

Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

S. Fanchette, J. Segard, Nguyễn Văn Sửu, Trần Nhật Kiên

In the Red River Delta, a process of very active *in situ* urbanisation is linked to very high densities of population and to the diversification of activities associated with wet rice farming, occupying a large workforce. In the densely populated peri-urban area – more than 2,000 inhabitants per km² (see Chapter 8) and multi-activity –, village pressure on land is growing. Owing to urbanised extended families no longer living together and the arrival of migrants, demand for residential land is rising (residential density in the villages of the peri-urban district of Hoài Đức was 166 inhabitants per hectare in 2009, a density of urban levels).

Similarly, artisans and traders, since the integration of the country into the market economy, make increasing demands to the local authorities, who have until now blocked access to land, to obtain land for production. The state, and now the provinces, are the only authorities who can alter the status of agricultural land for industrial or residential use, land that until recently was reserved in priority for agriculture to ensure food self-sufficiency, one of the pillars of Vietnam's land policy.

However, since the 2000s, owing to the failure of the policy known as 'the state and the people building together' (see Chapter 5), the state has eased access to land suitable for construction for large private or para-governmental companies to build up the Hanoi metropolitan area. The policies of access

to non-agricultural land for villagers of the post-*Đổi mới* years are being revised downwards and large swaths of agricultural land expropriated and rendered suitable for building, so long as projects are in conformity with the master plan to 2030.

The favours made to development investors to acquire large areas of several hundreds of hectares well below market price are perceived so much more negatively by villagers given that their numerous requests are not met by the powers that seek to curb low-cost self-building, incompatible with the construction of a metropolis of international standing. The authorities are thus identified, by a large proportion of the population, as responsible for injustices created by some of these projects, given that the state remains the owner of all land (1992 Constitution). A new form of incomprehension between inhabitants and their representatives is appearing, accompanied by a crisis of legitimacy in a regime that continues to represent itself as being socialist and gives itself as objectives the equitable development of the nation and the promotion of the common good.

Occupation strategies for very crowded and sought-after spaces

Until the end of the 1990s, villages could extend their residential space by creating 'population expansion' areas.

Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

This policy was basically intended for young couples lacking personal space in dwellings shared by several generations. Since *Đôi mới*, villages on the outskirts of Hà Nội have undergone strong demographic pressure linked both to new ways of life within families and an influx of migrants.

Firstly, the increase in residence units is linked to young couples no longer cohabiting in the family house. It is usually the case that in village families, several generations of married couples cohabit. This situation deprives these couples of any intimacy or autonomy of action and can create tensions. The bedrooms reserved for couples in the two alcoves or 'arches' located on either side of the central room in a traditional house also serve for storage: the wardrobes containing the clothes for the whole family were traditionally placed in them. This arrangement no longer suits the needs of modern life.

PHAN CẨM THƯỢNG (2008) has commented with humour: 'Here, there is no place for the love of modern times'¹. Today, young couples wish to have their own bedroom to safeguard their intimacy and not undergo pressure from other family members.

In addition, these villages play host to migrants from the provinces. Residential space changes rapidly, with a 'new function': supplying new lodgings to permanent migrants and rooms for rent to students and seasonal workers. In the face of this strong demand, the price of land rises rapidly and motivates many villagers, particularly those having lost their agricultural land to urban projects, to sell part of their land, their yard or their garden.

We will present here two kinds of spatial practices to increase residential space in villages and their impact on village morphology in two villages: one from the second urbanised ring, La Phù, and one from the first, Triều Khúc.

• Creation of an informal small craft industry zone in La Phù

La Phù is representative of big and very mechanised villages with large needs in residential and industrial land. Indeed, this very dynamic village-commune records an annual population growth rate that reached 2.12% between 1989 and 1999, then 1.53% between 1999 and 2009, rising from 6,798 inhabitants to 9,764 (Vietnamese General Population Census, 1989, 1999, 2009). It is the commune in the province of Hà Nội with the most artisans and workers: 12,200, according to La Phù People's Committee.

In 1997-1999, a 'population expansion' area of one hectare (plus 0.2 ha for the roadway) was built on 'market garden land' for growing food to the north of the village's residential area. To begin with, the inhabitants of this area labelled it unofficially *Xóm Mới*, or new hamlet, then *Xóm Hưng Long*.

This project concerned 110 households, of which 59 had market garden land in this area (they had to give 50% of their land to the project to obtain the right to change the status of their land); the rest was distributed to other households that needed to cease cohabiting. Each household received 88 m² to build a dwelling and had to pay a tax to the district people's committee for the construction of the concrete roadway.

This policy has not been renewed: the district of Hoài Đức has only authorised each commune to build a single zone/area of one hectare. However, in a more or less irregular manner, another residential and small craft industry zone has been built on the '5% land' at the entrance to the village. Those holding the rights of use to this land apparently received the approval of the local authorities in 1990. Locals clubbed together to pay for its development.

There now exist several means of increasing residential space:

- making residential space denser, by building a house with many storeys on the site of an old one, or by building a house in the courtyard for the family's children;
- building illegally on agricultural land;
- living on industrial sites;
- waiting for 'service' land, or 10% land, compensation for land expropriated for the Lê Trọng Tấn project, to be allocated to villagers. However, this land must be provided with services (levelling of land, construction of basic infrastructure, etc.) by companies to make them suitable for construction. The cost of this work is 1.350 million VNĐ/m², a sum that few villagers can pay. Accordingly, the whole '10% land' of the Lê Trọng Tấn area is in suspension, while land prices rise and several speculators are interested in buying it. In 2009, there was a market for this land at 7 or 8 million VNĐ/m².

In craft villages, the mixed nature of residential spaces (housing + workshops or businesses) can be explained by the lack of building land and its high cost, but also because artisans live with their livelihood. They have to monitor workers, get children and old people to take part in manual activities (basket-weaving, embroidery) or working late at night to meet orders, and prefer to live and work on the spot.

Some continue to live on industrial sites, as they can build large residences there, in spite of increased pollution since the installation of coal kilns and bigger and noisier machines than in the heart of the village.

In La Phù, a craft industry production site was built in about 2006, in a difficult context concerning land. The villagers considered that the market gardening land (or 10% land), plots of limited size (44 m²/ per adult), shared out equally among families until 1993 so that they could produce something to improve their daily lives during the collectivist era, were almost their property, in the same way as residential land. Even though it is mentioned in the 'red notebook' (lease for agricultural land), the authorities of the former province of Hà Tây, before its integration into Hà Nội, were less strict about its use. Located on the fringes of residential space, this land has mostly been built up in villages where demographic pressure is high. It is also part of a market for land, with prices that reach dizzying heights (see Chapter 9).

In the 2000s, the artisans of La Phù asked the communal and provincial authorities to change the status of market garden land⁷ for growing food at the entrance to the village and to use it for craft industry production. After five years of negotiation, this area, which covers 11 ha, changed status but the province, to convert it into an industrial zone, wanted to impose a minimum size on workshops, building standards, the construction of road infrastructure, etc.

This zone that should have been developed by the authorities was in fact done so by villagers, without any real provision of basic services. The villagers refused to give up their land use rights (LUR) so that the provincial authorities could set up an industrial zone the plots of which would then be resold at prices and sizes too inflated for them. They themselves started building workshops too small to install more than one machine (100 to 200 m²) and particularly shops and warehouses for wholesale trading in confectionary and biscuits, the zone being easy to access with trucks.

Businessmen therefore had to buy LUR from their neighbours to assemble a large enough area to set up mechanised workshops (500 to 1,000 m²). Land prices began to rise rapidly (see Chapter 9). Along the side paths, (where the price of land is much lower) workshops are bigger, but there are also many residences of several storeys, Hanoian-style tube houses (Figure 13).

The villagers in the southern area of the village (zones B and C), whose land for growing food has also been programmed to become production land, have

not yet received the approval of the provincial authorities. They refused on the pretext that the experience of zone A had not been successful, and that it was not possible to build industrial zones with so small plots of land, without adequate sanitary infrastructure and transport links.

As early as 2006-2007, the villagers began to build workshops there illegally, putting adjoining plots together by buying LUR. Owing to the illegality of constructions in this zone, there are fewer well-appointed residences. The risk of destruction by the district authorities is too great. The slackness of the provincial authorities of the former province of Hà Tây and of some officials has thus enabled the villagers to reshape the residential space of their densely populated village.

This phenomenon of village self-building, against which the municipality of Hà Nội is trying to fight in order to create the infrastructure necessary to its urban development, is paradoxically strengthened by the installation of industrial projects for which tendered contracts are awarded to private developers.

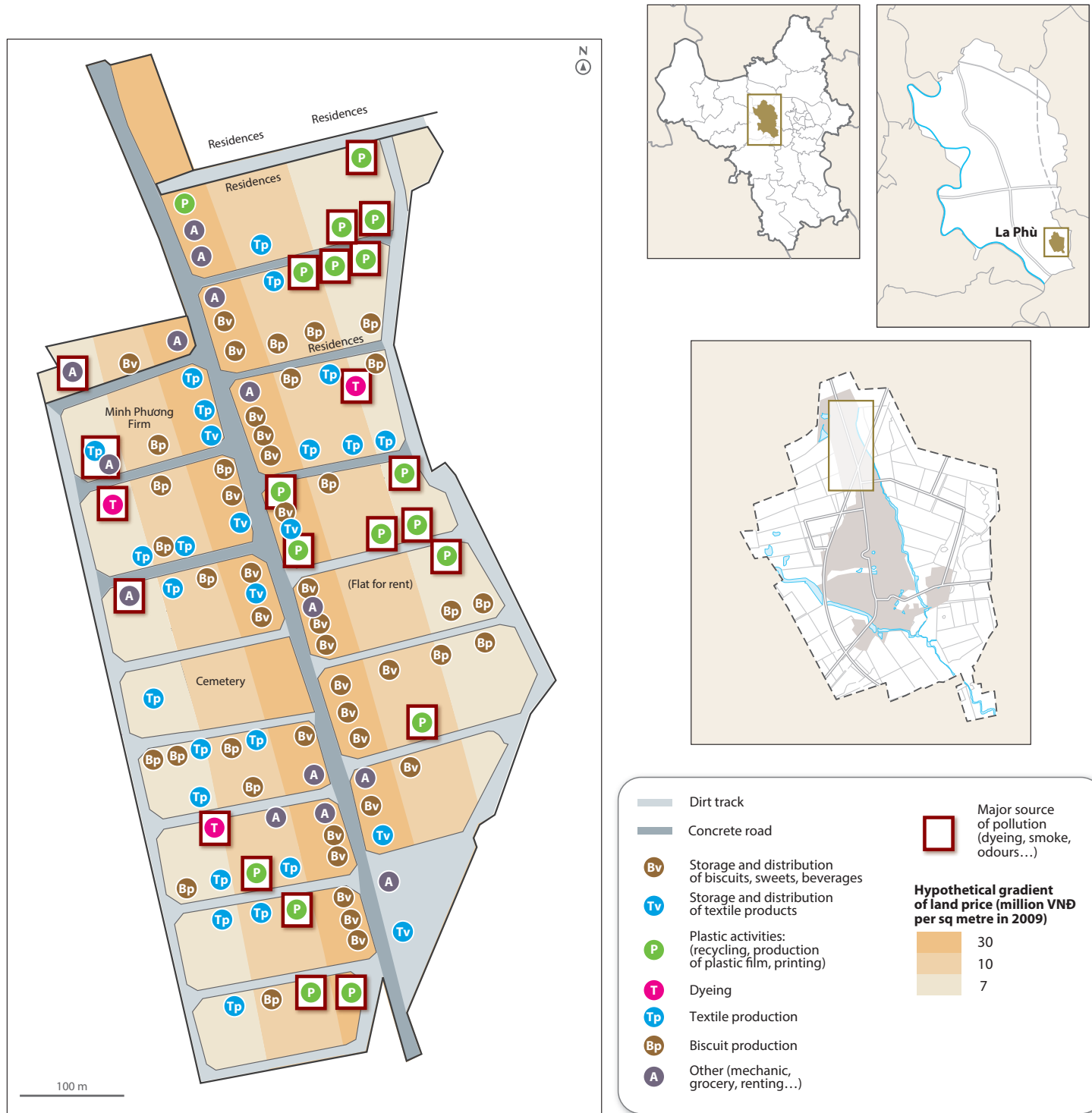
In La Phù, a project for an industrial site (*Điểm Công Nghiệp*) of 42.5 ha is being realised: the land is being expropriated. The businessmen and artisans of La Phù are supposed to have priority. Plots of land with basic services should be bigger than 1,000 m², the minimum size to build a workshop with enough storage and production according to the hygiene standards fixed by city authorities. The zone will be divided into three parts, each one specialised in one activity: confectionary, textiles, dyeing. Costs of installing infrastructure to pipe in water and to treat liquid waste will be met by tenants. Accordingly, the plots will be leased for a period of 50 years for 3 million VNĐ² a square metre, or 3 billion VNĐ per plot, a price that few artisans will be able to pay, particularly in a context of a crisis in exports and a dip in profits.

Therefore, many villagers refuse to allow themselves be expropriated, as they know they will obtain no financial benefit from this land, and this only slows down the project's implementation. They would prefer to build on the land themselves and pay for the taxes to change the land's status and for basic services.

In this context, craft industry production continues to overflow from the village and to mingle with living spaces. Given the lack of expansion projects for craft industry spaces set aside for villagers, self-building continues apace and the 'verticalisation' of buildings appears to be inhabitants' latest strategy to counter the lack of space necessary for households.

Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

Figure 13 – INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL USE OF LAND IN THE INFORMAL CRAFT INDUSTRY ZONE IN LA PHÙ



• Reshaping public spaces and the road network in Triều Khúc

On the outskirts of villages of the first urbanised ring, numerous changes to the traditional village road system can be observed, particularly blind alleys, and the creation of new blocks of houses. With the subdivision of plots for sale to migrants, many traditional houses have been destroyed to make way for compartment houses and dormitories. There are not many traditional houses that still retain a vegetable garden, a pond and a place for domestic animals.

The new rationale of land division and the formation of new blind alleys are incompatible with those inherited from the past and destroy the harmony of village road network design. Most streets that were paved with bricks are now covered with concrete.

The village of Triều Khúc nonetheless boasts a rich heritage of architecture and landscape, compared to that of other villages that have borne the full brunt of rapid urbanisation.

Village life continues at certain times of day, when one observes a multi-usage of public spaces, cultural activities giving way to economic activities. In particular, from 6h30 to 8h and from 17h to 18h30, the centre becomes an open-air market. All free spaces are systematically occupied and converted by the installation of mobile structures (tents, mobile kiosks, etc.); from 20h to 21h30 it resembles a small park where people practice sports and relaxation activities.

With the resurgence of religious activities, after several decades of its banishment, tangible heritage is regaining importance in village life, even in a context of strong pressure on land. Monuments are once again maintained and some are even enlarged to respond to the dynamism of religious activities. The continuity of village cultural activities is apparent in festivals and customs, which contribute in large part to establishing continuity in the use of the village's public monuments.

Locating on a current map of a village elements of heritage such as the religious monuments, the ancient trees, lakes and ponds, one notices that they are always concentrated around places of religious activity still frequently used by the village population (see Figure 4, Chapter 1). This enables us to arrive at an

important conclusion: continued religious observance is the main reason for the conservation of elements of village heritage.

Village heritage sites can be divided into three groups according to their function and their spatial transformation. Some are integrated into modern life, others are partially suited to it, while others have become unsuited.

– Heritage sites suited to a new context – they maintain their original functions while integrating new ones.

This group is made up of religious monuments and village places of worship (*Đình, Chùa, Đền, Miếu, and Nhà Thờ Họ*). This kind of heritage is protected thanks to values involving religion and identity still enduring to this day.

In these monuments, as well as worship, new activities linked to contemporary life may be observed: cultural activities, electoral campaigns, etc. These kinds of monuments are experiencing a new cultural dynamism and often undergo work to enlarge them.

– Heritage partially suited to the current situation: the traditional house.

The spatial structure of this kind of house is experiencing changes and only the main door and the body of the building are retained. They represent the family's traditions and identity. On the other hand, the other rooms intended for daily activities are converted to better suit the new way of life.

– Heritage with decreasing practical value and unsuited to the contemporary way of life.

With the decrease in farming activities, lakes, ponds, canals, public gardens, etc., are requisitioned by the city authorities or by local powers. The phenomenon can also be observed in the private sphere: the sale of private land is a more lucrative activity than farming.

In traditional houses, the densification of built-up space takes place to the detriment of undeveloped space in the following ways:

– gardens disappear rapidly;

– space for courtyards and ornamental ponds is limited;

– secondary buildings, toilets, the kitchen and the water tank are all demolished.

Activities associated with the kitchen and toilets have all been transferred to the house, now usually consisting of several storeys.

– The traditional house on one level is conserved, as it houses the altar to the ancestors and elderly family members prefer to live there. Family festivities are also celebrated there.

In urbanised villages, tradition and modernity live side by side despite the extreme densification of construction and the urbanisation of daily behaviour.

Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

On top of this *in situ* pressure linked to densification of the residential space, there is also the competition for land associated with large-scale land expropriations by major urban projects.

Conflicts over land and social problems

Access to land constitutes one of the major problems for investors to implement their residential and industrial projects. A whole series of reforms and decrees have attempted since the 2000s to ease the 'liberalisation' of land so that investors can build the Hanoian metropolis. Several prerogatives have been delegated to the provinces, particularly those concerning expropriations of farm labourers from farmland on which the capital's expansion projects will take place. As farmland belongs to the state, labourers enjoy rights to land use for a period of 20 years. This enables control of land management by the authorities and, above all, access to a price for land well below market value (see Chapter 9) to attract investors. The price of compensation is fixed by the provincial authorities on the basis of four years of crops on the farmland and not as a function of their future use.

In order to make these socially very controversial procedures more efficient, in 2004 were created at provincial level 'organisations of land funds development' that deal directly with private investors. Their task is to simplify the process for them, offering a single agency with which to deal, managing the funds coming from land retrieved by the state and preparing this land before it is handed over to investors (MELLAC *et al.*, 2010).

At the district level, particularly in those where urban projects are numerous, as in Hoài Đức (see below), committees for freeing up land take care of expropriating and compensating farm labourers. These negotiations can last for years and push the price of projects up sky-high owing to the inflation created by the lack of land suitable for building. In addition, the implication of members of communal people's committees in these negotiations only exacerbates the social malaise in the villages involved.

Since the 2003 land law, one can distinguish two forms of expropriation, depending on the vocation of projects (TRƯỜNG THIÊN THỤ & RANJITH PERERA, 2010):

- group 1 concerns projects of public interest (industrial or craft industry zones), schools and all kinds of public services. In this instance, land is compensated

for at rates imposed by the provinces and the negotiations take place between the land services and the villagers. The provinces then give the land to the constructors. However, it happens that the claims of villagers are so strong, slowing down the advance of projects, that the land authorities 'accept' higher compensations;

- group 2 land is destined for residential use. The developers have to deal directly with the villagers to be expropriated in order to reach an agreement with them. Sometimes the developers appeal to the communal authorities to convince the expropriated to accept lower prices. However, the latter seek to secure prices close to those of the open market for residential use (up to 2,000 USD/m²), compared with offered compensation of 31 USD!

In the face of mounting revolt and the dizzying rise in land prices on the open market at the outskirts of Hà Nội, following its enlargement, in October 2009, Decree 69 was enacted by the state to raise compensation rates for paddy fields to five times the former rates and protect the best agricultural land. However, according to Resolution 108 of the province of Hà Nội, there is no longer any question of allocating compensatory plots of land, which used to amount to 10% of expropriated land, as the province of Hà Nội is trying to ban self-building near new residential areas (FANCHETTE, 2011).

This land, known as 'service land' or '10% land', should enable villagers to build a workshop or a business on it to enable them to convert to non-agricultural activities. This fresh directive worries peri-urban villagers who consider that the

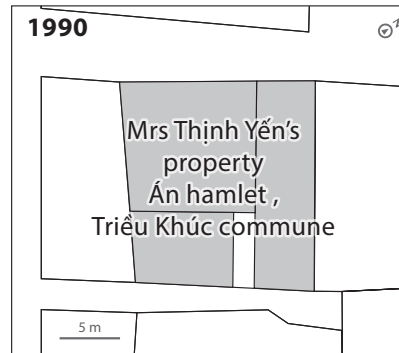
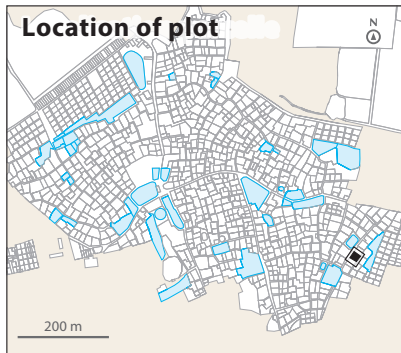
Box 2

The subdivision of the plot of Mrs Thinh Yên's family was studied in this village.

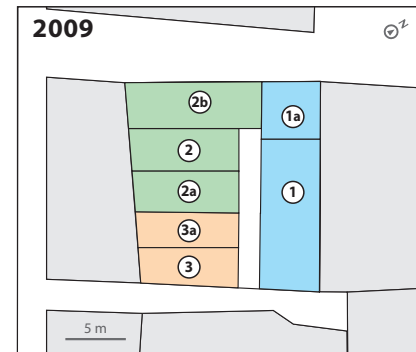
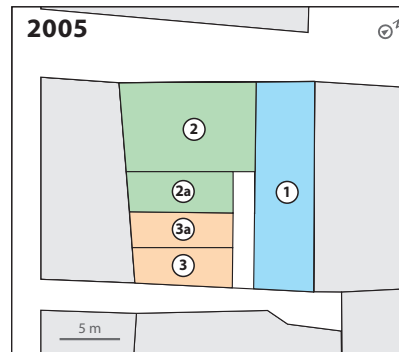
In 1990, within the framework of the policy of 'enlarging the residential area', this family with four sons received a piece of land of 300 m² in the housing transfer area on the edge of the hamlet of An. The three youngest sons settled there, while the eldest remained in the old house with his parents. The three sons then divided up their small plots to sell part of them to newcomers to the village: the youngest twice subdivided his plot in 2005 and 2009. In this way, in less than twenty years, the original piece of land received by the sons has been subdivided into seven small plots. These small plots are all built up to three or four storeys, and in this case, only one space free of buildings remains, converted into a blind alley (Plate 25).

In this same village, another example demonstrates the use of open spaces of the traditional farm labourer's house and their occupation. The house of Mr Triều Quang Đình, in the hamlet of Cầu, has been converted many times (Plate 25). In this family, undeveloped spaces such as the vegetable garden and the courtyard were reduced to make way for the expansion of secondary buildings. The main house is conserved. The kitchen, the shelter for domestic animals, the toilets and the bathroom were destroyed for the construction of a three-storey concrete building. This building gives directly onto the main path with an Internet café that has been set up on the ground floor.

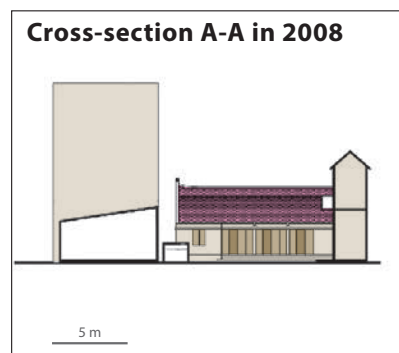
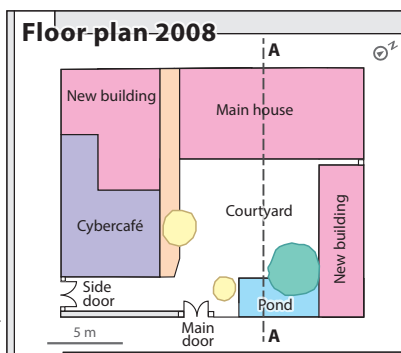
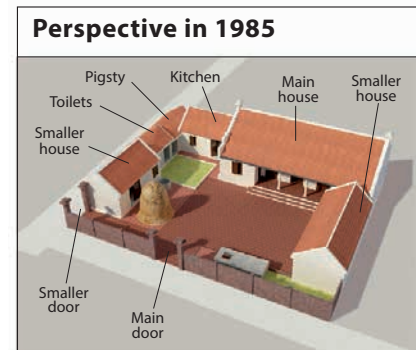
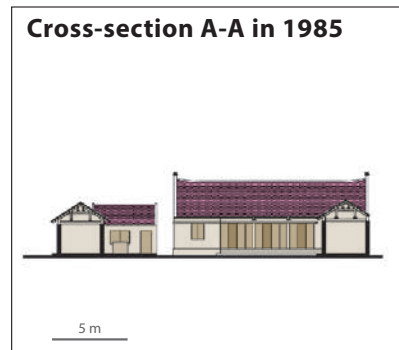
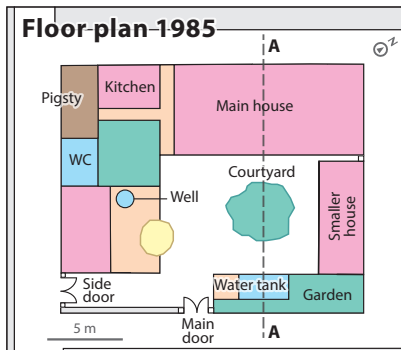
Village plot transformation between 2000 and 2009



- ◆ Location of property
- ① Second son's property
- ② Third son's property
- ③ Youngest son's property
- ①a Second son's property sold to outside person
- ②a Third son's property sold to outside person
- ②b Third son's property for sale
- ③a Youngest son's property sold to outside person



Village plot transformation between 1985 and 2008



© IRD, 2015

Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

monetary compensations are derisory, even at the new rate, compared with the price of residential land on the open market and do not enable them to convert to a new activity.

This only poisons relations between villagers, who refuse to let themselves be expropriated cheaply, developers, and the provincial authorities. Several residential projects in the areas near Hà Nội are now on hold as villagers want to be expropriated under the old system and receive compensatory land that they will have the option of selling at a high price.

The district of Hoài Đức, integrated into the province of Hà Nội in 2008, is part of the peri-urban area to be completely urbanised by 2030 according to the Master Plan signed in 2011. Two developments organised around traffic arteries and one linked to the proximity of the city centre to the east are being built. Even before 2008, several projects had been installed owing to the proximity of the capital and especially the construction of the Láng-Hoà Lạc Highway (152 m and 30 km), outcome of the future Hoà Lạc Science and Technology Park.

The new town of An Khánh North known as Splendora, covering an area of 264 ha and located 12 km from the centre of Hà Nội, should become an urban focus for development. A modern town with a skyline bristling with skyscrapers and luxury residences, it will host several service companies, for which there is no longer any room in the city centre, along with high-tech industries. It is at the centre of a motorway and railway network linked to Nội Bài Airport, to the north. An Khánh South houses several residential neighbourhoods, totalling 290 ha.

Ring road 4, situated just within the left bank dyke of the Đáy River, constitutes the other artery that defines this district from north to south (see Plate 26). Several residential projects of a total of several hundred hectares are situated along this artery. They were signed off by the province of Hà Tây and are being considered by the new municipality.

In 2010, in the district of Hoài Đức, over a total area of 8,246 hectares, there were 1,500 hectares being built upon or with projects pending: 989 ha for residential neighbourhoods, 167 ha for industrial projects, 158 hectares expropriated for roads and various projects for services and infrastructure.

Three communes have nearly half of their land urbanised: Văn Canh to the east owing to its position on the border with the former province of Hà Nội

was very quickly sought after by investors, An Khánh along the Láng - Hoà Lạc Motorway is being urbanised with two major projects of 630 hectares, and Di Trạch, situated along Highway 32, near the administrative centre of the district, houses the latter's expansion projects.

Consequently, the 4,317 hectares of farmland counted in 2009 are so much spare land for future projects of the capital, except for the area of land unprotected by the Đáy River's dyke, unsuitable for construction, which is the site of intensive organic market gardening. The scale of expected expropriations forebodes social tensions in this district, which has become a huge building site for developers in a context of difficult professional retraining for villagers.

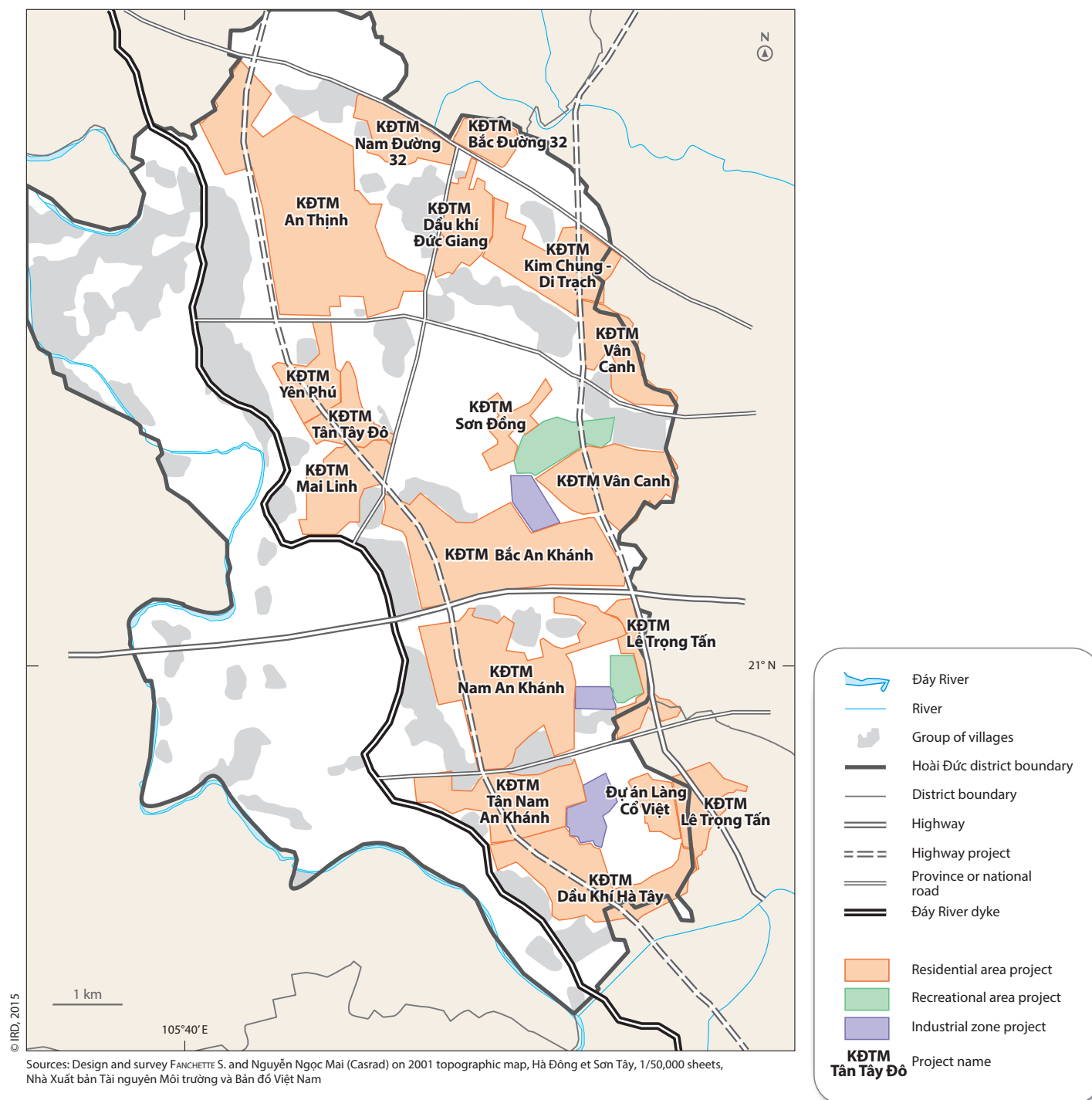
Undeniably, in the face of poorly compensated expropriations, development of projects for private ends and aimed at affluent social groups, along with land speculation that renders peri-urban land inaccessible to the majority, there are murmurings of revolt.

Acts of civil disobedience and conflicts over land (illegal construction on farmland, refusal to be expropriated, multiple petitions, demonstrations in the capital) are increasing, particularly in the light of rising numbers of unfinished projects where developers lack sufficient funds, and phantom and speculative projects that block the land. Unequal access to land provokes a blind rage in villages most affected by urban expansion, particularly among the more active ones that demand access to land for their businesses.

Several conflicts with the authorities stem from the difficulty in identifying those who hold the rights to land use, a key step in establishing compensation, given the numerous illicit transactions that took place in the 1990s. The most determined of these villagers refuse compensation for land that they consider unacceptable, given the open market price paid for land suitable for construction. Police raids, to expel recalcitrant villagers who continue to farm their land or those who refuse to destroy their workshops built illegally on farmland, create a very tense atmosphere in some villages.

An additional problem is that of the innumerable deductions carried out by the administration from the total compensation awarded to farmers. They are doubly swindled, by selling land for the price of farmland that is slated to change status, and not receiving all of the sum paid for their compensation by the companies or individuals who purchase their rights to land use (MELLAC *et al.*, 2010).

Current or future urban projects in the district of Hoài Đức in 2011



Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

The densification of urban villages and the retraining of expropriated villagers turned into landlords

With the metropolisation of Hà Nội and the development of construction and commercial activities, the rural exodus has accelerated in favour of the capital. Although the enlarged province has registered a net inwards migration of 292,426 people (between 2004 and 2009), it is above all the peri-urban areas and centres of industrial workforce that are the most affected (see below, Chapter 8).

This acceleration of migrations is happening in a context of progressive relaxation of population movement control within the country.

In the zone surrounding the city, there are two main kinds of migrants:

- permanent migrants, those who have acquired housing and aim to live long-term in the vicinity of where they have settled. Some come from the city centre

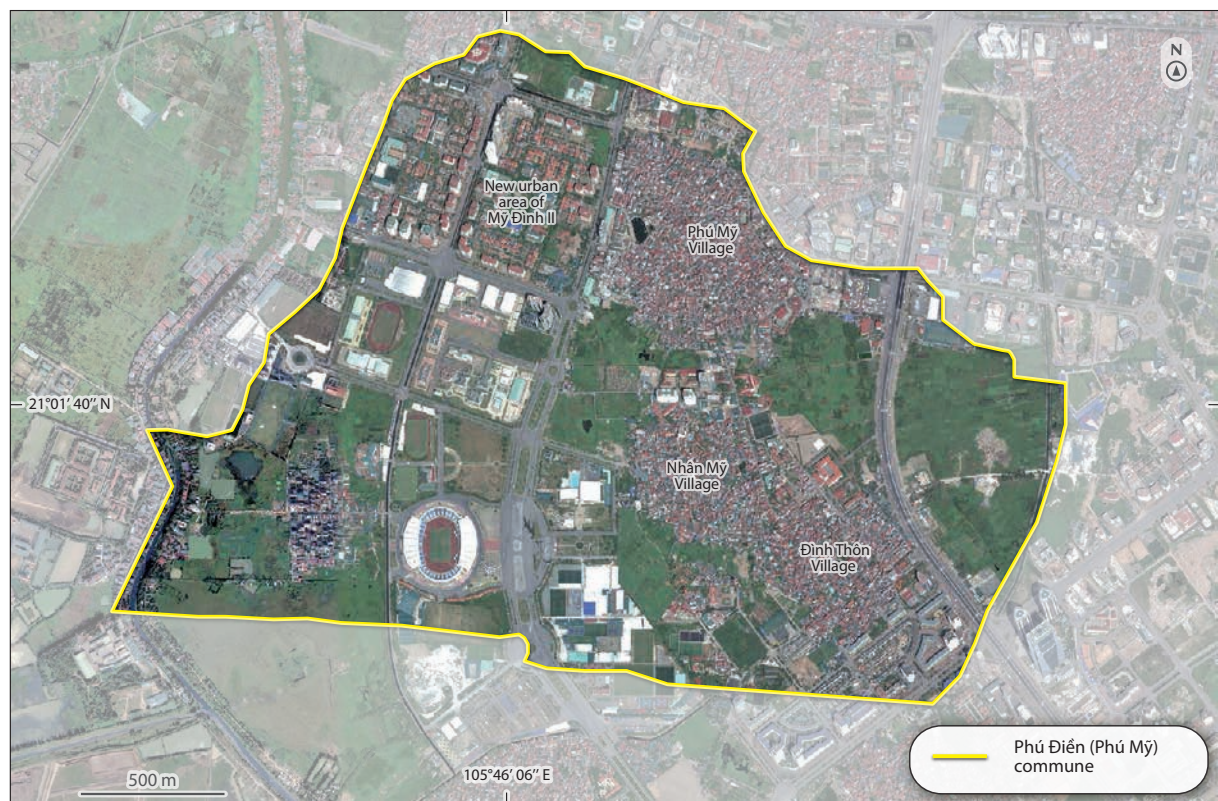
of Hà Nội where prohibitive prices for land have become inaccessible, or the provinces. They have a stable job, have bought a flat, a plot of land on the edge of the village (sold by the commune) or in the village (sold by inhabitants native to the village);

- seasonal migrants: those who rent housing for a relatively short-term period are above all students and workers from the countryside coming for seasonal work. They share the house with the owners or live in bedrooms that they rent, built outside the owners' main house.

These migrants settle in various kinds of places: in the new urban areas built on farmland, on the edge of the village, where plots of land are divided into individual lots by the communal government, or in the old residential area.

The new urban areas and the plots of land divided into lots by the communal government mostly house permanent migrants. Most seasonal workers settle in

Figure14 – CHANGE IN USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND IN THE COMMUNE OF PHÚ ĐIỂN



Source: Image © 2012 Digital Globe

the old residential zone. The increase in demand for temporary housing from seasonal migrants, especially students and workers, encourages house owners to build dwellings of very variable quality in their courtyards, in place of their former traditional house, their garden or their pond, and in some cases to rent out bedrooms in their own houses.

Construction possibilities within the residential space vary from one village to another, and capacities for investment by expropriated villagers depend on the size of land compensation that they have obtained and on demand for rooms and housing for rent.

Phú Điền³ is one of the villages that have recently been integrated into the urban fabric and has lost nearly all of its agricultural land.

Having been established since at least the 17th century, Phú Điền used to be an agricultural community that, in comparison with other Red River Delta villages, had a large area of agricultural land per farmer. The 1805 village land book shows that Phú Điền had a total of 353 hectares (i.e. 984 *mẫu*, 3 *sào*, 11 *thước* and 4 *tấc*) of agricultural land.

At the time of the 1950s land reform, on average, each farmer had 768 m² (4 *sào* and 2 *thước*) of agricultural land. About 30 years later, in the 1988 agricultural land distribution, each farmer in the village received 1,800 m² (4 *sào* of allocated agricultural land and 1 *sào* of 5% land) of agricultural land, higher than the average in the 1950s. By 2000, the village had 147.7 hectares of agricultural land, 1,088 agricultural households, each holding 1,350 m² on average.

In the context of rapid urbanization in metropolitan Hà Nội since the 1990s, Phú Điền turned out to be located in the middle of one of the city's new urban development areas, which has finally resulted in a process of agricultural land seizure since 2000.

The seizures of agricultural land use rights in Phú Điền have been conducted under the forms of *compulsory* seizure of land for the state and collective purposes and *voluntary* land seizure for economic development and other purposes.

By 2011, over three-quarters of village agricultural land has been expropriated for more than 100 projects to build offices, apartments, villas, schools, roads, trading areas, a bus station and a car park, etc. (Figure 14). The remaining area of agricultural land in the village, which is less than 40 hectares, located in

two of its four hamlets, are to be seized. This indicates that all agricultural land in Phú Điền has been converted to non-agricultural use over time.

In return for the loss of agricultural land, Phú Điền farmers have received a large amount of compensation money, the level of which was decided by the state authorities for economic values of agricultural land use rights that were allocated in the 1988 agricultural land redistribution. The level of economic compensation for agricultural land use rights in the village and in Vietnam at large has increased through the years and varies between administrative locations and even specific projects. While in 2000 the average level of compensation for one *sào* of agricultural land was 30 million VNĐ, it had doubled in 2007. By late 2009, the compensation level reached 400 million VNĐ for one *sào* of agricultural land in addition to one plot of *đất dịch vụ* (service land) if the agricultural land seized accounted for more than 30% of the total area of a household's agricultural land⁴.

For a number of households, compensation money is even higher, as they cultivated perennial trees prior to the seizure in order to *ăn diên bì* (eat the compensation). This originates from the fact that the state's compensation policy pays differently for the different kinds of trees and plants on the seized land.

Therefore, when the farmers probe the state's plans of land seizure, some start to plant perennial trees like willow and guava trees, etc., which are easy to plant and quick to grow, to enjoy a larger amount of compensation money.

For example, one farmer compares that the compensation for vegetables and other annual crops like rice, *rau muống*, etc., on the land was 12,000 VNĐ per square metre in 2004 (in 2007 compensation for these crops in Phú Điền was 35,000 VNĐ per square metre), while the compensation for annual crops such as willow and guava trees in the same year was 30,000 VNĐ per square metre. All of this shows that over a period of over 10 years, Phú Điền farmers have received a large amount of financial capital for giving up their agricultural land use rights.

However, in Phú Điền, many farmers still thought that such levels of economic compensation were not fair enough, as put together they are lower than the 'real prices' that they expect. The farmers often complain about such levels of compensation, especially when in several projects they witness that their agricultural land, after having been seized and converted into non-agricultural land, having been sold for apartments, houses, villa buildings, etc., commands a price many times higher.

Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

The rapid process of urbanization, especially agricultural land seizure as such has forced Phú Điền farmers almost to end their traditionally agricultural production. In the 1990s, for most of Phú Điền farmers, agricultural farming and animal husbandry offered them more than half of their annual income. This had often been supplemented by incomes from sideline work such as retailing, construction work and services for the municipality of Hà Nội or elsewhere.

After various land conversions, most farm labourers in Phú Điền are no longer working the land, as the existing irrigation systems supporting agricultural production have been destroyed by a variety of constructions on the seized land. This makes farming work in the remaining plots impossible. In some plots where water is available, a few farmers cultivate *rau muống*, a type of vegetable that can be easily grown and sold in the local market to earn 30,000 to 40,000 VNĐ a day, just enough for their daily subsistence.

In the second half of 2007, around 40 households in Phú Điền had middle-age female members engaged in this work. In other plots, they grow perennial trees to attain higher compensation when the land is seized. Some plots are simply left idle awaiting seizure.

The disruption of agricultural production in Phú Điền resulted in a pressing need to find new sources of livelihood. Research data show that while many farmers have not been able to find work in non-agricultural sectors, only a small number of households have successfully arranged some kinds of stable non-agricultural jobs for the family's adult members.

This derives from, on the one hand, villagers' poor social and human capital, which in turn constrains their access to skilled and highly paid work, and on the other, limited suitable work available for them. In such a context, many of them have turned to focus on their residential area as their main source of making a livelihood, because they find opportunities to offer boarding for immigrants.

The conversions of farmland for urban development, especially for building residential areas, roads, stadiums, etc., have shortened the distance between Phú Điền and central urban Hà Nội. Various new roads have been built and old roads have been upgraded, connecting Phú Điền and the surrounding areas.

This facilitates the flow of people coming to the village to rent accommodation. Taking this opportunity, the villagers started to invest their money into the building of houses, which in the first place often included a good house for their living space and simple houses with as many rooms as possible for leasing.

The construction of new houses and upgrading of old ones in the village have not only physically turned the village into a 'construction site' but also socially changed the village image from an ordinary community into a wealthy one.

The building of new houses in many cases consumed all and even more than the compensation money. Therefore, they sold part of their residential land. While the rapid urbanization took away the farmers' agricultural land, it also greatly increased the value of their residential land use rights.

Before 2000, Phú Điền people enjoyed lots of space. One family usually had a house and garden, with fences and many trees.

However, the village has become crowded as a result of the addition of students and various groups of migrant labourers. Many households' residential land has been divided into two or several pieces to partly sell to different people; many of them come from the outside, including those from the urban area.

Box 3

One Phú Điền farmer angrily said:

'The compensation price for agricultural land is not reasonable. The unreasonableness here is that this is a peri-urban area, close to the urban district, but the compensation price for our agricultural land is much lower than that of the neighbouring urban district. In the same project, same area of agricultural land, but the compensation price for us is just half of the amount for compensation money for agricultural land of those households who administratively belong to the urban district. For one *sào*, in 2007, we receive only 62 million VNĐ, while in the neighbouring communes the price varies from 140 to 180 million VNĐ.

More importantly, we are afraid that they are seizing the land to build apartments to sell. While they paid us around 60 million VNĐ for one *sào*, the land area has then been filled to sell with a price of 40-60 million VNĐ per one square metre for house and villa building. The villagers said the state *trấn lột* (confiscates) their property. Actually they [the entrepreneurs who use the appropriated land] are private, not the state; it is not the state doing this. The private sector does it in the name of the state. The compensation for changing jobs is also too low. Currently, one area of 300 square metres of agricultural land can be enough for one labourer to farm *rau muống* to earn two million VNĐ a month.

However, when the state seizes the land, they assist us with only 25,000 VNĐ for one square metre for changing jobs. This means that a total of 300 square metres of agricultural land provides assistance money of only 7.5 million VNĐ. However, with such a small amount of money, how can we farmers change our work and business?'

(Interviewed: Mr. Q., 60 years old, 11th September 2007)



© François Carlet-Soulages / Nôl Pictures

Photo 9

Expropriated land lying fallow used as pastures in the shadow of large-scale urban projects

Many Phú Điền villagers indicate a rapid increase in residential land prices since the late 1990s.

In the early 1990s, there were few transactions of residential land and the common price of residential land at the time was less than 3 million VNĐ per square metre in the best locations, i.e., near entrance roads and commercial areas.

However, since the late 1990s, the price of residential land has soared. The expensive plots of residential land in the village cost 60 million in 2007 or over 100 million VNĐ in 2011 per square metre. This has made Phú Điền one of the hottest locations of land trading in Vietnam. Results of 2007 fieldwork showed that about 80 percent of Phú Điền villagers had sold part of their residential land to outside people.

Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

It should be noted that building simple houses for lease has appeared since the early 1990s in other communities closer to urban Hà Nội. Nevertheless, the nearer accommodation is to the urban centre, the more it costs. Therefore, many students and poor migrant labourers choose peri-urban communities like Phú Diễn village for temporary residence.

In 2007, most of the houses for rent in Phú Diễn are designed as one-story longhouses (*dãy nhà cấp bốn*), with numerous small, simple rooms and modest furniture. Only a small number of households built two-storey houses with many rooms of higher quality for leasing.

The simplicity of accommodation originates from the simple demands of lodgers. It also stems from the fact that Phú Diễn villagers at first did not see this as a long-term strategy for livelihoods; therefore many were hesitant to invest more financial and natural assets in this type of business for the long term.

However, a few years later, by 2011, they had made quite a good living with this and then invested more financial capital in building multi-storey buildings for rent as accommodation or even some started to build hotels and office buildings for lease.

Many of the lodgers are students and migrant labourers, who look for cheap accommodation in the village. In general, a group of between two and four persons rent one small room. To rent a room, besides a financial arrangement with the host, lodgers need to register their 'temporary residence'⁵ with the village security officials and pay a small fee.

The accommodation rental fee, by the second half of 2007, often ranges from 300,000 to 400,000 VNĐ per small room per month exclusive of water and electricity charges. For a small number of higher-standard rooms, rental fee varies from 500,000 to 600,000 VNĐ per room per month.

Since early 2008, inflation has reached a two-figure rate forcing the accommodation rental fees in the village to increase slightly. In 2011, the rental fee in the village varied from 800,000 to 2,000,000 VNĐ per room per month.

Accommodation rent can be considered a source of income equivalent to former rice farming income, as it is the most essential and 'stable' source of income for many Phú Diễn villagers, many of whom no longer have any farming work. In 2011, the communal authorities' statistics showed that Phú Diễn had a total of

530 households renting accommodation; 35 households ran guesthouses. The total amount of lodgers in the village at the same time accounted for 11,000 people. The kinds of lodging are very diverse...

Overall, in 2007, many households had more or less five rooms for rent to attain a monthly income of over 1.5 million VNĐ. A few tens of households, who have a large area of residential land, have had between 20 and 50 rooms for rent, therefore these households' incomes from room lease alone adds up to 30 million VNĐ per month.

At the same time, however, it is estimated that around 20 percent of households at that time had no rooms for rent. This shows not only how natural capital in the form of residential land use rights has become an important source of livelihoods but has also significantly contributed to social differentiation in the village.

In addition, many villagers have got involved in informal retailing and selling basic foodstuffs, household goods and other services for those who reside in the community.

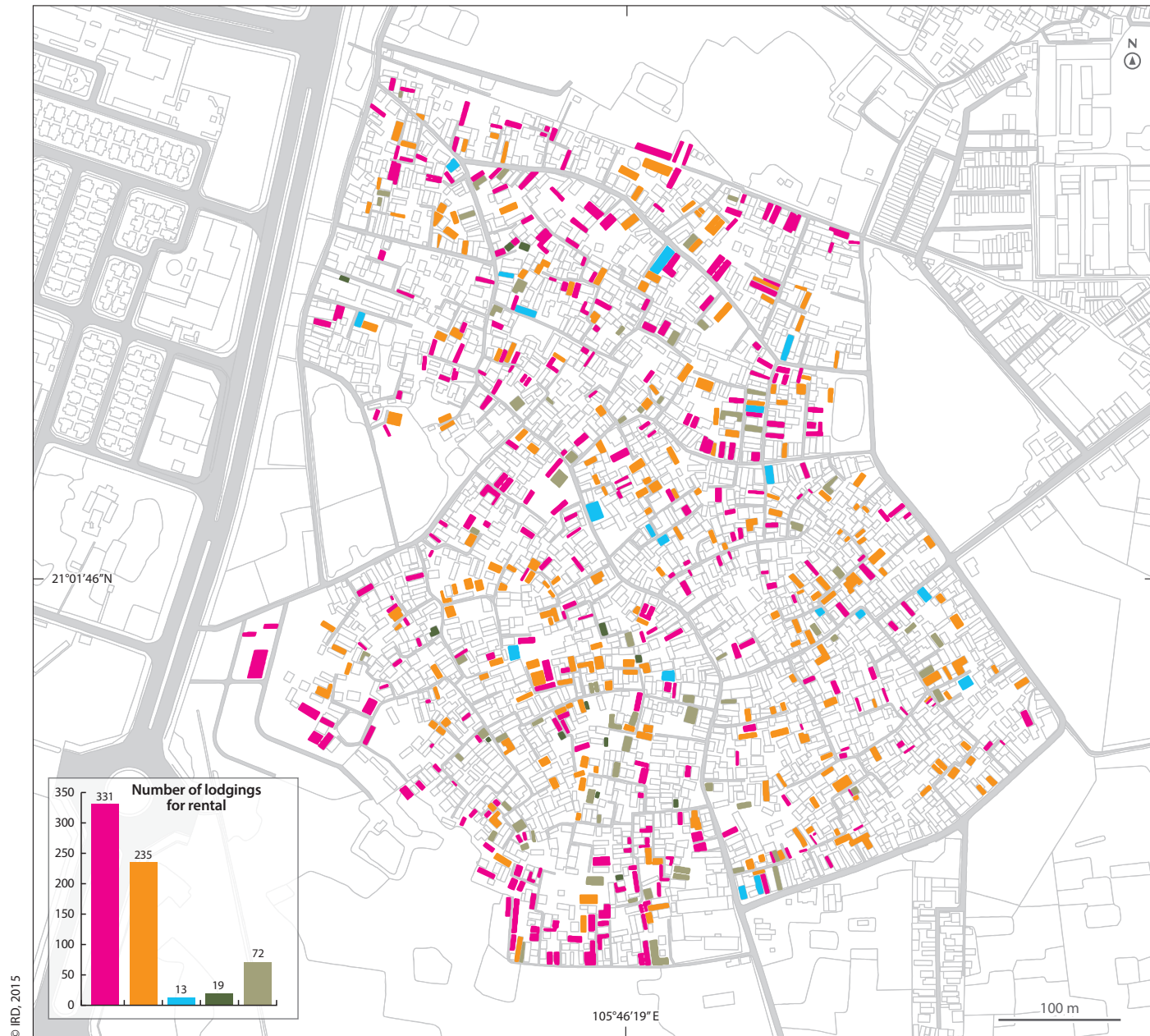
The retailing occurs in two main locations. One is in the village's new market of 500 kiosks that was built in 2003 to create a local trading site for land-lost Phú Diễn farmers. The second, which is a more significant location for retailing, is along the village main roads. This kind of retailing and services includes numerous small shops, bars, etc., encroaching onto village public space.

In short, the rapid process of urbanization in Hà Nội since the 1990s has led to conversions of a large area of agricultural land into land for non-agricultural purposes.

In this context of transition, for many farmers in Phú Diễn, the seizures of almost all of their agricultural land use rights for urban development have brought them a large amount of compensation money, in quantities which they might never have dreamed of before, in addition to a rapid increase in the values of residential land in the area, making Phú Diễn villagers among those who hold the most important amount of financial and natural assets.

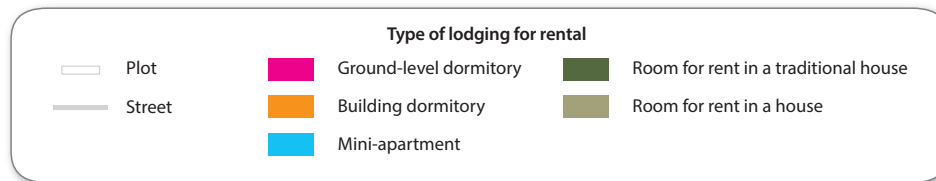
At the same time, the seizure of agricultural land has disrupted their traditional livelihoods, especially agriculture and animal husbandry, while offering them few opportunities to access salaried work in the formal sector.

Figure 15 – THE VARIOUS KINDS OF LODGINGS FOR RENTAL IN PHÚ ĐIỂN IN 2013



© IRD, 2015

Sources: ĐỒ THỊ THÁI HÀ and FANCHETTE S. surveys, ĐỒ THỊ THÁI HÀ drawing (June 2013)



Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

In coping with such a situation, many Phú Điền farmers have turned to focus on their residential area as a key location for making alternative livelihoods. They started to build houses for lease to migrants and got involved in retailing and other activities. All of these factors have dramatically changed modes of life for Phú Điền farmers specifically and for the Phú Điền community as a whole, becoming an urban village (*làng đô thị*) in the peri-urban fringes of Hà Nội.

The two peri-urban villages of Triều Khúc and Nhân Chính have also become dormitory villages. They are also in the first urbanised ring of the city since *Đổi mới*. Situated about 10 kilometres from the city centre, they have become the site of new residential projects on their farmland and migrants have settled in their already overpopulated residential area.

In Nhân Chính, in June 2005, out of 26,146 inhabitants, there were 4,687 who were living there temporarily (holders of residence permits KT3 or KT4) without counting those who were living there without being officially registered⁶. In the village of Triều Khúc, in 2009, there were 472 homeowners and 5,970 tenants. So in this village, on average, each household that leases accommodation has more than 12 bedrooms for rent.

Leasing out houses is becoming a new trade and simultaneously services for immigrants are being developed.

By observing the layout of houses for rent in the village of Triều Khúc (Plate 27), we can see that they are mostly in the small alleys of the hamlets. In the centre or along the main roads, there are few dwellings offering accommodation. These spaces are above all reserved for commercial activities such as hairdressing and beauty salons, Internet cafés, shops, and other local services.

Xóm trọ appeared in about 1995. This is a recent kind of construction made up of a series of bedrooms for rent, separate from the householder's dwelling. This kind of building is put up rapidly with little capital for rental to workers and to provincial students.

Each room is built on one level and is of limited size (about 9 m²), with roofing made of fibre cement, big enough for a maximum of two people. The huts are built side-by-side in a straight line and usually consist of a group of five or six units. These huts have a single, shared amenities room with: kitchen, toilet and bathroom (Plate 27). The shape of the hut matches the lie of the land and seeks to

maximise occupation of space. *Nhà trọ* are rooms for let right in the heart of the landlord's property.

Conclusion

Economic liberalisation, the establishment of the policy known as 'the state and the people building together' and the promotion of private housing have accelerated the process of *in situ* urbanisation in the villages surrounding Hà Nội.

Widespread construction of housing, sometimes illegally on 5% farmland, the densification of plots within villages with the building of tube houses in replacement for traditional one-storey houses, the construction of accommodation for migrants and students and the development of the private service industry or commercial micro-businesses have completely transformed the village landscape just outside the city gates.

Rates of residential density as high as 150 inhabitants/ha are reaching the same levels as those of the central neighbourhoods of the capital.

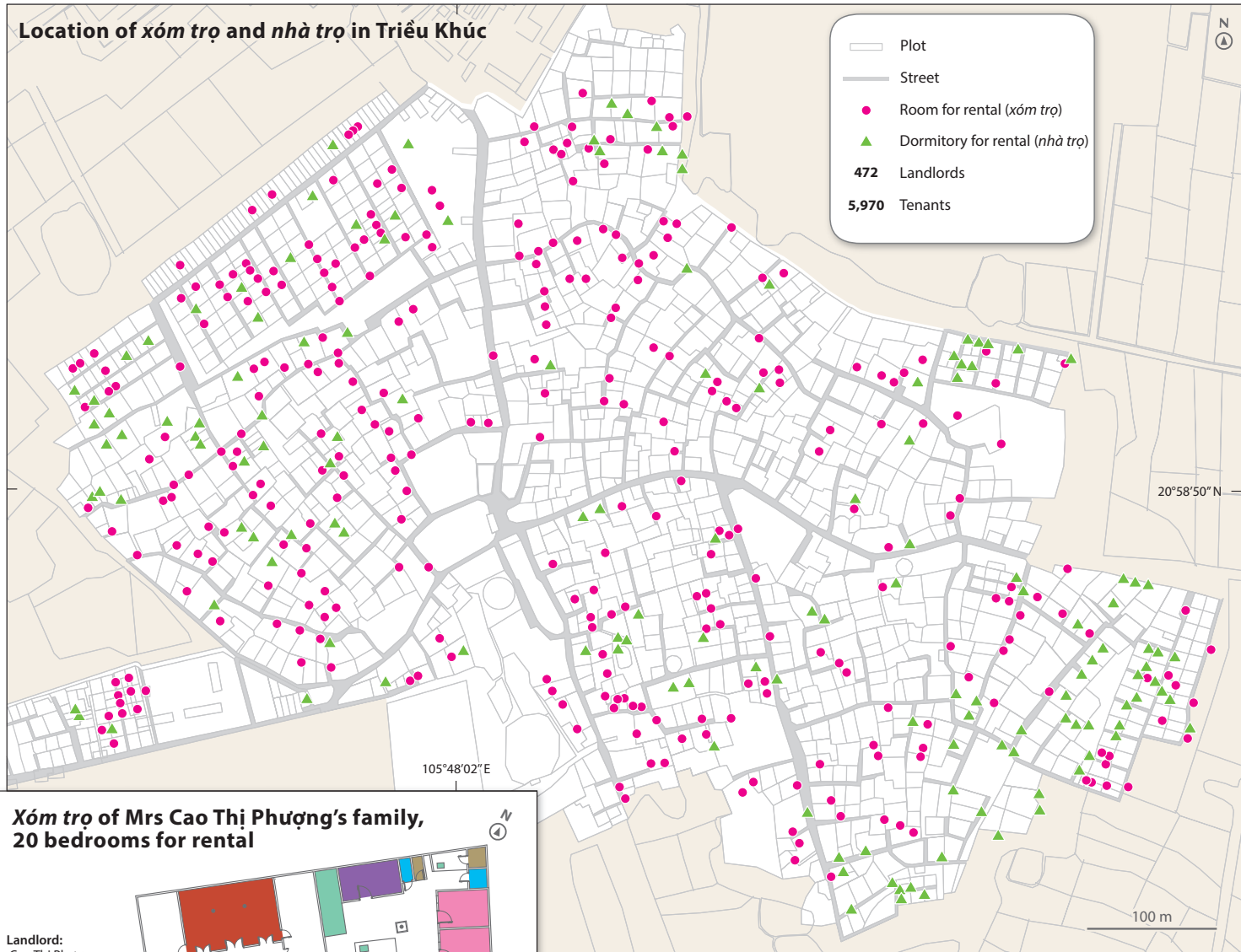
The farmland that had for so long been protected for food self-sufficiency through rice cultivation began to be encroached upon by the construction of housing and workshops, a process accompanied by policies for 'residential expansion'.

In addition, villages have been redeveloped to give more room to non-agricultural productive activities (mini craft industry zones, etc.). Legal or not, since the 1990s, new constructions and activities are sprouting up everywhere and giving rural, 'invisible' urbanisation an appearance that is multifaceted and difficult to grasp.

This urbanisation bears witness to the strategies of Red River Delta populations to anchor themselves in their villages, which are experiencing profound changes, and not to leave for the city.

However, this multifaceted and anarchic urbanisation, undertaken locally and cheaply by inhabitants, depending on their perception of space, encounters considerable resistance from the state on the outskirts of the capital, for it is land-hungry and contradicts the large-scale urban projects planned by investors who wish to make of Hà Nội a metropolis of international standing.

Location of *xóm trọ* and *nhà trọ* in Triều Khúc



Xóm trọ of Mrs Cao Thị Phượng's family, 20 bedrooms for rental

Landlord:
Cao Thị Phượng
Age:
50 years
Address:
hamlet Cầu
Number of rooms for rental:
20 rooms
Number of tenants:
around 40 people



Sources: Surveys and drawing of TRẦN NHẬT KIẾN

- Room for rental
- Bathroom
- Waterpool
- Kitchen
- Toilets
- Storage
- Landlord's single storey house
- Landlord's new two-storey house
- Landlord's former house



Peri-urban villages: unequal access to land for construction

Maintaining the population within villages integrated into the city cannot be achieved without sharing capital gains from land between villagers and urban developers so that they develop economic activities on the spot. With the liberalisation of land and its spiralling prices, plots suitable for construction have become inaccessible to most villagers, even the most dynamic businessmen.

1) Translated by TRẦN NHẬT KIẾN (2010): 484-485.

2) 1 million VND = 40 Euros.

3) The name of the village has been changed.

4) In the context of various tensions and difficulties with regard to the expropriation of agricultural land nationwide, *đất dịch vụ* was seen as an invention by Vinh Phúc Province's People's Committee in 2004 to ease agricultural land appropriation in this province. This was then advocated as a good solution, which has been applied in a number of provinces. In Hà Nội, *đất dịch vụ* was applied in 2008. In accordance with this, each plot of *đất dịch vụ* in Phú Diễn is equal to 60 m² or 686 million *đồng*. However, by September 2010, Hà Nội authorities rejected *đất dịch vụ* as not being effective or applicable in this province.

5) This is *cư trú tạm thời*, applying for those who do not have *bộ khẩu* in the area of current residence.

6) Source: *Make-up of the population in the neighbourhood of Nhân Chính*, June 2005 – detailed planning project for the neighbourhood of Nhân Chính.

Petit atlas urbain

Edited by Sylvie Fanchette

Hà Nội, a Metropolis in the Making

The Breakdown in Urban
Integration of Villages



Collection « Petit atlas urbain »

Edited by Sylvie Fanchette

Hà Nội, a Metropolis in the Making

The Breakdown in Urban Integration of Villages

Foreword by Rodolphe De Koninck

Atlas edited by the Cartography Department

Direction de l'information et de la culture scientifiques pour le Sud (DIC, IRD), IRD France-Nord (Bondy)

Maps (Plates) drawing: Éric Opigez

Mapping coordination: Éric Opigez

Layout: Marie-Odile Schnepf

Financial support of Ceped for English translation

Financial support of the Institut des métiers de la ville (IMV) for writing chapter 2 and buying photos

English Translation: Nicholas Stedman

Scientific and editorial coordination: Sylvie Fanchette

Photographies : Nôi Pictures Agency, Hà Nôi

Cover design: Éric Opigez

Cover photography

A Vietnamese woman holds branch of peach tree in blossom in a street of Hà Nôi

© Francis Roux, Nôi Pictures

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, xerography, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

ISBN : 978-2-7099-2197-8



© IRD, 2016