

**Examining the production and perceptions of public space in
developing urban environment: an exploration of Ho Chi Minh
City, Vietnam**

Thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
Newcastle University

THANH VO

School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape
Newcastle Upon Tyne University

January 2022

ABSTRACT

In developing countries, there is a growing trend for improving public space which transforms the built environment as well as raises the requirement for better public life. The driving forces to enhance experienced quality of urban spaces play significant role in urban design process. Moreover, according to the new life style and social contexts of market demanding, the current political systems and design styles have to be shifted and adapted so that the quality of these planning can meet the need of local citizens. Additionally, in the light of encouraging human interaction with urban environment, the design for public space raises the awareness of both public and private developers as well as local authorities and professionals in planning. The role of each of stakeholders during planning process may give the opportunities for these spaces to have an attractive appearance, exciting activities, and successful formulated design as well as involving all people.

The study takes place around the feature of walkable streets as public spaces which associated to the discovered and investigation of two pedestrian streets in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. This research contributes to the discussion that investigates the nature of planning and control in decision making process in the Southeast Asian's socialism country. Furthermore, the study tends to explore social influences involving within the management of local authorities, the meaning of places and people' perceptions on these public spaces. By using the combination of qualitative, quantitative and case study approaches, the research tends to answer how the triad (local authorities, planning professionals, and developers) deals with design planning for public spaces, the perceived of public space and the perception of users while these public spaces are being transformed. The result of this study not only contributes to the fields of urban design in Vietnam (which is very new in this country), but also it raises the awareness to the design for public space through the lens of all stakeholders involve in these places in the context of Southeast Asian cultures and different management system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give my deepest thankfulness and gratitude to all of my supporters during the time of doing my PhD research.

Firstly, I would like to gratefully appreciate to both my main and second supervisors: Professor Timothy Townshend and Dr Katherine Button who have been very generous, supportive and kindly provide effective advices during my study supervision period. They not only support and motivate me on every steps of the thesis, but also, they give me courage, valuable suggestions of my life outside the academic environment.

Furthermore, I would like to give my special thanks to all of my tutors and school secretary in the Newcastle University who taught at Hass training for PhD students and assist any problems happened through the research life.

Besides, I could not finish my thesis on time without the usually stimulation from my family, especially my husband, my parents, younger sister and brother; and my little son as well. I would like to tell them that I really appreciate their appearance in my life, love them very much and thanks for always being beside me through both good and bad time.

Finally, all of my friends and colleagues from Vietnam have showed their kindness and helpful to assist me with collecting information data as well as variety of valuable ideas for my thesis.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I. Introduction

Ho Chi Minh City is located in the south of Vietnam which is the most populous as well as the largest city of my country. This city is well-known as the economic and financial centre that play a vital role for the development of the whole country. I have lived and worked in this city for many years and Ho Chi Minh City has inspired me with several special elements such as its own period of development after war, its beauties and its drawbacks as well.

A large city in a developing country such as Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam is a crucible for social, political and economic interactions. This is because it offers so many places and spaces for interaction, for people from across Vietnamese society. There is, however, no doubt that the transformation in political and economic structures since the 1990s, globalisation and the embracing of new technologies, have drastically altered the Vietnamese way of life and in turn these have shaped the way in which we occupy and use out public spaces. During this period of transformation, there has been something of a crisis around the use of public space, who is for? What is it for? This raises the concern from the communities with their visible and invisible forms of meaning and complexities. The growing trend of commodification and privatisation of urban land has not only reformed the spatial condition of urban space, but it has also reformulated urban power relations. Urban planning has been at the heart of these issue. Due to these developments, the nature and relationship between the public and private sectors in the production and management of the built environment has changed completely. The transformation of urban spaces, has been led by urban politics based primarily on potential economic benefits. This has affected both spatial transformation and diversity of social relations. Moreover, the perception, nature and conditions of the production of public spaces have also modified which cause the research phenomenon on design and management relations in the production of current public spaces and shifting perceptions within those spaces of stakeholders.

According to Harvey (2008) and Marcuse (2010), while there are thegrowing trends, especially the influence of organisational adaptation and globalisation, people have also shifted their thinking on the right to the city of its dwellers. In contemporary cities, one of the major constraints on particular groups

of urban dwellers, are the inequitable allocations of resources, limiting the access of their choices related to the right to the city. In this context, the right to appropriation and participation, the core of Lefebvre's concepts (Koffman and Lebas, 2010) ideas are provide an underpinning to this study. Moreover, Lefebvre', triadic explanation of space – perceived, conceived, lived provides someobvious concept about spaces. They are the primary patterns which is used in thisthesis. As can be seen, While "Perceived" has recognized as spatial practice of social spaces, It forms everyday activities in the context of the wider socio- economic as well as guarantees the connection and cohesion for the relationship between people and space to some extent. As mentioned about "Conceived space" (the space images), it tends to be the dominant space or the production approach in every society due to its relationship among production and the order of market and current government. Talking about "Lived space", it opposites to the"Conceived space" as it defines everyday life, the controlled as well as inactive space that have forced its users change and adapt for fitting.

According to Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002), the appropriate tools of urban development as planning were used to create superiority, whereas they affect existing structures and expanding the gap between planning theory and practice. At this stage, as Zukin (1995) noticed that people, who can control the economic and political power, have many opportunities to form public culture by delivering the building of the city's public spaces by stone and concrete. Moreover, decision makers are able to shift and reform themselves within networks and relations which also symbolise the cultural codes of the society with their complexity and traditions in reality. The Perceived are identified by the perception of phenomenon which separated to refine through culture and social perspective; this may be the method people involved in architecture, operate and conceive the built environment. Lived is shown as the reality of actual interplay with a phenomenon which sometime reveals the space experience but not manifest in patterns (Guaralda, 2013). In addition, the users who actually enjoy these public spaces, are important for the justification of which features convince them to spend their lifetime there. Therefore, the role of the triad shaping and reshaping above revealed built environment gain the continuous goals of development around that environment.

The research attempts to investigate several particular opportunities as well as some approaches to promote better public spaces as walking places for

Vietnamese people which emerge in the longtime development of developing country through urbanization process. Even though the general principals of public spaces development are typical in Western on academic and policy discussion, the unique context as Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, still has the opportunities and initiatives for providing its own lesson for further exploration. Moreover, beside the finding of this own context for developing public space in Vietnam, the methodology of the thesis may enable some opportunities for other stakeholders to identify and grab those initiatives to their own situation.

II. Current thinking on public spaces

Since the 1960s urban design has evolved as a separate field of study, with a concern over the production, management and maintenance of public space at its heart (Carmona, 2003). In recent decades, there has been a burgeoning interest in public space and creating 'pedestrian friendly' urban spaces and the impacts on social life, experiential quality, sustainability, economy and health. In particular since the beginning of the 21st Century the need to encourage 'walkable' environments has been highlighted in many contexts. This has been driven by the sustainability agenda and the need to reduce vehicular emissions and pollution and a renewed concern for public health among the built environment professions. In Western contexts, reliance on private cars has been linked to increasingly sedentary lifestyle and related health issues.

In the period of crucial social and economic transition in Vietnam, there are many struggles between geography and the meaning outline of the country, buildings and public spaces. In the past, many activities are held on street as public spaces such as street-trading. Nowadays, such beauties are no longer the case, the Vietnamese trends in public space change day by day as the limited for freedom movement, no street activities except at Tet (lunar new year) holiday. Furthermore, the consumption pattern is changing from street-trading cultural life, enjoying fresh atmosphere to big shopping malls with air conditioner and none outside public spaces. These spatial and economic transformation cause sophisticated and un-managed situation which are disciplined by the governments, even over the present policies and sanctions within street activities. Hence, this thesis eager to find some approaches to change in the use of public space through the arrangement of relations among the public and the state for making these changing relations obvious. Moreover, these findings may shift in the emotional valence and current policies of people in Vietnam through an outlet to harmonise

their transgressive ideologies and requirements.

Based on these existing conditions and phenomena, the planning literature in relation to the increasing and decreasing design for urban public space, can be classified into different types of approach. Firstly, the 'conceived' is discovered through some authors focusing an optimistic approach in suggesting solutions such as Hillier (2002); Albrechts (2003); and some controvert researchers for being too idealistic whereas ignoring the conditions and difficulty of reality as Flyjberg and Richardson (2002) and Yiftachel (1998) and so on. The study explored the 'conceived place' via a critical approach by emphasising the gaps in management system for Vietnamese context, where the former takes the point of view too idealistic while the latter lacks in guidance for suitable approaches forward. Additionally, "the conceived" are analysed within tangible and intangible processes of the decision-making stage. Secondly, some modern ideas supporting for 'Imaginary and Perceived' and 'Lived and Real' such as Camona (2003, 2010), Mandanipour (1996,1999, 2003, 2010, 2013,2017), Guaralda (2013) and so on were used as references to define the research targets. Eventhough the public spaces do not need to be sociable for proving as expressive spaces, the study tend to investigate some aspects of these spaces which create the feeling of meaning for all. Feature of public space which are meaningful to people. Hence, the use of questionnaires for assessing activities of public space through the rating of community gathering places, design layout for encouraging public activities or behavior, the façade along the space, and the variety of uses and businesses are used as the useful method. Finally, some suggestions to increase the planning design process' value, as well as discussing the drawbacks.

III. Research questions

Many commentators including local and national governments themselves in developing countries such as Vietnam, have raised concern of the relentless investment in the built environment, which is the driving force behind urban development. However, the process of reshaping the urban environment not only reformulates the operation and actors of urban management, but also causes a further influence on the social-spatial dimension of urban space. On this thesis, it tries to find out the different between Western public space and Southeast Asian public spaces in both literature and reality due to the trend of Vietnam planning style for public spaces as using the West' styles as they think it comes from developed countries and It is the best choice for everyone.

Therefore, the debate of this study is that the interwoven nature of management relations and other stakeholders' role (professional in planning, investors, users) contributes to the creation and renovation of the built environment (particular in public spaces) and society itself. Here, the attempt to change the perception of society and what constitutes public space is driven by political-economic decisions. As a result, the development and transformation of public spaces are driven by two inter-related issues which are political-economic and the socio-spatial. The first is examined by the level of the decision-making process through urban design scale and the formal production of public spaces; The latter features, are affected by the result of the former's actions, recognising the consumption of the built environment through spatial and social perception. Therefore, in this thesis, instead of combining the requirement from both social demand and development purposes during each period of transformation, the distinct of management in the decision-making process through the development of urban built environment may cause many consequences for the successful of public spaces.

It is important to note that the built environment is the product, the obvious representation, created by tangible and intangible dynamics of urban management relations which are fixed in the contemporary practices during the urban development process. Hence, the analysis of who, how and why questions are vital to define 'the right' within management relations and social demand. Due to the position of the production of space which stand between the conceptual and the practical level, 'how' and 'why' the decision makers cooperate with social concern through searching the need of users and the solutions of decision makers in local context within each part of this study.

Furthermore, this research aims to investigate the gaps and hidden practices among the visible formal process and practical reality and to examine how urban planning is manipulated to satisfy both management's interests and social favours in the context of urban development for public spaces. On the way to seeking the answers, there is a set of supplementary objectives, contribute to make the best of research quality, which are clarified within the literature and the empirical research. Following the rhythm of this study, the subsidiary objectives are set to expose the whole process of the production from the beginning to the end and from existing practical to reality of primary data at chosen case studies.

There, the perspective of professionals and users are meaningful as the points of management holders, where the former group experiences these spaces with their actual feelings and working, while the latter group manipulate the production of space in providing their intervention as public services. It is clear to note that the differences between Western countries public space and Asian countries public space in literature and reality challenge the driving force to explore both the use and meaning of these spaces with specific attention in terms of geography, culture and the way people care about their surrounding environment. The investigation of designing for walkable public spaces in the context of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam reveals the reasonableness of the setting for the research aims and objectives of this study, because this phenomenon is not only the temporary trend for the development of urban space in Vietnam, but it also involves the negotiation and manifestation of various groups through the transformation of public spaces nowadays in Southeast Asia.

IV. Aims and objectives

1. Aims

This study focuses on the applied research to adjust existing or provide some approach which allow mixed-use growth as well as other arrangement revealed to increase walkability and improve walking activity. Furthermore, this research not only analyses the impact of the walking's-built environment, it but also finds the answers for why, how and when people do it.

Last but not least, this thesis targets at looking for some viable recommendations for implementing these friendly public spaces as street in the City particularly and in other provinces in Vietnam generally. This recommendation supports a Vietnamese designing for user-friendly streets that inspire walking and cycling activities. Furthermore, the growing trend of walkable streets influences the increasing of public space for social and commercial relations. The enthusiasm to identify some possible approaches is considered which guide this research focuses on the guidance and key principals designed to figure the best walkable public space designs.

2. Objectives

To understand how and why Vietnamese pedestrians react to design factors at different walkable public places and elements which influence the use of the street environment through a psychology approach in terms of psycho-cultural and thermal comfort.

To identify key issues and barriers to implement planning for public spaces.

To analyse the process of understanding factors which influence the lack of success of existing pedestrian projects in Ho Chi Minh City and how the changes can be implemented to improve the potential elements.

To propose the approach of design solutions and advices as well as principals on the valuable management of pedestrian spaces in order to improve the increasing of good public spaces.

V. Background and problems of the study

1. Transformation of Asian Cities: from Traditional Cities to Modern, Global Cities

Currently, rapid development and urbanisation is occurring across Southeast Asian cities - and Vietnam is not an exception. The transformation from traditional societies based on an agrarian economy to industrialised and modernised capitalistic economies in a relatively short time is astounding. As suggested by Douglass and Daniere (2009), these cities are in a race to catch up with the West so they are changing and increasing very fast, especially in terms of infrastructure and services. There, this also increasing demand on private cars and motorbikes as part of this modernization process, instead of the increasing investment in a convenient and reliable public transportation systems (see figure below).

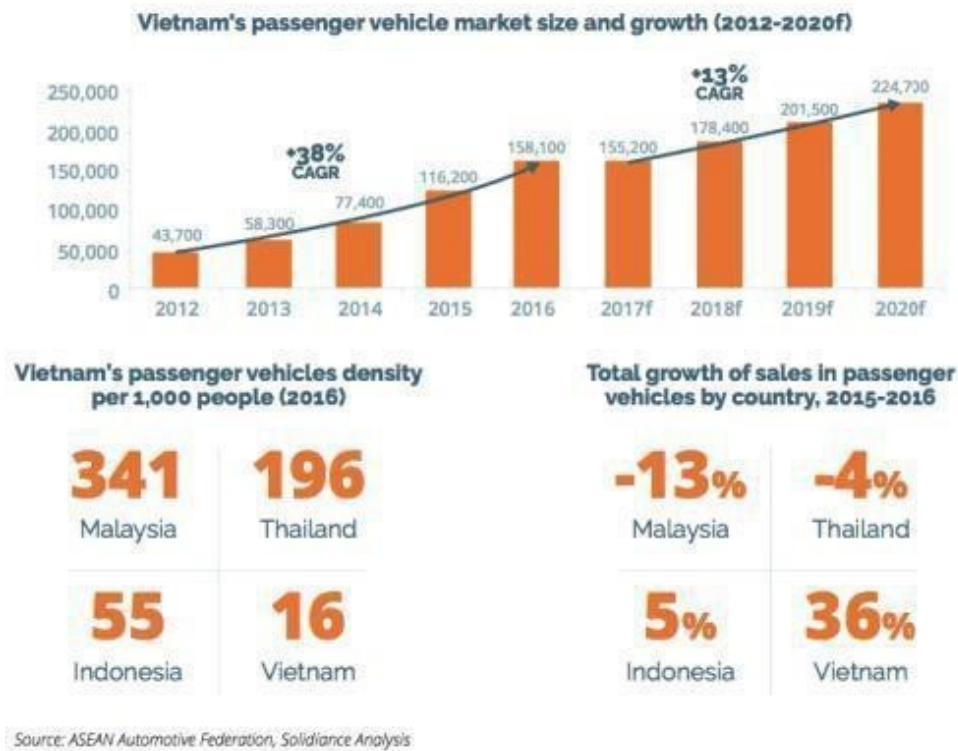


Figure 1 Vietnam's passenger vehicle market size and growth (2012-2010f) retrieved from: <http://www.marketresearchvietnam.com/vietnams-passenger-vehicle-market-continues-to-grow/#/>

Accordingly, city centres are occupied by vehicles and their streets cannot be attractive public places anymore which were described as the 'invaded city'. The influences of these trends raise the awareness for many local and central authorities. The driving force of them is not only on building for roads and highways, but they also have to focus on renovation schemes for existing streets. As a result, besides the effort for improvement of these places, there are some consequences due to the lack of preservation of the unique characteristics of Vietnamese' culture. Moreover, the wider the streets are set, the greater the number of vehicles that are purchased. Hence, the development of new streets cannot meet the needs of increasing private vehicles and the decrease in public spaces for people with greenery which also causes pollution issues.



Figure 2 Street space in Ho Chi Minh City is occupied by vehicular movement. Retrieved from <http://www.atgt.vn/anh-ket-xe-kinh-hoang-tai-cua-ngo-phia-dong-tphcm-sang-2611-av280161.html>, 2018; <https://laodong.vn/xa-hoi/tphcm-mo-duong-xay-cau-de-giam-ket-xe-kho-kha>

In Asian cities, most of the activities mainly take place along the street spaces, especially on the pavement cities such as Tokyo, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Ho Chi Minh are typical. As Limin (2001), Miao (2001), Gehl (2010), Rapoport (1987), and Sulaiman and Shamsuddin (2001) said that full of people activities and interactions are performed within the streets of Asian cities. There, people sell goods, bargain with street vendors, do their personal jobs such as vehicle reparations, to do art, to perform themselves or even to pray (see figure below). Hence, the most attractive Asian streets are rated by the variety of functions and activities. Moreover, the influence of vehicles reduces the time spent for activities and interactions on pavements.



Figure 3 Streets using in Vietnam and Japan. Retrieved from <https://traveler.marriott.com/tokyo/72-hours-things-to-do-tokyo/>; <https://vietnamnet.vn/vn/chuyen-trang/oto-xemay/thu-doan-pha-xe-lot-tien-cua-tho-sua-xe-may-334614.html>; <https://news.zing.vn/chan-chin>



Figure 4 Informal street activities along the streets of Asian Cities, a) Java Carnival, Solo, Indonesia, b) Jonker Street Night Market, Malacca, Malaysia Source: www.kompas.com, www.gogomelaka.com, 2013

2. The Invasion of the Shopping Mall

The term “the West” (includes US and Europe) is always mentioned as the

sophisticated and modern approach in Asia and as the best way to follow their development. The tendency about 'the West' not only changes the modern architectures, but also it causes the significant transformation to the Asian streetscape. Therefore, the increasing of shopping mall is recognised throughout many urban areas of Southeast Asia. As Utaka and Fawzi (2010) stated, these trends are also dominant around the world. In these buildings, they have almost commercial retailers such as restaurants, cafes, fashion shops, medical centres and even sport facilities which previously would stand along traditional streets.

This trend converts commercial place from horizontal to vertical in nature along the business streets around huge mixture building. Due to the conversion from public in nature to private in usage, from outdoor to indoor, from linking with pedestrian communication to disconnection in fragmented linkage, the future public spaces are lack of greenery and full of pollution. The new way of developing reflects the common denominator of developing countries with the speedy economic development. Considering Ho Chi Minh City as an example, over 40 large shopping malls were built, and these shopping malls are usually located not far away from the city centre and near the existing traditional streets. There, the traditional shop houses are demolished and converted into modern styles which can attract more visitors, but it causes the transformation of the continuity of the existing townscape. Additionally, the modern style of shopping malls somehow is not well designed which do not have physical and aesthetical connection with the surrounding environment and contexts.

The conflict between shop house owners with shopping malls owned by huge investors causes unstable conditions in Southeast Asia. The occupying of shopping malls affects the decreasing public spaces with fresh air and greenery at city centres. However, in the Vietnamese context, a tropical country with hot, humid and rainy season, the choices to be inside shopping malls are preferred due to being inside an air-conditioned building. Furthermore, many people would like to spend time in shopping malls with many options to meet their requirements than walking along traditional streets, although these street spaces apply better arrangements for their interaction and life. This raises the very serious debates about public spaces for people.

3. The view from human scale interaction in urban street

In reality most Asian urban streets are full of multi usage as nature setting.

The variety of functions is located at the same area such as temples, schools or shophouses within residential or commercial areas, especially in city centres. Moreover, the diversity of activities happens as part of everyday life. However, as Lincoln (2008) said that the official rationales were used to ban these activities for improving traffic safety, public health and creating a modern and world-class city. There are some views that suggest that street life is a long-standing part of the culture which provides some useful goods and services with cheap prices and provides a way to earn a living for some peoples. Vietnamese cities share these common consequences with other Southeast Asian cities, but to some extent Ho Chi Minh City is different in that street life abounds and varies. This city is well known with international tourism as its vibrant street life is used for dining, commerce, leisure and parking as well. In the city centre, the street should be supreme and be the first institution of the city as well as a room by agreement, the walls of the donors' belonging, contributed to the city for public use. Streets nowadays are neutral and not belonging to the houses behind them. Then, we have the road and we have no streets as Kahn (1979) stated.

Walkable places have a number of aspects related to urban design features which includes pedestrian oriented elements. There are several urban design attributes that affect different aspects of walkable places, and one of them is pedestrian-oriented features. It is imperative to notice that these features play their role at street level and contribute to pedestrian level through their designs and a convenient, flexible environment. In addition, as Frank et al., 2003 said that the pedestrian-oriented elements affect the perception of pedestrians and eventually change people's choices for walking as their mode of transport. Additionally, the design attributes that amalgamate the safety movement from traffic are also significant elements of walkable streets at street level (Jacobs, 1993; Brown et al. 2007). Commuters by mobile vehicles could be visually guided by design elements such as pedestrian crossings, raised crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, medians and curb extensions which protect the pedestrians (Giles-Corti et al. 2009; Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2010). Jacob and other scholars state that the segregation of pedestrians and traffic vehicles could be undertaken by on-street parking and bicycle lanes (Jacobs, 1993; Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2010). In addition, based on numerous researches, urban street design features create comfortable and fascinating aesthetic experiences and contribute to pleasant walkable environment. On one hand, the segregation of pedestrian and

traffic vehicles by urban street trees and landscape act as the barriers to reduce the speed and pace of flowing traffic and pedestrians. On the other hand, the elements could become a main design tool to make walking experience as pleasant as possible for pedestrians which creates visual landmark cognition and protection for pedestrians (Jacobs, 1993; Giles-Corti et al. 2009). There are remarkable benefits of urban street trees which enhance good urban design practice for walking streets, especially commercial walking streets such as aggregate additional value to adherent business services or street vendor business (see figure 02), traffic-slow-down due to appropriate placement of trees, provision of attractive light placement through the connection between tree and lamp or sheltering and shading from trees on the streets (see Figure 03) (Burden,2006). For instance, trees planted on the street can decrease the speed down to 7-8 mph and allow shops or malls to face streets which encourages walking activities. Tree's photosynthesis and water catchment that convert precipitation back into the atmosphere helps decrease the urban heat island effect. They could also act as a green corridor wall that separate pedestrian experience from movement of traveling vehicles (Naderi, 2003; Dumbaugh, 2004). On the contrary, the next evidence exemplifies that the occurrence of street trees acts as a proxy for an eye-catching walking corridor cognition, tree's value in providing shade might be restricted to current seasons and times of day that do not essentially link to the periods when travel-diary data were collected. And, of course, one could recognize that several factors such as urban design unnecessarily has bearing effect on fundamental travel decision.

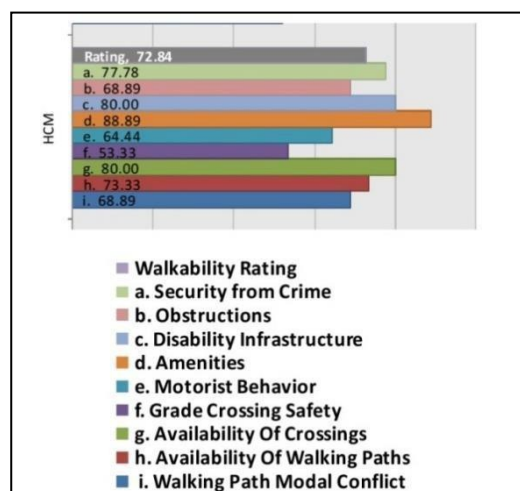


Figure 5 Walking rating around commercial areas (Asian development Bank-2010)

Urban design exterior furniture, namely as benches, kiosks, bus shelters and advertising within pedestrian's eye-sight would support to guide pedestrians and offer friendly, leisurely and comfortably walking experience (Jacobs, 1993). Pedestrian's perception or cognition could be largely influenced by site-level urban design feature. In the light of enclosure experience establishment, the consideration of street edge very well-known as building facades and street trees is pivotally raising the awareness of urban designer for creating walkable streets (Jacobs, 1993) (see figure 4.5). The spatial betweenness of buildings also amalgamate for street edge, namely the less of building spaces created; the more street edge cognition is recognized. In addition, buildings can become spatially-oriented objects which guide people to the streets and provide accessible nodes for pedestrian entry from thoroughfare. In comparison with buildings separated from streets, these integrations provide more choices which makes urban design create flexible ideas such as large parking lots instead of small on-street parking lots (Institute for Transportation Engineers, 2010).

In regards of building height and street width ratio, it is worth to notice that this golden ratio harmonization could create a great effect of attracting people to front-shops and experience the astonishing effect of architectures and building facades as expected intention of urban designers. The best golden ratio for human eye (with average height of an adult) is approximately 1:2 or 1:3 or measures by the angle of 45 degree to 60 degree (Lynch, 1960; Erem and Sener, 2008). Therefore, one should not consider slightly the effect of good ratio between enclosing building height and street width in street urban design. Furthermore, for instance, taking the case of building a long and very wide street with only two or three stories along the typical façade, all views of space enclosure are misplaced leading to poor urban design effect. Denser planting of trees and serious consideration of enclosed building heights and street width ratio will shed light on the spirit of leveraging monotony (Robertson, Howard & Montepulciano, 2009). While the wider of the street, the more favorable to road engineer which constitutes to most senseless shopping, the narrower streets with appropriate ratio and continuous enclosing walls are most suitable for creating vibrant commercial walking streets (Gibberd, 1990s). The perfect exemplar would be the case of designing streets slight at around 06-09 meters (20-30 ft) and the buildings are built with three to four stories, this will lead to "the view of completeness and enclosure" to the senses of walkable streets (Ashmolean, 2008). Narrower streets

also enable good shopping: movement along the street and window gazing has no obstacles and actually are inspired by the physical form of such development.

Eventually, there are several issues that need to be considered when designing the pedestrian environment as well as sidewalk widths, surrounding landscaping, existing context of designed area and urban exterior furniture. In regards to urban exterior furniture, this amenity could provide an attractive visionary cognition for pedestrians and also inspire larger share of use for these public places. Urban exterior furniture could act as aforementioned features albeit the obstacles, trip risk might happen or it could obscure visibility and threaten pedestrian safety in a particular way (Tate Fergus, 2007). As a result, every urban exterior furniture should be carefully considered in order to avoid the vision being obscured and increasing visibility of these things. It is widely accepted that urban exterior furniture should be at minimum height at one meter wherever is potential or useful and they should have a feature around 150 millimeter off the ground for the rest of its length to match to the ground which helps users avoid vision impair. Additionally, street furniture should be separated from the through route and be put in harmony around the same environment (Fergus, 2007; Land Transport Safety Authority, 2003) (see figure 08, 09, 10).

4. The lack of design consideration in existing design project

Rapid growth in inequality in mega cities, particularly under the impact of administrative structural adjustment and globalization, drew the attention of the right of inhabitants in the city (Harvey, 2008; Marcuse, 2010). The unfair resource allocation and accessibility in contemporary cities are major constraints of urban inhabitants that want to exercise their choices associated with “the right to the city”. In this context, Lefebvre’s notions of the right to appropriation and the right to participation are useful concepts in examining inhabitants living in these places.

a. Gender role

In feudatory period, Vietnamese people, especially Vietnamese women who followed the rule of Confucianism relegated their life style at home and considered it as their private space. As a consequence, the limitation of accessing public space causes some trouble to women. Moreover, time constraints prevented women from participating in leisure activities due to their heavy family responsibilities. Because of the time spending of women mostly around their homes more than in public space, the restraint also counts on the realm of leisure spaces (Dart, 2006; Gagne and Austin 2010; Henderson, 1991). However,

nowadays, it is no longer the case, due to the rapid development of economic, social and political aspects over the past century; women are encouraged to public space due to the opening of these spaces which give a great offer for their identity investigation. According to Leung (2003), nowadays, urban women gain the increasing concern than ever to define status difference, self-image, individuality and gender identity as well. In addition, as Gaubatz (2008) notes that today both genders experience an expressively higher degree of involvement in public spaces. Specifically, the use of public space and society was affected by the development of commercial areas in Vietnamese cities.

In order to understand the women's lives and gender norms in contemporary Vietnamese as well as Asian geographic context, the trend of gendered behaviour in these spaces and their significance for women and gender relations.

b. Young people and adult role

Commercial public spaces and shopping malls have prominently figured in geography in recent debates (as well as other social sciences and the press) in regards to the nature and usage of urban public spaces in Western societies. Scholars have noticed the fact that the meanings and uses of these spaces are competed between individuals and social groups (Jackson, 1998; Miller et al., 1998). They have also portrayed the tensions between different users of urban public spaces and the ways which dominant members of society (in particular, White middle-class adults) often perceive the presence of certain marginalized groups within these spaces to be problematic (Mitchell, 1996; Ruddick, 1996; Miller et al., 1998). Young people amalgamate large part of such marginalized group. Shopping malls and commercial public spaces are the phenomenon of nature and usage of urban public spaces in Asian societies. Moreover, several scholars have noticed that the presence of young people in public spaces such as shopping malls or pedestrian streets is considered to be problematic by many users (Goss, 1993; Jackson and Holbrook, 1995), a few researches have undertaken young people to explore the meaning of these spaces and the roles that they play in their life.

There is a limitation in existing literature explained for the mall surrounding public walking spaces which happen as social trend of the youth. Given the seeming importance of the mall surrounding public walking space as a social phenomenon for adolescents, it is surprising that limited existing literature offers explanations for the phenomenon. Some journalistic accounts pay serious

attention on this behaviour, for example, as Glaberson (1992) said that this modern manifestation causes “that teenage conviction that there is nothing else to do” and clarifies a few evidences about the difference of using these spaces and their meaning for variety group of young people.

Additionally, these spaces should be created for the youth with including outdoor activities as seeing friends, watching people, performances (Anthony, 1985). Her theories clarify the third place (the mall and surrounding public spaces) she theorizes that they use the space of the mall and surrounding public spaces as a third place, "a respite from the treadmill between home and school, a place for enjoying social life". Her study, while offering evidence for how young people use the mall, offers little explanation for why they so often choose this space as opposed to others.

Understanding how people react in public spaces gives the planners, urban designers and the state some opportunities to provide a better place.

c. Culture role

The marketing of newly conceived place which is the physical reconstruction of the old city and the creation of a new urban landscape always goes hand in hand with the development of a new civic pride. As the result, this phenomenon will help city governors distinguish their city from others in global marketplace, which contribute a specific priority on environment, social and cultural life of the city.

Our experience of the environment associate to the way we perceive a city. However, the main component of this experience is the visual (Cullen, 1971; Lynch 1984). We recognize cities by our experience with image in first person or through the lens of media interpretation. At some points, the cognitive architecture landmark was created by public spaces. As Brook & Dunn, (2011) defined that local identity is reclaimed by the uniqueness of a locality, architecture and urban design in order to enrich civic value or ambitions.

The sense of place making closely associates to urban design. There are two types of design which are the product of built environment, such as the one established by the influential of social group and the other argued and made sense by everyday users. Hence, after the decision of many people and organisations, a city is represented by recognizable landscape. Furthermore, according to Rapoport (1984) the certain rules for making choices should be recognized by every people as certified models or subjective templates (cognitive schemata)

which lead to make the decision in term of cultural context. Accordingly, a systematic arrangement of these elements shows the ordered of all cities and built environment; the shared cognition schemata and a consensus for activity form the cities, especially culture of the local context. (Rapport, 1984).

In a built environment, culture should necessarily afford city governors with desire and encouragement for urban generation by connection to urban design, since then, the sense in making place can be enhanced. One should note also that city's unique culture could articulate the individual identities, characteristics, self-perceived of people and influence to the sense of place-making. It is pivotally vital to connect urban design and improvements in the built environment with the political, economic and social processes implicit in the cultural planning approach for urban designers to be more effective in their resolutions for the built environment (Montgomery, 1998).

The level quality of social life in a city is cohesively confirmed to link with the quality of the public realm and the built environment. Generally, the moral, social, psychological and economic stimulus will be afforded by the good quality of public spaces for an effort to revitalize to the social life in cities (Jacobs, 1961).

d. Westernisation

According to Marshall (2009), as architecture and urban design critically plays an essential role in delivering world-class facilities, there is a powerful driving force on some parts of governments to determinedly create “world-class standard” projects to stimulate and marketing their national economics and city landmarks. Since World War II, due to the changing in world geopolitical power, the trajectory, vision and practice of architecture and urbanism has been increasingly influenced in different distorted courses. These as a result guides to the interpretation and deculturalization of Modernism, recognised as “International Style” – an aesthetic tool of Western Capitalism (Kurokawa, 1988). As Lim (1998) said that. the local identities of environmental context were often disregard through the “standard approach” to architectural design and urban design in some world-class projects, ignore the climatic condition and has no cultural reference as well as architectural/urban design articulation. All spatial objects in space including buildings are merely identified as the whole without texture to define the space so this has resulted in a condition that cities as representatives of cultural references are totally lack of spatial coherence.

In this sense, the destruction of sensitive urban environments is conducted

by variety elements of globalisation involving historic urban areas which are locality of precious architectures. Like other Asian cities, cities in Vietnam, are facing the course of globalisation, rapid pace of industrialisation, and social changes. The problems of urban development in Vietnam are commonly characterised by growth of urban population, lack of infrastructures, decaying quality of urban environment, economic development/market demand and institutional weakness. Based on grounded observation, the landscapes of the Southeast Asian cities undertake a powerful footprint of Modernization in the form of high compact density such as high office buildings, shopping centers. The contrast between traditional/indigenous low-rise building and these high-rise and modern structures by the latest contemporary fashions of architecture are obviously shown nowadays. Take Ho Chi Minh City as an example to investigate this typological contrast, the contemporary image of urban development has been shaped the coexistence of such urban-modern and rural-traditional collage. Hence, this situation may cause problematic and challenging for heritage conservation scheme and contemporary urban development in this place. The local identities and specifics as well as the diversity of urban development change due to the effect of globalisation. As Hall & Pfeiffer stated that (2000), one of the aggressive modernisms becomes the issues of the governing ideology in such “unhealthy” places. Hence, in which total rebuilding is seen superior while the preservation of older buildings’ structure is perceived to be bright idea. No wonder, according to Martokusumo (2008), this connotation was considered sentimental, irrational and anti-progress.

The designs which was tailored by Western style, have given both the pros and cons for people in local context. Understanding and finding the best way to adapt people’ s need as well as decreasing the consequences of the differences between West and East design features. Hence, this can prove the solutions for the design’s conceptualization, suggestions and policies as well, on effective management of pedestrian public spaces so that we may enhance the sustainability of public spaces.

5. Importance of the Study

There is a growing trend which impact on the modern streets’ design in Southeast Asia, it is the decrease of the perception of the role of streets in public urban spaces. As Kiang et al. (2010) stated that because of the fast urbanisation

of Asian cities and the rapid transformation of its cityscapes, the urgent awareness of Asian streets and public spaces should be carefully considered by professionals and scholars. Hence, it is important that while the streets and public spaces are being attacked by rapid urban transformation that this is recorded, learning from their complex nature as well as using extracted principles in new environments. Moreover, although there is a large amount of literature related to public space in Asian cities, the physical place of human scale as street and market are still vague from the discussions. Additionally, the history and political features are usually paid attention through the chosen places' research than their role, meaning and visual presence in the context of Asian modern life. This suggests why professionals of urban planning primarily rely on the experience of Western countries as European and America which is applied universally. However, Southeast Asian cities cannot use these findings because of the unique demographic, social/ cultural and also economic conditions, especially the unique style of using streets as public spaces. Southeast Asian cities have their individual solution to create their public spaces according to Miao (2001). Therefore, it is necessary to identify and disclose the quality of design for public spaces in terms of integrating with global development as well as still defining the own unique style of Southeast Asian cities.

6. Research gap

This study contributes to improving walkability of public spaces in Vietnamese cities with the lessons learnt from Southeast Asia as well as Western countries. There are some research studies that have revised the application of street designs as well as the street's character in Southeast Asia's new development; for instant, Shamsudin and Sulaiman (2010) in 'The Street and Its Influence on the Sense of Place of Malaysian Cities' and 'The Vanishing Streets in Malaysian Urbanscape' (2001) or Limin (2001) in 'Mapping the Street: Reading Asian Cities; or the Great Asian Streets Symposiums' (GASS) 1 & 2 by the National University of Singapore. It is important to note that the research on public spaces of Asian cities mostly comes from European and American institutions both in the past and recent years. So the driving force to find out the actual solutions to improve the best public spaces for people in Southeast Asia in general and in Vietnam cities is specific, encourage the researchers to focus on truly Asian perspective through the lens of researcher' experiences as local people. This study intends to acknowledge the different qualities of Vietnamese public spaces as

streets, to identify the existing planning and design control of stakeholders who are involved in the planning decisions under globalisation and socialism; and to recognise the quality categories of public spaces that satisfy the needs and uses of local people.

7. Research framework

This study hypothesises that there is an influence between walking place attributes, the designs' management of the state and hedonic walking motivations on walking loyalty, and the willingness to walk of people in a local context.

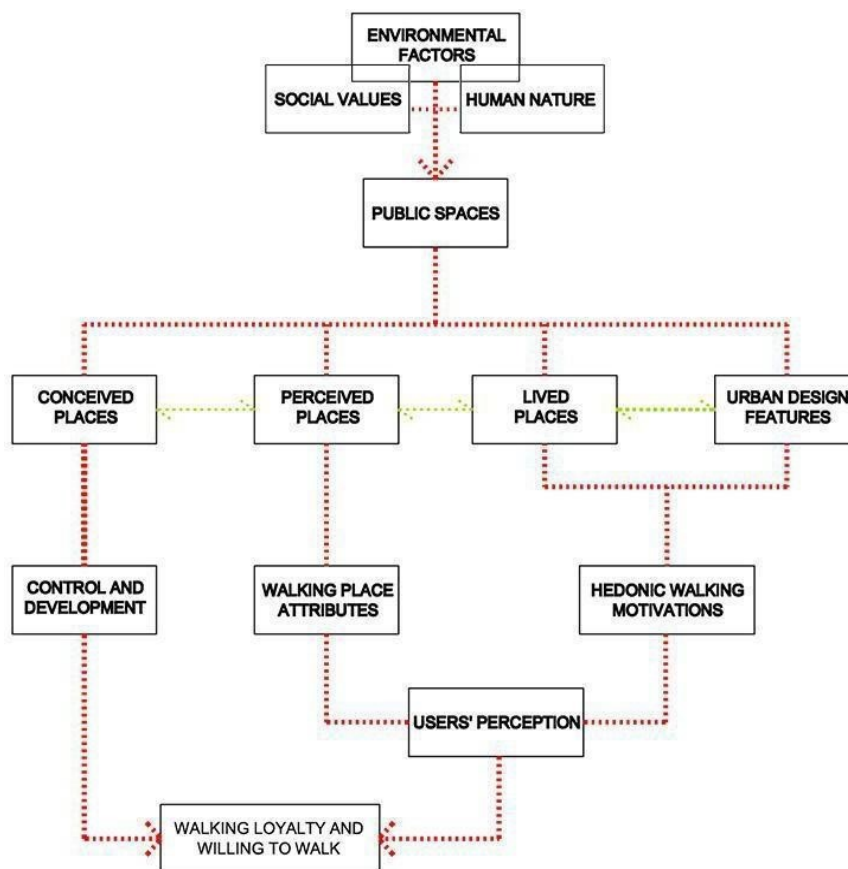


Figure 6 The proposal theoretical framework (author source-drawing on Lefebvre)

8. The theoretical framework through Lefebvre's lens

The spatial objective features intended icons and symbols are mentioned as the factors which identify the spatial identity. As de Certeau & Rendall (1984) suggested that a focal component in providing attachment and meaningful place-making is defined through everyday experience of a locality. The triple helix of Lefebvre reviewed these ideas through a conceived, perceived and lived space, with attempt to interpreting people mindset's approach of intentions, desires and experiences are cohesively interwoven in relevant to the built environment. The reflection of a concept from a subject was clarified as Symbolic and Conceived

space which would be the proposed designed in the context of architecture. The interpretation and prospect of a phenomenon are shown as Imaginary and Perceived space which selected by culture and social settings; one exemplar would be the approach of inhabitants and how they relate to architecture and how they navigate through spaces and understand them as well. Both of the concrete interaction with an object and the bodily experience of space are recognized as Lived and Real which is mentioned by Guaralda (2013), does not frequently follow manifest arrangements.

According to Casey (2001), while the effort to fulfill a function as well as meet the need of contingent are formed the conceived space, The individual history and their personal background influence the way people relate to this and the palpable activity they engaged in (Casey, 2001). Spatial navigation with different mode of transportation, for instance, walking, riding a bike, driving along the side of same pathway would provide different phenomenal experiences for users and especially a different interpretation of place (Guaralda, 2006). If the activities are informal and unstructured, the direct potential will relate to space and involve in it. Moreover, as Gehl (1987) said that the general forms or paths are recognised as the actual Walking while the journey mode is flexible filter by pace, rhythm, directions or interaction. The built environment can be used by pedestrians in an unplanned mode; or they may stop, change the way undertaking as well as particularly involve in space and its dwellers in an informal way. Odor is usually not noticeable, but our mind immediately films and keeps track of things which are not role of our habitual daily. One should not consider slightly the odor, even causes more impression than an image or sound, which is able to activate memories, remember past practices and divert or straight contemporary longitudinal experience / activities (McConville & Finch, 1999). Smack, sentiment, chronoception or thermoception are often less effective; however, they all catch special features of a space and adjust people's awareness of built environment (Guaralda & Kowalik, 2012; Zukin, 2010). Comfortable or uncomfortable sentiment in a site affects how people discover a location and interrelate with others. The main issue is human who lead our spatially practical application; social customs and oral rules impact our behaviors and physical experience of space as well (Jacobs, 1961).

As Guaralda (2013) said that there is the interwoven among conceived, perceived and lived places and the daily involment of a space qualifies users to

increase a site's feeling. This phenomenon can be or not be harmonised through the urban designers' intension making the evidence of spatial organization and visual experience with the large different. When the users can straightforwardly involve in a context, diversity of activities and personal stories clarify the built-form production of space.

The hypothesis of this study is that there is an influence among walking place attributes, the designs' management of the state, hedonic walking motivations on walking loyalty, and the willingness to walk of people in the local context.

VI. Structure and organisation of the thesis

This study is structured into three interwoven parts which provide appropriate information through accessing the quality of Vietnamese public space design around the lens of stakeholders and spaces themselves. Firstly, the thesis tries to describe the background of the research, literature review as well as the study approaches. Chapter 1 forms the contextual and describes the difficulty clarification of this study, aim and objective and the significance of the research theme. Secondly, chapter two shows how the "conceived space" was clarified, the role of local authorities, professionals in planning and investors/developers. Moreover, the place meaning and attachment in terms of "perceived space" were discovered in chapter 3 to examine the context in analysing the role of a good public space. Furthermore, chapter 4 provides a summary of streets in Southeast Asian cities which presents some features in common with Vietnamese cities in rapid development urbanisation. The research method was discussed in chapter 5 with the approach, design, framework and hypothesis implemented in the thesis. Additionally, the chosen case studies were investigated in chapter 6 which review Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) at a glance with advantages and disadvantages for improving public spaces. A conclusion of the first part is referred to at the end of this chapter.

Followed by part 2 with chapter 7,8,9 which present the findings, results and discussion of the research through two case studies on justifying the walkable streets as public spaces within field observations, interactive mappings and in-depth interviews. While chapter 7,8 focus mainly on analysing the findings and result from in- depth interviews with the triad stakeholders (professionals in planning, local authorities and developers/ investors); the questionnaires form was used to investigate the people who use these public spaces. These findings are

based on the emerging themes in literatures and sub-themes which were found in each of the case studies. This part of the thesis also reveals the planning and management of the streets. The association and contrast of the principal results of each case studies which relied on the literature and theory of previous researches in order to fill the gap in the literature. As well as contributing to the variety and vibrancy of today's public spaces around the world through chapter 9, 10.

Conclusively, Part 3 (chapter 11) presents the final section of this study with the primary key conclusion of the study, the limitation, influence as well as the suggestion for the future research. The outline of this study is concluded in the figure below:

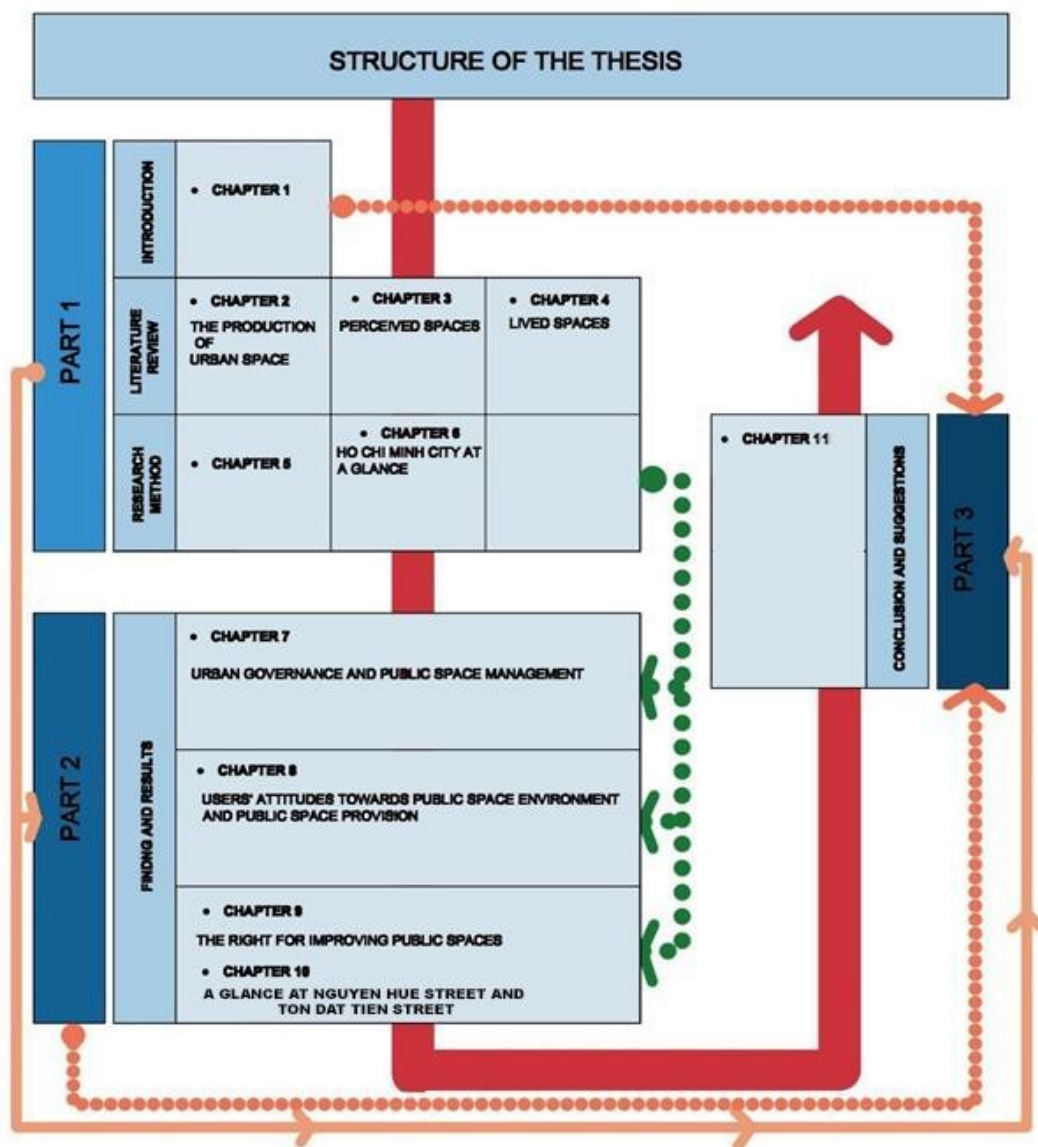


Figure 7 Structure of the thesis

CHAPTER II: REVITALISATION OF SPACE THROUGH THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POWER HOLDERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

I. Introduction

This chapter aims to explore and identify the changing nature of contemporary revitalization of public space and the way in public spaces are delivered, managed and controlled. These explorations primarily rely on the concept of management relations (such as the role of stakeholders on final decision of design for spaces and places) through urban design for public space as urban planning experiences. This is an introduction to the theoretical framework of this study within the evaluation of revitalisation of space and management relations, which examines the contemporary streets as public spaces and perception through these spaces.

The initial attempt of this chapter meets the requirement of the main research question by analysing the literature related to local authorities' management, professional urban planning and investors' role in urban planning decisions for urban public spaces and identifying the role of stakeholders in some concepts. Following these goals, this chapter begins with the evaluation within a conceptualisation of space commencing from its perception to its interactive, representative evidences of the urban design dimension. Moreover, the variety of theoretical approaches may be used to investigate these concepts and their contribution to urban politics. At the end of this chapter, the urban planning feature and its practices in reality of existing management are shown.

II. Development trends

1. Development trends in Asian developing countries

There are many Asian cities that are undergoing or have undergone radical transformation processes from traditional cities to 'modern' ones. Traditional spaces in the city that were full of people, and used for meeting and socialisation – for example, marketplaces – have become abandoned due to domination by cars and/or motorbikes. Public life in these locations has come to an end (Gehl and Gemzoe, 2003). They used to prioritise space for people's activities, but now these multi-activity spaces are dominated by motor vehicles, which causes street users to feel unsafe and unwelcome. In turn, this discourages walking and other non-motorised transport. Moreover, the desire to obtain Western styles of design and

consumption not only means accepting motorbike and car domination, but the degradation of local culture and the disappearance of traditional ways of life (Mateo-Babiano and Ieda, 2007).

It was shown that the Current transport policy in general, and pedestrian facility provision in particular in most developing Asian cities, borrows ideas from Western counterparts, but with no consideration for local socio-cultural context that usually represented the Western counterpart's without concern of the socio-cultural worth scheme of the place affected in unsound urban spaces causing a mismatch between facility and users (Mateo-Babiano and Ieda, 2007). The adopted solutions Proposals, therefore, do not consider local uses, pedestrians and street vendors, but simply the need to accommodate the vehicular traffic. were divided and to longer the case to serve other transport groups such as the pedestrians and street vendors due to the concerning for vehicle owners. Nevertheless However, in certain locations, the role of pedestrians and other street users have been paid greater attention to, through alternative concepts which are mobility management such as, liveable cities, new urbanism, sustainable and compact cities, and transit-oriented developments. For example, the Thu Thiem new urbanism area in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) proved its liveable and sustainable role as well as a central place for pedestrians. The Thu Thiem master plan by Sekkei concentrated on dynamic, mixed-use Central central Business business Development development (CBD) and sustainable development. Based on careful analysis of Due to the investigation about the framework of transportation, land use and public spaces, the master plan responded to the existing ecological conditions of the low basin of the Sai Gon river; and faced to the climate conditions of southern Vietnam as well as the way to improve habitat living through their design ideas for each pieces over the whole plan (Sekkei Association, 2003). This proposal helps the understanding of pedestrian behaviour in the context of the socio-cultural point of view. To echo Rapoport (Moudon, 1987), culture does not merely shape only participated in the pedestrian behaviour, but it also it defines the function of the physical environment. As Babiano and Leda (2007) investigated what cultural issues mean to the outcome of accepted rules and customs, institutions and routines, existing lifestyles and the description of suitable performance functions in a particular society.

2. Development trends in Vietnam's urban public spaces

Many developing countries try to close the perceived cultural gap with developed countries. With the increase in per capita income, the higher rates numbers of automobiles naturally follow, but then so does the and even the urban characteristics of cities in developed countries, such as like traffic congestion. The “miracle” of Vietnamese economic development is outlined shown in many books and articles, such as Melanie Beresford and Dang Phong, *Economic tTransition in Vietnam* (2000), which emerged with from the renovation policies named Doi Moi in 1986. During this period, the economic expansionic encouraged drove the increases ofin living standards., however, some former key economic such as agricultural cooperatives and governmental enterprises, seem to be relied on the previous development. The new symbols of a dynamic private economy are perceived as those successful recognised as businessmen, replacing the previous party cadres. According to Philippe Papin (2003), the social urban middle-class is desperately trying to remain part of the government mechanisms, but the social transformation still affects the country at all levels.

Due to the rapid change in economic development and social life, motorbikes are perceived as an unavoidable ‘must have’ for many in contemporary Vietnam. As Freire (2019) states, motorbikes are the central factor that defines Vietnam as a material and pleasure-seeking culture. Moreover, this transformation was included in the Doi Moi policies as well as assisting the stability of the social order in the Vietnamese context. Additionally, the lifestyle of the younger generation is defined by motorbikes; this identity separates them from older generations. There is, therefore, an ideological gap between the youth and the older generation through the development of motorbike culture. The youth (in other words, those under 30 years old) account for 60 percent of the population. They are searching for other lifestyle experiences related to the launch of the market economy in which tremendous changes have been taken place. According to Anh Nguyen Pham (2005), motorbikes reflect a current form of individualism, and people depend on them to carry out day-to-day activities – economic, social and leisure (Freire, 2009). Motorbikes, therefore, symbolise this previously communist country entering a new enjoyment-seeking and complex period in the sense of the market economy. Additionally, according to Nguyen Xuan Dao and Nguyen Huu Duc (2003), the motorbike is recognised as a private means of transport, but it is noticeable due to its effects within society.

3. Recognising difference: The preparation and Understanding of the

governance of public spaces

Another major change in HCMC is the way in which public spaces – for example, parks, squares and streets – are developed, managed and controlled. This involves key stakeholders, public-sector agencies, the private sector, as well as community organisations that are involved in the supervision and regulation of those spaces with local government with either direct or indirect roles. Hence, according to Bailey (1995) and Sullivan and Skelcher (2002), the general arrangement of change in governance and regulation of public spaces was increased the in the same way as other public services, which caused the widespread cooperation between different sectors and jurisdictions.

This transformation in regulation and governance for public spaces has, in turn, impacted on the meaning of the term ‘public’ in public spaces, raising the questions of who bears the cost and benefits and what the implications are for a rapidly changing society; the growth, potential and actual distribution of the costs and benefits around those changes and the implications for developing society also. These debates have been played out elsewhere, primarily in North America (see for example Low and Smith, 2005; Kohn, 2004; Sorkin, 1994; Zukin, 1991, 1995); it might be argued that they are now global phenomena. However, the shift of authority over public spaces to private bodies and away from the public sector took place a long time ago; currently, the involvement of other sectors cannot totally replace local government provision (Kayden, 2000).

This tendency of public spaces’ governance should be seen through the specific context that defines the state as the central governing actor and the primary essentials approach to analyse the development phenomena in the cities’ management. The changes in public spaces and their governance should be recognised as the modifying of particular series of corporate management. Hence, as can be seen in Andersen and Kempen (2001), Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) and Kooiman (1993, 2003), as research in the light of an increasingly different, divided and complex society, urban governance should define a specific channel of policy, but no individual social actor has all the answers for the policy situations that are faced.

Moreover, changing the management of public spaces also influences the broader transformation of the connections between society and regional

authorities, which was researched by Goss (2001) and Leach and Percy-Smith (2001), as this is actually demonstrated in public services' management.

III. Conceptualising space and space revitalisation

1. Space and the revitalisation of space

The spatial representation of global capitalism has been the focus of much research. For example, Castells (1977, 1978), Soja (1989), Harvey (1985, 1989-b, 2001) and Smith (2008) pay attention to Marxist relations within urban growth and consumption regarding the development of modernism, postmodernism and advanced capitalism and their influences on the manifests spatially. Other research focuses on the conceptualisation of space, in particular concentrating on spatial quality and quantity that make social spaces, thought networks and social relations; perceptions and lived experiences are explored as well (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1994; Harvey, 2005-a). Although such studies each have their contribution to debates on public space, no one theory or concept appears to offer a completely holistic understanding. In the context of this study, public spaces not only have spatial relations and architectural expression, but also include human activities. According to Vidal (cited in Gregory, 1994) and Dimendberg (1998), while space is very useful in society and nature, it may not be recognised within its perceptions. These spaces do not form accidentally, but evolve gradually over long periods of time; they are shaped over history by those who occupy them (Castells, 1977) and become embedded into people's 'mental' images of the city as well (Lynch, 1960). Furthermore, as Harvey (1973, 1985, 1989-a, 2005-b, 2012) said, these spaces embody capitalist social relations and gatherings, reflecting neoliberal conditions, which some research studies are concerned are an urbanisation of bias (Hubbard, 2011). Hence, space is the creator as well as the result of these economic, political and social relations. Moreover, space also plays a vital role as relations of power occur in everyday experiences in social forms. These are the main reasons why the hypothesising of space is marked as an initial point.

Lefebvre's work on the production of space; Carmona's dimensions of public space in 'Public Places: Urban Spaces' as well as 'Right to the City' is a key framework for this study (1991). His work explores the triadic relationship of space as that which is perceived, conceived and lived. He proposes that these three qualities of space are interwoven. Firstly, perceived space, the physical space – the

production and reproduction of space through spatial practices; secondly, conceived space, which is the representation of space, formulated by expertise and created by professionals within their skills and knowledge; and thirdly, lived space, which is the democratic appropriation of space – spaces of representation, used by people around moments of presence (Shields, 1999). In considering each dimension, it is vital to note that each of them continuously produces and compensates space as interwoven, so they cannot be separated within the development process.

Harvey (1973) is also taken as another source of inspiration. He also proposes a way to understand how space is being produced and reproduced. Harvey also uses the triad approach, which provides three distinctive identifications to explore space: the conclusive space showed as itself, available and liberated of matter; the space being relative belongs to the point of view of observers and the relationship of each object; and finally, the relative space, which is being fixed in the process of influencing external features in a specific time and stage (Harvey, 1973, 2005-a). Harvey's study concentrates on the Marxist view of space on value and capitalism, which is associated with Cassier (1944),¹ as space can be seen in three categories: organic, perceptual and symbolic space. In this research, he stated that if we want to recognise the spatial form, we have to investigate the symbolic features of that form at first glance. Moreover, Harvey also connects his research with the theory of Lefebvre (2005-a)² that each classification of space plays an interwoven role in reality and simultaneously exists at the same time.³

Then, accepting space as a social product, it is important to consider Massey (1995). She stated that space is a foundation for other places that have 'permeable boundaries' within their social dimension, including those of multi-social relations. This space blurs the identity, which affects people's experiences and creates a sense of belonging, according to Hubbard and Kitchin (2011). Additionally, Massey informed her ideas of space together in three categories, as follows: space is being created through interrelations, interactions and identities from the large to the individual scales and is produced in practice; space is diversity

¹ Harvey (1973).

² Chart in Harvey (2005).

³ There is a practical example in Harvey (2005-a) that showed the interplay between three dimensions.

and heterogeneity in any case; space is always incomplete by itself. Later, she explained her conclusion that space is political and the relations' products create a wide range with 'loose ends and missing links'. In contrast, Harvey (1989) indicated that place connects social identity and not space. Hence, a concrete place connects the symbolic revitalisation of space in depth. The conceptualisation of Massey's link with Harvey on the basics of social practices is provided within the relations and the constant revitalisation of space. These are the reasons why this research provides an explanation for the revitalisation of public space and perception in the context of space's material and social dimension.

After analysing these theories, this study proposes that space itself and the revitalisation of space are continuous processes that reproduce each other in the context of multiple relations and experiences. Thus, space is always reshaped within a variety of dimensions such as the political, economic and social, is affected by human behaviour and reflects society as well as social relations. In order to explore more critical concepts of spaces and their revitalisation of space, the research intends to grasp its dynamic and differing nature and be able to attach decision markers as power relations, as well as professionals and investors whose fields affect the revitalisation of spaces in the context of urban design for public spaces.

2. Critical concepts of understanding space through contemporary resolutions: Revitalisation of space

As established in section 1, space is both a setting and expression of social and power relations. As Soja (1989) stated, time is more obvious than space, which usually shields things from us, so the clarification of structural space and space's implicit capacity is the primary solution to define the current formation of space and to understand daily experiences, politics and theories. According to Smith (2008), geographical space is always defined by an economic and political schedule. Then, as Soja and Smith revealed, spaces also view the obvious concern for physical settings, from the organisation of the obvious to hidden political and economic changes in capitalism and globalisation geography.

Following this and due to the development of globalised capitalism at the end of the twentieth century, the influence of globalisation and capitalism raise the increasing standardisation of neoliberal geography.

As Harvey (2012) states, urban land rent becomes the product of that fetishism and the capital of urban space. Hence, the relations of capital and power impact on urban space, and are consistent and support each other. Harvey suggests that urbanisation, as the main driver, engages capitalism and becomes the central focus of capital accumulations, while activating the value and surplus value revitalisation. Then, space is active, energetic and collaborating with the setting, which always reshapes and is being reshaped through global, territorial, economic, political, societal and individual interactions together with the tacit interactions that happen under any conditions.

Placelessness is another key concept of space to examine in relation to global capital. As Relph (1976) states, placelessness is the condition where spaces and their spatial representatives convert into a condition of 'imitation' of each other, reinforced by majority interaction, dominant cultures and ideologies, global investment and capitalistic economic structures. Further, researchers have raised the issue of postmodernity, which confirms the blurring of the spatiality of space around the enhanced time expression. In the same way as Harvey's time-space compression (globalisation and capitalism produce enhanced relation of time and space), Virilio and Armitage (2001) provided a speed-time perception, with time and virtual existence rather than physical existence⁴ when one participates in that space. Similarly, Marc Auge (2008) suggests the notion of 'non-places',⁵ which shows the enhanced transformation of the present world on the fundamentals of space, ego and time as the modern geography of the intersection of consumption, interaction and transmission.

These debates, therefore, centre on metropolitan cities as the prime expression of the compression of the globe, processes which neglect ideas of 'authenticity' and power relations within diverse geographies.

In direct contrast, however, Smith (1998) and Soja (1989) stated that diverse societies still produce their own style of spaces in the context of social translation, transformation and experiences and manage their space as a social product. There, space is being created within persistent social practice where,

⁴ Virilio shows the example of TV and other high-tech communication materials where one does not need to be physically involved.

⁵ Presenting a quite pessimistic view, Auge (2008) lists the places and the world of supermodernity: 'where people are born in the clinic and die in hospital, where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating under luxurious or inhuman conditions ... where a dense network of means of transport which are also inhabited spaces is developing; where the habitué of supermarkets ... credit cards communicates wordlessly ... with unmediated commerce; a world surrendered to solitary individuality'.

according to Soja (1989) and Harvey (1973), diverse human activities produce diverse conceptualisation throughout the progression of space analysis rather than offering a definition for it. Hence, space is dynamic and reshapes itself around the various scales of experience (such as from collective to individual), diverse relations (for example, social, political, spatial, and economic) and time.

With these discussions in mind, one notes that, undoubtedly, the initial point for discovering a meaningful understanding of space always depends on researchers' views and on the lenses on which they focus on their subject. Diverse societies still produce their own style of spaces which this research agree with or at least point out some viewpoints are in opposition to each other for evaluating. Even though there are many researchers who recognise the spatialised existence of modern cities, which has been constructed and reconstructed by following global capitalist geographies, their evolution and processes of revitalisation create their own authenticity and their own type of spaces. Additionally, although the political, economic and spatial and social dimensions are being defined within time generating a time–space relation, diverse cultures still generate their own type of space and perceptions of space, which become contextual. Hence, this research, are going to test both the above ideas, has concentrated on a specific context and the next chapters explore the Vietnamese context to grasp the distinctives and define the motivation in terms of the mechanism, product and influences of these developments.

3. The Development Process

In relation to urban space, understanding the development process is important to conceptualise the stages, forces and actors involved in the creation and transformation of the urban environment (Lefebvre, 1991). Carmona, Heath et al. (2003) group the models of development into five categories: (1) the equilibrium models, 'derived from Neo-Marxist economics, these assume that development activity is structured by economic signals about effective demand, as reflected in rents, yields, etc.'; (2) the event-sequence models, 'derived from real estate management, these focus on the management of stages in the development process'; (3) the agency models, 'derived from behavioural or institutional explanations, these focus on the actors and their relationships in the development process'; (4) the structure models, 'grounded in political economy, these focus on the way markets are structured, the role of capital, labor and land in the development process, and the forces that organize the relationships and drive the

dynamics of the process'; and (5) the institutional models, which 'describe events and agencies and explain how they relate to broader structural forces'. The third and fifth models are especially important for a more comprehensive understanding of the establishment of urban space on city centres, where the agency of the local actors is very significant, and of equal importance are the relations between them, and with external actors (government, NGOs, for example) as well as with the depending context (physical, social and symbolic).

4. Actors, Roles and Conflicts

Carmona, Heath et al. (2003) also identify the key actors in the establishment of urban space: developers, landowners, providers of funds and investors, development advisers, builders, occupiers, the public sector and the community in general (residents, businesses and general public); in turn, these are all embedded within their own political and economic agendas. Depending on the type of 'project', collective actors or merely several actors are included, bearing in mind that some of them can play different roles within the same project. In this study, there are some approaches to find out the role of key actors who involve in the design process; the position of users within those designs for public spaces and the behaviour of those stakeholders over their own benefits in the context of developing country as Vietnam (not from politic point of view).

IV. Problems during the process of revitalisation of spaces

1. The State management and the urban designer role

In the context of developing countries, there is a decline of many public spaces due to the great need for urban land, divided between urban redevelopment and transformation. The decrease or even disappearance of these spaces has occurred without regret to many. According to Hee and Ooi (2003), planners in Asia claimed a requirement for open space in growing numerous and overcrowded cities during colonial times; hence, planners nowadays pay more attention to urban land and public spaces. Moreover, the role of power and the powerful was defined, as was the diversity of theoretical discussions on dimensional landscapes and their effects on human beings and their associations. Therefore, these roles impact both on forming the space meanings and imposing their construction. In the context of HCMC, as Pham (2005) stated, this role evolves into the achievement of self-rule, in a city that is organised by an authoritarian improving state. In the light of comprehension of the social primacy

of public space, a contribution by each person will shape the public. In the context of Vietnam, a proposed project of the state defines the urbanisation process, which is associated with debate, struggle and agreement at all levels of administration and quasi-government departments as well as non-government organisations; for example, the foreign firms that are encouraged by vast plans that will enrich them, political and social achievements in relation to improving economic progress, increasing difficulty in conceiving a sustainable society. The evolution of the stimulation of this urban enterprise affects the state in recognising urban space, urban planning, conducting urban space and enforcing these adjustments during supervision and administration in an effort to create harmony of political portrayals of rural and urban space, as mentioned in the research of McGee (2009).

The urbanisation process in Vietnam naturally impacted upon people from across communities. Interaction also involved administration at all levels. The interactions between these people follows the comprehensive list of administrative levels from the central government, the provinces, the districts, wards and communes. In addition, people will engage in negotiation, resistance and compromise about their rights or optimal benefits but their opinions are invisible in almost cases due to the powerful of some influencers (such as developers, investors or local government). Moreover, the urbanisation process in Vietnam comprises two main types: 'invisible urbanisation'⁶ in the urban margins and 'people-led urbanisation'.

In the very early periods of urbanisation in Vietnam, the policy of the local authorities differed recognisably between rural and urban areas. Additionally, in the context of the modernisation process, the governments at all levels raise awareness about the defining of plans to reform the urban hierarchy, distributing level management from principal to basic units, reallocating bureaucratic units of rural and urban areas; increasing urban infrastructure through external mortgages and compensation as well as engaging external expenditure in industry and the built environment.

⁶ The areas are established by attracting people from surrounding areas spontaneously and become the urban places that do not follow the processes of urban planning and do not have any plan for future development. These places have some suitable criteria, set by the urban places' requirements themselves.

For an economy that has shifted from communism to capitalism, there are many issues that are not always immediately apparent. Logan and Moloth (1987), for example, highlight the potential tension between 'use value' and 'exchange value'. For those who use a place to satisfy essential daily needs, that place generally represents a residence. However, for others land is a commodity, something to create financial returns; place represents a commodity for buying, selling or renting. In this way investors and developers serving their own needs impact greatly on urban structures.

The primary research of the urban process is defined as the perception of the commodification of space and the issues of resources in the built environment. For example, according to Yoshinobu Ashihara (1989), the design of buildings and streets should pay more attention to the ratio of heights and widths. Furthermore, his study mentioned that there is a connection between D, the width of the street, and H, the height of the building. The perception of rejection grows when the ratio $D/H > 1$, while a perception of density is provided if the ratio $D/H < 1$. The space seems to require a balance between being secure and convenience according to the ratio of D and H.

In HCMC, there are examples of development that are clearly more about creating opportunities for investment and capital return than about urban design or good urban form. Nguyen Hue Pedestrian Street is an example. Here, the local authority allowed the construction of high-rise buildings in order to maximise investment and profitability in complete defiance of their own urban planning regulations. The concept of the revitalisation of space was introduced by Lefebvre: 'space as a social and political product, space as a product that one buys and sells' (Burgel et al., 1987). There is a suggestion that commodification is not only the fundamental of capitalist arrangements, but that it also enables the physical space in the reactivation of the whole hierarchy of capitalism. As Lefebvre (1991) found, all reliance on the recovery of space and its function in the regeneration of socio-economic evolution is recognised as an institution of the environment and society, and the physical arrangement of towns and regions.

Integration of actors like urban developers or investors and events that have taken place in these public areas highlight the designers' role, which contributes greatly to the urban development process. Thus, it shows very clearly that designers' roles and interests cannot be studied independently from this process.

Evidence for this argument are the frequent changes of design in the preparation and implementation of urban master plans.

Whether based on technical or investment and operating policy considerations, a design can also be altered even after the formal design is approved by the relevant authority, indicating the necessity of compromise. Designers' efforts are only one part of an interactive process that involves a large number of actors in a complex sequence of events (Madanipour, 1996).

2. Urban space revitalisation in an international transition context

Since 1991, there has been a transition from the centralisation of communism to a market-oriented economy during the rapid urbanisation of society in Vietnam. This transition period, as stated by Tran and Yip (2008) and McGee (2009), has developed in a totally distinctive way and differently from other former communist countries such as the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. A hybrid space redevelopment practice is recognised as the situation of the Vietnamese context in this period, which identified the association of socialist issues with an adequate market system. At this point, the influences of private sector enthusiasm are equal to the role of administrators, while the government still keeps their vital position as the planner and authority over all levels of revitalisation schemes (The World Bank, 2011). Furthermore, according to Koh (2004) and McGee (2009), the principle of this transformation process is the adaptable and deliberating feature of the relationship between the local authority and society. Simultaneously, urbanisation in Vietnam is identified as both a state-led scheme and a market-led strategy. McGee (2009) explains that while this development follows the government plan and urban planning through large transformations, and governmental and social targets, it engages other groups of people (individuals, households and economic groups) from everyday life at all stages of spatial practice. Additionally, within the authorities, entrepreneurial as well as other well-known motivations were stated as the factors for urban space transformation. The wishes of the authorities comprise national, regional, local, external characters and communal public administrations. Actions to achieve urban regeneration and the ambition of both public and private actors are undertaken by entrepreneurial motivation. There are also contributions by individual households and mini-entrepreneurs through the activities of the urban space renaissance to their favourite projects. Furthermore, urbanisation engages

complicated space renovation procedures that comprise the procedure of debate, intervention and struggle as well as agreements among these primary propulsive impulses, as mentioned in McGee (2009).

The study of Tran and Yip (2008) showed that the huge investment of the entrepreneurial sector necessarily contributes to the transformation of urban improvement schemes. Nonetheless, the state's role is not reduced in the light of urban regeneration, whereas domestic commerce, with its powerful association with the governing authority, may provide the most impact on the urban improvement strategies. Without a doubt, one can identify that the profitable private businesses emphasise the administrative and governmental to local authorities.

Taking the argument of Gainsborough (2010) to illustrate Vietnam's reform characteristics, there is the development of a new authority business sector in the light of a variety of government enterprises as well as the creation of contemporary local authority businesses in order to contribute money to new state business interests. Moreover, one of these new enterprise investments is urban development, which includes bureaucratic interests and business interests. These are very difficult to differentiate due to the similarity of their nature and the responsibility to their own private sector. The control by the local authority seems to be inadequate while facing private investment and exploitation is expanding in government. Additionally, it is extremely vital to clarify the blurred relationship between public and private in the context of Vietnamese governmental control so that people can recognise the role of power in urban development.

The association between the governing authority and society has another characteristic that involves people in their capacity of self-organisation and in consulting government rules and administration in Vietnam. Moreover, as Koh (2004, 2006) found, previous studies highlight the adaptable and consultative issues of this association, which leads to the agreed modification of policies. At that stage, while the management of the governing authority favours beginning from the interests of capital, society has the right to debate and redesign the methods and barriers that affect them.

a. Attractive space regeneration and urban capacity

The findings of Jacobs (1961) identified the perception of an urban capacity that is associated with attractive space transformation applications, which relates

to popular space revitalisation practices as put forward by Jacobs (1961) as an assessment opposed to the modernist urban planning in the USA throughout the 1950s. An obvious segregation of issues as well as providing lost urban space with abandoned street life were the main concern of this urban planning. Moreover, Jacobs claimed that people created and enjoyed the self-management activities that thrive in cities. And some significant features such as combination pavements, the variety of culture with the population as well as the urban built schemes, mentioned by Jacobs, strengthen an enthusiasm for urban space. In HCMC, the traditional streetscape displayed many of those qualities so admired by Jacobs, although admittedly in strikingly different contexts. Streets were varied and distinctive from one another and full of life as activities spilled out on to the roadway, creating space for commerce and social interaction. Additionally, as Schumacher (1986) found in his research about this perception, the more popular spatial designs in public spaces are, the more people will gather at different times, as is the essential goal of urban design and urban life along the public street spaces. This issue is also identified in Gehl (2012), who illustrates the relationship between building designs and spatial practices for social interactions. He mentioned the efficiency of ground floor design as the encounter among buildings and the cities that count for the term 'edges' influence on the use of pavements and the city's liveliness. Furthermore, the ground floor façade is known as the building's 'soft edge', which is accessible to pedestrians and delivers the activities of pavement life. In contrast, closed ground floors and boring street façades, which were known as buildings' 'hard edges', prevent activities along the street, causing a monotonous streetscape.

There is an increasing control by private capital in the context of urban spaces' regeneration in both the West and Asia. This has been a recurrent theme of urban design texts over the past two decades – see, for example, Madanipour (2003). The needs of private capital have driven design decisions over public spaces, their use, their aesthetics and who they are designed for. The arrangement and administration of aesthetic correlation and uniformity are formed as the urban spaces reproduce features. In addition, some studies such as Flusty (2001), McLeod and Ward (2002) and Dowling et al. (2010) mentioned that these features tend to create a predictable area and provide a sanctuary place for prosperous people who try to prevent conflict with diversification. The privatisation and commodification of urban spaces and the loss of public spaces as well as social

exclusion may be called 'entrepreneurial cities' and 'collective cities' during this process (McLeod and Ward, 2002; Douglas and Huang, 2007). The neglect or repossession of public spaces and their services lead to privatised and restricted spaces; for example, shopping malls, galleries and plazas.

Jacobs (1961), Gehl (2012) and others' studies about urban qualities refer to their variety, diverse populations, cultures, social occasions, as well as urban built environments, with streets as the places for social communications; however, these features are lost in pioneering cities. Furthermore, the neglect of public space and the decline of social coherence during the process of renovation were recognised as an extreme danger for the development and construction of modern cities in Madanipour's (2003) research.

b. The improvement of extensive planning

The deepest value of the new urban areas (mostly state on the big city such as HCMC, Ha Noi City..) (NUAs)⁷ policy is recognised to be planned, combined or harmonised renovation (Vietnamese: phát triển đồng bộ). In the light of identifying the milestones for gradual renovation by personal households in the 1990s, there is a regulation which prevents the division of land for housing construction where this is unplanned. Moreover, the Ministry of Construction (2008) has issued documents that identify the 'planned' and arranged features of the new development, such as being consistent, reliable and friendly. In this case, this is intended to promote the rise of public facilities – for example, schools, hospitals, markets, as well as public playgrounds – instead of dividing land for housing. New regulations for NUAs in urban planning projects require a reasonable percentage of green spaces, public spaces and residential spaces; for instance, the minimum of green spaces in any new residential planning is 2%, or the space for public facilities must achieve 2.7m²/person. Furthermore, urban planning projects have connected urban areas with technical and social infrastructure, residential areas and other services that integrate with surrounding existing areas and the approved larger urban development plan.

c. Appeal to private capital

The NUAs pay more attention to engaging private capital for infrastructure and residential improvements. The approach focuses on trading land for

⁷ New Urban Areas.

investment in infrastructure. As mentioned in Government of Vietnam (2006), the investors or developers have a duty to develop the NUAs via an investment with a minimum of 70% of infrastructure for the non-residential sections and 100% for the residential sections, while the role of government is to give them an exemption on land premium and tax. Moreover, the provision of financial support and in-site clearance cooperation is mentioned as a further benefit to attract contributions for infrastructure expenses from those developers. In addition, according to Tran and Yip (2008), encouragement for foreign developers is shown by endowing supportive land lease strategies and tax breaks as well as the level of local authorities' involvement in running the projects; for example, the Phu My Hung project in HCMC has had foreign investment approved through NUA schemes, through the effort of local government to promote the most modern and highest quality of urban planning and urban design in Vietnam at this stage. The strategy of exchanging land for infrastructure can be seen as a win-win situation due to the increasing benefits for both sides. Undoubtedly, the development of infrastructure as well as the achievement of the urbanisation criteria are the greatest benefits for the local authority in such approaches; these values are recognised as the best solution under the limited conditions of budget pressure from authority-led renovation. At the same time, the developers have a chance to invest in urban land and create their windfall profits with reasonable prices (The World Bank, 2011).

V. Conceptualising power relationships

1. Power to plan, or power over urban planning?

Forester (1989) states that planners should pay attention to power if they do not want to admit their own inadequacy. At the same time, the association between the urban planning process and the power hierarchy may help planners to enhance the capacity of their analyses and enable local people and community activities.

The urban spatial problem arises around the relations between political economy and urbanisation. However, while urban planning is criticised for serving the interests of the dominant classes through space revitalisation of capital accumulation and consumption (each dialectically requiring the other to survive), a constant and inevitable need emerges that keeps the operation of the process alive by reproducing more space through the use of the urban development tools of state and local governments to attract more capital to be secured in urban space

development (Harvey, 1981; Molotch and Logan, 1987; Logan and Molotch, 2010). Here, the spatial fix in the local economy refers to land and property markets, investments and ownership relations reshaping the built environment and serving as a development strategy, especially after the 1980s (Healey, 2006). At this stage, these investments avoid permanent results and are not a 'placebo' or a 'panacea' in the local economies' regeneration due to the growing trend of land speculation and ignoring of long-term consequences (Turok, 1992). Therefore, local governments' position in the decision-making processes and the approaches concentrating on space revitalisation and the role of power became a critical instrument, not only in revealing administrative processes but also in investigating the direct and indirect roles of power, as this power became capable of crafting legitimate instruments to favour the capital holders. Here, 'capital' refers not only to economic capital, as explored in the previous sections, but also various other types of capital, each of which is intertwined with the others. As Bourdieu (1986), Latour (1987) and Coleman (1990) also suggest, social networks of relationships generate and develop various types of capital, each of which would have its own unique position in the power struggle of the urban context (social capital, human capital, environmental capital).

In this context planners seem ideally suited to perform the role of problem-solvers (Low, 1991). In practice, the planners face various challenges and dilemmas that are not limited to subjective individual values nor mere preferences, although argued otherwise by some (Hendler, 1995) and may be partially beyond the urban planning profession. This is where the participation of the planners themselves is superficial and, instead, the only effective practice is operated via various hegemonic power relations. However, according to Gunder (2003), urban planning is recognised as professional within appropriate meanings or ideas and tries to bring the physical world into harmony; but in reality it often cannot work as it should be (Hillier, 2002). This is because urban planning's processes have ceased to work for the government economy for urban development, due to its deployment in power relations and planners 'on the side of those with power, specifically powers of the state' (Friedman, 1989), especially in some contexts and cultures more than others where the ethical considerations are also challenged through contextually occurred conflicts.

This research, therefore, concentrates on some drawbacks of urban planning and intends to reveal the operation of power in urban planning and the driving forces behind them. Urban power relations' concern about the above-mentioned urban spatial problems and problem-solving considerations has attracted many researchers (Forester, 1989; Hillier, 2002; Albrechts, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002; Yiftachel, 1998; Stein and Harper, 2003; and, in the later editions of her book, Healey, 2006). Although these researchers have common ground in their thoughts, their divergence is based on two groups of movements. The first group briefly addresses the matter of power and attempts to review urban planning and planners' role (Forester, 1989; Hillier, 2002; Albrechts, 2003; Healey, 2006). The other group, however, following the Foucauldian approach, provides a critique of urban planning practice (Flyvbjerg, 1998; Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002); some even extend their criticisms to the very nature of urban planning, referring to urban planning as an agency of social control and oppression (Yiftachel, 1998; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000). Therefore, the following two sections explore these two approaches in detail while being critical to both.

2. Power-focused approaches

The communication-centred approaches are usually lacking in addressing the more veiled and informal conditions of power, as they mostly set out more idealistic conditions and contexts. Therefore, they become weak in revealing the conditions where the state or its institutions themselves become the underlying apparatus of mutual interest (with capital holders) for the revitalisation of urban space (Yiftachel, 1998). In contrast to the above-mentioned approaches that might be called more optimistic, there are other researchers holding a more sceptical view, basing their understanding of power relations on its complexities and concealed conditions. For them, although 'power may become the acid-test of urban planning theory', as Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002) emphasised, specific factors and traditional praxis requires a better acknowledgement within the current urban planning practice. This is because, as this research also presents in the empirical chapters, so-called public-interest representatives (referring to planners and legitimate instruments) have themselves become the agent of the hidden exercising of power and the protection of individualistic interests by revealing how legitimate instruments and frameworks of urban planning 'are crafted' 'in favor of particular interests' (Flyvbjerg, 1998). This approach criticises the Habermasian

communicative approach for ignoring the character of the collective capitalist situation and the powerful fundamental situation of the government and its associations, and instead, states that focusing only on the communicative processes would blind the approach to the non-communicative (or implicit communicative) processes in which most of the decision-making processes take place. The analysis of real rationalities, using phronesis, is seen as the main pillar of any power investigation, as it helps to reveal the asymmetrical relations between power and rationality (Flyvbjerg, 1998–2002). There, the latter is dominated by the former within the complexity of the dynamic reality, while at the same time producing that reality (ibid.), in which the domination and revitalisation concurrently weaken modern democracy and urban planning by generating discourses; therefore, urban planning practice and democracy within that praxis have gone 'astray' (Flyvbjerg, 2002: 357). In addition, Huxley and Yiftachel (2000) remind us of the dependence of urban planning on state regulations; thus, regardless of the inclusiveness of the communicative and collaborative approaches on the surface and the good intentions of the planners (Yiftachel, 1998), in the background the state and its legitimate instruments will be driving the process through its interests. Hence, urban planning practice, being liable for the regeneration and renovation of urban space as well as naturally an application of authority, enhances associations accessible to control and moral biases, even though, in the meantime, being their active partner. Although, as Yiftachel (1998) said, the communicative approach is criticised by the latter group for being 'too optimistic and often impractical', the Foucauldian approach is also criticised for not suggesting any resolutions but providing mere mega-narratives (Forester, 2001). In addition to these two broad approaches, there are others who suggest a different perspective and advocate the importance of trust in the urban planning profession and criticise the privileged use of the word 'power' in the urban planning terminology (Stein and Harper, 2003). They state that power-centred research undermines positive productivity and blinds us to the distinctive differences between what should be done and what is actually being done. However, while it is important to realise that 'obsession with power is dangerous', it is still appropriate to focus on the associate and effective character of power, which is able to generate its own actors and strategies to bypass potential obstacles that are initially suggested by the idealised urban planning approaches.

Last but not least, another aspect is presented by De Neufville (1983) about the hardship of bridging the gap between practice and theory that is usually associated with urban planning education and the urban planning profession. However, these approaches, although partially touched upon, including the ones above, are not able to cover power relations and their driving forces for diverse cultures at all times, and underestimate the contextual constraints and other obstacles coming from the structures embedded in the existing urban planning system. Therefore, in order to provide a better understanding of these constraints and other driving forces of power relations, the historical and traditional ties need to be shown in relation to theory and practices (Marcuse, 1976; Fischler, 1995).

It is also important to keep in mind that the gap that emerges via subtle power relations is not only between theory and reality but also in the structures and levels of the implementation process. Therefore, instead of adopting one of the above-mentioned approaches to the existing context of HCMC throughout this research, the investigation will concentrate on revealing the dimensions and the possible reasons for this theoretical–practical gap, to be bridged later by policy practice, providing historical and current perspectives.

VI. Conceptualizing Conceptualising professional in urban design

1. Which type of planner can be efficient within the planning process?

There are some observations that focus on the behaviours characteristic of effective planners, raising a contemporary question: which typical features of the person affect the interpretation of these behaviours? As Isenberg's (1986) research explained, some specify many effective methods on this subject. This is obviously to identify that the expertise of planners raises the ability to enhance adaptability and great quality. Moreover, the research of Hershey et al. (1990) also found that experts, in comparison with beginners in the same field, took less time on development schemes as well as requiring less information. Nevertheless, some experts tend to pay attention to associations' objective information, using applicable ideals associated with these aims as original for the regeneration of urban planning.

Visualisation techniques and common approaches seem to be used more by professionals; these possibly appeal to existing models that have been bespoke designed due to the obstacles and goals for each instance of local urban planning. Hence, it is obvious to identify that a collection of urban planning models should

pay attention to the environmental emergency that inspires the transformation to reshape and reform these models suitable to the context of the local area. This finding is logical when relying on the character of each case (Hammond, 1990) as well as the information of each approach type used in urban planning (Xiao et al., 1997), even though, within the same situation, there are a large amount of effects on urban planning that are provided through expertise. Firstly, according to Chi, Glaser, and Rees (1982), based on the availability of typical complex knowledge-forming professionals, there are some activities which not only clarify key actions in each case, but also may provide some indicators about the feasible disadvantages of the variety of processes (Abernathy, Neal, and Koning, 1994; Kirschenbaum, 1992; Saariluoma and Hohlfeld, 1994). Next, as can be found in the research of Palmer and Drake (1997), in comparison with newcomers, experts tend to recognise the primary fundamentals in their observations; they have the ability to identify the opposite errors as well as adjust their actions on the recognition of errors. Thirdly, experts will produce more illustrations and more possible choices because of their own reputation (Noice, 1991). The next aspect is that experts demonstrate better experiences than beginners when making a selection between each solution (Baltes, Staudinger, Maercker, and Smith, 1995). Lastly, as Patalano and Seifert (1997) mentioned, the way in which experts face the regulations and approaches for assessment gives them a chance to make the fastest identification and apply more actions for involvement.

Kuipers et al. (1988) identified the complex impacts of expertise on the performance of urban planning in their research. The study mentioned that the professionals produce repetitive plans that perform the key issues through regulations. However, these issues were judged to be the opposite of the popular cases that produce standards for preparing agreements through scheme management. Hence, the combination between the availability of appropriate standards as well as applicable regulations and approaches seems to be prepared by expertise in urban planning.

It is clear that expertise is a primary aspect forming the basis for urban planning, but it is absolutely not the single variable affecting the whole process. According to Zaccaro, Connelly, Mumford, Marks and Gilbert (2000), they argued that intelligence is another variable associated with the conduct urban planning. Besides the basics, it seems to be clear that the creation of possible plans may

rely on people's special skills rather than their rational abilities and intelligence. For example, in the case of urban planners, their particular skills in drawing software such as Sketch Up, Photoshop or 3D Max may give them a chance to propose a clear idea and visionary proposal that contributes to successful urban planning. On this subject, there is no research on conducting the particular systems that analyse the abilities or specific skills forming the quality of urban planning. Hence, those abilities may apply through direct and indirect impacts, spreading their power by creating hierarchies as obtaining knowledge and dividing concentration. Furthermore, besides the general characteristics, there are some aspects which are important in urban planning, such as openness or adaptability (Showers and Cantor, 1985), self-ability (Larson, Piersel, Imao, and Allen, 1990), as well as confidence and sociability (Norem and Illingworth, 1993). Hence, all of these aspects seem to be active through a flexible strategy that suits environmental approaches and pressures. Additionally, the way people become involved in and adapt their activities regarding the associations' goals and approaches may affect urban planning.

2. Design concerns

The priority of the visual affects some observers to identify that the government of spaces is accepted in perceptions about space, through friendly images of individual spaces in psychological or emotional concepts (Soja, 1996). Life was built by the conception of space through images of spatiality that recreate, enforce and strengthen social agreements and management, based on the constant, on commerce and networking, on duplication (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]). Furthermore, as mentioned in Lefebvre's research, conceived space is basically a motivation in the context of capitalism. Taking the urbanist (producer of space) as an example to illustrate Lefebvre's idea, he claimed that the role of projection and project are the same situation in a confused conception recognised as real. Hence, conceived space forms a semiotic abstraction that notifies the way people react to space in their everyday life, the associations' space, administrations as well as organisations. There is a double decline that happens when the social space is diminished into two spatial images that transform the social life of space, from something to be understood and alive (perceived and conceived) to an inactive space of separation. Most of the expert actors such as town managers and cultural development officers, planners and urban designers tend to make a great impact on the urban public spaces' designs and resolve them with a visual logic. However,

the value of social argument and cultural experiences was paid attention to by user awareness. Maybe due to the visual logic of experts, urban public space is conceived as a blank concept that needs to be filled with objects. In Nguyen Hue street, in HCMC, after professional concerns, the empty spaces with a single role as street space were converted into a flexible pedestrian street with lots of activities and a diversity of designs for people; and they still attempt to create these for the social and cultural requirements for a variety of purposes of public space.

3. The new labours' distribution

There is a transformation in the economy that is causing a new distribution of labour in the built environment. The role of the local authority in urban planning is more important for urban regeneration and development projects as well as public housing renovation. It is obvious to identify that the remit of the authority controls urban planning and urban design in the light of urban scale. Nevertheless, apart from the control of government in some activities and withdrawal from a regulatory role, it appears to have become a primary task of the private sector to increase urban public spaces. The requirement for urban designs is improved by private-sector bodies after undertaking urban-scale schemes.

The cost-effectiveness of urban design raises its own value during the improvement of the public realm and the management of urban regeneration. As Carmona et al. (2002) identified in their research, the variety of stakeholders contributes to the improvement of the value of urban design in economic and social as well as environmental circumstances. There have been doubts about the level of involvement of private-sector developers and investors; they seem to spread their impact on urban design due to their scale, appropriate styles and also the market situation. While traditional house builders care about housing units rather than urban issues, they seem to consider opinions far from their own points of view (Rowley, 1998). The lack of engagement in urban design by developers and investors causes the long-term views of business cycles (Department of the Environment (DoE) and Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), 1996; Rowley, 1998). After a long period of urban regeneration and struggle for change, the Vietnamese government has had to accept the primary role of urban design in long-term urban planning and investment. There is a significant growth in the size and scale of urban development, which contributes to spaces in both the centre

and the outskirts of the city in the context of new communities, explicating urban design for management.

The expert gap has been also filled by urban design. The enthusiasm of architects and planners was missed in creating the future form of the built environment because of the perceived failure of post-war urban renovation projects. Hence, the professional gaps require more awareness to be healed. Groups of professionals are formed to provide the best future of the city through new methods that clarify the interest of the private developers at the most accurate level of design, as opposed to large-scale maps and diagrams (Tibbalds, 1988).

VII. Conclusion

This chapter review some of approaches and ideas which help the researcher bares in mind about the surrounding studies and get some useful ideas for the main goal of the study. There is some point of views that totally different to the Vietnamese context and some ideas that may bring some lessons for transformation and development in developing country context. Moreover, the urban planning feature and its practices in reality of existing management show the gap in literature of designing and management in some countries as Vietnam. The more the researcher understand how the former researches deal with their problems within their context, the more experiences and ideas are investigated to promote better Vietnam's planning for public spaces and their users.

CHAPTER III: PERCEIVED PLACE - THE PRODUCTION OF PEDESTRIAN- URBAN SPACE

I. Introduction

As Gehl (1989) said, public places play a vital role as the easiest way to communicate with people and enjoy public life. Moreover, these are places for everyone; you can just be yourself and do not have to do anything special, just be there. For a long time, the issues of public space have raised awareness about the city and its people in Western urban studies. Some researchers such as Schmidt and Ne'meth (2010), Gehl (2001), Cullen (1996), Carr et al. (1992), Habermas (1989), Lynch (1960), and Jacobs (1961) have consistently defined the social-cultural meanings of the city as satisfied, well defined and controlled by public spaces. There are some authors whose main focus is on the attractiveness of public spaces, such as Neal (2010), who proposes the idea that public space was the triatic combination between the social, the legal-economic and the political-spatial. On the other hand, Carmona (2010a,b) expressed that the contemporary public spaces should be separated into two groups: 'over-managed' and 'under-managed'; and into two perceptions: 'political-economic' and 'socio-cultural'. The researches of Neal and Carmona examine similar issues; they defined diversity as a natural feature of public space that stimulates municipalities fond of creating public spaces that include the surrounding community.

It is important to note that people in Southeast Asia perceive and enjoy public space in a different way. According to Douglass and Daniere (2008), public space is distinguished through being informal and unplanned in nature. Moreover, in comparison with Western countries, public space usage is much more energetic and active. Additionally, there is the view that professionals and scholars should raise people's awareness to discover streets and public spaces with the intention of saving them, learning from their complicated nature and even using careful concentration in a new environment under the effects of rapid urbanisation (Kiang, Liang, and Limin, 2010). Correspondingly, some scholars such as McGee (1967), O'Connor (1983), and Chifos and Yabes (2000) recognise that Southeast Asia's urban system has still been preserved in traditional forms that are forced and pressured on their public spaces at this moment. Chia (2003) proposed that the starting point in Southeast Asia comes from the usual spaces inside the villages before they turn into towns and cities. These spaces were given specific meanings,

for example, 'the heart of the village', and these symbolic meanings still occur today in the townscape of Southeast Asian cities. Furthermore, the research of Oranratmanee (2012) relied on the relationship of society in Southeast Asia with the hot, humid climate, which causes some difficulty for the development of public spaces that are enclosed, inclusive and comfortable, as well as being suitable for a variety of users. Although some scholars such as Fraser (1990), Turner (2002) and Carmona (2010a) revealed the disappearance of public spaces in the West, many researchers have made known the loss of these spaces in Southeast Asia – for example, Connell (1999), Leisch (2002) and Firman (2004) – because of spatial exclusion, privatisation and consumption.

While Fraser (1990), Turner (2002) and Carmona (2010a) made assessments regarding the reduction of public areas in Western cities, the same issue, which occurred in Southeast Asian urban areas due to spatial separation and private occupation of public space, was pointed out by Connell (1999), Leisch (2002) and Firman (2004). Academics in Southeast Asia show their concerns about the serious impact of modern urban planning on the social and geospatial in Southeast Asia, including the development of the grid street system and expressways. The value of real estate property keeps rising; the lack of clean and good locations of land and the complicated legal procedures force any project developer nowadays to make every effort to increase the project plot ratio, which causes population pressure on existing public spaces. Also, the issue of privatisation within these residential areas has also led to restrictions in accessing and use of public space. As shown by some researchers of Thai public spaces such as Limthanakul (1994), Lewsriwongse (2003) and Atipothi (2005), there are some similarities in comparison with Vietnamese public spaces, which recognise the loss of old and expressive public space – for example, street markets, parks, playgrounds – and the demand for using new-style public spaces such as performance and activity spaces, malls and plazas, which are demonstrating an impact on people's present lifestyles. These consequences impede the chance for citizens to enjoy meaningful social activities in the city. The demand for more public space has to emerge as a communal environment, including the street as public space.

This chapter considers and highlights the sense of attachment and, sense of places which that involve the social- spatial and social activities that encourage

people to enjoy and respond to the quality of public spaces.

II. Concept of sStreet as pPublic sSpace in Southeast Asia

In the context of street usage in Southeast Asia, there has always been conflict between the users who prefer the city to be beautiful in all aspects and those who love to have streets that are full of life and multiple-use friendly (Appleyard, 1987). As can be seen both in the literature and reality, street vendors are always banned by local authorities because their activities may lead to serious accidents and may be uncomfortable to street users as well as create a messy environment in the city. However, this is a necessary activity that supports low-income people, selling food and other items for daily consumption and economic survival. There are some restrictive regulations to prevent street vendors in the centre of HCMC.



Figure 8 Local urban management team confiscating goods from street vendors in District 1.
Source: Tùng Tin. <https://news.zing.vn/tphcm-khong-co-chu-truong-day-duoi-nguoi-ban-hang-rong-post728088.html>

In addition, the local authorities try to adopt new measures to strictly manage street vendors and reorganise the chaotic features of public space into a better prepared concept that is much more 'organised, reasonable and spectacular' and can support pedestrian activities.



Figure 9 Street vendor allocated areas

Source: <https://nld.com.vn/thoi-su/ngam-pho-hang-rong-o-duong-nguyen-van-chiem-quan-1-20170828095426326.htm>

These streets become pedestrian streets in some way and create a better appearance of being a modern and friendly public space. However, the feeling of loss attachment is increased by citizens because the traditional street vendors give people the feeling of something familiar to them, the loss of intangible features.



Figure 10 Street vendor activities

Source: <https://plo.vn/do-thi/chu-tich-quan-1-se-co-khu-pho-cho-nguoi-ban-hang-rong-688336.html>

The allocated places for street vendors may look tidier and appear clean, but they cannot bring back the image, requirements, conditions and above all the familiar feeling of the Southeast Asian public lifestyle. The changing meaning of pedestrian streets with their new image and uses was mentioned by Crawford (1999) and Ben-Joseph (2012).

There are a variety of research studies related to public space expressing both conflict and the same ideas; these are still concerned with many shared negotiations such as their change, loss, privatisation and commoditisation, for example, Fraser (1990), Limthanakul (1994), Connell (1999), Leisch (2002), Turner (2002), Iewsiwongse (2003), Firman (2004), Atipothi (2005) and Carmona (2010a). The requirement for pedestrian streets as public spaces is high in Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries. In developing countries, the loss of public space, rapid urbanisation, the demand for social space as well as the trend of walking development and the conversion of urban lifestyle has led to the transformation of street usage, which requires more adaptive, flexible, informal and

reactive aspects to meet the needs of the citizens. As Jacobs (1961) and Moudon (1987) stated, public space plays an important role for city dwellers, who always tend to produce and reproduce forms of public space that adapt usage and compliance within a particular city's context.

According to Ben-Joseph (2012), the feeling of neglect and abandonment of public space together with the high demand for its fair use may create an opportunity for additional public areas to be created in the city. Although the perception of considering pedestrian streets as socio-economic space is not a new thing, the use of streets for markets as well as other social events and calling them pedestrian streets is extremely common in Southeast Asia. While most of the so-called 'socio-economic spaces' have a time-honoured development period, this is still shorter than those in Western countries. Moreover, even though, both in the West and in Asia, these spaces are called 'pedestrian streets', they have different meanings and activities. For example, pedestrian streets in Western countries are associated with pedestrianisation, which is not a habit of Eastern people, who are mostly used to motorcycling, especially in Southeast Asia, where pedestrian streets are more connected to people's daily use. Due to the complexity of public investment regulations, the limitation of national budgets and lack of long-term vision in city planning, insufficient pedestrianisation and the increase in private modes of transportation are still a vital issue of concern in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the social and economic aspects of rapid urbanisation cause a variety of problems in most Southeast Asian cities (Chifos and Yabes, 2000). Hence, the use of streets looked at through the lens of the social-economic provides a vital argument for developing more public space. Nevertheless, as Fraser (1990) stated, the stakeholders who are involved in the planning of these pedestrian streets and other forms of public spaces should pay more attention to the demands of social factors and citizens. If these kinds of commoditisation occur, then this can reflect the overconsumption of the market economy rather than the existing pedestrian streets as public spaces (Turner, 2002).

III. Human–place bonds

According to Jacob, Schreyer, and White (1981) and Roggenbuck and Williams (1989), the bond between human and place depends on place identity and place dependence. Moreover, Proshansky (1978) expressed that place identity defines the individual's personal identity, which is related to the physical

environments within a combination of intended and unintended ideals, faiths, sense of worth, as well as behavioural trends and skills appropriate to this environment. Therefore, the concept of these places gives people opportunities to achieve their identity. Conversely, due to the idea of Jorgensen and Stedman (2001), place dependence relates more to the setting of the space that reaches the achievement of the goal within the existing range of alternatives. Moreover, the functional value of a place may play a vital role for an individual (Stokols and Shumaker, 1981). According to Moore and Graefe (1994), Bricker and Kerstetter (2000), Vaske and Kobrin (2001) Kyle, Absher, and Graefe (2003), and Williams and Vaske (2003), there are some methods which are suitable for measurement of place attachment. Williams and Vaske (2003) examined the availability and generality of public spaces and defined the role of place identity as well as place dependence over a variety of settings. Similarly, the sense of place that was proposed by Jorgensen and Stedman (2001), Canter (1977), Relph (1976), Smaldone, Harris, and Sanyal (2005), Stedman (2003), and Stokols and Shumaker (1981) is broad and includes three perceptions: place attachment, place dependence and place identity; these provide meanings to places as do personal psychology, physical context and social activities happening at those places. Additionally, people's sense of place and their character are formed and combined not only by their own experience of a place but also the components of place such as physical form, activity and meaning (Montgomery, 1998). Even though, during the development process of place identity, there are several debates regarding the function of the physical elements and the activities, the imbalance of adequate attention and the role of sense and cohesion in making places still occurs. It is important to note that the meanings of attachment between one person and a location in attempting to provide a sense of place are very important in the context of understanding place as an experiential process.

The research contexts may impact on the researcher's use of place concepts. The 'sense of place' concept has always been used to explore human attachment to the setting within widespread development history related to that area. Lewis (1979), Steele (1981), Hummon (1992), Hay (1998a,b), Tuan (1980), Norsidah (2009), and Reid and Susan (2009) also engaged in many discussions related to the sense of place in conceptualisation and review. Hay (1998a,b) and Tuan (1980) defined that concept of place that includes the opinion of inveteracy,

and respondents with the inmost sense of place maintained the social, cultural and generational links to the place and community, while tourists and visitors demonstrated less emotional and spiritual ties. Moreover, according to Moore and Graefe (1994), Bricker and Kerstetter (2000), and Kyle et al. (2003), in the context of non-resident respondents, the setting is more sporadic; the debate concluded that the attachments to recreational setting are as strong as those in residential and community settings and the nature of these attachments differ.

Another subject for discussion is the usage of sense of place to illustrate the connection between people and place, according to the approach of Jorgensen and Stedman (2001). There are some discussions that recognise the influence of place identity and place dependence with unlike variables within recreational contexts. The studies of Vaske and Kobrin (2001) and Williams and Vaske (2003) noted that place identity and dependence do not usually perform consistently, despite being fairly and optimistically associated. As Kyle et al. (2003) said, while some users respond to the dimension of place identity with the highest attention to conversation and retrieval of the natural condition, others respond to the place dependence dimension with the highest score in facility development and expansion. Furthermore, the findings of Bricker and Kerstetter (2000) relied on the differential effects of place dimensions as evidence. They indicated that the increase in respondents on the place identity dimension is proportional to their level of skill, while the others relied on the growth of the place dependence dimension, which is proportional to the decline of their skills. Moreover, these studies explained that the score can be misleading because of the global interpretation of place attachment and its influence on other features. The place attachment dimensions characterise the variety of aspects of human–place bonds.

IV. Conception of place and sense of place

As Relph (1976), Canter (1977), Stokols and Shumaker (1981), Smaldone and Stedman (2003), and Harris and Sanyal (2005) indicated, there are a combination of components that define sense of place, which are the natural environment, personal psychology and the individual's internal social processes, as well as the properties and activities happening at the place. Additionally, according to Montgomery (1998), the cooperation between the activities, physical forms, meanings and also people's experience of place creates the character and sense of place. Although the debates regarding the function of activities and the

physical factors through the enhancement of place identity are given careful attention, inadequate consideration still appears with the role of significance and bonding in place-making with an effective sense of place. It is important to indicate that the easy way to understand place as an experiential process is the place attachment of one person making an attempt to bring in a sense of place.

Davenport and Anderson (2005) proposed that the development and sustaining of individual or group identity belonging to places plays a vital role. Therefore, place identity is informed as suggested by Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff (1995) by the way it defines the distinctiveness of a person or people and the combination of its typical aspects (Relph, 1976). Moreover, the types of place identity are characterised by Relph (1976) through the concepts of insiders and outsiders. While the insiders define greater and stronger place attachment, the public influence within the setting informs cultural values, experience and qualities of an associated place. Then, the identity with the place is directly proportional to what is felt profoundly inside a person.

The most important achievement of urban design is to produce the feeling of place. As Carmona, Heath, Oc, and Tiesdell (2003), Hay (1998), Relph (1976), Tuan (1977), and Williams, McDonald, Patterson, and Anderson (1995) have stated, there is a correlation between the senses and the perception when people enjoy the sense of place. The association of these relationships with the requirement to identify the surroundings of one individual and the demand for familiar places is proposed by Relph (1976). Furthermore, the quality of place design within its characteristics compared with other places also contributes to the power of the place itself which reminds us about human senses (Lynch, 1960). According to Jorgensen and Stedman (2006), the definition of a sense of place is ambiguous and hard to measure exactly, so related studies should focus on place attachment, dependence and identity.

V. The concept of streets as senses of place and related issues

Streets always play a vital role as economic and social settings within the urban context. Most of the great cities and places are recognised by the main streets and the images of cities are also characterised by their streets (Alcock, Bentley, Murrain, McGlynn and Smith, 1992; Jacobs, 1999). Additionally, people's perception of a city's reputation and uniqueness are usually represented by streets (Shuhana et al., 2004) because of the bonding that has grown from experience.

The development of urbanisation in Vietnam is based on the investment in streets. Traditional public thoroughfares are distinguished through the conventional method of business around aged boutiques and casual street vending, whereas the modern streets focus on the contemporary shopping multiplex and modern places of entertainment. The concept and design of the shop facades impacts the way that either encourages or discourages pedestrians involved in the activity. These features may create and provide the feeling of place and its attachment in terms of activities and design (Shuhana et al., 2004).

In comparison with Western cities, the functions of streets in Southeast Asia provide a stronger sense of place due to social interaction, where crowds are likely to gather along the streets and engage with many buying and selling activities (Shuhana and Ahmad Bashri, 2002). The arrangement and design of buildings along the streets act as a conversion space between the streets and the shophouses with five-foot walkway features. These spaces are not only a place for business transactions, but also a means for pedestrians to access the streets. Furthermore, the functions of these streets have a temporal dimension as a marketplace on a daily basis. Hence, the characteristics of street attachment are affected by the appearance of the variety of activities provided in terms of the partial setting. Therefore, streets that contribute to the sense of place within this basic function are a key setting for behaviours of Vietnamese urban citizens.

There is a gradual decline in the sense of identity of urban areas, which is causing the urban identity crisis in Vietnam. Modern development may be incompatible with existing conditions as well as the character of the cities' districts. Such mismatches influence the consistency of design styles and building scales and increase the failure of cultural meaning due to outdated buildings and spaces related to the traditional commercial streets. The decline of key public spaces that have been formed by traditional streets and the gradual reduction of public open spaces as places for social and cultural interactions is an example of these consequences (Shuhana; Ahmad Bashri, 2002). Besides that, the effort to improve and renovate the physical status of the traditional streets all around the downtown area had been carefully considered. Following the notion of modern development, the two- and three-storey shophouses were demolished and replaced by multi-storey office buildings, large shopping malls and business centres for trading and entertainment activities in the CBD areas in Vietnam. Consequently, this caused a

reduction in the number of the smaller and independent shophouses, which reduced the variety and diversity of the streets. The sense of place and local place identity resulting from the traditional shopping streets may therefore decrease because of such changes. As Arefi (1999) stated, the loss of meaning embedded in a place causes the weakening of place identity. Hence, streets as public space should identify and value the meanings related to the attributes and uniqueness of the places.

VI. Public space issues

As Tuan (1980) and Relph (1976) noted, the profundity of experience and social relations with settings for places shows the belonging of the sense of place. Relph also identified a method that not only examined the understanding of places' physical details, but also reflected the sense of relationship with a community and individuals' involvement with a place. Talking about the limitation of these discussions, as Dixon and Durrheim (2000) emphasised, these studies tend to define the distinctive features of place and hide the reality of the nature of the relationship between human personality and its environments.

There are some debates that have emphasised associated meanings of place, and the best way that these connotations can be considered is ecology conservancy (Kaltenborn, 1998; Williams and Patterson, 1996; Williams and Stewart, 1998). The aesthetic meanings, instrumental meanings, cultural meanings and personal meanings are, all together, influenced by the environmental problems of the place (Williams and Patterson, 1996). Moreover, these meanings define the way the existing environment has been perceived by people and the way users react to the outcomes of the environment (Kaltenborn, 1998).

For a long time, public spaces have been a vital feature for the cities and their citizens in the urban studies field in Western countries. Many scholars such as Lynch (1960), Jacobs (1961), Habermas (1989), Carr et al. (1992), Cullen (1996), Gehl (2001) and Schmidt and Ne'meth (2010) have continually identified the public space's role in sustaining, expressing and defending the city's social-cultural meanings. Moreover, some authors from the West also emphasised the perception of public space; for example, the three usual concepts of public space, which are the political, the legal-economic and the social space, are examined by Neal (2010). There is a critique by Carmona (2010a,b) about contemporary public

spaces, which was divided into “over-managed” and “under-managed” over two concepts: the political-economic and the social-cultural. However, both Neal and Carmona raise ideas in common that define the diversity of nature within different contexts and they encouraged municipal interest in creating public spaces suited for the cities and their citizens.

The perceived and used aspects of public spaces are very different in Southeast Asia. According to Douglass and Danieri (2008), public space in Southeast Asia is perceived impulsively, casually and much more intensively in comparison with the West. Furthermore, in the flying-speed urbanisation process in developing countries, professionals and scholars should raise the awareness of research of public spaces and streets so that their complex nature, the cultural as well as the new environment’s refined principal application, can be saved and explored in-depth and from the inside (Kiang, Liang, and Limin, 2010). Similarly, some authors such as McGee (1967), O’Connor (1983), and Chifos and Yabes (2000) recognised that the nature of urban forms in most towns and countries in Southeast Asia still remain and are insisted upon in contemporary public spaces. Additionally, there are some consequences occurring in Southeast Asia related to the kinship/relationship society as well as the tropical climate, which has defined the perceptions of public spaces to be more encircled, comprehensive, pleasant and adjustable to the variety of usages.

Whereas the loss of public space in Western countries was highlighted by Fraser (1990), Turner (2002) and Carmona (2010a), the persistent problems concerning the loss of public spaces in Southeast Asian cities were assessed by Connell (1999), Leisch (2002) and Firman (2004) because of the spatial segregation, privatisation and consumption of public space. The scholars in Southeast Asia have focused in particular on the impact of modern planning such as grid street patterns and expressway development within the social spaces of this area. There is a diversity of public space designs within the high level of requirements for property improvement, whereas the increase in privatisation of public spaces contributes to the reduction of public access and use. In Vietnam, the similarity of consequences in comparison with Thailand public spaces in the studies of Limthanakul (1994), lewsriwongse (2003) and Atipothi (2005) raise the awareness of this in both countries; the failure of old and meaningful public spaces (for example: temples, street markets, street vendors, gathering spaces) and the

requirements for new concepts of public spaces in the context of modern lifestyles (such as performance and activities stages, sports plazas). These disadvantages are causing the decline of people's opportunities to reveal meaningful social relationships within the city. The emerging form of usage of communal facilities, including occupation of the street as public space, is considered as a driving force for the demand for more public spaces.

Whereas the relationship between environmental problems, meanings or values can be recorded as sense of place in the research, with the inadequate meaning of existing natural places, planners can assume an inclusive value for natural places (Winter and Lockwood, 2004). There are a variety of efforts to increase dimensions that support a mixed valuation, including different place attachment dimensions (Williams and Roggenbuck, 1989; Moore and Graefe, 1994; Bricker and Kerstetter, 2000); the New Ecological Paradigm (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, and Jones, 2000); and the Natural Area Value Scale (Winter and Lockwood, 2004).

The place attachment dimension was used to identify and measure meaning within the diversity of land use settings. It is one of the main validated features nowadays (Williams and Vaske, 2003). It is constructed on the place attachments that define place identity and dependence. Kyle et al. (2003) proposed positive engagement debates between place identity and dependence and resource management. The findings of this discussion suggested that place identity developed in direct proportion to the positive outcome of recreationists' attitude, as well as following the increase in spending fee revenue. Nevertheless, place dependence did not define any significant results. Moreover, users tend to rely on place identity aspects to describe feeling crowded; however, the place dependence dimension was considered greater motivation for a suitable approach within the settings. On the other hand, there are some scholars who investigate place attachment as a specific dimension that separates it from place identity and place dependence; for example, Stedman (2002, 2003) and Jorgensen and Stedman (2006). However, in this study the careful consideration of place identity and place dependence are integrated with the place attachment dimension.

VII. Place attachment and place identity

1. Place attachment and place identity

As Montgomery (1998) identified, places are created by the combination of the physical form, activities and meaning. The personal psychology and social process related to the meaning of place produces perception (Stokol and Shumaker, 1981; Steadman, 2002). It is important to note that emotional perception is created through the psychological process (including meaning and attachments) embedded in the setting. The place's identification is shaped by both physical elements and meaning, a combination improved with people and places. Concurrently, Bott (2003) expressed that place identity is influenced through the melding of the individual's viewpoints and functional demands with cultural features. The study of this thesis argues that there is inadequate assessment of any place that is deprived of integration of the psychological and physical features.

The increasing of affective attachment or linking among residents and a specific place characterises place attachment (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001) which is defined, as Prohansky et al. (1983) states, within the relationship of affects, emotions and knowledge, and reveals the feeling of belonging. There are some research studies in environmental psychology that primarily define place attachment within the situation of improving one's own and the community's self-identity. Conversely, the recognition of the functional features and the attributes of places that create place attachment around the discussion have not been satisfactorily stated.

Moore and Graefe (1994) and William et al. (1995) noticed that place dependence and place identity were utilised as measurement concepts when studying place attachment and the sense of place. The physical and the emotional features of environmental experiences affect place identity which, as Shamai (1991) and Proshansky et al. (1995) stated in their findings, related to the symbolic importance of a place being a source for human emotions and relationships which defines life meaning and determination and regenerates the feeling of belonging. Place attachment is identified with individual development and community identification within the field of environmental psychology. Nevertheless, within the debate, there are inadequate cases regarding the identity of the physical concepts and perceptions of place which influence place attachment. The perceived uniqueness of the relation between a person and a particular place is associated with the quality of the contemporary place as well as the value of other substitute places that describe place dependence. Moreover, the physical and functional

qualities of places increase the level of dependency and are embedded in place as a stage of social interaction activities. Hence, in order to secure the identity of a place, the continuity of the physical and social as well as the meanings and attachments assumed by local people should be protected.

People who grow up with places play a vital role in contributing to place attachment (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, and Watson, 1992; Low and Altman, 1992; Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Giuliani, 2003; Manzo, 2003; Pretty, Chipuer, and Bramston, 2003). There are three concepts of place attachment: impressive, recognitive and behavioural, which were described as the key features required to define place attachment privately (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001; Kyle, Mowen, and Tarrant, 2004; Low and Altman, 1992). Moreover, the emotional feature is recognised as the most commonly measured, which was considered by several scholars such as Williams and Roggenbuck (1989), Shamai (1991), Bonaiuto, Aiello, Perugini, Bonnes, and Ercolani (1999), Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001), Stedman, (2002), Kyle, Mowen et al. (2004), Fe'lonneau (2004), and Shamai and Ilatov (2005); for a review see Giuliani (2003). According to Rapoport (1977), the imageability of places influences the meaning and attachment that are inspired by culture and experiences. This impacts on people's personality and their continuation of life as well as social-cultural significance. In terms of the place-making process, because of the rapid changes to city centres, which are affected by architectural style and worldwide culture, this is an adequate point to identify the attachment and perception dimensions. There, place attachment attributes may be considered as representative of a place that define the significance of place, keeping self-identity and group distinctiveness as well as the complexity of its typical aspects (Relph, 1976). In the case of research into urban design, the shortcomings of considering place attachment mainly focuses on the quality of physical elements rather than other features such as sense of place. Hence, the experimental place-making process is carefully identified within examining place attachment attributes. This research not only raises the awareness of user perceptions on place attachment to urban places, but also its association with human experience of the physical features and actions that intensively verify the identity of place.

2. Mutual relationships

Place attachment and place identity were described as not associated in

some of the literature. Williams et al. (1992) said that the two perceptions were sometimes recognised and used interchangeably. Moreover, Jorgensen and Stedman (2001), Stedman (2002), and Kyle, Mowen et al. (2004) stated that in some cases, place attachment is reflected as being equal to place identity at a similar phenomenological level. However, at other times, as Pretty et al. (2003) noted, place attachment is amalgamated with the characteristic of place identity. Place attachment also introduces the formation of place identity, which means that people may feel belonging to a place while it needs more time, depending on affection and bonding, for them to become involved in a place in their heart or as part of themselves (Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, and Hess, 2007).

It is important to understand that place attachment not only differs from place identity in terms of its perceptions, but also that they are associated with each other in terms of phenomena. Hence, attachment may play an independent role in the context of the specific content of place identity. Descriptions by Gustafson (2001b), Lo, (1992), Manzo (2003), Milligan (1998) and Relph (1976) show that people feel a sense of belonging to a place due to a variety of reasons such as different symbolisms or different identities. Additionally, the result from higher-order identifications defined place attachment as follows: as cities are the seeds of territory and nations, so the emotional ties with places come into being due to the contribution of national and regional identities (Bialasiewicz, 2003; Paasi, 2003). Some cities have described their residents as national instead of local representatives. Hence, different characteristics and interpretations of place within local or national identities have diverse cognitive and encouraging results. It is clear that the inspiration to admit the historically multicultural and multi-ethnic concept of a city – for example, its unique and distinct personality – may prefer local attachment more than national identity.

3. The influence of physical elements, activity and image

The features that most influence the sense of place are the physical elements and appearance. These attributes play an interlinked part in letting users understand places more easily, which can be recognised, controlled and navigated by people through the perceptible concept and simplicity of the cityscape within the context of places' physical form and function (Lynch, 1960). An obvious and precise image of place is enabled by legible place, which navigates the users to adjust their position and is impacted by the five dimensions of Kevin Lynch (1960):

paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. In comparison with Western countries, Vietnamese cities have a variety of cultural features in line with many layers of architectural inspirations. There, places are recognised and perceived by the users through these aspects.

Human activities can be accommodated by a reactive place. As Jacobs (1961) and Montgomery (1998) indicated, the vitality and energy as well as the enthusiasm of a place can be created by pedestrian activities as a result of the intensity and diversity of their actions. Therefore, according to Shuhana et al. (2004), the variety of activities around shopping streets in Southeast Asia are primarily affected by users' perceptions. Moreover, as Bentley et al. (1985) noticed, the wide range and mixture of choices of activities play an important role for urban settings. The best street is created with careful consideration of physical, economic and social activities, with a diversity of choices. Additionally, the more significant and safer public realms are proposed, the longer the activities and liveliness of the streets as public spaces can be secured (Jacobs, 1999). Therefore, Shuhana et al. (2004) stated that in order to attract more people to the places, the functions, activities and products of the buildings also need to be recognised.

Taking self-comfort as another attribute that influences public space, this aspect should include a variety of environmental factors – physical comfort as well as social demands (Carr et al., 1992; Carmona et al., 2003). As Lynch (1960) noted, users may perceive the positive and reliable image of the place in terms of its comfort dimensions. The cleanliness and good maintenance of public places can persuade people to engage deeply and create a good sense of belonging. The more people stay in public spaces, the less fear there is that they are unsafe (Gehl, 1987). Furthermore, people's cognition of the city image and its characteristics may have an impact through a sense of danger or worry and even crimes or accidents. Both tangible and intangible boundaries exist between any individual and the community (the division of public and private space); informal natural observation can be improved by the wide range of activities and functions due to Jacob's (1984) suggestions. When the street is defined as uncomfortable and unsafe, the imagined consequences may decrease the level of attachment sense of places through users' eyes.

4. Landscape values and place attachment

The landscape values that were proposed by Brown (2005) mapped the components claiming existing meanings of place that were asked about in several community surveys carried out in Alaska (Reed and Harris, 2002; Brown, 2003; Reed and Brown, 2003; Brown, Brown, Smith, Alessa, and Kliskey, 2004; Brown and Alessa, 2005) and in Australia (Brown, 2006; Raymond and Brown, 2006, 2007). In the past few years, allowing survey participants to use sticker dots as a tool for marking special places and identifying places on a map themselves has become a vital method for measuring the influence of these features. A sense of place and place attachment are connected through the possibility of defining and mapping landscape value and specific places. In addition, the Chugach National Forest (US) planning study shows similar results and suggests that strong place concentrations of place attachment are connected with greater cohesion, a higher quality of life and attempts to define more and more landscape values as special places close to people's communities (Brown et al., 2002).

In the study of Black and Liljeblad (2006), they proposed place attachment through focusing on the conceptual foundations. This approach is sound, but unlike the method of Brown (2005), it tends to increase internal validity through the conceptual foundations of mapped place attachment and uses a predetermined group of landscape values, particular places and partial stochastic sampling to reach the level of external effectiveness of place attachment with landscape modification. Furthermore, Brown's (2005) approach to place attachment concepts has not completely been determined. The temporal research of Williams and Vaske (2003) defined a chance to investigate the relations between place attachment and the assignment of landscape benefits and particular places.

5. The influence of residents' roles and local culture on place attachment

Users are always the primary key that create the urban places in any cities around the world. The level of users' involvement affects place attachment in any context, hence, the examination of the diversity of place attachment should be based on users' functional roles. A good role is defined by the level of activities and effects of participation on it. In terms of place socially and economically, the research relies on the frequent engagement with and dependence of users on places. As Rose (1995) proposed, ethnic issues or social classes are the vital features that provide a strong consciousness of cohesion to a specific place; thus,

due to users' roles and socio-cultural perceptions, place attachment is characterised through the number of their agreements. Culture impacts on the environmental reaction (Rapoport, 1977) and as Gustafson (2001) and Altman and Low (1992) stated, this kind of response contains common meanings associated with the environment and activities correlated with a place. The complication of culture also influences the diversity of environments that classifies a group differently from others. In Asian society, it is clear to state that culture performs a significant role in examining users' identity as well as the place identity of their dwelling. Therefore, the investigation of the influence on affective and characteristic features of place attachment on place attributes in terms of individual experiences may be explored in spite of the consequences of social and community attachment in manipulating place identity.

VIII. Conclusion

This chapter presented a glance into the perception of public spaces in association to the urban context. Space is created through users' activities as well as itself as a social product to define various representations and characteristics (Soja, 1989; Massey, 1995; Lefebvre, 1991). Place attachment and its meaning in the place-forming process for local people raises awareness during rapid development. Moreover, the alteration of the physical environment and the succeeding transformation in users' characteristics may be associated with the interventions that improve the urban fabric and interrupt its perception of place. Throughout this chapter, it has been the aim to highlight and state that memorable and meaningful places have been defined to improve the experience and the perceptions of users within cities. Furthermore, this chapter has shown that space contains a diversity of dimensions that is frequently produced by them and needs to be discovered contextually and dynamically as well as instantaneously. A stronger sense of place and continuous place identity has been contributed by functional and emotional attachments. The meaning of a place has been denoted by the form and degree of attachment to the immediate users. The distinctive atmosphere of shopping streets was created mostly by the functional form of attachment. Consequently, plans for improvement should take account of the dominant role of the place that has been perceived by the users and been expounded in the same way with their attachment to the activities. Therefore, this chapter details many approaches so that the identifiable properties and features

of place are affected not only by the quality of the intensity of activities and the physical elements, but also by the place attachment related to users' experience. Continuity of place identity needs to be ensured through adequate comprehension that places are physical, psychological and social aspects of human experience.

CHAPTER IV: CONCEPTUALISATION OF PUBLIC SPACE THROUGH USERS' PERSPECTIVE

I. Introduction

The great potential of dynamic travel modes – walking and cycling – that affect both environmental and health relations has had an effect on the increase in the number of studies from many fields on the influences of the built environment on travelling behaviours (Saelens et al., 2003; Ewing and Cervero, 2010). Specifically, as mentioned in Saelens and Handy (2008), walking has been recognised as the most popular mode of transportation that motivates people through physical activity and encourages a variety of related studies. Additionally, there are some substantial health benefits of walking in comparison with other modes of transport when considering the well-being of the public. Frank et al. (2006) researched the lower body mass index, particularly to increase cardiovascular health for children (Manson et al., 2002). Moreover, looking at ageing adults, the study of Hakim et al. (1998) claimed a connection between walking and greater longevity; this was followed by the cognitive action of Weuve et al. (2004) as well as the researches of Strawbridge et al. (1996) and Leveille et al. (1999) about good quality of life. Most related studies on walking have focused on the number of walking hours, as the effect changes as a result of public policy initiatives to encourage people to walk. Nevertheless, in the context of urban design, a successful project may not distinguish the number or length of walking trips; it may also look at the quality of those trips through user experiences. There is some information in the literature review that identifies the quality of the walking environment with a diversity of aspects, such as the effect on walking behaviour due to typical demographic features as well as reactions to and the opportunity of attractive destinations. As a result, the association between micro-scale-built environment features and user perceptions of walking quality may encourage the development of user experiences and greater sauntering.

An abridged development of the urban spatial pedestrian will serve as an introduction to some major questions that have been raised in the context of urban planning, urban design, implementation and maintenance of this particular form of space. Attempts at progressing the planning environments for walkers have been made by trial and error, interpretation of achievements, and workshop investigations, which indicate the multidisciplinary approach of the research's

object. This chapter is initiated by evaluating the current approach to street design and management, which are critically catalysing new schemes and the further expansion of existing walking space. Therefore, it is crucial to consider how people make different choices about transportation modes, known in other words as self-decision-making behavioural simulation. Finally, the integration of the knowledge base will conclude this study, along with other suggestions for design guidelines on how to plan effectively for public spaces.

II. The contemporary technique to the design and management of street as public space

A large number of Asian cities experience the transformation from a classical city providing a walking-friendly environment, public meeting spaces and market-oriented places to a very boring city. Gehl and Gemzoe (2003) claimed that the city is rapidly turning into an empty city due to the loss of the living places where public life has ended. Hence, because of the city authority's regulations, this loss has inspired a rise in motorised vehicle ownership as well as an attempt to approve the standards and practices of Western Street design without any consideration. This major utility shift has resulted in the dysfunction and misuse of public walking space for multipurpose use, which exposes the weaknesses of place-making. This misuse not only creates a negative sentiment between those who may not enjoy the space, the first in rank of which are walkers, but also aggravates the alienation towards these spaces, discouraging pedestrians and other forms of non-motorised transport (NMT). Latterly, the adoption of Western standards and techniques without thorough consideration and the implementation of these spaces indicate the incompatibility of urban facility provision and user demand. For example, the North Development Plan in Northern Bandung in Indonesia developed focused on providing a European area inside a tropical country; ultimately it was not successful (Soewarno, nd). Moreover, in the context of Vietnam's development, the design of footpaths was intentionally eliminated because most of the current road network dated from the French colonial period, which divided areas into public and private for each activity (Drummond, 2000). Changing areas from multi-use space to single-use space causes the loss of ineffective spaces, as mentioned in Edensor (1999).

Western styles (European styles and some American styles) continue to have a deep influence on Asia in the field of transportation. There was a great impact on socio-cultural foundations due to the colonial imposition on the urban

design of colonised Asian cities, whereas the failure of Western techniques still occurred during the contemporary practice period in non-colonised countries such as Japan and Thailand. For instance, Vietnam's planning principles were designed at the direction of France, and Malaysia followed its British colonisers in the urban fabric of Georgetown (Picard and Wood, 1997).

Western standards have usually used a typical approach to the design of roads in Asian countries. There is a book called the AASHTO's Green Book that illustrates the guidance for design of pedestrian facilities (Hook, 2002). Hence, the U.S. Highway Capacity Manual (HCM, 2000) and the Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS) were adopted as the present methods for pedestrian facility design. Those approaches, as mentioned in Watson and Crosbie (2004), were basically established for those interested in traffic engineering, focusing on space habitation, mean speed and pedestrian flow rates. Following this analysis, there is an association between pedestrian exercise and vehicle movement (HCM, 2000); for example, vehicle movement with faster speeds demonstrates the effective flow on the road, while more crowded roads with lower speeds identify an overcrowded situation. Nevertheless, the fact is that pedestrians can easily find other routes to avoid obstacles and be flexible in their choice. The greatest difference between the West and Asia is the way that people use roadways as public space and trading space, where people can stop for a rest or buy some street food, or talk with an acquaintance. People may easily change from moving to standing mode. Hence, footpaths may be viewed as sites for communication and building relationships with each other.

Additionally, the transport problem is not simply a matter of the growing road density, which gets the attention of the government through the principle of providing alternative approaches. Social equity and environmental conservation as well as economic equity are claimed as requirements for sustainable transport planning.

The user-centred method should be paid more attention in design to take back the streets for their users. There are some solutions to improve the transport networks in Asian cities. However, they just focus on the whole network as a legal authority while the mission to improve pedestrian facilities is based on the local governments and private sector's enthusiasm. Taking some cities in South East Asia as examples to illustrate this fact, Makati City in the Philippines began to

promote pedestrian facilities projects that were intended to decrease traffic congestion and separate areas for pedestrians and vehicles around the central business district in the early 1990s (Kishue et al., 2005). Although the current the city mayor in Manila, Philippines, blocked off streets to provide limited pedestrian use, some private enterprises took on the responsibility of developing the quality of planning in the University Belt (UE-FRASI, 2000). In Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), people do not have an aversion to social connections, and thus street-vendor culture may be a way of building social networks. This could lead to pervasive spatial design, formation and effective use of pedestrian streets in planning policy (Van, Huynh, Tran and Kim, 2013).

Most of the developing cities in Asia usually attempt to manage the current transport policy as well as pedestrian facilities projects in the same way as their Western complements, which has caused an unstable the renewal of urban spaces. Moreover, the lack of consideration on the social-cultural value approach to place affects solutions for both facility and user. Nevertheless, there are some alternative approaches, which draw attention to the vital role of pedestrians and other street users; for example, mobility management, liveable cities, transit-oriented renewal schemes. Hence, this is very relevant to understanding pedestrian behaviour from a social-cultural point of view. Moudon (1987) claims that pedestrian behaviour includes both the physical environment aspects and the contextual culture. Additionally, cultural aspects reveal the casual regulations and duties, beliefs and habits, current lifestyles and the explanation of suitable behaviours in a defined society. Asian pedestrians have their own specific pedestrian culture, which can distinguish them from Westerners. Hence, the more we understand and respect these differences, the more we obtain appropriate schemes for effective Asian pedestrian life.

III. Urban design position from the views of walkability research

There are two resources that are the required inputs to study walkability of urban design. The first resource is based on the increase in measurement of the built environment, whereas the other is associated with producing design interfaces with the built environment. As mentioned in Saelens et al.'s (2003a) research in the medical field, the requirement of the approach from particular environmental variables is missed in walkability studies, which caused some trouble as the research progressed. In the struggle to achieve further research

process, there are some achievements in the evaluation of environmental features; for example, integration and land use mix. Moreover, this field has typically applied cross-sectional designs in some contemporary studies; future research, thus, may require mediating designs to identify the environment-behaviour documentary correlation, which literally has causal relationships. These engagements of urban design interests in walkability studies should be associated to the specification of 'macro motives' that was proposed in Steve Johnson's theory (2005). Both urban planners and designers are responsible for the design interventions and strategies within the creation of large-scale designs related to the walkability of the built environment. These efforts may positively influence the development of micro-designs and large-scale behaviours. However, this stage of research on walkability also requires greater extension of the most practical proposals to modify the local policy approach to such considerations. There is some evidence in the research of Heath et al. (2006) associated with the environmental and policy strategies to encourage physical activities. The categories of regulations are different in each case study, which defined community-scale urban design and land use regulations; street-scale urban design and land use regulations; transportation and applications that were very powerful in encouraging physical activities. Hence, it is vital to note that the urban design field on walkability is very important while the actual information is inadequate to evaluate transportation regulations and exercises (Heath et al., 2006). The renewal of the built environment is the priority of the urban design field in the walkability study. The best approaches to measure this field are the determining features of the built environment, establishing the methods and investigating the structure. The priority at this stage is concern about the adoption of the observed or perceived information of the built environment's features. Hence, while this information is observable and perceivable, the primary mission is to improve the measurement of the built environment. For instance, the observed information features related to physical activities and the questionnaire items need to have more research and be enhanced in the survey approaches. Moreover, urban design should be carefully considered in walkability studies due to the actual role and involvement of urban planners and designers in the built environment. Whereas each individual is very different in the context of social demographic features, the urban form of the long-lasting foundation may be influenced by a large population. The influence on the built environment allows residents to achieve

physical activity targets collectively when they could not reach the goals individually due to the interference in behaviour transformation. These transformations, from both the physical environment and the neighbourhood design results, are not within the field of any professional study associated with public health. Furthermore, the experts' role supports the information and the requirement to assist in creating the conduciveness of some neighbourhoods to physical activity in the context of the medical field. For example, in the USA, there is a growing, enthusiastic trend in walkability research because of the development of urban sprawl causing obesity and automobile dependency (Sims & Mesev, 2011). The results of these research studies contribute a wealth of valuable information for discussions on modern tendencies and hypotheses in urban design such as the New Urbanism⁸ and Smart Growth⁹ theories.

IV. The productivity of pedestrians in Asia

There are a variety of reasons for moving along the street, such as reaching a destination, exercising to enjoy the fresh air, socialising and communicating with others. As a result, for socialising and communicating purposes, the footpath is seen as the realm of pedestrians. If pedestrians are claimed to be moving individuals, the footpaths may be provided as their allocated space. Nevertheless, footpaths are not only infrastructure spaces, but also interaction spaces. Hence, in order to attain the sustainability of spatial urban streets, the concept of user-centred design views the users as representative of transformation. Users' loyalty is marked by the amount of time spent there, counting both passers-by and active participants in the defined space, which demonstrates the achievement of the efficiency of pedestrian facilities.

1. Pedestrians in the context of the social- cultural in Asia

According to Whitting (1974, 1994), from the psycho-cultural research approaches there is a primary belief that individual progress is formed by its fundamental and subordinate associations. The fundamental associations rely on three relevant circumstances, which are the physical environment, history and conservation schemes; for example, rational motifs, settlement forms and the social system. Berry et al. (2002) claimed that fundamental institutions regulate subordinate institutions, and they precisely affect both educated and innate adult identity. This is more obvious with people engaged in edifying approaches; for instance, religion, art and relaxation. Moreover, the physical environments (including their history and maintenance systems) regulate pedestrian attitude and behaviour, which resolve

the requirements of pedestrians (innate) and their street behavioural demonstrations (learned), which allow the interpretation of a different street culture.

Furukawa (1935) and Suzuki (1978) demonstrate the wide influence that the environment has on people's lifestyle and behaviour. The tropical climate of Asia may care for its inhabitants with its natural environment of healthy appreciation and social agreement and the similarities of people's existences, as well as lacking an obvious order. Moreover, this environment also affects the road system, which is unreliable and has an unregulated pattern because of the contextual geographic situation; hence, this shows a low anticipated structure. Furthermore, a human-scale urban form is inspired by this environment, which includes the mixture of sounds and existence of diverse features in transferring the tropical environment into the street system. In this situation, these streets develop into a combined use of spatial formations that improve diverse activity patterns as well as representing a variety of contrasting objects. In the context of the sociology field, there has been an extreme influence on the spatial uses that inspire agricultural culture, a typical rational model in Asian countries. Berry et al. (2002) show that this style of settlement causes an inactive living model, extreme population density, a large family style with many generations living in the same place as well as a compact socio-governmental stratification. Additionally, as reflected on by Barry et al. (1959), people who live in an agricultural society are educated to be careful, flexible and cautious in their training and responsibility, rather than being self-independent and self-confident in comparison with Western living styles. This seems to be the Asian psyche, which defines a social behaviour that reflects the way that Asians manage and distinguish a particular space. Taking Japan as an example to illustrate the distinction in space perception between Western and Asian societies, as mentioned by Kurokawa (1988), there is a horizontal way of identifying the activities in the spatial active connection, and thus, the location of central plaza has an obvious distinction from the surrounding public facilities and market as well as the existence of pedestrian footpaths. In comparison with their counterpart, the time-dependent dimension was taken to define the vertical Japanese perception of space.

Shared meanings and distinct culture are created by social activities. According to Gehl (1987), there are three types of activities and purposes when pedestrians emerge on the footpath, which are utilitarian, optional and social. The

ways pedestrians use the streets are different and rely upon diverse aspects. For example, the utilitarian is merely associated with requirement and practice within social or environmental conditions. The latter purposes of journeys (optional and social, respectively), are vulnerable to the confidence level of the outside environment and the existence of other street users. Aldo Rossi (1966) claimed that the latter suggests a requirement to increase space, which encourages communication and casual trade between its users, who authorise the interpretation of street space as place. There are some researchers who negotiated with the findings of social exchanges in urban space, such as Funahashi (1979) and Kamino (1980). The cultural particularities are defined as the models of social contracts. For instance, although street vendors are the most typical trade type in most Asian cities, their structure, function and the categories of social change are very different and diverse from city to another. Within the concept of cultural consideration, although the perception of accepting individuals is comprehensive, the scheme of greeting is diverse: it may be a kiss on the cheeks, a handshake and so on, which all contribute to the culture.

Life processes may allow people to touch the diverse external factors that impact on people; the lifestyle, with the foundation of social structures and principals, remains stable. A good design is the way Asian pedestrians take advantage of the given space with different purposes such as paths, places for everyday activities, living space, the integration of space and recreational space. There is some useful information in Preiser and Ostroff's (2001) research, which reflect the dynamic Asian street life and outdoor activities, such as the diversity of food stalls, vehicle repair facilities, street vendors, people stopping and trading here and there, and other modes of transport also. It is important to note that the existence of small traditional communities in the context of Asian cities identifies the comprehensive mixed land use and the condensed quality as well as the pedestrian size of the urban form in the forest foundation settlement. At this stage, the primary mode of transport is walking. Because of the fast-growing current modern innovations, these casual communities are usually treated in contradictory ways. Nevertheless, around these areas and situations, the local culture may actually have experience.

⁸ New Urbanism is an urban design movement that arose in the USA in the early 1980s. New Urbanism includes (neo)traditional neighbourhood design and transit-oriented development and supports walkable urbanism and sustainability. New Urbanist neighbourhoods are designed to contain a diverse range of housing and jobs, and to be walkable. Designing places for the comfort and enjoyment of the pedestrian is one of the important aspects of New Urbanism.

⁹ Smart growth is an urban planning and transportation theory that advocates growth in the centre of city to avoid urban sprawl and aims for compact, transit-oriented and walkable land use.

2. Pedestrian needs: an overall for some overall perceptions

a. People's characteristics/ behavioural

Pedestrian requirements are an important consideration for the design of sustainable street spaces. The typical economic argument of the requirement for perception accepted by the consumer behaviour field identifies the similarity of pedestrians' behaviour and fashion consumers as the way pedestrians use space is equivalent to the way people engage with a product. The micro-scale aspects of human behaviour are defined by the requirements and principles of the dominant product (Vallacher et al., 1994). These are viewed as benefit-favourable circumstances that are implied by commodities or utilities that influence people's requirements (Jager, 2000). In this situation, benefit circumstances are assigned to footpath features: for example, the qualification to contribute to logical travel with convenience as well as satisfaction. These are frameworks that inspire user faithfulness or assist people's consumption of the street habitat. Nevertheless, as Mumford (1937) said, these features do not affect users' favourite items, whereas they encourage or prevent user decision-making.

There is a comprehensive literature review on the practical pedestrian environment, which affects pedestrian requirements and is stimulated by the demands of people approach that is hypothesised by Maslow (1954) and Max-Neef (1992). In addition, according to Fruin's concept (1971), the PLOS method is used to identify the features that appeal to possible users of the walking hierarchy (Vuchic, 1981). These fundamental requirements are the passion for motion or mobility, and besides that, conservation, satisfaction, recreation, fairness as well as personality have been defined as physiological or psychological requirements of pedestrians. In light of contributions to developing pedestrian pleasure, both movement and non-movement are examined by the pedestrian demands in the system. Furthermore, as Chang and Pham (2013) and Petruzzello (2012) recognised, people tend to access what they perceive as pleasant and what prevents the unpleasant, which motivates humans' behavioural decisions. In the context of making choices, people's feelings are one of the vital features of walking in comparison with other alternative decisions that influence their choices as they walk out of the door or are willing to stay in their vehicles. Thus, Segar and Richardson (2014) raised the point that while people have their own positive or negative perceptions of the action of walking, the primary suggestions for sustainable buildings are sustainable pedestrian spaces. Additionally, there is a

direct attraction or repulsion when people explore a place; for instance, a crossroads crowded with cars may cause repulsion. In comparison, a stimulation effect attracting pedestrians to the public space may be inspired through observing a space full of trees. As Reiter and Herde (2003) claimed, comfortable feelings come to ease people's pains and give them opportunities to enjoy the whole perception of the environment.

As Low (1987) mentioned in his research, the use of open spaces for pedestrians encourages social individuality; for example, typical motifs of the authentic, reflective, and social as well as attitudes associated with achievement and the existence of individually detectable groups might appear to describe the best socially invested spaces. The growing of these situations is not arbitrary; it is due to the profit of a variety of combinations of circumstances and the position is generally grasped through pedestrians' routines. The walking environments are known as the geopolitical cases in the city, which identify a broader base for local people to be regularly involved in such spaces. Practical design may pay more attention beyond cultures and time to classic patterns for re-analysis or replication, which counts for the observable physical arrangement, and representative as well as authentic design features. These practical designs and the expectations controlling them literally come from the anticipated consequences. Additionally, this mutual information of place and people also contrast or is inevitably included within various case studies. The precise corresponding suggestion has not been finalised to resolve the way landscape issues provide longing through public environments. A maturing structure of social connections defines the development of the use and personality of pedestrian spaces, which are adaptable with excellent techniques.

There is a correlation between the critical practice and theoretical question involved in the method to build up every day routines and formal behaviour. In the environment, the growing of these habitual activities is applicable; thus, such renewals ultimately influence the built structure. Routine is considered one of the important features of research, due to its influence on frequently visited pedestrian areas. The research also investigates the objects that affect daily routine or are occasional events, or the space itself in a particular and important approach to encourage people's activities. As mentioned by Gärling and Garvill (1993), the consideration between the research of the plans and the formulation of intentions and the study on routine itself have paid attention to identify the forms of

pedestrians' places. Moreover, the features, which affect the visitors' intentions and their journeys, were the character and locations as well as the planned activities in Eagle's (1988) study. Non-goal-oriented movement as well as activities may connect to the growth of shopping in North America and the widespread distribution of these models, which support these activities. The transformation of the social has encouraged the awareness of pedestrians' values and motivations that clarify their favourite places and the arrangement of activities in which they are involved (Shimand Eastlick, 1998).

a. Climate and microclimate

According to Naderi (2002), environmental issues achieve the highest value with the correlation of individuals' decision to walk, and the reason for the walk may not be part of these issues. Additionally, within the context of health, people tended to move in the natural environment that for health and well being people prefer to walk in the countryside more than in other circumstances. Without doubt, future research should pay attention to diverse natural features that engage people with the environment and inspire them to walk in both community-scale and smaller-scale projects (Naderi, 2002).

Due to the hot and humid weather, especially in Vietnam, protection from tropical climatic elements becomes fundamentally essential (Babiano, 2007). Additionally, time spent in a space may be recognised as the primary diverse indicator of comfort in terms of well-maintained quality of space (Gehl, 2006). The relation between spending time in outdoor spaces and climatic conditions may influence people's expectations. Hence, people rely on weather conditions and are pleased to enjoy the outdoor space. Thus, people who considered weather conditions typically spent more time in outdoor space. In contrast, as Aljawabra and Nikolopoulou (2010) identified in their research, people who spent less time in outdoor spaces tended to ignore the importance of climate conditions in the area at particular times of the year.

The more people there are with a high level of education, and stable jobs as well as financial situations, the more sensitive they are to environmental circumstances. This situation may be caused by the safe financial conditions of people who have more opportunity to choose to move indoors with air-conditioners

or outdoors into comfortable surroundings (Aljawabra and Nikolopoulou, 2010). The critical consideration of urban design in terms of climate and microclimate are one of the most vital features for tropical countries such as Vietnam. Specifically, the more options there are for people to experience the outside atmosphere, the more successful the encouragement for pedestrian design will be, as Gehl (1971) identified that the willingness of people to walk was influenced by local sunny or shady environments. The climatic circumstances associated with physical comfort that impact on behaviour in the context of public walking conditions are quantitative and definite influences. As Gehl (1980, 1987) claimed, the number of pedestrians may double when the outside temperature is 20°C compared with when it is around 2°C; elsewhere the number may triple. According to Li (1991, 1994), the approximate temperature recognised in New York that was comfortable for strolling and sitting was around 13°C. Additionally, there is a longitudinal research study by Zacharias et al. (2001) in Montreal, which identified the observation of the inverted U shape associated with the increase in temperature and sunlight. After that, people tend to find shade and a temperate place to rest. Furthermore, as Rotton et al. (1990) claimed, the air temperature is the most important issue that influences people's walking speed as well as the number of people in public spaces. The microclimate conditions have the primary influence on the provision of commercial activities (Cornélis, 1999). Psychological environmental circumstances rely on previous risk, which may impact on people's decision-making while they spend their leisure hours.

b. Appealing characteristics

Planners and policy decision-makers pay significant attention to the cognitive images of pedestrian areas: these are easy to identify ideas concerning the aesthetics and atmospheric qualities as well as the continuity of pedestrian areas. Nevertheless, it is important to note they agree less on the vital areas of visual details and primary landscape aspects, as well as the considerable associations with the value of these places, in the context of walking places for people. There is an over-concentration on landscapes and building detail rather than the consideration of three-dimensional form and layout, which are more important to experiences in walking space (James, 1995).

Moreover, according to the argument of Salingaros (1999), the necessary features of the information that was supportive of feeling and connection were used to define the architectural detail. The combination between the involvement of

historical, geographic and national iconography and conservation, as well as enthusiasm for historical structures and fabric, was recognised as the vital part of the spatial for pedestrians. Additionally, the enhancements carried out in changing these facilities in the context of cultural history may or may not provide typical space provision. However, they present the widespread awareness of public space beyond a simply economic circumstance. In this situation, careful considerations of these urban spaces raise the sensitivity of their various dynamics. The cognitive images prove their primary role within the goal of people staying and enjoying their time in many pedestrian areas.

In this case, the urban spaces have faced the sensitivity of their active senses. Subjective images raise their primary role within people's purpose of coming to enjoy themselves in these pedestrian areas. Timmermans (1993) and Timmermans et al. (1982) identified that the choices of pedestrians are not a priority with regard to some features such as accessibility, distance, range and quality of belonging, environment and experiences, as well as subjective images. There is a connection between the images and characteristics of public spaces' areas that shows the intentions of visitors through the joint methodology. Moreover, in these spaces, according to the research of Oppewal and Timmermans (1999), the attraction of the area is based on the management of whole areas as well as the appeal of shop facades, while some features, such as street activities, vegetation, cafeterias and groups of people, define the pattern of subjective images and promised options. The idea of the public affects the condition of the environments dedicated to the preservation of space, as mentioned in some research studies. Furthermore, organised actions have created alternative activities regarding the qualified design process due to the involvement of public attendance.

The primary aspects of pedestrians' decisions and attitudes are the existence of people and visual attraction. As Beaumont et al. (1983) and Peponis (1990) said, pedestrians are pleased to visit public spaces as long as these places have a variety of activities and people around them. Moreover, Haas (1970) and Rapoport (1977) claimed that some external characteristics – for example, the attendance of people and attractive environments – affect the determination of activities planned and the places chosen as well as the placing of pathways. There are some special factors that not only inspire pedestrians, but also define vital movement through the spaces' size, location, reputation, contrasting backgrounds,

usage and typical meaning (Rapoport, 1977; Gibson, 1979). Additionally, according to Haas (1970) and Lynch and Atkins (1988), characteristics such as landmarks, focal points and nodes may catch the pedestrians' attention and define the choice of route and the distance of travel. However, the satisfaction of pedestrians or their feelings of comfort are not defined through the presence of people in one place, which proves the fact that the design standards' guidelines should pay attention to the level of pedestrian presence and activity pattern (Zacharias, Stathopoulos and Wu, 2001).

c. Vegetation and landscapes

Numerous researchers have suggested that the climatic solution in the urban landscape raises awareness about the comprehensive use of urban vegetation as well as natural greenery, water factors and landscape design structures due to the needs of people and the variety of climate in each area (Fintikakis et al., 2011; Attia, 2009; Corbella and Magalhaes, 2008; Emmanuel, 2005). Moreover, according to Sun and Chen (2012), Bowler et al. (2010), Shashua-Bar et al. (2009) and Gomez et al. (2001), the contribution of natural resources such as vegetation and water bodies affect urban thermal comfort by cooling the area down to create an inverted urban island outcome, creating good ecological effects as well as improving a friendly living environment due to the transformation of the microclimate. Hidayat (2010), Shashua-Bar et al. (2009) and Wirdoyo (2008) also defined more ideas to adapt these factors: for example, shade issues, reducing ground and air temperature, minimising solar infiltration, urban fresh air issues and reducing glare from reflection. It was suggested that people affect the surrounding environment through their actions on the landscape. However, the appearance of the landscape may influence people in the way they perceive it, which is indicated through people's feelings. It is noted that natural landscapes affect people sentimentally, intellectually, socially and physically. Furthermore, it is suggested that people perceive the surrounding environment so that they can achieve their goals within a landscape and utilise affordance features of the landscape directly and in an immediate manner (Shojaei and Kamal, 2012; Mostyn, 1979; Gibson, 1979).

Some researchers use shared aesthetic desires to discover the composition of and architectural detail within the environments (Stamps, 2000). The ability of people to recognise and appreciate the visual order may raise the level of people's involvement in the landscape. While people seem to favour the balance of a

visually complex landscape, they still appreciate the existing order. Furthermore, the content of cognitive images and their related factors define the primary part of these shared aesthetic elements. For example, as Hartig et al. (1991) and Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) mentioned, the greener the space that was recorded in urban parks and plazas, the higher the level of similar material found in suburban and natural surroundings. People prefer to choose some visual features of the landscape scenery, such as a variety of tangible activities or obvious signs of public life, which are more engaging than architectural landmarks due to their personal meaning (Zacharias 1997c).

d. Facilities and amenities

Pedestrians move at a much slower pace than motorised vehicles and so they are more attentive to their surroundings. As a result, pedestrians require a high number of 'noticeable differences' in the form of street furniture, destinations, building types, building styles and signs to make the walking environment more enjoyable (Rapoport, 1977). Craig et al. (2002) describe some critical elements that may fundamentally create a walkable environment for pedestrians: for example, visual interest (some styles of building and their design); traffic safety, such as speed limits and being separated from the traffic; and pedestrian dimensions, such as familiar buildings, signage and facilities for pedestrians. Additionally, Owen et al. (2004) claimed that professionals promoted some typically inclusive designs that impacted on people's willingness to walk, such as safety from traffic, obvious footpaths, zebra crossing signage, levels of crowdedness, facilities, site concepts, attractive and encouraging views.

There are some scholars who pay attention to facilities and amenities of walking spaces: for example, Rohrer et al. (2004), Litman (2003) and Shay, Spoon and Khattak (2003). According to Rohrer et al. (2004), the walkable area was defined as a comfortable place to walk with the existence of a variety of pedestrian facilities. Moreover, Litman (2003) showed the importance of the condition of walking spaces, walking amenities, the required high quality of safety, satisfaction and comfort in confirmed walkability places. Shay, Spoon and Khattak (2003) noted that the concept of pedestrian facilities proved to be vital for walking factors such as traffic safety and convenience for both vehicles and pedestrians. Traffic safety is defined by the idea of measuring traffic calming or organising neighbourhood watches. Furthermore, convenient walking spaces are based on seating, street greenery and obvious visual signage as well as the mixed land use

from the point of view of high connectivity and well-established accessibility.

e. Asian pedestrian culture through the walking history

In Asia, as discussed before, there is a long history of the primary mode of transport being walking. The mid-nineteenth century (1860s) was known as the starting point of Asian cities' walking activities, before the introduction of motorisation. The status of walking still existed in the 1970s in most Asian countries: for example, 60% of Jakarta's journeys to work were on foot, and Tokyo's walking and cycling were estimated at 51% of the total number of journeys according to the State of Asian Urban Transport statistics (2000). Moreover, Barter (2000) found that walking accounted for a large number of journeys in Asian cities in the last two decades of the twentieth century, with 20% in Manila, 27% in Tokyo and 40% in Jakarta. But Hook (2002) claimed that this trend seemed to decrease because of the development of motorcycle traffic in China and Indonesia. It is vital to note that urban transport planning in Asia for the walking mode had been neglected, including by the lowest level of political organisation. The guidelines of infrastructure planning, design approaches and traffic regulations might treat pedestrians as a priority factor because the paths around these communities were used for short trips (Dimitriou, 1995).

Social equity is a critical aspect of the culture of informal street users when considering development of street space in terms of sustainability. The purpose of accessibility through the streets was encouraging all users, whether pedestrians, street vendors or other users. While the street vendors are usually seen as barriers to pedestrian flow, the presence of them in almost all Asian streets and the way in which governments dealt with them identified potential development. Moreover, the Western concept of streets (about the regulations and guidelines) has simply been based on the purpose of movement, whereas Asian streets tend to provide space for markets and trading locations for economic profits. This trend of Asian streets also has socio-historical roots, such as selling miscellaneous things for daily use, which takes place naturally on the street corners every day. Taking Vietnam as an example to illustrate this fact, informal economic activities by street vendors or hawkers often occur along the streets in commercial areas. Moreover, the streets become temporary markets and turn into places of the powerful informal economy. This trend is based on the reality of the socio-economic and cultural factors that demonstrated a lack of attention to the design of footpath space across Asian countries.

V. Conclusion

To create a dynamic and interesting public space, the research should pay attention to the primary target of a future design for users. The ideal is an open space with welcoming streets in which all people are equally able to achieve their requirements; a place that is not surrounded by walls. Open public spaces are based on governmental and psychological methods for perceiving and asserting diverse groups and their requirements in the context of space conditions. In Vietnam, the ideas may become reality if we can give governmental representation to group interests and accept the different cultures and typical features of each group, as well as rethinking the performance of public spaces (especially streets as public spaces) as stations for shared culture and its production and reproduction. The public streets can be reimagined as spaces to express cultural and social identity, and be redesigned as the representation for the production and transmission of local identity also.

CHAPTER V: METHODOLOGY

I. Introduction

A city – or an urban area – consists of many interlocking complex systems, such as social and technical infrastructures, people and the environment, etc. Therefore, considering or researching a city or an urban area has been difficult to clarify. However, some aspects of the city could be analysed through observation, multi-stakeholder information and multidisciplinary sources. This is the reason why I chose qualitative research as the main methodology of this thesis.

Undertaking research in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) requires many skills and this shaped my methodological approach. Even though I am Vietnamese, and I know my culture very well, I still had to face numerous difficult issues during the data collection period. Moreover, even the first step of my fieldwork, choosing the case studies, the object of the research and planning information of these places, became a challenge due to the hidden culture.

This chapter examines the methods, procedures and techniques applied in this research to answer the research questions. In this study, I was keen to include many methods but still relied upon traditional methods such as interviews and questionnaires. In addition to that, some research was primarily undertaken through site visits using photographs and video, as well as the author's own experiences with the Vietnamese and their lifestyles. This chapter of the research starts with discussions and justification regarding research design, the fundamentals for using mainly qualitative methods, case studies, etc. Methods used for collecting data are set out in the next part. Moreover, the variety of different techniques that were used for analysing data are detailed in a later section. Finally, the penultimate part identifies the ethics of the research while the summary section reveals the main limitations that challenged the researcher.

II. Choice of research methodology

It is important to note that this research is not linear, which means that this study is dynamic-iterative because it motivates from beginning to end. Within each step of the research, the research questions as well as the strategies were initially planned in order to achieve the most accurate answers because it contributes to the richness of data in response to the themes. Due to the hidden nature of power relations, the study had to have flexible steps to uncover the information, urban

power and relations interpreted within, which were not obvious but rooted in the system, the culture and daily experiences. Hence, some information, such as formal documentation, could not be obtained directly, and was given by some actors related to this. This situation affects the research and, therefore, the method that could be used. In this case, the approach to accomplish these methods involved the sensitive and careful judgement of the researcher. Moreover, the structure of this study, based on the relationship between power relations, perceived and lived over public spaces, goes through the research process from data collection to analysis. In addition, within the research process, the main research argument was followed by some subsidiary questions and research objectives.

According to Silverman (2001), qualitative research is created on the exploration of the chosen cases through a wide spectrum of observation. Moreover, the detailed fieldwork enables simultaneous observation as well as creating paths to a deeper understanding through in-depth participation. This study's major emphasis is to analyse the relationship between the urban power relations involved in shaping the built environment with public spaces in particular and the role of stakeholders to improve the quality of these designs. This phenomenon is experienced differently from one culture to another. Moreover, a qualitative exploration is suitable in the context of answering the question of what is going on 'out there' and how this is applied in practice through these interrelated matters. As Denzin and Lincoln (2013) and Flick (2009) note, the qualitative methods have a multidimensional focus and portray the researcher as a main maker, who seeks and reveals reality through montaging different information and data in the case of research together as well as it can be categorised into the focus features, where each of them is supportive to the others. So, this study is qualitative research and is enriched through the case study approach, including interviews, field observation, questionnaires and detailed investigation.

De Vaus (2001) noted that, depending on certain research criteria, an appropriate selection for research design and methodology is extremely important in order to make sure that the evidence taken allows us to discover the answer to questions during the research process as thoroughly as we can. Moreover, as Creswell (2003) and Yin (2008) said, the choice of the research design and methodology relies on the experience and ability of researcher to use various

methods.

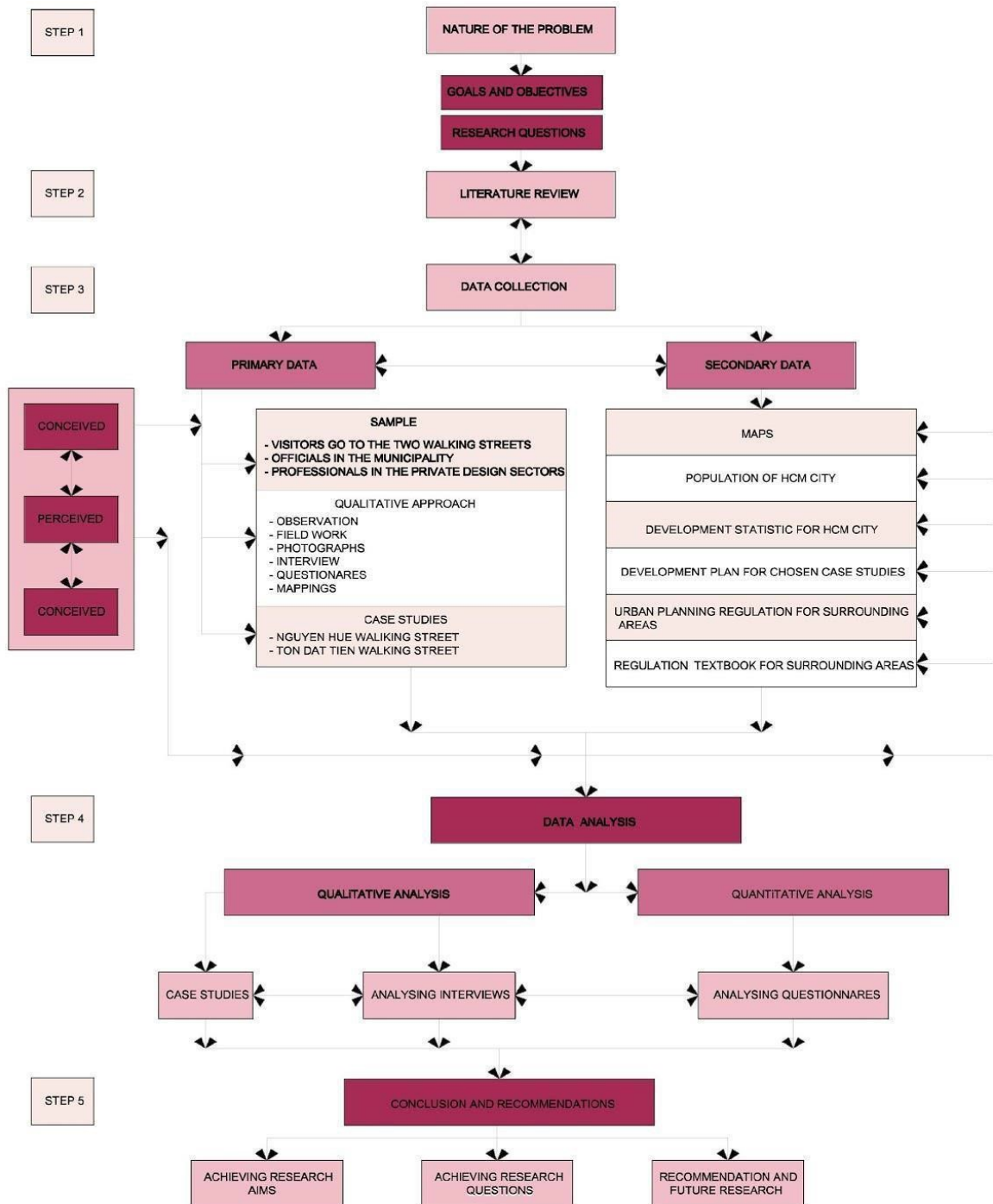


Figure 11 shows the process taken in this study from the beginning to consider the problem and provide a conclusion and recommendations

Table 1 illustrates The methods which are used in this study to investigate the research questions.

Themes	Objectives	Issues	Method s	Analysis	Output
<p>The relationship between the local authority, professionals in planning and the investors' effect on planning</p> <p>The capacity of the local planning authority</p>	<p>To identify the key issues and barriers to implementing more pedestrian friendly street in HCM City.</p> <p>To fully understand unsuccessful existing pedestrian projects in HCMC and how these might be addressed.</p>	<p>The role of each group causes the effective working of the others.</p> <p>Effective design.</p> <p>Sustainability relationship.</p> <p>Views of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative data (semi-structured) • Secondary data (statistic) • Case studies 	<p>Charts and tables.</p> <p>Comparison with between Western and Asian literature</p> <p>Categorises the answers and analysis by order.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the planning system clearly. • The framework to increase the efficiency of each group in planning, especially design for public spaces. • Perception of officials, investors and professional in urban planning.

Themes	Objectives	Issues	Method s	Analysis	Output
		officials, professio nals and investors.			

Themes	Objectives	Issues	Methods	Analysis	Output
<p>The right place to develop public spaces</p>	<p>To investigate the aspects of achieving a good urban design for public spaces.</p> <p>To propose key policies and interventions that would help create more walkable streets in HCMC.</p>	<p>Factors affecting the right place for public spaces.</p> <p>The difference between the new development and the old view of public spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical data to project the future choices for public spaces • Fieldwork • Visual method (photos and clips) • Case study 	<p>Descriptive analysis (Excel).</p> <p>Charts and tables.</p> <p>Based on real experiences and observations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way to fix the deficiencies of the previous cases at local level. • Adding some recommendations for future development of public spaces. • Future demand for public spaces. • Suitable transformation of the city under global development.

Themes	Objectives	Issues	Methods	Analysis	Output
Stakeholders' views and satisfaction	To understand how and why Vietnamese pedestrians react to various design elements (using empirical case studies).	<p>The impact of the new public spaces through the eyes of local people, professionals and officials.</p> <p>Cultural issues that led to conflict.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative (semi-structured interviews) • Questionnaires • Face-to-face interviews at the time of observation • Case studies 	<p>Descriptive analysis (Excel).</p> <p>Charts and tables.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of citizens' satisfaction within two case studies • Level of citizens interested in the design • The impact of applying the new design for public spaces in the cases • What is actually happening in public walking.

The case study method was adopted as the research strategy to investigate the reality of the phenomenon in this research through the implementation of the influence of the design for public spaces and the involvement of local people in those areas. Yin (2008) suggested that the most appropriate method was the case study because of its explanatory power for 'how' and 'why' questions. For the purpose of achieving a better explanation and more complete understanding of the situations, I used the selection of the case study design that was defined by De Vaus (2001); Bryman (2008) and Yin (2008) as " ... the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations, and the maturations of industries." Moreover, as Bryman (2008) and Yin (2008) proposed, even though the case study can be considered as a form of qualitative research, it can also engage in both qualitative and quantitative research processes. In my thesis, I used the questionnaire survey to discover the design experience in both the chosen case studies that demonstrate the illustration of the quantitative method.

1. Data collection and research fieldwork strategies

Collecting data is a critical work and an essential stage in social research (Bulmer, 1993a), especially within plan-making and completion of a piece of research. Data that are needed for achieving the objectives of the research are guided by the nature of the research itself. As stated by Creswell (2003) and Hafazalla (2005), survey objectives must correspond with the research's target. Thus, the researcher has to select specific information before starting to collect it. The researcher divided data used in this study into two parts, which were primary and secondary data. In different phases of the research, the researcher utilised various approaches to collect the data. Additionally, as proposed by Bulmer and Warwick (1993), dependability as well as availability of data are both considered at every step of the research work. Consequently, a clear fieldwork plan must be undertaken well before conducting the main fieldwork for the purpose of setting out the sources of data methodically and to ensure that its dependability and availability were tested during the experimental stage.

Table 2 The fieldwork arrangement

Number	Phase Descriptions	Activities
1.	Arrangement for initial investigation in 2014—2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collecting and reading research literature review and documents related to research focus and different research methods. ● Choosing the research method and intention. ● Making a list of queries followed following the themes of the research. ● Preparing face- to- face semi- structured interviews questions.
2.	Second stage of investigation in 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifying the issues related to the design for public spaces. ● Identifying the issues related to the relationship between local officials, investors and professionals in urban planning. ● Testing the reliability of face-to-face interview questions with whom it might concern. ● Translating to the country's language clearly and so that it is easy to understand. ● Booking in advance with local officials and get help from them to meet the other groups efficiently. ● Interviews and discussion with officials, professionals and developers. ● Selecting case studies. ● Learning and testing some methods (university research training, reading books and journals related to topic). Collecting secondary data (documents related to HCMC and the design for chosen case studies, statistics about HCMC reports). ● Site observation and photographs.

Number	Phase Descriptions	Activities
3.	Post study in 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluating the data of research outcomes. ● Reviewing the research methods and strategies. ● Selecting the appropriate methods for data collection. ● Preparing the final version in English and Vietnamese for face-to-face semi-structured interview questions with different focus groups. ● Final contact to book these appointments in advance. ● Preparing questionnaire forms. ● Contacting students who studied at the same university with the author, who would help to go to the chosen sites and take the answers of local citizens.
4.	Main fieldwork in 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attending meeting with local planning authorities. ● Collecting secondary data (maps, updated text book for chosen cases design, documents and reports). ● Onsite observations and photographs at specific times for two weeks. ● Prior meeting with helpers (student at HCMC University of Architecture) to pass the questionnaire forms to local citizens. ● Face-to-face interviews with local officials, professionals in urban planning and developers. ● Testing the reliability and understanding of each question from face-to-face questionnaires at chosen case studies. ● Correcting the form and continuing to ask people from chosen case studies.

2. Overview of the context and setting the scene

a. Selecting a city

This research aims to investigate the walking environment and how people react to design in crowded places and developing cities by collecting and interrogating empirical data. In this part, I explain each step to reach the purpose of this research by the selection of HCMC as the case study city.

b. The need to improve my own country

There are some Asian cities that have been experiencing a transformation process from a traditional city to an invaded city (Mateo-Babiano and Ieda, 2007; Gehl and Gemzoe, 2001; Camona, 2010). These cities have been characterised by car and/or motorcycle domination and are in danger of becoming boring cities; as Gehl and Gemzoe (2001) described, they become places where public life and public spaces almost disappear. Huge changes caused by the previous trends resulted in letting a multiactivity space where people were prioritised become a utility space dominated by motor vehicles. This phenomenon has generated the feeling of unease among street users, especially pedestrians. This has exacerbated the isolation of these spaces and decreased walking and other friendly modes of transport. Through the problems of motorcycle and car domination, the acceptance of Western styles of design and consumption has caused a mismatched relationship between facility users and their provision (Mateo-Babiano and Ieda, 2007).

HCMC is dominated by private vehicles: most of them are motorcycles. The restrictions of the basic technical infrastructure of the old city and the population explosion are the main reasons for the rapid increase of private vehicles; the public transport system cannot develop due to the high demand for dwellings and urban public spaces are gradually encroached upon for traffic or personal purposes. The reconciliation of all intentions in urban space is the most feasible solution for the situation of HCMC.

Moreover, it has been shown that the current management policy and design for these public spaces in HCMC have been displaying a lack of consideration for socio-cultural shared values and for the significance of place such as bamboo-frame retailers, little barbers' shops in the roadway, ..., for gender and age such as the space for elders to play chess, a playground for the children and teenagers ... as well as following the trend of Westernisation. In an effort to explore this phenomenon, the everyday experience of public spaces, especially commercial walking streets, which

help people to form a sense of meaning for a place, will be examined. Therefore, such meaning can be compatible or incompatible with the designers' intention, specifying how spatial organisation is much more than just a visual experience. Only if users directly relate to a context, different activities or personal stories can sift the built form to produce a sense of place.

c. Reasons for choosing HCMC

This research began in late 2014 and Vietnam was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, Vietnam is the home country of the researcher, where I live and learn in the planning field; hence, there is familiarity with this place and ease of communication, as well as a comprehensive knowledge of the culture and the way of dealing with specific conditions of the context. Secondly, as it is the homeland of the researcher, this is the main motivation for conducting this research, as there are many planning development issues to be dealt with because Vietnamese planning has only developed recently. In addition, due to the perception of public spaces and the complexity of the planning structure and urban power mechanism, the results can be found to be different from most of the literature on Western styles and this may provide valuable information to fill the gap of knowledge about designs for public spaces in South East Asia.

HCMC was chosen to be the main theme city of the research. Although the country has its own potential, the dynamic HCMC proves itself with many interesting aspects to explore. Moreover, while it is not the capital city of Vietnam, it has always been a representative of the country with a special strategy for development, which supposedly developed as a lesson for the rest of Vietnam. Furthermore, the researcher has knowledge of the chosen city very well through her professional and student experiences. So, the reasons for choosing HCMC are based on the criteria listed below:

- Ho Chi Minh City – the researcher's hometown, familiar to her and convenient for accessing fieldwork. The researcher has connections with local academics working at HCMC University of Architecture.
- HCMC is the most developed city in Vietnam with enormous urban transition and potential.
- As this city is chosen to promote and represent any new city applying such urban design for public spaces, an economic budget for other smart growth

and so on, the findings of this research may be considered to apply to other cities in the future.

- Finally, urban research about public spaces in big cities like HCMC still has not been paid enough attention, especially in the field of planning regulations research and relations between urban governance and officials and planning professionals. Hence, selecting HCMC may fill a knowledge gap to some extent on the conditions of Asian cities.
- HCMC with case studies of Nguyen Hue Avenue and Ton Dat Tien Street

To meet the aim of my thesis, I wanted to select cases that encompassed many of the chances to improve the walking environment. HCMC is a very dynamic city and it gets to create places for people to walk. Moreover, this city has an infrastructure deficit as well as failing to follow good designs and is at risk from the management side. As a rapidly developing city with a well-documented loss of public spaces, HCMC is the best choice in terms of location, scale, public spaces crisis, predicted implications of following Western styles, plus a management crisis, but remains a useful case study to investigate the response to the efforts to improve it by urban designers, local authorities and developers. HCMC's position as Vietnam's economic capital and its rapid urbanisation make responses to environmental issues possible by giving space for public places. Such findings may inform the opportunity of improving in other cities as well as other countries in similar contexts.

Also, the explosion of population and personal transport is the general reality of all Vietnamese big cities such as Hanoi and Da Nang, not only HCMC. In recent years, migration to HCMC has been increasing. HCMC's population is over 10 million people, so the need for public space, as well as reducing the pressure on the transport system, is important. In addition, HCMC includes places in various stages of urban development, such as the existing centre on the basis of the French planning blueprint, spontaneous urban development such as Tan Binh, Tan Phu and Binh Tan districts, and new urban areas such as districts 2 and 7. Deciding to focus on HCMC was the priority choice as a site of investigation. The environment of these megacity responses is within the central (district 1) and the new development areas (district 7). These areas have their own pros and cons which clearly show the main targets of the research. The central area has many public space projects such as walking spaces in the 930 ha central detailed plan, walking streets in Nguyen Hue, Le Duan, Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, Pasteur, Dong Khoi...

but they are still 'planning on hanging' it means that it still be the paper works and have not did them in reality; only Nguyen Hue Street has applied regeneration within two years. As mentioned about district 7, it has its own plan, from a general plan to a detailed one, according to the big investor who has enough power and finance to develop and control its targets. Based on the information I received from the local authorities and urban designers as well as searching on the internet, they have suggested cases closest to my field to obtain the best results.

The first field trip to return to HCMC was very useful in terms of collecting information. First, the research focused on general projects and looked for any environment that included public space schemes, walkable places and funding from the public sector. I realised that I should look for specific projects to contrast and compare. Moreover, a common factor across these cases was the relationship between urban designers, local authorities and investors. The success of these projects depends on many reasons; however, this trio's relationships with each other are the most important reason in terms of the design and management. The way people react to the design of the project influences the rest of it as well. As discussed in other chapters, in a communist country like Vietnam, the role of authorities in the final decision is very complicated, especially for each planning project in HCMC, so exploring their relationship with other factors, between policymakers and within society became a logical starting point for my research. The method used for these factors is discussed in the section below.

3. Scoping the research

The first stage took place from September 2014 to June 2015, when the research focused on the literature regarding urban design for public spaces in Asia and the West, urban governance, the planning system in Vietnam, and HCMC urban development and urban design. Moreover, early consideration of the appropriate methodology was also prepared. Furthermore, the research also made a list of queries for local authorities in HCMC in the Faculty of Planning, professionals in planning and investors related to the chosen case studies.

4. Methodology adopted

a. Primary data

➤ Qualitative methods

During the first stage of the research, some qualitative methods were used, such as:

Focus groups:

As Powell et al. (1996) and Bryman (2004) suggested, a focus group is a selected group of people who participate in discussing and exchanging opinions on a particular closely fixed subject that is related to the topic of the research. Following the recommendations of Brockington and Sullivan (2003) in order to attain the best focus group method, within this study there are three focus groups selected among people who were known to me. They were local authorities and professionals in planning and whom I knew through my own relationships due to the time spent studying at HCMC University and working at the Southern Institute of Planning for Urban and Rural Areas and the Department of Construction in Long An province. These groups were set up in advance in different places according to the choice of interviewees, such as coffee shops or their own offices. However, after the meeting with the local authorities' group, the researcher had a chance to hold a meeting with another group to obtain high-quality information based on the recommendation of the local authorities.

The second group was that of planning professionals from various places. To some extent, this was the easiest focus group, because both interviewers and interviewees worked in the same field, so we had a lot in common and could communicate through the technical terms we use. The third group was that of the investors and developers. This group was very difficult to contact at first. However, after recommendations by the local authority, they were able to set up free time for a meeting with the researcher and to share their opinions freely about the study topic.

The idea was to talk to these groups informally and share information or experiences in a friendly manner, so most of the conversations took place where they were comfortable, such as coffee shops or their own offices. The quality of the results was high, and a lot of information was shared.

Observation

Observation is one of researchers' vital tools that can be used to assess real-life conditions in a subjective way (Overton and Diermen 2003). The researcher came to the chosen site, walked around to form a mind map and took note about what happened

there (such as written notes, photographs and drawings as well). The researcher conducted a physical survey in two walking streets:

- Street in the old city centre with the development budget from the local authority: Nguyen Hue Avenue in district 1.
- Street in the new development area with a budget from private developers: Ton Dat Tien Street in district 7.

Structured interviews

This method was used with Mr Thụ Huỳnh from the workforce of the Department of Planning and Architecture of HCMC, who designed Nguyen Hue walking street; and the vice-chairman of the Department of Planning and Architecture of HCMC who made the decision on the final stage of the design. The questions and answers were sent via email because the aim of this first structured interview was:

- To obtain the very first point of the design for walking streets in HCMC.
- To fully understand the framework of the planning system at different levels from the local to the regional and national one.
- To investigate the reasons for choosing Nguyen Hue as a public space for walking and the predictable implications of the new design.

This method proved very useful in terms of clarifying some of the issues, but caused ambiguities because the researcher was living in the United Kingdom, so it was very hard to contact these people directly due to the difficulty to arrange in advance.

Unstructured interviews

This method was used with academic peers at the University of Architecture in HCMC. An informal meeting was held, and a list of informal questions were asked in order to obtain more information about the real conditions of working in planning and the planning administration hierarchy in Vietnam.

Photos

Some photos were taken during the time the researcher visited the chosen sites and were kept updated through the internet. These photos were used to create visual effects and to illustrate not only the overall areas, but could also demonstrate the influence of the new designs in public spaces.

➤ Quantitative methods

Quantitative methods were used during the preliminary study, as follows:

Semi-structured interviews

According to Bryman (2004), in survey research the standardised interview is sometimes the typical method of interview. And as Overton and Diermen (2003) suggested, a structured interview is not as stringent as a questionnaire. The provisional semi-structured interview of this research included:

Table 3 Table illustrating the number of questions in the interview for each group of people.

Group		General Questions	Main Questions	Specific Question for Topic 1	Specific Question for Topic 2	Specific Question for Topic 3
Local authority		8				
	District 1		2	3	2	1
	District 7		2	2	3	1
Professionals in Planning		8	2	3	3	1
Investors/Developers		8	2	3	3	1

At this stage, the questions were revealed many times so that they could clarify the main points of the interviewer and obtain the best answers from the interviewees. At the same time, these queries were prepared in Vietnamese before being used in the fieldwork. This was very difficult to translate exactly from English to Vietnamese because Vietnamese has a lot of meanings in every single word (Vietnamese is a tonal language, like Chinese so the words that change their meaning using rising or falling tones, for example).

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were created and the effectiveness of the answers were considered with the researcher's supervisors in advance of the fieldwork. In the first version, the questionnaires had more than 30 questions and the supervisors said that it would be difficult to obtain the answers from any interviewees because they are always too busy or lazy to do this. Often it appears that people just get frustrated at being asked questions all the time – this is sometimes called consultation fatigue. As I have seen many times at Eldon Square, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, United Kingdom, there are some interviewers with questionnaire forms in their hands but many people refuse to answer them, as they may be busy with their own activities. The key was to get their attention first; this then made them feel interested in the topic and free to give their answers in the shortest way that they wished.

Case studies:

This kind of method seems to be an appropriate choice for this research because its spatial centralised approach and the significance of the environment are fundamental and are the primary subject in this study. Moreover, because of the nature of this research, which relates to the diverse environments and willingness to change when the work had to face any unexpected events that occurred during its progress, the flexibility of case studies was appropriate. Furthermore, the study tends to qualitative methods and requires many techniques as well as application, so as Muir (2008) said, case studies are suitable due to the multi-aspect context and various points of view taken into account.

b. Secondary data

According to Ahmed (2011), the research can be understood thoroughly by the insight and in-depth information provided in the documentary data. Both published and unpublished documents were provided by government departments, planning offices and developers about related cases to this study. For example, the published documents are the census of HCMC, the data from development plans for HCMC from 2000 to the time this study's fieldwork took place and design planning for chosen cases; the unpublished documents are the decisions and decree documents accepting plans or allowing each project to proceed in principle by local authorities. In addition, journals and articles about many kinds of issues were collected so that the researcher could have an overview as well as a comparison with information correlated to this study topic, such as urban governance and the production of public spaces in Western

countries (which have various research studies in urban design fields). For this research, all the documentary evidence about existing design for public walking streets in district 1 was a vital and useful piece of secondary data that enriched the argument and analysis of the primary data from this research.

c. The outcomes of the preliminary study

During the preliminary research, this study had a clear direction to go on to the next step. The more obvious the approach made, the more focused and new ideas were found. At the end of the preliminary study, the researcher summarised the following different groups that were recognised as extremely important factors for the research:

- Local authority of HCMC, which takes responsibility for overall city planning including design for public spaces.
- Professionals (such as architects and planners in both the private and public sectors), who convert the ideas into drawings and make them happen 'out there'.
- Investors/developers, who use their budget to translate the drawing to reality with effort.
- Local citizens, who come and enjoy these places with the influence of the design in reality.

This stage revealed that one method suited each group in terms of the purpose of the researcher to achieve the best results. For example, the interview was sent to the local authorities by email. This was not an inappropriate method, because the people concerned are always too busy to answer all the questions in detail. Moreover, these people just forward emails to their staff and the interview questions are answered by a person who does not have responsibility to make decisions for the projects.

This stage was the time to consider finding assistance to help the researcher. These helpers would help to check the reliability of each of the questions in the questionnaire form in Vietnamese. Moreover, technical terms were used in the form sent to the local people, so these helpers could fix such problems. After that, the study discovered that such technical terms were only suitable for professionals and officials (whose work was related to planning) but not for local citizens.

To some extent, the observation at the chosen sites was a useful approach because it could help the researcher identify subjective issues regarding the implications and fulfilment of the design of public spaces in reality.

According to the season as well as the time of day that these public spaces were used, the surveys had to be carried out before 12pm and after 3pm when the temperature would be under 37°C and after working hours. Hence, the timing of conducting the fieldwork in HCMC had to be arranged carefully.

Case studies at microcosmic level were not only significant in developing the research ideas; this method also guided the researcher to focus more on the difference between the goal of the study and reality to obtain information. In short, the careful preparation of this stage filtered the key places, key people, key group, key questions and key methods as well.

Another essential step at this stage was the reference letters with the signatures of both supervisors and approval of the university before the researcher went back to Vietnam to conduct fieldwork. Sometimes, people don't know who you are and what you are doing and so are reluctant to take part in research; such letters help them to be free to assist you with no doubt. Especially when you have to arrange an appointment with local authorities in Vietnam, they will feel free to talk and easily share information with confidence when you have the reference letters from a specific foreign university.

Taking interview questions as the following topic to discuss, as guided by the researcher's supervisors, the researcher began by identifying the aim of each interview. Later, key questions for each group were set in case the interviewees were too busy to meet for more than 15 minutes. Reviewing, modifying and ordering questions was the next important step to make sure that no information was lost during the time of these meetings. Moreover, as McCormack and Hill (1997) said, the wording of the interview questions should be simple, unbiased, understandable, inoffensive and comprehensible, as well as following a sequence. The use of words in a question is more like an art than a science, as mentioned by Bulmer and Warwick (1993). Moreover, the questions were categorised into three main subjects that were chosen by the researcher and refined under the guidance of the supervisors. The first topic related to the role of stakeholders who were involved in the planning design from the concept to the decision-making stage. Secondly, the questions referred to the production of spaces and places, which reminded the researcher of what had

happened here and there around the city as well as the chosen site in order to evaluate the answers. This method mainly used open-ended questions.

The questionnaire form for local citizens was to measure their satisfaction level in two different places (Nguyen Hue Street and Ton Dat Tien Street), by discovering to what extent the design is suitable for citizens' needs, their wishes and their views about becoming involved in planning design decisions. The research began by changing the type and description of the initial queries as in the example below: the former clarified one of the old forms and the latter illustrated it.

The old version of my questionnaire appeared tedious: it just had text with answers, such as question 2:

2. What's your intention when coming to this street?

A. Buying things and/or eating.

B. Going for a walk and enjoying public activities in public space.

C. Just on the way to another place.

D. Others.

Later, the researcher fixed it with some more interesting choices, as shown in question 8:

8. How do you feel about the whole streetscape?

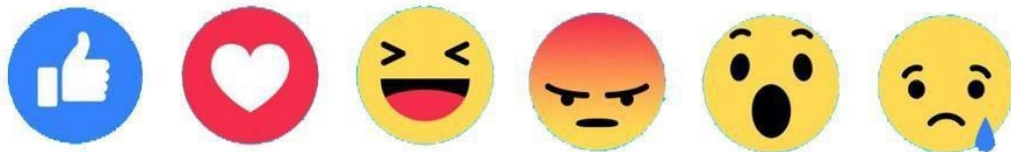


Figure 12 emotion icon for choosing the level of people satisfaction

But the choice of emoticons was slightly confusing, so after taking advice from supervisors, the researcher decided to choose the final version as follows:

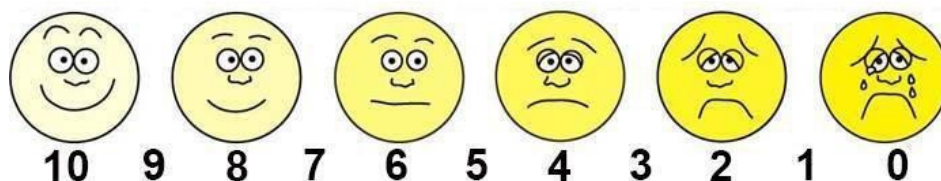


Figure 13 emotion icon for choosing the level of people satisfaction

And for 'agree' and 'disagree' answers, it was as follows:

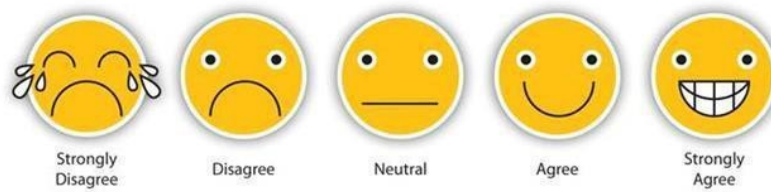


Figure 14 emotion icon for choosing the level of people satisfaction

The key behind the use of emoticons in this way is that they are a scale of one emotion, rather than a range of responses/feelings, so that they go from very happy at one end to very unhappy at the other. According to Cardello, and Jaeger (2016), although emotion words presently are dominated on using questionnaires method, emoji or picture characters are known as other approach for delivering such self-reports because they produce graphical image of feelings, emotions as well as abstract concepts. As Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall, (1996) said that in the light of communicating emotions, emoji-based questionnaires relate to non-verbal cues such as gestures, vocal intonation and facial expressions) so that emoji-based questionnaires can take advantage of both their popularity and evolved social psychological characteristics of human conveying (Gesselman, Ta, and Garcia, 2019). Nowadays, emoji are common to people due to the popularity of smartphones and other high-end digital devices on their daily life, no matter what their gender, age and culture are (Swiftkey, 2015, Bai et al., 2019, Cruse, 2015, Evans, 2015). In the research of Gülsen, (2016), cross-cultural research is appropriate to use emoji as “a set of standardized icons that have certain meanings” because in a specific context ,they may be handled and recognised equivalently across individuals (Bai, et al., 2019). Moreover, as Novak et al., (2015), Jaeger et al., (2019) claimed that cultural context does not effect strongly on the interpretation of emoji which seem to be regarded as a bridge across diverse cultures. It is clear to note in research of Ogarkova, (2016), Wierzbicka, (1999) that on cross-cultural research, the application of word-based questionnaires rely upon translation, which is difficult because of the challenging in the meaning related to emotion words, the culture-specific emotion words, the absence of addressing unique emotions’ words, as well as special emotions discriminated in one language and not in another.

III. Research challenges and strategies

1. Discovering hidden interventions and contacts

As a local resident in HCMC, I still had to face the major challenge of the fieldwork while discovering projects as well as research. Due to the hidden nature of the state of affairs, which means that the detailed information of urban planning announced by the government may be different from the real situation, it was difficult to make contacts within local authorities and there was reluctance by possible contacts to engage with the research. This reluctance can be categorised as general scepticism about the research, a lack of trust in anonymity and concern about commitment to the truth. I used to work for government for a while and I had very good contact with the managers who worked for the Architecture and Planning Department and Transportation Department. However, at the time of my first fieldwork, the whole management system around Vietnam had changed (five years for each term per person, which applies to the directors and vice-directors in each department) so I booked interviews in advance before I went back to Vietnam, but they were still delayed and it took time to wait for approval before the interviews. Moreover, it is very difficult to book an appointment with the leaders of these departments; however, my father, who is also a vice-director of the Construction Department in Long An province, helped me to make contact with these people. At that time, I used various methods to build relationships, such as communication by email or phone call for the first contact. It was also important for me to discover their concerns before the time of the interview. In addition, the first source of information was the internet, but with limited success due to the lack of information about planning projects (in fact, this should be published with access for everyone, but it just shows some information, the rest is hidden). The ability of the director who I could contact and made an appointment became key in order to keep in touch with other people in my list of interviewees. As can be seen in the discussion below, the case study streets chosen were selected as those that were famous, accessible and with several pieces of information from believable responses.

1. Web-accessible documents

In fact, urban planning is a very new field in Vietnam; in particular, urban design for public space is rarely paid attention to. Vietnam's Ministry of Construction(MOC), which is in charge of urban planning, has put a lot of effort to improve the legal system, including the enforcement of the Law on Urban Planning 2010, which is the first law on urban planning in Vietnam. Therefore, a limited number of such interventions are taking place, both in Vietnamese and English. Another reason that might prevent this

information from being found is that the design for public space just remains at a basic level and the developer, urban planners or citizens may not think that they are involved in these researches. They carry out urban design due to what they learn from other case studies around the world after taking the moral lessons from them and not based on any practical research of local conditions. Moreover, information about planning projects is rarely updated on the internet in detail; they are mentioned in general with basic information. For example, the name of the project, the developer, the founder, the consultants' company, the area (in square metres or hectares) of the project as well as some notes about future development. In addition, communication with these few leads was the next challenge, as they were always busy, ignored emails and refused to talk on the phone. It is important to note that the closer the relationship you build with people in government, the easier you obtain detailed information such as the data and drawings of orientation planning of the chosen area from them. Furthermore, the more flexible and spontaneous you are, the more likely you will achieve the requirements of the research.

2. Affiliations

One way of trying to secure appropriate access to information for the research was to maintain affiliation to HCMC University. It is clear that such an affiliation to an institution can provide connections and support. A friend who works for the Architecture and Planning Department became a useful contact and resource, introducing me to the head of department and giving many chances to talk with professionals in my field. My former colleague at the university and his list of student contacts helped me to conduct a survey of people in the chosen case studies.

3. The case studies

In this part, all tools, procedures and general principles that were followed during data collection are included. Yin (2009) stated that the dependability of case study research may be increased by protocol as a major method that desires to lead the researcher in performing data collection from one to several cases in multiple case studies.

This research has three main strands: the role of stakeholders in power relations, perception of public spaces and how the spaces do their jobs. The first through its operating mechanisms and praxis, may be effective in manipulating the last, as this study argues. Therefore, the research questions are shaped accordingly, based on the 'how' question sets leading to qualitative research. This approach, therefore, requires learning from practice: a practical wisdom, called phronesis, developed by Flyvbjerg (2001) and Flyvbjerg et al. (2012). Thus, the two-fold nature of the research highlights the importance of practices similar to phronesis, where 'phronetic social science explores historic circumstances and current practices to find avenues to praxis' (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.140).

Furthermore, the second part of the empirical research is related to the transformation of contemporary public spaces and public perception of the new generation of public spaces that have to be dealt with in a similar way. In this part, the focus is on the culture, context and perceptions that are influenced by the built environment. Therefore, various types of data collection are required.

IV. The main fieldwork

1. Documents

Along with the letter from Newcastle University, a translation was provided in Vietnamese for those respondents who could not understand the questions in English. Furthermore, the letter from the vice-chairman of the Department of Planning and Architecture gave me permission to obtain any information related to my topic from them. One of the issues causing problems at this stage was that people were afraid to answer my questions and give me the file documents, even though I had the letter to confirm that this interview was done for study purposes and would not be shown to a third party.

The researcher contacted friends and colleagues in the public and private sectors and booked meetings with them in advance. In this main fieldwork, the version with fixed Vietnamese questions was used. One of the issues in translation was the possible misunderstanding because of the multiple meanings in Vietnamese. Moreover, the way to ask questions in the Vietnamese context without offence to local culture norms is very important, while some of the connected questions that were expressed in a confident way in English, such as questions about the management system. Additionally, shortening the words in Vietnamese without changing the meaning was another difficulty. The final draft of the Vietnamese version was checked and reviewed with two interviewees and by the researcher's friends from the Department of Planning and Architecture.

2. Primary data

- a. Visual observation: walk-by observations, pedestrian activities and behavioural mapping

In this PhD study, the researcher recorded both stationary and dynamic activities along the streets, including the usual activities, performing arts, parades, street vendors and food stalls, etc. through walk-by and observations; most pedestrian activities and behaviours were mapped synchronously. The data collection work was conducted from the beginning of March to the end of June 2016. Observation work was carried out by walking and watching the surroundings, making notes and mapping sheets.

The times chosen for observations were from 7 am to 10 pm, on both weekdays and weekends. The timing was divided into different periods to gain plenty of outcomes. No observations were made in rainy weather because the streets are almost empty at such times. No observations were made outside due to the very hot temperature (the record highest is about 36°C); the researcher sat inside a coffee shop and made careful observations. At night-time, the researcher walked around the chosen places, enjoyed the sites and wrote down the requirements and expectations in notes at each step. During that time, I used sketch notes to clarify my ideas and opinions in my own way so that I could remind myself of them at any time. Moreover, quick notes and mapping were used to capture people's behaviour, while plenty of photographs were taken from different angles to acquire optimal perspectives of the scenes and activities in the street.

During the times of completing questionnaires, the mapping of pedestrian behaviours was carried out during weekdays and at weekends. The details of the timings were as follows:

Table 4 Summary of Behavioural Mapping (Time and Duration)

Weekday	Weekend
7–8 am (morning)	7–8 am (morning)
12–1 pm (afternoon)	12–1 pm (afternoon)
6–10 pm (evening)	6–10 pm (evening)

b. Physical Mapping

The conducting of physical mappings or street measurements in the case studies to produce comparable information about these physical features can be found in such places as their plans, dimensions, details and patterns. Moreover, the more we identify and measure these physical characteristics of streets, the more we understand which features and surroundings affect street activities, especially social interactions.

When performing physical mapping, the existing plans of the street spaces were obtained thanks to official base maps provided by the local authority. These files were in .dwg format, which was easy to print out and take notes about on the field studies. However, they were not the up-to-date version, so it took time to amend them from the map version to real life. When the street plans are clear and precise, the best results of field studies can be obtained.

c. In-depth Interviews

In the context of qualitative research, the interview method is exceptionally useful and influential for obtaining the experiences and undertaking the meanings of topics related to the everyday world (Kvale, 2007).

There is a distinction between the general introduction earlier (where perhaps this belongs) and the specifics of what I did of the interviews in the context of qualitative research, are uniquely sensitive and powerful methods for capturing the experiences and lived meanings of the subjects' everyday world (Kvale, 2007). Such methods also allow subjects to communicate with other cases from their own point of view and in their own words.

The method used for interviews included in this research was semi- structured, in which various basic queries were pre-prepared and others were set up naturally by the interviewer during the interviews. The researcher organised sheets for such in-depth interviews by dividing it into several segments (see in-depth interview sheet in appendix):

- General information of the interviewees
- General questions for all participants
- Specific questions for governors at in districts 1 and ,7
 - + Key questions
 - + Topic categories:
 - The role of stakeholders (local authorities, urban designers and developers).
 - The production of spaces and places.
 - Public vs private.
- Questions for developers.
- Questions for urban designers:
 - + As a citizen of the society
 - + As an intellectual
 - + As a planner/ practitioner
- Planning and management (particular category for interviewees from the Urban Planning Department).

Selecting and Briefing the Interviewers

For purpose of enabling a larger quantity of interviews to be conducted, at least two interviewers were chosen to support the main researcher with the fieldwork. Prior selection of these was carried out to minimise any possible bias of the results due to the approach taken for the survey. At the beginning, the meeting between researcher and interviewers was very important for the consistency of approach, setting out clearly and exactly what the researcher wanted to ask. The initial interviews were held with decision-makers, managerial actors and professionals, from both the private and the public sector, some of whom could be considered as the cream of the crop in the group of main researchers (elite groups).

The responsibility of the researcher becomes more challenging when the interviewees are from elite groups. This is because the role and the position of the interviewee have a clear impact on the responses. The interviewee usually prefers to give responses reflecting widespread social beliefs or aims to meet general requirements rather than actuality or real thoughts. However, according to Deifenbach (2009), understanding 'socially expected answering patterns', answering tactically and being conscious of 'intentionally misadvising' has prime importance in turning this to the researcher's advantage.

Moreover, as Rice (2010) said, due to the realisation of "particularity of power ... which concentrates power further in the hands of the already powerful" and minimising potential limitations, the researcher should also have his/her own strategies for access, negotiation and convincing the interviewees to participate in the research. Therefore, informing participants beforehand but not sending them the sample questions in advance was very important to avoid answers given just to satisfy the interviewer and to make them feel relaxed during the interview.

Sample Size

Based on documentation retrieval, there were various provision sources that offered manuals for actual sample sizes suitable for qualitative studies, including:

- Ethnography and ethnoscience: Morse (1994) suggests 30–50 interviews for both; Bernard (2000) states that most studies are based on samples between 30 and 60 interviews for ethnoscience;
- Grounded theory: Creswell (1998) 20–30; Morse (1994) proposes 30–50 interviews;
- Phenomenology: Creswell (1998) 5–25; Morse (1994) recommends at least six interviews.
- All qualitative research: Bertaux (1981) and Guest et al. (2006) suggest that 15 is the smallest acceptable sample.

As this study applied a qualitative method, nine interviewees for two case studies were carried out at the time of fieldwork according to the following list:

Table 5 List of interviewees

Number	Position / Role	Organisation	Type of Organisation	Date
1	Project Manager	District 7 Project Management Office	Local Authority	23/03 /2016
2	Senior Urban Designer	Phu My Hung Development Corporation	Urban Designer	13/04 /2016
3	Spatial Planning Manager	Department of Architecture and Urban Planning	Local Authority	22/04 /2016
4	Project Manager	Department of Transportation	Local Authority	26/04 /2016
5	Director	Urban Planning Centre	Urban Designer	27/04 /2016
6	Director	Phu My Hung Development Corporation	Developer	04/05 /2016
7	Director	Tan Thuan Corporation (TTC)	Developer	26/05 /2016
8	Vice-Director	Urban Planning Centre	Urban Designer	31/05 /2016
9	Senior Urban Designer	Novaland group	Urban Designer	31/05 /2016

The attitudes, emotions and impressions of street quality, street perception as well as place attachment were obtained by the questionnaires within each users of the streets such as citizens, shop owners, visitors and street vendors. Moreover, there is some settings about the meeting to local governments who work for urban planning department. After these interviews, some information about their perception of the quality of street as public spaces are obtained and recognised so that I can understand the current situation and predict the trends for future planning and operation of street environment.

Research Assistants (Ras)

The face to face surveys with local citizens are done by Ras which bring the most advantage for the fieldwork. It shows the fact that, due to the time involed, without the cooperation of Ras, researcher cannot control and conducts the surveys

themselves (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Hence, Ras have been recruited locally or by some agencies who work on it professionally. I have contacted some of my friends (who still work for the University) at the University of Architecture in HCMC (the researcher's previous university) to appropriate some students who were willing and familiar with doing surveys. Moreover, the researcher attempts to take the rest of the secondary data itself with the officials and professionals.

As Ritchie and Lewis (2003) said that all of work targets and requirements have to be briefed carefully for Ras. Hence, prior the date of launching the surveys, there is a meeting at the coffee shop between researchers and RAs which not only built the professional relationship each other, it also plays a vital role on the successful fieldwork. Then, the nature of the research was explained; the meaningful of the survey was claimed and the requirements for final expected from their works were clarified after all. The Ras requested for reading the whole questionnaires and they asked for dividing into four groups of four people. Each group contains five to six students, who have had different works such as conducting the surveys, review the answers of people, taking note of people activities on the prepared maps as well as analyse the sample's validity.

Additionally, the explanation on the approach to connect the respondents was made such as how to introduce themselves and what they are going to do with the surveys. I also suggested that if they have any questions or get any instant situation during taking the surveys, they have to contact me immediately so that I can help them to solve the problems as soon as possible. Moreover, in order to make the most accurate, validity, reliability and consistency information, the face-to-face surveys have to be done right within my guideline at any time. The Vietnamese version of questionnaire were provided to RAs for double checking in case of some mistakes as they also are one of the users enjoying these two case studies. Finally, the whole team allow to meet each other after each day and contact to the researcher every time for checking the quantity and quality of works per day.

3. Data collection

After gathering the data, it was divided into primary and secondary data, as follows:

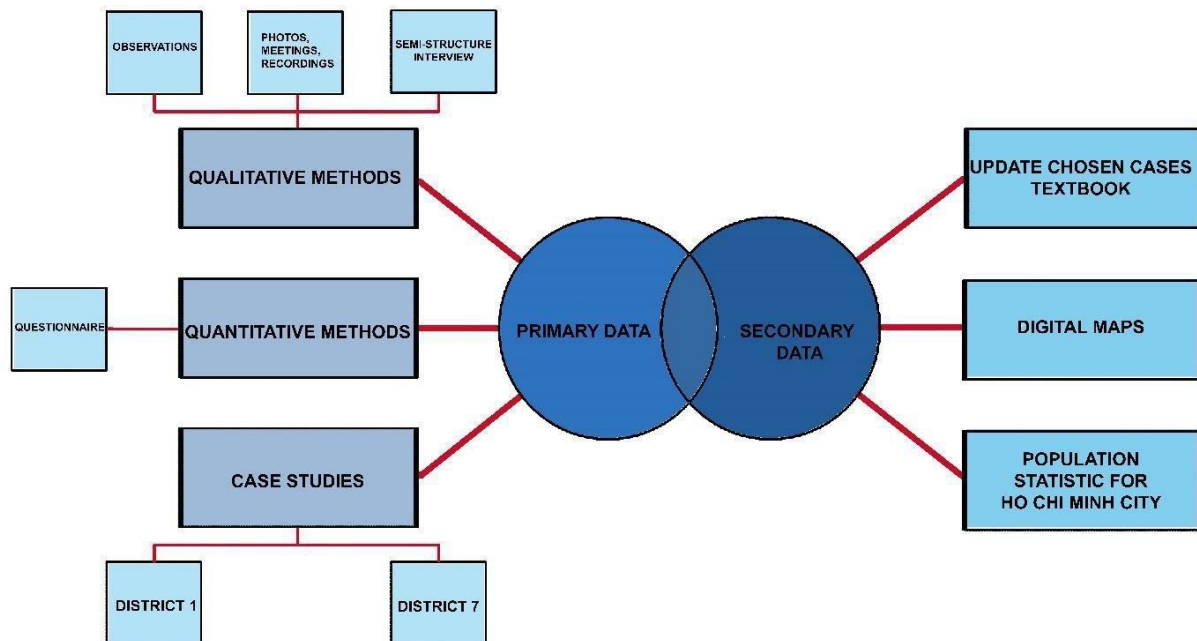


Figure 15 Types of data and methods of collection during the main fieldwork.

3.1. Primary data

At the time of the main fieldwork, there were many types of methods which were used to collect the data. They were interwoven between quantitative methods and qualitative methods, which were applied to obtain a high quality of data.

3.1.1. Qualitative method:

3.1.1.1. Semi- structured interviews:

By using the face-to-face semi-structured interviews as quantitative methods, the data was collected from the focus group of stakeholders who were involved in the planning design process (such as local authorities, professionals in planning, developers) as follows:

Interview with local authorities (see appendix)

First of all, I booked in advance with the manager of the central planning department, Mr Thao (Department of Planning and Architecture of HCMC). The first meeting with Mr Thao was an informal meeting. We talked about my research, such as how it was proceeding, the fields related to my research and so on. At that time, Mr Thao introduced me to other officials who could help me with the rest of my

interviews. For example: Mr Anh, the head of the central transportation division (HCMC Department of Transportation) who was the main management of the Nguyen Hue Street walking project; and Mr Cong, head of Planning Division (HCMC district 7), who were the main management of the whole of district 7, including the Phu My Hung project. Furthermore, I met with the Vice-director of HCMC Department of Planning and Architecture (Mr Toan), who was the main decision maker of all planning projects in HCMC, raising the profile of my research that enhanced the relationship with other groups (related to my interview group). In addition, he helped me to easily access the data and documents required for my research.

The selection of interviewees of this group was based mainly on the process of the planning system, the research aims and my own relationship with the local authorities (from the time studying at HCMC Architecture and Planning University, working for the government, as well as my father's position in the government department) such as those with Mr Toan, who was my father's classmate, so he was very pleased to reply to all of my demands for this study, or Mr Thao, who is my close friend's boss, which helped me to make some connections with other groups of interviewees.

I had a chance to conduct interviews with five officials (in both case studies). Interviews were mostly carried out at their own offices, but some of them wanted to hold the interview at coffee shops (Mr Cong and Mr Thao). This was because I told them that they could choose any place that made them feel comfortable to answer my questions.

I explained to each interviewee the purpose of my research, told them about the confidentiality of their answers and asked for their permission for recording. However, they felt uncomfortable the first time. After some persuasion, they were pleased to answer but I could feel that they were very careful when I asked some sensitive questions related to the management system.

Interviews with professionals in planning (see appendix)

This group of interviews allowed me to discover the professionals' perspectives on the planning process and the success of planning design. After considering choosing the interviewees by introducing the local authorities' group and my own purpose of the research, four interviewees decided to join my interview. These interviewees

participated in project design and applying for planning permission from the local authorities at chosen sites. Most of them were happy to answer my questions in places outdoors, where they could express their ideas easily.

After my explanation regarding the purpose of my study, all of them answered confidently when I mentioned about their design and their passion at work. For example, when I asked Mrs Thu, senior urban designer at Phu My Hung Development Corporation (see appendix) about Ton Dat Tien walking street, she was very excited about how it was before and after the project, why it lacked benches for people to rest, etc. However, when I asked about the procedure of planning design for these projects, she hesitated and was unsure what to say. Some of the professionals were pleased to be interviewed, whereas others were uncomfortable about answering particular questions related to local authority management.

All of them allowed me to record the interview when I had given them the assurance that it would not be used for third-party purposes.

Interview with developers (see appendix)

This group was interviewed to investigate their goals and the balance of their budgets when investing in general projects or specific projects as public places through the local administration system and the ideas of urban planners. Throughout the interview and my experiences of both chosen sites, there were big differences between the projects that were invested in by private developers and those by public developers. For example, when I interviewed Mr Nhan (private developer), he agreed strongly with contributions to public spaces as part of any project. He told me that this idea not only created a harmonious life for the people who lived in the area, with amazing public spaces, but also that this investment increased the value of these projects.

Moving on to the questions about the local administration for planning design, these interviewees gave slightly hesitant answers. However, they expressed a wish that the old management style would change after obtaining more feedback from their answers as well as my research (official academic research for better HCMC planning design). They contributed to my research with many valuable points to compensate for the lack of research and practices for planning design in general and for public spaces in particular.

It was very easy to obtain this group's permission to record the interviews. All of the meetings took place at their own offices. Any obstacles occurred simply because they were very busy due to their schedules, so I had to go through the question list quickly and focused on the key questions. The rest of the list had been checked at a glance.

3.1.1.1. Observation

I spent time at different public places to observe the diversity between two walking streets in terms of design affecting people's feelings, the main activities and the groups of people using these places.

3.1.1.2. Photographs

A variety of photographs were taken at the chosen sites and some potential places nearby to get ideas for developing public places connected with the main research area.

3.1.1.3. Quantitative methods:

The respondents among the street users were initially intended to be chosen from various age groups in each street in order to investigate their requirements. The method of this interview was to structure questions that were prepared for users by me in order to reveal general perceptions of the selected cases (Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien Streets). With this in mind, the questions were formulated starting from the personal profile of the respondents, features of street quality from the physical and non-physical dimensions, issues of the location and the users' experience, then looking at the physical and social notions of the places including issues such as security, publicness, leisure and design. Moreover, the final question for each interviewee was set in order to understand their own perceptions and experience within the country and HCMC and its relationship to the selected cases and public spaces. In that regard, 500 interviews were completed with users. Nevertheless, it should also be kept in mind that during the interviews, both with users and key informants, the questions presented in the appendix are only representative of the main direction of the conversation.

3.2. Secondary data

The statistical data used includes information from census data and development statistics for HCMC and Vietnam, which were taken from the Statistical Office in HCMC and from the Department of Planning and Architecture. The non-

statistical sources came from the Department of Planning and Architecture and the Phu My Hung developer, which included the design regulations, literature and documents held by local authorities, which show Vietnam's structure and hierarchy and the urbanisation process as well as the management system.

Nevertheless, making sense of these statistical and non-statistical data was not easy and could only be done by the people who could access the sources. For example, statistical data about HCMC was obtained after I contacted four friends and a manager from the Department of Planning and Architecture. However, they were not an up-to-date version due to the time taken to obtain these data from the authorities. So, I had to find out more from some other source on the internet, but the data was not accurate and consistent; there were many versions that could not be verified. Moreover, the non-statistical sources had both pros and cons. Normally, any design regulations contained two type of files, which were Word files and Autocad drawing files (digital files such as maps and map data explained). For the Nguyen Hue Street project, I asked to collect all the data for the projects; but the official believed that there was no need to give me digital maps for my research thesis. After talking for a while, I had to make clear my intention in asking for e-files by doing so for a long time. Elsewhere, when requesting the same documents from the private sector about the Ton Dat Tien project, things were easier because they felt free to show off their project as a part of their marketing plan to introduce these products to more people.

3.3. *Making sense of the data*

The previous section illustrated the whole process of obtaining the data for this study, which used various kinds of information from both primary and secondary sources. A variety of techniques can be used to classify and analyse the data after collecting them (Overton and Diermen, (2003). Hence, this section delivers the obvious perception of the methods, which were applied in this study to explore and perform qualitative as well as quantitative data.

While reviewing the data, I always kept in mind the 'so what' question. Hence, some of the data was eliminated to ensure data accuracy and avoid biased information. Moreover, the main purpose of data analysis was to explain and describe the existing circumstances of the design for public spaces and how the stakeholders are involved in these projects. Therefore, I had read some research to obtain a general overview about the most appropriate statistical skills to be used in

this study effectively.

Consequently, following Creswell (2003), my decision was to pick descriptive and theoretical analysis as a method to check the quantitative data, and to use depictive and thematic text to access qualitative data. The analysis program designed for this study is applied as follows.

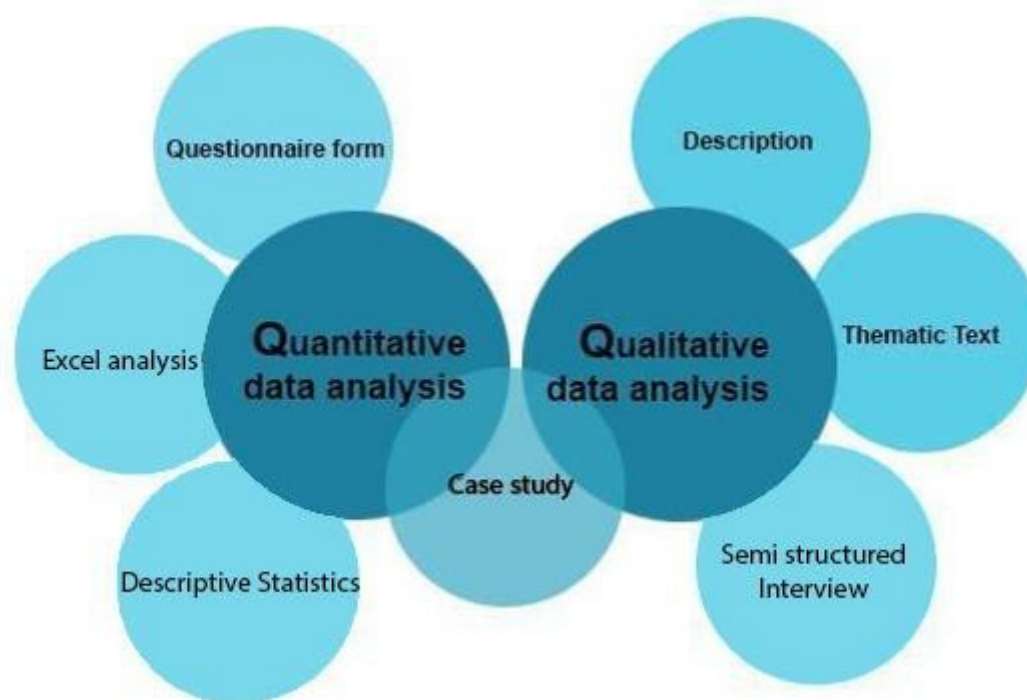


Figure 16 The analysis scheme

3.3.1. Quantitative analysis

The findings have used tables and variety kinds of graphs such as linear, vertical as well as horizontal bar charts for illustration.

Questionnaire analysis

After taking all the questionnaire, all of these fresh data were transfer into Microsoft Excel for analysing through tables and charts. Additionally, the using of five-points Likert scale (fused to the emotion icons equal to 1 referred to “strongly disagree” to 5 for “strongly agree”) are provided for gather information of users’ satisfaction on each prepared subject. The process of adding data in and out took time and need careful checking before finish them. While SPSS software is very useful to learn, the researcher has personal experiences on Microsoft Excel. At that

time, I realised that I just could use Microsoft Excel better than SPSS, so I chose the one I could use best. When this process has completed, it is very easy to present and analyse the data through charts and tables on Excel more than other software. However, it is very difficult to select the best analysis approach for taking quantitative data and the practical patterns for presenting results which are suitable for the research's purposes.

3.3.2. *Qualitative analysis*

According to Yin (2009), It is undoubted to note that the analysis process should give more attention on comprehensive investigation of the cases instead of attaching analysis for any particular items and aspects. In addition, as Miles and Huberman,(1994) claimed that words are the primary mode of analysis although it may perform in visual demonstration or by some narrative devices. As mentioned in earlier sub-section on this chapter, the analytical process was organised based on the statistics of the fieldwork such as visual researches and face to face surveys and then the findings followed on the appearance data as data-led analysis. The appearance information, then double checking again with chosen objects which indicated in literature review.

There are some visual observations which are used for various outputs, for example: photographs, street maps, street section diagrams and sketches as well. This visual information performs the quality of chosen cases from urban design point of view which are mentioned in the literature review as follows:

Table 6 List of visual observations

Dimension	Element	Output	Data Collection Technique
Morphological	Land Use	Street Map	Physical Mapping
	Building Structure	Measured drawings, sketches	Physical Mapping, Visual Observation
	Plot Pattern and Street Pattern	Street Map	Physical Mapping
	Street Scale and Proportion	Street Sections	Physical Mapping, Visual Observation
	<u>Floorscape</u>	Street Sections	Physical Mapping, Visual Observation
Perceptual	Place Image and Environmental Meaning	Street Map, Photograph, Text	Visual Observation, Interviews

Dimension	Element	Output	Data Collection Technique
	Sense of Place	Photograph, Text	Visual Observation, Interviews
Socio-cultural	Street as Public Space	Plan, Photograph, Text	Pedestrian Count, Visual Observation, Behavioural Mapping, Interviews
	Street Public Life and Street Culture	Plan, Photograph, Text	Visual Observation, Behavioural Mapping, Interviews
Visual	Aesthetic Quality of Urban Architecture	3D Drawing, sketches	Physical Mapping, Visual Observation
	Façade Design	Serial view, façade drawing	Physical Mapping, Visual Observation
Functional	Pedestrian Activity and Movement	Plan	Physical Mapping, Visual Observation
	Activities in the street as Urban Place	Plan	Physical Mapping, Visual Observation

Dimension	Element	Output	Data Collection Technique
Temporal	Street Transformation: Continuity and Change	Text, Photographs	Document Review, Interviews
	Time Management of Urban Street	Text, Photographs	Document Review, Interviews

According to Groat and Wang (2002), there is a very long and interactive process during the examination of in-depth interviews in order to recognise the key subject, cultivating a complicated coding strategy as well as ultimately combining the findings into a textual description for the research. This study has pursued the process of in-depth interview analysis concept by Kyle (2007), which are coding and classification of documents, brief and understand of meaning. While coding includes more than one keywords to attach a document section that allow later description of an allegation, classification requires a more structure perception of a statement, beginning for measurement. But these two terms are usually used correspondently. Talking about briefing, it mentions about the condensation of intention articulated by the interviewees more concise management. The meaning interpretation is offered after briefing the explanation of the interviewees. In order to engage a more inclusive and comprehensive results of the research, these three modes of examination and determination concentrate on meaning more than any other reasons.

There are some appearing issues after the fieldwork which were classified into themes, associated to the street quality signs. Moreover, the emerging data from the fieldwork creates the themes in each chosen cases. The final result of each themes is analysed in final chapter and in the comparison chapter.

V. Research Ethics

As usual, all of the research has to be considered about the ethical factors of their study. During the fieldwork, the information letter have been known as a mandatory duty for the survey, which describes the purpose of the study as well as the researcher's characteristic and the sponsors. Moreover, a short but comprehensive description was informed and sent to all of the participants involving

in this research. Additionally, during the fieldwork, the brief introduction about the study and the identification of the Ras was priority to provide to all the respondents. The researcher also uses both verbal and written duty to all respondents that all of the information gathering from them will be used for research' purposes. While some of participants as the vice-chairman of local authority or officers were please to involve in the research in secret, some respondents from both public and private sectors were proud to be part of the contribution of this study.

VI. Research Obstacles

In this section, the researcher will briefly emphasise and discuss the types of the main constraints that have been faced during the study process. These difficulties were as follows:

- Hidden nature and lack of clarity of the information: I expected to talk to people in confidence because the information was just for my research and it would not be used for any third party, but people tended to hide the facts to some extent. This led to some adjustments in the data collection motive of the key fieldwork.
- Setting up appointments with public officials and specialists: both local authorities and private sector professionals were very busy so it was quite difficult to set up times for appointments with them. Moreover, due to some kind of ingrained sense of superiority, they thought that they could cancel meetings without prior notice. At the time of my main fieldwork, the administrative system underwent significant changes throughout the whole country, so this caused delays to appointments for a while. Consequently, this called for alterations in the survey plan.
- Completing questionnaire forms with local citizens: during the fieldwork it was clear that youngsters were willing to give their answers and opinions more cooperatively than elderly people. Besides, it was hard to ask people to answer, unconditionally, more than 20 questions that would not give them any benefits back, because we had just come to the chosen sites and asked for their time to answer the form with only some candies and biscuits as gifts for their cooperation.
- Recording an interview using a mobile phone recorder: due to some sensitive issues, most participants from the public sector departments, and

especially from the private sector, did not agree to be recorded when they were in conversation. Thus, convincing them of this at the start was one of the key successes for the interview.

- Well-being and researcher's mental health: during the research, I felt as if I was swimming alone in the sea and did not know where my destination was. My mood went up and down many times. Moreover, because of my lifestyle, I just wanted to stay at home all of the time, especially in the winter when the sun was obscured. I just wanted to go back home because I wanted to lie on the beach with my partner or spend time with my parents. In addition, due to a complicated situation with my partner, I even wanted to quit everything and come back home. After getting married, I had a baby, which caused some more stress. This is one of the big time-consuming issues, getting away from stress, focusing on the thesis and finishing it at the right time.



Figure 17 A PhD's life

- **Secrecy of information:** Nowadays, the official information is more widely available, and accessible, and the level of transparency has changed to achieve a high level in Vietnam; however, there are some private and public sectors bodies still keeping information as the confidential documents. Even with the official letter from Newcastle University (both in Vietnamese and English version), I this situation still confronted me this situation. This problem happened occurred at the Department of Transportation and Department of Planning and, Architecture in HCMC. These Departments were extremely conservative about giving the providing data in Autocad autodesk format. The other situation occurred with the private sectors bodies who had a responsibility on for the design, for developers at of Ton Dat Tien Street and the, Phu My Hung area, where parts of certain statistics and maps were quite hard difficult to access.
- **Lack of consistent data:** in the same year, the statistics of HCMC had some versions from different sources of data.
- **Be careful of sensitive cases:** this issue occurred when I took conducted the interviews in both the public and private sectors with questions related to the management of the authorities, as the professionals that I asked were very careful when answering such sensitive questions, due to the worry concern that their answers would affect their job and that I may might use their answer for third- party purposes. Moreover, the local authorities were very careful when I mentioned about the management system and the role of administrators in circle a round-table relationship with professionals and developers.
- **Questions for structured interview been had to be prepared:** the time-consuming, I was faced face with was the preparation for the interpretation of interview questions in both English and Vietnamese.
- **Changing management system period:** at the time of the main field work, I had to face with the rush of the time- consuming tasks because this was the period for in which changing the management system was changed throughout the whole country (staff rotation, retirement and replacement of some positions). I had to wait for a long time while I had already booked these appointments in advance.
- **Representation and translation:** These issues of representation and

interpretation were caused by the relationship between the researcher and the community. As mentioned before about translation, it this raises the complexity to of the representation of citizens' ideas and feelings. While my research was taken carried out in my own country and used my mother language tongue, the issues of representation still affected the study due to the influence in social and economic terms.

- Although the research was undertaken in the researcher's native country and mother tongue, issues of representation nevertheless arose because of a distance in social and economic terms. 'Representing the voice of the "other" is [therefore] problematic, especially given the distance between the two parties: distances of history and geography, as well as of gender, race and class" (Kellett, 2000). Along the same lines, there were sensitive themes such as political interests, or special circumstances, such as family difficulties arising in people's lives, where confidentiality and meticulous care was required in treating the information. I tried as much as possible to use people's voices, to listen carefully to what people had to say and to try to discern the motivations behind what they were saying, and when interpreting to be as cautious as possible. Real names have been used to make people's thoughts clear, and because all the people wanted to be identified, clearly stating: "I want to see my name in your document".

- Translation issues became apparent when analysing the data and elaborating the first reports and arguments from it. "Languages are communication systems inextricably bound within cultures and different ways of seeing the world" (Kellett, 2000, p. 195). And in addition, there is are the politics of languages, in which translating may involve mapping ideas and meanings (Smith, 2003). In this sense, translation and representation issues were treated with care, and I attempted to remain as detached as possible from my personal positionality and subjectivity. These, however, are complex subjects that every researcher needs to reflect upon, always bearing in mind that there are different and parallel ways of seeing the world.

CHAPTER VI: CHOSEN PLACE: HO CHI MINH CITY AT A GLANCE

I. Introduction to Ho Chi Minh City

1. Geography

Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is the economic capital of Vietnam and it is situated beside the Saigon River towards the northern part of the Mekong River delta. HCMC is located at 10°45'N, 106°40'E in the south eastern region of Vietnam, and covers 2,095 km².

HCMC was formerly known as Saigon. It is a relatively young city that was first built 300 years ago and used to be called the 'Pearl of the Far East' because of its economic domination and prosperity, and cultural and historical richness, in the south of Vietnam. Since the communist takeover, however, it has experienced great political, social, economic and environmental changes. The city changed from a capitalist market to one where the state was the main decision-maker. Since the 'Doi Moi' reformation, there has been a new central focus of improving the city's image, thus the timely introduction of the new Master Plan (Ha and Wong, 1999, p. 301).

2. Population

The 2009 General Housing and Population census found that the total population in Vietnam was 85,789,573, a rise of 9.47 million from 1999. HCMC accounts for 7,123,340 residents and is the most populous city in Vietnam (VNA, 2011). HCMC is also the 20th largest city in terms of population density, with 9,450 people per km² (City Mayors Statistics, 2007). Ethnic Vietnamese account for about 90% of HCMC's population, while various other ethnic groups like the Chinese, Khmer, Cham, Nung and Rhade make up the remaining 10% (AsiaRooms, 2011).

3. Economy

In recent years, urbanisation has been taking place rapidly and vigorously in HCMC. The economy of HCMC has been growing significantly due to the 'Doi Moi' policy, amounting to over 11% in almost every year for the past decade (Le V. T., 2007). As leader of the country's economy, HCMC's economy is constantly progressing, and contributing the highest percentage to GDP growth. Developed trade and services, prosperous financial activities and an efficient economic restructuring transition and especially foreign direct investments (FDI) have witnessed many signs of flourishing. HCMC is the leading receiver of FDI in Vietnam, with 2,530 FDI projects worth US\$16.6 billion at the end of 2007 (VBN, 2010). Although economic growth has improved,

material conditions for a considerable part of the urban population in the expansion of the economy have not (Bolay and Du, 1999). As Bolay and Du (2002) argue, 'the number of poor is falling but the living conditions of those who stay poor are deteriorating'.

4. Urban form and structure and unique characteristics

a. Land use

Agriculture, forestry and fisheries were the main usages of land in HCMC in 2000; however, these areas have been adjusted and reconfigured for other usage such as residential and further development of the city. Since plans for high-rise buildings are already in place, less land is distributed for residential lots and this results in an increasing demand for land.

Table 7 Land use in HCMC

Year	2000		2005		2010	
Land category	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual
Area of natural land (km ²)	209,105	209,199	209,105	209,199	209,105	209,199
Land for agriculture/forestry	121,944	128,760	112,084	121,235	102,205	107,465
Land for specific uses	20,693	23,544	29,638	29,184	38,788	38,184
Residential land	22,478	16,685	26,782	19,438	30,747	25,475
Unused land]	43,990	40,210	40,601	39,297	37,365	38,075

b. Transport and communication

Before HCMC implemented the 2025 Master Plan, only one elevated railway starting from Hoa Hung Station and ending at Bien Hoa City in Dong Nai Province was planned by the city government, plus one upgrade project for river waterways and another project to increase the sea ports' capacity. Further changes to the 2025 Master Plan will be explored later in this thesis.

c. Housing

The housing shortage in HCMC is acute. In rural areas, houses are built with simple local materials, so the majority of the housing budget is spent on the urban areas. Since 1986, when the reform and opening policy came into effect, the housing sector has received more attention. According to Ha and Wong (1999), this sector has ranked fourth in the government's development agenda behind agricultural consumer goods production and exports.

d. Planning framework, legislation and institutions

HCMC's planning vision for the twenty-first century consists of the creation of a 'Multiple Centres Urban Structure', which is, namely, a plan to rehabilitate existing urban areas (14 districts) and expand inner districts (eight districts) and also to create a new urban centre in the suburban areas of HCMC. A public transportation system and road infrastructure are planned to develop to better connect the inner and suburban areas. The Land Law, which was implemented in 2003, has contributed to the improvement of land rights and overcoming of land price subsidies. Presently, the government is reviewing this law for further improvements. One of the changes being made is to authorise provincial people's committees to approve the local land use plans (Anson, 1997).

5. Transportation issues

With the large increase in FDI that is flowing into Vietnam, which has consequently resulted in a rapidly increasing urban population, HCMC has now become the largest city in Vietnam in terms of population numbers. Strong growth leads to a large demand for transportation, which has been met primarily by rapidly expanding private vehicle fleets (UMRT IP, 2010). An improved urban transit network is vital to meet growing travel demand, as with predicted continuing socio-economic growth in Vietnam, there is significant potential for an increase in private car ownership. There has been a rapid growth in the numbers of private cars and motorcycles on the road.

In 2005, the total numbers of registered motorcycles and cars in the city were three million and 220,000, respectively, and these figures are seen to be increasing by an average of 9.5% and 13% per year. In 2007, there was an explosion of motorcycle owners – for every two people one motorcycle was owned (Ash Institute/Fulbright, 2008). To add to this, there is also an increase in transport, as many residents in HCMC make more trips than people in other cities. As compared to Hanoi, whose trip rate is 2.0, citizens in HCMC have a trip rate of 2.57 and rising. With households who own more than one motorcycle, the trip rate is 3.2. It is then no surprise that with the ownership of private vehicles in HCMC increasing, so is congestion, and travel time is also getting longer.

The great limitations of the public transport infrastructure in HCMC also contribute a great deal to the transportation woes of the city. In HCMC, motorcycles account for 74% of non-walking trips, with buses accounting for just 5% (Ash Institute/Fulbright, 2008).

Poor reliability and quality of public transport are huge determinants for the choice of a mode of transport. Heavy congestion often results in buses not keeping to their allocated fixed schedules, resulting in commuters becoming increasingly impatient and dissatisfied with the public transport system, hence turning to private transport such as motorcycles for greater efficiency. Also, the road infrastructure in HCMC is reaching saturation point. Traffic planning is weak, and traffic management systems are inadequate to control city traffic.



Figure 18 Ho Chi Minh City, 2014. Retrieved by author.

6. Ho Chi Minh City, a city on the rise

Since the mid-1980s, Vietnam's opening up to the outside world under the 'Doi Moi' policy and its transition process from a centrally planned economy to a liberal market economy have led to a great transformation that brings huge benefits to the metropolis of HCMC. The areas in the south of Vietnam are those that have the most critically targeted range of remote regulated ventures, possessing double-digit development rates; a long way above the country's average. Today, HCMC generates 30% and the overall region almost one-third of the national GDP (thesaigontimes, 2017). Therefore, the city and the surrounding provinces are the most important driving forces for the economic growth and the modernisation of Vietnam. However, better living and working conditions as well as the country's highest living standards result in an enormous rural-to-urban migration into the region of HCMC. The economic upswing was therefore driven by a population growth of more than 60% within 15 years, an

increase from 3.9 million inhabitants in 1989 (NIURP, 1994) to more than 6.2 million in 2005 (GSO HCMC, 2006, Table 2). The population projections by HCMC's Real Estate Association forecast around 12 million inhabitants in 2025 based on a scenario with an annual growth rate of 3.4% (Do, 2008). However, these data do not include unregistered migrants and temporary workers. The actual population will far exceed six million inhabitants and even the estimations for 2025 have to be adjusted upwards to take the migrants in HCMC into account.

Land use and population density differ considerably within HCMC's 3699 km² administrative area. The rural districts are dominated by agricultural land, as well as swamps, marshes and mangroves. While about 600 inhabitants per km² live there on average, the population density in the inner districts reaches peak levels of 50,000 inhabitants per km².

Table 8 Population development of HCMC

Year	Population	Year	Population	Year	Population
1900	183,900	1954	1,723,400	1989	2,796,200
1907	228,400	1958	1,383,000	1995	3,555,000
1911	249,500	1962	1,431,000	2000	3,992,000
1926	346,700	1967	1,736,900	2004	5,479,000
1939	495,800	1975	2,377,000	2006	6,240,000
1945	976,000	1979	2,701,000	2025	est. 12,000,000

Source: GSO HCMC (2006); Do, T. L (2008)

a. Climate change and urban development in HCMC

➤ **Failures of current urban development**

Even today, HCMC has to struggle with already perceptible climate-related problems, the impacts of which have been brought about or intensified by failures in managing the ongoing rapid urbanisation since the mid-eighties. Since then, large parts of the city, particularly in the northern and western areas, had become built up (PC HCMC et al., 2007). This uncontrolled urban expansion and land use change brought about by urbanisation went along with an excessive change of natural land cover to sealed surfaces, the removal of natural retention and infiltration areas for precipitation, increased traffic volumes, and increased emissions related to transportation and industrial production. In addition to the population growth, the settlement area of HCMC has more than doubled in the past 20 years (Van and Bao, 2007). As a result of the mostly spontaneous land occupation, the adequate provision of technical and social services often lags behind in the marginal settlements on the outskirts, as well as in the inner-

city slums, causing considerable negative effects on the environment and urban society of HCMC (Wüst et al., 2002).

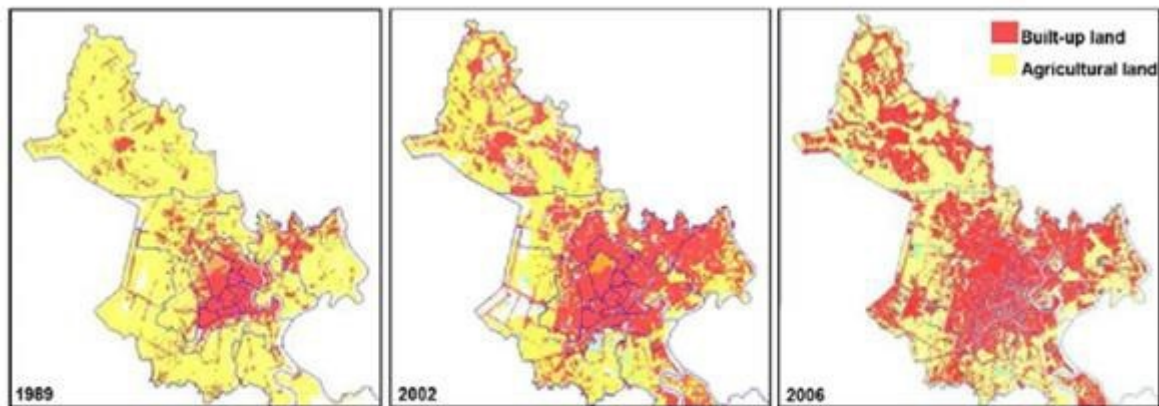


Figure 19 Urban land cover change in the central and northern parts of HCMC
(Source: Tran and Ha, 2007)

Yet even the officially planned urban growth largely ignores climate variation. For instance, in HCMC, most of the recent residential building construction activities are now focused on massive extension projects around the southern part of the city (Saigon South) and the eastern part (Thu Thiem). In these zones, entirely new urban areas have been or will be built on flat lowlands, mainly swampy land that used to be buffer zones during periods of flood (Eckert, 2009). These new residential areas are mainly affected by extraneous factors such as international urban design philosophy, and the traditional lifestyle and behaviour patterns of the local Vietnamese people seem to be ignored. Huge traffic flows result from the lack of social and commercial infrastructure, with working facilities close by. As is shown, raising the awareness of urban design issues when examining urban development is now carefully considered in order to adapt to climate change in HCMC.

b. Challenges for the future urban development

Against the background of climate change, it is necessary to carry out a profound evaluation of all consequences for the built environment of HCMC and to develop substantial countermeasures on all levels of urban development planning. In particular, the predicted sea level rise (SLR) can lead to a new dynamic in the medium- to long-term urban development, for which the current urban planning system is not prepared. One of the most outstanding challenges will be the adjustment of current land use management within the HCMC region to cope with the limited land availability. Due to the continuing population growth and the ongoing influx of migrants, the demand for

housing space, particularly for the lower income groups, remains very high. Taking the projected SLR into account, potential areas for future housing developments will be reduced dramatically. While a majority of the already built-up inner-city districts are located on areas with good land conditions (defined as areas 2 m above sea level and good soil conditions), nearly 50% of the suburban districts are indicated as flood-prone areas or at least as areas unsuitable for long-lasting constructions (PC HCMC et al., 2007). However, these areas in the rapidly growing suburban periphery pose the main potential for future building sites.

Both the compact urban structures in the inner-city districts and the large-scale urban expansion projects as well as the sprawl on the outskirts of HCMC demonstrate shortcomings in their resilience to the impacts of climate change. However, all urban typologies have an individual capability to cope with problems related to flooding, high precipitation and increased temperature and, therefore, they need a slightly different approach to adaptation. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) points out a broad spectrum of potential adaptation measures, ranging from purely technological measures like flood defences, the optimisation of urban form and land use, or the dislocation of settlements. Further, the IPCC mentions behavioural measures such as influencing human lifestyles (such as with regard to mobility behaviour or energy consumption), managerial measures such as altered farm practices and policy measures such as changing legal planning regulations (IPCC, 2007). Ultimately, an effective and successful adaptation policy will consist of relevant options for all sectors. Focusing on the built environment, the following approach generally deals with technological and implementation measures.

c. Road traffic emission

According to the studies of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2006), Ho et al., (2006) and Trinh (2007), vehicles were the main cause of air contamination in HCMC. As Dana and Hiranya (2009) stated, only 3% of the HCMC population use public transportation and the rest have been using private vehicles such as motorcycles. Motorcycles account for around 60–65% of all trips while bicycles account for just 25%. While cars make up less than 5% of trips in this city, which is fairly low, there is still a possibility of a sharp increase. According to some research, the number of registered cars rose from about 294,331 in 2006 to 493,300 in 2011. Public transportation just constitutes around 7% of all vehicle trips.

Traffic safety in the urbanised part of the city is a serious problem. Statistics on non-serious injuries and accidents cannot be trusted because of significant underreporting. Every year in HCMC, there are 800 to 900 road fatalities, while the number in Hanoi is 400 to 500. In fact, 70% of them are cyclists or motorcyclists. As is shown, the road network is not only fairly constrained, but it also has fewer opportunities to enlarge capacity in urban areas. There are many forecasts of economic growth, for example, with the development of the economy; private car ownership will increase day by day, but this means that HCMC has to face a serious traffic jam problem. According to the ADB, from 2006 to 2011, the number of cars increased to 493,300 and that of motorbikes grew to 5,519,000, an unbelievable increase.

Emissions are calculated by considering the percentage of transport undertaken by a particular mode of vehicle. This would imply that private vehicles (motorcycles and cars) would be replaced by public means of transport (buses and metro).

The results shown in Ho's (2011) research on HCMC urban road traffic emissions are evidence proving that the main source of road traffic emissions is the motorcycle. Consideration of the four emission reduction strategies evaluated local government's efforts and looked at the role of public transportation in reducing emissions. The results indicated that if the government of HCMC does not go ahead with these strategies as planned, the emission load of CO and CH₄ will rise rapidly (over 30% from 2015 levels) and the emission index of 2020 will increase by over 60%. For exactly the same reason, if the government of HCMC follows the plan to control emissions, the levels of 2015 will decrease by more than 10%. In 2020, CO and CH₄ emissions will also be reduced by some percentage points.

II. Ho Chi Minh City road traffic system



Figure 20 Traffic in HCMC (Vnexpress, 2014)

Vietnam's largest financial and economic centre, HCMC, is the city linking the southern areas with the country's other areas and with foreign countries. The demand for city transport is ever growing. However, the transport infrastructure, especially in the road sector, remains very poor and has not yet kept pace with development growth.

1. Inter-regional road network

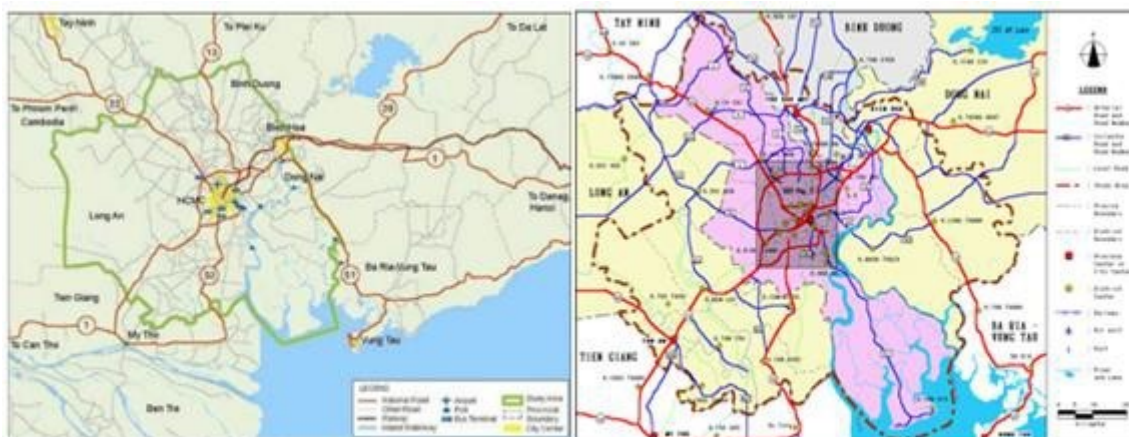


Figure 21 Inter-regional road networks and main networks in HCMC

Source: JICA (2005)

The current road networks in HCMC and surrounding regions are shown in Figure 18. Each road in the national road network either starts or ends in HCMC, linking the city with the surrounding areas and linking these areas with one another. The provincial road systems are of bad quality and cannot be effective connections between the centres of the districts and national roads.

2. Urban road network

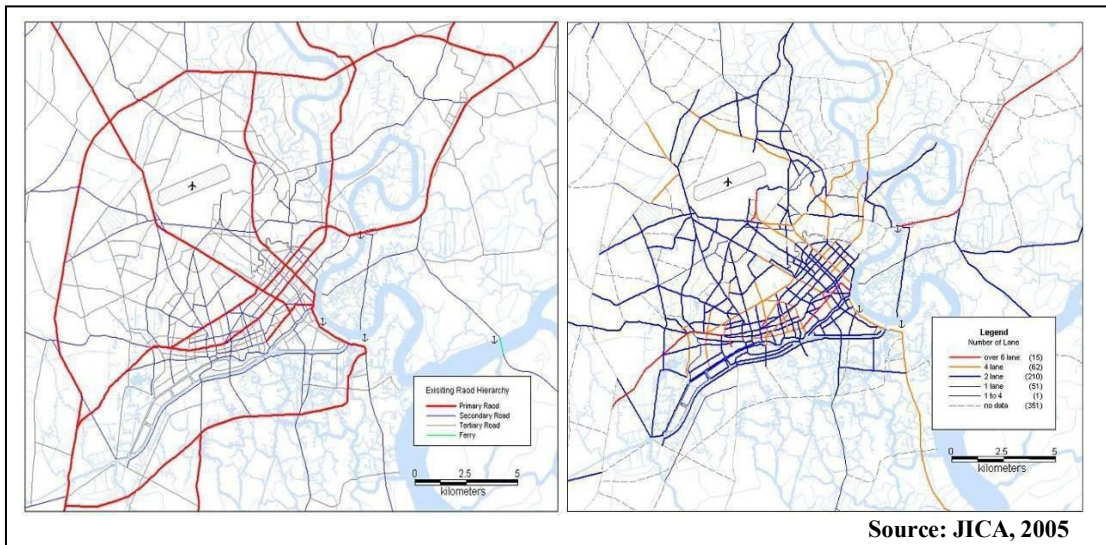


Figure 22(a) Main road network in HCMC (b) Number of lanes in roads

Figure 19 depicts the existing road system in HCMC. The full length of the roads in HCMC is 1,242.13 km. Most of the urban roads are two-lane roads as shown in Figure 19b. Very few of them are four- or six-lane roads and the numbers of lanes on these roads has decreased over a period of time. These facts have seriously affected the smooth flow of traffic.

a. Road hierarchy

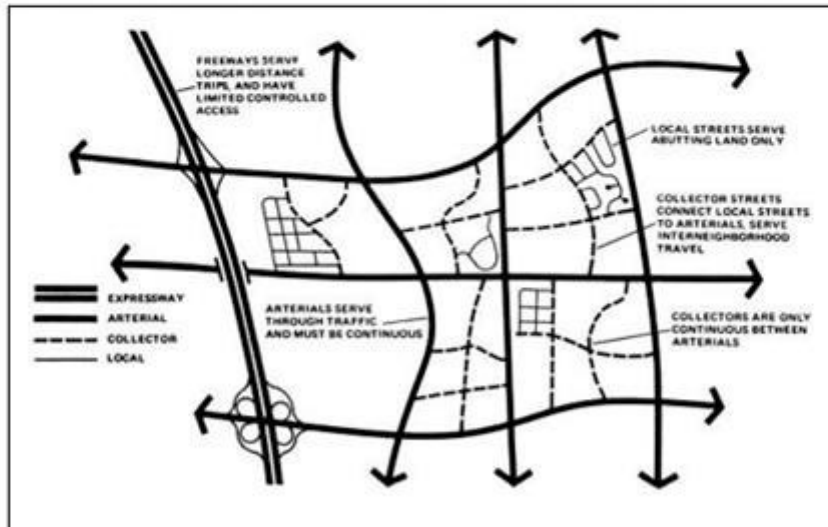


Figure 23 Road categorisation

Source: Access Management Guidebook (2001)

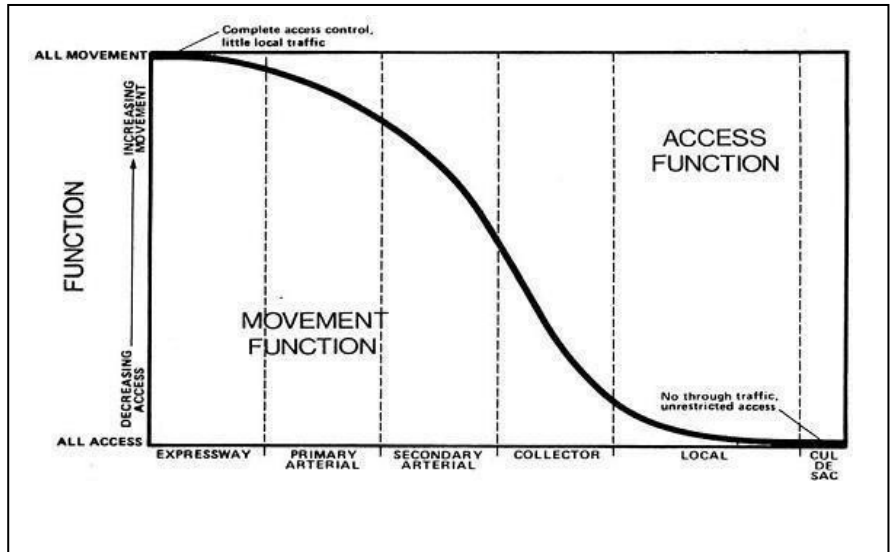


Figure 24 Road function

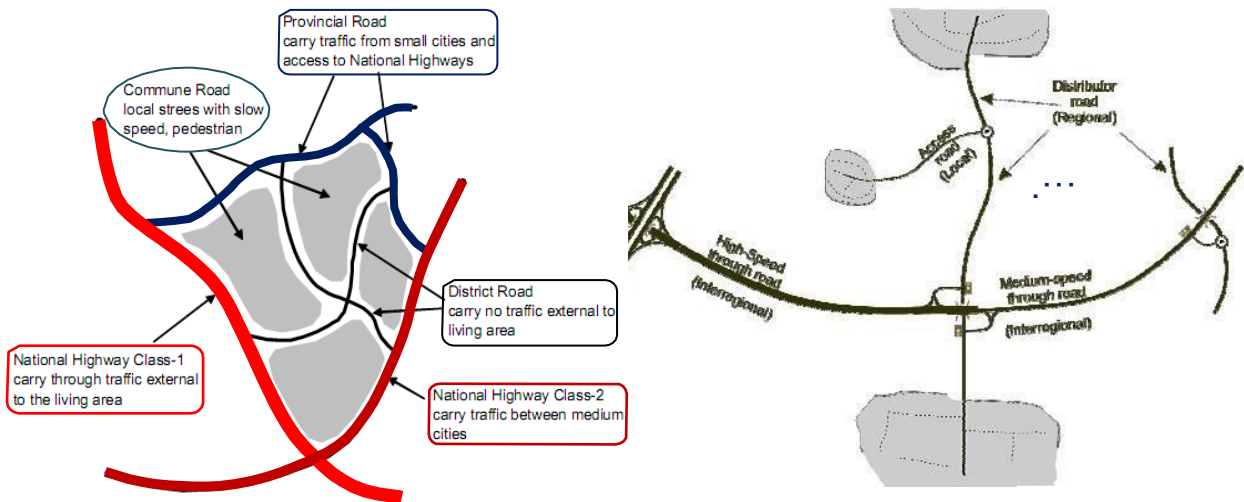


Figure 25 Concept of the application of road hierarchy / road categorisation in Vietnam

In view A, before urbanisation, there were only a few houses along the side of the road. Most of these houses serve as temporary accommodation for the farmers who were in charge of farming in those areas.

In this period of time, the roadway has a rural character; delays occur when entering or exiting the roadway. The experience of driving through the area is quite intense.

VIEW A



In view B, the increase in population has led to increasing needs for housing, which has resulted in spontaneously established residential settlements along the roadsides.

More housing and urban development and more commercial development has taken place, and the resulting side streets add more opportunities for vehicle to enter or leave the roadway, leading to poorer traffic flow. As traffic volume increases, vehicle spacing becomes denser and the average speed has dropped.

VIEW B



In view C, residential areas alongside the road, food shops and supermarkets develop without applying access management, leading to the addition of excessive lanes and intersection points resulting in constraints on traffic by vehicles entering or exiting the roadway. This situation can lead to increased vehicle collisions and slow the traffic. Driving through the area has become difficult.

VIEW C



One key weakness of the HCMC road network is the poor articulation of the road hierarchy (Figure 20), and this has become increasingly more of an issue as Vietnam progresses towards becoming a motorised country with superlative growth rates in motorcycle ownership, car ownership and truck movements. To rectify the situation, one important aspect is the enhancement of design standards by setting standards of access control and the functionality of roads in coordination with other parameters such as design speeds. At present, this is not considered by the current Vietnamese road network planning and road design standards, and as an example, Figures 21 and 22 describe the road classification standards in the USA and European countries. This has a strong effect on road traffic safety because of the mixture of high-speed through traffic, and the stop-and-go flow of local traffic.

b. The impact of urbanisation on road traffic safety in HCMC

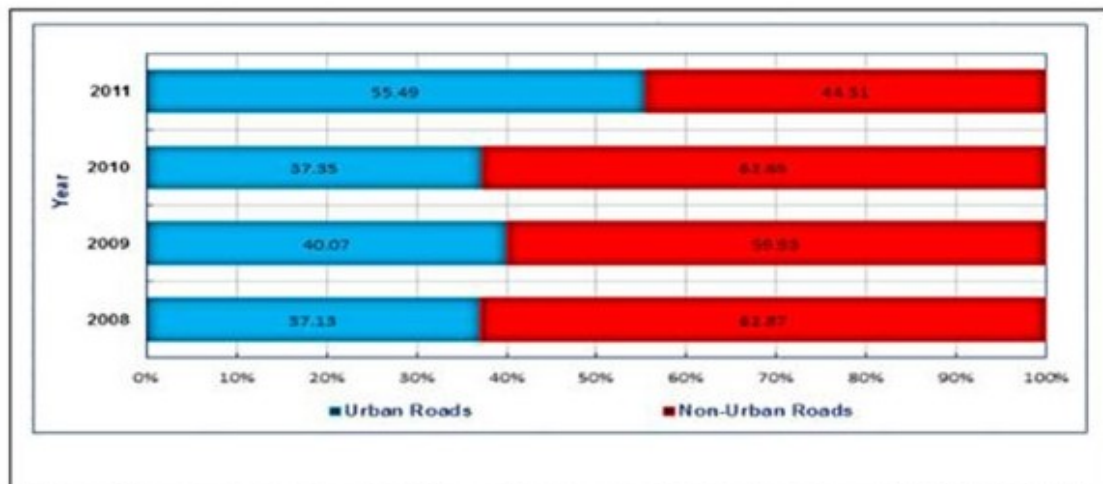


Figure 26 Percentage of road traffic accidents according to type of roads in HCMC (2008–2011)

Each year, HCMC experiences approximately 12,000 road accidents, including fatalities plus those causing injuries and property damage only. Approximately 60% of these accidents occur on non-urban roads in urbanised areas without access management. According to Nguyen and Pichai (2011), the number of blackspots on national roads and provincial roads has gradually increased in recent years. These blackspots are located in areas with rapid urbanisation.

The facilities of new residential settlements along the roadsides has increased the access to these roads, and therefore the existing roads could no longer function as they had been designed. In other words, the nature of these roads was changed in terms of function. Overall, the traffic situation became chaotic with more accidents.

3. Infrastructure for private motorised transport

As is shown in the figure below, around the world, the supply of road space and parking for vehicles has changed significantly nowadays, which reflects the awareness of many cities about the different strategies for private motorised travel. Most cities in Asia have less than 1 m of road per person, in comparison with Latin American cities and Western cities, which have more road length per person. Furthermore, developing cities such as HCMC (Vietnam), Bangkok (Thailand) and Jakarta (Indonesia) have a road length per person that is lower than the average of developed countries, while the USA and Australia have about 6.5 and 8.1 m per person respectively. It is important to note that developing countries just invest in road space for motorised transport, so new road infrastructure is inclined to result in additional traffic. This may cause an amount of traffic problems rather than solve the obstacles when predicting growth in

motorisation within the term of sustainable development (Global Report on Human Settlement in 2013). This is the case of HCMC in recent years. The investment just focuses on tackling immediate problems of transportation; for example, when traffic jams occur at crowded junctions, the city has built an overpass bridge in order to calm the vehicle flow in busy districts (Figure 29) (thanhniennews, 2014).

Taking parking space as an issue to illustrate, according to the report of UN-Habitat, it is important to note that the availability of parking space is the primary choice of destination in many cities. There are many factors which are used to control the increase of private vehicles such as available spaces for parking and also the costs of parking. Moreover, the restriction of traffic enforcement policies should be involved in banning informal parking places, which always happen in developing countries (Figure 30). Altogether, comparing developing and developed countries, the delivery of infrastructure for private vehicle transport has a big gap. While it is lower in developing countries, it accounts for a large amount of road length, motorway length and freedom of parking spaces in developed countries. According to Tuoitre News (2013), HCMC has to face the problems of informal parking in everyday life and even during some festivals when people tend to walk and park near the main location. Vehicles occupy the footpath to park informally and pedestrians have no way of reaching their destination, which may cause a lot of traffic incidents.

City/region	Country	Length of road (in metres) per person	Length of freeway (in metres) per person	Parking spaces per 1000 CBD jobs
Chennai	India	0.3	0.011	5
Harare	Zimbabwe	1.8	0.000	370
Mumbai	India	0.3	0.000	77
Ho Chi Minh City	Viet Nam	0.3	0.000	105
Dakar	Senegal	0.5	0.003	120
Beijing	China	0.3	0.005	24
Jakarta	Indonesia	0.7	0.007	175
Cairo	Egypt	0.1	0.001	115
Tunis	Tunisia	2.0	0.018	170
Manila	The Philippines	0.5	0.004	29
Shanghai	China	0.3	0.003	2
Tehran	Iran	0.4	0.031	22
Guangzhou	China	0.5	0.000	24
Bogotá	Colombia	1.8	0.000	3
Cracow	Poland	1.5	0.023	31
Cape Town	South Africa	2.3	0.051	298
Johannesburg	South Africa	3.4	0.018	221
São Paulo	Brazil	1.0	0.009	183
Budapest	Hungary	2.2	0.013	147
Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	2.1	0.142	1883
Bangkok	Thailand	0.6	0.013	304
Curitiba	Brazil	3.2	0.000	84
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	1.5	0.068	298
Prague	Czech Republic	2.3	0.059	48
Seoul	Republic of Korea	0.9	0.017	25
Athens	Greece	4.5	0.039	225
Eastern Europe		2.0	0.031	75
Middle East		1.4	0.053	532
Latin America		2.0	0.003	90
Africa		2.0	0.018	252
High-income Asia		2.2	0.020	105
Low-income Asia		0.6	0.015	127
China		0.4	0.003	17
US		6.5	0.156	555
Australia and New Zealand		8.1	0.129	505
Canada		5.3	0.122	390
Western Europe		3.0	0.082	261

Note: CBD = central business district

Source: Kenworthy, 2011.

Figure 27 Infrastructure for private motorised transport



Figure 28 Overpass bridge in HCMC (vietnamnews, 2014)



Figure 29 Pavement occupied by parked vehicles in HCMC (vnexpress, 2013)

4. Impacts of private motorised transport in HCMC

The major factor behind the development of private motorised transport in HCMC has been the individual flexibility it offers; it is getting to be reasonable for a developing number of individuals.

The visible preferences of comfort, protection and status proceed to make the private motorcycle and car an alluring method of transport in this city. In addition, the private motorised transport industry produces various financial benefits, counting coordinated work in fabrication, corrupt business in framework and administration (fuel stations, upkeep, moment hand markets, policing, crisis administration) and major speculation in urban ranges (street development).

Overall, a considerable range of externalities arise from increased motorisation in Vietnam, especially in HCMC. Taken together, these dwarf the benefits of this means of transport. Being heavily dependent upon oil, one of the most significant impacts of private motorised transport is on the environment. Increased use of private motorised transport also has various impacts on health and safety in Vietnam in general and in

HCMC in particular.

An advance externality of private motorised transport is activity clog, which forces noteworthy costs on financial productivity, as time wasted due to blockages decreases efficiency. In developing nations such as Vietnam, travel by private motorised transport is reserved for a small group of high-income (usually male) workers, and so its significance for women is comparatively minor. Be that as it may, this situation is changing, especially in developing economies such as China, India and, moreover, Vietnam, where women are increasingly owning and driving motorcycles and cars. The differences in opportunities between different genders is therefore reducing.

III. Walkability in commercial areas of HCMC in comparison

According to the ADB (2011), when they looked at the roads/streets surveyed for pedestrians in 13 Asian cities, the statistics showed that the highest number of pedestrians passed by commercial and educational areas. HCMC scored an average level of walkability in commercial areas.

1. Commercial areas

As shown in Figure 27 the typical value of walking capacity in commercial areas is 60.94%, which is the highest of the four different regional types. Nearly all the average parameter scores were 60% or higher, with the exception of the disabled infrastructure parameter scores, which were the lowest. This is not surprising: as stated in many studies, a good environment for pedestrians can provide positive support for local business organisations.

HCMC and Hanoi achieved different results in the investigation. While HCMC ranked quite high (72.84%), probably due to the general status of the walking environment for the investigated pedestrians' situation in the commercial areas, Hanoi (49.56%) achieved a comparatively lower ranking. The roadways and footpaths around commercial areas accounted for higher ratings in HCMC, contrasting with other lower ratings elsewhere, and good facilities for crossing the street. But then, because of this strict application, the spaces for pedestrians are constrained in order to give space for vehicle flow, which sometimes causes pedestrian 'traffic jams'. Some people think that the ability to walk within certain commercial areas would not affect walkability throughout the city. The reason for this is that most street vendors or hawkers are concentrated along footpaths and roadways in commercial areas of the city.

The capital, Hanoi, by contrast, scores poorly for people with limited access and the poor condition of its infrastructure with plenty of obstacles. There was no dedicated

space for street vendors or pedlars.

HCMC is well known as the 'Pearl of the Orient', with ubiquitous and bustling street activity and pavement life based on the widest roads and the smallest alley. In order to restrict the increase in private vehicle use, HCMC Department of Planning and Architecture and People's Committee have provided their views in a study on the creation of pedestrian streets, such as new policies banning vehicles, developing street projects and so on. According to their suggestion, some pedestrian areas will be established in HCMC such as Bui Vien Street, some streets around Ben Thanh market, and even Nguyen Trai Street, which is the most active commercial street, but would still be used just for vehicles travelling.

In addition, HCMC offers the best amenities, for example a lot of wide streets, short distances to service facilities, and shopping centres close to residential neighbourhoods. This is encouraging, because the city is constructing mass transit facilities, with low traffic volume, and the availability of crossing points scored high in residential areas as well as commercial areas. Moreover, it also has a high rating for footpaths and pavements around commercial areas. On the other hand, due to a large proportion of motorcycles, pedestrians in HCMC are being confined into small spaces to give way to vehicle flow, which has caused pedestrian 'traffic jams'. Furthermore, HCMC has many kinds of street vendors, which gives weight to the idea of designing for pedestrians with these activities along footpaths in commercial areas (Figure 28).

Walkability Ratings of Surveyed Commercial Areas by Parameter

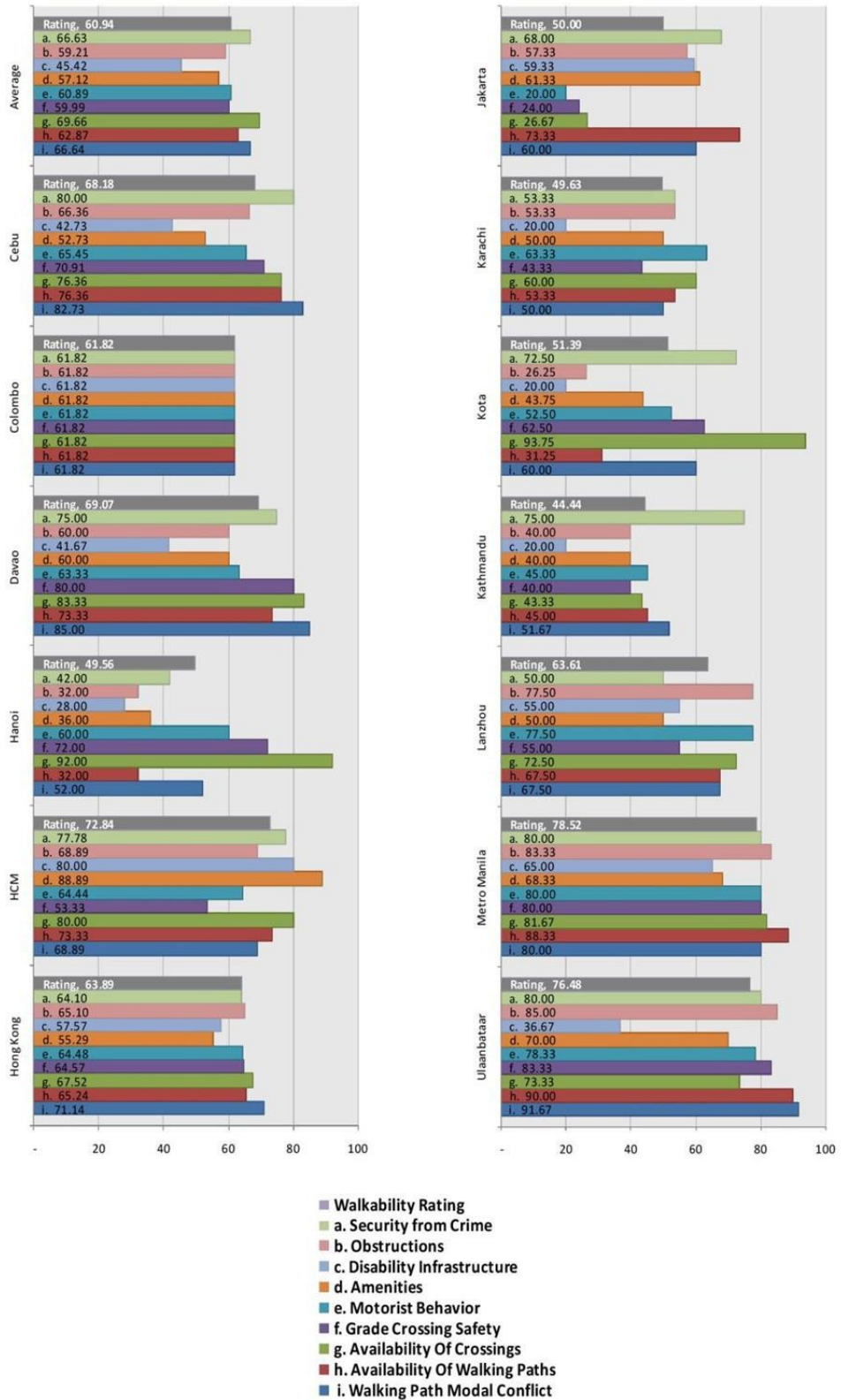


Figure 30 Walkability in commercial areas of Asian cities (ADB, 2011)



Figure 31 Left: tourists in a commercial area in Hanoi. Right: tourists in a commercial area in HCMC (Source: vnexpress)

2. Inadequate facilities for public transport and pedestrians

The figure below shows that in HCMC, many trips could be made by foot and bicycle because average trip lengths are low. However, poor infrastructure forces people to abandon walking and cycling and use motorcycles instead. The situation is similar in Manila where nearly 35% of destinations are within a 15-minute walk or bicycle trip, but the majority of short trips are made by paratransit (jeepneys and tricycles) and cars (ADB, 2011).

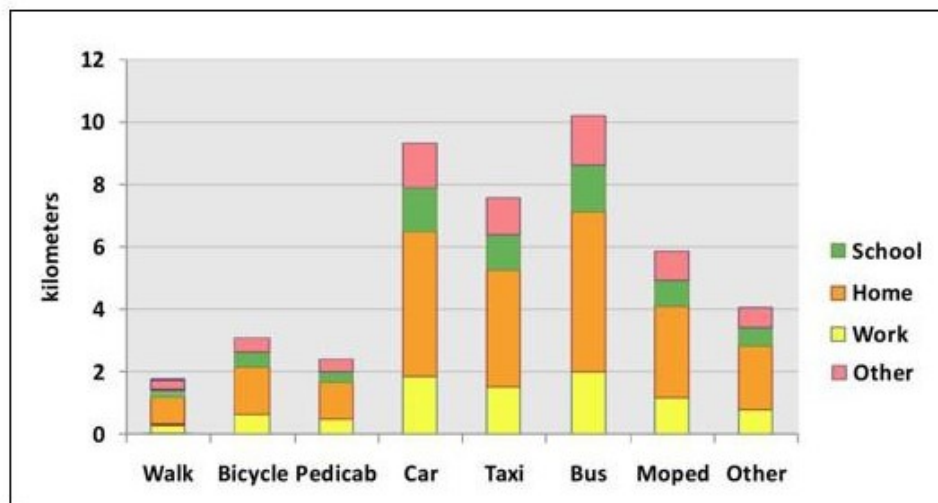


Figure 32 Facilities for public transport and pedestrians (Source: author)

Some pedestrians walk by choice even if they have the option to take alternative modes of transport, but there are many 'captive pedestrians' who walk because they

cannot afford or do not have access to other transport modes. Considering the deterioration of facilities and migration of people to motorised modes of transport, it would be apt to say that pedestrians are victims of policy neglect. A recent study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) on global road safety concluded that '68% of countries in the world don't have national or local level policies that promote walking and cycling' (WHO, 2009). The lack of such policies will lead to the sustained reduction of pedestrian travel, and a transition to separate motorised modes of transport.

3. Existing conditions of HCMC pedestrian design in comparison with other cities

'Walkability' is a term used to describe and measure the connectivity and quality of walkways, footpaths or pavements in cities. It can be measured through a comprehensive assessment of available infrastructure for pedestrians and studies linking demand and supply.

Some cities have undertaken comprehensive studies and city plans to improve walkability. Transport for London (2004) defines walkability as the extent to which walking is readily available to the consumer as a safe, connected, accessible and pleasant activity. For New Zealand, it was defined as the extent to which the built environment is walking-friendly (New Zealand Transport Authority, 2007). Abu Dhabi has developed an Urban Street Design Manual that integrates the concept of the pedestrian realm into overall street composition. Other cities, particularly in Europe, have developed plans and supporting policies specifically to improve the walkability and cyclability of the whole city.

Some Asian cities are changing from their traditional design to foot traffic, in addition to creating different functions such as meeting spaces, walking spaces and so on, which are illustrated as a distressed balance controlled by the car and characterised as a place without public life (Gehl and Gemzoe, 2003). Based on the inheritance of good research from other countries, HCMC has already developed and designed these.



Figure 33 Field walkability scores of Asian cities (ADB, 2010)

Most cities and towns in Vietnam do not have any pedestrian areas in the full meaning of the word. The first pedestrian space in Vietnam was created in the last century in HCMC. It was a small alley connecting two main streets: Le Loi and Nguyen Hue. But now, it no longer has this meaning. The characteristics of HCMC have developed dissimilarly from most other cities. Besides, in Courtney (2010), the rapid growth in the economy and population in HCMC will increase the demand for travel. It is for that reason that a sustainable public transport system has become more important than ever to meet that demand and improve the quality of urban living and the environment in HCMC (Figure 30).

To be a pedestrian in HCMC is to embark on a vibrant obstacle course unlike any other. The pavement is for much more than transport in this city; it is a marketplace, workshop, billboard, parking lot, yard, community centre and café all rolled into one, a public space that is truly used and experienced. Colourful goods spill out of storefronts onto the streets, while motorcycle taxis and informal street vendors in iconic cone hats toting their famous street food on bamboo poles contend for the remaining road space alongside numerous pavement cafés and bicycle repairmen. While informal street activity is found throughout the world, Vietnamese street activity is unprecedented and widely documented. People have commented that ‘buying and selling on Vietnam’s city streets is part of Vietnamese culture’. A visitor unused to this type of street life activity is simultaneously excited, intrigued and overwhelmed.

IV. Practices of public and private space in urban Vietnam

The 'public and private' organising concepts are said to be 'profoundly important' in Western social life (Benn and Gaus, 1983, p. 25). Particularly in human geography, public and private spaces are one of the deeply important issues that have been the topic of critical analysis within this academic subject and are less critical but widely used. Nevertheless, the 'Western' usages and norms have become the focus of the discussions of these concepts and practices.

Practical application in the West has been facing criticism and yet, despite the complication or uncertainty of the academic application of 'public' and 'private', their enormous descriptive power is still retained on a daily level. As McDowell (1999) argues, 'The division between the public and private ... is a socially constructed and gendered division' and, as such, examining the process of its forming at specific moments and locations is necessary. Here, this thesis mainly studies the division of public and private space or other forms of society building in contemporary Vietnamese cities.

These notions have not yet been paid much sustained academic attention in Vietnam; there are works emerging on public space/public sphere issues, some piecemeal work emerging on public space/public domain issues that are not systematic or allowing of a comprehensive analysis of complaint symptoms in the literature on Vietnam studies in general. In the last two to three decades, Vietnam has been significantly affected due to the lack of attention and access (except for Kerkvliet, 1996; Logan, 1994; Luong, 1994; Marr, 1997; Koh, 2000; Higgs, 1998).

Consideration of the interpretability and the abilities of Western academic concepts are the approaches used to describe and explain social background and development outside Western societies. For the purpose of enriching the context-specific image of urban social life in modern-day Vietnam and helping to understand the processes of daily life, it is necessary to understand the operation of Vietnamese practices of public and private space.

In analysing public-private tension in the Vietnamese context, there are arguments about the contrast between public and private space in cities of Vietnam,

both of which are said to be allegedly violated or glossed over from within – which means that public spaces are made use of by families and individuals for private activities to an extent and in ways that render that public space notionally private; and the ‘outside in’ – which means that the state’s interventions in so-called ‘private’ space, particularly in the organisation of domestic life, are so invasive and so wide-ranging as to negate or seriously compromise a conceptualisation of ‘private’ space. The focus of this discussion is on this transgression of the distinction between public and private spaces and will argue that they have social and cultural specifics that are important in distinguishing their practice from Western practices, however much it might be helpful to continue to use the terms ‘public’ and ‘private’ in the Vietnamese context. In this way, this discussion is structured and the examples and illustrations offered as a spatial metaphor, or in Lefebvre’s (1991) terms, as a spatialisation of social life as a negotiation between state and society, where the state’s power and activities are associated with the ‘public’ realm and society’s activities with the ‘private’. Howell (1993) further argues, in a discussion of the historical geography of modernity, that understanding the public sphere as public spaces enables an understanding of the ‘particularity, context and locality’ of modernity (Howell, 1993, p. 319). This part of the study expands this concern to approach the particularity of Vietnamese modernity via the interactions and negotiations between public and private spaces which enrich the context of the experience of everyday life.

1. Conceptualising public and private space

The inference in the study is not that academic terms used in the West do not resonate in a non-Western context like Vietnam. Instead, these concepts provide important insights when reviewed due to ‘local’ salient features of time and place. In this case, to notice that ‘Western’ is used here as an all-inclusive term is very important; although Western societies and academies cannot be explicitly addressed here, the significant differences among them must be acknowledged.

In the previous section, public and private are noted as basics in the West and are also apt to be used in a manner that refer almost solely to Western understandings and experiences. Even though the interpretation of these concepts has changed over time, in democratic societies such as the founding of the Greek republic, public spaces

have taken up a significant idealistic position. They represent the material location where the social interactions and political activities of all members of 'the public' occur (Mitchell, 1995, p. 116) although it is also clear that exclusion was often as much the norm as inclusion. Private spaces were the opposite of public once, perhaps its residual: while man (sic) made himself in public, he realised his nature in the private realm, above all in his experiences within the family (Sennett, quoted in Mitchell, 1995, p. 116)

Private space, in this conceptualisation, is the domestic space where social reproduction occurs more or less free from outright control by outside forces such as the state. Public space is the space 'out there' that belongs to the whole community, although regulated by prevailing social and legal norms. The conceptual separation between home and work also distinguishes private spaces and public ones. But this dichotomous and Western liberal distinction between outside and inside has been critiqued from several angles, and the concepts and practices of public space have been subject to considerable analysis and criticism (Lefebvre, 1991; Gregory, 1994; Harvey, 1989; Davis, 1990; among many others). Particularly, public spaces' concept has been complicated by analyses which argue that it does not always correspond to the public sphere. 'Unlimited space' is the Western ideal of public spaces, within which political movements can be organised and expand to wider areas (Mitchell, 1995, p. 110). In practice, however, the retreat is more often controlled and ordered where a properly behaved public might experience the spectacle of the city (Mitchell, 1995, p. 115).

In other words, the public sphere does not have to play out in public space: public spaces and public spheres often do not neatly map onto one another (Duncan, 1996, p. 130). A feminist perspective of the experience of public and private space has been formed by much of the critique of these concepts (see, for example, Pateman, 1983; Duncan, 1996; Sharistanian, 1987; McDowell, 1999; Wilson, 1991; Massey, 1994; Rendell, 1998). Feminist analyses are particularly critical of the patriarchal character of these concepts, when 'public' is associated with men/masculinity and 'private' with women/femininity, especially as the private sphere or domestic space is supposedly one of 'freedom' from outside impingements and obligations when it is

often experienced as anything but a place of freedom from responsibility and work by women. Indeed, private space is often a place of oppression for women (and children) when the rights of the husband/father impinge upon the rights of other household members (Duncan, 1996). The complications and historically cultural specifics of women's engagement with public spaces is more than the indication of the idealised public-private distinction, as studies of nineteenth- and twentieth-century department stores (Domosh, 1996; and Dowling, 1993, for example) and of the experience of fear and danger in public spaces argue (Valentine, 1989, 1990; and Pain, 1991, for example).

Recent scholarship on the street, as well on the increasing movement of public life of Western streets into 'pseudo-public' spaces (Mitchell, 1995) or privatised public spaces (Zukin, 1991), has allowed for a more nuanced and subtle rendering of the street as a space of distinguish between public and private, masculine and feminine and other social categories. For example, the work on the shopping mall as a domesticated public space by Jackson (1998) argues that even in these regulated spaces, accounts must be 'sensitive to the socially differentiated nature of people's experience of these highly contested spaces' (Jackson, 1998, p. 188). Accounts of the street such as that of Rendell (1998), who traces the early nineteenth-century urban male rambler, reveal much about the gendering of urban space and his mobility suggests gender and space's relationships are more complex than established ideas concerning the 'separate spheres' of the male public realm and the female private realm (Fyfe, 1998, p. 6).

Edensor's (1998) comparison of Indian and Western streets is an especially valuable contribution to this literature on the street, where he argues specifically that the social ordering of regulation of Western streets is culturally specific and not easily transferable to non-Western contexts.

2. Public and private space in Vietnam

In Western societies, the ideals of the public sphere and the realities of public space are not balanced. In Vietnam, however, there is little evidence of a tradition of a public sphere at all, nor of public spaces where such a sphere might be manifest, whether pre-colonial, colonial or post-colonial. Before colonialism, the village, its

conventions and its Council of Notables controlled spaces, not the emperor. These spaces would have included the village communal house (*dinh*) and the temple (*chua*), both of which were restricted in access depending on gender and status, as well as communal rice paddies (which were not farmed communally but were allocated for set periods to various members of the community deemed worthy/need, or to fund rituals for the communal house or temple). 'Public spaces' were not said to exist, with the exception of temples and ritual spaces that were often segregated, as noted, by gender (women using temples, but being barred from the communal house).

The imposition of French colonial rule (varying south to north from the mid- to late nineteenth century up to 1954) introduced the transference of Western urban planning norms to this non-Western setting, particularly ideas about the spatial separation of public and private activities and the need to create distinct areas for distinct activities: reducing what Edensor (1998, p. 209) calls the 'multi-use spaces' of non-Western streets to 'single-use spaces' (see also Wright (1991) for an extended discussion of French urban planning in colonial Vietnam). During the colonial period, public spaces were constructed and controlled tightly by the government and often wiped out local pre-colonial semi-public spaces, monuments and places of meaning, reconstructing or reinscribing them with new uses and/or meanings appropriate to and reinforcing colonial rule (see Wright (1991) for thorough discussion of this process in both Hanoi and Saigon). Little of 'oppositional social movements' were allowed by the colonial authorities to surface in the public sphere or in public spaces.

The post-colonial state up until the mid-1980s (1954–86 in the north; 1975–86 in the south) also engaged in re-inscription of spaces (especially public spaces) on a vast scale, even more intensely and widely than the colonial state achieved. Control and surveillance over public space in the post-colonial state of this period was also maintained tightly, and there was even tighter control over the public sphere through control over its organs (newspapers and other media) to a degree unattained by the colonial state, under which there were at least several periods when 'independent' social commentary emerged, if not flourished, as in, for example, the development of reportage in the 1930s (Lockhart, 1996; see also Marr, 1981). Visually, the re-inscription of the iconic spaces of the colonial state was the most dramatic

transformation, with the symbolism of the nationalist and communist regime and the creation of spatial icons of the communist regime (Logan, 1995).

On the other hand, until the socialist post-colonial period, the state had subjected private spaces to comparatively little interference. The Western concept of private space is, in its ideal form, precisely its freedom from state control and interference. Moreover, it is a 'jealously guarded' domain of patriarchal authority. Vietnamese pre-colonial concepts and practices of private space are not well studied, although in general the understanding of the 'traditional' household is one of a Confucian patriarchy under the absolute power of the senior male, with a Confucian structure of authority relationships structured as son–father–king and an emphasis on the subjugation of the self in favour of sacrifice for the family or emperor. The individual was constructed as a loyal subject (Marr, 1997). During the colonial period, French authorities do not seem to have been particularly interested in interfering in the household and its organisation except indirectly, as in through informal attempts (rather than state policy) to educate women (Marr, 1981). The post-colonial socialist state, however, has since its inception – indeed, since the formation of the anti-colonial Communist Party – actively engaged in reordering social roles and reorganising the household and family, mainly through social mobilisation campaigns; this process will be discussed in more detail below as part of the discussion of the state's interference in domestic space and life.

In brief, little of the public sphere or public spaces exist in Vietnam's history, a social vacuum that has always been filled by the authority of the emperor/state with little place for Western-style public discussion or expression. Until the socialist state (mid-twentieth century), private space has been experienced primarily as a space of independent patriarchal authority in the same way as it has been idealised in the Western concept of 'private'.

3. Inside-out: practices of private – public space in contemporary urban Vietnam

The contemporary state still orders the use of public spaces, but residents and other users infringe constantly on the more mundane areas of public spaces, such as the street. Streets are used for personal, usually commercial, purposes, which is

rampant in the cities and, although it has been attempted to clear roadways by periodic crackdowns, there is usually only a temporary, if not momentary, effect. The state no longer exercises the moral authority that it held in the earlier period and is no longer able to control rigidly the use of all but the most symbolic of public spaces. The usages of public spaces are becoming more personal: for example, spontaneous public mourning for non-political public figures; nihilistic and occasionally fatal late-night motorcycle races that are widely reported in the press, as are police attempts to put a stop to them; and encroachment for personal or commercial use (pavement stalls, the spilling out of wares from cramped shops and 'pay parking' for motorcycles and bicycles). Public spaces were previously controlled and patrolled more effectively: HCMC was renowned for its quiet streets in the 1980s, a description which a contemporary visitor would not be able to fathom, both through policing and through neighbourhood systems of keeping a watch on local goings-on. Now, perhaps these methods either hold absolutely less power over people or else the police are seen to be easily bribed or are simply more preoccupied with other offences and issues to put much effort into curbing everyday-level encroachment into the street. The state is clearly attempting to impose a notion of appropriate and desirable use of 'public space', but that is being met with considerable, continual, small-scale and individual infringements.

As discussed above, the concept of private space in Western academia is largely as the space of the home, to which those within can deny access (Benn and Gaus, 1983), the space where social reproduction takes place, where the necessary domestic tasks are performed to replenish the worker and make possible his/her next day's, next year's and next generation's participation in the workforce. There are also critics of this conceptualisation, however, and certainly for urban Vietnamese little of this reproductive activity actually takes place within domestic space.

It is important to note that street frontage is a valued commodity in Vietnamese property considerations, as it offers the opportunity for domestic and commercial activities to 'spill out' onto the pavement or street. Living areas are generally cramped; the living space per person figure for downtown Hanoi is less than 5 m². Hence, it is not surprising that the most visible manifestations of this inversion of domestic and

public space are some of the most basic, including outside practices of eating, cooking and bathing: outside practices that were or are common in other Asian countries (Edensor, 1998; Yasmineen, 1996). People often have their meals outside the home, particularly breakfast, which may consist of either some sticky rice from a mobile vendor, a bit of French baguette from the bread-seller or a bowl of noodles at a stand along the road to work. Dinners are regularly taken outside as well, at the ubiquitous 'Common People's Rice' stands (*com binh dan*). Even with home-cooked meals, children often take their bowls outside to eat while playing with friends (see Valentine, 1998, for a discussion of the 'lack of civility' traditionally associated with eating on Western streets). Moreover, people often cook outside due to the lack of room in most Vietnamese homes, placing their coal 'stoves' in otherwise public corridors, streets or lanes. This practice has a rural counterpart and perhaps antecedent: in rural homes, the kitchen area is usually located outside the living area of the house.

There are some ways in which domestic activities are performed unbounded by a notion of 'private' space. But 'private' uses of public space in urban Vietnam are even more often commercial. Appropriation of public spaces for commercial activities is visibly rampant in the cities and the pavements are lined with small businesses operating on what is normally public space: cooked food stalls, hairdressers, bicycle – and motorcycle – minders, petty traders, mobile vendors, vegetable sellers, tea stands: almost every imaginable small-scale service or product. In many instances, these are also very gendered uses of the street, as women mainly run these small-scale informal businesses, who are the vast majority of mobile vendors, vegetable sellers and food stall proprietors. Men's informal commercial use of the street is more often as a gathering place for the city's various 'labour markets' for construction and other day-workers.

The small services sector in the cities, in fact, caters to many of the domestic activities that a Western observer would expect to see done inside the private home: neighbourhood launderers, shampoo shops and hairdressers and cafés which cater to the need for space for sexual activities. The picture is reminiscent of Sjoberg's (1960) pre-industrial city with its communal water and bathing facilities, thus reinforcing that conceptions of public and private space have changed, are historically specific and

should be considered, as this thesis is attempting to do, in context. Sjoberg's model perhaps needs only the addition of motorbikes and karaoke bars to be a convincing stand-in for urban Vietnam.

Due to the lack of space for privacy in urban homes, even more intimate activities are carried out in 'public' space. The parks that are not gated and locked at night, as well as shadowed wall spaces along the city streets are packed with young couples making out on parked motorcycles and with sex-workers. This example also illustrates how uses of space can also be defined temporally: these areas are used differently in the daytime (for early morning sports or tai chi practice; as shady spots for mobile fruit vendors to put their baskets out, if they are not chased away by police; at noon, for cyclo (rickshaw) drivers or mobile traders to take a siesta) and at night.

Illustrations of the state's often futile attempts to assert its authority over 'public' space and impose its notions of acceptable uses of public space are probably as numerous as the number of city-dwellers. In a monograph on the notions of public and private property in the Philippines, Stone (1973, p. 1) notes that Filipinos have a concept of usage he describes as private, transitory possession or use of public property, where it is assumed that public property, rather than being the possession of all, belongs, in fact, to no one.

Public spaces' users regard them as being their own property during the time of usage. This attitude maybe presents in Vietnam but does not seem to be prevalent. I would argue, instead, that Vietnamese urbanites understand very well that they do not own the pavement they use for their commercial purposes, even on a transitory basis, although their customary use of the space may be defended against potential usurpers. They understand that their uses of the pavements are against the laws, but appear to feel either that they need to use the space in order to conduct commercial activities and are therefore justified in doing so, as long as they do not get caught or the penalties are not too harsh, or they are simply not persuaded that the state will be able to enforce the consequences of their illicit occupation.

The state, in other words, is actively trying to impose a concept of public space and respect for public space on an urban population which routinely transgresses that line. On the streets of the northern cities in the 1960s and 1970s, the state had a more

effective reign and the urban streets of those decades were largely quiet and bereft of commercial activity. This description is hardly recognisable in the Hanoi streets of the 1990s. Part of this contemporary effort to control 'public space' is the now-familiar attempt of developing country regimes to create a 'modern' cityscape. In this effort, a well-trodden path is followed by the government in attempting to control and eliminate 'informal'-sector activities, particularly those which are most visible and therefore most eloquently attest to the country's 'backwardness', such as cycles, pedlars, beggars, streetside cooked food outlets and spontaneous fresh produce markets, as well as to assert the ownership of the city's spaces by the entrenched urban residents, to keep out rural migrants, however circulatory, as much as possible and to make the city inhospitable to them.

4. Emerging pseudo-public spaces

It is clear, however, that there are changes in the nature of public space in Vietnam as the market economy develops. These changes are mostly visible in the area of leisure spaces. Once, for urban Vietnamese, the state produced and controlled the spaces for leisure activities, including parks, museums, sports facilities (operated by the various ministries to which they belonged) and the 'squares', in addition to spaces such as pavements, which were used for recreation activities, particularly sports, because other more appropriate or more purpose-built spaces were not available. These spaces were free of charge, although specific affiliations were often required: the sports facilities, for example, could only be used by employees of the ministries or organisations that owned them. These spaces were not necessarily in any way adequate but were the only recreational spaces available until the late 1980s.

'Doi Moi', which has seen the gradual introduction of a market economy, has, in addition to its many other social effects, made possible and encouraged the commercialisation of leisure space and the commodification of leisure itself. Leisure now is consumption, direct or indirect, where previously conspicuous or even moderate consumption of leisure was frowned upon and discouraged. The creation of commercialised leisure spaces is now allowed and encouraged by the state, where the primary activity within these spaces and indeed their primary purposes, is consumption. As in Western societies, public space is becoming consumption space

(Zukin, 1991).

An excellent example of this is HCMC's SuperBowl bowling alley, inaugurated in 1996 with a lavish opening ceremony. Bowling at SuperBowl is comparatively expensive in its own right, but more than half of the space of the SuperBowl complex is made up of a shopping mall, Vietnam's first, which includes the first KFC and Jollibee (a fast-food chain from the Philippines) to open in Vietnam. The mall has a video game arcade, a mini-supermarket, as well as shops selling clothes, cosmetics, CDs and so on. Bowling is the least of the activities in this leisure space: most of the Vietnamese who go there do so only to watch the bowling, browse the shops and perhaps eat a KFC meal which, for three or four persons, costs approximately the equivalent of one-third of a government worker's official monthly salary. Other types of leisure space are also experiencing commercialisation. As noted above, young couples use the parks and other public areas at night for intimate activities because of the lack of space for privacy in their homes, but this is also changing.

The point here is that all of these commercialised spaces and leisure pursuits now operate as private spaces, restricting access by financial criteria, not by Party or employment affiliation as some leisure spaces did before. These commercialised leisure spaces are coming to dominate recreational options. What does this mean for urban society and Vietnamese society in general? The commodification of public space in Western societies, through its replacement with pseudo-public spaces, serves to depoliticise those spaces: they serve corporate interests, not democratic ones (whether Western, socialist or other) (Mitchell, 1995, pp. 119–121; Goss, 1996). Thus, the predominance of pseudo-public spaces makes truly political spaces of unmediated access unavailable. In Vietnam, where such potentially politicised spaces hardly existed, this phenomenon may not be remarkable or problematic. Indeed, the state is complicit in this development, but to what extent the provision of spaces of consumption as entertainment, with all the advertising, glossy magazines and lifestyle input that these entail, will be sufficient to stave off any potential demands for deeper reform, remains an open question, particularly now when it seems that economic growth will be slowed if not halted in the near future. Consideration of these issues actually raises more questions than it answers but is important as a first foray into thinking about some of these issues in the Vietnamese context.

V. Summary

The use of the street in the inside-out direction is unlike the modern Western usage, both because of law enforcement and because of the rise of the motor car and shopping mall in the West, which is yet to happen in Vietnam (except shopping mall), but contemporary Vietnamese city streets would appear very much like the streetscapes of other Asian cities. From an outside-in direction, there is very strong interference in private space in contemporary Vietnam, unlike the Western experience, because of the state's strength in its ability to impose and perhaps because of the lack of a tradition of a public realm of discussion in which resistance to these impositions could be negotiated or mediated. Ironically, where studies of public space in Western cities decry the death of street life, Vietnam has experienced in the 1990s a sudden resurgence of street life and street use by pedestrians, shoppers and residents, as users become increasingly emboldened in their occupation of this space as an extension of domestic space, an annexation of commercial space and a space for personal expression. To some extent, slowed temporarily perhaps by the recent economic downturn, a convergence with the Western urban phenomenon of pseudo-public spaces has begun in Vietnam with the construction of private leisure facilities as described above. These are limited and still few, however, and the most commonly used leisure space is still the street and its pavements. Although it is clear from the preceding discussion that these terms, 'public' and 'private' space, have as complicated an expression in Vietnam as is now accepted in critical application of these terms in Western society studies, it is also clear that the reasons for this being so are culturally and locally specific and therefore need to be acknowledged in their usage.

to District 4 and Binh Thanh District. In Figure 34, both walking streets can be seen situated in the visible high-density area.

Judging by the distance from each street to the inner districts, the former surely is more accessible than the latter thanks to its favourable position. Being situated in the city centre means that people can reach it by both public and private transportation. Moreover, with such surrounding services and amenities, it is quite convenient for Nguyen Hue Street to become a regular recreational location.

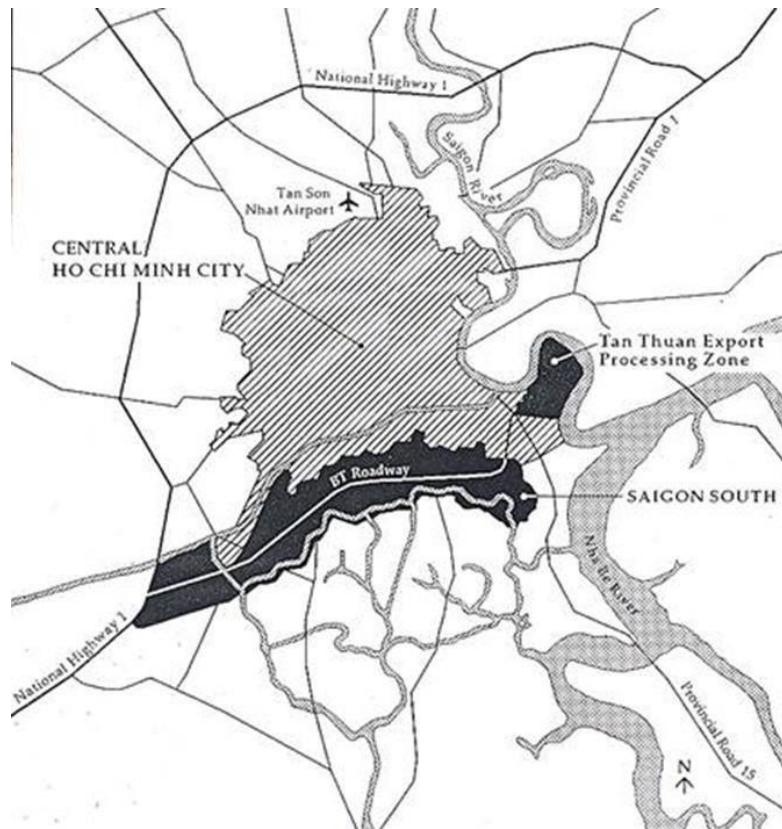


Figure 35 HCMC zoning



Figure 36 The two research targets in their respective districts/residential areas (courtesy of Google Earth 2018)

b. History and development period

- History

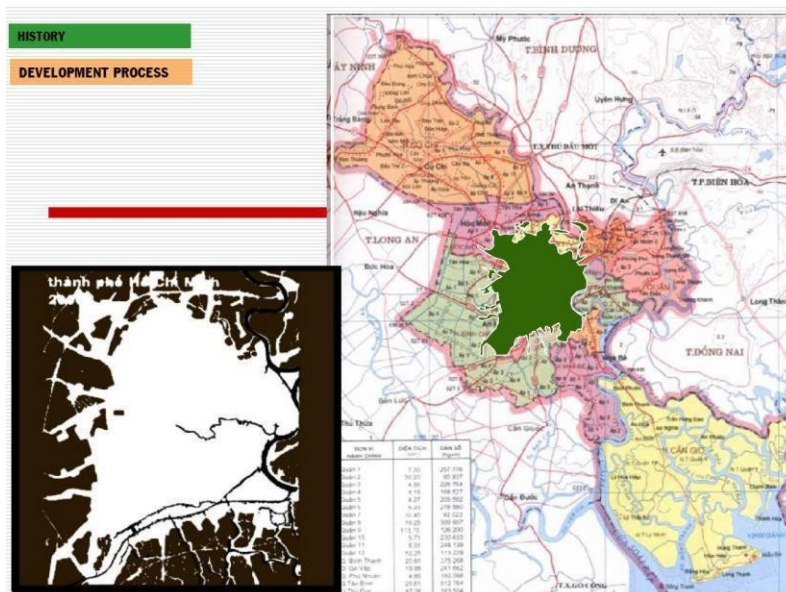


Figure 37 HCMC and its historical core

HCMC emerged as a large town in the eastern dominion of the Khmer Empire. By the eighteenth century, it was conquered by the Vietnamese forces and eventually transformed into the largest urban area in the south, consisting of two separate parts: Gia Dinh and Cho Lon. In the colonial era, as the French wanted to create a united capital for their Indochina colony, the city, called Saigon, received heavy investment through infrastructure projects and economic development. Following the Vietnam War and unification, with the new waves of migration from other provinces, its name was changed to Ho Chi Minh City and it continued to grow both in physical mass and population.

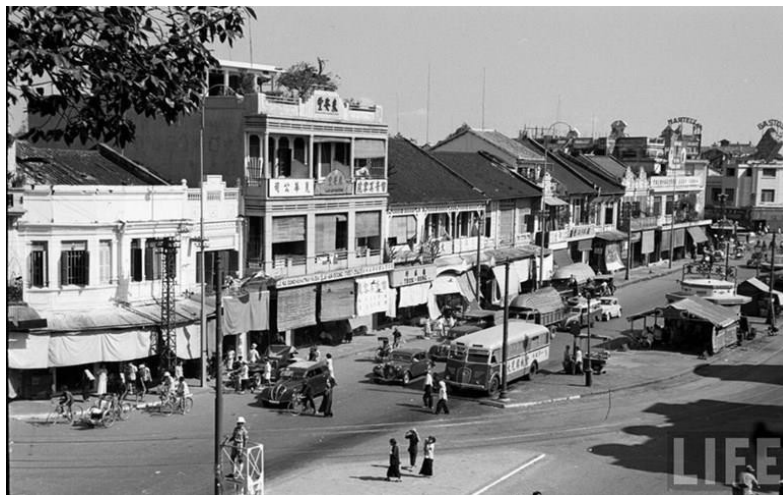


Figure 38 Cho Lon in 1950: French Colonial era (courtesy of Carl Mydans)

- *Development*

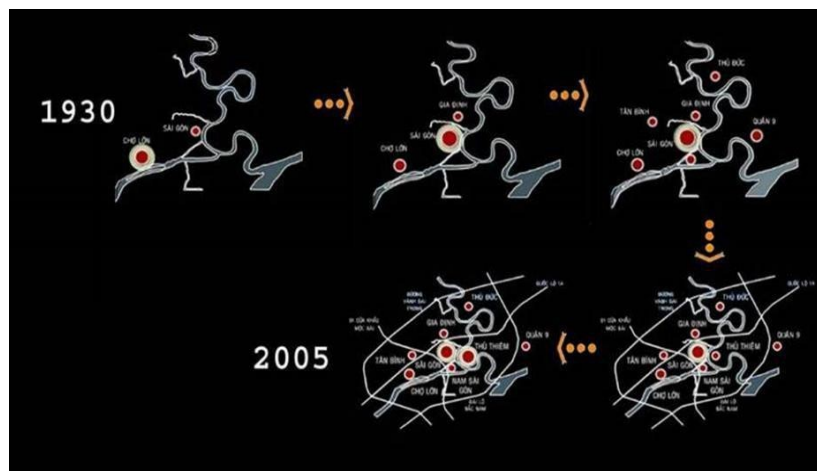


Figure 39 Transformation of HCMC

In the beginning, there were the separate towns of Gia Dinh and Cho Lon, where the Vietnamese and people of Chinese origin lived respectively. Over time, the military settlement of Gia Dinh absorbed its surrounding villages, became the famous Saigon and transmuted to the centre of the new metropolis. Cho Lon, referred to as Chinatown by some, remains a bustling hub for commerce and trade up to the present day. As time went by, more satellite districts emerged and moulded the city into its present-day shape.

In the beginning, the city was an example of Hoyt's Sector City model, with Gia Dinh – or later, Saigon – as the government headquarters, while Cho Lon was the area dedicated to commerce. However, due to unforeseen events, HCMC has taken another path. In the 1990s, HCMC loosely represented Burgess' Concentric Zone model with Districts 1 and 3 as the core business area. The adjacent 4th, 5th and 6th (Cho Lon), Binh Thanh, Tan Binh and 10th districts harboured such activities as light manufacture and wholesale as well as lower-class residencies. During the 2000s, the city government tried to change the course of development when they promoted investment in the new urban area in District 7 and later in District 2 by moving the administrative centre there (Nikken Sekkei Ltd, 2007). However, the Multiple Nucleus model is still pending.

urbanisation on the eastern side (General Planning of New Urban Area in South Ho Chi Minh City, 1994).

Milestones:

- *July 1993: Proposal from the international urban design competition was held by Phu My Hung Corp. to provide the most modern urban renovation project.*
- *July 1996: Infrastructure works begin.*
- *December 1996: Granting of the first 100% foreign investment licence.*
- *February 1998: Nguyen Van Linh Avenue phase I officially commences.*
- *June 2008: The project is named 'The Model City' by Decision No.860/QĐ-BXD on June 19th, 2008 by the Construction Minister, Nguyen Hong Quan.*
- *October 2012: The project won the Global Excellence Awards prize from the Urban Land Institute in the USA.*
- *June 2013: The Starlight Bridge, a small scheme within the Phu My Hung project, was awarded the Arthur G. Hayden Medal for outstanding success for bridge technology, demonstrating the view and modernisation of bridges of particular purposes. (Phu My Hung, 2016).*

Planning and land use

There are five urban development sites that Phu My Hung Corporation are in charge of, which lie alongside the Nguyen Van Linh Highway. They are:

- *Phu My Hung New City Centre (Site A – 409 ha)*
- *University Campus (Site B – 95 ha)*
- *Hi-Tech Centre (Site C – 46 ha)*
- *Merchandise Centre I Site D – 85 ha)*
- *Merchandise Centre II (Site E – 115 ha)*



Figure 42 'Before and after' of Phu My Hung Urban Complex (Source: Phu My Hung (2016))



Figure 43 Location of Ton Dat Tien Street In Phu My Hung urban complex (walking area)

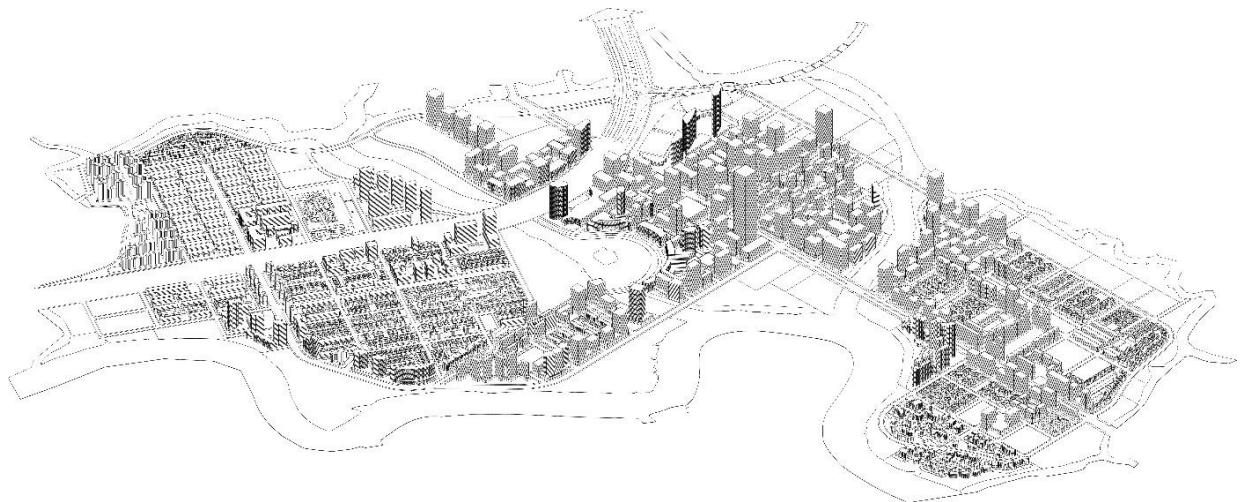


Figure 44. 3D concept of Phu My Hung area (government source)

- **Design pattern of Ton Dat Tien**

Focusing on building a trademark residential area, the design of the Phu My Hung area was influenced heavily by housing design trends in South East Asia, especially from Singapore.²² For many visitors, they do share the same feelings as soon as they set foot in the area. However, for people who call this place home, they are quite comfortable with the situation.



Figure 45 From left to right: Ton Dat Tien Street, Crescent Lake Park and Starlight Bridge

Therefore, the design of Ton Dat Tien Street faithfully complied with that spirit. First of all, the location of the street is quite advantageous. It is situated in the centre of a bustling commerce and service area, supported by surroundings of landscape elements such as a waterfront, recreational parks and a landmark bridge. It is no doubt that the street gradually becomes attractive to people. Functionally, its mission is to become a leisure connection conduit for residents from both sides of the canal. The idea of locals taking a walk alongside the waterfront with children playing on the footpath will definitely promote a peaceful and desirable image for customers who are interested in the property. Evidently, aside from the grandiose concept of constructing an ecological and aesthetical settlement, profit must be considered.²³ After all, the entire project still is a private one, and the success of developers here is the way in which they have balanced the benefit of customers and their own.

- Specifications

- a. **Physical features**



Figure 46 Land use of Ton Dat Tien surroundings

As presented in the land use map, the street is surrounded by low-level buildings (maximum seven storeys). The architecture is typical for types of multi-purpose building: the ground level is dedicated to commercial activity, the upper

level for offices or recreation centres and the tower levels are saved for accommodation only.

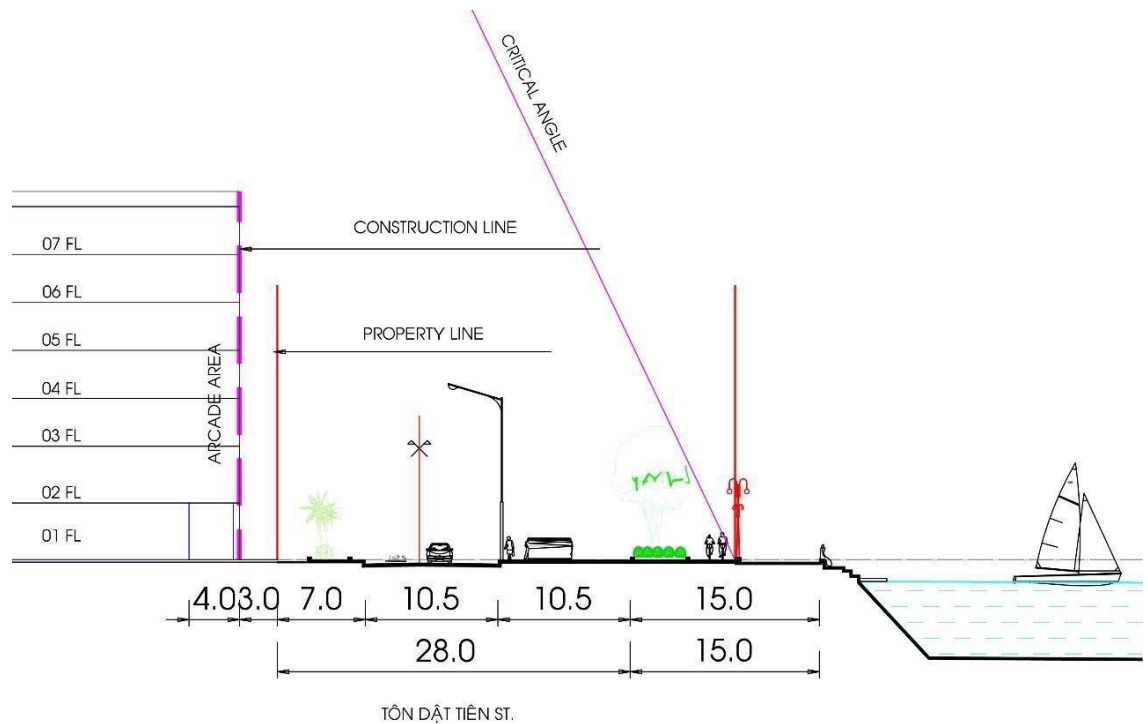


Figure 47 Cross-section of Ton Dat Tien Street

The street is designed with two different lanes, one for motorised vehicles, while the other is a footpath. Occasionally, there are small piers for pedestrians to walk down the canal for recreation. Every conventional requirement for street design in Vietnam is obeyed, from construction setbacks, critical angles and space for pedestrian. This is thanks to the master design guidelines of SOM, which have been elaborated thoroughly.²⁴



Figure 48 Ton Dat Tien Street: Playground for neighbourhood children and leisure space for adults

Originally designed as a normal motorised road, the street was transformed

into a promenade due to the need for a new leisure walkway. Even before the inauguration of Starlight Bridge, the necessity of a scenic path where people can walk without the hindrance of vehicles emerged urgently. The introduction of the bridge has linked two parts of Zone A that are still separated by the canal. The grand picture of a beautiful high-class residential area has been enhanced thanks to that idea.

b. S.W.O.T.

Strengths:	Good landscape and natural environment Well designed and managed
Weaknesses:	Privately owned In a fixed position Under influence of developers
Opportunities:	Reinvestment from new buyers
Threats:	Reaching its threshold of development due to restrictions from being a private property

CHAPTER VIII: THE RIGHT FOR TO IMPROVING IMPROVE PUBLIC SPACE

I. Introduction

The currently emerging metropolises in Southeast Asia are going through a rapid and global urban transformation. Their economic emergence is taking place in a context characterised by an exponential urban growth, a revaluing of the city by the political authorities in the region and a fast process of urban renewal. These urban transformations are not only architectural, but also economic and social: they result in reconstruction of urban morphology, reshaping of urban governance and renegotiation of urban practices on a daily basis. Social and political problems concerning the development of civil society in Southeast Asia have been aroused during these processes. This chapter introduces the transformation mechanisms of modern Vietnamese cities, which are visible from the pedestrian street level of public space.

It can be seen that the space formed is composed of the interweaving of competence and knowledge. This hierarchical space is suitable for those who desire to govern society's organisation through the ordering of space (Brenner and Elden, 2009). Moreover, representation of space is associated with formal knowledge and reductive practices, systematically extrapolating and concluding the urban problematic (de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]). Composed by the interface of competence and knowledge, control is continually exerted from those who operate tools of representation that compartmentalise space, producing a space of *savoir* (formal bureaucratic knowledge) and logic.

Here we find signs and characteristics that are associated with production relations and the kinds of order these impose through urban design for public spaces. The most significant challenge that urban public spaces design is facing is the interference by three types of people – manufacturers, administrators and users – especially in a developing country such as Vietnam, a socialist country. The interests and expectations of each interest group can become a threat to the elimination of the interests and expectations of the others. Economic considerations may become the key motivation in developing cities, prioritising specific industries at the cost of others, or equating the needs for development with those of people. Top-down solutions may also be applied in urban management,

promoted by elitist suppositions and bureaucratism instead of the actual needs of the economy or society. In addition, as stated by Madanipour (2006), each category presents significant challenges, because these are not homogenous groups and each group may consist of very different sub-groups and individuals with their diverse demands and needs. Thus, another danger is to consider all users as the same, and to summarise the characteristics of a particular part of society to estimate other users.

Therefore, the common challenge is how to achieve a balance and a specific goal without paying other costs to improve the quality of public spaces. In this chapter, the interlacing of urban designers and developers and local government are reviewed to rethink the concept of public spaces to fully integrate the urban practices and concepts in the field of urban design in Southeast Asia. The methodology of this part relied on face-to-face semi-structured interviews and follow-up case studies, which were chosen so that we can understand the interweaving between the three roles, and as a means to examine best practice for public space in a developing country.

II. The negotiation of public spaces under the urban transition process in Vietnam

1. Overview

Many urban public spaces in developing countries are under the threat of rising values of urban land or fragmentation caused by urban reconstruction and change. With such reduction, or even disappearance, the public space of the modern city has not gone un lamented. Just like colonial planners in Southeast Asia, who emphasised the demand for open spaces in densely populated and crowded cities, so as Hee and Ooi (2003) proposed, today's planners are increasingly demanding both urban land and public spaces. An extensive theoretical discourse about landscape spatial design and their implications for individuals and communities recognises the powerful and the role of power, not only in forming these meanings but also in constructing them. As stated by Pham (2005), in cities that are planned by a powerful developmental state like Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), this has become autonomous. From the understanding of the public space's social meaning, it is the combination of reflexive individuals modelling public space, rather than the idealistic manipulations of the powerful.

In the context of Vietnam, it can be assumed that the process of

urbanisation is considered as a national vision project that involves discussion, resistance and compromise among government and government agencies at all levels and non- government organisations such as firms and foreign enterprises that are driven by broad political, social and developmental goals directed towards economic growth, poverty reduction and creation of a worthwhile society. The activation process of this urban project involves the state in defining and planning urban space organisation, regulating and enforcing these regulations through supervision and implementation in an attempt to be consistent with government representatives of rural and urban space (McGee, 2009).

However, the urbanisation process in Vietnam has brought together many people, who may be private persons, families and socio-economic groups. The interaction of these people runs throughout a nested hierarchy of the management system of central, province, district, ward and commune government, and people will engage in negotiation, resistance and compromise about their rights or optimal benefits. Moreover, the urbanisation process in Vietnam comprises two main types: 'invisible urbanisation'¹⁰ in the urban margins and 'people-led urbanisation'.

In the early stages of Vietnam's urbanisation process, there were significant differences in local government policy between the urban and rural populations. But the state's role in the development of urbanisation has changed since the start of the 1990s as Vietnam has integrated more rapidly into the process of global economic integration and accelerated market reforms, particularly focusing on new rising land markets linked with the acknowledgement of individual access to land. As an integral part of the modernisation process, the country (including central, provincial and city units) has played an important part by working out a programme to reorganise the urban system, decentralising fiscal control from central to urban units, reclassifying administrative units in both rural and urban areas, improving urban infrastructure by using foreign loans and aid, and attracting foreign direct investment in industrial fields and the building environment.

Logan and Moloth (1987) argued that there is a potential tension between use value and exchange value. For some who use the place to satisfy essential

¹⁰ The Such areas are established by attracting people from surrounding areas spontaneously and become becoming the urban places which that do not follow the orientation of urban planning, and does not have any plan for future development. These places have some suitable criteria fixed with by the urban places' requirements themselves.

daily needs, place represents residence; for others who strive for financial return, place represents a commodity for buying, selling or renting. In fact, urban structures impact greatly on framing actions of urban developers or investors. The conception of commercialisation of space and resources flowing into the building environment are of vital significance to the urban research process. For example, according to Yoshinobu Ashihara (1989), dimensions of buildings and streets such as heights and widths are also key factors to focus on when designing.

He also found that, with D as the width of street and H as building's height, if D is greater than H ($D/H > 1$), the sense of displacement will be enhanced, while the sense of becoming close will be generated when the ratio D/H is less than 1. When the value of D/H is about 1, this will balance the space to create a sense of security and comfort. Nguyen Hue Pedestrian Street in HCMC was made differently to any urban design theory due to the value of the project's location. This project is situated among the most expensive places in HCMC where the developers or investors want to get the most benefit from it; thus, the local authority has to give them the right to build high-rise buildings that totally contravene planning regulations. Lefebvre proposed the conception of the spatial production: 'space as a social and political product, space as a product that one buys and sells' (Burgel et al., 1987). On account of the concept that commodities are essential for analysing capitalist order, this is expanded into space to entangle the natural environment in the entire capitalist production system. Accordingly, in 1991, Lefebvre pointed out that the environmental and social organisation as well as the urban layout all depend on the spatial production and its role in the reconstruction of socio-economic forms.

Integration of actors such as urban developers or investors and incoming events taking place in these public areas highlight the designers' role, which contributes greatly to the urban development process. Thus, it shows very clearly that designers' roles and interests cannot be studied independently of this process. Evidence for this argument are the frequent changes of design in urban master plans' preparation and implementation.

Whether based on technical or investment and operating policy considerations, a design can also be altered even after the formal design has been approved by the authority, indicating the necessity of compromise. Designers' efforts are only one part of an interactive process that involves a large number of

actors in a complex sequence of events (Madanipour, 1996).

2. Vietnamese authoritarianism facing an exponential increase of mobilities

HCMC's urbanisation has been accompanied by an explosion in urban mobility. According to Gubry (2008) and Gubry and Le (2010), this is because of the emergence of and daily commutes of new urban residents coming from surrounding rural areas or more distant provinces to the urban area. There are many processes that promote the increase of these communities and daily mobilities, starting from the urban planning scheme – which means frequent unwanted displacements of residents – but also the development of new residential real estate in the urban suburbs and the new cohabitation practice of youngsters. In addition, as proposed by Gibert (2014), land investment strategies are also responsible for residential mobilities. These different kinds of mobilities are conducive to social changes at the community level, where an advanced personalisation of lifestyles can be observed, combined with a growing extraversion of communities. These evolutions challenge the socio-economic balance of ancient local communities and often lead to contradictory effects in daily negotiations between the residents and the government.

In addition, new residents of the area are often seen to be settled directly from the district government, as they benefit from adequate social capital. In this way, the local and daily figure of the street or hamlet chief is easily overlooked, and sometimes even suspected.

According to Lahire (1998), under the background of increasing mobilities, urban residents in Vietnam have become more 'pluralist', and have the ability to navigate among various social fields and urban spaces, and wish to be more anonymous, not least if they need to be vital to the political system. Paradoxically, the places where political debates take place today are usually related to legally private spaces, where anonymity is more secure and away from local monitoring systems (Hogan et al., 2012). These places are often shopping malls or cafés, where city residents can enjoy some liberty of behaviour and speech in comparison with nearby areas. This is because most shopping malls are outside the territory subject to their rules. These new urban practices sometimes challenge the effectiveness of local monitoring systems, based on unions and local leaders.

3. Towards the privatisation of urban production: a challenge for inherited management structures

The private condition of shopping centres is also an issue in terms of the larger city scale, with the quantity of new urbanised areas (khu đô thị mới) multiplying, such as large-scale projects, which exemplify both the privatisation and internationalisation of the urban structure in Vietnam. HCMC's new district – Phu My Hung, which is also known as Saigon South – is a prime example of this trend. The developer who planned and constructed the Saigon South project is a Taiwanese–Vietnamese joint venture, who started the planning of 3,300 ha of land in District 7 from 1993 under the slogan 'urban civilisation – people-centred community'. Saigon South is considered a separate part of the city, where residential areas are made up of high-rise buildings, luxury villas and business centres, as well as office buildings, education and entertainment facilities. The process of urbanisation in the region consists of major roads and functional subdivisions of various activities. This is the shared privatisation process that characterises this large project: the location of the city and the planning and managing of stakeholders in the area are the responsibility of the private sector. This newly developed area is for the upper classes only: the real estate products offered are very selective and there is no provision of public housing.

While not entirely enclosed or isolated from the local environment, this new urbanised area is being multiplied, meaning that most urban areas are no longer directly governed by public or classic infra-public stakeholders. This is an example for new craft and industrial parks on the outskirts of the city. The sub-systems of local government and their representatives are absent, at least initially, and mass organisations also struggle to settle down there. With regard to daily management, city services or related community relationships draw one's attention; they are basically administered by 'management committees' established by the developers and investors of the area. New forms of local organisations are being invented and established, only marginally controlled by the public authorities. This privatisation of urban production challenges the previous socialist control over territory. The control structures of these new urbanised areas serve a neo-liberal order without contributing to freeing citizens from state oversight or to collective claims.

Mass organisations also compete against the increase in autonomous associations, such as alumni networks or professional and entertainment organisations that link overseas members together for the common good. Even in rural communities, numerous associations have sprung up and formed alternative places for discussion, informal gatherings, mutual support or the building of social capital outside the old framework of the socialist system. As stated by Russel Dalton and Nhu Ngoc Ong (2003), ‘since opposition political parties are prohibited, these non-political groups might serve as outlets for casual political discussion with fewer chances of being accused of law-breaking’.

The growth of the internet and online social networking platforms has also fostered connections between people and engagement in a way that emancipates people from local control, although the government is still conducting censorship and daily surveillance. As stated by Endres (2001) and DiGregorio (2007), in addition to this social control that is inherited from the socialist period, not only have new autonomous groups emerged, but also pre-socialist customs and religious etiquette have re-emerged, and have been massively invested in by local communities. Religious activities that were banned in the time of the socialisation of the New Man – like the Buddhist commemoration of tutelary genies – have been enormously successful and have proposed an alternative value system.

4. A view from Ho Chi Minh City’s public space (pedestrian streets)

Urban public space forms an interesting angle from which to observe the development of urban living styles and citizenship. Paradoxically, this object of study only found a true place in urban research field in the late 1990s, at the time that the quality and vibrancy of these public spaces seemed to be threatened by new forms of privatisation, segregation and even sometimes by the strong arm of the state (Jacobs, 1995; Ghorra-Gobin, 2001; Decroly et al., 2003; Billard et al., 2005). However, these analyses mainly applied to the northern metropolises. The more recent exploration of this topic in the field of Southeast Asian studies constitutes an invitation to reconsider these conclusions (Heng and Low, 2010; Goh and Bunnell, 2013). De-centring the focus allows us both to enrich the originally European concept of ‘public space’ and to renew the study of the local urban fabric in Southeast Asia. Street life is truly an appropriate way of assessing urban Asia. For the Vietnamese, the most visible and popular form of public spaces are streets. According to Sitte (1889), HCMC actually has very few squares – quite

a contrast to the classical city matrix in Europe – and only a few parks, most of which are in the centre of the succession colonies. Conversely, going for a walk through the streets of HCMC allows one to blend in with the pace of city life and experience an urban tempo full of vitality.

The street constitutes ‘the paradigm of the urban form’ (Gourdon, 2001) as it both embodies its identity and reveals the mechanisms of its global functioning. Observing the urban mutations from the perspective of street life happenings can let one consider the daily nature of urban changes. This scale is particularly relevant to HCMC, where street culture has always been one of the city’s strongest features. The boundary between private and public spaces is anything but clear: the ground floor stores mostly overflow onto the streets and the interior space is usually wide open and visible to the passer-by (Drummond, 2000; Thomas, 2001, 2002). But today, from a neo-functionalist perspective, economic growth and new street regulations are leading towards a change of public spaces from multifunctional to single-use. Urban renewal is under way and there are projects to expand streets and lanes (alleyways), questioning whether public space is a tool of social integration and urban rights development (Lefebvre, 1968) in the post-reform and fast globalising Vietnam. Urban projects like that raise questions not only about how a city is made up of its residents, but also about the effective role, voices and power of those with related benefits. ‘Spaces of negotiation’ constituted by streets in HCMC is at least equal to ‘spaces of control’.

The authorities of HCMC also use streets as places of expression: large banners and official regulatory signs are multiplying along streets and alleyways. These colourful elements are part of the street landscape and emphatically invite city dwellers to behave in a ‘cultural’ and ‘civilised’ way on the street. ‘Modernisation’ (Xây dựng đô thị văn minh, hiện đại) has indeed become a key concept and requires the respect of a series of criteria laid down by the government and its local representatives. Among these criteria, the proper uses of what a civilised street should be are very informative as to the vision of the street for tomorrow. The main objective of these propaganda campaigns is to regulate the activities in the street and to clarify what must remain in the domestic sphere. Thus, there is an agreement on the ‘modern’ necessity to decrease the footprint of trade stands on the footpaths and roads, and avoid the presence of hawkers. It is nevertheless important to recall that most of these new regulations do not yet have

the value of a law and remain indicative. But these official programmes remain the indicator of the main future trend of considering and regulating the streets. The street's uses remain mainly a topic of negotiations and local arrangements (Koh, 2006). Nevertheless, what is still possible in the local alleys is sometimes no longer possible in the main streets of the city centre, where the authorities care more about the image of the city that is displayed to visitors.

III. The role of the state, urban designers/ planners and developers in improving the quality of design for public spaces:

1. Overview of their role:

It seems that a massive number of people are joining in design decisions that relate to the creation of a new environment and that few of these people have had formal training in design in the Vietnamese context, such as local authorities, urban designers and developers.

Taking professional designers who have responsibility for both public and private funding projects, there are the trained professional designers like the architects, landscape architects and urban designers who have had a thorough education in the aesthetic aspects of design as well as its functional and technological aspects. However, the development control process operates in such a way that they are not invariably involved and indeed were not in a very high proportion of the cases studied during the research project. There are the civil engineers and town planners who in many, but by no means all, cases will have had at least a limited education in the aesthetic aspects of their professional activities. The planners are involved in the processing of all planning applications and the civil engineers in many where the building of roads is necessary (Beer, 1983).

Although urban design seems to meet political and economic needs of cities, there are still social, aesthetic and environmental challenges. Each growth is a challenge to the current situation, one that can remove the often-fragile balance or weaken and replace the assailable. The way that ideas are created and disseminated, and the speculative essence of much of the development process, have led to a demand to shorten the distinction between exchange value and use value in order to achieve design standardisation in different places and types of development.

If the government agencies think and act like private companies, it means their decisions are built on the same basis as those of the private sector, which is firstly in the search for exchange value. This would enable them to be in line with economic needs but would reduce their ability to meet certain social needs, especially those requiring public support through market mechanisms. The public authority has the right to provide use value in balance with exchange value, rather than being primarily controlled by it. The quality of private sector jobs can also be threatened by funding pressures. The financing of development projects is organised in such a way that can allow developers to think in the short term to speed up the development cycle, and thus reduce interests need to be paid for banks. This focuses on return of investment, not the long-term quality of the built environment (Madanipour, 2006). In addition to the local authority officials who work on the planning applications, there is a range of lay people making design decisions. There are the councillors who are almost without exception untrained in design, but who must make the final decision after receiving the advice of their officers. There are the developers who also are unlikely to have any education in design and who invest in the building schemes primarily for their own financial benefit. Their main interest in design is to ensure a scheme that maximises profit. In relation to residential development they only occasionally employ architects to work on their schemes. The exceptions to this are housing associations and the local authorities themselves: when these organisations act as developers, they are interested in design for very different reasons and employ skilled professionals to create their designs. Finally, there are the users of the built environment, who are unlikely to be trained designers, but who have strong opinions and reactions to their internal and external environments at home and work. Their attitude towards the way in which any scheme is designed is likely to be a result of the interplay of cultural, social, educational and financial factors as they affect the individual and there are, therefore, almost bound to be different reactions. Without training or professional bias, they are not likely to perceive a built environment in terms purely of aesthetics or of function, but rather as part of their total experience of life (Beer, 1983).

That so many people are involved in the design decisions that relate to the development control process is of itself complicated. The problem is exacerbated by the communications difficulties that exist between the different teams who join

in the design process. The concerns of the trained designer are apparently incomprehensible to most councillors and developers. That this is so must be seen in terms of the individual's comprehension of the word 'design'. For the untrained person, design in relation to the built environment is a straightforward word connected with formulating a plan in the mind, then expressing it as a drawing. From this drawing a builder can construct the 'idea' behind the design. To such an untrained person, the act of designing is likely to appear as a relatively simple process of identifying a built environment problem and providing a solution. In contrast, the trained designer, thinking about the act of designing a built environment, will perceive it as complicated and carrying many connotations of the need to solve the conflicting issues. These issues can include the problems created by the social, aesthetic, financial, ecological, climatic, spatial, communication and many other aspects of the design problem. They are issues that arise from the detailed consideration of a site by the designer and that have to be resolved before a design drawing can be finalised. As proposed by Beer (1983), the designer in this context sees the act of designing to be a thinking process that can address many physical factors associated with a specific location and the demand of the person who will be using the location.

2. Overview of power on to making make decisions for on planning projects, in the case of Ho Chi Minh City

HCMC has 22 inner and outer districts. The 16 inner districts include 12 urban districts (numbered 1 to 12), plus Binh Thanh, Go Vap, Tan Binh and Phu Nhuan, while the six outer districts are suburban districts (Cu Chi, Hoc Mon, Thu Duc, Binh Chanh, Nha Be and Duyen Hai). Each urban or suburban district has its own People's Committee and Planning Development Subcommittee. The members of these committees are usually members of the Vietnamese Communist Party. The planning system comprises four levels, namely national, provincial, district and local levels.

a. Planning system

The National Planning Development Committee is the highest planning authority at the national level and is chaired by the Prime Minister and the Ministers of State Councils. This public institution formulates and formalises domestic development policies and strategies. Fulfilment and accountability of urban planning and management like housing, transportation, infrastructure and public services are handled directly by each ministry and the relevant provincial agencies. Thus, the Ministry of Transportation and Communications is responsible for all matters relating to transportation and communications. The Ministry of Construction is in charge of building houses and infrastructure for public services.

b. Municipal level

The provincial People's Committee is the critical unit in charge of provincial planning. The central planning authority of HCMC is directly controlled by the national government and is subordinate to the municipal People's Committee. Under the competence of HCMC's People's Committee (PC-HCMC) are district and local People's Committees, and all plans must be reviewed by the municipal government. The latter drafts its base plans on broad national policies and strategies and applies to the national government to approve them. With approval obtained from central government, the plan can be put into practice.

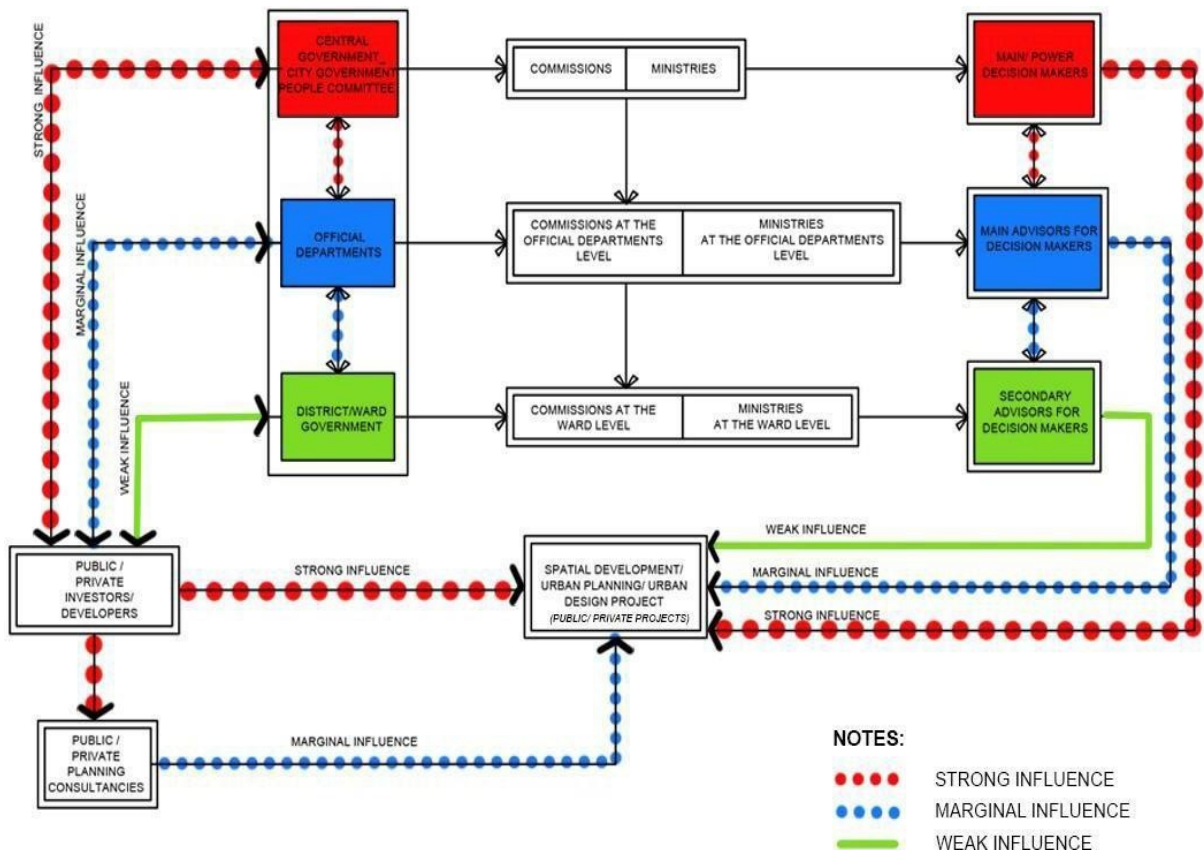


Figure 49 Powers of decision- making (Source: author)

The Department of Architecture and Planning, which is relatively newly established and under the control of PC-HCMC as well as being its main advisor, is the pivotal body in HCMC’s urban planning and development. Its main functions are to:

- Organise, develop and implement the Master Plan;
- Co-ordinate projects developed by the private sector, co-operatives and government bodies approved by the PC;
- Take charge of physical planning, architectural design, landscaping and urban environment of the city;
- Undertake surveys and compile topographic, geological and water resources maps of the city; and
- Evaluate and regulate construction projects and the planning of the city. (City People’s Committee, 1995)

3. Attitude to urban design for of public spaces of the 'triad' group¹¹

a. Attitudes of local authorities towards design

The attitude of these people towards design proves to be of vital importance to the whole impact of the development control process. The local authorities and councillors are expected to see design as an integral part of any planning application, and they may, therefore, be seen to be attempting to recognise the problems that non-designers have in comprehending design issues. Moreover, they encouraged the designers to be aware of the aesthetic, as well as functional, aspects of design and to contact the appropriate experts whenever they were in doubt. In fact, governors and councillors actually only become involved in design issues if there are obvious faults in the application that would cause it to be rejected. In certain cases, only do they feel it is warranted to impose a planning condition that relates to a design issue. They see their role as permitting development to proceed wherever possible and using conditions to make it possible where necessary. Instead, the councillors may have no strong opinions as to what constitutes good design, but consider that if their staff decided they had design problems they were free to ask for help from the architects and landscape architects working for the authority (Beer, 1983).

In Vietnam, the governors and councillors carry out their management with no particular interest in design at the first stage and they prefer to deal with each application as an individual problem. When an application which is sent to the Architecture and Planning Department to obtain approval and meets all the requirements of the general regulations for master plans or detail plans, such as the percentage of public spaces occupying at least 15% of the total project area¹² (primary school, community houses, playground, etc.), they have to accept it and continue to carry out the next steps without agreeing or disagreeing with the design. It was made clear that in no district would an application be turned down for design reasons: instead they would use conditions to make it as acceptable as possible before giving approval. Occasional discussions with the local authority architects or planners were seen as giving sufficient advice on design to the development control sections. The identification of design issues was not seen as a problem. As was said during the interview with Developer¹³ about the current situation of legal issues in HCMC:

¹¹ The 'triad' group includes local authorities, urban designers and developers.

¹² According to Regulation for Urban Planning 30/2009/QH12 (Vietnam's legal procedure).

- **Interviewer:** During developing your projects, have you encountered any advantages or disadvantages in terms of legal issues?

Developer 1: Nowadays, the biggest concern in real estate is the planning management of local authorities through their legal procedures. The planning project must be a 'living being'. Planning in Vietnam, on the other hand, creates a dead one. What is a living project? That project remains active over time. For a 20-year vision, it shouldn't present the same picture throughout that time, but be changeable. How would it look in the first five years? And in the next five years? And in other 'fives'? The scenarios for problems that may occur over its timeline and solutions to counter them. And Vietnamese planning does not exercise this practice. A simple plan with a school and some streets is made and in the next 10 or 20 years everything will be built exactly like that. And this leads to problems and such. One person's property is marked as land for greening while his neighbour's is not. That leads to discontent in people. Therefore, an urban plan must be a lively one. While our society transforms every day, plans are only changed after five years. That is the contradiction. Planning here is not only a construction plan but also social planning. What will the course of society be? From urban planning, housing will definitely follow the trend. The human characteristic is living. There is nothing without us. Hence, the root of the problem is planning. Ideas. There are great ideas, but they have to fit within the planning margins of someone else. Furthermore:

- **Interviewer:** Because our planning regulations require that new development must fulfil its proportion of public areas, a school is therefore put in the masterplan to round up the requirement.

Developer 1: Then, why must it be a school as a public place? Why is it too conventionalised? How many people live in PMH [Phu My Hung] who use educational facilities there? The old thinking is outdated. Meanwhile, another issue is left intact. Why does Vietnam have so many traffic jams? Picking up the kids from school. Why is working time lost? The same reason. Do people from other countries need to do that or not? It is because of planning. Children's transit is urgently needed, and needed right now. But no one cares. Isn't it simple? Why are schools needed everywhere? Why not plan for places where kids can stay and wait for their parents to pick them up? A children's transit system can be organised. Some places can be made as playgrounds for children when they have to wait to go home. This could solve the traffic congestion as well as the loss of working time. That's why I said our way of planning is not responsive. Public buildings can be varied, not forcefully specified. What purpose will those facilities serve? While local residents have automobiles and get their children to study in District 1, why build a kindergarten here? Who will it serve? Then, if people in

the neighbourhood just use bicycles? They may need a school. People with cars will need, however, a recreation place for children. That's how we should address the problem. Just like the question of making large or small roads. The opinions are diverse. People may like big roads after all. From my point of view, what is constant should be planned thoroughly and carefully, while changeable matters should be allowed to change. For instance, the land area is unchanged, right? But what we build on it can [change]. One area can be a kindergarten today, but will be a recreation area in future. We should give more freedom to change. The width of a road will remain untouched, but the footpath and roadway can change depending on demand. The footpath could be wider for sub-surface infrastructure installation and provide more space for pedestrians. In Vietnam, everything is regulated. 36 metres is the fixed width, 18 for the roadway and six for the footpath each side. Why is it so different from the rest of the world?

The developer means that the government seeks to influence plan policy through advice given on the law and legal procedures and through the use of governmental powers to direct or stall policy choices. Planning helps to reduce future uncertainties (Innes and Booher, 2001), but the state just provides principles of action for economic development and space organisation in general and applies them in an inflexible way. Moreover, they make their decision criteria non-explicit. They organise the development of the city within more general forces, not considering the reinforcement of the characteristics of the places. Furthermore, the distinction between key policies, principles of planning, territories and sites is fundamental, as it provides the missing and necessary links between major strategic actions and transformations of specific spaces. However, the planning officers at local sites are permanently trying to enlarge the scope of the local state beyond the limits of their administrative and political areas of competence in the case studies' projects as well as other planning projects. The role of the planning officers is fundamental in this context as it permits their intervention where necessary, on the one hand to push the politicians to take up the challenges, on the other hand to find satisfactory solutions to these challenges. The planning officers are also permanently looking for the right geographic scale to deal with the problems of the urban area. However, they just use their competence in set ways to manage and improve these projects.

¹³The interview was carried out with the developer on 26/5/2016

As said by a local planning manager (Officer 1):

- **Officer 1:** *Management regulation should be established first to prevent illegal or unsafe actions. However, for public space, you know that architecture is only a 'body', while the 'soul' is the way that we run this area. I mean that the soul is management regulation. Honestly, in almost all public spaces in Vietnam, such as parks, there is a lack of investment in building effective management methods. We have only focused on creating beautiful places with trees, a pond, chairs ... while the activities in those areas have not been previously planned. In my view, it is difficult to determine management regulations in the beginning. So, we can run public space for a while, and then we can find out what is right or wrong to improve the current rules. Overall, I think that the management department can create points and solutions, this is within our control.*

In addition:

- **Officer 1:** *So far, we can see that the knowledge and vision of the management department is not really good and lacks a unified approach. In fact, there is a difference between age, experience, background and knowledge of managers. For example, some managers studied and have lived in Vietnam all their lives; others have had chances to study abroad and acquire new knowledge. Or else, between elder and younger architects, they do not have the same view in the same situation. I think that the difference also does exist in almost all fields and professions. And this can be solved if we have a leader who controls as well as gathering ideas and information from participants. But I am not sure about the proficiency of such a leader in the case where he or she cannot devise a unified solution for the group. However, solutions depend a lot on the attitude and proficiency of the leaders, and the results can be right or wrong. You know that departments or units have their own leaders or managers. Before announcing any regulations or rules, the committee needs to have a meeting with all leaders and managers. The committee, of course, cannot have deep knowledge about architecture or current problems. So, if there is a disagreement between leaders and managers, it will be difficult or take a long time to determine the best solution under management regulations.*

Local authorities must consult with the government through their regional offices about the policy of the plan review and plan preparation arrangements explicitly. The government is a statutory consultee during the preparatory stages, and when the plan is put 'on deposit' for wider consultation and later 'modified', the stakeholders have the right to submit objections. The working relationship with the regional government officers is therefore important to progress the plan. On some policy issues, ambiguous advice

has led to confusion; on other issues, the regional officers have used their powers to meticulously reword or delete local plan policies that were 'too detailed' or 'negative'. The emergence of the plan-led system was seen by the developers I interviewed as leaving key strategic spatial decisions to the uncertainties of local political action. This group of respondents also felt that the move to plan self-adoption gave a local authority carte blanche to do what they wished. They argued that the overriding importance of the current planning system, whose object is to reduce the chances of obtaining planning permission on appeal, appeared to swing the pendulum back towards local political discretion. They recognised that developer interests do not necessarily coincide and, whatever the plan policy, some will be disadvantaged but some clearly felt that highly organised 'not in my backyard' groups were distorting otherwise open technical processes of land allocation.

Each investor, developer and institutional actor often develops an intervention, which, initially, is in contradiction with the state's legal procedure. It is necessary to fight so that the intervention regains the sense of the city. We must underline the dominating and authoritarian attitude of the mayor in the elaboration and the implementation of the plan, as the whole process is organised around him and ensures his personal choices. Moreover, his personal bearing on these policies is considerable. The pattern of institutional relations that is established can be compared to a designer creating new fashions. The city is decorated with works of art, then public spaces are adorned with an international perspective that is built to link the locale with globalisation. The mayor's comprehension of the city affects its architectural and aesthetic dimensions, but this conception influences his policies far beyond these dimensions.

Although those in charge of the design control were strongly influenced by their own attitudes, some differences of attitude did emerge during discussions. If the head of the management department had strong views about the importance of design, all the staff were equally adamant about their role in encouraging a proper consideration of design issues and the related aesthetic issues when negotiating with developers. An informal design guide to public spaces layout and design details had been drawn up in the office and it was recognised that this helped the staff to systematically think through the problems posed by each application. They felt that the guidelines influenced their deliberations in a positive way.

On the other hand, in the district where the management head felt that

development control should only become involved in design if there were obvious faults, it was interesting to find that the staff were very aware of imposing different design standards in different parts of the district. Different staff dealt with the various different areas of the district and recognised that their different approaches resulted from the fact that design decisions were made on an individual basis and that each of them had a different perception of what constituted good design. On the whole they considered that they dealt adequately with design issues and whenever they identified a problem, they would ask for help from a planner, an urban designer, an architect or landscape architect. The staff may have been more interested in design issues than their managers and made it clear that whenever they identified a problem, they would talk to someone with design training before making a decision. If any districts had a person with design training in the planning department who was in regular contact with the development control offices and who spent a substantial proportion of time talking to developers, this could increase the quality of design (Beer, 1983). Moreover, the staff in other sections of the planning, architecture and recreation departments play an important role in the processing of planning applications. The more the local authority can do to improve the situation within the planning system, the fewer low design standards are achieved. Their role in relation to planning applications is not just to suggest the modifications needed to enable the proposed development to be granted permission; they should play an active role in engaging a high standard of design on the planning decision process.

b. The production of spaces through the role of governors

Product development has taken the form of building new public infrastructures, whether through the development of new transportation networks or the improvement of public space. Through the use of public arts and the development of cultural industries, a physical and cultural infrastructure is developed to help the city become a more attractive place to live and work. Urban design is an important tool to help develop infrastructure, which can create both iconic and realistic dimensions for a changing city. From suppliers to supporters, this is all a shift in the role of public institutions. In the field of urban development, this means expecting the city government to provide the necessary frameworks to support private developers in providing indispensable spaces. This is in stark contrast to the massive public works that essentially reshaped many cities after the war. Thus, the role of the public authorities has changed from being urban producers to promoting and regulating their production. Urban design has become a means to promote urban development, to guide and standardise spatial production

(Mandanipour, 2006). However, this is a controversial process because product development and promotion need to target resources to certain areas, images, conditions and users over others. The role of the public authority becomes more partisan than ever, unlikely to attract the approval of all constituency members. Like the relationship between the board and shareholders in private companies, it is the major shareholders that hold more votes. Erasing the images and conditions of industrial history and dealing with the victims of economic transformation has been a particularly painful process, making cities control palimpsest.

c. Vision of local authorities for future development

Visions are the significant sense that local government can guarantee a degree of control over forces that are often thought to be beyond their control. As can be seen in the UK government's key planning policy document, they ask the local planning authorities in their space planning to 'set a clear vision for the future pattern of development' (ODPM, 2005). Localities may feel helpless to attract resources or lead them into needed routes. Previously, comprehensive planning was used to prepare and manage all possible change, but it has become increasingly clear that forecasting and governing all forces is impossible or involves strict and unpopular tasks in the long run. Visions have been used locally to flexibly determine future needs, instead of being controlled by the global, like relying on the weather conditions, or being too rigid to take advantage of opportunities for developing their future.

For a place, vision is about taking control of its own destiny in the age of global players, bringing a sense of optimism and looking forward, not submitting to the will of heaven. Management documents encourage companies to develop a purpose that looks at how a company does business and can be clearly communicated to the employees and outsiders. Similarly, cities and countries are developing their own visions in order to articulate their role in an increasingly interdependent and competitive global space. However, visions and mission statements may be just a combination of general sentences that are often less relevant to the realities of a place. Therefore, it is important to recognise that visions should be placed in a specific context where potential debris arising from social, economic and technological change is collectively referred to as 'fragments' and confronted with the challenges of globalisation. This embeddedness usually means giving thought to the spatial nature of the vision for specific locations and people. According to Holden and Iveson (2003), the mission of urban design is to explain foresight and common policy statements; it offers an opportunity to imagine the future.

But when societies are divided and stratified, agreeing on a vision is always a difficult task, and the results are often contested in the wrong areas of society.

d. Managing change

Following the previous planning recommendations of the UK government, the benefits of good design included helping to ensure continued public acceptance of new development required (Department of Transportation, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR), 2001). This has clearly driven up tensions among development and society, where the government and market see the need for change and society does not. The question is whether design is considered as professional or nice wrapping. Public acceptance could be secured by ensuring that 'experts', i.e. the designers, would deal with the problems; or that development will be acceptable through an aesthetic tool like design, otherwise it could be objected to by those affected by it. In both cases, design seems to be a useful tool for development-friendly authorities trying to weaken the tensions between exchange value and use value, between development and protection, between economy and society.

The traditional way to control spatial production has been through the planning system at selected locations. But this system has been under pressure from two sources. From an economic perspective, there is a need to reduce the barriers to market performance. This has been a constant feature of the planning system since the pressures for economic liberalisation have dominated the political landscape. Urban design has been a part of the move towards a document-based planning system that provides a degree of certainty to the market while limiting state intervention within the economy. The planning system has also come under social pressure to adopt a more social approach, showing greater sensitivity to the needs of local communities and concern for the environment. This pressure has also been a characteristic of the planning system since the perceived failure of urban renewal programmes after the war. For some of these needs, urban design focuses on public spaces and environmental sustainability. As Madanipour (2003) proposed, in fragmented, polarised societies, public space plays an important role in facilitating social integration and tolerance, promoting the existence of different groups who cannot even perceive each other.

Under the long-term comprehensive plan, which provides a legal framework for long-term projects, urban design management has changed. Initially, urban design was considered as the appropriate tool for making such a change because it provided the

necessary framework for a project. The current planning system has been changed to show greater urban development flexibility and sensitivity to urban design. Urban design was primarily seen as a marginal area of activity merely interested in the appearance of places, or, worst of all, intervention on behalf of the developers' interests while damaging the integrity of the planning system. But after a long period of economic growth, when public money became available, these funds are being channelled into the built environment. As the number and size of projects have increased and as time goes on, master planning has emerged to accommodate the resulting higher levels of complexity. As the number of stakeholders in the governance of urban areas has increased, the focus at both strategic and local levels has changed to creating visions that can form the region's future. Thus, urban design has been included in the planning process, as this has been clearly reflected in the central government's documentation and recommendations on changes in attitudes of local government. The current planning system has changed into a more plan-based system, which is visionary and has foresight, and more interesting location qualities; all features shared with urban design. As there has been pressure on planning to become more innovative and development friendly, it has become more akin to urban design.

e. Contributing towards good governance

- Public space management structures and coordination

In liberalised economies, city authorities are expected to withdraw from extensive intervention in the economy and limit their activities to regulation and support. This has resulted in decentralisation, with many participants involved in forming the political economy of urban areas. As stated by Sellers (2002), although this has created flexibility for the market, it has required some form of management to achieve effective market operation and ensure a higher quality of life for people.

According to the research of Madanipour et al. (2001), this change in the overall governance, from a strong state to a group of stakeholders, has had profound impacts on the management of urban regions. New mechanisms are essential in order to make sure that these different stakeholders can collaborate effectively. The size and complexity of public institutions, divided by functions and sectors, have also led to a multiplicity of public actors with different orientations. The project-based nature of urban development, and the diversity of stakeholders, have meant that space could become the focus of attention and action. Place allows various actors to cooperate on specific

tasks. It produces tangible results for politicians and business managers alike, showing the validity of the exercise to their voters and shareholders. In reality, in Vietnam, although there was little coordination through the structures of the local authority, respondents still reported a range of issues, most of which related to the linkages between public space policy and its implementation by the local authority. In addition, policy is often translated into a large number of disparate initiatives, with different timescales, compounding the problems of coordination. Typically, this situation seems to be exacerbated by a lack of clarity about responsibility for each policy area within local government. Moreover, coordination problems are still caused by professional boundaries between public space responsibilities, such as the boundaries between engineers, planners and public space managers, even though they are in the same department. The local political environment continues to create problems for coordination. Poor working relationships between members, officers and the private sector are seen as a culture of blame, and politicising public space issues leads to a lack of coordination between the different groups of stakeholders. In addition, HCMC has addressed the constantly changing priorities of previous administrations by setting up a steering group for public space projects composed of representatives of various groups.

The behaviour of local authorities varies depending on their experience of private sector involvement in management of public space, and on the common characteristics of each province and local circumstances. Interviewees said that the private sector typically has more resources to manage their privately owned pseudo-public spaces, usually meeting higher standards. The authorities make an effort to accept this, but they seldom rate their own public space services based on these criteria in order to create more instances of resources and a seamless switch from state-owned and managed spaces to privately owned spaces, because they still want to keep their power in every case, especially in a normal district such as District 1. However, in the case of District 7, the Phu My Hung project, the private sector manages public spaces in their entirety; they have the right to do so because at the time they invested in this area, the local authority tried to attract many developers to improve that place. There, through a joint agreement, a coordinated approach was developed to maintain, clean and signpost these public–private spaces as well as owning and managing the surrounding district.

Many of these public–private spaces are a result of Planning Agreements¹⁴ of local government, under which developers have discussed with the local authority how to create or improve the public realm. While such contributions are generally more relevant to new projects, it is better to use the funds they provide for long-term management than to manage the current environment. The private sector, in the form of local enterprises, may also contribute to the management of public space in a number of ways; the most common are sponsoring street furniture, hanging baskets, lampposts, flower displays and decorations (Figure 31), for example, the Nguyen Hue project succeeded in implementing such a plan for its stunning and attractive public spaces. As can be seen in Figure 31, this is one of the local businesses which has its facade well decorated with trees, lights and coffee tables. Not only can it attract many customers, but it also creates a beautiful screen facing the pedestrian street.

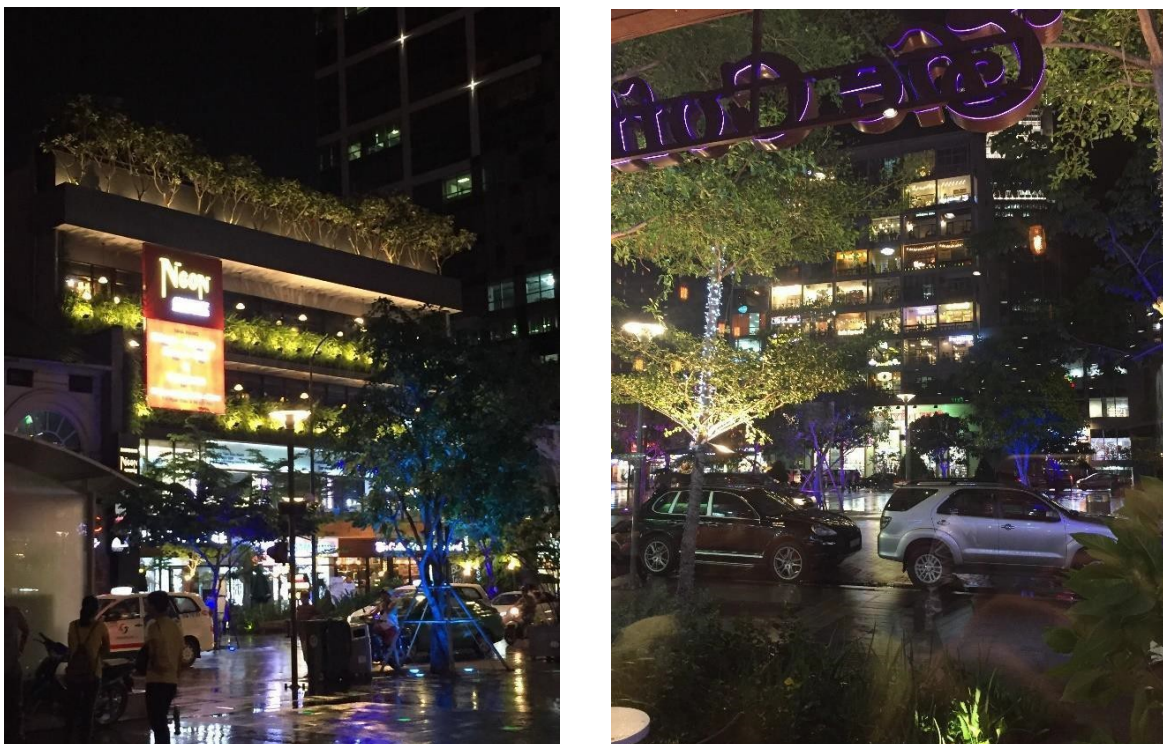


Figure 50 Tree decoration in front of one local business at Nguyen Hue project (Source: author)

It is important to note that even though the representatives of the company board are not profiting from the participation of local enterprises in local public places, it is also increasingly popular. Other stakeholders may be involved, including the local authority,

¹⁴ This is a legal procedure that has to be completed before starting any projects. In this document, the local government will make a list of agreements with developers. In Vietnamese it is called *chủ trương*.

or through commuted sums or financial contributions to public space services in England. For example, Rowley (1998) showed that Coventry City Council had established an independent not-for-profit city centre management company, now known as CV One, with the aim of improving the image of the city centre and therefore its public spaces. According to CV One, downtown businesses must pay an annual membership fee which is used by the company to invest in improvements to the city centre. The company reported that, with a viable budget, it could respond quickly and efficiently to public space management issues. The law allows local authorities to set up Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and charge extra fees for eagerly awaited public space management. This is a very good solution to help the local government have enough revenue to manage public spaces as well as improve the quality of these projects easily. But in HCMC, especially in the chosen case study (the Nguyen Hue project), this is no longer the case. According to the interviewees, this project obtains funding from the state alone and does not have involvement with any private sector body. The estimation of its finances will be made annually. Due to this enterprise possessing some items that exist for the first time, it is therefore required to define the finance threshold for maintenance and management. This is the job of the management unit. At the moment, the estimation is based on actual data from physical expenditure. Nonetheless, perhaps it may come to employ consultants, or the Department of Traffic (DOT) may make its own financial estimation. They will utilise the socialised fund, which comes from advertisements and business, to compensate for the expenditure. That is the direction in which the management unit has to go. The main concern here is that they need regulations – so that investors, once they conduct business in Nguyen Hue promenade, should be obliged to reinvest in the maintenance of the area – as well as guidelines for the effective management of the investments.

Another relationship mentioned in the interviews was the private sector as public space contractor. In this respect, the private sector may provide many services, but the most frequent one seemed to be street sweeping and cleansing, as well as waste collection services. Interviewees said that local government are unlikely to object to the use of private contractors in a forced bidding/tendering environment, despite a lack of awareness and enthusiasm among public contractors, and usually focus on the quality of service received. However, the authorities did recognise the value of private sector contractors because of their expertise and the provision of services that may not always be provided by the local authority, including tree surgery or chewing gum removal from

pavements.

Urban design is an effective tool for developing location-based visions and strategies that can be used for good governance, highlighting different aspects and getting people to agree on a common programme of action and to act in unison. This has encouraged the cooperation of decentralised public authorities and private, voluntary and community organisations. This is where the debates about governance and public sphere are relevant due to different facets of the same issue: the need to build linkages where few have existed in order to operate sustainably where fundamental change leads to fragmentation and a multiplicity of agencies, requiring new frameworks to work individually and together.

- Local authority objectives

Some targets to improve quality of public space were examined in the legal procedures of the local authority about the chosen case studies, demonstrating that clear thinking on how they would improve management of public space was arising. Contrary to the observed results, the users' survey and interviewees clearly believe that the local government have given little regard to a continuity of public spaces and relied on widespread and aspiring expressions in their planning. According to the interview below, the local authority objectives might differ in terms of the view from the leaders:

The interviews showed that the best value process, which includes interaction between the state, developers and planners as well as a serious review of political policy before and after making decisions in every project, usually provided the impetus for local authorities to retest their public space objectives, reliable or not. For example, Nguyen Hue's project sets a goal to evaluate the best value of the streetscape to provide 'high quality, accessible, pedestrian friendly, and attractive public spaces. Local authorities usually make general corporate statements on public space, but these aspirations were supported by other documents that describe public space strategies and operations, often including examples of demonstration spaces to further inspire practice. Moreover, the Construction Law was announced in 2005, and the Urban Planning Law in 2010. The reality is that our law has not been clear; there really was no law before 2005, but a lot of constructions had been built before that time. The debate between each group's involvement in the project is rarely taken into account and the city council has a right to exercise control and has created a lot of rules that have to be obeyed. In contrast, the Ton Dat Tien project in particular and

the Phu My Hung planning project more generally are in different situations. This is because at the time the area was built, there was not a clear law. The council, investors and planners had to negotiate to achieve a unified solution, and of course, they were not worried about whether their policies were correct or not. However, when there are laws, the management department in that area has obeyed them; this leads to changes in policies. A recurring topic in public space goals is the desire to interact better with stakeholders. One particular example is Ton Dat Tien, which realised difficulties in regulating public space activities among locals, businesses and tourists, and has plans to address all three stakeholder groups in putting forward proposals for the Crescent Mall project and the its adjacent areas. They actively involve local people in public space issues and seek design-led solutions to public space problems.

4. Attitudes of developers

a. Type of value in the built environment

As with urban design, the concept of value has been defined in many ways. In its broadest economic context, value is understood as the amount of money traded between a willing buyer and seller in an open market. It is important to define value as used in this study based on the attribute value of property. In the asset literature, the difference between the two main types of value is crucial. As proposed by Carmona et al. (2001), exchange value is the quantity of other goods (usually cash) or commodities that can be exchanged. It is generally referred to as market value and often related to the concept of price. The use value is usually associated with the concept of worth or the pleasure a product creates for the user. The interrelated concepts of price and worth have provided a number of different definitions of value. Price ranges are wide due to the fact that worth is not the same as price since there is no such thing as a perfect property market. In particular, the existence of international valuation manuals is one of the main reasons for the confusion. During my interview, most of the developers stated that they are pleased to spend their budget on public space design and gain more in return. It will gain value in use to attract many customers.

- **Developer 1:** *From my point of view, as a businessman, the biggest goal of any enterprises is benefit. But this benefit must be sustainable, that's why we should consider the matter in more overall perspective. In this case, if we can reserve land to generate sustainable revenue, as well as great enough to attract investment, then it would be an optimal solution.*
- **Developer 1:** *As I have said, it is all about profits. Between spend and gain more or*

don't spend and nothing happen, I would rather choose the former. Hypothetically, I am investing in Nguyen Hue Street, a high value esplanade in the city centre. But the promenade management unit suggests that I contribute part of my revenue for the maintenance expenditure in return for the right to develop enterprises there.

Or:

- **Developer 2:** *The Phu My Hung project is a product for exchange value. We simply sell the 'product' with a high standard of residential places as well as a good environment and landscape with public spaces, after that we get money in return. And this 'exchange', it is an exchange procedure between buyer and seller. If we sell good quality, customer will pay with corresponding prices.*

Macmillan (2006) identified six different value types, providing a comprehensive classification of the value generated in the built environment. The environmental product to be constructed by exchange value is regarded as a trading product and its commercial value is measured by the price that the market is willing to pay. Use value takes into account the contribution to organisational results such as competitiveness, productivity, rentability and repeat business. Image value derives from the contribution of the built environment to corporate identity, prestige, vision and reputation, reflecting its commitment to design excellence or to innovation, to openness or brand name engagement. Social value occurs when the built environment creates opportunities for positive social interaction, enhances social identity and civic pride, improves safety and security, and reduces disruption and crime. Environmental value is generated through principles of applicability and/or flexibility, robustness and low maintenance, and the application of a life-cycle cost approach. Cultural value involves fundamental concepts and place meanings and may include consideration of highly invisible issues such as symbolism, inspiration and aesthetics.

The interviews show that the value of built environment products refers to the goods to be bought and sold. Therefore, it is related to the exchange value or market value expressed in the real estate prices obtained by evaluating the impact of quality design. The rationale for this method involves the process of converting the various types described above (especially the use value) to exchangeable value. This 'translation' process is based on interdependent economic factors that create value, namely utility, scarcity, desire and purchasing power efficiency (Appraisal Institute, 1996). Utility is the ability of a good to meet demand. Scarcity is the supply of an item related to the demand for it. If demand is constant, the scarcity of an item makes it

more valuable. In this case, because the initial investment costs reflect its market price, the quantity of a quality (urban design) product is reduced.

According to Webster (2007, 2010), urban design (as a good product for the public) is not applied to real estate development and the housing construction industry because of its inefficient prices. Desire is a purchaser's wish for a commodity to satisfy needs beyond the basic needs of life. This is thought to be directly related to quality, as the willingness to pay a higher price for higher utility. Finally, effective purchasing power is the ability of buyers to participate in the market.

b. The role of developers in public space projects

It is clearly noted that the developers must handle a wide range of financial, logistical and production tasks and deal with the various, often conflicting, goals of all the parties involved in the development process. Developers are usually directly responsible for the financial success or failure of a project; and for many, developers must also bear the ultimate responsibility of the quality and appearance of a development.

In the new knowledge economy, HCMC has found a new meaning as a node for innovation and communication. The changing urban environment has had a deep influence on economic, social and political characteristics. As proposed by Touraine (1995), in globalised economies, where resources can be easily moved around, many cities are expected to behave like companies seeking new business opportunities. They compete to attract investment, whether by relocating companies or by attracting tourists and investors. Therefore, the city government consider themselves as managers of these 'companies', that is, participating in product development and marketing based on the logic of business management. In the selected city, this translates into developing the necessary infrastructure and promoting the city.

On the one hand, the liberalisation process of the economy has taken away much of the state's ability to shape localities directly, since space production is primarily within the private sector. As a result, the private sector at both local and regional level has found a more important role in the management of urban areas. New agencies at different levels and with different scopes have created decisive patterns of fragmentation and shaped the living conditions of a region in new ways. Globalisation, on the other hand, has opened up the marketplace to compete with others, meaning that these local and regional players are not always in control either. So, they hope that the local government will support them in the global marketplace, by promoting the locality, by investing in the infrastructure and by trying to change the

regional image.

Based on the opinions of Ashworth and Voogd (1990) and Smyth (1994), the advertising role of the city government involves placing their city on the international map as an ideal destination for enterprises to effectively market the city. City promotion occurs through efforts to reshape the city; many cities are trying to change the enduring image of industrial decline into a vibrant new one. By emphasising their historical heritage, and their brand-new infrastructure, they want to convey a thoroughly different image to attract more potential visitors and investors. One of the functions of urban design is to help the municipal government to carry out this reimagining. Whether by hiring famous designers, or by highlighting leading-edge projects and newsworthy initiatives, cities have tried to mark the shift in their conditions and their desire for future development.

There were several instances in the case studies of developers only employing an architect in order to get the scheme through the planning consent system. According to Beer (1983), one architect even stated that he was rarely told by the developer if the scheme had been approved and that the developer did not like the architects he employed to have any contact with the planning department, preferring to control negotiations himself. The lack of design expertise is not seen as a problem by the majority of developers; in the main they are quite pleased with their own schemes. A very few admitted that design standards could have been higher. These were in effect aware that 'something better' could have been produced with the aid of good design, but this group also tended to qualify their statements by saying that they 'produced the buildings for which the public was willing to pay' (Beer, 1983).

As can be seen, the design is only one aspect of a complex process, and developers see all aspects of design as essentially a means to a financial end and not as an end in itself. Common design concerns of developers include: requirements of investor and occupier, preferences and tastes – in particular, the 'price' they will pay for a product that responds to these; flexibility of both building and site layout to adapt to changing conditions; buildability; cost effectiveness and value for money; visual effects, including the 'image' that has been developed as an aid to marketing or leasing; and the management implications, including the 'operating costs' of the completed development. And as proposed by Buckley (1990), one challenge for developers is to influence the design process in a way which maximises the realisation of their goals without affecting the creativity and performance of their designers.

By focusing on urban design considerations, developers see several benefits.

These are usually related, but they include helping to secure development sites; winning public space to support development proposals and increase the sense of participation and 'ownership' awareness of a development; creating a new location or 'address'; increasing the financial profitability of a development; giving a development an obvious and tradeable visual image; ensuring product differentiation; and attracting people to the development – for example, offering trade for retailers. Developers acknowledge that in some cases, some of these benefits can be fully realised only by adjustments to the 'normal' development and urban design processes, including closer cooperation with planning and other authorities, and more active community involvement and counselling processes. With larger, more synthetic and longer running developments, the time to build mutual respect and understanding may pay dividends later in allowing more detailed design phases to be approved and when debating whether changes need to be made in response to market conditions. Involvement by the 'public' may even lead to people coming forward to run facilities within a development and will, eventually, bring a sense of community and pride of place to all parts of a wider urban design review.

Developers acknowledge that it is difficult to quantify the benefit they gain from the quality of urban design, but it is important to see this in their business context and clearly consider that urban design matters to them. While it is easy to pay the cost of development, it is often much harder to put value on qualities that are usually invisible, all of which are cases of creativity for specific solutions. So, developers frequently rely on a 'hunch', although a few claim to be able to measure the returns on investment in design quality. Consequently, architects and master planners with strong convictions may have a major impact on the developers, helping to convince them of the value of a design beyond what they realise, even if this initially involves an increased cost. For instance, Ton Dat Tien pedestrian street, designed by Korn Architects, incorporates a big shopping mall centre as a focal point in the locality; this feature is reported to have added more money to the cost of investment, but it will not increase the level of the surrounding rents.

c. Benefits and constraints on taking urban design considerations into account

Real estate development is a challenging task that requires an operations network that includes market research, site acquisition, project funding, ensuring planning permission and all needed approvals, design and costing, construction, marketing, letting and disposal.

According to the interview, developers see several benefits resulting from paying attention to urban design considerations. These are often interrelated but they include helping to secure sites for development; winning over public opinion in support of a development proposal and promoting a wider sense of involvement and 'ownership' of a development; creating a new location or 'address'; increasing the financial profitability of a development; giving a development a distinct and marketable visual image; ensuring product differentiation; and attracting people to the development, for example, to provide trade for retailers.

Phu My Hung provides several illustrations of this. For instance, the Ton Dat Tien walkway, designed by Korn Architects in collaboration with Crescent Mall (it is a big shopping mall in district 7), is a local landmark with a height of around 30 m; this feature is reported to have added millions to the construction costs, but does not increase the rental value of the completed building and the surrounding shops. Developers are well aware of the causal relationship between the costs of improving the quality of urban design and the market price, and this is probably due to the nature of their product and their retail-like business.

The study identified a number of factors that make developers acknowledge the impact and sometimes limit the focus on urban design. These are customer- occupiers', investors' or house buyers' requirements, preferences and priorities; development times related to market conditions and the business cycle; land ownership, costs and values; project size and development timing; and finally, the role, contribution and overall attitude of the public authorities towards a specific development.

5. Attitudes of planners and urban designers

a. Role of planners and urban designers in public spaces' design

Public space is inescapably linked to the exchange of commodities because its production depends on the creation of exchange and use values that are associated with the dynamics of urban renewal. The exchange values of public spaces derive minimally from the appreciation of real estate values surrounding them (Low, 2000). Since public space also acts in a capacity for public expression (cultural, political, etc.) it has a use value, though market forces squeeze the use value out in favour of increasing exchange value (Harvey, 1999; Lefebvre, 1991; Madanipour, 1996). Public space design reproduces the conditions within which processes such as gentrification may occur, because it is often to the quality of the design of public space that people, such as investors, attribute the ability to generate profit, and can therefore justify

clearing out people who do not share in that vision. Shopping malls and 'themed' environments are some obvious examples of such commodity production of public spaces, in which the displacement of the homeless is almost ubiquitous. They seem to act as an implicit design requirement. Lefebvre shifts part of the blame for this kind of commodification to designers. While they 'present themselves at one and the same time as doctors of society and creators of new social relations' leading to a 'formalism' or 'aestheticism' devoid of meaning and content, at the same time, their designs are 'thrown away as fodder to satisfy consumers' appetites' (Lefebvre, 1996). However, there are limits to what urban designers can do in the shift towards commodification of urban space, constrained as they are by the desires of clients and developers (Madanipour, 1996). Lefebvre here proposes that designers may avoid political reflection on their work as they participate in consumer systems, resulting in a usability loss of urban design products. Nan Ellin (1999) restates the problematic position of the urban designer in a different way:

Finally, withdrawal from a political agenda into the invention of histories, surrealist environments production, and subjectivism often ends up emphasizing the prohibition of capitalist urban development rather than checking its excesses. Designers are not part of the solution; they are part of the problem.

Additionally, the drive by cities to sponsor design competitions for major projects on an international stage situates public space design and urban designers within the interests of the nation state, within overlapping geopolitical interests. Thus, the commodity production of public space and the technical work of urban design from the conceptual ordering of space on computers and paper to the quite physical process involved in carrying out design in urban space places the urban designer in an international division of labour, a role often overlooked by those discussing rights and justice in the city. The working world of urban design and the process of devising design solutions reveal the production side of public space, whereas divisions of labour and shifts in exchange values of public spaces influence public space design.

According to Davis (1990), Gulick (1998), Mitchell (1995) and Sorkin (1992), the two key practices of the production side of public space design help us understand how public space has shifted from being somewhat 'open' to somewhat 'closed'. On the one hand, urban designers have changed their approaches, ideologies and representational practices in producing urban space, marking a self-conscious

postmodern turn in architectural practice, while on the other, shifting political and economic pressures have increasingly privatised public space, making its production crucial to economic development in cities. How designers see their interventions in urban space has changed. No longer driven by utopian visions that seek to ameliorate society's ills, designers have turned to 'strategy', 'heterotopias' and 'speculation' (Tschumi, 2001) as design strategies reflecting, in many ways, the 'flexible' and 'global' capitalist market. Urban designers increasingly rely on the use of contextualism, or the attention to the aesthetic, rather than the social context of a site, and they focus attention on surface treatments (Ellin, 1999; Madanipour, 1996). These shifts clearly mark a turning point in the normative mandate of urban design, transforming the products of urban design, like public space, into flexible nodes for investment.

The other aspect of public space transformation considers public space design as another frontier of capitalist production, a site for the entrenchment of the interests of the elite classes and a source of profit (Smith, 1982, 1996). The two sides of the transformation of public space, the varying role of urban designer and the political and economic transformations that dictate their work overlap on the issue of social justice in the city and on the role of the designer in fashioning products that change the rights to the city. This is the right to acquire, enjoy and be involved in urban life, and we must measure the ability of urban designers to either refuse or provide to exercise that right. The social effects of the production of public space, seen then through a lens of rights, seem to situate the changing aspects of public space along four axes: struggle, exclusion, representation and justice. First, public space is always a space of conflict; it is a site of struggle over who controls and who has access to it, who decides its structure, and how it is reproduced. Second, as paradoxical as it may seem, public space is always an exclusionary space that allows or tolerates certain access rights. Thirdly, we can measure the degree to which public space promotes political representation and the extent to which we can see the people contesting social relations, protesting injustice and appropriating space for their own uses. So, finally, these qualities of public space measure the social justice system of any society; they gauge the scope of rights in any social relationship, and regulate and control unequal distribution of resources, rights and accesses to public spaces, thereby exacerbating oppression for all. Aspects of public space come from the practices of people in public spaces and from the designers who create them.

b. The way urban planners deal with council office staff

The role of council officers emerged as one of the key differences in how political power was deployed in the two case studies in particular, and other projects in general. This group of council staff, who come from various backgrounds, were often intimately involved in receiving advice from the planning department's staff and engaged in shaping decision-making processes. Council staff viewed their role as being involved in the day-to-day decision-making, as a way to ensure accountability of the project team to the elected representatives. Ultimately, they viewed themselves as those with the final control over decisions:

- **Planner 1:** *I think the pressure of having a representative from the elected officials there every meeting kind of brings a new sense of accountability, whether 'oh shit, we'd better figure out this problem because if not somebody is going to tell the boss'. Whereas in other projects, where maybe someone from a politician's office is not so intimately involved, they don't have that amount of accountability. And so I think that really helped, because at the end of the day there was somebody in the room who could say, 'this is how we are doing it, and we're the ones who are paying you guys, so this is going to happen'.*

Planners and designers contested this perception that council staff had ultimate control over planning and design decisions to differing extents. Some designers acknowledged that council staff perceive that they have final control over planning decisions, though how that power is deployed is less clear. As one private sector designer stated:

- **Planner 1:** *I would say that most of the council offices that ... actually I would say all of the council offices that I have dealt with also have a very, very strong sense that they actually are the true planners.*

And similarly,

- **Planner 2:** *It's always been fascinating to me that they [councillors] have their own planning staff, and it's sort of like that mediates between the council office and the neighbourhood groups, really, and then Planning [department] kind of gets brought in, and kind of gets to let [everyone] know what the decisions are in some ways.*

The power of council offices was echoed by those in the public sector as well, with one urban designer stating that political staff members:

- **Planner 3:** *... have a lot to say about projects, they don't have everything to say, but they have a lot to say about the main thrust of a project, there is no doubt about that. Sometimes when these projects come through, the council staff, you know, lay down the broad parameters of what their expectation is, and usually, I'd say 80 to 90% of the time, whoever's deciding in the planning department goes along with that.*

Given this perception that council staff have significant control over these issues, the question arises as to how this power is negotiated, and how design professionals arbitrate conflicts with political staff. While most private and public sector designers expressed the good working relationship that they have had with council staff, difficulties were acknowledged. The involvement of council offices in planning and urban design issues was largely characterised as episodic and reactive. While there were instances where council offices would be heavily involved, there were others where urban design issues were seen as inconsequential.

Some designers differentiated between the interests that council staff had in design issues specifically, rather than broad development and planning concerns. While design issues were sometimes seen as inconsequential for political staff, in other instances they could become serious issues of conflict:

- **Planner 3:** *There are cases where the council staff doesn't even worry about what's going on at the margins, the design margins. So a project might come in and they might have their broad parameters but they really don't care about whether there's a landscape requirement and how difficult it is and that kind of thing so usually landscape is something the planning staff do, the councilmen and women say 'fine, the more the merrier, I don't really object' but when it comes down to redesigning the facade of a building or trying to sort the mess with the ground level or something, it gets very contentious and ultimately the planning staff loses if the council staff decide they want to do it.*

This view that council staff often acted as the 'gatekeepers' for planning and design issues was borne out by their active involvement in the day-to-day planning and design decisions.

While negotiations over professional expertise commonly occurred between public and private sector professionals, the important role of political staff in design issues added another layer of complexity to this issue. Political staff were often cognisant of the issues related to professional practice and acknowledged the difficulty of challenging paid consultants on their professional opinion. When asked if there was any conflict over design issues with professional staff, one political staff member replied:

Officer 1: *I don't want to talk bad, but definitely they think they know what is best and yeah, they get insulted at times when you come in and just tell them 'we don't like that' or 'that's not what we want' or 'that's not the vision that we have for the park' and yeah, there's a lot of pushback, definitely. It gets very tumultuous at times and you know, you're telling somebody you don't like their artwork and they are like 'well, you paid me*

to do this and for my professional opinion, and the industry standards, this is the right way to do things' and you know, you got a guy like me who's coming and saying 'well, we're not going to do it' and they don't like that.

There were clear instances where professionally trained designers and planners seemed to resent the involvement of political staff in planning and design issues. This was expressed as the belief that political staff sometimes have the appropriate professional expertise and were expressing political views. In this sense, establishing the professional expertise of urban designers is not only a process of negotiation with other professionals (whether in the private or public sector), but also with political actors who have differing interests in the implementation of projects. While understanding the negotiations around expertise between municipal actors and outside consultants largely revolved around protecting professional domains, the active role of political staff implies a further threat (whether perceived or actual) to the work of professional urban designers.

c. Planners and urban designers' role under pressure from developers and local authorities

Any design activity creates guidelines for the making of things. As defined by Kevin Lynch (1981), design is: 'the playful creation and strict evaluation of the possible forms of something, including how it is to be made'. This would also apply to the design of public space, which requires clear thinking about how to organise the space, what forms it should take and what functions it should perform. Therefore, urban design is an indispensable part of the urban development process, which shapes urban space. A quick look at the basic urban design techniques defined by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) can assist us in finding some clues about the nature and scope of public spaces' designs in the process of urban design. It enlists the areas of social life, cultural performances, invasion and mixed use of many people in urban centres, and takes into account the ability to live in cities. Together, they seem to have acquired the vast skills needed to manage the growth and change of urban structures. In the initial stage, urban design was narrowly defined as dealing only with appearances, and now people are increasingly aware that it also, and more importantly, deals with organisation of urban space and processes of shaping cities. This is particularly evident in the Vietnamese government's changing approach to current design issues. However, the government does not seem to see design as a solution to 'how it works and how it looks' yet. As a result, design has been redefined from purely aesthetic issues, which should not be the only consideration of developers and

designers, to a much broader definition that requires public attention (Mandanipour, 2006).

Planners are not contemporary Vietnamese urban police. They abide by the rules and the regulations of government procedures and the instructions of developers. But their impact on effective change is in line for future development. People become planners for many reasons: to protect communities, conserve the environment, redistribute wealth, protect the disenfranchised and build better cities. This review is aimed at those interested in planning to create and preserve exciting places in cities –housing, shopping, workplaces and functional entertainment venues that are attractive, cost effective and aesthetically pleasing. They are ‘positive’ planners because they aim to have a positive influence on the built environment and to see vibrant neighbourhoods as well as new housing, shopping facilities, public spaces designed and offices built. They expect to witness real improvements in the way that cities look and function. They are excited about the skyline, new highways and boulevards, new parks, downtown lakes and new public housing. But positive planners have been moved to the side-lines. They have ignored what drew them to work in the first place, and the planning educators who teach that good physical change can only be achieved through adjustments in the political and economic institutions have deprived them of it. Positive planners lose ground partly because they have become disillusioned. They have found that planning does not have as big an impact over Vietnam's built environment as they thought.

Who bears the main responsibility for the built environment of Vietnamese cities? ‘Planners’, ‘developers’ or ‘local authorities’ have never been that simple answer. However, while planners have contributed to cities’ development, it is up to developers and the local governments to decide what is actually built, when to build and what it looks like. They tend to lay out the streets in subdivisions and direct the architects to design the public spaces in shopping centres and business districts where people gather. It is developers, as well as the state, working in political and economic organisations, at least in planning Vietnam’s built environment.

As was said during my interviews, the developers believe that planners want to prevent them from gaining rights such as establishing rights through partitions. They argue that for some reason, planners hate developer ‘profits’ and that the role of planners is to reduce the growth of its profits by asking for various (and sometimes outlandish) ‘public interest’ improvements. As stated by British developer Trevor Osborn (1989),

Planning gain became recognised during the last decade as the norm and was taken to extremes and abused by many councils. Planning authorities hold a very valuable negotiating position, the ability to delay, and it is this trump card which has secured bargains, even blackmail settlements, for the issue of valuable planning consents.

On the other hand, most planners believe that developers would ignore them if they could. They feel that developers view the planning and approvals process as an unnecessary intervention and a waste of time and money. Indeed, many planners believe that it is fundamentally selfish (if not outright greedy) for developers not to take responsibility for improving the quality of urban life beyond their projects, and that they only care about profits.

Planners consider themselves as representing the common good and the generations who have not been born yet. They balance the power of the rich and influential (developers). In planning and in the process of public decision-making, planners are the neutral analysts and arbitrators, the selfless voice among political factions. They believe they can get to know human society better than others and understand the best way to achieve this goal. On the other side, according to Baum (1990), 'Planners are accustomed to believing they have little control over the direction of practice. They view planning mainly as reacting to major political and economic events shaped by others far away'. He also points out that planners are more comfortable in a technological world than in a political one, where many well-organised interests place conflicting demands on politically vulnerable planning agencies.

As for the way planners see developers, many people are sceptical of them. Respondents believe that the profit motive of developers is sometimes in conflict with social welfare. They consider development as a zero-sum game. Profit that makes developers rich and powerful comes at the cost of society's welfare, and in fact, they earn more than they really deserve. They impose costs on society (the economist's 'externality' problem). Developers are insensitive. They do not know or care at all about who is harmed by their actions.

On the other hand, the developers themselves claim to be builders of our cities, take risks and without them, none of the civic goods that planners (or society) want would happen. According to Peiser (1990), what is good for developers is also good for the city. What can best increase developers' profits simultaneously maximises social welfare. Furthermore, they think that planners do not understand financial reality or what is really needed to develop real estate. Planners never take risks, so they are not able to know what growth is about or why high returns are necessary. Planners are perhaps

irresponsible because the professional occupation is low-paid and planning staff are too often inadequate or unqualified. Planners are usually antagonists than facilitators. They do try to make things better but they often make them worse. As Osborn (1989) stated, 'In the past few decades, planning has become completely negative in the way of urban and rural development and the catalyst planner has almost ceased to exist'.

Whether these images of cities for future development are real or fictional, they create barriers between planners and developers that ultimately damage cities. Although some developers and planners follow the worst stereotypes, the vast majority of members of both professions actually share the same goals of building better cities, creating neighbourhoods that work and buildings that are attractive and functional. There is no need for the doubt and distrust that permeate planning and development. They are based on prejudices against the motives and activities of the other occupation. According to Peiser (1990), if planners correctly understood the role of taking risk and profit in development, and if developers understood that most planners want to create high-quality development, planners and developers would be able to work together better and achieve common goals faster.

d. The struggle for planners/urban designers to become more effective

Planners find it difficult to assert themselves effectively because they play many conflicting roles and represent different constituencies. Staff member, analyst, arbiter and advocate are four sometimes conflicting positions in which they work. Similarly, they serve four different constituencies, which are elected and appointed city officials; citizens, including residents, employees and employers; implementers, both private and public developers and a range of public institutions involved in infrastructure development; and, last but not least, the public interest and generations yet unborn.

The extent to which planners serve the public interest depends on how it is determined: planning for whom? It is natural for planners to incorporate their own private agendas, goals and biases into their decision. The private agendas usually aim to promote one or more of the following goals like efficiency, community protection, equity and revenue repartition. Where objectives collide, as they usually do, the planning commissioners and city councils must make tough political choices. However, none of these objectives needs to be in conflict with development and at least four (efficiency, equity, revenue repartition, and economic growth) can be relied upon. Good developers recognise situations where protection and preservation issues are compelling and avoid them; as noted by Osborn (1989), 'It is socially unacceptable and commercially foolish to construct buildings which offend the public attitudes towards environmental issues.

Unluckily, not all developers are so sensitive, and in the case of building bad projects, poor developers can create bad intentions for the entire profession. In recent years, one of the most inappropriate trends for both planners and developers is the politicisation of land use and planning decisions. Even where the best land use patterns are clear, actions against political interests often make them difficult to achieve. Lowdon Wingo (2013) states that the problem 'is more intractable and more complicated than a simple failure of empathy or excess of petulance between the parties. Improving understanding may not be enough. I think it may involve really profound incompatibilities among ethical structures. Planners have a unique opportunity to reaffirm their importance by taking advantage of the growing need for developers to reconcile conflicting goals. However, planners who want to seize this opportunity must understand how their actions affect the development costs and risks.

The biggest risk that developers face today is that each project must go through more and more arbitrary approvals. Such consents are growing as they give increasing power and opportunity to local interest groups. In the long run, this trend is bad for both cities and developers due to the favours for specific interest groups and makes politics become more important than objective criteria in making the decisions on which projects are to go ahead. In the most extreme situation, the city is built by developers with the best political connections, not the best projects.

IV. Publicness and privatisation

Political management and official regulations or programmes are not the unique catalysts in the modern levers of the public as opposed to dynamic private spaces. The functionalist urban planning that the authorities are aiming for in HCMC streets today is in line with what the new emerging urban middle class is looking towards. Erik Harms underlines, for example, the interesting convergence between the authorities' will to control and 'clean' public space with the new aspirations of the middle class to protect their interests (Harms, 2001). This social category, very emblematic of recent Vietnamese development, has recently accessed new property rights, particularly from the issuing of the Land Law in 2003. So, they are now ready to provide support for a clearer distinction between public and private space in order to thoroughly identify what their own private property is. The boundary between public and private space is now fixed and more than symbolically marked. Moreover, the emergence of individualistic practices clearly contributes to the new definition of private and public spaces. In contrast, the fixed boundary between private and public spaces has immediately been identified as a fundamental principle in the new peripheral urban zones, where

functionalism has been the basis of the urban matrix. This emerging trend has nevertheless been balanced out by the very creative ways in which people negotiate these major changes.

The evolution of the use of the streets in HCMC allows the discussion of the conception of the 'private' and 'public' categories in contemporary urban Vietnam. The capacity of streets to welcome many people and activities is linked to both the morphological frame of the city and the specific spatiotemporal organisation of the streets in HCMC. For the last decade, the authorities have nevertheless questioned this specific urbanity. The real impulse to modernise is challenging the capacity of streets in order to provide a 'right to the city' for every economic activity and each city resident. But political management and official regulations or programmes are not the only catalysts of the contemporary levers of the public versus private space dynamic. These trends seem to contribute to an increasing distinction between the private and public spheres and the functions with which they are associated.

1. The importance of accessibility to public space in the city

Urban spaces that are accessible to all citizens such as squares, streets, parks and the adjacent buildings that define and confine them are the city's public space (Tibbalds, 1992). Carmona (2003, p. 110) pointed out that in a broad sense, the public realm includes all the spaces that can be accessed and used by the public, including external public spaces such as public squares, streets, etc. and internal public spaces such as libraries, museums, etc., and finally external and internal quasi-public spaces such as university campuses, sports fields, etc. According to Krier (1984), Glazer and Lilla (1987), Moudon (1992), Sorkin (1992), Tibbalds (1992), Worpole (1992), Madanipour (1992) and Calthorpe (1993), in the design and planning literature, the role and importance of public space in various aspects of social, cultural and health issues has been greatly emphasised. Based on a discussion made by Mitchell (1995), public space occupies a significant idealistic position in democratic societies. Public space represents the physical location where the social interactions and political activities of all members of the public occur. Lefebvre (1991) believed that spaces are formed through the mutual effect between the built environment and spatial reality as well as representations of space, and that every society has a history of shaping a particular social space that meets its intertwined demands for economic and social production. As proposed by Arefi and Meyers (2003) in this regard, public space's usage voices our deep-seated shared values, as in public holidays, parades, cultural events and political

demonstrations, and permits exercise of democratic rights such as freedom of assembly. Public space provides an opportunity to meet and help strengthen community bonds. Gathering places around it provides 'heart' to the community (Langdon, 1997) and serve as a counter-pressure to community fragmentation, leading to the privatisation of communication (Talen, 2000). Public spaces in the form of parks and community centres also symbolise civic pride and a sense of place, which drive the concept of community. According to Duany and Plater-Zyberck (1991), a sense of place can only be created by paying attention to a sense of space through proper design and arrangement of public space.

Goodmann (1968) sees public spaces as an important element in our environment, performing necessary and positive functions, providing entertainment opportunities for all, protecting natural resources and influencing a series of economic development decisions. Ability to access to public spaces may be one of the important factors, including the natural size of the spaces. This dimension can have significant impacts on the other aspects of the spaces. Accessibility is a frequently used concept but there is no consensus about its definition. It is a common term that different people experience (i.e. characterised by different needs, abilities and opportunities) at any time and place of the day, which results in a major change in the composition of public spaces.

According to the research of Donald Appleyard (1987), the urban street is a kind of public space that is in a period of contradiction between different users because of varying priorities. However, in pre-modern Vietnamese society, the concept of public and private space was quite vague. In urban space, the boundaries between private and public were also blurred. In theory, public space belonged to the government, but to be more precise, it belonged to people under the control of the state. The street negotiations in the 'obscure areas' between individuals and government were an ongoing process. Through negotiations, people can find a comfortable public area on either side of the road and have the right to use it as long as they are willing to take responsibility for the consequences (e.g. paying taxes). In contrast to modern street planning, these areas are not of the right size and function. They depend on how much the individual premises want to interact with the street, and their activities are not restricted. On the other hand, the distance they can extend into the public street is limited by the necessary conditions to maintain other economic and social functions, such as traffic flow, communication, etiquette and entertainment.

2. Already private?

Even when talking about urban privatisation in a neo-liberal era, one assumes that spaces have the public character of the past. Discussions of many Asian cities are designed to address any such assumptions. In Anglophone social science, the distinction between 'public' and 'private' is usually based on the state economy and the market. But it is important not to ignore specific cities in the context of most of the Western liberal democratic cases from which this difference has become widespread. Additionally, the periods during which perceptions of public space were standardised to Western liberal contexts are historically specific, especially in the form of the Keynesian national welfare state of the 1960s (Brenner, 2004). In other words, even in Western liberal democracies, public space, spheres and life were not a given, but were actively created as a collective historical achievement that was subject to renegotiation and deconstruction.

In most Asian cities, there is usually no public information to undergo the privatisation process through new development. As Jeremy Seekings and Roger Keil (2009) recently asked,

What does 'neoliberalism' mean in the prevalence of the global South where the role of the public-sector in-service delivery has rarely amounted to poverty alleviation and expanded participation. Can private sector involvement in service delivery really benefit the poor?

It is true that among the diverse range of political systems and mechanisms of social control in Asia, there are strong states, such as Singapore, Communist China and Vietnam. These states provide powerful but counter-examples of public collective life, as distinct from private urban forms, and encompass very different civil society expressions. But when we try to understand the megacities of Southeast or South Asia, these examples mislead our attention. Here, most city-building by the rich and poor alike is privately financed, reflecting private goals and values.

For all political consensuses in the West about the public-private divide, the dominance of private space in much of Asia is an urban nightmare. In cases where governments have failed to provide public spaces such as gardens and parks, sports facilities, and community health centres, hardly failures that are unique to Asian cities, private sector initiatives have responded. As a result, privately owned and regulated space produce quasi-public amenities not evident in most urban areas, even in spaces that might be considered public.

According to Hook and Vrdoljak (2002), South African experiences-based review partners, if 'public' is defined as urban social interaction with strangers and regular acquaintances rather than as state ownership of land, then development by the private sector can be attributed to expanding the capacity to participate in public life. The widespread invocation of the terms 'public' and 'private' in academic and popular discourses often fail to consider the contextual meanings and implications of these concepts on the ground. Although controlled communities are often negatively portrayed in Anglo-American literature, for example, the explosion of private housing markets and gated communities in China could be understood as potentially enhancing personal autonomy away from authoritarian state control (Pow, 2007), instead of using private forces to represent the bulldozing of public spaces (Zhang and Ong, 2008). The idea that privatisation is often associated with continuing global urban opposition has dampened the process. There are long traditions of utopian and anti-utopian thinking regarding the northern cities of Europe and America (e.g. Hall, 2002; Kumar, 1987), but there is room for new discovery of these traditions and literatures. More specifically, previous approaches should shape the preconceptions of urban researchers addressing the emerging cities of the Asian-Pacific region in the twenty-first century. A more critical reflexivity about our own urbanity may open up new avenues for research that offer more nuanced explanations of Asian urbanisms.

3. Over-managed public space – privatised space

In the USA and the UK, public space management debates have increasingly emphasised concerns over privatisation and related security issues in recent years. For example, Low and Smith (2013) highlighted the increased safety and regulation in the USA. As pointed out by De Magalhaes and Carmona (2009), in most Western countries before the 1980s, the management of public spaces, streets, squares, parks, playgrounds and other free areas was normally carried out by public sector authorities in the context of public goods and public services. The production of these spaces was seen as vital for the well-being of communities and as a means of enhancing civil rights and obligations (Carr, Francis et al., 1992). Technically, the assumption was that public sector institutions had both the power and the capacity to formulate a policy and translate it into urban reality. Institutionally, states and local governments are expected to fulfil the following tasks: to bring in an efficiency of administration to ensure the provision of infrastructure and public entertainment facilities within a policy framework; to facilitate economic activities; to develop human resources; to standardise urban

development; and to enable the private sector to operate efficiently and safely (Davoudi, 2009).

In institutional terms, the wave of decentralisation policies involving the privatisation of public utilities provision alongside a reduction in public expenditure has been one of the most significant factors changing the way government should intervene as a provider and regulator representing other entities in urban development. This has led to the removal of municipal influence, and in many ways, the transfer of state responsibility to related parties, opening up a competitive landscape of state competition. As a result, the responsibility of provision of public places such as public spaces has shifted to the private sector, and privatisation has become a general trend that includes many government initiatives aimed at promoting contracting out of public services in Western countries (Hall, 1998; Madanipour, Hull et al., 2001; Healey, 2002; MacKenzie and Lucio, 2005; Carmona, De Magalhaes et al., 2008).

On the other hand, in Vietnam, the local government acts as enabler as opposed to provider, with private–public spaces managed by their police, not by any private security. As mentioned by Minton (2006), it is effective if local authorities transfer their authority of public space management from the state to individuals, since they have the right to restrict access and control activities. Taking the Nguyen Hue project as an example, this is a publicly funded project and takes place at a sensible location in front of the HCMC's People's Committee building (Figure 32). Its location is disconnected from retail streets or residential areas where pedestrians gather. The architectural layout of this place is designed for government-sanctioned functions, such as official ceremonies and parades, or simply to create a grand backdrop for a governmental building facing the square. So, in order to evoke an immediate strong visual impression, this public space is dominated by stone-paved surfaces or lawns. To enhance its grand posture, this project has no awnings, benches, private partitions, and prohibits food vendors and some performance activities (Figures 33 and 34). Moreover, prohibitive management is always the key to prevent people's activities in a public place like Nguyen Hue's pedestrian street. It is not uncommon in the city's front yards, which are surveilled heavily in order to regulate users' behaviour. For example, there is a fountain that will play with lights and music every 15 minutes in the middle of the street. But at the time of the water's 'performance', there are four security guards standing at each corner to prevent people from going inside to touch the water (Figure 35). This will make it difficult to get more people to come to visit. Furthermore, the management of public

facilities restricts their uses as the government officials are not concerned about serving the public. As was said by this project's manager during my interview¹⁵:

Officer 3: *This issue is a bit 'special'. Nguyen Hue Street is located in the city centre, in front of the City People's Committee Hall and Ho Chi Minh's statue. Therefore, politics is quite a topic here. Therefore, all activities that take place here need to follow the regulations. While the project was indeed urgent, at its inception there were no concerns about management and preservation, until the esplanade was made active and problems began to spontaneously happen that made people aware of issues. Whereas cultural events mostly apply and receive approval from the local authority, groups of young adults gather spontaneously. This is because of the misconception that Nguyen Hue promenade is public space, and that gives people the right to act within the limitations of the law. However, as a city centre area, to ensure public security for City Hall and its surroundings, the PC has issued several regulations. It does not mean that the street is prohibited to any activity, but there are only some restrictions to street vendors, pets and so on. In the meantime, a management committee unit is establishing whose role it is to make rules and oversee the project. These measures aim to define the margin of street businesses and advertisements. The decision to establish that management committee unit has already been passed, yet the personnel structure has not been completed. Once this committee becomes active, it will orientate and regulate the required detail guidelines which are based on the current statutes of HCMC. These will help retain order and security, due to the still restricted awareness of the community who take part in the use of Nguyen Hue promenade. Whilst some of the public has a high consciousness of public civilisation, still some others do not. And this will eventually change if we apply the regulations.*

¹⁵ This interview took place on 26/4/2016 with the project manager of the Department of Transportation



Figure 51 Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee building in the morning and at night (Source: author)

In this figure, the left-hand side shows the beginning of Nguyen Hue's pedestrian street in the morning and on the right-hand side in the evening. The public space begins in front of HCMC People's Committee building, with the statue of Ho Chi Minh, who was a key person in the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In this area, people are prevented from getting closer to the statue and it is guarded by security guards. It is called a sensitive area because it is in front of the most important government office and it represents the appearance of the whole city. Hence, this should be clear, clean and access even prohibited at all times.



Figure 52 Vendor activities (Source: author, baomoi news)

Figure 52 identifies how vendor activities occur throughout Nguyen Hue's public space. On the left-hand side, some people have tried to occupy the place and display their products. On the right-hand side, other people carry the product with them and they move here and there in order to attract as many customers as they can.



Figure 53 Performance activities (Source: tuoitrenews)

Figure 53 illustrates how people perform in Nguyen Hue Street. The variety of performance activities shows that people really enjoy that public space where they can gather with friends and watch outdoor activities, as well as show off their skills.

Most activities in this place are carried out by the youth, so the local authority thinks that this should be controlled. However, there is still a big debate within the state authorities about which activities are good and why some are bad, so that they can decide whether to give them permission to 'play' there.



Figure 54 Security guard (man in green shirt) does his job (Source: tuoitrenews)

With regard to spatial planning, the privatisation of public sector activities is evident in the major changes taking place in the political economy and has played an important role in the spatial pattern of the public sector. As mentioned by Kirby (2008), the interweaving of the real estate, construction and design sectors has promoted the reorganisation of the urban landscape, and reflects the latter's impact at the expense of municipal oversight. Similarly, the increasing role of the private sector in urban governance led to the status of the public open spaces in most major cities in North America becoming a product of public–private negotiation and agreement (Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris, 1992). The privatisation ideology not only minimised the role of the state, but also presented itself in the commodification and homogenisation of space, challenging individual freedom and other civil society principles (e.g. outcomes, freedom and equity (Kayden, 2000). As Mitchell (2003) and Carmona, De Magalhaes et al. (2008) maintained, it must be noted that privatisation can be seen as disrupting the process of providing traditional public amenities, since the public sector lost its monopoly on the provision of these amenities.

As stated by Low and Lawrence (2003), the provision of public spaces through public–private partnerships raises the question of whether the various management and design options developed through such a partnership have affected consumption patterns and the meanings given to them. Actually, as mentioned in the interview, public–private partnerships are rarely used in either public or private projects. Thus, as a result of these activities, the once accessible open spaces have become controlled spaces. According to Low (2000) and Kirby (2008), the users of these spaces find it difficult to gather freely and communicate with others. In addition, the privatisation of public goods has also encouraged contentious public hearings and anti-social attitudes towards certain community members who have questioned the high degree of public space control and the spread of private management strategies. As Mitchell (1995), Banerjee (2001) and Kohn (2004) argued, these people also believe that the provision of service is a means of enhancing civic responsibility and that, therefore, it is unrealistic to restrict potential users from free access to public places. Previous experience of the urbanisation of Western countries has also shown that the large population growth in urban areas was one of the major challenges facing the authorities and the entire spatial planning regulatory system. This situation forced governments to resolve conflicts between institutions and interests. In the policymaking process, decisions about which

urban development need to be supported or provided with utilities are often reflected in economic and spatial planning. There must also be a trade-off between the best timing, the ideal location and the most realistic capabilities to begin or develop the process. This means that urban decisions cannot be approved without taking into account the current political, social and economic conditions. This situation has forced local authorities to bear new responsibilities and to cope with the challenge of working with various actors and organisations, taking public opinion into account. As a range of local groups become more involved in the governance process, spatial planners and managers (land use planning and urban development management) are under pressure to provide a more sustainable urban environment by considering more people as legitimate participants in the planning process (Harpham and Boateng, 1997; UN-Habitat 2001b, 2006).

It is these developments that have raised the need for changes in spatial planning and the provision of public recreational facilities, in order to adapt them into the new process of political, social and economic restructuring. Taking the UK as an example, the delivery and management of public spaces was in accordance with the general pattern followed by the emergence of public services, in which different forms of cooperation between agencies and participants became essential (Punter, 2010). But this is no longer the case in HCMC, especially the Nguyen Hue project; there was only coordination between relevant stakeholders at the time of carrying out the project. Following that, a management committee unit is being established, whose role is to make rules and oversee the project. These measures aim to define the margin of street business and advertisements. Once this committee becomes active, it will orientate and regulate the required detailed guidelines, which will be based on the current statutes of HCMC. These will help retain order and security, due to the still restricted awareness of the community who take part in using Nguyen Hue promenade. While some of the public has a high consciousness about public civilisation, still some others do not. And this will eventually change once they apply the regulations.

As De Magalhaes and Carmona (2009) pointed out, the latest trends in public space management are part of a process, and thus, this has led to a multiplicity of organisations involved in public space planning and management. As Mitchell (2003) proposed, putting forward new contradictory demands on public entertainment facilities such as public space, demographic and social changes at the same time also brought corresponding pressure on public space management. Therefore, the role of urban

planners and designers in making cities and the environments within them was now not only to manage urban development from a functional and technological perspective, but also to devise creative ways to improve the living environment through a governance process that requires the participation of stakeholder groups (Madanipour, Hull et al. 2001, 2002).

In recent years, under the impact of globalisation and privatisation, the importance of public space has been increasingly recognised and supported by local authorities. In HCMC, for instance, the municipal authorities are also increasingly supportive of the idea of creating well-designed and well-maintained public spaces both in the city centre and within new proposals around residential areas by launching new policy documents, as well as initialising new public space planning. Recently, there has been a great deal of interest in public space development, through an improvement of urban design policy and the commencement of a series of development plans in Vietnamese urban centres.

These schemes have made significant progress in enhancing the public sector and creating new images, while new public spaces continue to raise questions about accessibility, safety and suitability for purpose. As suggested by Madanipour (2006) and Punter (2010), it must be noted that such interest in improving the quality of the public sector is concentrated mainly in urban centres in Western countries, while open spaces within suburban residential areas are still useless and unattractive. The situation is similar in HCMC. This can also be attributed to the physical layout of buildings and urban settings, which further emphasise the private spaces of each house and outdoor areas while not supporting social interaction. This can also be attributed to the increasing pressure exerted on the city government to provide public spaces that require less funding for maintenance, which means less provision of public facilities. Thus, the problem may stem from difficulties in raising funds for large-scale and high-quality investment in public spaces within these areas. It can be also linked to a misunderstanding of the concept of urban space by most city governments. Such authorities may be responsible for the provision of public space, but they rarely understand the range of behaviours among those for whom they are committed to provide (Ehrenfeucht and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2010).

To resolve these conflicts and deliver better managed and more pleasingly designed public spaces, the role of urban planners and designers is to integrate various spatial issues with a multiplicity of activities, interests and perspectives in urban policy. As stated by Madanipour et al. (2001), this comprehensiveness can be achieved

through a technical analysis of the complex understanding of what constitutes public space. In addition, as Punter (2010) pointed out, empowering local governments and promoting stakeholders to participate in decisions that may affect local communities is an essential foundation to improve outcomes, providing long- term urban restoration and strengthening urban and public sector governance.

Urban development, the fragmentation of urban layouts and the decline of the public realm in Vietnamese cities have all been influenced by many factors corresponding to observations in the literature and planning of cities in Western countries. As Madanipour (2010) pointed out, there are many common themes in the urban global process that affect the way public spaces are used, the ways in which participants everywhere are appreciated and compete. Arguably, these problems prevent Western countries from providing public open spaces, which are crucial for our understanding of the problems that exist for public space provision in Vietnamese cities.

V. Conclusion

1. Local authorities

It appears from this study that many new developments are happening on the ground in Vietnam without anybody fully trained in design having been involved in their progress. This may well be a factor in the generally poor quality and particularly the monotony of the new environments, which can be observed in many parts of Vietnam, especially HCMC. It is not an insoluble problem, or even one which means that additional staff need to be employed, but it does require long-term investment in training existing local authority staff and efforts from the higher education system to set up appropriate courses. The extent to which negotiations and, particularly, concerned interest by local authority staff and councillors can influence the quality of design has been hinted at in these studies.

Unsurprisingly, documentation on international public space and especially the empirical proof relating to the quality of Vietnamese public space reports a general decline, when management practice of local authorities appears to be too local and fragmented, and short of vision to improve practice in the coming years. It is true that the survey confirmed that most of the local authorities do not prescribe specific and detailed strategies for managing public space, and instead, very broad 'motherhood'-style corporate objectives or individual strategies for parts of the external public space agenda are more popular.

In general, despite differences between councils in the way management services provide for external public space, the division between parks/recreation, planning/expressways and street maintenance services continues to follow the traditional model. Sometimes these are under a board of directors, usually two, but sometimes even three or more. However, there is little coordination between the services that normally operate along the professional lines of the industry. Over time, the burgeoning scope of initiatives could have a significant impact on improving structures and accountabilities of public space management and on providing integrated strategies within local authorities. The methods mentioned in the case studies proposed how some local authorities are actively planning their way forward.

2. Private–public property decision-makers and the quality of urban design

The study aims to investigate the involvement of private–public partnerships through policymakers in the field of urban design. This is an unexplored field that surpasses some established academic and professional disciplines, and it is not easy to measure quality. The public realm meets many different needs and there are various needs in the same places. Considerations provide an alternative measure of quality. Developers, investors and occupiers should be stimulated to prioritise these considerations when making decisions; at the same time, they need to require environments that reflect the breadth of concerns in urban design and not only as an option that is in line with the short-term interests of the immediate client. This will demand better urban design; not always more expensive design but definitely something different. Appropriate timescales must be included in the development process.

All designs involve choosing between product design functions and making trade-offs; urban design is no exception. The qualities of an environment are the product of the circumstances, values and production times. Our personalities, performance and local experiences change over time. This fact is seldom included in proposing schemes, when deciding to purchase a development project or when the first occupier decides to rent a property.

We can imagine these places ageing gracefully. This is rarely necessary and in fact all of them require constant maintenance and often become obsolete. Developers, investors and occupiers are now more and more concerned about the life-cycle costs of buildings. We need to show a similar level of awareness and respond appropriately to the care of the public realm. The basic structure of the public realm should last for

decades. In urban design, short-term considerations and functions become confused with long-term ones. However, once a development is completed, its basic functionality cannot be changed without significant cost.

Such insights and understanding are needed to achieve a sustainable urban design quality. According to Gibson et al. (1996), as the horizons of commercial, financial and political decision-makers have grown shorter, the need to adopt a longer-term view of quality is counter to an important trend. Quality of urban design depends on a horizon longer than most current participants, and a sense of pride of ownership and the principle of the public realm management need to be enhanced or reintroduced.

The process of creating urban environments is very complicated and the pursuit of quality in urban design seems to be a cycle. Society is seeking improvement of quality; the developer aspires to satisfy the needs of customers as does the investor; but most customers' requirements and aspirations are often too conceited to meet the wishes of society. The challenge is to find ways to break the cycle. Planning policy is significant; however, it is only one part of the jigsaw puzzle. The process of development is strongly influenced by the outside world, including people's beliefs and values about the type of environments they want to own, use and live in. Education and debate are two of the keys to changing people's expectations and the ways they do things. To be effective, education must be strengthened through investigation and informed research; and it must be supported by example and leadership. Elsewhere, developers and others continue to innovate and to improve standards of urban design. Often, a common component is an innovative collaboration between the private and public sectors, combining vision and resources. Such plans usually work because they have recognised and sought to follow the changing principles rather than being strictly limited by predetermined and narrow views of good urban design elements.

3. Urban designers

We change our focus from the urban designer and the design to the user. This shift of attention is not intended to undermine the value of design, as urban designers still hold a major role. Nor does this change in focus only mean recognition of the multiplicity of user needs and wants.

First, urban designers must realise that they should not and cannot make decisions for users. This means that they should not impose their values on users. Today, most major products are extensively tested. Manufacturers also invest heavily in market research to discover consumer needs, and develop new products accordingly. Similarly, many designs of products and systems, especially those used in the public

environment, such as urban planning and street furniture, must be integrated with the cultural and personal needs of users. Policymakers, planners, and designers should make their decisions only after carefully considering the specific needs and interests of different user groups, especially those of the minority groups. Second, simultaneously with recognising that they should not and cannot make arbitrary decisions for users, designers should also realise that users have the right to implement and modify designs to make them more appropriate to their needs and desires. According to these two views, designers should take seriously two alternative options: (a) leave more 'gaps' for users to fill in, and (b) encourage user involvement in developing designs. Leaving more gaps means that designs should provide greater flexibility and encourages users to modify them. For example, in community park design or public space furniture, the user's most adaptive design will allow and encourage residents to express their interests, and to modify them according to social and individual needs.

However, even providing users with more gaps still puts them in a somewhat passive role, as the users' influence still depends on the designers' decision and providence. How can the design process then be changed to become more autonomous? Among the various design approaches and processes, the participatory design with user involvement is one of the best. As its name suggests, this kind of participation allows users to engage in the design decision-making process. This opportunity to participate not only provides users with more suitable solutions, but also raises the awareness of having an impact on the design decision-making process, as well as consequences of the decision.¹⁶

It is unclear whether the design is aimed at a specific group or a small group of people or social class. However, it is very important that the design involves more and more users. In addition, in designs involving the public interest, like playground design or street furniture for a public housing complex, user involvement also promotes a sense of community by gathering like-minded people. For designers, participatory design can provide updated and more relevant information, establishing a methodological framework that allows the use of reasonable decision-making methods without affecting the authoring process.¹⁷ In short, participatory design means different things to different users, or even the same users, depending on the problems, timing, and the environment (physical, cultural, social, political and also religious) in which it occurs. Thirdly, a high degree of user engagement does not mean that designers will not do anything or should be ignored. Instead, this misconception also is one of the reasons why so many

designers still want to keep exclusive rights in decision-making. Instead, designers should actively adopt two important roles in design of user involvement. The first is as coordinators, bringing together different interested groups and experts, and then as facilitators, supporting users in joining, modifying, experiencing, creating, generating and implementing the design.¹⁸

4. The production of private space and its implications for urban social relations

This research has assessed a number of the claims about the urban evolution process from traditional combinations of large-scale public spaces to a newer incarnation that focuses more on the growth of private space sides, as we may usefully describe them: privately owned public spaces.

In some documents, this kind of transition is seen as a fundamentally negative phenomenon, for the reason that this is a violation of civil rights to assembly and the possibility of collective action. In contrast, this thesis explores the complexities of both public and private space. That is a lot, but the focus here is that control is at the heart of urban public space. The latter is not an empty container in which individuals and groups may insert themselves as they please in order to pursue their own goals. As Berman (1988, p. 12) asserts, the open approach does lead to public squares, but it does not tell us much about what awaits there. Entry and exit are controlled in many ways; some are implicit while others are explicit. As stated by Coaffee (2005), these forms have changed over time, but surveillance and law enforcement are still needed, and, if anything, will become sharper over time.

Privately owned public space is different from public space, but without the usual requirements. We should acknowledge that the archetypal formations of the public sphere, the coffee houses and salons of the pre-industrial era, were in reality private spaces (Crang, 2000). Most modern private spaces are heterogenous places that are managed rather than controlled, and need to adopt soft technologies rather than hard one. According to Vanderbeck and Johnson (2000) and Voyce (2006), conformity is indeed expected, but since owners and managers hope to earn profits from these areas, they are often reluctant to use force to create consistency.

In general, the study suggests that current interpretations of urban spaces are privatised and viewed in dysfunctional and even disastrous terms, outperforming themselves in their efforts. To a large extent, they do so for two reasons, first because they appear to idealise the concept of people and collective interaction, and second because they propose two different phenomena, human interaction on the one hand,

and creative ideas that help the public debate on the other. In the first context, many seem to agree with Sennett that 'the public order should be gritty and disturbing rather than pleasant' (Voyce, 2006, p. 280). However, this is still an ambiguous ruleproposal. Just how much grit 'should' there be in the public world and how much blood should run with the grit? Or to put it another way, people have written a lot about the homelessness because of revanchism, but it remains the situation that social cities are places where there is affordable housing, not more public space left for the homeless after dark.

On the second issue, according to our urban experience, there is no need for public space and the public sphere to be interlinked ubiquitously and infinitely. Even if it can be justified to be true at some point in time and space, it could be a change in the built environment, the global 'War on Terror' or the development of information technologies that require them to be disconnected. As Crang (2000, p. 313) further explained, there is a need to reconstruct what constitutes public space, while recognising the existence of the so-called 'different electronic, physical, social and political spaces. These do not constitute the familiar form of café society; instead, their integration 'creates a fractured public sphere, not the individual expressing the interaction itself, but the interactions that make up the public space themselves'.

16 Randolph T. Hester, *Community Design Primer* (Mendocino, CA: Ridge Times Press, 1983); Henry Sanoff, *Integrating Programming, Evaluation and Participation in Design: A Theory Z Approach* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Avebury, 1992).

17 Henry Sanoff, *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning* (New York, Toronto, Singapore: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000).

18 Ann M. Gibson, 'If Only They'd Asked Us!'—Achieving Effective Participation in the Design Process (London: National Federation of Housing Associations, 1990); Chu-joe Hsia, "Urban Process, Urban Policy, and Participatory Urban Design," in *Space, History and Society*, Chu-joe Hsia, ed., (Taipei: Taiwan Social Research Studies— 03, 1993); Stanley King, *Co-Design: A Process of Design Participation* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1989).

CHAPTER IX: USERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PUBLIC SPACE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SPACE PROVISION

I. Introduction to data analysis

This chapter reviews the data collected from over 500 participants through an 18-question survey that was carried out in two research case study areas, Nguyen Hue Street in District 1 and Ton Dat Tien Street in Phu My Hung New Urban Complex, District 7 on five consecutive days.

The survey questions focused on the following issues:

- Demographic information of characteristics of survey respondents.
- Assessment of physical facilities and psychological satisfaction that the respondent received after visiting the areas studied.

Studying the person's background gives the researcher a clear picture of any subjects, in this case pedestrians, who might be concerned with the study of promenade street development.

Commentary and evaluation given by survey respondents will provide the fundamental data to study the behaviour pattern of pedestrians regarding the promenade areas. Thus, this will allow the researcher to project a meticulous illustration of such studied objects in order to proceed to the upcoming phases.

II. Categorising collected data

1. Background of survey participants

In the questionnaire, there are three questions that affect the profile of survey respondents: gender, age and occupation.

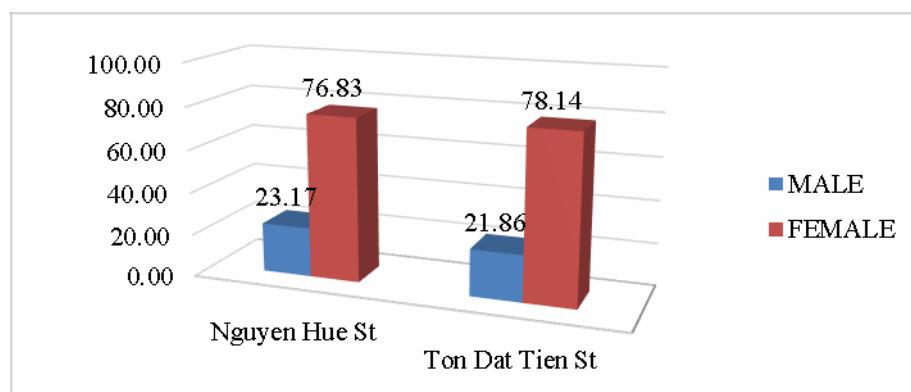


Figure 55 Gender distribution

The results from Figure 55 clearly show the imbalance in gender distribution of those who visited the promenades when the study occurred (this reflects the numbers of people available during the fieldwork) in Nguyen Hue Street. Less than a quarter of survey respondents were male. Interestingly, the same thing happened in Ton Dat Tien Street, yet the difference is even larger as the proportion of males was slightly over one-fifth overall. This may cause a lack of data in the psychological behaviour analysis, as males and females have differences.

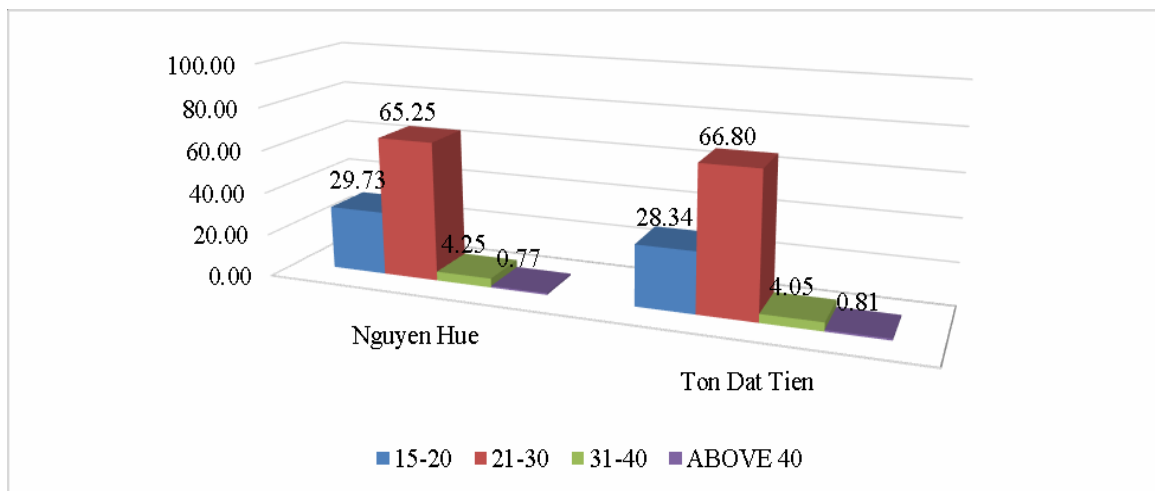


Figure 56 Age Distribution

During the time of the survey being conducted in the two areas, approximately two-thirds of the survey participants were in the age group of 21–30 years old (Figure 56). The age group of 15–20 years old was the second largest, with 29% and 28% in Nguyen Hue and Ton Dan Tien respectively. Other age groups of 31–40 and above 40 were exceptionally insignificant in number, as in total they made up less than 5% of survey respondents. However, the target age group of this research was decided in the methodology section, with a lack of data from any age group aside from teenagers and young adults.

While all survey respondents provided their information on their current occupation, there are many job titles. Therefore, a systematic job classification is required in order to present a more concise figure. The preference for such classification is the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), which is a part of the United Nations system for international economic and social classification (ISCO-08 structure, ISCO-88, 2016). ISCO is the classification structure of the International Labour Organization (ILO) that is used to organise labour and employment information. This latest version, called ISCO-08, was released in 2008 as the fourth version, as a

result of updating and modifying the previous versions (ISCO-58, ISCO-68 and ISCO-88).

The following diagram illustrates the proportion of jobs of the survey respondents.

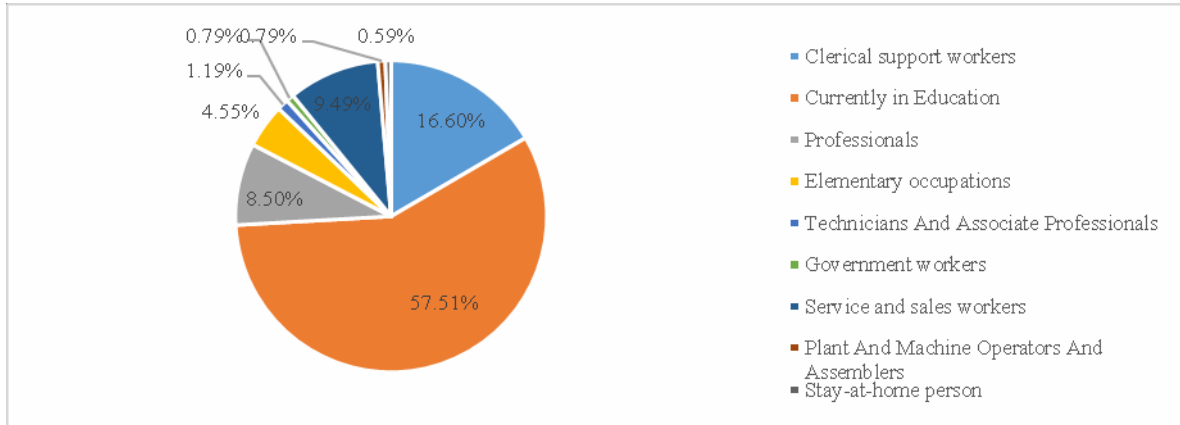


Figure 57 Occupation by percentage

As Figure 57 demonstrates, the division between groups that are studying and working can be seen clearly. Over 57% of those who visited the promenades were students or at that time in any form of education. Among distinct working groups, clerical support workers and technical and associated professionals are the leading groups with 16.6% and 9.49% respectively.

Figure 58 shows the domination of the 21–30 years age group as it appears in every occupation group except stay-at-home. This supports the research notion that the two promenade areas are more likely to attract young people than others in HCMC’s population. They are all in education (mean that those respondents still at the age of going to school).

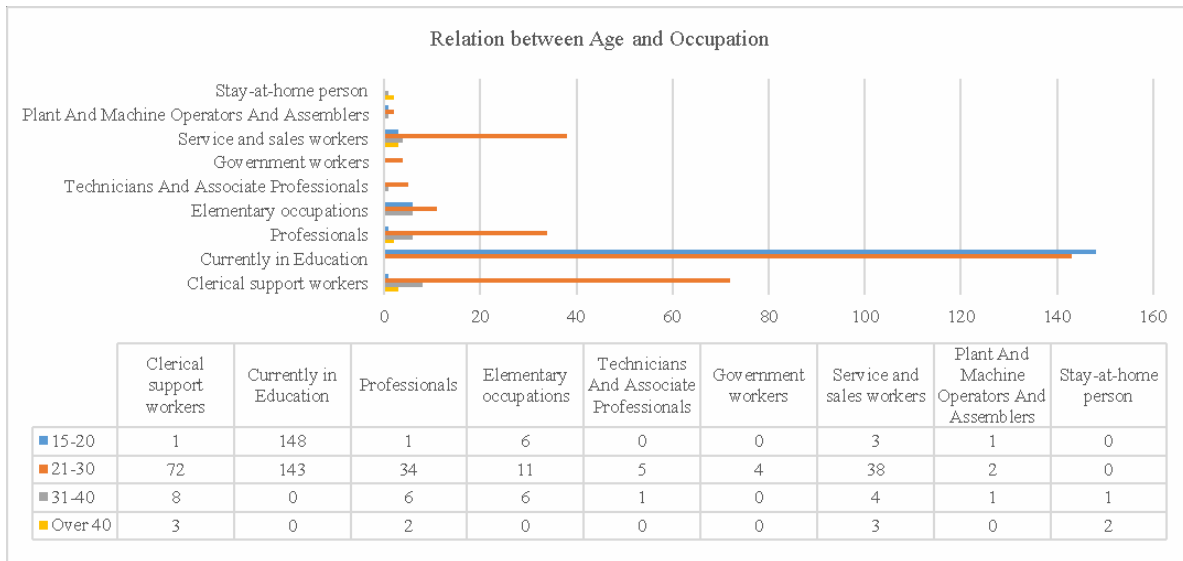


Figure 58 Relation between age and occupation groups

2. Behaviour patterns

Following the results from investigating the background information of survey participants, from now on, the analysis process will focus more on the two age group 15–20 and 21–30, as they are the primary research target of this study.

➤ Question 1

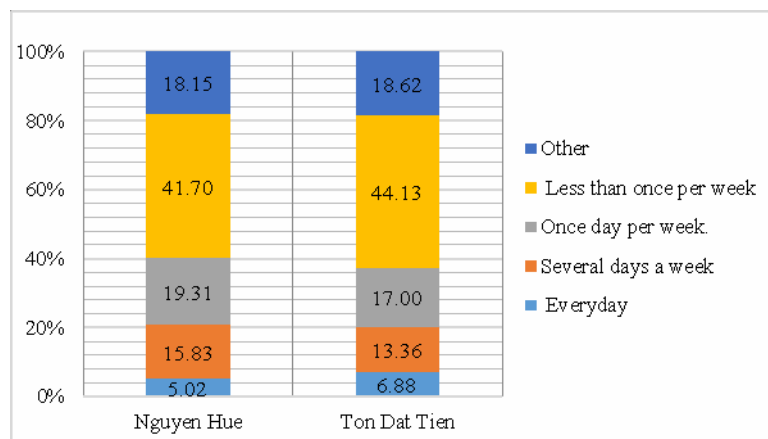


Figure 59 Visit frequency by percentage

In Figure 59 it is easy to see that the majority of the public would most likely come by occasionally, with 41.70% and 44.13% of people who stated that they visited Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien, respectively, less than once per week. In the former promenade, however, there were more people who preferred to come to the street once every week as there were 19.31% of respondents who chose answer C. Additionally, there were very few people who visited quite frequently, as only 5.02%

and 6.88% of survey respondents admitted they that did come by every day to Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien respectively.

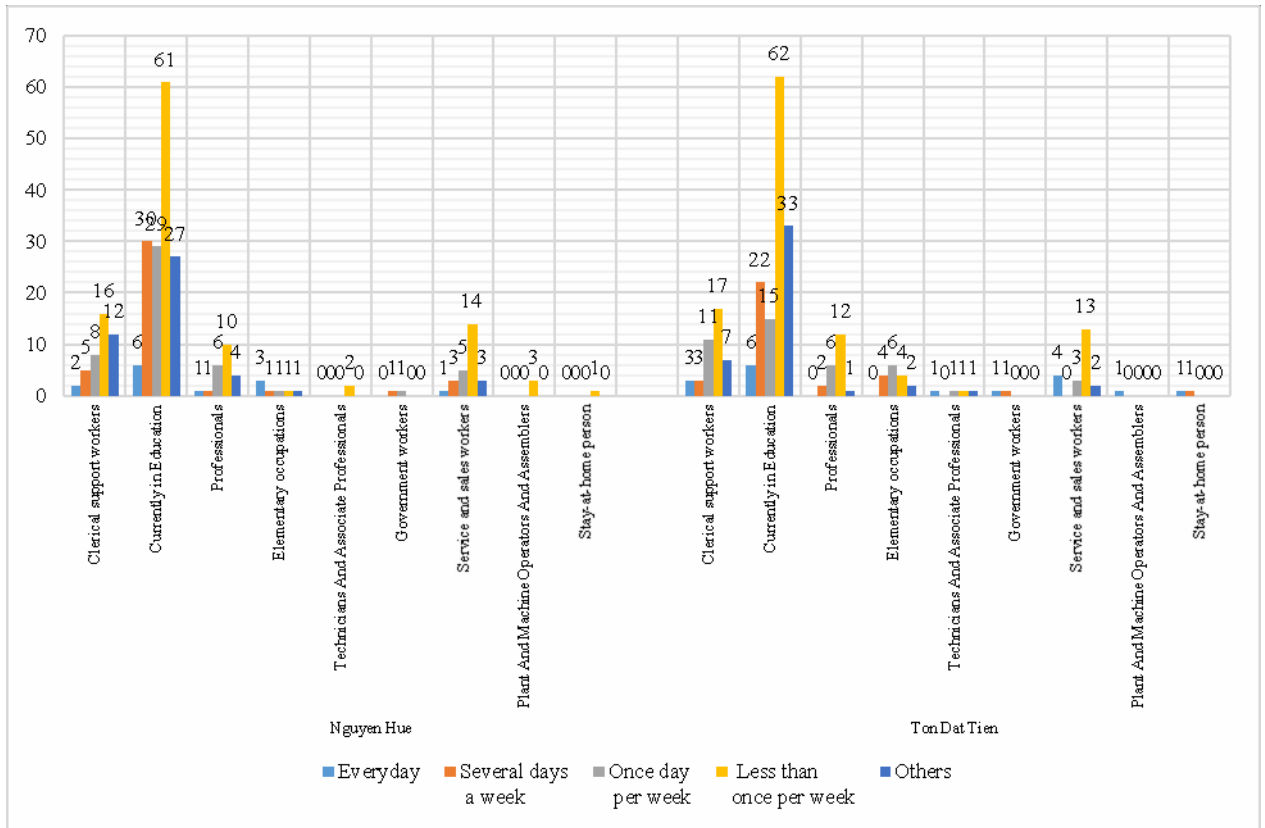


Figure 60 Visiting frequencies by occupations

As students are the most numerous among the survey participants, their responses had a great impact on activity patterns. Over 60% students stated that they would like to visit Nguyen Hue or Ton Dat Tien once in several weeks. In contrast, less than ten were reported coming to those areas every day. Moreover, Nguyen Hue seems to attract more students who are likely to stop by once a week than Ton Dat Tien, as the former has around 30 people compared to less than 20 at the latter.

➤ **Question 2**

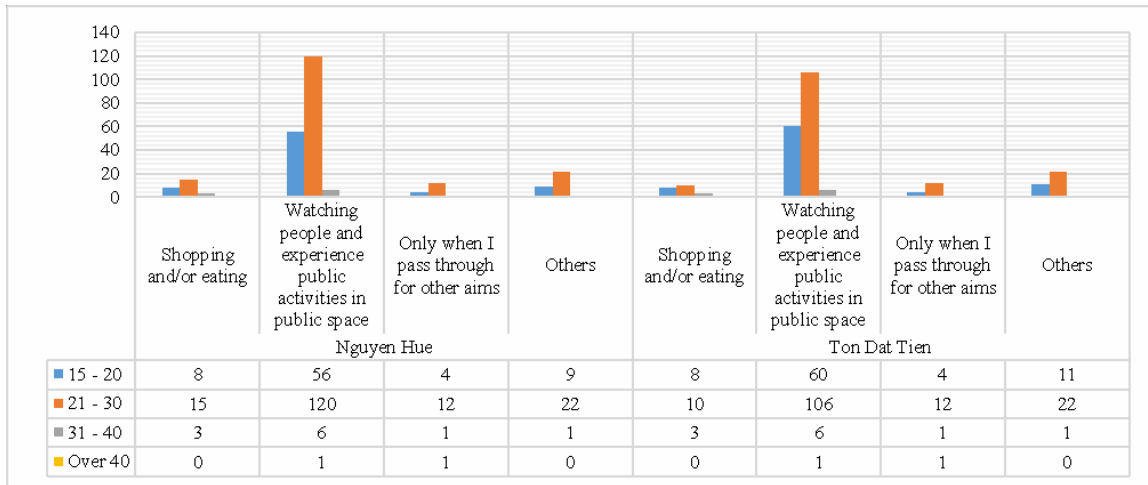


Figure 61 Visit purposes by age groups

Figure 61 shows a very detailed picture of the tendencies of people who come to the promenades. Despite the dominance of the young age groups among the survey respondents and the difference in the number of participants of the two areas, the trends are quite similar. There was an overwhelming response to the choice ‘watching people and experiencing activities in public space’, which totalled two-thirds of the participants. Very few people declared that they just passed by the site as they were en route to another destination or for shopping and gastronomic needs.

➤ **Question 3**

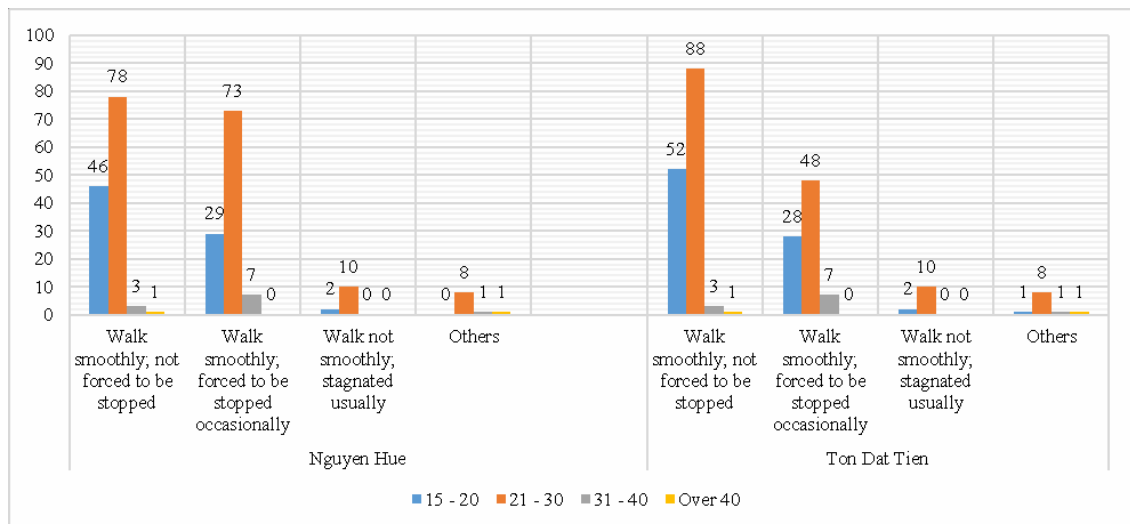


Figure 62 Perception about continuous walking

Regarding the data extracted from Figure 62, survey respondents from every age group gave mostly positive recognition to walking conditions, as only 22 from Nguyen Hue and 23 from Ton Dat Tien expressed their discontent. However, in Ton Dat Tien, the number of people who thought that their walking activity was uninterrupted and more satisfying was higher than the other site. Another aspect that needs to be considered: as most of the participants were in their teens or twenties, could their acceptance of the physical elements be more forgiving?

➤ **Question 4**

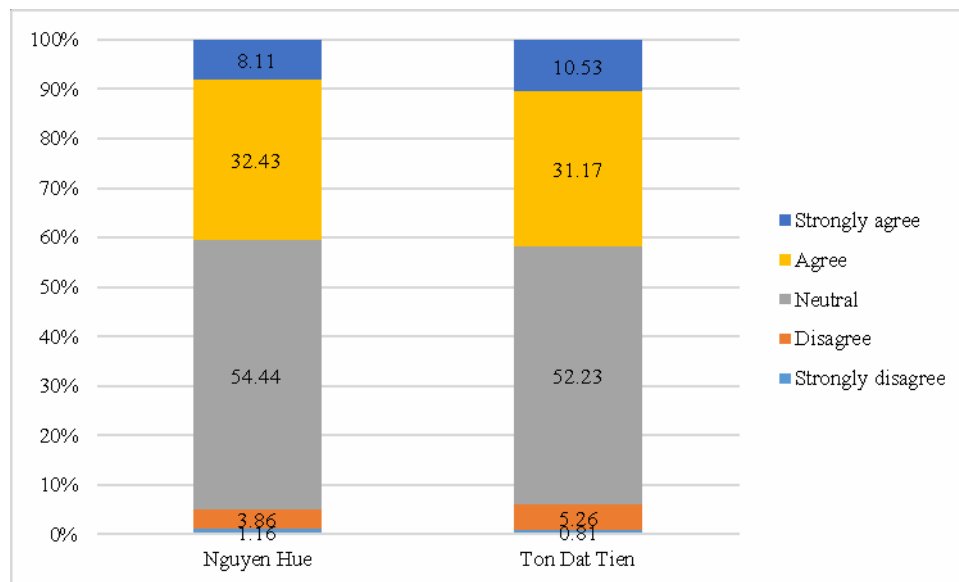


Figure 63 Attitude to crowds by percentage

Analysing Figure 63, on one hand, the data demonstrates that half of the respondents were neutral towards the crowdedness of the esplanade areas studied. On the other hand, a third of them had positive feelings about the compactness in public space; more precisely, 32 (43%) for Nguyen Hue Street and 31 (17%) for Ton Dat Tien Street. An unreceptive attitude against the denseness of the street was scarcely present among the people who took part in the research, as less than 7% of people in both areas expressed their disagreement.

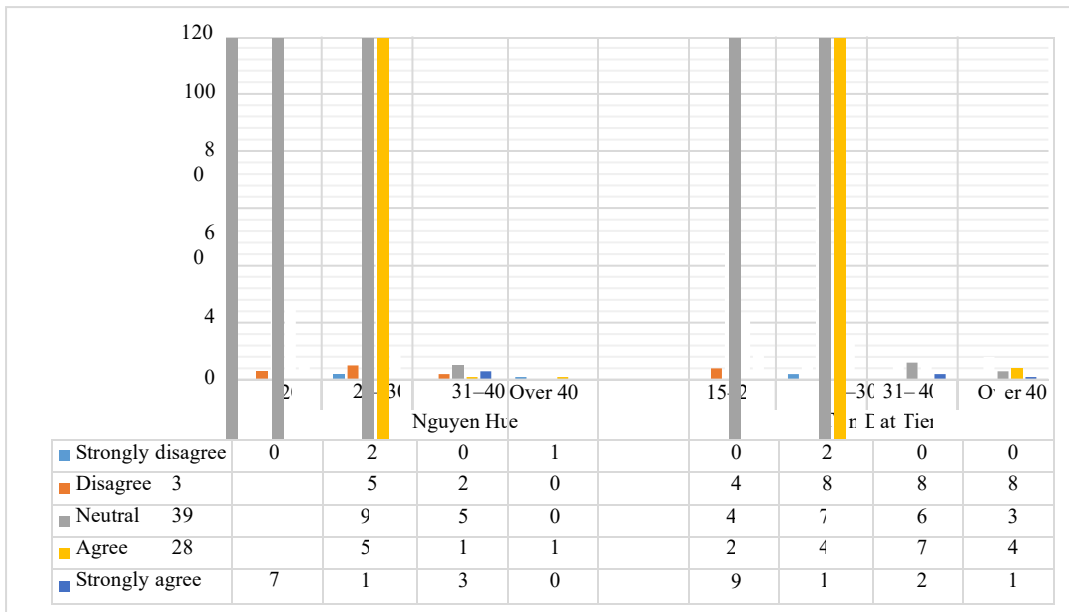


Figure 64 Attitude to crowdedness distributed by age

Figure 64 provides a more specific view on the relationship between age and acceptance of crowdedness. In Nguyen Hue Street, nearly 100 people aged between 21 and 30 expressed an indifference to the crowd. In the younger group, the number was less than 40. A total of 84 participants considered that the compactness of the promenade was somewhat fine. Additionally, only 21 visitors actually felt a strong approval of the crowdedness.

The tendency in Ton Dat Tien Street did resemble that of Nguyen Hue Street, yet it had some distinct aspects. More people felt less at ease with the crowdedness and the difference between indifference and approval of crowdedness was lower.

➤ **Question 5**

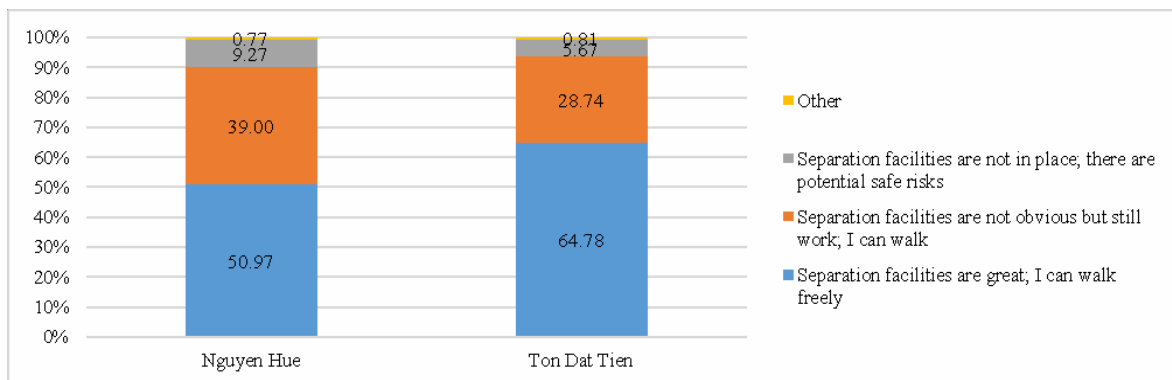


Figure 65 Evaluation of separation means for traffic divide by age group and by percentage

In Figure 65, the obvious similarity is the high satisfaction of survey respondents with the road medians that are used to separate roads. However, Ton Dat Tien esplanade enjoys more approval, as nearly 65% of the respondents thought that the road medians worked well and were convenient compared with 51% in Nguyen Hue. Less than 10% in each group of participants felt that the designed means of separation were inadequate and that their safety was compromised.

➤ **Question 6**

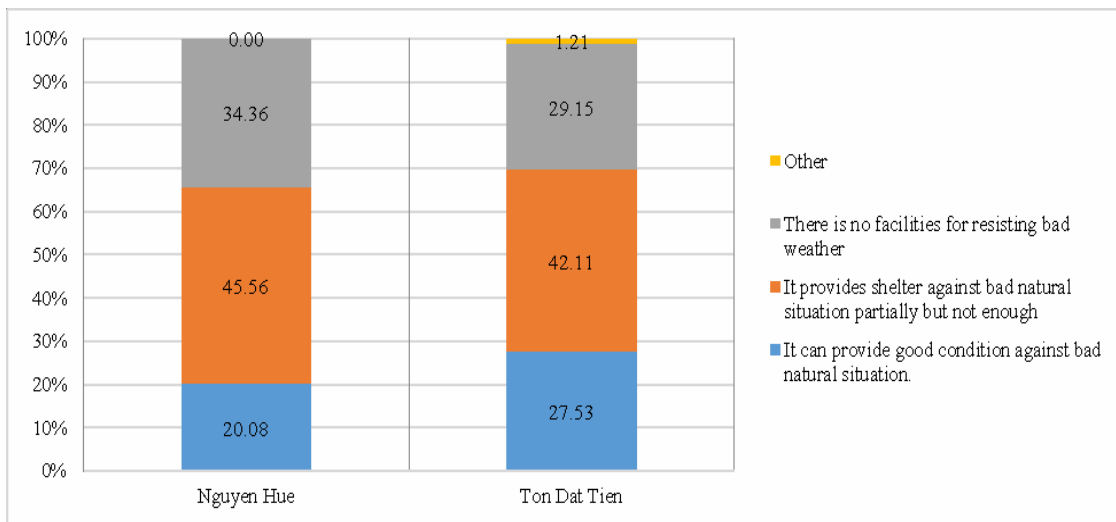


Figure 66 Evaluation of shelter from weather by percentage

In this question, differences in feedback from participants are less drastic than in previous questions. In Nguyen Hue, 45% of respondents expressed their concerns about the insufficiency of shelter from the weather while up to 35% argued that there were no available facilities at all. Meanwhile, one-fifth of Nguyen Hue visitors agreed that the area did provide protection against bad weather. In the other area, opinions between expressing discontent and contentment over the shelter from the weather provided were nearly equal, as the former was 29.15% and the latter was 27.53%.

➤ **Question 7**

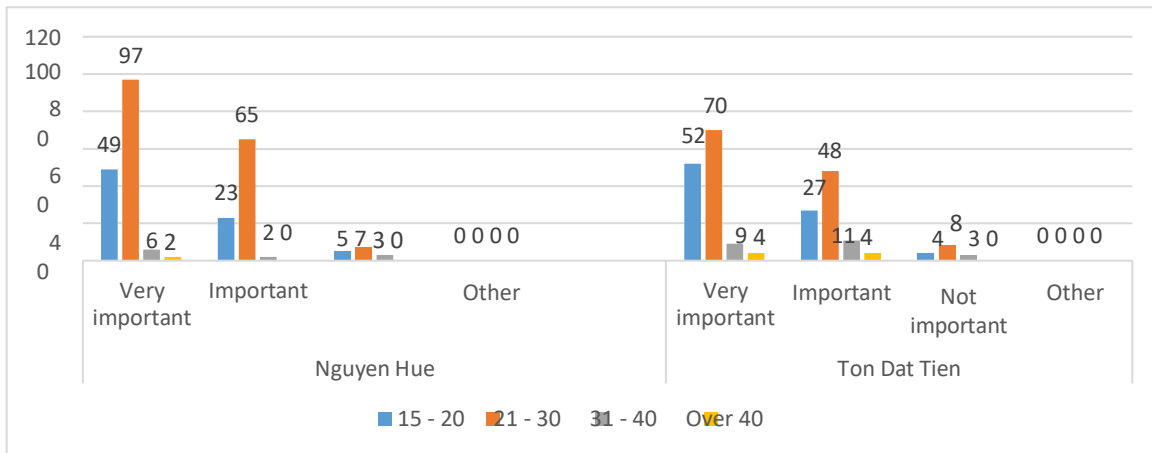
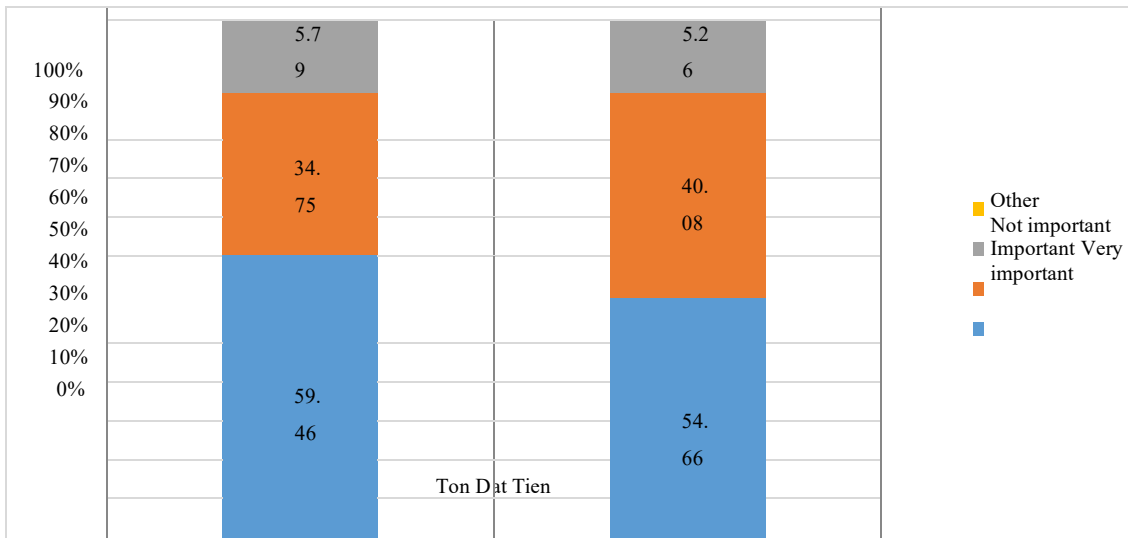


Figure 67 Opinions on weather shelter by percentage and by age group

The charts show how the opinions of survey respondents were divided over the importance of shelter from the weather in the promenade area. It is quite clear that everyone was concerned about this issue, as a very low percentage of participants thought that shelter was insignificant. In both areas, only 12 young people expressed that they felt the feature was unnecessary. In contrast, the majority of persons who took the survey stated that shelter was essential for a walking space. Hypothetically speaking, although young people were the majority of the respondents to the survey, the basic needs of humans to be protected against unfavourable weather conditions still presents as very strong.

➤ **Question 8**

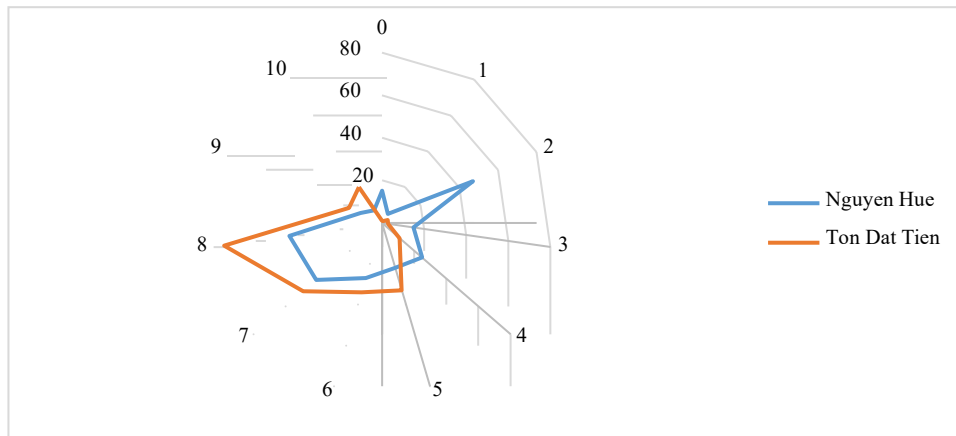


Figure 68 Evaluation on streetscape of two promenade areas

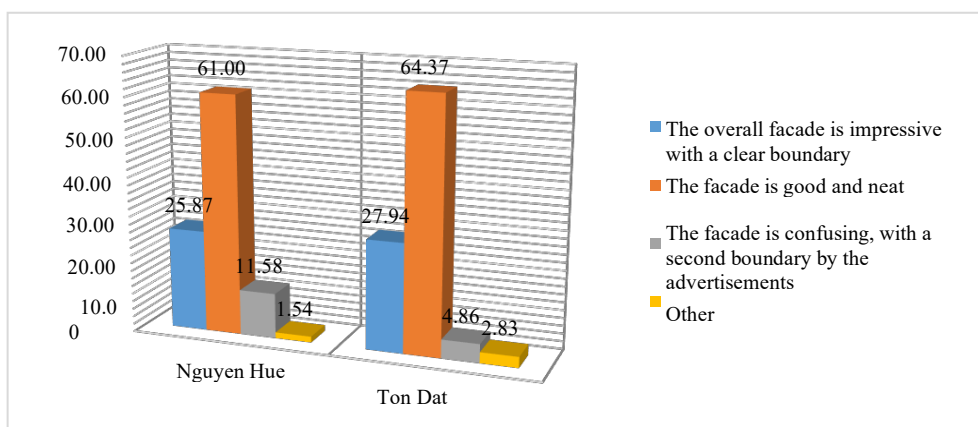
The illustration depicts the feeling of survey respondents regarding the landscape of Nguyen Hue Street and Ton Dat Tien Street.

The latter surely gained a more favourable assessment from its visitors, as 50 people ranked it 7/10 and between 70 and 80 people gave the streetscape 8/10. The number of criticisms of the Ton Dat Tien area was low, as less than 30 people out of a total of 247 ranked it lower than 5.

The former, nonetheless, received less appreciation from people who came by, while the amount of positive feedback was still higher in total; surprisingly, nearly 50 of 259 people questioned gave it 2/10.

From this result, one can surely say Ton Dat Tien enjoys an advantage over Nguyen Hue Street in terms of the designed landscape.

➤ **Question 9**



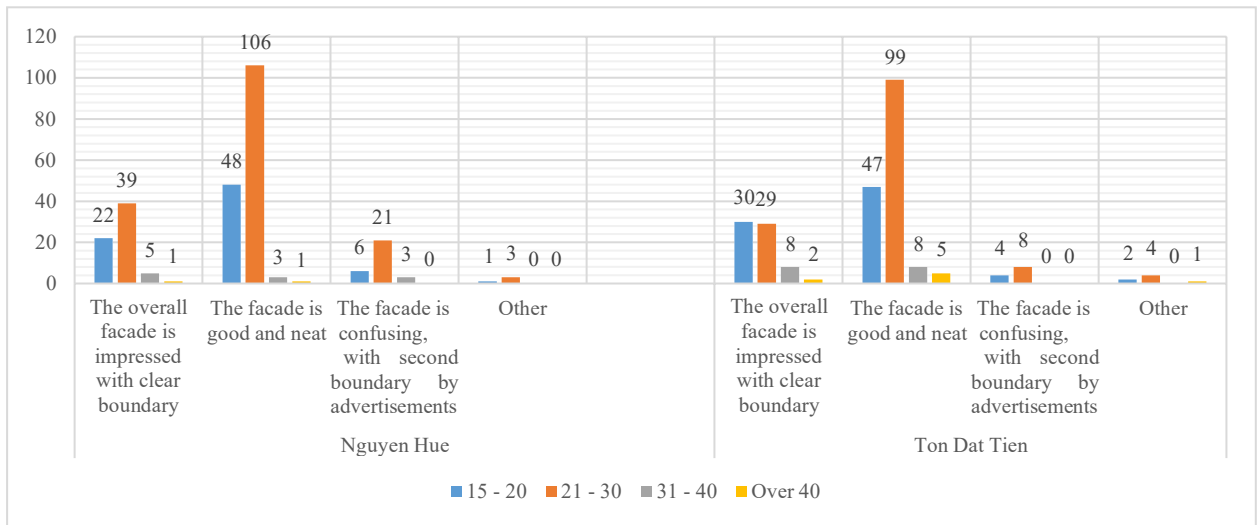


Figure 69 Opinions on building facade and advertisements by percentage and by age group

In general, the percentages of people who considered the street facade was 'good and neat' is relatively high, as there were 61% and 64.37% in Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien respectively. The lowest group in both streets is 'Other opinions', which consisted of less than 2%.

Further investigating the age range, at Nguyen Hue Street, 106 young people in their twenties, along with 48 teenagers, expressed their mild acceptance of the building facade and its advertisements. Only 40 persons argued that the advertising made a bad impression on the area. A similar tendency can be seen in Ton Dat Tien – however, the number of discontented visitors was fewer; 12 persons only.

➤ **Question 10**

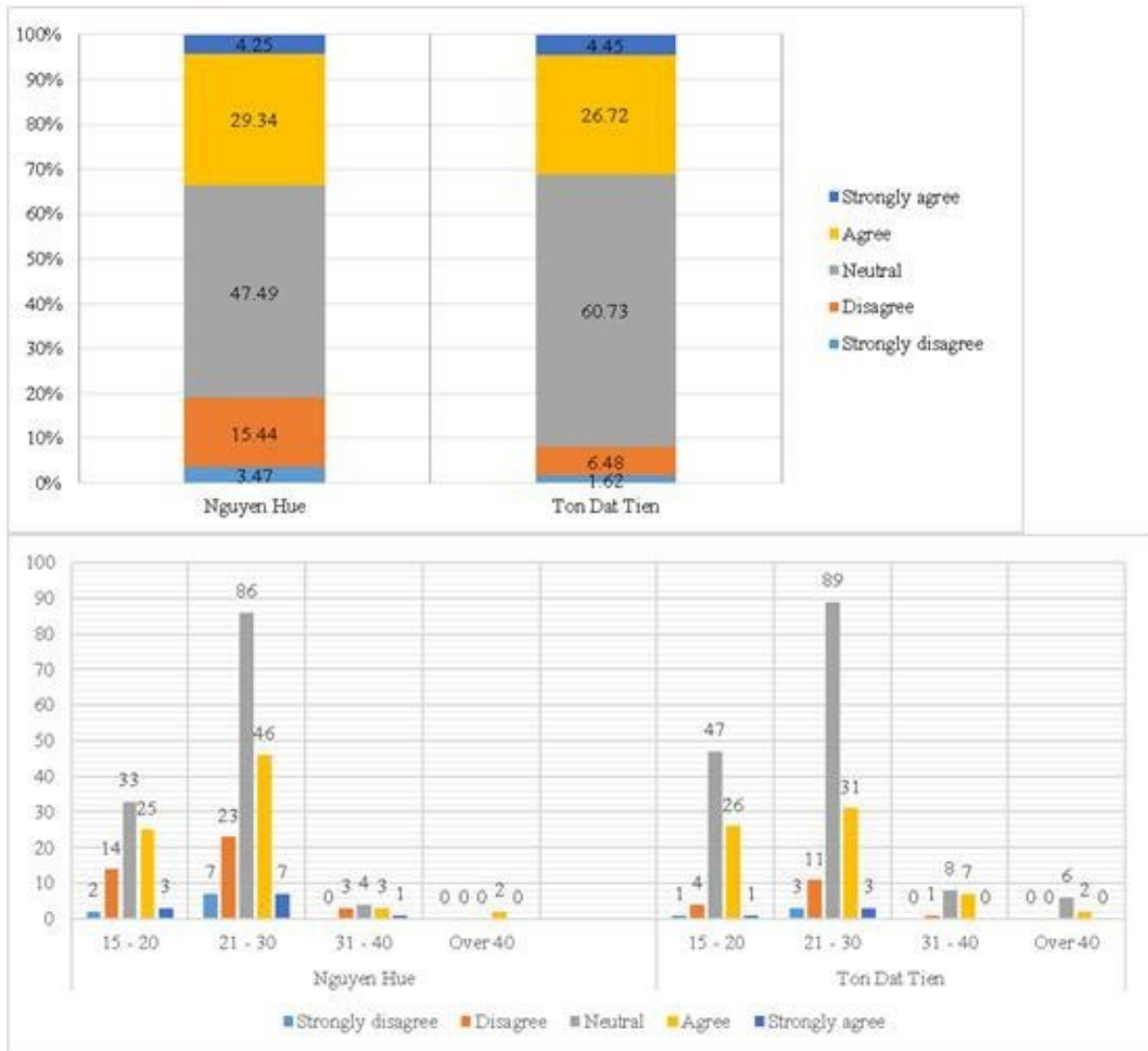


Figure 70 Opinions on attractiveness of advertisements by percentage and by age group

The illustration demonstrates that the majority of participants had an indifferent attitude towards advertisements in the researched areas: 47.5% and 60.73% in Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien respectively. Moreover, the proportions of people who show either strong support of or great dislike towards the advertising in the walking street are relatively low: both are lower than 10%, though the discontented percentage in Ton Dat Tien is just half of that of Nguyen Hue.

Also, in Figure 70, by viewing the pattern of the two dominant age groups, it can be seen that most young people show little interest in advertisements in general. However, the number of survey respondents who were against advertisements in Ton Dat Tien is lower than those in the other area: 18 compared with 46. Additionally, people in their twenties who visited the promenade in the city centre were more attracted by advertising than those who visited the suburban one, as there were 53 against 34.

➤ **Question 11**

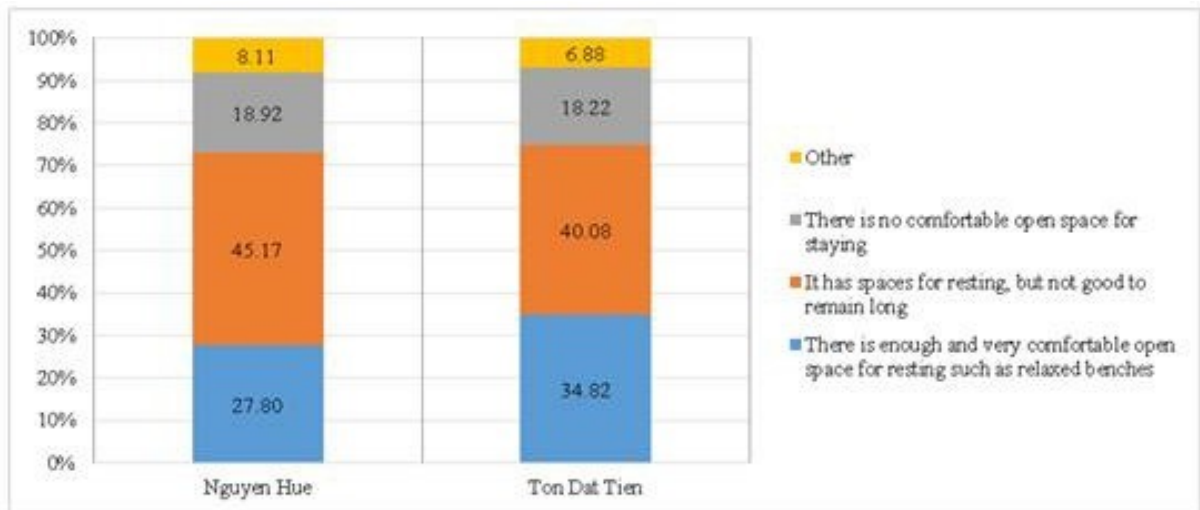


Figure 71 Opinions on rest stops by percentage

As seen in Figure 71, the most numerous choice of survey respondents was concentrated in option B, which agreed that the walking area did have rest stops but were somehow unfit for people to stay too long. In the city centre promenade, Nguyen Hue, 45.17% of people expressed this, while in Ton Dat Tien, the number of people who shared this opinion is lower – slightly higher than 40%.

Interestingly, those Nguyen Hue survey participants who thought that the facilities for rest stops were good was also lower in comparison: 27.8% against 34.82%. The percentages of people who directly complained about uncomfortable or missing rest stops in both areas were very close, 18.92% and 18.22% in Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien respectively. Among other opinions, the lack of seats at rest stops and confined space are common issues.

➤ **Question 12**

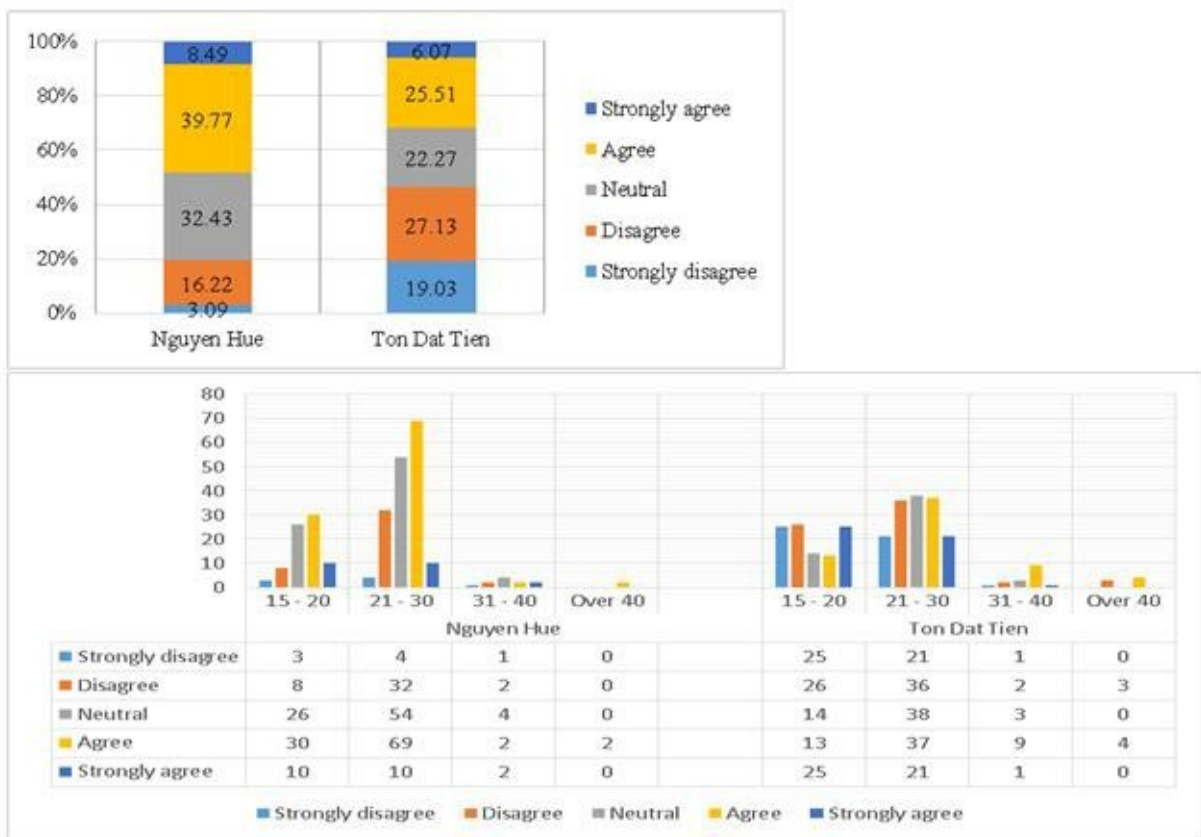


Figure 72 Assessment of disabled-friendly features by percentage and age group

In Figure 72, the similarity in tendency between the two places which can be seen from previous survey questions no longer exists.

Aside from the differences to survey answers in distinct proportions, in Ton Dat Tien, only 6% of people who were asked agreed that the esplanade was disabled-friendly. The dissimilarities between the choices in four categories, 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' are not too great. The group of people complaining about the disadvantage to disabled people is higher in number.

In Nguyen Hue Street, only a handful of people considered that the area was not supportive to the disabled and elderly. The amount of positive feedback is clearly higher, which could hypothetically relate to the more adaptive designed plan of Nguyen Hue.

Regarding Ton Dat Tien Street, the fact that over 100 survey respondents in their teens and twenties expressed their concern over the issue proves that young people do care about accessibility for people who have difficulties with mobility.

➤ **Question 13**

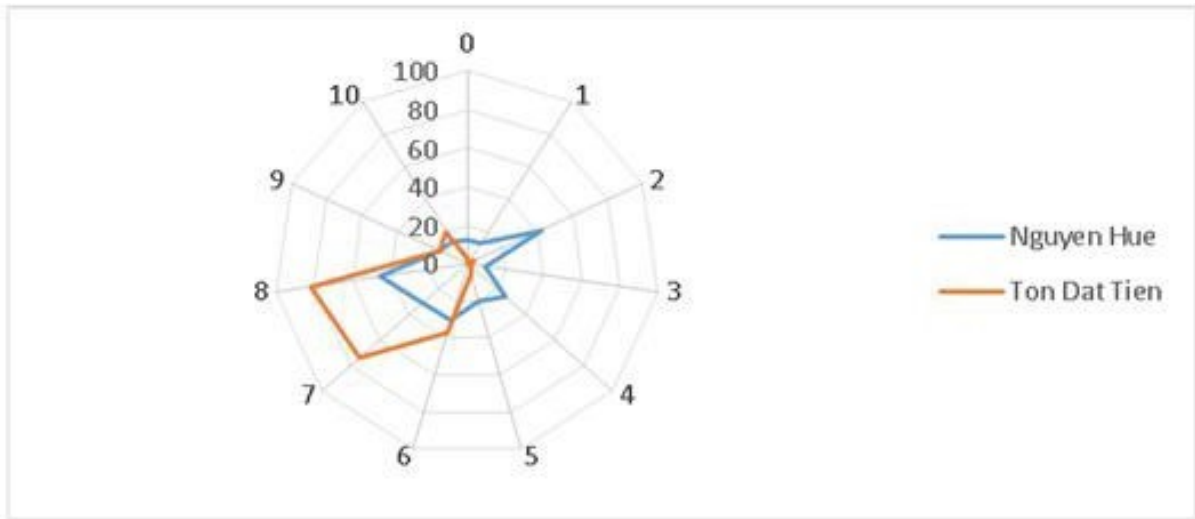


Figure 73 Comparison of ratings of comfort in the two promenades studied

In spite of receiving negative opinions over accessibility for people with difficulties with mobility, the Ton Dat Tien area was once again considered above Nguyen Hue in terms of general comfort, with overwhelming ratings in their band score of 7 and 8 (160 of 249 against 50 of 257). Visitors to Nguyen Hue likely vary in ranking its level of comfort, as no particular band scored higher than 50. Additionally, over 40 people gave it 2/10 for comfort, which is a serious negative point for the public area.

➤ **Question 14**

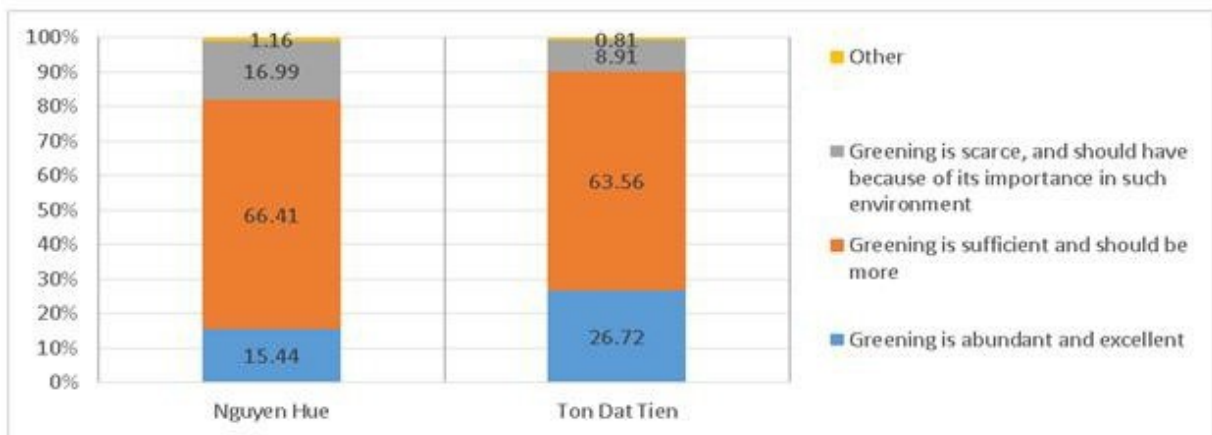


Figure 74 Opinions on greenery level by percentage

There were over two-thirds of survey respondents in both areas that considered the greenery level in the place they were visiting sufficient but needed to be increased:

66.41% in Nguyen Hue and 63.56% in Ton Dat Tien.

Regarding the option 'abundant and excellent', Ton Dat Tien surely leads, as its physical location and design are more concentrated on greening the landscape. A quarter of those surveyed chose this answer.

In contrast, as Nguyen Hue is located in the city centre and has less land mass for greenery, only 15.44% of respondents consider its level of greenery to be abundant.

Nonetheless, the number of people who were strongly concerned about the scarceness of trees and vegetation and suggested change is quite low, 17% and 8.91% in Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien, respectively.

➤ **Question 15**

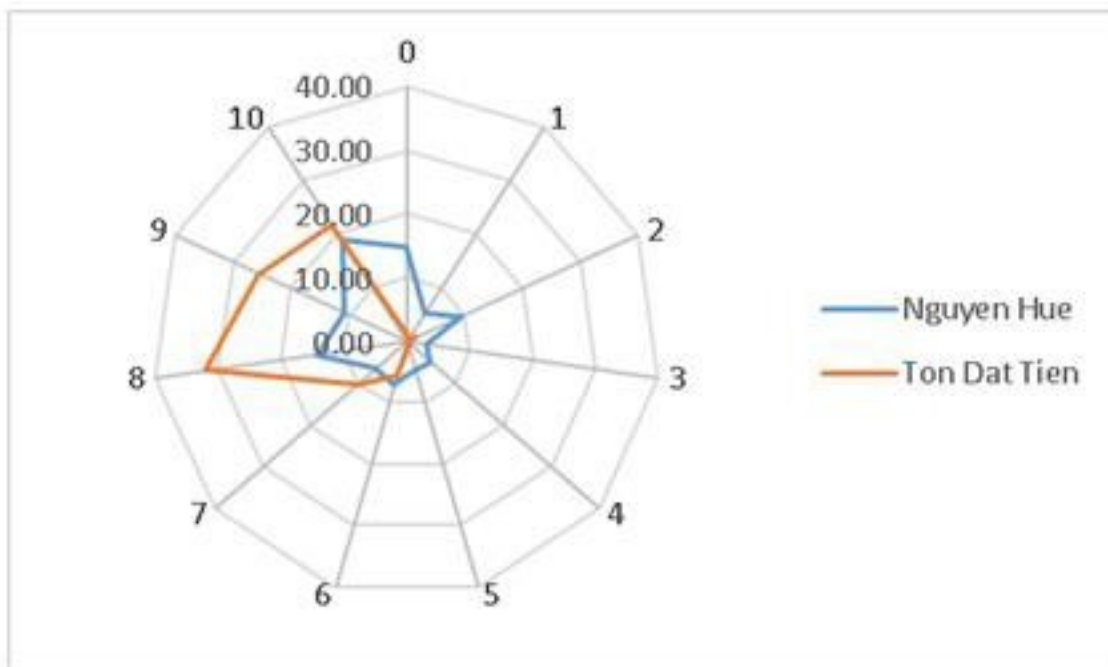


Figure 75 Comparison of ratings of greenness in the two promenades studied

As a result of differences in area and location as well as design plan, Ton Dat Tien promenade received a much higher approval rate from survey respondents, with half of its visitors rating it between 8 and 10 (out of 10). Only 12 people among 247 survey participants gave it a score lower than 5, which indicates a very impressive success of its design.

On the other hand, Nguyen Hue Street has a more modest rating; 109 of 259 people rated it lower than 5 in terms of greenness.

From this result, it is easy to see that greenness is an important feature for visitors deciding their approval, especially in the city centre where the level of natural vegetation is quite low.

➤ **Question 16**

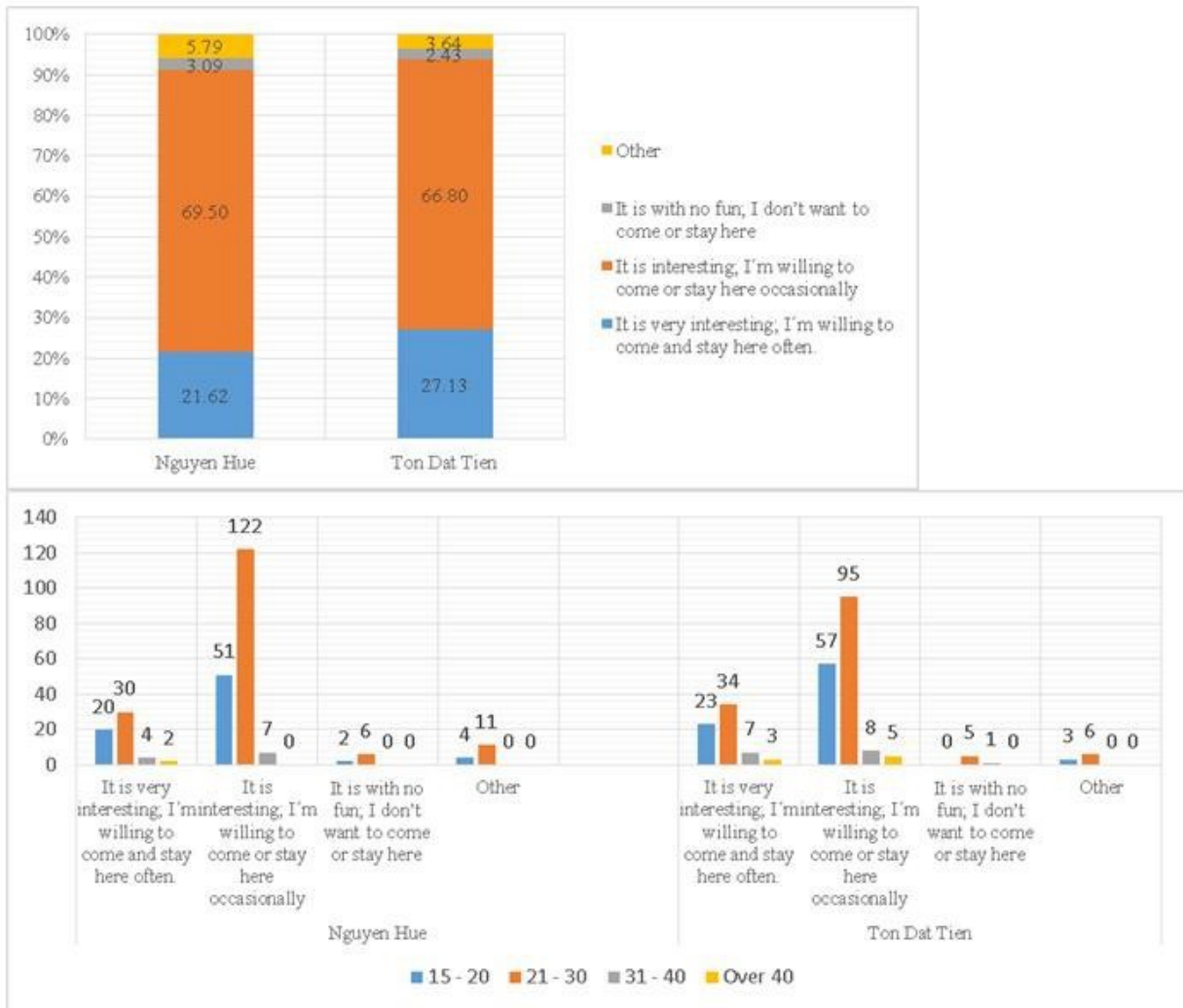


Figure 76 Opinions on interesting level by percentage and age group

The similarity returns to the graphs, as Figure 61 shows the correspondence in the behaviour of visitors in the two studied areas.

Two-thirds of the survey respondents admitted that they visited because of the appealing features of the promenades and would like to visit as often as they can. The second highest group also showed their interest of wanting to visit occasionally. There were very few participants that expressed their dislike.

The age group illustrates the dominance of young people in the survey and the identical trends of visitor choice.

➤ **Question 17**

In Figure 77, on the one hand, the highest choice belonged to option C, which argued that the promenade possessed little cultural identity and uniqueness, especially in Nguyen Hue Street, where 120 people supported this view. On the other hand, there were less popular opinions that claimed the promenade did have its own characteristics.

The same tendency also appeared in Ton Dat Tien, however, only 100 of 247 people regarded this street as similar to a normal commercial street. Moreover, there were 55 participants who considered Ton Dat Tien esplanade had its own unique identity.

In the 'Other' group, there were particular critical views, such as 'the area has a mixed and chaotic culture and character' or constructive ideas like 'should combine more Vietnamese culture with the design and activity on the walking street'.

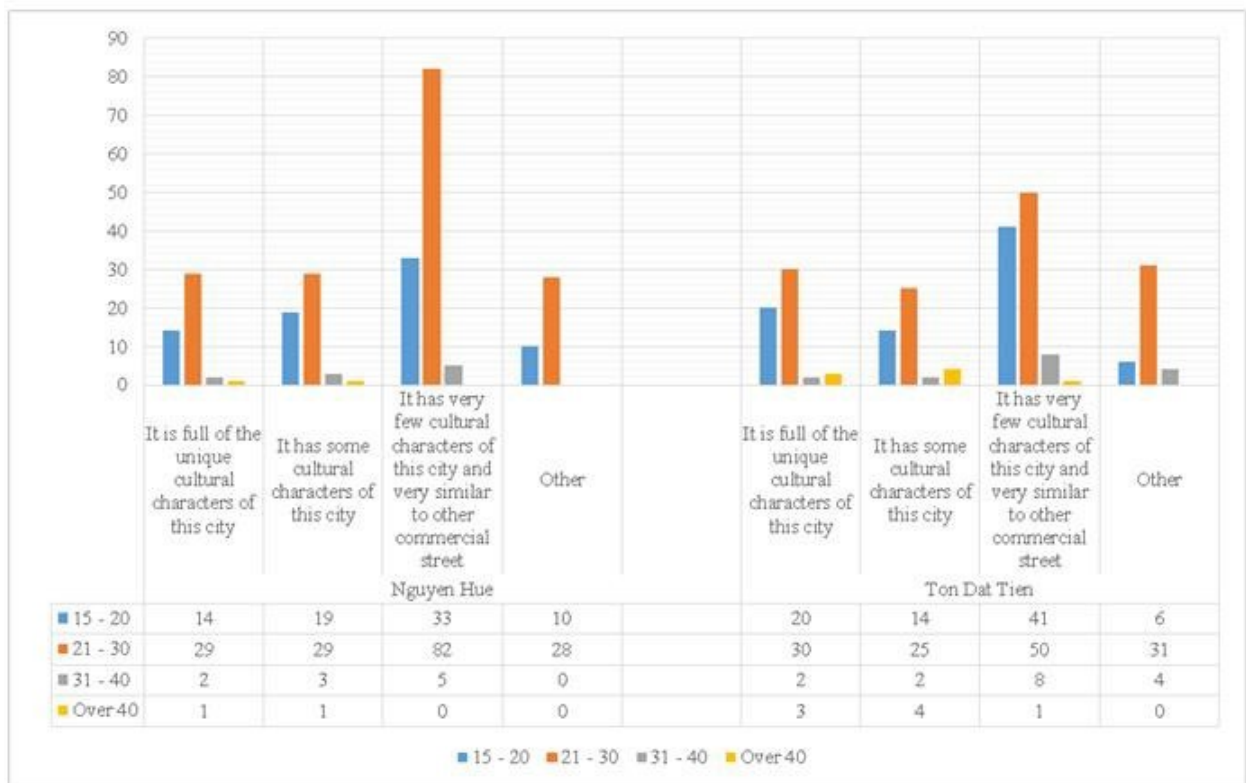


Figure 77 Opinions on cultural identity by age group

➤ **Question 18**

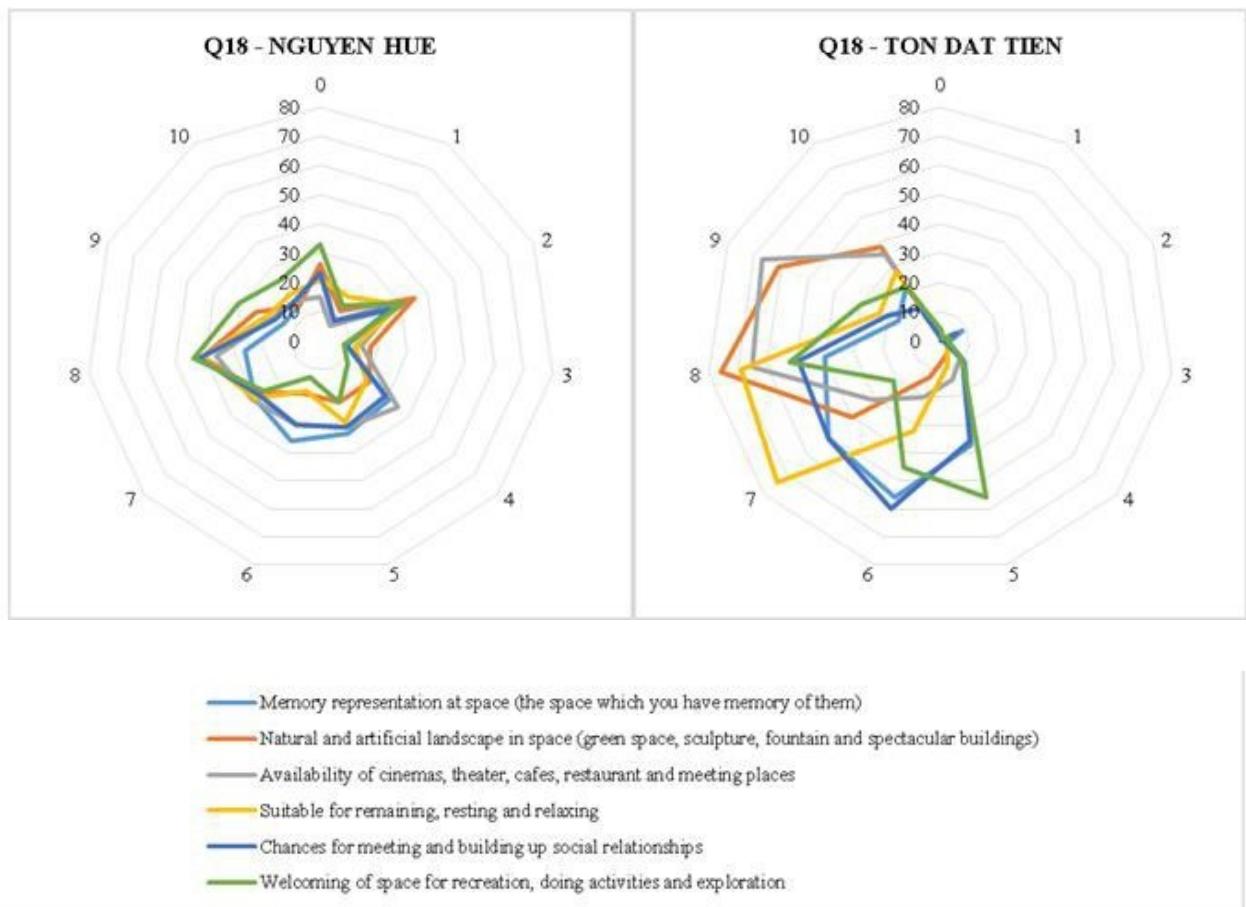


Figure 78 Comparison of ratings of various aspects in the two promenades studied

Figure 78 illustrates the evaluation from survey participants of functions with both physical and psychological impact in Nguyen Hue Street and Ton Dat Tien Street.

Generally, the Ton Dat Tien area received a lot of appreciation from visitors, as it had few bad scores in most rating aspects. For example, in the categories on the availability of social amenities, areas to relax and natural landscape, none of these had a number of people greater than 15 who gave negative ratings. On the radar meter, it is clear to see that people generally rated it between 6 and 9 (out of 10).

In contrast, the given responses about Nguyen Hue Street were a mix. No aspect shows a significant element that needs to be considered, as no category reached 50 votes. Furthermore, many low marks were given for band 2 in every aspect; close to 40 votes for each category.

III. Conclusion

By selecting and analysing the data collected from 18 survey questions, many interesting facts and existing problems have emerged and been identified.

Although there is some insignificant iteration in data comparison, the similar tendencies in the responses of visitors to two different areas over many social behaviours illustrates the homogeneity of the community and typical needs of the younger generation.

This survey, however, has several critical flaws, such as the unevenness that exists in gender, occupation and age group. This may lead to a biased result in the research, as some aspects cannot be determined thoroughly. Furthermore, unwillingness to cooperate and the possibility that some respondents provided false information could be problematic as well.

The results of the data analysis also shed light on the cause of negative opinions regarding walking street areas as well as explaining the popularity of Ton Dat Tien, which is located in the famous new urban complex Phu My Hung in the south of HCMC.

Regarding the research results, there is a need to reconsider, identify and find solutions to mitigate the current restrictions of Nguyen Hue Street as well as create changes in order to fully utilise the potential of the area.

CHAPTER X: DISCUSSIONS

I. Impressions and recognised concerns of walking

1. Survey results

Generally, the Ton Dat Tien area received a lot of appreciation from its visitors as it had very few low scores in many rating aspects (see figure 63). For example, in the category of availability of social amenities, areas to relax and natural landscape, no more than 0.5% of the respondents (15 of 247 persons) gave negative responses. It is clear to see that people rated it positively. The street may be taken for granted by people from the neighbourhood, but to visitors who live elsewhere it is a great attraction.

Two-thirds of the survey respondents admitted they visited because of the appealing features of the promenade and stated that they would like to come back as frequently as they could (see figure 61). The second highest group also showed interest in wanting to visit occasionally. In contrast, there were very few participants expressing their dislike towards this location, of which there were less than ten in total. Regarding cultural identity, however, attitudes are more diverse. A total of 100 people saw this street as a normal commercial street and significantly distant from HCMC. On the other hand, 55 participants acknowledged that Ton Dat Tien esplanade possessed the essence of the identity of the city. There were also 45 persons that expressed that the walking street managed to show a mild individuality. In the 'Other' group, the respondents gave interesting comments like 'the area has a mixed chaotic cultural character' or constructive ideas such as '[it] should combine more Vietnamese culture in the design and activities on the walking street'.



Figure 79 Street barriers and security guards from different groups

However, as Ton Dat Tien has become more popular through time, one critical problem eventually showed up. The motorcycle is more than just a means of transport in Vietnam; it has become immersed into the way of life of many Vietnamese. What this means is that as soon as people started to flood into the promenade, their vehicles would be there too. Hence, problems kept emerging one after another. With more motorcycles gathered there than the design limit, the effects on the street were unacceptable. As the parking lots here have abundant capacity, there was no concern over this. Risks of accidents, snatching of personal belongings and unacceptable levels of noise are among the notable issues. Consequently, Phu My Hung management has come up with a drastic measure. Barriers were put up at every junction and security guards posted in many places (Figure 79).

Interestingly, as every Zone A property is privately owned, there is an overlap in security jurisdictions. Technically, the management unit holds responsibility for safe-keeping for the whole urban area. Nonetheless, the properties were purchased and divided up by various developers and their clients. Those smaller property owners also employed their own security guards. Thus, the entire area gives the impression of extra surveillance. On the one hand, additional safeguarding is a great advantage to consider for anyone who is purchasing assets in Phu My Hung. Customers will be at ease as they know their houses/buildings are in good hands²⁵. On the other hand, more of a security presence will create a virtual barrier to non-resident people who come to the street just to enjoy the scenic atmosphere. The feeling being watched surely makes people feel uncomfortable.

Although some of the developers of Phu My Hung declared that public parts are open to everyone,²⁶ there is a question about whether they have mistaken the meaning of 'public'. Was free access really implied at the beginning when the project was still in its inception? Or did the management have to give the green light later when the Phu My Hung project became successful and they wanted to create a friendly image to the public? In Ton Dat Tien Street, travellers may encounter security guards on every corner, and even more so in the evening. Inside Zone A, there are several areas that are limited to their own residents only. Those areas are truly gated communities with no sense of neighbourhood. Through observation and the survey, the majority of respondents showed little concern about the constraints in walking or engaging in various activities. Yet, the presence of the guards and restrictions still reminded them that they were on private property and feeling the separation between 'common' and high-class people.

With the effort to make a model residential area for the affluent community, any activities that are deemed not to fit the 'urban civilised code' are prohibited. For instance, street hawkers are one of their targets. In the in-depth interviews, several persons considered such hubbub to be an image of the old age, which is no longer required in a modern urban place.²⁷ Evidently, such attitudes can be recognised in Ton Dat Tien Street. There are many warning signs placed around the area forbidding various activities, either originating from the local government authority or the Phu My Hung management unit (Figure 65). The priority of the security system here is to keep an eye on those street hawkers.

Why do street hawkers attract so much animosity now? In Southeast Asian culture, the presence of street hawkers is historical and naturally social. Currently, Vietnamese society has been on the path of modernisation at a fast pace, yet the remnant of the old age still lingers in several corners of the city. Even for people who were born in the late 1990s, the cries of those mobile vendors are quite familiar. Their services are extremely useful, especially for who cannot afford the time to buy groceries or money to go to the supermarket. If one had to summarise this specific service, there are two words: 'cheap' and 'convenient'. Hence, it is no surprise that the street hawkers are popular and somehow manage to become etched into Vietnamese culture. As society evolves, so does the hawker. Harsh competition from conventional markets and between themselves has led to frauds and scams. In addition, the problem of food safety has emerged as a critical issue recently. Finally, there is the greatest side effect of selling

food on the street, which is littering. Although the responsibility is not entirely theirs, as buyers also need to take care of their own garbage, the public community needs a scapegoat. Consequently, the street hawkers take all the blame. In the story of Ton Dat Tien Street and Phu My Hung, there is no place for any street sellers as ‘they will degrade the image of a model urban area’.²⁸



Figure 80 From left to right – Sign prohibiting street hawkers;²⁹ Periodic restrictions for vehicles during the week;³⁰ Security checkpoint

2. Remarks

Unanticipated by project planners, the Phu My Hung project has overachieved, with many state-of-the-art features. Since the beginning of the project, this area has attracted thousands of people to come and enjoy its amenities. Started as a landmark high-class residential area, Ton Dat Tien Street has progressed to a popular and well-known location, even outside the boundaries of South Saigon New Urban Area. The community of HCMC residents, who were desperate for a green, scenic recreation area inside the overcrowded city now has a destination. Captivated by the design and convenience of the place, they are willing to be bound by the Phu My Hung restrictions. The notable problem of Ton Dat Tien Street is its privatised characteristics, despite being called public space.

3. Nguyen Hue Street

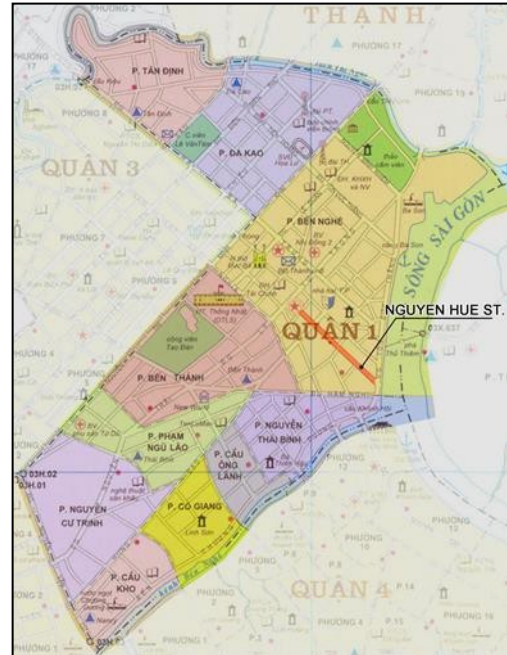


Figure 81 Left – Nguyen Hue promenade at night (Courtesy of Kim Sang, 2016); Right – Nguyen Hue Street in District 1 (Bản đồ quy hoạch chung Quy hoạch Quận 1, 2016)

Nguyen Hue promenade is situated on the edge of District 1, facing east towards the Saigon River. This is the populous and dynamic district that has many modern shopping malls, hotels, offices and restaurants as well as attractive historic buildings and entertainment locations. This area is extremely dense and has lots of public spaces for social interaction. In addition, Nguyen Hue Street is used as a Flower Boulevard at every lunar New Year celebration, which transforms it into a massive hub of attraction to HCMC residents.

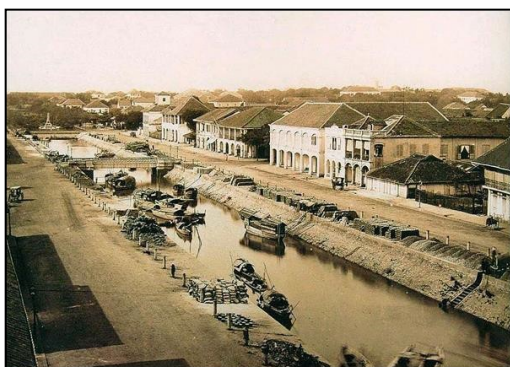


Figure 82 Left – Kenh Lon in the late 19th century; Right – End of Grand Canal leading to Saigon River Harbour (Hình ảnh xưa của miền Nam, n.d.)

Its location in District 1 means that Nguyen Hue has a long and eventful history. Originally, the road was an irrigation canal that brought water to Gia Dinh Fortress, which was built in 1790. This canal was named Kênh Lon or Grand Canal, later changed to Charner Canal in 1861 after South Vietnam fell under French domination. In 1887, the once busy commercial canal was filled in and became a boulevard, at the end of which was L'Hôtel de Ville à Saigon.



Figure 83 Nguyen Hue Street as Boulevard Charner in the French colonial era (Hình ảnh xưa của miền Nam, n.d.)

Following the course of time, the boulevard's name was changed again, this time to Nguyen Hue – a famous historical figure in the late eighteenth century. The street became one of the most beautiful streets in Saigon, surrounded by colourful hotels, restaurants and historical buildings. In 1960, the first flower market and festival was held on the Vietnamese New Year holiday (Hòa, 2015). Since then, the tradition has carried on until the present day.



Figure 84 Left – Saigon 1966, Nguyen Hue pavement; Right – Nguyen Hue Boulevard (Henley, n.d.)

- Planning and land use

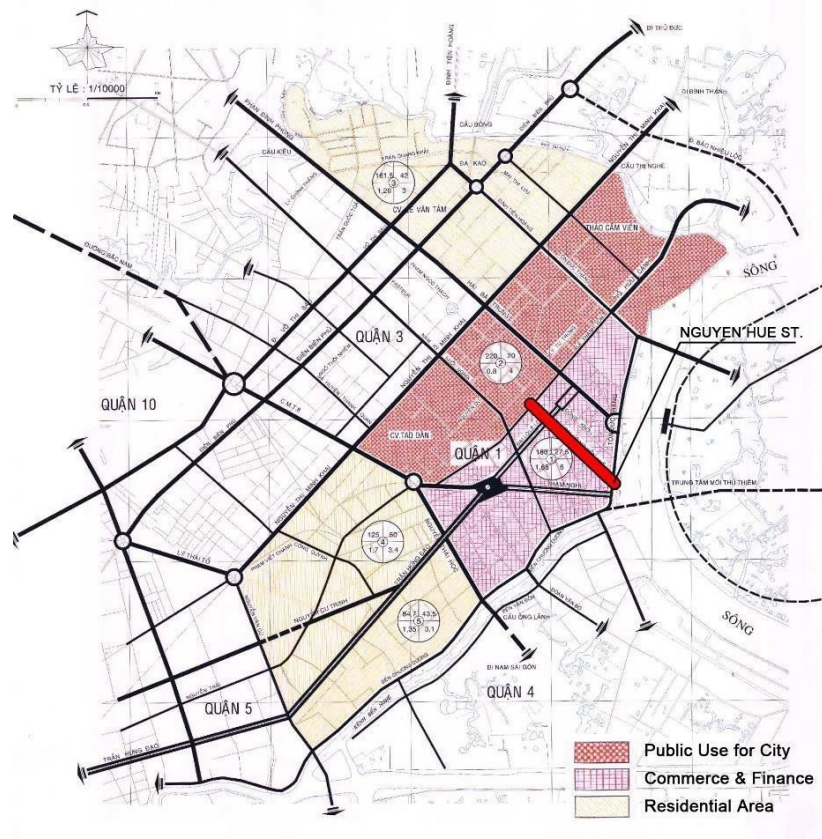


Figure 85 Land use of District 1 (2010–2020) (Điều Chỉnh Quy Hoạch Chung Quận 1, 1997)

Though District 1 is not the oldest quarter of HCMC, since it was chosen as the location of the colonial government by the French in the early twentieth century, it has become the most important part of the city. While there are many neighbourhoods with high density, the main function of this area is administration and commerce. As the map in Figure 85 shows, the whole street is located inside the commerce and finance quarter. Due to the project of rejuvenating the city centre and inauguration of the new statue of Ho Chi Minh in front of the City Hall, a new renovation plan for Nguyen Hue Street was approved by the city council and People’s Committee.³¹ This project was quite ambitious as the goal was to provide a facelift for the most popular street of the city centre and boost the appearance of the City Hall behind it.



Figure 86 Top ten most expensive streets in HCMC (VET, 2016)

These plans also created new heights for Nguyen Hue Street, as the price of properties surrounding it has skyrocketed, with 49,555 US dollars for just one square metre. Evidently, becoming the priciest street in HCMC has brought problems for planning, such as the cost of land reclamation. If there had been any ideas of increasing the ratio of public land use, with this unimaginable price it would be too difficult to convert any commercial lots. In addition, the fund for the improvement of Nguyen Hue Street came directly from the city's budget,³² which meant that the development plan could not be too expensive. Hence, the street was confined within its current limits, which led to less room for new designs.

Technically, Nguyen Hue promenade is under the management jurisdiction of District 1, where it is located. Nonetheless, as the project fell under infrastructure construction, the Traffic & Transport Department (TTD) took charge of the project. In the end, there is no dedicated management unit for this project. Consequently, confusion has emerged during the process of running street activities and redistributing the operational budget.

- **Design pattern**

Initially, the plan simply aimed to upgrade and enhance the old street,³³ with the TTD acting as developer, while the Urban Planning and Architecture Department was in charge of planning and design. Nonetheless, as the project originated as one of street design, only the work on infrastructure improvement was emphasised. Several phases of the normal planning process were omitted, from scientific research to landscaping calculation. The nature of Nguyen Hue Street development was indeed a technical design construction, not an urban planning project that would take into account every

aspect of urban street life. This project is an exemplary evident of an impromptu planning process, which is quite common in contemporary Vietnam.

Goals:

Create a walking area that can combine cultural, political and commercial activities. The promenade will become the destination for HCMCdenizens to visit not only for occasional events but also every day.

Build up a green corridor for the city centre that can help to improve the microclimate of the area. Moreover, this street will encourage people to engage more in public activity.

Organise a constant linkage of landscape from the City Hall to Bach Dang Park (Basic Design Description of Improving & Upgrading Nguyen Hue St.,2014)

- Specifications

- Physical features



Figure 87 Design plan and arrangement of plants (Basic Design Description of Improving & Upgrading Nguyen Hue St., 2014)

The design was inspired by the concept of a public town square combined with a modern walking street. It was divided into three different parts, which contain three main landmarks: the Ho Chi Minh statue, the laser light fountain and the flower park at the end of the street.

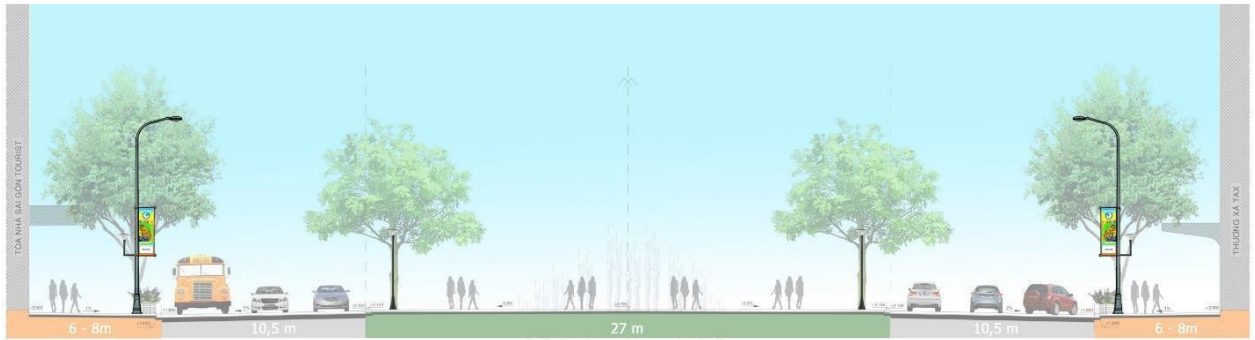


Figure 88 Cross-section of Nguyen Hue Street (Basic Design Description of Improving & Upgrading Nguyen Hue St., 2014)

In general, the size of the old boulevard still remains the same; only the proportions of the interior lanes were changed. The middle part was dedicated to pedestrians, with a width of 27 m, and the surface was laid with coloured granite tiles. There are two lanes for motor traffic; each is 10.5 m wide, and open for vehicles on weekdays from 23.00 to 19.00 to relieve traffic pressure from adjacent areas.

Amenities for public service were also thoroughly designed along Nguyen Hue promenade. The disabled were provided with special accessibility through the standards of the city guidelines. Furthermore, in order to promote walking and public interaction, several bus lines were set up along the street with appropriate service intervals. Urban furniture like rubbish bins, benches, bus stops and information boards were also provided.

4. S.W.O.T.

Strengths:	<p>Good accessibility</p> <p>Public property</p> <p>Historical location</p> <p>Traditional destination for public events</p>
Weaknesses:	<p>Limited space</p> <p>Traffic intertwining</p> <p>Inadequate design</p> <p>Under influence of government authority</p>
Opportunities:	<p>To receive proper design modification</p> <p>Changes in management method and investment</p> <p>New metro access</p>
Threats:	<p>Development of commercial activity</p> <p>Disunity between new and old policies</p>

➤ **Impression and recognition concerns in walking survey results**

Table 9 Negative ratings of Nguyen Hue Street

Total negative ratings	Percentage
106	40.93
112	43.24
97	37.45
102	39.38
95	36.68
98	37.84

In contrast to the previous results from the District 7 walking street, the responses given concerning Nguyen Hue Street were a mix (see figure 78). First of all, less than half of the survey respondents agreed to give marks of 8 to 10, even

for the strongpoints such as engaging with recreation activities and building social relationships.

The majority of ratings were between the average and above average range (5 and 6). Notably, there were a substantial number of people who gave negative feedback (any score lower than 5). For instance, the lowest marks for each category were 39% in average, which was much higher than the 7% of Ton Dat Tien. Paradoxically, while the goals of the project supposedly focus on such elements of social interaction and public activity, the results said different. In any business, a dissatisfaction ratio as high as two-fifths is unacceptable.



Figure 89 From left to right – Street performance with sign language; man selling cotton candy; another vendor displaying his eccentric commodities

The trend that was witnessed in Ton Dat Tien now reappears in the data relating to interesting aspects of the city centre promenade. More than half the survey participants agreed with the appeal of the street and expressed their intention of revisiting, but only occasionally. The attractiveness of the site contributes to its tradition as an eventful place where many cultural activities usually occur.



Figure 90 Responsibility for public security is divided between the Voluntary Youth Public Benefit Service Company Limited (left) and the police force (right) (Source: Dinh Phu35)

Furthermore, attributes in the form of new enhancements such as the walking area, the light water fountain and lit decorations at night help to create the essence of modern public space to capture the residents of a city that is too casual. However, street hawkers have been criticised by the media and some of the urban managers as the cause of littering and public disturbance.³⁴ Their presence somehow is more tolerated than in the case of Ton Dat Tien. Because the image of Nguyen Hue Street is quite significant, there is an extreme focus on public safety here. Aside from the local police patrol from District 1, the People's Committee have also employed a specific unit dedicated to the job. While the main task of law enforcement officers is to look out for crimes, the mission of those employees in dark green uniforms is more diverse. They help to regulate the traffic flow around the promenade, assist tourists and keep watch for public disorder. The atmosphere here completely contrasts with the promenade in District 7, and visitors have less of an impression of being monitored. Even though people are prevented from entering the area of the water fountain, in general Nguyen Hue Street still retains public freedom.



Figure 91 Commercial shop and gastronomic business on Nguyen Hue Street



Figure 92 Spontaneous parking lots: Left – utilising a construction site; Right – utilising the nearby footpath

Because Nguyen Hue Street is situated in a crowded city quarter, limiting the volumes of motorised vehicles is not a simple task. The pedestrian and vehicle flows intertwine, posing a serious risk of accidents and crimes. Moreover, the recognisable flaw in planning here is the absence of designated parking spaces. Apparently, no planner has taken into account the fact that people in HCMC travel mainly by motorcycle. As soon as Nguyen Hue promenade was introduced, crowds of city folks poured onto the site. With no preparations, an impromptu solution arose. Several adjacent construction sites were utilised for parking, and even the pedestrian footpaths were also put into such use. As these services are private, the price also depends on the owners' goodwill. The survey respondents complained about the lack of price control, when the cost of parking could easily be raised by two or three times in the case of special events.³⁸ Moreover, temporary parking spaces are definitely not a substantial solution for the walking street. With new buildings being completed, won't more vehicles appear in the vicinity?

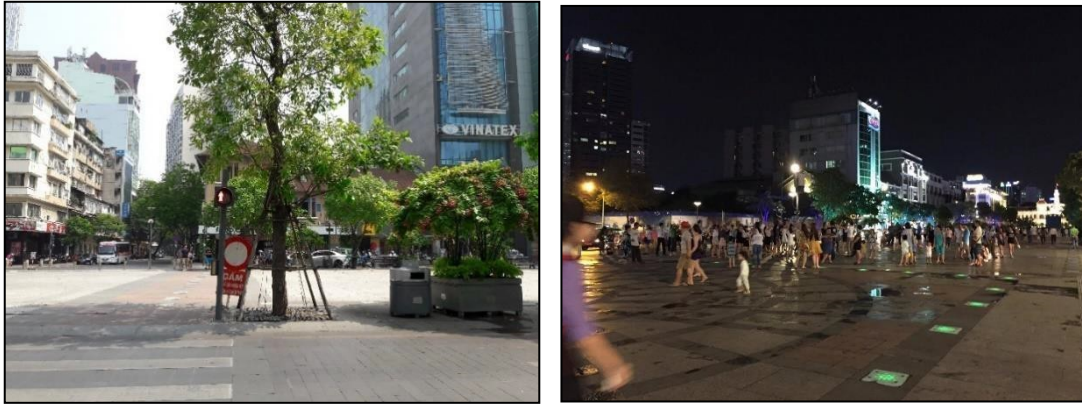


Figure 93 The difference between day and night at Nguyen Hue Street

While discussing the situation with two fellow experienced urbanplanners,^{39,40} they did not appraise the promenade design highly. Notably, both of them criticised the lack of greenery and shade for pedestrians. This deficiency can be visibly recognised if one visits the street during the day. With a sub-tropical climate like that of HCMC, walking under direct sunlight is considered undesirable. In addition, the whole area is covered with thermal materials such as concrete and granite tiles and surrounded by glass buildings. As people arrive in the area, they can feel the heat spontaneously. This explains why more visitors come to the promenade at night-time. This is certainly a downside of Nguyen Hue Street, as the time frame for activity is limited.

Remarks

Initially, the project started as a technical upgrade for one of the most active historical commercial streets in HCMC, with simple but ambitious visions. Thanks to the essence of the modern image and the hunger for open public space by city denizens, who are constantly confined within the common built environment, Nguyen Hue promenade has hit the heights and become a new symbol of a public place to visit. However, due to inadequate planning and the emergence of unforeseen events, the street has suffered from various shortcomings. Numerous issues such as parking lots, lack of cultural identity and insufficient streetscape designs have challenged the development process of the street.

II. Remarks from interviews

When conducting interviews with several key personnel who were involved in the projects of the Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien promenades, five interesting facts were unveiled.

1. Lessoning influence of designer/planner in planning project

Regarding the level of impact on any planning project, between the urban manager, developer and planner/designer, each person who was asked confidently supposed that his/her respective part was the crucial one.⁴¹ Moreover, among the trio, the planner/designer role was undermined due to political decisions and the interests of the other groups.

Mr. Hai, an interviewee who was an urban designer in the public sector and director of HCMC Urban Planning Centre, determined that 'for such a public project like Nguyen Hue promenade, the management was most important as the financial support is also from the state'.⁴² In his opinion, planners or technical consultants just acted as intermediaries between the developer and urban manager. Concerning the administration system of the state, there were development policies and regulations that necessarily applied to any project. Meanwhile, the investors, who were the source of financial support, would understandably put their demands on the planning scheme, while consultants would help the demands of the investors to be balanced against the state agency's requisitioning. If the investor was also part of the state agency, then the finance aspect might not be significant any more. Currently, there are many vital state projects, which vary between parks, walking streets and recreation areas, and are essential for the development of HCMC. However, as the state could not take care of everything, many plans would wait for a certain period until the funds were sufficient to proceed to construction. Nonetheless, some more significant projects might arise and the original planned projects would be kept pending indefinitely. Mr. Hai argued that parts of these projects should be socialised to attract private capital. Thus, it could help transform the HCMC landscape into a better one. Mr. Hai reaffirmed his statement:

*Of course, those business activities should be marginalised, as the investor was not given unlimited power. That was the situation that needed to be monitored and administered. And the state agency would be the one who closely followed and oriented the development plan of the investor.*⁴³

One important interviewee, Mr. Nhan, who was a veteran businessman in the Vietnamese real estate market, alleged: 'The masterplan may be great, but faulty implementation would definitely lead to disaster. The person who determines the structure and working mechanism of project management is the most important one'.⁴⁴ He argued that the success of the new urban area in south HCMC (Phu My Hung) was credited with the exceptional vision of the authorities and an amazing management mechanism. In contrast, he criticised the masterplan of Phu My Hung as limited planning. While the development and design of the Phu My Hung residential area were state-of-the-art at that moment, it failed the main purpose of a living town. The entrepreneur said: 'In Vietnam, the architect aimed to make the nicest plan or the most compliant-to-regulations one, not the most harmonised one; and did not focus on the people, who were the real users.' Mr. Nhan concluded, 'So, the master plan might be great, but there was no guarantee of investment'. To him, it was clear that the state's representative, the urban manager, was the one who should take the reins and drive the cart forward. However, Mr. Nhan demanded a fair position for developers, as, 'basically, a product needs financial supply to keep it alive!' A good location and favourable conditions would attract developers, and the crux of the problem is management, not the developers themselves.

Another developer, however, has completely diminished the position of planner. Mr. Loc, Director of Phu My Hung Development Corporation, openly stated that 'planners were a detachment of the developer's team'.⁴⁵ If the consultant was absent during the project process, it meant that the developer had other approaches: 'The consultant was more like a requirement for developing the scheme'. Notably, the definition of 'consultant' in the Vietnamese real estate field was quite broad. As he explained, a consultant could be understood as a planner, designer, marketer or aftermarket expert. While architects and urban planners also considered themselves to be 'consultants', this developer saw them as a fragment of the planning body. Even he acknowledged that 'the consultant stands above the designer on the ladder of significance'. Once the agreement between the consultant and developer was completed, the designer began their work under the plans given by the consultant.

Regarding the point of view of planners, the discussion with Ms. Thu, a senior urban designer who worked in the private sector, provided more understanding about this matter. In her opinion, the master plan was grounded on design and designated regulations. Therefore, when architects stepped in, their task was to develop further the design of those buildings based on the given data that had been available in the master plan. In practice, in the hearing session or project meeting, the government manager did not concern himself much with architectural design, but paid great attention to the planning indicator index. Thus, there should be few conflicts between designer and manager. It depended on how much the architect grasped the ideas of the developer and got the green light from them. In cases where there was disagreement and any modifications were required, architects should understand it was a part of their job. If architects wanted to protect their ideas, they had to strengthen them with persuasive arguments and sound evidence in order to convince developers that they could make a profit if they followed the design that the architect proposed.⁴⁶

A peer of Ms. Thu, Mr. Vinh from Novaland Group, also discussed his knowledge regarding the matter. Speaking about practice circumstances in Vietnam, he said that the consultant created a space that aimed to serve the community that possessed the essence of humanity, modernity and aesthetics. The state agency also shared these goals.⁴⁷ In addition, there were two types of consultants. One assisted the government department in terms of professional support. The other one worked for the developer. Talking about the first type, those consultants stuck closely to government regulations and standards, which created significant design limitations for public space. As a result, such public space designs would enjoy more advantages in terms of land mass, accessibility and capacity. However, such plans were against the interests of the developer, as they would lead to a reduction of public space. Hence, both parties should reach out to achieve a compromise agreement.⁴⁸ The balance between the profit of the developer and public space for the community was becoming too essential to ignore. In practice, if there was no public space, the developer could not sell their product at all. Furthermore, if the requirement for public space was more reasonable, then it was easier for developer to accept. Of course, the developer would focus more on such groups of potential buyers as they assumed could yield more profit. There was a difference between roles of state manager and consultant in Vietnam and in other countries.⁴⁹

In my own working experience as an urban architect, the position of designer has never been acknowledged as equal to others. While the expertise of a professional

in the construction field was essential, to urban managers and developers, designers were somehow seen as employees of developers. Therefore, the job of designer was to transform the vision of the idea of his employer to a real product that also met the requirements from the state agency. The architect could manage to balance the demands from the others. Yet, it was not a simple task for any designer, as skills and strong determination were needed, especially in state owned projects.

A project normally went through many market studies and researched phases before materialising. Even if an urban planner could make such an impressive project, there is no guarantee that it would not be surpassed by others one or two years later.⁵⁰

Consequently, the decision on the development course of the project was not in the hands of the architect but in those of the developer and the urban manager from the government. While the role of the latter decided not only the approval but also the implementation of the project that followed, it was visible that they, in turn, received much pressure and directives from on high. The relationship, in theory, was a balanced one for every related party. However, only the state agency and the developer could say that it was a win-win situation. For the end customer, their position was the lowest on the ladder. Then, compromise and open dialogue could be seen as the answer for such issues. Through discussion, understanding and respect are earned, and different points of view, experience and knowledge are shared. Moreover, no party feels it would be left out or ignored over the process, and equal contributions are distributed. Neither faction becomes overpowering nor overwhelmed by the others. To many, the state representative might be seen as the leader of the board. Yet they should not step over their jurisdiction and try to dictate to others, as the job of urban manager is to be the 'leader' who provides planning guidance and revision.⁵¹ The developer is the source of finance for any business plan that is significantly vital. But keeping them from putting their profit above everything else is the mission of the urban manager. Nonetheless, as the Vietnamese state's agents strictly adhered to standards and guidelines,⁵² the need of professional opinions is essential, as the designer is the person who knows how to balance the benefits between the developer, the project user and the state.

2. Flaws in plan-making process and absence of cohesive management policy

The most noticeable drawback of the Vietnamese planning process is inconsistency. Many construction projects have faced severe issues due to the lack

of a thorough master plan from the beginning, of which Nguyen Hue walking street was a notable example.

Originally, it was an urban infrastructure reinvestment venture that was ordered by HCMC council to rejuvenate the public space situated in front of City Hall, where a new statue of Ho Chi Minh was placed⁵³ as well as a connection to the upcoming metro line 1. The original goals were to design, renovate and upgrade the street by creating an open space. Then, gradually, it would be reorganised into an esplanade for the public, connecting to Ben Thanh market via Le Loi Street.⁵⁴ This town square would serve as a particular space for the community to participate in social events. There was an assumption that it was a 'walking street', while until then the true nature of the street's design had not yet gone in that direction.⁵⁵ As a result, the TTD was made project owner/developer (*chủ đầu tư*) and the Urban Planning and Architecture Department (UAD) was nominated as designer. The TTD, in their defence, had seen this assignment as a simple street construction project and endorsed that vision in the directive to the UAD. That explained why the promenade lacked research foundations as well as in-depth data investigation,⁵⁶ which led to several shortcomings in the design of the Nguyen Hue area, such as a lack of parking lots, attractions and urban furniture.⁵⁷ In addition, there was no management preparation, which should not be neglected. At the time this research was being conducted, there was no effective management unit who took control of the promenade except for a representative from the TTD. As the TTD had limited experience in managing urban public space, the confusion kept continuing.⁵⁸ Consequently, Nguyen Hue promenade began to be criticised, as its purpose was changed due to the course of events and lacked countermeasures to spontaneous problems emerging. In addition, poor preparation for planning issues like littering control, public performances and street hawkers had reached the attention of the public via columns on online media.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, Mr. Anh, the project manager from the TTD, explained that because of the necessity and urgency of the project, the fact that all research about the impact on the economy, future scenario anticipation and pros and cons had not been adequately studied was likely acceptable.⁶⁰ He also added:

However, as we can see, the economic profit is quite high. At the moment, the two sides of the promenade have more facilities that serve the demand of people who are strolling in the area. And the business development is clearly booming. Therefore, general revenue is increasing and certainly government can

enjoy a growing influx of tax. The value of properties that surround Nguyen Hue Street have skyrocketed.

The other government officer, Mr. Hai, likewise admitted the inattention to urban planning in the master plan of Nguyen Hue promenade. Yet he argued that: 'As far as I am concerned, the streets and the town square were successful. The rate of property rent grew by 30–40% and proved the fact that the land value has increased amazingly'.⁶¹ Furthermore, an image of large, trendy public space was sent to foreigners who live nearby. While, in the morning, many elderly people came there to exercise, there were a great number of young adults engaged to social activities at nightfall.⁶² The visible benefit of Nguyen Hue Street that the two government officers had brought in was undeniable. A modern public space with some novel elements like the light fountain, a pedestrian assistance system and the spirit of Western culture surely attracted people from all over the crowded city. This was the reason some people used to defend it. Nevertheless, its flaws were too noticeable to ignore, as many specific policies that were meant to help manage Nguyen Hue promenade effectively were absent at the beginning; not only regulations for renovation, preservation and maintenance, but also guidelines for street performances, social events and street vendors were not established. Hence, more and more drawbacks eventually arose.

Regarding South Saigon urban complex where Ton Dat Tien Street is located, there were differing views over its development. While in the eye of the public, on the one hand, the grand project was a symbol of urban development success via modern architecture and a well-designed landscape with abundant greenery. It grew in fame with the public and even became the pride of the people of HCMC.⁶³ The notable advantage of planning in Phu My Hung was freedom in design and management. Considered to be a semi-autonomous area, South Saigon's management unit had a certain amount of power in deciding the investment strategy and arranging functional areas in the master plan. While the general master plan still complied with the decisions of District 7 People's Committee, every microproject inside Phu My Hung was less bound by the regulations. On the other hand, criticisms about the new urban complex were not taken lightly.

Looking at the masterplan, the distribution of neighbourhoods lay alongside the Nguyen Van Linh Street axis. In those areas, there were workplaces. Whoever had planned this argued that residents didn't need to use vehicles to travel. Every destination for eating, shopping or working could be reached by walking. It was a

great proposal. Yet, in reality, it did not exist. In PMH [Phu My Hung], only area [Zone] A fulfilled that vision. Where would you work if you lived in that area? You would have work in a restaurant, shopping mall, bank or entertainment service. If your profession was different, then you would have nothing here. Then, it would not be a living urban place after all.

'People cannot just live in leisure all the time; they also have to make a living.'⁶⁴ These were the comments of Mr. Nhan over such weaknesses of the southern HCMC urban area. The design of the urban complex area could be seen as an innovation for an underdeveloped city, yet it concealed some issues within it.

Regarding the belief that 'the success of Phu My Hung was because the developer had chosen the right time and right place to develop', Mr. Vinh, the senior urban designer from Novaland Group said: 'the project got the green light easily because no plan had been made to invest in the south of the city at that time. Moreover, there was a significant need to connect to the western provinces.'⁶⁵ The location of Phu My Hung used to be a large water catchment and drainage area for HCMC. The initial projects all had large open sewerage lines. But the developer, with approval from the local administration, filled up those canals to save more land for housing construction. As a result, floods have occurred more and more in the city. Therefore, the flooding problem came from the South Saigon area and not the city centre. Phu My Hung was a success for itself but a failure for HCMC. Hence, the intention was right, but the planning implementation was not. It was a grave mistake of local government, who failed to regulate and assess the impact of the developer's action. The developer only focused on profit; if they received a nod from the state agency then they would proceed with their plan without thinking much about other impacts.⁶⁶

Lack of integration within the planning process is not a recent issue. Moreover, the root of such problems lies in the operation of government. There were terms of government and planning periods. One working term of government was five years, and in every new period of office, new policies were enacted. Because of that, many projects were usually put on hold as the developer wanted to know what the new policy would be before resuming investment. Furthermore, planning policy often affected different departments of the city government, which demanded a great cooperation and coordination effort. As each city department likely answered only to their respective ministry, a unified planning policy did not exist. Then, whenever an issue

arose, an emergency meeting had to be held to resolve the matter in a passive fashion. This attitude has made planning become too inert and diminish to a mere conditioned response. The lack of an envisioned strategy as well as long-term solutions has made the urban development in Vietnam proceed under its own capacity. The planning period, coincidentally, was also five years long. The most severe disapprovals occurred about the time of making the plan. It was argued that in the modern world, as cities grew rapidly over the course of time, the planning process also needed to speed up. Shortcomings could happen at any time and the government, who had control of planning, should be ready for such cases.⁶⁷ For the developer, there would be the risk that his projects could remain pending for long periods due to dissimilarities with a new general policy, or a design that was deemed eccentric by the state agency. Consequently, there were two available options for the developer in order to proceed. The first choice was to redesign the master plan and submit it strictly to the issued standards.⁶⁸ While this solution could be useful if everything went well under the management margins of government, the limitations in creativity as well as innovation were largely explained by the master plan.⁶⁹ The second method was an unethical one, as the developer would try to bribe the management agency in order to retain freedom in design as well as attain greater benefit. From experience at work, one popular conflict between the developer and the planning management agency was the large gap between the maximum and minimum planning and construction standards. For instance, with a grand project that took up hundreds of hectares, there would be different development plans from several parties, a 1/1000 scale plan from the state or a 1/500 scale detailed plan. The state's plan was usually designed as average to high standard for every functional construction of greening, cultural and educational purposes, or anything else. Meanwhile, developers themselves wanted to reduce the land percentage of such items to the minimum level. While such standard levels remain high, then nobody will pour capital into a project with low profits. Consequently, the negotiation between developer and the state agency was prolonged and complicated. Moreover, due to this process, an unexpected situation, which was called the 'ask-give mechanism', eventually occurred. As state agencies were numerous, from the Department of Traffic and the Department of Planning and Investment to the Department of Construction, understandably, the faster the developer wanted to proceed, the larger the bribes should be. If developers were too stubborn to follow this, their projects would be put on hold indefinitely.⁷⁰ If the issued regulations and guidelines were truly connected to the actual need, focusing on more

prestigious, concentrated and high-quality educational facilities, it would be better than following the general designated standard without further thought. Also, there were government officers whose task was to evaluate planning applications without having proper fundamental knowledge or rational thinking. Those agents simply analysed the designed development plans and strictly compared them with the state's standards. The state agency's officer, who works with the developer and the planning project, should be required to be knowledgeable and adaptive to the situation. Similarly, the political orientation of the country has been misleading due to the failure in comprehension, which created more problems than it should have.

3. Monopoly of government in planning decisions and role of urban community

The traditional process of the Vietnamese planning system was a top-down approach where everything was decided by a few people. In the constitution of every planning project, the community was openly required to take part. Yet, in reality, the voice of people was seldom heard. The representative from the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning (UAD) has argued that urban design plans did not need much community involvement.⁷¹ He determined that such a model should likely apply to a small community. Meanwhile, in HCMC, its public spaces serve more than ten million city dwellers. So, listening to all opinions from the masses and trying to fulfil all of them seemed impractical. In his own experience with one Singaporean senior architect, the idea of community was objected to. In Singapore, the community role was not too significant.⁷² 'The most important [thing] was that the planner and the urban manager needed to be fair and work with their hearts.'⁷³ Community opinions might be complicated and too irrelevant to account for. Moreover, the community might not grasp the whole idea of planning.⁷⁴ The manager remarked,

Hence, what we do here has a symbolic meaning for openness, democracy and publicity rather than collecting expert opinions. Our law regulates that people should take part in the process but on a general planning level and not for a single building. [The situation] is a little open for the community in building development.

While Vietnam was keen to retain its one-party policy, every planning process would be more or less dictated by political influence. In practice, politics was an important factor in implementing any urban construction project. A comprehensive and sound decision could dissolve disagreement and push the progress forward. One such example was the Louvre Pyramid, a large glass and metal pyramid in Paris. There

was a conflict about building that pyramid, but it was commissioned by the President of France, François Mitterrand, in 1984. That is a political intervention in planning and building infrastructure. However, as the President had a good viewpoint, the pyramid was recognised as one of the most interesting places in Paris.⁷⁵ So, what were the limitations of the Vietnamese city planning process? The problem with this totalitarian structure is that final decisions would be more risky, as they depended entirely on the competency level of the leaders. There would be no opposition to any wrongdoing nor a fair organisation to monitor the whole implementation. Hence, the performance and capability of the top brass would decide what the outcome of such plans would be.⁷⁶ In urban development, investment projects proceeded unhindered as long as the government body was knowledgeable and insightful. A visionary person with great power in hand would benefit a whole city. In practice, this was not always the case.

On the other hand, it was the norm that ordinary people reluctantly took part in such planning activities, which they deemed as a 'government job'. The community as a whole was a collective of people of different backgrounds. Therefore, it would be infeasible if the project manager had to accommodate the demands of every single person. Having particular representatives, who would be the people's ears and voice, was also a challenging task. On the bright side, encouraging locals who had lived in the area for their whole life to take part in the development of their own living space was more than purely a democracy drive. It meant to help citizens to revive their built environment, connecting to the community and developing a sense of ownership (*giúp người dân khẳng định quyền làm chủ không gian sống của chính họ*). Then, the point of the exercise was to clear away the people's doubts and show them the benefit of taking part in the planning process. This surely put more strains on the management agency as they needed to put in resources and effort to convince local residents to become stakeholders of the project, as well as persuading the developer to invest in terms of a finance–benefits trade-off. Conversely, it is essential that political influence on the work of the management unit should be limited or mitigated. Reasonably, in a subtle way, while the proposed mechanism seems complicated, finding a compromise between the demands of the different involved parties and easing the conflict between the state and public requires a new approach with less pressure from the state.

4. Confusing line between public versus private open space, misinterpreting modernised society's standards and discussing community awareness

In Vietnam, the definition of public and private space was understood simply as the right to control property. Because the law forbids any individual to possess land – as the constitution states, ‘land in Vietnam is the property of the people and is managed by the government’ – there is only one relevant right, which is the right to use land. In theory, this meant that the state would only control and distribute the ‘land use permit’ to everyone, and did not have possession of the land. In such projects, the government agency was both developer and manager and the status of ‘public space’ was rather obvious in cases like Nguyen Hue promenade. Ton Dat Tien Street in South Saigon, however, nominally belonged to a private developer.

In the public view, streets and open spaces were made available for everyone. People had the right to access them without any hindrances. Yet, there were some incidents that questioned the real definition of free accessibility. In Nguyen Hue, there was a security force that monitored people and refused to allow certain public activities. Through interviews, government officers explained that such actions mostly aimed to preserve the solemnity of the space, as it was right in front of City Hall and the Ho Chi Minh statue. Apparently, such actions, like bathing in the light fountain area, or young males breakdancing in topless costumes or brawling with each other could be seen as inappropriate to the code of conduct in any Asian country.⁷⁷ Moreover, littering was also a severe problem in the walking street as there were many occasions on which it had happened before. Therefore, security to prevent such things was understandable. Regarding Phu My Hung, as it was a private venture, it should be guarded in any case. The developer of Phu My Hung had expressed that its public areas were designated to serve its own residents first. However, over time, the popularity of Phu My Hung, as well as its innovative design, has attracted the whole population of HCMC. Consequently, to cope with these circumstances, non-locals were allowed to visit and enjoy the amenities of Phu My Hung.^{78,79} Apparently, to explain why there were guard posts on every major accessway of Phu My Hung, Mr. Cong from the District 7 project management office alleged that their job was to prevent motorcycle penetration into the area.⁸⁰ The area itself was a ‘gated community’ with its own security and restrictions for the outsider. Because the property owners highly appreciated their privacy,⁸¹ they somehow wanted to be distinct and distant from other groups in society. In other words, this was a social schism, although the margin was still small. The developer desired that the public space should serve the local residents only. Hence, the land percentage of parks or public facilities would be controlled and availability to everybody would be restricted. If it were too open to people, the

neighbourhood would presumably lose its privacy. Therefore, most of the public areas mainly served local residents; only a few areas were opened to the public. Putting oneself in the shoes of those people, they have paid a large sum for their property, which was why they wanted to be in a better position to others. The developer merely aimed to satisfy the requirements of the affluent buyers. Of course, no developer wanted their project to become too exclusive to the public. However, an over-publicised project would yield less sales.⁸² Did this lead to an unintended rich/poor division? Apparently, it happened to a certain degree. Then, the state also noticed this problem and tried to tackle it through a mandatory social housing policy. However, another issue arose from the developer to counter the government's edict. The developer tended to put the social housing areas in less favourable locations, distant from the exclusive accommodation areas and separated by physical features like a park or a road.⁸³ The rich could see that people who lacked public awareness might be involved in inappropriate social behaviour. That explains why the upper class did not want to mix with them. 'This issue is quite difficult to resolve', Mr. Vinh concluded. While people who lived outside of Phu My Hung would see it as a 'privatopia' (McKenzie, 1996), its residents consider themselves as a movement of a civilised lifestyle⁸⁴ within the notion of environmental consciousness and sustainability (Harms, 2014). Street hawkers, who used to be seen as cultural figures of the streets of Vietnam,⁸⁵ were now deemed an uncivilised practice by some people.⁸⁶ Therefore, several acts of the current management unit may create the confusion of 'privatising a public space'. Moreover, on the subject of opening up to private developers in return for reinvestment for maintenance and operation costs, it is questionable whether the freedom of the public could be removed or not. margin was still small. The developer desired that the public space should serve the local residents only. Hence, the land percentage of parks or public facilities would be controlled and availability to everybody would be restricted. If it were too open to people, the neighbourhood would presumably lose its privacy. Therefore, most of the public areas mainly served local residents; only a few areas were opened to the public. Putting oneself in the shoes of those people, they have paid a large sum for their property, which was why they wanted to be in a better position to others. The developer merely aimed to satisfy the requirements of the affluent buyers. Of course, no developer wanted their project to become too exclusive to the public. However, an over-publicised project would yield less sales.⁸² Did this lead to an unintended rich/poor division? Apparently, it happened to a certain degree. Then, the state also noticed this problem and tried to tackle it

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It must be recognised that civility can only be sustained in the context of awareness of one's impact on other people. Promotion of this awareness can itself be understood as a very civilised project, because the recognition of the impact that one has on others is at the core of any notion of civility (Harms, 2014).

III. Survey data projections and trends

During five consecutive days of distributing and gathering survey questionnaires in the two locations, data from 500 people was collected.

1. Demographic information on survey respondents

There were two remarkable points that were revealed in this section of the survey. Firstly, the gender gap was really huge, as the number of survey respondents who were male were only a quarter of the total. (see figure 55)

More interestingly, this phenomenon did not exclusively occur in one research study area, but in both of them. One theory has been put forward based on the survey assistants' claim that men were reluctant to complete the survey and usually declined or passed it to their female companion. Whether this is an occasional or frequent occurrence, with too few available proofs, a thorough explanation seems impractical.

The second theory, however, strongly supported the studied theory argument that walking streets were youth magnets. Nearly three-quarters of the participants were in their twenties and the second largest group was teenagers. Other age groups

did take part in the investigation, yet their numbers were too insignificant to actually affect the results. The relation between the participant's age and occupation is clearly displayed, with 57.5% of the survey respondents taking some sort of education or training (See Figures 57 and 58). More precisely, 148 were in their teens and 143 could possibly be in secondary or tertiary education. Other occupations were also present, mostly in the 21–30 group, where 72 persons were clerical support workers and 38 belonged to the service and salesector.

Looking more closely at the results, this was not a surprise at all. For a long time in HCMC, young people have been looking for recreation places that are welcoming to them⁸⁷ (Dr. An Binh Nguyen, Khánh Long Tiêu, 2005). While some public parks and open green spaces did exist in the city, they hardly met the rising demand from the growing population. Packed with daily visitors, with inadequate amenities and sketchy maintenance, those areas were losing more visitors from the younger generations, individuals who understandably craved for open public space to express themselves through collective cultural activities. Sadly, such a critical issue has never been addressed wholeheartedly by HCMC's urban management body. Lacking concern and desire for a solution, the problem was seemingly forgotten and covered up by emerging issues that kept appearing during the course of HCMC's history. Then, at some point, it was unearthed and started to catch the eyes of the people. This was when Phu My Hung new urban complex area appeared. Praised as an innovative built environment with state-of-the-art design, it has attracted hundreds of thousands of people to visit and a large number who became permanent residents. Aside from the luxurious appealing facade that Phu My Hung offered to people, its open space and green parks were the real attractions. Over the course of more than 20 years since its establishment, the open areas of this new urban complex were the destination for young people who came to enjoy the refreshing atmosphere and engaged in outdoor activities, which they were rarely able to do in the inner city. Although the walking street of Ton Dat Tien was not among the first areas built, its arrival brought in more public interest in Phu My Hung. At that moment, people who had been used to the 'motorcycle culture' started to experience a long-lost element of the urban lifestyle: the walking street or urban promenade. Arguably, the re-emergence of an exclusively pedestrian street started from this point. While there can be no concrete evidence, attention to and awareness of urban space dedicated to pedestrians have created a foothold in the minds of the city's population. Among

several different age groups, perhaps young people were the ones who were most eager to experience the reintroduction of the urban promenade. Then, the Nguyen Hue Street project materialised; a new open space, which is situated in a more favourable location. The needs of people have eventually been heard.

2. Behaviour and evaluation of survey respondents:

As suggested in the previous chapter, personal characteristics did affect the frequency of visits of those who had taken the survey. As more than half of them were students, understandably that majority group were those occasionally came welcoming to them⁸⁸ (Dr. An Binh Nguyen, Khánh Long Tiêu, 2005). While some public parks and open green spaces did exist in the city, they hardly met the rising demand from the growing population. Packed with daily visitors, with inadequate amenities and sketchy maintenance, those areas were losing more visitors from the younger generations, individuals who understandably craved for open public space to express themselves through collective cultural activities. Sadly, such a critical issue has never been addressed wholeheartedly by HCMC's urban management body. Lacking concern and desire for a solution, the problem was seemingly forgotten and covered up by emerging issues that kept appearing during the course of HCMC's history. Then, at some point, it was unearthed and started to catch the eyes of the people. This was when Phu My Hung new urban complex area appeared. Praised as an innovative built environment with state-of-the-art design, it has attracted hundreds of thousands of people to visit and a large number who became permanent residents. Aside from the luxurious appealing facade that Phu My Hung offered to people, its open space and green parks were the real attractions. Over the course of more than 20 years since its establishment, the open areas of this new urban complex were the destination for young people who came to enjoy the refreshing atmosphere and engaged in outdoor activities, which they were rarely able to do in the inner city. Although the walking street of Ton Dat Tien was not among the first areas built, its arrival brought in more public interest in Phu My Hung. At that moment, people who had been used to the 'motorcycle culture' started to experience a long-lost element of the urban lifestyle: the walking street or urban promenade. Arguably, the re-emergence of an exclusively pedestrian street started from this point. While there can be no concrete evidence, attention to and awareness of urban space dedicated to pedestrians have created a foothold in the minds of the city's population. Among several different age groups, perhaps young people were the ones who were most eager to experience the reintroduction of the urban promenade. Then,

the Nguyen Hue Street project materialised; a new open space, which is situated in a more favourable location. The needs of people have eventually been heard.

Further information strengthened the assumption, except for stay-at-home persons, that anyone with an active occupation found it improbably inconvenient to visit in a more regular manner (See Figure 58).

The exceptional similarity in behaviour of visitors of the two promenades, which was revealed during the research process, created particular concerns regarding the matter. Why did Nguyen Hue Street and Ton Dat Tien Street, whose locations and physical characteristics were totally different, share such traits in visiting frequency, purpose of travel, etc.? Apparently, it is because Nguyen Hue promenade is situated in the heart of HCMC, a location that is too convenient to be passed by. People can comfortably reach the site with various choices of transport. Meanwhile, Ton Dat Tien is located in the far south of HCMC, in the middle of the Phu My Hung new urban area, so its service radius could probably reach only as far as the city centre. This meant that the number of people who could afford their precious time and effort to visit Ton Dat Tien Street was far less than who came to the walking street in the inner city.

Curiously, whether the questions concerned the walking conditions, people's attitude to the crowd, the effects of advertising or the level of attractiveness, such tendencies could be recognised in both locations.⁸⁸ The majority of visitors explained that their main purpose was 'watching people and experiencing public activities'. Very few people chose 'shopping and eating' or 'passing through due to other aims'. Once again, the age group determined the survey results. As the youth were the most active group in society, it was common for them to spend time just to 'observe others' and 'do their social activity in public'. Moreover, regarding their age, they seemed to be quite tolerant of irritating features of urban society such as crowds and lack of space to walk. While it was common for Vietnamese to avoid the busiest place, many survey respondents expressed their neutrality towards the crowdedness in the walking streets (See Figure 59,60).

Regarding the separation from traffic and shelter from the weather, while Ton Dat Tien Street did lead as far as the level of approving attitudes was concerned, in general, both streets shared the same pattern. (See Figure 60)

Moreover, when discussing such matters related to the well-being of visitors, for instance, separation from traffic or shelter from the weather, mainstream participants stated their outward worry about fulfilling their basic needs in the urban environment: safety and convenience. (See Figure 61, 62)

In other aspects such as the aesthetic effect of the streetscape and impact of advertisements, the opinions from survey respondents are divided (Figures 65 and 66). While two-thirds of people in both streets remarked that the street facade had an acceptable level of 'good and neat', their thoughts about the streetscape were very different. On one hand, Ton Dat Tien gained more favourable ratings –nearly half of the survey respondents. Additionally, with only 30 of 247 people who gave it lower than a rating of 6 (out of 10), people appreciated the landscape of the Phu My Hung walking street. On the other hand, the inner-city promenade received a lot of criticism as nearly 50 of 259 people gave it a rating of 2 out of 10, while other ratings were borderline. (See Figure 66)

A similar trend occurred in the following assessments for typical elements of street facilities, such as rest stops and disabled-friendly features in Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien (Figure 71). While the design of the former proved its superiority over the latter for people who had mobility difficulties, it lost out again in terms of comfort and greenery level (Figures 72 and 73).

In particular, the Phu My Hung walking street achieved a very high score, with overwhelming ratings of 7 and 8 by 160 of 249 people, against 50 of 257 for Nguyen Hue. The location as well as the land area were strong points in favour of the outer city promenade, as 235 of 247 survey respondents in Phu My Hung were satisfied with the greenness that the area offered to them. To HCMC dwellers who have to endure the scarcity of trees and vegetation every day, nothing is more relaxing and comfortable than leisurely enjoying a walk in a street with greenery. It is like a subconscious psychological need of humans. No matter how distant they grow apart from nature once they settle in an artificial built environment, people still long for their place of origin.

Although Nguyen Hue promenade was constructed much later and learnt to tackle technical problems from many existing projects, it possesses particular weaknesses that are difficult to address and solve. Those are confined space, political decisions and an unreasonable planning strategy.⁸⁹ In comparison with the other street in Phu My Hung, Nguyen Hue Street has neither the luxury of abundant space nor

plentiful finance from the private sector. Its design was narrow, within the existing boundaries of the old street with no alternative, while the development cost was tunnelled from the city budget. Moreover, bearing the burden of being a significant landmark of HCMC and dominated by several government agencies made its design too compromised. In addition, strategic development planning for such an important area was nowhere to be found. In fact, initially, the Nguyen Hue Street project was the responsibility of the Department of Traffic, and in their perspective, it was just a renovation and re-embellishment project.⁹⁰ With several disadvantages and lack of preparation, some fundamental problems in planning and design were neglected, which in turn greatly affected the finalisation of the promenade construction. Therefore, the lack of greenery and comfort are the understandably critical flaws of Nguyen Hue Street.

In the collective questions to yield an evaluation of physical and psychological satisfaction, the well-designed Ton Dat Tien received a great amount of appreciation from its visitors, comprehensively acknowledged through the study of its master plan (See Figure 77). The city centre street received mixed responses, though. Among 259 survey respondents, no more than 45 people rated it 8/10 in every category. At the other end of the scale, nearly 40 people expressed their dissatisfaction, with a 2/10 rating. In the end, Ton Dat Tien proved far superior as 'the most popular promenade'.

The third part of the data analysis, however, illustrated the deficiencies of both streets. Although most of the participants mentioned that the promenades were interesting places to return to, still a sceptical question arose. Did they make the decision due to the scarcity of suitable open spaces or they were really loyal hedonic visitors? While, unarguably, such streets were an essential part of HCMC's precious open space, it was difficult to determine what their real characteristics were.

Ton Dat Tien Street was originally designed as a public space but is now seemingly exclusively reserved for residents of Phu My Hung. Although its developers had denied such a statement,⁹¹ it was clear that Phu My Hung has, over time, transformed into a mega-'gated community' where access by the majority is limited. Moreover, the segregation between an inner rich neighbourhood and adjacent poor communities could possibly contribute to the ongoing conflict. Street hawkers and other sorts of cheap commodities have gradually disappeared from the streets of Phu My Hung. Meanwhile, the majority of visitors and even people who were working in the area

were from the low-income group. The obvious question was whether they could afford the higher economic standards. Even if there were several around-the-clock convenience stores, their goods were still overpriced for young people who regularly visited the area.

At the moment, in Nguyen Hue, consciousness over the rich/poor divide also exists. A legacy of a once first-rate business area now converted to public space is still strongly demonstrated. Along with new commercial buildings, the new face of the street still did not make people any less uncomfortable with it. A vast number of visitors expressed that it was 'less cultural and more commercial' (Figure 62). Moreover, in the 'Other' group, there were particularly critical views such as 'the area has a mixed, chaotic cultural character' or constructive ideas like '[it] should combine more Vietnamese culture with the design and activity on the walking street'. Why were there such negative attitudes regarding cultural characteristics? Perhaps it was because the planning of Nguyen Hue Street was a technical design construction, not an urban planning project that would take into account every aspect of urban street life. The Nguyen Hue Street project was an exemplary piece of evidence of an impromptu planning process, which is quite common in contemporary Vietnam.

CHAPTER XI: CONCLUSION

I. Introduction

In this last chapter, the author summarises the main research results that address the targets and objectives, points out the study's contribution as well as significance, illustrates the research's constraints and puts forward some resolution for more studies in the near future.

II. Briefing

First of all, to refine the impact of the 'triad' group in the design as well as investment and management for public places, to clarify their role as the key decision-makers for the best public life and to recognise their needs and responsibilities in future development guidelines, a combination of empirical data and secondary data was analysed through field observations and in-depth interviews. The data reveals that each group has their own functions but they play an interwoven role at every stage of the design development process. Moreover, the best design development can be formed by the intellectual level of local authorities, the cooperation of the investors and the encouragement abilities of the professionals in planning. In addition, due to the condition of each case, the interwoven 'triad' should share their power in terms of management level. The most important factor is the intervention role of local authorities: for instance, they should not keep their own ideas inside their own comfort zone and should take a step towards the stakeholders as general management after taking full cognisance of the situation.

Secondly, the streets were characterised by public places. This study investigated their position within the urban built environment as well as identifying their major components affecting the city. This is shown in the preparation of observational statistics, which were obtained through the chosen case studies within HCMC's streets. As can be seen in the field observations and in-depth interviews, there are some facts that have demonstrated the unique functions of those cases, shaped by the streets' physical quality and images. These can be seen in the streets' characteristics over a combination of various approaches to space, or in the streets' nature through constituting several cultural spaces and finally in the streets' identification as cultural patterns as well as the city's public spaces. Those features seem to be the most influential factor in defining exclusive features, due to their particular and energetic interpretation and their significant

meaning for the city's public spaces. Thus, the results on streets' qualities for all factors including the tangible and intangible seem to be shown to encourage social life along those streets as public spaces.

The research found that the streets as public spaces play an important role in today's public life due to various aspects. The variety of facades and activities taking place in the walkable street spaces and surrounding buildings have definitely provided the willingness of all kinds of people to visit them. Moreover, the vital part of the above aspects is that the more modern activity settings in these spaces there are, the more people will visit these spaces. Because the young people tend to come to these places more than others, they usually 'chill' with friends at the coffee shops but will change their minds if these public spaces meet their needs. Secondly, the public street spaces should have multicultural settings in order to be the main assembly points used for public festivals or parades in the city, because the modern and traditional aspects play their own role but come together as the combination of today's development.

The research shows that these public walking street spaces tend to make a contribution to the economy, as well as to public and cultural urbanism. The need of these spaces is more and more important for today's lifestyle, due to the decline of public life because of rapid developments with a lot of high-rise buildings and megaprojects as well as housing requirements. This research takes note of our knowledge of design activities that not only develop the city through sustainable living, but can also create more breathable spaces for the citizens.

These findings have shown obvious evidence to answer the research questions in chosen context. They are not only identified "the right" of public space within management relations and social demand, they also strengthen the literature of public space between Western countries and Asian countries.

III. Contribution of the research

The contribution of this study mainly relies on the development of urban design of public spaces in Vietnamese cities, which supports the planning field in developing countries. Moreover, this research defined the vibrancy, excitement and multi-usage of Southeast Asian streets. Additionally, the thesis also confirms how to improve the management and design process for public space in the context of the socialist system, which is totally different from the literature and theory that mostly comes from the West. Streets as public spaces in Southeast Asia play a vital role in urban life with their diversity of activities, as well as vibrant tangible and intangible culture.

IV. Implications of the study

1. Lessons for students and field awareness

Urban design is a new and less familiar field in the Vietnamese context, so the primary hypothetical significance of this study is that it applies knowledge in the field of urban design in the Vietnamese context, particularly in the design of streets as public spaces. Moreover, the research will help students whose fields are related to architecture, urban planning and sociology, as the first cases are a lesson in terms of the Southeast Asian context with solutions to issues and problems of streets as public spaces; to give them the lesson of how to deal with design quality, especially for public spaces as walkable streets in the Vietnamese context.

Scholars such as Drummond (2000) and Kim (2012) conducted various studies on Asian streets, with the focus on pedestrian footpaths in Vietnamese streets; Marie Gilbert "Urban Planning and the Streets Frame in Ho Chi Minh City, Territorial Dynamics at Stake" (2015); "Hồ Chí Minh City, Towards a Competitive Metropolis: the Road against the Street?" (2014); "Between Public and Private, a Socio-spatial Approach of Leisure Practices in Ho Chi Minh City" (2012); "City Modernization and Streets Planning in Ho Chi Minh City" (2010); Limin (2001), "Reading Asian cities"; Oranratmanee and Sachakul (2014), on Thai Streets; Sulaiman and Shamsuddin (2001), Ja'afar and Usman (2009), and Shamsudin and Sulaiman (2010) on traditional streets in Malaysia, and Kiang et al. (2010) on Asian streets.

Some scholars have studied urban streets in Vietnamese cities, mostly from single perspectives such as Marie Gilbert (2015), Mandy Thomas (2002) on the policy perspective, urban transformation by Drummond (2000), Kim (2012), Marie Gilbert (2010); Du Huynh (2015) on the urban built environment and Hoai Anh Tran (2015) on urban problems. Although there is a lot of research on the streets of Asia, little evidence of research is shown that focuses on how designs have been made in the current rapid development in Vietnam. Moreover, there are many indicators which affect the design of the street as public space in the urban design perspective. The result of this research confirms the relationship that influences the quality of the designs and suggests that Asian streets should be multi-use, with diverse activities as well as complexity; and sometimes with a messy, disorganised and inconsistent image. All of these aspects will help the design to remain alive and last a long time for sustainable development.

2. Lessons for professionals in related fields

a. Some primary suggestions for further applications

I am glad to note that these overall research results can be used as a sample case in architecture and urban design practices to design streets as public spaces in Vietnamese cities or other Southeast Asian cities. Taking diversity quality as the first indicator for practitioners, the two case studies have demonstrated less diversity in uses and functions, so citizens required more activities, such as free performances with no registration required with the authorities; keeping street hawkers with street foods in allocated places; or mixed-use design along the street to encourage people to enjoy the rest of the places and be willing to come again soon. The future walkable street design should have more surprising points along the area, including the interweaving of modern and traditional cultural styles in terms of functions and activities.

In addition, street configurations – for example, pattern, scale and proportion, pavement, building facade and architectural design – play a vital role in the legibility and vibrancy of the streets because they influence the users. Suitable sizes of pavements with allocated sites for street vendors encourages people to walk and enjoy window-shopping. In the meantime, the open street spaces designed at some points may offer the users some opportunities to take a rest to see and join in recreational activities.

The design for walkability and vitality of the street is also emphasised by this study. The appropriate material creates a feeling of comfort and safety for people in these spaces. Moreover, the correct and adequate quantity of resting areas should be the best choice for high-quality design; these are good points to improve the vibrancy of walkable public street spaces. Furthermore, a comfortable environment, including such items as green spaces and shading, also affects the liveability of the street due to the average temperature in Southeast Asian cities.



Figure 94 The old building facade at Nguyen Hue Street at night (Source: Nomadic notes, <https://www.nomadicnotes.com/ho-chi-minh-city-cafes/>)

One is particularly aware of the fluency and dynamic frontals of the building facades by the street in this study, because the final finding showed that these careful designs not only support the development of the real estate market in these places, but also attract a variety of activities from users and developers. With these designs, the public spaces will be vibrant in terms of people's activities, design activities and investment activities as well.

b. Important implications for urban regulation

From the results of this research, both tangible and intangible values play a vital role in any design for streets as public spaces in Vietnamese cities and Southeast Asia. Further design practices should bear in mind these typical attributes so as to increase the value of the designs as well as choose appropriate methods that would help the modern style to be integrated in harmony with the traditional style.

In the case where cooperation for the best future practices is required, including between multidisciplinary professional people such as urban designers, planners, economists, sociologists and architects, the overall findings of this research can be used to consider the design guidelines to manage urban public spaces. Likewise, the local authorities also have to collaborate with the stakeholders in creating urban regulations for these spaces so that the worst of the designs can be reduced and the best can be carried out beforehand in the context of Vietnamese cities.

3. Implications for local authorities as administrative producers

- a. Requirement for appropriate regulations and implementation of urban design and management guidelines

The maximum sufficient regulations should be operating in the two case studies. The local authorities acknowledged that planning and management guidelines had to be carried out immediately at both case studies. Hence, after starting on Nguyen Hue Street for a while, they recognised the 'falsity' of the project (but they gave the answer to the interviewer that this project was just the regeneration of the street, not the actual urban design for the street as public space). The local authorities tried to resolve the problems with urgent regulations at the time that trouble occurred, but these were just to solve the immediate problems and not for future development. The better provision of regulations for the Nguyen Hue project is ongoing planning. In the near future, more projects such as Nguyen Hue Street will arise and require suitable guidelines for sustainable design and development. Thus, the findings of this study can support the stakeholders with their key points and recommendations. In the end, the former projects can be developed with careful consideration and future practices can be prepared with confidence.

- b. Need for street management board/agency

As can be seen in the findings, both case studies require a management board/agency so that the main goals can be reached and the existing ones can be improved. The Ton Dat Tien project was developed by private investors in a residential area, so the regeneration is the responsibility of the investors' budget as well as considering the voice of residents nearby. The good points of this case are that improvements occur day by day because the investors want to increase the property value of their surroundings. But it still belongs to the investors and does not have enough design points to be fully accessed as one of the lesson cases. Moreover, when considering the Nguyen Hue project, it is still managed and maintained by the local authority's budget, but it needs more than that due to the requirements of the street development as well as the finance for maintenance. Furthermore, the authority and responsibility of local officials are still limited to the street's technical management works, for example, the cleanliness and security of the water fountain system. So, this project expects to have management agencies who come from the private sector or a combination of the private and public sector, with broader authority and responsibility. The management agency will be the body that can take over all of the project's problems

and formulate a design and action plan for each period of the year. It is worth noting that the walkable street project will become the most attractive and interesting public place for citizens in the very crowded city centre.

4. For the general public

The research findings may bring some advantages for the public by raising awareness of conservation and the development of streets as public spaces. Additionally, this research also emphasised that these streets as public spaces have a special meaning for citizens, because street life has proven itself as the most important feature that can connect people from different backgrounds and allow them to enjoy everyday life with a variety of activities along these spaces in terms of Vietnamese culture.

The recommendation of this study may also lift its voice as the reason for better and more qualified public spaces in HCMC in particular, and in Vietnamese cities in general. The practitioners and policymakers may also use these research results as one of the approaches in the future design of the same spaces.

During the fieldwork of the research, the respondents had a chance to take part in the design for these public spaces with their opinions and expectations for the future. Generally, the respondents desired the well-organised management of stakeholders and an increase in the quality of these street spaces in the context of design and conservation. Consequently, this study delivers some optimistic messages that encourage users to bear in mind efforts such as protecting the environment out there through cleanliness; and to behave with healthy and civilised activities. Besides, the investors of surrounding areas may recognise their abilities to copy the architectural style and the peculiarities of merchandise and marketing promotions that are suitable for street development. Therefore, the cooperation of all users and planning stakeholders will ensure sustainable generations.

5. The potential for public space management

The research found that while local authorities have not obviously recognised public spaces, most of them seem to rely on an inclusive definition due to the primary problems to be tackled by public space administrators, which were reappearing through spatial types and environments. Without doubt, one should note that the primary problems seem to happen at the overall level, with no materials for public space management and persistent difficulties with cooperation. There are some issues that have to be overcome in order to provide better public space management.

The first of these was better collaboration between guidelines and plans as well as conduct. Lack of funding and linkage of administration policy production and application, and imprecisely defined policies, as well as the departmentalism of local authorities, were the issues that have to be solved by the policies, programmes and actions. Secondly, the local authorities should be aware of the obstacles that stand in the way of higher quality of public space management, which are the lack of cooperation within the regulatory system of government, lack of resources for implementation and insufficient prosecution powers. Thirdly, talking about the issues of major resources and investment barriers, there is a demand to fix the fragmentation of public financial flows with explicit requirements. Moreover, careful consideration should be given to the costs and time involved in receiving and managing these funds. Additionally, the local authorities do not have a consistent plan that entails investment in and deregulation of some services, so that it is difficult to reach the goal of a higher-quality environment. Finally, impacts on maintenance routines occur due to the difficulties within the design as well as the loss of interest in support throughout the design progress. Hence, the opportunity to consider all things within the role of each stakeholder can help to overcome a variety of problems, which may provide a chance for the best quality of public spaces.

There were some opportunities to analyse more effective methods around existing resource levels, while local managers always claimed that they lacked the human resources and expertise provided through management processes. Furthermore, a qualification for better public spaces governance can be identified by the effective enforcement powers. There, the role of the private sector in better management of public space also seems to raise the possibility of an optimistic two-way relationship, such as dealing with their responsibilities as landowners and investors in public space, with directly sponsored projects and direct contractual provisions. Moreover, they should restructure the way in which public spaces are controlled by focusing on a cross-cutting approach and joined-up activities. Involving partnerships with private sector bodies is one of the most vital duties in financing and implementing public space developments. Additionally, the joining up of participants from local areas can improve the quality of public space policies because they are conscious of and enjoy themselves in these areas.

V. Limitations of this thesis

Some limitations should be clarified at this stage. The research case studies just relied on streets in HCMC, Vietnam, through limited time of studying; hence, the findings might not be appropriate to other contexts. It is clearly noted that the respondents were the users and representatives of local bodies such as HCMC Planning and Architecture Department. It seems that the other stakeholders may respond in different ways. Moreover, because of the constraints on time and resources and those due to existing conditions, only Nguyen Hue and Ton Dat Tien Streets were chosen as case studies for this thesis. It is expected that more cases may be used to make the results more reliable as well as robust; for example,, evaluating cases from other Southeast Asian cities, or European cities with cases from Vietnam in the context of different cultures, geographical regions and economic statuses.

The other constraints were that this study took a long time to complete, so the results may not be reliable, and some mistakes made by the projects may be able to be corrected and improved upon day by day. Furthermore, the thesis has used some interviews of managers of local authorities and obtained their points of view from their time in post. But at the end of this study, the whole management system had its five-yearly change in positions; hence, the new managers may have other ideas depending on their background. For example, if a new manager has a background in architecture or planning, he will pay more attention to these designs for streets as public spaces and the researcher may easily obtain interesting views from him through further interviews.

VI. Recommendation for further research work

Due to the contribution and results of this thesis, future research should be taken wider with a cross-national study of European and Asian street design as public space. Future research may authorise more inclusive findings through some comparisons of several streets concerning theory from European cases, but which may or may not apply successfully in Asian cases; the tangible (visual and spatial) dimension versus intangible elements (perceived and public). This study can assist with formulating theoretical resources as tools to cooperate in every way for the design for street as public spaces, or recognise their important role in Asian urban life. Future work may combine mixed methods so that the best results with the least limitations will be achieved. In addition, multidisciplinary working should be looked at, such as the combination between urban planning or architecture with the fields of sociology and psychology. That may offer more opportunities to answer many questions in reality.

VII. Conclusion

Due to the rapid development of Vietnam, the transformation from traditional to modern life has caused a very different side of Vietnamese cities to arise in the context of planning design. The market drives the tendency for the new design of cities, which affects the loss of the urban entity in terms of this study; the streets as public spaces. The quality and quantity of these streets decreased both in tangible and intangible features due to the lack of care from stakeholders relating to these designs.

This research not only widens our attention to modern streets as public space design, it also uncovers some gaps in the urban design field concerning these spaces. The study's empirical results emphasised other theories, that Asian streets have to be liveable with complexity and multiple activities and be multi-layered spaces with a variety of natures. The research also adds to the literature that the street spaces in Southeast Asia play an important role in the everyday life of people, so the combination of any modern style from the West should harmonise with the existing tangible and intangible features of its own style. These street spaces may be distinguished from other public spaces because of the Asian culture mostly relying on street activities.

It is vital to note that this can be misleading if the prospective design for streets as public spaces use the final results of this study as the key features. Future design should use these findings as another approach in comparison with some successful designs around the world for better planning and decision-making. There are many ways to achieve the best for public space design and the study's results can be a starting point to discover a worthier design. As a final word, a lively urban street can create a vibrant life and disadvantages can help stakeholders avoid poor decisions.

FOOTNOTE

Interview with Mr. Thu on 26/04/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

²³ Interview with Mr. Loc (Developer) on 04/05/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

²⁴ Interview with Mr. Thu on 26/04/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

²⁵ Interview with Mr. Thu on 26/04/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

²⁶ Interview with Mr. Loc (Developer) on 04/05/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

²⁷ There was a similar attitude from four different interviewees from Government officers to developers over this issue.

²⁸ Interview with Mr. Loc (Developer) on 04/05/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

²⁹ This sign belongs to the People's Committee of Tan Phu Ward, District 7, and sets out the fine for violation of the prohibition.

³⁰ This sign, however, was erected by Phu My Hung management unit. It indicates the time motorised vehicles can travel through the area: from Monday to Friday from 06.00 to 17.00, but not at all at the weekend.

³² Interview with Mr. Hai on 27/04/2016 at Urban Planning Centre office.³⁴

Interview with Mr. Hai on 27/04/2016 at Urban Planning Centre office.³⁵

Thanh Nien News (2015).

³⁹ Mr. Vinh, a private sector architect, who won the Grand Jury Prize of Architectural Ideas for improving urban spaces, which was sponsored by the Danish Cultural Development and Exchange Fund (CDEF) in 2013.

⁴⁰ Mr. Nhut is a Project Manager of the Southern Institute of Spatial Planning, Ministry of Construction

⁴² Interview with Mr. Hai on 27/04/2016 at Urban Planning Centre office.

⁴³ Interview with Mr. Hai on 27/04/2016 at Urban Planning Centre office.

⁴⁴ Interview with Mr. Nhan on 26/05/2016 at Tan Thuan Corporation (TTC) office.

⁴⁵ Interview with Mr. Loc on 04/05/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

⁴⁶ Interview with Ms. Thu on 13/04/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

⁴⁷ ⁴⁸ Interview with Mr. Vinh on 31/05/2016 at Novaland Group.

⁵¹ Interview with Mr. Thu on 26/04/2016 at UAD.

⁵² Interview with Ms. Thu on 13/04/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

⁵³ Interview with Mr. Anh on 26/04/2016 at TTD.

⁵⁴ Interview with Mr. Hai on 27/04/2016 at Urban Planning Centre office.

⁵⁵ Interview with Mr. Anh on 26/04/2016 at TTD.

⁵⁶ Interview with Mr. Anh on 26/04/2016 at TTD.

- ⁵⁷ Interview with Mr. Thu on 26/04/2016 at UAD.
- ⁵⁸ Conclusion was drawn from analysing information given from interviews of important figures in Nguyen Hue project.
- ⁵⁹ Regarding articles on most popular news websites in Vietnam, which were tuoitre.vn, laodong.com.vn and vnexpress.net.
- ⁶⁰ Interview with Mr. Anh on 26/04/2016 at TTD.
- ⁶¹ Interview with Mr. Hai on 27/04/2016 at Urban Planning Centre office.
- ⁶² Interview with Mr. Hai on 27/04/2016 at Urban Planning Centre office.
- ⁶³ Interview with Ms. Thu on 13/04/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.
- ⁶⁴ Interview with Mr. Nhan on 26/05/2016 at Tan Thuan Corporation (TTC) office.
- ⁶⁵ Interview with Mr. Vinh on 31/05/2016 at Novaland Group.
- ⁶⁶ Interview with Mr. Vinh on 31/05/2016 at Novaland Group.
- ⁶⁸ Interview with Ms. Thu on 13/04/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.
- ⁶⁹ Interview with Mr. Nhan on 26/05/2016 at Tan Thuan Corporation (TTC) office.
- ⁷¹ Interview with Mr. Thu on 26/04/2016 at UAD.
- ⁷⁴ Interview with Mr. Thu on 26/04/2016 at UAD.
- ⁷⁵ Interview with Mr. Thao, Director of General Planning Department, on 24/04/2016 at UAD.
- ⁷⁶ Interview with Mr. Nhan on 26/05/2016 at Tan Thuan Corporation (TTC) office.
- ⁷⁷ Interview with Mr. Thao, Director of General Planning Department, on 24/04/2016 at UAD.
- ⁷⁸ Interview with Mr. Nhan on 26/05/2016 at Tan Thuan Corporation (TTC) office.
- ⁷⁹ Interview with Mr. Vinh on 31/05/2016 at Novaland Group.
- ⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. Cong on 23/03/2016.
- ⁸¹ Interview with Mr. Vinh on 31/05/2016 at Novaland Group.
- ⁸² Interview with Mr. Vinh on 31/05/2016 at Novaland Group.
- ⁸³ Interview with Mr. Vinh on 31/05/2016 at Novaland Group.
- ⁸⁴ Interview with Mr. Loc on 04/05/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.
- ⁸⁵ Interview with Ms. Thu on 13/04/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.
- ⁸⁷ Interview with Mr. Anh on 26/04/2016 at TTD.
- ⁸⁸ Survey data analysis: Figures 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16 and 19.
- ⁸⁹ ⁵⁰ Interview with Mr. Anh on 26/04/2016 at TTD.
- ⁹¹ Interview with Mr. Vinh on 31/05/2016 at Novaland Group; Mr. Loc on 04/05/2016 at Phu My Hung Development Corporation office.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

PREPARATION FOR INTERVIEW

- 1. Choose a setting with little distraction.** Avoid loud lights or noises, ensure the interviewee is comfortable (you might ask them if they are), etc. Often, they may feel more comfortable at their own places of work or homes.
- 2. Explain the purpose of the interview.**
- 3. Address terms of confidentiality.** Note any terms of confidentiality. Explain who will obtain access to their answers and how their answers will be analysed. If their comments are to be used as quotes, get their written permission to do so.
- 4. Explain the format of the interview.** Explain the type of interview I am conducting and its nature. Let them ask questions, specify if they're to do so as they have them or wait until the end of the interview.
- 5. Indicate how long the interview usually takes (45–60mins).**
- 6. Tell them how to get in touch with you later if they want to.**
- 7. Ask them if they have any questions before we both get started with the interview.**
- 8. Ask for permission to record the interview or bring along someone to take notes.**

QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNORS

A. General questions for all participants:

1. What does the local authority believe about the current management of the built environment design in terms of today's integration and development in Vietnam/Ho Chi Minh City? (*Note: distinguish the differences between the governor's ways of thinking about managing the built environment design from other types of management you know.*)
2. Can you explain the process of decision-making concerning public space design? (*Note: which social and group identities have been constructed that the state has considered during decision-making about this project?*)

3. Do you think the relationship between the public and the state will have implications for our understanding of public spaces? How? In what way? (*Note: remind interviewees about the two case studies.*)
4. Who is best placed to provide public spaces?
5. Who are public spaces designed for?
6. I've noticed groups of young people hang out in certain projects – do you believe this is a problem? Why or why not?
7. Can you explain the ideas behind the design consideration of public spaces? (*Note: what is our model of public spaces in design consideration? Is it the ceremonial model of public space, or the community of public space, or the liberal model of public space, or the multi-public model (Iveson, 1998)? Are there any conflicts between land prices and the public space design process? How to deal with this situation?*)
8. Is there anything else you'd like to say about your role and/or your perspectives?

B. Specific questions for governor of District 1:

Key questions:

- a) ***Who is primarily responsible for the built environment design in District 1's public funding's projects in terms of ideas and applications? (Note: compare with private funding's projects.)***
- b) ***What is the trend of urban design for public spaces in Ho Chi Minh City in terms of today's integration, development and globalisation?***

Questions:

Topic categories_ The role of stakeholders (local authorities, urban designers and developers):

1. What is the main purpose of the design of Nguyen Hue's pedestrian project?
2. What are the regulations for urban management in District 1? Does that place have some exceptions? Why? Are they considered based on users' requirements or investors'? Who benefits because of these exceptions?

3. If the design organisation of various public spaces in District 1 differs, which consequences are identified for how each public conceives of public spaces?

Topic categories_ the production of spaces and places:

4. Can you describe the aesthetic concept of the pedestrian project? *(Note: Due to the trend of Westernisation nowadays in Vietnam, what do you think about the adoption of Western styles in the project's aesthetic concept? In your own opinion, which style do you prefer when making decisions on any urban design project for public spaces in HCM city? (Inappropriate aesthetic concept).)*
5. Do you think the Nguyen Hue pedestrian project has the right location and design? *(Note: Instead of pedestrianising some popular retail streets such as Dong Khoi, Nguyen Trai, Nguyen Dinh Chieu... which already have their initial proposals, the local authority chose Nguyen Hue Street, which alienates ordinary people further with its estranged relationship to the surrounding city. Moreover, its location tends to be either in the administration or business centre of a city, not properly connected to retail streets or residential areas where pedestrians are concentrated and increasing retail commodification is encouraged.)*

Topic categories_public vs private:

6. There is some prohibitive management at pedestrian places. What are your purposes behind this kind of management and such practices? *(Note: as the front yard of the city, do you think these public places often have heavy surveillance to regulate users' behaviour? Do you think such practices will hardly encourage more people to visit these places?)*
- C. Specific questions for governor of District 7:

Key questions:

- a) **Who is primarily responsible for the built environment design in District 7's private funding's projects in terms of ideas and**

applications? (Note: compare with public funding's projects.)

b) What is the trend of urban design for public spaces in Ho Chi Minh City in terms of today's integration, development and globalisation (private investment)?

Questions:

Topic categories_ The role of stakeholders (local authorities, urban designers and developers):

1. What is the main purpose of the design of Ton Dat Tien's pedestrian scheme in the Phu My Hung project?
2. What are the regulations for urban management in District 7? Does that place have some exceptions? Why? Are they considered based on users' requirements or investors'? Who benefits because of these exceptions?

Topic categories_ the production of spaces and places:

3. What thematic content does the project focus on? How it is internally organised? How does it maintain its boundaries and relatively greater internal cohesion in relation to the larger public? Does its separate existence reflect merely sectional interests, some functional division of group of people, or a felt need for bulwarks against the hegemony of a dominant ideology through the design?
4. Can you describe the aesthetic concept of the pedestrian project? *(Note: Due to the trend of Westernisation nowadays in Vietnam, what do you think about the adoption of Western styles in the project's aesthetic concept? In your own opinion, which style do you prefer when making decisions on any urban design project for public spaces in HCM city? (Inappropriate aesthetic concept).)*
5. Can you distinguish the characteristics of Vietnamese cities in terms of urban design for public spaces in general and HCM city in particular? *(Note: Have you confused modernisation with Western architecture, attempting to imitate Western urban forms in Vietnamese cities? Do you think the existing public space projects in HCM city clearly define this point of view? (Ignorance of the characteristics of Vietnamese cities).)*

Topic categories_public vs private :

6. There is some prohibitive management at pedestrian places. As governor, what do you think about this kind of management and such practices? (*Note: As the front yard of the city, do you think these public places often have heavy surveillance to regulate users' behaviour? Do you think such practices will hardly encourage more people to visit these places?*)

QUESTIONS FOR URBAN DESIGNERS

1. As a citizen of the society

Opinion about:

- Privatisation and publicness in public spaces through the two case studies.
- What do you think about window-dressing projects around the city?
- The impact of Westernisation on the removal of the socialist planning system and impacts on personal life through public space design.
- What are the consequences of gentrification on the wider area? (*Note: Does the gentrification process at this time enlarge the gap between the rich and the poor?*)

2. As an intellectual

Opinion about:

- Privatisation and publicness in public spaces through the two case studies.
- Loss of national identity in globalisation/internationalisation/Westernisation.
- Threat to cultural heritage in huge development activities.
- Equality versus efficiency.
- The roles of the market and the state: moral crisis: 'all for money'.

3. As a planner/practitioner

Opinion about:

- Privatisation and publicness in public spaces through the two case studies.
- The role of planners in a socialist market economy (*Note: what should planners serve – market or government? How about the people?*)
- Power structure and planning process (*Note: What is the role of planning in HCMC?*)
- Gap between modernisation and the reality of Vietnamese cities (*Note: what are the goals and what is feasible? Globalisation, new economy and impacts on local development.*)
- Planning's function in a market economy, transitional period (*Note: what to borrow from the West? How to build a new theory?*)
- Public interest versus clients (*Note: where is the balance? Who is the planner's client (or boss)?*)
- Relationship between physical planning and social planning (*Note: how to integrate physical development into social development?*)
- Power versus democracy: what is the role of public participation in Vietnam?
- How to involve people in the design project, especially young people?

QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPERS

1. Can you distinguish the privatisation and publicness in public space (with your own design project in District 7)? How was it planned/designed? What was the rationale? (*Note: Ton Dat Tien Pedestrian Street is very famous and crowded at all times. To some extent, this is publicness inside a privatised residential area. What do you think about this situation? Was it planned in the urban design project of this place?*)

2. Can you evaluate use value and exchange value of your public space project? (*Note: Exchange value is the quantity of other commodities (normally cash) that a commodity can be swapped for (Carmona et al., 2001)). It is generally referred to as market value and often related to the concept of price.*

Use value is often associated with the concept of worth or the pleasure a commodity generates for its user.)

3. Have you ever considered built environment products as commodities to be traded? People tend to choose those goods and services that they value most highly. Which plans have you made so far on your projects related to this trend? *(Note: their thinking about the balance among suitable land prices, quality of public space designs and highly prestigious value of places?)*

4. How much changing of the design project is there after dealing with local authorities to process the design project? What do you think about the interwoven role among developers, urban designers and local authorities?

5. Which advantages and disadvantages does the project face in terms of design styles? *(Note: by using Western or traditional styles in the design.)*

6. What is the focus group on your projects? How have these targets applied at the site on paper and in reality when the project is going on? *(Note: There are a lot of young people coming and enjoying these public spaces in your project. They tend to use a variety of facilities that are offered around the public walking space and they are somehow not your target users (potential customers for the surrounding luxury residential areas or constituted by the commodification of services). Are there any impacts on various aspects of quality design on real estate value? How to meet the needs of this majority group of users in order to reduce disadvantageous and increase advantageous influence from them?)*

7. What is your opinion about losing public space characteristics in the Vietnamese context? *(Note: How does Westernisation impact on design ideas? How to fill the gap between modernisation and the reality of Vietnamese public spaces?)*

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE SHEET

Sincere thanks to you for taking part in this survey. This questionnaire sheet consists of 20 questions and requires only 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

The goal of this survey is to investigate the needs of people who use public spaces; the results will be used as data to improve the effectiveness of the urban design process of specific projects and developing promenade-supporting design projects in future.

Information collected from this survey will be put into use in one doctorate thesis and perhaps several research papers for Newcastle University, UK, later. Participants in this survey will be kept anonymous. I truly appreciate your support.

Name:

Sex:

Age range:

18–20

21–30

31–40

Over40

Occupation:

1. How often do you come to this street?

B. Every day.

C. Several days a week.

D. One day per week.

E. Less than once per week.

E. Other:.....

2. What's your aim in coming to this street?

- A. Shopping and/or eating.
- B. Watching people and experience public activities in public space.
- C. Only when I pass through for other aims.
- D. Other:.....

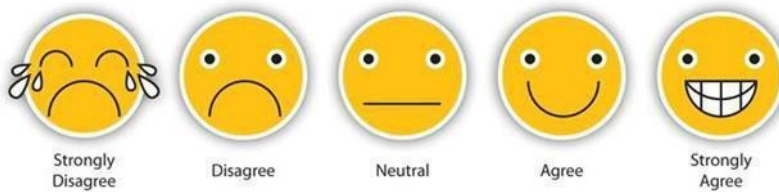
3. What's the condition of continuous walking?

- A. Walking smoothly; I am not forced to stop.
- B. Walking smoothly; I am forced to stop occasionally.

C. Walking is not smooth; I usually have to stop.

D. Other:.....

4. Does your attitude to the crowd affect your choices of a suitable promenade area?



5. How are the separation facilities between people and vehicles?

A. The separation facilities are great; I can walk freely.

B. The separation facilities are not obvious but still work; I can walk.

C. The separation facilities are not in place; there are potential safety risks.

D. Other:.....

6. What do you think about the conditions of facilities to shelter from bad weather or avoid direct sunlight?

A. It can provide good conditions against a bad natural situation.

B. It partially provides shelter against a bad natural situation, but not enough.

C. There are no facilities to shelter from bad weather.

D.

Other:.....

7. Do you think facilities (shade, rest stop) to shelter from bad weather or avoid direct sunlight are important in pedestrian streets?

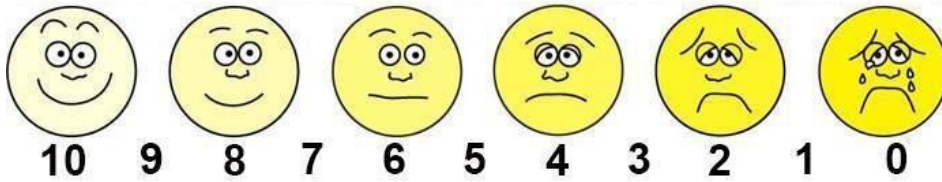
A. Very important.

B. Important.

C. Not important.

D.Other:

8. How do you feel about the whole streetscape?



9. What's your impression of the facade view? Are the views of advertisements bad?

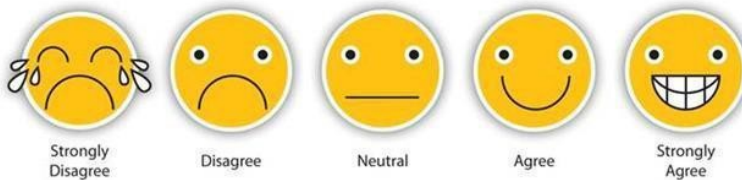
A. The overall facade is impressive, with a clear boundary.

B. The facade is good and neat.

C. The facade is confusing, with a second boundary by the advertisements.

D.Other:

10. Do you agree that advertisements surely catch people's attention in this area?



11. How do you like the conditions for rest stops?

A. There is enough and very comfortable open space for resting such as relaxing benches.

B. It has spaces for resting, but they are not good to remain long.

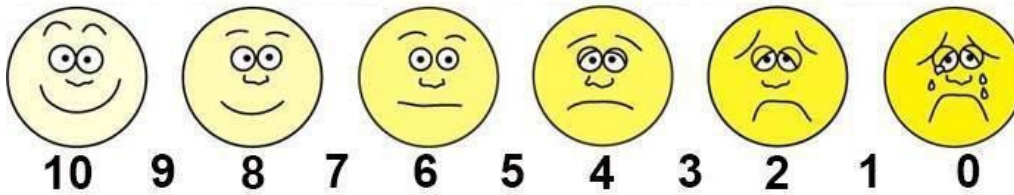
C. There is no comfortable open space to stay.

D.Other:

12. Do you think it is convenient for elderly people and the disabled?



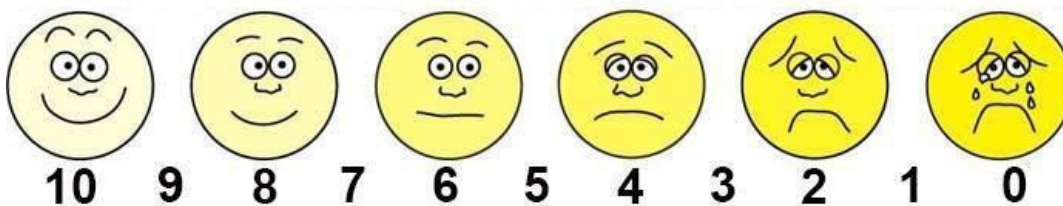
13. Would you like to rate the comfortability of this promenade area?



14. What do you think about the greenery level?

- A. Greenery is abundant and excellent.
- B. Greenery is sufficient and there should be more.
- C. Greenery is scarce, and it should be there because of its importance in such an environment.
- D. Other:

15. Would you like to rate the importance of greenery of this promenade area?



16. Do you think this street is interesting? Why?

- A. It is very interesting; I'm willing to come and stay here often.
- B. It is interesting; I'm willing to come or stay here occasionally.
- C. It is no fun; I don't want to come or stay here.
- D. Other:

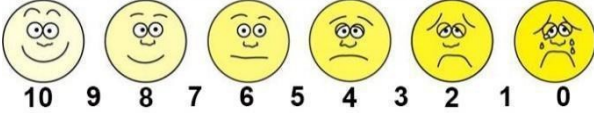
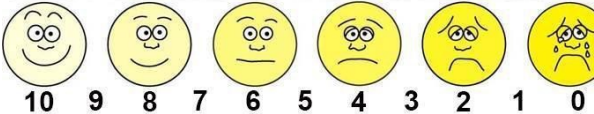
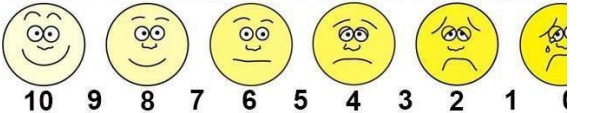
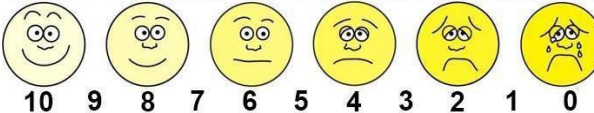
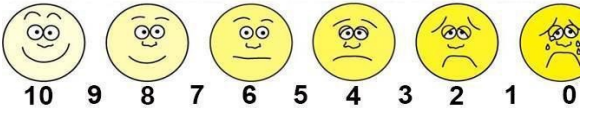
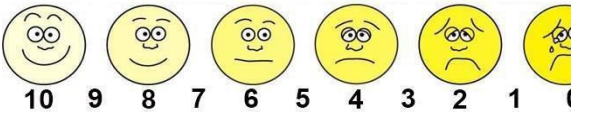
17. How do you feel the culture in the street?

- A. It is full of the unique cultural characteristics of this city.
- B. I can feel it mostly.
- C. It has some of the cultural characteristics of this city.

D. It has very few cultural characteristics of this city and is very similar to other commercial streets.

E. Other:

18. Which qualities of public space (street-park) are most important to you? (Please give your ratings for each quality below.)

N o .	Quality	Rating
1	Memoryrepresentation in space (the space which you have memory of them)	
2	Natural and artificial landscape in space (green space, sculpture, fountain and spectacular buildings)	
3	Availability of cinemas, theatre, cafés, restaurant and meeting places	
4	Suitable for remaining, resting and relaxing	
5	Chances for meeting and building up social relationships	
6	Welcoming space for recreation, doing activities and exploration	

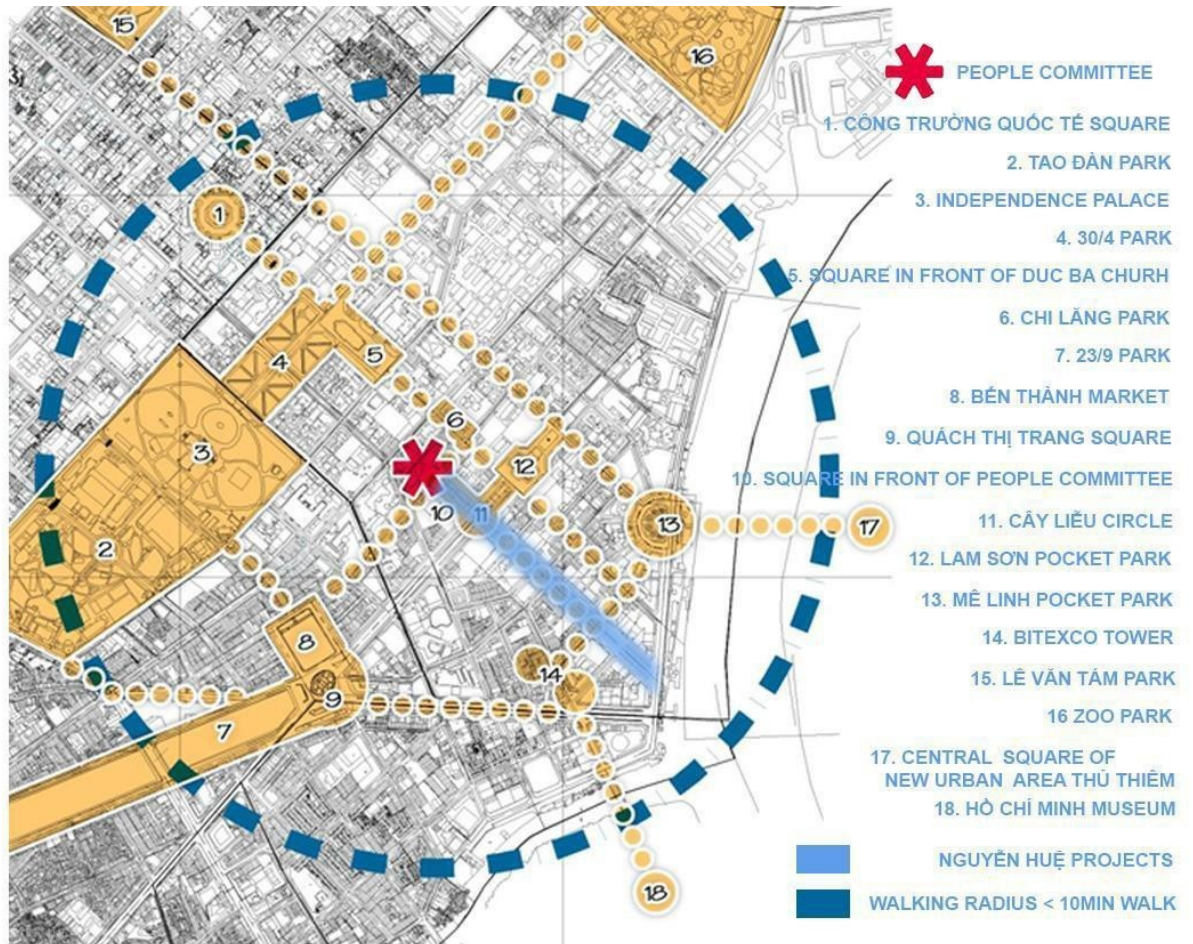
19. Would you like to name factors that prevent you from coming to these promenade areas?

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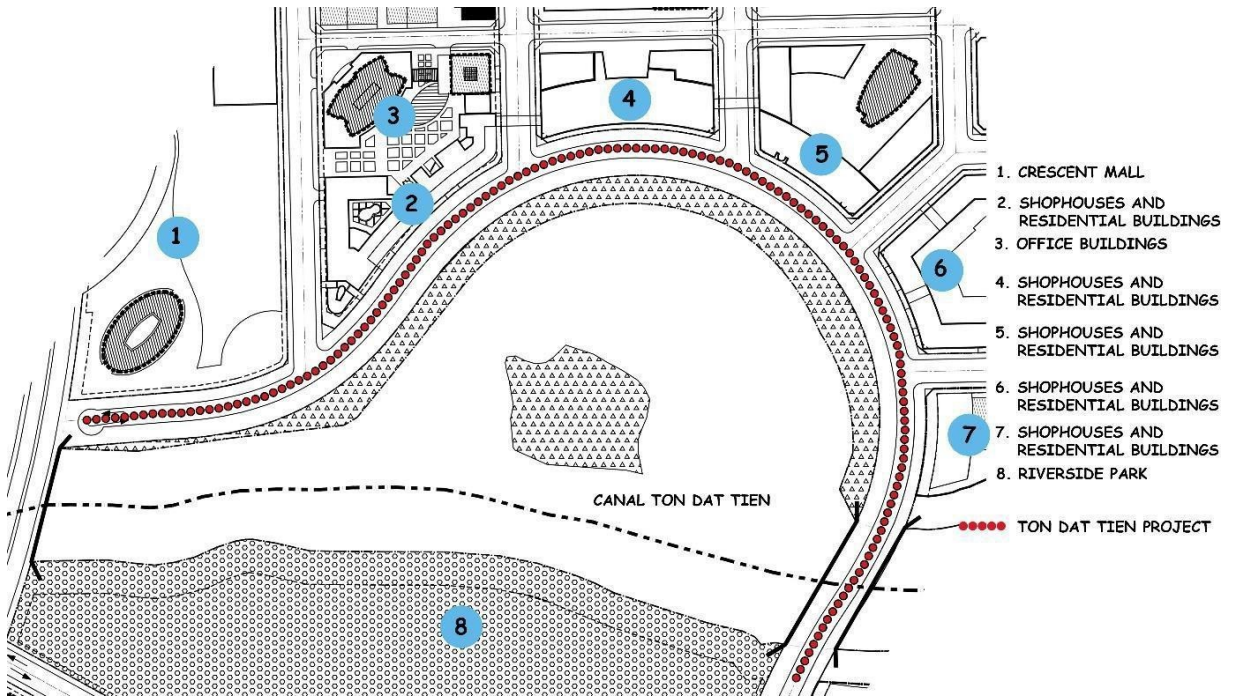
20. Do you have any additional opinions about this issue?

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APPENDIX C: CONTEXT OF NGUYEN HUE STREET AND TON DAT TIEN STREET

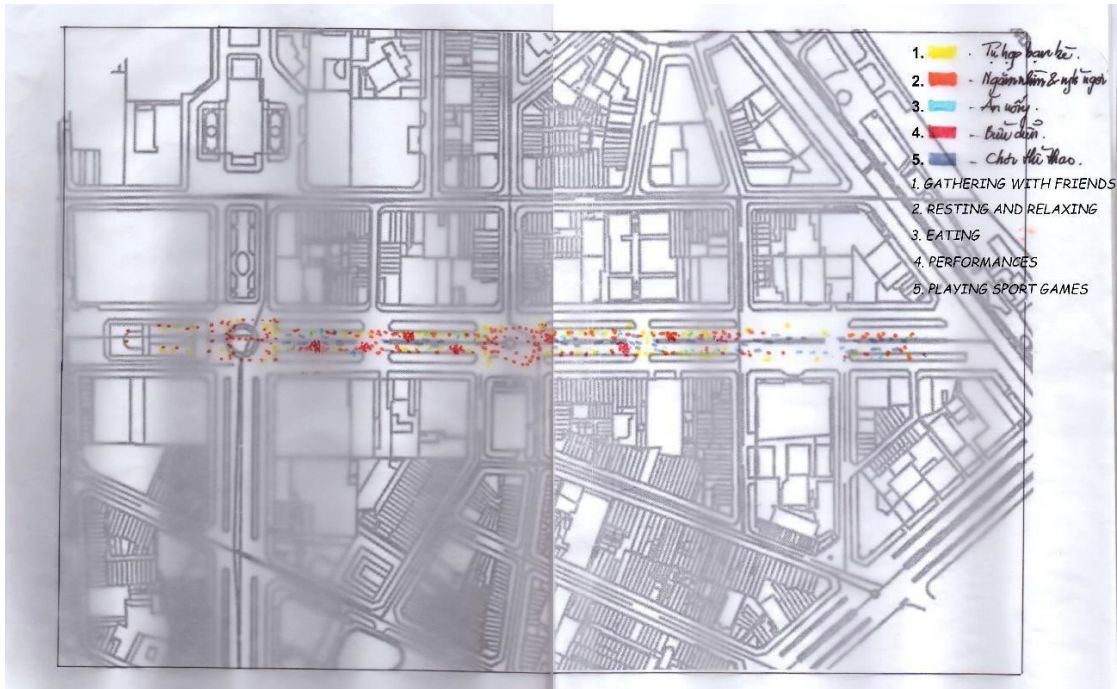


The walking radius between Nguyen Hue Street and other public spaces



The walking radius between Ton Dat Tien Street and surrounding areas

APPENDIX D: ACTIVITIES ALONG NGUYEN HUE STREET ON WEEKDAYS AND AT WEEKENDS AT NIGHT



Activities on weekdays along the street



Activities at weekends along the street