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EXPANDING CIRCLES

SOCIAL COHESION IN PERI-URBAN VIETNAM

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List of Abbreviations

OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FUA	Functional Urban Area
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
USD	United States Dollar



*“In the afterlife of super-cities, rapidly devouring its outskirts
its neon octopus arms redecorating late at night” - Julian Casablancas (2009).*

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to explore the theoretical relationship between the concepts of peri-urbanization and social cohesion. While these are both relatively popular themes in social and development studies, the relationship between the two has not been given enough attention. This thesis will be broken up into three main sections: a theoretical section, an analysis section, and a case study. The research takes the form of a literature review, scanning relevant information to gain a full understanding of the two topics and synthesize their relationship. This will be done by first breaking down the definitions and relevance of each topic in relation to development studies, then analysing examples of global understanding, implementations and policies in various contexts. Finally, to use a more specific and in-depth example, this thesis will subsequently look at peri-urbanization and social cohesion in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, a country that has been experiencing rapid urban expansion including peri-urbanization all over the country for the last three and a half decades and dramatic social changes over the last century. Considering the three pillars of cohesion to be 1) social inclusion, 2) social mobility, and 3) social capital, this thesis finds that peri-urbanization has several different and complex effects on the multi-dimensional topic of cohesion, with some positive and some negative for various stakeholders. For instance, peri-urbanization generally leads to political fragmentation and exclusion, which hinders cohesion. It often brings economic growth, but not always inclusively and can instead exacerbate inequality. It also generally increases social capital and networks but may decrease the strength of ties. Different contexts of course see different processes, results, and changes. More empirical qualitative research is necessary for international development and social studies scholars as well as policy makers to understand cohesion in peri-urbanization. This thesis stresses that greater local political representation is necessary to bring in residents’ voices into the changes surrounding their own livelihoods and lifestyles.



INTRODUCTION

As the urban population of the world continues to rise, the city too must grow physically. It is estimated that around 700,000 square kilometres of land is being converted for urban use worldwide between 2000 to 2030, of which over 70% will be in developing countries and almost all of it will be along the urban periphery. These “peri-urban” areas around the city have become home to hundreds of millions more people recently and will be home for millions more in the coming decades (Webster, 2014). Peri-urban spaces, referred to sometimes with various terms such as “the urban fringe” or “urban hinterlands”, are formerly agricultural areas (generally) located around the city that are being engulfed through the process of urban expansion.

Peri-urbanization brings infrastructural and economic growth, industrialization, new employment opportunities, and new residents into the area. However, it also brings issues such as increased food insecurity greater wealth inequality and greater poverty for some through often impervious lifestyle changes as well as exploitative governments and labor practices (Saksena, 2014; Webster, 2014). Development scholars and urban planners worldwide are in search of how to approach the peri-urban dilemmas in ways that provide the most benefit and least amount of risk (Saksena, 2014).

Societal growth and urbanization can lead to other changes such as in peoples’ values or an increase in conflict between members of the rapidly changing communities which need to be explored and understood. The peri-urban tidal wave is an inevitable shift that is occurring so rapidly that its effects on livelihoods and lifestyles are poorly understood with only fragmented bits of information in existing literature. This literature review attempts to piece those bits together in a way that demonstrates how lifestyle, culture, and society are affected by the peri-urbanization process under the umbrella term of social cohesion.



According to the World Bank, “more and more evidence shows that the social cohesion is very important for the sustainable social economic growth and development. It is not only a simple summary of institutions for forming a society but also the gluing substance for binding them together” (1999). Social cohesion, therefore, presents an important angle to understanding the effectiveness of development actions and policies, as well as for indicating the ways development can be improved in the future. The concept of social cohesion is gaining increased importance and relevance in development studies as a multi-dimensional umbrella term encompassing many variables such as trust, inclusion, economic mobility, social capital, and values. It is also gaining attention due to its empirically positive relationship to peaceful conflict resolution, a strong democracy, strong government institutions, a strong economy, and lower crime rates (Easterly et al, 2006; Holdsworth & Hartman 2009; CeC, 2005; Europe, 2007; OECD, 2014).

Further, “the term [social cohesion] has the advantage of being ideologically neutral and can therefore be applied to societies that differ in their political systems, stages of development, and structures of governance” (Siddique, 2001). Because of this, any research on cohesion can adequately contribute to the overall discussion and this research can therefore contribute to a discussion of cohesion in any peri-urban setting. For this reason, the concept of cohesion was selected as an analytical framework to understand the socio-cultural changes taking place under peri-urbanization.

1.2 LITERATURE GAP

While there is a fairly significant body of research on peri-urban areas overall, these are usually specifically focused on one issue at a time such as land use, political struggles, food security, or conflict which cannot adequately provide a full scope to the challenges and changes that peri-urbanization can bring. Further, as Webster (2011) notes, existing research on peri-urbanization is generally too specific and idiosyncratic to be generalizable. Instead, using the approach of social cohesion allows a more fully encompassing view to understand the processes of social change within peri-urbanization. Any negative outcomes of peri-urbanization that may have fractured cohesion, as well as positive actions to enhance it, can help governments and NGO’s understand how to improve cohesion to build solidarity in a society and allow for more sustainable, peaceful, and inclusive urban development.



A majority of the existing literature on urbanization focuses North America and Europe, and not enough attention is drawn to Asia (Gross, 2014). As a result, western scholars tend to view the world as either urban, rural, or suburban in a way “that applies universally across social formations and time periods” (Brenner & Schmid, 2013), but this is not the case and it ignores the transitional state. East Asia has the fastest rates of urban growth in the world, with Southeast Asia being the second highest (UN data, 2012). It is estimated that by 2030, 40% of all urban growth in East Asia will be peri-urban, expanding by a projected 200 million people (Kontgis, 2014). This area has its own unique style of peri-urbanization which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

1.3 SELECTED CASE STUDY

To use a more specific and in-depth example, this thesis will look at peri-urbanization and urbanization more broadly in relation to social cohesion in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, a country that has been experiencing rapid urban expansion and peri-urbanization all over the country for the last three and a half decades. This includes dramatic social changes in that time and more broadly over the last century. In Vietnam, the process of peri-urbanization is happening rapidly and at times dramatically. Additionally, its communist status, ethnic homogeneity, and collectivist values also help make it a good case-study for social cohesion as the lack of political and ethno-linguistic diversity help somewhat isolate peri-urbanization as a variable.

Residents in peri-urban or rural areas have had difficulty with the government over compulsory agricultural land acquisition in which residents receive often as low as 10% compensation from the government for what their land is worth (Nguyen, 2015; Pham Thi, et al., 2019). This land is then built upon as urban housing development to bring in new residents from the city or other parts of the country or to build new businesses such as factories, both for the purpose of economic growth. This process has sewn distrust from the citizens towards the government. It can also can combine different lifestyles and cultures in a way that can cause conflict or discord that has not been studied enough, especially in this context. For instance, research shows that in the peri-urban areas surrounding the city of Hue in central Vietnam, a majority of respondents of peri-urban residents (54.7%) believed that “Rural



culture will change as outsiders move to live in villages” (Nguyen, 2015) though if/how these changes have happened and how people feel about them has not been properly followed up on. Other authors have also pointed out that more research about the socio-cultural and demographical impacts of peri-urbanization is needed in Vietnam (Kontgis, 2014). Therefore, the intersection of these two variables is highly relevant and this presents a research gap and demonstrates the urgency of social cohesion studies in peri-urban areas of Vietnam.

Cohesion is considered a common approach to understanding topics such as the youth in Vietnam (Kham, 2016), but this has not been applied to the peri-urban context. While there is ample research covering peri-urbanization in Vietnam and even some on its effects on social life, these are mostly focused on livelihood strategies for families relating to income, employment, foods, housing, etc due to urbanization and land loss. Instead, interest for this thesis lies in understanding the sociocultural developments that have taken place across the country, both within the family unit and the community. This research will focus on cultural shifts and changing perceptions or attitudes as well as how the patterns associated with peri-urbanization are affecting the variables within cohesion. *Therefore, this thesis is driven primarily by the question: what are the relationships between peri-urbanization and social cohesion overall, and what are the relationships present in Vietnam?*

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This thesis will be structured as following: first, it will review the definitions and the relevance of each topic individually in relation to development studies. It will begin by giving an overview of the theoretical debates surrounding peri-urbanization, followed by a similar dissection of the multi-dimensional umbrella concept of social cohesion. Then it will briefly discuss the methodology used for this systematic literature review and its limitations.

Next it will analyse what the available literature states about the relationship between peri-urbanization and the various aspects of cohesion at an international level for a cross-cultural understanding. It will do this by breaking down the complex effects, both positive and negative, such as what conflicts it has caused, how it affected social capital, or how local governments, NGO's, or various stakeholders addressed their challenges. This is important for understanding the process of social change through urbanization as a possible threat to



cohesion. A more global understanding of the subject will demonstrate how cohesion is effectively achieved, how it is hindered in various contexts, and what processes effectively soothe things over and strengthen community ties during the rapid changes. This approach will further help set an understanding of what issues could arise in order to place Viet Nam within the larger context.

Within the two chapters centred around Viet Nam, this thesis will first give a background of the culture and history with a general overview of urbanization in the country, then move into an analysis of existing literature related to cohesion that ties into peri-urbanization. It will then use available literature on the specific case study of Xuan Hoa, an area outside of Hue city in central Viet Nam before finally delivering concluding remarks.



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 PERI-URBANIZATION

Schnore (1964) described urbanization as a cultural shift in thinking and a change in lifestyle, a movement from agriculture as a means of livelihood towards urban labor markets as a centrum, an increase in population in urban areas, as well as an increase in the amount of urban areas overall. Urbanization is generally viewed as people moving towards the city, but in reality it often involves state, private, or civil actors formally or informally taking land for economic or lifestyle change (Gross, 2014). Because of urban congestion and increasing development, growth often takes place on the periphery as rural areas outside of the city with less built-upon land are cheaper and viewed as being available, making it vulnerable to urban growth (Nguyen, 2015).

As the city expands and encroaches on its rural exterior, the zone of engulfment is considered to be “peri-urban”. Webster (2011) notes that scholarly research of peri-urban areas generally



takes either this perspective of horizontal city expansion, or the perspective of the pre-existing communities going from the outside in and their changing lifestyles or environments, which is the approach more commonly taken by anthropologists for instance. Both are generally accurate descriptions of the same process, and this thesis will attempt to provide both views in chapters 5 and 6, though overall leaning into the latter. Scholars contend that understanding these peri-urban areas is essential to understanding the full picture of urbanization overall (Haarhoff, 2017). However, because of the transformative nature of these peri-urban areas as spaces that see rapid and constant transformation, and because the process does not happen in a singular, linear, or predictable nature, a clear definition of the term is somewhat lacking. This section will explain the process of peri-urbanization and its effects on political, economic, and social life.

Peri-urbanization has been described as a process in which rural areas become urban physically, economically, and socially (Webster, 2014). Webster also described peri-urbanization as a process that sees an economic and employment shift from agriculture to industrialization, population growth, housing developments and land use changes, and increased land prices, (2002, summarized and cited by Saksena, 2014). Others have additionally included an increase in mobility, increased importance of remittances, and cultural and social changes (Riggs, 2006, cited by Saksena, 2014). More specifically, peri-urban spaces have been defined as “a zone of direct impact – which experiences the immediate impacts of land demands from urban growth, pollution and the like and a wider market related zone of influence – recognizable in terms of handling of agricultural and natural resource products” (Simon et al., 2006).

Peri-urban areas are spaces where agricultural and urban lifestyles exist side by side (Simon et al., 2006). They are the fringe between the urban and agricultural spaces that make them appear to be both and neither simultaneously (Ford, 1999). These are urbanizing rural-agricultural areas, defining an area generally left out of the rural-urban scholarly dichotomy and generally viewed as the mediating area, “spaces in mutation” which will eventually become urban spaces, or as third-spaces with their own unique features and challenges (Ruoso and Plant, 2018). Whether a peri-urban space is on the path to being fully consumed into an urban area or not does not necessarily mean it is not still a third-space during the



process. the term “peri-urban” then can be used to describe a place, a concept, or a process (Narain, 2009). Some argue that while generally on the outskirts of an urban center, peri-urban areas are not defined strictly by their physical distance to a city but also by political and social changes (laquinta, & Dreschler 2000). For instance, Saksena describes peri-urban areas as those with both urban and rural characteristics and land usages, rural-urban linkages, rural-urban flows of resources and services, which can occur anywhere, noting that each country has different statistical considerations and calculations for what defines “rural” or “urban”, further blurring what it means to be “peri-urban” (Saksena, 2014)

They are further marked by the rapid change and diversity in local land use. Due to increasingly advanced technology and greater international emphasis on land availability, studying peri-urbanization through land conversion has emerged as a topic of increasing interest (Webster, 2011). Peri-urbanization generally does bring improvements in infrastructures such as water, electricity, communication, or roads (Rakodi, 1999). This infrastructure growth brings additional trans-local development through remittances and increases the ease at which commodities can be sent to rural or peri-urban areas, expanding their markets (Otsuka, 2007).

However, these developments can have adverse effects as well. For instance, if the infrastructure is not properly maintained there can be consequences such as broken pipes which can cause spillage and damage to agricultural land or even an increase in mosquitoes with the subsequent health effects (Narain, 2009). Further, it comes at the expense of farm or forest land, making the land often highly contested. As the population and size of the city grow and food demand increases, the amount of available arable agricultural land decreases (Kontgis, 2014). The loss of agricultural land can mean less available food and a higher reliance on the market. This is witnessed not only in the loss of available arable land, but also the loss of grazing land, leading to a reduction in livestock (Narain, 2009).

Differentiation in peri-urban landscapes can be caused by a variety of factors such as government regulations, the amount of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), levels of manufacturing, property development, time, etc. For instance, the area may be built up due to residential spill-overs or manufacturing-driven growth. Spill-over peri-urban zones caused



by over congestion in the city core are generally less planned than the latter and see more informal settlements (Webster, 2014) as informal land markets along the city's edge offer a cheaper substitute to the more formal housing market (Lombard, 2016). These specific types of areas are more typical of what is called first-generation peri-urban zones, which are more common in emerging economies (such as Vietnam) (Webster, 2011/2014).

After an initial shock and change period during the process of peri-urban growth, what is called second-generation peri-urban areas see increased domestic consumption habits, a rising service economy, a growth of the middle or wealthy class, increased entertainment-based capital flows, second homes, retirement communities, even agro-tourism (Webster, 2014). These second-generation peri-urban areas are generally found outside mega-urban centers such as Beijing or Ho Chi Minh City. Peak peri-urban areas may even see the spawn of mega-projects such as airports or amusement parks as they lie outside the city center. Some peri-urban areas may stagnate or decline, while others outlive the major city they were formed around (Webster, 2014). As the process of peri-urbanization looks different in different contexts, there is no one completely generalizable model. Because of this, scholars debate whether the process is good for economic development for the residents or not. This will be addressed in Chapter 4.

Because of the ever-increasing demand for urban land, the process of urbanization for economic development is often associated with or attributed to the larger issue of compulsory land seizure or "land grabbing", that is, the government repurposing of land for private economic development or Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Land grabbing overall can be associated with various projects such as infrastructure growth, mega-projects such as railways, converting smallholder agriculture into large-scale food production, or more relatedly, urban expansion (Nguyen, 2015). Similarly, many peri-urban areas experience forced land acquisition in which the government seizes the land to develop on, but often paying less than the land is worth or with very late payments, which can cause distrust and resentment towards the local government (Nguyen, 2015; Narain, 2009; Pham, 2014). Because of this, peri-urban areas are often the sites of gentrification, which can be broadly defined as a process in which land use changes from low to higher value, and new middle-class residents often push out the original poorer inhabitants (Hudalah, 2014).



Peri-urban spaces are often sites of increased internal domestic migration and overall net immigration as rural residents seek to move towards the city for work (called centripetal migration) (Arouri, 2017; Anh, 2012), often bringing in migrants who are younger and more ambitious than the typical urban dweller (Webster, 2014). This can cause increased demand for social services (Saksena, 2014). The location of these areas on the outskirts of a city is also often very attractive to ex-urbanites who are looking for a quieter lifestyle as well as people with less wealth who seek affordable living, especially as a city becomes more expensive which can push out the lower-income earners (Haarhoff, 2017; Nguyen, 2015; Webster, 2014). Along with cheaper land, many newcomers find these areas simpler to navigate and adjust to than a large city (Webster, 2014).

Additional attractions for migrants to the peri-urban regions include a more natural setting with fresh air, a desire for security, and the search for a more tightly knit community where they know their neighbours and have a greater satisfaction in their surroundings than they would have in the city (Vallance, 2014). In this sense, many residents and migrants from both rural and urban spaces see peri-urban spaces as the best of both worlds. This increased rate of in-migration as well as an increased rate in population retention are the main forces driving up the population in peri-urban areas (Ford, 1999).

As a third-space between the urban and rural divide, peri-urban areas have unique spatial identities that are more malleable and less stable as their political, ecological, economic, and demographic makeup rapidly changes. As peri-urbanization brings in more migrants to once quieter areas, this population growth and influx of potentially very different lifestyle ideas can impact how cohesive these communities are. Peri-urbanization also mixes rural agrarian villagers with urban professionals, elites, and blue-collar workers. This can create a cultural blend or clash that has not gotten enough attention (Leaf, 2002).

Peri-urban areas are, by definition, highly dynamic areas (Gross, 2014). Social structures become more susceptible to change as people are more pressured to adopt urban lifestyles and alter traditions as new people come, potentially altering identities (Rakodi, 1999). Because of unfair labor practices, environmental degradation, increasing wealth disparities,



land grabbing and displacement, and the combined resulting changes in political structures, social networks, and identities, peri-urban zones can be places with high tensions or conflict (Rakodi, 1999; Webster, 2014; Ruoso and Plant, 2018; Von der Dunk et al., 2011; Dadashpoor, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to understand the concept of social cohesion in these communities as they undergo their rapid changes to allow for more peaceful and sustainable change.

2.2 SOCIAL COHESION

Social cohesion has many scholarly interpretations and definitions. This section seeks to explore the differences and similarities between meanings for a holistic understanding of how the term is used in literature. The term “social cohesion” first gained popularity over a century ago from Emile Durkheim’s discussion on the impact of modernization and rapid urbanization. Durkheim saw cohesion being achieved through either mechanical or organic solidarity. That is solidarity achieved through common values and beliefs in a “collective consciousness”, and solidarity through peoples need and dependency on one another’s services respectively (Durkheim, 1893/1933). He further describes cohesion as a lack of conflict, such as gender, race, religion, class, etc, and strong social bonds including through factors such as civic participation, group membership, democracy (Durkheim, 1897). The concept has since grown and been adapted into various fields such as social science, political studies, economics, psychology, and mental health studies. The difficulty in creating a singularly understood definition or set of measurements lies in the diversity of research subjects in political, cultural, socioeconomic, or geographical variations (Fonesca et al, 2019). While there are varying definitions and understandings, this thesis predominantly focuses on the definitions provided by social science and political studies as described further below.

Within a wide body of literature, social cohesion is generally viewed as a multi-dimensional umbrella approach to the social connectedness and relationality that offer a source of trust or interdependent responsibility between individuals or members of a place-based or non-place-based group, especially in non-kinship ties, that binds them together and provides a sense of belonging, inclusiveness, solidarity, or loyalty (Holdsworth & Hartman, 2009; CoE, 2007; McDaniel, 2003, Valentova, 2016). This is often expressed through values, norms, proverbs, stories, idioms, or religiosity. Cohesion includes strong social bonds, pressure for



conformity, civic culture, social control, and reciprocation (Fonesca, 2019; Kearns and Forrest, 2000). It has been described as a way for groups to “live together differently” (Healy, cited by Novy et al, 2012). It is viewed as both the desirable final goal of social togetherness and the means of achieving social change (Berger-Schmitt, 2000).

The importance of the subject is increasingly recognized and included in development-related projects and reports (OECD, 2014) as well as policy making. For instance, according to the Canadian Policy Research Networks, “social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community” (Maxwell 1996). Further, the Council of Europe defines social cohesion as “the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members—minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation—to manage differences and divisions and ensure the means of achieving welfare for all members” (CoE, 2007). They further include the characteristics of shared loyalty and reciprocity, strength of social relations and values, trust, belonging, and reduced inequalities and exclusion (CoE, 2007). The OECD also includes trust, belonging, inclusion, and mobility (OECD, 2014). Cohesion is reciprocity with group mentality and similar ways of thinking and feeling (Fonesca, 2019). It is the solidarity that allows for peaceful collective action in response to change or social issues.

As Siddique notes, “although social cohesion is difficult to quantify precisely, it is strongest when a majority of members consider themselves to be stakeholders in a particular society. Conversely, it is weakest when a majority of members are alienated, or ‘stakeless’” (2001). Measurements of social cohesion generally take the form of measuring rates of civic participation, trust, income distribution, social capital, more recently social networks, or more experimental approaches such as the probability of two random people being from different ethnolinguistic groups, (as groups that have more linguistic homogeneity are generally more cohesive) (Easterly et al, 2006). Social cohesion encapsulates familial and kinship ties, social and cultural capital, and even economic and political life. Therefore, it can be conceptualized as a micro, macro, or meso-level variable, from the individual to the neighborhood to national borders, with each scale having different forms of measurement. While some scholars such



as Holdsworth & Hartman use community cohesion to differentiate from social cohesion, specifying it as the interdependency of community members on each other (2009), according to Fonesca, community-level cohesion is simply one of the three main perspectives or levels used in social cohesion literature, with the institution and the individual as the remaining levels (2019).

BOX 2.2 PROMINENT DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL COHESION

- *“Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community” (Maxwell, 1996).*

- *“The capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members—minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation—to manage differences and divisions and ensure the means of achieving welfare for all members” (CoE, 2007).*

- *“A society’s capacity to achieve progress in well-being for all its members” (OECD, 2011).*

- *“A cohesive society works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility” (OECD 2011).*

- *A cohesive society is “a society that strives for social integration and builds up social capital to create a common sense of belonging, and as a place where prospects exist for upward social mobility” (OECD, 2014).*

- *“The ongoing process of developing well-being, sense of belonging, and voluntary social participation of the members of society, while developing communities that tolerate and promote a multiplicity of values and cultures, and granting at the same time equal rights and opportunities in society” (Fonesca, 2019).*

2.3 THE THREE LEVELS OF COHESION

Cohesion at a Community Level

Some important variables generally thought to be important to community-level cohesion are values, community size (as well as perception of community size), the existence of a common goal, or the perception of an outside threat (Cartwright, 1968). Trust in others as well as tolerance to diversity are two key indicators of cohesion which are believed to lower crime rates and reduce discontent, as societies lacking in trust or tolerance are more fragmented



(OECD, 2014). Communities with lower levels of trust for one another are more likely to experience conflict (Gambetta, 1988). Further, conflict can destroy trust, having a cyclical nature. This means trusting a neighbour, but also trusting institutions, making it a very important variable. These variables can be thought of as an extension or by-product of social capital. From this perspective, community-level cohesion incorporates the previously discussed variables of norms, beliefs, social networks, social capital, pressures for conformity, loyalty, solidarity, and shared goals.

Understanding cohesion at a community level was once a focal point for 20th century western sociologists who feared that urban growth would shake communal shared values towards anonymity and individualism. In their view, a generally undefined age of morality and solidarity had been shaken, and collective identity had been lost, leading to rising crime rates, violence, rising divorce rates, or high unemployment, leading to a perceivable disarray in peoples everyday lives with unspecified long term consequences (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). This view was widely criticized for its lack of specificity and unrealistic understanding of the past, but also for its lack of understanding of the way people behave in their everyday lives and view their own micro-level community. Today, there is a renewed interest in cohesion that stems from a bottom-up approach to understanding social justice through a social lens. Yet definitions and methods are still debated.

Today, the neighborhood spatial identity is only a part of a person's overall individual or social identity. And yet, neighborhoods can be an indicator of broader consumption patterns – “what we consume and who we consume it with”. (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). Succinctly put, Buckner (1988) said “a neighbourhood high in cohesion refers to a neighbourhood where residents, on average, report feeling a strong sense of community, report engaging in frequent acts of neighboring, and are highly attracted to live in and remain residents of the neighbourhood. Just the opposite would hold for a neighbourhood low in cohesion”.

Kearns and Forrest (2000) stress the importance of shared values and “a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another”. Identity and shared culture are often considered major elements of belonging to a group. Cultural identities are both shared and personal, as a can bring together all sorts of



backgrounds and groups (Novy et al, 2012). Because of this, multiple identities can be created across spaces and times, making territorial identity key and cultural understandings fluid (Dukes and Musterd, 1997).

What then of a community whose spatial identity is being rapidly shaken with an influx of people with different income levels, lifestyles, and consumption habits? “By implication [of the standard definitions of cohesion], a society lacking cohesion would be one which displayed social disorder and conflict, disparate moral values, extreme social inequality, low levels of social interaction between and within communities and low levels of place attachment” (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). However, this is not always necessarily the case. Group identity can stem from differentiation between themselves and another group. Therefore, it is entirely possible that a cohesive village is at odds with the overlying city or society and is actually contributing to greater fragmentation at a meso-level. For instance, a wealthy, gated community may experience strong local cohesion, but be overall exclusive of the wider community and therefore not cohesive with (or even at odds with) the wider community. Therefore, some authors stress that the “imagined communities (Anderson, 1991) based on shared history, religion, norms, or ethnicity could presently very problematic grounds for social exclusion of the ‘other’” (Hobsbawm, 1990).

To differentiate cohesion from ideas such as nationalistic unity or cultural homogeneity, many scholars include the acceptance of diversity at the core of their definition, referring to cohesion as a system of trust between all. In this sense then, division or conflict, even between diverse cultural groups in an area, can be seen as the opposite or lack of cohesion (Holdsworth & Hartman 2009). It is important to note that cultural disjunction and conflict are not necessarily an anomaly as a conservative view of culture might perhaps suppose, tending to steer focus away from what is not normative. Rather, culture and society are fluid and continuously changing, and disjunction is then a temporary indicator of long-term processual change, rather than an outcome in and of itself. In studying cohesion in a community, it is important to have a strict view of the community and to understand their shared identities. As Forrest and Kearns so elegantly put it:



“The simplest observable measure would be of groups of people who live in a local area getting together to promote or defend some common local interest. This could come in various forms: organizing the annual street party; petitioning for a better local service of some kind; the vigilante group organized to hound out some ‘undesirable’ resident; the street gang fighting its turf; poor people fighting for better housing; rich enclaves with guards and security cameras. There is the social cohesion of an ethnic majority imposing its rules and values on others. There is the social cohesion of restrictive covenants and of withdrawal from and defense against the world outside; such withdrawal and defense can occur among both rich and poor neighborhoods, albeit for different reasons and with different consequences. As we suggested earlier, a city could consist of socially cohesive but increasingly divided neighborhoods. There may be ethnic or religion-based cohesive communities living side-by-side. In such circumstances, the stronger the ties which bind such communities the greater may be the social, racial or religious conflict between them. Social cohesion at the neighborhood level is therefore by no means unambiguously a good thing. It can be about discrimination and exclusion and about a majority imposing its will or value system on a minority. Moreover, the assumed ingredients for social cohesion may be lacking in precisely those parts of the cities which are apparently successful and problem-free.”

(2001)

Because of this, scholars debate if the concept of cohesion can encompass diverse groups, or if it necessitates cultural homogeneity for shared values and trust. For instance, Larsen (20013; cited by Fonesca, 2019) asserts that diversity prevents cohesion because of language barriers and differences in values or mindsets that are required for trust. Others maintain that a fragmented society with cohesive bubbles is not as strong as a society that achieves cohesion through mixing and engaging with each other (Cheong et al, 2007; cited by Fonesca, 2019) and some argue that cohesion is solidarity despite differences (Siddique, 2001). One place with a strong identity and cohesion could still threaten the wider society’s cohesion, this is the difference between a socially cohesive place or group and a cohesive society. In this sense, it is important that people feel capable of holding more than one identity (Kearns and Forrest, 2000).

Overall, current definitions of social cohesion generally do not account for diverse multicultural societies, which could be a source of tension when using cohesion in policy framework (Fonesca, 2019). To more accurately fit the culturally diverse cosmopolitan societies seen today, specifically in the context of resilient cities. Fonesca et al. provided an



updated definition of cohesion, calling it “The ongoing process of developing well-being, sense of belonging, and voluntary social participation of the members of society, while developing communities that tolerate and promote a multiplicity of values and cultures, and granting at the same time equal rights and opportunities in society” (2019).

Cohesion at an Institutional Level

Formal institutions can be described as the conditions that people agree to such as laws, codes, or procedures that are communicated officially to the residents, while informal institutions are more subjective ideas of unwritten rules that are enforced and communicated outside of official channels (Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra, 2017). From an institutional or socioeconomic perspective, cohesion incorporates social mobility and social inclusion and exclusion related to access to resources, markets, and the workforce (Novy et al, 2012). This level includes variables such as distribution of wealth, economic mobility, trust in government, government/community participation rates (including voting), and access to economic activity. The institutional level also concerns factors such as conflict management, decision making and rights (Fonesca, 2019). This further includes the ease of access and availability to those in poverty, but also the willingness of the wealthy and powerful to participate and be involved in the wider society (Novy et al, 2012). From this perspective, wealth and income inequality are necessarily antithetical to cohesion as they create a barrier to equal opportunity and prevent harmonious development (Novy et al, 2012). Therefore, cohesion is linked to redistribution (Kearns and Forrest, 2000; Fonesca, 2019; CoE, 2007).

Statistical studies have shown a relationship between strong cohesion and strong institutions (such as formally recognized government or NGO’s). Empirical economic research indicates that cohesion is vital for improving developing countries (Easterly et al, 2006). Social cohesion is often considered imperative to a strong democracy, a growing economy, and peace (Easterly et al, 2006; Holdsworth & Hartman 2009; Europe, 2007; OECD, 2014). Higher rates of civic participation were found to help lower government corruption (Putnam, 2000, cited by OECD, 2014).

A cohesive society would see high levels of engagement in civic affairs and relatively low levels of dissatisfaction. It also encapsulates not only political affairs but political culture and the



means of conducting oneself in political life, such as avoiding the politicization of morals. Because of this expectation, a cohesive society, in theory, would be more efficient in addressing political affairs in a timely and effective manner through collective action (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). To add to this level, theory on cohesion at an institutional level should incorporate an examination of cooperation between different scales of government or various institutions – a view that seems to be overlooked in available literature.

Cohesion at an individual Level

From the individual perspective which incorporates a more psychological approach, cohesion is viewed as a sense of belonging with an idea of a collective identity (Buckner, 1988). This includes face-to-face communication, discussing intimate topics, feelings of inclusion, similar interests or goals, an individual's willingness to participate in civic life, motivations and desires, and perceptions of and adherence norms (Fonesca, 2019). This individual level also looks at people's relationships with their broader community through social capital and social networks.

Social capital and social networks are perhaps the most recent way of researching the topic of cohesion (Fonesca, 2019). Social capital can be defined broadly as norms, rules, networks, grounds for trust, reciprocity, and shared objectives that allow people to work together towards a common goal (OECD, 2014). Social capital is related to the institutions, relationships, standards for forming the quantity and quality of social interaction in a society (World Bank, 1999). Bourdieu defined social capital as the membership to a group or groups that allows for the building of potential resources through established relationships and networks. (1986). It is both strong and weak ties to other individuals through ongoing engagement (Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra, 2017).

Social networks here are defined as the chain of connections that link people directly or indirectly, such as through an organization. Social Networks connect the individual to society and provide the social patterns of interactions such as social cues or identities, familial ties, or authority patterns (Dalton et al., 2002) and are “the capacity of individuals to count on relatives or friends for help when in need” (OECD, 2014). Social networks have even been linked to lower levels of depression or isolation (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). Generally, it is



understood that a cohesive society would have a high degree of social interactions (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). In one Scandinavian study, a strong majority of people reported that beyond social or practical support, weak social ties in an area were very important to them for leading to strong ties, helping people feel at home, and providing a sense of identity. Further, they found that weak ties had particular importance to vulnerable groups in this sense (Henning and Lieberg, 1996).

Cohesion at an individual level looks at a person's understanding of society and their place in it as well as their place-based identity. Therefore, for a strong understanding of cohesion at an individual level it is important to discuss the concept of social constructionism. Social constructionism is the idea of understanding how a phenomenon is understood through social means and differ between contexts. In other words, individual internal thought patterns, processes, and perceptions are established through social means (Kham, 2016). This means that understanding social inequality, for example, could be less relevant to exploring overall cohesion than understanding peoples' *perceptions* of inequality (Langer, et al., 2017).

In designing and carrying out research, this helps the researcher frame questions in terms of the lived experiences of the participants, by understanding the way they view their problems and understanding their perspective and reasons for them. For example, this also means understanding the *meaning* of cohesion in relation to their context (Kham, 2016). Relatedly, the OECD notes that perceptions of disparities and perceptions of exclusion can be threatening to cohesion and economic progress (2014). For research about cohesion, it is important to both quantitatively measure factors such as for example mobility and to qualitatively measure *perceptions* of mobility. Cohesion research overall would benefit from this approach.

Cohesion starts at the individual level as people need to feel some sort of motivation to belong, but individuals can only perceive cohesion if the community level allows them the comfort to do so and the institutional level provides the platform for this. For a citizen to feel comfortable making these contributions, they need to feel that a) their norms and values are shared or at least accepted and b) that institutions provide them the with opportunities and



freedoms to express themselves formally or participate (Fonesca, 2019). Therefore, each level is equally important and mutually influence each other and cohesion.

2.4 THE THREE PILLARS OF COHESION

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines a cohesive society as “a society that strives for social integration and builds up social capital to create a common sense of belonging, and as a place where prospects exist for upward social mobility” (2011). Further, they list the three pillars of social cohesion as objectives to achieve: to promote social inclusion for all; to facilitate upward social mobility; and to strengthen social capital” (2014). This section will provide a greater depth information on each subject as defined by the OECD.

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is considered the governments’ mandate and the peoples’ right to equal access to food, water, shelter, work, housing, education, or healthcare (OECD, 2011; 2014). This is considered essential to cohesion. Inclusion in this context refers to things such as equitable delivery of social protections in both quality and quantity, regardless of characteristics (OECD, 2014). Inclusive growth is the pace and distribution of economic growth. A main challenge to inclusion is stigmatization based on indicators such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, class, etc. Inclusion therefore can be considered how the measurement of how important these factors are to equality. Differentiations and social identities based on such factors can cause conflict and prevent inclusive growth and cohesion. Comparing the concepts of cohesion and inclusion, cohesion provides a much broader approach to understanding the health of a society and is generally thought to be more indicative of a healthy society overall (Novy et al, 2012). Further, it places greater emphasis on civic participation and social responsibility (CoE, 2007).

Additionally, this thesis presents a greater emphasis on the oft excluded view that gender be considered a primary dimension of inclusion and cohesion. While still overwhelmingly left out of cohesion studies, gender inequalities are increasingly recognized as a hindrance to cohesion and as a major “faultline” for inclusion and diversity (McDaniel, 2003). There are gender gaps not just in wealth and access to labor markets and the wider economy, but also



in rates and styles of political participation, social networks, institutional trust, and solidarity. This is due to the way people interpret and internalize their gender roles (Valentova, 2016). In a western context, studies show that women are generally less involved with politics and formal civic groups (especially ones that are conflict oriented) than men, yet are gradually becoming more and more involved. Meanwhile, women are also more likely to volunteer or be involved in education roles, church groups, and charitable organizations than men (Valentova, 2016).

Women often report greater interconnectedness and “informal solidarity” with larger and stronger kinship-networks than men, often attributed to greater domestic responsibilities as well as greater sensitivity to values such as shared reciprocity, whereas men generally have stronger non-kin ties and networks (Valentova, 2016). Their lower degree of civic participation is explained as having a lesser degree of developed skills such as public speaking (due to gender attitudes), and having less available time to allocate life outside of domestic duties (Valentova, 2016). However, strong cohesion and inclusion would require these aspects to be equal.

Social Mobility

As an extension of inclusion and inclusive growth, the second dimension of cohesion according to the OECD is social mobility, with a positive correlation between the two. This refers to the movement of people within class or income group, career level, etc. and is considered a measurement of equality as an extension of equal opportunity. This can be for an individual or inter-generational mobility. Mobility can be either “absolute” or “relative”. This means, respectively, the total amount of people moving up or down classes, and the upwards or downwards movement of people from one class versus those of another class (OECD, 2014). Mobility includes how society chooses to allocate and justify the allocation of resources. The perception of potential mobility allows community members to see a benefit to being a part of society, helping cohesion (Siddique, 2001).

Social Capital

The final dimension of cohesion according to the OECD is social capital as defined previously (norms, rules, networks, grounds for trust, reciprocity, and shared objectives that allow



people to work towards a common goal together [OECD, 2014,)). Cohesion thus encapsulates capital and is a far broader term, encompassing attitudes and behaviours, political participation, solidarity, and institutional trust as explained in the other two dimensions. Again, expanding on the existing literature, it is logical to assume that gender and familial relations provide an important indicator of social capital and networks.



METHODOLOGY

While the author was scheduled to conduct surveys and interviews in Hue, Vietnam from February 5th to May 5th, 2020, unfortunately the COVID-19 outbreak cut the length of the stay in half. In the six weeks in Hue, due to bureaucratic issues and a rising xenophobia from the villagers because of the virus, research approval from the local authorities (which is necessary in Vietnam) was never granted. As a result, this research was redesigned to exclusively be a literature review. Therefore, this literature review will contain a few additional comments based on fieldnotes from the author that were gathered from personal experience, though this can be considered anecdotal evidence. The original research methodology as well as the planned surveys and interview guide are included in the appendix.

The aim of this literature review is to survey existing literature to develop a deep background analysing and synthesizing more concrete understandings of both social cohesion and peri-urbanization in order to broadly display the effects that peri-urbanization has on social life. For this reason, the topic of “social cohesion” was selected because it best encapsulates all aspects of social life as it is a multi-dimensional umbrella term and because it is a goal that is not limited to a specific cultural context and therefore is applicable to all settings. In this sense, this research is important in expanding the dialogue surrounding all peri-urban areas, and all research about related subjects can be highly prevalent to a wide-scoped literature review. Aggregating several approaches to cohesion to include more information than any one study would allow will help the reader understand the scope of the term and its applicability to a specific setting such as peri-urban areas.



Moving forward, this thesis will first look at available information on an international level related to how peri-urbanization has affected cohesion in various settings, such as what conflicts it has caused, how it has affected social capital, or how local governments, NGO's, or various stakeholders have addressed their challenges. This is will demonstrate the how social change through urbanization can threaten cohesion. This global view will demonstrate will how cohesion is fractured or achieved in the rapidly changing context of peri-urbanization. This approach will further help set an understanding of what issues could arise to compare and contrast to available literature about Viet Nam.

3.2 PROCESS

This thesis will first present the urbanization process in Viet Nam as well as attempt to paint a clearer picture of its peri-urban systems primarily using existing academic literature on the topic, including statistics and some government data. Next, it will collect and synthesize existing research about how urbanization has impacted social life in the country under the conditions of social cohesion that were previously laid out in the theoretical review. These variables include trust (in others and institutions), social capital and networks, social inclusion (equality in access to education, healthcare, and economic activity), social mobility, presence or absence of conflict, shared identity, social capital, and people's connection to the community. These latter three variables are defined in greater detail in box 3.1 below as they broadly encapsulate most of the others. Because of the multi-dimensional understanding of cohesion as a concept, some dimensions can be strong while others are weak. Therefore, it is important to research all aspects separately in parallel, as some aspects may be influenced not just by each other but by outside factors as well (Valentova, 2016).

Further, this thesis will approach the following sub-questions in relations to peri-urbanization as key indicators of cohesion (as discussed in the previous chapter): 1) What impact does peri-urbanization have on social inclusion? 2) What impact does peri-urbanization have on social mobility? 3) What impact does peri-urbanization have on social capital? 4) What is the relationship between social cohesion and gender and familial relationships, and 5) what impact does peri-urbanization have on gender and familial relationships. These sub-questions



are asked of each article that was read about peri-urbanization, and articles about cohesion are similarly asked “how may this relate to peri-urbanization or urbanization overall”.

This literature review used Google Scholar and Worldcat as the primary search engines for scholarly, peer-reviewed journals and articles were selected based on the relevance of the titles and abstracts. Occasionally, simple google searches of the main terms would lead to a few credible databases or books, for instance the Social Cohesion Policy Report of Vietnam from the OECD. Reputable databases and development organizations such as the OECD, the World Bank, UNDP, and the General Statistics Office of Vietnam were also perused for relevant information. Outside of these sources, only peer-reviewed sources were used. Keyword searches predominantly used (either individually or combinations of) the terms “peri-urban(ization) + social cohesion + urban(ization) + social change + conflict + community cohesion + neighbourhood cohesion + Vietnam” (including various combinations including the terms “migration” + “gender”).

The criteria for cohesion used in this research are the Fonescsa’s three levels of cohesion and the OECD’s three pillars of cohesion. Therefore, important questions that were asked of the available literature included were founded most principally on these pillars: inclusion, mobility, and social capital (i.e. “how does peri-urbanization impact social inclusion” etc.) This further applies to the case of Viet Nam, but not exclusively. To find this literature, search results were slightly altered to include these key words more specifically, for instance “peri-urban + social + inclusion/mobility/capital”, though admittedly more of this literature was found during the primary research.

Articles that were commonly sourced in literature or seemed highly relevant based on titles were looked at next and the reference lists were carefully reviewed for other relevant sources. Those about Vietnam specifically were given higher priority. For the theoretical overview, newer sources were prioritized to make sure information was up to date with a stronger foundation. Articles that did not directly contribute to describing or defining the peri-urbanization or social cohesion or did not address their relationship were left out, unless they provided were specifically focused on Vietnam and provided a deeper background on what it looks like there.



Some information and an important dissertation which also held a significant body of relevant literature were provided by a local Vietnamese supervisor based in Hue (Nguyen, 2015) which provided the initial starting point both for the topic and for finding literature. This contact also provided a policy document which was translated from Vietnamese using Google Translate.

Supervisors at Hue University of Economics selected the commune of Thuy Van in the town of Huong Thuy for this research as they felt it is most appropriate due to the rapid peri-urbanization there. It was requested they find a village that has seen rapid growth and urbanization in recent years with an influx of new people living there. It was also necessary to the original research plan mentioned to keep geographical location in mind for purpose of convenience so location was fixed around Hue as the home base. The greater and more recent the changes in the village, the clearer it would be able to understand the changing views of the original inhabitants, and hypothetically it would be more likely in such a context that there could be conflict or resentment to some extent. That type of setting would likely see more pronounced changes in perspectives and possibly therefore stronger opinions as well. After an initial meeting Thuy Van People's Committee and a village leader, it was recommended that the focus of this research be on the village of Xuan Hoa as it fits these criteria the most. It is remaining as the central case study because some specific information was able to gathered on the area in time and it helps provide a concrete example of the process and changes that are occurring all around the country and indeed the world.

3.3 LIMITATIONS

The first and most evident limitation of this thesis is that it is purely a literature review with no independent research conducted, making it highly theoretical in nature, and it would strongly benefit from uniquely crafted empirical research. While research in Hue, Vietnam was planned, due to unforeseen issues of bureaucracy and xenophobia followed by the outbreak of a global pandemic shutting down borders, original research plans were abandoned, and the nature of this thesis suddenly changed. In the wake of this, it was with greatest effort that preparatory pre-field research and some elements of personal ethnographic experience remained incorporated for the sake of an example.



Social cohesion research, in general, would benefit from a more qualitative approach to understanding more abstract concepts perceptions of life or conflicts in a region at a day-to-day ground level, as relevant research generally takes a more quantitative socioeconomic approach, only encompassing part of the picture. Adding a qualitative approach to cohesion research would better encapsulate people's perceptions and feelings about urbanization and help facilitate expression of conflict or social discord. It is for this reason that previous research plans including a rough draft of a survey and interview guide are included.

Further limitations to exploring both cohesion and urbanization relate to the difficulty in obtaining many official documents about policy for the case of Vietnam, as only very little official information that was able to be accrued and had to be translated using Google Translate.

IV GLOBAL ANALYSIS

This section seeks to explore and demonstrate the broader relationship that available literature has stated about peri-urbanization impacting the various previously listed components under the umbrella of cohesion, such as how the political and economic changes brought by peri-urbanization can affect social cohesion. It will dissect the generalizable effects that peri-urban growth, as well as urbanization and modernization more broadly, have had on political, economic, and social life of its residents in various contexts. Though political, historical, legal, and sociocultural contexts may differ, an expansive overview can show which aspects and effects of the peri-urbanizing process are typical. Then, the chapter will display various types of conflicts that have been found to be common in different peri-urban contexts. This will display how peri-urbanization positively and negatively affects cohesion. This approach will further help create an understanding of what issues could arise to compare and contrast to available literature about Viet Nam.



Economic Changes & Cohesion

Peri-urbanization is generally associated with economic growth stemming from diversification of the market and increased industrialization (Rakodi, 1999). Due to the increased population through migration, land prices go up which means greater revenue is generated from renting or selling land (Rakodi, 1999). As discussed in section 2.1, this process is associated with a growing number of wealthier migrants coming into the area (Hudalah, 2014). These two processes together are associated with a growing middle-class in peri-urban areas (Webster, 2014). This has been linked to an increase in cash spending at local stores and a rise in general consumerism, such as in peri-urban India for example (Narain, 2009).

Peri-urbanization is often tied with an increasing rate of employment in manufacturing and decreasing rates of employment in agriculture (Kontgis, 2014). Agricultural activities remaining in the area are also often transformed and industrialized (Ruoso and Plant, 2018). This can lead to (often forced) agricultural land loss and loss of livelihood for farmers, decreased access to food supply, greater competition over natural resources, loss of livestock grazing areas, and environmental degradation (Pham, 2014; Van Suu, 2002; Nguyen, 2015; Narain, 2009) which create new frameworks of vulnerability (Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra, 2017). For example, those who do not own the land or livestock but are employed as laborers to help or those who work on as middlemen from agriculture to consumer (such as perhaps a butcher) also are forced to transition and may see a change or loss in livelihood opportunities (Narain, 2009). Further, these newly more industrial areas often see labor concerns such as poor working conditions, exploitation, or a lack of workers' rights (Webster, 2014).

Because of the increased employment, peri-urbanization is typically supported by national governments, fought for by core-city governments, and supported by international development organizations such as the World Bank (Webster, 2014). Peri-urbanization provides rural residents with greater and more stable access to the formal economy outside of agriculture. While economic growth and increased employment have the potential to improve cohesion, the loss of livelihoods for farmers during the transition process can hinder cohesion. Further, peri-urbanization can be a product of urban restructuring that pushes out



poorer people for the sake of middle-class comfort, which can limit their access to economic activities or political processes (Marshall and Dolley, 2019).

Political Changes & Cohesion

Peri-urban areas are spatially complex extensions of economic urbanism that exist outside of standard political district lines in governance grey areas. This also creates blurry boundaries between formality and informality as well as bureaucracy and tradition, (Gross, 2014; Marshall and Dolley, 2019). The expansion of the city government means that when residents have an issue to take up with the government, they are no longer battling the neighbourhood but larger more powerful (and more formal) bodies such as the city or municipality (Hudalah, 2014). This grey-zone factor can create difficulties when projects benefiting both the rural and urban areas are supposed to take place in the peri-urban grey zone, as questions of which body is to pay for a project or do the work on it arise. This tension can even lead to the abandonment of projects altogether, as has been the case for several peri-urban projects in India (Narain, 2009). Therefore, these areas are often ignored by administrative bodies (Saksena, 2014).

Because the fragmented, small-scale local governments often lack the skills and resources to properly manage the infrastructural developments on their own, they often seek the help of private developers to take control of establishing infrastructures and even essential services such as transportation and schools, which can be more efficient but can also further weaken the community government and overall communal voice (Webster, 2014). In other cases, it has been recorded that the weakening of local institutions made it harder to fight against the changes and made it easier for housing developers to expand influence and gain prominence in peri-urban areas (Hudalah, 2014).

The issue of formality can also be a source for tension as it can be difficult to establish a legitimate community voice or local government structures may simply be too weak or fragmented to establish themselves against the larger encroaching body of the city, national governments, or international development agencies that are all pushing for urban expansion (Webster, 2014). Further, Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra found that informal institutions in peri-urban Mexico provided quick, short-term fixes to problems and created greater access to



services but were also ripe with nepotism and corruption and were often very exclusive (2017). For stronger cohesion in peri-urban regions, it is essential that they are able to form a collective political voice. More deeply engaging the local residence in their own development has been suggested as an essential way to reduce conflict or distrust against the government in the development process (Webster, 2014; Roth et al, 2019).

Changes in Social Capital

Social capital is seen as essential for accessing resources in peri-urban areas (Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra, 2017). “Urban-dwellers have been found to have larger social networks with friends and acquaintances than those from rural areas” (while social capital in family life was shown to be unaffected in this particular study) (Lanoo, 2012), which makes peri-urban residents an interesting subject. This difference was due to the increased amount of choice through sheer population size, but also in the increased amount of meeting points and available activities as well as proximity. However, rural areas are shown to have more supportive social capital and networks than urban and peri-urban areas due to less fragmentation and heterogeneity, ascribed to different interests and power imbalances (Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra, 2017).

4.2 CONFLICT

The urbanization process creates pressure on rural residents to adopt urban lifestyles and identities as well as to adapt to the behaviors of the newcomers. Peri-urbanization is strongly correlated with rapid social change “in which rural settlements adjust economically and socially to urban influences, both opportunities and threats, and in which existing populations are added to by in-migrants from either the inner city or other parts of the country” (Rakodi, 1999). As a result of all of this in-migration, residential and infrastructural development, economic growth, prices of land and local commodities also increase in these areas, increasing wealth disparities (Nguyen, 2015) which can hinder cohesion.

While there are various types of peri-urban zones, scholars note that in the villages that have in-migration, conflict between the original inhabitants and newcomers can be an issue (laquinta, & Dreschler 2000). Because peri-urban areas are marked by their rapid population increase and density, they see greater social compression and intensification which can cause



both evolution and conflict (Rupri, 1998). This makes it imperative to understand how the original inhabitants of a once-agricultural area are interpreting these changes and coping with them from a qualitative perspective. For example, there is research that shows that in China, migration into some well-established peri-urban communities has led to conflict between the original inhabitants and the newcomers (Siu, 2007). These types of conflicts have been recorded all across the world in various periUrban settings. For instance, dating all the way back to 1962, Gutkind found that in peri-urban areas in Uganda, residents were much more likely to conflict with other cultural groups than their own. Multiple studies have shown that maintaining “rural values” such as emphasizing mutual respect, frequent interactions, and maintaining traditions were important to keeping the peace during the urbanization process (Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra, 2017).

Water-related issues are increasingly a source of tension in peri-urban areas (Prakash, 2015; Roth et al, 2019). This includes problems regarding water rights, usage, and sanitation (Roth, 2019). For instance, privatization of the land market often comes with privatization of water access. Dams or gates are generally controlled or seized by urban elites with flow, availability, salination, and/or sanitation (pollution) changes often rendering water unusable for drinking or agriculture in peri-urban areas or simply decreasing supply (Roth, 2019). These issues are generally related to larger issues such as poverty, inequality, and power relations (Roth, 2019).

Peri-urban land conflicts are often some of the greatest and most numerous public disturbances, with tens of thousands of cases annually in China for instance (Webster, 2011), commonly over compulsory land acquisition and confusion over policy changes and changes in ownership rights (McGee, 2009). Because of the new demographic of urban dwellers and laborers and because of the informality of the land giving it less distinct purpose or boundaries, there is often social contestation about the meaning and purpose of land between residents as well as institutions, which can cause land-use conflict (Ruoso and Plant, 2018; Lombard, 2016). Land use conflict occurs 1) when demand for land in an area increases and subsequently so does its cost, so competition for ownership can occur (Lombard, 2016), or 2) when various stakeholders in a geographical area have incompatible interests in its use (Von Der Dunk, 2011). In some instances, a single piece of land can have multiple uses for



multiple stakeholders, with each of them having different claims and rights to the land. The reduction of viable agricultural land can also lead to increased competition over resources (Lombard, 2016). In one study of peri-urban Switzerland, it was found that about half of all land-use conflicts arose over a single issue. Conflicts included, noise pollution, visible blights, health hazards, nature conservation, preservation of the past, and changes to the neighbourhood (such as changing lifestyle), none of which are mutually exclusive of course (Von Der Dunk, 2011).

According to a systematic review by Dadashpoor (2009), many scholars consider land-tenure (individual and group relationships to the land) related conflicts to be the root cause of many peri-urban conflicts. According to this study, land tenure related conflicts fell into three main categories. 55% of surveyed literature indicated that the major cause of conflict in peri-urban land tenure is over conflicts of interest. The author lists the most common causes for land-tenure conflicts of interest in peri-urban areas as illegal tenure, threats of violence for evacuation, lack of basic services, exclusion and homelessness, changes in land policies, inconsistent policies and rights, inefficient governments, food insecurity, not following planning standards, poverty, lack of political power, rural migration and land abandonment, and “lack of social cohesion and social instability including conflicts and civil unrest”.

24% of the conflicts in existing literature were over conflicts of power, which is a common issue due to the fact that large governing bodies or organizations encroach on smaller ones, effectively ignoring their voices. It may also include for instance individuals versus individuals or individuals versus institutions. The remaining 21% of conflicts were over legal frameworks due to the rapid changes in land and ownership policies. These are common because urban political expansion often spreads into areas with informal housing based on custom or tradition (Dadashpoor, 2019). Finally, they note that land tenure is often a matter of both ethnicity and gender, which can cause distrust and resentment. For instance, in many places it is still common for the son to inherit the property and women must marry into it, leading to increased vulnerability in cases such as divorce (Dadashpoor, 2019).

The “faultline” of gender is an approach that has generally been left out of studies of the social aspects of peri-urbanization. Opportunities in agrarian areas are often shaped by



gender, and agrarian change has been shown to have different impacts on men and women (Angeles and Hill, 2009). These differing economic changes are further felt through changing gender roles in home life in marriage and parenting changes as the economy restructures the family (Grosse, 2015). For example, in a study of peri-urban Filipino villages, Angeles and Hill found that because of traditional gender roles of women as the caretakers and men as the breadwinners, women were not being adequately supported by their government. While they were gaining greater access to resources because of peri-urban lifestyle changes, they were also being essentialized as caretakers, which created additional burdens on them to focus on their home life while still needing to be a part of the formal economy. In this sense they found that the state and international development agencies were reinforcing normative gender roles and exacerbating inequalities (2009). As another example, one study of India found women to have greater dissatisfaction with their husbands as the loss of agricultural activity and the money generated from land sales had reportedly decreased their productivity and increased their alcoholism (Narain, 2009).

“Modernization” in the western sense is generally associated with a shifting gender regime towards a more public life for women with lower domestic responsibility (Valentova, 2016). In their a statistical review of survey data in Luxembourg, Valentova found that women with traditionalist views on gender roles and women with more modernist egalitarian views (that are typically associated with urbanization) had no statistically significant difference in rates of civic participation, though both still lower than that of men. Women with traditionalist gender role views were more likely to have higher rates of solidarity and trust with what the author deemed as more cohesive “attitudes” overall, yet these views did not have a statistically significant effect on cohesive “behaviour”. Traditional women were more likely than traditional men to have cohesive attitudes, however, traditional views are more likely to hinder women in cohesive behaviour such as civic participation than it is to hinder men (2016). This highlights that gender equality is essential to increasing cohesion for women, thus increasing cohesion overall. While this is only one statistical analysis that only covers the small country of Luxemburg and does not explicitly address peri-urbanization, it is also one of the only studies of its kind as gender is too often left out of cohesion studies and its approach to changing gender roles is generally applicable to the process of becoming “socially urban”.



V

REGIONAL CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK OF VIETNAM

This chapter will give a background on relevant Vietnamese history in relation to social change and social cohesion and the country's patterns of urbanization and peri-urbanization in recent decades.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam was under French colonial rule as French Indochina officially beginning in 1887, finally gaining independence in 1954. Almost immediately after came a brutal, 20 year long civil war between the northern communists and the south in an attempt to unify the country under communist rule. After the communist victory in 1975, the country experienced several massive economic and social changes. In response to a failure to reach the expected amount of food production as well as overall economic stagnation came the 1986 Doi Moi (or "renovation") initiative (Kontgis, 2014). Drafted mimicking China's model, the point of Doi Moi was to have a "market-oriented socialist economy under state guidance" (Beresford, 2008).

Since 1986, Vietnam has had robust economic growth. Doi Moi marked a shift from agriculture towards a transitional, multi-sector market-based economy with de-centralized agriculture. This can be thought of as a market-based socialist-capitalist hybrid (McGee, 2009). Doi Moi encouraged foreign direct investments (FDI) as well as private economic activity, reallocated farmland for individual usage, removed price controls, increased agricultural and wider economic diversification, and pushed for the exportation of goods and foreign trade (Arpino, Bruno and Aassve, 2014; OECD, 2014). This is widely credited for lifting the country and its citizens out of extreme poverty and its status of being one of the poorest countries in the world into that of a lower-middle income country with one of the fastest growing economies.



In the last 20 years alone, over 45 million people in Viet Nam have been lifted out of extreme poverty after the country moved towards a market-based system. Extreme poverty fell from 50% in 1990 to roughly 2-3% today (OECD, 2018). The emerging middle class is expected to double in the next 5-10 years from 13% to 26% (World Bank, 2019). Since the reform, the country has had a roughly 7% annual GDP. The service sector has (for better or worse) also grown substantially, now making up roughly 40% of the country's GDP (OECD, 2018). The Vietnamese government is concentrated on the idea that integration into the global economy is the clearest path to economic development (McGee, 2009).

Along with this, there has been rapid urbanization. Before the "renovation" policy, there was a strict divide between the rural and urban (Kontgis, 2014) where roughly 90% of the country worked in agriculture, now just over three decades later that number is closer to 40%, though roughly 70% still live in rural areas. In urban areas in the country, 95% have clean water, and 99% of the country have electricity (General Statics Office of Viet Nam). The country's life expectancy has also risen from 69 in 1986 to about 75 today (World Bank 2019).

In existing literature, there is information regarding poverty, land rights, livelihoods, urbanization, and gender in Viet Nam. These are all important topics that will be intertwined in this thesis. However, some there is no literature directly discussing the relationship between peri-urbanization and social cohesion in Vietnam. The World Bank has a report titled "Vietnam Urbanization Review" (2011) that includes the term "peri-urban" only once without providing any depth and does not discuss social cohesion. While there is a lengthy report titled "Social Cohesion Policy Review of Vietnam" from the OECD (2014) that has provided a significant amount of information for this thesis, it unfortunately also does not take into account the highly prevalent trend of peri-urbanization in the country, failing to mention it even once and hardly touching on broader urbanization. Instead, said report is primarily focused on quantitatively evaluating the economic inclusivity of policy initiatives and flows of financial capital (OECD, 2014). This is one form of measuring the concept that displays from a meso-level political economic perspective and does reveal information about overall collective national unity. It will however be included to form an empirical basis of the subject. However, there seems to be no information available about how urbanization affects cohesion in Vietnam from a qualitative perspective.



Chart 5.1 General Statistical Information of Viet Nam

Year	Population of Vietnam	Working in Agriculture	GDP (in USD)	GDP per Capita (in USD)	Unemployment Rate	% Living in urban areas	Poverty Rate (<3.20 USD daily for lower-middle income country)
2000	80 million	65%	31B	765	4.5%	24%	71%
2005	84 million	52%	44B	1018	2.2%	27%	55%
2010	88.5 million	48%	116B	1318	3%	30%	17.3%
2015	93.5 million	43%	193B	1667	2.5%	34%	10%
2019	95.5 million	unavailable	245B	1965	2.2%	36%	7%

(Information from Trading Economics & World Bank)

This chart illustrates just how rapid of economic changes Viet Nam has actually experienced, with only half of the Doi Moi timeline even displayed. These dramatic types of changes demonstrate why studying cohesion is important in this context.

5.2 CULTURAL CONTEXT

For further contextual information on social life in Vietnam in order to understand cohesion, this section looks at its cultural, religious and political life. Unification of the Vietnamese state in 1975 essentially operated as a cultural victory for the North, with Northern ideals about national identity becoming predominant, though southern ideas of identity and history can still be found in the South and as well in the center of the country. One example of a change is that during the war, Hue City was officially a southern city, until a bloody month-long siege in 1968. Because of its southern ideas, after the war, its history and historical features were heavily repressed, though many of the buildings are now being restored generally for tourist attractions.

Surprisingly, there seems to be little existing information about social cohesion specifically linked to a communist or transitional regime or comparing cohesion under communism to cohesion in other systems. While it is likely in this case that communism is functional at least in part *because* of the Asian values of social cohesion, such as levels of trust mentioned above, the overarching political regime of a one-party system suppresses dissent and perhaps demands cohesion. Less critically, it may provide a reference point for political similarity, either way making it a highly important topic in this context.



Vietnam is officially an atheist state, but also recognizes eight religions that are officially permitted. Roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the country identify with what they call the triple religion or *tam giáo*, which is the grouping of the three main religions of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Of the three, Buddhism is the most popular, with over 80% of the country identifying as Buddhist and this is especially true in Hue. Mahayana is the more prominent form of Buddhism in the country, which is an important note because it is less conservative than Theravada Buddhism, but more importantly, rather than focusing on self-enlightenment like Theravada does, Mahayana emphasizes striving to reach enlightenment for all beings and encourages more social action (therefore likely increases cohesion). (Pham, 1993). Looking at Google Maps, there are at least 20 Buddhist temples in the city of Hue.

Considering the *tam giáo* a philosophical line of thought rather than necessarily a religion, roughly 80% of the country considers themselves “non-religious”, although roughly half of those people identify with folk religion. The other official religions are Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, and two ethnic religions. However, because it is an atheist state, religions outside of the triple religion are not emphasized or well supported, as they do not fit state thinking. Further, all religions operate within party oversight; none are allowed to propagate non-state thinking (Pham, 1993). A large part of the overarching folk religions many Vietnamese practice is patrilineal ancestral worship, as family is extremely important (Dalton et al., 2002, OECD, 2014). These values often heavily contribute to the laws, and even sometimes substitute for them. This then presents another interesting dynamic to explore under the context of urbanization – has this dynamic changed, and if so in what way? The next section will look more closely at the process of urbanization and peri-urbanization in Vietnam overall.

Because an estimated 70% of the near 100 million people in the country are under the age of 35 (World Bank, 2019), deeper insight can be gained from exploring the generational differences overall. The age difference in the population is important to cohesion because respect for elders is considered highly important, but many elders report that this value is lower among young people today (in part due to cultural differences between the north and the south before the war, before the north spread its cultural hegemony). Many elderly people reportedly believe that breaking this tradition of generational reverence is a severe



form of disrespect and can lead to severed ties (Agergaard, 2012). This means that as young people are drawn to urbanizing villages that generally retain mostly older populations, age-status could be a source of discontent for some.

5.3 UBRANIZATION IN VIETNAM

From 1950 to the end of the war, North Vietnam had a socialist-led urban development that emphasized rural-urban equality (McGee, 2009). After the communist victory in 1975, the government planned a mass migration of people from the north to the south to offset population imbalance between the two regions as well as between urban and rural areas (Kontgist, 2014). In order to decongest large cities, the government focused on urbanizing small and medium-sized cities instead (World Bank, 2011). Before this, citizen mobility in Vietnam was monitored through a household registry system (Agergaard, J., & Thao, V. T. 2011). The introduction of the Doi Moi market-socialism led to mostly spontaneous urban development at first (McGee, 2009). This section gives specific attention and background to peri-urban growth and urbanization in Vietnam.

Vietnam currently has 58 provinces and 5 centrally administered major cities (for 63 provincial authorities). These provinces are all subdivided first into district-level administrative units, then into municipalities, of which there are 11,162. These municipalities are then categorized as either urban wards or rural communes. The 63 Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) make up about 7% of the country's territory and are the home of 41% of the population (according to 2013 data). Over 1,900 12 of these FUAs are classified as metropolitan areas with over 500,000 residents.

The population of the FUAs grew five times faster in Vietnam than the average OECD country and the country's population overall rose more than average as well (OECD, 2018). The country's urban population has almost doubled in the last three decades and expands by roughly one million inhabitants every year (Vietnam Government, 2016). Exemplifying the rapidity of peri-urban expansion in Vietnam, one longitudinal satellite study found that the built area around Ho Chi Minh City quite dramatically expanded by nearly five times its size over just 22 years (Kontgis, 2014). In 2008, Hanoi annexed its outlying areas to triple its official



land area and double its population (McGee, 2009). Because of these types of booms, peri-urban expansion has become a main strategy to decongest urban centers (Kongis, 2014).

Urbanization is currently considered the center of Vietnamese economic development as the path towards growing the economy and their goal of becoming “modern” (McGee, 2009). This is a sensible strategy, as research generally shows a positive cyclical relationship between urbanization and economic development (Gallup et al., 1999) especially in Asian countries (Ravallion et al., 2007). In Viet Nam, poverty reduction has mainly been a result of an increase in non-agriculture related labor (Paris et al, 2009). Measured by the amount of regional GDP coming from manufacturing, manufacturing-led peri-urbanization is rapidly increasing in the major metropolitan areas of Vietnam (Webster, 2014).

Asia has seen a specific spatial pattern of peri-urbanization which McGee calls *desakota* (Indonesian for “Village-Towns”), characterized by dense populations, decreased agricultural use, and high levels of population mobility, generally stretching along transportation corridors (McGee, 1991). These are characterized by

“(1) a large population of smallholder cultivators; (2) an increase in nonagricultural activities; (3) extreme fluidity and mobility of population; (4) a mixture of land uses including agriculture, cottage industries, and suburban development; (5) increased participation of the female labor force; and (6) a lack of administrative responsibility (i.e., administrative grey zones”), which encourages informal and illegal activities”
(McGee, 1991; summary quoted from Saksena, 2014).

Desakota zones are already densely populated areas that are rapidly urbanizing, bringing several environmental and social issues along the way (McGee, 1991; Douglas, 2006).

In their study, Saksena notes three types of peri-urban communes in Vietnam, 1) those on the periphery of large towns or cities, 2) those built along roads, highways, or transportation corridors, and 3) those in rural areas with activities such as mining, dams, or provincial administration (Saksena, 2014). Using mapping and statistical data from 2006, Saksena found that 18% of communes and 7% of land in Vietnam could be considered peri-urban, making up 13% of the population or about 11 million people. They also found that Vietnam classified 61% of these peri-urban areas as rural and 39% as urban. Saksena et al’s analysis classified



1909 communes in Vietnam as peri-urban, 1/3 of which were outside of either Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City. They also found that 62% of urban expansion happened in peri-urban areas, which was twice as much as in urban areas and 16 times as much as in rural areas (Saksena, 2014). Kontgis (2014) found that 79% of the areas with the fastest population growth were peri-urban.

Because Vietnam is a communist country, the state still owns all of the land that people reside upon (although things like property inheritance are still common). Since the Doi Moi with increased integration into the global market with attention to urbanization, land commodification and land prices subsequently have increased (McGee, 2009). Because the government owned the land and wanted to lead the urban growth and private developments, land acquisition has been a hot topic in recent years for politicians, media, and discussions because the government often seizes the land without providing adequate compensation to the residents. Some locals in Hue reported to us during informal conversations that their families received just 10% of what the land was worth.

Since the land reforms began, over 10 million hectares of mostly fertile agricultural land has been converted for non-agricultural purposes (Vietnam Government, 2016). According to Nguyen, Van Westen, and Zoomers (2014), this meant that the governments had automatic acquisition of land to sell to private developers when it is then converted to private developments and investments, infrastructure, factories, or housing units. Further, this creates non-agricultural labour such as factory work for the population. For these reasons, policy makers tend to support it seeing it is necessary for economic development (Nguyen, 2015). In this sense, Vietnam seems to be a fairly equal mix between government-led and private-sector driven. Comparatively, Chinese peri-urbanization is mostly deliberate and government-led, with help of the private sector (Ye & Wu, 2014), whereas Indonesia is also a more equal mix of the two actors (LeGates & Hudalah, 2014, cited in Gross, 2014). However, some have argued that Vietnam is slowly becoming more deliberate with the process (McGee, 2011).

Strong urban areas are considered highly important in Vietnam as their role in the economy continues to grow. Emphasizing local urban importance, in Doi Moi the federal government



has also slowly been decentralizing, granting cities more power. It also came with a broad reclassification of rural outskirts as being functionally urban, generally allowing cities to claim administrative power over the peri-urban areas (McGee, 2009; Kontgis, 2014). Vietnam's spatial policy framework has been criticized as overall ineffective due to a lack of a clear internal hierarchal structure (OECD, 2018). The decentralization process also allowed and encouraged the cities to have greater freedom to draw in Foreign Direct Investments (FDI).

FDI into urban areas for the sake of export-oriented production is generally linked with peri-urbanization (Kontgis, 2014) and has been a key factor in the Doi Moi economy, growing even more after Vietnam joined the World Trade Organization in 2007 (Liu, 2019). In fact, new urban districts receive incentives from the federal government to turn cropland into industrial or residential land (Pham, 2013). Cities compete over foreign investment by industrializing cropland, creating stronger infrastructures, and developing new medium-to-high housing units (McGee, 2009). As an example of the prevalence of FDI in Vietnamese peri-urban construction, McGee remarks on the cases of the towns South Saigon and Ciputra Hanoi Internation which were government-led projects that were actually 70% funded by international investments (2009). FDI tied with greater freedom of movement after the household registry system led to an even greater urban boom, with many more moving in or near the city for work (Agergaard & Thao, 2011; Anh, et al., 2012; Resurreccion & Khanh, 2007).

Besides the aforementioned annexations, this rural-urban migration has led to a majority of the urban growth (Arouri, 2017). Nearly half of all migrants move to either Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City, and nearly half are between 20-29 years old (OECD, 2018). Roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of Vietnamese households have at least one rural-to-urban migrant, and rural-to-rural migration is also very common. While much of the once-agricultural country has moved away from the farm and towards city life and modernization, there is a faction of those who are doing the opposite and moving from the city towards smaller villages to seek peace and quiet, often selecting peri-urban areas that have similar amenities and comforts as the city but in a more peaceful area (Nguyen, 2015).



Migration is gaining increasing importance for rural dwellers in Vietnam as having a family member work in something such as industrial labor in the city provides a safety net for the remaining family in events such as crop failure. However, households with and without migrants in Vietnam tend to make comparable incomes. Yet, in areas where nonfarm activity is limited, remittances from migrants can be crucial, as they send on average around 60% of their income back to their families through remittances, reflecting their strong family values (Paris et al, 2009). The family members (typically males) who have more opportunity are typically the ones to migrate while the women, elderly, children, and sick are left behind to await the remittances. In this sense, urbanization presents a potentially crucial lifestyle opportunity for some rural dwellers, but can be detrimental for others.

As a result of the economic diversification and increased access to education, there has been a rising demand for education and higher qualifications for entering the workforce (Wilensky 2002). However, roughly 80% of the workforce holds no technical or professional qualification (OECD, 2018). Therefore, there is a large skills mismatch due to an overall lack of appropriate education to address the recent technological growth with an increase in related jobs (OECD, 2014). In Vietnam, status is acquired from education, with wealth holding less importance (Dalton et al., 2002).

Due to the rapidity of the urban growth, the infrastructure, environmental impacts, and sustainability of urban centers are all considered to be generally inadequate and in need of greater attention. Urbanization in Vietnam has been linked to destruction of habitat and the loss of overall arable land for peri-urban farmers which can result in loss of livelihood (Pham, 2013). Using GIS data and remote sensing, Pham predictably found that the closer to a city center, the more arable land is lost (2013). The percent of the population working in agriculture has been on a significant and steady decline as the amount of available arable land shrinks. Because the city spreads onto arable land, there are concerns that population growth combined with less agricultural land could also lead to food shortages (Kontgis, 2014).

In Vietnam, urbanization has shown to be positively linked to environmental degradation and air and water pollution as well as waste management are all considered pressing issues (Fan et al., 2019; OECD, 2018). Many peri-urban areas in Vietnam also face issues such as lack of



proper water sanitation (Saksena, 2014). While there is a growing focus on economic sustainability (McGee, 2009), and according to the OECD, noteworthy *Green City* policy frameworks have been written in Vietnam, they have yet to be meaningfully incorporated into policy (2018). Despite these negatives, urbanization has generally improved overall life expectancy for Vietnamese city-dwellers (Fan et al., 2019).

Housing availability of urban centers are also considered to be generally inadequate and in need of greater attention. Access to affordable, quality housing is considered a major issue in urban areas due to its unprecedented growth rate. An estimated 75% of all housing in the country is informal (OECD, 2018). In some parts of the country, it is estimated that 70-90% of land used in peri-urban areas is also informal and built upon without proper legal authorization from the national government, rather it is done with informal authorization from local authorities (Leaf, 2002).

While the renovation transformed the economy, infrastructure, and health, in order to fully understand the effects on overall life one must understand the consequences these changes have brought on social life and culture. As the country's rural landscape quickly and continuously urbanizes, it is imperative that the effects of this are clearly understood at a social and communal level as well as how residents' lifestyles are being reshaped. To refer to these societal changes within their daily realities from the reform, the Vietnamese employ the term *mo cua* or "open door" (Nguyen, 2006). The next section will discuss Vietnam's overall social cohesion at a national and peri-urban level.



Box 5.2

Personal Diary Section

In this short section I will include my personal ethnographic experiences of my, albeit brief (six weeks), stay in Hue, Vietnam in relation to my perceptions of peri-urbanization and land acquisition. Everyone we spoke with about the subject seemed to be aware of the harsh exploitative realities of the government land acquisitions projects intended for real estate development in the area. Surprisingly, the village leader in Thuy Van we spoke to (who was a locally-elected government worker) also spoke out against this to us, refuting our fear that they may not be trustworthy spokespeople (although it could be true of others).

The peri-urbanization was often times very visible and in stark contrast to the city. While it is hard to point to an area as being concretely “peri-urban”, it was generally noticeable through a series of small informal buildings in a more agricultural area around the city and often had new developments around them. The peri-urban areas quite clearly looked like rural area undergoing urban development, as farm, forest, or grasslands had clear boundaries to mark where new properties would be developed. While some of the areas had dirt roads with few shops and old homes, other parts of the same village (even across the street sometimes) seemed to more closely match the more developed parts of the city.

We only once drove through the village of Xuan Hoa which we had originally planned to research. We took time to look around at the various houses and buildings to see which seemed like new developments and which were older, and it was generally quite easy to tell. The new buildings generally looked very nice on the outside, were more likely to be multiple stories high, and looked (from outside glances) like they had more decorated and furnished interiors. The village also had newly developing apartment buildings, which stood out in stark contrast to the informal settlements they seemed to block from view. It appeared to us that many of the homes in the peri-urban areas did not have any agricultural land at all, while some had a significant amount, (unofficially) confirming that many of the residents must have indeed had jobs in the urban labour market, ostensibly agreeing with the general traits ascribed by the literature.



VI

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL COHESION IN PERI-URBAN VIETNAM

As urbanization and broader globalization take hold of a once more-nationalist country that long existed more or less outside of the global market, they are beginning to fully realize the processes of urbanization and social network expansion from the village to the country to the world. Therefore, as the country's rural landscape quickly and continuously urbanizes, it is imperative that the effects of this process are clearly understood at a social communal level as well as how residents' lifestyles are reshaped. The OECD notes that the changes brought from Doi Moi have also created some concern for social cohesion and questions about if the associated changes have brought increased well-being to the majority, with emphasis on existing structural gaps related to things such as employment, education, or social policy (2014).

As the previous chapter discussed in length the urbanization process in Vietnam as well as what peri-urbanization looks like there, this section will look at cohesion in Viet Nam according to the aforementioned pillars of inclusion, mobility, and social capital, as well as the underlying variables such as trust, with as much attention given to peri-urban regions as available in the literature. This section will then conclude by discussing the case of the village Xuan Hoa located just outside the city of Hue in central Vietnam. This area provides a pertinent example of the changes taking place throughout the country and researchers have explicitly stated that research on the social impacts of peri-urbanization in this area is needed (Nguyen, 2015; Pham Thi et al, 2019).

6.1 ANALYSIS

As noted previously, a stronger economy and increased upward social mobility are correlated to stronger cohesion in a positive cyclical relation. Social mobility has been reported to be relatively high in the middle class in Vietnam, with the OECD reporting a majority of people seeing upward mobility in a five-year span and 1/5 seeing downward mobility (2014). The



information presented in Chart 5.1 in the previous chapter indicates that over the last 20 years cohesion could have increased at least on the overall national level, though the still-urbanizing areas may see different impacts as they experience a different type of lifestyle change. The economy of Vietnam has shown strong growth over the last 20 years, with official unemployment rate being cut in half to just over 2%, the GDP has grown over 8x the size even while the population showed slow but steady growth and overall poverty has been greatly reduced since the introduction of Doi Moi (World Bank, 2019).

However, this economic boom seems to have been concentrated towards the elite as there has been an increasing divide between rich and poor in Viet Nam (Beresford, 2008) and regional income inequality is among the highest in the world (OECD, 2018). Economic growth in the country has overall been least effective for the poorest groups, especially for ethnic minority groups. Though making up only 15% of the nation's overall population combined, 60% of the ethnic minorities are poor, making up nearly half of the country's poor population and about 70% of the population in extreme poverty (OECD, 2014).

Research is somewhat mixed about the impact urban growth has on poverty and economic inclusivity in Vietnam. Urban areas in Vietnam have been shown to have much lower poverty rates than rural areas (Fan et al., 2019) and the General Statistics Office of Vietnam reports lower levels of wealth inequality in urban areas than in rural areas, with slightly higher levels of inequality in the central region than the rest of the country (such as Thua Thien-Hue). One study concluded that overall, urbanization did decrease poverty in Vietnam and found that urbanization stimulated the transition from farm to non-farm economic life through the remittances the migrants were receiving from the migrant in the city (Arouri, 2017). Other research has similarly linked it to an increase in rural labor activity in non-agricultural positions which have helped reduce poverty (Pham et al., 2010). Poverty reduction in Vietnam was found to be positively linked to access to markets and the ability to buy and sell, as well as a link to technological advancements in the agricultural field (Pham et al., 2010).

However, urbanization and economic development have been linked to the widening gap between the rich and the poor of the country overall as well as between migrants and residents of the same areas (Cohen, 2016). Further, other research has shown that land loss



in agricultural land due to land acquisition has led to increased unemployment and poverty for many farmers (Pham, 2014; Van Suu, 2002). Moreover, communities with lower poverty rates in Vietnam generally have higher educational enrolment as well as greater access to media (Arpino et al, 2014). However, the OECD importantly found no significant disparity in access to up to higher-secondary education between urban and rural areas (2014).

McGee (2009) predicts that as a result of this overall wealth gap and the growing rural-urban wealth gap as well as with the continuation of rural-urban migration, that Vietnam will have serious difficulty in managing the urban transition in coming years. Income and wealth inequality can be also problematic for a country such as Viet Nam that is self-proclaimed socialist/communist and claims egalitarian values (Cohen, 2016). As noted previously, economic inclusion is important to social cohesion, so rising inequality due to urbanization could be a threat or hindrance to it.

As stated in Chapter 2, tolerance to diversity is considered an important indicator of cohesion. About 85% of the country's population identify as ethnically Vietnamese, with the about the same percentage speaking Vietnamese as their primary language. The country has 54 official ethnic groups. This means that in this context, exploring racial differences as the west constructs them for example is ostensibly not the most effective way to understand cohesion. Rather, a more practical approach than racial differences would be ethnic identities, as well as understanding the value of ethnic identity compared to national identity (Langer, et al., 2017). About 35% of Vietnamese state a tolerance to diversity, which may in part explain the wealth gap for minorities.

Trust in others is also an important indicator of cohesion. Notably, the World Value Survey notes that reports of trust are typically lower in developing countries, but generally higher in Asia than much of the rest of the developing world, (though it lacks that data about Vietnam specifically). According to the Gallup World Poll, roughly 30% of surveyed Vietnamese stated that they feel most people could be trusted. The is number heavily depended on the region, with central provinces (such as Thua Thien-Hue) being the lowest at 28%, compared to 55% in the north (Dalton et al., 2002). While the 30% average seems low, this is actually higher than most other developing countries including most countries in the region. However, this



number could change depending on factors such as memberships to, or participation in certain groups, region, or ethnic minority status. Though an older study, Dalton et al., found that both educational and income levels were statistically insignificant variables in relation to how trusting someone is in Vietnam (2002).

Trust in government is also important to cohesion, as it impacts residents' willingness to participate in public affairs, accept policy reforms, as well as their willingness to pay taxes. The OECD (2014) notes that levels of trust in institutions in Vietnam are "moderate" but does not specify further. Civic and community-social participation rates have been on decline in Vietnam in recent years. The OECD also notes that the Vietnamese local government system overall has an ineffective coordination platform in terms of allowing a voice for subordinate district and communal government, or communicating between national and regional levels (2014, 2018). This can make it difficult for citizens to participate, address issues, or challenge policies. Tax avoidance has also been reported to be high, in part due to the prominence of the informal economy as well as perceptions of corruption (OECD, 2014). High distrust of the government or perceptions of corruption could lead to major social upheaval and the party views corruption as a major threat to its legitimacy (OECD, 2014).

One study of roughly 500 student participants importantly found that the Vietnamese youth generally feel as though they are not as involved in their community as their parents or grandparents (Kham, 2016). Kham (2016) found that the youth in Vietnam are more willing to accept more global or "modern" ideas and reject the extreme authority and propaganda of days of old, yet do not reject the ideas and values of the state. They went on to find that these changes were threatening the state's relationship with the youth. However, the party has since adopted some minor reforms to better incorporate the youth and that a degree of control is maintained through the establishment of various youth organizations (Nguyen, 2006).

As an example of contemporary political discontent, land acquisition is considered a controversial topic in Vietnam, with clear benefits for some and clear consequences for others. However, research found these land reform policies to be wildly unpopular in the city of Hue, with around a 90% disapproval rate from the surveyed residents, and they are



currently a major source of discontent and distrust toward the government (Nguyen et al., 2014; OECD, 2014). Opposition mainly focuses on forced displacement in compulsory land acquisition, loss of livelihood for farmers, unfair compensation rates (often as low as 10% of what the land is worth), and increased social tensions (Nguyen et al., 2014). These peri-urban land conflicts have been one of the leading sources of public disturbances in Vietnam (Webster, 2011). As mentioned in Box 5.1, in personal experience, most people in Hue seemed to be familiar with the topic, with each of the few people in informal discussions expressing strong dissatisfaction and concern. While 2014 saw the implementation of a new law to prevent compulsory land acquisition for the sake of economic development, it is unclear how effective this law has been at reducing tensions or even at doing what it claims to do, as it is still a known problem in the country.

While the survey that was designed for the planned fieldwork for this thesis included questions about trust in local and national institutions, it was advised by translators and local supervisors to leave these questions off, especially about the national government. They stated that, as the research needed approval for the local government, these questions would prevent it. In conversation with people, several did seem to express some degree of distrust with the government, especially a concern that the government was always watching them. However, these were informal, anecdotal conversations and in no way scientific.



Box 5.3

Personal Diary Section

In this short section I will informally include my personal ethnographic experiences of my, albeit brief (six weeks), stay in Hue, Vietnam in relation to my perceptions of social cohesion. Perhaps the most notable example of social cohesion could be seen in the COVID-19 response, especially compared to what I saw upon my return to the Netherlands. The vast majority of the Vietnamese urban population were wearing facemasks long before Europe was even concerned about the virus. The national response was swift, and the government was quick to educate the public.

Upon arrival to the country in early February the country was already prepared for a lockdown, with schools empty and people stocking up on food, over a month before Europe followed suit. If the city saw a single new case of the virus, the tenseness could be felt everywhere in the city and it would cause our meetings to be delayed or cancelled. Still in February with cases barely in the double digits, streets were shut down and most people seemed reluctant to leave the house. Like most young people I have spoken with in Europe or America, the young people there were generally not worried about getting the virus or dying themselves but were concerned about spreading it to the sick or elderly. To me, these early precautions demonstrated a greater sense of collectivism as people put others before themselves and their own desires to get on with life. It made me reflect on how we in the west generally (especially before the quarantine began) thought primarily about our own health, rather than thinking of ourselves as small pieces of a larger system.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, cohesion can often be strengthened or measured through a group's collective acknowledgment of an outside threat. At first, I viewed this to be true with the threat of the virus, then with my own presence there as an outsider. Because the virus was further spread there by European tourists, white people became directly correlated with the virus, other than to anyone who had known us to be there for six weeks already. By the time we decided to leave the country, we had people very literally running away at the sight of us in the streets even if we had facemasks on. This was even more true in the peri-urban areas than in the city. I saw this sort of xenophobia as an extension of social cohesion at an ethnic level.



6.2 FAMILY

As a Confucian-influenced country, the family is seen as the most essential aspect of Vietnamese social networks with strict guidelines of behaviour for each member. (Dalton et al, 2002). The Doi Moi and urbanization led to the privatisation of state-owned business and agriculture, making family-run agriculture even more important (World Bank 2011). This subsequently led to a greater separation between work and home-life (Wilensky 2002). These changes also brought changes in family structure towards a nuclear family in order to fair better against the new economic conditions (Grosse, 2015). For instance, because family structure can be a method of economic organization, it is common in Vietnam to have three generations in one household.

Respecting and caring for parents specifically is also considered very important (Agergaard, 2012) and in their study of Wold Values Survey data Dalton et al., (2002) found that 99% of young people say they respect their parents, higher than any other country in the region. Dalton et al (2002) found that social modernization that traditional values towards family and community had not yet been affected by urbanization at the time of study (though urbanization was associated with increasing people's social networks through professional or social groups). Instead, they found that a majority of people highly value time with their family, especially more so than they do time with friends, colleagues, or religious associates. Interestingly, this study found that family values and (overall social networks) in Vietnam are generally stronger for the wealthier and more educated (Dalton et al., 2002). This indicates that these economic changes may theoretically have overall been beneficial for family and networks in peri-urban areas as education becomes more widely available and poverty is reduced. As a result of modernization, the importation of western values through mediums such as television or movies, economic pressures, and general social changes, many in Vietnam fear that the importance and authority of the family will erode or diminish (Dalton et al. 2002). As this was a study published nearly two decades ago, more follow up is needed.

More recently, the Gallup World Poll found that between 2006 and 2012 the amount of Vietnamese citizens saying they felt like they could count on a close friend or family member in time of need fell from 89% to 75% (2012). This was the largest fall in the region and due to



its correlation, this drop has been attributed to urbanization and economic growth, although countries with similar patterns of growth did not show such decline in support (OECCD, 2014). This decline in familial support credited to urbanization could be a major issue impacting cohesion in peri-urban areas, though more empirical research is needed. Further, in urban areas of Vietnam divorce rates have increased (Paris et al, 2009) which also presents an interesting approach to understanding cohesion.

6.3 GENDER

Gender relations in general can be an important indicator of cohesion. For example, women make up a majority of agricultural workers in Vietnam, and a majority of women are such, as about 58% of women are farmers, and 53% of farmers are women overall (OECD, 2014), with 72% of farmers being women in rural areas (Dalton et al., 2002). This means that women are disproportionately affected by compulsory land acquisition and can face a greater loss of livelihood as a result, which can build greater resentment or distrust towards the government, though they have less representation. For example, today, women make up only about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Vietnamese government called the National Assembly, with even fewer women being officials at a communal level.

Vietnam is an interesting case when it comes to gender relations because it is traditionally Confucianist, politically post-communist, and economically “modernizing” and rapidly developing. Modernization is generally thought to allow for more equality as women gain responsibility, opportunity, and access to the economy. Communism spouts gender equality and the Vietnamese communist party indeed set such goals and proclamations (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Wilensky 2002). On the other hand, Confucianism, which has been part of Vietnamese tradition for over 2000 years, teaches gender-conservative views that women should be compliant and obedient to men, with significant pressure to uphold reproductive and household duties (Agergaard, 2012). There is a current debate about which element carries the most weight in regards to gender relationships and views, and these divergent views create complex opinions and relationships.

Around the beginning of the Doi Moi, during which the differentiation between the poor and the rich was first being accentuated, it was found that women had been gradually



withdrawing from the activities of society and state management (Tran Thi Que and Allen, 1992). This is due in part to the firmness (or perhaps return) of longstanding traditional-conservative Confucian gender roles, as well as the popular belief that men make better politicians (Tran Thi Que and Allen, 1992; Dalton et al., 2002). Though communist and Confucianist values have challenged each other, one author noted that Confucian views of gender inequality are returning, writing that “since reunification and peace — and especially since the initiation of economic reform — there have been growing signs that the position of women is declining, particularly in rural, secluded and remote areas” (Tran Thi Que 1992). Despite the political and economic changes in the few decades, some researchers still state that gender-conservative views and inequalities are not just returning but have long persisted (Luong 2009).

One study analysing data from the World Value survey saw that communist views were not correlated with views on gender-equality. This study went on to find that while Confucianism is statistically significantly related to gender-conservative views in Vietnam, modernization was significantly correlated to gender-equality views as those working in urban areas were more like to hold gender-progressive views than those working in agriculture (Grosse, 2015). However, the author does note several limitations to the data, such as lack of explanatory value and limitations of using World Values Survey data.

Some studies also show that the economic changes have created conflict in the home as some of the social changes can be seen as conflicting with tradition (Bélanger and Pendakis 2009; Truong 2009). For instance, while an increasing portion of the population has become more encouraging of women to join the workforce and contribute to household income (perhaps due to communist values), women are still expected to maintain their familial household obligations, often doubling their workload (Dalton et al., 2002). This is especially true in urban areas where women can more easily find work. While the prevalence of female migration is relatively low compared to other countries in the region, women nonetheless take on an important role in familial poverty alleviation and care with significantly increased labor demands as the male head of the household often migrates for work. (Paris et al, 2009). Women in Vietnam who stayed behind while their husbands migrate to the city for work



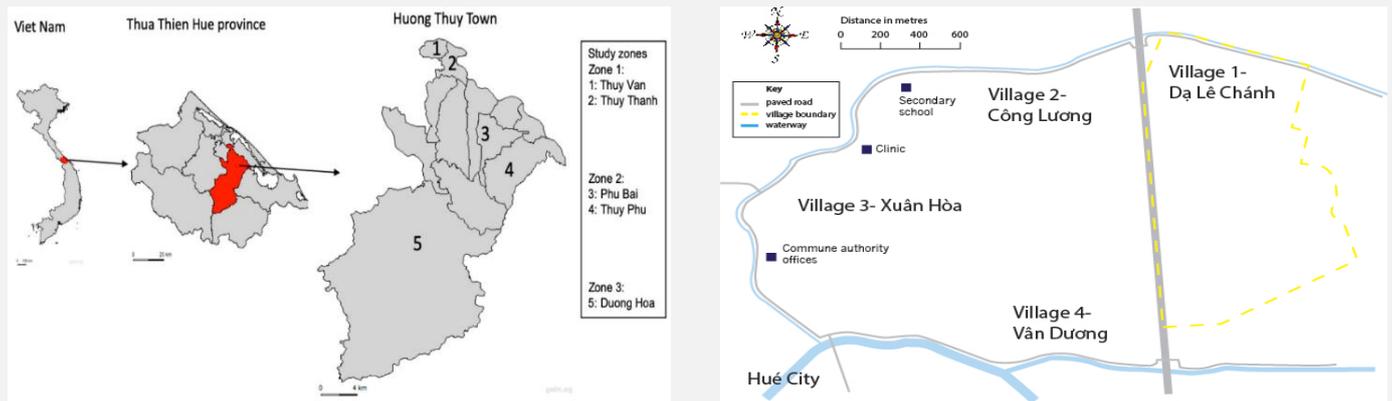
additionally face issues such as loneliness, depression, insecurity, and increased difficulties raising their children (especially their sons) (Paris et al, 2009).

As is the case in most of the world, in Vietnam, women are making up an increasing proportion of urban dwellers. This is due to a variety of factors such as changing norms, the need to make a living, the appeal of greater access to utilities or education, etc. It is also in part driven by the prominence of female-led industries. For example, in Southeast Asia, the export-driven garment industry is very popular and comprised of 70-90% female labour (UNFPA, 2012). Single women who are head of their household are more likely to live in urban centres in general, but this is especially true in Vietnam where they are two times more likely to reside in the city (UNFPA, 2012).

Although the communist party has written several significant policies regarding gender equality over the years, some of these are not enforced or mandated, not retroactive in terms of rights of ownership, and overall do not do enough to promote the woman's place in society (Grosse, 2015). Paris et al. (2009) provide a good list of policy and program recommendations, such as but not limited to, training women on technical skills such as crop management as well as encouraging them to train others. Further, it is essential that women not face by a double-burden in balancing work and home life.

6.4 A CASE STUDY - HUONG THUY / THUY VAN / XUAN HOA

The city of Hue holds roughly 300,000 people, and the greater province of Thua Thien-Hue holds around 1,150,00 people. Just outside of Hue, Huong Thuy is currently considered a separate town with roughly 100,000 people but will soon be taken over by Hue. This annexation as well as general urban growth is expected to nearly double the Hue population by 2030. Huong Thuy is considered the "southern gateway" to Hue due to its proximity to the international airport. The area is important for mechanical engineering, especially in aircraft repair services, as well as the production of significant amounts of fiber, textiles, and food and drink (TTHPC, 2019). Inside of Huong Thuy, the commune of Thuy Van and within that the village of Xuan Hoa (see Maps 1 & 2 below) provide good examples of the rapid peri-urbanization process happening throughout Vietnam.



Map 1. Location of Thuy Van Commune (Source: Pham Thi, et al., 2019)
 Map 2. Thuy Van commune, showing Xuân Hòa village (Source: Hayward, 2014)

Thuy Van is one of the town's seven communes with around 6,300 people. Thuy Van is very close to Hue city and is set to eventually be merged with the city. Within the commune, the village of Xuan Hoa is arguably the first village in the region to truly feel the effects of peri-urbanization. It has had 105.6 ha of once agricultural land converted mostly into roads and residential lands. Since 2012, on average, each household in the commune lost a vast majority of agricultural land, from around 1,900 m² before to around 400 m² now (HTTPC, 2015). According to a village leader interviewed, the average newcomer family has roughly 2000m² homes with good facilities, nearly five times the amount of land of most people in the commune, displaying the stark inequalities. About 100 out of the villages 400 or so families are newcomers. Many of the remaining original residents are reported to be elderly.

Xuan Hoa has seen rapid developments since 2012 such as improved roads, a stronger electrical grid, and new housing projects. These developments have brought a wave of migrants coming in from the city who still work there but wanted more affordable housing in a quieter area. Because of this, land prices have soared and more people are choosing to sell pieces of land, the quantity of which based on their needs and comfort level (Nguyen & Vos, 2016). Most respondents from previous research seemed to support the changes overall either due to increased wealth, improved comforts from infrastructure, increased attractiveness of the area, or the availability of new jobs such as in construction or hospitality. According to this study, most respondents were enthusiastic about the changes and only a few had concerns such as losing tranquillity or increased crime (Nguyen & Vos, 2016). However,



this does not account for former residents who may have been pushed out. Further, according to Nguyen, 54.7% of Hue's peri-urban resident-respondents believed that "Rural culture will change as outsiders move to live in villages" (Nguyen, 2015).

The traditional households who have been in the area for over 10 years report to notice many differences between them and the newcomers.

"They describe the new households as those with high incomes, stable jobs and having a small and young family of maybe one or two children. The adults do not socialize a lot and are often much preoccupied with their job, as opposed to enjoying life. Only during special holidays, such as Tết holiday or a special day of worship, many are at home and join in with the local festivities. Despite of this, the general view is that new households are adapting well to the countryside lifestyle. Especially positive is the high contribution these households give towards the budget for the local organizations (Women/Farmer/Youth Association) and social events (celebration activities)"

(Nguyen & Vos, 2016).

One study of the Huong Thuy Town found that agricultural land acquisition has been a major cause of lifestyle change in the town and that in recent years due to urbanization and the restructuring of socioeconomic life, that the economic and occupational status of many women have improved, along with their vocational skills, confidence, and informal education (Pham Thi, et al., 2019). Further, the study found that, due to urbanization, men here are now more likely to work in the city, giving the women more duties at home which has increased their burdens, but many report that it has also earned them more respect and improved their status both in their community and in their homes. However, these effects were not equal throughout the different parts of the town and the agricultural land acquisition was shown to increase inequalities between women in the area. Further, many women stated dissatisfaction with the compensation and support policy with low support for them from investors. The author noted important steps the government and investors should take to ensure the livelihood protections of these women "such as providing vocational training courses, occupational consultancy, connection with employers, and supporting financial capital" (Pham Thi, et al., 2019).



The People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue Province specifies that they plan to expand Hue City into Huong Thuy (in which they specify that this includes Thuy Van) as well as other nearby towns, including expanding their administrative boundaries to encompass these towns and establish wards of the city. This urban expansion has been approved by the Prime Minister. They plan to complete the expansion of Hue city by 2022, to bring the province directly under the classification of the Central national Government by 2025 (which they say is "on the basis of preserving and promoting the value of the ancient capital's heritage and Hue's cultural identity"), and to make the province a center for health, education, science, and tourism in Southeast Asia by 2030 (HTTPC, 2019).

According to the People's Committee, a main objective of their urban planning vision includes "building and developing the Hue urban area on the basis of preserving and promoting the value of Hue's ancient heritage and cultural identity with characteristics of culture, heritage, ecology, landscape, environment friendliness and intelligence". In this way, the People's Committee is ostensibly placing a cohesion framework as a prerequisite for action to be taken on urban expansion by putting emphasis on the shared heritage and cultural identity. However, these political buzzwords do not necessarily indicate political or economic inclusion. For instance, discussion of helping the formerly rural communities uphold their values or traditions, recognition of the dramatic changes to agricultural livelihoods, or ensuring recognition of the political voices of the residents are all absent from the document.

While the document does mention presiding over and coordinating with localities to ensure project preparation, it does not specify to what authority or power localities are given in this process. The document also states that this process is a political administrative expansion of the city's power. They plan to complete the expansion of Hue city by 2022, to bring the province directly under the classification of the Central national Government by 2025 (which they say is "on the basis of preserving and promoting the value of the ancient capital heritage and Hue cultural identity" [HTTPC, 2019]), and to make the area a center for health, education, science and tourism in Southeast Asia by 2030. This political takeover authorized by the national government strips the residents of Huong Thuy and the other towns of their decision-making ability in their own communities.



Unfortunately, this is the only policy document found on the subject, so limited information is available as it is more a list of plans than specific details. However, from this policy document, it can be inferred that the aim of the Committee is some degree of economic inclusion through resource extension to the annexed towns through infrastructural development. For example, completing a solid waste treatment plant near Huong Thuy is considered a top-priority investment for the province to be completed by 2025.

In line with the previously discussed Vietnamese urbanization strategies, the province has emphasized the importance of bringing in FDI, infrastructure development, trade, environmental friendliness, and, perhaps most relatedly, human resource development. The goals or solutions for human resources listed are to

“1) prioritize investment in education and training development; 2) promulgate mechanisms and policies to attract talented people to the locality; promote the capacity of civil servants; 3) create favorable conditions and adopt policies to encourage work, research, creation and application of new technological achievements; 4) organize training and retraining of a contingent of managerial officials, especially urban managers; professional and technical staff; prepare the apparatus for Hue city after expansion and Thua Thien Hue becomes a city directly under the Central Government; and 5) strengthen the training of quality human resources. Encourage businesses to train workers themselves. Promote the socialization of vocational training, attach to job creation, develop and upgrade key vocational training institutions of the province”

(HTTPC, 2019).

These goals emphasize the importance of human capital to the Committee while stressing the role of private business and the acquiescence of administrative control to the central government. While it stresses the importance of education and skills training, it also specifies that it plans to draw more skilled migrants into the area, many of which will likely end up in the recently developed/developing housing projects in peri-urban areas, which could drive up land prices and wealth inequality in these areas and lead to greater changes in spatial identity. The government should take caution to more deeply engage the local residents in the development of their region. It should pay attention to the gender relationships in the area and how these new developments will impact the livelihoods of men and women differently.



This case study of one area outside of a small city in central Vietnam displays the pattern of peri-urbanization and city expansion that is happening all throughout the country and the world. In this case, the national government has given cities the power and approval (as well as encouragement) to expand and engulf their outskirts politically and physically. As is the case with most peri-urban contexts, this has brought both positive and negative changes to the area. Importantly, it displays (with the limited information available in existing literature) the depth and extent of possible changes in politics, the community, and even the household, exemplifying the necessity to use the framework of social cohesion in such a rapidly changing milieu.

VII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 DISCUSSION

This thesis has hitherto demonstrated the sweeping relationships between peri-urbanization and social cohesion. The global discussion in Chapter 4 sought to display common issues that arise, while Chapters 5 & 6 about Vietnam broke down a case study to display several effects of the process in a way that has been absent from existing literature. Vietnam and the Thuy Van commune make excellent examples because there has not been any particularly exceptional conflict, rather it has seen a bubbling discontent due to various changes resulting in a growing distrust and resentment towards the national government. Vietnam displays a process that is happening all around the world with many various effects on the lives of millions of people. From a global perspective, peri-urbanization has been found to influence several factors that fall under the umbrella of social cohesion, though it needs to be remembered that each context and process are different.

Economic changes and overall growth can bring peri-urban residents a greater access to the formal economy, resources, and social services, but cut them off from the original livelihoods



they had known and relied on before and often forces them into positions with few worker rights and poor working conditions (Saksena, 2014; Rakodi, 1999; Webster, 2014; Marshall and Dolley, 2019). Gentrification in peri-urban areas can be a source of tension as a newcomer middle-class may push out the original poorer inhabitants and those who remain may see decreased political power as the area becomes more elite (Hudalah, 2016). Their political voice is also weakened when the area is annexed or lies in an administrative grey-area which may be ignored by both rural and urban bodies. While this is a broad depiction of changes observed in various contexts, all of these changes have also been observed in Vietnam. In this way, this thesis reinforces existing peri-urbanization scholarship by aggregating the effects of peri-urbanization through the lens of cohesion to provide an extensive overview.

Conflicts that arise in peri-urban areas in various contexts most commonly include (not in any specific order) 1) land use and tenure conflicts such as ownership or property rights, conflicts of interest, conflicts of power, legal framework issues, (McGee, 2009; Lombard, 2016; Von Der Dunk, 2011; Dadashpoor 2019; Ruoso and Plant, 2018); 2) demographic changes, changing traditions and lifestyles, and associated cultural clashes or xenophobia (Gutkind, 1962; Rupri, 1998; Siu, 2007; Iaquinta, & Dreschler 2000); 3) conflicts over specific resources such as water (Roth et al, 2019; Prakash, 2015); and 4) increased land and commodity prices may bring in middle-class newcomers. While not necessarily an issue in itself, this however can increase wealth disparities and/or lead to gentrification, pushing out the lower-income original residents (Hudalah, 2016).

Vietnam has most reportedly experienced issues listed as 1 and 4, though 2 and 3 have been observed. Issue 2 in Vietnam, demographic changes and changes in lifestyles, has been observed, but effects have not been well enough studied in literature so far and is therefore perhaps the most apparent gap in peri-urban literature in this context (Nguyen, 2015). Vietnam has been criticized for its overemphasis on administrative upscaling, its weak communication from larger political bodies to smaller ones, giving too much weight and power to FDI and private investments, and unfair land prices in compulsory land acquisition. In this sense, Vietnamese peri-urbanization is very much a top-down approach, for which it has drawn significant criticism. This top-down approach is common throughout Asia, but is not the exclusive form of peri-urbanization as it can also happen less methodically and more



organically. The case of Vietnam reminds us that top-down growth often leads to resentment and distrust towards the government, as the “small” groups of people nationwide that are affected actually combine to a large number of people in the country and worldwide.

Most scholars agree that granting residents greater political and legal representation and including them in policy formulation is perhaps the most essential way to prevent the associated issues and ensure a sustainable and peaceful transition process (Paris et al, 2019; Dadashpoor, 2019; Nguyen, 2015; Marshall and Dolley, 2019; Webster, 2014; Roth et al, 2019; Narain, 2009). This includes: creating more clear administrative spaces rather than allowing the “grey-zone”; subdivision and administrative downscaling; transparency and clear policy frameworks and rights; a compromise-meeting agenda in which peri-urban voices are included; and a decreased emphasis on the privatization of land use.

By reviewing several cases from multiple contexts, this systematic literature review paints a broader picture of the social impacts that peri-urbanization can have on its residents. While most research is focused on a singular issue or a heavily concentrated set of issues, aggregating the various factors together under one umbrella term such as social cohesion helps the reader get a stronger overview of the process of peri-urbanization. In this sense, this thesis also demonstrates the importance and the scope of “social cohesion” which is gaining increased importance in development studies. Cohesion is especially important to understand in a context with rapid social compression and intensification such as the peri-urban space, which has generally ignored been cohesion studies thus far. The approach of social cohesion helps create a more holistic understanding of a given situation, is a universally agreed upon goal (and therefore relevant across contexts), and encourages self-reliance through emphasizing goals such as political participation. Cohesion as a theory also puts pressure on the larger powers that be to be trustworthy, to allow the people to participate, to decrease inequalities, to make way for diversity. In this way, cohesion places the responsibility of peaceful conflict management and sustainable development onto both the people to be proactive and the government to be responsive and accountable.

This research also demonstrates some weaknesses of social cohesion. 1) its broadness, while a strength in many cases, can also make it difficult to place exactly what cohesion is or isn't.



For instance, many scholars take a wider political-economy approach focused on a national level, while other researchers may choose to focus on a community level which may include a greater emphasis on small scale politics, social capital or networks, or bridging differences, but may leave out the more macro-level view. In this sense, it can be difficult to find the right balance, which this thesis attempted to do. 2) cohesion studies overall do not generally include much direct discussion of power relationships. This is an important gap because so often it is exactly this that may be causing conflicts in the first place. 3) qualitative cohesion studies are generally often focused on conflict, the lack of conflict, and strategies for bridging difference. In this sense, there is often a lack of discussion about what constitutes “conflict” in the first place and what makes it to be either “good” or “bad”, as the lack of conflict does not necessarily equate to the lack of social issues and it can be argued that conflict can bring necessary change.

7.2 CONCLUSION

The primary research question of this thesis was: *“what are the relationships between peri-urbanization and social cohesion overall, and what are the relationships present in Vietnam?”* This thesis has sought to demonstrate the effects that peri-urbanization has on social cohesion through a systematic literature review, first by using several case studies from various contexts, then by focusing widely on the country of Vietnam as well as one peri-urban area within the country. While there is no “one” example of what peri-urbanization looks like in process or in form, and therefore there is no perfect example of its effects on how cohesive a society is or will be, there are certain patterns that can be generalized and understood in specific contexts. While cohesion is becoming more important in urban studies, it is generally ignored when studying the less researched urban fringe. Peri-urban areas make interesting and important case studies for social cohesion because they are areas that are rapidly changing politically, economically, and socially. Additionally, it is also important to study cohesion in these areas because they are quickly becoming home to potentially hundreds of millions more people worldwide in the coming decades. This section will summarize the main findings presented above and draw conclusions about the case of Viet Nam.

The importance of social cohesion is becoming increasingly recognized in social and developmental studies as it is important for a strong democracy, improving governance, a



strong economy, peace and conflict resolution, social capital and networks for livelihood support, and overall well-being of community members. Strong social cohesion can be identified through strong 1) social inclusion, in which all of the community has equal access to resources, social programs, political and civic engagement, and both formal and informal sectors of the economy; 2) social mobility, in which all members of the community can move both up or down social class with equal opportunity; and 3) social capital, in which community members are able to build both strong and weak ties or networks that provide them with comfort, feelings of safety, trust, reciprocity, and loyalty that allow them to feel a sense of belonging and desire to remain in their community. These variables can be measured quantitatively through surveys and statistics or qualitatively through understanding people's perceptions of them.

Peri-urbanization necessarily brings questions of political-spatial identity as the region around the city develops and grows. These political grey-areas can be exclusive of the residents as the political dominance of the core-city encroaches. These areas also struggle politically because they are often informally established and therefore are not officially recognized. National-scale governments generally promote and incentivize urban growth while the residents in the formerly rural regions are ill-equipped to voice an opinion on the matter. Further, as they draw in more migrants either from the city or other rural areas,

Peri-urbanization brings economic growth and economic diversification in a way that increases the potential for economic mobility, but in ways that are often not inclusive. Peri-urban regions often see greater economic inequality and loss of livelihood for many farmers. A positive aspect is that they generally see greater infrastructure development which could be considered inclusive. Further, because they form along transportation corridors, their location opens access to services in the core-city for many. However, it is often the case that the very reason peri-urban regions grow is due to the core-city restructuring and pushing out the poor residents, so it can be argued that their growth also limits access for some residents. Therefore, peri-urban regions need stronger collective voice through political engagement both for inclusivity as well as to guarantee worker's rights to ensure upward rather than downward mobility as the foundation of their livelihoods shifts and is industrialized.



Peri-urban spaces are in-part defined by their growth in population as they bring in new residents from other rural areas or exurbanites who (by choice or force) are leaving the city but still want to be near it. This new demographic brings new political and social identities. There have been many cases in literature where this demographic shift has brought conflict. One such conflict is the changing values that takes place as these areas become “socially urban” such as switching from traditional gender regimes to more a more equitable one. Gender views and roles therefore provide an essential indicator of social cohesion, especially through social inclusion. Peri-urbanization can also increase social capital and social networks, but can weaken the ties that already exist.

Through understanding peri-urbanization’s effect on various indicators of cohesion in other contexts, and through looking at available data on those same variables in the Vietnamese context, some generalizations can be made. Viet Nam is experiencing rapid urbanization all over the country. Land acquisition for the sake of peri-urban development is highly unpopular among the citizens and is eroding public trust in the government which can threaten cohesion. A majority of peri-urban dwellers around Hue are reportedly worried that their culture and way of life will change. The public’s trust in each other is relatively high compared to the rest of the region but trust in the government could be improved.

The Vietnamese economy has been growing strongly overall since the introduction of Doi Moi, but not inclusively as ethnic minorities and the poor are being left out or left behind. Tolerance for diversity is also low and ethnic minorities such as the various cultural groups in the north face the greatest obstacles to resources, social programs, and the economy. Therefore, overall Viet Nam perhaps first and foremost needs to work on social inclusion to improve cohesion.

Urbanization in Vietnam is associated with bringing in more “modern” values, such as less traditional gender roles, which are becoming more prominent in the country and the role of women in family and society is changing. Family structures themselves are also changing towards a nuclear family to adjust to the new economic realities. These familial and interpersonal relational changes mark an important shift in Vietnamese culture that could



impact cohesion especially among generational gaps as people have different values and expectations of someone's role and how people should conduct themselves.

Further research for peri-urban areas should focus more directly on the social changes taking place, especially on changing demographics and political representation (for example, see appendix for Interview Guide and Survey). Future research focused on social cohesion should turn take a qualitative shift in order to understand smaller-scale changes, as research is generally more macro-level statistical analysis. Further, future researchers of social cohesion should look towards the Global South, as most of the existing research is focused on Europe and North America.

In conclusion, peri-urbanization studies would greatly benefit from the same greater emphasis on social cohesion that is already becoming more popular in wider urban studies. Further, while it is present in some research, cohesion studies more broadly would benefit from a more qualitative shift to bring in people's perceptions of the changes that are going on around them. Peri-urban areas perhaps most importantly need a legitimate platform such as their own formally recognized government to ensure inclusion in political and economic development based decisions rather than the top-down approach that is forced upon many of these regions from the national governments, core-cities, or international development agencies, and this is especially true in the case of Viet Nam. This thesis, using a systematic literature review format to fully portray the broad term of social cohesion, displays how it is affected by peri-urbanization. Synthesizing these topics adds to the overall depth of knowledge by exemplifying the range and importance of social cohesion as a field of study, and by showing how peri-urban areas can see a more inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable development process.

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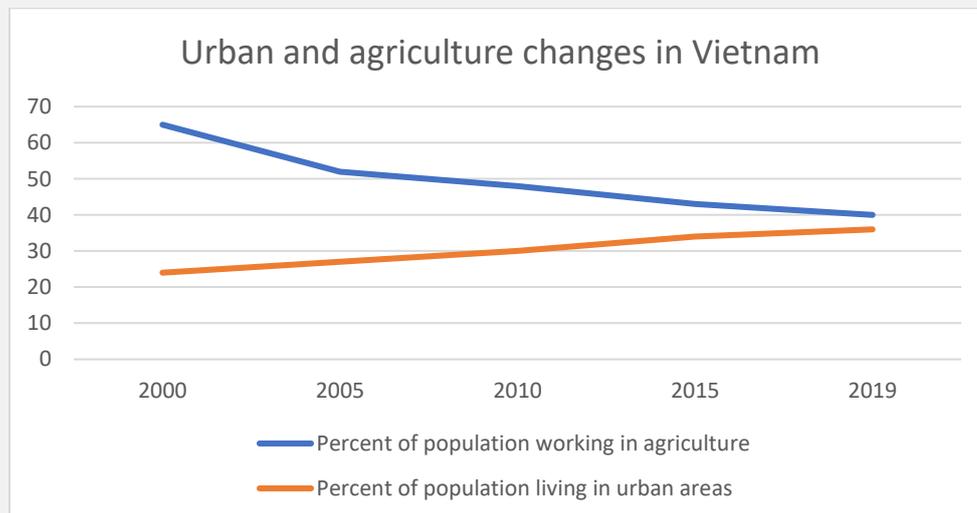
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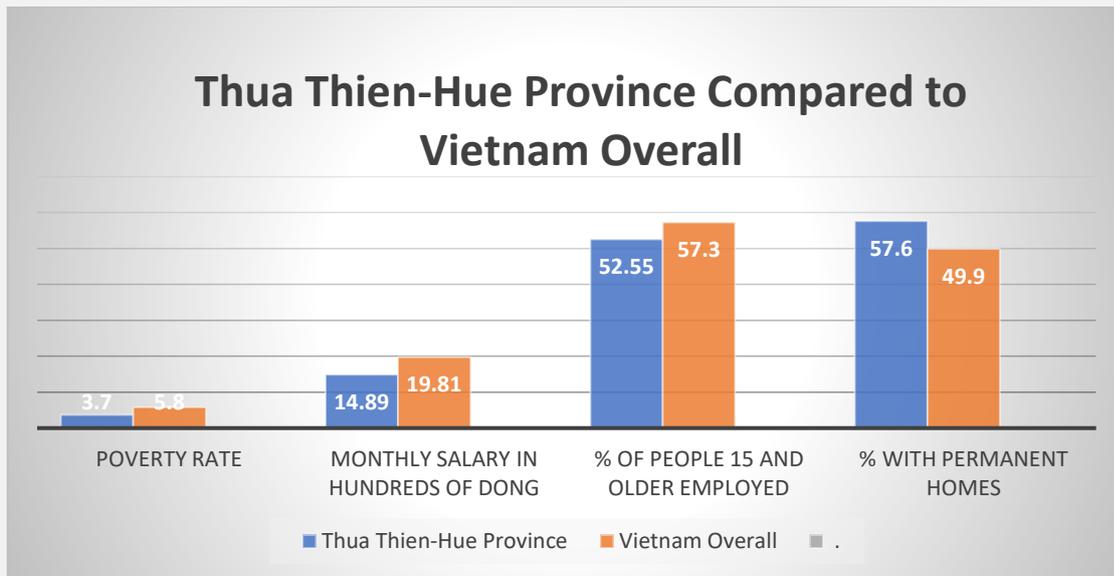
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APPENDIX



This graph more effectively demonstrates that the country is moving away from rural lifestyles towards urbanization. While just 20 years ago there was a much greater gap, today nearly as many people live in urban areas. This rapid shift presents the potential for dramatic lifestyle and cultural changes, implying a possible shock to the way society is perceived and understood and therefore how it can be cohesive.



(Information from the General Statistics Office of Viet Nam)

For this chart I gathered information from the general statistics office of Vietnam to compare how Thua Thien-Hue province fares to the rest of the country in what comparative information they had available. While the poverty rate is slightly lower in Thua Thien-Hue province, less are employed and the average salary is lower, though more have permanent homes. Perhaps especially important is the amount of permanent homes, as it could indicate a lower rate of urbanization and internal migration than the rest of the country.

Original Methodology

Unfortunately, due to the absence of first-hand research because of COVID-19, the variables involved could not be examined properly but instead provide points of interest that are to be assessed in available literature and discussed when possible. For transparency as well as for providing a concrete outline of how to study these topics, this section also includes the original research questions, the operationalization of the variables that were to be used in the planned survey and interview guide (in appendix) and how they would have been or could be assessed. This section will then briefly discuss the original study plan overall. , these original questions reveal the literature gap that exists in peri-urbanization research which still to some degree (albeit a lesser extent) did still help guide the discussion and the research process when analysing the literature.

Original main question: How does the process of peri-urbanization and migration out from the city of Hue to the surrounding village of Xuan Hoa affect the social cohesion in this village?

Original sub-questions:

- Who are (generally) the newcomers in the area and why do they come?
 - Do they original inhabitants perceive problematic differences in values and norms from the newcomers? -If so, how do they perceive these differences?
- What are the relations of trust and acceptance between the newcomers and the original inhabitants?
 - As population grows, how do groups cooperate or compete over resources?
- Do the villagers or the local governments use any certain tactics to build cohesion?



- Is there a relationship between local institutions such as governments, temples, committees, or other groups with overall cohesion?
- What are the biggest factors hindering cohesion?
 - How do they deal with social differences?
- How does this peri-urbanization affect kinship and familial ties?
 - What kind of impact (if any) has it had on gender relations within a family/marriage of both the newcomers and original inhabitants?
 - How has urbanization had an impact on traditional ideas such as gender roles?
 - How has it affected perceived rates of emigration out of the village?
 - If so, how does this emigration affect cohesion with friends and family?

Variables for Original Methodology

Shared identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Religion and overall Religiosity (self-reported, as well as frequency of temple/church attendance) -Feelings towards those of the same religion/those of different religion -Perception of socioeconomic divide and mobility -Elderly perception of changing values in the community -Feelings of belonging or inclusion -Perceptions of what the main issues dividing people are -Perception of gender roles
Connection to community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Length of time in the village/community -Desire to continue living in the village -Intertwining personal and place identity -Feelings of Trust – “Do you think people can be trusted?” (from the World Value Survey) -Trust and support in institutions (local and national) -Civic engagement/participation in local government -Feelings of safety -Perception of frequency of crime -Reciprocity -Participation in social events
Social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Knowing many (self-perceived) friends/family/neighbors in the village -Weak ties -Perception of the strength of the family unit in urbanization (has it changed/how?) -Including strength of marriages -Frequency of interaction with neighbours -Frequency of interaction with overall community

These variables would have provided a much deeper understanding of social changes in the area. Originally, many of these variables such as the “feelings” topics would be surveyed through a written statement followed by the options of “strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree”. It would ask “How long have you lived in this village?” and categorize the time frames to compare survey results to gain a deeper understanding of the difference of opinion between the newer and older residents. Again, the questionnaire and interview guide are included in the appendix.



In a context such as peri-urban Vietnam, quantitative surveys would be a simpler form of research as they could simply be translated then distributed. However, cohesion research would generally benefit from a more qualitative shift. After meeting with our translators and discussing with local research supervisors, it was encouraged to continue to try to use a mixed-methods approach, but to try to lean in deeper with a more qualitative approach. It was also advised to conduct a focus group, though upon further consideration I was unsure if it was wise to group people together and ask them if there are conflicts between them. I had considered if there were an appropriate way to do this, such as asking specific respondents that match a specific type of profile, such as “older people living in Thuy Van for X years of X socioeconomic group”. However, this seemed like as if it would ultimately defeat the purpose of a focus altogether and likely prove less effective than individual interviews. Moderating without speaking the language would also prove difficult and our translators also advised against focus groups for feasibility and practicality concerns. I had therefore decided against it despite our supervisor’s recommendation.

Because cohesion research focuses on some quantitative statistical information such as upward mobility and some qualitative information such as perception of conflict, it is the author’s opinion that a mixed methods approach would have been most comprehensive. Ideally, qualitative research would come first in order to help understand what needs to be looked at and to help frame the surveys, which was ideally to be used for more supplemental statistical information and additional depth. These two methods could of course take very different directions and as well will require different sampling methods, but would hopefully complement each other well in regards to cohesion research. Additionally, simple ethnographic observation and note taking for general data collection would be beneficial and, if possible, perhaps with some form of participant observation in community events to help establish rapport. The original research outline was to complete 20-30 interviews, then to distribute 50-100 surveys (in appendix).

For qualitative research, a simple snowball sampling method was to be used for convenience by proximity. To find initial participants, the plan was to start by first meeting with the head of the community. Then, along with a translator, to ask around at community organizations such as churches or temples or government meetings or even something such as a coffee shop if community members would be interested. For survey distribution, simply going house to house would likely be the most effective. Further, while the interviews were to come first, it is noted on the survey that if the respondent would be interested in conducting an interview that they can leave their contact information, and interview respondents would be asked if they had interest in filling out the survey. If more specific information or participants (such as more elderly respondents) were required to make the interviews more representative, the next step would be further snowball sampling or trying to contact the commune community leader(s) again.



Survey (English)
Social Cohesion in Xuan Hoa Village

Hello,

I am a Masters student at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands working with the Hue College of Economics. We understand this village has seen many changes due to urbanization in recent years, this survey is designed to understand social relationships in the village and if they have changed as the village changes. Please think about daily life here *before* the COVID-19 outbreak.

This survey is completely anonymous, no personal information will be included in the final results, and the data will only be visible for the University of Utrecht and the Hue University of Economics.

The survey will take approximately 7-10 minutes.

Age: _____

Gender:

- Male
 Female
 Other

Occupation: _____

Religion (Check all that apply):

- Buddhism Protestantism
 Confucianism Islam
 Taoism None
 Catholicism Other (Please Identify) _____

Are you the head of the household?

- Yes
 No

How many people live in this household? _____

Do other members of your immediate family live in this village?

- Yes
 No

Do other relatives and members of your extended family live in this village?

- Yes, all/most
 Yes, some
 No



Length of time living in Xuan Hoa:

- Less than five years
- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years
- More than 20 years

In general, do you feel that people in Xuan Hoa treat each other equally?

- Yes
- No

In general, do you feel you can trust people in this village?

- Yes
- No

In general, do you feel you can trust your local officials or leaders?

- Yes
- No

Do you feel crime in this village has increased, decreased, or remained the same in recent years?

- Increased
- Decreased
- Remained the same
- Don't know

The size of this commune is:

- Too big
- Too small
- Just right

Do you think that having more people in this village is a:

- Good thing
- Bad thing
- don't know/no opinion

Do you feel that due to urbanization and changes in Xuan Hoa, your marriage is:

- Stronger
- Weaker
- Unaffected
- (I am not married)

Do you feel that due to urbanization and changes in Xuan Hoa, your immediate family's relationships with each other are:

- Stronger
- Weaker



Unaffected

Do you feel that due to urbanization and changes in Xuan Hoa your relationship with your extended family is:

Stronger

Weaker

Unaffected

Do you feel that due to urbanization, your relationships with your neighbours and community are:

Stronger

Weaker

Unaffected

Please fill in the circle that most closely matches your opinion					
	strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
I feel like I belong in this village	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like living here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to keep living here for a long time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like values have changed in this village	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The culture in this village has changed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel proud to say I am from Thuy Van	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safe here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust people here to always do the right thing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People here help each other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Too many new people live in this village	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can get along with people who have recently moved here just as well as people who have lived here a long time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socioeconomic status affects how well people get along in this village	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know many people here very well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I interact with my neighbours frequently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are a tightly knit community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable with the changes that have taken place here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, the changes to my community have benefited me and my family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



There is a perceivable divide between people who have lived here a long time and those who moved here more recently	<input type="radio"/>				
I take an interest in my local government	<input type="radio"/>				
Community events give us a chance to know each other	<input type="radio"/>				
There are enough opportunities to meet people here	<input type="radio"/>				
I try to participate in events and meet people when I can	<input type="radio"/>				
Shops, markets, and restaurants bring us together	<input type="radio"/>				
Religion brings us together	<input type="radio"/>				
Another person sharing my religious beliefs is important to me	<input type="radio"/>				

With the threat of the Coronavirus, do you feel that the people in this village are unified in their response?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Do you feel that when this threat is over, it will ultimately have:

- Brought people in the community together
 Driven people in the community apart
 Not changed our relationships

The End
Thank you!



Interview Guide (English)
Social Cohesion in Thuy Van Commune

Hello,

I am a Masters student at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands working with the Hue College of Economics. I understand this village has seen many changes due to urbanization in recent years, so this interview is to understand social relationships in the village and if they have changed as the village changes.

The interview will not take more than 30 or 40 minutes. All the answers are completely anonymous and if there are any questions that you do not understand or you don't wish to answer, please say so. You can also ask me questions at any point during the interview.

If it is ok with you, I would like to record this interview purely so I can transcribe it, but the full recording and transcription will be completely anonymous and any private information will not be included. The data will only be visible for the University of Utrecht and the Hue University of Economics.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Probing tips: – ask for context through why/asking for examples or elaboration - who what when where how which

Phased assertion probe – ive heard about this before – can you tell me more

Avoid too many questions, vague questions, jargon, leading, confronting

Try to avoid taking a stand

Introduction

1. How long have you lived in this commune? (if recently moved – from where/why?)
2. What do you do for work?
3. Do you like it here? Why, why not?
4. Do you want to keep living here?

Changes

5. Have you noticed many changes to this community in the time you have been living here?
-What kinds of changes?
6. Which changes do you consider positive and which do you consider negative?
7. How do you feel your family has been affected by these changes?
8. How do you feel your marriage has been affected?
9. Do you feel that your traditions have changed? – if so how?
10. Do you feel younger people have the same values? – if not, why?



Cohesion and Division

11. Do you feel this is a closely-knit community?
-why/why not?
12. Do you feel you can trust your local leaders and officials?
-if not, why
13. Have you noticed many people moving into this area?
14. Do you feel the newer people and the people who have lived here a long time get along well? -if not, why not?
15. Do you perceive any competition for resources here?
16. Do you think socioeconomic status affects how you get along with others in the community? – if so how?
17. Do you feel education affects how you get along with others in the community? – if so how?
18. Do you feel there is more or less crime in here than there used to be? Or the same? (or if they are very new – than there was where you previously lived)
-If changed, why do you think that is?
19. Are there things that cause conflict between each other?
-If so, what are the main issues?

Coping Mechanisms

20. How do you feel people handle social differences? What kinds of things bring you together?
21. Do you think there are enough ways to get to know new people here (religion, community events, markets, etc)?
22. Do you think if someone has the same religion as you that you can trust them more or be friendlier with them?
-Do you think most people here share your beliefs?
23. Do you have anything else you would like to add?
24. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you