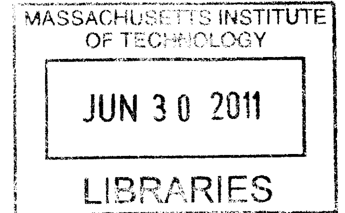
ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES TO URBAN MIGRATION IN HO CHI MINH CITY:

ADAPTING TO THE CHALLENGES OF A HIGHLY REGULATED ENVIRONMENT

By

Daniel Tien Simon

B.A., American Civilization
Brown University (2001)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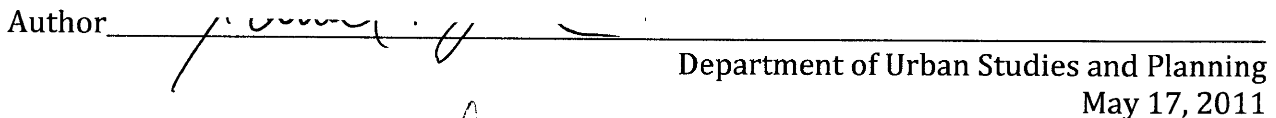

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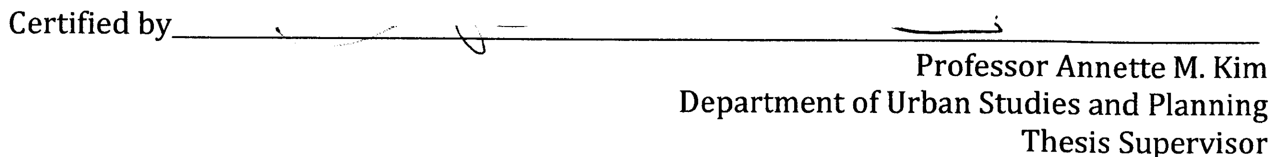
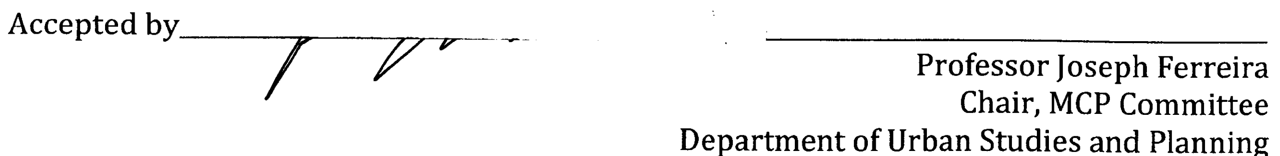
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
May 17, 2011



Certified by
Professor Annette M. Kim
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Thesis Supervisor



Accepted by
Professor Joseph Ferreira
Chair, MCP Committee
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

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By

Daniel Tien Simon

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the operational environment for social organizations working to address the challenges facing Ho Chi Minh City's increasing migrant population. After Vietnam introduced sweeping economic reforms in 1986, the country began to experience rapid industrialization and urbanization. Ho Chi Minh City has since emerged as the country's financial hub, and it finds itself at the epicenter of a significant population shift and the destination of a large number of migrants seeking economic opportunity.

This thesis seeks to uncover the difficulties that arise from Vietnam's urban migration by exploring the challenges facing the migrant community in Ho Chi Minh City. It further analyzes how migrant needs may or may not be addressed by existing social organizations. Given Ho Chi Minh City's unique political environment, how does this highly regulated environment influence the social activities of local non-profit organizations and how do such organizations adapt to these challenges in order to meet the needs of migrant workers?

This research clarifies the inequalities that emerge from urban migration and the importance of social organizations to address the pressing needs that arise from these shifting dynamics. This thesis suggests that Vietnam's unique operational environment presents added challenges to addressing these issues. In light of global migration and urbanization trends, Vietnam still has far to go in its development, and how the state chooses to interact with these organizations may determine the success of its progress.

Thesis Supervisor: Annette M. Kim
Title: Associate Professor of Urban Studies and Planning

Thesis Reader: Tunney Lee
Title: Professor of Architecture and Urban Studies, Emeritus

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research question

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's dynamic business hub and financial center, whose allure suggests the promise of opportunity, finds itself the destination of a migrant population looking for new possibilities. After a decade of dismal poverty and stagnation, sweeping economic reforms introduced in 1986 – referred to as *đổi mới* or *renovation* – saw accelerated industrialization and urbanization, and as HCMC[1] began to generate a large amount of the country's wealth and development, it also attracted a large number of migrants seeking economic opportunity. As the country's largest and most densely populated city, it boasts a population of over seven million residents according to the 2009 Census. This figure, of course, only reflects an official count and does not account for the millions of undocumented inhabitants, who put the unofficial population count at over ten million.

The *đổi mới* reforms, which partially opened up an economy that had been essentially closed for over a decade, invited a sudden inflow of foreign investment and global capital. This set the tone for Vietnam's urban development policy, and these sweeping reforms, while comprehensive, have focused mainly on the economy and the renovation of economic policies (Boothroyd 2000). As it concentrates its resources towards a more economically focused agenda, the Vietnamese

[1] HCMC refers to Ho Chi Minh City and the two are used interchangeably throughout this document.

government finds itself struggling to adequately carry out its social responsibilities. In the meantime, hundreds of thousands of migrants descend upon the city each year seeking a better quality of life but often experiencing a wide range of difficulties in their new urban environment. The *đổi mới* reforms that led to a vast influx of capital into the city and a simultaneous increase in its urban growth rate has resulted in an expanding divide between HCMC's rich and poor and an increase in urban poverty. A lack of social services and outdated policies that essentially deny the migrant population access to city services put this growing group at a tremendous disadvantage.

In the absence of state led assistance, one would assume that civil society would serve the social needs of the population. The proliferation of non-profit organizations seems to indicate that this is indeed what is happening. Yet as a single-party, authoritarian government, Vietnam has its unique brand of civil society that is highly regulated and controlled by the state. This presents a remarkable irony in which the legitimacy of the Vietnamese state, derived from its Marxist origins, lies in its duty to pursue a social agenda, but currently, its economic priorities divert its resources elsewhere. At the same time, the state's complex relationship with civil society, particularly in HCMC, does not allow for the autonomy of organizations to fulfill the work the state should.

Civil society, while strongly promoted by the international players assisting in Vietnam's development, is itself a convoluted and nebulous idea that may not actually be applicable in the case of Ho Chi Minh City. If simplistically defined as a

space for citizen activity outside of the state that may influence the quality of life, the groups that emerge to address HCMC's urban challenges may not even be considered civil society. In light of this, how does strong state involvement in Ho Chi Minh City's social sector shape the activities of social organizations? How are such organizations adapting to these challenges in order to meet the needs of migrant workers?

1.2 Methodology

Much of this paper is based on fieldwork in Ho Chi Minh City, where I lived for two months during the summer of 2010. During this time, I spearheaded a Community Needs Assessment Project for the Viet Nam Urban Community Development Association[2], a Vietnamese non-government, non-profit organization. VUCDA supports community development in the larger Ho Chi Minh City area and has a strong interest in urban issues with ties to many organizations – both local and international – working in this sector.

VUCDA wanted to explore the problems posed by rapid urbanization and their impact upon the quality of life in Ho Chi Minh City. We devised the Community Needs Assessment Project, which sought to identify which quality of life issues posed the greatest challenge to urban communities in HCMC and to determine which populations were in the most need of assistance. The original intention of the study was to collect feedback directly from local residents; however, before we

[2] At the request of the organization, I have used a pseudonym in lieu of their actual name.

could pursue a community survey, we consulted a number of community development experts working in Ho Chi Minh City representing non-profit organizations or academic institutions to help focus on particular issue areas and population groups.

VUCDA identified and provided me with a list of individuals and organizations working in Ho Chi Minh City with whom they had existing relationships.[3] In a few instances, the interviewees I met with would suggest an additional contact and then put me in touch with that person directly. The majority of these meetings were with director or manager level staff of a local non-profit organization, but they also included academic researchers and even a university dean. I contacted each of them and met with those whose schedules permitted. I directed exploratory interviews and held one to two hour meetings with these community development experts and asked them to identify disadvantaged groups and quality of life issues. The objective for these interviews was to identify significant challenges faced by different populations and communities in and around Ho Chi Minh City. It is the result of these interviews that really shed light on the migrant population as the group with the greatest needs and illuminated the type of challenges they face. It also highlighted some of the nuances and complexity in the relationships these organizations have with the government.

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[3] Due to the political sensitivity of the topic, the identity of all the individuals and organizations interviewed for this research are protected and will be referred to by an interview # throughout this thesis.

Interviews were customized depending upon each individual's area of expertise and tended to be conversational and informal in an effort to build upon the discussion. All interviews began with one open-ended question: "What are major community challenges in or near Ho Chi Minh City?" Although some respondents felt that the question was too broad, and some even asked for the specific community or population of interest, I made every effort to wait and see how each respondent would answer on his or her own. The majority of interviewees independently brought up migrant workers as the population facing the greatest challenges in HCMC, but in a few cases, I specifically asked about their relationship to and thoughts on the migrant population if the interviewee did not address it. In these cases, they offered their specific perspective on this as it might relate to their own work or research. It is possible such "leading" questions may have influenced the research results. Similarly, the "off the cuff" interviewing style may have also affected the direction of the interview, as questions were not universally consistent throughout the process.

The research stems from interviews with 17 academics and practitioners in total – of which I conducted 14 and a different VUCDA consultant carried out the remaining three. I still found important and relevant information from the latter and have included this information in my research even though I did not conduct these interviews personally. All of the interviewees were experts in their respective fields, as previously mentioned, and certainly offered important insights, but none of them served as primary sources. Unfortunately, due to timing limitations and political sensitivities, I was unable to speak with any migrant workers directly.

Lastly, it is important to note that the interviews were conducted in either English or Vietnamese depending upon the interviewees' fluency in the former. While I consider myself conversational in Vietnamese, I am not fluent and certainly not comfortable with some of the jargon used in discussing these issues. I hired a Vietnamese assistant to serve as a translator for the Vietnamese-language interviews. She was a recent university graduate and not a professional translator, therefore her skills were above adequate, but not perfect, and some moments may have been lost in translation. Within the first interview, however, a typical pattern emerged where the interviewee and I would address each other directly while he or she would speak in Vietnamese, I would respond in English, and my assistant would fill in the blanks.

Following my field research in Ho Chi Minh City, VUCDA sent me a database (upon request) containing information on 243 non-profit organizations operating in the Ho Chi Minh City area. This database, in addition to the interviews, greatly informed my thesis. While the interviews were able to help paint a larger picture of the major community challenges in HCMC, the database offers a bigger picture of the non-profit terrain in HCMC. The information I received from the interviews helped direct me towards to what to look for in the latter, where first, I explored the activities of each of the organizations to determine if and how the specific needs of migrant workers are addressed and second, I tried to determine each organization's measure of independence from the state.

VUCDA organized the database as part of their efforts to track the activities of organizations working in local community development. The only criteria to be listed in VUCDA's database are that organizations must consist of two or more people (as distinct from individuals) and that it must address a community need. For the most part, all of the listed groups are local organizations. Most of the information compiled for the list was done through informal research and periodic encounters. While the database allowed me to make some broad generalizations about the non-profit environment in HCMC, it is not complete or fully comprehensive. It was sometimes difficult to determine a group's specific activities, target groups, and umbrella partners, and at times, I was forced to make certain assumptions or to discard the group from the study.

1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis attempts to uncover how such strong state control of Ho Chi Minh City's civil society influences the social activities of local non-profit organizations. The next chapter explores the complicated nuances of civil society, its influence in Vietnam, and the resulting operational environment for these organizations. In order to determine what needs might not be adequately addressed, in Chapter 3, I establish why HCMC's migrant population is experiencing the greatest challenges and explore the difficulties facing this group. Through an organizational analysis, Chapter 4 uncovers how migrant needs are not being adequately met by existing social organizations and validates the complex relationship between government and local organizations. Finally, in Chapter 5, I discuss my conclusions and

hypotheses, and I reflect on how this relates to Vietnam's current point in the urbanization process.

CHAPTER 2: THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

2.1 Introduction

In order to better understand the operational environment for organizations within the context of Vietnam, I begin by first reviewing the concept of civil society, which is often offered as a broader category for such groups engaging in social welfare activities. Further exploration of this idea, however, reveals that the very definition of civil society itself is vague, establishing who comprises it is controversial, and attempts to articulate what it does are inconsistent. A clear definition of civil society is remarkably elusive because it is frequently defined by what it is *not* (i.e. not the state, not the private sector, not the private/family domain), while the heterogeneous list of organizations and institutions that civil society may encompass are extensive and variable (Salemink 2003). Hannah (2007) aptly and descriptively points out that "any exploration of civil society theory opens a Pandora's box, a bewildering chaos of definitions, paradigms, descriptions, and explanations of what should and shouldn't be considered part of the concept." Nonetheless, it is exactly these confusions and complexities that shed light on our understanding of the current state of civil society and social organizations in Ho Chi Minh City.

2.2 Origins

In terms of a modern understanding of civil society and its potential relevant applications to Vietnam, it is worthwhile to note that civil society has clear Western origins and "is essentially an intellectual product of 18th century Europe, when citizens sought to define their place in society independently of the aristocratic state" (Anheier 2004). Early theorists, including Enlightenment writers such as John Locke and Scottish moralists such as Adam Smith, explored the role of emerging citizenship and democratic associations as separate from the state. French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville similarly emphasized the importance of associations among private citizens, particularly the formation and support of societal associations and their influence on quality of life. His version of civil society has had a strong influence on contemporary interpretations and has served as a touchstone for current writers of civil society. These early explorations of civil society outlined the significance of associations in society as well as establishing the importance for a space outside of the state.

Civil society later developed beyond a space outside the state to a space that could be viewed *in opposition* to the state. Emerging from the literature on strategies for resistance to Poland's communist regime in the 1980s, Eastern European dissidents such as Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuron appropriated ideas of civil society into their resistance treatises. Soon the idea of civil society expanded to include "a sphere of action that is independent of the state and that is capable... of energizing resistance to a tyrannical regime," which has led to the perspective of civil society as

an "essential ingredient in democratization and the health of established democracies" (Foley and Edwards 1996).

2.3 Civil Society in International Development

Following the fall of the Soviet Union and Eastern European Communism, civil society began a prominent re-emergence through its appropriation into international development. Development policy circles have emphasized the importance of strengthening civil society, which highlights the role of NGOs and grassroots organizations to address poverty alleviation and social welfare objectives. Such development agendas have become commonplace and are generally promoted by multilateral institutions, the World Bank, UNDP and other such organizations (McIlwaine 1998). They have adopted this approach as part of an effort to encourage citizen participation, a method that has become highly valued among development agencies.

The idea behind public participation is that it serves as a vehicle to give voice to groups previously silenced. In the case of international development, citizen participation is seen not just as a means for people to influence decisions that affect them, "but also as a means to obtain, through mutual-help initiatives and possibly with outside help, the basic needs which would not, otherwise, be available to them" (Choguill 1996). This suggests a powerful democratic process and a community-based, bottom-up approach that seeks to empower citizens rather than just fulfill the interests of the state.

The approach is certainly noble, but the danger here lies in the almost dogmatic insistence in strengthening civil society by the international development community. Such organizations often perceive civil society as a panacea to development issues, which has raised a plethora of literary criticism. For example, Hughes (2002) questions whom civil society actually speaks for in the development context and interrogates civil society's representation, legitimacy, and accountability in such environments. Some scholars also scrutinize the politics surrounding civil society's role in development and subsequent governance issues (Hearn 2000, Jenkins 2001).

An important criticism to emerge concerns the idea of civil society as a Western import to developing nations, where these concepts may be less conveniently applied. Mclwaine (1998) contends that the role of civil society in development originates from "western notions of democratic capitalist development" imposed upon what are often non-compatible environments and that "for civil society to have any credibility, it must emerge from below." This perhaps contradicts the idea of a citizen-empowering civil society by implying that the development agenda is essentially a top-down process, which may actually prevent civil society from organically emerging from below "according to its own rules and negotiations" (Mcllwaine 1998). Further, given civil society's Western birthplace and development, Hudson (2003), acknowledges the dangers in importing such Western concepts into the global South, and suggests it is necessary to rethink what civil society means in Asia due to differing institutions, norms, and values.

The traditional notion of civil society in international development stresses the distinction of this sphere from the state. Such a pure form of civil society as called upon by development actors may, however, be difficult to encounter in this context. Some literary criticism suggests that the separation of state and civil society itself is contentious, but rather that the realms are interdependent (McIlwaine 1998). Pereira's (1993) examination of civil society as part of Brazil's economic development maintains its vital linkage to the state, which "has sponsored and protected, and at times directly created, associations that in other societies (especially Anglo-American ones) have tended to exist independently of the state." Amirahmadi (1996) takes this a step further by suggesting that states in early periods of development will take steps to encourage certain sectors of civil society, while restraining others that do not contribute to economic development. Such interactions between the state and organizations typically understood as civil society actors perhaps calls for a redefining of civil society, at least within the international development context.

Hannah (2007), in fact, offers a new way of viewing civil society by reconceptualizing it as a realm of activity rather than a space disconnected from the state. By examining a continuum of civil society *roles*, he suggests that organizations which may typically perform the functions of a civil society actor but that are less autonomous in their dealings with the state may now be considered part of this broader civil society. This precludes the need to exclude certain organizations because of their ties to the state in studies of civil society.

2.4 Organizational Regulation in Vietnam

Because development policy circles emphasize the importance of strengthening civil society, the relationship between civil society and the Vietnamese state is understandably complex. The idea of civil society is not yet widely understood in Vietnam, and those who use this term are generally limited to a small number of development agencies, non-profit organizations, and some state officials. The Vietnamese state, however, has placed new priorities on comprehending the concept because of donor insistence and the connection to donor aid, but Vietnamese sensitivity to civil society persists. Civil society was heralded as the driving force behind the fall of Eastern European Communism and retains its identification as a harbinger of democracy, and so, the call for more civil society in Vietnam has strong undertones of resistance against the state and a challenge to its legitimacy (Hannah 2007). This perception limits the legitimacy of any form of social organization outside of the state, so while civil society organizations may be recognized by the state for the social service they provide, they are also subject to state suspicion. For these reasons, the Vietnamese government believes it is better to control and harness the inevitable growth of a civil society than to let it occur organically (Hannah 2007).

In 1986, the Vietnamese government instituted major reforms in response to a stifling lack of economic progress. Known as *đổi mới*, or *renovation*, these reforms shifted Vietnam from a centrally planned economy towards a "socialist-oriented market economy" which encouraged foreign investment and gave private enterprise

a significant role in the national economy alongside strong state sector control. At the same time that *đổi mới* introduced sweeping economic reforms, it also introduced a space for non-Party organizations in two principal ways. First, as the Vietnamese state focused its efforts and priorities on economic development and integration into the world economy, the *đổi mới* reforms marked a "retreat of the state from its earlier role as monopoly provider of social services and from many aspects of control over daily life... and the slowly reduced role of the state encouraged a nascent and growing non-profit and voluntary sector" (Sidel 1997). Second, the new economic openness created an opportunity for international donors to begin entering the country. This timing coincided very closely with the re-emergence of civil society in the Eastern European context and its subsequent adoption by international development actors, who, in turn, introduced this concept into Vietnam.

The influx of international development actors into post-*đổi mới* Vietnam also spurred the formation of local organizations and associations since the state mandated that many international NGOs would be required to work with domestic partners, "thus creating a large demand for civil society organizations or domestic NGOs in a country where a hegemonic Party cum State leaves little space for association outside of state control" (Salemink 2003). This was most likely a measure intended to control foreign influence in a newly opened Vietnam but would also lead to further control over a rising social sector outside the state's direct jurisdiction. The new demand for local partners in tandem with the formation of organizations to compensate for the state's shifting priorities away from the social

sector accounted for the vast proliferation of civil society type organizations in the late 1980s. In Wischerman & Vinh's (2003) study of civic organizations in Vietnam, they note that more than four-fifths of those existing in 2000 were set up after 1985.

As the number of such organizations grew, the party state leadership became "concerned with an increasingly chaotic situation where popular associations were set up without following proper procedures and were, technically speaking, 'illegal.'" In 1998, the government established stringent parameters regarding the formation and regulation of such organizations that helped clarify the relationship between the state and popular associations. These regulations required any new association to seek official permission from a government agency "and have its statutes endorsed by relevant state agendas." While the government generally expects such organizations to be voluntary, self-governing, and self-funded, the state would offer financial resources to those associations providing services that align with state priorities (Vasavakul 2003).

Furthermore, the state established the use of a "front" system, which set up umbrella organizations to oversee various associations with related interests or activities. Through these umbrella entities, the party-state could more effectively retain its leadership over such organizations, and its directives would continue to affect their activities. These umbrella entities are able to maintain control over their member associations through supervision, alignment of objectives, and controlled leadership. Any newly formed association is expected to seek membership within these organizations, thus creating barriers for autonomy outside of the central

union's jurisdiction. All member groups are required to report to the central union twice yearly. Member associations are given permission to have their own statutes, but they must fall in line with those of the central union. The state also keeps the central union within its own structure by placing it under the leadership of the Secretariat (as in the case of VUSTA, an umbrella group that will be discussed further), which selects candidates to hold office in that union (Vasavakul 2003).

The non-profit sector thus depends upon the state for any social or legal legitimacy, usually accomplished through an arduous and complicated registration process. Hannah (2007) explores this further through his analysis of the registration process for a Vietnamese local non-profit organization. He explains that there is no clear basis for Vietnamese NGOs to exist in Vietnam, so many organizations typically register as "Scientific Research Organizations" under VUSTA (Vietnam Union of Scientific and Technological Associations), which is the kind of umbrella organization as described by Vasavakul. Although it was formed in 1992 to permit individuals to form groups that promote scientific research, it was granted status as a political and social organization by the Secretariat, which may explain why organizations with a social agenda so frequently register under this umbrella group. This method sidesteps official identification as a social organization, and many organizations seeking to do social work and development may take advantage of this loophole to register their group (Hannah 2007, Vasavakul 2003).

The process of registering a local NGO in Ho Chi Minh City (as opposed to Hanoi) presents even further complications. While nearly every group in Hanoi

registers under this method, VUSTA presence in HCMC is very limited. "The geographic difference is explained by the imperfect implementation of central policy, allowing local jurisdictions to retain certain powers for themselves," which suggests additional bureaucratic and political difficulties to register in HCMC under the national VUSTA or even the local HCMC USTA (Hannah 2007). This often means HCMC-based organizations must find and sub-register under a larger existing organization.

The North-South historical and political tensions add a further layer of complexity. Northern distrust of the Southern population and concerns of foreign influence make registration even more difficult and unwieldy. In HCMC registration is "difficult, costly, politically risky, and can be operationally restrictive. The consequence is that VNGOs are much rarer in HCMC, which is counter-intuitive for many Vietnam watchers who see HCMC as a much more liberal environment, generally. However, though bureaucratic restrictions on commercial enterprise seem far looser in HCMC, social controls are more stringent there" (Hannah 2007). [4]

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[4] This stands in conflict with many popular perceptions of the South as being more "open" than the North. While Ho Chi Minh City might have a freer economy due to its more recent history with a market economy, its complicated political history with the North often means tighter social controls than in Hanoi (Dapice 2004, Turley 1998).

CHAPTER 3: THE CHALLENGES FACING HO CHI MINH CITY'S URBAN MIGRANTS

3.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter examined the stringent controls on social organizations in Ho Chi Minh City, this chapter seeks to explore what social or community needs might not be properly addressed in light of the state's economic priorities and Vietnam's restrictions on social organizations. The majority of key informants interviewed as part of the Community Needs Assessment project pointed to the migrant community in and around Ho Chi Minh City as a highly disadvantaged population whose needs are not adequately being met. This chapter will examine the scope and shape of the challenges facing the migrant community in Ho Chi Minh City.

VUCDA provided me with an initial list of individuals and organizations that they identified as "community development experts" who could best pinpoint the significant challenges faced by different populations and communities in and around Ho Chi Minh City. Of those interviewed, five are researchers either affiliated with a university or research institution, and the remaining twelve are practitioners either presently working in community development or with related past experience. The nature of their work ranges from grassroots community engagement to policy analysis, but they are all embedded in some social need. The majority of the practitioners are affiliated with a local non-profit organization, but I also

interviewed a governmental agency, quasi-governmental organizations, an international NGO, a multilateral institution, and the social work arm of a Catholic Church. In all but two cases, every interviewee singled out the migrant community as a population facing the greatest urban challenges.[5]

In spite of the interviewees' diversity of perspectives, experiences, and areas of focus, they all positively identify migrant groups as the city's most challenged, which only underscores the gravity of the migrants' situation. Furthermore, given the broad nature of the interview discussion, the fact that three of the first four interviewees opened the conversation by unequivocally pointing to the migrant population as the community in the greatest need was a striking insight and set the tone for the remainder of the interviews. In order to paint a clearer picture of the individuals/organizations I interviewed, I introduce here those first three who, unprovoked, brought my attention to the plight of the migrant population. The first (Interviewee #1) is a local researcher and lecturer at the Vietnamese office of a prominent U.S. university, who has done extensive research on the effects of urbanization on HCMC's infrastructure and provided a broad overview of the issue. The second (Interviewee #3) is the manager of a local organization focusing on health and education issues related to HIV/AIDS and spoke at length about the different migrant communities throughout the city and their respective challenges before even touching upon his organization's specific AIDS-related activities. Finally, the third (Interviewee #4) spoke from his experience as an urban planner and

[5] In these two cases, one is a researcher looking at issues of the Vietnamese middle class and its upward mobility and the other is a director of an organization focusing on the disabled.

resettlement expert on urban upgrading projects in a quasi-governmental organization, and so his perspective focused more on housing-related issues. The remainder of the interviews allowed me to flesh out the nature of these challenges further by exploring them as they relate to the specific research and work of each individual interviewee.

3.2 Migration to Ho Chi Minh City

Cities in developing countries around the world are experiencing vast numbers of urban migration, and Ho Chi Minh City is no exception. As the country's business and financial center, HCMC brings in and generates a large amount of the country's wealth and development and therefore attracts a large number of both rural and city migrants seeking opportunity. Studies indicate that the rate of migration to HCMC has been increasing over the past few decades – particularly since the introduction of the *đổi mới* reforms – from 15,000 per year before *renovation*, to roughly 100,000 per year from 1989 through 1999, to over 200,000 per year from 1999 to 2004 (Luong 2009). It is estimated that 70% of Vietnam's internal migrants relocate for economic reasons, either for new employment opportunities or to improve working and/or living conditions (UNFPA 2007).

The low migration numbers before *đổi mới* is primarily a result of the country's de-urbanization efforts intended to control urban population growth and increase rural productivity following the end of the war and the reunification of the country. After 1975, Vietnam instituted a household registration system (*đăng ký hộ*

khẩu), which bound citizens to their ancestral homes and made it difficult to leave without official permission. According to a 2004 United Nations Population Fund survey, 96% of migrants have no registration in their current place of residence, and any attempt to become legally registered in Ho Chi Minh City (at least in the case of unskilled laborers) can present its own difficulties (GSO/UNFP 2004). It can be assumed that a large percentage of migrants do not intend to stay in HCMC and therefore do not pursue a change in registration status. Migrants who do attempt to update their registration status, however, and have moved for employment or improved living conditions are more likely to be refused registration according to the 2004 survey, which cites that 53% of those who moved for a job said they were denied permission and 47% of those who moved to improve living conditions experienced the same (GSO/UNFP 2004).

Although changes to Vietnam's Constitution in 1992 guarantees "freedom of mobility and residence within the country," the household registration system still creates barriers to migrant settlement in the city. The primary issue that arises is access to services – most migrants are classified as temporary residents and are not eligible for provincial social services, state sector employment, property ownership rights, or priority access to local schools (Luong 2009). This then becomes an issue of *cost of access*, as migrant workers will have to pay for the necessary services that the city commonly provides, such as education and health care, in the absence of recognized residency status in Ho Chi Minh City.

Map of Ho Chi Minh City and its Districts, including the areas experiencing the greatest urban migration

3.3 Migrant Profile

The migrant population in Ho Chi Minh City can be categorized into two distinct groups. The first are those earning a consistent salary working as factory workers. The second are those who work informally, such as domestic workers, street vendors, or construction workers. Both groups face common and unique challenges relating to jobs, education, health, housing, and social services.

Factory workers tend to be single men and women generally between 18 – 25 years old. This group generally establishes a more consistent, long-term base in Ho Chi Minh City. *"The intention of this group is to work and to save and to return home – but this is often not the case. They develop their own set of skills after working in the factory, and they want to permanently settle – and this becomes the greatest challenge – how to settle permanently."* [6] They may become attracted to the lifestyle in HCMC and become unwilling to return to their hometowns. Furthermore, many workers may eventually start families and the addition of a spouse and child can create greater burdens, particularly with regards to finding adequate housing and funding their children's education.

The second group seeks more independent work either because they lack the knowledge or skills required by manufacturing jobs, they are older than the preferred hiring age, or they may already have children which would require more scheduling flexibility than working at a factory would allow (such as taking a day off

[6] Interview #1, University researcher & lecturer

to care for a sick child). They tend to be more mobile and may move back and forth between HCMC and their hometown depending on the season. Similar to the first group, those with families or children may be subjected to greater hardships with regards to housing and education.

3.4 Jobs/Employment

Interviewees identified issues related to jobs and employment as a key challenge and area for improvement. Within this category, the interviewees cited a low salary as a primary area of concern, particularly with regards to factory workers. "[Our organization] has done research on workers' needs (factory workers in HCMC working in industrial zones) and identified salary and income as a primary challenge," cited one interviewee whose organization supports migrant workers through vocational training and educational programs.[7] He insists that such low salaries often do not justify the long hours and hard factory work.

These findings suggest that the migrant labor force employed in factories is vastly underpaid and cannot afford a reasonable standard of living. The results of the UN Population survey reinforces this data by reporting that the average income of migrants is significantly lower than the non-migrant population (UNPL 2007). These insufficient wages seem to directly contribute to the major challenges they face elsewhere, notably housing and health. The poor living conditions of migrant workers may be attributed to their low salaries, as they simply cannot afford better

[7] Interview #6, Local non-profit director

housing conditions. Although factory employers will provide health insurance to their workers in some cases, this may not always be sufficient and many workers cannot afford to pay insurance fees. One interviewee even claimed that "workers do not earn enough money to buy food that is nutritious."[8] Factory salaries have a direct connection to quality of life and "without the prospect of better opportunities or outside assistance, migrant workers have little chance to improve their lives or their living conditions."[9]

A lack of job stability and limited employment opportunities also present additional difficulties. Migrant laborers working independently in the informal economy obviously have no working contracts, employment benefits, or job security. They generally lack any formal form of support in terms of health benefits, living accommodations, or education/childcare, either via an employer or state assistance; and when it exists, aid from civil society organizations can be difficult to obtain for the reasons explored throughout this thesis. While factory workers may benefit from a regular salary and greater job stability, this group may also experience a lack of job security as well. Their livelihood is tied to their place of employment, and if the company they work for should close or relocate, these workers will be jobless with few contingency options. As non-residents of HCMC, they are not afforded any benefits, and since they may lack other job skills, their only choices are to seek factory work elsewhere or to return to their hometown. Migrant workers from both groups have "no opportunity for professional

[8] Interview #17, University researcher
[9] Ibid.

development, to learn a trade, to go to school, or to get training for a better career. Both groups do not have any way to improve their situation."[10]

The interviews suggest that child labor has also become a problem among migrant laborers evidenced by numerous factory workers under the age of 18. Due to their lack of resident status and low wages, children of migrant laborers often cannot afford to attend school in HCMC and turn to factory work in order to help their families earn money. Here they may suffer from harsh working conditions and even abuse. It is illegal for underage children to work in factories, so many will create fake IDs to overcome the age requirement; or migrant families, already enduring low wages, may have to bribe government officials for permission, which increases out of pocket costs and further contributes to ongoing government corruption.

3.5 Education

Data from the interviews indicates that access to education and education expenses have proven to be formidable barriers to migrant households in Ho Chi Minh City. Due to the lack of development and poor educational systems in rural areas, most migrants arrive with a low level of education and have no knowledge of educational opportunities that might be available in an urban setting. This is only exacerbated by the challenges facing Ho Chi Minh City's own educational system. A government official I interviewed suggested that given the city's high density and

[10] Ibid.

increasing population, there is already an insufficient number of schools to accommodate all children, let alone the growing influx of immigrants from other provinces. On top of that, existing schools suffer from a lack of resources, facilities, and equipment.

While many of these issues concern residents and migrants alike, policies currently exist that can assist HCMC residents, but migrants experience a unique set of challenges regarding their schooling. These children do not have access to schools in the district where they are living because they are not registered as permanent residents of HCMC. As non-residents, these children don't have resident ID cards (*hộ khẩu)* that would offer reduced fees for schools. Most schools require these resident cards in order to enroll, so migrant children may simply be unable to matriculate at any local school. These children may need to find a school further away that would accept them, but this sometimes "leads to discrimination and further prejudice between migrants and permanent HCMC residents."[11]

Although in theory Vietnamese public schools should be "universally accessible and free," the Ho Chi Minh City government has adopted a cost-sharing principle that requires parental contribution to educational costs through increased tuition and mandatory fees (Luong 2009). Such costs may be an additional burden to migrant families, many of whom barely earn enough to provide shelter and food. Other city policies, however, generate even more daunting obstacles to their education. Due to the their lack of residential status, they are given low priority for

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[11] Interview #17, University researcher

access to public schools, and the major issue becomes the cost of access, since this population now has to pay a higher price for educational services as they are subject to a different pricing scheme than HCMC residents. In many cases, migrants "will often have to bribe admissions officers and continue to provide these officials with money to keep them happy. The price of corruption also adds up."[12] Alternatively, due to these local barriers to public school attendance, many migrant households need to seek education at non-public schools, which can cost anywhere from 25% to 50% more than public schools (Luong 2009).

Since the cost of education becomes an enormous obstacle, many children will not continue their schooling in HCMC. One Ho Chi Minh City study indicates that the percentage of youth not in school increased from 31% in 1998 to 40% in 2001. This is telling in light of Vietnam's general improvement in school attendance since 1990, and more importantly that all the increase in this period took place primarily in rapidly urbanizing communities experiencing a heavy influx of migrants (Luong 2009).

Given these barriers to education, many migrant children may seek work opportunities instead. One result of this is underage child labor in factories, as described earlier. The absence of schooling or legitimate work opportunities may push more youth towards illicit activities, exacerbating HCMC's already substantial social challenges stemming from its urban poverty. The head of a local NGO

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[12] Interview #1, University researcher & lecturer

commented that many migrant youths without a legitimate ID "often become drug users or sex workers." [13]

3.6 Health

Most interviewees also pointed to health care as a major difficulty facing the migrant population. Much like the city's educational system, the health care infrastructure in Ho Chi Minh City is similarly insufficient for the general population, and there are not enough hospitals to adequately serve the entire population. Most of them are clustered in the centrally located districts, so residents who live further out may need to travel at least one hour to see a doctor. Given the high housing prices in HCMC and the location of industrial zones, the vast majority of migrants reside on the city's periphery.

As in the case of education, the cost of access is also a major issue in health care. Following *đổi mới*, "financial responsibility for health care has been shifting from the state to individuals and families" resulting in the rise of private health care and unequal access to health care based on class (Luong 2009). Migrants without permanent resident status in HCMC are again at a disadvantage and subjected to a different pricing system and have to pay a higher price for health care services than local residents. This may result in illness without treatment as migrants are 19% less likely to use a health facility than non-migrants (UNPFA 2007).

[13] Interview #8, Local non-profit manager

Following the privatization of health care, some factories started to offer their employees health insurance, but it is often insufficient, and many workers still have difficulty paying the insurance fees. Even the factories that do provide health care are limited in number: *"Factories that are part of larger corporations might set up nurseries or health clinics to help their workers, but smaller companies usually do not, and so access to these services becomes difficult."*[14] With regards to the informal workers, one interviewee ranks lack of health insurance as their number one challenge. She asserts that these migrants will have "no access to service because they cannot afford it as they must pay for all services out of pocket."[15]

In addition, migrant workers must contend with a number of distinct health issues. The poor living conditions under which many of the migrants live gravely affect their health. The World Bank attributes crowded, polluted, and substandard living and working conditions to the potential for illness, stress, and physical injury (Luong 2009). Poor sanitation and lack of water also contribute to potential health problems.

Behavior and lack of knowledge also play a role in migrants' health. Since factory workers are young single adults, many of them pursue sexual relations, but with a lack of knowledge and information on safe sex and reproductive health, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases are not uncommon. Many factory workers are single and do not want to have a child alone nor do they have the means to keep a child, so abortion rates are very high among female migrant

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[14] Interview #1, University researcher & lecturer
[15] Interview #17, University researcher

workers. Women not contracted to a large company without health insurance must pay for their medical bills, which can become very expensive. Without a social network or counseling services, many women who have abortions do not have any emotional support. These women may also suffer from inadequate medical care, and "abortion procedures often go wrong leaving the women to deal with the consequences,"[16] such as the inability to have children again. Also alarming, according to the director of a government run social organization, one-third of children born to migrant workers are HIV positive – "changing their behavior is the challenge," she says, "even if they know about contraception."[17]

Migrant workers also suffer from a number of mental health issues, such as high stress and depression, which may result from a combination of strenuous working conditions and a lack of entertainment. This often leads to high rates of alcoholism among males. Men may turn to drinking to combat this stress or depression and because they lack the financial means to participate in other activities. Such excessive consumption can lead to serious health problems. According to a migrant researcher, no services or help is available for workers who are stressed or have mental problems and no services or help is available for male workers who are suffering from alcoholism.

Food safety also presents a health hazard to migrant workers. Manufacturing companies and factories do not provide healthy or nutritious food, and these

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Interview #9, Local non-profit director

workers do not earn enough money to buy food for a healthy diet. As a result, they may suffer from severe food poisoning and chronic problems with their intestines and stomach.

3.7 Housing

The primary problem with housing concerns the substandard living conditions in which most migrants live. In fact, the UNPL survey reports that a "significant number – more than one-quarter – said that [housing] conditions were worse compared to before migration" (UNPLA 2007). The issues surrounding housing for migrant workers are closely tied to some of the other challenges discussed earlier: low wages impede efforts to find adequate housing and squalid living conditions can have serious health consequences.

Finding adequate housing in Ho Chi Minh City is an enormous challenge for the migrant population. Many migrants settle in industrial areas where some factories may provide worker housing. However, the living quality in these dormitories is often substandard, and many recent arrivals are willing to accept poor living conditions in exchange for a salary. These rooms are narrow and overcrowded, housing up to ten to twelve people in one small space. This is a human rights violation according to one interviewee who asserted that "you have to address their living quality and we need to take care of these people."[18]

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[18] Interview #7, Local non-profit director

Many companies don't offer worker housing, and a number of workers seek their own space and a different lifestyle so they end up renting small rooms outside of the industrial areas. In these cases, like the informal laborers, factory workers would need to find and rent their own housing. Those that start families also need to search for independent housing because sharing a space with other workers can become difficult, if not impossible. Due to the high price of housing, the cost of living can triple or more, and "in this case, both parents will have to work in order to support the family. But then that begs the question of what to do with their child. Where will he or she go? Back to the countryside?"[19]

Migrant workers that rent homes may find themselves in equally appalling conditions. Rising rental prices may also force migrants to move often within the city or to move back and forth between job opportunities in Ho Chi Minh City and their hometown. Such a transient lifestyle makes this population hard to locate and difficult to inform of any potential social programs and opportunities. In some cases, migrants may resort to occupying illegal homes in squatter settlements.

3.8 Social Networks and Services

Many recent arrivals to the city have no social networks that can provide support or aid. Life in Ho Chi Minh City can be lonely and overwhelming, and this may lead to difficulties adapting to a new lifestyle. In such a foreign environment, many migrants have trouble with the management of life-skill issues, such as how to

[19] Interview #1, University researcher & lecturer

manage money, time, or how to maintain relationships with relatives back home. Without any organizations that can advise incoming migrants of the challenges they will face, they must learn about the city conditions through word of mouth from relatives and neighbors. For this reason, many seek networks and connections with those who came to HCMC earlier from their same village or hometown. It is not uncommon to find migrant communities throughout HCMC who share the same geographic origin. One interviewee cited that many residents in Tan Binh District, a peri-urban area noted for a high migrant population, come from the central region of Vietnam.

The 2004 UN Population Fund survey indicates that migrants with greater social networks at their destination report fewer difficulties after they arrive (UNFPA 2007). Creating a sense of community can be integral to survival and success in their new setting. Earlier arrivals can guide newcomers to navigate new urban challenges, and migrants tend to rely on these personal networks of relatives, friends, and village connections as their primary source of help, including assistance with employment, health care, and housing. *"Relatives try to encourage other family members to come to the city so they can share and divide rent to save more money."*[20] Many migrants find emotional support and acceptance through these family and regional networks.

Such networks may even band together to earn more money or create more lucrative opportunities. One interviewee recounted how migrants from Vinh Phuc

[20] Interview #17, University researcher

Province in Central Vietnam come together in HCMC and teach each other massage, a skill they can then use to earn money. Another notable case of creative community building can be found amongst the migrants from Tan Hoa, who actually learn to be beggars. They come to Ho Chi Minh City and earn money playing this role – it essentially becomes their job. Then they return home to teach each other these skills, a new crop of "beggars" descends upon the city, and the cycle continues.

A large number of migrants, however, completely lack such a social network that can support them, factory workers in particular. *"In the village, they all know each other, but in HCMC they live separately and don't trust each other or open up."*[21] Isolated living conditions and a transient lifestyle may also contribute to these limited networks. Many interviewees agree that developing relationships with other migrants is very important, but the "government discourages organizing informal networks outside of official labor unions."[22] Very few services exist that directly address this issue, and many services available to assist with migrant relocation are private organizations that demand a cut of the workers' salary.

Even within these limited social services, only 11% of migrants turn to the government or other formal sources for assistance. This is most likely due to the paucity of available options or low awareness of the formal sources that do exist. In looking at government employment agencies, for example, only 12% of migrants are aware of these services, and of those who are aware, less than 60% use them. These

[21] Interview #11, Catholic charity representative
[22] Interview #1, University researcher & lecturer

service organizations are not very effective in outreach towards migrants, so the majority of this population remains unaware of their existence. The prevalence of registration fees may also dissuade migrant workers from seeking such services. Lastly, a belief among migrants and agencies that migrants must possess local household registration to use these services erects yet another barrier by discouraging migrants from pursuing government sources of support (GSO/UNFP 2004, UNFPA 2007). This de-linkage from formal support structures make migrants more economically vulnerable. Without the assistance of such services, migrants are less likely to have savings and more likely to have debt. This also means they have less access to loans and are less likely to be involved in trade unions (UNFPA 2007).

A primary issue among the interviewees concerns this lack of official services to aid migrant workers. *"There is no system to address migrants and they don't know about what little options are available."*[23] The few government-run options that exist include the Institute of Development Studies under the People's Committee of HCMC, who deals with infrastructure and resettlement, as well as the labor unions, but such government agencies are strapped for resources, "plagued by many problems, and generally not effective."[24] Industrial areas are slowly beginning to offer services, but it is too early and the distribution too inconsistent to make any positive assessment. Religious organizations, such as Catholic or Buddhist organizations that may operate out of a church or pagoda, are commonplace and may address the migrant population in their charity work. Some interviewees

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[23] Interview #3, Local non-profit manager
[24] Ibid.

commend the efforts of religious organizations to help migrant workers, but fear that they are too small and so their scope and success is limited.

CHAPTER 4: ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE

4.1 Introduction

Given the needs outlined in Chapter 3, this chapter explores which local organizations are operating in Ho Chi Minh City and how they address these needs. Through trying to understand their organizational challenges and governmental influence, I try to uncover what activities the government might restrict and how this relates to programs that address migrant needs.

This chapter is based off analysis from the interviews discussed at length in the previous chapter as well as the database of organizations sent to me by VUCDA. This list contains 243 non-profit organizations operating in the Ho Chi Minh City area and was compiled by VUCDA as part of their efforts to track the activities of organizations working in local community development. The only criteria to be listed in VUCDA's database are that organizations must consist of 2 or more people (as distinct from individuals) and that it must address a community need. I analyzed the list from two angles: first, I examined the activities of each of the organizations to determine if and how the specific needs of migrant workers are addressed. Second, I tried to determine each organization's measure of independence from the state.

4.2 How do these organizations help migrants?

First, no organization either interviewed or listed in the database specifically mentions the word "migrant," or even "laborer," in its title. Only three groups explicitly mention migrants in the description of their activities in the database. One of those groups was mysteriously crossed out on the list and when I attempted to visit its website, I was greeted by this message: "This domain name may be pending for final approval. Using ".vn" domain name are protected by the Vietnamese laws." I can only speculate on the fate of this group, but perhaps this is a sign that it has run into complications with the government.

4.2.1 Social Networks & Services

As discussed in the previous chapter, government social services for migrant workers are few and underutilized. Among the 243 non-profit organizations listed in the database, only one stood out as an organization that fits this role. According to its description, this support center helps young workers through various services that cover most of the migrants' primary challenges, such as helping to find adequate housing with affordable rents, providing educational services on laws and reproductive health, and offering counseling for workers with bad employers. Unfortunately it is difficult to determine if and how it is connected to a government entity because its umbrella organization is unknown.

Religious organizations, such as Catholic or Buddhist organizations that may operate out of a church or pagoda, are commonplace and may also address the migrant population in their charity work. I spoke with one woman who works at the Social Work Bureau of a Catholic Church, who interestingly enough spent nearly two decades working at an international NGO prior to her current position. Through the church, she organizes meetings for migrant workers on Saturday evenings to help them understand how to manage "life-skill issues" and to teach them additional work skills to help them better prepare for the future in case their factories should close.

These groups seem to indicate the presence of scattered, smaller grassroots efforts that work with the migrant population, but they appear to be an exception to the norm. Networks of support are most likely an area of government sensitivity or control and given that the "government discourages organizing informal networks outside of official labor unions"[25] it is not surprising that very few social service organizations with such a mission exist.

4.2.2 Jobs/Employment

Some organizations have tried to aid migrant workers through vocational training programs. 12% of all organizations in the dataset address vocational training, though mostly through specific programs aimed at the disabled, children,

[25] Interview #1, University researcher & lecturer

and women. This seems to indicate that vocational training does certainly exist but that migrants are not the targeted demographic.

One organization that I interviewed supports migrant workers through such educational programs, notably scholarships and non-interest loans. In discussing its mission, the head of the organization explains that "work at the factory is only a job and not a career, so after a number of years, these workers will need new jobs. Education is a means to find new opportunities in their lives."[26]

He discussed a number of ways that his organization can disseminate information about these training opportunities. Most simply, they may visit and send leaflets to worker dormitories or encourage those participating in the program to introduce it to other workers. Another way is to contact the labor division of HEPZA (Ho Chi Minh City Export Processing and Industrial Zone Authority), a government entity authorized by the Ministry of Planning and Investment to grant licenses for projects in the EPZs & IZs and that oversees all of these activities. Unfortunately, he lamented that only 12 – 20 companies actually helped transfer this information and most companies don't "because they are too busy with other things or they simply are not concerned."[27] They also seek the help of reporters writing about worker issues and attempt to outreach through the media. They have relationships with some of HCMC's most popular newspapers, including *Tuổi Trẻ* and *Sài Gòn Giải Phóng*, but he commented on difficulties with *Người Lao Động*. This paper belongs to the labor unions who send the paper to companies for distribution

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[26] Interview #6, Local non-profit director
[27] Ibid.

to the workers, but given their affiliation they "sometimes feel uncomfortable introducing [our] activities."[28]

The organization also reaches out to workers in the industrial zones through a monthly fair. The fair includes a forum that supports workers to participate in their vocational training program. Workers without a study program meet with those currently involved as well as high profile personalities to discuss why workers should study, what to study, difficulties they may encounter in school, and how to overcome them. The fair also invites Vietnamese companies to sell their products at discount prices for the workers. It offers entertainment and raffles and musical and dance performances by local celebrities.

The director noted that Pouyeun, a Taiwanese company with a factory in HCMC with 80,000 workers, has a work union that allocated 300 million VND ($14,000 USD) as loans for their own workers to study. Although many of these workers left the company after completing their studies, he added that this is a method companies use to attract workers to their factories. He elaborated on the challenge of employees leaving their company for other opportunities following their education by trying to understand "how to balance worker benefits and company interests and how to consider this balance is also passed on in worker training."[29]

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

In spite of all these activities, the organization's director is still questioning what he should be doing and how he could be most effective to help the migrant worker population, particularly since his organization is in jeopardy because of opposition from the labor unions. He claims that "civil society can't work alongside the government system."[30] In light of his organization's difficulties addressing these specific migrant challenges along with the lack of programs targeting migrant workers, it is a conceivable assumption that job-related training of migrant workers is a contentious and sensitive issue for the government.

4.2.3 Education

Over 15% of all organizations in the dataset address education. While an oddly disproportionate 35% of those specifically target disabled children, one group's mission specifically describes poor migrant children as their target group. The majority of this educational support is aimed at the poor or street children. It therefore seems reasonable that the educational needs of migrant children is at least one area being addressed by social organizations.

My interviews also seem to indicate that attention is being paid to this issue. An international NGO I interviewed works in Go Vap District on migration issues, child labor, and anti-trafficking, and they conducted a survey on child labor in HCMC. They also partnered with a government institution I interviewed, who did a survey for them and studied the impact of education. This same INGO currently

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[30] Ibid.

provides educational support for children to go to school. They can provide only limited assistance with formal schooling because schools can only enroll a certain number of students or they will be overwhelmed, but programs exist to help children with formal schooling by providing materials, such as uniforms or subsidizing student fees. The organization instead offers "development classes" taught by retired teachers who receive a small allowance from the government.

4.2.4 Health

None of the individuals I interviewed specifically discussed how their group addresses the health needs of the migrant population, but with 12% of all organizations in the dataset addressing health issues, it appears that some services are available. These organizations provide services through HIV/AIDS care and prevention centers and various types of clinics throughout the city.

4.2.5 Housing

Not a single organization in the database (outside of the worker support center discussed earlier) addresses housing issues let alone housing for migrants specifically. While 16% of the organizations on the list are "shelters," these should be construed as temporary dwellings, such as homeless shelters, halfway houses, or senior housing. Similarly, none of the interviewees I spoke to seem be involved in any activities addressing the needs of migrants' housing challenges.

ORGANIZATION TYPE	# OF ORGS	% OF TOTAL ORGS
Children	75	31%
Disabled	55	23%
Shelter	38	16%
Education	37	15%
Vocational Training	30	12%
Health	29	12%
"Social Assistance"[31]	19	8%
Volunteer Networks	6	3%
Other	15	6%
Unknown type	14	6%

Table of organizations arranged by type of activity

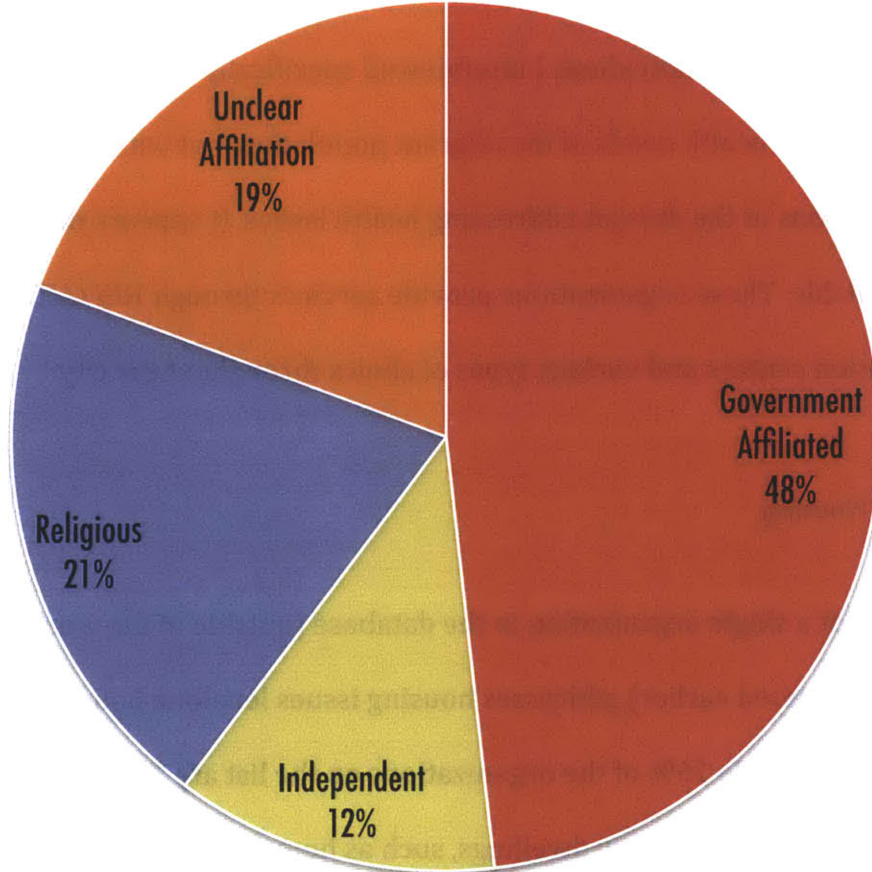

Chart of organizations arranged by affiliation

[31] The groups categorized as "social assistance" indicate that it was difficult to determine what type of work they are doing or that they are performing miscellaneous services for disadvantaged populations (such as law advice or food donations).

4.3 How are these groups connected to the state?

As discussed in Chapter 2, the regulatory environment for organizations outside of direct state jurisdiction is complex, and so I examine each organization's ties to the state in order to get a better sense of the non-profit landscape in Ho Chi Minh City. An exploration of organizations' affiliations or parent/umbrella organization can help shed light on how organizations in HCMC are operating within this tightly controlled environment.[32]

4.3.1 *Direct Government Parent*

Nearly half of the groups have a government affiliation. Of these government-parented organizations, almost 80% are operated through or are directly connected to a governmental department or agency. The agencies range from national to city to district level. Fifteen different agencies are represented as umbrella groups with DOLISA (Department of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs) appearing the most frequently, representing twelve organizations. The HCMC Department of Planning and Investment, the HCMC People's Committee, and VCCI (Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry) are among the city to national level government agencies. Some local agencies include the People's Committee of District 1 or the Education and Training Office of a given district.

[32] Of the 243 organizations, 97 have available data for this field and the remaining 146 are unknown or undetermined. The following analysis will apply only to these 97 organizations.

4.3.2 Indirect Government Parent

A number of other groups are not registered through a government agency per se, but via a different organization that itself may be directly sponsored by the state. This still indicates a government link, although slightly removed from the ones discussed previously. The types of indirect umbrella parents are discussed below.

- Mass organization (4): These are functional groups linked to the Vietnamese Communist Party that often represent a particular constituency (i.e. Youth Organization or Women's Union) and may perform some social welfare activity. Their individual level of connection to the state is frequently unclear or difficult to determine.

- University (5): The database lists five different universities as the umbrella group of a respective organization. Universities in Vietnam are strongly affiliated with the state, either through its establishment, management, or other connection.

- Newspaper (2): Many of the official media outlets in Vietnam are an official extension of a state agency, or, at the very least, are strongly monitored and controlled by the state.

- State-owned enterprise (1): This Ho Chi Minh City based for-profit company is one of Vietnam's many state-owned businesses.

4.3.3 Partnerships

I have categorized the remainder of organizations with a government parent as those as part of a partnership. This means that it has more than one umbrella sponsor, with one of them being a government agency. Seven of these umbrella organizations are hybrids between a government agency and an independent company, a mass organization, or a different government agency.

4.3.4 Independent entities

Only 12% of organizations had umbrella groups that are completely independent of the state. These comprised of private companies, independent organizations, or personal/family charities. An additional three independent companies are partners in government-hybrid arrangements (as described above), but I do not consider this type of umbrella group to be independent from the state.

4.3.5 Religious Groups

21% of organizations are clearly defined religious organizations, typically a Catholic church or Buddhist pagoda. It is still unclear how these organizations operate with respect to the state, it can be assumed there must be at least some sort of permission, or at least cooperative, process with the local government. It does appear that they operate through larger networks as one of my interviewees stated that for a project in Binh Cat: "*we did not contact the government system, but we*

contacted priests, nuns, and homeowners (who rent to migrants) and work with organizations already in the area."[33]

4.3.6 Other Organizations

The remaining 19% of organizations have unclear affiliations. Even further research might not be able to clarify these relationships. According to VUCDA, "some are government entities, some are supported by government (i.e., teacher salaries, beneficiary stipends), and some are completely independent. It's difficult to tell you 100% who is what as it is not always clear, even to us."

This data indicates strong governmental control or influences on social organizations. Hannah (2007) discusses ways in which some organizations circumvent such influence or restrictions, such as operating under the radar, not formally registering but staying visible through direct contact with local officials, or forming a for-profit company to do not-for-profit work. Through these means, he suggests that organizations may continue to carry out their work without having to report back to a governmental umbrella agency. It is most likely, however, that these organizations would still perform activities that are in line with government agenda or they risk opposition or other difficulties.

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[33] Interview #11, Catholic charity representative

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Research Findings

5.1.1 The Role of Civil Society in Vietnam

Civil society as it is understood, at least by the international development circles that promote it, is not applicable in the Vietnamese context. It is important to remember the nature of Vietnam's government and the political context in which these organizations must operate. Vietnam is a single-party, authoritarian government, whose political views on democracy are not exactly favorable. Outside groups that come to Vietnamese soil singing tunes of democracy would naturally elicit hesitation and resistance on the part of the Vietnamese government. At the same time, because they serve as important sources of capital, the government continues to welcome these groups in spite of these differing philosophies.

These Western notions promoted by aid groups are not helpful in the case of Vietnam. Using the strict definition of civil society and all that it entails can be misleading and inappropriate as this is an environment that is not truly open to competing organizations. The Vietnamese government, including the labor unions as described earlier, is actively stopping organizations from performing much needed social functions. Given the political context, however, this should not be so surprising. Considering the state's Socialist mandate to provide social services to its

population serves to further validate this point. As noted by Wischerman and Vinh (2003):

> [M]any officials seem to perceive Civic Organizations (especially those they are in direct control of) as an integral part of the implementation of state-led programs and policies, incorporated into the state's administration and meant to fulfill specific tasks, administered by Governmental Organizations. Even more, Civic Organizations are seen as only temporarily necessary. This view of Civic Organizations is put forward) in a nutshell by a People's Committee Chairwoman (in Ho Chi Minh City). In her view, for example, poverty alleviation is a duty of the state and a problem which will be solved mainly by state-administered programs at a given time: 'The operation of societal organizations is just temporarily urgent!'"

In light of Vietnam's strong governmental control of organizations operating in the social realm, it does not seem feasible to foster a sphere outside of its influence. These notions of civil society promoted by Western aid groups are not helpful in Vietnam and may actually take away from a group's ability to be effective. Perhaps if an approach was adopted that did not focus as much on democratization processes and activity beyond state influence, the Vietnamese government would be less resistant.

More importantly, however, the focus should lie more with their activities and effectiveness and less with the sphere in which these activities and organizations exist. In the context of urban migration, if the goal of these organizations is to help provide social services, then the emphasis should be on the effectiveness of organizations to get these functions done rather than democratic processes and robust activity outside of the state. Providing basic needs should be the top priority.

Who then becomes excluded as a result of this definition? Such a limited perspective also diminishes the role of other associations performing social activities, including those with ties to the state. A number of quasi-governmental organizations I interviewed seem to be relatively more effective in addressing the needs of the migrant population, particularly in terms of ease of access. Some of these organizations had more freedom to interview and work with the migrant population and seemed to have more leverage in terms of their activities. They did not face the same barriers as other organizations with weaker government ties.

5.1.2 The Exclusion of Ho Chi Minh City's Migrant Population

The research also finds that the migrant population in Ho Chi Minh City is not being directly addressed. This finding, however, is not altogether unique for cities experiencing earlier stages of urbanization. As such countries industrialize and make strides towards advancing their economy, this often becomes the primary focus. During this process, new social challenges emerge. As governments focus on their economic development priorities, it becomes more difficult for them to balance their social needs.

Why is it then that social organizations have such difficulty directly addressing HCMC's migrant population, and what is unique about this group that they cannot be directly addressed? Firstly, if NGOs in Vietnam are "restricted in their activities to projects which are in line with state development priorities" (Hannah 2007), the rights of migrants may be put on hold while other priorities are

being pursued, particularly those boosting Vietnam's economic development. Additionally, from the perspective of Vietnam's economic advancement, Waibel (2007) suggests that by retaining the household registration system and refusing increased rights for migrants, Vietnam will reap financial benefits by maintaining "the potential attractiveness of Vietnam as a location for cheap-labor production." Furthermore, there is a general perception that waves of new migrants contribute to social disorder, overcrowding, and poverty. As part of its recently prioritized economic policies, the city endeavors to create what it perceives to be modern, global spaces that it hopes will, in turn, attract further investment. If the government or social organizations institute programs directed at the migrant population, the state perhaps fears attracting even more migrants, so this may be an attempt to control the numbers of migrants coming to HCMC. Lastly, this population is further hindered by Vietnam's unique political context. Perhaps the government may be wary of addressing this group following a wave of strikes in 2006. Migrant groups may not be targeted for aid because a fear that organized migrants may lead to further strikes and social unrest.

5.1.3 Critical Assessment of Research Interviews

Considering Vietnam's recent urbanization history might help explain and justify the interviewees' tendency to discuss the challenges facing migrant populations. Every individual I interviewed is a local Vietnamese citizen currently living in Ho Chi Minh City, with nearly all of them originally from HCMC or at least Southern Vietnam, so their point of view is certainly a result of their specific

background and experience. The challenges arising from rapid urbanization are the current pressing problems they must face daily in their own communities, but it is only in the past two decades that HCMC has begun to confront this phenomenon. While urban migration is a part of a larger global pattern, their perspective, at this time, may be limited to their current environment and context-specific issues. I have the luxury of a foreign viewpoint and the academic distance to zoom out and see what is happening now in China and India or how Japan and Korea developed years earlier or even the industrialization of France and the United States decades ago. Therefore, I want to acknowledge the limitations of these interviews and the biased perceptions of these specific individuals and organizations. How do they determine what the migrants need most? How might their idea of what migrants need differ from what the migrants themselves might want? How might their agenda influence their organizations' interventions or activities? Without having direct access to migrants themselves, I have only their perspective to outline these challenges.

5.2 Vietnam's Urbanization Story

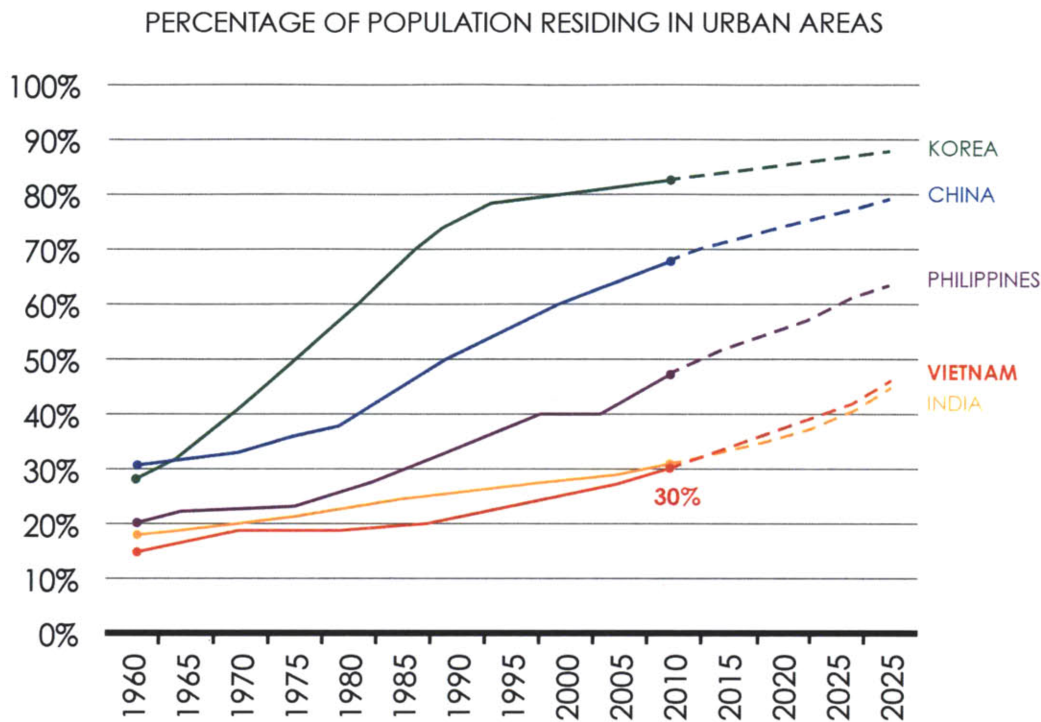
If migrant exclusion from the city is perhaps an expected consequence of Vietnam's urbanization and industrialization process, it might be useful to consider how Ho Chi Minh City's path fares in the context of this larger worldwide phenomenon.

> *"What will be remembered about the twenty-first century more than anything else... is the great, and final, shift of human populations out of rural, agricultural life and into cities. We will end this century a wholly urban species. This movement engages an unprecedented number of people—two or three billion humans, perhaps a third of the world's population—and will affect everyone in tangible ways... [from] the northern*

> *reaches of Mumbai [and] the dusty edges of Tehran [to] the hillside folds of São Paulo and Mexico City"* (Saunders 2010).

As journalist Doug Saunders alludes to in his book, *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History is Shaping Our World*, the urbanization story in Ho Chi Minh City is a global phenomenon that has been happening in cities like New York and Paris for over a century and is now occurring more intensely in developing cities all over the world. Urban migration – those who come seeking a better life and the hardships they encounter – is an important part of this story. From this rapid urbanization and growth emerges a great inequality between the rich and the poor, the established and the new. How individual cities and countries manage this inequality will influence how these cities develop.

Distinct urban policies can determine if these populations will eventually thrive or struggle. To deny them a rightful place to the city would be utter folly – the urbanization tide is an inevitable force that cannot be avoided. How will these populations fare as they follow their goals of social mobility and the eventual pursuit of urban establishment? Vietnam, with only 30% of its population residing in urban areas as of 2010, still has far to go on this trajectory. Could its current struggles be simply emblematic of this early transition state? How does it compare to other countries further along the urbanization path? What does it need to do to successfully manage its rapid urbanization and increasing population?



5.2.1 History and Rapid Urbanization

We can uncover Ho Chi Minh City's current urbanization story through a brief examination of various historical and political developments over the past century. In the mid-1800s, Vietnam became part of French Indochina and France's global colonial empire. The French administration focused on developing a plantation economy, and Vietnam remained predominantly an agricultural society throughout the colonial era. At the time of its independence from France in 1954, only 11% of its population could be found living in urban areas, with the vast majority in its two principal cities, Hanoi in the North and Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in the South (Boothroyd 2000).

Post-independence Vietnam saw a vast shift politically, economically, and culturally. As the country was divided into the Communist-led North Vietnam and the US-backed South Vietnam, Hanoi and Saigon's urban development diverged drastically, and Saigon began to experience immense changes. Over the next twenty-one years, from 1954 through 1975, Vietnam's raging war had a profound impact on Saigon as its bloated wartime economy attracted rural dwellers while devastation in the countryside forced other rural residents to relocate to the city (Nguyen 1996). After roughly two decades of war, April 1975 marked the end of the conflict that reunified North and South Vietnam and saw Saigon officially recast as Ho Chi Minh City. A single-party Communist regime was established at this time that forcibly resettled urban residents in an effort to decrease the city's population. The post-war period was marked by an urban to rural migration and astounding de-urbanization from a wartime peak of 40% to 18% in 1982 (Boothroyd 2000).

In 1986, however, the government instituted the *đổi mới* reforms in response to a stifling lack of economic progress. These major reforms shifted Vietnam from a centrally planned economy towards a "socialist-oriented market economy" which encouraged foreign investment and gave private enterprise a significant role in the national economy alongside strong state sector control. *Đổi mới* has served as a catalyst for the renewed urbanization of Ho Chi Minh City and has resulted in fundamental changes to the social, economic, and spatial order of the city. Extraordinary changes can be seen in the city's built environment, as HCMC experiences a "pace of new construction [that] exceeds all previous experience" (Boothroyd 2000). This new open economy also gave rise to the proliferation of

street vendors and a visible informal economy previously discouraged under the moral authority of the state. The introduction of market elements and restructuring of the trade and service sectors has resulted in new employment opportunities and contributed to the massive rural to urban migration.

It is this rapid pace of change of Ho Chi Minh City's population, economy, and spatial form that has contributed to the struggles migrants experience today. In the modern global economy, cities are the drivers of growth. In fact, 80% of Vietnam's GDP in 2006 came from the urban-industrial sector, up from 61% in 1990 (UN Population Division 2008). On top of that, Vietnam must contend with fierce competition from other industrializing nations facing similar (or greater) levels of growth and urbanization, such as China and India. With its recent entry into the WTO and aspirations to reach industrial nation status by 2020, it is not surprising that Vietnam's "overall development strategy aims at producing a 'modern state'" and the pressure towards becoming a global city seems to be a motivating factor behind its urbanization policies (McGee 2009). Vietnam now finds itself in a precarious balancing act: while it must contend with how to maintain its economic growth and increasing role in the global economy – particularly in light of such powerful competition – how can it simultaneously manage its changing urban population and dynamics? Is there a space for the migrant within this new vision?

5.1.2 *In Pursuit of a Global Vision: Marginalization of the Migrant*

As some Ho Chi Minh City residents experience considerable economic advancements, the income stratification becomes more pronounced and others are left behind. This could be attributed to poor economic and social management on behalf of a state and city still grappling with how to reconcile the dynamic elements of a market economy with the current political system. For example, the de-collectivization of property has contributed greatly to some of Ho Chi Minh City's housing issues that were touched upon earlier. Real estate speculation has become commonplace among an enthusiastic, but largely inexperienced, population. The city now suffers from exorbitant land prices (and rent) and the country has moved in a very short time from a collectivized property system to highly inequitable land distribution. At the same time, little attention is being given to affordable housing or public housing schemes, and those who cannot participate in the real estate game become further marginalized – physically, economically, and socially. The Vietnamese government has created little incentive for developers to invest in much needed affordable or public housing. Despite regulations that new housing developments must include a certain percentage of affordable units, Vietnamese laws are too loose and there is not an adequate supervisory authority to ensure that affordable housing laws are upheld, and so investors can easily circumvent them. The newly arrived must then often resort to squalid living conditions or even illegal squatting.

Furthermore, in 2003, when the Southeast Asia Games came to town, "eager to present a picture of a modern, clean, rapidly developing city to international visitors, the Ho Chi Minh City government instituted a campaign called the 'Year of Order and Urban Civilization,'" in which it began to illegalize street vendors from operating in certain areas of the city, primarily downtown (Harms 2009). The city offers other discourses for this exclusion, such as traffic congestion, public health, or even tourism, but it appears to be this pursuit of a global and modern space that suggests the omission of the informal economy from this perceived vision. While a previously thriving street economy hasn't altogether disappeared, many migrant workers now need to operate illicitly in order to make claims to this city space and, more importantly, to maintain their livelihood.

5.2.3 *Valuable Lessons*

Given Vietnam's relatively recent emergence into the global economy and that its development efforts are comparatively new, it is in the advantageous position of being able to examine other regional cities as examples to emulate or avoid. Perhaps the argument is true that every city has its own historical, cultural, and political circumstances that render it utterly unique so that no model truly exists, but Ho Chi Minh City can still look towards its neighbors for lessons on how to combat its own challenges and how to deal with its pressing urbanization problems.

In examining regional success cases, a 2008 Harvard study defines an East Asian growth model based off the examples of Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (Harvard 2008). The study claims that "the East Asian countries, particularly since the 1960s, have grown at historically unprecedented rates... [and] have achieved, or are rapidly achieving, world-class standards of healthcare and education for their people." During their developmental phases, the East Asian governments prioritized the basic needs of their citizens, including quality public education, affordable health care, housing, and even "vocational training [that] equipped migrants from rural areas with skills to secure better paying jobs in factories" (Harvard 2008). It has already been discussed how Ho Chi Minh City has current difficulties providing these essential services effectively.

Vietnam could benefit by looking at the experiences of these successful East Asian countries in order to pursue sensible urban development policies including more equitably distributed urban services. In fact, both Hong Kong and Singapore famously embarked upon public housing schemes several decades ago to address the needs of low-income residents. In the 1970s, the Government of Hong Kong even declared affordable housing a national priority and announced a ten-year plan for the public provision of housing. With nearly one half of Hong Kong's residents currently residing in some form of public housing, the lasting legacy of these policies demonstrate the possibilities of success.

The key moving forward is how Vietnam now chooses to manage the endless flow of migrants into its cities during its ongoing urbanization. Satisfying the basic

needs of its residents and keeping workers satisfied would naturally contribute to its national development. If the government is strapped for resources, perhaps the answer lies in the delicate dance between the state and social organizations to provide these needs. The complicated regulatory environment in Vietnam certainly offers unique challenges for social organizations to address these inequalities, but how the government chooses to focus on the usefulness (rather than the perceived threat) of these organizations towards progressing its national development – and how it subsequently decides to interact or cooperate with them – may influence Vietnam's path to economic success. If Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City, and the institutions and organizations operating within can perfect the networks and entry mechanisms necessary to ensure the survival and success of new migrants, it can enable the ability of this population to become established city dwellers, which will then contribute to their social mobility and ultimately greater prosperity. And then the next wave of migrants will arrive and the process will repeat itself again. And again.

APPENDIX

A.1 List of interviews

Interview #1, University researcher & lecturer

Interview #3, Local non-profit manager

Interview #4, Architect/Urban planner

Interview #5, University researcher & lecturer

Interview #6, Local non-profit director

Interview #7, Local non-profit director

Interview #8, Local non-profit manager

Interview #9, Local non-profit director

Interview #10, Government agency program coordinator

Interview #11, Catholic charity representative

Interview #12, Manager of the Vietnam office of an international multilateral institution

Interview #13, University dean & researcher

Interview #14, International NGO Program Officer

Interview #17, University researcher

A.2 Urbanization Statistics

Percentage of population residing in urban areas

	Vietnam	China	India	Korea	Philippines	Brazil	Peru	France	U.S.A.	Japan	Indonesia
1960	14.7	20.2	17.9	27.7	30.3	44.9	46.8	61.9	70	43.1	14.6
1965	16.4	22.2	18.8	32.4	31.6	50.3	51.9	67.1	71.9	47.4	15.8
1970	18.3	22.8	19.8	40.7	33	55.8	57.4	71.1	73.6	53.2	17.1
1975	18.8	23.3	21.3	48	35.6	61.7	61.5	72.9	73.7	56.8	19.3
1980	19.2	25.7	23.1	56.7	37.5	67.4	64.6	73.3	73.7	59.6	22.1
1985	19.6	28.9	24.3	64.9	43	71.3	66.9	73.7	74.5	60.6	26.1
1990	20.3	33	25.5	73.8	48.8	74.8	68.9	74.1	75.3	63.1	30.6
1995	22.2	36.6	26.6	78.2	54	77.8	70.3	74.9	77.3	64.6	35.6
2000	24.3	40.4	27.7	79.6	58.5	81.2	70.7	75.8	79.1	65.2	42
2005	26.4	40.4	28.7	80.8	62.7	84.2	71.1	76.7	80.8	66	48.1
2010	28.8	44.9	30.1	81.9	66.4	86.5	71.6	77.8	82.3	66.8	53.7
2015	31.6	49.2	31.9	83.1	69.6	88.2	72.5	79	83.7	68	58.5
2020	34.7	53.2	34.3	84.2	72.3	89.5	73.6	80.2	84.9	69.4	62.6
2025	38.1	56.9	37.2	85.2	74.6	90.4	74.9	81.6	86	71.1	65.9
2030	41.8	60.3	40.6	86.3	76.7	91.1	76.5	82.9	87	73	68.9
2035	45.5	63.7	44.2	87.2	78.7	91.8	78.2	84.1	87.9	74.9	71.8
2040	49.4	66.9	47.8	88.1	80.5	92.4	79.7	85.2	88.8	76.7	74.5
2045	53.2	70	51.5	89	82.3	93	81.1	86.3	89.6	78.4	77.1
2050	57	72.9	55.2	89.8	83.9	93.6	82.5	87.3	90.4	80.1	79.4

Average Annual Rate of change of urban agglomerations

	HCMC	Hanoi	Beijing	Shanghai	Shenzhen	Delhi	Mumbai	Seoul	Tokyo	Manila	Jakarta	Sao Paulo	Lima	Paris	New York
1950-1955	1.43	8.31	1.33	0.76	2.21	5.26	3.67	8.38	3.92	3.85	6.12	5.31	4.99	0.83	1.38
1955-1960	1.43	8.31	1.33	0.76	2.21	4.96	3.36	8.38	3.92	3.89	6.12	5.31	4.99	1.73	1.38
1960-1965	4.64	7.08	1.33	0.76	2.21	4.4	3.57	7.6	3.91	4.37	4.15	6.5	5.26	1.45	1.38
1965-1970	4.64	7.09	1.33	0.76	2.21	4.32	3.6	8.62	2.77	4.45	3.44	6.54	5.32	0.94	1.29
1970-1975	4.64	7.31	1.33	0.76	2.21	4.52	3.95	4.96	2.66	6.94	4.13	4.65	4.3	0.49	-0.39
1975-1980	4.16	6.49	1.33	0.76	2.21	4.56	4.02	3.86	1.4	3.5	4.36	4.58	3.66	0.26	-0.35
1980-1985	1.45	1.82	1.33	0.76	7.72	3.94	3.55	2.9	1.19	2.91	3.16	2.05	2.84	0.65	0.29
1985-1990	1.45	1.82	1.33	0.76	11.39	3.85	3.48	1.99	1.42	2.93	3.08	1.96	2.63	0.82	0.32
1990-1995	1.45	1.82	2.84	4.79	19.36	4.14	2.73	-0.55	0.64	3.3	0.36	1.53	2.27	0.38	1.04
1995-2000	1.46	1.83	2.84	4.79	19.37	4.18	2.62	-0.67	0.51	1.15	0.16	1.39	1.7	0.38	1.04
2000-2005	1.86	2.11	1.83	1.82	3.51	3.81	2.47	-0.19	0.5	1.55	1.05	1.39	1.7	0.33	0.97
2005-2010	2.41	2.49	1.82	1.7	2.3	2.45	1.96	-0.13	0.43	1.61	1.86	1.32	1.56	0.21	0.74
2010-2015	2.49	2.52	1.79	1.73	1.97	1.86	1.78	-0.05	0.15	1.84	2.13	0.96	1.12	0.1	0.54
2015-2020	2.36	2.39	1.45	1.41	1.51	1.86	1.83	0	0.02	1.66	1.6	0.56	0.87	0.05	0.39
2020-2025	2.22	2.25	1.04	1	1.09	1.88	1.85	0	0	1.28	1.12	0.29	0.74	0.01	0.25

Percentage of urban population residing in each urban agglomeration

	HCMC	Hanoi	Beijing	Shanghai	Shenzhen	Mumbai	Delhi	Seoul	Tokyo	Manila	Jakarta	Sao Paulo	Lima	Paris	New York
1950	38.1	8.8	6	8.4	0.2	4.5	2.2	25.4	38.7	28.5	14.7	12	34.1	28.2	12.2
1955	33.1	10.8	5.4	7.3	0.2	4.8	2.5	29.7	39.3	28.1	17	12	35.9	26.9	11.5
1960	28.3	13	4.7	6.2	0.2	5.1	2.9	34.1	41.1	27.7	19.1	12.1	37.8	26.2	10.9
1965	28.2	14.7	4.1	5.3	0.2	5.2	3.1	37.4	43.3	28.4	19.5	12.9	38.4	24.4	10.6
1970	28.4	16.6	3.9	4.9	0.2	5.4	3.3	40.9	42	29.3	19	14.2	39.4	23.1	10.5
1975	31.2	20.9	3.7	4.5	0.2	5.4	3.4	40.2	42	33.5	18.4	14.4	39.7	22.3	9.8
1980	33.9	25.5	3.3	3.9	0.2	5.4	3.5	38.2	41	33	17.9	14.7	39.7	22	9.2
1985	32.1	24.7	2.8	3.2	0.2	5.5	3.6	36.1	41.4	29.5	16.1	13.8	39.2	22	8.7
1990	29.8	23.3	2.3	2.6	0.3	5.6	3.7	33.3	41.7	26.7	14.6	13.2	38.9	22.2	8.3
1995	26.4	21	2.2	2.7	0.6	5.6	4	29.1	41.4	25.4	11.9	12.7	39	21.8	8.1
2000	24.1	19.5	2.2	2.9	1.3	5.6	4.3	26.6	41.6	22.3	9.4	12.1	39.2	21.6	7.9
2005	22.6	18.6	2	2.7	1.4	5.6	4.6	25.4	41.9	20.3	8.1	11.7	39.9	21.1	7.7
2010	21.9	18	1.9	2.6	1.3	5.5	4.6	24.5	42.3	18.9	7.5	11.4	40.5	20.5	7.5
2015	21.3	17.6	1.9	2.5	1.3	5.3	4.5	23.9	42.3	18.2	7.3	11.1	39.7	19.9	7.3
2020	20.7	17.1	1.8	2.4	1.3	5.1	4.3	23.5	42.1	17.7	7.1	10.7	38.6	19.3	7
2025	20.1	16.7	1.8	2.4	1.2	4.9	4.2	23.3	42.1	17.1	6.9	10.4	37.5	18.7	6.8

Percentage of the total population residing in each urban agglomeration

	HCMC	Hanoi	Beijing	Shanghai	Shenzhen	Manila	Delhi	Mumbai	Seoul	Tokyo	Jakarta	Sao Paulo	Lima	Paris	New York
1950	4.4	1	0.8	1.1	0	7.7	0.4	0.8	5.4	13.5	1.8	4.3	14	15.6	7.8
1955	4.3	1.4	0.8	1	0	8.1	0.4	0.8	7.2	15.3	2.3	4.8	15.8	15.7	7.7
1960	4.2	1.9	0.8	1	0	8.4	0.5	0.9	9.4	17.7	2.8	5.5	17.7	16.2	7.6
1965	4.6	2.4	0.7	0.9	0	9	0.6	1	12.1	20.5	3.1	6.5	19.9	16.3	7.6
1970	5.2	3	0.7	0.8	0	9.7	0.6	1.1	16.6	22.3	3.2	7.9	22.6	16.4	7.7
1975	5.9	3.9	0.7	0.8	0	11.9	0.7	1.2	19.3	23.9	3.6	8.9	24.4	16.2	7.2
1980	6.5	4.9	0.6	0.8	0	12.4	0.8	1.3	21.7	24.4	4	9.9	25.6	16.1	6.8
1985	6.3	4.8	0.6	0.7	0	12.7	0.9	1.3	23.4	25.1	4.2	9.8	26.2	16.2	6.5
1990	6	4.7	0.6	0.7	0.1	13	1	1.4	24.6	26.3	4.5	9.9	26.8	16.4	6.3
1995	5.9	4.7	0.7	0.9	0.2	13.7	1.1	1.5	22.8	26.8	4.2	9.9	27.4	16.3	6.3
2000	5.8	4.7	0.8	1	0.5	13.1	1.2	1.5	21.2	27.1	4	9.8	27.7	16.4	6.3
2005	6	4.9	0.8	1.1	0.6	12.7	1.3	1.6	20.5	27.6	3.9	9.8	28.4	16.2	6.2
2010	6.3	5.2	0.9	1.2	0.6	12.5	1.4	1.6	20.1	28.3	4.1	9.8	29	15.9	6.2
2015	6.7	5.6	0.9	1.2	0.6	12.6	1.4	1.7	19.8	28.7	4.3	9.8	28.8	15.7	6.1
2020	7.2	5.9	1	1.3	0.7	12.8	1.5	1.7	19.8	29.2	4.5	9.6	28.4	15.5	5.9
2025	7.7	6.4	1	1.3	0.7	12.8	1.6	1.8	19.9	29.9	4.6	9.4	28.1	15.3	5.8

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Urbanization Prospects: The 2007 Revision

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