

2022

The Peri-urban City: Cargo Cult Urbanism, Porosity and an Emerging Urban Citizenship in Vietnamese Secondary Cities



Mirjam Le
Universität Passau
18.01.2022

Universität Passau

Philosophische Fakultät

The Peri-urban City

**Cargo Cult Urbanism, Porosity and an Emerging Urban
Citizenship in Vietnamese Secondary Cities**

Dissertation

zur Erlangung des Grades Doktors der Sozialwissenschaften (Dr. rer.
soc.)

im Fach Südostasienforschung

vorgelegt von

Mirjam Le

Januar 2022

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I want to dedicate this book to all the people living in the urban periphery in Vietnam. This book is a declaration of love. Writing it brought me back to countless afternoons in Vietnamese coffee shops and evenings in roadside food stalls. The things I could not include in this book but wish I could is the smell when leaving the airport in Ho Chi Minh City, the warm feeling of heat on my skin, and the sound of motorbikes in the night air. You might have to imagine these things while reading.

This work is the end of a very long road, only made possible by all the people who helped me along the way. Foremost, there is my supervisor, Professor Rüdiger Korff. He motivated me, gave me constructive feedback, and provided an inclusive space at his department for all his Ph.D. students to discuss our topics and support each other. He never saw himself as superior and was always open to discussions. He also opened the department to my children that were always welcome during office hours, meetings, events, and celebrations. He also willingly shared his experiences as a parent and grandparent in the academic field. Being a researcher and a mother at the same time is often difficult, but he made the experience easier. For this, I will always be thankful.

I would also like to thank Professor Sandra Kurfürst, who was willing to be my second supervisor, even in difficult times due to the pandemic. She is also a role model for me, as I could see her career path from a Ph.D. student in Passau to Professor in Cologne.

Co Thu und Martin Grossheim, I want to thank you for your support over the years, all the beautiful evenings, when you brought a little bit of Vietnam to Passau and your support during my different fieldtrips to Vietnam. Thanks to you, I had numerous great memories. You also introduced me to the beauty of the Vietnamese language and made a difficult learning journey easier and more fun.

In Vietnam, I want to thank IVIDES at the Vietnam Nation University in Hà Nội, especially Anh Kien who provided a lot of support over the years. I would also like to thank the supportive people I Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuật for supporting us like family, looking out for us, sharing their knowledge, and their cities with me. I would also like to thank Chinh, my research partner and friend from the Southeast Asian Master's program at the University of Passau. I will always love to remember our research project in the Mekong Delta and all the great experiences and stories we share from that time. You

shared my first steps in academic fieldwork with me. And in this context, I would like to thank Sonia and Anna, friends I met in Tam Kỳ and who provided a support network for my family away from home.

In Passau, I also want to thank my friends and colleagues at the University of Passau, the “Doktorandengang”, and Hannah von Bloh, Franziska Nicolaisen, and Mandy Fox in particular. There were many others over the years, in particular Prof. Martina Padmanabhan and Prof. Wolfram Schaffar who opened their academic space for my research.

I would also like to thank the organizers of the Engaging with Vietnam conference. The conference offered me a welcoming environment for my first steps in academia and some amazing experiences, people, and support in academic publishing.

To finish this work, it took me almost 10 years, two children, and a pandemic, but finally I have reached the end of this journey. Therefore I want to thank those who took part in every step of the way: My family, who supported me over the almost ten years it took me to finish this work. You traveled to Vietnam with me, supported me so I could go to conferences all around the world, and made it possible to have late night writing sessions shortly before every deadline.

I am grateful to have you all in my life.

FOR MARGARETA AND ELIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Figures	vi
Abstract	x
Zusammenfassung	xii
Introduction	1
1. Theoretical framework: Defining the City	1
2. Research question, methodology and structure of work: The case of Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ City	9
2.1. Research question and background	9
2.2. Research method	12
2.3. Reflections on research difficulties and ethics	14
2.4. Thesis Structure	16
Chapter 1 Conceptualization of Space in the Urban Periphery	18
1. The peri-urban city – blurred boundaries, images and the periphery	18
2. Framework of analysis: Defining peri-urban space	19
2.1. The definition of peri-urban	19
2.2. Peri-urbanization in small and medium-sized secondary cities: “The peri-urban City”	21
2.3. Dimensions of peri-urban transformation: Porosity and fragmentation	23
3. Looking for the peri-urban in the Vietnamese context	25
3.1. The administrative definition of peri-urban in Vietnam	25
3.2. Peri-urban cities: Mapping the city in Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ	27
4. Analysis of the space of transformation	32
4.1. Material pattern of space in Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ	32
4.2. Functional pattern of space in Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ	56
4.3. Symbolic pattern of space in Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ	66
5. Conclusion: Small and medium-sized towns and the peri-urban city	76
5.1. Space of transformation	77
5.2. Networks, control and power	78
5.3. Mobility and transition	79
Chapter 2 Cargo Cult Urbanism and the State-led Production of Space in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột	81

1. Cargo cult urbanism in Vietnam	81
2. Three dimensions of state-led space production in Vietnam.....	82
2.1. Urban planning in Vietnam: The state, the society and the urbanisation process	82
2.2. Mobil urban forms and the globalization of the urban.....	85
2.3. Local aspirations and emerging cargo cult urbanism	87
3. Processes of state-led urbanisation in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột.....	90
3.1. Discourse, actors and networks in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột.....	91
3.2. Infrastructure development.....	99
3.3. State ideology and dominance of public space	112
3.4. Development, commodification and economic future.....	121
4. Conclusion.....	129
Chapter 3 Porosity as Social Arena: The peri-urban City in the Context of State-Society Relations	130
1. Challenging state dominance in the production of the peri-urban city.....	130
2. The social framework of porosity: The peri-urban city as social interface	130
2.1. Porosity and the production of a social space.....	131
2.2. Dimensions of the peri-urban city as social arena	134
3. Everyday porosity In the peri-urban city	136
3.1. Traditional urban porosity	137
3.2. Newly accessible porosity	143
3.3. Environmental porosity	150
4. Porosity and urban commons: Transformation of activities and evolving coping strategies of local actors	155
4.1. Urban commons: Porosity and spatial cooperation	155
4.2. Commons in the peri-urban city: Aspiration and appropriation	158
4.2.1. Spaces of aspiration: Success, disengagement and local aspirations.....	158
4.2.2. Space of appropriation: Everyday usage of space in the peri-urban city.....	168
5. Conclusion.....	178
Chapter 4 Urban Citizenship and Porosity: Spaces of Resistance and Interaction.....	181
1. From aspiration and appropriation to urban citizenship	181
2. Urban citizenship and the emerging cosmopolis as localized urban space	184

2.1. Porosity and spatialities of emancipation	184
2.2. Localized urban space and Urban citizenship in Vietnam	185
3. Space and citizenship: Everyday resistance and interaction.....	190
3.1. Urban citizenship and spaces of sharing: Re-negotiating peri-urban water usage as shared urban resource.....	191
3.2. Urban citizenship and spaces of In-betweenness: Everyday mobility as space of resistance	200
3.2.1. In-betweenness, mobility and the peri-urban city	200
3.2.2. Everyday mobility and resistance	201
5. Conclusion.....	215
Chapter 5: Coloniality, Urban Cargo Cult and Urban Commons in Vietnam’s Secondary Cities.....	217
1. Cargo cult urbanism and utopian hope.....	217
2. Coloniality and urban cargo cult: Challenges and constraints	219
3. Final thoughts.....	224
Bibliography.....	226

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Map of Buôn Ma Thuột (Photo of print map, Mirjam Le)	28
Figure 2 Map of Tam Kỳ (Cổng Thông Tin Điện Tử Thành Phố Tam Kỳ 2016).....	29
Figure 3 Urban boundaries: Gates and walls around middle class housing in Tam Kỳ (top) and Buôn Ma Thuột (bottom)	34
Figure 4 Neighborhood around the Central Market in Tam Kỳ (above) and Buôn Ma Thuột (below): Small shops and businesses in 2014 and 2015	35
Figure 5 Newly built market in Tam Kỳ in November 2014.....	36
Figure 6 Sidewalk market and food stalls around the University of Quảng Nam	36
Figure 7 Central Business District in Buôn Ma Thuột (top) and Tam Kỳ (bottom) in 2014	37
Figure 8 Public use of the athletic field at the University of Quảng Nam in October 2014.....	38
Figure 9 Administrative architecture: Main building of People's Committee in Tam Kỳ	38
Figure 10 Overgrown park in Tam Kỳ provides urban porosity.	39
Figure 11 Central park in Buôn Ma Thuột with children's rides and café.....	41
Figure 12 Different use of the main public square in Tam Kỳ (above) and Buôn Ma Thuột (below)	42
Figure 13 Sidewalks as public space in Tam Kỳ: Market (top left), interaction (top right), work place (bottom left) and worshipping (bottom right).....	43
Figure 14 New urban area in Buôn Ma Thuột in 2014 (Phan Chu Trinh, Tân Lợi)	45
15 Rural-urban interface in Tam Kỳ (12/2014)	46
Figure 16 Rural-urban interface in Tam Kỳ (12/2014)	47
Figure 17 New urban areas in Tam Kỳ in 2014 (clockwise: Bùì Tấn Diên, An Phú/ Đường Lam Sơn Tân Thạnh /Đường Phan Khôi, Tân Thạnh/ Khu dân cư 270 Tam Phú)	49
Figure 18 Recreational space in peri-urban space: Motels in Tam Kỳ.....	49
Figure 19 Production for the market: Shrimp and fish farms in Tam Kỳ (left) and coffee plantation in Buôn Ma Thuột (right).....	50
Figure 20 Public space in peri-urban Tam Kỳ used for recreation and entertainment	51
Figure 21 Wasteland in peri-urban area in Buôn Ma Thuột.....	53
Figure 22 Ede long house as a tourist attraction in Buôn Ma Thuột (Ako Dhong).....	53
Figure 23 Construction of a wastewater plant in Tam Kỳ, financed by international donors in 2014/15	54
Figure 24 Usage of street space for business in Tam Kỳ	56
Figure 25 Urban gardens and agriculture public spaces in Tam Kỳ	58

Figure 26 Reproductive function of per-urban space: Recycling (top), material for urban development/ construction (middle) in Tam Kỳ, and agriculture (bottom) in Buôn Ma Thuột.....	62
Figure 27 Peri-urban mobility for trade, work and recreation: Road side market (top), preparation for roadside barbecue in peri-urban Tam Kỳ (middle) and arterial road with small businesses in Buôn Ma Thuột (bottom)	63
Figure 28 Rural nostalgia: Nature as design aesthetic in Tam Kỳ.....	64
Figure 29 Rural nostalgia represented in the Coffee Village and a small café in Buôn Ma Thuột	65
Figure 30 Symbolic control of space: Police at the market (above) and signs and barriers at the main square (middle) in Tam Kỳ and Ho Chi Minh Statue in a park in Buôn Ma Thuột.....	68
Figure 31 Propaganda posters on the construction of a civilized, green and clean city (above) and a telecommunication advertisement next to a warning sign against domestic violence (below) in Tam Kỳ	69
Figure 32 History and the shifting urban space: The remaining market in Hung Vương Street after most vendors were forced to move	70
Figure 33 Commercialization of urban space: Shopping malls in Buôn Ma Thuột (top) and Tam Kỳ (bottom).....	71
Figure 34 Gated community in Tam Kỳ	74
Figure 35 Middle class neighborhood in new urban area in Buôn Ma Thuột: Cars as status symbols	74
Figure 36 Abandoned house in Buôn Ma Thuột.....	75
Figure 37 Cattle moving through peri-urban Tam Kỳ.....	76
Figure 38 Urban Master Plan for 2030 with an Outlook for 2050 for Tam Kỳ (VAA 2014).....	93
Figure 39 "The World of Coffee" museum and global aspiration: locating oneself in a global narrative (Images from The World of Coffee Homepage).....	96
Figure 40 Aspiration of a Global Asia: The Coffee City in Buôn Ma Thuột (Images from Coffee City Homepage).....	97
Figure 41 University District (top) and rural city neighbourhood (below) in Tam Kỳ 2015.....	100
Figure 42 Producing spatial structures by constructing street grids in New Urban Areas in Tân Thành, An Phú and Tam Phú, Winter 2014/15.....	105
Figure 43 New urban area for the middle class: Modern Houses (top) and government-owned hotel (bottom).....	106
Figure 44 Privatizing urban space and erecting boundaries: Gate community "Fulicheng Garden" in Tam Kỳ 2015.....	107
Figure 45 Sign on public behavior on the sidewalk next to the University of Quảng Nam	113
Figure 46 Building a civilized as city a cooperative effort between state and society	114
Figure 47 Cleaning up Tam Kỳ in the winter of 2014/15: Combined efforts of traffic police and garbage collectors	116

Figure 48 Symbolically dominating urban space in Tam Kỳ	118
Figure 49 State celebrations in public space: Presentation by the HCM Youth, military and ethnic groups during the opening of the Vietnamese Heroic Mother Statue (top and middle) and decorations for Tết (below).....	119
Figure 50 Opening of Vietnamese Heroic Mother Statue in March 2015	120
Figure 51 Commercial sponsorship in public space.....	122
Figure 52 Old and new market building in Tam Kỳ (private photos)	123
Figure 53 Mural Village Tam Thanh (VNAT 2016) and road of art (Nhan Dan 2017) in Tam Kỳ	126
Figure 54 Touristic representation and branding in Buôn Ma Thuột: Brand coffee and artefacts from local ethnic minorities presented in the Ethnographic Museum of Đắk Lắk (04/2014).....	127
Figure 55 Traditional porosity and temporary use: Social interactions, work and worshipping	138
Figure 56 Traditional porosity and temporary use: Celebrations, recycling and gardening, and domestic chores.....	139
Figure 57 Porosity, boundaries and barriers: Sidewalks as parking lots and different forms of cafés Tam Kỳ (top) and Buôn Ma Thuột (bottom).....	140
Figure 58 Producing new porosity in peri-urban space.....	144
Figure 59 Newly created porosity and peri-urban subsistence production: Access and boundaries	145
Figure 60 Erecting boundaries in new urban areas in Tam Kỳ.....	148
Figure 61 Everyday environmental porosity: A football field in peri-urban Buôn Ma Thuột	151
Figure 62 Natural porosity as recreational space and environmental resource: Elephant rides and picnic area in Yok Đôn National Park	153
Figure 63 Destruction of environmental porosity due to modernization in Đắk Lắk province, around Buôn Ma Thuột.....	154
Figure 64 Urban entertainment: Only club (top) and cinema (bottom) in Tam Kỳ in 2015.....	164
Figure 65 Localization of global customs; Valentine’s Day in Tam Kỳ in 2015.....	165
Figure 66 Fitness between local and global aspirations: Soccer training in Tam Kỳ and exercising in a public park in Buôn Ma Thuột.....	166
Figure 67 Appropriation of urban space for gardening, household chores and urban agriculture in Tam Kỳ	171
Figure 68 Appropriation of empty space for a small business in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột : After school hours in Tam Kỳ, sidewalk as parking lot and road side market in Buôn Ma Thuột.....	173
Figure 69 Appropriation of space for spiritual use in Tam Kỳ for Tết 2015.....	175
Figure 70 Peri-urban space in Buôn Ma Thuột: Mobility as source for income opportunities.....	204
Figure 71 Cemetery as space of resistance: Abandoned ARNV cemetery in Buôn Ma Thuột (located along Hà Huy Tập Street and Y Moan Street).....	206

Figure 72 Square 24-3 in Tam Kỳ with sign stating rules for usage (top), broken metal barriers (middle) and motorbikes (bottom) 211

ABSTRACT

The impact of urban development on local residents in the urban periphery oscillates between processes of empowerment and processes of marginalization as well as between state-controlled order and decentralized self-organization. Consequently local authorities, including urban planners and local residents need to negotiate their respective roles in the production and usage of urban space defined by transition, transformation and ambiguity. Therefore, this work examines the underlying patterns, interactions and structures which define the negotiation of state-society relations in the framework of a porous peri-urban landscape in Vietnam's secondary cities.

In Chapter 1, peri-urban areas are defined as space of transformation where pattern of rural land use are intertwined with pattern of urban land use to create an urban-rural interface with blurred boundaries. The main characteristic of the spatial pattern in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột is rooted urban porosity leading to the spatial intertwining of rural, peri-urban and urban spaces. The emerging urban landscape can be defined as peri-urban city. Three main themes define this peri-urban city beyond porosity: (1) processes of transformation creating the peri-urban city, (2) networks of power and control as means to adapt to these transformations and (3) mobility as prerequisite for ability to benefit from the changing landscape in peri-urban cities.

Chapter 2 describes how state authorities, urban planners and private investors at the local level in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột use porous space to reproduce the city based on their aspirations. This leads to a cargo cult urbanism, where urban planning is rooted in future aspirations for the city. Plans and construction efforts reference the image of a modern urban future and produce the image of a city, which does not exist in the real urban space of Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. In the meantime, practices based in peri-urban space are often contradictory to the official aspirations of local state authorities

Chapter 3 explores this emerging divergence between the aspired urban space by the state and the reality of urban space rooted in material and social porosity. Traditional, newly accessible and environmental porosity provide an array of accessible space which transforms the peri-urban city into a social arena of encounters and interaction. Consequently, porosity enables local residents to maintain urban space as commons. This counters the push towards the privatization of urban space by state and private actors and creates multiple aspirations for the urban future.

Rooted in urban space as commons, porosity enables the usage of peri-urban space as spaces of resistance as discussed in Chapter 4. Mobility and interaction are means of reproduction in the porous ambiguity of urban materiality but also become means of everyday resistance. The emerging spatialities of emancipation provide opportunities for an emerging urban citizenship. Urban materiality and urban citizenship have a mutually constitutive relationship.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Peri-Urbanisierung oszilliert zwischen Demokratisierungs- und Marginalisierungsprozessen sowie staatlich kontrollierter Ordnung und dezentraler Selbstorganisation der Bürger. Lokale Behörden, Stadtplaner und städtische Bürger*innen müssen ihre jeweiligen Rollen bei der Produktion und Nutzung peri-urbaner Räume, die von Veränderungen und Ambiguität geprägt sind, aushandeln. Die Arbeit untersucht die zugrunde liegenden Wechselwirkungen und Strukturen, die die Aushandlung von Staat-Gesellschaft-Beziehungen im Rahmen einer porösen peri-urbanen Landschaft in Vietnams Sekundärstädten definieren.

In Kapitel 1 werden peri-urbane Gebiete als Transformationsräume definiert, in denen ländliche mit urbanen Landnutzungsmustern verflochten sind. Dadurch wird eine Stadt-Land-Schnittstelle mit unscharfen Grenzen geschaffen. Das Hauptmerkmal der räumlichen Strukturen in Tam Kỳ und Buôn Ma Thuột ist die tiefverwurzelte städtische Porosität, die zu einer räumlichen Verflechtung von ländlichen, stadtnahen und städtischen Räumen führt. Die entstehende urbane Landschaft kann als peri-urbane Stadt definiert werden. Drei Hauptthemen definieren diese peri-urbane Stadt jenseits von Porosität: (1) Transformationsprozesse, die die peri-urbane Stadt schaffen, (2) Macht- und Kontrollnetzwerke als Mittel zur Anpassung an diese Transformationen und (3) Mobilität als Voraussetzung für die Fähigkeit, von der sich verändernden Landschaft in peri-urbanen Städten zu profitieren.

Kapitel 2 beschreibt, wie staatliche Behörden, Stadtplaner und private Investoren auf lokaler Ebene in Tam Kỳ und Buôn Ma Thuột poröse Räume nutzen, um die Stadt nach ihren Vorstellungen zu reproduzieren. Dies führt zu einem Cargo-Kult-Urbanismus, bei dem die Stadtplanung nicht in realistischen Prognosen sondern in urbanen Zukunftsvisionen verwurzelt ist. Pläne und Baumaßnahmen versuchen das Bild einer modernen urbanen Zukunft zu projizieren, welches im realen Stadtraum von Tam Kỳ und Buôn Ma Thuột keine Entsprechung findet. Gleichzeitig widersetzen sich Alltagspraktiken der lokalen Bevölkerung im peri-urbanen Raum oft den offiziellen Bestrebungen der lokalen, staatlichen Behörden.

Kapitel 3 untersucht diese aufkommende Divergenz zwischen dem vom Staat angestrebten Stadtraum und der Realität des Stadtraums, die in materieller und sozialer Porosität wurzelt ist. Traditionelle, neu zugängliche und ökologische Porosität bieten eine Reihe von zugänglichen Räumen, die die peri-urbane Stadt in eine soziale Arena der Begegnung und

Interaktion verwandeln. Folglich ermöglicht die Porosität der Bevölkerung, den städtischen Raum als Gemeingut zu erhalten. Dies wirkt dem Drang zur Privatisierung des städtischen Raums durch staatliche und private Akteure entgegen und ermöglicht eine pluralistische Vision für die städtische Zukunft.

Verwurzelt im urbanen Raum als Gemeingut ermöglicht Porosität die Nutzung peri-urbaner Räume für die soziale und politische Emanzipation, wie in Kapitel 4 diskutiert. Mobilität und Interaktion sind nicht nur Mittel der Reproduktion in der porösen Ambiguität urbaner Materialität, sie werden auch zu Mitteln des alltäglichen Widerstands. Die neu entstehenden Räumlichkeiten der Emanzipation bieten Chancen für eine aufkommende urbane „Citizenship“. Urbane Materialität und urbane „Citizenship“ stehen in einem konstitutiven Verhältnis zueinander.

INTRODUCTION

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DEFINING THE CITY

While urban growth became increasingly located in Latin America, Asia and Africa, research on the city is rooted in the European and American experience in the 19th and early 20th century creating a homogenous Western perspective on types of cities and their development. Urban realities in the rest of the world and especially in Southeast Asia are still seen through this lens by researchers and urban planners. Wirth (1938: 10), as the forefather of research on cities, defines three central characteristics for a minimal definition of the city: (1) numbers of population (size), (2) density of the settlement, and (3) heterogeneity of inhabitants and group life. Going one step further, cities are sites of crystallization of social, political, spatial, and economic development and influence their surrounding areas as they culturally, economically, socially, and politically dominate their hinterland. As centers of production and consumption, cities become centers of society with distinct spatial formations and imaginaries. They are strategic places in society. (Evers and Korff 2003)

When urbanization in Southeast Asia is academically discussed, the frame of analysis and the base for all theoretical discussion is defined relating to this Western perspective. Historically, research of cities in Southeast Asia describes early urban development in terms of harbor principalities/cosmopolitan port-cities and sacred inland cities. Both constituted centers of economic, political, and spiritual leadership. Later, the colonial city as the frame of reference emerged. (Dick and Rimmer 1998; Schenider 2016)

Since the 19th century, academic literature has linked urbanization and the city to industrialization (Johanson 2008). At the same time, particularly in the Global South, industrialization and colonialism were connected. In both arenas, the exploitation of resources, including human resources, was central. The city was – and often still is – a symbol of control and power of national and global forces. These forces establish their often exploitative nature and their narrative in the local context. (Goh and Bunnell 2013)

The regulation of the urban population dominated the colonial urban space. This control included restrictions on social participation established by the colonial state authorities, particularly for Vietnamese subjects (Vann 2007, Lewis 2016). In Indochina, the French attempted to segregate the colonial city (Vann 2007). However, the dynamic realities of

the colonial world already produced a complex social network rooted in cosmopolitanism (Lewis 2016), where the distinction between the French and Vietnamese space was not always obvious. However, the implicit hierarchy in knowledge production was already established where the French claimed the superior realm of modernity. Concerning urban development, the focus on modernization, infrastructure, and technology put the French and their expertise in charge of the urban transformation. Nowadays, narratives on urban development are still rooted in these patterns and structures of colonialism in knowledge production, even after the end of the colonial era. There exists a historical continuity that looks at global urban models for inspiration instead of local traditions. For example, the reconstruction of the war-torn city of Vinh after the reunification in 1975 by East German experts used East German models of urbanity (Schwenkel 2014; and Kaiser 2014). Quijano (2007) calls these underlying narratives the coloniality of knowledge, in which a Western hegemony established during the colonial era still dominates power structures, especially knowledge production (also Mignolo 2017). This perspective positions the narrative of postcolonial cities in the Global South as a *space of development* (Korff 2008) characterized as hotbeds of multiple problems like air pollution, traffic management, housing, and water management. Accordingly, this perspective warns of the emerging urban catastrophe or the urban collapse, which needs to be managed and organized (Korff 2008). Putting the city into the development framework lays the focus on technology as a solution. Urban planners, architects, and policy-makers - the experts - become the ones who will manage and implement these solutions. Urban development is hence part of the postcolonial hegemony of the West. It is a capitalist endeavor, which aims at producing economic profits for Western and East Asian conglomerates and companies. It reconstructs power relations, which favor previous colonial actors. Processes of urban development are still strongly linked to industrialization under the influence of capitalism and private investors on the development of cities worldwide which favors the privatization of urban space. Instead of colonialism, development as part of the narrative of coloniality became the prime tool of Western hegemony. Subsequently, coloniality also became the underlying structure of the development of urban space. The emerging power structures lead to the marginalization of urban residents and their agency to produce urban space. Not everyone has the same access to urban space and can make decisions about its use. Due to the link between urbanization and development, cities in the Global South became non-political spaces as development functions as an anti-politics machine (Ferguson and Lohmann

1994). Urban residents become recipients of aid without agency. Alternatively, urban experts conceive them as part of the problems, which need to be solved. For example, state authorities perceive Vietnamese residents who drive their motorcycles to work as responsible for bad air quality and CO₂ emissions. Thus, these residents need to be educated in the art of modern, healthy city living if needed with regulations and law enforcement like the ban on motorbikes in Hà Nội in 2030 (Vo 2019). This narrative is encouraged by state officials at the local as well as the national level. The solution for the cities of the Global South is a universal vision of the modern city – the globopolis (Douglass 2009) - with a homogeneous material, functional and symbolic pattern. Experts and politicians transport this urban ideal across the globe as mobile urban forms in workshops, conferences, and meeting rooms (Söderström and Geertmann 2015).

For Southeast Asia in the 20th and 21st century, urban development emphasizes large megacity regions as research focuses on Jakarta, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, and Singapore. The most important framework is the “desakota” model (McGee 1989; McGee 1991; Dick and Rimmer 1998:2305, 2309). This model takes the idea of the city-region and, using the example of the greater metropolitan region of Jakarta, looks at the integration of smaller surrounding towns into a network around a metropolitan center. This process includes the development of urban sprawl, economic decentralization as industries move closer to the workers in the smaller urban centers, mixed land use: “complex and compound regional systems consisting of central cities, fringe areas of those cities, exurbs, satellite towns, and extensive intervening areas of dense population and intensive traditional agricultural land use in which paddy tends to dominate.” (Ginsburg 1991: xiii) Other concepts discuss transnational or regional city networks. This research includes the conception of the “global city” (Sassen 1991) or “world city” which analyses the city in the framework of globalization. Developed from a Western point of view, the perspective focuses upon the city as the center of capitalism. The starting point is the integration of cities into the globalizing world economy based on their roles as the location for businesses. This integration leads to the increasing complexity of economic activities that enforces the outsourcing and agglomeration of specialized services in urban areas. This process is made possible by modern communication and transportation technologies making businesses increasingly spatial flexible. The outcome is the emergence of transnational city networks and hierarchies - a global network of cities without clear geographical borders. These emerging networks and hierarchies create a new geography of

centrality and periphery rooted in competition and marginalization between cities and towns on a regional and global scale. Cities and their functions are no longer exclusively defined by their local context but by their mutual relations. (Pflieger and Rozenblat 2010)

Taking this as a starting point, cities – not only megacities - work as nodes of connections between different places, being the centers in an extensive network through which goods, people, and ideas move. Korff (2006: 97) speaks of an urbanized society in which the spatial form of the city is not its main feature. Instead, he characterizes the urban as virtual space and imaginaries with their own identity and meaning. These imaginaries open space to connect different people whom all participate in an urban way of life. This urban way of life is rooted in interaction and communication (Castell 1998) that establishes networks between different people, not necessarily all located in the same place. Generally, cities are places of representation that produce meaning and uniqueness. These places of representation are less anchored in their material form and paramount in the discourses and identities linked to the concept of "the city" in general and the idea of a specific city. These discourses, identities, and the related interactions, negotiations, and activities produce the city as a concrete, material geographical space. In the everyday experience of this concrete urban space, urban citizens reproduce and negotiate the symbols and meanings used to understand the city as a specific place with its own identity (Lefebvre 1991).

Lefebvre (1991) formulates an analytical framework for a better understanding of the production of urban space and the dichotomy between locally rooted and state-controlled urban space. Schmid (2012:49) summarize Lefebvre's theory as a three-dimensional dialectic where the interconnected processes of space production are defined on the one hand as (1) "spatial practices", "representations of space", and "spaces of representation" and on the other hand as (2) "perceived", "conceived", and "lived" space.

In a first step, all urban space can be experienced by all senses providing a tangible dimension. The "perceived space" thus is directly linked to the materiality of space that provides the setting for spatial practices like material interaction and physical encounter. The connection of perception and spatial practice in space produces a spatial order of synchronicity. This synchronicity includes an overlapping multitude of interactions, communication, innovation, exchanges, and surprises that are observed by those moving through urban space. However, to be able to understand the perceived space, urban space

needs to be conceived first. Beyond the observable realities of space, the "conceived space" is the imagination of the urban space as constructed in the collective mind. This mental conception of space is based on the combinations of elements, interests, and mental images supported by social conventions that are often contested and thus negotiated in discursive (political) practices. The "spaces of representation" that result from these negotiations are rooted in existing knowledge, power structures, and hierarchies. "Spaces of representation" immediately lead to questions of exclusion and inclusion, of what and who is and is not urban. This conflict translates into a set of rules, morals, and ethics of the city that includes acceptable behavior and its control and regulation. Finally, beyond the social production of a conceived and perceived space, urban space also always contains a level of signification expressed in (material) symbolism. By adding meaning, as urban space is transformed into spaces of representation, urban residents have to confront this in their everyday life, hence Lefebvre's term of "lived space". The experience of the city as a "lived space" is embedded in processes of socialization. Individual and collective experiences are transformed into memories and inscribed in the urban space. The emerging meaning of space gives rise to an implicit urban value system rooted in the city space. The production of the "lived space", based on spatial struggles for meaning, is thus an inherently social and political process. These struggles are translated into elements of urban experience and become constitutive to "representations of space. They can give rise to new aspirations different from those that urban residents and local authorities previously envisioned for the urban space. Hence, "representations of space" facilitate processes of appropriation and can be constitutive for an emerging form of urban citizenship. (Lefebvre as cited by Schmid 2012: 49-52)

The mutual constitutive process which simultaneously produces meaning and form can be understood as the core of urbanization. Increasing numbers of people are integrated into an urban space, living an urban way of life, based on urban meanings and symbols surrounded by urban materiality. The modern, civilized city is the blueprint for urban development in Vietnam. However, contrary to the perceived de-politicization of urbanization in the West, urban development in Vietnam is highly politicized. The city is a central political space for the state and society. Foreign development and aid organizations and their urban development schemes enter into this contentious space as non-political actors. However, their interference has unintended political consequences as urbanization projects are embedded in local interests, needs, and conflicts. The Vietnamese state uses the ambiguity

between the political and unpolitical perspectives on urban space for its agenda. It uses development projects as means to access resources and increase visibility on a national and international scale. The state increases public support for projects by referencing development and urban models like Singapore. It also uses global discourses which problematize cities to mobilize and educate the population to remake them into modern citizens. To this aim, the state reconstructs the material urban environment and implements policies with the support of the international donor community to increase state control of urban space. Under the pretense of the development discourse, the state delegitimizes specific use of urban space, for example by street vendors and motorbike drivers. This urban development discourse provides the Vietnamese government with tools to re-colonize the urban landscape under the disguise of development. The state is thus not a mediator but a puppet master using available resources to gain influence and control of urban space without allowing participation. In this endeavor, private investors support the Vietnamese government as both attempt to colonialize the material space to make financial gains. This process integrates cities into networks of global interests. Capitalism leads to the emergence of a neoliberal city in which monetary resources determine the level of access and participation in space (Springer 2009).

However, cities are also rooted in local space. As a contested space that represents the aspiration of local residents and the state simultaneously, local authorities cannot easily erase residents and their demands. Their everyday practices also influence urban space and its materiality. Even in Vietnam, where political participation is limited, forms of local agency are rooted in informal interactions and embedded into everyday practices to open space for participation in Vietnamese cities. Using the concept of mediation space (Koh 2006), Vietnamese citizens negotiate with local state officials to gain advantages, support their interests, and solve problems. The government tries to regulate these interactions while it also tolerates them to address urgent needs of its citizens that the government cannot solve by itself. Using means of local everyday resistance (Scott 1985), urban residents aim to produce porous spaces for maneuvering to disdain, mock, mimic, participate in, contest, connive, negotiate and reproduce urban realities. Douglass (2009) calls the emerging urban realities a “cosmopolis” centered on its citizens and not based on control and power. Here, the city is not privatized but imagined as a communal space that increases social cohesion. Citizens then use the city to counter existing patterns and structures of coloniality.

Thereby, citizens raise the question of who can define the urban identity of the city. Local agency and participation are contentious aspects of this political process. The city is the space where state and social actors negotiate questions of citizenship and state-society relations. Contrary to the ambition of the Vietnamese state to produce the modern urban space by itself, the production of space is a social activity (Lefebvre 1991) in which urban residents engage daily. Researchers like Lefebvre (1991), Harvey (2000), and Sennett (2010; 2018) offer a perspective on the urban that re-centers on the urban citizens and thereby counters the coloniality reshaping urban space in the 21st century. However, it is also necessary to look at urban processes in the Global South independently to establish a framework from below. This independent perspective becomes a more pressing necessity when moving to the urban periphery, where the majority of urban citizens reside. Small and medium-sized cities are still black holes on the Vietnamese academic map.

Peri-urbanization in small and medium-sized cities in Vietnam

With the increasing urbanization of Vietnamese society and migration into urban centers, one of the major urban trends researched is peri-urbanization (Tôn et al. 2012). Harms (2011), Labbé (2013); Bousquet (2016), and Jacques et al. (2017), amongst others (Tôn et al. 2012), wrote extensively on peri-urbanization in Ho Chi Minh City and Hà Nội¹, where peri-urban sprawl, the integration of former farming land, and the development of new urban areas is a common trend. The phenomenon is hardly analyzed for secondary and small –and medium-sized cities. However, the process which slowly transforms Ho Chi Minh City and Hà Nội into global megacities with several million residents also slowly transforms the urban periphery. Interestingly, in recent years, research moved towards the urban periphery, particularly towards the peri-urbanization process surrounding Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City.

Small and medium-sized cities constitute the urban periphery to more central, national cities like Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City. The terms used like secondary cities or regional centers delegate these cities to a lower level in the national hierarchy. Naturally, urban governance in Vietnam is codified in a five-tier scale dependent on population size and infrastructure. This urban hierarchy influences access to resources and orientates urban

¹ This work uses the geographical names in Vietnamese script with the exception of Ho Chi Minh City and Vietnam.

development towards advancement on this scale from a small township to a national metropole. A research focus on those urban spaces which are neither located at the top nor the bottom of this scale allows for a better understanding of the increasing location of urban space in-between and the resulting transformation processes. The growing fluidity and porosity of urbanity in the urban periphery in Vietnam is the main characteristic of the urban landscape in Vietnam. For this work, we will call these urban spaces secondary cities, as they are already well on the way to growing urban centers while at the same time still being situated in the urban periphery when compared to Hà Nội, Ho Chi Minh City, Đà Nẵng, Cần Thơ and Hải Phòng.

The close spatial link between urban and rural in these secondary cities leads to mixed spatial use in the city center due to the smaller population size (Talcoi 2003). Rural residents migrate into urban fringe areas in secondary cities leading to the diversification of livelihood strategies in these cities. Small towns and cities materially expand into their surroundings, particularly along the main traffic arteries. This expansion dissolves the boundary between the urban and the rural resulting in peri-urban areas. For political and financial reasons, this process is supported by political actors who aim to modernize and develop the rural, peri-urban, and urban spaces in these secondary cities. This development increases pull factors as more and more rural migrants move into these smaller cities, changing the lifestyle and everyday practices of the inhabitants and the built environment at the same time. Roberts (2016) defines five dimensions of change based on this process. As employment in the non-agricultural sector increase, income structures, work, and class structures diversify, already visible in Vietnam. At the same time, lifestyles become urbanized due to daily encounters with strangers and differences. These changes increase with the widespread use of modern communication, mass media, and the internet.

Means of communication connect urban, rural, and global areas and the people residing in them. These connections create an interface of encounters, differences, and exchanges (Talcoi 2003). They also change discourses, narratives, and norms which informally regulate urban life for those living at the peri-urban and urban fringe. However, at the same time, the process of rurbanization pulls urban residents into these newly urbanizing zones (Roberts 2016). Lower rents, access to employment, and closeness to nature might all be factors pulling the urban elites and the urban poor into these new peri-urban zones. The result is an interface of mixed usage, a diverse set of residents, and blurred boundaries.

Investment in gated communities, new urban areas, urban services, and recreational facilities changes the materiality of space. A new pattern of exclusion and marginalization arises with new opportunities to participate, open businesses, and access goods and services. However, beyond the newly emerging lifestyles of consumption, urban architecture, culture, and land usage, rural patterns of everyday life still survive at these emerging fringe zones. They penetrate the urban fabric, resisting their extinction. In the framework of small and medium-sized cities, this mixing of patterns results in what can be called a peri-urban city, where the whole city becomes a peri-urban interface of mixed usage, encounters, and exchange. Urban and rural lifestyles, norms, and activities intermingle, transforming the urban landscape. The city is neither complete urban nor rural. A lack of financial resources, political importance, and proximity to rural and urban space creates an open space in which local residents and state agents often engage in creative ways to overcome the shortcomings of the periphery. Consequently, the two major patterns of this peri-urban city in Vietnam are porosity and mobility (Wolfrum 2019; Cresswell 2010). The constitutive element of mobility and porosity in the urban periphery will thus be the central question of this work

2. RESEARCH QUESTION, METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE OF WORK: THE CASE OF BUÔN MA THUỘT AND TAM KỶ CITY

2.1. RESEARCH QUESTION AND BACKGROUND

The academic focus on the metropolitan regions of Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City creates a unique perspective on the Vietnamese urban, where the center represents the periphery and the urban periphery remains silent. As small, medium, and secondary cities are still academically sidelined in the majority, this work aims to add to this existing literature on the urban periphery by looking beyond the national urban centers and analyzing the urbanization of the periphery. The unequal transformation processes between Vietnam's metropolitan centers and the urban periphery question the application of findings from Ho Chi Minh City and Hà Nội beyond their demographical and geographical boundaries. For example, a Deloitte report from 2019 (Deloitte 2019) on urban consumption found a high divergence between Đà Nẵng, and Cần Thơ – both large Vietnamese cities - and Ho Chi Minh City and Hà Nội – Vietnam's urban primary center - concerning shopping behavior. The growing popularity of supermarkets in Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City is not mirrored in Cần Thơ and Đà Nẵng where shopping at wet and neighborhood markets and small

corner stores is still prevalent (Deloitte 2019). At the same time, urban development and peri-urbanization are not limited to Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City. Its impact also transforms urban space and everyday life in the urban periphery like secondary cities. This work hence explores the influence of peri-urban transformation on these secondary cities in Vietnam.

As Harms (2011) establishes in his book on Ho Chi Minh City, the impact of urbanization processes on local people in the urban periphery oscillates between integration and exclusion, as well as empowerment and marginalization. This oscillation influence state-society relations in the urban framework. Therefore, this work analyses the underlying pattern, interactions, and structures that define the negotiation of state-society relations in an emerging peri-urban landscape characterized by transition, transformation, and ambiguity. Following in the steps of previous work on cities and urban development, notably the concept of Lefebvre on the production of space, this work perceives urban space as a social arena where social actors negotiate meaning and aspirations continuously. This approach moves the city beyond its built environment towards a socio-political realm where power relations between social and political actors are defined and contested. It connects urban materiality with the functionality and symbolism of the city. This work analyzes urban development as an arena where the future coexistence between social groups and between society and state emerge. This results in three main questions which this work aims to answer:

1. *Temporal process*: How can we define the periphery at the urban edge, notably peri-urban space and peri-urbanization at the margin of Vietnam's urban system in secondary cities?
2. *Spatial Process*: How does the production of space by state and social actors influence the materiality, functionality, and symbolism of the urban edge?
3. *Socio-political process*: How do the emerging negotiations between state and social actors redefine state-society relations in the urban framework in Vietnam?

As a starting point, this work assumes that due to the rapid transformation introduced and promoted by urban development at the urban edge, those living in these spaces also have to change their everyday behavior and aspirations.

Temporal Process:

We understand peri-urban space as a space of transformation where rural characteristics are transformed into urban. Consequently, we have to move beyond the focus on the geographical dimension – the urban edge – to define peri-urban space and peri-urbanization in secondary cities. Furthermore, rural and urban materiality, functionality, and symbolism in secondary cities are intertwined. It is thus necessary to employ a broader spatial scope to the concept of peri-urbanization. Whereas its temporal dimension – the transformation of space and the resulting in-betweenness is still in existence, its spatial dimension gets diluted and needs to be investigated.

Spatial Process:

This transformation finds its expression in the shifting usage of resources defined broadly as symbolic, material, and social means of reproduction. Embedded in the basic urban fabric, urban resources are necessary for all livelihood strategies of urban dwellers. Their usage in the urban and peri-urban landscape is daily contested and negotiated by local people and state actors. This contestation leads to shifting ownership, the emerging of urban commons, and the transformation of local meaning and aspirations. This work looks at (1) the concrete material space, (2) urban aspirations, and (3) water resources to illustrate these processes. Thereby, rooted in local conflicts, the need to adapt livelihood strategies and negotiate between different social groups and the state emerges. Local people need to find ways to transform their livelihood strategies, including their resource usage. This adaptation further changes the material spaces and accelerates urban development. Consequently, spatial transformations and the local adaptation process are interdependent and influence local relations between social groups and the state.

Socio-political process:

As local negotiations of everyday practices transform the material, functional and symbolic space, they also shift the power relation between state actors and residents. As already described by Lefevbre (1991), the state is not the only major actor in the production of urban space. Thus, the contested negotiation of urban space production translated into the transformation of state-society relations. Consequently, a pattern of urban citizenship emerges where urban citizens use it to take advantage of increasing porosity and as a tool

to gain access to and control of urban space vis-à-vis state actors. Urban citizenship then enables the emancipation of urban dwellers at the local level and thus a form of local democratization of urban space.

2.2. RESEARCH METHOD

A conclusive definition of a city or town as small or medium-sized is highly objective and depends on the national framework. Researchers and urban planners use categories like population size, infrastructure, and density of the built environment to create hierarchies of urban space. However, what constitutes a big or a small city also depends on the national framework and the individual experience. For this work, the aim is a focus on urban space beyond the major big cities, primarily Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City. Thus, to identify, the work uses the Vietnamese categories of cities with a focus on cities in Category II and I.

Possible research locations are spaces of transformation oriented towards modernization, urban development, and population growth. With the help of IVIDES, Vietnam, potential research sites were identified as Buôn Ma Thuột, the provincial capital of Đắk Lắk province in the Central Highlands, and Tam Kỳ, the provincial capital of Quảng Nam province, south of Đà Nẵng. Both cities are emerging regional centers, offering urban services to their rural hinterland. They are globally interconnected – Buôn Ma Thuột due to its role in coffee production, Tam Kỳ as an actor in the East Asian urban planning network. Their urban development is more recent, being only established as cities during the French colonial period. They are located in the periphery of the Vietnamese cities network but are linked to major transportation hubs and gain importance as markets and service providers for their hinterland. Buôn Ma Thuột has an airport with daily regional flights. Tam Kỳ is located along the National Highway QL 1A and near Đà Nẵng.

During fieldwork in Buôn Ma Thuột, Đắk Lắk from March to April 2014 and in Tam Kỳ, Quảng Nam province from October 2014 until April 2015, I collected qualitative data. The research methods combined the visual documentation of the urban space in Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ with participatory observation and semi-structured interviews with 30 households in peri-urban wards in Tam Kỳ. Beyond informal interviews and questionnaires with local officials, the thesis also uses secondary sources, like urban development plans, newspaper articles, and workshop material to trace the state vision of urban space and its implementation.

Based on secondary data, the work identifies urban areas of urban development characterized by an outward movement of the built environment. In a second step, I visited these areas to take pictures and notes on my observations. The combination of participatory observation and the collection of visual data identified major peri-urban areas in both cities. In the beginning, this process was random, but it became more structured over time. Consequently, after I identified areas of interest, these were visited regularly at different times of the day using a motorbike. More remote areas were visited only once or twice while areas closer to the city were visited almost weekly. The goal was to document different practices and changes in the material space.

Emic constructivism and thick description

Clifford Geertz (1973) coined the term “thick description” to describe a research process that perceives everyday practices as culturally embedded and thus allows the researcher the emic construction of a broader landscape of social and cultural meaning, aspirations, and relations from the analysis of these practices. The aim is the emic construction of everyday reality (Evers and Korff 2003:11). Following the “everyday politics approach”, which defines state-society relations by analyzing everyday practices and the social landscape in which they are located and was established for Vietnam by Kerkvliet (2009), Koh (2006), and Fforde (2009), this research reconstructed the meaning and functionality of material space expressed by the use and design of the space by local people. In this understanding, the materiality of space serves as a stage on which local people can paint their everyday life. Following this *approach from below*, local practices provide opportunities to reconstruct the realities, aspirations, and reactions of daily life in the cityscape. The space is conceived as an expression of local aspirations. Consequently, aspirations, practices, and resources are rooted in localities which, as noted by Korff (2003), define space, local knowledge, and social organization based on the perception of belonging and the related interests and resources. As the state in Vietnam still dominated the formal production of the urban space, this focus on everyday practices allows identifying areas of conflict where local behavior challenges state aspirations. Practices of resistance move beyond formalized and highly visible political protest. Instead, they include those acts of everyday resistance which contest formal state visions without challenging the state authorities directly. In the authoritarian framework of Vietnam, this approach is more productive as it can account for

the complex and ambiguous state-society relations in Vietnam without reducing them to simple political power hierarchies.

The use of visual methods, i.e. photos, provides a means of documentation that bring these practices and aspirations to the front and simultaneously locates them in space. They underline the close relationship between material space and the social layers imprinted on this space. The focus is not the individual and its activities but the constitutive interdependency between the communal urban material space and the everyday activities located in this space. Interviews were then used to gain more information on activities, aspirations, and perceptions. They provide in-depth information to contextualize the observations and visual data. Interviews also constitute starting points for the collection of further visual data. Due to issues with the research permit in Buôn Ma Thuột, I could only conduct interviews in Tam Kỳ. From previous experience, the expectation was that local officials at the ward level would like to supervise and organize these interviews. Instead, local authorities allowed me to interview people alone and on my terms. Therefore, after identifying the major peri-urban areas in Tam Kỳ, interviews were conducted based on availability and chance, following the same pattern as the collection of visual data and participatory observations.

2.3. REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCH DIFFICULTIES AND ETHICS

Conducting fieldwork in Vietnam always contains its own set of difficulties and boundaries, which researchers need to take into account. Beyond the authoritarian political context, working as a European researcher in a previous European colony needs to account for the sensitive historical context. Furthermore, the visual aspect of this work also raises questions regarding the use of photos. In the following, I will address these questions.

Political dimension

First, the fieldwork of this work was generously supported by IVIDES at the University of Social Science and Humanities in Hà Nội, including the provision of visa and research permits and local contacts. One of the major points where this support was invaluable was the choice of research location. Originally, the research design focused on Buôn Ma Thuột as the location for the fieldwork. However, after six weeks it became clear that it was not possible to receive a research permit for Buôn Ma Thuột, and thus local research,

particularly as a foreigner, might be difficult to conduct and endanger potential interview partners. Therefore, based on the recommendation of IVIDES, further fieldwork was conducted in Tam Kỳ, where it was much easier to gain a research permit. It was also possible to move freely through the city and conduct interviews without local interference. However, many interview partners did not prefer the recording of interviews and were reluctant to give names. Thus, based on previous experiences where local officials in a different location harassed interview partners even when these same officials were previously present during the interview, I tried to respect this reluctance and conducted most interviews by taking notes. As a researcher in an authoritarian political context, it is relevant to highlight the safety and well-being of interview partners. Therefore, in Buôn Ma Thuột, I did not conduct interviews beyond informal talks with local people. However, this allowed me to focus more on the material space and the relation between everyday practices and materiality. Buôn Ma Thuột thus gave rise to my visual approach to this research project to find a solution to the external limitations I faced.

Position as researcher

Research on Southeast Asia and particularly fieldwork contains the risk to perpetuate local social hierarchies and elevate outside above local perspectives. As a Western researcher, it is thus important to be conscious about this position and particularly how to engage the field and communicate results. This includes the use of the Vietnamese language in interviews, the careful relationship with sources and interviews and their contributions and worries, and the aim to avoid the implicit Westernized perspective on Vietnam by questioning the Western presentation of Vietnam in media and research. To address this problem, this work takes local practices as constitutive blocks to reconstruct local realities. This focus on local practices is increasingly common in social science in recent years.

During my fieldwork, my husband and my daughter (at the time two years old) accompanied me. This family context changed the dynamic as my husband, who migrated from Central Vietnam could support me with linguistic and social support and thus often provide access for interviews and logistical solutions. My daughter also changed my position in the field as she was often an ice breaker during interviews but also made me more visible in the small homogenous community in Tam Kỳ. Both, my husband and my daughter, facilitated interviews and increased local trust in my work.

Visual data

The most difficult aspect of this work is the use of photos as data. First, most photos used in this work are my own. Thus copyright questions are no issue in this work. However, the use of visual data raises questions concerning the right to one's photo. During the fieldwork, I was new to the visual research method and was not conscious of the ethical connotations concerning image ownership. The visual method used for this work was mostly experimental, even if it got more systematic over time. When people were photographed directly, I always asked about permission but not in written form, which people are more reluctant to give. However, many photos were taken while riding on the back of a motorbike. Thus, it was impossible to ask for permission in those instances. I aimed to document the material space and the practices and not the individuals. Hence, most pictures were taken at a wide angle with people not identifiable. However, in some photos, faces are recognizable. Thus, I decided to include these photos only in this thesis if they posed no direct danger for those depicted.

2.4. THESIS STRUCTURE

The social, economic, and political landscape in Vietnam oscillates between formal image and informal practice (Reis 2012). Whereas the formal representation is often easily accessible and visible, it often attempts to conceal the practicalities of everyday life. Furthermore, the state at different levels dominates the formal image presented to the outside world. Residents can often either conform to the projected image or employ informal practices as a countermeasure as there is little room for participating in the production of the formal image. Instead, negotiations between state actors and residents are mostly relegated to the realm of informality. Based on the formal representation, every researcher has to start digging to uncover the informal practices which constitute Vietnam's social, economic, and political life. This work follows this approach to move from the easily accessible surface of images towards the complex practices of everyday life.

In the first chapter, this thesis defines the subject of peri-urban space in the urban periphery. It identifies the material, functional and symbolic pattern of peri-urbanization in secondary cities in Vietnam. This pattern constitutes the materiality of what this work

defines as a “peri-urban city” and sets the stage for the images and practices projected and employed by state actors and residents.

Following the setting of the stage, the second chapter analyses the processes by which the local state actors engage in the production of the formal image. However, this state-led production of peri-urban materiality already creates opportunities for informal practices. There emerges a rift between the urban aspirations of the local administration and the urban realities of everyday life.

Therefore, Chapter 3 describes the emerging peri-urban city as a social arena defined by spatial practices and porosity. The focus is on the complex and dynamic realities of everyday life. It links these practices with the question of materiality. The chapter looks in detail at the functionality of porosity. It identifies emerging spaces of appropriation and aspiration in the informality of everyday life, which enables the use of space as urban commons. Porosity thereby allows the rise of intertwined layers of practices and relations in the city.

The combination of porosity and layers of practices and relations gives birth to the peri-urban city as a space of everyday resistance. Chapter 4 describes the constitution of urban citizenship rooted in everyday resistance. The informal practices of everyday resistance discussed in this work focus on spaces of sharing and mobility. This space of everyday resistance also gives rise to the utopian hope for an integrative, socially just, and participatory urban future that moves beyond the cargo cult urbanism of the Vietnamese state.

CHAPTER 1 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SPACE IN THE URBAN PERIPHERY

1. THE PERI-URBAN CITY – BLURRED BOUNDARIES, IMAGES AND THE PERIPHERY

Finding the heart of a city is easy. One can look for the market, the central administration, a traffic hub. From there, the material and the symbolic space of the city stretch out in all directions. However, how to find the boundaries of the city as the place where the urban ends and the rural begins?

In our imagination, and especially in the Vietnamese context, there are specific images and functions attached to the categories of “urban” and “rural”. “Rural” space is imagined as preserving tradition, offering a more relaxed lifestyle, and being characterized by the immediate presence of nature. Contrarily, the “urban” is imagined as the epitome of modernity, characterized by a dynamic lifestyle and permanent transformation. Hence, in Vietnam, urban and rural are two distinguished categories, separated by clear administrative boundaries as well as specific meanings (Harms 2011). These meanings include the dichotomy of tradition and modernity, civilized and backward, culture and development. Both have ascribed functions in the nation-state, like the production of food or industrial goods or services. These images are part of a national discourse on urban and rural space. They produce social categories that the state and social actors jointly construct and reproduce (Harms, 2011). The opposition between rural and urban is more than a system of meaning. It creates a sense of identity and belonging and “organize[s] the political and economic relations among people within society” (Harms 2011, p.5). At the same time, the everyday practices of people moving in these spaces contradicted this dichotomy. Between rural and urban space, there is an ambivalent space that is neither part of the rural nor the urban space but characterized by its in-betweenness. This space is often referred to as peri-urban. People living in peri-urban spaces are neither rural nor urban. Their practices are a combination of urban and rural activities. Hence, the peri-urban space at the urban periphery is a frontier space of urbanization processes and simultaneously a conservatory space for rural livelihood strategies. This duality blurs boundaries between rural and urban and between center and periphery. In the framework of small- and medium-sized cities, where spatial proximity between rural and urban spaces is even closer, the whole city can thus be defined as a peri-urban space. Using the cases of Buôn Ma Thuột in the Central Highlands and Tam Kỳ in the central coastal region, the idea of a

“peri-urban city” will be explored in the following, starting with a definition of peri-urban space in the framework of small and medium-sized cities in Vietnam.

2. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS: DEFINING PERI-URBAN SPACE

2.1. THE DEFINITION OF PERI-URBAN

The location where the city ends is not geographically marked or easily identifiable. Instead, urban space, the city, is constantly moving outward into the surrounding area pushing rural areas further out. This fluidity and constant transformation lead to a space of ambiguity. This space, neither rural nor urban in its characteristics, but dominated by its fluid in-betweenness and blurred boundaries, represents the peri-urban. The peri-urban exists as a spatial continuum, not fixed in space and with no distinct borders but constantly shifting, moving, adapting.

The definition of peri-urban itself maintains a level of fluidity and cannot be easily narrowed down. It creates a continuum from rural to urban. Depending on how one looks at the peri-urban space, one can see a place, a concept, or a process (Narain and Nischal 2007). The peri-urban as a geographical place is surrounding the city center. As a concept, the peri-urban space serves as an interface between rural and urban space, activities, and institutions. In this sense, the peri-urban exists as a space of exchange and interaction, being rural and urban at the same time. Finally, as a process, the focus is on the changing nature of the peri-urban as a center of transformation. It constitutes an area through which goods, ideas, and people move. The peri-urban existing in the present will thus not exist in the future. (Narain and Nischal 2007)

Based on the approach of the peri-urban as a process, five relations need to be taken into consideration: (1) spatial as a space between the urban core and the rural hinterland, (2) temporal as a space between the past and the future, (3) functional as a space of interaction, of resources and flows, (4) social as a heterogeneous space integrating different social groups, (5) conflicting as a space of conflict concerning different systems and interests. (Brook et al. 2003)

Along these lines, the peri-urban space surrounding a city core fulfills different roles. Firstly, peri-urban space provides an interface where social actors from a rural and urban background (including state actors and the administration, newly arriving and long-time

residents, rural farmers, and urban business people) negotiate access to resources (i.e. land, water, energy, but also employment, networks, and social relations). Consequently, the different actors push forward interests linked to their specific position along the continuum between rural and urban. Farmers negotiate for access to land, water, and markets. Urban dwellers are demanding land for housing and pushing for urban infrastructure. (Narain 2010)

Secondly, peri-urban areas work as frontier spaces of urbanization, globalization, and governance (Leaf 2015). An increasing level of fragmentation (Leaf 2015) and porosity of space (BypassLab 2016; Stavrides 2018; Wolfrum 2019; Benjamin and Lancis 1925; Sennett 2010; Sennett 2018) characterize these areas. Different practices and symbols, land use, infrastructure, and buildings exist together in the same space. Sometimes, these differences might overlap or support each other. At other times, they might contradict or challenge each other. Porosity also refers to a more open space with fewer restrictions to movement and mobility. The same space is used by vendors located along the side of the road, by farmers who move slowly along the road grazing their cattle, bicycles, motorbikes, cars, and trucks all moving with different velocities through the same space. Space also provides opportunities for farming, construction work, political mobilization, and religious festivals. This fragmentation and porosity produce a multilevel landscape of urban planning, self-organization, and negotiation between state and non-state actors leading to socio-economic transformations. These transformations create a place of encounter, interaction, and contestation between different actors, interests, and meanings.

Thirdly, peri-urban space constitutes a space of transformation in which rural structures and patterns are transformed into urban structures and patterns (Narain and Nischal 2007). This transformation includes the material, functional and symbolic characteristics of space and the socio-economic and political frame of social activities and interactions between different social actors. Furthermore, there exists a mutual relationship between space and activities. As actors move in space, they need to adapt their activities to spatial transformations. But their adapted strategies to cope with the shifting spatial structures further transform the space surrounding them.

Finally, peri-urban space is characterized by social edginess defined by Harms (2011). Social edginess means the mutual existence of opportunities and marginalization created by the position of local actors at the blurred boundaries of urban and rural space (Harms

2011). Social edginess emerges from the ambivalence of peri-urban space because it exists as a grey zone of administrative, social, and economic conditions. To take advantage of this grey zone and the newly created opportunities, local people need coping strategies, particularly access to resources. These strategies will create a space of emancipation for local people to renegotiate their relations with the transforming space and the people inhabiting it. Local actors will be marginalized if they lack access to resources and cannot cope with changing structures and adapt their livelihood strategies. Thus, peri-urban space creates a pattern of inclusion and exclusion based on the access to resources and the existing social creativity of its inhabitants (Evers and Korff 2003). Evers and Korff (2003) describe social creativity as

“[...] the definition of a decent living and the effort to create the conditions for making such a decent living. It is social creativity because it is based on interaction, it implies social relations to others, in particular family members, friends, relatives. Social creativity is the knowledge, usage, and coordination of resources available.”

Ribot and Peluso (2003, p.158/159) define access as "the ability to benefit" from resources. They distinguish the ability to gain, control and maintain access. Differences in access and social creativity produce social inequalities based on marginalization and exclusion.

The ambivalence of peri-urban space and its related insecurities enforces the need for risk spreading and diversification of everyday survival strategies. Thus, agricultural activities, the combination of urban and rural resources, and diversified employment strategies in one household are central for peri-urban space. These diversification strategies are based on the availability of modes of transport and the mobility of the actors. Furthermore, often, these survival strategies are dependent on the proximity of the urban center. Social edginess at the urban periphery creates hybrid social forms based on the flexibility of roles and identities.

2.2. PERI-URBANIZATION IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED SECONDARY CITIES: “THE PERI-URBAN CITY”

The term “peri-urban” along with peri-urbanization as a research category is mostly used in the context of large cities. For example, Harms (2011) anthropological study “Saigon’s Edge” focuses primarily on the emerging new urban areas on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City, and Bousquet (2016) analyses peri-urban space in Hà Nội. In both cases, there is a

clear distinction between the urban city and the rural hinterland. In these cases, peri-urban development is characterized “by low to medium density dispersed urban development with low connectivity and sometimes large areas of vacant or low-level production agricultural land between settlements” (Almeide 2005). This definition also includes poor urban services and infrastructure, the prevalence of farming activities on small plots, and family-owned commercial and business activities. With growing urban development, industrial manufacturing increases. (Roberts 2016)

However, smaller urban centers make the distinction between rural and urban and the localization of the peri-urban in-between space more difficult. In small towns and cities, the urban center and the rural hinterland are often geographically close, sometimes only a drive of five minutes on a motorbike. Simultaneously, markers of rural activities are present in the urban core, close to modern housing facilities or supermarkets. Thus, contrarily to the idea that the urban is spreading out into the periphery and transforming rural into urban space, in smaller cities and towns, we can also find characteristics of the rural surviving and even pushing into the urban space. Hence, the whole city maintains a certain level of in-betweenness, being rural and urban at the same time.

This in-betweenness of the urban in small towns is linked to the function of secondary cities as the point of arrival for new rural migrants before they might move further into larger and more central cities in the national hierarchy. Secondary cities in Vietnam thus function as an interface, which transforms rural into urban citizens. They teach them about urban ways of life by also maintaining a certain level of familiarity. They provide urban anonymity and heterogeneity, urban jobs and entertainment but also a setting in which, while driving through town, it is possible to meet many familiar faces, close networks of neighbors and colleagues, and the security provided by these social networks, in which people might provide resources, like water, in case of need (Talcoli 2004; Talcoli 2003.)

Therefore, secondary cities could be characterized to be “peri-urban” in their totality. They are a frontier between the local rural and global urban. They produce spaces of transformation and globalization. Being neither urban nor rural but in-between, they provide an interface for people and ideas to interact. They offer opportunities for new migrants and old inhabitants but might also marginalize others. Intertwined processes of peri-urbanization and urbanization dominate them. They are less visible, less modern, less sexy, more down-to-earth, more conservative, and slower in adapting to new lifestyles. But

they are defined by constant processes of transformation that produce new identities, offer open space for the development of modern aspirations, and require continuous negotiations between different actors. Peri-urban cities have the population density and the functionality of a city concerning the market and state control while also integrating rural and peri-urban functionality and spatial materiality with urban porosity.

Using the examples of Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ, this section, using peri-urbanization as the frame of analysis, argues in the following that small and medium-sized towns and cities in Vietnam can be perceived as peri-urban spaces of transformation. In terms of analysis, we have thus to look at the space of transformation along with the space of emancipation, to describe small and medium-sized towns and cities in Vietnam as “peri-urban cities”².

2.3. DIMENSIONS OF PERI-URBAN TRANSFORMATION: POROSITY AND FRAGMENTATION

As defined above, a process of transformations, including fluidity and changing economic, political, ecological, and social patterns, characterizes peri-urban space. Discontinuity and a lack of constant pattern dominate this evolving space. In the following analysis, three dimensions of this emerging space of transformation are distinguished: the transformation of (1) material, (2) functional, and (3) symbolic pattern of space. Material patterns concern the built environment and define the landscape in which people move and interact daily. This visual characteristic of space is the first marker of the transforming pattern of peri-urban space. It includes newly built roads, new buildings, and the new infrastructure of modernity. Besides this material pattern, the transformation of space also concerns the functional aspect of peri-urban space. This dimension attempts to answer questions on how and why the usage of peri-urban space changes. It is linked to Lefebvre’s idea of the lived space and the spatial practices rooted in this space (Lefebvre 1991 as cited by Schmid 2008 and Schmid 2012). The functional transformation sometimes follows the transforming material pattern. In other cases, transforming functional patterns lead to a change in the

² The term “peri-urban town” was used by Melot (2016) to describe the process of peri-urbanization in France referring to smaller communes around bigger cities. In this work, “peri-urban city” will be used to describe the development of small and medium-sized towns in Vietnam and their ambivalent in-betweenness.

built environment. Finally, the space of transformation also changes the symbolic patterns, or what Lefebvre calls the conceived and perceived space. These symbolic patterns are linked to the meanings and identities embedded in the space. They are reproduced by interaction in our everyday life, along with the plans, imaginations, and aspirations related to this space. Hence, while symbolic patterns contain visual artifacts found throughout the space, this dimension is also embedded in continuously renegotiated narratives and aspirations of different social actors. Moreover, while the material dimension of space is identical for all members of society, the functional and symbolic ones can be very different for different social actors.

The material, functional and symbolic pattern of peri-urban space and the transformation of its landscape produce spatial porosity and fragmentation (ByPassLab 2016). In Chapter 3, the idea of porosity is analyzed in more detail, but the basic concept will be introduced here. The urban environment can be distinguished from rural space by a higher density of people, buildings, and activities (Wirth 1938). This urban density is not complete but is interrupted by borders, thresholds, and forgotten empty spaces. In rural space, density is low. There exists a high degree of homogeneity combined with a high amount of open space, the usage of which is not yet defined. In urban space, high density is combined with high heterogeneity of actors and activities as urban voids are smaller and more scattered. Urban planning and management define the use of most of the space. Between the two extremes of rural and urban, we can find a high degree of porosity in peri-urban space, due to constant transformation: density is growing but not spatially even. There still exist many open areas, whose usage is not predetermined. Fewer boundaries and more borders and thresholds, which can be crossed to provide access, define peri-urban space. At the same time, the social, functional, and spatial heterogeneity increases. The peri-urban city provides numerous open, undefined spaces, which can be explored, appropriated, negotiated. Porosity combines the density of urban areas with existing voids to provide empty and open spaces throughout the physical urban environment. These voids provide openness, accessibility, and mobility, as well as space for innovation, flexibility, and negotiation (Wolfrum 2018a). Generally, porosity encourages the mobility of peri-urban people within and between the urban and peri-urban. Porosity and the subsequent mobility of peri-urban people enable them to access and use multiple roles, fulfill various functions and evoke different symbols at the same time, similar to the description of social edginess

by Harms (2011). The emerging synchronicity in functionality, materiality, and symbolism becomes accessible due to the low density and high openness of available porous space.

While borders and thresholds provide accessibility and mobility that connects spaces, boundaries limit or end movements. Rather they create dead-ends that interrupt mobility and openness. The result is a fragmentation of space. Contrary to porosity, which supports multifunctional use of space, spatial fragmentation restricts the use of space. At the same time, spatial fragmentation in peri-urban space is characterized by the simultaneous existence of urban and rural spatial patterns next to each other, only separated by accessibility and regulations (Harms 2011). Rural and urban material, functional and symbolic patterns are intertwined. They create a fragmented landscape. This landscape includes the construction of industrial parks in the middle of rice fields and the side-by-side existence of rural farms and new urban areas nearby. In urban areas, this fragmentation of space is often the consequence of strict zoning rules. In peri-urban space, they often emerge from a lack of overall planning. Space is seen as an opportunity as its porosity enables its fragmented use (Harms 2011).

The level of fragmentation and porosity emerges from the peri-urban space of transformation in which the material, functional and symbolic pattern of the peri-urban shift towards a more urban usage while maintaining some rural characteristics. These shifts transform the identity of urban space as the urban buildings and activities move into peri-urban and rural spaces. At the same time, rural spatial patterns persist in urban and newly developed urban areas. These transformations reproduce porosity and fragmentation and create spatial ambiguity as central characteristics of peri-urban space. The peri-urban city is thus still a little rural in its core. The cause is the spatial transformation, which is not limited to the periphery but stretches into the center.

3. LOOKING FOR THE PERI-URBAN IN THE VIETNAMESE CONTEXT

3.1. THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEFINITION OF PERI-URBAN IN VIETNAM

To contextualize peri-urban space in the Vietnamese discourse, this chapter introduces the administrative definition of urban used by the government. For the Vietnamese state, the city is defined as a spatial unit limited by geographical boundaries. It has an administrative as well as a geographical dimension and is characterized by quantitative characteristics like

population, density, infrastructure, administration, and other institutions as well as socio-economic structures (Harms 2011).

Due to the focus on quantitative characteristics, urban development plans for every city of Vietnam set specific goals as part of 5-year plans. These plans emphasize infrastructure and services, like hospitals, schools, or administration. They describe a development trajectory that is similar for each Vietnamese city. The implementation of these plans leads to the categorization of cities into different levels depending on their perceived level of development, as stated in the Decree No. 42/2009/ND-CP OF MAY 7, 2009: On the grading of urban centers. This categorization decides the distribution of available financial resources provided by the central government and creates an incentive to rapidly climb the national urban hierarchy. The result is quantitative urbanization based on population growth and infrastructure projects. This focus ignores the need for qualitative urbanization such as support for the adaptation of livelihood strategies, social networks, and the daily way of life in secondary cities.

Due to this favored development path, every Vietnamese city exists not only in a specific form in the present but also contains traces of past plans and aspirations for its future. The Vietnamese city is at the same time located in geographical and aspirational space. Urban aspirations, expressed in urban planning are then translated into the concrete space and renegotiated between different social actors. The Vietnamese city is constantly transforming based on the desire to become more modern, civilized, and urban. Thereby, the “urban”, defined as the epitome of modernity, is geared towards the transformation of the whole nation into a space of modernity. (Harms 2011)

The reality of space and planning expresses this fact in the administrative division between inner- and outer-city districts. The inner-city districts (Vietnamese: phường) represent the existing city space while the outer-city districts (Vietnamese: xã), although included in the urban administrative unit, are part of the rural hinterland characterized by the rural past. The inner-city is already urban in the material, functional, and symbolic sense. It represents the realization of modernity as defined by city planners. The outer-city offers space for material transformations as well as the symbolic colonization of space. It functions as an area of agricultural production, offering resources and the potential for long-term urban growth. They maintain the promise of the urban for a modern, civilized future and symbolize a space for future modern development. (Harms 2011)

Consequently, in its most basic geographical definition, the peri-urban is situated on the edge between the inner and the outer-city districts.

Harms (2011) criticizes that there exists no administrative category of peri-urban in the Vietnamese regulatory framework. Thus, the state cannot consider the specific problems, demands, and needs of peri-urban space and its residents. Peri-urban areas belong partly to the inner-city administrative districts but are also part of the outer-city administrative districts (Harms 2011). They are partly already perceived as modern space but simultaneously produce the space where the vision of modernity, defined in development plans, will be implemented in the future. However, the lack of a clear administrative category and the blurred boundaries between rural and urban space creates a space of ambiguity at the emerging peri-urban interface. The established meanings and functions ascribed to rural and urban space in the national discourse such as the dichotomy of tradition and modernity or civilized and backward, are not applicable in the ambiguous peri-urban space. People living in peri-urban areas are neither rural nor urban. Their everyday practices are a combination of urban and rural activities. Peri-urban space thus always falls partly outside of the realm of state control and discourse.

In small and medium-sized towns, this ambiguity of peri-urban space and the lack of an administrative category create what I called above the “peri-urban city”. Not only does the urban space cut into the rural hinterland, but the rural hinterland also reaches into the heart of the urban center. The fully urbanized, modern center hence does not exist. Instead, there is a fluid space of transformation located in the discourse of modernization and urban development. Simultaneously, this fluidity allows for rural practices to reach from the urban center into the surrounding periphery.

3.2. PERI-URBAN CITIES: MAPPING THE CITY IN BUÔN MA THUẬT AND TAM KỲ

Being the largest city of the Central Highland region with 375,590 inhabitants and an area of 377km² (population density of 1310 inhabitants/km²), Buôn Ma Thuột, the provincial capital of Đắk Lắk province, is a political and socio-economic center for the whole region (Kim Bao 2021a). It also has a prominent position in the global coffee market, as Vietnam is the second-largest producer of raw coffee beans. In 1904, during the colonial era, the French chose Buôn Ma Thuột, a minority village and trading center along Serepok River, as the provincial administrative center for the newly established Đắk Lắk Province in the

area of previous minority villages, especially the Ede (Báo Biên Phòng 2016). Till this day, a significant proportion of the population is part of minority groups living within their villages, often used as tourist attractions. During the post-war era, a process of administrative restructuring started that integrated districts in the immediate vicinity slowly into the administrative realm of the city of Buôn Ma Thuột. Based on the population census from 2019, approximately 65% of the population live in 13 urban districts, while 25% live in eight rural districts (GSO 2020:32).

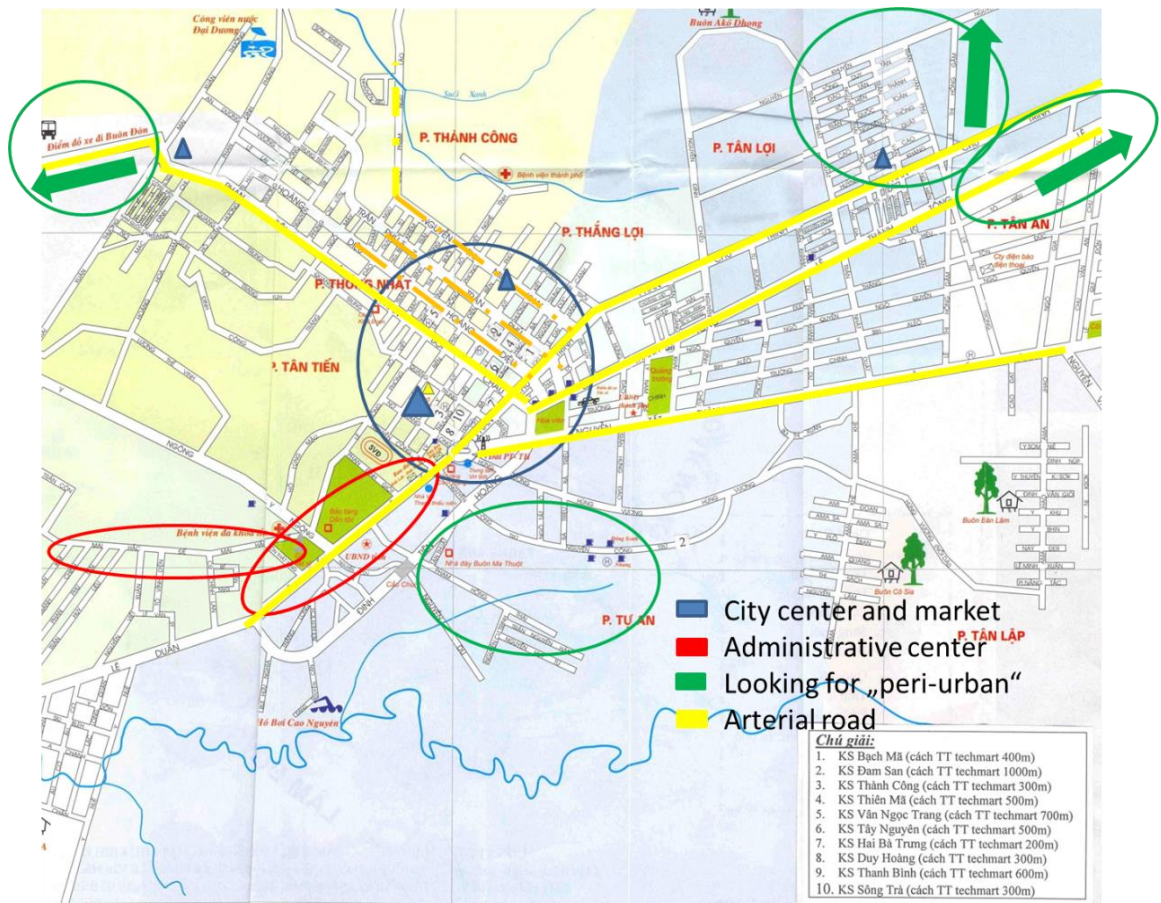


Figure 1 Map of Buôn Ma Thuột (Photo of print map, Mirjam Le)

Since the late 1980s, migration, especially from Northern Vietnam brought over one million additional people to the Central Highlands. The Vietnamese party-state in parts supported this migration movement. But more important were the promises of the growing coffee sector and the availability of large areas of empty land. The resulting coffee boom had a wide array of ecological and socio-economic consequences, including the living conditions of ethnic minorities in the region, deforestation caused by illegal logging and shifting agriculture, and the loss of wildlife (Vietnam News 2017; VietnamNet 2018, Havemann et al. 2015). Furthermore, the growing population combined with the boom of

coffee plantations and the development of hydropower plants led to an over-exploitation of water resources (Amarasinghe et al., 2015).

Besides the administrative function of the city as the provincial capital, which provides a range of services, especially in health care and education, cash crop production, especially coffee and pepper play important economic roles. Buôn Ma Thuật has a small, primarily domestic tourist sector, hosting a bi-annual coffee festival. It is also home to Trung Nguyên, the most prominent Vietnamese coffee brand. In terms of city size and national urban hierarchy, Buôn Ma Thuật constitutes a secondary city (Category I City in 2010) with a vital regional role and a global link due to the production of raw coffee. (VietnamNet 2012; VOVWorld 2020)



Figure 2 Map of Tam Kỳ (Cổng Thông Tin Điện Tử Thành Phố Tam Kỳ 2016)

Tam Kỳ is the provincial capital of the Central Vietnamese province of Quảng Nam since its re-establishment in 1997. It is situated 70 km south of Đà Nẵng along the National Highway 1A and 30 km north of the Chu Lai Industrial Zone. The city area reaches the South Chinese Sea in the east and borders the Annamese Cordillera in the west. In 2019, Tam Kỳ has an area of 100 km² and over 122374 inhabitants living in nine urban and four rural wards (GSO 2020:27). 75% of the population is estimated to be urban (GSO 2020:27). Based on the Vietnamese categorization of cities, Tam Kỳ was appointed a Category II City in 2016 (VGP News 2016). The local economy combines agriculture, aquaculture, handicraft, services, and a small industrial sector (AVC 2013). Until recently, even with its long beachfront in the east, Tam Kỳ was not a tourist destination. A community art project in 2015 aimed to put Tam Kỳ on the Vietnamese travel map. Vietnamese and South Korean artists painted houses and walls in the rural district of Tam Thanh to create the “Mural village” as a tourist attraction (Strauch, Robiou du Pont and Balanowski 2018: 57). In recent years a beach resort opened and residents started to operate a homestay in Tam Thanh commune.

Historically, like many other small Vietnamese towns, Tam Kỳ did not play an important role. It was founded in 1906 as a tax post by the Nguyễn Dynasty (AVC 2013). In the 1960s and the 1970s, an American airbase operated from an area close to the modern administrative city center. Back then, the locality was still a rural wasteland while the urban area of Tam Kỳ was concentrated around the market and along the river and highway, which crossed the city. Communist forces, which launched regular attacks at night, controlled the rural areas in the vicinity. Except for a battle in 1969 (“Battle of Yui Non Hill”), Tam Kỳ was of no historical significance during the war or after the Communist conquest on March 24, 1975, until it became the provincial capital of Quảng Nam province in 1997.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show maps of Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ respectively. By looking at these maps, one can follow the network of streets and buildings represented on the map starting from the city centers moving outwards.

In both cities, the existing city center is small but compact compared to the respective city size. Furthermore, the administrative center of each city is spatially linked to the older center built around the central market. However, there exists a clear-cut functional differentiation between both areas. Newly developing urban areas surround both city

centers. These areas contain a modern housing structure and mixed-economic use of agriculture, handicraft, and small-scale industries. These are located along the arterial roads and include big shopping malls like METRO in Buôn Ma Thuột as well as small hotels, restaurants, barbershops, workshops, and small stores for everyday utilities in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. On the maps, the grid-like street network compared to the more meandering rural streets can identify these newly developed urban areas. Besides the street network, open fields, wasteland, and construction sites close to the old city center around the market show the dynamic transformation of these administratively urban areas on the map.

Therefore, in both cities, the inner-city districts are not yet thoroughly urbanized based on administrative aspiration. Those areas of the inner-city districts further away from the city center are still in a transformative process in which the material, built patterns are changed, and new economic activities develop. This late urban development of administratively urban districts ensued from a process of administrative restructuring from the late 1970s onwards when rural districts were integrated into the city, particularly Ha Noi, to increase the size and population number of the city without developing the existing urban structures first (Labbé 2013; Nguyen 2016).

Hence, in consequence, most outer-city districts are still fully characterized by a rural material pattern like agriculture - cash crops like coffee and pepper in Buôn Ma Thuột and rice and aquaculture in Tam Kỳ - and small one-story housing as well as more open space. Thus, the urban development plans are still focusing on inner-city districts where the potential for the urban future is still not yet fully realized. The administrative definition of rural and urban is thus not helpful in locating peri-urban areas. Contrarily to the intuitive approach to look for the peri-urban pattern in rural districts, it is more feasible to start from the city center and investigate the surrounding urban districts to locate peri-urban space of transformation. This locating peri-urban transformation processes in urban districts produces a strong interdependence between rural and urban districts and a “peri-urban city” as described above.

In the following, these peri-urban transformation processes will be described in detail using both cities as examples with data from participatory observation, visual data, and semi-structured interviews collected in 2014 and 2015.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE SPACE OF TRANSFORMATION

4.1. MATERIAL PATTERN OF SPACE IN BUÔN MA THUẬT AND TAM KỶ

The material manifestation of space is often the first characteristic of space we perceive when passing through rural, urban or peri-urban space. This manifestation includes the density of buildings, the openings, the architecture, the grouping of buildings, and the organization of space.

Urban

A dense network of streets, which follows a grid pattern, defines the urban cores of both cities (see maps in Figures 1 and 2). These streets are tarred, lined by trees, and clean sidewalks. Both urban centers are densely populated. Consequently, residents build townhouses without gardens and often-missing yards. They are directly bordering the street and have no open space in-between (Figure 3). House owners install iron gates and solid brick walls on the front side to demarcate their homes spatially. The iron gates are left open during the day if inhabitants are at home or if they use the ground floor for business. Thus, these gates constitute thresholds instead of boundaries (Figure 3).

The urban center is home to a central business district (CBD). The main building of the CBD in both cities is the central market (Figure 4). In Tam Kỳ, the city administration built a new modern market in 2014 in Trần Cao Vân Street in the centrally located urban district (phường) of An Sơn (Figure 5), which subsequently replaced the old market area in Hung Vương Street. In Buôn Ma Thuật in 2014, the city administration renovated the market building and the surrounding area. Due to the market, the neighboring area in both cities is home to numerous small-scale, private, home-based businesses like shops, cafes, and restaurants. Besides these fixed business locations, a more improvised, mobile set of shops is located in the area, reaching from stalls to carts and mobile street vendors. This economic landscape leads to a fragmented material space with diverse forms. These forms include modern state architecture like the new market halls and the two to four-story tube houses, which are omnipresent in Vietnamese cities, often combining various architectural styles. The ground floor of these houses provides a threshold between the private and the public when residents use their homes as a shop or a café. Often activities spill out onto the sidewalk, where small tables and chairs improvise a mobile café or small “restaurant”. Around the market, market stalls are also set up in front of houses.

These improvised material forms of businesses often change depending on the time of the day. Small mobile food stalls on the sidewalk usually appear during breakfast, lunch, and dinnertime. Market stalls are present in the morning until noon. Shops have standard business hours but might be closed for a lunch break. In the evening, street vendors use sidewalks for makeshift food stalls selling barbecue and beer (Vietnamese: Bia hơi), which combines eating and drinking beer. In Tam Kỳ, this is prevalent on sidewalks around the University of Quảng Nam where students hang out at the night market, barbecue stalls and “chè”³ shops (Figure 6). The sidewalk furthermore provides parking space. Besides improvised sidewalk stalls, restaurants and beer halls offer a more sophisticated atmosphere for families, business people, and office workers to relax.

Besides this materiality of everyday urban life, the CBD in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột is also home to various offices and affiliations of companies and banks, often located in recently built small-scale skyscrapers. These buildings reference a model of international architecture based on glass and steel. They also include a shopping mall in Buôn Ma Thuột, modern supermarkets - Co.opmart in Tam Kỳ and Vinmart in Buôn Ma Thuột- and a Lotteria fast-food restaurant in each city. In Tam Kỳ, in 2015, the newly constructed Muong Thanh Grand Quang Nam Hotel also contains a modern entertainment complex for the well-off public. It is located in Hùng Vương Street, An Sơn ward. Consequently, the CBD in Tam Kỳ now stretches from the central market to Hùng Vương Street. It contains the major streets between both locations. However, many of the modern buildings in the CBD have boundaries that exclude the public, symbolized by official guards. These buildings represent a privatized urban space owned by private business owners. A minority of buildings is also accessible for the public and thus provides an open heterogeneous space to meet and interact (Figure 7).

In Tam Kỳ, the University of Quảng Nam is located in the urban center. Its adjacent neighborhoods constitute a small but lively quarter characterized by boarding houses and entertainment facilities, particularly cafés, music and beer halls, and a (night) market. The university itself provides open, accessible spaces for local people. Its athletic field offers opportunities for the public to exercise and go jogging and for the neighborhood children as a playground. Its confining walls and iron gates are closed at night to constitute a

³Translation: Sweet Vietnamese dessert soup

boundary. During the day, the gates are open and work as a threshold the neighbors and students can easily cross (Figure 8). In Buôn Ma Thuật, Tây Nguyên University is not located in the city center but the peri-urban outskirts of the city.



Figure 3 Urban boundaries: Gates and walls around middle class housing in Tam Kỳ (top) and Buôn Ma Thuật (bottom)



Figure 4 Neighborhood around the Central Market in Tam Kỳ (above) and Buôn Ma Thuột (below): Small shops and businesses in 2014 and 2015



Figure 5 Newly built market in Tam Kỳ in November 2014



Figure 6 Sidewalk market and food stalls around the University of Quảng Nam



Figure 7 Central Business District in Buon Ma Thuot (top) and Tam Kỳ (bottom) in 2014



Figure 8 Public use of the athletic field at the University of Quảng Nam in October 2014



Figure 9 Administrative architecture: Main building of People's Committee in Tam Kỳ

Finally, the material pattern in the urban core is also defined by the administrative quarter. Both Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột are provincial capitals, thus fulfilling many administrative, educational, and health services for the whole province. The city center is home to numerous administrative buildings, schools, hospitals, and health care centers. Administrative buildings are clustered together next to the CBD in both cities. The area is quieter, with less traffic, and cleaner. In Buôn Ma Thuột, the administrative district also includes two large museums located in a park. Architecturally, all administrative buildings follow the same style (Figure 9). They are closed off from the street and surrounded by a high wall. In Buôn Ma Thuột, the administrative buildings are all situated in broad alleys lined by old trees. These general material features produce a boundary as they distinctly set the administrative district apart from the rest of the city. Residents may travel through this area, though it is not part of their everyday life.



Figure 10 Overgrown park in Tam Kỳ provides urban porosity.

As buildings and the material pattern set borders and boundaries throughout the urban core, parks and public squares provide open spaces for use by local people. These public spaces form an urban void, which provides a level of creativity in its usage. Parks are generally open for the public by day and provide entertainment for children and adults, fitness equipment, small children rides, and cafes. Nevertheless, many parks like the one in Buôn

Ma Thuật (Figure 11) are enclosures, confined by walls and gates and closed at night. However, often parks are also less formal, just a patch of green with some banks in a neighborhood to provide some community space for interactions, as often found in Tam Kỳ (Figure 10).

In Tam Kỳ, the central square is the main public space of the city. The square offers a vast empty area surrounded by trees in front of the Provincial People's Committee. Residents of all ages and economic spheres meet, exercise, and hang out at the square throughout the day. Attempts by officials to control the entry to the area were met with resistance, e.g. the iron bars erected to prevent motorbikes from driving on the square were repetitively vandalized. In Buôn Ma Thuật, the main square provides less open space. It consists of a roundabout as a centrally located traffic hub decorated with the first tank entering the city in 1975. From the square, five arterial roads are moving outwards in all directions. A Catholic church is located next to the roundabout. Additionally, the adjunct open areas offer space for meeting and entertainment in the evening (Figure 12).



Figure 11 Central park in Buôn Ma Thuột with children's rides and café



Figure 12 Different use of the main public square in Tam Kỳ (above) and Buôn Ma Thuột (below)

Ongoing construction in both city centers, like the construction of the new market, new arterial roads, and the renovating and modernizing of private houses, creates a third

category of open voids: construction sites and empty lots. Some of these spaces remained after the construction of buildings around them. Others emerge only temporarily until future buildings will fill the still existing voids. They provide a visual context of fluidity, opportunities for alternative activities like gardens in the urban core, and increase the urban porosity. Local people use these left-over spaces for farming, thus producing a material pattern of farmland in the urban center.

Finally, sidewalks and space along the roadside offer the most common open, public space in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. Sidewalks function as significant spatial voids. Local people use them in their everyday life for public and private activities as shown in Figure 13. Sidewalks provide parking spots, space for selling and buying, household chores, gardens, and meeting with friends. They exist as an interface between the private and public in Vietnamese cities.



Figure 13 Sidewalks as public space in Tam Kỳ: Market (top left), interaction (top right), work place (bottom left) and worshipping (bottom right)

Finally, the material used for its establishment also defines the material pattern of the urban core. Cement, bricks, and iron are the chief construction materials. These materials create massive boundaries, which can be closed and stop movements and usage. However, as the example of the square in Tam Kỳ shows, the need for urban public space demands a

level of openness and porosity. Even iron boundaries are not always confining space and stopping porosity.

In summary, the material pattern of the city center is not immutable, but fragmented in time and changing depending on the needs of the local population. Whereas on the first look, boundaries seem to be present everywhere in the urban in the form of walls, iron gates, or construction fences, a closer look reveals a diverse environment characterized by open spaces, thresholds, and borders instead of boundaries. This double role of boundary and border in the material space becomes evident when observing road space. Streets with heavy traffic function as boundaries. They are sometimes hard to cross as they cut through the urban space and divide the city. However, they also work as thresholds providing mobility and connection between areas. The ambiguous Vietnamese relation between private and public makes these spatial distinctions more fluid. The best example of this urban fluidity of material pattern is sidewalks. Following the concept of porosity, sidewalks provide spatial voids, which can be redefined, reimagined, and re-negotiated between different actors. They are characterized by a constant transformation.

Peri-urban

To reach the peri-urban space, one must move outward along the arterial roads, passing through neighborhoods further away from the center. Along these arterial roads, private investors and the local administration construct new urban areas on farmland to provide living quarters for a new middle class and targeted population growth. However, these new urban areas developed by the city administration in Tam Kỳ only consist of a street grid and primary infrastructures like streetlights, street signs, and crosswalks. The future house owners have to build their own private houses. This leads to a scattered landscape of buildings in new urban areas where vast amounts of empty land are still available (Figure 14 and 17)



Figure 14 New urban area in Buon Ma Thuot in 2014 (Phan Chu Trinh, Tân Lợi)



15 Rural-urban interface in Tam Kỳ (12/2014)

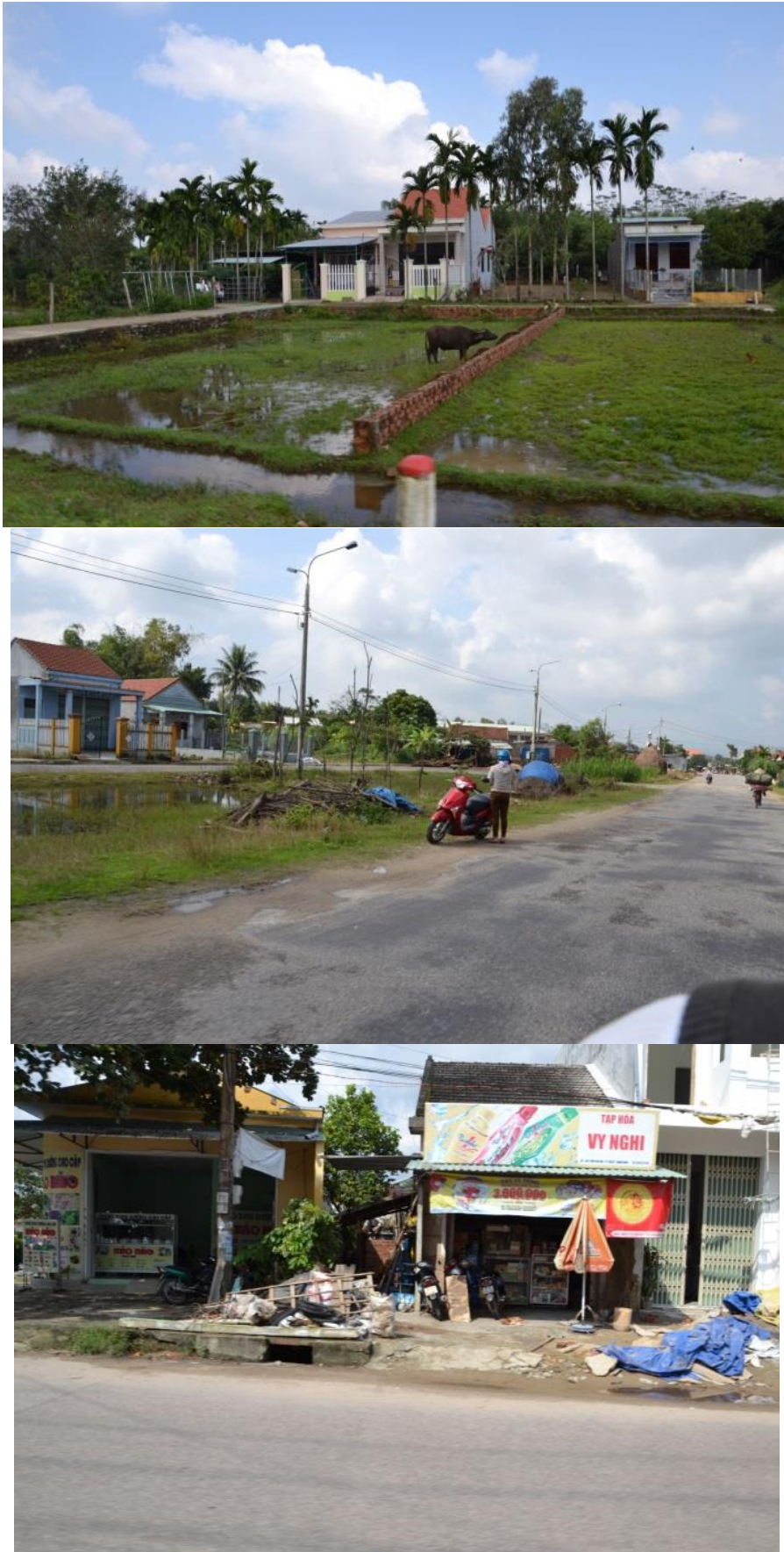


Figure 16 Rural-urban interface in Tam Kỳ (12/2014)

Besides the development of new urban areas, the peri-urban space is also home to established local communities. Some of these communities still live in villages, especially those not directly located along the arterial roads. However, in many cases, particularly closer to the urban center or around central traffic hubs, they became buzzing clusters of old and new houses and economic activities. They are hence slowly integrated into the urban core. The buildings established in these self-developed urbanizing pockets are a mixture of modern two or three-story homes and older rural housing. These older one-story houses become more prevalent the further away from the center one moves. Sidewalks are not commonplace along arterial and main roads in this peri-urban setting in both cities. In back alley streets, roads are narrow, not always asphalted, and without any sidewalk. These areas are residential. Economic activities and shops are confined to the main streets. In Tam Kỳ, two kilometers from the city center and only a five-minute motorbike drive across railway tracks and Highway 1A, the transformation from rural to urban becomes evident. A rural-urban interface emerges that combines spatial transformations with porosity and fragmentation. However, different from the planned new urban areas, these transformations are organically integrated into the peri-urban landscape (Figure 15 and 16).

Consequently, proximity and fluidity between urban and rural landscapes emerge. Peri-urban housing clusters create a patchwork in which agricultural farmland, dwelling, and business activities alternate. Space becomes available, including wasteland, farmland, and future construction sites. In Buôn Ma Thuột, farmers use space along rural roads for coffee production on small-scale farms (Figure 19). This practice creates a fragmented space occupied by smaller farmhouses surrounded by farmland and huge urban villas. Along these peri-urban and rural roads, small shops, improvised gas stations, roadside cafes, and hair salons serve mobile customers who commute between rural and urban areas. Whereas cash crop production is not part of the economic mix in Tam Kỳ, the material pattern of cafés, gas stations, and hair salons along main roads is similar. Instead of cash crops, fishing villages along Thanh Nhiên Road, which runs parallel to the shoreline, engage in fishing and shrimp farming along the riversides of Trường Giang River. The shrimp ponds with their electric pumps are thus part of the material pattern of Tam Kỳ (Figure 19)



Figure 17 New urban areas in Tam Kỳ in 2014 (clockwise: Bùi Tấn Diên, An Phú/ Đường Lam Sơn Tân Thạnh /Đường Phan Khôi, Tân Thạnh/ Khu dân cư 270 Tam Phú)



Figure 18 Recreational space in peri-urban space: Motels in Tam Kỳ



Figure 19 Production for the market: Shrimp and fish farms in Tam Kỳ (left) and coffee plantation in Buôn Ma Thuật (right)



Figure 20 Public space in peri-urban Tam Kỳ used for recreation and entertainment

These roadside villages are also home to local people who commute to Tam Kỳ for working, which is only a short 15-minutes' drive away. Many houses in Tam Thanh are thus locked during the day, creating the impression of quiet roads. Commuting provides a degree of mobility and interconnectedness between the urban and peri-urban/rural spaces. The city reaches into its hinterland; the hinterland reaches into the city hence crossing the borders between rural and urban.

The material space along the main roads, which connect the peri-urban space and the urban core, also provides space for several entertainment establishments like cafes, restaurants, massage parlors, bars, and motels (Figure 18). Recreational space is hence a relevant material pattern of peri-urban space. However, often this space is privatized and closed off from the public by gates, walls, or the cost of admission. Sometimes, these costs are small, like buying a cup of coffee in a café on the roadside. But increasingly, the expenses exclude poorer groups of the local population, like in the case of expensive seafood restaurants, the new hotel built in Tam Kỳ or the Trung Nguyên Coffee Village in Buôn Ma Thuột, home of the Trung Nguyên coffee brand, which all cater to a small but growing middle class. The Trung Nguyên Coffee Village, for example, consists of a large garden area, a shop, and a café and is used for tourists and local wedding photoshoots. Whereas access is open to everyone, the comparatively high prices for drinks and food serve as means of exclusion.

Besides these private spaces, there exist open public spaces in peri-urban areas. Residents use these spaces for meetings, playing, moving like the beach in Tam Kỳ. Sometimes, small parks constructed in new urban areas provide a public space for local people. In other cases, like the newly built "Vietnam's Heroic Mother Statue" in Tam Kỳ, state monuments also offer public space. This monument located in the peri-urban fringe of Tam Kỳ was inaugurated in 2015 and is surrounded by a large park (Figure 20). Furthermore, the natural space and open wasteland in peri-urban areas are still significant for the material pattern, often directly located between pockets of housing, villages, fields, and construction sites. The natural environment, lower population density, and a lack of built boundaries help to create these open spaces as voids in the peri-urban area (Figure 21).



Figure 21 Wasteland in peri-urban area in Buôn Ma Thuột



Figure 22 Ede long house as a tourist attraction in Buôn Ma Thuột (Ako Dhong)

Whereas peri-urban development can open space for the public, for multiple uses and thus negotiation, it also produces new boundaries. For both cities, the emerging tourism sector changes the material pattern of space. In Tam Kỳ, a beach resort was recently built, which

encloses parts of the shoreline. A more inclusive development project is the community art project in Tam Thanh, the “Mural Village” established by local and South Korean artists in 2016. Both projects simultaneously reduced boundaries as they opened space for a new public, e.g. tourists but also lessened accessibility for residents who cannot participate in these spaces anymore. In Buôn Ma Thuột, the commercialization of Ethnic minorities has a similar effect on residents. The Ede village Ako Dhong serves as a touristic attraction (Figure 22) which takes the material form of the Ede culture out of its local context to entertain tourists.



Figure 23 Construction of a wastewater plant in Tam Ky, financed by international donors in 2014/15

Finally, large buildings like the Tây Nguyên University, high schools, military, and police buildings, as well as hospitals, are located along the borders of the urban space in both cities. Other infrastructure facilities focus on public services, like education and healthcare, clean water supply, waste disposal, and wastewater treatment plants. In Buôn Ma Thuột, METRO, an international retailer, also has a shopping mall in peri-urban space rooted in a modern global image. However, small mobile roadside markets are still prevalent in most peri-urban areas. Located along intersections or main roads, these markets represent an antithesis to the modern state buildings. Hence, modern buildings and traditional street

markets are both parts of the peri-urban infrastructure. Traffic infrastructure, like the airport in Buôn Ma Thuột, the National Highway QL 1A, and the railway tracks in Tam Kỳ, also works as a border between the urban core and the peri-urban hinterland. The construction of this infrastructure is still ongoing and transforms peri-urban space in the short and long term. This infrastructure also shows the mixing of modern high-tech and low-level local solutions. For example, waste collecting and sorting are often provided by small local businesses which often use street space for their sorting business (Figure 25), while a modern wastewater treatment plant is built and operated with financial support from international donors in Tam Kỳ (World Bank 2016; also Figure 23).

Economically, industrial parks and small, private in-house handicraft shops dominate the material space besides agriculture. Industrial parks are often surrounded by walls or set aside from the local communities. This spatial distinction creates a boundary between these parks and activities and the interaction of everyday life. Contrary to the demarcations set around industrial parks in Tam Kỳ, small local businesses often ignore existing borders and use street space to enlarge their workspace. (Figure 24)

To conclude, diverse material and often fragmented patterns characterize peri-urban space (Harms 2011). Voids and empty spaces create porosity. This porous space provides a white slate on which actors can paint their aspirations. This porosity also leads to a highly heterogeneous space, which is constantly transforming. At the same time, older material features remain and need to be integrated into urbanizing areas, like the small markets and the use of roads space for private activities and recreation. Constructions also allow access to new spaces, often-previous wasteland, which can be used creatively, at least momentarily. Still, these new developments also produce new boundaries and ways of exclusion. Industrial parks, new urban areas, and new modern entertainment are not always accessible for everyone. The emerging boundaries create a fragmented space, which residents cannot easily cross, and borders, which might limit the mobility and participation of residents.



Figure 24 Usage of street space for business in Tam Kỳ

4.2. FUNCTIONAL PATTERN OF SPACE IN BUÔN MA THUẬT AND TAM KỲ

Urban

In Buôn Ma Thuật and Tam Kỳ, strict functional zoning organizes space in the urban center. As described above, in both cities, the urban center is built around a central market. People living in this area combine their personal living space with economic activities.

Thereby, they create a space of accumulation rooted in trade and the exchange of goods. Along with small private shops, cafes, and supermarkets, the urban core functions as the business center for each city and their peri-urban and rural hinterland. Employment for local people in the service sector, especially health care and education plays another central function of the urban core. To participate in the job market, people from the hinterland commute to the city center for work.

Both cities function as transportation hubs. They provide connections to the regional, national as well as global level. Therefore, the material infrastructure of the airport in Buôn Ma Thuột, the train station in Tam Kỳ as well as the national highway system creates a space of mobility. Trade, cash crop production, and tourism form gateways to the nation and the world beyond. One example is the integration of Buôn Ma Thuột into the global coffee market. The urban space not only entails needed infrastructure but also embodies global urban aspirations. This aspirational function of the urban plays a central role in attracting new migrants to both cities. Migrants from the surrounding hinterland move to these cities in search of a better future. Compared with the poverty of the rural periphery, small and medium-sized cities like Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột can offer a sense of new opportunities and economic growth (Talcoli 2004). Hence, in this sense, the urban space creates an open space for aspirations and reduces marginalization. The ADB thus mentions “[] diverting rural-urban migration from large metropolitan cities []” (ADB 2013b:1) as one of its goals of the “Secondary Cities Projects”.

“Besides accumulation and aspiration, the urban center fulfills an administrative function. Administrative authorities are responsible for the regulation and control of behavior, the implementation of policies, and the planning of urban development, not only for the city and its hinterland but the whole province. The administration also provides public services for the population, as well as health care and education. Often, these administrative functions establish new boundaries as means of control as they determine tolerated behavior, including littering, begging by homeless people, street vending, driving, and the use of public space. These boundaries reduce the existence of porosity in the urban core and enforce a space of control.



Figure 25 Urban gardens and agriculture public spaces in Tam Kỳ

Next, urban space fulfills a small reproductive function. Small-scale urban agriculture and urban gardening are common in both cities (Figure 25). In Tam Kỳ, residents plant small rice fields and vegetable gardens on small plots in residential areas. Many houses have small gardens in their yards or boxes and planters on the sidewalk in front (Figure 21). This reproductive function is possible due to the remaining or newly created porosity in the urban core, as described above. The lack of boundaries allows for access but also the creation of new borders. These borders set space apart for individual reproductive activities like gardening. They transform a homogeneous spatial usage into a fragmented landscape.

Socially, the urban space also serves as a space of interaction. A multitude of public spaces, like parks, squares, cafes, and restaurants offer opportunities for local people to interact. The urban center is also home to the main religious buildings, like a Catholic church and the main Buddhist temple in both cities. Often, these spaces of interaction create meaning by referencing a diverse set of images. This use of space creates a social experience that is central to the emergence of an urban feeling. Being constantly in contact with a heterogeneous, anonymous, and moving population is part of the space of interaction. At the same time, because Tam Kỳ, as well as Buôn Ma Thuột, is still comparatively small, there also exists the feeling of a local community in which it is common to help each other.

Thereby, the space of interaction encourages negotiating and sharing the use of available public space. These interactions increase social creativity and reduce boundaries. The combination of state control and regulation with the market strongly focused on trade characterizes the main functions of both city centers. Besides these two main functions, both cities also work as spaces of interaction, mobility, aspiration, and reproduction for their respective residents. These functions provide a social component, which integrates the residents into the city, creating a sense of community and identity beyond the state and market. The emerging urban porosity reduces boundaries and increases access. This porosity enables social creativity as the urban strategy of survival (Evers and Korff 2003).

Peri-urban

Whereas the urban core mainly functions as a space of accumulation and administration, the peri-urban space has a more complex function. It is simultaneously oriented towards

the urban center and the rural hinterland because peri-urban space constitutes an interface between the rural and the urban.

Peri-urban space provides a reproductive function for not only the rural and peri-urban but also the urban core. It channels rural resources into the city center and offers urban services to the rural space. Therefore, the reproductive function of peri-urban space goes beyond the provision of land for the construction of new urban areas. In Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ peri-urban residents produce agricultural and handicraft goods to trade in the urban space. In contrast to the urban commodity market based on consumer goods like furniture, peri-urban markets focus on raw materials, including cash crops like coffee, beans, and pepper and construction material. Peri-urban areas also supply employees for an urban-based service economy, a function which increases with the construction of new urban areas in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. Primary services like water, electricity and waste facilities are located in peri-urban areas of Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ but support the reproduction of its urban centers. Peri-urban space offers services like health care, education, and market access for rural residents. It also provides agricultural land close to urban markets and economic opportunities not available in rural space. For example, peri-urban dwellers collect and sort urban waste for recycling in a small private service sector.

The reproductive function uses the location alongside transportation and travel routes of peri-urban space, unused space, and agricultural production (Figure 26). Many activities and interactions need mobility to create economic opportunities for local people in peri-urban Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ. Peri-urban residents sell food, drinks, and snacks to travelers and offer space for recreation, like cafes and restaurants (Figure 27). They repair and wash cars and motorbikes. They also provide storage space for goods and gas stations and parking space for automobiles. As an interface, peri-urban space becomes a threshold which people and goods constantly pass. This characteristic as a threshold defines the advantage of the peri-urban as a space of transition. Unlike the urban space of control, mobility is the central feature of this peri-urban space shaping a space of interaction. Due to its geographical position on the urban edge, the everyday transit of numerous people, like commuters, characterizes this space. However, urban people also move into peri-urban areas to meet and gather for recreational activities and business meetings. Cafés and small restaurants are thus commonplace features in peri-urban spaces in Tam Kỳ. Trade activities connect rural and peri-urban traders with buyers from urban and peri-urban spaces.

Roadside markets occur daily along all major arterial roads in Tam Kỳ. Migrants from rural and urban areas move to peri-urban areas for less expensive land prices and the availability of free construction land to build houses, thus pushing the development of new urban areas in both cities. This development leads to a mingling of people with different socio-economic and geographical backgrounds. These interactions often combine mobility, market, and recreational activities. They reduce boundaries, as these interactions are heterogeneous, flexible, and often spontaneous.

Peri-urban space also has an aspirational function. Due to existing voids and few boundaries, residents and urban planners can dream and implement these dreams without the limitations encountered in the urban center. Hence, a new middle class is building its urban villas in the new urban areas. Migrants from the rural hinterland open their little shop or café along a major road. Students participate in urban consumption and entertainment culture. Peri-urban space links the urban aspiration for modernity with the nostalgia for an imagined rural tradition (Gillen 2016). This nostalgia materializes in the aesthetic of peri-urban cafés in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. It often references a more natural, rural aesthetic with plants, water installations, and traditional architecture, the best example being the Coffee Village in Buôn Ma Thuột (Figure 29). These cafés offer the consumption of rural nostalgia without the need to move out of the modern urban space (Figure 28). City dwellers can escape the chaotic city to realize their aspiration of rural peace.



Figure 26 Reproductive function of per-urban space: Recycling (top), material for urban development/ construction (middle) in Tam Kỳ, and agriculture (bottom) in Buôn Ma Thuột



Figure 27 Peri-urban mobility for trade, work and recreation: Road side market (top), preparation for roadside barbecue in peri-urban Tam Kỳ (middle) and arterial road with small businesses in Buôn Ma Thuột (bottom)

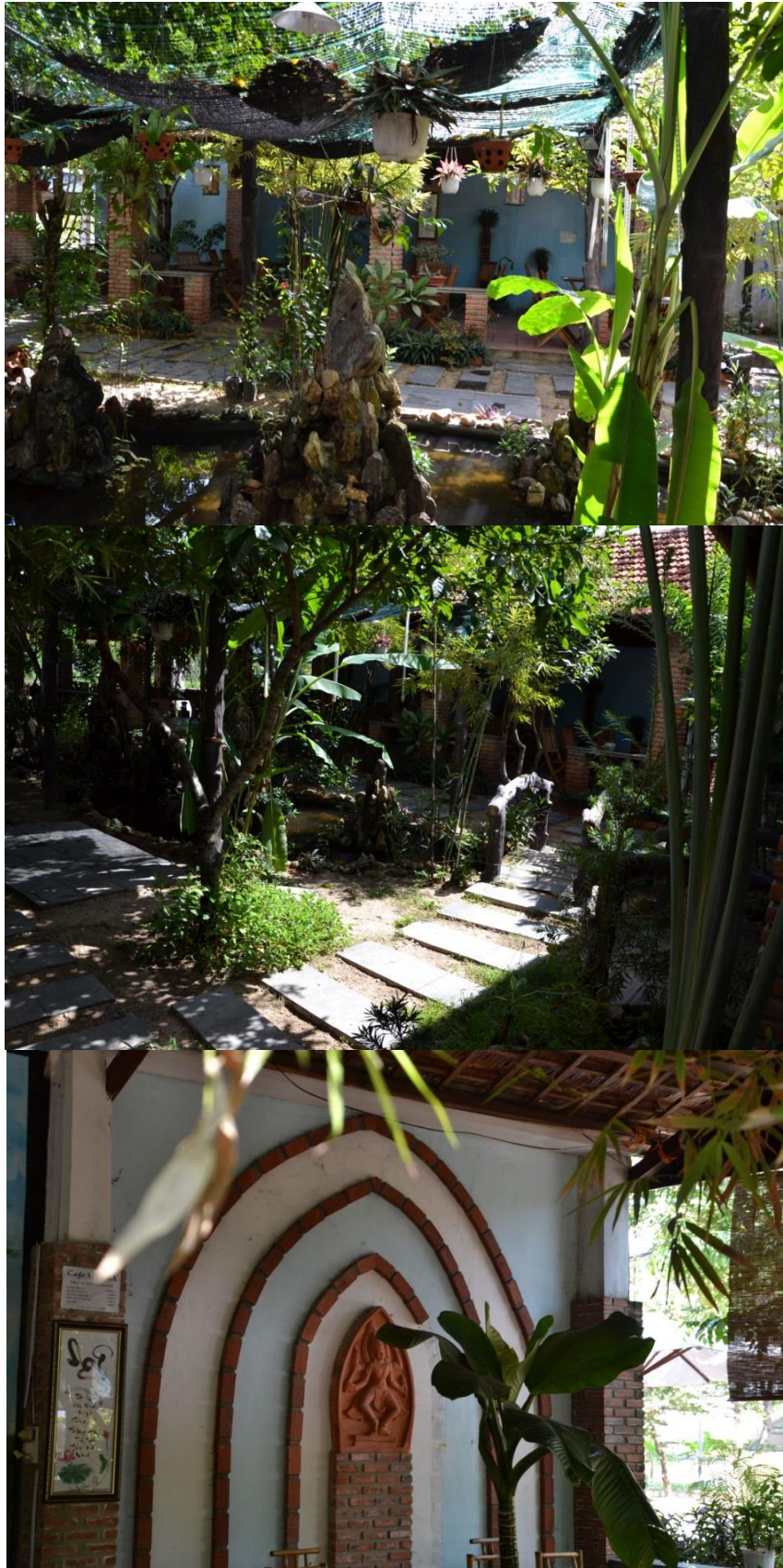


Figure 28 Rural nostalgia: Nature as design aesthetic in Tam Kỳ



Figure 29 Rural nostalgia represented in the Coffee Village and a small café in Buôn Ma Thuột

Finally, peri-urban space plays an increasing role as a space of control and education, in which rural people are slowly integrated into the urban, civilized way of life. The construction of state infrastructure and monuments by state agents in peri-urban space increases state control. Regulations of the usage of modern infrastructure by the state transform local people into urban citizens (Biggs 2010) as the state moves slowly deeper in these spaces. For example, the “Vietnam’s Heroic Mother Statue” in Tam Kỳ is a monument of state power and ideology to educate the local population. The traffic signs, lights, and zebra crossings built-in new urban areas are less obvious but more effective in changing behavior. The state slowly civilizes the peri-urban and rural hinterland in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột and its inhabitants. This development produces new borders to cross and reduce the existing porosity. Simultaneously, it also increases the level of fragmentation and thus the threat of marginalization.

Compared with the functional pattern of the urban core, peri-urban space has a primarily social function, like reproduction, interaction, aspiration, and control. There is no spatial separation between these functions by a clear zoning policy. Instead, often they overlap, which leads to functional fragmentation. Voids and thresholds which people can easily cross are more prevalent than boundaries. However, as new actors enter these peri-urban areas, transformation processes also shift the functional pattern, reducing agriculture and increasing population density.

4.3. SYMBOLIC PATTERN OF SPACE IN BUÔN MA THUỘT AND TAM KỶ

Urban

An official symbolism mixing state ideology and modernity characterizes the symbolic landscape of the urban core of Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ. State symbolism works as means of control and often aims to educate the local population, including prohibitive signs throughout the urban space. For example, the police order the use of space and regulate traffic (Figure 30). In Tam Kỳ, steel barriers at the central square aimed to control the access to the main square for motorbike drivers. However, as people ignored the steel barriers, they became less a symbol of control and more resistance. In 2014 and 2015, the city administration of Tam Kỳ also led a campaign to remove beggars and homeless people from the city and transport them to a different province. An official statement called these

people non-local intruders from the outside. They represented a threat to the modern image of the city (Vietnam News 2014).

Besides control, the local administration uses state symbolism for education. This educational function finds expression in numerous propaganda posters along the main road and front of important buildings (Figure 31). Symbols of state power are combined with modernity in the city center along the main streets, like Hùng Vương Street in Tam Kỳ. Some promote the state and its many agents, like the armed forces. Others aim to educate on a variety of topics, from domestic violence to traffic rules. Often, these propaganda posters merge state ideology with visions of modern civilized society within proximity to economic advertising.

Another means of education are official loudspeakers situated at main intersections in urban neighborhoods of both cities. They are mainly used to disseminate information and propaganda. However, they can also broadcast music or wake up residents for early morning exercise. Finally, the display of state power is represented in the construction of the new buildings for the provincial people's committee in Buôn Ma Thuột as well as in the clean and green alleys, which are home to various state offices. The building of the People's Committee of Quảng Nam, for example, is an impressive building with a large park located in front of the main square of the city. Its architecture and location create a powerful image of untouchability (Figure 9).

State symbolism also includes references to the past as the center also represents the historic heart of each city. In Buôn Ma Thuột, the first tank, which entered Buôn Ma Thuột in 1975, is prominently displayed at the main intersection (Figure 12). Another symbol of state power is the Museum of Daklak. It propagates a state-approved version of the history of the province and the state image of the ethnic minorities in the region. In Tam Kỳ, history is less prevalent; instead, the focus is on the future vision for the city. Construction sites with their signage are symbols of transformation and aspiration in both cities. In Tam Kỳ, imagery of the urban development plan was publicly displayed in the administrative district in 2015. Beyond imagery, his symbolism translates into the visual transformation of the city, for example, when the local administration tears down and rebuilds the older urban infrastructure like the old market in on Hung Vương Street Tam Kỳ (Figure 32).



Figure 30 Symbolic control of space: Police at the market (above) and signs and barriers at the main square (middle) in Tam Kỳ and Ho Chi Minh Statue in a park in Buôn Ma Thuật



Figure 31 Propaganda posters on the construction of a civilized, green and clean city (above) and a telecommunication advertisement next to a warning sign against domestic violence (below) in Tam Kỳ



Figure 32 History and the shifting urban space: The remaining market in Hung Vương Street after most vendors were forced to move

Lastly, modernity provides a second set of symbols for the urban core encapsulated by the construction of the modern city with a global vision. In Buôn Ma Thuột, an apartment complex next to the central intersection represents this vision of a modern future. Ironically, in 2014, this building was almost empty, reducing modernity to an empty shell. In Tam Kỳ, references to the urban future graze billboards showing the master plan of the future city in 2015. On a smaller scale, public toilets, waste collectors, and street cleaners symbolize this understanding of modernity in everyday life. This official vision of modernity combines consumption, commercialization, and privatization. Its symbols are modern hotels, shopping malls, and fast-food chains like Lotteria. These images and practices of a civilized, modern society represent the urban future envisioned by the Vietnamese state and its people. In everyday life, local people reinforce this vision of modernity related to consumption, using the products of modernity as status symbols, like cars, modern housing, and recreational activities in modern cafes. In this narrative, going to Lotteria or Jollibee for ice cream and to the mall for shopping food symbolize urban modernity (Figure 33). In Tam Kỳ, students frequent small modern coffee shops around the University of Quảng Nam with a mixture of modern Western and East Asian aesthetics.



Figure 33 Commercialization of urban space: Shopping malls in Buôn Ma Thuột (top) and Tam Kỳ (bottom)

In the urban core, state symbolism of control and education produces new and maintains old boundaries which influence everyday behavior. The dominance of state ideology in public space also attempts to reduce voids in meaning. The combination of consumption culture expressed by advertising and state ideology in propaganda posters reduces the symbolic porosity necessary to advance local meaning. However, resistance to official

symbolism is expressed in small gestures like avoiding official events or the destruction of boundaries set up by the state. Thus, even with the symbolic domination of the city center by state ideology and capitalism, even little spatial porosity allows everyday forms of resistance - introduced as a concept by Scott (1985) to produce space for negotiation.

Peri-urban

These symbolic images and practices of modernity are crossing into peri-urban space. Often, the transformations in the material landscape transport these urban meanings, particularly the symbols and meanings of modern consumption culture beyond the city center. In Buôn Ma Thuột, the construction of METRO, the global retail giant, represents this process. Peri-urban areas provide space to show the individual symbols of modernity, one's civilized lifestyle, and personal symbols of success in a capitalist society. Peri-urban dwellers use these symbols of modernity to express their aspirations. For example, Đặng Lê Nguyên Vũ, the owner of Trung Nguyên coffee, built the "Coffee Village" as symbol of his success in Buôn Ma Thuột. On a smaller scale, in neighborhoods of newly urbanized areas in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, middle-class homeowners build modern villas and townhouses. They purchase private cars to express their status of civilization and modernization. In Ako Dhong, an Ede village on Buôn Ma Thuột's borders, traditional Ede longhouses are combined with modern Vietnamese rural and urban houses. Walls and gates around these private properties provide a sense of security for its owners. Moreover, gated communities that dominate urban development in metropolitan areas, while still an exemption, are also slowly developed on the peri-urban fringe of smaller cities like Tam Kỳ (Figure 35). These symbols of status and security produce material and social boundaries between different social groups in both cities. Most of the time, these status symbols are based on processes of commercialization in which regional, national and global markets push into the peri-urban space. Billboards for advertisement along main roads – often combined with entertainment establishments – are signs of these processes. The combination of national and global brands that advertise with local signs for local services symbolizes a heterogeneous, fragmented, and transforming market. Rural and especially peri-urban spaces no longer constitute voids for the global market economy.

These material boundaries translate into everyday practices. Slowly, cars become a means of transport for the emerging middle class in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, which will change traffic flow in the future (Figure 34). Supermarkets in both cities started to offer an

alternative to local markets for shopping. However, the large majority of peri-urban residents has little access to symbols of modernity and do not participate in these emerging practices. The difference between practice and symbols leads to differences in needs and interests. Thus, generally, status symbols used in peri-urban spaces produce new social boundaries and fragment peri-urban communities.

This commercialization of peri-urban space is also symbolized by the development of tourism in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, which use peri-urban space as a resource. In virtual space, peri-urban locations in Tam Kỳ like “Vietnam’s Heroic Mother Statue” and the Mural Village of Tam Thanh or the Coffee festival in Buôn Ma Thuột are advertised online by tourism agencies, private websites, and the local administration. Peri-urban space thus provides a backdrop for international image campaigns in the competition between cities for investment, business, and tourists. Thereby, local tourism becomes a symbol of the global integration of those spaces. However, peri-urban spaces always carry overlapping meanings, as shown with the mural village in Tam Kỳ. Painted as a cooperative effort of Vietnamese and South Korean painters; it also produced a symbol of local interaction where local people can participate in the globalizing world. During interviews in Tam Kỳ in 2015, residents mentioned that initially, the People’s Committee showed reluctance and even resistance to allow this local community participatory art project. However, in time the development of a community-based, eco-cultural tourism development strategy for Tam Kỳ was officially adopted by Tam Kỳ’s People’s Committee and supported by UN-Habitat, the Cities Alliance, and International Urban Training Center. Nowadays, this participatory approach towards sustainable tourism is used in international forums to advance the innovative, global approach towards urban development in Tam Kỳ. Here, symbols of local participation are appropriated by the state discourse. Bottom-up becomes top-down. (Interviews in Tam Kỳ 2015; Strauch, Robiou du Pont and Balanowski 2018:57)

Symbols of rurality also characterize peri-urban space. Generally, in both cities, in many peri-urban areas, old rural houses with gardens or yards still exist next to agricultural land turned into construction sites and newly constructed townhouses. Markets are also symbols of local exchange systems dominated by rural agriculture. Cattle and poultry moving through peri-urban space also express this rurality. Together, they symbolize the economic structure of the peri-urban, the agriculture. (Figure 37)



Figure 34 Gated community in Tam Kỳ



Figure 35 Middle class neighborhood in new urban area in Buôn Ma Thuột: Cars as status symbols



Figure 36 Abandoned house in Buôn Ma Thuột

However, there are also symbols of transformation. Machinery and signs of construction sites as well as for land for rent or sale are everywhere. These signs include displays of the vision of future buildings and urban districts. Furthermore, especially in Buôn Ma Thuột in 2014, older peri-urban districts include numerous vacant houses and buildings. These houses are often older, run-down, and have a more rural, one-story design. The surrounding yard is often overgrown by nature, creating porosity in the modernizing peri-urban space. (Figure 36)

Finally, displays of state power are constructed in peri-urban space. State institutions like hospitals and schools are advancing symbols of state power, as are busses to remote villages. In Tam Kỳ, the local administration built the “Vietnam’s Heroic Mother Statue” as an ideological symbol of the state. This statue includes a museum as well as a large park area. The state intended to reference the sacrifices of children, husbands, and brothers made by mothers during the war for Independence with France and the United States. However, an emerging market orientation provides an underlying symbolic meaning in which entertainment and recreation for local people dominate the use of the space. Around the monument, residents opened shops and cafes catering to visitors taking selfies and meeting friends.

Symbolically, peri-urban space is highly fragmented. Symbols of state power, private status, globalization, and economic development emerge in opposition to symbols of rurality and social interaction. New symbolic boundaries are erected, as the peri-urban space provides an empty slate for the modern aspiration of state officials and an emerging middle class. In-between new emerging symbols of modernity, the market, and state power, localized symbols of everyday life still survive.



Figure 37 Cattle moving through peri-urban Tam Kỳ

5. CONCLUSION: SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED TOWNS AND THE PERI-URBAN CITY

With regards to porosity, a fragmented, heterogeneous landscape emerges in both cities. As the urban core reaching into the peri-urban hinterland, it produces urban pattern and dependencies, which often create new boundaries of exclusion. At the same time, these transformations also produce new means of access in peri-urban space, where spatial voids and borders emerge. Whereas the city pushes into its hinterland the rural reaches into the core creating pockets of rurality. Moreover, spatial proximity creates a close economic and social exchange between the core and its surrounding areas. Porosity emerges as the central characteristic of both cities, creating a peri-urban city.

From the analysis of the material, functional and symbolic pattern of urban and peri-urban space in Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ, three main themes define this peri-urban city beyond porosity: (1) processes of transformation creating the peri-urban city, (2) networks of power and control as means to adapt to these transformations and (3) mobility as prerequisite for ability to benefit from the changing landscape in peri-urban cities.

These three themes will be shortly discussed here, but will be further explored in the following chapter.

5.1. SPACE OF TRANSFORMATION

As a starting point, peri-urban space is characterized by changing structures which thereby create space of transformation. The material, functional and symbolic pattern of urban and peri-urban space shows processes of transformation in both spaces. However, there is a difference in the grade and impact of these transformations on the existing structures. In Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, urban modernization and urban planning attempt to change the material pattern of the city, as the example of the new markets shows. Urban planning envisions Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ as modern urban centers of their respective regions. For this goal, state investment into modernization and urban development lead to a change of material pattern and political structures. However, the material and symbolic landscape in the urban core, like the grid of streets, land usage, and landmarks, is settled for the foreseeable future. Economic activities are focused on the commodity market. The functions of the urban core stay consistent, only taking on more administrative functions and a global link. Transformation primarily creates new economic opportunities, as the coffee boom in Buôn Ma Thuột or an emerging service sector in both cities.

The changing material pattern in peri-urban space becomes visible in construction efforts which slowly transform wasteland into a built environment. The replacement of agricultural land with new urban areas leads to shifting socio-economic structures. Outsiders move into new housing areas setting up new neighborhoods and new relations. The changing land use also affects the environment, reduces the natural land cover, increases the soil sealing, and affects the water system. Simultaneously, the changing reproductive function opens up new economic opportunities for those able to seize them to transform the functional pattern of peri-urban space. Sitting between rural and urban space offers opportunities for those who have access to rural and urban resources and relations.

However, land-use change from agriculture to a mixed rural-urban usage excludes and marginalizes some social groups, like ethnic minorities or small-holders who do not have the capacities to benefit from the change. They are left behind because they are not able to invest in new urban opportunities. At the same time, they cannot benefit from their rural resources. This marginalization leads to rising tensions between long-term rural residents, migrants, and state authorities, in particular in cases of land-use change. Land rights conflicts are commonplace in Vietnam. They primarily center on questions of compensation for land transferred in modernization projects (Kerkvliet 2014). The marginalization also leads to shifting socio-economic structures in peri-urban areas as some profit from raising income while others lose their source of income (Harms 2011). Finally, peri-urban areas are characterized by symbols of urban modernity and rural tradition still existing side by side. However, gradually, more signs of urban modernity and state domination like the "Patriotic Vietnamese Mother Statue" take over. Symbolic patterns of the rural past slowly disappear or are pushed aside, like the Ede longhouses.

To conclude, processes of transformation are less dominant in the city center limited by unchangeable structures. However, urban planning and urban aspiration of modernization aim to recreate urban space in a modern global image. By contrast, processes of transformation dominate peri-urban space as a frontier area between rural and urban. These processes can be independent and spontaneous or controlled by state agents. They affect different structures from the environment and material pattern to symbolic meanings and socio-economic relations. Thus contrary to the urban core, peri-urban space is fluid and changing in its totality.

5.2. NETWORKS, CONTROL AND POWER

The symbols of modernization found in the peri-urban space are signs of growing economic prosperity and the growing influence of a uniform vision of the modern civilized future as propagated by state ideology. Urban planning, like the development of new urban areas in peri-urban areas in Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ, shows an increasing will to integrate those areas into urban administration and state visions of the future (see Chapter 2). In the context of the Mekong Delta, Biggs (2010) describes how the colonial reconstruction of space and the reorientation from the water to the roads was an attempt to modernize and civilize the society; to increase state control and push forward a uniform vision of modernity. Similar efforts emerge in peri-urban space, where the state reaches

outward from its administrative center into peri-urban space to integrate more and more areas into a network of modern infrastructure symbolized by hospitals, schools, streets, water, and police. The state view of an urban, civilized lifestyle challenges self-organized material and socio-economic patterns (see Chapter 3). By reorganizing the material pattern of the peri-urban, the state can exert its control over the space.

But state control is challenged by other actors, sometimes by simple acts like the appropriation of state space for recreational activities or the demolition of boundaries implemented by the local administration. The newly available symbols of modernizations combined with traditional functions and images in peri-urban areas open space for new opportunities and networks. For example, the maintenance of the traditional longhouse enables the Ede people of Ako Dhong to attract tourists and gain economic benefit. Thereby they can gain access to symbols of modernity like modern housing and cars. Another example would be the residents along arterial roads who use their specific position in the peri-urban space to make economic profits by selling goods and offering services. Due to the pattern of peri-urban areas, peri-urban residents can maintain or even gain control over their life and the space in which they live. State power and control plays only a minor role in their everyday life. But due to the transformative characteristic of peri-urban space, this advantageous position can change depending on state planning. The decision on how land is used – for urban housing, industrial development, or agriculture – is made by state agencies. Local people have to deal with the outcome of those decisions without being able to negotiate them. Therefore, relations to state agencies on different – local or provincial – levels might alter local people's ability to create opportunities from their position in peri-urban space or being marginalized. Hence, local people will need their existing private networks in communities to negotiate those opportunities (Le and Nicolaisen 2021).

5.3. MOBILITY AND TRANSITION

With the transformation of peri-urban structures, the people living and working in peri-urban spaces are in constant transition. Their daily life is rooted in mobility (see Chapter 4). They either leave for the rural or urban space to earn an income. Alternatively, they stay in the peri-urban area but make their living from those passing by and crossing the location where they live. Mobility is hence central to the everyday livelihood strategies. Those who are excluded from mobility but are bound in space are marginalized (Harms,

2011). Constant mobility demands flexibility and creativity. And it redefines the peri-urban space as an interface in which people are looking in two directions: (1) the urban center and (2) the rural hinterland to make the most of their location in-between and benefit from its proximity to the urban heartland with its administration and market. They also profit from the vicinity to rural areas as places of natural resources. Consequently, the peri-urban space works around the constant exchange between its inhabitants and the surrounding world.

Those living close to the roads have the most economic advantages and employ an economic strategy based on the market. Those further away from the main roads or the urban core follow a more rural strategy based on agriculture. However, as seen in Buôn Ma Thuột, by producing cash crops, they are also well connected to a global market that goes beyond the borders of the urban center. This connection links the peri-urban space to an international network of trade.

In this context, the material and functional patterns play a central role in fostering mobility. Simultaneously, mobility also creates the backdrop for the functionality of peri-urban space. Due to mobility, a space of interaction emerges where people from different social backgrounds from urban and rural areas can meet. Mobility helps to create reproductive functionality by moving resources, people, goods, and services from rural to peri-urban to urban space and back. Finally, mobility also enables the introduction of new symbolic patterns and aspirations into peri-urban space.

CHAPTER 2 CARGO CULT URBANISM AND THE STATE-LED PRODUCTION OF SPACE IN TAM KỶ AND BUÔN MA THUỘT

1. CARGO CULT URBANISM IN VIETNAM

Urban development in Vietnam follows a linear path towards a homogeneous urban image based on global models of modernity, sustainability, and economic progress. Based on the national legal framework, officials from the local administration, the provincial and central government are the chief developers of urban space and the engine of urbanization in Vietnam. According to the constitution, the land is owned by the people but managed by the state. Furthermore, the state has the right to acquire land for economic development, with some form of compensation (Le 2016, p.288). Hence, the government is the principal driver of urbanization in Vietnam. This role enables the government to incorporate state ideology into urban space. Therefore, urban space in Vietnam illustrates the modern aspiration of the state. Furthermore, based on a framework of formal urban planning, urban development in small and medium-sized towns and cities is often based on alien concepts imported from a global discourse by international donor agencies.

This combination of state supremacy in urban planning and global models of urban modernity creates a cargo cult⁴. This perspective follows the idea of “Cargo Cult Science” as pseudoscience discussed by R. Feynman (1974), where people only look at those methods and results which confirm their already set notions of truth. The methods used are thus employed to reach a preconceived and desired result. In the framework of urban development, similar to Melanesian villagers in the 20th century, urban planners engage in rituals of planning to manifest an aspired urban future as symbolic “cargo”. The emerging virtual urban space is not rooted in real needs or demands but reproduces an international imagination of urban as a universal idea without local meaning. This approach perceives planning as a performative act rooted in rituals performing modernity and its successors (Abrams 2013: 1). In Tam Kỳ, the construction of state monuments, the development of new urban areas, and slogans like “Green Capital of Vietnam” illustrate this process.

⁴ “[...] cargo cult was an agitation or organised social movement of Melanesian villagers in pursuit of ‘cargo’ by means of renewed or invented ritual action that they hoped would induce ancestral spirits or other powerful beings to provide.” Lindstrom (2018)

This conception of the “city” based on constructed knowledge and power structures is dominated by state actors in Vietnam. Consequently, the emerging representations of space (Lefebvre 1991), the meaning of urban, the instituted social rules and norms are thus primarily defined by an official state narrative. The discourse on the city in Vietnam is thus inherently shaped in favor of the state. Residents might challenge the meanings, norms, and rules integrated into the city. However, they will have to do this in a landscape built by an official vision of the urban. For residents, to challenge these conceptions of “city”, local people fall back on spatial practices which help to navigate the perceived urban space and counter-act its attached meanings. The tension between the conception of the city and the perception of the city manifests itself in the everyday experience of the city by residents. The emerging space of representation gives signification to the urban space. The production of urban space in Vietnam is thus a conflicted process. The local administration and residents face a conflict between the idea of the city and its meaning and their spatial practices and everyday experience (Lefebvre 1991, as cited by Schmid 2012, p.11-12). As the state primarily aspires to the material implementation of its conception of the city, it thereby aims to influence and change the practices and experiences of local people. However, instead of success, more often than not, these attempts reinforce the existing cargo cult of urban planning.

This chapter will look at this state-led production of space and the emerging conception of urban space in more detail. Three dimensions influence this production process: (1) the framework of the national government and its policies on urban planning, (2) the international donor community and their visions of modern urban space, and (3) the local aspirations for the urban space within this national and international framework on urban development. The reciprocal relationship between these three dimensions forms a local-global interface, which dominates urban development in secondary cities in Vietnam.

2. THREE DIMENSIONS OF STATE-LED SPACE PRODUCTION IN VIETNAM

2.1. URBAN PLANNING IN VIETNAM: THE STATE, THE SOCIETY AND THE URBANISATION PROCESS

Generally, urbanization in Vietnam follows a pre-defined path towards a homogeneous urban image linked to global models of modernity, sustainability, and development (Söderström 2013). Based on a comprehensive framework of formal urban planning, state actors are the main developers of urban space as modern state space by including inherent

state ideology. Moreover, urban planning reproduces an international imagination of urban as a universal idea connected to a global discourse without local meaning as argued by Kaiser (2014) for the reconstruction of Vinh City by urban experts from the German Democratic republic. One goal of the Vietnamese state is regulating the urbanization process to facilitate the legibility of the urban space (Scott 1998). The state defines a vision of the urban as civilized, clean, and modern. This vision should be reached by every urban area under state control as prescribed in the Law on Urban Planning (Harms 2014). Referencing a development path pre-defined in a master plan for each city, the implementation of this vision is the Vietnamese state's way to control a proper, civil urbanization process (Harms 2011, Gibert and Segard 2015)). It is perceived to prevent the emergence of an ugly urban image and maintain urban civility (Harms 2011; Harms 2014). Additionally, the Vietnamese state enforces its control by establishing representations of space (Schmid 2008; Lefebvre 1991) in each city, which embodies the party-state, its symbolism, and power relations. The state vision of urban space as a modern, clean and orderly ideology is partly borrowed from a global discourse - and hence already highly mobile. It travels from the center to the periphery – a process, which leads to its translation into local narratives and the reinterpretation of this vision based on local needs. Furthermore, secondary cities nowadays also participate in global networks and discourses, which leads to urban forms traveling from the global directly to the local as will be discussed in the context of Tam Kỳ. (Söderstrom 2013)

The pre-defined urban image of the state will be reproduced by the discourse of local people (Harms 2011; Söderström 2013; Gibert 2018; Gibert and Segard 2015) as illustrated by the often-used concept of urban civility (*văn minh đô thị*) (Harms 2014). Urban civility, as used by state officials and local people, generally expresses the “will to impose order on human beings living in social groups” (Harms 2014, p.226). The concept of urban civility is used as a top-down instrument of government control and a bottom-up critique of chaotic social order (Gibert and Segard 2015). Many Vietnamese perceive the cities as out of control because they do not follow a proper path of development and planning (Harms 2014). As “many experts have expressed concern that urban development in Vietnam is not following earlier plans” (VietnamNet, 2014), the realities of urban, everyday life do not always align with the image of a modern, civil city. Instead, regulations are ignored, re-negotiated, and adjusted as self-organization is a central component of the urban everyday life of the local people in Vietnam (Gibert 2015).

Discrepancies between the formal and informal state institutions in Vietnam lead to an emerging mediation space. This mediation space offers opportunities to negotiate between different actors (Koh 2006; Reis 2012). Two factors facilitate the emergence of a mediation space: (1) a (conscious) lack of regulative state control at the local level and (2) the ambivalent role of local state actors simultaneously working as state representatives and members of the local community. This mediation space becomes a space for negotiations between different actors, which can be considered a challenge to the state. Local actors, like local officers, farmers, traders, etc. become key actors in these negotiations (Koh 2006). These negotiations also support the emergence of representational space, described by Lefebvre (1991), which is rooted in the local environment and counterbalances state control (Schmid 2008; Prigge 2008). This representational space is a lived space occupied by urban dwellers as symbols and meanings outside of state control and ideology overlay the built environment. Thus, one must differentiate between the state-led urbanization process and the process of self-organized urbanization, between a state space of representation and representational space, and between the urban image and the urban practice prevalent in urban areas. In the context of mobility, there is the introduction and implementation of mobile forms of a civilized, sustainable modern image, focused on control and order on the one hand. On the other hand, there are the daily practices of mobility as a coping strategy to adapt to the ever-changing urban realities.

Based on the authoritarian character of the Vietnamese state, it is thus helpful to start the analysis of the urbanization process in Vietnam with the state discourse. The state defines measurable criteria to classify urban centers into cities, towns, and townships depending on existing infrastructure, population numbers, economic activities (Decree No. 42/2009/ND-CP OF MAY 7, 2009: On the grading of urban centers). It also demands that the local administration, the people's committee, formulates plans and mobilizes resources for investment following the criteria of the decree. Urban centers should aim to develop and successively move up the grading scale. While the decree states that an "urban development program must aim to improve the quality of people's lives and make urban architecture and landscape civilized, modern and sustainable while preserving the cultural quintessence and traits of each urban center." (Decree No. 42/2009/ND-CP OF MAY 7, 2009: On the grading of urban centers), there is a strong focus on quantifiable development goals like infrastructure and population growth.

Thus, one has to differentiate between the state-led urbanization process and the process of self-organized urbanization, between a state space of representation and representational space, and between the urban image and the urban practice prevalent in urban areas. There is a clear difference between the state-defined vision of the urban future and the everyday practice by local people as found in the urban space in Vietnam. This difference follows the difference between the state image and state practice described by Migdal (2001). A state presents a homogenous image, which implies one right way of doing things. At the same time, its practices denote multiple types of performances and the possibility of contention. This contention is possible due to blurred boundaries between the state fragments and other groupings inside and outside the state and between private and public actors, similar to the “mediation space” defined by Koh (2006). Conflicting sets of rules can emerge in everyday life, including different meanings, which can challenge the state (Migdal 2001). In urban space, this includes conflicts on the usage of space and resources, livelihood strategies, and the meanings and identities attached to the urban. Negotiating these conflicting sets of rules in a mediation space can lead to mutual transformation between the state and social actors in urban space. This mutual transformation depends on the degree of engagement and disengagement of the different state and social actors involved (Migdal 2001, p.100). Some social actors decide to cooperate with the state and use its resources. Other social actors avoid state intervention and withdraw from interaction with state actors.

2.2. MOBIL URBAN FORMS AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF THE URBAN

The aspiration of urbanity and the models on which the government bases its urban development plans, follow not an indigenous idea of “city” but look beyond national borders for inspirations, models, forms, and concepts.

Based on the global mobility of ideas, goods, and people, the idea of the city is less locally rooted but converging on the international level (McCann 2011; Douglass and Daniere 2008; Dick and Rimmer 1998; Gibert 2018). Produced by the material, functional and symbolic development of urban space, urban forms are born out of projects of mobility. They are imported to the cities of the Global South by architects, urban planners, NGOs, development agencies, and investors through international networks, organizations, and conferences. These imported forms contain sets of architecture, infrastructure, buildings, symbols, and regulations, which summarize the expectation for the design of a modern

urban landscape. They are projects of modernization implemented by urban actors as a promise of a better, civilized life (Söderström 2013:2).

These projects create a hegemonic discourse using buzzwords like sustainability, green city, smart city, which have to become part of urban planning to be taken seriously and gain access to investment. In Hà Nội, officials and professionals started to compare and even imagine the city as a future Berlin, Toronto, or Copenhagen (Söderstrom and Geertmann 2012: 17). However, in recent years, cities in China, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore have offered alternative models of urban development (Söderström 2013). In Southeast Asia, the example of Singapore is especially inspirational to copy. Due to this increasing influence of East Asian actors in urban development in Vietnam, the field of actors and thereby funds for development increases. Simultaneously these actors found new Asian associations and networks, like CityNet, the “largest association of urban stakeholders committed to sustainable development in the Asia Pacific region” founded in 1987 (CityNet2021). These developments produce a larger playing field and open the opportunity to engage more directly in discourses of urban development.

Features of these mobile forms include the focus on (1) mobility, especially a car-centered city, (2) the mono-functional use of space and hence the spatial separation of living, recreational and working space and (3) the emergence of edge cities in the peri-urban space of large cities. Furthermore, urban development attempts to create a modern skyline of steel and glass. Consequently, historic urban cores often have to give way to skyscrapers and broad streets. Traditional materials, traditional architectural forms, and the traditional use of space in Southeast Asia are perceived as backward. This development is also symbolized in the rise of the shopping malls in Southeast Asian cities, the prevalence of global Western or East Asian brands in the central shopping districts, and the Disneyfication of urban life and urban forms for the sake of tourism. Many large cities, especially Ho Chi Minh City, seem already “lost” to these trends. However, urban development in small- and medium-sized secondary and tertiary cities is less subjected to these hegemonic urban forms due to a lack of financial resources to implement many of these expensive projects.

Because global urban forms influence the materiality of cities around the world, they also change their pattern of functionality. Furthermore, they aim at transforming the behavior of

urban citizens. Söderström (2013) describes urban forms as urban pedagogies which incorporate an educative and disciplinary function. This perspective links urban planning to Foucault's concept of "governmentality" (Foucault, Rose, and Fach 2000). In this function, urban models educate their users about modern urban behavior and help create the civilized, urban subject. They also provide means of control for state agents as they encourage acceptable behavior. For example, they might support shopping in air-conditioned malls and supermarkets while discouraging buying from street vendors and neighborhood markets.

Urban forms also manifest as a permissive function that opens new urban spaces for urban citizens and their mobility projects (Söderström 2013). Here, mobility projects reference practices of everyday life based on movement and mobility. In this context, space acts in diverse roles when residents enter, leave, and pass through. Residents can also abandon and appropriate the space. Finally, they can use space for interactions and meetings. These mobility projects can include resistance and subversion alongside innovative, interactive, and integrative activities in urban space. By promoting the interaction of citizens with their surrounding urban space, these projects enable those citizens to participate in shaping urban identities, meanings, and communities (Söderström 2013:2). People can work with or against these modern urban forms and hence produces a space of contestation or affirmation for the mobile modernization projects of state actors, urban planners, and developers.

To summarize, mobile urban forms simultaneously function as means of control and discipline and as means of empowerment and contestation. They are mobile imaginations, which attempt to create a material, functional and symbolic pattern, which then influences the everyday mobility in real locations. Whereas we will look at the empowering function of mobile urban forms later, this chapter will look at how this process of globalization enables local city administrations in Vietnam to aspire to their vision of a modern civilized urban future. Furthermore, this chapter also looks at the translation of these mobile global forms into local urban space.

2.3. LOCAL ASPIRATIONS AND EMERGING CARGO CULT URBANISM

The government's approach toward urban space and the mobile urban forms outlined above define urban planning with the intention to create a modern urban space and lifestyle

in Vietnam. Urban planning combines the local and the national vision of the city (Gibert 2018). It is oriented towards the future due to its developmental perspective. Different actors, like local administrators, local citizens, urban planners, and entrepreneurs, translate this future orientation into aspirations for the urban space. These aspirations are consequently also future-oriented. However, they are locally rooted and have the past as a reference frame (Appadurai 2004). Therefore, Appadurai (2004) links aspirations to culture. The capacity to aspire demands the ability to imagine the future based on the past and the present. It takes into account the available opportunities as well as the possible paths of development. (Appadurai 2004; Holston and Appadurai 1996)

Depending on the paths chosen and the future imagined, urban aspirations can be vastly different. First, there exists the localization of aspirations, in which the urban is rooted in the existing local space, its everyday life, the lived space of Lefebvre (Schmid 2008). Aspirations are oriented towards the vernacular, including local vibrancy (Satur 2020) and conviviality (Friedmann 2010). This orientation produces a space of interaction, negotiation, and porosity in which urban aspirations can realize a liveable future city for its citizens based on their participation. Douglass (2009) calls the emerging urban space “cosmopolis”. Chapter 4 will analyze these locally rooted aspirations in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột.

This chapter focuses on the second path whose frame of reference is oriented towards the global. This path introduces international standards into the local space and aspires to develop urban space based on global designs and models. The underlying goal is global homogenization. There is little space for porosity and thus participation. The emerging space is not rooted in the lived space but the space of representation (Lefebvre 1991), which creates boundaries. The emerging “globopolis” (Douglass 2009) is a consumer-driven, increasingly unequal, and privatized urban space. This urban space is the product of the global competition for markets and investment. It often destroys vernacular architecture and local conviviality (Friedmann 2010). The urban citizen emerges as a modern consumer. Small urban neighborhoods are rebuilt as new urban areas by global real estate developers. (Douglass 2009)

The “globopolis” is an urban vision developed by the developmental state and its vision of a developmental city (Korff 2008). The principal feature of the developmental state is its large planning technocracy (Scott 1998). Starting in the 1960s, the Southeast Asian elites,

educated in the West, implemented the Western concept of urban space. These elites focused on the production of urban infrastructure, the modernization and homogenization of the pre-existing cityscape, and the centrality of functionality and modern design in a top-down approach towards urban development. Economically, the aim was the creation of infrastructure for export-oriented manufacturing. The developmental state and its agents built large public squares with large symbolic buildings and statues to celebrate its achievements (Scott 1998). The residents of these urban spaces were not included in these processes but were often displaced and evicted. The national elites perceived their old communities and neighborhoods, culture, and architecture as backward, hindering the march towards modernity. The most famous example in Southeast Asia is the reconstruction of Singapore after the Bukit Ho Swee fire of 1961. (Douglass 2009)

From the 1980s onwards, due to neo-liberal ideologies influencing urban planning, the focus shifted towards the emerging middle class, global consumption, and private investment. Urban planning became the field of experts hired by the local administration. The administration itself moved into city marketing to attract international investors to finance urban mega-projects and land acquisition for mega projects. This process further destroys inner-city neighborhoods, their architecture, their local shops, and their livelihood. Instead, private spaces, shopping malls, gated communities, high-security skyscrapers, and entertainment were promoted and built to create a simulacrum of global status. The central features were global imaginary, consumption, world-status architecture, and urban amenities. Recipients were the new middle class who owned the means to participate in this consumer city. Poorer classes were marginalized and pushed to the edges as civic and public spaces were reduced and privatized. Since the Millennium, this process gathered speed and changed the urban landscape in most primary cities in Southeast Asia. (Douglass 2009; Scott 1998)

This second urban aspiration, the “globopolise” the civilized, modern, global urban space dominated by consumption, inspires the majority of urban planning in Vietnam, especially at the city level. Plans frame the modern city in terms of the global development discourse - green city, sustainability, smart city, participation – and represent a homogeneous urban image. The planned space translates into real space by producing the material space with its infrastructure and altering existing urban structures. Because the emerging material space is not always representative of real needs in the existing urban space, it has

difficulties transforming urban spatial practices. Therefore, the state agencies that support this planning effort and are responsible for its implementation can either enforce changing urban practices or accept the failure and the re-interpretation of the new urban materialities by local people.

This tension raises the question of whether urban planning in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột takes local needs and realities into consideration. Especially in an authoritarian state like Vietnam, it is often difficult for local people outside of state agencies to voice needs or participate in decision-making (Norlund 2007; Koh 2008; Kerkvliet 2010). The entanglement between the national urbanization strategy and the global discourse on urbanization creates a virtual urban space. In this virtual urban space, urban realities and spatial practices are disconnected from local state aspirations in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. By formulating the perfect plan, the expectation arises that the mantra of a modern city will produce the materiality of this city and its citizen as envisioned by the plan.

Hence, these urban aspirations and their implementation are more than attempts to change the material form of the city and the behavior of urban citizens. Similar to the millennial cargo cults in Melanesia in the late 19th and early 20th century (Lindstrom 2018), it is an enchantment by imitating the correct pattern, which will magically transform the city into a modern, developed, and civilized space populated with civilized inhabitants.

As urban planning creates a virtual urban space as imagination, this disconnection of urban planning from local needs and market demands can be called Cargo Cult Urbanism. Urban planners, designers, and planners use this term in online discussions like blogs to describe a phenomenon in urban planning in which urban development does not follow needs but aspirations (Appadurai 2004). It reproduces an international imagination of urban as a universal idea without local meaning. The focus to construct a modern city is on structure and forms and not on practices of everyday life:

“The New Urbanists seem to believe that as long as they get the look of the buildings right, everything else will follow.” (Robare 2013)

3. PROCESSES OF STATE-LED URBANISATION IN TAM KỲ AND BUÔN MA THUỘT

In the following, this chapter analyses how the three dimensions explained above - the national discourse, mobile urban forms, and the move towards the globopolis - influence

the state-led production of urban and peri-urban space in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. The following analysis uses secondary sources, like urban plans and legislation, participatory observations, and informal interviews from Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột in 2014 and 2015.

3.1. DISCOURSE, ACTORS AND NETWORKS IN TAM KỶ AND BUÔN MA THUỘT

As a recent foundation without any historical symbolism and meanings, which need to be taken into consideration, Tam Kỳ provides the opportunity for urban planners to create their vision of a modern city. Furthermore, being surrounded by rice fields and empty wasteland also provides a lot of space to implement these visions. These visions are embedded in a planning framework based on the national urban framework of Vietnam and its urban system, the Vietnamese concept of the city, urban space, modernity, which defines the city as a space of modernity and global concepts like sustainability, smart city, participation, and transparency. The result is an imaginary world not anchored in existing landscapes, needs, or people.

However, financial, material, and knowledge constraints curtail the goal of constructing and modernizing Tam Kỳ. Thus, the administration cooperates with international development actors to gain access to the resources needed. These collaborations integrate a stream of ideas on sustainability, environmental protection, and urban civility into the urban development – combined under the headline of “green, modern city”. Another concept gaining support in recent years is “smart city”. Tam Kỳ has established partnerships with Korea, the Korean development agency KOICA, and Japan, including the Japanese research and development agency "Foundation for MultiMedia Communications". At the moment, these partnerships focus on the exchange of knowledge and expertise, often in the form of workshops. In the long run, Tam Kỳ wants to become a model city for the smart city movement. (Công Thương 2018; QNO 2018) Just recently, Tam Kỳ cooperated with the ABB Oy Company in a project financed by Finland to install a MINISCADA system to develop a smart power grid (VIR 2016a).

This focus on digitalization and environmental protection is embedded into the Vietnamese approach towards climate change. Climate change and its mitigation efforts play central roles in the national policy discourse. Risk assessment and adaptation projects are popular because Tam Kỳ is located in one of the main impact regions for climate change, with a

high risk of future flooding and extreme weather events. (Pho, Le and Le 2014:18-19). Adaptation projects, like flood protection, are implemented in Tam Kỳ, for example, by the ADB and their Vietnam Secondary City Programme (ADB 2021).

The integration of these concepts mentioned above in the urban planning process connects the development of Tam Kỳ with the global discourse on urban development. The international engagement in cooperation with partner cities in Korea and Japan (Fukuoka), the ADB, UN-Habitat, Finland, Denmark, and as a new member in Cities Alliance supports this process. Furthermore, Tam Kỳ is one of two Vietnamese cities, which will use the urban planning tool “City Development Strategy” crafted by the Cities Alliance to coordinate their urban development in the future (UN Habitat 2015b). Tam Kỳ is also a member of the Regional Network for Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlement (CityNet). Overall, Tam Kỳ is an active participant in the global discourse on urban development. It uses tools provided by the international community for its development efforts. Finally, Tam Kỳ is eager to be perceived as a role model for a green urban future to realize their aspiration to be part of a global urban planning movement. (VAA 2014; UN Habitat 2015a; CityNet 2021)

Therefore, the urban aspiration promoted by the city administration is not rooted in a local tradition but global imagery of urban modernity. In Tam Kỳ, this means that the underlying urban planning is developed and discussed in a global forum in which city officials meet with other international actors. These forums, meetings, and workshops constitute modes of mobility for modern urban forms (Söderström and Geertmann 2015). Examples of these modes of mobility are numerous international workshops held by the Tam Kỳ People’s Committee together with UN-Habitat, the Japanese city of Fukuoka in 2014, and the Cities Alliance and International Urban Training Center on green urban development and eco-tourism in 2015 (UN-Habitat 2015), as well as with KOICA in 2018 (QNO 2018). Besides the transfer of knowledge and financial investments, they also constitute symbolic rituals of mutual recognition. They confirm the institutional importance of urban planners as drivers of urban change in the framework of urban development discourses.

Beyond the global discourse, Tam Kỳ also needs to implement the national urban strategy. Therefore, local urban plans need to be consistent with predefined national decisions, which are summarized in more than a dozen plans, decrees, resolutions, and other regulations. Generally, “Urban Green Growth” can be understood as the central

developmental aim of urban planning in Vietnam based on the “Urban Green Growth Development Plan to 2030”, which follows the shift on urban growth towards sustainability and climate change adaptation in the global discourse. Tam Kỳ constitutes one of the 23 pilot sites for this plan (Bizhub 2018).

The “Urban Master Plan for 2030 with an Outlook for 2050” draws the image of Tam Kỳ as a “Green Capital” with a strong focus on a green economy, green space, and green infrastructure, including a comprehensive water supply network for all citizens (VAA 2014; Doan 2014). This master plan draws heavily on pictures of modern but placeless architecture, including glass, steel, and green and open spaces as illustrated by Figure 38. The master plan draws on global imagery – clean farmer markets, high risers, and green public space. This vision of the urban future is not rooted in the local heritage but envisions a universal urban space instead of linking the plan to the existing urban landscape (VAA 2014; Doan 2014).



Figure 38 Urban Master Plan for 2030 with an Outlook for 2050 for Tam Kỳ (VAA 2014)

In reality, the existing built environment, including particularly health and education, still lags behind these grand visions. Therefore, in 2015 many city and provincial administrators did not permanently relocate to Tam Kỳ with their families. Instead, they commute between Tam Kỳ and Đà Nẵng. Their children stay in Đà Nẵng to have access to better education. The parents have a second home in Tam Kỳ while maintaining their residence in Đà Nẵng. Thus, Tam Kỳ exists as a satellite town to Đà Nẵng but with a

reverse flow of people who work in Tam Kỳ but live in Đà Nẵng. This relationship with Đà Nẵng provides the opportunity to be closely connected to the center of power and reduces the peripheral marginalization of Tam Kỳ. Political actors in Tam Kỳ foster close global connections. These residential arrangements also recreate Tam Kỳ as an entry point for mobile urban forms and an interface with the international discourse. However, it also marginalizes Tam Kỳ and slows down local development of small businesses and entertainment, because many middle-class families spend less time and money in Tam Kỳ. (Interviews Tam Kỳ 11/2014)

In 2009, the national government selected Buôn Ma Thuột to develop into the primary urban center and a regional hub for the Central Highlands (*Conclusion No.60-KL/TW*). The growth of economic prosperity for the region is a central focus for the development of Buôn Ma Thuột as a regional driver of per capita income and infrastructure improvement. Thus, Buôn Ma Thuột is deeply entrenched in the national urbanization strategy with a designated future role in the Vietnamese urban system.

With a focus on agroforestry, Buôn Ma Thuột is the economic center for coffee and rubber production in Vietnam. Furthermore, Buôn Ma Thuột plays an important role in national security and defense due to its border with Cambodia and its location in the central highland with a long history of rebellions. Finally, from a demographic perspective, since reunification in 1975, Buôn Ma Thuột and its peri-urban and rural areas underwent profound transformations. On the one hand, the socio-economic position of ethnic minorities became more contentious and precarious. On the other hand, due to economic and political incentives, especially the coffee boom, new residents moved in the area changing existing social relations and networks since the 1990s. (Minh Hue 2019; Vietnam News 2009)

Compared with Tam Kỳ, Buôn Ma Thuột is less active in international networks, has fewer international partners, and is thus less embedded in the global discourse on urban development. However, despite not being part of many international networks, many of the same themes are referenced in Buôn Ma Thuột – foremost, green, smart urban development - due to the national urban discourse relying on many of these themes.

Internationally, Buôn Ma Thuột, like Tam Kỳ, is one of the partner cities of the Secondary City project of the ADB targeting waste management. Buôn Ma Thuột also cooperated with ABB to install a smart energy grid for the city (ABB 2016). Finally, the provincial

and city administration focuses on smart city development in its most recent urban planning strategy, as shown by recent workshops on smart urbanization in 2017, 2018, and 2019 with VNPT, a Vietnamese tech provider. The implementation of this smart city strategy is firmly established in a project run by VNPT from 2020 until 2025. This “smart city” discourse frames urban development in technological terms. The goal is the integration of information and telecommunication technology in the urban infrastructure, from the administration to the control of traffic flows and the management of waste, wastewater, and water supply. One central aspect of smart city development in Buôn Ma Thuột is the installation of surveillance cameras in public spaces supporting efforts to curb illegal advertising, including the advertisement of telephone numbers and waste and wastewater disposal. The global discourse on smart city and its technological frame offers the perfect tool to control public space and provides an urban pedagogic which attempts to educate urban residents on modern urban behavior. (Söderstrom 2013, Nguyen 2017; Thúy Diễm 2019; Kim Bao 2021b; Kim Bao 2020)

Besides ABB, the coffee producer Trung Nguyên Legend acts as a private investor in urban development. In 2018, it started the construction of “Coffee City”, residential development with urban amenities and a coffee museum (Figure 39 and 40). The architecture for the planned houses references Milan and London on its website, once again using mobile urban forms instead of vernacular architecture. (Saigoneer 2018, Coffee City 2021) Here, another global actor influences urban development at the urban periphery in Vietnam. International and local investors play a major role in developing these new urban areas and gated communities in peri-urban space. These investments can be observed not only in cities like Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City but also in Buôn Ma Thuột, as shown in this example. This local urban development is marketed towards a growing middle class with a homogenous, global aesthetic.

The material space borrows from global imagery of “Asia” as seen, for example, by the integration of a “Japanese” Zen garden in the Coffee City (Figure 40). Furthermore, in this framework, urban development also integrates urban space into the logic of global capitalism. The constructed space is privatized and distinctly cut off from local mobilities and the local public sphere. None of the space produced is for public consumption. Instead, control of access and behavior dominate the space. It reduces porosity, establishes boundaries, and redirects mobilities and participation towards a global sphere and elite.



Figure 39 "The World of Coffee" museum and global aspiration: locating oneself in a global narrative (Images from The World of Coffee Homepage)

Rất nhiều thành phố lớn trên thế giới có công viên và vườn hoa đẹp, một số nơi còn có rừng cây và khu vực hoang dã. Paris có Bois de Boulogne, London có công viên Hyde, thành phố New York có công viên Trung tâm do nhà thiết kế cảnh quan đại tài Frederick Law Olmsted thiết kế. Ông từng nói rằng:



ZEN GARDEN
 Chùa Linh Thân - Tâm - Trì bằng nghệ thuật làm vườn từ thiên nhiên
 Healing body - heart - mind with natural gardening art



Figure 40 Aspiration of a Global Asia: The Coffee City in Buôn Ma Thuật (Images from Coffee City Homepage)

This combination of capitalism and global orientation is also inherent in the newly constructed “World of Coffee” museum (The World of Coffee 2021). On the outside, the museum, a part of “Coffee City” in Buôn Ma Thuột, reproduces a modernized local architecture borrowed from the Ede longhouse. However, beyond the surface, the museum targets not the local population but tourists. Oriented towards the global market, it represents the history of coffee around the world and, thus, situates itself and the role of Buôn Ma Thuột on this global map: “over 10,000 objects related to coffee from a number of coffee cultures around the world through various periods” (The World of Coffee 2021). The frame of reference is not local history, tradition, culture, or even coffee production. Instead, Buôn Ma Thuột becomes a part of global history for which the local context has little relevance. This understanding finds its expression in the exhibition of up to 10,000 objects on global coffee production and consumption. Jens Burg, a German coffee lover, and collector donated the displayed objects in 2020 to the museum. Thus, the museum constructs a global sphere of coffee producers and situates itself, the “Trung Nguyên Coffee” brand and by extension Buôn Ma Thuột in this framework. It is thus less about local identities and histories and more about global aspirations. Local traditions, like music, dances, and costumes from ethnic minorities or Kinh Vietnamese, are used in cultural events (The Coffee World 2021). They become tourist spectacle that commodifies these traditions. However, because little information on meaning and history is provided, this reduces local culture to entertainment. It loses the means to construct and maintain local identities.

Multiple political actors from local, provincial, and national agencies create a multi-level dynamic that translates global discourses into the local context. These actors also include international networks, private investors, NGOs, and corporations. The emerging cooperation provides access to expertise and financial resources for urban development. However, it sometimes also removes urban development from the local realities. In Tam Kỳ, the participation at the global level, especially in international organizations, provides status and recognition, which is relevant in the global competition of cities. In the end, this leads to the rise of cosmopolis, based on mobile urban forms and promoted by national and international actors and private investors in the two cities discussed.

3.2. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The local administration uses the aspirations and concepts outlined above as the fundament for the state-led production and material transformation of urban space. As urban plans often include a broad range of topics, this chapter will illustrate the main fields of intervention as relevant for the production of porosity. Other dimensions, like health care, education, and environmental protection, will be ignored.

Urban zoning

The production of clear spatial structures and urban zoning shows the process of transformation in Tam Kỳ. In peri-urban areas, this includes a constant process of construction as well as a re-definition of land use like new urban areas and industrial parks. The urban plan for Tam Kỳ separates the urban area into four zones with a clear spatial differentiation: (1) an urban core, (2) a new urban area, (3) a mixed industrial, ecological, and agricultural zone, and (4) a tourist zone along the shoreline (VAA 2014; Doan 2014).

In the city center, the separation between the administrative district, the neighborhood around the university, and the CBD around the market prevailed in 2015. When moving through Tam Kỳ, distinct communities and neighborhoods with their own local identities are scattered throughout the city. For example, the area around the university has a market, cafés, and entertainment for students. It caters to a younger population, whereas the area around Trang Nguyen Han Street has a more rural village characteristic (Figure 41).

Outside of the city center, there exists a clear distinction between the homogeneity of the new urban areas in the peri-urban surrounding and the heterogeneous landscape of houses and small shops in the urban core. The new urban areas constructed at the urban edge have a strong mono-functional focus on housing. This focus might shift when urban growth integrates these areas into the urban core. Already today, cafés and street-side vendors start to appear where customers are available. However, many of these areas still are not characterized by the busy Vietnamese street life as residents are not at home during working hours.



Figure 41 University District (top) and rural city neighbourhood (below) in Tam Kỳ 2015

In contrast, older rural settlements in the peri-urban surrounding are more densely populated and have a mixed-functional and material landscape. Often located along major roads, they are busy economic areas. Their organic integration into the city leads to a further increase in density, a reduction in spatial porosity, and the slow transformation of the built environment. The replacement of rural houses with more modern architectural features accompanies this development. For the time being, they are still clearly distinct from the new urban areas developed by state agents and investors.

Finally, industrial parks, agricultural land, and a recreational area at the seafront occupy the peri-urban and rural surroundings, often embedded into a multifunctional use of space. These areas are part of plans for land-use change, often towards a more mono-functional usage. For example, industrial parks are often limited by clear spatial boundaries like walls and hence not integrated into the everyday life of the surrounding village.

In Buôn Ma Thuột, the newly constructed infrastructure also follows a spatial separation between market and administration as the two main parts of the city center, as described in the previous chapter.

Mobility and Transit

A central focus of all infrastructure development in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột is the construction of street networks, which link both cities to the national and even global levels. Besides constructing new roads, improving the existing road network is central to the urban master plans. For this aim, the ADB emerged as an important international donor. For example, the ADB implemented the Secondary Cities Projects in Buôn Ma Thuột, Tam Kỳ, and Ha Tinh (ADB 2021). In Tam Kỳ as well as in Buôn Ma Thuột, this project contained subprojects focusing on the construction and improvement of major urban roads (Dien Bien Phu Road in Tam Kỳ, as well as Tran Quy Cap Urban road and Mai Thi Luu Urban Road in Buôn Ma Thuột).

In Tam Kỳ, another major road construction concerns a major coastal road through Tam Thanh rural commune connecting Tam Kỳ with Hoi An and Đà Nẵng in the North and Chu Lai Economic Zone in the South as an alternative to National Highway QL 1A. This project is significant due to the additional connection to the international airport in Đà Nẵng and the regional airport in Chu Lai. In 2015, the train station and the National Highway QL1A were the only link to the national level and beyond. Therefore, these new road constructions provide new connections on the local level (Điện Biên Phủ Road construction), on the regional and global levels.

Additionally, these new constructions will also improve access to some of the more secluded areas of Tam Kỳ, like the rural areas of Tam Thanh and some urban areas of An Xuan and An My. Now, these areas can only reach by bumpy, narrow streets. They feel less modern and urban and thus part of a rural past. The new Điện Biên Phủ Road will cross this area, link it directly to other parts of the city and thereby make movement easier. This infrastructure project will also open space for new urban developments as better

access makes the area more interesting for land development. However, this construction required the resettlement of 345 households in Tam Kỳ. It affected residential as well as agricultural land. (ADB 2016)

In Buôn Ma Thuột, the connection to other regional urban hubs is based on the vision of Buôn Ma Thuột itself as the center of the Central Highlands. The city already has its regional airport with daily flights to major Vietnamese Cities. However, major road connections to the Vietnamese urban centers, especially Ho Chi Minh City, and Cambodia play a critical role in the economic development of Buôn Ma Thuột. Being one of the main urban centers of the Central Highlands and the Vietnamese coffee production, regional and global connections are a significant aspect of urban development and are thus dominant in the urban development plan. However, as Politburo stated during the review of Conclusion 48-KL/TW on developing Buôn Ma Thuột, the development of transport links with other provinces is still slow. Additional support is planned in Conclusion 67-KL/TW of the Politburo on Buôn Ma Thuột development to 2030 (Vietnam News 2019b; Nhân Dân 2019). The goal is to upgrade several local and regional transit connections like National Highway 29, the Buôn Ma Thuột - Nha Trang (Khánh Hòa Province) Highway and the Buôn Ma Thuột – Liên Khương (Lâm Đồng Province) Highway as well as Buôn Ma Thuột Airport to an international airport (Vietnam News 2019b). This provision of regional mobility is central to reimagining Buôn Ma Thuột as the center for the Central Highlands. This infrastructure development, primarily roads, also provides a means of control that leads to new opportunities for those who can benefit from better access and higher land value. Residents without access to mobility and resources necessary to benefit and who will also have to adapt to new realities like resettlement will be marginalized.

Networks of streets and empty space: Filling in the void in new urban areas

The development of new urban areas in the peri-urban space of Tam Kỳ (mainly in Tân Thanh and An Phú ward and the rural ward of Tam Phú) is incorporated in the master plan to build a growing modern city. These new urban areas are located along the main roads with easy access to the city center. To begin with, they are composed of a layout of streets, street signs and lights, crosswalks, newly planted trees, and a lot of space (Figure 41). The open space is designated as construction sites for prospective private houses. However, as these houses are mostly not yet built, it creates open, unused space, which private citizens can appropriate for their everyday activities. The planning of these new urban areas

produces new, future-oriented spatial structures projecting population growth. The plan and its implementation does not see the city as it is nowadays, but where it should be in the future. These new spatial structures reorganize the existing landscape and its use. They change how people move through space. And they symbolize the constant transformation of space, as the empty spots are successively filled with new houses, shifting use and movement once again.

The importance of spatial structures and definitions are most visible in the emerging new urban areas in the peri-urban space. These new urban areas represent the frame of future urban development: streets, sidewalks, and crosswalks are built in-between fields and wasteland in the surrounding of the city center, waiting for prospective house owners to fill the void where life still consists of grazing cows and running chickens (Figure 42). The city administration provides a fixed framework for urbanization, which needs local people building their houses into these already existing frames. These streets and structures already transform the landscape of peri-urban Tam Kỳ and point at a different future. In the meantime, small rural huts, farms, shops, and rice fields dominate the routines of daily life while continuously faced with possible transformation and are under threat of eviction. (Doan 2014)

These new urban areas provide housing for a slowly growing middle class, often working in the administration, education, and health care. The newly built neighborhood in Tân Thành in proximity to the administrative district, for example, is conceived as a living quarter for state officials in Tam Kỳ and includes a government-owned hotel as a guesthouse for official visitors next to the river (Figure 43). Some of the administrators in Tam Kỳ might have impressive modern villas in these new urban areas. But they still only use these houses during the workweek, as their families reside in Đà Nẵng due to better schooling for the children and entertainment. Most other private buildings in the new urban areas follow the architecture of classic tube houses with a small front and up to four levels high. They also integrate a diverse set of modern Vietnamese architecture combined with Western and Asian symbols and features. Contrary to the construction of large social housing estates, the state-led redevelopment of urban housing like in China (Leaf 2002) or the privately produced new urban areas in Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City, in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, the state cedes its control over the urban aesthetic. This decentralization

results in the prevalence of one-family homes and the lack of large apartment blocks, creating a different urban landscape.

This development is not restricted to Tam Kỳ. Similar urban development zones emerge in Buôn Ma Thuột, where new urban areas are also located at the urban edge. They are characterized by the same material pattern and socio-economic structures. As an urban space of a growing middle class, consumer goods like cars visibly dominate their spatial materiality. Furthermore, these new areas attracted global shopping facilities like Metro in Buôn Ma Thuột, shopping malls, and big modern stores along the major traffic roads.

Contrary to the urban development sponsored by the state, in Buôn Ma Thuột, the Coffee City mentioned above is a private investment by the Trung Nguyên coffee chain. Almost as a self-contained town inside a bigger city, the planned Coffee City includes all the main “elements of the universal toolbox of post-modern urbanity of any new town worldwide” (Waibel 2010). Besides modern housing, the developers provide medical and educational facilities. As an exclusive space, Coffee City focuses on the civilized aspiration of its future residents. It provides them with security and a sense of global modernity. The Coffee City is thus marketed as an international space, in which its residents can feel like global citizens and part of a global culture of consumption.



Figure 42 Producing spatial structures by constructing street grids in New Urban Areas in Tan Thanh, An Phú and Tam Phú, Winter 2014/15



Figure 43 New urban area for the middle class: Modern Houses (top) and government-owned hotel (bottom)

For the state institutions, this privatized urban development provides the advantage to create a civilized and orderly urban experience without having to invest scarce resources. As financial means are often lacking in Vietnam, private investors provide an easy way to realize urban aspirations by the state. This privatized urban development also de-politicizes

the city and transforms citizens into consumers (Douglass 2009). It is possible because the Vietnamese constitution stipulates that the land is owned by all citizens but managed by the state. Thus, the state decides how and by whom land can be used. Private land ownership is not officially recognized. The state has the right to repossess land use rights for economic and infrastructure development. This right to repossess becomes relevant in peri-urban areas, where land prices rocket. Land speculation, while not officially allowed, provides revenues for state and private actors. Residents who lose their land-use rights should be compensated. However, corruption and fraud characterize the compensation process in many cases creating conflicts between different actors. In Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, there were no large-scale protests due to land rights as urban planners have implemented resettlement schemes to clear urban space. And further land transfer might also increase the possibility of conflicts. (Do 2020, Kerkvliet 2014)



Figure 44 Privatizing urban space and erecting boundaries: Gate community “Fulicheng Garden” in Tam Kỳ 2015

Finally, the private investment into the development of urban housing often focuses on gated communities. These developments are urban enclosures with security guards and walls as boundaries to protect residents from the city. Fulicheng Garden in Tam Kỳ (Figure 44), like the Coffee City in Buôn Ma Thuột, is one of these housing developments. It offers a modern living space for expatriates, businessmen/women, and wealthy travelers. Similar to the Coffee City, this small-scale urban development references global urban forms. It represents a homogenous vision of the city in which every house and every street looks the

same. Additionally, barriers, cameras, and guards also offer a feeling of security and order for those living inside.

Whereas the Vietnamese government maintains control over land, its development – particularly in the housing sector - and thus the creation of the peri-urban landscape is a combined effort where state actors, private investors, and residents produce its spatial materiality.

Water and Waste

The efforts to move up on the ladder of urban categorization in Vietnam reproduce a modern, urban image. Specific quantitative milestones, particularly infrastructure like water supply and waste management, have to be implemented often with the help of international development agencies like the ADB.

In Tam Kỳ, for the urban clean water supply, this means that until 2020, 80% of the population should have access to clean tap water (VAA 2014, p.7). By 2030, this number should increase up to 90% (VAA 2014, p.7). A World Bank loan project envisions even higher numbers: “First-phase: 120l/person per day and night for 85% of the population, Long-term: 150l/person per day & night for 95% of the population” (DDC 2010). This project specifies the number of people served with tap water and the daily amount of water supplied. Crossing the city, one is constantly reminded of this goal: workers construct the water supply network with pipes and a wastewater plant in the peri-urban Hòa Hương ward. These visual symbols of change promise that a clean, modern water supply might soon be accessible for the whole population. This prognosis supports the state’s claim to provide a better future and a decent living for its citizens. However, this promise is not easy to fulfill. Based on reports from the Quảng Nam Water Supply and Sewerage JSC, which supplies water to Tam Kỳ, in 2015, only 55 % of the population were served by the city’s water supply network with a residential consumption of 90.9 liters per customer and day (IB-NET DB 2021a). The ADB resettlement project reported that in 2013, Tam Kỳ’s water supply system distributed water to around 60% of the total population. Thus, 40% of the population, in particular in the eastern wards of the city, relied on drilled wells (ADB 2013a). The report mentions areas with only 30% coverage for tap water in 2013. For example, in Tan Thanh ward, 80% of households had no access to piped water and therefore relied on groundwater (ADB 2013a).

Still, the network is slowly expanding into peri-urban areas. State agencies and the local water supply company only install the primary pipe network along the main streets. Then, residents have to privately connect their respective houses to this network, paying fees, labor, and material. Furthermore, due to financial constraints, the construction of piped networks focuses on new urban areas and areas plagued by water scarcity or pollution.

This unequal development leads to a fragmentation of the water supply network, as some people gain access to tap water whereas others do not. This differentiation might be as strong as piped water access on one side of the street but not on the other as in the case of Lê Thanh Tông Street, An Phú district. Access to tap water becomes a privilege for a minority.

In a 2016 meeting with a delegation of experts of Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) and Ben Gurion University (Israel), the participants discussed the problem of heavily polluted surface water of Duy Tan Lake, Nguyen Du Lake, and Nga Ba Lake, sources for drinking water. City officials complained about water pollution due to economic development. Many businesses, restaurants, and slaughterhouses directly discharge their waste into the local water bodies, which then flow into the rivers to cause further pollution. Alum-contamination and saline intrusion further reduce water quality in Tam Kỳ (MONRE 2016). Interviewees in 2015 voiced similar complaints. One interviewee particularly mentioned mining activities, particularly illegal gold mining around the Bong Mieu gold mine (Dac Thanh 2021) in the neighboring Phu Ninh district as a source of surface water pollution and complained about the lack of government response. Another interviewee also pointed to water pollution in connection with shrimp farming. For now, the government did not implement real solutions yet. The investment in a wastewater plant in the peri-urban area might, at least, reduce water pollution to some degree. However, on the PAPI 2020 score, Quảng Nam still measures relatively low on water quality as reported by residents, hinting at the opportunities for future policy improvements reaching only 0.59 from 3.33 points (ECODES, VFF-CRT, RTA & UNDP 2021: 81). Thus, virtual aspirations and plans are met with the realities of everyday life.

For Buôn Ma Thuột, in the provincial master plan on socio-economic development of Đắk Lắk province to 2020, orientations to 2030, the targeted aim for clean water usage is 90% of the urban population in 2020 and about 95% in 2030 (Long 2020). Starting in 2019, the development of the water supply system was also part of an ADB financed “Buôn Ma

Thuột and Three Adjacent Districts Water Supply Project”. This project included pumping stations, a pipeline system, and a water treatment plant, located on Tan Lap hill Krong Ana district with a production capacity of 35,000m³/day (Vu 2018; ADB 2016b). For 2015, the Đắk Lắk Water Supply, Investment, and Construction Company estimates that coverage reaches 92.7% with a residential consumption of 105.76 liters per customer and day (IB-NET DB 2021b). This estimation indicates the realization of the targeted coverage even when the quantity of water supplied is still behind.

Whereas the water supply system is modernized and an increasing number of urban and rural household gained access to the municipal water supply, in the last decade, the region and the city of Buôn Ma Thuột has suffered from water shortage during the dry season in recent years. Falling groundwater and surface water level reduce the number of available water resources, forcing the water supply company to cut down services and even cutting the water supply during the dry season (Vietnam News 2011; VietnamNet 2013; VIR 2016b). However, whereas planning and investment for new water supply systems are central to most modernization programs for the Central Highlands, including Buôn Ma Thuột, the operation of the new plants is often short-lived. Reports estimate that half of all water supply infrastructures in poorer and rural areas is abandoned, either during the construction or shortly after. In 2019, according to the Center for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation, in Đắk Lắk province including Buôn Ma Thuột, “[...] 20 projects operate inefficiently and another 20 were seriously damaged beyond repair.” (Vietnam News 2019a) Once again, planning and the implementation of quantifiable aims take precedent over the quality of these infrastructure projects and the needs they should fulfill. Furthermore, the low PAPI score for water quality from 2020 (0.5 from 3.33 points) points towards low surface water quality and problems in water governance similar to Tam Kỳ points (ECODES, VFF-CRT, RTA & UNDP 2021:81).

State provision of water supply provides legitimation as well as supports claims to be a modern green city. As water supply infrastructure is expanding into peri-urban space, so is the state in its role as a water provider. It slowly pushes away other water sources and ways of supply and implements a specific idea of urban civility. In this context, the construction of water supply infrastructure offers a means of control. It reshapes the space and how people are acting in this space. For example, Biggs (2010) describes the effect of infrastructure construction in the Mekong Delta. In Tam Kỳ, the image of a proper,

civilized, modern urban water supply is implemented by widespread construction of pipes while simultaneously many areas and people still have no access. This tension between the state aspiration as a provider of clean water and the practice of water shortage is also caused by state intervention. Interviewees confirm that even areas already served are not safe from sudden water cuts due to construction or drought. These contradictions between image and practice open a mediation space for self-organization. Chapter 4 on the local approach towards peri-urban water supply will discuss this emerging self-organization.

State agencies put similar efforts into the development of modern waste management in both cities. However, comparable to the self-organized water supply in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, in both cities, informal recycling plays a vital role in waste management.

Generally, in Tam Kỳ, garbage collection is highly effective, making Tam Kỳ a clean and orderly city. The city administration installed public garbage cans along all major streets. Larger garbage containers are used for collecting household waste in local neighborhoods. Besides large garbage trucks that empty these larger containers, on a smaller scale, street sweepers with small carts are cleaning the streets daily from garbage, waste, and leaves. This official state-organized waste collection is supplemented by small private informal recycling businesses, which collect or buy and recycle waste to generate an income (see, for example, Mitchell 2009 on Hà Nội). Based on official statistics, in 2014, between 85% and 100% of domestic waste was collected, while around 75% of households participated in the waste collection (People's Committee of Tam Kỳ 2014).

Furthermore, communities are mobilized to participate in campaigns like the "3 clean" campaign (clean houses, clean gates, clean roads) to clean up local neighborhoods. Local state institutions in Tam Kỳ use mass organizations, especially the Youth Union at the University of Quảng Nam, as a tool of mobilization to raise awareness and support these efforts. These efforts become more pressing as the amount of domestic and industrial waste annually produced is rapidly increasing from 70.000m³/year in 2011 to 138.180 m³/year in 2013. From 2014 until 2020, the amount of waste produced was projected between 145.000 – 250.000 m³/year. From 2020 until 2030, this amount even rises to 250.000 – 500.000 m³/year. Until 2011, waste was buried in a landfill in a neighboring district that is now closed down. Since 2014, a specialized company has collected and transported the waste to a solid waste dump at Tam Xuan II commune in neighboring Nui Thanh district,

Quảng Nam province. Still, there exists no recycling process, but future recycling is part of the master plan for Tam Kỳ. (People's Committee of Tam Kỳ 2014)

In Buôn Ma Thuột, the improvement of solid waste management is part of the ADB Secondary Cities Project, which finances subprojects in three secondary cities in Vietnam (Tam Kỳ, Buôn Ma Thuột, and Ha Tinh). The relevant subproject contains the development and construction of a solid waste management facility and landfill in Hoa Phu commune (15km to the Northeast of the city center of Buôn Ma Thuột). Furthermore, it is also planning the closure of the existing dumpsite in Cu Eabur. The provincial master plan projects the collection and treatment of 100% of solid waste, industrial and urban waste by 2020. This projection also includes the provision of several composting plants throughout the province. (Provincial People's Committee of Đắk Lắk 2015)

3.3. STATE IDEOLOGY AND DOMINANCE OF PUBLIC SPACE

Besides an orientation towards infrastructure construction, other aspirations of modern urban life are also integrated into the vision of the urban future in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột.

Pedagogy: Education and control

Urban planning in Vietnam, in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, is predominantly occupied with the creation of a modern future, which can be measured by quantifiable goals and promise better living conditions with improved infrastructure and economic opportunities. However, beyond the material aspect, Söderström and Geertmann (2015) point towards the pedagogic component of urban planning in the state-led production of urban space centered on attempts to reform everyday behavior. In Vietnam, this idea is expressed in the ever-present slogan “green, modern, civilized”. The term “civilized” (van minh) refers to the modern idea of urban as orderly. "Being civilized" means shopping in supermarkets and shopping malls. It means driving a car and following traffic rules. It means recycling waste and not littering the streets. It is part of a broad social discourse of appropriate behavior (Harms 2014).

At the celebration of Tam Kỳ's 110th anniversary in 2016, the Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc not only upgraded Tam Kỳ to a grade 2 city but also urged the city officials to develop Tam Kỳ into a modern and civilized city. Besides the focus on

infrastructure and economic development, he especially called for the creation of an urban, civilized lifestyle (VGP News 2016). Consequently, urban planning needs to engage with the everyday life of local people and create a sense of urban order against the perceived chaos of everyday activities. To establish this order, local state actors need to limit and control the activities of everyday life.

The control and regulation of the city include the dominance of public space by the interest of the state. Thus, at central places in Tam Kỳ, like the sidewalk alongside the university or the main square 24-3, official signs remember people passing by of undesired behavior (Figure 44). This undesired behavior includes advertising, selling goods, lottery tickets, and littering. Some of the signs also forbid driving on sidewalks and public squares. The stated aim “Xây dựng tuyến phố văn minh đô thị”⁵ in the picture in Figure 44 is a fitting reference to the pedagogic aim of urban development.



Figure 45 Sign on public behavior on the sidewalk next to the University of Quảng Nam⁶

In Tam Kỳ, City Directive 10⁷, issued October 31, 2016, translated this aim into a policy (Xuân Phú 2017). This policy encouraged a political campaign to mobilize the population

⁵ Translation: “Building civilized urban streets”

⁶ Translation: Building civilized urban streets: 1. Don't advertise improperly 2. Don't trade on the sidewalk or the street 3. Don't stop your car to buy or sell at the side of the street 4. Don't install roof tents improperly 5. Don't throw waste on the street

and mass organizations to implement the state's vision of urban order. Propaganda, meetings of self-managing groups, and pledges by households are the main tools of engagement by the state (Ngô 2018). The campaign addressed primarily roadside trade, advertising or graffiti on buildings, and littering as uncivilized. In practical terms, authorities also dismantle illegal construction and confiscate objects like banners, flower pots, tents, etc., which encroach on the streets (Ngô 2018). Streets that fulfilled the requirements presented in the directive can be officially recognized as civilized urban streets. The stated aim is a beautiful, orderly urban space. Intending to build an orderly and civilized city, by 2017, already nine streets fulfilled the criteria to be called “urban, civilized streets” (Xuân Phú 2017). In 2021, more than 20 streets were recognized as civilized by authorities, which was more than 80% of all existing streets in Tam Kỳ (Tu pháp Tam Kỳ 2021).



Figure 46 Building a civilized as city a cooperative effort between state and society ⁸

This approach towards civilizing the city follows the concept of cooperative citizenship (Le and Nicolaisen 2021). The local state and party, along with urban citizens, are

⁷For the Vietnamese text of the directive:

<http://thanhuytamky.org.vn/QTIUupload/VanBan5/KLTU%20243.pdf>

⁸ Translation: The party, military forces and people of Tam Kỳ decisively build a clean, green, civilized city together.

responsible for the creation of the civilized urban future, as the slogan in Figure 45 proudly states. It perceives citizens as morally obliged to cooperate on the improvement of the Vietnamese nation. From this perspective, state and society are deeply interwoven. The state will decide on the best pathway towards a better future benefiting all citizens. The citizens support this state vision and contribute their share. Underlying these expectations is a self-appointed state role as an educator who teaches his subjects appropriate, civilized behavior. Citizens need to be taught, mobilized, and then compelled to change their behavior permanently. The local authorities express this expectation with slogans like “Toàn dân đoàn kết xây dựng đời sống văn hóa⁹” and “Toàn dân đoàn kết xây dựng nông thôn mới, văn minh đô thị¹⁰” (Ngô 2018).

The control of urban space is particularly harsh when concerned with urban mobility. In Tam Kỳ, in 2014, authorities implemented a plan with the aim “to turn the city into a beggar and homeless person free zone” (Vietnam News 2014). The administration sent homeless people and beggars back to their stated hometowns or into social services. It set a clear rule on which kind of mobility and behavior was acceptable and who was excluded from the usage of public space. The stated aim was once again the idea of a civilized city. Local people largely support the implementation of these regulations because they see beggars and homeless people as nuisances and hassle.

The control of urban space also contains commonplace regulations, like speeding, enforced by the traffic police. The traffic police also supervise public behavior, primarily street vendors and their pushcarts. They control trading permits but are foremost concerned with the interference and obstruction of traffic by sellers sitting or standing along the street and people in cars or on motorbikes stopping (observations and interviews in Tam Kỳ 2014). For example, in one observed incident in October 2014, traffic police checked on street vendors who were blocking traffic or the sidewalk. They confiscated signs, carts, or other objects interfering with the flow of traffic. (Figure 47)

⁹ Translation: “The whole people unite to build a cultural life”

¹⁰ Translation: “All people unite to build new countryside and urban civilization”



Figure 47 Cleaning up Tam Kỳ in the winter of 2014/15: Combined efforts of traffic police and garbage collectors

Propaganda and monumental buildings

The Vietnamese state also builds the modern urban future on the past to create continuity. This imagined continuity fosters legitimacy while a socialist ideology and revolutionary history are referenced in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. As an authoritarian socialist state, Vietnam still controls much of its public space. State institutions are omnipresent in public space in both cities. Propaganda posters announce the achievements of the local as well as

national government and slogans proclaiming future goals of development along all major roads. It also includes the still existing loudspeaker in public areas, which play music and announce local party news at certain times of the day. Thus, early in the morning, loudspeakers in the neighborhoods wake people up with music to motivate them to exercise (observation in Tam Kỳ 2014/15). This space of representation is a part of everyday life as people drive past posters and loudspeakers. Public space is also often used for formal state ceremonies. These ceremonies can be celebrations of anniversaries concerning different state organizations, and all kinds of marches, for example, by local youth and student groups. During the Tết¹¹ holidays, state-sponsored public festivals are commonplace. Large decorations grace the central square and all major roads in Tam Kỳ (Figure 48 top). During Tết, the focus is on an inclusive use of public space. At other times, the setup is exclusive when public space is used for political events (Figure 48 bottom and 48 bottom). Often the local population ignores the political use of public space. From the daily public speaker announcements on major roads to a martial arts competition on the central square and small-scale political parades, residents disengage and continue their daily activities. The only exception is the display of the Vietnamese flags on major holidays in front of most houses along the main roads. This display is strongly encouraged by the local neighborhood representative of the state (Figure 48 middle).

While everyday propaganda is embedded into the urban center of Buôn Ma Thuột and Tam Kỳ, peri-urban space provides enough open space to create a new public space dedicated to the socialist state ideology. The best example is the construction of the Vietnamese Heroic Mother statue (Mẹ Việt Nam Anh Hùng) in Tam Kỳ, an 18.6m high statue of Nguyễn Thị Thu, which is in the peri-urban ward of An Phú and has cost US\$19.27 million (figure 509 top). Besides the statue, the face of Nguyễn Thị Thu, the monument contains a museum, a large park with fountains and pavilions, and a parking lot. This space of representation integrates the city into the national discourse on Vietnamese history and the legitimation of the ruling Communist Party: “The Vietnamese Heroic Mother Statue is imbued with deep humanity, contributing significantly to educating the country's younger generation on their predecessors' patriotic tradition.” (Nhân Dân 2015). Thereby the statue, park, and museum become an essential part of the modernization process.

¹¹Translation: Vietnamese New Year



Figure 48 Symbolically dominating urban space in Tam Kỳ



Figure 49 State celebrations in public space: Presentation by the HCM Youth, military and ethnic groups during the opening of the Vietnamese Heroic Mother Statue (top and middle) and decorations for Tết (below)



Figure 50 Opening of Vietnamese Heroic Mother Statue in March 2015

The statue was inaugurated on March 24, 2015, as part of the 40-year celebration of the liberation of Tam Kỳ. The celebration was organized by mass organizations like the Hồ Chí Minh youth, including dance, music, fighting scenes, firework in the evening, and choreographic presentations to celebrate the Vietnamese state. But there were also people selling food, drinks, umbrellas, taking pictures, and another kind of small business activities (Figure 49 and 50). The whole celebration attracted a local crowd. Afterward, the park around the statue became a recreational space for local people and a tourist attraction. Cafés are located around the park and statue. People come to take selfies and pictures, which they post on Facebook and Instagram. Thus, a process of commodification emerged around this public state space.

3.4. DEVELOPMENT, COMMODIFICATION AND ECONOMIC FUTURE

Commodification and markets

As already seen in the processes of commodification of the public space surrounding the Heroic Vietnamese Mother Statue, there exists a close link between the socialist state and the market economy. In the case of the Heroic Vietnamese Mother Statue, this commodification of space took place due to the economic activities of local people living in the surrounding of the monument, opening cafés, and starting small street businesses. But often, this close link is also established and exploited by the local state administration itself. Bierre Larue, a Vietnamese beer brand owned by Heineken, sponsored the large-scale Tết decoration in Tam Kỳ in 2015. Because of this sponsorship, the brand – including its logo and colors blue, yellow, and white – was prevalent throughout the display (Figure 49 bottom and 51).

In everyday life, next to the ever-present propaganda posters, advertizing posters are commonplace in the urban landscape, often side by side along main roads like Hùng Vương Road. Interestingly, especially local breweries are major advertisers in the roadscape of Tam Kỳ. Other major advertisers are the big state-owned telecommunication companies like VNPT, Vinaphone, Viettel, and Mobilphone. This prevalence of advertising in the urban landscape of small towns in Vietnam is the first sign of emerging consumption culture.

In Buôn Ma Thuột, as mentioned above, the investment by Trung Nguyên into a new privatized urban quarter –the Coffee City – gave Trung Nguyên the role of an urban developer sponsoring the modernization of Buôn Ma Thuột. Trung Nguyên, a locally grown corporation, is also closely linked to the self-identification of Buôn Ma Thuột as the center of Vietnamese coffee production. Trung Nguyên further dominates urban space in Buôn Ma Thuột with its coffee museum, shop, café, and park, which is often used for wedding parties and their photography session. Whereas Tam Kỳ is still working on its national and international branding (“green city”), Buôn Ma Thuột is branding itself as the gate to the Central Highlands and “Coffee City”. This branding in Buôn Ma Thuột finds its expression in the bi-annual coffee festival.



Figure 51 Commercial sponsorship in public space

Furthermore, the state also aspires to modernize the consumption pattern of local people, including the policing of small, often partly informal, neighborhood markets as described above. The modernization of consumption in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuật is part of their urban development plan. In Buôn Ma Thuật, the old central market building in the city center was renovated in 2014. In Tam Kỳ, a new market was built along Bàn Thạch River in the city center (Figure 52 bottom). However, the acceptance of this new market by local people needed to be enforced by the administration. As the market is surrounded by small

shops in narrow streets in the city center, accessibility for those living in peri-urban wards was partially reduced. However, the market is close to one of the three bridges crossing the Bàn Thạch River, which is one of the bigger arterial roads in Tam Kỳ. This location increases accessibility for those residents living east of the river.



Figure 52 Old and new market building in Tam Kỳ (private photos)

In late 2014, tensions arose, as the old Vuon Lai Market (or Tam Kỳ Night Market) area was located along Hùng Vương Road with better accessibility for people living west of National Highway QL1A and the railway tracks (figure 521 top). These people did not like to change their shopping behavior which would mean a longer drive through town. They

already felt left out of the city and complained about a lack of market access (interviews in 2014). As local market sellers in the new market complained about a lack of customers, the city took matters into their hands and enforced a changing of the market location. City authorities radically reduced operations at the old market: the main building was partially demolished; only some market stalls were allowed to sell fruit and clothes (Figure 52 top). Hence, people were forced to change their behavior and use the new market. (Observations; PetroTimes 2014; Thanh Niên 2014)

Economic future: Industrial zones and tourism

Economically, the planning in Tam Kỳ focuses on developing new economic zones in connection with the economic zone in Chu Lai to attract international companies. In 2015, two industrial zones were already operating. Two more zones were planned, including Tam Thanh II (under construction). Based on the urban master plan, these economic zones focus on automobile production and smart technology. In 2015, two garment companies with Korean investment (Panko Tam Thang and Duck San Vina) started constructing their production plants in the Tam Thang Industrial Zone. Since then, both plants have started their operation (VietnamNews 2015).

In Buôn Ma Thuột, the development and management of industrial parks is also the main focus of the economic investment. At the moment, several industrial zones are already operating: Hoa Phu Industrial Park, the Industrial and Handicraft Cluster of Buôn Ma Thuột (Tan An), and the two industrial Clusters Tan An 1 and Tan An 2. Three more industrial zones are planned for future operations in Buôn Ma Thuột and its surrounding districts. In Buôn Ma Thuột, industrial parks are concentrated in Tan An, along Provincial Highway 8. (The Su 2017)

This strategy, industrialization through industrial clustering, is prevalent throughout Vietnam. It provides potential investors and producers with high-end infrastructure, most notably electricity, water supply, wastewater treatment, and modern telecommunications technologies. Often the infrastructure in the surrounding neighborhoods is less developed and lagging in comparison. Thus, industrial zones aim to provide secure production for regional, national, and international investors, which cannot be guaranteed outside of the industrial parks. State agencies promote this industrialization strategy. However, local handicrafts, agriculture, and aquaculture play a more significant role in the economic

livelihood of local people. Currently, coffee production in Buôn Ma Thuột and shrimp farming in Tam Kỳ are major sources of income for many residents. Besides this, the urban role of each city as the administrative hub for its province provides jobs in administration, education, and the healthcare sector. Consequently, jobs in industrial zones in peri-urban areas of secondary cities are not yet the job engine that the Vietnamese state planners envisioned. Instead, tourism seems to promise a golden economic future for many in the local administration and population. Thus, investment in the tourism sector is included in development plans in both cities. However, some are still critical about its potential, as interviews in Tam Kỳ show.

In Tam Kỳ, the development along the beach is the main focus. The local administration recognizes the value of the still underdeveloped local shore-side beyond the economic value for fishing and aquaculture. In Tam Thanh, the administration supported the construction of a seaside resort, The Tam Thanh Beach Resort and Spa, and better accessibility via street. The attempts to foster tourism led to establishing a local tourism festival at the beach of Tam Thanh commune (QNO 2019). At the same time, in 2015, a new city hotel complex, the Mùng Thanh Grand Quảng Nam Hotel, was built in the city center at Hùng Vương Road, which has since opened. A bar and restaurant are open for locals.

However, the project which decisively put Tam Kỳ onto the touristic map of Central Vietnam was the 2015 community art project implemented in the Tam Thanh community. The “mural village” resulted from cooperation between Vietnamese and Korean artists and the local community who painted murals on the walls of local houses and fishing boats (Figure 53). First opposed by the local administration (interviews 2015), it led to the first opening of a local homestay in Tam Thanh, The Golden Lantern Tam Thanh Homestay. Furthermore, international actors recognized the project as an innovative city planning idea and awarded it with the Asian Townscape Award 2017. It is a project from and for the community, but it is also a state project, which could only be realized with the approval of the local administration. It is thus strongly linked to the state and thereby enforces engagement with the state. Finally, it enables new modes of mobility as tourists start to visit the small village along the shores. This development offers opportunities for those households who can participate in the tourism sector. But it also marginalizes those who cannot benefit from these new possibilities because their houses did not be part of the

project or they lacked resources to invest in businesses. (Bao 2017, VNAT 2016, Nhan Dan 2017)



Figure 53 Mural Village Tam Thanh (VNAT 2016) and road of art (Nhan Dan 2017) in Tam Kỳ

Whereas the provincial administration promoted tourism as an economic strategy, it is less prominent in the urban master plan in Buôn Ma Thuật, particularly concerning international tourists. Although easily accessible by air traffic, the tourism infrastructure in Buôn Ma Thuật was underdeveloped in 2014. Existing hotels and hostels were rare and catered mostly towards Vietnamese travelers, especially business travel. Although, Buôn Ma Thuật is part of motorbike tours for backpackers through the highlands, starting in Đà Lạt or Nha Trang, tour operators seldom advertise the city as a destination by itself.

The two central attractions of tourism in Buôn Ma Thuật are ethnic minorities and coffee (Figure 54). However, even though Buôn Ma Thuật was founded on the land of ethnic

minorities, especially the Ede, its international branding strategy tends towards a more modern, global image. It favors the reference to "coffee". This frame of reference generates a modern, global Kinh¹² Vietnamese identity sold to the world. This imagination is the base for the conceptualization of the "World Coffee Museum".



Figure 54 Touristic representation and branding in Buôn Ma Thuật: Brand coffee and artefacts from local ethnic minorities presented in the Ethnographic Museum of Đắk Lắk (04/2014)

¹² The term „Kinh“ – a self-reference by ethnic Vietnamese - is used here to differentiate between the ethnic Vietnamese which have their cultural, historic and linguistic roots in the Northern red River Delta and migrated to the Highlands in larger numbers since the 1980s and the ethnic minority groups which settled in the Central Highland already during pre-colonial/colonial times

Ethnic minorities are pushed to the margins of the urban space, not only in spatial but also in aspirational terms. They are not visible in the city center or the imagined urban space but segregated into small traditional villages surrounded by the modernizing city. Alternatively, they have to adapt to the modern Kinh lifestyle, thus having their distinct identity erased. Ethnic villages are redefined as touristic destinations without being integrated into the urban space. Besides these villages, like Ako Dhong, ethnic minorities, as a distinct identity, are represented in the Ethnographic Museum of Đắk Lắk, located next to the administrative district in a large park (Figure 54). The museum presents a simplified and partly stereotypical version of ethnic minorities and their local history (observations from 2014). The museum also skips over the complex, often violent relationship between the state, majority Kinh Vietnamese and ethnic minorities in the Central and Northern Highlands (see for example Seb Rumsby (2021) work on the Hmong in the Northern Uplands). Finally, ethnic minorities can also represent a commodified version of their culture in local festivals. The largest of these festivals is the biannual coffee festival of Buôn Ma Thuột (Kim Bao and Tuan Hai 2019). This festival aims at promoting the coffee brand of the Tây Nguyên Central Highlands. In 2019, the slogan was “the quintessence of jungle”. During the five days of the festival, several cultural events and a coffee fair selling various kinds of coffee products, items processed from coffee plants, machines for processing coffee, and fertilizers and pesticides used for coffee plants, are held in Buôn Ma Thuột and the surrounding districts. For the local administration embracing "Coffee" as a global branding strategy is less complicated than coping with the historical realities of internal displacement and marginalization. Even more so as the local coffee sector is coopted by Kinh Vietnamese history, the businesses owned majorly by Kinh Vietnamese, and thus less problematic for a modern, local identity. The Trung Nguyên coffee brand, the coffee village, and the museum, as mentioned already, are the leading propagandists of this strategy. Being located in a park area, which also includes a Trung Nguyên café, the Coffee village is used as a local attraction for Vietnamese tourists, middle-class residents from Buôn Ma Thuột and as a backdrop for wedding pictures. It is thus part of the local recreational space. Simultaneously, it also represents an exclusive, private space as people of lower-income groups cannot afford the prizes of Trung Nguyên café. This commodification of recreational space is a central aspect of urbanization.

Consequently, these economic plans, the industrial zones, and the development of local tourism are a process of globalization and mobility. They bring people – as workers and

tourists -, goods and companies from the outside to both cities. But they are at the same time privatizing space, especially along the seaside. This process creates spatial enclosures in spaces that are currently still open to local people for recreation and economic activities like fishing.

4. CONCLUSION

State actors determine the transformation of urban and peri-urban space. They write development plans, decide the usage of the land and look for investment into their projects. They also provide meaning and symbols for these newly developed spaces. This state-led process of space production combines three dimensions of aspirations by local state actors. First, the political aspiration for urban space aims at the control of spatial use and the education of residents into civilized citizens. Second, the economic dimension aims at income generation for residents and the state sector. It aspires to attract investment by private corporations and global development agencies alike. It also focuses on the competition between urban centers for investment, tourism, power, and economic development. Finally, local state actors aspire to promote the image of a modern civilized urban space integrated into a global network of cities.

The discourses emerging from these urban aspirations are transferred to the global level without giving a voice to residents. Different actors in these international forums do not always perceive local people as citizens with any agency in urban development projects but as consumers and subjects to be controlled and educated. The emerging interface between global experts, local administrators, and international investors creates an abstract urban space barely rooted in the local. The mediation space, eloquently described by Koh (2006) as a space of negotiation, is thus not open to all but subjected to processes of marginalization and exclusion to those not part of the modernization discourse. This emerging exclusive space results in the persistence of the globopolis as an urban form.

But as state actors in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột structure and restructure their cities, this state-led production of urban space is challenged in everyday life by residents and their need to adapt to these shifting urban structures. Enabled by the porosity of urban space, the mobility of residents, and the interaction in everyday life, a different localized urban space emerges. This localized space will be the topic of the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 3 POROSITY AS SOCIAL ARENA: THE PERI-URBAN CITY IN THE CONTEXT OF STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

1. CHALLENGING STATE DOMINANCE IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE PERI-URBAN CITY

The previous chapter explored the production of urban space by local political actors based on their modern urban aspirations. The emerging space is part cargo cult urbanism and part globopolis. The resulting domination of state power and global capital in cities around the world reaches into every Vietnamese town, no matter how small. State actors, urban developers, and investors use the urban space as a playground for their aspirations. However, urban space provides more than a blank slate for those in power. It is also used, crossed, appropriated, formed, made, and reproduced by the everyday practices of residents. The lived space of everyday life confronts the reinforced control by the state. Where the state and its agents aim to establish boundaries, the implementation of urban plans also creates porous spaces. These spaces are open for appropriation by residents. In the following, this chapter moves beyond the representational state space to look in detail at the social production of urban space in the peri-urban city by its citizens. It attempts to answer the question to what extent urban citizens can engage in the formation of urban space in small and medium-sized cities in Vietnam. This question focuses on the peri-urban city as a social space of communication, interaction, and mobility produced and reproduced by its residents. The key to this social space is the maintenance and emergence of spatial porosity. As spatial porosity provides a requisite for the maintenance of social space, urban residents can use this space to transform urban space into urban commons.

2. THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORK OF POROSITY: THE PERI-URBAN CITY AS SOCIAL INTERFACE

The materiality of the city not only exists as a physical space, as described in Chapter 2. A city only comes into existence by the continuous interactions, activities, aspirations, and communications in everyday life, which give the city meaning beyond its physical environment (Evers and Korff 2003). Whereas the materiality of the city provides the shared physical space for everyday practices, these activities then transform and reproduce this shared space (Certeau 1984:97). The city is built around these interactions,

communication, and struggles. It becomes an inherently political space in which aspirations and identities emerge, compete and disappear. Every city is a heterogeneous arena in which different actors compete for goods, services, and meaning. Emerging urban struggles manifest in the material space of the city. They shape the urban identity and lived space of its inhabitants. They produce knowledge and meaning. Consequently, at its core, the city is a social arena defined by differing and diverse urban cultures interacting in everyday life. Urban identities are multiple, shifting, overlapping, and in transition. They are hybrids that incorporate a diverse set of roles for each resident moving through the shared space. (Douglass 2009; Evers and Korff 2003)

The city provides the resources to engage in this social production of space. Everyday activities in the city are organized around the appropriation and management of shared resources. First discussed in the context of shared resources in rural communities, the concept of commons derived from the rural experience of shared natural resources. In the urban landscape, they promise opportunities for participatory and emancipatory self-governance against the control of the state. They open a discourse toward a fairer distribution of resources to address needs. In the urban landscape, the most prominent common is space as a shared resource. And whereas often the government produces regulations for the use of physical space, more often, the appropriation, usage, and maintenance of space are organized in the local communities. (Kip et al. 2015:9)

The combination of material, functional and symbolic porosity with the production of urban commons in peri-urban cities, like Buôn Ma Thuôt and Tam Kỳ, is thus the foundation for urban social space and the challenge for the modern globopolis.

2.1. POROSITY AND THE PRODUCTION OF A SOCIAL SPACE

As Evers and Korff (2003:12) state: “In everyday life [] space is required as usable []”. The production of this usable space creates interdependencies between local people and their social, economic and political realities reimagining the city as social space. However, this production through everyday life also fragments the urban space, erects boundaries and leads to an emerging urban landscape where use is spatially limited. People then need mobility to address this fragmentation (Evers and Korff 2003). However, porosity can also address the problems of urban fragmentation, allow for a new social space to develop.

In a first step, it is relevant to conceptualize porosity to understand its function. Benjamin and Lacis (1925) first introduced the idea of urban porosity in their work on Naples. Wolfrum (2018) roots urban porosity in existing or emerging urban pores. These urban pores are ambiguously defined urban spaces which allow people to enter and leave at will. Their usage is not predefined but arises situationally in a given moment based on those entering the space and exploring it. Urban pores provide opportunities to communicate and interact with a diverse field of actors and social groups. This perspective points once more to the urban as shared spaces. Urban residents live in these shared spaces which continuously shift between public and private realms and actions (Miles 2000). The constant shift between practices and spatial forms perforates the barriers erected by the state and private sector. This erosion of barriers enables urban hybrid realities to emerge. However, for urban hybrid realities to emerge, urban space needs porosity. Because space and action are mutually constitutive (Sennet 2018: 13), the mutual relation between form and design on one hand and use, aspiration, and identity on the other are in the center of the urban.

The ambiguity of urban space where urban voids allow for porosity mirrors the ambiguity of urban roles and identities. Harms (2011) describe this ambiguity of roles and space in the frame of “social edginess” for the peri-urban space of Ho Chi Minh City. The ambiguity of the peri-urban space in his research allows residents to employ different roles and identities to gain access to the opportunities emerging at the peri-urban frontier. Harms (2011) recount the example of street vendors in Ho Chi Minh City. When they roam the inner-city streets, they employ a rural image of a farmer with their behavior and clothes. However, when they return to their peri-urban communities, they live an urbanized lifestyle.

Whereas urban planners, developers, and administrators create boundaries in urban space (Chapter 3), urban porosity reproduces the city as a “network of thresholds to be crossed” (Stavrides 2010). This network challenges spatial boundaries and creates a space where diverse cultures can communicate, interact, collaborate, and be recognized. These different cultures and their encounter and interaction constitute a main marker of the urban. From this perspective, porosity becomes a process, an experience that activates the relationality of time and space in the city (Stavrides 2018). In the peri-urban, this process entangles rural, urban, global, local, state, and subversive space with distinct time perspectives on

present, past, and future. Only the mobility of residents connects the diverse porous space through which people, time, and ideas flow.

Only porous, ambiguous urban spaces can give ground to differing social identities to express themselves. Porosity is a prerequisite for the identity formation process, which is constituted through and in lived space (Schmid 2008). This constitutive process creates “geographies of emancipation” (Stavrides 2015). These “geographies of emancipation” are spaces of otherness in which diversifying or deviating practices can emerge. Daily life not only enables social reproduction but is also an expression of self-differentiation as well as personal and collective resistance (Scott 1985). These practices produce a shattered urban landscape in which porous spatialities of otherness emerge. Emancipating struggles in porous space are directed at the mechanisms that reduce and fix urban identities from the top. They focus on access, integration, and communication, thus supporting spaces of interaction. In the context of these struggles, the focus is less on space as a common good but on space as a dispersed and diversified arena in which social actors negotiate their differing social identities. Accepting that identity is ambiguous, relational, multifarious, and open, also demands that we accept that space is only loosely determined, ambiguous, in-between, and in transition. However, private and state agents attempt to reduce spatial ambiguity to reproduce the city as a readable space. To this goal, they regulate spatial use, erect boundaries, and privatize space. Instead of a collaborative space where residents interact, the city becomes an educational system (Söderstrom 2013). In this system, social reproduction imposes state-sanctioned identities without the tools to negotiate between alternative, emerging identities. (Schmid 2012)

Nevertheless, the peri-urban space by definition provides a space of transition par excellence, which is not that easily domesticated. As an in-between territory, state authorities cannot smoothly implement control and regulation because possibilities of transgression are preserved in peri-urban space. These spaces of transition allow for liminality and ambiguity. They permit the negotiation of emergent identities in a “city of thresholds” (Stavrides 2010) where spaces are crossed and everyday life is defined by mobility. In this context, the city can emerge as a collaborative space where otherness is not seen as a risk but as an opportunity to shape practice with an individual and collective agency.

Because porosity has a formative social function and peri-urban space is inherently porous and transitional, hence, spatialities of emancipation define the peri-urban city. As a result, the city is a political space where urban struggles about access to resources and the right to collective identities are situated. The right to the city, discussed by Lefebvre (1991) and Harvey (2008), is rooted in these spatialities of emancipation. Harvey argues that the right to the city is “the right to control the urbanization process and to institute new modes of urbanization” (Harvey 2008). Thus, to counter the alienation of daily life and the marginalization of the urban population, there is a need for a city, which offers access to urban resources for all residents and the possibility to negotiate alternative ways of life (Schmid 2008).

As discussed in the previous chapter, in the authoritarian context of Vietnam, the right to participate in urban development and be an integral part of the negotiation of urban identities is still hard to realize. State actors and agencies define, organize and control the urban space. However, the porosity of urban space in the peri-urban city might provide alternative ways of resistance and participation as proposed by Kerkvliet (2014) and Scott (1985). Kurfürst (2012) describes the production of public space in Hà Nội as collective spaces. Kaiser (2014) and Schwenkel (2014) both observe the struggle between experts, local planners, and residents in the reconstruction of destroyed urban space in Vinh in the 1980s after the war between Vietnam and the US (1955-1975)¹³. In both cases, Hà Nội and Vinh, emerging porosity provides opportunities for people to participate in the production of urban space.

2.2. DIMENSIONS OF THE PERI-URBAN CITY AS SOCIAL ARENA

Three dimensions of urban porosity move the peri-urban city beyond its government-controlled spatial function to create a social arena: (1) urban aspirations as symbolic and normative dimension, (2) mobility as social dimension, and (3) transformation as temporal dimension. These three dimensions are interconnected. Together, they create a space of creativity in which residents and state agents negotiate the future of urban space. This creativity is necessary to solve everyday problems in the peri-urban city.

¹³ I am aware that the term used in academic literature is “Vietnam War”. However, the use of this term reflects a US-American perspective and narrative. As this thesis is written from a Vietnamese perspective and in the spirit of decolonizing academia, I decided to choose a more neutral term, which better reflects this perspective.

Urban aspirations as symbolic and normative dimension

Spatial porosity allows for the materialization of aspirations by peri-urban residents. Aspirations constitute a diverse set of visions for the future. They relate to the social and political discourse in which these visions are embedded and the individual's position in society (Holston and Appadurai 1996). Urban aspirations are closely linked to the urban development of space. The meaning of urban space, and the symbols and narratives employed to discuss urbanity define the available aspirations. As porosity opens urban space for creativity, it enables the materialization of local aspirations. Subsequently, this materialization might either limit or increase future spatial porosity. Hence, the materialization of aspirations influences the future configuration of available aspirations and the opportunity to realize them in space.

Mobility as social dimension

The porosity of space and the aspirations of residents demand and promote the mobility of people, goods, and ideas, which adds a social dimension to the peri-urban city. The porosity of space facilitates projects of everyday mobility. Porous space becomes a common urban good. Projects of mobility affect how the space is transformed. These projects introduce new practices and change the availability of porous space for projects of transformation. Forms of everyday mobility are necessary for the fluid, ambiguous space of the peri-urban city to address its constant spatial transformations. Communication and interaction are the main functions provided by mobility to enable sustainable co-existence in a porous space. Flexibility to react and adapt to continuous change allows the exploitation of opportunities available and avoidance of marginalization. Therefore, besides spatial movement, mobility also includes social upward and downward mobility. Spatial mobility is entangled with social mobility. Everyday mobility influences the aspirations available to state agents and residents and their pursuit for social advancement. Furthermore, shifting aspirations lead to spatial movement from the rural to the urban areas. These movements are linked to a social upwards mobility for migrants as access to employment, income and lifestyles transform.

Transformation as temporal dimension

Urban aspirations and everyday mobility encourage the transformation of space. These transformations illustrate the chronological urban changes as the past, present, and future are intertwined in the porous material space of the peri-urban city. These transformations are the materialization of the urban aspirations projected into the future. They envision the future space by using the porosity of the present. Furthermore, they might also reference the past to create an illusion of continuity while producing spatial and temporal fragmentations. In the long term, these transformations can generate new aspirations and reinforce or replace existing aspirations. At the same time, this transformation limit as well as increases spatial porosity. However, a lack of spatial porosity hampers further transformation.

Over time, urban aspirations and the projects of transformations initiated in porous space will reduce urban porosity. Thereby, clear spatial boundaries will emerge. The homogeneity of space will increase as the liminality of the peri-urban city decrease. Rural, urban, and even peri-urban become distinct spaces. Aspirations become more homogenous and limit creativity and the imagination of what is possible. The peri-urban city morphs into a standardized urban space.

3. EVERYDAY POROSITY IN THE PERI-URBAN CITY

To participate in processes of transformation and negotiation in urban and peri-urban settings, porosity – as stated – is an essential pre-condition. The everyday porosity in the peri-urban city enables urban dwellers to engage with the urban environment. Using the example of Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, this chapter discusses three types of everyday porosity based on visual data from the two cities.

To better understand everyday porosity, four dimensions that constitute porosity will be analyzed. First, the spatial dimension considers accessibility and the existence of voids, borders, and boundaries in the city. Second, the interactive dimension examines the level of participation and interaction of residents in the porous space. Third, the transformative dimension investigates the occurrence of movement, flexibility, mobility, and change in space. Finally, the symbolic dimension regards the shifting urban aspirations and the reinterpretation of spatial meaning.

Because everyday porosity exists in different forms, these four dimensions can manifest to varying degrees. However, this everyday porosity is the pre-condition for the emerging possibility of a cosmopolis. Only in the context of porosity, a space of emancipation in the authoritarian landscape of urban Vietnam can emerge.

3.1. TRADITIONAL URBAN POROSITY

Traditional urban porosity in Vietnam is described in a large body of literature on the Vietnamese city, even if the expression of “porosity” is not always used (Labbé 2013; Harms 2011). Sidewalks are one example: residents use them as semi-privatized spaces in urban centers throughout Vietnam (Koh 2006; Kurfürst 2011). Households use sidewalks for a plethora of activities like cooking, cleaning, and private parties. Beyond sidewalks, streets, especially neighborhood alleys, markets, parks, and public squares are also part of the traditional porosity of Vietnamese cities. All of these spaces are public but can be privatized spontaneously at any given moment. Their usage is not fixed but varies significantly throughout the day.

In the urban landscape in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, there are various visual markers of these traditionally porous spaces. The spatial dimension of everyday porosity allows for easy access because the usage of these spaces is available to almost every social group. This openness creates a homogenous urban space.

While boundaries are scarce, borders are often set up spontaneously, either on purpose to limit access or as an unintended consequence of an activity. However, these borders still can easily be ignored. Activities can overlap or happen close to each other.

This proximity of activities can produce the potential for increased tension and conflict. However, the perception of porous spaces as part of the community facilitates negotiations concerning allowed participants, times, and activities. Residents seldom occupy these traditional porous permanently. Instead, usage depends on need and is hence flexible. Usually, residents use the streetscape for domestic activities like drying racks, cleaning vegetables, or cooking in the morning. Waste collectors sort their waste on the sidewalk in the afternoon, whereas in the evening, the same space is occupied by street vendors selling “chè”¹⁴ or barbecue.

¹⁴ Translation: Sweet Vietnamese bean soup dessert



Figure 55 Traditional porosity and temporary use: Social interactions, work and worshipping



Figure 56 Traditional porosity and temporary use: Celebrations, recycling and gardening, and domestic chores



Figure 57 Porosity, boundaries and barriers: Sidewalks as parking lots and different forms of cafés Tam Kỳ (top) and Buôn Ma Thuột (bottom)

Additionally, people also use the sidewalk for religious practices as could be observed in Tam Kỳ during the monthly Buddhist holiday. Regularly, in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, streets provided space for private celebrations, like weddings, when families erected tents to receive guests. Local artisans throughout Tam Kỳ also use the sidewalk and the road to

extend their workshop during the day and dry their produces like rice paper, cinnamon, or incense sticks. (Figure 55 and 56)

Generally, this spatial flexibility enables the transformative dimension of the peri-urban city. Mobility and movement are constants in porous space. People enter and leave these spaces continuously. Furthermore, the activities in porous space are often either dependent on mobility – customer passing by, disappearing from state supervision, etc. – or are mobile themselves. They do not need permanent material structures but are easily moved to a new place. In the morning, a small vendor sells noodle soup in the same space another vendor uses to sell snacks during school breaks throughout the day. Later, parents can use it as a parking lot waiting to pick up their children from school.

Furthermore, different social groups use the same space at various times. In the early morning, the central square 24/3 is used for outdoor exercise like jogging. At five pm, families with children and the elderly use the square to meet, chat and play. Later, students hang out on the square with their bicycles, for snacks or hip-hop dancing. In none of these instances, the materiality of the traditional porous space changes permanently. Instead, materiality is shifting during the day depending on use and user group. Where the use of porous spaces blocks access and excludes other forms of usage, for example, when used as parking spot in front of a café, locals will find ways to arrange their everyday routine around these blockages (Figure 57).

This flexibility and community approach permit the interactive dimension of porous spaces by opening traditional porous spaces for a diverse set of activities, from economic to domestic. As the openness of traditionally porous spaces forces the interaction of social actors from different social backgrounds, these porous spaces become inclusive. They provide the opportunity for planned, spontaneous, and chance encounters and interactions. They set social borders and reduce these borders at the same time. Meeting with a group of friends at a street food stall at the sidewalk is planned, fixed, and sets a border by excluding those not invited. However, the interaction with people selling lottery tickets, the stop to buy fruits on the way home at a street market, and a short talk with the neighbor in front of the house are chance encounters that tear down these borders. Even in the case of the friends at the food stall, a different friend passing might lead to an invitation to join the group. Many of these mundane encounters happen daily in urban and peri-urban spaces. They are ingrained in the urban and peri-urban landscape. Hence, crossing social borders is

inherently part of the interactive dimension of porous space. Because these encounters happen outside of the built boundaries of a shop or restaurant, they open the possibility for a vast array of interactions. They also include a wider group of people crossing social borders and hierarchies, particularly in the case of urban parks and squares, which people use for recreation in the urban landscape. Thereby, the porous space becomes a collective space.

As some of the examples above show, there is a high level of conflicting interests involved in porous space. Porous space is a limited urban resource, although most urban residents need it. Furthermore, by definition, porous space forces encounters and interaction, holding the potential for conflicts. To counter this tension, neighbors informally negotiate as the uses of porous space are embedded into the social fabric of the neighborhood, community, and city. In the case of traditional porous space, the usage is rooted in existing norms and expectations. Residents know how they can use space for domestic activities in front of their houses, for example. This understanding also includes that people will tolerate that local workshops block parts of the street for their production. How to use the available porous space is not negotiated daily but fixed in an informal understanding. State officials participate in these partly informal negotiations (Koh 2006) but might also challenge them when they counter state visions of modernity (for example the "civilized streets" policy). These negotiations and knowledge reduce tensions and conflicts as they set expectations. At the same time, it roots the use of porous space locally. From this local perspective, the symbolic dimension of porous space emerges. Traditional porosity supports the local community, its values, and norms. It anchors the meaning of locality and regulates its norms and rules. Porous space in this understanding is community space. Every resident has a right to its usage as long as it does not undermine the collective awareness of a shared space. Thus, whereas from the outside, the use of traditional porous space might look chaotic, it is regulated by the local community. For example, in Tam Kỳ, it was easy to join the morning jogging at Square 24/3. However, as two Belgian English teachers had to learn, the local community regulated this use with regard to the clothing acceptable during this jog in a small Vietnamese city where outfits are often more conservative. As neighbors deemed their clothes too revealing, they related this information to their landlords for possible intervention. Beyond questions of the regulation of women's bodies in public space, the episode also shows that in the case of outsiders, rules need to be stated explicitly to be enforceable. In the everyday life of the community, these rules are enforced

more subtly with social pressure. Most rules on the use of public space are known in the community as a longstanding tradition. Therefore, families only take small children outside in the late afternoon hours as taking small children out during the day is frowned upon. Everyone knows that a child must wear a woolen hat against the cold wind when sitting on a motorbike. These are rules that only become explicit if confronted from the outside. To master the use of porous space, it demands communication to foster an understanding of local norms to move beyond these symbolic barriers. (Observations Tam Kỳ 2014/15)

In recent years, due to urbanization and modernization, state agencies in the urban landscape of Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột have attempted to intervene in the usage of porous space (see Chapter 3) to create a more civilized, modern cityscape. At the local level, this might take the form of mediation to balance conflicting interests. In some cases, local authorities erected boundaries to limit the access to porous space and its usage. In Tam Kỳ, they set up metal bars to stop motorbike drivers from entering the square 24/3. The state might also intervene in the interest of a specific social group to the detriment of other community members. This intervention was, for example, the case in Tam Kỳ when the state forcibly relocated the local market. In other cases, the local authorities limited the usage of street space for vendors where they blocked the traffic flow. Local authorities also often have a gatekeeper function to formalize the use of traditional porous space. Whereas the acceptance of use is mediated in the community, the permission for usage, for example, for street vendors or street cafés, is given (formally or informally for bribes) by local authorities. Therefore, traditional porous space can be inclusive and heterogeneous; however, its usage for economic gain is partly determined by the state and limited by symbolic barriers and material and financial boundaries. This inconsistency opens the door for the possible marginalization of those who lack the knowledge, network, or financial means to participate in its use.

3.2. NEWLY ACCESSIBLE POROSITY

Whereas traditional urban porosity exists in all urban areas in Vietnam to different degrees, newly accessible porosity is a characteristic of peri-urban space, especially in peri-urban cities. Newly accessible porosity intersperses urban and peri-urban landscapes, which were previously not part of the human-used space in these locations. These areas were undeveloped due to a lack of infrastructure. However, projects of urbanization integrate these areas into the urban landscape and enable access for residents. Often these areas are

not located in the urban center but the surrounding areas. The best example is the development of new urban areas in Tam Kỳ. While these housing projects are built for projected population growth, wasteland at the urban edge is developed with the most basic infrastructure – often only streets. However, as these developments focus on the future, at this moment in time, this produces empty, porous space, which is easily accessible. Because this space has no or only a limited function in the present, residents can negotiate and appropriate its use.

These new urban areas can also include previously rural communities, which are now spatially integrated into the urban space due to material urbanization. The construction of roads and more houses increase the proximity between previous rural neighborhoods and the urban centers. It condenses these spaces but also opens land for new activities which was previously only used for agriculture.



Figure 58 Producing new porosity in peri-urban space



Figure 59 Newly created porosity and peri-urban substance production: Access and boundaries

Besides new urban areas, ideological state space can also be part of newly accessible porosity. These spaces are often open for the public and are integrated easily into everyday life strategies. At the same time, there are also more restrictions on porosity regarding forms and times of use. An example is the newly constructed “Mother Statue” in Tam Kỳ already mentioned previously. Whereas the statue itself and the associated museum are rooted in the ideological realm of the Vietnamese state, the surrounding park offers space for the public.

Finally, construction work in the urban core also creates newly accessible porosity. Construction sites can temporarily open space without predefined functionality (Figure 58). In the long term, these new constructions translate into traditional porosity as they turn into part of urban everyday life. However, these constructions also create boundaries, permanently or temporarily, across the city. These boundaries can be security fences, new walls, new security officers, or the enclosure of previously open space.

Contrary to the inclusivity of traditional porous space, newly accessible porosity is more exclusive. The porous space is not yet fully embedded into the everyday space of the city. Instead, these areas provide opportunities for small local neighborhoods in their proximity. On the one hand, because these areas are often more remote and located at the urban edge, they are less favorable for many everyday activities, including small-scale businesses, household chores like shopping or access to basic infrastructure. On the other hand, this porosity provides opportunities for subsistence production and agriculture. To a lesser degree, residents also use these porous spaces for economic activities like small street-side shops, recycling facilities, small cafés, or workshops often spilling into the porous space.

Newly constructed infrastructure produces access to these new spaces. However, new residents in new urban areas often reduce accessibility as they erect boundaries to fence in plots of land for gardening (Figure 59). New urban areas in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột are also often home to middle-class commuters, which creates the impression of a clean and modern space during the day. Empty streets and closed gates dominate the image instead of traditional street activities, where private and public spaces intermingle.

However, as business activities move into peri-urban areas, residents appropriate and privatize porous space for their interest. New cafés, small shops, and food stalls slowly emerge along newly built streets. New house owners take over land for private gardens.

These fenced-in plots are sometimes used as community gardens in some neighborhoods. This practice provides a level of integration for these communities. However, in all these cases, either the state or the community regulates access to space for subsistence production, mostly by constructing fences (Figure 58 and 59).

The need to regulate space leads to the interactive dimension of porosity in newly accessible space. Porous spaces in new urban areas are not yet integrated into the vast network of urban activities in the urban core. Their meaning and usage are still open and fluid. Due to their remote location, majorly only residents of the neighborhood use these spaces. Hence, they are less inclusive of an urban community than traditional porous spaces. However, they possess the potential to integrate newly arriving city dwellers into the urban fabric. As new neighbors who were previous strangers start to interact, they become part of the urban community. Nevertheless, new urban areas cater to a specific social group, often with higher income, like the growing Vietnamese middle class. Therefore, as the social background is less diverse, the communities are more homogenous. In Tam Kỳ, one new urban area (between Lam Son and Đường Trần Thủ Độ in Tân Thành ward, next to the since opened Ban Thach Riverside Hotel & Resort), for example, was constructed in 2014/15 to provide housing for local state employees. The emerging social structures also influence the materiality of space. Houses and property are walled and gated. The separation between private and public is more pronounced. Homes show the status and income of their residents in both Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột¹⁵.

In contrast, newly built public spaces – like the “Mother Statue”- provide new opportunities to connect and interact beyond the local community. Especially as recreational spaces, these spaces can create a broader urban identity, which includes and integrates different social groups. Therefore, whereas these public spaces are narrowly conceived as ideological state space, their porosity and newness enables them to be more fluid in their meaning and thus provide valuable space for everyday interaction.

Then again, due to the location of these newly accessible porous spaces at the outskirts of the urban core, mobility is a chief strategy of everyday life in these spaces. Moving in and out of these spaces is part of the daily routine. Farmers move through them with their cattle while workers and employees commute into the urban center. They work as a rest stop for

¹⁵ Since 2014/15, most of the new urban areas observed during the fieldwork are now already fully integrated into the urban fabric as both cities are growing outwards.

travelers, who might stop for a drink, some food, or some shopping. Thus, economically, these newly accessible porous spaces are already deeply integrated into the urban landscape. They enable residents and passersby to be mobile in space. People can thus interact with the urban core and the rural surrounding at the same time.



Figure 60 Erecting boundaries in new urban areas in Tam Kỳ

As a transformative space, residents gain and lose access to the porous space over time. This process opens possibilities for negotiating access and use by creating a *fait accompli* with actions. This opening also creates new opportunities for traders, services, and subsistence production as the structures become spatially and temporarily fixed. Over time, this will transform these newly accessible porous spaces into more traditional porous spaces as residents will enclose more porous space and transform it into private space (Figure 60).

Overall, many of the material structures in these newly accessible porous spaces are temporary constructions. The fences and gates surrounding small-scale gardens use only cheap natural materials, like branches, wigs, and planks. The low investment value reduces the financial loss when the space is later re-appropriated by the state or other users. At the same time, activities located in these spaces are also less permanent. They are shifting over time and hence might transform the functional landscape of these areas. These

transformations not only include the material landscape and the usage of space over a long period. Instead, shifts in use and materiality also happen in the short term. As mobility is the main characteristic of everyday life in these newly accessible spaces, throughout the day, activities change constantly. A Phở¹⁶ vendor might set up a stall in the early morning, a small market on the main street may appear in the afternoon, some farmers are passing with their cattle during the day, and some neighbors returning from work use the sidewalk for exercising or socializing in the evening. Gardens and shops can appear and disappear from one day to another. Thus, in the beginning, these newly accessible spaces maintain a high level of temporal and material fluidity. However, the increasing built density and urban integration will reduce the fluidity over time until the porosity becomes more fixed and predictable.

Symbolically, due to the fluidity and transformations in these newly accessible spaces, the meaning of porous space is not yet determined. This symbolic uncertainty leads to the re-interpretation of singular state meaning to a plural meaning as a public space for local communities and the city in general. Often, a newly emerging community lacks a local identity. In the case of previous rural communities, older meanings and identities become useless. Instead, meanings and identities need to change. New members moving into the communities shift economic activities from agriculture to the service sector. These changes lead to shifting self-perception from rural to urban identities. However, this shift in the identity of people is often slower than the material inclusion of space into the peri-urban city. Interviewees living west of the train tracks and the National Highway QL 1A in Tam Kỳ mentioned the feeling of exclusion from the city and the barrier to participating as urban citizens. The train tracks and the highway functioned as symbolic boundaries between urban and rural. This exclusion translates into a perceived lack of access to urban services. Several interviewees in neighborhoods surveyed felt a particular lack of local markets and access to the central market in Tam Kỳ. Thus, the spatial, interactive, and transformative dimension of these porous spaces created a peri-urban city. Symbolically these porous spaces were still rooted in the rural past. At the same time, the transformations enforced a process of re-interpretation as residents adjusted their everyday life to the peri-urban city. Thereby, newly accessible porosity becomes an aspirational space as porosity creates space for the aspirations of its residents as peri-urban dwellers.

¹⁶ Translation: Vietnamese Noodle Soup

The future orientation is more dominant than in traditional porous spaces. The state's aspiration that peri-urban space becomes urban mirrors the aspiration of its residents to become a part of urban life. Hidden in the complaints of exclusion by residents is thus their hope to be offered the opportunity to participate. Finally, peri-urban porosity also translates global into local aspirations. Porosity as an interface between locality and globalization provides a frame where local patterns can be globalized, and globalization is localized. Modernization and the integration of modern, urban symbolism into secondary cities in Vietnam localized and thereby anchors these symbols in the local landscape. It translates them into local aspirations which can be used by local people, in particular those without access to resources, to participate in the making of the city (Evers and Korff 2003:4, 12; Korff 2003; Korff 1996)

3.3. ENVIRONMENTAL POROSITY

Nature is generally characterized by porosity. However, the activities of daily human life reduce this form of porosity as construction work erects boundaries and limits access and use of porous space. Thus, environmental porosity is scarce in urban centers with their high density of buildings and people. However, especially in smaller peri-urban cities are still some hidden areas of environmental porosity not yet touched by human development. Furthermore, there exists an interactive relation between the urbanized core and the spaces of environmental porosity in the rural and peri-urban periphery. These interactive relations integrate spaces characterized by environmental porosity into urban daily life. Spatially, this includes open landscapes, mountain ranges, beaches, meadows, and forests. In these spaces, boundaries are scarce. Access is universal for those who know how to enter and use these spaces, which roots them in their localities. Local people use natural porous space for gathering, fishing, and other temporary agricultural activities. Natural borders, like hedges and rivers, limit the use of these porous spaces, whereas roads cross them and connect them to urban centers. These roads also produce accessible porosity in two ways: first, they increase access to previously hard-to-reach areas. Second, they can be temporarily used for recreational or economic activities, similar to sidewalks in the urban core. Hence, these roads constitute borders rather than boundaries. At the same time, the construction of new roads in the countryside also generates a new set of natural porosity. This newly emerging porosity consists of open space alongside roads. Street vendors use this space for small mobile shops to sell agricultural produce, food, and drinks.



Figure 61 Everyday environmental porosity: A football field in peri-urban Buôn Ma Thuột

The recreational function of environmental porosity is a significant function for the peri-urban city. The proximity of a few of these porous spaces to the urban center enables easy access for the local population. As these porous spaces are by definition not privatized, access is still universal and often free of charge. They fulfill an important integrative role and enable interactions within social groups as well as between different groups. These porous spaces can be nothing more than an open field used as a football, volleyball, or badminton field by residents, like seen in Figure 61 for Buôn Ma Thuột.

A great example of this function is the beach in Tam Kỳ. As a public space, the use of the beach is open to the public without regard to economic or social background. Access only depends on the knowledge of its existence and the mobility to travel there. However, due to the location of Tam Kỳ at the edge of the global urban system, its existence has little meaning beyond the city borders. As only local people care for this space, it has an integrative function for the communities in Tam Kỳ. It constitutes a community space in which urban dwellers and people from the urban periphery interact. Fees for motorbike parking are low. Hence, they do not significantly affect the accessibility of this public space. Whereas the beach fulfills a recreational role for urban dwellers from the urban center of Tam Kỳ, it also holds an economic role for local fishermen/women and owners of the small, makeshift seafood restaurants at Tinh Thuy Beach, Tam Thanh. It further re-

integrates the rural and peri-urban landscape into the everyday landscape of the city, reproducing peri-urban structures. Free access is central to the porosity of this natural environment and the usage of this space. However, privatization for touristic development reduces this porosity, erects boundaries, and excludes city dwellers and local fishers from access. Phú Ninh Lake in Phú Ninh district, neighboring Tam Kỳ, fulfills a similar recreational function connected with environmental porosity. It provides a recreational space, particularly for Tam Kỳ's middle class. It also performs an environmental function by providing clean water to Tam Kỳ. Its landscape and tourist infrastructure presents a feeling of natural serenity and perceived environmental authenticity linked to the urban nostalgia for the rural.

In Buôn Ma Thuột, traveling to Yok Đôn National Park offers a similar experience connecting nature, imagined authenticity, and nostalgia (Figure 62). However, beyond questions of privatization, the national park in Đắk Lắk also shows another destructive force. Regular droughts during the dry season, the smuggling of wood, and the burning of the forest to gain agricultural land transform nature and thus environmental porosity (Figure 63). As more and more land in Đắk Lắk is reduced to its economic value, its recreational and environmental functions are lost. Furthermore, this newly created porous space is then privatized as agricultural land, further reducing its porosity and access for others. For Buôn Ma Thuột, this might increase its economic production but reduce the integrative aspect of the city. Moving beyond the city center offers less nature, less recreation, and less perceived authenticity. Instead, it shows a landscape of dystopian natural destruction and thus pushes people back into the city to escape from this reality.

In all these cases, access to these porous spaces also depends on mobility. Most people only enter these porous spaces temporarily. Most material structures are only temporary. Furthermore, this porosity also provides primary space for peri-urban development. Therefore, these porous spaces are slowly integrated into the urbanized material landscape and partly privatized. These transformations reduce the already scarce environmental porosity, erect new boundaries, and cut inclusive access for urban dwellers. Recreational activities in nature move further away from the urban center. Where porous spaces might still exist, access becomes more difficult to achieve. Privatization also favors new users from the middle class or international and national travelers while excluding other social groups.



Figure 62 Natural porosity as recreational space and environmental resource: Elephant rides and picnic area in Yok Đôn National Park



Figure 63 Destruction of environmental porosity due to modernization in Đắk Lắk province, around Buôn Ma Thuột

Finally, environmental porosity maintains a high symbolic value. It represents a place of longing and nostalgia for nature and authenticity. To recreate this setting, in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, many inner-city cafés hence integrate "nature" into their interior design, like plants, water, and birds. Owners combine these natural elements with stylistic elements adopted from traditional and rural architecture and pagodas (Figure 29 and 30).

As Harms (2011) writes in his book, rural space and especially nature maintain a symbolic value based on authenticity and order. There is a long tradition of perceiving the urban as evil and corrupt, whereas the rural space represents the "true" Vietnam. At the same time, rural space, if it is characterized by environmental porosity, provides space for modern aspirations. Rural areas are easily transformed into urban, modern spaces when investors and urban planners target them for urban development projects. These development projects offer new opportunities for those with access to the space or even ownership rights. These opportunities can be an investment, employment, or business. Participating in the development of rural areas and the last pockets of untouched nature provides access to urban, national, and global networks. The nostalgia for rural authenticity combined with the aspiration of an urban future leads to a duality of environmental porosity. It connects the longing for the past with aspirations for a modern future, if close to already urbanized areas.

To conclude, everyday porosity in peri-urban cities is collective, inclusive, communitarian, locally rooted, and flexible. It fosters interaction and encounters in a heterogeneous landscape. It is a precondition for the emergence of urban commons. However, the need for control by the state and privatization by global and local investors also threatens its survival. It is thus a space of tensions, which can only be solved in a local arena based on locally agreed norms.

4. POROSITY AND URBAN COMMONS: TRANSFORMATION OF ACTIVITIES AND EVOLVING COPING STRATEGIES OF LOCAL ACTORS

4.1. URBAN COMMONS: POROSITY AND SPATIAL COOPERATION

To participate in the daily life of the peri-urban city and reproduce social practice, access to urban and rural resources is essential. These resources can be relational, institutional, legal, financial, material, natural, or symbolic. Ribot and Peluso (2003: 153) define access as "the ability to derive benefits from things" (Ribot and Peluso, 2003: 153). This approach focuses on power relations ("bundle of powers"), which underlie the usage of resources. It is contrary to a property approach which focuses on the underlying rights. This bundle of powers is part of various mechanisms, processes, and relations. It creates the material, cultural, economic, and political framework. This framework determines access and includes three distinct practices influenced by power relations: (1) gaining access, (2)

controlling access, and (3) maintaining access. There exists a broad spectrum of power that people and institutions can use to gain and secure access. Accordingly, various mechanisms of access emerge. Shifts in power relations affect access to resources (Ribot and Peluso, 2003:154).

In the framework of the city, access to space is the main gatekeeper to participation in daily livelihood strategies. Harms (2011) connects access to space with the concept of “social edginess”. In his analysis of Ho Chi Minh City, access to urban and rural space, its use, and the meanings attached strongly determine dimensions of marginalization and opportunities for peri-urban residents. As mentioned in Chapter 1, to better understand this dynamic of marginalization, the concept of “social creativity” (Evers and Korff 2003, p.14) can be helpful. As a reminder, social creativity is oriented towards “[...]a decent living and the effort to create the conditions for making such a decent living” (Evers and Korff 2003, p.14). It is rooted in social interactions as well as the “knowledge, usage and coordination of resources available” (Evers and Korff 2003:14).

These resources include money, social relations, capabilities, and the usage of symbols and symbolic capital. By using these resources, local people can engage in processes of negotiation and transformation of local space, practices, and relations. These processes play a significant role in the transforming environment of peri-urban areas where new resources constantly emerge. The changes in available resources necessitate renegotiations of access. Thus, social creativity enables social actors with access to these resources to better react and adapt to peri-urban transformations, influence their environment, and create a new pattern of interaction. However, actors without access to resources are marginalized and pushed out. They form a floating population, which participates economically in the informal sector.

Space is the fundamental urban resource to gain access and improve living conditions. Access to urban space is a requisite for housing, economic activities, transport, social interactions, and political participation. Schemes of private rent-seeking and real estate businesses, for example, need physical space. Physical space provides a place to set up small informal businesses, from a mobile barbershop on a sidewalk to a small food stall. It is used in temporary everyday social activities, like meeting, chatting, exchanging information, rumors, and knowledge. It enables urban residents to express their interests and needs when they take to the streets for protests. Mobility relies on access to space to

foster further access to the job market and urban participation. The appropriation of urban space, long or short-term, is thus a daily, universal action in every city. Urban space thereby becomes a space of interaction and emancipation. This daily appropriation is part of the informal realm of practices, where negotiations with state agents and between neighbors occur. Koh (2006) defines this space for Vietnam as a mediation space.

The temporary appropriation of urban space is only possible due to spatial porosity. Privatized space with clearly defined boundaries, functions, and regulations concerning access cannot be part of these practices. Thus, porosity becomes a central dimension of urban everyday activities and interactions. Thereby, porosity links space to the narrative of urban commons. Originally concerning the locally negotiated and managed use of natural resources in small communities (Ostrom 1990), the term is increasingly applied to cities. In the beginning, the concept of commons was concerned with the communal management of finite resources without over-exploitation and long-term destruction of these resources. In the urban context, the term mainly relates to the use of public space. Practices of urban commoning establish collective governance mechanisms in urban and peri-urban communities (Kip et al. 2015). In the heterogeneous and densely populated urban landscape, like-minded people unite to create and employ new social strategies. The constant interaction forces urban and peri-urban dwellers to establish processes of cooperation to avoid potential conflicts. Beyond the realm of the state regulations, informal practices thus manage and coordinate access to urban resources, including space. However, anonymity indifference and individualism, often linked to urban lifestyles, might function as significant barriers to commoning efforts (Kip et al. 2015). However, small peri-urban cities still have many close-knitted communities. Due to a lower population density and size, they are not yet characterized by urban anonymity. Furthermore, space is a more widely available resource. This availability makes space more accessible to residents and increases the need to find informal settlements to organize access.

Research in India on the usage of streets and sidewalks in the city center of Hyderabad (Kip et al. 2015) provides examples for urban commons. Generally, public space does not automatically constitute urban commons. However, porosity can transform urban and peri-urban space into urban commons. The focus is on accessibility due to porosity, which allows for easy appropriation. It is thus important to ask how residents gain, control, restrict, and maintain access to porous space long-term. (Kip et al. 2015)

The combination of porosity of space and access to space allows residents in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột to adapt their livelihood strategy to the constant transformations in the peri-urban city as they use available space as urban commons. The emerging self-organized material and socio-economic structures in both cities challenge the public view of an urban, civilized lifestyle. Contrary to the narrative of the developmental city (Korff 2008), residents are thus not only recipients of development initiated by outside agents but are themselves active participants in the production of urban space. On the one hand, they react to the process of transformation initiated by state agents. On the other hand, they can also force these state agents to negotiate and transform their urban aspirations.

Generally, residents employ three coping strategies to deal with the changing patterns. These strategies create three distinct spaces. First, spaces of aspiration enable the anticipation of a modern urban lifestyle and better economic opportunities. Second, spaces of appropriation aim to gain access to relevant networks to maintain power and control. However, these networks also facilitate access to a semi-legal space of informality outside of state control. Third, spaces of mobility around everyday activities allow residents to move between urban and rural spaces. All three spaces are closely interrelated. The interface between the spaces creates a space of emancipation. In this space, residents of peri-urban areas continuously renegotiate their relationship, with each other, the state, and the transforming peri-urban surrounding.

Whereas this chapter will look into spaces of aspiration and appropriation, spaces of mobility will be part of the next chapter.

4.2. COMMONS IN THE PERI-URBAN CITY: ASPIRATION AND APPROPRIATION

4.2.1. SPACES OF ASPIRATION: SUCCESS, DISENGAGEMENT AND LOCAL ASPIRATIONS

Porosity in the symbolic and functional space of the peri-urban city enables residents to produce a multitude of urban and rural aspirations. Appadurai (2004) conclusively writes about the cultural and social role of aspirations. From his perspective, aspirations constitute a social practice, which guides our choices and decisions about future wants. It connects these wants to the cultural norms in which we navigate our everyday life.

Generally, aspirations center on individual wants, preferences, and visions for the future. Beyond this personal level, they are rooted in the cultural norms of a specific society:

“[...] aspirations form parts of wider ethical and metaphysical ideas which derive from larger cultural norm. Aspirations are never simply individual (as the language of wants and choices inclines us to think). They are always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life.” (Appadurai 2004:10)

In this sense, aspirations connect the broader frame of underlying social and cultural norms in a given society to the mundane needs of everyday life. As a practice of everyday life, ideas about a good life are translated and simplified into ideas like marriage, health, work/leisure, virtue, status. Further along, these societal concepts then become even more concrete as specific wants and choices: who to marry, where to work, what car to buy. This translation decontextualizes aspirations by hiding the underlying norms about life in general behind individual material dreams and wants. To fully engage in the translation between the abstract cultural norms and the personal everyday wants, people need social creativity (Evers and Korff 2003) to develop their capacity to aspire. Aspirations help people to navigate their social landscapes. People with lower social creativity in terms of power, material resources, or networks have fewer opportunities to use this navigational capacity of aspirations. They might engage at the personal level to express their aspirations in material terms but cannot participate to:

“[...] produce justifications, narratives, metaphors, and pathways through which bundles of goods and services are tied to wider social scenes and contexts, and to still more abstract norms and beliefs.” (Holston and Appadurai 1996)

Their limited navigational capacity excludes them from the underlying negotiation of the deeper meanings and narratives behind aspirations. It also limits their ability to participate in the formation of the cultural framework and identities, which define a society as aspirations become a social practice.

Nevertheless, the spatial, functional, and symbolic porosity of the peri-urban city at the periphery might provide residents with the means to engage with aspirations in a broader framework and participate in their negotiation at the local level beyond material wants.

Aspirations in peri-urban Vietnam

Jamie Gillen (2015:77) argues that “people in Ho Chi Minh City frame their aspirations in spatial terms that privilege the lifestyle qualities of the countryside” as the city is perceived “[...] as a means to an end” (Gillen 2015). In his argument, the rural defines the collective foundational essence of Vietnam, whereas the urban offers “an individualized set of achievements (or failures)” (Gillen 2015). These achievements - status, income, or professional development - and the potential assets, which can be acquired in the urban future, are rooted in a consumption culture. Consequently, they lack the transcended symbolic meaning of the rural, ancestral “homeland”¹⁷. Hence, emerging aspirations are oriented towards materiality and consumption that increases status. These patterns emerged in (Southeast) Asia since the height of the post-colonial modernization in the 1970s. Societies value motorbikes, TVs, a fridge, and nowadays cars as the essential markers of modern, civilized, and urbanized lifestyles. Urban aspirations are centered on individualized dreams, values, and interests (Holston and Appadurai 1994).

The emerging individualized aspiration of material status symbols based on consumption characterizes small, peri-urban cities like Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. The growing influence of state ideology, the global entertainment industry, and global corporations create a uniform vision of the modern civilized lifestyle. These actors, often thousands of miles away in boardrooms on different continents, define what is perceived as urban and modern. From this definition, a pre-defined and homogeneous set of aspirations derives. This set of aspirations is embedded into movies, music, state regulations, and advertisement and disseminated globally. As symbols of modernization and consumption invade peri-urban spaces, they are also signs of growing economic prosperity in these spaces at the global periphery. They integrate them into a global narrative on modernity (Rigg 2015; Eisenstadt 2005). Thereby rural symbolism and aspirations are slowly pushed out of peri-urban space.

Simultaneously, the rural is interwoven into the urban fabric of the globalized Vietnamese city of the 21st century. Due to rural-urban migration, traveling back to one’s village of origin in the countryside is common. Furthermore, on a broader scale, traveling to the

¹⁷ In Vietnamese: “quê hương”

periphery and tourist cities like Đà Lạt or Tam Đảo, both old colonial hill stations, as a recreational activity becomes popular among the new urban middle class in cities like Ho Chi Minh City and Hà Nội (Peyvel and Võ 2016). For residents in Tam Kỳ Phú Ninh Lake and the beach in Tam Thanh provide this rural refuge for recreational purposes. For many migrants from rural areas, there is also still a connection to their villages of origin, where their family often still lives. This connection leads to frequent travel between village and city for family gatherings, celebrations, and needed assistance around the house (interviews and participatory observations). Thus, land and family back in the village becomes a rural refuge for urban residents set against the modern life in the city. By implication, rural nostalgia and the need for recreational space are connected, creating peri-urban hybrid spaces that simultaneously reference modern and rural symbols. In Buôn Ma Thuột, the Ede village Akō Đông, as a minority village and tourist attraction, constitutes an example for such a commercialized, as well as nostalgic space. Located in the urban periphery in 2014 (since being more integrated as the city moves outwards), it is advertised to tourists as an authentic ethnic community using nostalgia while benefiting from the globalizing landscape of the city. Moreover, rural aesthetics and spaces of nature are omnipresent throughout the city in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. In everyday life, the local neighborhood market, street vendors, urban gardens, and the ruralized interior design in many modern cafés provide reference points for the yearning for a simpler, rural life as described by Gillen (2016). This referencing of rural symbolism might also indicate that the real counterpart of this imagined clean, timeless, orderly rural space (if it ever existed) is increasingly disappearing.

Harms (2011) describes how urban street vendors can exploit this yearning and perception of the rural as clean to create an illusion by referencing a rural appearance in clothing and manners without being part of the rural livelihood. This ambiguity between rural and modern symbols can be visualized with the market seller using a cart or other mobile transportation to sell apples or grapes imported from abroad. However, contrary to shifting shopping behavior in Ho Chi Minh City and Hà Nội towards modern malls and shops (Deloitte 2019: 23), the local neighborhood market and the central market are still the main providers for everyday groceries in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, where modern, air-conditioned stores and supermarkets are still scarce (there was only one in Tam Kỳ in 2015) and more expansive. Aspiring urban consumption is thus not yet translated into

changing shopping behavior. Instead, access to a market was often described as a major urban advantage by interviewees in Tam Kỳ.

The synchronicity of rural and urban, modern and traditional likewise influences the interior design of cafés. The ruralized design in many cafés in peri-urban wards is in sharp contrast with the globalized modern design of most cafés catering to a younger, student generation located in the area around the University of Quảng Nam in Tam Kỳ. Here, an urban landscape emerges that materially, functionally, and symbolically connects a localized urban landscape to a global student and youth culture. Thus culture is characterized by community activities like going out and having fun with other young people from similar socio-economic backgrounds. However, contrary to student quarters in other cities, in Tam Kỳ, there exists no modern bar scene (in 2015, there was only one club in the city, see Figure 64). Instead, locals consume alcohol (beer and rice vodka) in a traditional Vietnamese way, at home, in beer halls, restaurants, or on the sidewalk. Students meet in cafés and juice bars where globalized coffee culture mixed with the local Vietnamese street food culture merges with East Asian and American pop culture and aesthetics. Bubble tea shops and polished cafés are intermittent with small sidewalk stalls selling “Bún thịt nướng”¹⁸, “Hủ tiếu”¹⁹, and freshly pressed juice. The globalized aspiration of students confronts the more conservative mindset of the Vietnamese periphery and a Vietnamese urban landscape that still offers only limited global entertainment. Thus, not surprisingly, the local cinema in Tam Kỳ in 2015 was located in a small two-story townhouse instead of a large, modern entertainment complex.

The Valentine’s Day celebration in Tam Kỳ also illustrates this juxtaposition between local and global aspirations. As an American holiday, the traditions and meaning of Valentine's Day are imported from the American entertainment industry. However, they are localized into the urban landscape where local street vendors sell flowers, stuffed animals, and small gifts around the university to young couples. In particular, the “flower arrangements” (Figure 65) are partly rooted in the local culture.

Sport and fitness is another domain that demonstrates the tension between urban consumption, urban aspiration, and the local use of urban space. Modern gyms, sports

¹⁸ Vietnamese rice noodles with barbecue pork

¹⁹ Vietnamese noodle soup dish

facilities, and athletic fields opened in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột in the framework of urban development and private investment. They offer fitness classes, tennis, and soccer catering to a small but growing middle class. However, the large majority of the urban and peri-urban population in both cities still use open public spaces like public squares (in Tam Kỳ) and parks (in Buôn Ma Thuột) for exercising (Figure 66). However, beyond the glossy modern facilities for middle-class urbanites, there exist also cheaper, local alternatives. These alternatives often use older equipment and are located in less fashionable buildings, for example, in a "hole in the wall" next to the University of Quảng Nam in Tam Kỳ. Fitness, as a universal aspiration, is located at this juxtaposition between local and global meanings, between the global, modern fitness trends, and the local opportunities and needs of lived realities.

Thus, processes of peri-urbanization slowly transform large parts of the urban periphery in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột into peri-urban spaces. Rural spaces of aspiration are re-interpreted as nostalgic imagination, and modern city life becomes attainable for large parts of the local population. In the meantime, the emerging peri-urban cities in the Vietnamese periphery are in-between spaces, which bridge the perceived gap between rural-traditional and urban-modern realities. This in-betweenness, a constant state of transition, characterizes large parts of the Vietnamese everyday life outside of the large urban centers of Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City.



Figure 64 Urban entertainment: Only club (top) and cinema (bottom) in Tam Kỳ in 2015



Figure 65 Localization of global customs; Valentine's Day in Tam Ky in 2015



Figure 66 Fitness between local and global aspirations: Soccer training in Tam Kỳ and exercising in a public park in Buôn Ma Thuột

In the context of the peri-urban city, the strict distinction between the urban and the rural aspiration is redundant. However, in everyday narratives, urban space is still linked to opportunity and consumption. Interviewees in Tam Kỳ often reference the market function of the urban space and the economic opportunities as the main incentives of the city. Thus, aspirations in the peri-urban city are oriented towards participation in a modern urban

lifestyle which includes cafés, shopping malls, and cinemas. Economically, local people hope for better economic opportunities, like white-collar jobs outside of agriculture. Opening a café or a small repair shop is a common practice in peri-urban space in Tam Kỳ. Entrepreneurial activities and innovations can provide new income for residents. Winning support of local state actors is an important requirement for economic success. Attempts by a resident in An Phú ward, Tam Kỳ to start a water filter business failed, as he could not gain the state's support for his business project. At the same time, new migrants see livelihood strategies as precarious due to competition, as described by the family of the newly migrated artist running a café at Highway 1A in Tam Kỳ. Harms (2011) describes this dual link between opportunities and marginalization for peri-urban space. In the peri-urban city, this marginalization is intertwined deeply into the urban fabric.

Beyond this material level of aspirations, spatial, functional, and symbolic porosity also provides opportunities for the development of urban identities outside of the state vision of modern, urban life and its space of representation. In the transforming environment of peri-urban space and its need for constant adaptation, interaction, and communication, new urban identities based on self-organization and social creativity (Evers and Korff 2003) can emerge. The state becomes one of many actors, and engaging with the state becomes a choice. Agency, participation, and modernity become underlying aspirations beyond the material framework.

These symbolic aspirations find their expression in the public space in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột as residents use porosity. With the use of traditional images and symbols like the longhouse, the Ede people of Akō Đông can attract tourists and make an economic benefit. Thereby they can gain access to the symbols of modernity like modern housing and cars. By using state symbolism, they control and reconstruct their space by combining different symbols. Furthermore, residents, especially students, often express aspirations that transcend the local space of the peri-urban periphery. They attempt to connect to broader narratives, which are expressed, for example, by the hip hop dancers and cyclists meeting at the central square in Tam Kỳ or middle-class residents training at the modern gym in Buôn Ma Thuột. With access to social media, residents can communicate these aspirations beyond the physical, local space. The Vietnamese Mother statue, the visit to a café with friends, and hanging out at the beach offer a background to take selfies and post them to Facebook. Besides the urban aspirations of consumption and an urban lifestyle,

rural homes and landscapes also represent local identities. Mobile phones, with cheap contracts and large data capacity, and social media connect residents of the peri-urban city in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột with the global space.

Individual aspirations are embedded into a broader social narrative. Local people express their aspirations and linked identities by participating in local social groups, like the cyclists and hip-hop dancers. Aspirations are translated into self-expression when students hang out with friends in modern cafés drinking fancy bubble tea. From this, individual aspirations construct the aspirations and identities of the local community, which local people share. Simultaneously, aspirations are regulated in the local community, for example, concerning acceptable workout clothing in public. The peri-urban city provides social control due to a lack of anonymity. As a comparatively homogenous space, the stranger and strange behavior stand out in the peri-urban landscape. In this sense, Tam Kỳ, and to a lesser extent Buôn Ma Thuột, still possess the social pattern of the rural compared with cities like Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City.

Aspirations in smaller, peri-urban cities oscillate between the local and the global and the rural and the urban. Therefore, shared identities emerge in this ambivalent space of continuous negotiation. Without the self-confidence of the urban identity of large urban centers like Hà Nội, urban identities and aspirations stay fluid and enable further changes.

4.2.2. SPACE OF APPROPRIATION: EVERYDAY USAGE OF SPACE IN THE PERI-URBAN CITY

While urban aspirations are concerned with the urban as a representational space, social communication and interactions build upon the materiality of space. The aim is the appropriation of urban space to secure the social reproduction of urban life and communities. In this sense, the materiality of space becomes a resource as urban commons, which can be appropriated for usage by all urban residents in their everyday life. These processes of appropriation are often short-term, depending on temporary availability. However, they can be repetitive. For example, a hawker sells his Bánh mì²⁰ every morning at the same street corner, and the waste collector travels her daily route and sorts her

²⁰ Vietnamese sandwich and common street food

collected waste at the same place. And they can be overlapping when locals use the same space for different activities at the same time.

The underlying condition to the appropriation of space as urban commons is its accessibility due to existing porosity, particularly flexible, open borders which can be crossed. This accessibility is mainly negotiated outside of state control to establish, maintain and control access to space. Communication becomes the central means of appropriation: As the material, porous urban space can be seen as urban commons, its usage becomes customary based on informal negotiations based on social creativity and the idea of a mediation space (Koh 2006). Without porosity, the social landscape of the city cannot be reproduced. The city becomes a dead space of anonymity due to a lack of communication and interaction. The development towards highly privatized space in cities has accelerated this process in many global cities in the last decades, not only in the Global South. It creates orderly urban space without social creativity. The easiest way to deprive urban communities of public space is the reduction of urban porosity by a clear-cut definition of all urban space and its functionality, leading to restrictions of interaction and communication. This process is slowly moving into small and medium-sized cities in the urban periphery in Vietnam (see Chapter 2).

However, processes of appropriation still provide counterpoints to this movement of privatization. They reproduce social creativity and porosity and maintain the peri-urban city as a social space. Access to space, social networks, and informality influence the capacity to appropriate space.

Access to space

Concerning the appropriation of space, Springer (2009:140) mentions that: “[...] public space is a process, never a complete project, always in a state of flux between those who seek to deprive it and those who seek to expand it”. Porosity enables this expansion of public urban space. The lack of boundaries and fixed functions creates ambiguity and the opportunity to appropriate these spaces as urban commons. Residents can appropriate the material space in the peri-urban city for private and public use and thereby support the reproduction of urbanity as they foster social interaction and social creativity. This process also establishes future access to space and thus maintains and even creates porosity in the city.

The appropriation of space offers livelihood strategies for people in peri-urban and urban areas where private space is limited. The majority of urban and peri-urban dwellers live in houses with little square footage and only small or no courtyards and gardens²¹. The housing area per capita as stated by the GSO (2020:628ff) in the 2019 Population and Housing Census for Quảng Nam is 25,9m² (urban: 29,7m²; rural: 24,6m²), and for Đắk Lắk, it is 20,4m² (urban: 25,9m²; rural: 18,6m²).

Furthermore, in both cities, formal and informal household businesses, which account for 30,4% of the national GDP (Le 2018:14), and their widespread use of private living space for economic operations further limits personal living space (Nguyen, Oudin, Pasquier-Doumer and Vu 2017: 69). At the same time, due to porosity, public spaces like sidewalks, streets, and empty plots are still widely available and easily accessible. Thus, private and economic activities spill from private into public space in cases of temporary appropriation. This appropriation is not based on land titles or legal rights but customary practices. As such, it is widely accepted.

As space is easily accessible, in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, residents expand their economic activities onto the street to dry products like incense sticks or cinnamon, sort waste and expand their small workshops. The use of street space for domestic chores is commonplace in both Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột, including drying clothes, washing vegetables, and cooking. Taking Tam Kỳ as an example, nowadays, urban gardening can be seen all over the city on sidewalks, around trees as well as fallow peri-urban land. It is not limited to the peri-urban areas but reaches the urban core, where people grow lettuces and herbs in Styrofoam boxes. Kurfürst (2020) comments on the practice of urban gardening in Hà Nội that “city urbanites creatively employ the urban built environment and thence the materiality and materials that the city has to offer” (Kurfürst 2020:41). Where open space is lacking, sidewalks in front of houses become extensions of the private space. These gardens can be small and easily ignored, or they can become a lush oasis along the street with a large variety of plants taking up most of the sidewalk in front of the house. Using social creativity as their willingness to improve their living (Korff, 1991:15) affirms the urban aspirations and identities and thus reproduces urbanity.

²¹ To compare the housing area per capita for the whole country: 23,2m² (urban: 24,5m² ; rural: 22,5m²)



Figure 67 Appropriation of urban space for gardening, household chores and urban agriculture in Tam Kỳ

In the framework of urban gardening and as stated by Kurfürst (2020), the practice of gardening, especially herbs and vegetables, is linked to the aspiration of health (Kurfürst 2019). The fear of contaminated food, especially from China, and the lack of easy access to rural production, while less pronounced in *Buôn Ma Thuôt* and *Tam Kỳ*, suggests gardening as an easy solution to provide fresh produce. Gardening and the visual of gardens in the cityscape also provide an outlet for rural nostalgia. Access to space thus not only facilitates spatial appropriation but also the realization of aspirations. Beyond gardening, practices of appropriation are also employed in the realm of urban agriculture, where peri-urban dwellers use urban space for their cattle and chicken (Figure 67). The intertwining between rural and urban, which creates the peri-urban city, comes to the forefront. The usual sight of farm animals in the urban landscape, even in the heart of the city, contradicts the urban aspirations of its residents and creates a more diverse landscape.

Appropriation is thus born out of need and opportunity. Residents simplify their life and find easy, local solutions to their everyday needs without deep transformations of the urban landscape. However, at the same time, these acts of appropriation take up public space and establish temporary boundaries. Thereby, they force others to take them into account then move through the city. By engaging in these acts of appropriation, residents stake a claim at the city.

In a more aggressive pattern of appropriation of street space, residents living along arterial roads use their specific position in the peri-urban space to make economic profits by selling goods and offering services to those passing by (Figure 68). The establishment of a semi-informal service sector at the urban fringe includes small curb-side markets and shops, motorbike repairs shops, informal gas stations, and cafés. The specific pattern of peri-urban space gives them advantages that they can use to maintain or even gain control over their life and the space in which they live. For these activities, people appropriate the sidewalk or parts of the street often in a more long-term manner by constructing permanent structures or repetitive behavior. While still easily dismantled and flexible in its set-up, these more permanent acts of appropriation more directly alter the urban landscape. They affect the behavior of others as they force interaction and communication.



Figure 68 Appropriation of empty space for a small business in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột : After school hours in Tam Kỳ, sidewalk as parking lot and road side market in Buôn Ma Thuột

In contrast to the appropriation of urban space for private use, these forms of appropriation have a social component when services and goods are traded. Acts of appropriation in these cases, while based on porous space, create boundaries and borders. Blocked sidewalks, parked motorbikes, vendors, or food stalls, make their use for pedestrians difficult and force them to use road space or forgo walking altogether. It also prioritizes some activities before others, like parking and thus driving over walking. Finally, it reduces public space for other activities, like children playing outside or window shopping, on a larger scale. However, long-term appropriation for economic gains also offers economic opportunities for those at the urban fringe. The emerging economic activities provide services to those living outside of the city center. Based on interviews, easy, local access to a market, even an impromptu roadside market, is highly valued in peri-urban neighborhoods. Other activities like repair shops and small gas stations also provide an important service for a mobile population. Spaces of appropriation due to porosity and access to space facilitate these activities. However, in many of these cases, negotiation with the local state plays a more vital role in the process of appropriation to gain and particularly maintain and control access long-term. Formal and informal permissions are necessary to reduce risks and establish a stable long-term income.

Finally, processes of appropriation are established in spontaneous or organized social gatherings by using access to space. Celebrations of main events like weddings often use street space, for example, to set up a large tent for guests. More spontaneously, people gather at main squares and on sidewalks for meetings, share a meal, hang out, and exercise. The appropriation of public space becomes a cheap alternative to cafés and bars, especially in small peri-urban cities like Tam Kỳ, where no real nightlife exists. By participating in Hip Hop dance battles or driving bicycles together, links to broader youth culture and an urban youth identity are forged (Kurfürst 2021).

In Tam Kỳ, spiritual and religious appropriation of space was also commonly based on the moon calendar. Once a month, yellow flowers and incense sticks were offered at trees, in front of houses or trucks. Before Tết, residents performed more elaborate offerings in public spaces, in front of houses and businesses (Figure 69). However, people not only appropriated public space based on the moon calendar. Celebrations for a business opening, for example, also used available street space. These celebrations can become

elaborate with dragon dance, music, and offerings, as observed in Buon Ma Thuot for a hotel opening.



Figure 69 Appropriation of space for spiritual use in Tam Kỳ for Tết 2015

While some acts of appropriation need official approval like a license, others follow loose rules or are tolerated by authorities without an official permit. They are situated in a political grey zone. Not political and at the same time challenging the state as the sole creator of urbanity. They establish urban communication and thus identity outside a state-sanctioned narrative. Therefore, whereas public space for protest in Vietnam is still scarce and mainly located in the national cities of Hà Nội and Ho Chi Minh City, everyday appropriation can be seen as political in the sense of everyday resistance against a dominant state. Appropriation often counters official state aspirations. It creates alternative urban materiality going directly against the idea of "civilized streets" promoted by authorities in Tam Ky (see Chapter 2). Thus, not surprisingly, many activities by the "civilized streets" campaign directly target appropriation. They aim to regain control of urban streets. From this perspective, the appropriation of urban land will always be political. Easy access is the common theme of these acts of appropriation. They are often temporary, very limited in scope, and can be easily dismantled. These characteristics reduce the state's capacity to intervene. They provide an element of surprise that is difficult

to counter for the authorities. Often investment is relatively low to minimize the costs when the state intervenes. Mobility also protects those engaging in acts of appropriation.

In sum, by appropriating urban space, local people change the material, urban space, and, as a result, influence the meanings rooted in this space. This impact on meaning, and thus aspirations, eventually defines appropriation as a political act. The appropriation of urban space provides urban residents with a means to address the encroachment by the state by countering the homogenous, top-down urban image of urban cargo cults. Furthermore, because urban materiality is continuously reimagined, local people can appropriate the existing landscape for individual or collective needs. Meanings are as easily attached as they are transformed, as practices of appropriation are shifting. The built materiality of the city is thus not more than a backdrop to the imaginative construction of the urban as a social space in the daily life of residents.

Social networks and informality

Following Evers and Korff (2003) highlights the importance of social creativity in everyday interactions in the city beyond access. Social networks build the cornerstone for most successful projects of appropriation in the peri-urban city. Using connections with neighbors, family, and the state provides a solid set of strategies and resources to participate in the urban space and the creation of urbanity.

For most residents of the peri-urban city, private networks are the most important resource. State power plays only a minor role in their everyday life. The owner of a local motorbike repair shop in Tân Thành, Tam Kỳ, stated that he tries to disengage from the state as much as possible in his everyday life. This feeling was also often repeated when residents talked about their water supply strategies, where trust in the state supply of water is low. Private networks provide a solid support structure. In some fringe districts in Tam Kỳ, private networks provide access to water when the own access to the state network and own reserves are running dry (see also Chapter 4).

A lack of networks is problematic, especially in the urban fringe areas. Access to porous space alone does not guarantee to escape marginalization. Social networks also facilitate access to resources. These resources can be loans, labor, and tools needed to start and operate informal and household-based businesses (Pasquier-Doumer and Nguyen 2017). This need for personal networks presents a burden for migrants who move into peri-urban

cities. They cannot rely on their old social networks after they uprooted their lives to move to Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. Thus even though they live in porous spaces, they cannot always use their location to their advantage. A local artist who moved to Tam Kỳ from the mountainous rural areas of Quảng Nam describes these difficulties in starting a small household business in Tam Kỳ. The location of his small café along highway 1A should be an advantage, but the income was still low. Many other migrant and low-income households also opened cafés in these porous spaces to subsidize their income. This trend created stiff competition. Furthermore, due to their status as migrants, the interviewee and his family lacked local networks for support, including customers or financial help. Thus, to benefit from spatial porosity and the appropriation of space to create urban commons, the peri-urban city relies on social space to integrate new migrants into social networks.

However, while porous spaces allow for successful survival strategies outside of the realm of the state, personal contacts with state officials and an established state network will prove crucial in many cases. Relations to state local or provincial agencies alter local people's ability to create opportunities from their position in peri-urban space. Especially for construction work and land speculation, relations with state officials are crucial for economic gains. Individuals, like Đặng Lê Nguyên Vũ, the founder of Trung Nguyên coffee in Buôn Ma Thuột, use the peri-urban space and their connections to create their business empire.

The mural village Tam Thanh in Tam Kỳ is an example of a successful negotiation with state actors. Proposed by Korean and Vietnamese artists to promote Tam Thanh as a tourist destination, first city authorities opposed the project. Due to the involvement of international actors, they finally allowed the project, which was successfully implemented and is now even used as a best practice example for city planning (see Chapter 2).

However, for residents at the urban fringe, it is often difficult to negotiate with the state due to a lack of channels of communication from social actors towards the state. Without the backing of NGOs or other official actors, residents in porous spaces might be able to appropriate space but might fail to benefit due to a lack of access to the state if needed. The lack of access to financial resources to support economic activities, the lack of infrastructure, and the informal status of many household businesses limit their income. For example, in the case of household water infrastructure, households are still personally responsible to gain access to water, including the financial costs (see Chapter 4). In the

case of a local shrimp farmer from Tam Thanh, he and his neighbors complained about declining production, environmental problems, and illness in shrimp without the possibility to address the government. Authorities were neither providing any help nor listening to the grievances. A local entrepreneur in Tam K tried to engage the local authorities to sell water filter systems but was denied support for his business and lost his job. He complained that the local authorities ignored problems with the quality of surface water and water pollution from mining. (Interviews in Tam Kỳ 2015)

Social networks and the interaction in peri-urban space combined with the availability of resources and the porosity of land in peri-urban areas create a space of informality. Activities outside of state norms get transferred into this space. This transfer into informality results in a grey zone, in which the state partly withdraws its control. The result is a flourishing informal sector, small-scale private water networks, and small black markets, including small street traders who move from the peri-urban and rural space into the urban space for trade. However, besides informal economic activities, temporary and long-term construction work without official permits is common and prospering in peri-urban space.

This space of informality also includes informal state practices that were moved into peri-urban space. State officials meet in cafes located in peri-urban areas to relax and discuss business with each other and potential business partners. An example from Buôn Ma Thuột, which needs further examination, is the question of illegal logging taking place in the frontier area with Cambodia in which state officials are involved (Vietnam News 2017). Peri-urban space also offers the opportunity to turn financial gain from other activities, like trade and illegal logging, into legal channels by constructing large villas or investing in land development projects. (Observations and informal chats in Buôn Ma Thuột)

5. CONCLUSION

The social networks and interaction in peri-urban space combined with its porosity enable access to resources and facilitate social interactions. This dual process results in the reproduction of urbanity. While power relations and the underlying networks play a significant role in the transformation of peri-urban space and the question of who can benefit and who gets marginalized, communication and social creativity provide a

counterforce to establish social spaces in the peri-urban city. Urban aspirations go hand in hand with the appropriation of urban space for everyday usage. Consequently, the emerging social space reproduces urbanity and challenges the formal state perspective towards urbanization. Contrary to the idea of the city as a globopolis dominated by privatization and state control, an interactive and communicative urban space emerges with multiple urban identities and aspirations. The concept of “multiple modernities”, as proposed by Eisenstadt (2005), explains these different modes of interpreting the urban space, which emerge in the peri-urban city. Modernity, according to Eisenstadt (2005), can be defined as the crystallization and development of new modes of interpretation of the world. Different actors negotiate the alternative meanings and interpretations of reality (Eisenstadt 2005). Older visions of power and its legitimation might lose ground to the possibility of multiple imaginations of life. These imaginations rely on the recognition of various individual and group goals and various interpretations of the common good. Instead of the utopian ideal of one given future that will be realized, modernity is the confrontation with a reality of negotiation and mediation. This reality leads to a continuous reinterpretation of the future. Local people combine self-organization and (dis-)engagement with personal choice and agency to reinterpret their space and mode of living to define their path towards modern, urban life. This path does not necessarily follow the path pre-defined in urban master plans. The realization of multiple modernities goes hand in hand with the reality of multiple, emerging urban aspirations in the peri-urban space as well as the space of appropriation that transforms state space into social space. Combined with the porosity of the peri-urban city, peri-urban space can maintain its character as urban commons. Thereby, the peri-urban city counters the push towards the privatization of urban space by state and private actors. Instead, it allows the emergence of multiple aspirations for the urban future.

As residents of the peri-urban city appropriate space, they also express their location in the urban community and their role as urban citizens. The appropriation of space becomes an expression of individual urban aspirations. However, processes of appropriation also express the emancipation of residents as they state their claim to the city and demand to be taken seriously as actors in the urban landscape.

The definition of porosity has to be expanded to realize these opportunities. First of all, porous urban space also needs functional porosity. The functionality of space cannot be

pre-defined but needs to be adaptive based on needs and use. This flexibility needs to be maintained to provide opportunities for urban commons, appropriation, and new aspirations. Second, the capacity of the state to control access to porous space needs to be limited. If the state controls access, space is not porous because the state can exclude people from its usage. Exclusion as well as a fixed functionality reduces opportunities for appropriation and thus the establishment of urban commons.

CHAPTER 4 URBAN CITIZENSHIP AND POROSITY: SPACES OF RESISTANCE AND INTERACTION

1. FROM ASPIRATION AND APPROPRIATION TO URBAN CITIZENSHIP

Spaces of aspiration and appropriation in peri-urban cities, which arise from peri-urban porosity, create opportunities to negotiate urban citizenship in these cities. As a result, these spaces also provide opportunities to counter the existing urban cargo cult in urban planning in Vietnam. Thus, Sennet (2008) argues that the public sphere is essential for producing the city. Consequently, public space is often equated with the public sphere as the backbone for democracy and participation. The public sphere is perceived as central for civil society, democratic practices, and urban citizenship (Eisenstadt and Schluchter 2001: 12). However, in the context of Vietnam, democratization and civil society are contested concepts, which are not always helpful to understanding the everyday realities in the city (Pye 1999; Le 2013; Morgenbesser 2020). Therefore, this thesis argues that the general porosity of space, the ability to access and use space is more important for processes of appropriation and aspiration and thus urban citizenship. Hidden in everyday practices, porosity allows for a broader range of participation due to a higher degree of functional ambiguity. By contrast, public space often has a more ambiguous relationship to participation and state power. Miles (2000) argues that public space has long been an exclusionary site, with a tenuous connection to democracy. The focus on public space as the main arena for participation and the public sphere ignores the often exclusionary characteristic of public space for numerous social subgroups, like women, children, minorities, and the poor. When the public space is exclusively connected to power, those excluded from the public space are thus also excluded from power and, consequently, participation. This perspective reduces narratives of participation to open expressions of dissent like open protest and neglects to account for everyday resistance, which is particularly commonplace in marginalized groups. In the materiality of space, this power differential finds its expression in public spaces, which are locations for monumental architecture that conveys the values of the dominant class (see also Springer 2009; Schmid 2012). This exclusionary characteristic increases due to the binary differentiation between private and public life. From this perspective, public life is located in public space and distinguished from private life, which state and society relegate behind the doors of private homes. Whereas the disappearance of the private from the public eye is less prevalent in

Vietnam than in the West, there are still political attempts to institutionalize a clear difference. This attempted segregation dominates new urban areas, where urban development provides less space for interaction, and the state regulates the use of public space. This increasing banishment of domestic activities from the public eye into private space notably discriminates against women, the poor, and minorities. For example, public drinking of women in Vietnam outside of main cities is frowned upon as women's behavior in public is heavily scrutinized.

This conceptualization of public space as state-dominated contradicts the original concept of public space as a domain of publicity, as valued by Hannah Arendt (1958), in which power is made transparent rather than enforced by the gaze of the rulers. The concept of space for publicity includes the idea of (1) mutual perception and (2) reality produced in plurality and willing exposure to differences. Douglass (2009) references plurality and exposure to differences as a basis for an emerging globalpolis as a counterforce towards the privatization of cities.

Miles (2000) points to transitional space as a third spatial category. The concept of transitional space integrates the idea of Habermas on the public realm, which he defines as "any medium, occasion, or event which prompts open communication between strangers." (Sennet 2010). Whereas Habermas perceives communicative processes as relevant constitutive elements, he understates the role of spatial materiality in producing public space. In contrast, Miles (2000) takes the example of balconies in Southern European cities, already identified by Benjamin and Lancis (1927) in Naples as porous spaces, to illustrate transitional spaces where private activities and interactions are moved into semi-public perception. The materiality of the space is perceived as the chief constitutive element that allows for the public realm to emerge. This approach is more consistent with Sennet's (2010) perspective, which focuses on everyday practices, particularly interaction and communication between strangers as the main building blocks for the public realm, similar to Douglass' (2009) argument. As practices are embedded into the material space, the materiality of the city influences the ability of residents to interact and thus create a public realm. While new communication technologies, like the internet, reduce the relevance of the physical space, this development cannot completely circumvent the role of materiality. Urban citizenship can only emerge when cyberspace activism is translated into the material space of the city (Le and Nicolaisen 2021).

Sennet's (2010) concept of the public realm can be understood in the sense of Miles' (2000) transitional spaces. However, as Miles (2000) mentions and Sennet (2010) also criticizes, these transitional spaces are often victims of encroachment. They are easy to demolish amid gentrification, privatization, and the creation of privatized pseudo-public spaces, like shopping malls. As Sennet (2010) points towards spatial openness as an answer to this development, I would propose porosity as a broader and more practical term based on the observations in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. From this perspective, any accessible urban space will become a space of transition and thus be appropriated in everyday urban life if its functionality is adjustable, access is open, and state control is not dominant. Following the discussion of aspirations and appropriation in the previous chapter, everyday encounters and interactions in the private realm in Vietnam can become political in these porous spaces as they reframe and remake the city. Thus, as porous space goes beyond the binary of public and private space, it creates the opportunity to participate in the city, interact and communicate outside of the gaze of the ruler. The ruling class is often in no position to claim domination over porous spaces, especially in the context of the peri-urban, even in the framework of an authoritarian state like Vietnam. Porous space thus allows for appropriation, participation, visibility, and, finally, interaction with differences.

The concept of porosity goes hand in hand with the idea of the "architectural everyday" as proposed by Miles (2000). Miles (2000:259) defines the "architectural everyday" as "[...] *things dwellers do to produce their own space, by adapting buildings, making them out of found materials, or decorating them*". Thereby, urban dwellers create identities which are collective, plural, and mutable:

“[...] *whilst the identities of states are contrived and those of commerce constructed through marketing, the identities of the architectural everyday are everywhere so that it is almost unavoidable to be immersed in them.*” Miles (2000:259).

The material design of the public space reaffirms that the public sphere was always exclusionary. However, experiencing the everyday throughout the city produces a critical space, which is also embedded, imaginative and participatory. The emerging space mirrors the processes of aspiration and appropriation discussed in Chapter 3, as people take and create their own urban space, permanently or temporarily, in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. The combination of everyday activities, the appropriation of porous space, and the

emerging urban aspirations becomes political as it creates the foundation for emerging urban citizenship.

2. URBAN CITIZENSHIP AND THE EMERGING COSMOPOLIS AS LOCALIZED URBAN SPACE

2.1. POROSITY AND SPATIALITIES OF EMANCIPATION

Urban administrators and planners move beyond form to establish an approved set of urban aspirations and behavior in their quest for urban order and control (Söderstrom and Geertmann 2015). The aim is a depoliticized city organized by market mechanisms and state legibility (Scott 1998). These efforts result in processes of exclusion based on fixed identities. They reduce interactions between people from different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, they reproduce only a small set of acceptable urban identities. These identities enable urban dwellers to deal with the risks and opportunities of daily urban life. Urban identities define access to urban space, how one can move through the city, and how people can use urban space. (Stavrídes 2018)

However, the narrow conception of urban identities contradicts the idea of the city that highlights the importance of differences in social interaction in the making of urban communities (Arendt 1958; Schmid 2012; Sennett 2010; Stavrídes 2018). Therefore, by challenging mechanisms which reduce urban residents to narrowly defined and fixed identities, urban space becomes political again and enables emancipatory struggles in the urban framework (Stavrídes 2018).

As porosity allows for practices and spatial forms that perforate barriers and mediate between different urban cultures, it is a crucial prerequisite for these alternative formations of urban identities. Due to opportunities for encounters, interaction, and communication in porous spaces, porosity produces means of acquiring collective identity awareness and reduces experiences of exclusion. As everyday life contains practices of self-differentiation and resistance, spaces of otherness proliferate in the city due to diversifying or deviating practices. These spaces of otherness lead to emerging spatialities of emancipation, where otherness not only exists but can flourish, be accepted, and celebrated. Spatialities of emancipation allow new practices in porous and inherently differentiated spaces. These practices give ground to differing social identities and their expression in everyday interactions. Through the experience and use of urban porosity, urban residents have access

to a spatial network that provides opportunities for encounter, negotiation, and mutual recognition. Furthermore, as the relation between space and its use is mutually constitutive, those urban residents inhabit, use, and create spaces of encounter which they use as a ground to establish differing identities, to negotiate and realize their interdependence, regain a sense of solidarity between different people.

Emancipation can thus be conceived as the establishment of means to negotiate between emergent identities without corroborating preexisting asymmetries. Emancipation is necessarily a collective process, but this does not make it a process of homogenization. Because emancipation is rooted in collective interests and dreams, it establishes urban aspirations, which neighborhoods collectively realize in negotiating everyday practices and identities in porous urban spaces. In the long term, emancipation establishes new diverse identities and practices that reproduce urban space. Emancipation can then be understood as the right to collectively create the city and regain control over one's life:

Defending urban porosity might mean defending the right to the city as the right to overcome identification through localization. Instead of identity strongholds to be defended, we need passages that may connect and separate, giving ground to encounters of mutual recognition. It is in such encounters that commoning may develop as an expanding force of collective creativity (Stavrides 2014).

As porosity and emancipation are inherently intertwined, they reestablish the urban as a political arena. In this political arena, people move through, use and recreate space. However, if the urban is inherently political and organized around spatialities of emancipation (Stavrides 2018), this allows urban citizenship to emerge in the peri-urban city. The definition of urban citizenship in Vietnam and its assemblage needs further examination.

2.2. LOCALIZED URBAN SPACE AND URBAN CITIZENSHIP IN VIETNAM

Citizenship can be described as means “to construct and sustain a political order in which every individual person [...] can realize his full development as a whole human person” (Kuan and Lam 2013: 49). Citizenship then defines the membership of individuals in communities based on rules, orders, and reciprocal relations. The most general discussion focuses on citizenship in the framework of nation-states, where citizenship is often formalized as a contract involving rights and duties (Tilly 1995). In Vietnam, national

citizenship is perceived less as a right and more as a duty. It demands the cooperation of the Vietnamese people with state authorities to create a better, more modern, more civilized society in tandem with the existing state institutions (Le and Nicolaisen 2021).

However, citizenship can also apply when discussing relations between state authorities and residents in the urban landscape. In this framework, urban citizenship is a means to reproduce an interactive and integrative urban space. It enables the equal participation of residents and state authorities in the making of the city, including the materiality, urban aspirations, and the meanings and identities located in urban space. Thus, urban citizenship transcends the national level by connecting the local and the global, as various actors use the city as an interface. As a marketplace of goods and ideas, as a meeting space for people and the crystallization of aspirations, the city moves beyond a framework determined by state-society cooperation to focus on a broader range of relations and interactions. Urban citizenship can be described as emancipation from state control in the urban landscape.

Generally, porosity, the emancipatory struggles in urban space (Stavrides 2010, 2015, 2018), and the narrative of a right to the city open the possibility of localized citizenship, based on the connection between space and identity in the urban landscape. The appropriation of urban space as commons is a major step towards this urban citizenship. This appropriation enables the participation of all residents in the making of the city. Thereby, their ability to imprint their own identities on the urban landscape increases.

Urban citizenship defines the relationship between the individual, the urban space, and the global discourse. While the state still strongly defines the urban space, it is not the only relevant actor. Residents also engage in local space production, in which they meet local, national and global ideas and aspirations, as discussed by Kurfürst (2012) for Hà Nội. Following the concept of cooperative citizenship between state and citizen (Le and Nicolaisen 2021), state and social actors negotiate the production of urban space collaboratively.

Residents often support state attempts a civilized space production. However, not all space production is rooted in cooperation between citizens and the state. Often residents consciously disengage from the state by ignoring the official channels of communication and the formal practices available. Instead, they create their channels of interaction, communication, and cooperation outside of the realm of the state using means of

appropriation. Following the idea of James Scott (1985) on resistance in everyday life, these actions create a pattern of self-organization in urban and peri-urban spaces. Koh (2006) and Kerkvliet (2009) describe a similar process in Vietnamese everyday politics. Nevertheless, this disengagement is not always born out of political resistance but more often out of the necessities of everyday life.

Whereas state-led space production is globalized, this citizens-led space production is localized. Elites are cosmopolitan due to their orientation towards a globalized world, also described by Castell (1998:415). By contrast, citizens are locally oriented. Their lives and experiences are rooted in places, in their culture, and their history. Hence, instead of the urban aspirations of local elites, which reference global urban forms and metropolitan urban vision, the urban aspirations of residents are predominantly locally rooted in place and time. This localization enables urban citizens to cope with the spatial transformation due to urbanization and thereby develop strategies to counter some of the effects of the social edginess (Harms 2011) present in peri-urban cities.

In Vietnam, as in many post-colonial Southeast Asian cities, this combination of urban ambiguity and localization is still embedded in a narrative of urban chaos. Warnings from the urban catastrophe and the urban collapse, which need to be managed and organized (Korff 2008), focus on third world problems like air pollution, traffic management, slums, and water management. The city becomes a space of development. Setting the city into the context of development enforces a focus on technology to solve the perceived urban catastrophe. Urban planners, architects, and policy-makers (thus experts) are therefore the only ones able to administer and implement these solutions. Urban porosity, the city as a social interface, and urban citizenship are perceived as challenges to the development of a modern, civilized city in Vietnam.

Furthermore, as long as urban development is part of the post-colonial hegemony of the West, it is a capitalist endeavor. Along these lines, urban development projects aim to produce economic profits for Western and East Asian companies and reconstruct the power relations in favor of previous colonial actors.

Thus, while ambiguity and porosity transform the city into an inherently political space, the developmental narrative employed by the state and its urban agents attempt to minimize the impact of the ensuing emancipatory struggles. Ferguson and Lohmann (1994)

described the impact of the developmental narrative as an anti-politics machine. Consequently, the third-world city becomes a non-political space from the Western perspective. Experts perceive its residents as part of the problems which need to be solved. Thus, residents become recipients of aid without agency. They need to be educated by experts in the art of modern healthy city living. This narrative was seized by the Vietnamese state and reproduced as described in the previous chapter. From this perspective, the solution for the third world city is a universal vision of the modern city – the globopolis - with hegemonies material, functional and symbolic patterns (Douglass 2009, Korff 2008). In chapter 2 on state-led space production, I discuss these attempts to build the idealized city in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột. However, these attempts by the state to control and de-politize the production of urban space are not successful across-the-board. The porosity and ambiguity of urban and peri-urban areas are not easily constrained and are, hence, allowing the urban to prevail as a social interface of everyday activities. The concept of “cosmopolis” (Douglass 2009) frames this process. Douglass (2009) uses the term “cosmopolis” as a counterpoint to the privatized, neoliberal “globopolis”. Since the formation of once again independent states in Southeast Asia after World War II, the region went through processes of rapid transformation at the political, economic, social as well as religious-cultural levels. Newly-appointed state leaders and local elites established developmental states inspired by Western industrialization and capitalist growth. In these developmental states, governments combined the regulation of the economy with regulating society in attempts to achieve economic growth (Douglass 2009:4). Due to increasing urbanization, this developmentalism also influenced the cities of Southeast Asia. The emerging developmental city (Korff 2008; Douglass 2009) concentrated on infrastructure and manufacturing. Urban planners and city authorities often destroyed neighborhood life and vernacular architecture to construct an urban landscape that celebrated the state and its achievements. In the 1980s, with the rise of neoliberalism in urban planning, private investors and a global consumption culture entered the scene. In the emergent of the “globopolis” (see Chapter 2) – a neo-developmental city - the state took over the role to facilitate the privatization of the cityscape and its commercialization.

In contrast, the cosmopolis is an urban space created by the engagement of citizens with the material, functional and symbolic city surrounding them. The cosmopolis aims to localize and decenter politics from the national down to the urban scale, and thereby it incorporates all people living in a locality in governing the city. Douglass (2009) postulates

that acknowledging the "Right to the City" (Harvey 2008) and other postulates of urban citizenship are necessary to allow all residents to be engaged in multicultural city-making. Central concepts are (1) inclusivity and openness, (2) local identity and community, (3) the public sphere, small places, and local place-making, and finally (4) participation, interaction, and engagement (Douglass 2009).

The focus is on heterogeneity, social and ethnic diversity, and the tolerance towards differences in the urban landscape to create a socially just and equitable co-existence among urban residents (Stavrides 2018). The cosmopolis, envisioned by Douglass (2009), is rooted in the day-to-day world of small everyday spaces. It produces new types of cultural spaces, encourages interaction among people, and supports the rights to local placemaking. Thereby, urban citizenship emerges as a guarantee for individual rights. These rights contain equal access to collective consumption, housing, law enforcement, and protection against social marginalization. As the last point, the cosmopolis creates a city worth living in based on diversity and conviviality.

Consequently, the cosmopolis challenges the globopolis and its normative frame and creates a new arena of tensions between different actors creating the urban. However, Douglass (2009) argues that civil society, democratic institutions, and social mobilization are needed to establish a cosmopolis. The formation of a globopolis depends on urban citizens with the agency to engage in urban space production. These citizens cannot alone be subject to the state's agency in urbanization projects. They need to engage in urban space production themselves, to realize their interests, aspirations, and strategies.

Urban development and the authoritarian state structure in Vietnam are thus not conducive to establishing a cosmopolis in Vietnam. Albeit, there exists a more accommodating state in Vietnam behind the authoritarian image of the state (Kerkvliet 2014): In everyday interactions, mediation and negotiation between state and residents in the local sphere is part of state-society relations (also see mediation space by Koh (2006)). Scott (1985) and Kerkvliet (2014) also describe acts of everyday resistance, which challenge the state. This accommodating state produces new opportunities to engage the authorities when combined with the spatial porosity in the urban landscape. This combination allows for the participation in place-making, the production of new meanings and identities, and the interaction in a heterogeneous space. Especially in the peri-urban city, local communities, vernacular architecture, and identity can thus be maintained and reproduced. Kurfürst

(2012) describes this divergence between the aspiration of the Vietnamese state for urban control of public space and a reality where the state lacks the capacity to implement this control with the example of Hà Nội. This divergence results in an acknowledged level of self-organization and appropriation of urban space by urban dwellers, for example, the simultaneous use of Ba Dinh Square in Hà Nội for socialist remembrance and youth groups of skateboarders. This ambiguity creates spatialities of emancipation, where different identities and their related practices interact and negotiate the usage of the public space resulting in a more complex urban landscape. In the frame of porous spaces, this spatial ambiguity of the state towards control is more pronounced. Marginalized groups use porous space for economic or private activities to improve their living conditions. The state has little interest in preventing these activities because they fulfill critical social functions and increase social stability.

Following the theoretical framework, the peri-urban city in Vietnam is a space of emancipation. The everyday practice resists the formal state narrative that wants to depoliticize the peri-urban city. Porosity enables the city to develop into a space of emancipation in which everyday practices constitute struggles of emancipation. These struggles create urban identities and inclusive urban spaces. Furthermore, the emerging space of emancipation allows local people to renegotiate their relationship continuously with each other, the state, and the transforming peri-urban surrounding. Therefore, due to porosity, spaces of emancipation in peri-urban cities contain two social arenas in which residents can engage: (1) a space of mobility and (2) a space of interaction, which both foster communication and engagement providing the roots for urban citizenship.

First, spaces of mobility allow residents to move between urban and rural areas. Second, spaces of interaction focus on practices of sharing and the establishment of urban commons. Both spaces are closely interrelated and based on urban porosity. Both spaces enable exposure to differences and demand for their navigation. Thereby, they contribute to new diverse urban identities that are less fixed than state-controlled identities.

3. SPACE AND CITIZENSHIP: EVERYDAY RESISTANCE AND INTERACTION

The porous space in peri-urban landscapes in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột opens space for everyday practices of resistance. These practices are rooted in interaction and mobility. They provide opportunities to navigate differences, establish new urban identities and

aspirations and result in new forms of urban citizenship in peri-urban cities. In the following, I will analyze these everyday practices of resistance to understand how residents can use spatial porosity to produce a city for its citizens and transform urban citizenship in the peri-urban city.

3.1. URBAN CITIZENSHIP AND SPACES OF SHARING: RE-NEGOTIATING PERI-URBAN WATER USAGE AS SHARED URBAN RESOURCE

Due to the porosity of peri-urban cities and their transitional characteristic, they are often built around conflicting structures, rules, and regulations that try to govern the practices of residents and their access to urban resources. Consequently, residents need to navigate a grey zone of formal and informal institutions established and implemented by the local administration. Formal state structures are not always able to provide sufficient access to resources. Thus, residents require alternative strategies to fulfill their daily needs. Access to urban resources can also be organized and managed by collective mechanisms. These mechanisms are rooted in local communities where people live in close proximity. This spatial proximity produces neighborly conflicts but also gives rise to practices of sharing that transform the city into a space of sharing. The emerging practices can address local needs as people adopt strategies of self-organization where the state retreats. In the framework of the Vietnamese state, where a balance between self-organization and control is a fundamental feature of state power (Koh 2006), local practices of sharing have a long tradition, including in urban and peri-urban areas. In Vietnamese cities, these practices of sharing are organized around spaces of interaction. They rely on personal networks and connections. They are part of the everyday life of local communities using spatial and functional porosity. This interpretation follows Stavrides (2016) and perceives the city as a space of interaction and encounter where residents appropriate space and produce aspirations.

These practices both address the everyday needs of urban residents but are also inherently political. They are part of citizenship negotiations and emerging spaces of emancipation. Practices of sharing can equalize power structures, promote interactions and thus redefine identities and meanings in the urban context. Stavrides (2016) points to rising struggles to redefine commons in European cities and states: “In those struggles, people redefine what is to be shared and how by actually reclaiming the city both as a means of sharing and as a distinct scope of sharing.” (Stavrides 2018:35).

“The process of defining and maintaining the common in and through city life is a process of collective inventiveness. Rules of sharing are tested in practice, and collective experiences are evaluated in the course of ingraining new habits.” (Stavrídes 2018:35)

As practices of sharing transform local identities, they also change the materiality of local space and its meaning. They address conflicting structures and rules and establish new urban norms for coexistence in the peri-urban city. In the following, I analyze how residents in Tam Kỳ organize access to urban water resources around practices of sharing, social creativity (Evers and Korff 2003), and local communities.

Local water supply as area of conflict

In peri-urban areas, particularly the peri-urban city, conflicting structures and rules concerning the provision of a comprehensive water supply strategy emerge. Providing a comprehensive water supply network poses a problem for the city authorities due to different factors such as land-use change, changing economic structures, and shifting social cohesion during the urbanization process (Spencer 2007; Spencer 2008; Bakker 2010). In peri-urban areas, the existing water supply system is construed for a rural environment and water usage, including agricultural use and lower population density. However, in the frame of the urbanization process, this water supply system cannot fulfill the water demands of the urbanizing areas anymore. A modernized urban water supply infrastructure is needed but not completed yet. Besides, some user groups are denied access to the water supply network due to costs, even when the new infrastructure is available. These limitations on access can cause water scarcity in peri-urban communities when not addressed (Bakker, 2010). Thus, residents need to cope with shortages and negotiate alternative self-organized solutions.

Considering the urban and peri-urban water supply in Vietnam, the state is unwilling or incapable of providing a comprehensive water supply network for all citizens (see also Chapter 2 for the situation in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột). Consequently, local communities and private households establish additional strategies and networks. A fragmented water supply system emerges that is only partially regulated by the state authorities. This system relies on mutual help, experience, and private resources.

Thus, the emerging peri-urban water supply system has to adapt constantly. Increasing population in peri-urban areas also increases water demand. Combined with new forms of

water usage and over-exploitation of water resources, this can create new competition and scarcity. Where the state is incapable of expanding the water supply network into peri-urban areas, conflicts about water distribution emerge. Finally, pollution due to industrialization and modernization reduces the water quality of existing resources. It is, hence, necessary to constantly rearrange and adapt the fragmented local water supply system to address these difficulties. The resulting flexibility increases the resilience of the system.

As residents use self-organized water supply based on practices of sharing in the peri-urban city, ambiguities between the peri-urban space and the universal discourse on civilized, urban behavior emerge. By engaging in self-organized water usage outside of the state realm of modern infrastructure and the vision of civilized urban life, peri-urban residents challenge the meaning of urban. Furthermore, they question the relationship with the state as the provider of basic needs, which might undermine the state's legitimation in the long term. The emerging space of sharing constitutes a space of local everyday resistance (Scott1985).

Peri-urban water usage in Tam Kỳ

The local authorities in Tam Kỳ are unable to provide continuous access to its water supply network for all residents yet (see Chapter 2). Residents need to maintain an additional water supply strategy at home. From the perspective of residents in peri-urban Tam Kỳ, this strategy fulfills five aspects (Conan 2004, p.10):

1. Convenience: access to a water source is closeby and not time-consuming
2. Reliability: continuous or at least regular service and access
3. Quantity: adequate amount for daily need
4. Quality: tap and non-tap water as clean and safe as possible
5. Affordability: costs and payment adapted to income structure

To reach this aim, local people can choose from several available water sources in Tam Kỳ, including tap water, well water, surface water, rainwater, and bottled water. Based on interviews in Tam Kỳ, the principal water sources used in the research locations are tap water, well water, and bottled water. Households interviewed never used rainwater or surface water. Hence, both water sources are excluded from the analysis in the following.

Each water source used in Tam Kỳ has specific constraints and characteristics which define its usage. For tap water, challenges from modernization add to limitations at the household level. Because the state still needs to extend the pipe network in Tam Kỳ, residents in peri-urban space face a lack of infrastructure. The state only constructs the primary pipe system along main streets. Residents have to invest in their water infrastructure and build the secondary and tertiary network that connects the primary pipe system with the local households. Thus, it is not always easy to gain access when the city authorities did not build the primary pipe system yet. However, due to a lack of trust in the quality, not all households prefer to use tap water for domestic chores. For example, several households interviewed do not like to use tap water for cooking. They prefer traditional sources like well water or invest in bottled water which they perceive as cleaner water. Against this, some interviewees praised the quality of tap water with adjectives like "hygienic", "modern", and "safe". In Tam Kỳ, this perception is rooted in the positive image of Phú Ninh Lake as the water source for tap water. Finally, people also perceive the convenience and reliability of tap water as positive.

However, not all households can afford the costs to lay pipes connecting to the primary network due to a lack of financial means. Besides financial means, access to information and personal networks is necessary to apply for a permit with local authorities for access to tap water. People interviewed in peri-urban areas with access to tap water had either a well-paid job in the construction sector, thus enough financial means, or had at least one family member working for the government. These connections provide income and help navigate the bureaucratic challenge when applying for access.

For well water, interviewees face several challenges. In many neighborhoods, groundwater quality is declining. Many interviewees named industrialization, urban development in peri-urban areas, and agriculture as major causes for low quality. Along the coast, intrusion of saltwater contaminates the groundwater. Furthermore, one interviewee told us that aqua farming and its extensive use of medicine on shrimp farms also pollute the water. During the dry season in April and May, the groundwater level also decreases so that households face water shortages for some weeks of the year. Therefore, whereas most households own their private dug well at home, in Tam Thánh ward, some had to use public wells in recent years due to these shortages. Dug wells are still omnipresent in the peri-urban areas of Tam Kỳ. Peri-urban residents perceive them as a cheap water source that they trust based on

long-term experience. However, while well water is used for many domestic chores, it is not seen as the preferred source for drinking water by interviewees.

Instead, residents perceive bottled water as good quality drinking water. At least one interviewed household preferred to cook with bottled water for small children. Residents also like the home delivery of bottled water and the reuse of plastic water containers. However, the high costs make bottled water in sufficient quantity unaffordable for several interviewed households.

Overall, no water source alone can fulfill all needs for a comprehensive water strategy for peri-urban households in Tam Kỳ. Furthermore, these challenges cannot all be easily and timely solved, including the lack of infrastructure for tap water and the declining groundwater quality. Access to tap water, for example, is dependent on proximity to the constructed state network.

Thus, local people need to adapt and negotiate their water strategy to face these challenges. Based on the idea of “social creativity”, they can use different resources to facilitate this adaptation. Beyond financial resources that make water sources available, the first step of addressing these challenges is the combination of several water sources where possible; in particular, the combination of tap water with well water or bottled water and the combination of well water with bottled water. By mixing different water sources, households can minimize costs. At the same time, they can maintain a certain level of quality and reliability.

The relation with neighborhood residents also determines access to water resources. Local personal networks determine which water sources are available and used in each household. Interviewed households with at least one household member working for the state administration had better access to tap water than households without these connections. Households without these state connections who use well water as their primary water source relied on personal networks to secure access. These networks allowed for a space of sharing to emerge that can supply a second well water source during times of water shortage. Many interviewees mentioned their neighbors as first contact if they needed additional water during the dry season. Sharing available water resources based on personal relations is common. This practice underlines the significance of

personal connections in the urban landscape. It also reinforces the city as a space of interaction as only these interactions can enable practices of sharing.

Finally, households also use knowledge about hygiene, like water cleaning techniques, to maintain access to water resources in the transforming peri-urban landscape. These techniques can be as simple as boiling water before drinking. Households with more available income also use advanced filter systems for their water. A small number of respondents mentioned mechanic and chemical filter systems, also used in Western countries.

Private networks, self-organization and state engagement

All of the water resources mentioned above underline the central aspect of peri-urban water supply: it is rooted in self-organization and practices of sharing. Many of the activities providing a comprehensive water supply strategy take place outside of the realm of the state. They are based on experience and personal networks and limited by constraints like financial resources, existing infrastructure, and environmental conditions. In peri-urban space, this leads to a fragmented landscape of water supply, as described by Bakker (2010): self-organized water supply strategies are intertwined with state supply networks, sometimes situated on two sides of the same street or used by two neighbors.

The water supply in peri-urban space in Tam Kỳ is characterized by three main conflicts (1) the impact of economic modernization (aquaculture as well as mining) on the local water quality, (2) the exclusion of parts of the population from the water network and hence urbanization and modernization and (3) the importance of access to the local administration to maintain access to water resources. As a result, the aspiration for a modern supply network is not realized yet. Instead, a fragmented water supply landscape emerges that incorporates alternative private, self-organized strategies. These networks establish an imagined continuity from the rural past and are based on functional porosity and practices of sharing. These alternative networks are a significant part of the Vietnamese water supply strategy and are, thus, tolerated by state authorities. However, while accepted, they are not part of the modern urban vision of state planning and urban civility.

Thus, the peri-urban city is a fragmented space of pipes and wells, of interactions between neighbors and with the state. It opens up a space of sharing that enables negotiations. In

this space, people can make their own decisions about water usage and supply from a wide range of sources. These decisions are embedded in spatial porosity. This porous peri-urban space provides a high diversification of water sources and thereby increases resilience and flexibility. In an ideal environment, this would mean that opportunities emerge in which every household can choose their preferred water source and thereby reduce dependencies without constraints on the access to specific water sources, like tap water. In reality, this ideal environment does not exist. Instead, due to the lack of infrastructure, water pollution, and decreasing groundwater levels, many users face several constraints on their choices. Thus, the everyday practice of water usage differs from the aspiration of a civilized water supply supported by concepts of urban civility. The alternative of a self-organized water supply independent from the state is also unattainable. Therefore, the resulting entangled supply system then contradicts both aspirations and makes them interdependent at the same time. This emerging system is rooted in negotiations, encounters, and communication. It enables practices of sharing – of water, financial resources, and information– and provides opportunities to maintain and increase spatial, social, and symbolic porosity in the city.

At the same time, the population in peri-urban areas in Tam Kỳ increases because new migrants move into the rural hinterland and the city center. This further increases the need for infrastructure and resources for those new residents. Because the infrastructure construction lags behind, many people have no access to tap water and cannot participate in the mediation space but are marginalized and facing a growing dependency either on their neighbors or on state support. Thus, people's agency is reduced, their access to resources limited and their social creativity minimized. In this context, engagement with the state might be a conscious choice or the only existing option.

The more rural ward of Tam Thánh is located along the seaside. Households live on two sides of a small country road that divides the community parallel to the shore. During one interview, the head of a household located on the beachside of the street told us that due to seawater intrusion into groundwater, they could not use their dug well anymore for several years. So they had to get their water from a public community well on the other side of the street, closer to the river, where the water quality was still good. Finally, the local Water Supply Company had just built pipes into the area. So households on their side of the street now have access to tap water to substitute for the salinized groundwater and the public

well water. According to him, people on the other side of the road still mostly use well water.

In the peri-urban An Phú district, an interviewee complained about the declining water quality of well water in a village nearby. He described how the Bông Miêu gold mine and the illegal mining in the area around the mountains in Phú Ninh district polluted the groundwater and the rivers. According to him and other interviewees, the people in the surrounding villages would get sick from the water. As he had contacts with an American organization and company, he tried to get local state officials to allow for the import and distribution of water filters produced by this company in the context of an NGO project. As his proposal got rejected, he blamed the corruption of local officials. As a consequence, he has retreated from engagement with state officials.

The engagement or disengagement with the state leads to a transformation of strategies, meanings, and space (Migdal 2001). Engagement, like in the case of Tam Thán, might lead to the spreading of tap water usage where it is available. It can also promote the idea of tap water usage as modern and civilized. However, attempted engagement can also lead to mistrust and a negative attitude if unsuccessful. This emerging mistrust then supports strategies of self-organization, as seen in the case of the man in An Phú who opted for disengagement after his failed inquiries. Besides, forced engagement with the state, as in Tam Thán, can only create opportunities when people can participate in a meaningful mediation space where authorities hear their needs and wishes. Residents need a choice and access resources to participate in mediation to create real opportunities, where both self-organized water supply and state provision of water are accessible options. If this is not the case, people lose agency concerning their decision-making capabilities.

Consequently, the fragmentation of water supply results from a fractured relationship between state and society. People with good relations to the administration have better access to water, whereas others without these relations face more difficulties in gaining access. Thus, the advantage of the mediation space that provides a more flexible and adaptable environment at the interface between state and society also produces a mechanism of exclusion for people who have no direct access to state agencies. The mediation space becomes a problem instead of providing an interface for negotiation and adaptation. Residents need resources and networks to engage and communicate with the

state. People without these opportunities, the relevant social relations, the financial and economic or symbolic resources, or the capabilities face threats of marginalization.

However, the marginalization of local people also provides opportunities for alternative urban identities outside of the state vision of modern, urban life and its space of representation. Residents, who move already outside of state relations, can more easily explore alternative norms and morals. In the transforming environment of peri-urban space and its need for constant adaptation and interaction, new urban identities based on self-organization and social creativity can emerge. The urban can then become an interactive, self-organized, and dynamic space with a high potential for change and integration and the importance of communication. This alternative space enables the usage of open space for urban agriculture, the mixture of different water sources, and the establishment of private support networks. The state becomes only one of many actors working on urban development. The loss of its singularity also reduces its spatial and functional control.

The prevalence of self-organized water supply strategies also fosters a different perspective on the urban future leading to a transformation of meanings and symbols attached to peri-urban and urban spaces. The self-organization of the peri-urban water supply in Tam Kỳ is rooted in practices of sharing and social creativity, especially personal networks and experiences. It maintains the agency of the local people. And it focuses on flexibility, interaction, and communication. In this sense, it provides mechanisms of integration and adaptation. This focus on interaction, communication, and integration provides a new perspective on urban space. Whereas the state fosters order, legibility, and a fixed, pre-defined path of urbanization, this new perspective supports personal agency, social creativity, and diversity. It provides new meanings of urban as a space of interaction, in which different activities, people, and resources are integrated and as a space of opportunities and negotiation (Stavrides 2018). From this perspective, the peri-urban city provides new structures and meanings that transform the local urban culture and urbanization process into spatialities of emancipation.

3.2. URBAN CITIZENSHIP AND SPACES OF IN-BETWEENNESS: EVERYDAY MOBILITY AS SPACE OF RESISTANCE

3.2.1. IN-BETWEENNESS, MOBILITY AND THE PERI-URBAN CITY

Porous urban spaces provide loosely determined spaces of non-identity, transition, and in-betweenness with flexible and adaptable functionality. These spaces can be markets, gardens, restaurants, hang-outs, or communal places. They continuously shift their identity and usage. This transformative and flexible dimension also characterizes peri-urban space on a larger scale. This combination of porosity and in-betweenness creates the peri-urban city discussed above.

However, urban porosity can only exist as an in-between space when residents use porosity to create spaces of encounters instead of exclusion. Then, beyond encounters and interactions, this in-betweenness enforces mobility. This mobility can be physical movement as well as social transition, shifting identities, and transforming aspirations. Furthermore, mobility rooted in porous transitional space means living with and accepting the differences in cities. This acceptance enables a new set of citizenship norms to emerge based on cooperation and flexibility. The peri-urban city rooted in porosity, transition, transformation, and in-betweenness is the model space to look for practices of mobility that produce these new forms of urban citizenship.

Referring to Chapter 2, urban planning by different state agencies defines a strict development path for each city and paints the urban future as civilized, clean, and modern. Furthermore, urban planning and development aim to regulate the urbanization process to install order in the perceived urban chaos (Harms 2014). From this perspective, public discourse in Vietnam perceives the activities of mobile actors who populate the city as reasons for the urban chaos. Traffic participants, street vendors, young people, and families using public and porous space to hang out, farmers using streets and open space for their cattle, homeless people, street kids, and migrant workers populate the porous urban space with everyday activities. Because all these people move through the city, this hampers efforts to install a sense of order and increase control. The urban thus becomes a space of everyday mobility. This development is especially true for smaller towns and peri-urban spaces where economic and domestic activities are interconnected because urban porosity offers more access and fewer boundaries.

Spaces of mobility emerge from this porosity. Here, mobility moves beyond mere physical movement. Instead, I would refer to Cresswell's (2010) concept of "politics of mobility". Beyond mobility as "the intention and realization of an act of movement in physical space that involves social change" (Kaufmann 2014:7), mobility is socially constructed and socially shaped (Söderström 2013:2). Cresswell (2010:21) describes this process as politics of mobility, which includes all "social relations that involve the production and distribution of power" and "in which mobilities are both productive of such social relations and produced by them". Mobility becomes a resource for local people who have to navigate the changing landscape of peri-urban cities and thereby a tool to access new opportunities. Thus, as Cresswell (2010) proposes, mobility has a political dimension concerning the experience of mobility, the meaning of mobility, its regulation, and finally, the access to mobility based on the existing competencies and skillsets available to be mobile. The access to mobility, the attached meanings and representations, the mobile experience and practice, and the regulation of mobility are all based on underlying power relations. They produce a hierarchy of mobility where some flows of people, objects, ideas, and financial capital are privileged. Simultaneously, other actors are slowed, limited in their access to mobility, or even fixed in space. Control and regulation of mobility is a key function of the state in urban landscapes. It is also closely linked to access and use of public space. In return, practices of mobility are part of everyday practices of resistance in cities and constitute claims to one's right to the city and its materiality. They are part of the urban struggles for emancipation and the negotiation for urban citizenship. Finally, at its core, mobility is one of the fundamental constituents of urban life which constitute the city.

3.2.2. EVERYDAY MOBILITY AND RESISTANCE

For residents, mobility is a livelihood decision, which creates new opportunities. As mentioned, small and secondary cities function as interfaces for their rural hinterland as well as their whole surrounding region. The spatial proximity and porosity of space characterize these cities. Their function as interface combined with their spatial characteristics allows for the establishment of diverse mobile practices. However, this also makes these practices necessary in everyday life. As the urban center of Tam Kỳ provides white-collar employment in the administration, the university, and hospitals, work commute between rural housing and urban workplace is commonplace for residents in the rural district of Tam Thành and other surrounding rural neighborhoods. Many of the civil

servants of the different city and provincial government agencies even commute between Đà Nẵng and Tam Kỳ (interviews Tam Kỳ 2015) due to better amenities and education in the larger city. Mobility for economic reasons also includes many employed in the informal sector like street vendors and waste collectors. However, even local farmers move from the rural into the urban fringe areas to use the porous open space in newly developed urban areas for their cattle. Besides economic opportunities, rural households in Tam Kỳ also travel into urban spaces for shopping purposes, health care, education, or entertainment. In the other direction, in Tam Kỳ, urban residents will travel from the city center into rural areas like the beach in Tam Thành for recreational activities. Furthermore, mobility can become a recreational activity, for example, when students on motorbikes cruise around the square 24/3 and along Hung Vương Street in Tam Kỳ in the evening hours.

Spatial proximity and porosity dissolve the boundaries between rural and urban. Short-distance travel increases access to all social groups. None of the trips in Tam Kỳ will take more than 20 minutes. As traffic is still low and traffic jams are an exception, traveling overall is also a positive and convenient experience. Moreover, whereas travel into rural space for residents of metropolitan cities like Hà Nội or Ho Chi Minh City often constitutes a day-trip, for residents of Tam Kỳ, these trips between rural and urban are a normal part of everyday life. Access to rural areas is straightforward for most residents. Furthermore, interactions between rural and urban residents are part of the daily routine, as many workers living in rural villages in the peri-urban periphery work in the city. The distinction between rural and urban is negligible as interactions and encounters are the norms.

However, some peri-urban residents still perceive geographical markers and infrastructure as a boundary that produces the dichotomy of rural-urban/ inside-outside. In interviews in a small village community west of the National Highway QL 1A, in Hòa Thuận, Tam Kỳ, the lack of a local market was the chief complaint by interviewees, even if a trip to the central market on a motorbike at that time would have been less than 10 minutes. To reach the market, residents would have to cross the Highway, which thus constituted a natural border between village and city. One interviewee who moved from the urban center of Tam Kỳ across the Highway and the railway tracks into the rural district of Trường Xuân due to marriage gave a similar perspective. Although the material landscape in her old and

new neighborhood is similar and travel time into the urban district is under 5 minutes, the interviewee described feelings of distance and rural marginalization while wishing for more urban development. Referring back to the space of aspiration, the idea of urban and rural and the mobility attached to it is thus less of a quantitative measure of distance and more of a feeling of inclusion and access. Therefore, mobility presents the core root of urban participation and urban citizenship. The difference between urban and rural is expressed as a cultural divide: (1) Urban as modern, civilized, consumption-oriented, and (2) rural as cooperative and community-oriented (see also Chapter 3 on aspirations and rural nostalgia). The ambivalent position at the peri-urban interface – neither urban nor rural – creates an ambiguous feeling: being rural in the city and those alien, a stranger. Only those fully emerged in the urban material space with its high population density, opportunities for consumption, and Westernized culture are considered urban. Everyone else remains peri-urban, in transition, without a fixed identity. In the context of the peri-urban city, these ambivalent identities affect large parts of the population, as large parts of urban space are still in a state of transformation. Consequently, local identities in the peri-urban city are transitional.

Beyond being mobile, households in peri-urban spaces can also benefit from the mobility of others. Staying in the peri-urban space at the fringe of the small urban center of Tam Kỳ opens the opportunity to make a living from those passing by or crossing the neighborhood. As a small peri-urban city, these spaces of transitional mobility reach deep into the urban core sustained by constant movement through space. Small coffee shops, street vendors, small street-side markets, or motorbike repair shops benefit from the increasing accessibility of peri-urban space and the subsequent transit mobility (Figure 69). Not singular to Tam Kỳ, these spaces are also found along arterial roads in Buôn Ma Thuột.



Figure 70 Peri-urban space in Buon Ma Thuot: Mobility as source for income opportunities

Most late-night entertainment facilities like beer halls and the sex industry are also located in peri-urban space in Tam Kỳ, increasing traffic between inner-city neighborhoods and urban fringe. Small waste recycling workshops on the fringe of Tam Kỳ also use the porosity of space as their activities spill onto sidewalks and roads. Their activities increase mobility as waste flows from the urban core into peri-urban space and, forward, into the

production cycle or to landfills in the rural hinterland. Finally, the small-scale production of various goods, like incense sticks, spices, or woodwork in workshops in Tam Kỳ and Buon Ma Thuot - often located in private houses - use porosity for additional space. Their activities temporarily spill on sidewalks or traffic lanes. Thereby, these activities interfere with the flow of traffic, limiting speed and mobility by reshaping the urban landscape. As porosity and transformations still allow for sidewalks in the urban center to remain part of a wide array of economic and domestic activities, the political aspiration of the civilized city is subjected to the reality of this peri-urban "chaos". Some activities are temporary, like washing vegetables, drying clothes, or having a family party; other activities are more lasting, like the small workshops and the gardens in Styrofoam boxes. This sustained intrusion into the material spatialities results in different speeds and modes of movement. People rest on the sidewalk, drink coffee, eat noodle soup or engage in small talk while cars, trucks, and motorbikes speed along. Motorbike drivers sometimes stop to buy something from the vendors on the sidewalk while farmers with their cattle, street vendors with their pushcarts, and school kids on bicycles slowly move along the street. Traveling, selling, sorting, drying, relaxing, and repairing are integral parts of the urban fabric of peri-urban cities. There are constant movements of goods and people between urban and rural spaces passing peri-urban areas. Urban, rural and peri-urban space in Tam Kỳ benefits from its proximity between the urban as an administrative center and market and the rural as a place where natural resources and more porous space is still plentiful. Porosity reduces the differentiation of spatial usage between movement and stoppage. At the same time, both stoppage and movement depend on the mobility of goods and people. Combined, they enable the claim on urban space and thus provide tools for urban participation.

Peri-urban porosity also provides space for spiritual and symbolic mobility. Churches, temples, cemeteries, and landmarks of historic remembrance are embedded into the urban landscape as spaces of memory and spirituality. They are spiritual spaces of transition as well as encounters. Mundanely, they provide spaces for interaction as well as collective memory. In Buôn Ma Thuột, the abandoned cemetery along Hà Huy Tập Street and Y Moan Street, Buôn Ma Thuột and the Catholic Church in Tam Kỳ are both located in porous peri-urban spaces. However, spiritual spaces are not always located in the periphery. The Catholic Church in Buôn Ma Thuột is next to the main square in Phan Chu Trinh Street.



Figure 71 Cemetery as space of resistance: Abandoned ARNV cemetery in Buôn Ma Thuột (located along Hà Huy Tập Street and Y Moan Street)

In their everyday, residents often pass these spaces without engagement, taking them as a material backdrop in the urban landscape. However, at other times, for special occasions, residents enter these spaces on purpose, looking for guidance, remembrance, or community as the city offers a space for rituals, continuity, and repetition. As spaces of encounters, they provide the means to redefine the city as a social arena. Spiritual mobility also maintains and materializes memories in the urban landscape. These memories, expressions of nostalgia for an idealized urban past, connect the existing urban space to the past and those creating it. Thus, the past is intertwined with the present city. This connection creates continuity and meaning that local people can translate into aspirations.

In this context, remembrance can become a means of resistance, particularly in the socialist, authoritarian framework of the Vietnamese state where the official historical narrative and religious affiliation are closely supervised and controlled by the authorities' memories machine (Großheim 2020). The spiritual mobilities of spaces of remembrance and worship allow for a diverting narrative. This diverting narrative is, for example, rooted in the Catholic Church in Vietnam, as well as those families who fought for the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) before reunification in 1975 (Großheim 2020). Their

memories are taboos and thus constitute acts of everyday resistance, as defined by Scott (1985). Consequently, old ARVN²² cemeteries represent spaces of counter-memories (Figure 71). They were and are still often abandoned, and hence the dead lost to time. For their surviving families, this provides continuous tensions, stoking fears of urban redevelopment when located on peri-urban and urban prime land. At the same time, these abandoned cemeteries also become porous spaces that residents use for their daily needs, to grow vegetables and fruits or set up temporary shelter like in the case of the cemetery in Buôn Ma Thuột (Dang Dang Phuoc 2015; Ông Châm – Slowlife 2021). As mundane and spiritual mobility overlies each other, the resulting tensions produce new struggles for meaning. As memories and spiritual spaces can be lost, reconciliation becomes more difficult to achieve.

Besides the mobility intrinsic to Tam Kỳ, urban planning introduces more forms of mobility. Due to economic growth and its role as the administrative center of Quảng Nam province, as stated in interviews with rural migrants and the contact with the People's committee, Tam Kỳ attracts migrants from the more rural districts of Quảng Nam along the Lao border and in the mountainous region. At the same time, employment in the administration and university brings in new citizens with higher education, often from larger urban centers. Furthermore, as mentioned above, geographical proximity to Đà Nẵng also creates close economic and personal relations between both cities (Interviews in Tam Kỳ 2014/2015).

Tam Kỳ thus exists as an interface between local and global, rural and urban constantly in close contact with outsiders and the outside world. The expected influx of migrants and office workers leads to the construction of new urban areas due to projected population growth. These new urban areas consist of basic infrastructure, a street grid, and empty spots where future house owners can build their houses. However, as most of these newly developed urban areas are located at the outskirts of the existing urban space, new residents are forced to commute and move between the city and their peri-urban home for recreational, economic, and domestic needs. The construction of new urban areas also creates access to these areas that opens the space, not yet used for housing, for alternative activities, especially gardening and farming. Thereby, a fragmented landscape emerges

²² Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnamese Army)

where mobility and porosity are intertwined with newly erected boundaries. House owners construct small wooden structures for their private gardens next to their houses, along streets, and in open areas to plant vegetables and herbs for consumption and to claim the wasteland. They thus build their boundaries, limiting mobility. At the same time, farmers who move through the peri-urban areas use the same newly accessible space to let their cattle graze. Subsequently, these activities move into more urbanized areas where small construction sites, sidewalks, streets, and empty slots also offer space for these activities.

By moving into the city, people also bring their modes of transport into the city. These modes of transport are not always compatible with the modern vision of mobility which sees cars as status symbols and public transport as means of transport for the poor. Besides the omnipresent motorbike, bicycles, pushcarts, animals, and pedestrians invade the city. All this leads to a more ambivalent urban setting where the urban identity of being modern, civilized, and clean as promoted by urban planners merges with more rural, self-organized activities and modes of mobility. It creates a fluid interface, which people can enter, leave, and thereby engage in processes of emancipation. These material and functional patterns of peri-urban space play a significant role in making opportunities available and fostering mobility.

However, mobility also creates the backdrop for the functional and material landscape of Tam Kỳ. Mobility becomes a valuable resource for people living at the fringe of the urban center and a coping strategy in everyday life. Mobility creates a space of interaction where people with different social backgrounds from urban and rural areas can meet. And mobility helps to create reproductive functionality by moving resources, people, goods, and services from rural to peri-urban to urban space and back. Mobility is hence central to the everyday livelihood strategies. Those excluded from mobility but bound in space are more easily marginalized (Harms, 2011). However, the “social creativity” (Evers and Korff 2003, p.14) of those living in these porous, ambiguous spaces provides the means to challenge the limiting boundaries of the urban fabric. By challenging the existing urban boundaries, local people can participate in the making of the city and state their claim to urban citizenship.

Control of urban mobilities and everyday resistance

From an urban planning perspective, the mobility of residents contradicts the implementation of urban plans and creates unintended consequences in the everyday reality of urban life. These contradictions and unintended consequences lead to a sense of urban chaos. Thus, urban planners need to engage with the everyday life of local people to establish a sense of urban order against the perceived urban chaos. To facilitate the ordering of the urban landscape, urban planners and local administration aim to control everyday mobility and thereby interfere in processes of emancipation. To establish this order, local state actors need to limit mobility and decide which projects of mobilities can be allowed in urban space. They engage in politics of mobility (Cresswell 2010), which link the right to mobility to power structures resulting in the threat of marginalization for those urban residents dependent on mobility.

Generally, the city administration in Tam Kỳ issues regulations for the use of public space. These regulations in Tam Kỳ, particularly the implementation of directive 10-CT/TW of the central government from 2016 on the construction of civilized countryside and cities, address the governance of everyday mobility. These regulations are transcribed into the material space through signs and other means of representation, like the police force and information campaigns. Consequently, signs are often installed at public places to guarantee high visibility. In Tam Kỳ, official signs on sidewalks and the main square 24-3 reference “civilized urban streets” as a community goal. These civilized urban streets enact limitations on advertising, trading, lottery tickets, and littering. Signs also forbid driving on the sidewalk and public squares. Propaganda and information campaigns by the city administration aim to raise awareness of the acceptable use of urban space. Regulations also control trade in public spaces in Tam Kỳ, including the category of persons allowed to trade, the timeframe, location, and the goods allowed for trading. These regulations not only constraints mobility but reduce functional and symbolic porosity. Social actors not seen as civilized are excluded from access to street space. It is perceived as necessary to remove those people from urban space who don’t conform to the vision of a civilized city. For example, efforts by the city administration in 2014 removed beggars and homeless people from the streets in Tam Kỳ and transferred them to their hometowns or social services (Vietnam News 2014). The city administration uses the local police to control public behavior and enforce regulations focusing on street vendors, beggars, and

uncivilized behavior. Besides trade permits, the police are also concerned with the interference and obstruction of traffic by trade (observations and interviews in Tam Kỳ October 2014) as observed in October 2014 around Trung Tâm Thương Mại, the market area next to the University of Quảng Nam. Similar efforts occurred after the central government issued directive 10-CT/TW. Between 20016 and 2018, the responsible local authorities confiscated and dismantled 150 roof constructions, 350 advertising banners, 80 tents, seized 210 umbrellas, 20 trolleys, 400 flower pots, and other illegal items which encroached on roads. The fast flow of traffic takes precedent over the everyday mobility of local people and their shopping habits. The conceptualization of modern city space with civilized transport by authorities and the everyday practice of residents thus produces tensions between different forms of mobility.

Therefore, signs declare rules on public behavior that residents often ignore. Thus, enforcement by the state is needed. During the winter of 2014, at the square 24-3 low metal barriers were installed by the administration to stop people from driving their motorbikes on the square (Figure 72 middle). The idea was that the square should be used for official celebrations, festivals like Tết, and as a recreational space for the local population. However, the installed barriers did not stop motorbike drivers from entering the square. Thus, for two months, the barriers got regularly broken and replaced. People still drove their motorbikes on the square. Furthermore, local people in Tam Kỳ regularly also engaged in a wide range of other prohibited, undesirable activities on the central square (figure 72). It was common practice for students to meet for picnics with friends and local bicycle groups to meet and drive on the square.

Even with the local administration trying to regulate behavior, people were less willing to change their behavior and found ways to circumvent those regulations. As the state aimed to limit spatial porosity and erect boundaries, residents ignored those boundaries and re-establish a porous space. Furthermore, except for motorbikes, most of the activities on the square were also tolerated by the authorities. The local government tried to balance the political aim of a civilized city with the everyday needs of the local population, including local space for the community to meet, interact and relax. They indirectly enabled existing spatialities of emancipation to be preserved.



Figure 72 Square 24-3 in Tam Kỳ with sign stating rules for usage (top), broken metal barriers (middle) and motorbikes (bottom)

The struggle about the new market in Tam Kỳ in 2014 (see Chapter 2) also demonstrates the difficulties of regulating mobilities. The movement of the central market from Hùng Vương Street, An Xuân, close to the peri-urban areas in Trường Xuân on the other side of National Highway QL 1A and the train tracks, to the city center in Trần Cao Vân Street, Phước Hòa, shifted accessibility and mobility pattern. As a consequence, people from the peri-urban neighborhoods of An Phú and Hoà Hương only had to cross Kỳ Phú Bridge to reach the market, whereas those living in Trường Xuân now had to cross the city. Furthermore, due to the narrow streets, the market is less accessible. Hùng Vương Street is a major arterial road, with easy access that people regularly use on their daily commutes. This easy access is not the case for the new location for the majority of the people living West of Ban Thach River. The quarter around the new market building is located in a narrow urban stripe between Ban Thach River and Phan Châu Trinh Street. The quarter is more densely populated with a lower degree of porosity. Consequently, people had to change their travel routines to incorporate the new market into their mobility patterns. Instead, local authorities had to enforce the change and reduce operations at the old market. This intervention finally led to the intended shift in behavior and thus mobility. At the same time, the reduced operation at the old market opened space that is now available for alternative activities. Thus, in this case, the enforcement of boundaries created new porosities and opportunities to use urban space to explore in the future. Porosity and boundaries hence define the materiality of the old and new markets. The new market building provides a stable, almost monumental architectural structure and thereby erects a border separating outside and inside. The old market was an optical and material mix of porous, temporary structures and materials with a large warehouse structure as the main building. This materiality provided a sense of fluidity and accessibility. (Observations in November and December 2014)

Another way of altering and regulating mobility includes the construction of new streets. Scott's (2009) discussion of pre-modern communities in the Southeast Asian Highlands and Biggs' (2010) analysis of the French colonial development of the Mekong Delta, both show that infrastructure, especially roads, canals, and dams, impacts everyday mobility and increases state control. Thus, beyond new ways of transportation, the arterial roads planned in Tam Kỳ will also change access to the more secluded areas around Tam Kỳ, like the rural areas of Tam Thanh and peri-urban areas of An Xuân and An My. In 2015, these areas were occupied by small, old houses and intermitted by open, porous spaces and

nature. They were only accessible by bumpy, narrow streets. They are not yet modern and urban and are part of a more rural past and thus create a peri-urban frontier space. The new Điện Biên Phủ Street will cross this area, link it directly to other parts of the city. It will make travel faster while also opening space for new urban developments. As better access makes the area interesting for land development, this construction requires the resettlement of 345 households and affects residential and agricultural land (ADB 2016). This resettlement creates a landscape of forced mobility, transforms the porosity of space, and readjusts practices of mobility. In these instances of urban development, residents can only react to the material changes negating opportunities for everyday resistance. Their agency is reduced to adaptation and interaction with the changes while moving through the ever-shifting peri-urban space. Urban development not only provides new modes and ways of mobility. It also removes access for people and forces them to change their modes of everyday mobility. The modern urban future described in urban plans and developed in international and national forums thus transforms everyday mobility. Infrastructure development, particularly roads, as means of control creates new opportunities for those who can benefit from better access and higher land value. People without the financial resources to invest in land development and no personal relations with local authorities for construction permits cannot benefit from these new realities. Residents in those newly developing urban areas also needed to adapt to new realities like resettlement. If they do not have the necessary, they face the risk of marginalization. Urban citizenship is thus as much a force of adaptation as it is an emancipatory one. People's ability to participate in the making of the peri-urban city depends on the social creativity that they need to adapt to the transformation brought by external factors and actors.

To understand this adapting force in the negotiation of urban citizenship, one has only to look at the layered usage of public space as a space of state representation. As an authoritarian socialist state, Vietnam still controls much of its public space. Thus, socialist ideology and revolutionary history are referenced in the material peri-urban space in Tam Kỳ. The state is omnipresent in public space in Tam Kỳ. It maintains a space of representation that is a part of everyday mobility as people drive past posters and loudspeakers. Authorities also use public space for formal state ceremonies, celebrations, and marches blocking access and use for residents. However, while these activities are commonplace in public areas, around square 24-3 and along Hùng Vương Street, local people rarely participate and mostly ignore these state-organized activities as they pass the

space. Participation is limited to those people, often members of state mass organizations required by the state. It is easy to ignore those state activities because they are limited to the administrative district of Tam Kỳ. Everyday mobilities and the state's spaces of representation in the city center exist as two different spheres with minimal impact on each other (interviews and observation Tam Kỳ). However, peri-urban space, on the other hand, provides enough space to create a new public space dedicated to the socialist state ideology. The best example is the Vietnamese Heroic Mother statue (Mẹ Việt Nam Anh Hùng), as described in Chapter 2. Besides the statue depicting the face of Nguyễn Thị Thu, the monument contains a museum, a large park with fountains and pavilions, and a parking lot. The whole landscape forms a space of remembrance, a memorial. This space integrates the city into the national discourse on Vietnamese history and the legitimation of the ruling Communist Party.

The inauguration of the memorial in 2015 combined the official program organized by different mass organizations to celebrate the Vietnamese state with a mundane celebration for residents with a firework. Street vendors and small businesses also took advantage of the occasion. Afterward, the park around the statue became a tourist attraction and a recreational space for local people. Cafés are located around the park and statue. People come to take selfies and pictures, which they post on Facebook and Instagram. Moving beyond the original narrative that defines the memorial as a space of state ideology and educational space for the younger generation, it was transformed into a recreational space by everyday mobilities. People drive to the park to take pictures and walk around the park. They might drink a coffee and meet friends. The political space is overlaid by a space of local practice shifting the meaning towards the mundane. Even without the porosity found in the peri-urban city, the tightly controlled state space becomes a social space of interaction that promotes urban citizenship outside the state discourse.

Control of mobility by urban planning is thus not a one-way road from the state to the local population. Local people can take up the spaces created by urban planning and the emerging porosity and produce their meanings and interpretations as these spaces are integrated into everyday mobilities. Everyday resistance provides means to establish urban citizenship, which differs from the state vision of “green, civilized and modern”. Attempted resistance leads to contradictions between the government's pursuit of control and its failure in realizing this control. Temporarily and spatially, state and society oscillate

between state control and social self-organization at the community level. When the state tries to solve the perceived urban chaos, it often creates new chaos which needs to be resolved by self-organization. Long-term, this self-organization also creates chaos that might need state intervention. However, the resulting informal balance between state intervention and self-organized mobility is a deliberate governance instrument by the state. The state uses the increasing tension to control urban space, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, also accommodate local needs and interests where the state does not have the capacity to address them himself. Urban planning as a means of control is undermined by local practices, even in an authoritarian state like Vietnam (see Koh 2006 on “mediation space” and Ehlert 2012 on formal and informal governance practices in Vietnam). These local practices open space for emerging urban citizenship, which is locally rooted in the porous space of the peri-urban city.

5. CONCLUSION

The peri-urban city is an interactive, self-organized, dynamic space with a high potential for change, integration, and communication. This dynamic space finds its expression in the usage of porous space for interactions, the mixture of different water sources based on sharing and community networks, and the establishment of private networks of support. Residents participate in the everyday making of the city as they produce urban communities, aspirations, and identities. Building on the porous spatialities of the peri-urban city, its fragmentation, and in-betweenness, spaces of interactions, sharing, and mobility can emerge. These spaces allow local people to imagine urban citizenship rooted in the space of aspiration and appropriation described in Chapter 3. Local people reimagine their lived space, mode of living, and path to modern urban life based on self-organization, (dis-)engagement, and personal agency.

Consequently, whereas local state authorities in Tam Kỳ and Buôn Ma Thuột still dominate the production of urban space due to their political control of urban planning, the making of the city is not one-dimensional. Beyond the official aspiration of urban order and civility, a diverse set of alternative aspirations, meanings, and identities find their expression. State authorities both tolerate these diverging practices and incorporate them into their informal urban plans.

The result is a fragile, emerging urban citizenship that opens opportunities for informal participation and cooperative production of urban space. This urban citizenship limits the state's power of control. It also creates the possibility that in the future, Vietnamese cities can offer opportunities for “every individual person [to] realize his full development as a whole human person” (Kuan and Lam 2013: 49).

CHAPTER 5: COLONIALITY, URBAN CARGO CULT AND URBAN COMMONS IN VIETNAM'S SECONDARY CITIES

1. CARGO CULT URBANISM AND UTOPIAN HOPE

The peri-urban city as a conceptualization of urban space in the urban periphery in Vietnam is foremost a transitional space. Characterized by porosity, transformations, and the intertwining of rural and urban functionality and materiality, the peri-urban city is never fixed in time or space. Change and mobility are the foremost drivers of its urban development. People living in this transitional space need to adapt to these transformations and rely on flexible practices that they can embed in spatial and functional porosity.

Harms (2011) argues that the impact of urban development on residents in the urban periphery oscillates between processes of empowerment and marginalization. Simultaneously state-controlled order and decentralized self-organization are mutually constitutive. Consequently, local authorities, urban planners, and residents need to negotiate their respective roles in the production of these urban spaces defined by transition, transformation, and ambiguity. Therefore, this work examined the underlying patterns, interactions, and structures that define these negotiations of state-society relations in the framework of a porous peri-urban landscape in Vietnam's secondary cities.

Rooted in urban porosity, the spatial intertwining of rural, peri-urban and urban space in secondary cities leads to an emerging urban landscape that forms the peri-urban city. The materiality of these peri-urban cities creates a landscape that simultaneously produces practices of an urban cargo cult favoring state control and the utopian hope for an integrative, socially just, and participatory urban future. This utopian hope rests upon local self-organization, appropriation of space, and negotiation of aspirations by local communities. Furthermore, the constant transformation and the ambiguity of the city offer open space for alternative identities, practices, and aspirations. Cargo cult urbanism and the emerging utopian hope rely on this ambiguous porous space to realize its goals. State authorities, urban planners, and private investors at the local level use the ambiguous porous space to reproduce the city based on their aspirations and interests with the image of a modern urban future as a point of reference. This process leads to an emerging interface between state control and market liberalism. In this space, external political and economic forces reduce residents to passive consumers only occupying urban space. These forces also reduce the functionality of cities to provide shelter, work, and a market. The

social dimension of the city becomes not more than a footnote. This privatization reduces the city to urbanity, a densely populated space that ultimately cannot qualify as a "city" anymore (Roberts 2021). Its materiality aims for control and order. Therefore authorities conceive spontaneous encounters, communication, and interaction which provide the underlying means to reproduce the city as challenges to the envisioned civilized city of the future.²³ However, the porosity of the peri-urban city, which provides space and opportunities for those urban civilizing projects, also offers opportunities to counter these forces. We can observe an emerging divergence between the aspired urban space by the state and the reality of urban space rooted in material and social porosity. Even in its most authoritarian form, the state and private sector fail to remove the social dimension from the urban space. The materiality of the city, supported by its spatial, social, and symbolic porosity generates practices that are thus often contradictory to the official aspirations of the local state authorities. Traditional, newly accessible, and environmental porosity provides an array of accessible space which transforms the peri-urban city into a social arena of encounters and interaction. Consequently, porosity enables residents to maintain urban space as commons. These commons allow for the usage of space for aspiration and appropriation. Rooted in choice and agency, local people continuously reinterpret their lived space, their everyday practices, and their path to modern urban life. This path does not necessarily follow the pre-defined path suggested by cargo cult urbanist projects. Instead, it counters the push towards the privatization of urban space by state and private actors and creates multiple aspirations for the urban future. As residents of the peri-urban city appropriate space, they express their emancipation as residents who stake their claim to the city. They emerge as urban citizens.

The appropriation of urban space as commons enables the usage of peri-urban space as spaces of resistance. Mobility and interaction are means of reproduction in the porous ambiguity of urban materiality but at the same time become means of everyday resistance. Communication, networks, and mobility enable encounters and dissolve the anonymity of the city. The emerging spatialities of emancipation, where engaging and disengaging the state become politically loaded decisions, provide opportunities for emerging urban citizenship where urban residents are not mere objects of urban planning but participate in

²³ Roberts D (2021) "A rant about lawns in America. They are bad and symbolize bad things." Volt, 24.march 2021. <https://www.volts.wtf/p/a-rant-about-lawns-in-america>

the production of the city. Urban materiality and urban citizenship have a mutually constitutive relationship. Thereby, urban citizenship becomes a means to reproduce a utopian interactive and integrative urban space. It limits the state's power of control and opens opportunities for informal participation and a cooperative production of the city.

2. COLONIALITY AND URBAN CARGO CULT: CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

The emerging urban citizenship and urban spatialities of emancipations can provide a utopian perspective for the urban future: In the reality of everyday life in Vietnam's cities, political, economic, and social challenges and constraints often confront this utopian hope.

Vietnamese state as an authoritarian actor

Academic literature on Vietnam perceives the party-state dominance of society as a central characteristic of the Vietnamese state. However, this perspective reduces social actors to a passive role. It also ignores that boundaries, rights, and power distribution between state and social actors are often contested (Koh 2006, p.9/10). The "accommodating state" approach offers an alternative view that stresses "dialogue" as a characteristic of state-society relations (Kerkvliet 2000, p.31). Responsiveness towards social demands and mutual influence between party-state and society creates a "maneuvering space" for deviating practices. The state is dominating the formal policy structures and decision-making. Social actors influence the implementation of those decisions.

This responsiveness is important where local people use porosity for practices of appropriation and mobility and create spaces of encounter and aspirations. A lack of state capacity to address local needs causes the flexible and responsive implementation of regulations by local authorities. At the same time, local state authorities are wary of porosity because it creates a pattern of perceived chaos, reduces control, and projects visions of uncivilized urban space. Porosity contradicts an official discourse on urban development rooted in global mobile forms and supported by international organizations, NGOs, and urban planners. These discourses are rooted in global knowledge produced in Western institutions and promote a homogenous vision of urban space, including broader ideas like sustainability, green growth, and smart city. The underlying narrative, broadly favored by Vietnamese state actors, supports a top-down approach towards urban development with state actors as main drivers and decision-makers. It aims to control the perceived urban chaos and to realize an orderly, civilized urban space. This narrative also

includes the loss of urban porosity in favor of modernization, privatizations, and control. Thus, referring back to the concept of development as an anti-politics machine (Ferguson and Lohmann 1994), urban development in Vietnam is at the same time highly political as it alters the materiality of the everyday life of urban residents and is framed in technical terms to depoliticize the emerging transformation processes to reduce resistance.

Furthermore, a political system not premised on pluralism is ill-equipped to support plural visions for urban space. Urban porosity might provide more urban space for marginalized social groups like women and LGBTQ+ people. However, the conservative mindset and state outlook on civilization still infringe on their participatory rights. The party-state's narrow perspective on development as a homogenous path towards the future cannot integrate local needs, interests, and peculiarities. This perspective enforces a singular vision of the urban, limits aspirations, meanings, and use of space. It is, therefore, unable to address local challenges concerning economic, social, and environmental needs. For example, transportation systems in different Vietnamese cities cannot follow a "one size fits all" approach but need to consider the geographical, ecological, material, economic and social conditions. However, this localized perspective supports decentralization and reduces the possibility for top-down control. This further increases porosity in the political system and can be perceived as less orderly, less civilized, or even threatening to the political system.

Based on the concept of a "coloniality of knowledge" (Quijano 2007), the Vietnamese state prefers a homogenous path for urban development following global ideas on urbanity. The focal point is a Western-dominated narrative on urbanity and cities originating from Western academia and its framework of urban planning. Western urban planners and scholars exported this approach of a homogenous urban development to Southeast Asia where national governments used their top-down perspective for the modernization of their cities. Nowadays, Southeast Asian global cities like Singapore provide a regional model for urban planning. At the same time, in Western cities, some urban planners introduced a more participatory approach to urban planning.

This difference produces a dichotomy where urban planning in the West aims to redefine public space and reintegrate urban porosity into urban space, and Vietnamese cities still implement a strict homogenous urban vision of civilization and modernity. Urban planning in Vietnam is at risk to devolve into an urban cargo cult where rituals of control and order

dominate the public discourse. External experts from the metropolitan region at the national and global level ignore locally rooted knowledge and local conditions in favor of Western knowledge and expertise. From this perspective, the local people in the periphery are not seen as capable to govern themselves. Their agency is denied. The city is defined as a global, metropolitan project. Thereby, it promotes structures of coloniality and hierarchies of power that disenfranchise the local population in the urban periphery. The peri-urban city and its porosity and transitional space could offer an alternative approach to these hierarchical structures and empower the local people and their knowledge and needs. Spatialities of emancipation could emerge to counter a landscape of coloniality. This alternative perspective indicates a need to decolonize knowledge production about urban development, cities, and their residents.

Spatial boundaries, privatization, and the commodification of the city

Beyond the homogenization of urban development as a top-down approach, commodification and privatization of urban space also threaten spatial porosity in peri-urban cities. The construction of new urban areas, shopping malls, gated communities, and industrial zones reduce agricultural land, increase land prices and reduce accessibility due to the erection of boundaries. The commodification of peri-urban and rural land increases opportunities for land speculation. As privatization transforms porous into private land, processes of exclusion and marginalization take place. Because state actors and investors privatize more urban and peri-urban land, this increasingly pushes domestic activities out of public and porous spaces and into the private sphere. This process limits access to privatized land and puts lower-income households in urban areas at a disadvantage. As state authorities define streets vendors, urban gardens on sidewalks, domestic activities on sidewalks as uncivilized, for many lower-income households, this reduces sources of income and pushes them into overcrowded private spaces. This process also adds another dimension to the existing urban cargo cult. On one side, authorities built urban space and infrastructure in the hope of future development. On the other side, they controlled their citizens without providing alternatives for those whose behavior is regulated. Coloniality is thus not only a political framework but also combines state forces with the private economy to enforce spaces of order, control, and domination.

Whereas borders and thresholds provide accessibility and facilitate mobility, boundaries limit movements. They create dead-ends that interrupt mobility and openness. The result is

a fragmentation of space, instead of porosity. Contrary to porosity, which supports multifunctional use of space, spatial fragmentation restricts the use of space. As argued above, mobility is a prerequisite for maneuvering everyday life in a peri-urban city. Combined with self-organization in spaces of encounters, this opens space for urban emancipation. By contrast, the construction of boundaries and the closing of public and porous spaces due to privatization provide advantages for private investors but disadvantages for residents. Material, political, social, and symbolic boundaries limited the opportunity for participation for citizens. Instead of citizens, the city is populated by easily controlled consumers as long as they can consume. This market orientation increases the profit margins of local and global corporations but devoid the city of its social function. From the perspective of the Vietnamese state, this offers the vision of an easily controllable urban society distracted by consumption and the promise of a better future. The privatization of urban space reduces spaces of encounter and mobility and undermines local communities and neighborhoods. Without interactions, solidarity and responsibility slowly vanish. While the Vietnamese state often points towards the individualistic West as a negative example, it also creates conditions that favor a more fragmented urban society based on social demarcation, for example, the construction of high-end gated communities and new urban areas in the periphery.

Grassroots strategies shift discourses and narratives on the city, but not everyone can participate in these negotiations. Time, access to information, and social encounters are necessary for local citizens to engage in these negotiations. Consequently, for some, the promises of urbanization are never realized. The city no longer provides urban citizenship to its citizens but constitutes a fragmented market space.

However, in secondary, medium-sized, and small cities in Vietnam, this development of increased privatization of urban space is still at the beginning. There is little demand for gated communities. Furthermore, shopping malls are still rare. At the moment, porous and public space still commonly defines these cities. The consistency of these porous spaces provides opportunities to maintain a more inclusive process of urban development. Ironically, the periphery might thus be the more democratic urban space and point away towards inclusive urban citizenship.

Pandemic and material space

Since 2020, the SARS-COVID19 pandemic poses another threat to urban porosity and the city as a space of encounters and mobility. Whereas Vietnam's pandemic response in 2020 successfully maintained low case and death numbers (Le and Nicolaisen 2022), since April 2021, the country is struggling to contain a new wave of infections with urban areas as one of the main drivers of the outbreak.

Generally, the government in Vietnam dominated the physical urban space. It can control people, their movements, and access to space to a high degree. This level of spatial domination is more apparent during the pandemic when efforts of control multiplied. Measures to control the outbreak rely heavily on the limitations of movement and encounters (Sjölander-Lindqvist et al. 2020). Lockdowns and social distancing limit access to the material, urban space. Therefore, urban porosity is decreasing in the last two years on a global scale. Already, there are signs that governments in Southeast Asia use the pandemic to push for a more authoritarian approach in the production of urban space (Miller 2020). Lockdowns and stay-at-home orders delegate political activists and urban residents from the public into private spaces. Governments also implement a more top-down approach towards urban development. This top-down approach reduces the spatial and functional porosity of urban space and roll-backs environmental regulations in favor of big businesses and industrialization. The focus on economic recovery makes deep cuts into the material and social cityscape. Globally, governments depict economic recovery as essential, whereas social, environmental, and political needs are represented as negligible. The restricted use of public space also limits the chances for urban residents to voice dissent or stage protests. Health policies that confine people to their houses can become political means to limit alternative voices. Partly these spaces moved online, leading to a landscape of interaction where online and offline realities are highly intertwined. Online activism might provide an alternative approach for participation and emancipation. However, it cannot fully compensate for the loss of public and porous spaces.

The pandemic demands a high level of solidarity and shared responsibility from local communities. This solidarity helps to balance the mental and economic burden of many households. Neighborhood support networks and donations to provide food for marginalized groups, as can be seen in Vietnam at the moment, express this solidarity. However, solidarity and shared responsibility can only develop between urban residents if

spaces for negotiations in cities are maintained. Only then, local communities can construct meaning in their pandemic everyday life. When local authorities block these spaces for long periods, they increase social fragmentation and isolation and reduce social responsibility and solidarity.

Consequently, these changes will influence the materiality of cities. They will reduce existing spatialities of emancipation and reduces opportunities for emerging urban citizenship. The reduction of encounters creates new challenges for urban communities which attempt to formulate identities and aspirations. Spatial pandemic policies thus foster marginalization and exclusion as income opportunities for low-income groups are curtailed, particularly for street vendors. Luckily, some porous spaces, like those characterized by natural porosity, are less perceptible for state control and thus provide a counter-space. However, in a large metropolis, these porous spaces are scarce. Contrary, cities of smaller size in the periphery, which are also closely connected to the natural space surrounding them, can provide space for escape.

3. FINAL THOUGHTS

In the framework of coloniality, the pandemic shows the existing power relations which define the urban space and its constitution in Vietnam. State authorities combine spatial domination with a local cargo cult urbanism and market orientation on economic development. Consequently, the utopia of an inclusive city and its spatialities of emancipation loses traction. The authoritarian state and its developmental narrative of order, control, and civilization provide little space for alternative narratives, meanings, and identities. The pandemic also provides a pretense to reduce the available space for negotiation and participation in Vietnam. It re-shifts the focus of urban development further towards technological and economic goals, including surveillance techniques. (Miller 2020)

The peri-urban city offers an alternative perspective. Due to local circumstances, urban space is organized around spaces of porosity, mobility, and encounter. Its spatial functionality is more ambiguous and not always easy to control. This ambiguity applies particularly to isolated spaces of natural and newly accessible porosity in the periphery of the peri-urban city. Even when public and porous spaces in the city center are locked down, a complete lockdown is more challenging to implement in the periphery. These

spaces thus can provide space for excessing, mental health, and recreational activities. They can maintain a level of encounter and communication and thus the "city" as a lived-in landscape.

Porosity is an urban characteristic that is still more prevalent in smaller cities in the periphery. However, the experiences during the pandemic show that to establish an inclusive, socially just, and participatory city, the reintroduction of porosity in our cities, in Vietnam, and elsewhere might provide the first step to realize an urban utopia in the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABB (2016). ABB to support power reliability in Vietnam. Trade Press release ABB, 13 July 2016. <https://new.abb.com/news/detail/45854/abb-to-support-power-reliability-in-vietnam>.
- Abram, S. (2013) The future of planning? *Metropolitics*, 13 November 2013. <https://metropolitics.org/IMG/pdf/met-abram.pdf>.
- ADB (2020). Viet Nam: Secondary cities development project. Completion Report, Asian Development Bank, March 2021. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/45198/45198-004-en.pdf>.
- ADB (2016a). Resettlement monitoring report. Viet Nam: Secondary Cities Development Project. Half-Year Report, prepared by Black and Veatch in association with V-CIC, for the Provincial People's Committee of Quang Nam Province and the Asian Development Bank, June 2017.
- ADB (2016b). VIE: Buon Ma Thuot City & three adjacent districts of Eakar, Buon Don, and Krong Nang water supply development project. Updated Environmental Management Plan, December 2016. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/41456/41456-033-emp-13.pdf>
- ADB (2013a). Resettlement plan: Secondary cities development project - Tam Kỳ City. Report by the Provincial People's Committee of Quang Nam for the Asian Development Bank, May 2013.
- ADB (2013b). Resettlement plan: Secondary cities development project - Tam Kỳ City. Report by the Provincial People's Committee of Quang Nam for the Asian Development Bank, May 2013.
- Almeide, B. (2005). A GIS assesment of urban sprawl in Richmond, Virginia. Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University of Blacksburg.
- Amarasinghe, U. A., Hoanh, C. T., D'haeze, D., & Hung, T. Q. (2015). Toward sustainable coffee production in Vietnam: More coffee with less water. *Agricultural Systems*, 136: 96-105.
- Appadurai, A. (2004). The Capacity to aspire: Culture and the terms of recognition. In: V. Rai and M. Walton (eds.) *Culture and Public Action*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACV) (2013). Construction planning and development of Tam Kỳ city towards green growth. CityNet Presentation, Korea, 2013.

- <http://citynet-ap.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Association-of-Cities-Vietnam-ACVN-Presentation-Climate1.pdf>.
- Bakker, K. (2010). *Privatizing water: Governance failure and the world's urban water crisis*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Báo Biên Phòng (2016). Huyền thoại về tù trưởng Ama Thuột (The legend of chief Ama Thuột). Báo Biên Phòng, 28 June 2016. https://daklak.gov.vn/vai-dong-lich-su/-/asset_publisher/bDngMUmMrWIw/content/huyen-thoai-ve-tu-truong-ama-thuot
- Benjamin, W. and Lacis, A. (1925). "Naples". In P. Demetz (ed.) *Reflection: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writing*. pp. 163-73.
- Biggs, D. (2010). *Quagmire: Nation-building and nature in the Mekong Delta*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- BIZHub (2018). Vietnam cities plan for urban growth. Vietnam News Bizhub, 03 February 2018. http://bizhub.vn/news/vn-cities-plan-for-urban-green-growth_292156.html
- Bousquet, G. (2016). *Urbanization in Vietnam*. New York: Routledge.
- Brook, R., Purushothaman, S. and Hunshal, C. (eds.) (2003). *Changing frontiers: The peri-urban interface Hubli-Dharwad, India*. Bangalore: Books for Change.
- ByPassLab (2016). *Bypass infrastructure of the peri-urban fringe*. Report, Indo-German Centre for Sustainability (IGCS).
- Castells, M. (1998). *The rise of the network society*. Malden, Mass. u.a.: Blackwell.
- Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- CityNet (2021). Who are we. Homepage, CityNet Association. <https://citynet-ap.org/20-2/who-we-are/>
- Coffee City (2021). Thành phố cà phê (Coffee City). Homepage, Dự Án Thành Phố Cà Phê (Coffee City Project). <https://www.thanhphocaphe.com/trang-chu.html>.
- Conan, H. (2004). *Small piped water networks: Helping local entrepreneurs to invest*. Report, ADB Water for All Publication Series. <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28569/small-piped-water-networks.pdf>.
- Cổng Thông Tin Điện Tử Thành Phố Tam Kỳ (2016). Bản Đồ Thành Phố Tam Kỳ (Map of Tam Ky City). Homepage, Tam Ky City. <http://tamKy.gov.vn/Portals/2/image003-001.jpg>
- Công Thương (2018). Tìm giải pháp xây dựng Tam Kỳ trở thành thành phố thông minh (Find a solution to build Tam Ky into a smart city). Công Thương, 18 August 2018.

<https://congthuong.vn/tim-giai-phap-xay-dung-tam-ky-tro-thanh-thanh-pho-thong-minh-107541.html>

- Cresswell, T. (2010). Towards a politics of mobility. *Development and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28(1): 17-31.
- Dac Thanh (2021). Illegal miners chased away from Quang Nam gold mine. VNEexpress, 10 April 2021. <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/illegal-miners-chased-away-from-quang-nam-gold-mine-4260683.html>.
- Dang Dang Phuoc (2015). Nghĩa Trang Sư Đoàn 23 Bộ binh QLVNCH tại TP. Ban Mê Thuột đang bị bỏ hoang phé! (The ARVN 23rd Infantry Division Cemetery in HCMC. Ban Me Thuot is being abandoned!) [Video]. Youtube, 30.11.2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SlyYU6XKC8>.
- The Su (2017). Meeting on reviewing investment in industrial zones. Homepage, DakLak Provincial People's Committee, 21 December 2017. <https://daklak.gov.vn/web/english/-/meeting-on-reviewing-investment-in-industrial-zones>.
- Decree No. 42/2009/ND-CP OF MAY 7, 2009: On the grading of urban centers.
- Deloitte (2019) The Vietnam consumer survey: An accelerating momentum. Consumer Report, Deloitte, January 2019.
- Dick, H.W. and Rimmer, P.J. (1998). Beyond the Third World City: The new urban geography of South-East Asia. *Urban Studies*, 35(12): 2003-2321.
- Do, T.H. (2020). Land conflicts in emerging suburban areas in Vietnam: causes and effects. Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI), 15 July 2020. <https://papi.org.vn/eng/land-conflicts-in-emerging-suburban-areas-in-vietnam-causes-and-effects/>.
- Doan, H. (2014). Tam Kỳ looks forward a green urban. Quang Nam – Investment Travel, February 2014. <http://nguoiquangxaque.com/english/investment/201402/tam-Kỳ-looks-forward-a-green-urban-449725/>.
- Dong Duong Construction and Investment Joint Stock Company (DDC) (2010). Environmental impact assessment. Project Report Urban Water Supply and Wastewater: Tam Kỳ City Drainage Wastewater Collection and Treatment Sub-project. World Bank.
- Douglass, M. (2009). Globopolis or Cosmopolis? – Alternative futures of city life in East Asia. *Journal of Urban Humanities*, 2: 67-115.
- Douglass, M. and Daniere, A. (2008). Urbanization and civic space in Asia. In: A. Daniere and M. Douglass (eds.) *Building Urban Communities: The Politics of Civic Space in Asia*, Routledge.

- ECODES, VFF-CRT, RTA & UNDP (2021). The 2020 Viet Nam Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI 2020): Measuring Citizens' Experiences. A Joint Policy Research Paper by Centre for Community Support and Development Studies (CECODES), Centre for Research and Training of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front (VFF-CRT), Real-Time Analytics, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Hà Nội, Viet Nam.
- Ehlert, J. (2012). *Beautiful Floods: Environmental Knowledge and Agrarian Change in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam*. Berlin, London: LIT Verlag.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. (2005). Multiple modernities. In: S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.) *Multiple Modernities*. Piscataway (NJ): Transaction Publishers.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. and Schluchter, W. (2001). Introduction: Paths to early modernities – A comparative view. In: S.N. Eisenstadt, W. Schluchter and B. Wittrock (eds.) *Public Spheres & Collective Identities*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1-19.
- Evers, H.-D. and Korff, R. (2003). *Southeast Asian urbanism: The meaning and power of social space*. Berlin, London: LIT Verlag.
- Ferguson, J. and Lohmann, F. (1994). The anti-politics machine: "Development" and bureaucratic power in Lesotho. *Ecologist*, 24(5): 176–181.
- Feynman, R. (1974). *Cargo Cult Science*. Opening Speech, California Institute of Technology.
- Fforde, A. (2010). Vietnam: Water policy dynamics under a post-cold war communism. *Water Alternatives* 3(3):552–574. http://www.water-alternatives.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=143&Itemid=1;
- Fforde, A. (2009). Economics, history, and the origins of Vietnam's post-war economic success. *Asian Survey*, 49:484–504.
- Friedmann, J. (2010). Place and place-making in cities: A global perspective. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 11(2):149-165. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14649351003759573>.
- Foucault, M., Rose, N. S. and Fach, W. (2000). *Gouvernementalität der Gegenwart: Studien zur Ökonomisierung des Sozialen*. Frankfurt a.M./ Berlin:Suhrkamp.
- Gibert M. (2018). Rethinking metropolitan production from its underside: A view from the alleyways of Hồ Chí Minh City. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 50 (3): 589–607.

- Gibert, M. and Segard, J. (2015). Urban Planning in Vietnam: A Vector for a Negotiated Authoritarianism? *justice spatiale | spatial justice*, n° 8. http://www.jssj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Gibert-Segard_En.pdf.
- Gillen, J. (2016). Bringing the countryside to the city: Practices and imaginations of the rural in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. *Urban Studies*, 53(2): 324–337.
- Ginsburg, N. (1991). Preface. In: N. Ginsburg, B. Koppel and T.G. McGee (eds.) *The Extended Metropolis: Settlement in Transition*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. xiii-xviii.
- Geertz C (1973) *The interpretation of culture*. New York: Basic Books.
- General Statistics Office Viet Nam (GSO) (2020). *Completed Results of the 2019 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census*. Statistical Publishing House 2020.
- Goh, D.P.S. and Bunnell, T. (2013). Recentring Southeast Asian cities. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37 (3): 825-833.
- Großheim, M. (2020). Celebrating the socialist past: The Vietnamese ‘Memory Machine’ at work. *인문논총*, 2020: 327-356.
- Harms, E. (2014). Civility’s footprint: Ethnographic conversations about urban civility and sustainability in Ho Chi Minh City. *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 29(2):223-62.
- Harms, E. (2011). *Saigon’s Edge: On the Margins of Ho Chi Minh City*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Harvey, D. (2008). The right to the city. *New Left Review*, 53:23-40.
- Harvey, D. (2000). *Spaces of hope*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Havemann, T, Nair, S., Cassou, E and Jaffee, S. (2015). Coffee in DakLak Vietnam. In: S. Scherr et al. (eds.) *Steps Toward Green: Policy Responses to the Environmental Footprint of Commodity Agriculture in East and Southeast Asia*. Washington, DC: EcoAgriculture Partners and the World Bank.
- Holston, J. and Appadurai A. (1996). Cities and citizenship. *Public Culture*, 8:187-204.
- IB-NET DB (2021a). Utility Profile Quang Nam Water Supply and Sewerage JSC, Tam Ky City. Homepage, IB-Net DB, https://database.ib-net.org/Utility_Profile?uid=13697
- IB-NET DB (2021b). Utility Profile Dak Lak Water Supply, Investment and Construction Co. Ltd, Buon Ma Thuot City. Homepage, IB-Net DB, https://database.ib-net.org/utility_profile?uid=13706&years=2020,2019,2018,2017,2016&type=report&ent=utility&mult=true&table=true&chart=false&chartType=column&lang=en&xch=1

- Jacques, O., Labbé, D. and Musil, C. (2017). Shortcomings of an idealized urbanity: Ghost urban areas and the asynchronous territorial development of Hanoi. *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, 32(1-2):81-108.
- Johanson, C. (2008). Green modernism: The irony of the green garden cities in Southeast Asia. Paper presented at 44th ISOCARP Congress 2008, The Hague: International Society of City and Urban Planners.
- Kaiser, T. (2014). Transnational impact on urban change: Modern projects in Vinh, Vietnam. Dissertation, University of Passau.
- Kerkvliet, B. (2010). Governance, development, and the responsive–repressive state in Vietnam. *Forum for Development Studies*, 37(1):33-59.
- Kerkvliet, B. (2014). Protests over Land in Vietnam: Rightful resistance and more. *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, 9(3):19-54.
- Kim Bao (2021a). Dak Lak’s population ranks first in the Central Highlands. Homepage. Dak Lak Provincial People’s Committee, 09 November 2021. <https://daklak.gov.vn/web/english/-/dak-lak-s-population-ranks-first-in-the-central-highlands>
- Kim Bao (2021b). Thành phố Buôn Ma Thuột với xu thế phát triển đô thị thông minh (Buon Ma Thuot City with the trend towards smart urban development). Cổng Thông Tin Điện Tử Tỉnh Đắk Lắk (Dak Lak Province online portal), 10 February 2021. <https://daklak.gov.vn/-/thanh-pho-buon-ma-thuot-voi-xu-the-phat-trien-o-thi-thong-minh>.
- Kim Bao (2020) Trình UBND tỉnh dự thảo đề án “Xây dựng thành phố Buôn Ma Thuột trở thành đô thị thông minh (.Submitted Draft to the Provincial People's Committee for the Project "Building Buon Ma Thuot City into a Smart City"). Cổng Thông Tin Điện Tử Tỉnh Đắk Lắk (Dak Lak Province online portal), 06 October 2020. <https://daklak.gov.vn/-/trinh-ubnd-tinh-du-thao-e-an-xay-dung-thanh-pho-buon-ma-thuot-tro-thanh-o-thi-thong-minh->.
- Kim Bao and Tuan Hai (2019). 7th Buon Ma Thuot Coffee Festival 2019 opens. Cổng Thông Tin Điện Tử Tỉnh Đắk Lắk (Dak Lak Province online portal), 12 March 2019. <https://daklak.gov.vn/web/english/-/7th-buon-ma-thuot-coffee-festival-2019-opens>.
- Kip, M., et al. (2015). Seizing the (every)day: Welcome to the urban commons! In: M. Dellenbaugh, M. Kip, M. Bieniok, A.K. Müller and M. Schwegmann M. (eds.) *Urban Commons: Moving Beyond State and Market*. Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag.
- Koh, D. (2006). *Wards of Hanoi*. Singapore: ISEAS Publications.

- Korff, R. (2008). The developmental city. Conference paper, IUAES Congress Kunming 2008, January 2008.
- Korff, R. (2006). Urban politics, globalisation and the metropolis in Southeast Asia. *Global Bioethics*, 19(1): 97-105.
- Korff, R. (2003). Local enclosures of globalization: The power of locality. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 27(1):1-18
- Korff, R. (1996). Global and local spheres: The diversity of Southeast Asian urbanism. *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 11(2), pp. 288-313.
- Kuan, H.C. and Lam, W.M. (2013). Norms of good citizenship – The case of Southeast Asian countries. Paper presented at the Asian barometer conference on democracy and citizen politics in East Asia, Taipei, Taiwan, 17-18 June 2013.
- Kurfürst, S. (2021). *Dancing youth: Hip Hop and gender in Late Socialist Vietnam*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Kurfürst, S. (2020). Grow at home, buy local: (De)commodifying ‘rural’ vegetables and herbs. In: S. Kurfürst and S. Wehner (eds.) *Southeast Asian Transformations*. Transcript Verlag.
- Kurfürst, S. (2019). Urban Gardening and rural-urban supply chains: Reassessing images of the urban and the rural in Northern Vietnam. In: J. Ehlert and N.K. Faltmann (eds.) *Food Anxiety in Globalising Vietnam*. Singapore: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kurfürst, S. (2012). *Redefining public space in Hanoi: Places, practices and meaning*. Münster: LIT Verlag.
- Labbé, D. (2013). *Land Politics and Livelihoods on the Margins of Hanoi, 1920-2010*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Le, D.B. (2018). Viet Nam private sector: Productivity and prosperity. Asian Development Bank, Hà Nội: Economica.
<http://www.economica.vn/Content/files/PUBL%20%26%20REP/Viet%20Nam%20Private%20Sector%20ENG.pdf>.
- Le, M. and Nicolaisen F. (2022). State-society relations as cooperative partnership and the COVID-19 response in Vietnam. In: A. Veere, F. Schneider und C. Lo (eds.) *Public Health in Asia during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Global Health Governance, Migrant Labour, and International Health Crises*. Amsterdam University Press. (forthcoming 2022)
- Le, M. and Nicolaisen F. (2021). Conflicted citizenship in Vietnam: Between grassroots mobilization and state repression. In: J. Gillen, L.C. Kelley, and L.H. Phan (eds.) *Vietnam at the Vanguard: New Perspectives across Time, Space, and Community*. Singapore: Springer

- Le, T. (2016). Interpreting the Constitutional Debate Over Land Ownership in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2012–2013). *Asian Journal of Comparative Law*, 11 (2016):287–307.
- Le, T.P. (2013). Tracing the discourse on civil society in Vietnam: A narrative from within. In: G. Waible, J. Ehlert and H. Feuer (eds.) *Southeast Asia and the Civil Society Gaze- Scoping a Contested Concept in Cambodia and Vietnam*. Routledge, New York, pp.171-186.
- Leaf, M. (2002). A tale of two villages: globalization and peri-urban change in China and Vietnam. *Cities*, 19 (1): 23-31
- Leaf, M. (2015). New urban frontiers: Periurbanization and (re) territorialization in Southeast Asia. *The Design of Frontier Spaces: Control and Ambiguity*: 193-212.
- Lefebvre, H.(1991). *The production of space*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Lewis, S. (2016). *Cities in motion: Urban life and cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920–1940 (Asian Connections)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lindstrom, L. (2018). Cargo Cults. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, 29 March 2018. <https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/cargo-cults>.
- Long, G. (2020). Adjusting and supplementing master plan on socio-economic development of Dak Lak Province to 2020, Orientation to 2030. ASEM Connect, 26 October 2020. <http://asemconnectvietnam.gov.vn/default.aspx?ZID1=12&ID1=2&ID8=11052>
- McCann, E. (2011). Urban policy mobilities and global circuits of knowledge: Toward a research agenda. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 101(1):107-130.
- McGee, T.G. (1991). The emergence of desakota regions in Asia: expanding a hypothesis. In: N. Ginsburg, B. Koppel and T.G. McGee (eds.) *The extended Metropolis: Settlement Transition in Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp.3-25.
- McGee, T. (1989). Urbanisasi or Kotadesasi? Evolving patterns of urbanization in Asia. In: F.J. Costa, A.K. Dutt, L.J.G. Ma and A.G. Noble. (eds.) *Urbanization in Asia, Spatial Dimensions and Policy Issues*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 93-108.
- Melot, R. (2016). How to regulate the peri-urban town: Local political decisions and styles of justification. *Revue française de sociologie*, 57(4): 711- 734.
- Migdal, J.S. (2001). *State in Society: Studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Mignolo, W. (2017). Coloniality is far from over, and so must be decoloniality. *Afterall: A Journal of Art Context and Enquiry*, 43: 39-45.
- Minh Hue (2019). To sum up 10 years of constructing and developing Buon Ma Thuot City into primary urban in the Central Highlands. Daklak Provincial People's Committee, 2 April 2019. <https://daklak.gov.vn/web/english/-/to-sum-up-10-years-of-constructing-and-developing-buon-ma-thuot-city-into-primary-urban-in-the-central-highlands>.
- Miles, M. (2000). After the public realm: Spaces of representation, transition and plurality. *The International Journal of Arts and Design Education*, 19(3):253-261.
- Miller, M. (2020). Urban resilience in a time of COVID-19 and climate change in Southeast Asia. Blogpost, London School of Economics and Political Science, 29 December 2020. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/seac/2020/12/29/urban-resilience-in-a-time-of-covid-19-and-climate-change-in-southeast-asia/>.
- Mitchell, C. (2009). Trading trash in the transition: economic restructuring, urban spatial transformation, and the boom and bust of Hanoi's informal waste trade. *Environment and Planning A*, 41:2633- 2650
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) (2016). International experts support environmental recovery in Tam Ky city (Quang Nam). Press Release, MONRE, 01 September 2016. [http://www.monre.gov.vn/English/Pages/International-experts-support-environmental-recovery-in-Tam-Ky-city-\(Quang-Nam\).aspx](http://www.monre.gov.vn/English/Pages/International-experts-support-environmental-recovery-in-Tam-Ky-city-(Quang-Nam).aspx).
- Morgenbesser, L. (2020). *The rise of sophisticated authoritarianism in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Narain, V. (2010). Periurban water security in a context of urbanization and climate change: A review of concepts and relationships. Peri Urban Water Security Discussion Paper Series 1, SaciWATERs.
- Narain, V. and Nischal, S. (2007). The peri-urban interface in Shahpur Khurd and Karnera, India. *Urbanization and Environment*, 19(1): 261–273.
- Ngô, C.C. (2018). Tam Kỳ sơ kết 2 năm thực hiện Chỉ thị 10 về công tác đảm bảo trật tự, văn minh đô thị (Tam Kỳ summarizes 2 years of implementing Directive 10 on the work of ensuring urban order and civilization). Trang Công Dân Thành Phố Tam Kỳ (Homepage of Tam Kỳ City), 08 October 2021. <http://tamky.gov.vn/Default.aspx?tabid=279&Group=15&NID=6330&tam-ky-so-ket-2-nam-thuc-hien-chi-thi-1-ve-cong-tac-dam-bao-trat-tu-van-minh-do-thi>.
- Nguyen, N. (2016). Administrative urbanization in Vietnam: The mixture of political ambitions and administrative power under different economic theories. Proceedings for the Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast (ASPAC) Conference 2016.

<https://scholarworks.csun.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/174829/Nguyen-ASPAC-2016.pdf?sequence=1>.

- Nguyen, T.K.T., Oudin, X., Pasquier-Doumer, L. and Vu, V.N. (2017). Characteristics of household businesses and the informal sector. In: L. Pasquier-Doumer, X. Oudin and T. Nguyen (eds.) *The Importance of Household Businesses and the Informal Sector for inclusive Growth in Viet Nam*. Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences and the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development.
- Nguyen, T.A. (2017). Xây dựng TP Buôn Ma Thuột là thành phố thông minh (Building Buon Ma Thuot city as a smart city). *Đại Đoàn Kết*, 12 January 2017. <http://daidoanket.vn/khoa-hoc/xay-dung-tp-buon-ma-thuot-la-thanh-pho-thong-minh-tintuc355797>.
- Nhân Dân (2019). Politburo examines development of Hue, Buon Ma Thuot cities. *Nhân Dân Online*, 16 November 2019. <https://en.nhandan.org.vn/politics/item/8128202-politburo-examine-development-of-hue-buon-ma-thuot-cities.html>.
- Nhân Dân (2015). Politburo member visits Vietnamese Heroic Mother Statue. *Nhân Dân Online*, 2 May 2015. <http://en.nhandan.org.vn/politics/domestic/item/2479602-politburo-member-visits-vietnamese-heroic-mother-statue.html>.
- Norlund, I. (2007). Civil society in Viet Nam. Social organisations and approaches to new concepts. *Asien*, 105, Oktober 2007:68-90.
- Ông Chậm –Slowlife (2021). Địa điểm nghĩa trang quân đội VNCH - Sư đoàn 23 (Location of the ARVN Army Cemetery - 23rd Division) [Video]. Youtube, 28.03.2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlDzPUM68x4>.
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pasquier-Doumer, L. and Nguyen, T.T.P. (2017). The use of social networks in the functioning of household businesses. In: L. Pasquier-Doumer, X. Oudin and T. Nguyen (eds). *The Importance of Household Businesses and the Informal Sector for inclusive Growth in Viet Nam*. Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences and the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development.
- People's Committee of Tam Ky City (2014). Solid waste management in Tam Ky City, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam. Presentation for Workshop of UN Habitat and Fukuoka, 2014. http://www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org/kcap/activities/egm/2014/pdf/egm05_en.pdf.
- PetroTimes (2014) Vì sao tiểu thương vây Ban Quản lý chợ Tam Kỳ? (Why do small traders surround Tam Ky Market Management Board?) PetroTimes, 18 March 2014. <https://petrotimes.vn/vi-sao-tieu-thuong-vay-ban-quan-ly-cho-tam-ky-166893.html>

- Peyvel, E. and Võ, S.X.L. (2016). Tourism, urbanisation and globalisation in Vietnam. Institute for International Asian Studies (IIAS), The Newsletter 73 Spring 2016. <https://www.iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/tourism-vietnam>.
- Pflieger, G. and Rozenblat, C. (2010). Introduction: Urban networks and network theory: The city as the connector of multiple networks. *Urban Studies*, 47(13): 2723-2735.
- Pho, D.T., Le, T.H. and Le, T.V.A. (2014). Urban resilience scoping study and baseline assessment. Midterm Report 01, 20 March 2014, American Red Cross and Urban-Rural Solutions. <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Pho%20Duc%20Tung%202014%20small.pdf>.
- Prigge, W. (2008). Reading the urban revolution: Space and representation. In: K. Goonewardena et al. (eds.) *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*. New York: Routledge.
- Provincial People's Committee of Dak Lak (2015). Environmental management plan civil work package BMT 01. Final Draft Report, ADB, Secondary Cities Development Project Buon Ma Thuot Subproject, September 2015. <http://buonmathuot.daklak.gov.vn/documents/10181/166504/6.Cap+nhat+ke+hoach+quan+ly+moi+truong+BMT01.pdf/7b927e4b-2199-4565-8a34-6365f8e2554c>.
- QNO (2019). Đến và khám phá Tam Kỳ (Come and explore Tam Ky). Bao Quang Nam, 03 June 2019. <http://baoquangnam.vn/du-lich/den-va-kham-pha-tam-ky-67390.html>
- QNO (2018). Quang Nam-KOICA cooperation in the project on Tam Ky smart city. Quang Nam News, 19 December 2018. <http://quangnamnews.vn/english/news/201812/quang-nam-koica-cooperation-in-the-project-on-tam-ky-smart-city-829872/>
- Quijano, A. (2007). Coloniality and modernity/rationality. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2):168 — 178.
- Reis, N. (2012). Tracing and making the state: Policy practices and domestic water supply in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. Berlin, London: LIT Verlag.
- Ribot, J. and Peluso, N.L. (2003). A theory of access. *Rural Sociology*, 68(2):153 – 181.
- Rigg, J. (2015). Challenging Southeast Asian development: The shadows of success. London, Routledge.
- Robare, M. (2013). Cargo Cult Urbanism. Blogpost, Urban Liberty: Free People, Free Cities. 18 December 2013. <https://urbanliberty.wordpress.com/2013/12/18/cargo-cult-urbanism/>.
- Roberts, B.H. (2016). Rural urbanization and the development of small and intermediate towns. *Regional Development Dialogue*, 35: 1-23.

- Roberts, D. (2021). A rant about lawns in America.They are bad and symbolize bad things. Volt, 24.March 2021. <https://www.volts.wtf/p/a-rant-about-lawns-in-america>
- Rumsby, S. (2021). Hmong christianisation, the will to improve and the question of neoliberalism in Vietnam's Highlands. *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, 20(1): 57-82.
- Saigoneer (2018). Trung Nguyen is building a 'Coffee City' in Dak Lak. Saigoneer, 30 March 2018. <https://saigoneer.com/saigon-development/12971-trung-nguyen-is-building-a-coffee-city-in-dak-lak>.
- Sassen, S. (1991). *The global city: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Satur, L. (2020). *Vibrancy of public space*. Berlin: Regiospectra.
- Schmid, C. (2008). Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: towards a three-dimensional dialectic. In: K. Goonewardena et al. (eds.) *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*. New York: Routledge.
- Schmid, C. (2012). Henri Lefebvre, the right to the city, and the new metropolitan mainstream. In: N. Brenner , P. Marcuse and M. Mayer (eds.) *Cities for people, not for profit: Critical urban theory and the right to the city*. New York: Routledge.
- Schneider, H. (2016). Von Angkor zur Megastadt von heute: Vorkoloniale Ursprünge der Urbanisierung in Südostasien. In: Essener Gesellschaft für Geographie und Geologie (ed.) *Mitteilungen der Essener Gesellschaft für Geographie und Geologie*. Band 2, Essen, pp.73-100.
- Schwenkel, C. (2014). Traveling architecture East German urban designs in Vietnam. *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity*, 2(2): 155-174. https://anthropology.ucr.edu/people/faculty/schwenkel/books/Traveling_Architecture_HCM_2014.pdf
- Scott, J. (2009). *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Scott, J. (1998). *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, J. (1985). *Weapon of the Weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. Yale University Press, London.
- Sennett, R. (2018). *Building and dwelling: Ethics for the city*. Milton Keynes, Penguin Random Books.
- Sennett, R. (2010) *The public realm*. In: G. Bridge and S. Watson (eds.) *The Blackwell City Reader*. London: Blackwell Publishers. pp. 261-272.

- Sennett, R.. (2008). *Verfall und Ende des öffentlichen Lebens. Die Tyrannei der Intimität*. Berlin: Berliner Taschenbuch.
- Sjölander-Lindqvist, A. et al. (2020). Communicating about COVID-19 in four European countries: Similarities and differences in national discourses in Germany, Italy, Spain, and Sweden. *Frontiers in Communication*, November 2020, Volume 5.
- Söderström, O. (2013). What traveling urban types do: Postcolonial modernization in two globalizing cities. In: O. Söderström et al. (eds.) *Critical Mobilities*. London: Routledge.
- Söderström, O. and Geertmann, S. (2015). Loose threads: The translocal making of public space policy in Hanoi. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 34 (2013): 244–260.
- Spencer, J.H. (2007). Innovative systems to create peri-urban infrastructure: Assessment of a local partnership set up to provide water to the poor in Vietnam. *International Development Planning Review*, 29(1).
- Spencer, J.H. (2008). Household strategies for securing clean water: The demand for piped water in Vietnam’s peri-urban settlements. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 28:213–224.
- Springer, S. (2009). Violence, democracy, and the neoliberal “Order”: The contestation of public space in posttransitional Cambodia. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 99(1): 138-162.
- Stavrides, S. (2018). Urban porosity and the right to a shared city. In: S. Wolfrum et al. (eds.) *Porous City: From Metaphor to Urban Agenda*. Basel:Birkhäuser.
- Stavrides, S. (2015). Common space as threshold space: Urban commoning in struggles to re-appropriate public space. *Footprint*, June 2015, 9(16):9-20.
- Stavrides, S. (2010). Towards the city of thresholds. Creative commons, professionaldreamers.
- Strauch, L., Robiou du Pont, Y. and Balanowski, J. (2018). Multi-level climate governance in Vietnam. Bridging national planning and local climate action. Berlin: adelphi.
- Talcoli, C. (2004). The role of small and intermediate urban centres and market towns and the value of regional approaches to rural poverty reduction policy. OECD DAC POVNET Agriculture and Pro-Growth Task team. Helsinki Workshop, Earthscan.
- Talcoli, C. (2003). The links between urban and rural development. *Environment and Urbanization*, 15(3):3-12.
- Thanh Niên (2014) Chợ Tam Kỳ ế ẩm, tiểu thương kéo nhau đến UBND thành phố phản ứng (As Tam Ky market is quiet, small traders flock to the City People's Committee

- to protest application). Thanh Niên, 27 November 2014. <https://thanhnien.vn/cho-tam-ky-e-am-tieu-thuong-keo-nhau-den-ubnd-thanh-pho-phan-ung-post432836.html>.
- The World of Coffee (2021). The World of Coffee Museum. Homepage. <https://baotangthegioicaphe.com/en/bao-tang-the-gioi-ca-phe-en/>.
- Thúy Diễm (2019). Phát triển TP. Buôn Ma Thuột thành đô thị trung tâm vùng Tây Nguyên (Urban development of Buon Ma Thuot to become an urban center in the Central Highlands). Dân Trí, 29 March 2019. <https://dantri.com.vn/bat-dong-san/phan-trien-tp-buon-ma-thuot-thanh-do-thi-trung-tam-vung-tay-nguyen-20190328203546339.htm>.
- Tilly, C. (1995) Citizenship, identity and social history. *International Review of Social History*, 40 (SupplementS3):1-17.
- Tôn, N.Q.T. et al.(eds.)(2012). Trends of urbanization and suburbanization in Southeast Asia. Regional conference “Trends of urbanization and suburbanization in Southeast Asia” (CEFURDS, LPED), Ho Chi Minh City, 9-11 December 2008, Ho Chi Minh City: Ho Chi Minh City General Publishing House.
- Tư pháp Tam Kỳ (2021). Thành phố Tam Kỳ - 15 Năm xây dựng và phát triển (Tam Kỳ City – 15 Years of Construction and Development). Homepage, Phòng Tư pháp thành phố Tam Kỳ (Tam Kỳ Tam Ky City, Justice Department). <http://tuphaptamky.gov.vn/2014/news/Tin-hoat-dong/THANH-PHO-TAM-KY-15-NAM-XAY-DUNG-VA-PHAT-TRIEN-5572.html#>
- UN Habitat (2015a). Delegates deliberate on green and smart development of Tam Kỳ City. News, Homepage UNHabitat, 28 April 2015. <http://unhabitat.org/delegates-deliberate-on-green-and-smart-development-of-tam-Kỳ-city/>.
- UN Habitat (2015b). Vietnam rolls out city development strategies. News, UN Habitat, 14 January 2015. <https://unhabitat.org/vietnam-rolls-out-city-development-strategies>
- Vann, M.G. (2007). Building colonial whiteness on the Red River: Race, power, and urbanism in Paul Doumer's Hanoi, 1897-1902. *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, 33 (2): 277-304.
- VGP News (2016). Tam Ky urged to develop into a civilized and modern city. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam Online Newspaper of the Government, 25 August 2016. <http://news.chinhphu.vn/Home/Tam-Ky-urged-to-develop-into-a-civilized-and-modern-city/20168/28195.vgp>
- Vietnamese Association of Architects (VAA) (2014). Điều chỉnh quy hoạch chung thành phố Tam Kỳ, tỉnh Quảng Nam đến năm 2030, tầm nhìn đến năm 2050 (Adjusting the general planning of Tam Ky city, Quang Nam province to 2030, with a focus on 2050). Urban Master Plan Tam Ky City.

- http://issuu.com/kienviet/docs/thuy___t_minh___i___u_chinh_qhc_tp_/1;
(accessed 20 July 2015).
- VietnamNet (2018). Illegal deforestation and encroachment still rampant in Dak Lak. VietnamNet, 03.October 2018.
<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/environment/209545/illegal-deforestation-and-encroachment-still-rampant-in-dak-lak.html>
- VietnamNet (2014). VN cities fail to follow urban development plans. VietnamNet, 01 January 2014. <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/society/92725/vn-cities-fail-to-follow-urban-development-plans.html>.
- VietnamNet (2013). Dak Lak Province faces acute water shortage. VietnamNet, 19 February 2013. <https://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/environment/66608/dak-lak-province-faces-acute-water-shortage.html>.
- VietnamNet (2012). Dak Lak – The capital of Vietnamese coffee. VietnamNet, 14 October 2012. <https://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/society/43720/dak-lak---the-capital-of-vietnamese-coffee.html>
- Vietnam News (2019a). Central Highlands people lack access to clean water as supply projects abandoned. Vietnam News, 22 April 2019.
<https://vietnamnews.vn/society/518972/central-highlands-people-lack-access-to-clean-water-as-supply-projects-abandoned.html>.
- Vietnam News (2019b). Buon Ma Thuot to become hub in Central Highlands. Vietnam News, 31 December 2019. <https://vietnamnews.vn/society/570539/buon-ma-thuot-to-become-hub-in-central-highlands.html>.
- Vietnam News (2017). PM orders probe into Đắk Lắk illegal logging. Vietnam News, 16 June 2017. <https://vietnamnews.vn/society/378460/pm-orders-probe-into-dak-lak-illegal-logging.html>
- Vietnam News (2015). Quang Nam starts clothing factories. Vietnam News, 31 July 2015.
<https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/273803/quang-nam-starts-clothing-factories.html>.
- Vietnam News (2014). Tam Ky looks to move beggars off the streets. Vietnam News, 13 February 2014. <https://vietnamnews.vn/society/251074/tam-ky-looks-to-move-beggars-off-the-streets.html>
- Vietnam News (2011). Buon Ma Thuot reels from water shortage. Vietnam News, 12 May 2011. <https://vietnamnews.vn/society/211223/buon-ma-thuot-reels-from-water-shortage.html>.
- Vietnam News (2009). Party leader pushes urban development in Dak Lak. Vietnam News, 04 November 2009. <https://vietnamnews.vn/society/193696/party-leader-pushes-urban-development-in-dak-lak.html#sOMZQDRrysVxrcuJ.97>.

- VIR (2016a). Finland helps develop smart power grid in Viet Nam. Vietnam Investment Review, 08 March 2016. <https://www.vir.com.vn/finland-helps-develop-smart-power-grid-in-viet-nam-40577.html>.
- VIR (2016b). Worst drought in 30 years strikes Vietnam coffee. Vietnam Investment Review, 03 May 2016. <https://www.vir.com.vn/worst-drought-in-30-years-strikes-vietnam-coffee-41769.html>
- Vo, H. (2019). Hà Nội may ban motorbikes ahead of 2030: city chairman. VNexpress, May 12, 2019. <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/hanoi-may-ban-motorbikes-ahead-of-2030-city-chairman-3922285.html>
- VOVWorld (2020). Buon Ma Thuot – an urban center of the Central Highlands. VOVWorld, 10 April 2020. <https://vovworld.vn/en-US/discovery-vietnam/buon-ma-thuot-an-urban-center-of-the-central-highlands-846001.vov>
- Vu, L. (2018). \$685 Bil clean water project delivers water from Q1/2019 in Dak Lak. Newsbeezzer, 17 July 2018. <https://newsbeezzer.com/vietnameng/685bil-clean-water-project-delivers-water-from-q1-2019-in-dak-lak-society/>
- Waibel, G. (2010) State management in transition: Understanding water resources management in Vietnam. Working Paper, Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn.
- Wirth, L. (1938). Urbanism as a way of life. *American Journal of Sociology*, 44(1):1-24.
- Wolfrum, S. (2019). Porosity – On interpenetration. In: S. Wolfrum and A. Janson (eds.) *The City as Architecture*. Basel: Birkhäuser.
- Wolfrum, S. (2018). Porosity – Porous city. In: S. Wolfrum et al (ed.): *Porous City: From Metaphor to Urban Agenda*. Basel: Birkhäuser
- World Bank (2016). Developing a provincial master plan for water supply and sanitation services in Quang Nam Province for period up to year 2030. Summary Report, World Bank. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/768321468120557390/pdf/AUS11490-WP-PUBLIC-Summary-Report-has-been-approved-P152492.pdf>
- Xuân Phú (2017). Thành phố Tam Kỳ: Xây dựng văn minh đô thị (Tamky City: Building a civilized city). *Bao Quang Nam*, 06.November 2017, <https://baoquangnam.vn/chinh-tri/thanh-pho-tam-ky-xay-dung-van-minh-do-thi-55014.html>