

What is planned for the next year

- > Continuation and finalization of analysis of data from observational and questionnaire surveys of public spaces in 5 study sites (VASS team is currently working on this);
- > Writing of academic publications (conference papers, journal articles by Canadian and Vietnamese researchers and students on the team);
- > Continue development of content for exhibition to be held at Vietnamese Women Museum (Year 4 or 5);
- > Research project by NUCE students who will sketch, photograph and analyse informal public spaces used by youths in the Fall 2020. The results will be edited into a book and provide the material for an exhibition to be held at the Vietnamese Women Museum.

> IMPORTANT NOTES

Given the current sanitary crisis, the Hanoi team faces considerable uncertainty with regard to possibilities to travel internationally and possibilities to access public spaces for data collection in the next few months. Our plans for fieldwork are “in the air” for now and, in the circumstances, we may focus on analysing the data already collected and developing publications for Y4.

Type of products envisaged in the coming year

- > Multimedia Coproduction;
- > Event;
- > Scientific Publication;
- > Presentation at a conference.



RELATIONSHIP OF RURAL YOUTH MIGRANTS TO URBAN AND VIRTUAL PUBLIC SPACES IN HANOI

and their everyday resistance tactics when labelled as transgressive by others

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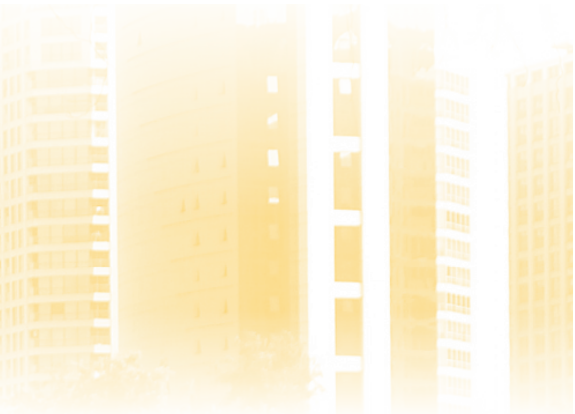
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Partners: Vietnamese Women Museum, Healthbridge.

HOW DO YOUNG WORKING RURAL MIGRANTS RELATE TO, USE, AND PERCEIVE THEIR PLACE IN HANOI'S URBAN AND VIRTUAL PUBLIC SPACES? HOW DOES BEING/FEELING LABELLED AS TRANSGRESSIVE BY OTHERS SHAPE THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO THE CITY'S PUBLIC SPACES?

Highlights

> About 100,000 internal migrants move to Hanoi every year. And over half of them move to the capital city in search of work (Coxhead et al 2015 and Hoang & McPeak 2010). This is a relatively young population, the majority of which being 15-25 years old. Some urban residents see the presence of these young rural migrants in the city as problematic. Critiques are numerous and relate to perceptions of undesirable attributes such as low socioeconomic status, rural accents and appearances, ‘rural’ manners deemed inappropriate in the city, etc. In line with this, some view migrants as making the city dirty, polluted, noisy, disordered, overpopulated, congested, unsafe, etc. Although limited, studies suggest that rural migrants feel being looked down by urbanites and consider themselves ‘outsiders’ in the city. Social stigma, combined with institutional discrimination, is seen as causing social exclusion, a lack of a sense of belonging, and poor well-being and mental health. Against this backdrop, the aim of this case-study is twofold: to investigate the relationships of rural youth migrants (16-29) to urban and virtual public spaces in Hanoi and to understand how perceptions of their ‘place’ in the city shape their interrelations with public spaces.



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What was done this year

- > Continuation and finalisation of the coding of interview data collected from approx. 100 young rural labor migrants;
- > Administration of questionnaire survey to young public space users in the wards on which previous data collection activities (systematic observational survey + interviews) focused;
- > Finalisation of 3 literature reviews (started in Y2) based on annotated bibliographies on rural-to-urban migrants in the East and Southeast Asian region covering English and Vietnamese-language sources;
- > Production of a detailed study and report on small, street-based, commercial public spaces (ex: street food and tea stalls) and their usage by youths in an area of Hanoi home to two major universities;
- > Submission of a book chapter about female youth street vendors in Hanoi (based on Hon. thesis of C. Zuberec, co-authored by S. Turner);
- > Production of a literature review on the question of public space in East and Southeast Asia (H. Lieu under the supervision of P. Hien);
- > Production of a video-documentary about women youth migrants and public spaces in Hanoi. This documentary was screened at WUF10 (see below) and submitted to an international film festival;
- > Organisation of a side-event at the 10th Session of the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi (Feb. 2020);
- > Papers delivered at an international conference on urban planning. Two of the papers are set to be published in conference proceedings.

Preliminary results

> Results from literature reviews about migration and public spaces

Throughout Southeast Asia, unskilled, low-educated rural labor migrants experience harsh living and working conditions in cities. Studies show that these people face major housing, employment, income, and social inclusion hurdles in urban areas. In addition, various forms of discrimination (institutional, economic, social). And stigma put pressure on migrants, limiting their capacity to develop social networks in cities, to access urban services, and to integrate into urban life. Like a large part of their lives, the negative effects of these exclusionary forces on migrants are not always visible to the rest of the population, especially in large cities. Public spaces might offer a mean to alleviate some of the stress rural migrants experience and to help them expand their social network and inclusion in urban societies. However, the areas of cities where migrants concentrate tend to offer very few public spaces. Migrants also face obstacle to use the few spaces available around them. They have very limited spare time, are often left exhausted by work, and face cultural and policy discrimination. All of these

problems need to be addressed if we want public spaces to improve migrants’ urban life.

> Preliminary results from analysis of coded data with approx 100 youth labor migrants

Most of the research on Asian cities, assumes that migrants do not participate in the (re) production of urban spaces, or else that they do unintentionally. The few studies connecting migration and the (re)production of urban spaces in Vietnam thus conceive of migrants as passive beings whose actions on their socio-physical environment result essentially of coping and survival responses to structural constraints. Our data suggests that despite their subaltern position in urban society, young rural labor migrants might be important and purposive agents who don’t only shape but can—and sometimes do—actually produce new types of urban spaces.

Our data suggests that youth labour migrants mould Hanoi’s public space through their individual subjectivities, desires, and reflexive responses to perceived and material exclusion. Supporting this

proposition, we find that youth labor migrants play a significant role in the (re)production of ‘informal’ sidewalk public spaces that authorities are trying to ban across the city (tea and food stalls). These transient urbanites are also directly involved in turning into public spaces, places that were never intended for this usage (supermarkets and bridges in particular). They also boost the success of a new type of highly regulated and exclusive public spaces launched/initiated by the state (pedestrianized streets). These preliminary findings interrogate the position and role that this marginalized and transient population plays in city-making processes.

References cited

- > Coxhead, I., Nguyen Viet Cuong, Linh Hoang Vu (2015) Migration in Vietnam: New Evidence from Recent Surveys, Vietnam Development Economics Discussion Paper 2, Hanoi: World Bank – Vietnam Country Office.
- > Hoang, P., & McPeak, J. (2010). Leaving or staying: Inter-provincial migration in Vietnam. Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, 19(4), 473-500.

