation about the origin and filial piety (with 54,9% of the respondents). For Vietnamese people, the worship of grandparents, ancestors and people who have made meritorious services to the family, clan or country is not only the religious belief of those who perform it, but it also shows filial piety and respect with the parents who brought up them. It is a chance to educate the gratitude, to strengthen and build relationships of solidarity and closeness between individuals, families and community. Previous researchers such as Phan Ke Binh, Toan Anh, Phan Dai Doan, Nguyen Tai Thu agreed that ancestor worship is not only a spiritual and religious acts but also a moral, a good cultural tradition of the Vietnamese people to educate descendants about their roots, filial piety, gratitude to their father's generation⁴.

Therefore, most of families who believe in the traditional religions in the Red River Delta have an ancestral altar in the family with 95,5% of people participating in this study. A researcher has made a fairly accurate statement: "In the past decades, the movement to revive clan culture (văn hóa dòng tộc) is taking place strongly, many families and clans have put their efforts and enthusiasm in building, and restoring the clan temples, buying worshiping objects, in order to cultivate the moral tradition of "drinking water, remember the source" of the nation"⁵.

Finally, the new construction, repair, and upgrading of sacred spaces in the family also *aim to bring individuals and families closer together* with 51,4% of the survey respondents. In modern society, when individualism is promoted, relationships are also becoming looser. The cracks and disagreements in relationships can become barriers between husband and wife, parents and children, the younger generation and the elderly generation, etc. The worship of family is seen as a way to connect and strengthen relationships. The sacred world- expressed through the

preservation and construction and restoration of sacred spaces-family members, clans, and communities are reconnected. The key thing is not only in the sacredness of the object of worship but also in building trust and building a sacred space that creates a common sense among individuals and families, thereby creating a connection among these people.

The correlation comparison shows that there is a relatively clear difference between the nuclear and extended family groups in the reasons for changing the sacred spaces “to bring individuals and families closer together”. For this reason, the nuclear family group gave a rate of 40,6%, while the extended family group gave a much higher rate of 63,5% ($P < 0.001$). Correlation analysis also shows that there is a link between generations and causes of sacred space change, the group over 50 years old tends to emphasize the reason for changing sacred space to unite family members more than those under 50 years old (57,4% versus 38,5%) or “to educate the next generation about the origin and filial piety” (59,8% versus 44,4%).

The survey results show that the people who play a pioneering role in the process of transforming the local sacred space are often the elderly. They are much more interested in sacred space issues and directly involved in this transformation process. Is it because the elderly show more concern and responsibility than other groups in transforming sacred space because they have time; are knowledgeable about traditional customs, and are also the bridge between the deceased and the next generation? Therefore, they think they have a responsibility for the sacred space of their family and community.

2. Causes of the transformation of public sacred spaces

Studying the transformation of public sacred spaces shows a change in the spiritual life through the transformation of material worship spaces with 93,7% of respondents saying that “local sacred spaces have changed over the past 15 years”.

Analyzing the causes of the transformation of the public sacred space, the obtained data show that there are certain similarities with the private sacred space. The need for worship is always the leading cause of the transformation of private and public sacred spaces. However, for the private sacred spaces, the causes related to material resources ranked second, right after the need for worship, for the public sacred space, the causes of protecting sacred spaces and traditional culture prevailed are a higher rate than the causes in terms of financial resources. The causes aimed at strengthening community relations and economic development accounts for the same proportion and ranks last in the groups of causes leading to changes in public sacred spaces. See in the table below:

Table 3: Causes of the transformation of public sacred space in localities

Causes of the transformation	Frequency (person)	Rate (%)
<i>Due to the need to worship</i>		
The previous spaces are not big enough to serve the needs of the present ceremony	334	59,4
Objects of worship with great merit need more spacious worship spaces	213	37,9
new objects of worship added	12	2,1
Local people face many problems such as diseases, risks, business failures	5	0,9
<i>To protect sacred spaces</i>		
The original place of worship has been degraded, destroyed, and damaged.	298	53,0
Some individuals and families have encroached on the land of the worship spaces	7	1,2

<i>To protect cultural traditions</i>		
The need to restore local cultural traditions and educate the next generations.	298	53,0
<i>Better economic conditions</i>		
People's economic conditions are now better, receiving a donation.	290	51,6
<i>State's policies and laws</i>		
Funded, land invested by the State	202	35,9
The places of worship have been classified as a Special National Monument so changes are due to the State	175	31,1
Planning (bridges, roads, houses, industrial zones...) to lose the original place of worship	10	1,8
<i>To strengthen relationships</i>		
To strengthen the relationship among the community, the village, the clan, etc.	185	32,9
<i>To develop the economy</i>		
The need to develop spiritual services (economic, tourism, ...)	173	30,8

Causes related to the need to worship

The aforementioned data shows that spiritual needs are an important factor in promoting the transformation of sacred space in localities today. Accordingly, 59,4% of the respondents said that the transformation of the local sacred spaces is because the previous space did not meet the people's need for ceremony. In addition, 37,9% of respondents said that this transformation comes from the fact that the God being worshiped has great merit, so there is a need for a more worthy worship space. Similar to the private sacred spaces, few people said that the transformation of the sacred

space is due to the addition of new objects of worship or the difficult problems they have encountered in recent years. Talking to the custodians of sacred spaces, and witnessing the “punishment” or “retribution” from the Divine for those who destroyed sacred spaces has led to the need of the community to restore spiritual places that have been demolished, degraded, etc.

“In the past, people did not pay much attention to the worshipping spaces as they do today... Some people had disruptive behavior in the communal temple, who did wrong thing was punished by god and had to do a ceremony. And when you ask for help, god will bless you. The God is sacred (thiêng), so people agree, contribute effort and money to repair the communal temple” (in-depth interview with an 81-year-old man, Thinh Liet communal temple, Hoang Mai, Hanoi”.

According to Chu Quang Tru, “in the past, we talked a lot about the cynical and mystical aspects of religion, superficially understand the thesis of Marx when saying that *religion is an opium*. However, when the communal temples have been left floating (bị thả nổi), the face of the village have become haggard like newly established hamlets, the festivals have been limited, the cultural activities of the villagers were really poor, and the spiritual life was overlooked... Only when we study to understand religion from different cultural perspectives do we realize that religions have many values as a national cultural heritage”⁶. It is clear that religious activities, as a part of cultural practice, are not only one of the basic needs to be satisfied, but they also enrich the spiritual life of people. In recent years, the social community tends to restore the traditional religious festivals on a larger scale in terms of the number of participants as well as in terms of organization space and good economic conditions for these festivals. Moreover, under the influence of mass media, the pervasive power of these activities is very strong, easily attracting a large number of people interested in and attending these activities, thereby requiring larger spaces to

meet the practical needs of the people. In addition, the natural and mechanical population growth also has a significant impact on the need for expanding sacred space.

Causes related to protect sacred spaces

In recent years, the transformation of sacred spaces to avoid negative influences from external impacts such as degradation, dilapidation, destruction due to war, and encroachment is increasingly considered by the State and people. 53% of respondents said that the transformation of the local sacred space was *due to the original place of worship being degraded, destroyed, or damaged*. In fact, in many villages in the Red River Delta, after two wars, many religious buildings were affected. The disappearance of some worshiping statues, and objects, and the destruction or narrowing of the place of worship is common. On the other hand, in the past, after the August Revolution, it was influenced by the view that activities related to spiritual life were superstitious, leading to the destruction and eradication of public places of worship in most localities. “The mistake of radicalization led to the destruction of many arts and cultural architectures, many ancient statues being buried or sacrificed to the water god”⁷. In many localities, the movement to restore sacred spaces of the community received the active participation of many classes of people.

“The communal temple and pagoda of Dao Thuc have dated since the 17th century. In the past, the communal temple was bigger with 7 compartments. However, during the period of the war against the United State of America, the communal temple was degraded and there was a policy of demolishing the communal temple to serve as a granary of the Cooperative (from the 1960s to 1965). Then, the communal temple remained the main sanctuary. In 1995, we built 5 more compartments. The main sanctuary was not dismantled because there were many statues of the tutelary deity named Duc Tam Giang (In-depth interview, male, 73 years old, a cadre of Dao Thuc commune, Dong Anh district, Hanoi)”.

In addition to the renovation to protect the sacred spaces from deterioration, and damage, the upgrading, and repair of these spaces also aims to avoid fire, theft, etc...It has taken place in many places of worship. In particular, the worship spaces have many valuable antiques. A number of fires or thefts took place in recent years, causing many significant losses, which led to the need to protect sacred spaces to avoid losses from objective and subjective factors.

Causes related to protect cultural traditions

The reasons for sacred spaces changing to “protect cultural traditions and educate the next generation” accounted for 53% of the respondents. Accordingly, the restoration of sacred spaces is because these are also the treasures containing the precious heritage left by the forefathers. The preservation and protection of those spaces by the followers are also protecting the national cultural traditions. Through the treatment of ancestors according to the tradition of “drinking water, remember the source”, people educate the next generation and expect the same behavior from future generations. “In the past, our ancestors were good at doing that, if we break down it, it means we are falling behind. Today, our life is a little better, I have to restore it, to promote the new from the old (In-depth interview, male, 73 years old, an officer of Dao Thuc commune, Dong Anh district, Hanoi)”.

When they have gone through the stage of having enough to eat and wear, people begin to think about preserving and restoring traditional sacred spaces to promote values and cultural traditions of ancestors. A researcher commented that ““In the past decades, the movement to revive clan culture (văn hóa dòng tộc) is taking place strongly, many families and clans have put their efforts and enthusiasm in building, and restoring the clan temples, buying worshiping objects, in order to cultivate the moral tradition of “drinking water, remember the source” of the nation”⁸.

Causes related to strengthen relationships

32,9% of respondents said that the transformation of sacred spaces in their locality is aimed at “strengthening relationships”. Many studies have shown that participating in religious activities has increased cohesion among members of each religious community. Results of another survey conducted by the Institute of Religious Studies showed that participating in religious activities or performing rituals created connections between individuals, families, clans, and communities as well as common playgrounds through these collective activities ⁹. This study further affirmed the role of religion in connecting members of the community not only through religious acts but also through activities aimed at transforming the sacred space of that religion.

If spaces for physical activities such as sports playgrounds, parks, commercial centers, and amusement parks are often reserved for specific groups of people, religious spaces are suitable for all people in terms of gender, age, occupation, education, place of residence or origin, etc. Therefore, the investment in these spaces will be towards broader social groups compared to other entertainment spaces. Thereby, on the one hand, people participate in these activities for spiritual enjoyment, on the other hand, it also helps to strengthen the relationship among individuals, families, and communities in the area.

Causes related to better economic conditions

Another basic reason leading to the transformation of sacred space is the economy has improved with 51.6% of respondents. As analyzed above, material resources play an important role in leading to the transformation of current sacred spaces in both private and public spheres. When material conditions improve, people begin to think about spiritual values. It is a decisive factor in transforming or not transforming sacred spaces.

Research on *Philosophical aspects of ancestor worship of Vietnamese people in the Northern Delta at present* stated that the excitement of religious life originates from the instability of the economy. Accordingly, “the bad luck in the market mechanism, the gap between the rich and the poor in society, the destruction of the ecological environment, the appearance of negative aspects brought about by the scientific and technological revolution, the intellectual level of a part of the population is still low, etc. are social, psychological and cognitive causes leading to an increase in religious and belief activities”¹⁰.

Over the years, with the results of the market economy and religious life getting more and more attention, it shows that there is a relationship between these two fields, however, it is the opposite direction as the aforementioned opinion. It is the improvement of economic life that becomes the material foundation for people to satisfy and improve their spiritual life. The survey results showed that the difficulties encountered in life are the causes leading to the transformation of sacred space in the family and the community, accounting for a very small percentage (with 5.5% in private sacred spaces and 0.9% in public sacred spaces).

In general, the increase in spiritual needs, on the one hand, is a consequence of the process of reviving religions and beliefs in recent years. However, changes in religious life also stem from improvements in economic life. The convenience of economic life creates favorable conditions and is a prerequisite for changes in religious life: when people no longer have to worry about food and clothing, people spend more time practicing and expressing religious beliefs. That practice and expression must take place in more commensurate spaces.

In fact, religion is an integral part of the lives of the vast majority of Vietnamese. When society develops and economic conditions help people to improve their quality of life in both material and spiritual aspects, religion cannot be separated from

their lives. In addition, the urbanization process has replaced the three-room tiled houses with high-rise buildings, in that context, the sacred space cannot remain its archaic “version”. It also integrates into the flow of “urbanization” and the process of “transformation of sacred space”.

Causes related to develop the economy

These causes are also related to economic factors, the changes of sacred space in order to economic development through investment in sacred spaces for tourist business and spiritual services account for a lower proportion. Although this cause ranks at the bottom of the table among the causes of sacred space change, however, fieldwork data in many localities shows that this is an important reason for the transformation of sacred spaces at present- especially the sacred spaces with great influence (the worshiped God who had merit and influence over the large community, sacred space has a long history, a beautiful location, many people come to worship, visit, ...).

The survey results show that the need to develop spiritual services to improve the economic life of local people leads to the investment in transforming sacred spaces currently accounts for 30,8%. In recent years, along with the development of the tourist industry, the association of “tours” with spiritual sites has become one of the attractions that attract a large number of tourists. This is also the view of some businesses currently investing in spiritual tourism areas.

“Building spiritual works help people remember the historical tradition of our forefathers. Besides, the Company has created jobs for tens of thousands of people such as boat drivers, and tramcar drivers. The image and reputation of the business are enhanced (Interview with a private enterprise of construction X.T.).”

Some spiritual establishments that used to be crowded with people to worship have been invested in by businesses to become spiritual tourist destinations and attract more tourists. For many

people, going to these spaces can both satisfy their spiritual needs and sightseeing, and entertainment. The business associated with spirituality becomes a fertile land for economic development, likened to a “chicken that lays golden eggs”. Sacredness has been used to promote economic value, or sacred spaces are being turned into commodities.

The views of many localities also show that linking economic development with spiritual spaces has become a sustainable economic development strategy.

“The district has surveyed and planned a project to build communal temples and pagodas associated with water puppetry to serve tourism. Currently, the tourists who come there are mainly foreigners with about 10 to 20 tours per month” (In-depth interview, male, 73 years old, official Dao Thuc commune, Dong Anh district, Hanoi).

The district’s policy is spiritual tourism in association with craft village development. Ý Lan temple, Giong temple, Chu Dong Tu temple associated with Bat Trang pottery village, the Museum of the Central Vietnamese Women’s Union, Vinhomes urban area form a tour. Building a spiritual area requires advertising to be known and spent on doing (transforming the sacred space) in order to interest people” (In-depth interview, male, 39 years old, an officer in Duong Xa commune, Gia Lam district, Hanoi).

Both qualitative and quantitative data show that there is a close relationship between the transformation of sacred spaces and the increase in religious practices and activities. According to Ngo Duc Thinh, festivals are always held in sacred and large spaces associated with natural scenery and charming mountains. On the one hand, people attend ceremonies to worship gods, on the other hand, they are also in harmony with nature. Therefore, attending festivals and pilgrimages is always visiting the beautiful landscapes of the country¹¹. Recently, travel is increasingly becoming one of the measures of living standards and material enjoyment, attaching

tourism to visiting spiritual sites has become one of the ways to attract tourists to localities and investment in spiritual works, thereby the economic development through spiritual tourism business.

Causes related to the State's policies and laws

A factor that also plays a very important role in leading to the transformation of the sacred spaces of traditional religions in the Red River Delta is the State's policies and laws. The innovation in viewpoints, approaches, and policies towards religions of the Party and the State since 1986 has re-evaluated the value of religious works as well as the spiritual value of religious activities. As a result, the restoration of sacred spaces for religious activities has also received more and more attention and investment, and the participation of all classes including intellectuals as well as businessmen.

The role of the State in transforming sacred spaces is not only reflected in policies and laws on religious land but also in the State's investment in these spaces, including funding, resources, and favorable conditions in the planning process. 35,9% of respondents said that the transformation of sacred spaces in their locality comes from the State's investment in funds and land. The in-depth interviews' data also reinforce the role of the State in this area:

“In the locality, there are also some traditional sacred spaces that were destroyed during the war but they were not restored due to economic conditions. Economic conditions mainly determine the construction and repair of sacred spaces today... Funds to restore sacred spaces still depend on the State's investment, especially in funding and land” (In-depth interview, male, 73 years old, an officer at Dao Thuc commune, Dong Anh district, Hanoi).

“In the local budget allocation plan, some degraded items will be invested in building, repairing and expanding the parking of the

Temple” (In-depth interview, male, 39 years old, an officer in Duong Xa commune, Gia Lam district, Hanoi).

In addition, the transformation of public sacred spaces also depends on the State if these works are on the list of ranked relics. As a result, the restoration and embellishment of these works need the approval of the State and must meet the requirements of documents, design, and construction units. This reason accounts for a large proportion, rate 31,1%. Meanwhile, the cause of the change in sacred spaces due to that spaces in the planning accounts for a very small proportion, equivalent to 1,8%. This data is completely consistent with the qualitative data obtained through discussions with the local authorities surveyed.

Accordingly, urban planning or bridges, roads, and industrial zones of localities always try to avoid planning on spiritual works. Rare plans violated spiritual construction. The government and people even struggle to adjust the plan if it violates sacred spaces. For example, in the case of Ba Chua Kho Temple in Hanoi, the construction of the central station of Cat Linh, the Department of Religious Affairs of Hanoi City advised adjusting the planning to preserve this temple.

Conclusion

The results of data analysis show that the transformation of the private and public sacred spaces *mostly comes from the people's spiritual needs*. There is a close link between an increase in religious practices, expression of faith, and an interest in sacred spaces. Due to the increase in faith, people seek to enhance and highlight sacred spaces. The transformation of sacred spaces also includes the process of sanctifying the secular thing (cái phàm) in the community's mind and life. On the contrary, the fact that sacred spaces that were embellished and upgraded have attracted many people. Moreover, with the population growth in urban areas, some worshiping places were overloaded which require further expansion to meet social needs.

Besides, the collected data also shows *the importance of material factors in transforming sacred spaces both in private and public spheres*. When people have better material conditions, they have more time to take care of their spiritual life, shown by being more interested in repairing, restoring the sacred spaces where people perform rituals and express their beliefs and seek connection with the sacredness (cái thiêng).

In addition, *the transformation of sacred spaces also comes from the deterioration of sacred spaces* (public spaces in particular). Many sacred spaces were turned into warehouses, cattle stables, etc. during the war years. However, since 1986, the development of economic life has led to the recovery of spiritual life. The role of the State reflected in the policies and laws on the sacred spaces of religions in general and traditional religions, in particular, has created many favorable conditions for the restoration, and improvement of the sacred space and building new sacred spaces.

In parallel with the State's inventory, ranking of relics, and restoration of degraded relics, the people also mobilize human and material resources to protect and restore these works. Funding for these activities comes from two sources: the state budget and socialization capital. In some places, the state budget allocated each year for monuments is insignificant, but it is a basis to mobilize private capital. Even in many cases where religious institutions are not included in the national monuments, socialization capital is the decisive source. With degraded public sacred spaces, the repair and restoration also depend on the value of the work (expressed in architectural art, preserved antiquities, or important evidence of history), the influence of the sacred spaces (number of visitors), and the role of the Divine (Đấng Thiêng) being worshiped there. Moreover, other factors also contribute to the transformation of the current sacred spaces such as protecting the nation's traditional culture, strengthening individual relationships, family, and community, or promoting local economic development.

In fact, the decision to transform a sacred space in the private or public sphere needs to consider many aspects. In general, the aforementioned causes are not separate from each other but *they need to be considered in the reciprocal relationship, promoting each other*. The transformation of a sacred space is a process that is brought together by many factors such as the need of the subject to practice the belief, the role of the Divine (the object of worship), media, the influence of the person who initiated the transformation of the sacred space (in order to educate the tradition for the next generation). Besides, the transformation of sacred spaces is also taken into account the benefits of groups participating in this activity such as the State, people, people with prestige or influence in activities, people who invest in the operation. In other words, the investment in sacred spaces has maximized its beneficiaries. Therefore, in the coming years, these activities will continue to receive attention and investment from both the State and people./.

NOTES:

- 1 Phùng Thị An Na (2016), “Tin ngưỡng dân gian vùng đồng bằng sông Hồng” (Folk beliefs in the Red River Delta), *Tạp chí Khoa học xã hội Việt Nam*, số 11, tr. 26.
- 2 Hoàng Văn Chung (2019), “Dẫn luận về không gian thiêng và biến đổi không gian thiêng”, Kỷ yếu hội thảo *Biến đổi không gian tôn giáo truyền thống ở đồng bằng sông Hồng và những vấn đề đặt ra hiện nay* (Presentation on sacred spaces and transformation of sacred spaces, Conference Proceedings on *Transformation of traditional religious spaces in the Red River Delta and current issues*), Viện Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo, tr. 15.
- 3 Hoàng Văn Chung (2019), “Dẫn luận về không gian thiêng và biến đổi không gian thiêng”, Kỷ yếu hội thảo *Biến đổi không gian tôn giáo truyền thống ở đồng bằng sông Hồng và những vấn đề đặt ra hiện nay* (Presentation on sacred spaces and transformation of sacred spaces, Conference Proceedings on *Transformation of traditional religious spaces in the Red River Delta and current issues*), Viện Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo, tr. 16-17.
- 4 Trần Đăng Sinh (2002), *Những khía cạnh triết học trong tín ngưỡng thờ cúng tổ tiên của người Việt ở Đồng bằng Bắc Bộ hiện nay* (Philosophical

- aspects of Vietnamese ancestor worship in the Northern Delta at present*), Nxb. Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội, tr. 49.
- 5 Bùi Bá Quân, Nguyễn Gia Khoa, Giang Mạnh Cầm (2020), “Hệ thống đồ thờ truyền thống trong từ đường ở miền Bắc Việt Nam” (The system of traditional worshiped objects in the temples of clans in North Vietnam), *Tạp chí Khoa học xã hội và nhân văn*, Tập 6, số 1, tr. 92.
 - 6 Chu Quang Trứ (1996), *Di sản văn hóa dân tộc trong tín ngưỡng và tôn giáo ở Việt Nam* (The national cultural heritage of beliefs and religions in Vietnam), Nxb. Thuận Hóa, Huế, tr. 7.
 - 7 Trần Lâm Biền (1993), “Quan hệ tín ngưỡng dân dã Mẫu Liễu và điện thờ” (Folk beliefs of Mau Lieu and the shrine), trong *Văn hóa vì con người* (Culture for people) do Hồ Sĩ Vịnh chủ biên, Nxb. Văn hóa và Tạp chí Văn hóa Nghệ thuật, Hà Nội, tr. 313.
 - 8 Bùi Bá Quân, Nguyễn Gia Khoa, Giang Mạnh Cầm (2010), “Hệ thống đồ thờ truyền thống trong từ đường ở miền Bắc Việt Nam” (The system of traditional worshiped objects in the temples of clans in North Vietnam), *Tạp chí Khoa học xã hội và nhân văn*, Tập 6, số 1, tr. 92.
 - 9 Trần Thị Phương Anh (2018), “Một số vai trò cơ bản của hoạt động tín ngưỡng – tôn giáo ở Việt Nam hiện nay và các yếu tố tác động” (Some basic roles of belief-religious activities in Vietnam today and influencing factors), *Tạp chí Khoa học xã hội và nhân văn*, Tập 4, số 6, tr. 748.
 - 10 Trần Đăng Sinh (2002), *Những khía cạnh triết học trong tín ngưỡng thờ cúng tổ tiên của người Việt ở Đồng bằng Bắc Bộ hiện nay* (Philosophical aspects of Vietnamese ancestor worship in the Northern Delta at present), Nxb. Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội, tr. 9.
 - 11 Ngô Đức Thịnh (1993), “Những giá trị văn hóa của lễ hội cổ truyền và nhu cầu của xã hội hiện đại” (Cultural values of traditional festivals and needs of contemporary society), in trong *Văn hóa vì con người* (Culture for people) do Hồ Sĩ Vịnh chủ biên, Nxb. Văn hóa và Tạp chí Văn hóa Nghệ thuật, tr. 335.

REFERENCES

1. Phùng Thị An Na (2016), “Tín ngưỡng dân gian vùng đồng bằng sông Hồng” (Folk beliefs in the Red River Delta), *Tạp chí Khoa học xã hội Việt Nam*, số 11.
2. Trần Thị Phương Anh (2018), “Một số vai trò cơ bản của hoạt động tín ngưỡng – tôn giáo ở Việt Nam hiện nay và các yếu tố tác động” (Some basic roles of belief-religious activities in Vietnam today and influencing factors), *Tạp chí Khoa học xã hội và nhân văn*, tập 4, số 6.

3. Hoàng Văn Chung (2019), “Dẫn luận về không gian thiêng và biến đổi không gian thiêng”, Kỷ yếu hội thảo *Biến đổi không gian tôn giáo truyền thống ở đồng bằng sông Hồng và những vấn đề đặt ra hiện nay* (Presentation on sacred spaces and transformation of sacred spaces, Conference Proceedings on *Transformation of traditional religious spaces in the Red River Delta and current issues*), Viện Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo.
4. Bùi Bá Quân, Nguyễn Gia Khoa, Giang Mạnh Cầm (2020), “Hệ thống đồ thờ truyền thống trong từ đường ở miền Bắc Việt Nam” (The system of traditional worshiped objects in the temples of clans in North Vietnam), *Tạp chí Khoa học xã hội và nhân văn*, tập 6, số 1.
5. Trần Đăng Sinh (2002), *Những khía cạnh triết học trong tín ngưỡng thờ cúng tổ tiên của người Việt ở Đồng bằng Bắc Bộ hiện nay* (Philosophical aspects of Vietnamese ancestor worship in the Northern Delta at present), Nxb. Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội.
6. Chu Quang Trứ (1996), *Di sản văn hóa dân tộc trong tín ngưỡng và tôn giáo ở Việt Nam* (The national cultural heritage of beliefs and religions in Vietnam), Nxb. Thuận Hóa, Huế.
7. Hồ Sỹ Vĩnh (1993), *Văn hóa vì con người* (Culture for people), Nxb. Văn hóa và Tạp chí Văn hóa Nghệ thuật, Hà Nội.