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**Urbanisation, environment,
development and urban policies
in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

LÊ Van Thanh
Institute of Economic Research
28 Lê Quy Don, 3rd district, Hồ Chi Minh city, Viet Nam
Tel. : 84.8.9321 352
Fax : 84.8.9321 370
E mail : thanhlv@yahoo.com

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*Le Van Thanh
Institute for Economic Research
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam*

Ho Chi Minh City¹ (HCMC) is placed in the crossroads of several regions: the South-East, the South of Central Highlands, the South of central coasts and the Mekong delta. These regions possess a great variety of resources, agricultural, aquatic and oil resources of which are dominant. HCMC situation is advantageous, in the middle of a vast rural zone constituted of a rice storage and a vast industrial plantation. With an important harbor system, HCMC became the most important economical pole of the country for exportation, connected with the rest of the country and with the world. With a population of more than six million inhabitants and a GNP per capita about of 1 500 US dollars, HCMC plays a role mattering in the state economy of the country and becomes the largest urban agglomeration in Vietnam.

With a surface of 2 056,6 km², the city contains at present: an urban part with 12 urbanized districts (Districts n°1, n°3, n°4, n°5, n°6, n°8, n°10, n°11, Tân Bình, Bình Thạnh, Phú Nhuận, Gò Vấp), and five new districts, untied from the rural part, recently created in 1997 : district 9, district 2, Thủ Đức, district 7, and district 12 and a rural part consisted of five districts : Củ Chi, Hóc Môn, Bình Chánh, Nhà Bè, and Cần Giuộc.

Along with the rapid economic growth in the process of urbanization, HCMC is facing environmental problems such as the pollution of the environment in resident zones in the down town and the suburb. The development of the urban economy, particularly the private sector and foreign investments provoked a demand for the environment protection in the city which it is in a process of fast urbanization. Policies on urban management have to face the development with great dimension in the context of an economy in transition. It should be noted that HCMC is a city that attract a lot of foreign and domestic investments. Moreover, HCMC has received the greatest number of migrants from rural areas in the phase of accelerated urbanization in the recent years, due to liberalization of the economy and to removal of the controls on population movements.

The concentrations of people and industries pose a fundamental challenge to the development of adequate infrastructure and the maintenance of healthy environments. As known, socio-economic activities of human beings provoke pollution. A high density of the population in the inner city (4.5 million residents/140 km²) resulted in a lot of problems concerning the healthy environment such as traffic jam, air quality, garbage,

¹ The name of Ho Chi Minh City was given on July 2, 1976, during the 1st session of the National Assembly by gathering the city of Saigon and Gia Dinh's province.

water supply, living conditions in slums, etc. In this context, public authorities are confronted with problems of the degradation of urban environment in HCMC. The reasons of the existing environmental problems are divers but this paper mention only the role of the population distribution.

An example should be taken: the overcrowding population along the canal Nhieu Loc Thi Nghe. This canal that is located in the inner city, was heavily polluted due to untreated waste. Along and even on this canal, about 20 000 slum houses have made the situation more degraded by disposing waste directly into the canal. The overcrowding population on the banks of the canal and the lack of sewerage and sanitation have degraded the quality of life and polluted the environment. A project that has been done to improve the living conditions and the environmental situation, have had to resettle all slum houses in other places. Although there are certain impacts on relocated households, the results are considered good consequences on many fields in which the environment has been improved.

Therefore, it should be found the way to solve the environmental problems not only by technical environmental approach but also by other socio-economic solutions in which the approach of population distribution should be considered. It aims to solve the current and potential disasters on environment of a futur megacity. Hence, the environmental policies could not be applied efficiently without mentioning the urban management policies, particularly the policy on population deconcentration.

I. The current situation of the Ho Chi Minh City territory

The division of three zones (urban, semi-urban and rural, mentioned above) establishes one significant characteristic of HCMV at the level of the urban development and of the distribution of the population. So the fact to understand the current situation of these zones and to apply them different policies of development is one priority with the aim of building a multi-polar conglomeration. We call also these three zones, the three crowns of the city.

The urban zone, the first crown, includes 12 districts urbanized, with a surface of 104,6 km² and a population about 4 millions in 2003. It is the most urbanized zone, developed for a long time (at least of half a century), particularly for districts 1, 3, 4, 5 and Phu Nhuan, with more than a century of urban development. Until now, by looking on the HCMC map on population density, one is seen "big black zone" in the centre, representing a strong density of the urban zone.

The zone " semi-urban ", the second crown, with a surface about of 300 km², is created by the administrative decrees recently by transforming parts of the rural districts into five new districts (district 2, 7, 9, 12, and Thu Duc) in 1997. This transformation is not only the expression of a political will, but also a part due to the urban development, even though this development was in its first steps. The idea to create five new districts is to establish favorable conditions and to prepare spaces for the development of the city. Really, this will is justified by the evolution of this zone, notably a strong growth rate of the population, in a short duration of five years. This zone has for perspectives to widen in the future.

The rural zone, the third crown, with a surface about of 1 600 km², with five rural districts: Binh Chanh, Hoc Môn, Cu Chi, Nha be and C n Gio are a specificity of HCMV. As city, HCMC possesses a vast rural part which could play a spare role for the urban development. Population density evolved slowly in this part.

The evolution of the weight of the population between three zones between 1979 and 2002 (more than 23 years) is recent (from 1989), and still modest (table 1). This reflects a congestion of the mobility during long period, but also an uneven development between HCMC's various zones. The population of the 3rd crown, rural zone, almost has double in absolute value, but its weight in the total population increases only 1,5 points, of 16.7 % a 18.8 % (table 1).

Table 1: Evolution of the population according to three crowns

| | Years | | | | | | | |
|--------|------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| | 1979 | | 1989 | | 1999 | | 2003 | |
| | Number (1000 pers) | % | Number (1000 pers) | % | Number (1000 pers) | % | Number (1000 pers) | % |
| HCMC | 3,420 | 100.0 | 3,988 | 100.0 | 5,037 | 100.0 | 5,630 | 100.0 |
| Zone 1 | 2,442 | 71.4 | 2,842 | 71.3 | 3,384 | 67.2 | 3,673 | 65.2 |
| Zone 2 | 401 | 12.4 | 478 | 12.0 | 740 | 14.7 | 898 | 16.0 |
| Zone 3 | 577 | 16.2 | 668 | 16.7 | 913 | 18.1 | 1,059 | 18.8 |

Source: Sources : statistical books

This distribution is a spreading tendency, from districts 1 and 3 towards suburb districts Tân Binh and Go V p (table 2), but it still stayed in the zone 1. The population is not still really taken out of the first crown. If one considers that urban growth is an indicator of economic development, one can say that the development of the city is still limited in the urbanized zones (12 urban districts).

Table 2 : Evolution of the population according to 12 districts of the zone 1 (%)

| District | In 1979 | In 1989 | In 1999 | In 2003 |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | 10.4 | 9.0 | 6.7 | 6.3 |
| 3 | 10.0 | 8.6 | 6.6 | 6.1 |
| 4 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 5.7 | 5.5 |
| 5 | 7.9 | 7.6 | 6.2 | 5.8 |
| 6 | 7.2 | 7.6 | 7.5 | 7.3 |
| 8 | 8.7 | 9.1 | 9.7 | 9.6 |
| 10 | 9.5 | 8.2 | 7.1 | 6.8 |
| 11 | 8.1 | 8.0 | 7.0 | 6.8 |
| Go Vap | 5.2 | 5.8 | 9.1 | 11.0 |
| Tan Binh | 10.8 | 11.9 | 17.1 | 18.5 |
| Binh Thanh | 10.2 | 11.5 | 11.9 | 11.3 |
| Phu Nhuan | 5.9 | 6.1 | 5.4 | 5.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Number | 2,442 | 2,842 | 3,384 | 3,673 |

Sources : statistical books

The problems of the city as the degradation of the environment, traffic jams, the lack of urban services become more and more evident, notably in the first crown there where it undergoes a strong pressure of concentration of population. If inside the city, density is of more 26,000 inhabitant/km², there are places as in the district 5 density can reach 50,000 inhabitant/km², while in the suburb in the rural districts, it is only 641 hab./km² in 2003. This distribution is due to a concentrated economic development inside the city during the long history of urban development of the city.

Why has there been this concentration of the population? Answer is that there is not only a concentration of the population, but also a concentration of the elements of production. Today, among 7,387 private companies, there is 83,2 % of it distributed in 12 urban districts. At the level of the hand of work, 70,7 % of the 288 679 employees of private companies work in this zone (table 3). The new companies, even stores, continue to settle down inside the city recently.

Table 3: Distribution of private companies and their employees

| | Private companies | Number of employees |
|--------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Zone 1 | 83.2 | 70.7 |
| Zone 2 | 8.4 | 17.0 |
| Zone 3 | 8.4 | 12.3 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Actual | 7,387 | 288,679 |

Source: HCMC's statistical Office

Companies, even the instigations of local authorities, do not want to move towards the suburb in industrial parks. They risk losing their business connections or increasing their expenses. Except in the case of polluting industries, forced to move, they find the reasons to delay their movement. The other urban services (including the small businesses) chose places populated to develop their activities to make them profitable. The rich customers are in the central districts rather than in the rural zones. The other economic and social activities, including entertainment activities, take place here. All the network of the working market (companies, employers, employees, workers) concentrates in the urban part. In this market of labor force, it not there not only inhabitants on the spot, but also some number of employees come from the peripheral zone. Every morning, one can notice employees' streams passing by the entrances into the inner city as " *Nga Tu An Suong* " that connects districts 12, Hoc Môn, and Cu Chi with the town centre. There are also foreign consumers (the tourists, the employees of the foreign companies, etc.) who contribute expenditures. Besides, the combination between the residence and the work place (small businesses and services) produced more dynamism to this zone. Besides, in the recent years, foreign investments in terms of property construction as the great hotels, the great shopping centers, the immense towers, concentrated in the town centre, accelerate the density of the socioeconomic components of the zone 1.

Furthermore, even though there are efforts in the investment of the urban infrastructures, the network stays still mainly in 12 districts. Supply in drinking water is an evident example. The inhabitants of the rural districts as Nha Be and Can Gio, have to buy the drinking water from a higher price, 5 times more, nevertheless they are poorer than their homologues of the central districts.

Besides, a distribution of the social classes is done in the various districts. Generally, one notices that the more the inhabitants are in the centre, the more they are rich. The costs of services in districts 1, 3, 5 are always higher than those in districts 'peripherals' as Tan Binh and Go Vap. In particular, there is a very net difference between the expenditures of the inhabitants of urban districts and those of the inhabitants of the rural districts (table 4).

Table 4 : Monthly average expenditure per person by urban and rural zones in 2003

| | Whole city | | Urban zone | | Rural zone | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Number (VND) | % | Number (VND) | % | Number (VND) | % |
| Eating-drinking | 376,216 | 50.0 | 415,230 | 49.8 | 207,871 | 52.0 |
| Housing, water, electricity | 58,215 | 7.7 | 65,036 | 7.8 | 28,782 | 7.2 |
| Equipment, utensil | 48,663 | 6.5 | 54,197 | 6.5 | 24,785 | 6.2 |
| Garment expenditures | 47,836 | 6.4 | 53,363 | 6.4 | 23,985 | 6.0 |
| Transport expenditures | 79,049 | 10.5 | 87,549 | 10.5 | 42,374 | 10.6 |
| Study expenditures | 55,432 | 7.4 | 62,535 | 7.5 | 24,785 | 6.2 |
| Health expenditures | 42,194 | 5.6 | 46,693 | 5.6 | 22,786 | 5.7 |
| Amusement, entertainment | 27,453 | 3.7 | 30,850 | 3.7 | 12,792 | 3.2 |
| Others | 17,073 | 2.3 | 18,342 | 2.2 | 11,592 | 2.9 |
| Total | 752,131 | 100,0 | 833,795 | 100,0 | 399,752 | 100,0 |

Source: HCMC's statistical book

The necessities of medical, educational care, leisure activities, information are satisfied in this first crown. The best schools, hospitals and the other advantages are concentrated in the central districts. Rich people often wish to live in central districts to profit the best services of medical and educational care. In spite of the price for houses more brought up than in the suburb, even the poor men, regroup into the centre for their work and to minimize the costs of daily movement (go to the school, to the market, to entertainment centers ...).

The development of shopping centers in all the districts of the first crown according to the strategy to transform a mono-polar city (concentrated in districts 1, 3, 5) towards a city multi-polar (Binh Thanh, Go Vap, Tan Binh), facilitates the daily activities of the inhabitants. Thanks to this policy, the conditions of life of districts formerly peripherals (Tan Binh, Go Vap ...) improved. One must call back that Tân Binh and Go

Váp, before 1975 , was military bases, with great stores, of which population density was only 7 000 inhabitants by km². The privilege to live is there evident. Because of this improvement, disparities between the first crown, notably the suburb of the first crown, and the other crowns aggravate.

Besides, for a long time, and until 1997, with the creation of five new districts, the second crown, was determined as rural zone. We shall see this situation in the following part with the presentation of the new districts. Economic activities and the investments of infrastructures are mainly in the agriculture. Recently, with the establishment of industrial parks, a considerable evolution of the 2nd et 3th crowns is noticed. The image of industrial parks as Tân Tao and Lê Minh Xuân to Binh Chanh, Linh Trung to Thu Duc and free zone Tân Thuận in the district 7, has really changed the landscape. It is an element mattering for the development of the suburb. The existence of industrial parks plays a motor role in the construction of the infrastructures of the zone. However, situation remains waited.

Everything, this is to say that it is about a strategy of choice of the place of residence at the level of households. This strategy is contradictory with the policy of the population deconcentration of the authorities of the city. Economic planning must pay attention so. It must bring advantages to two other zones (semi-urban and rural) in the policy of deconcentration.

In the previous plan of city development, approved by the Prime Minister in 1998, a program of population deconcentration has been already proposed. Means foreseen to modify the distribution of the population were not ready from both directions: departure and destination. The most important thing is to know that is going to move, how and with which interest. So, one of the main objectives of the plan of development of the city for 2010, to move a part of the population to obtain 3 million inhabitants inside the city is really a defeat.

One of the main tasks of the urban development of the city is to modify this uneven distribution in the objective to transform a big city into a multi-polar built-up area. This multi-polar conglomeration of HCMV will create favorable conditions to connect the other cities in a network of satellite towns of the region the South is, notably the advanced economic region.

II. The dimension and the will of movement of the inhabitants

According to the results of the census of 1999, one can notice that there are more than 300 000 inhabitants who moved with regard to a population more of five millions at the time. In other words, 6 % of the population moved inside the city during a period of five years, from 1994 till 1999 (table 5). This means that 60 000 displaced persons a year are had about. It is necessary to call back as well as this period experimented first movements obliged for great projects as that of the improvement of the canal Nhiêu Lộc-Thị Nghê.

Let us take the zone of urban districts (the first crown) which is really touched by projects of urban organization: among the 283,427 inhabitants of the 12 districts who moved, there was 67,5 % which moved inside 12 districts, 15,7 % towards five new districts and 16,8 % towards the rural districts. Besides, an important thing is that with

regard to the 21,525 persons gone out of the 1st crown, there are 274 813 migrants come from other provinces, for the same period have not been yet counted, and settled in this crown.

Table 5: Population mobilities inside HCMV during the period 1994-1999

Unit: person

| Place of residence in 1999 | Place of residence in 1994 | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------|
| | 12 urban districts | 5 new districts | 5 rural districts | Total |
| 12 urban districts | 191,332 | 9,016 | 12,509 | 212,857 |
| 5 new districts | 44,556 | 1,885 | 3,472 | 49,913 |
| 5 rural districts | 47,539 | 1,343 | 2,762 | 51,644 |
| Total | 283,427 | 12,244 | 18,743 | 314,414 |

Source: Census of 1999

By analyzing, this phenomenon of mobilities, one notices that the streams of mobilities did not happen naturally according to the elements of the market economy: land price (including speculation), and job, but also by the intervention of authorities through projects of organization of the territory.

In a recent survey², the proportion of moved people inside HCMV increased in about 11 % during the period 1998-2003. Among 11 %, there is more than 74 % is movements inside the zone of 12 central districts. If one refers to strategic objectives fixed by the new distribution of urban population until 2010 and 2020, the inhabitants are little numerous to want to change place of residence. Besides, the destinations that they aim (at town centre) do not correspond to residential zones wished by the authorities of the city (that is the suburb).

Table 6: Population mobilities inside HCMV during the period 1998-2003

| Current zone of residence | Zone before moving | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| | Urban districts | Semi-urban districts | Rural districts |
| Urban districts | 74.2 | 18.2 | 22.6 |
| Semi urban districts | 11.6 | 74.2 | 13.2 |
| Rural districts | 14.2 | 7.6 | 64.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Survey on intra-urban mobilities in HCMC, 2003

² It is the survey questionnaire on intra - urban mobilities behaviour in collaboration among IRD and IER in 2003. The questionnaire addresses the general population of the city, and not only the persons concerned by the projects of relocation.

Also in this survey, by asking for the opinions of people on their project in the future, one finds that there is only 4.6 % of interrogated people who answered that they intend to move (table 7). In spite of there is also an important proportion, 16.7 %, of them who have not yet decided, one sees although the rate of movement above 11 % during five years corresponds a little near to this answer. This means that most of people have really no intention to move.

Table 7: Intention of moving

| | Migratory status | | | | Total | |
|------------------------|------------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Migrant (*) | | Non migrant | | | |
| | | % | | % | | % |
| No intention of moving | 837 | 68.0 | 4,729 | 80.9 | 5,566 | 78.7 |
| Intention of moving | 87 | 7.1 | 241 | 4.1 | 328 | 4.6 |
| Do not know | 306 | 24.9 | 874 | 15.0 | 1,180 | 16.7 |
| Total | 1,230 | 100,0 | 5,844 | 100.0 | 7,074 | 100.0 |

Source : Survey on intra - urban mobilities in HCMC, 2003

Note : (*) The one that lives in the district in less than 5 years

Besides, data show us that among those that intend to move, 57.3 % do not know where go. And among those that know well where they have to go, 74.4 % would like to move in the first crown, 18.9 % in the second and only 6.7% in the third.

III. Urbanisation and the change on environment

In general, it can be said that the environmental situation of HCMC is influenced by the economic development, go along with the overloaded and poor infrastructure, the rapid urbanisation (population increase) and the concentration of the population in the center. The current environmental situation in Ho Chi Minh City can be remarked by three main activities as follows:

+ Industrial activities: There are about 500 enterprises which are located in two Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and twelve Industrial Zones (IZs). The volume of air emission generated from EPZs and IZs emitting daily to the ambient air is 15 tons of dusts, 150 tons of SO₂, 10 tons of NO_x, and 4,6 tons of CO. The approximate volume of pollutant discharged daily to rivers is 75 tons of SS, 46 tons of BOD₅, and 107 tons of COD. The total volume of solid wastes is estimated to be 3,924 tons per year, in which 705 tons are hazardous wastes. Some of EPZs and IZs have been investing in constructing centralised waste treatment facilities. In addition, a large number of small and medium enterprises scattering in centralised residential areas (12 urban districts in the center) are currently polluting the air, canal, river, soil and ground water.

+ Agricultural production activities: more than 400,000 hectares growing paddle, beans, flowers, vegetables in the five rural districts. These activities are going down due to the process of urbanisation.

+ Traffic pollution: with more than 2.3 motorcycles and nearly 160,000 of all types of car and trucks.

The local authorities have many pollution mitigation activities in industrial production such as the program of moving polluting enterprises to suburbs or to IZs or the program of minimizing the industrial pollution with the pollution prevention approach. However, the results are still limited.

One of the questions often raised by researchers and policy makers is the relations between the process of urbanization and the changes on environmental conditions. Thus, in order to answer that question, besides the environmental quality monitoring (ambient air quality, traffic air quality, surface water quality, groundwater quality), a socio-economic survey, conducted by the Institut of Economic Research (IER) was realised in 2004.

Three areas which represent different levels of urbanization were selected. The district Go Vap represent the highest level, then the Binh Tan district come the second with medium level and the District n° 2 represent the lowest level. All these three districts are in the urbanising area. The survey questionnaire ask question at two different period of time : five years ago and at present ('before' and 'after' in the tables followed) to collect opinion of community about changes on environmental conditions in their living area. About 500 households were asked to give their opinion on the changes on environment in their living area during the last five years.

There are some followed results that reflect the opinion of community at these three study areas. It is seen from the table 8 that the changes on water source become worse because the percentage of households using underground water (not really safe water) increase from 86.5 % five years ago (1999) to 88.0 % at the present time (2004). This varies between the three districts, especially in Binh Tan the situation is better, however, in general at the level of the urbanising area (represented by three area), this indicator has the tendency in decreasing. That shows that the urbanisation (more people) does not go along with the development of urban infrastructure in new districts. It may be recalled that the urban infrastructure, especially the water network of the city has been improving too slow in many years and still stay in the first crown as presented before.

In this study, water quality from well (drilled or digged) is worse than the one from public pipe (tap). The increase of well drilled that exploit deeply the underground water, in one hand is more safe than the water from well digged, but in the other hand it makes some consequences for the water resources in long term.

Table 8: Opinion of community about changes on water sources in their living area

Unit: %

| Water from | Gò Vấp | | Binh Tân | | District 2 | | Total | |
|--------------|--------|-------|----------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After |
| Well drilled | 89.5 | 97.2 | 62.0 | 61.8 | 78.5 | 94.4 | 76.7 | 84.4 |
| Well digged | 4.8 | 2.1 | 5.6 | 2.8 | 18.8 | 5.6 | 9.8 | 3.5 |
| Public pipe | 5.5 | 0.7 | 32.4 | 35.4 | 2.7 | 0 | 13.5 | 12.1 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source : Survey on changes of socio economical conditions of households in the process of urbanisation in HCMC, 2004.

Not only there are a decrease from safe water (public pipe) to unsafe water (underground water), but the community reactions about the water quality is also worse in all these study areas. The survey results are shown in table 9, the category “good” is gone down.

Table 9: Opinion of community about changes on water quality in their living area

Unit: %

| | Gò Vấp | | Bình Tân | | District 2 | | Total | |
|--------------|--------|-------|----------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After |
| Good | 84.6 | 81.3 | 66.9 | 61.0 | 83.1 | 81.8 | 78.2 | 74.7 |
| Having color | 6.5 | 9 | 19.0 | 19.9 | 6.3 | 7.7 | 10.6 | 12.2 |
| Having smell | 8 | 9.2 | 4.9 | 8.9 | 7 | 7 | 6.6 | 8.3 |
| Muddy | 0.7 | 0.09 | 9.2 | 10.3 | 3.6 | 3.5 | 4.5 | 4.6 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source : Survey on changes of socio economical conditions of households in the process of urbanisation in HCMC, 2004.

If for the water quality, the communities have appreciated with a relatively high proportion (74,7 %), the air quality is evaluated at low level, 16.2 % five years ago and only 2.9 % at present with the proportion of “good quality” (table 10). It should be noted that the evaluation on air quality is taken in resident places. The air quality in traffic circulation (e.g. at crossroad) of HCMC is worse. It is apparent that having dust in the air in the living area is the most polluting element. Dust come from construction and circulation.

Table 10: Opinion of community about changes on air quality in their living area

Unit: %

| | Gò Vấp | | Bình Tân | | District 2 | | Total | |
|--------------|--------|-------|----------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After |
| Good | 28.1 | - | 20.7 | 7.7 | - | - | 16.2 | 2.9 |
| Having dust | 62.5 | 92.5 | 50.0 | 53.8 | 75.4 | 50.0 | 62.6 | 64.8 |
| Having smell | 8.3 | 7.5 | 22.9 | 38.5 | 21.7 | 43.8 | 17.6 | 29.9 |
| Having smoke | 1.1 | - | 6.4 | - | 2.9 | 6.2 | 3.4 | 2.4 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source : Survey on changes of socio economical conditions of households in the process of urbanisation in HCMC, 2004.

Table 11 suggests that the more the city develop the more the city becomes noisy. The noise comes from industrial activities, traffic and also from daily activities of residents. The fact to let the music at high volume is an exemple in new resident blocs. It mentions a new reason that is the transition of the rural life to urban.

Table 11: Opinion of community about changes on noise in their living area

Unit: %

| | Gò Vấp | | Bình Tân | | District 2 | | Total | |
|-----------|--------|-------|----------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After |
| Not noisy | 49.5 | 31.3 | 58.3 | 6.3 | 67.6 | 66.7 | 58.4 | 34.7 |
| Noisy | 50.5 | 68.7 | 41.7 | 93.7 | 32.4 | 33.3 | 41.5 | 65.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source : Survey on changes of socio economical conditions of households in the process of urbanisation in HCMC, 2004.

If the “natural environment” (water, air...) become worse, the “human environment” with the new efforts is better. It should be noted that this information refers to the works of gathering, collecting garbage. There is a slight increase of satisfactory level in communities of urbanising areas from 54,3 % to 57,9 %. This means the process of urbanisation leads to an urban way of living more civilized.

Table 12: Opinion of community about changes on hygiene conditions in their living area

Unit: %

| | Gò Vấp | | Bình Tân | | District 2 | | Total | |
|----------------|--------|-------|----------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After |
| Satisfactory | 59.4 | 64.6 | 50.0 | 46.9 | 53.6 | 62.4 | 54.3 | 57.9 |
| OK | 21.7 | 24.3 | 30.5 | 29.5 | 31.9 | 29.3 | 28.0 | 27.7 |
| Unsatisfactory | 18.9 | 11.1 | 19.5 | 23.7 | 14.5 | 8.3 | 17.6 | 14.3 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source : Survey on changes of socio economical conditions of households in the process of urbanisation in HCMC, 2004.

IV. Urban growth, urban development demands and public policies

HCMC population increased quickly in the last years. With a growth rate about 3 % per year, and a current population of six million inhabitants, one can envisage easily that in 20 years, HCMV will reach certainly 10 million inhabitants in normal conditions, without acceleration of the migratory streams. Furthermore, the size of 10 millions inhabitants already appeared in the official documents of the government as in the modifications of the development plan of the city for 2020.

An almost double population of that current, asks for a urban space doubled, in other words one "other city" should be built since now on to welcome it. The surface of urbanized grounds should double with a development of infrastructures and urban services. Furthermore, the increases of demands that should be brought to the city-dwellers for improving their living conditions have not been yet calculated. A well-balanced distribution of the population facilitates urban development and mutually.

The first megacity³ of Vietnam will appear certainly in 15 or 20 years. This considerable urban growth is a phenomenon which entails "inside demand" inhabitants in the development of the big city. These internal necessities of the human life are different: to work, to form, find accommodation, to relax, to communicate and they are different from a person in another one. Let us take an example, the need of flat of the inhabitants. Let us suppose that every person needs 15 m² ⁴ with 5 million inhabitants more, a surface of 75 millions m² must be built. Furthermore, there are so different demands, flat, house, etc. The question which arises here is to know how all the individuals could find their interest and place them in the daily life in the process of development.

Besides, it is evident that HCMV has not only the important role for the country: with the international activities (economical, financial, cultural...), notably the relations with the region of the Asiatic Southeast, it widely spreads its influences. But also with other megacities of the region (Shanghai, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta...) that HCMV will contribute to the decisions of the world market. It is in these perspectives that the city has also "outside demands" to satisfy exchanges and to become integrated into the international life. It is forced by demands of modernisation of the region and of globalization (e.g. the existence of great shopping centers of international trade-marks). The implanting of companies and foreign desks which ask for some standards of levy (rent, surface and structure of desks), develop so the structure of the urban space. In the future, the development of HCMC becomes probably the most picturesque phenomenon of the Vietnamese activity of 21st century.

At the level of the city management, towards public authorities, an evolution of the perception of HCMC's role is noticed in the important decisions of the party political office. The decision n° 01, in 1981, on the HCMC development, for the first time determined HCMC as a multi-function centre of the southern region. 20 years later, in 2002, another decision, decision n° 20, was delivered to evaluate and reconfirm its weight in state economy and particularly for this time, its role in international relations. One of the main tasks that decision n° 20 provoked is to elaborate the strategies of city development, notably the guiding plan. So, on one side, the demand of daily life in the process of development and on the other side the political will of municipal authorities, there is the same objective, to design a new city.

Under the pressures of internal and outside necessities, and with the political will, the city should be developed in an intensive way. The more the business of the city develops, the more urban population increases and accelerates demands for the city in term of infrastructures and urban services. In front of challenges in the process of development, local authorities should make efforts to make the city more attractive for economic activities and also for the quality of life of its citizens by creating employment and living conditions better. More the city develops more it becomes attractive. The city turns around this circle of "cause and effect" in the process of development. So, it needs the territorial space to distribute the new sites of construction. If it can not escape current territorial limitations, in "a narrow shirt", it can not be developed. On the other hand, urban development must not be realized spontaneously, but according to well prepared directions. Consequently, an urban economic planning is strongly evoked to

³ City of more than 10 million inhabitants

⁴ The objective of HCMV is of 14,5 m² / inhabitant for 2010.

resolve the questions of necessities above. Among the directions of urban development, the management of the population and the distribution of the population in a new structure of the urban space is one of crucial problems. Besides, environmental considerations are required to integrate into decision making for development project such as the establishment of a new industrial zone.

The distribution of the population is important because it is going to supply a basic element for the urban development. The networks of infrastructures and urban services rest on the network of the former and new resident sites. We present the fundamental point of it public will: the orientations of the distribution of the population towards the suburb.

The development plan, approved by the Prime Minister in 1998, influenced by former ideas that the State must make everything, kept firmly the population of the city at five million inhabitants in 2010. This implies always a policy of limitation of the population and the decentralization towards the bordering provinces. Based on this limited population, the city resigned itself to a more or less modest and closed development.

From 1998, with the evolution of the population and the economical successes, a demand for the development plan to revise its objectives for reaching the reality, arose in local authorities. Reasons for a modification of this plan could be regrouped in two categories: new ideas and objectives to be revised. The creation and the development of five new districts (n°9 , n°2 , n°7, n°12 and Thu Duc), with a surface more 1 900 km² in the recent years which illustrate the perspectives of the urban development at a higher and wider level, allow plans of distribution of the population within HCMV and new plans of territory organization.

Altogether necessities of development of the economic region of Southern, socioeconomic relations between the provinces become more and more necessary. Great projects as the establishment of the new network of ports in the region and industrial parks upset the orientations of development of the previous period. So, new ideas came for an urban development of more opened HCMC, as the necessity to build a new city in the Northwest of the city around two districts Cu Chi and Hoc Môn, with a surface of 6 000 ha, the highway of the 3rd crown most of the parts of which pass by the territories of the bordering provinces, etc.

Besides, there are also objectives of the former plan (approved by the decision 123/1998/QĐ-TTg, 10/7/1998) that one not still resolved: the movement of polluting factories, the construction of shopping centers in the entrances of the city, the construction of the residential sites next to industrial parks, the establishment of infrastructures in five new districts, etc.

In 2003, one begins to study to modify and to integrate new strong perspectives. For the first time, one sees appearing from these works (not still finished), a population of 7,5 million for 2010 and 10 million inhabitants for 2020. By accepting such population, a new urban development, with the characteristics of a grand and of the opening HCMV towards the Southern region is approached. So, the size of the city should be agreed to spread out in the space for the development of one megalopolis. This idea on the size of the population constitutes a basic element for the reconstruction of a new city. The

distribution of the population, infrastructures, companies, should be revised in a different way, with a greater scale, but of a way decentralized and scattered on the territory.

However, for the point of departure, at present, one is in front of a more or less pessimistic situation. In fact, the development of the city inherited negative consequences to correct. An urban management with the lack of concrete rules entailed a "wild urbanization" and an anarchy management in recent years. All the phenomena as the occupation of the public grounds, notably along canals and railroads, constructions without permission, the reducing width of alleys by the extension of houses, the creation of small firms and the explosion of the commercial spaces in living districts, the abuse of pavements for the small business, really left scars on the urban face which deforms seriously. The distribution of the population joins in this disorder of which the concentration in the centre is an illustration. Situation becomes more and more tense with these errors in the city planning. So, urban economic planning has a double task: build new sites and modify urban imbalance, notably the distribution of the population.

In conclusion, one can say that HCMC is characterized by an uneven distribution of its population related to the urbanization. The surface of more than 2000 km² of the city makes a considerable potential ground for the urban development, the redistribution of population and environment protection. If the city is well fitted out, it could accept more a certain number of population, develop the urban space and establish a new sustainable development. Building new resident blocks would give birth to a new city with the urban face of a big city. However, until now, in spite of the public will of the deconcentration of the population, for lack of means, results are still limited. If the city can not widen with the construction of infrastructures (system of distribution of water, evacuation of liquid waste, networks of roads and public transports) in time, its well developed centre will be too much populated, blocked, polluted and surrounded with an underdeveloped suburb.

However, the movement of millions of inhabitants and polluting industries, and the creation of new urban communities will entail certainly a profound turnover of the populations in terms of their customs of daily life and work. The land or housing compensation is really a socio-economic problem not only for people but also for the government and the investors.

The criteria for consideration and evaluation of the urban management project is as follows : a project of urban planning would be considered as effective only when the majority of inhabitants would accept positively the change of place of residence and all its consequences. In the other hand, the authorities should focus on master plans to improve the living quality in terms of environment to the whole city.

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