



Map: Fanny Quertamp, 2004

Thoroughfares and Urban Hierarchy in Vietnam in 1999

[Extract from Quertamp, Fanny, "La population urbaine au Viêt Nam: Définition, répartition et évolution entre 1979 et 1999". *Traitement statistique et cartographique du recensement de 1999*. Hanoi: Institut des Métiers de la Ville, 2004, p. 65.]



Image Spot, September 1999

Satellite Picture of Hanoi

In 1999, Hanoi counted 1.5 million inhabitants within its urban area (approximately 1.9 million in 2006). The following points are particularly noticeable: high density built environment in the city centre; peripheral rural housing in the form of hamlets typical of the Red River Delta; constructions extending along the road towards the southwest and Ha Tay Province; the left bank of the river, still rural but due to be built up rapidly; the dykes that contain the river highlight the existence of neighbourhoods built in the easily flooded area between dyke and river.



Image Spot, February 1999

Satellite Picture of Ho Chi Minh City

In 1999, Ho Chi Minh City numbered 4.2 inhabitants within its urban area (approximately 5.5 million in 2006). The following points are particularly noticeable: high density built environment in certain central areas, especially Cho Lon in the southwest part of the conurbation (especially District 5); scattered habitat in the outskirts; port infrastructure extending along the Saigon River; vast rural areas still remaining within the administrative limits of Ho Chi Minh City; constructions extending along the roads, especially towards Bien Hoa (Dong Nai Province, on the other side of the Dong Nai River), which indicates that built structures will soon form an uninterrupted line to the city centre, and that planning of the future megalopolis will need to take into account adjacent provinces.



Photo: Patrick Gubry, July 2003

The so-called “compartment” constructions, or penetrating contiguous houses, are typical of the city centre in Hanoi (above, in the area known as the “36 streets” in Hoan Kiem District, whose historical lake and newly built towers can be glimpsed) as well as in Ho Chi Minh City (below, in Ba Thang Hai Street, District 10).



Photo: Patrick Gubry, April 2003



Photo: Patrick Gubry, November 2002

Khu Tap The (KTT) are collective housing units built before *Doi Moi* (Renovation). The above estate is located in Hai Ba Trung District in Hanoi. Maximizing the available space by arranging balconies into a living area is common practice. The KTT below, located in Giang Vo, Ba Dinh District in Hanoi, was built in 1985. The community is responsible for the maintenance of external façades, which are often badly deteriorated, whereas the flats themselves can sometimes be unexpectedly luxurious, depending on the financial means of their inhabitants.



Photo: Emmanuel Cerise, June 2003



Photo: Patrick Gubry, October 2004

Water is an essential element in the Vietnamese landscape, including in the urban environment. The above photograph taken in My Tho shows both basic habitat on stilts on a small tributary of the Mekong and modern constructions in the background, and denotes an intense economic activity. Constructions on stilts enable their inhabitants to live in the vicinity of the city centre without land use rights. Even the sampans (below on the Perfume River in Hue) can be turned into temporary urban habitat when moored in the city.



Photo: Myriam de Loenzien, August 2005



Photo: VeT Việt-nam, January 2005

Pilot resettlement programme, Phuong 11, District 6, Tan Hoa-Lo Gom Canal in Ho Chi Minh City (above). The photo was taken from the northern shore of the canal: from individual, illegal and unsanitary housing to collective, legal housing connected to urban services. Below: Thi Nghe area, Binh Thanh District in Ho Chi Minh City, view of the southern bank in District 1, after the inhabitants had cleared off and unsanitary housing had been destroyed.



Photo: Patrick Gubry, November 2004



Photo: Patrick Gubry, March 2003

The administrative limits of cities in Vietnam still include vast areas that are still objectively rural. This is the case in Hanoi as much as in Ho Chi Minh City. Above, a farm in the village of Le Phap, in the rural district (that is, *huyen*) of Dong Anh, on the left bank of the Red River. Below, a ferryboat on the Dong Nai River in District 9, which was recently classified as urban district (i.e., *quan*). These are fundamental factors to take into account when evaluating changes in the urban population.



Photo: Patrick Gubry, April 2003



Photo: Patrick Gubry, October 2005

Vietnam presents certain interesting urban particularities. Above, unbelievably intricate electrical connections in Bao Khanh Street, Hoan Kiem District in Hanoi; a loudspeaker used to broadcast municipal information is visible. Below, flooding in District 11 in Ho Chi Minh City: when high tide combines with strong rainfall, water drainage can become difficult and results in the city being flooded for several hours.



Photo: Patrick Gubry, October 2003



Photo: Myriam de Loenzien, August 2003

Waste collection and wastewater disposal are two major issues confronting the large metropolises. Above, Nguyen Trai Street in Hanoi. Below, Rach Ben Nghe (formerly known as the “Chinese Arroyo”), at the confluence of the Saigon River, which separates Ho Chi Minh City’s District 1 from District 4 (opposite, with the Ho Chi Minh Museum, former seat of the *Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes*, an open sewer in all but name; wastewater drainage is hampered by the current flowing back upstream at high tide — which does not prevent some from bathing in it.



Photo: Myriam de Loenzien, April 2004



Photo: Patrick Gubry, October 2004



Photo: Patrick Gubry, July 2003

Occupation of public space for private use remains a characteristic of big cities, as can be seen here in Hanoi: whether for parking motorcycles on the pavement (above left, Cau Go Street, Hoan Kiem District), small informal businesses (above right, Hang Dao Street, Hoan Kiem District) or craft activities (below, Le Duan Avenue, Dong Da District, where a cabinet-maker makes furniture in the middle of the railway track leading from Hanoi to the south).



Photo: Myriam de Loenzien, March 2005



Photo: Yann Maublanc, IMV, October 2004

The vast majority of urban transport relies on motorcycles. “How will I ever cross the road?” (above, Hoang Hoa Tham Street, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi). Honda *xe om* drivers (moto-taxis; the term *om* refers to the fact that the passenger “hugs” the driver), under Long Bien Bridge (below, Hoan Kiem District, Hanoi).



Photo: Charlotte Rosier, IMV, 2003



Photo: Yann Maublanc, IMV, June 2005

Public transport, which existed until quite recently, but had almost disappeared, has been given a fresh start, in particular with a project in cooperation with the French, setting up bus lines running partially in dedicated site (above, Cau Giay District, Hanoi; below, Le Loi Avenue, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City). These lines are very popular due to very attractive fares.



Photo: Patrick Gubry, October 2001



Photo: Charlotte Rosier, IMV, 2003

Suburban areas nearer the city centre are experiencing the highest proliferation of building sites in response to recent urban population growth, which will continue for several decades. Above, Vinaconex 2 in Cau Giay District, Hanoi. Below, building site for the pilot rehousing project in Phuong 11, District 6, Tan Hoa-Lo Gom Canal, Ho Chi Minh City.



Photo: VeT Việt-nam, October 2004

Three Modern Construction Programmes



Photo: Patrick Gubry, November 2002

Hanoi, Thanh Tri District:
blocks of flats.



Hanoi, Thanh Xuan District:
“compartment” houses.

Photo: Patrick Gubry, November 2002



Photo: Patrick Gubry, April 2005

Ho Chi Minh City, Phu My Hung
New Town, “Saigon South”
project, District 7:
housing block and
“compartment” houses at the
onset of construction.



Photo: VeT Việt-nam, February 2005

Ho Chi Minh City: Interior of the flats to be used for resettlement, pilot resettlement project, Phuong 11, District 6, Tan Hoa-Lo Gom Canal. Above, flat being completed; below, furnished and occupied flat. The bedroom is in the mezzanine, which is accessible with a ladder.



Photo: VeT Việt-nam, February 2005