TITLE

MIGRATION OF YOUTH TO HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Determinants of Mobility and Adjustment Experiences

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
January 2008
ABSTRACT

As a result of the economic reforms that were introduced in Vietnam in 1986, the country has grown economically. However, due to a bias toward development policies which have been mainly concentrated in urban areas, the economic gap between rural and urban areas has rapidly widened over time. More job opportunities and better living conditions in the city, as well as low productivity in agriculture, have caused people to move to the major cities. Consequently, rural to urban migration has become one of the dominant flows of internal migration in the country in recent years. This migration stream not only has increased in scale but also in its complexity. Particularly, the age of the migrants has become younger as many young people, especially females, become involved in this flow. Moreover, this migration flow has become less selective in terms of education as both more and less educated people migrate. Also, not only the rich but the poor take part in this movement. This thesis considers the determinants of moving and the experiences of young migrants to Ho Chi Minh City in terms of their economic, social and cultural adjustment in order to provide deep insights into the lives of young people when they migrate.

This thesis has used the migration model of Scharping (1997) as the theoretical framework to investigate the decision to move as well as their living experiences in the city. A multiple method approach has been used to the study as both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed. Quantitative data such as secondary data from censuses and data from large-scale surveys at the national and the city levels and primary data from the author’s survey with 300 young migrants were applied. Qualitative data from 25 in-depth interviews with young migrants, 5 with authorities and 5 with migrant returnees were used in this study, to provide detailed information on migrants’ lives.
While the city has attracted a large number of youth from rural areas because of its development advantages, the city’s government has applied policies to limit this flow. Yet, this migration control policy has proved costly and ineffective in restricting the flows of people to the major cities. This policy has created many difficulties for migrants in the city. In addition, low levels of education and limited work skills force many young migrants to work in the informal sector where their human rights are heavily violated. Other young migrants work in cheap intensive-labour factories. Low pay and hard work, but without labour and medical insurance, lead these young migrants to live on the margins of urban society. These findings suggest that if the local people do not accept these migrants, and urban policies make no effort to assistance them, it is impossible for young migrants in the city to be successful in building new lives and careers. Instead of trying to limit rural to urban migration, the national government should put more effort into narrowing the rural-urban gap by improving development in rural areas. More jobs with better pay in rural areas may be the most effective and sustainable way of reducing rural to urban migration flows.
DECLARATION

The candidate confirms that the work submitted here is her own and contains no material which has been accepted for any other degree in any university and that appropriate credit has been provided where reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to my thesis to be made available in all forms of media when it is stored in the University Library.

Hong Xoan Nguyen Thi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Project 322, MOET, Vietnam for sponsoring my study at the University of Adelaide. Thanks should go to the School of Social Sciences and HCMC National University who helped me obtain permission for data collection. I would like to thank Kim Xuyen Tran and the staff at the Department of Sociology for organising the survey. Special thanks go to all young migrants and officials who answered my questions in the field.

Many thanks to Professor Graeme Hugo for his valued and appreciated supervision. Also I am grateful to Dianne Rudd, my second supervisor. Their academic and personal support was instrumental in completing my Ph.D. I would like to thank the staff and students of the Discipline of Geographical and Environmental Studies for their friendship and support. I appreciate Christine Crothers for her cartographic services. I would like to thank Phillip Thomas for his proofreading and editing my thesis.

I am indebted to all my friends in HCMC and Adelaide for their personal support during a difficult period. Special thanks to Julia Hinsliff for her help from the first day of my arrival in Adelaide to the end of my candidature.

Finally, many thanks must go to my family. First of all, I would like to thank my parents who encouraged and supported me during the course of this thesis. Also, special thanks to my partner, without his support I would not have been able to finish my Ph.D. He was always beside me and tolerant toward me during difficult times. Also my son has been a motivation making me overcome some of the trauma and difficulties enabling me to complete the Ph.D.
## GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASFR</td>
<td>Age-Specific Fertility Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBR</td>
<td>Crude Birth Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDR</td>
<td>Crude Death Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNSA</td>
<td>Canada’s National Statistical Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>Department of Investment Services, Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNRE</td>
<td>Department of Natural Resource and Environment, Ho Chi Minh City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECERFSD</td>
<td>Enhancing Capacity to Engender Research for Sustainable Development, Vietnam 2003-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIU</td>
<td>Economic Intelligence Unit, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFILWC</td>
<td>European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWCP</td>
<td>East-West Centre on Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSO</td>
<td>General Statistical Office, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency virus/ immunodeficiency syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCMC</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICPD</td>
<td>International Conference on Population and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IER</td>
<td>Institute for Economic Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>International Organisation for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISPST</td>
<td>Institute of Sociology and Population Studies and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIA</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior Affairs, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOET</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Training, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPW</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Works, Sai Gon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACSA</td>
<td>National Assembly’s Committee for Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEZs</td>
<td>New Economic Zones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NSI          National Statistic Institute, Sai Gon
PC-HCMC      People' Committee of Ho Chi Minh City
PPP          Purchasing Power Parity
SAVY         Survey and Assessment of Vietnamese Youth
SCUK         UK Save the Children
SMAM         Singulate mean age at first marriage
SO           Statistical Office, Ho Chi Minh city
STDs         Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TFR          Total Fertility Rate
UN           United Nations
UNAIDS       Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAV         United Nations Agencies in Vietnam
UNDP         United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP      United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO       United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA        United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF       United Nations Children's Fund
VA           Voice of America
VDIC         Vietnam Development Information Centre
VP           Vietnamese Parliament
VWU          Vietnam Women Union
WB           World Bank
WHO          World Health Organisation
Hukou        Household Registration System in Chinese

In Vietnamese
Chi Cuc Di Dan  Department of Migration, Ho Chi Minh City
Doi Moi        The economic reforms
KT1           Permanent registration- non-migrant with household registration residing in the same district of registration
| KT2 | Permanent registration- non-migrant with household registration but residing in a different district of registration |
| KT3 | Temporary registration- migrant residing independently or with relatives without registration book, working in formal factories or organisations, 6-12 months with extension. |
| KT4 | Floating migrant, residing in a guest house or temporary dwelling, without registration book, 1-3 months or no registration, usually working in the informal sector. |

**Ho Khau**  Household Registration System  
**Ho Tich**  Birth Registration  
**VND**  Vietnam Dong (Vietnam Currency, 1USD = 16,000VND in 2007)
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Vietnam has experienced rapid economic change and reform since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, but there have been large differences between regions, especially between rural and urban areas. More employment opportunities and expanding social networks in the major cities have stimulated rural-urban movement (Dang et al., 2000). Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is the largest and most developed city in Vietnam, and has been a major focus of rural-urban migration. Migration to large cities has increased not only in scale but also in the complexity of migrant groups’ socio-economic and cultural background (Bach et al., 1997; Guest, 1998a). The age of migrants has become younger and the number of females has out-numbered males since the beginning of economic reform. The rate of youth migration has risen markedly in recent years.

Under-employment in rural areas is forcing young people to move to the cities for jobs and this migration stream has put pressure on cities. According to UNDP (2003) and Hugo (2005a) the increasing establishment of new industrial zones in large cities provides more employment opportunities for young migrants. However, most work in unstable jobs with low pay and there are reports of them being exploited in the city (Dang, 2005a).

While the migration of youth in Vietnam has become a major stream of rural-urban movement, little attention has been given to this group by policy makers and researchers. Therefore, this thesis focuses on youth migration and pays special attention to the determinants of their migration and the experiences of young rural-urban migrants.
in HCMC, Vietnam. Since policies to limit the growth of the largest cities and restrict the flows of people to those cities have proved costly and ineffective (Doan and Trinh, 1998), understanding the experiences of young migrants in the city, as well as the challenges they face is necessary to combat or prevent the harmful effects of this movement and to maximise its benefits.

In this study the youth population is defined as consisting of young people aged between 15-24 years old (World Health Organization in Phuong, 2003). The term young migrant will include males and females between the ages of 15 and 24 years who move from rural to urban areas. This period of age is an important stage of transition physically and socially from childhood to adulthood.

It is hoped that, by using a multi-method approach and both macro and micro sources of data the study will provide a comprehensive understanding regarding this movement as well as the factors influencing the practices of young migrants in the city. As a developing country, Vietnam has its own peculiarities but it also shares similar features with other less developed nations. Therefore, this research will contribute some theoretical and practical knowledge in this field and the findings will be a useful reference for policy-makers in the countries experiencing similar situations.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

Using a combination of macro and micro analyses this research attempts to shed some light on the determinants of migration and the experiences of young migrants in urban labour and housing markets, as well as in adjusting to life. To achieve this purpose, the study will have four specific objectives.
1.) To provide a detailed analysis of the patterns and characteristics of youth migration in Vietnam generally and to HCMC in particular.

2.) To understand the determinants of youth migration. At the macro level the study will try to understand the rural-urban disparities that influence migration flows. The micro level will focus on explaining why some young people move, while others remain in their place of origin. In particular, the impact of social networks on the moving determinants is examined.

3.) To provide insights into the pattern of adaptation of young migrants, especially their entry to the housing and labour markets, their state of health and social adjustment

4.) To assess any policy implications of the findings and make recommendations.

By analysing a multitude of factors influencing the lives of young migrants in the city, the study seeks to make a contribution to the theoretical understanding of young migrants’ adjustment to urban areas in developing countries. The investigation of determinants of migration is carried out within the context of migration theory.

1.3 Youth and Their Migration Patterns in Asia and Vietnam

1.3.1 Youth and Their Migration Patterns in Asia

In the last two decades, Asia has undergone significant social and economic transformation. As both a cause and consequence, the region has experienced substantial demographic change, much of it involving youth (Hugo, 2006a; Xenos and Kabamala, 1998; Xenos, 1999). With over half of the world’s population living in Asia (Castles and Miller, 1998; Hugo, 2006b, Dang, 2003), the number of youth in this part of the world is very large. Indeed, the number of youth in Asia has increased dramatically from 258 million in 1950 to 494 million in 1980 and in 2000 Asia’s youth
population reached 615 million, which comprised 57.7 percent of the world’s youth population (Hugo, 2005a:64; Atal, 2005:24). Young people are not distributed evenly among Asian countries, but mainly concentrate in the less developed countries (Westley and Choe, 2002). The current generation of young people in Asia is a transitional one, and globalisation has led them to spend more time in being educated, having fewer children and living independently (Fahey and Gale, 2005). Compared to the older generation, youth are more mobile and are more likely to move to cities to achieve a better life (Hugo, 2005a).

As a result of rapid economic change, Asia has experienced the highest level of rural to urban mobility (Dang, 2003; Hugo, 2005a), and the age of migrants to the city has become younger (Hugo, 2005a). In Bangladesh, for example, migration of youth has dominated the phenomenon of population mobility over the last decade (Afser, 2003). The domination of youth migration was also found in Indonesia during the 1990s (Hugo, 2005a). In HCMC, Vietnam, some 72 per cent of migrants in the city were aged 15-29 in 2004 (SO, 2005). The increasing number of youth moving to cities makes urban residents in Asian cities younger than in rural areas. For example, in Thailand, some 20 percent of the urban population was aged 20-29, compared to 16 per cent in rural areas in 2000 (Hugo, 2005a:71).

However, the considerable concentration of young people in the city creates pressure on education services and the labour market, making it difficult to absorb an increasing number of youth entering employment for the first time. Competition for jobs is an important challenge for young people in urban places, especially for those with low levels of education. Poverty does not allow poor and less educated youth in the city to be unemployed, so they are forced to work in the informal sector with low pay and less
security (Hugo, 2005a:70). It is believed that youth in cities, especially those with low levels of education, face many difficulties (Raharto and Noveria, 2005). Vietnam is a case in point. The lack of a comprehensive understanding of migration in general and youth migration in particular, has created many problems in the management and planning of the major cities in Vietnam. As Hugo (2005a) argues, the migration of youth in Asia should be seen as more than a redistribution of the young population in the region because youth mobility is both caused by and a factor influencing social and economic change.

1.3.2 The Age Composition of Population in Vietnam

The population of Vietnam was 84 million in 2006 (GSO, 2007a) of which 30 per cent were young people. With a population growth rate of 1.8 percent per year the population will reach 100 million by 2020 (Nguyen Quoc Anh, 2000). As in other developing countries, Vietnam experienced a substantial shift in the age structure of population as a result of a decrease in fertility and a relatively low and stable mortality rate. Figure 1.1 and Table 1.1 shows that Vietnam’s age pyramid in the past was dominated by very young ages due to high birth rates and relatively low death rates; it has increasingly become more rectangular due to falling fertility and longer life expectancy.
The number of youth will continue to increase in the next decade because the transition from high to low fertility rates only started in the 1990s when Vietnam experienced a sharp decline in TFR from 3.8 in 1989 to 2.3 in 1999 (Table 1.2). With a stable Crude Death Rate (CDR) of some 5.5 per 1000 population, Vietnam’s population growth rate...
declined from 2 percent to 1.4 percent between 1989 and 1999 (Haub and Phuong, 2003). If the population growth rate remains as 1.4 percent, the number of youth in the country will decline after a decade. Obviously, Vietnam will still face the youth bulge for a while before the transition from high to low fertility comes to an end.

Table 1.2 Total Fertility Rate (TFR), 1989-2003, Vietnam
Source: GSO (2000 and 2005)

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TFR</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to population projections, the population aged 15-24 in 2010 in Vietnam will increase to 18 million, but it will gradually fall to 15 million in 2020 (Hugo, 2006a). Moreover, as indicated in Table 1.3, the annual growth rate of the population aged 15-24 was very high during the period 1970-1990 with 4.7 per cent. It gradually decreased to 1.7 percent in 1990-2000, to 1.4 by 2010 and after that it is expected to decline dramatically.

Table 1.3 Annual Growth Rates for Age Group 15-24 (percent) in South-East Asian Countries, 1950-2030
Source: Hugo (2006a: 8)

Because of the very high fertility rate after the reunification in 1975, the proportion of youth aged 15-24 peaked in 1990 and is expected to decline over the first twenty years
of the 21st Century. Compared with other countries in South-East Asia like Laos and the Philippines, the speed with which the growth rate of young people in Vietnam has declined, has been quicker. While the Philippines needed 50 years, Vietnam may have completed the transition by 2010, which means it will only have taken 20 years. In term of the transition, Vietnam is much more advanced than that of Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia where the peak of youth population will occur much later in 2010. Currently, Vietnam is still experiencing a youth bulge as it is estimated that the number of young people is increasing by more than one million per year.

The proportion of youth population aged 15-24 was 20 percent (15.8 million people) in 2000 (Hugo, 2006a: 7), and Vietnam’s population is young compared to the Asian population in general (18 percent) (Hugo, 2005a: 62). The young population poses a great challenge for the government of a less developed country like Vietnam. The majority of young people live in rural areas (Le Thi My, 2005) where 75 percent of the total population lived in 2004. A high proportion of youth in a population can be costly to development due to high expenditure on education and other aspects of life (Crook, 1997). Indeed, increasing numbers of youth has created pressure on the country to expand education, health and employment programs for youth. Despite its rapid economic growth, Vietnam faces many challenges related to employment, especially youth employment. Although there was a decrease in the number of youth in the labour force from 31 percent in 1990 to 25 per cent in 1999, the actual numbers of youth entering the labour force are still increasing. In 1999, young people aged 15-24 accounted for 25 percent of the total workforce, and around 1.4 million young people entered the labour market for the first time annually (UNDP, 2003). High unemployment rates among youth are an important bottleneck for the development of a less developed country like Vietnam. As shown in Figure 1.2, the population
unemployed and underemployed\(^1\) in the youth labour force in Vietnam was still high in 2000. Data in Figure 2 indicates that more than 20 percent of youth at working age in Vietnam in 2000 were underemployed and nearly 10 percent were unemployed. Although detailed data of unemployment of youth regarding different occupations is not available, the figure of unemployment and underemployment provided here sheds some light on youth labour in Vietnam.

**Figure 1.2 Youth Labour Force in Vietnam, 2000**

Source: UNDP (2003:5)

Moreover, the youth unemployment rates were much higher in urban than in rural areas (Table 1.4). In addition, younger people aged 15-19 are more likely to be unemployed rather than older age groups (20-24).

\(^{1}\) A person is underemployed if he/she is at working age and works fewer than 40 hours per week but still physically available to do additional hours of work if offered ( UNDP, 2003:7).
Table 1.4 Youth Unemployment Rates in Vietnam by Urban and Rural Areas and Age, 2001


NOTE:
This table is included on page 10 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Young females were more likely to be unemployed than young males, especially in urban places. While unemployment is higher in urban areas, underemployment is greater in the countryside. In 2000, about 2 million youth were underemployed and 95 percent of them were in rural areas (GSO, 2007b; UNDP, 2003). One cause of high under-employment in rural areas is the seasonal nature of agricultural employment (UNDP, 2003:7). Under-employment in the farming sector is caused by a labour surplus in rural areas. The vicious cycle is one in which poverty lead to illiteracy, which in turn causes unemployment and this creates poverty that young people from rural areas find difficult to escape.

It has been established that the number of young people moving to the city from rural areas increases not only quantitatively but also in terms of its complexity, and more young females move to urban areas than males (GSO-UNDP, 2001). Moreover, rural-urban migration has become less selective in terms of education, with both low and high educated young people taking part in this population mobility. It is argued that with no skills and no work experience, many youth migrants face difficulties in the city (UNDP, 2003). It is believed that low levels of education and the lack of vital occupational and social skills limit young migrants’ flexibility in adjusting to labour market change in HCMC, and the bulk of young migrants live in conditions of squalor including poor sanitation and high person-to-room ratios (Tran Xuyen and Hoa Nguyen, 2004).
1.4 A Brief Review of Internal Migration and Youth Studies in Vietnam

1.4.1 Research on Migration in Vietnam

Migration has been a notable phenomenon in Vietnam, especially after the reforms of the 1980s but migration data is lacking (Guest, 1998a). The main cause of the lack of migratory information before 1975 was the impact of the wars (UNESCAP, 1992). Although after the reunification in 1975 several studies of migration were carried out, almost all of them concentrated on government-planned migration and there was little or no research into other kinds of migration (Do, 1998). This movement was the major form of internal migration in Vietnam between 1980 and 1990 (Djamba et al., 1999). There were no questions asked about migration in the 1979 census, leading to an information gap on migration during that period. Doan and Trinh (1998) show that the bulk of data on migration in the 1980s was mainly provided by the 1989 census; however, the migration information from the census was mainly focused on permanent movers, and it excluded people who moved temporarily to urban areas. Hence, data on migration were inadequate and very little is known about the trends and patterns of internal migration in Vietnam during this post-war period.

Following the introduction of the economic reforms, quite a few projects on internal migration were conducted at national and local levels. Among them are several large-scale studies such as surveys in 1989, 1994 and 1996. Each of them had specific target groups but they all employed quantitative research methods. This method does not provide researchers with in-depth information to explain personal behaviours such as moving determinants and the adaptation of migrants in the new environment (Nabi et al., 1993). Moreover, using the household as a unit sampling in the 1994 survey (IER, 1996)
may have omitted people living in other residential buildings such as barracks and boarding houses - frequently the home of temporary migrants (Hugo, 1980).

Also, these studies, though they have shed light on migrants’ ability to adapt, have only investigated their employment status. In fact, adaptation is a broad and complicated business and most of these studies have mainly concentrated on employment adaptation. To understand the life of migrants, we need to look at not only their economic status but also migrants’ health conditions and social adjustment (Brown, 1983). Additionally, the complex net of social, economic and cultural dimensions affecting adaptation status of the movers was not discussed in these reports. Local authorities’ opinions about migrants as well as their suggestions for improving the lives of migrants were ignored as well as trying to understand their aspirations and expectations. Adaptation needs to be understood comprehensively so that local and national authorities develop appropriate policies and action plans that help migrants overcome their difficulties and have stable lives (Nguyen Nhung, 2004).

Pursuant to these findings, in 1997 a survey on migration and health was undertaken by the Institute of Sociology, Vietnam (Dang, 1998). Unlike the studies already discussed, this research looked at the problems from a sociological perspective by investigating the roles of social networks in the adaptation of migrants. According to this study, social networks have played a key role in assisting people to adapt to the new environment, while recruitment agents and social organisations have had little or no impact on adaptation. Additionally access to public services, accommodation status and health conditions of the migrants were also mentioned in more detail in this study. The report states that the majority of migrants in cities have had very poor living conditions such as squalid housing and poor sanitary conditions, because their unstable employment
situation and very low incomes have made it impossible for them to obtain a better life. As a consequence, these disadvantaged migrants are extremely prone to social and health problems in the city. In addition, the gender issues were discussed in the research by analysing how gender differences influenced the behaviour of migrants. Although this research has approached the topic from a new direction, some important aspects of their experiences at destination were omitted, particularly recreational activities after working hours and social integration such as relationship with friends, with co-workers as well as their ties to the new environment. Most importantly, HCMC, the largest and the most developed city in Vietnam and the first place to experience rural to urban migration, was excluded from this survey.

In 2000, a study on migration, using a completely different approach, was conducted by the Centre of Gender and Family Studies (Ha et al., 2000) in which 60 in-depth interviews with female migrants in Ha Noi, Da Nang and HCMC were undertaken. This qualitative research is the first to provide in-depth information on the quality of life, health status and difficulties of spontaneous rural to urban female migrants. Moreover, it is also one of the first studies that have considered the issue from a gender perspective. In addition to the in-depth interviews, the study also used a range of methods such as group discussions and participatory rural appraisal. The results showed that female migrants in big cities do not adapt well to the urban environment due to poor working conditions, inadequate housing, insufficient access to clean water and poor sanitation. Despite the new approach and detailed information this research provided, it mainly focused on female migration. Despite the already noted advantages of this work, it is a qualitative study, so the sample was only small, and the findings are not representative of the majority of migrants in the city. Qualitative data may be used as a means of providing exploratory information (Bouma, 1996). Otherwise,
information at the micro level in this work still does not fully reflect the nature of what causes migrants to move and live in the city.

Some studies concerned with urban poverty have focused on migrants. According to the project “Poverty reduction in the Urbanization process in Ho Chi Minh City” conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences in the South of Vietnam from 1997 to 2002 (Nguyen Minh and Nguyen Mai, 2004), migrants in HCMC are among the poorest people and they are one of the most vulnerable groups because they lack access to social services such as micro credit, free health care and cheap education. However the study does not examine the impacts of policies on migrants’ lives and the roles of political institutions in helping these migrants. It collected no information about the recreational activities of migrants and their participation in social organizations (Nguyen Nhung, 2004).

Migration is an extremely complicated phenomenon in our society and we only have limited knowledge. Therefore one survey can hardly cover all aspects of migration as its nature has become more and more complex over time. Consequently, some of the spheres of migration have still not been investigated, particularly young migrants aged 15-24 years.

1.4.2 Research on Youth in Vietnam

In complying with the regulations of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 (Lindahl, 1995), Vietnam has paid much attention to youth and adolescent issues in recent years (Ridge, 2002). Since then numerous studies on adolescents have been undertaken in Vietnam. These studies assert that the social and economic transition in recent years has a profound impact on expectations and the behaviour of youth. “Doi moi” policies encouraging privatization
and an open economy led to changes in family relationships. The power of parents and older people over young people has declined over time. Premarital sex is more acceptable among the young which was regarded with “disdain” in the past. As a result, the rate of adolescents having sex before marriage and the number of young women having abortions is very high (Goodkind, 1994). Although a significant amount of research on adolescents has been undertaken in Vietnam, they have mainly concentrated on reproductive health and no population-related research on Vietnamese adolescents has been published (Mensch et al., 2002).

In 2003, the largest-scale national survey, Survey Assessment of Vietnamese Youth (SAVY, 2005) was undertaken in 42 provinces with 7,584 youth aged 14-25 years in order to investigate aspects of adolescents’ lives all over the country. The findings show that young people, particularly youth from poor families and from ethnic minority groups, are encountering many challenges since poverty restricts their access to education and employment. The school drop-out rate is high and literacy levels are low in rural areas, especially among ethnic minorities in mountain areas. A high percentage of youth have no job training, hence most of them have unskilled and low paid jobs in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. As compensation for these difficulties, young people in Vietnam receive considerable support from their parents, relatives and friends and most of the adolescents retain strong ties with their families. In terms of reproductive health, though young people are fairly well informed about reproductive health, their knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases is still limited. Apart from the comprehensive information given by this large scale project, using a household sample in it omitted one very important group of adolescents, namely street children, young people living in barracks, boarding-houses, education centres, dormitories, factories, etc (SAVY, 2005). Many of the street children and youth staying in barracks, boarding-
houses and factories are migrants, especially in the big cities. It is clear that young migrants in the city, notably ‘floating’ ones, were excluded from these surveys.

In summary, young migrants who concentrate in the big cities are eliminated in almost all of the studies on adolescents. It is obvious that young migrants in the city need to be paid specific attention, particularly spontaneous migrants who live far from their families and are poor. This group of adolescents face more challenges compared to other young people. Low levels of education, poverty and loneliness make them struggle when they reach their destination. Indeed, the number of young prostitutes is relatively high and as a result, the risk of spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is rising in big cities in developing countries (Vu et al., 2003).

Several studies concerned with the health of young people in the city partly examine young migrants’ health. Nguyen et al. (1999) state that the numbers of young people aged 15-24 taking part in sexual relationships are rising dramatically in Vietnam. However, many young people have poor knowledge about this. Vu et al. (2003) reported that young migrants’ behaviours such as having multiple sex partners and no access to reproductive health information may lead them to being at risk of contracting STDs and HIV/AIDS. Since this kind of research strongly focused on STDs and HIV/AIDS and young migrants were one part of their sample, they certainly reflected only one aspect of young migrants’ lives - their knowledge of preventing STDs and HIV/AIDS.

There were other small-scale qualitative studies focusing on young migrants in HCMC; however they only concentrated on young female migrants. These are some of the first
studies undertaken in Vietnam specifically on young movers’ lives, which give us initial and useful information about youth migrants.

**1.4.3 Conclusion**

The literature on migration has concentrated primarily on migrants of all ages. These studies have shed light on the adaptation of migrants, such as their employment status, income and remittances. It has established that the number of young migrants aged 15-24 has significantly increased in recent years. They have faced a number of challenges in the city because their low levels of education have restricted their adaptability to the urban environment. However, there is no single study paying special attention to migration of youth. From the literature on adolescents and youth we found that young migrants in the big cities, especially those who live in barracks, boarding-houses, factories and on the street are mostly spontaneous migrants and poor, and are absent from all of the research concerned with adolescents and youth in Vietnam.

Based on this evidence, we come to the conclusion that young people who move to the big cities from rural areas do not receive adequate attention from the authorities as well as researchers. They encounter more difficulties in comparison to other people in the city. For this reason, the author selected young migrants as the target migrant population for this study.

**1.5 Study Area**

This study investigates migration of youth in Vietnam, a developing country in South-East Asia, and HCMC is the most important socio-economic and development centre selected as the focus of this research. The first section presents a brief description of
Vietnam, and is followed by an overview of HCMC in order to provide some background to the study area.

1.5.1 Vietnam Context

1.5.1.1 Geographical and Demographic Overview

Vietnam is a tropical country which is characterised by strong monsoon influences and is located on the Eastern part of the Indochina peninsula in South-East Asia (MOFA, 2007), bordering the Gulf of Thailand in the South, China in the North, with Laos and Cambodia in the West and the China Sea in the East (see Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3 Map of Vietnam

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 18 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
Northern Vietnam is mostly a mountainous region covered by mountains and hills, with some highland areas covered in a thick green blanket of jungle. The mountains and hills are mainly concentrated in the North-East and North-West regions. This area is regarded as the poorest in the country due to the unfavourable terrain and impoverished soil (VDIC, 2004). In the lowlands of the North is the very large Red River Delta which stretches along the Red River. There are also some coastal plains in this region. The Red River Delta region is the most populated in Vietnam because of its favourable terrain and fertile soil. Due to the high population density and serious floods that the area experiences every year, poverty is still a threat.

In the South of Vietnam people benefit from the rich and fertile soil in the Mekong Delta. Although the region is one of the most fertile places in the country, it experiences natural disasters such as floods during the wet season and severe drought during the dry season. It is not surprising that many of the poorest communities live in this area. The area experiences a year-round tropical climate with quite a stable temperature around 31°C. Central Vietnam is characterised by high temperatures and rich volcanic soils. This area borders Laos with the Truong Son mountain range in the West and with the sea in the East. Therefore, it has a difficult physical environment as the soils are sandy and the rainfall is unreliable. Furthermore, drought and flooding make Middle Vietnam the poorest region in the country.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Vietnamese people with some 75 percent of the country’s population living in rural areas, and some 65 percent working ages working in the agriculture and forestry in 2001 (GSO, 2003:41). Rice is the leading crop and rice cultivation is mainly concentrated in two rich well-water alluvial deltas: Red River and Mekong Delta. Peanuts, corn, sweet potatoes and beans are the secondary
food crops, and coffee, tea, cotton and sugarcane are cash crops grown in the highlands. Fishing and aquaculture are the chief industries and mining is a very important export industry.

As shown in Figure 1.3, there are 4 major cities under the government’s administration: Hai Phong, Hanoi, Da Nang and HCMC, of which Ha Noi is the capital city and located in the North. Hai Phong is in the North-East, Da Nang is in the Centre and HCMC is in the South. As discussed previously, Vietnam’s population was 84 million with 27 percent of the population living in urban areas in 2006 (GSO, 2007a). The proportion of urban population has increased in recent years and the majority of people live in the major cities as shown in Table 1.5. The population in these four major cities accounts for a large part (40 percent) of Vietnam’s urban population. HCMC is the largest city not only in terms of urban population, but it also the biggest economic and financial centre of Vietnam.

**Table 1.5 Urban Population in Vietnam and in the 4 Major Cities, 1979-2004**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995 Number (Mill)</th>
<th>1995 %</th>
<th>1999 Number (Mill)</th>
<th>1999 %</th>
<th>2002 Number (Mill)</th>
<th>2002 %</th>
<th>2004 Number (Mill)</th>
<th>2004 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCMC</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha Noi</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Phong</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da Nang</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 major cities</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>35.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the severe ravages of war, the loss of economic assistance from the old Soviet Bloc and the rigidities of a centrally planned economy associated with a subsidised
system and household registration system\textsuperscript{2}, Vietnam experienced an economic crisis during the 1980s (CIA, 2007). In order to overcome this crisis in 1986 the government introduced reforms to move the country from a centrally planned economy to a multi-sector economy.

\textbf{1.5.1.2 Social and Economic Context since Economic Reform}

The 1986 reforms have had a profound impact on Vietnam’s socio-economic development (Dang, 2005). Table 1.6 shows the GDP per capita of Vietnam has increased over time, and its average GDP growth rates have remained at 7 percent per year. Economic growth has reduced poverty rates as the proportion of households below the poverty line has decreased from 60 percent in 1990 to 32 percent in 2002 (GSO, 2004b) and 18 percent in 2006 (VWU, 2007). VWU (2007) also indicates that a national programme on poverty production has been implemented for 2006-2010 with the goal of decreasing the poverty rate to 10-11 percent by 2010.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{GDP per Capita (US $) in Selected Countries of South-East Asia, 1995-2001}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\hline
Vietnam & 230 & 300 & 350 & 400 & 450 & 500 \\
\hline
Thailand & 270 & 350 & 400 & 450 & 500 & 550 \\
\hline
Singapore & 300 & 350 & 400 & 450 & 500 & 550 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Source: UNESCAP (2005)

\textbf{NOTE:}
This table is included on page 21 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

\textsuperscript{2} Household registration system has been applied in Vietnam since the 1960s in order to stop population movement into cities. This will be explained in more detail in Chapter 2.
Rapid economic growth has brought about a change in the economic structure. The GDP share of agricultural production has decreased, while that of industrial and service output has increased (GSO, 2002a). Consequently, employment patterns have changed as the industrial and service sectors became more labour intensive. Urban-based investment policies have turned the major cities into the premier economic development centres (Dang, 1999, 2005). The establishment of private companies and organisations and flows of foreign investment into large cities have created more job opportunities for people in these urban places. There is also a wage gap in the average age of people working in industrial factories in the North and South of Vietnam and its urban and rural centres (Brassard, 2006:102). Wages in the North are much lower than in the South. Also, wages in agriculture are far less than in the industrial sector. This regional gap in the labour market plays a very important role in regional migration as well as the rural-urban movement. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Although household registration policy is still being used, it is no longer important in stopping people moving to the cities (Zhang et al., 2001). This is because the end of the subsidised system and establishment of private and foreign companies means that people are no longer dependent on the state supply system. As a result of rapid expansion of the private sector, nearly 2.5 million jobs were created in this sector in 2003 (VDIC, 2004) which is higher than all jobs provided by the 5000 state-owned enterprises in the country (Brassard, 2006). In agriculture, decollectivisation and the household land contract system have liberated farmers (Zhang et al., 2001). According to this new land law, with the household land contract, farmers now can lease, mortgage or transfer their land more easily. As a result of the land contract, people in rural areas are more easily able to move to other regions and to the city as they can transfer their land to other people in the community.
All these factors noted above make rural-urban migration the dominant type of internal migration (GSO-UNP, 2001). In addition, the age of rural-urban migrants has fallen over time as more young people move to cities. HCMC, the most developed city in Vietnam, has become an important destination for rural-urban migrants (GSO-UNDP, 2001).

1.5.2 HCMC Overview

Ho Chi Minh City, originally known as Sai Gon, the biggest city in Vietnam since the 19th Century, is located in the South-East. It has remained the largest city despite the nation’s various political crises (Gubry and Le, 2003). The current HCMC is an integration of Sai Gon city, Gia Dinh Province and a part of Hau Nghia Province. In 1972, the Sai Gon’s population was 3.3 million (Table 1.8), and population growth before 1975 mainly came from migration from North to South3 before and after 1954. After 1954, together with the North to South flow, migration to the city included movement from rural areas in Central and South Vietnam to avoid the effects of war. The peak of this rural-urban movement was 1964-1965 and 1973-1975. According to data provided by the National Statistic Institute4, in 1967, 40 percent of the population of Sai Gon consisted of migrants including 10.3 percent migrants from the North, 5 percent from the Centre and 22.3 percent from the South (MPW, 1973).

After the war in 1975, with a population of 3.4 million (Table 1.7) the city faced many difficulties in employment, housing, and other social and political issues. In order to avoid overpopulation, the new government initiated programs to relocate urban people

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3 North, South and Middle Vietnam was defined by the South government and based on the territory of the Government.

4 This Institute belonged to the Government of the South before 1975.
to NEZs in rural areas (Bach *et al*., 1997; Guest, 1998a). Moreover, people in the city were also encouraged to return to their rural homes. As a result, the city’s population fell to 2.4 million in 1979. At the same time, HCMC received 150,000 people from the South who moved to the North during the war and came back to their families after the war or were ordered by the government to work in the city (Bach *et al*., 1997). Migration to HCMC after the war is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

### Table 1.7 HCMC’s Population (million), 1972-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The onset of industrialisation in Vietnam accompanied by foreign direct investment in the major cities made HCMC the country’s fastest growing city. As a result of rapid economic growth, in HCMC there was a proliferation of large factories as well as small private workshops which have involved the recruitment of many young workers from rural areas. Consequently, HCMC’s population has rapidly increased and it plays the most important role in the urbanisation process of Vietnam. As shown in Table 1.7, the city’s population rapidly increased after 1989, especially between 1999 and 2004 with approximately 200,000 people per year. Migration, especially youth migration, has made a significant contribution to its population growth and needs more detailed research. As discussed previously, there has been a high under-employment rate in rural areas due to a large number of young people entering the labour market. These high rates of unemployment linked to problems of poverty and illiteracy, especially among youth, is a challenge in the countryside. This forces young people to move to the city where a vast range of new employment possibilities is open to them. Therefore, the major cities have become the primary destinations of migration streams. However,
increasing migration to the cities from rural areas of young people has led to growing unemployment and caused other problems for the city and for migrants themselves (Dang, 2005).

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for moving determinants in this research is derived from Scharping (1997). Combining factors at the both macro and micro level, Scharping developed a model of migration describing the complex factors that influenced the decision-making process of migrants in China. This model is employed here to explain because the situation in Vietnam shares similarities with regional migration in China (Le, 2000). At the macro level, the gap between rural and urban areas is considered as a major cause driving migration flows to the city. However, to answer the question about who moves, the factors at the micro levels such as education, gender, social networks and family conditions are examined. Various aspects of migrants’ lives and migrant’s adjustment are a complex process; a multi level framework of migrant adjustment (such as economic, social, cultural or political) is therefore used in this study. The theoretical framework is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.7 Methodological Approach

The main sources of data used for the study of migration are the population censuses, sample surveys and population registers. However, census data can not provide the reasons and motives for migration because such questions are not included. Using other techniques of estimating migration such as sample surveys with more in-depth and detailed information can overcome the limitations of census data. Therefore, there is a strong justification to be made for migration research making use of multiple methodologies, in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of migrants’
experiences. Based on the aim and objectives of this study, a multi-method approach is used to investigate the experiences of young migrants in HCMC. Quantitative data from the 1999 Census and statistical data at the national and city level is analysed to provide a broader picture of youth migration. Some 300 interviews with young migrants in the city provide information on the reasons for moving as well as their experiences when they reach their destination. In addition, detailed information from 22 in-depth interviews with young migrants was also used, which included 5 in-depth interviews with returnees and 3 discussions with local authorities. The quantitative and qualitative data used in this study provides a multi-level understanding of contemporary youth migration to HCMC. This multiple approach provides an opportunity to investigate the complex factors impacting on the lives of young migrants. Methodology and methods of this research are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

The study is divided into three sections. Section A provides an introduction to the thesis in this chapter. This chapter outlines the topic being investigated and it also provides a brief overview of the social, economic and demographic influences on youth migration. An overview of the methodology is also presented. Chapter 2 examines theories on migration determinants and migrant adjustment. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and the multiple method approach and the quantitative and qualitative methods. All stages of collecting primary data are also described here.

Section B discusses urbanisation and internal migration in Vietnam. Chapter 4 investigates the urbanisation process in more detail. Specifically, the trends and patterns of urban growth and the detailed characteristics of urbanisation are examined. The impact of urbanisation on internal migration in the country is examined. In Chapter 5,
more detailed description of the patterns and characteristics of internal migration is provided. A brief history of migration in Vietnam is also presented. This chapter also investigates the characteristics of migration in relation to the region’s socio-economic conditions. Population mobility to HCMC and its relationship to particular regions are examined. Specific attention is paid to young migrants throughout Vietnam and in HCMC.

Section C discusses the survey findings of the study. Chapter 6 begins with an examination of the determinants of migration at both the macro and micro levels. The economic gap between rural and urban areas is examined in order to find out how this gap influences migration. In order to understand the selectivity of youth migration, this chapter also examines the relationships between the migration of young people and their personal characteristics. The role of social networks in migration is discussed in the last section in this chapter. Chapter 7 investigates the economic adjustments that migrants make in the urban environment. Occupation, income and accommodation status are examined in this chapter. In an attempt to give a comprehensive picture of the life of young migrant in the city, health status and social adjustment are investigated in Chapter 8. As well, the roles of formal and informal agents in their adaptation are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 9 summarises the major findings of each chapter and the results of each objective are highlighted. The implications of the findings for policy-makers are discussed. The contributions of the study to the development of theory are included. The limitations of the research and the need for further research in this field are also suggested.
1.9 Conclusion

As can be seen in this chapter, the main focus of this study is on the migration of youth in HCMC. A preliminary discussion has indicated a need for research on youth migration to the major cities of Vietnam, especially their adjustment levels. A brief overview of Vietnam’s context and HCMC’s background (the study area) are presented. Moreover, it has identified the importance of employing a multiple method approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to investigate important aspects of youth migration. Finally, the structure of the thesis has been outlined.
Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

In South-East Asia in the last two decades, population mobility has increased in both scale and complexity and in the range of gender, social-economic and cultural groups involved (UN, 1982; Rushing and Watts, 2005). This phenomenon has attracted significant interest from scholars, and there have been a number of theories of migration developed to explain it. However, no single theory can fully explain migration due to its complex nature. Accordingly, most analyses adopt an approach which uses a number of theories to explain a population migration pattern and trend. In this chapter, a review of migration theories is presented in order to assess their applicability to Vietnam and to choose an appropriate theoretical framework for the study. Defining migration is discussed in the last section of the chapter.

2.2 A Review of Migration Theories

Perhaps the earliest migration theory was developed by Ravenstein in 1885 in which he indicated the significance of rural-urban migration and the importance of examining factors causing that migration. Later, Lee (1966) argued the decision to move is determined by factors associated with sending places, host places, intervening and personal factors. Both origin and potential destination wield positive and negative influences. Negative factors in rural areas such as lack of employment have traditionally “pushed” people to move out, while growing opportunities in secondary and tertiary industry in urban areas “pulled” migrants to them. Despite a broad theory of migration at the macro perspectives, Lee’s ideas are hard to operationalise and Lin (1998: 13) has stated that “this framework turned out to be more a general
conceptualisation than a theory aiming at explaining the underlying migration behaviour and mechanism”.

Before and after Lee (1966), a number of more specific theories of migration have been established. Neoclassical economics used macro theory to explain economic factors in migration. Lewis (1954), Ranis and Fei (1961), Harris and Todaro (1970) and Todaro (1976) suggest geographic differences in labour supply and demand are the main causes of migration. Fast growing modern industrial processes that are mainly concentrated in urban places result in higher wages and more employment opportunities in those countries, which in turn attract migrants (Findley, 1977). In rural areas as Hawley (1950) claimed that low agricultural productivity resulting in declining job supplies leads to out-migration from rural areas in order to release surplus labour. This movement continues until the surplus labour reserves are depleted and the rural-urban income gap narrows. Therefore, it is believed that in developing countries most migrants move to the cities for employment-related reasons such as seeking better jobs with higher incomes. Although these ideas shed much light on the economic aspects of migration, they provide only a partial explanation. Generally, economic theories on migration have used an economic model to view rural-urban migration as a consequence of the economic gap between these two regions. However, they have neglected non-economic aspects of development which have been found to have significant influences on migration (Zhu, 1998). It is also necessary to pay attention to the social norms, migration history, social contacts and physical conditions in migration studies (Hugo, 1981; Bilsborrow et al., 1984).

It is obvious that rural-urban disparities are the major factors pushing people out of villages; however, such a decision is made by an individual or family. In response to
this, some theorists have looked at the migration decision-making process at the micro level (Lee, 1966; Todaro, 1976; Long, 1973; Davanzo, 1981). Migration is selective as Lee (1966) argued that not all people evaluate the same negative and positive factors in the same way since they receive the information differently and the ability to analyse reality varies from person to person depending on their individual perceptions. Moreover, migration occurs at certain stages of one’s life and certain characteristics of migrants. For example, young people tend to move more than older ones, and more educated people are more likely to be mobile than less educated people. Micro neoclassical economists (Todaro, 1976, 1989; Davanzo, 1981) focus on individuals rationalising choices on whether to move or to stay. An individual makes a cost-benefit calculation of origin and destination and he/she decides to migrate if he/she expects higher incomes after the move. Migration is therefore seen as an investment.

While micro neoclassical theorists consider the role of personal characteristics, those of the new economics stress the role of the family in the decision-making process. In developed countries, the risk to the household economy is minimised by insurance or government programs, whereas in the developing world these formal mechanisms play a small role in assisting households avoid risk. In such cases, migration is a way of minimising household risk (Stark, 1991) where government programs are not enough to ensure people’s livelihoods. This theory considers migration to be a strategy explained by households to not only provide insurance but also to make maximum use of the household’s recourses. Hence the decision to move is often made in a family context rather than by individuals (Hugo, 1998; UNAV, 2003). Family factors influence migration and people in large families are more likely to migrate than those in smaller families (Findley, 1987). The cost-benefit analysis of migration for the family may not coincide with the analysis of an individual.
Another approach is network theory which highlights the importance of interpersonal ties, which develop connections between people in both sending and receiving places in shaping the decision to migrate. Social networks created between origin areas and destinations help to lower the costs and risks of migration so that migrants can maximise their net returns. In response to this, non-economists developed social networks theory to explain migration. They state that social contacts in the place of destination play a significant role in migration in developing countries since family and friends in the urban area help potential migrants to get accurate information about cities prior to arrival and provide initial assistance. This helps to alleviate the risks of movement and reduces the costs of migration.

It is understood that making the decision to migrate is a multifaceted process and based on both economic and non-economic factors at both the macro and micro levels (Massey et al., 1993; Rawat, 1997). Massey et al. (1993) reported that to achieve a comprehensive understanding of migration, a complex theory is required that combines a variety of perspectives, levels and assumptions. Based on the multilevel discourse (Massey et al., 1993; Rawat, 1997) this thesis uses a multiple approach to establish a theoretical framework of migration. However, when applying migration theories in Vietnam, we should bear in mind the social-economic context of the country. In addition, these theories were predominantly constructed in developed countries which had quite different social and economic contexts to those in less developed countries (Hugo, 1975, 1978). One example is that Vietnam differs from other countries where markets are free and governments treat non-migrants and migrants equally. In Vietnam migrants in the city face discrimination due to migration control policies, migrant integration in the city is affected not only by socio-economic changes but migrants are also discriminated against by the government. In such circumstances, the impact of
urbanisation on migrants may not be the same as in other more developed countries. It has been argued that occupational characteristics of the labour market in a regional community have a significant impact on rural-urban migration in many developing countries. How does this fit the Vietnamese situation?

Of the developing countries in Asia, Vietnam is similar to China since the two countries have experienced a long period of socialist government and have a comparable level of development (Le, 2000). Both countries had a centrally planned economy for a long period before changing to a free market economy during the last two decades. As noted by Scharping (1997), the application of labour market theory in countries like China has to take into account the fact that the labour market did not exist in the country before the recent move to a market economy. The rural-urban gap is not as significant because of the centrally planned economy and a subsidised system which was applied in the country since the 1960s (Banister, 1997). Like China, this planned economy had been applied in Vietnam until the mid-1980s, which was linked to the urban economy dominated by state-ownership. Since the 1960s Vietnamese governments implemented the household registration system (Ho Khau) in the North in order to prevent from over-urbanization and to avoid an imbalance in population density between rural and urban areas (Hardy, 1998:281). During that time, there were two distinct types of registration in the country: Ho Tich and Ho Khau. While Ho Tich was a statistical register of births, marriages and deaths, Ho Khau recorded people’s mobility. Every household had a Ho Khau booklet and in this book recorded each person’s place of permanent residence and that of other household members. Demographic information such as name, age, occupation, ethnic group and place of origin was indicated in this booklet. The Ho Khau registration in Vietnam is the same as the hukou in China:
An individual becomes a member of a household at birth and outside marriage, only rarely initiates mobility. This mobility is commensurate, in law, with movement from one household to another across an administrative boundary. To move legally permission is required from work units and public security offices (Hoy, 1996: 7).

Members of a household are persons who live under the same roof and share cooking facilities (Dang, 1999; Hoy, 1996). Every person has been forced to register Ho Khau in one and only one place. If someone moves out of the household for more than three days, they must report to the authorities at both the place of origin and destination. If they misreport their whereabouts they will be fined. People from urban areas move relatively easily to rural areas and also those from the plains to mountain areas, but it was very hard for rural residents to get permission to stay permanently in the cities and for persons from the mountains who moved to the delta area (Le, 2000; Cheng and Selden, 1994). During the subsidy period, people were dependent on the government because all essential goods were supplied by the state. As in China, during the centrally planned economy before the 1970s when food could only be purchased with local ration coupons (Wang Feng, 1997), in Vietnam coupons were distributed to urban residents who had urban registration (Dang, 1999). Urban areas allocating food, jobs and other essential goods were based on household registration (Zhang et al., 2001; Banister, 1997; Garcia, 2004). A person could get a job only at the place where he/she had permanent registration and access to other social services was based on tickets and stamps provided by one’s workplace. In urban areas, if you did not have a job you could not afford to stay for long, because goods on the black market were much more expensive than those provided by the state (Dang, 2005; Maxia, 1997). In rural areas, land was allocated to households in the place of household registration, and if a person had no one to rely on for all most everything at the receiving place, he would not move, because the allocation of jobs, food and other essential services depended on Ho Khau. This system was very effective in stopping migration from rural to urban areas during
the planned economy in Vietnam (Dang, 2005; Zhang et al., 2001) and China (Wang Feng, 1997; Zhan Shaohua, 2005).

This Ho Khau policy was very effective during the centrally planned economy which subsidised food and other essential services. While the market economy was prohibited, employment in state-owned organisations was allocated only to permanent urban residents. In rural areas, farm land was allocated only to working-age people with Ho Khau in the community. Therefore, rural-urban migration was regulated by this policy as people with temporary residency had no access to any essential services in the city. During that time in Vietnam (Zhang et al., 2001) and China (Hoy, 1996) rural-urban migration only happened for people who the authorities nominated. These people were more likely to be given a permanent job with a permanent residency in the city. After reunification in 1975 Vietnam was a very poor country and experienced a severe economic crisis due to the serious devastation caused by the war (CIA, 2007). Soon after the two parts of Vietnam were officially reunited the country adopted a centrally planned economy and this lasted until 1986, but public ownership of the means of production had negative consequences for the economy (UNESCAP, 2000). An example of these impacts was the prohibition of private business. The government made people dependent on public organisations and limited competition between organisations (Bui, 2000). Moreover, rural-urban migration in Vietnam was regulated before the reforms began like in China (Maxia, 1997; Huang Ping, 2003); hence migrants to urban areas were mainly organised movers who were directed by authorities (Bach et al., 1997; Dang, 2005).

Since the mid-1980s, Vietnam has achieved remarkable success in developing the economy and in reducing poverty both in agricultural and industrial areas and
urbanisation has increased rapidly. As a result of the transformation from a centrally planned economy to a free market, people are no longer dependent on state-based allocations of food, jobs and other essential services (Dang, 1998). Although the household registration system still exists in Vietnam and China after the reforms, the situation has changed. This system is no longer important as it was during the subsidised economy (UNAV, 2003; Hoy, 1996). As a result of the adoption of a market economy there has been an increasing diversification of ownership forms in these two countries. Establishing a private sector and increasing numbers of joint-venture industrial zones in the major cities have made these urban places more labour-intensive areas (Hugo, 2006b; Dang, 1998; Garcia, 2004). The abolition of centrally planned labour and wages in urban areas and the cancellation of land allocation in rural areas have played a major role in attracting people to the city (Zhang et al, 2001, Banister, 1997).

The rural-urban disparity has emerged and grown over time (Le Bach Duong, 2002; Zhan Shaohua, 2005) and it now functions as the macro level force for rural-urban migration. Moreover, as a result of abolishment of the state monopoly over food and employment supply in cities, in-migrants to urban places have increased dramatically in counties like Vietnam and China. However, migrants in the city tend to concentrate in no skilled jobs and are involved in a newly created low-paid labour sector (Zhenzhen Zheng et al., 2001; Dang, 2005). Although people now have more freedom to move around the country (especially from rural to urban areas due to the abolition of subsidies), bureaucratic interventions such as the household registration system still impact on the rural-urban migration process (Banister, 1997; Dang, 2005). The impact of migration control policies is no longer effective in limiting rural-urban movement. However, access to state and collective organisations is still limited for migrants in the
city. This is different from other developing countries where only economic conditions and personal scenarios influence the decision to move (Scharping, 1997).

Many economic theories explain the migration decision-making process as a rational choice regarding the costs and benefits in an open political system and a free market where people are fully informed and treated equitably. In countries such as China and Vietnam, published information is still limited and impediments to freedom of movement exist. Furthermore, the continued prevalence of traditional behaviours and customs means that this assumption needs modification (Scharping, 1997). Western theories and Chinese policies have been anything but consistent, and because of the specific characteristics of socio-economic and political contexts in China, Scharping (1997) established a special model of migration which integrates different systemic factors and the peculiarities of the Chinese experience to explain migration in that country at the macro and micro levels. As noted above, Vietnam has experienced a similar situation, so this requires an appropriate framework for the country. Based on the evidence discussed so far, the author uses this model as the framework for migration in this study.

2.3 A Multilevel Model of Migration

As shown in Figure 2.1, the migration model tries to explain migration from macro-level data (geographical, economic, demographic and social features) with data on migration decision at the micro-level (individual and household behaviour). Migration is a process of two separate steps but they influence each other. It is believed that the factors in the upper box of the model are the most important. This is also a reason for increased movement to urban centres.
It is believed that geographical position, natural resources and climate make some regions in the country poorer than others. Moreover, the demographic structure such as
population density, fertility rate, age structure and household size is also of great importance in rural-urban migration. While agricultural productivity is very low, natural population growth rates in rural areas are much higher than in urban areas due to high fertility and low mortality rates. Higher growth of population and poor development in rural areas create employment pressure, especially as an increasing number of young people are entering the labour market due to the high proportion of youth in these places (Chen et al., 1998). In developing countries, especially in South-East Asia, rural areas are problematic in that their economies tend to push people out of the villages (Hugo, 2003; Guest, 2003). Educational attainment also has an influence on migration behaviour.

Many studies on migration highlight the importance of economic factors (Afsar, 2005; Dang 2005; Sheng, 2002; Jones, 2002; Guest, 1998a and 2003; Hugo, 2003). The economic structure in regard to the share of the primary sector, secondary and tertiary sector is a major determinant of population mobility. Government policies and measures to stimulate economic development and industrialisation in the less developed world have acted to shift predominantly agricultural and rural societies into more industrialised and urbanised societies at a very fast pace. More employment opportunities, higher incomes and better living standards in the urban places compared to those in rural areas attract people into the city. Market access plays a decisive role in migration. Another economic factor which is significant for population movement is volume and distribution of investment. As a result of the concentration of development in urban areas and the increased employment opportunities with higher income offered, the city becomes attractive to rural-urban migrants (Todaro, 1976; Fuller et al., 1983; Davin, 1999; Dang et al., 1997). Economic theory states that income differences are the most important variable causing migration. As the income gap between cities and
villages widens, rural-urban migration increases. Earning a higher income is the major driving force for migration.

The second layer of the migration model concerns micro-economic factors which are understood as individual people’s reasons. In principle, the potential migrant weighs up the cost-benefit and decides to move if they gain from migration. Gains are realised as income improvement and change in regard to the family situation, medical services and social status. Gains from migration should be balanced by personal considerations of migration costs. The costs include transportation, school or training expenses for a new job. Risks arising from possible unemployment or the risk of obtaining only under-paid jobs are also considered as moving risks. Moreover, health risks as a result of hard and unsafe jobs or costs spent trying to obtain work have to be considered. Further migration costs are those concerned with day to day living while looking for a job. The distance from the place of origin and destination also influences migration costs as the greater the distance the higher transportation costs. This may lead to higher living expenditures and greater risks.

Last but not least, the influence of individual characteristics needs to be considered. As Lee (1966) stated the evaluation of negative and positive points varies from person to person depending greatly on the information he/she receives and his/her ability to analyse it. While social networks, media and distance to the destination play an important role in providing information to migrants, personal characteristics such as education level, occupation, income and sex have an impact on analysing information and making the decision to move. Therefore, migration is selective. Personal traits vary widely but some occur more frequently than others. In this model, above all, the level of education, occupation and income play an important role in perceptions and available
alternatives for action. Other characteristics such as gender, age and marital status are important. Life-cycle stage is the most important micro-level item. Personal balances are calculated for life time periods and these balances depend on factors such as age, marital status and opportunities to improve working skills and chances of workplace promotion. This is the most important reason that explains the phenomenon of youth migration.

Asian youth are very much different from their parents in terms of their marriage behaviour, education and employment (Hugo, 2006a). They prefer to work out of the home and do non-farming jobs, and they are more likely to lead an independent life in a place distant from their family. Migration is perceived as the key to leaving their home villages where life is harder. Young people are less likely to be deterred by the risk of moving, and they have more time to benefit from the move because they are only at the beginning of their career and family formation (Cooke, 1999). In Vietnam, the economic reforms have changed not only the economy but culture as well. Family relations and traditional values such as close ties between communities, families and households have declined significantly (Rushing and Watts, 2005). In the new market economy people are more likely to rely on urban employment opportunities and young people especially girls are forced to take part in rural-urban migration to earn money for themselves and their families (Vu Ngoc Binh, 2002).

Another set of factors which should be taken into account are social behaviours and state interventions; these constitute the third layer of the model. These items are treated by economists as unidentified factors of risk and cost calculation (Scharping, 1997). As stated by Scharping (1997) the impacts of information, assistance and migration policy on the moving decision-making process can be investigated by survey work. However,
even in this case where such measurement is difficult or impossible, ignorance of these valuables would cause gross misjudgement. In Figure 2.1, information, assistance and migration policy are considered as intervening variables influencing migration decisions rooted in personal considerations. These factors in turn are influenced by underlying variables which are grouped into two boxes on the left side of the figure. One of them is social and cultural items, the others are political and legal ones. Since values are regarded as external variables which are too complex for further modelling in the context of migration-related studies, they here refer to lifestyle preferences and the weight given to wealth and status, comfort and risk, autonomy and affiliation. As in China, these variables in Vietnam seem to be relevant in terms of traditional values such as rights and obligations of individuals versus the family and community. This implies the importance of family-based behaviour in matters concerning migration. Unlike other social and economic items, cultural values are generally considered to be much more tenacious and unchangeable. Establishing these cultural values as a variable independent of social and economic items is difficult.

The first item influencing information is distance. Media coverage is another important factor to be considered. It is argued that the non-availability of media in rural provinces leads to gaps in knowledge and distorted information being provided (Scharping, 1997). In the absence of this type of formal information, people use traditional sources of information and support, and kinship ties are the most important. Personal networks play an imperative role in the extension of support and information to remote relatives. This networking is useful in providing emotional and financial support in obtaining jobs, accommodation and so on. However, this may limit freedom of personal choice and lead to informally segmented labour markets, and this may turn into a self-propelling mechanism for chain migration.
Another important social factor is migration policy. As discussed previously, since the 1960s, Vietnam adopted migration control policies in order to limit population mobility to urban areas. The household registration system, labour regulations, food allocation and access to state-owned accommodation have been examples of political intervention that empowered the government to grant or decline resources to potential migrants. Collectivisation and nationalisation of most economic activities gave the government total control of population mobility. Since the reforms of the 1980s, the privatisation of nearly all aspects of economic life has caused significant changes in migration. People now have the right to lease, transfer or sell their land-use rights but the state still continues to occupy an important part in the urban economy and private ownership of land is limited to land-use rights (Zhang et al., 2001; Brassard, 2006). Similarly, the household registration system has been relaxed but not abolished. Labour regulations have largely improved in terms of job allocation, but the government retains control in the form of permission requirements and a number of restrictions. Finally, bureaucratic procedures also shape migration behaviour. Apart from the permission to change the place of residence there are other problems related to employment, housing, schooling.

As shown in Figure 2.1, it is the complex set of macro level factors, micro level considerations and intervening elements which make up the causal structure influencing migration decisions in countries like China and Vietnam. Migration itself is sketched in the four layers of the model. Analysis of population mobility on this level is based on the box: volume (number and migration rate); direction (migration streams by types and sizes of settlement, regional movement especially rural-urban migration.); selectivity (age and gender structure, education attainment, occupation), duration (short- or long-term movement); channels (spontaneous versus organised migration).
Registration status considers whether migrants are given temporary or permanent residential status, because this continues to be an important indicator of the unequal rights and opportunities in China and Vietnam.

The last layer of the model refers to factors concerning impact of migration. The outcomes of migration depend on causes and expectations. In many cases chances for getting a job are influenced by level of education and family connections, and in turn job-searching results in employment status and income. Income plays a key role in accommodation status and living conditions of migrants. Good education is generally necessary if a migrant wants to be successful (Gardner and Wright, 1984). Employment and income, accommodation and education are the most important indicators of a new social stratification. These immediate outcomes of migration result in other changes in migrants’ lives such as health status and social integration. How migrants adapt to the urban environment in turn affects both migrants and the host community.

When people move from one place to another they not only experience occupational changes but also face social and cultural changes. These migrants are likely to experience regional differences in terms of culture and economy (Speare, 1983). To be integrated into a new society, migrants need time and knowledge to get used to the social, economic and cultural differences. Since the socio-economic and cultural disparities between rural and urban places are very wide, when people move to the city they face many challenges. At the destination, they live in a quite different environment with a new culture and lifestyle called ‘urban life’ (Montgomegy et al, 2001). Therefore, a comparison of cultural differences between sending and receiving places should be taken into account when doing research on migrants’ ability to adapt to a new environment. Table 2.1 shows the differences between rural and urban areas are a
complex set of economic, social and cultural factors. Migrants in the city take advantage of the urban environment where there is a range of educational opportunities and experiences. As a result, urban residents have higher levels of education than those from rural areas. Higher incomes lead to better living standards in urban areas and social services. Access to health services is better and as is access to public provision of services. In addition, more households have access to water, waste disposal and electricity.

**Table 2.1 Dimensions in which Urban Environments Differ from Rural Environments**

Source: Montgomery *et al.* (2001: 71)

Despite the above benefits mentioned the problems that urban dwellers encounter deserve attention. In urban areas, although there are more social services the high cost of food, transport and housing are a problem for urban dwellers, especially poor people. Owning a house is beyond the reach of the poor and high costs of education deter the
urban poor. Low levels of education limit poor people’s ability to take advantage of urbanisation and they may not avail themselves of the opportunities. As a result, the rate of school enrolment of children from poor families in urban areas is as high as that in rural areas. Access to other essential social services such as water, electricity and health care for the urban poor is out of reach. This leads them to live on the margins of society. Moreover, living in conditions of squalor with poor sanitation poses high levels of health risk, notably in the form of communicable diseases and diseases caused by poor sanitation. Because most of the rural-urban migrants are among the urban poor, they are vulnerable to sudden economic changes as well as health risks as other poor groups in the city (Moser, 1996).

Development of massive industrial zones in big cities has a negative impact on the urban environment such as overpopulation which may cause pollution due to the absence of adequate infrastructure and good governance. It should be noted that the implications of so called “modern diseases” on urban dwellers’ health, especially of the poor are very noticeable. Heart attacks, cancers, strokes and HIV/AIDS are very common in the urban environment (Montgomery et al., 2001). The poor are likely to live adjacent to polluting industries where low income households are concentrated.

Besides the changes any migrant has to experience at the destination, young migrants at the same time experience additional challenges due to the physical and psychological changes at their special age stage. The phase of youth is an important time for the development of career values and it is the first step in young people’s socio-economic life (Mortimer et al., 2000) when they implement the change from education to work. Also, at this age young people experience physical and psychological transactions from
childhood to adulthood, which is critical in the formation and development of a system of values.

At this stage of life young people are defining their self identities. They are most likely to be innovative and achievement-oriented (Tran Xuyen, 2003). Nevertheless, unfamiliar experiences, sensations and responsibilities are the things young people seem to face during this transition time (Pettiss, 1971). Pettiss (1971) also states that the questions often posed for these young people are whether they are able to deal with the changes and overcome them. Moreover, young people are likely to be involved in confrontations with their parents because adults often expect their children to become more self-reliant and responsible for themselves, while they are not yet equipped with enough life skills to be independent (Macoinis, 1991). It is clear that the level of adaptation of youth depends on both internal psychological and external social factors. At the individual level, the sense of identity, psychological autonomy and self-regulation are formed (Pettiss, 1971). At this stage, adolescents also face physiological changes due to puberty which cause them to have unstable behaviours. Without adults’ guidance, this may lead to problems with their health in general and on their reproductive health in particular. At the social level, youth participate in different relationships outside of the family and school, such as friends, co-workers and social organisations in which they are expected to accept social controls and to share social norms and values. The ability to deal with problems and cope with new things is necessary for young people to be successful. Achievement at this stage plays a very crucial role in the development of self-confidence as well as in shaping the future of the youth. Maladjustment and deviancy can lead to social problems in young people’s lives. Discouragement and a loss of confidence are often experienced by unsuccessful
adolescents. As a consequence, they may choose to become involved in high-risk behaviour.

Besides the sense of identity, psychological autonomy and self-regulation, the young also need freedom of choices and opportunities (Machacek, 1998). According to Machacek (1998), it should be noted that discontinuity and inconsistency in the process of transition from childhood to adulthood may put young people at risk. When young people can avail themselves of sufficient social resources, then they are likely to achieve much during their transition period. In contrast, where competence and resources are not enough, the results may be negative.

To assert their newly formed identities, young people are likely to engage in different activities which they have never been allowed to do before. Although young people find it easier to adjust to change than older generations, it is obvious that high risk-taking and troublemaking behaviour are common among adolescents. Moreover, curiousness associated with youth as they try to do new things in their lives with the absence of parental monitoring, supervision and social ties are the main reasons why youth take many unnecessary risks (Windle et al., 2000). According to UNFPA (2002) adolescents and young people are at a high risk of unprotected sex, STDs and drug use in South-East Asian countries where the number of young people with HIV/AIDS is rapidly increasing. Poverty and unemployment in rural areas make young people; especially girls, vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation (UNFPA, 2004). In recent years, the number of adolescents working full-time or part-time is increasing not only in developed countries, but also in less developed ones. There are different points of view about adolescent employment (Mortimer et al., 2000). Some scholars find positive aspects in this employment when they show that employment makes the youth feel
more self-confident, responsible and independent. They acknowledge the importance of money and labour market inclusion. However, other authors provide negative evidence of this issue. They assert that working at an early age can lead youth to have less close relationships with their peers. Too much freedom in spending money may influence them to use drugs. On the one hand, achievement at work may help young people improve their well-being and build self-esteem, while on the other hand, experiences of problems at work may cause stress, depression and alienation.

2.4 Definition of Migration

Because migration is a complex event, there are difficulties in putting theoretical concepts into practice (Scharping, 1997; Standing, 1984). Unlike birth and death which have very clear-cut definitions because they happen only once in a person’s lifetime, migration may occur more than once (Bilsborrow, 1998). Due to its multiple dimensions, there is no standard definition of migration. There are many types of migration and migrants (Sheng, 2002:139). Researchers in diverse disciplines use different definitions of migration. While geographers and demographers focus on spatial and temporal dimensions of migration, sociologists and economists pay attention to the socio-economic features of this phenomenon (Zhang et al., 2001). The central concerns of demographers are about duration (permanent versus temporary) and distance (crossing provincial borders or moving to another country). In terms of duration of migration, official censuses in different countries use a 5-year time span to indicate permanent migration. However, this approach omits other short- or long-term migrants who do not fit the fixed temporal points set by the census (Standing, 1984). Economists focus on the impacts of migration on the labour market, and sociologists concentrate on the influence of socio-economic, political and cultural factors on migration (Zhang et
al., 2001). They use “push” and “pull” forces at origin and destination such as socio-economic, demographic and political factors to explain the migration process.

According to Sheng (2002) definitions and distinctions of migration are not only important for researchers, but also for policy-makers, because each type of migration has its own motivations and needs requiring different policies. The lack of comparability seems to be the curse of migration studies worldwide (Scharping, 1997). In general, definitions of migration that are put into practice comprise five dimensions: time, space, legal status, activity and actor.

Migration is not only a multiple-dimensional phenomenon; it also has dualistic characteristics. “Dualistic classifications of migration” are manifest in such categories as internal and international migration, forced versus voluntary movement (Zhang et al., 2001: 3). However, the complexity and multiple dimensions of migration may blur the demarcation of dichotomised categories. For example, the definition of forced and voluntary migration is relative because if we look at migration as a whole, no move is totally independent of society (Standing, 1984; Zhang et al., 2001: 4). Government-planned resettlement programs are classified as forced migration; however, population movement due to economic stagnation or natural disasters in the place of origin is not completely voluntary. Therefore, there are no fully voluntary movements. In China, university graduates who were encouraged to move and work in remote areas were considered to be voluntary migrants (Zhang et al., 2001: 5). The motivation for doing so was to sacrifice their own interests for the interests of the nation. In resettlement migration, dualistic classifications are indicated in the categories of organised/forced versus spontaneous/voluntary migration. As stated by Saith (1999) and (Zhang et al., 2001: 6), migration experiences in Asia range from “early coerced and state-mediated
“migration” to market-driven population movements. This is the case in Vietnam as organised migration was the most common form of internal migration in Vietnam before the economic reforms, while spontaneous population movement has dramatically increased since then (Doan and Trinh, 1998). In reality, it can be seen that spontaneous and organised migrations have occurred simultaneously in countries such as the United States, Australia and countries in South-East Asia (Dang, 1999; Dekoninck, 2000; Zhang et al., 2001: 5).

Migration experiences in Vietnam seem to be more complex due to the link between migration with development and livelihood in the country’s context. Despite the state’s policies to control population redistribution within Vietnam in different historical periods, the population movement of individuals and families in pursuit of better economic opportunities has increasingly become important now that the free market has been established (Zhang et al., 2001: 7). The definition of migration in Vietnam appears to be more complicated than conceptual dichotomy assumes, so analysing Vietnamese migration needs to be integrated into general development programs such as focussed investment policies, household registration system, land use rights, etc. The diversity in types of migration in Vietnam is discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

Unlike other developing countries where rural-urban migration has attracted the attention of many researchers and policy-makers, most migration studies in Vietnam have focused on migrants who are involved in resettlement to NEZs as established by the government since the mid-1970s (Doan and Trinh, 1998; Zhang et al., 2001). Organised migration refers to people who participate in government-sponsored programs and often includes the permanent change of residence of the core family (UNAV, 2003:4). Migration in contemporary Vietnam has become much more varied
than the NEZ-type programs and its patterns have shifted significantly since the economic reforms began. Institutional changes in decollectivisation, land-use rights and household registration regulations led to increased spontaneous migration in rural-rural and rural-urban direction (Dang et al., 1997).

Spontaneous migrants are the same as floating movers in China who migrate without household registration change (Solinger, 1999; UNAV, 2003). They are recognised but are not encouraged and they are responsible for the costs and choice of destination (Dang et al., 2004; Garcia, 2004). In the destination place, they get no support from the government and are self-supporting. Following the reforms, although the household registration system still exists, it is no longer important in limiting migration to the cities (Dang, 1999; Wang Feng, 1997). Free markets make people no longer dependent on state-based supplies of food and other essential goods. In addition, over-population, limited land and lack of jobs in rural areas, and more employment opportunities with higher incomes and better social services in cities have motivated the rural-urban population movement (Dang, 1999; Dang et al., 2004). Spontaneous migrants have been a major new demographic and economic phenomenon since the 1990s (Dang et al., 2004:6). This type of migration has far out-numbered organised migration over time. This is similar to China where there has been a decrease in migration with official change of permanent residence and an increase in floating migration (Ma Xia, 1997). Prior to 1986, a spontaneous migrant would have found it impossible to obtain permanent registration at the destination. However, after 1986 if a person stayed in the destination for more than 3 years, worked in a state-owned organisation and owned a house there, he/she could be considered for permanent residential status. This policy changed in 2007 as the minimum stay in the destination is one year and the person does not need to own a house. He/she can live in a rental property but they need a written
agreement from the landlord to register them as a permanent resident. It can be a challenge for migrants because not many landlords agree to the written agreement (Nguyen Tien Hung, 2007). Therefore, only a few spontaneous migrants are granted permanent residency. Based on household registration status, in the major cities in Vietnam there is another classification of migration. Urban residents are grouped in 4 categories: KT1, KT2, KT3 and KT4 (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Definitions of Residential Status
Source: Dang (2005); SO (2005) and UNAV (2003:1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KT1</th>
<th>KT2</th>
<th>KT3</th>
<th>KT4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent registration- non-migrant with household registration residing in the same district of registration</td>
<td>Permanent registration- non-migrant with household registration but residing in a different district of registration</td>
<td>Temporary registration- migrant residing independently or with relatives without registration book, working in formal factories or organisations, 6-12 months with extension. Including people who had household registration before but for some reasons moved out of the city with their registration and have returned.</td>
<td>Floating migrant, residing in a guest house or temporary dwelling, without registration book, 1-3 months or no registration, usually working in the informal sector. Students from rural areas and from other urban places come to study in the city. Despite the new residential law which is advantageous for migrants, migrants with KT4 seem to receive no benefits from it.</td>
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While people with KT1 and KT2 are considered to be non-migrants because they have permanent registration status, those with KT3 and KT4 are migrants. This definition of migrants does not cover all types of migrants because people who change their permanent residence are regarded as non-migrants. Therefore, most KT3 and KT4 groups are spontaneous migrants (UNAV, 2003). The access to city services differs between non-migrants (with KT1 and KT2) and migrants (with KT3 and KT4). Moreover, between migrants with KT3 and KT4, there are great differences in terms of access to the city’s services. With their stable jobs in the formal sector and temporary registration, migrants with KT3 can have access to government’s accommodation and their rights in the city are not very different from non-migrants, especially after 1st July.
2007 when the new residence policy came into effect. Migrants with $KT4$ status cannot access the city’s services. Living in temporary accommodation with an unstable job is common for these migrants. This registration status may help authorities to control people but at the same time created difficulties for migrants’ social life and welfare (UNAV, 2003). Young migrants in HCMC with registration status $KT4$ were the population target of this research.

The definition of migration based on residential status is different from migration as defined in nation-wide censuses. In censuses at the national level, a person is defined as a migrant if he/she has moved out of their place of permanent residence for the last five years but not less than 6 months. This definition is broader because it covers all movement in a 5-year period no matter if they change their permanent residence or not. The definition of migration based on residential status omits movers with a change of permanent registration and all people with $KT3$ and $KT4$ status are considered “migrants” no matter how long their duration of stay. Therefore, it is difficult to make a comparison between migration data from national censuses and from censuses at the city level.

**2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a broad view of migration and a review of migration theories in order to identify an appropriate theoretical framework for migration in this study. Adaptation is a concept that examines the experiences of young migrants living in an urban environment. The classification of migration in general and in Vietnam in particular is presented in this chapter. Chapter 3 will describe the methodology used in this research, the sources of data and the techniques used in the data collection process and analysis.
Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used to investigate youth migration to HCMC in this study. The first section discusses the research approach and is followed by a section on methods employed. The research design using multiple methods is then discussed. Attention is also paid to the obstacles of doing research with young migrants. Finally, the author’s experiences of conducting research with young migrants are described. The three main sources of data and details of analysing these data are presented. All of the phases used in conducting research to reach the objectives are described.

3.2 Methodological Approach

3.2.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies

In the social sciences there are two major approaches to research: quantitative and qualitative. The advantages of quantitative research are that it investigates social problems objectively (Sarantakos, 1998). Sarantakos asserts that objectivity is the main concern in quantitative research because objectivity requires researchers to remove personal prejudices and bias and see things for what they are. Moreover, objectivity is a significant indicator in establishing the validity of information (Kumar, 1996). Doing so, investigators become neutral observers and analysts. Ragin (1994) has indicated that qualitative data are best understood as data enhancers and improved data are helpful in seeing key aspects of scenarios more clearly.

Because social phenomena are multi-dimensional and are affected by many factors, to be measured they have to be defined by different variables. These variables are nominal,
ordinal and numerical (interval or ratio). A variable has to have two or more categories or values (Coolican, 1990; Bernard, 1994; Neuman, 2003). In statistics, in order to process data, the values of a quantitative variable are usually coded with numbers. In quantitative research, to ensure reliability, one other important condition is the findings of any research can be repeated and the results have to be the same every time. Quantitative research mainly stresses objectivity and uses more “mechanical” techniques.

In quantitative survey research, sampling is also a matter of concern, especially research in developing countries (Bulmer, 1983). There are two broad kinds of samples: probability and non-probability. Probability sampling is the only approach that makes possible representative samples (Kidder and Judd, 1986). Therefore, the research findings can be use to generalise to the total population (de Vaus, 1995). However, using probability sampling is costly and a sampling frame is not always available, especially in developing countries (CNSA, 2006). In such cases non-probability techniques are used. This type of sampling is appropriate when sampling frames are unavailable or the population is widely dispersed making it impossible for cluster sampling (de Vaus, 1995).

Contrary to quantitative data, qualitative information is gathered verbally in a detailed and complete form. The purpose of this kind of research is to explain human actions that express reality from the inside, but not from outside. Therefore, it is useful for preliminary exploratory work when the researcher has no or little information about the research field. From the informant’s words the researcher attempts to understand people by investigating what they think and their experiences (Oxford, 2007). The information is detailed enough to ensure the validity of research results. Nevertheless, since the
number of informants is small the findings cannot be used to generalize to the wider population (Hakim, 1987). Objectivity in qualitative research is differently understood from that in quantitative perspectives. Objectivity here exists when the research findings are accepted and appreciated by colleagues and society (Sarantakos, 1998).

3.2.1.1 Migration Research

Migration studies have a long tradition of using census data and data from population registers (Nabi et al., 1993). However, the information from this quantitative data source is often limited for analytic purposes (Goldstein et al., 1981; Goldstein, 1983; Sheng, 2002) as these macro-level data on migration have limitations in terms of coverage and cannot provide detailed information on the interplay of individual and environmental factors affecting the moving decisions, as well as the adaptation processes. Therefore, in order to overcome these deficiencies associated with census data, migration-related surveys are conducted (Nabi et al., 1993; Sheng, 2002). However, the surveys treat migration as an isolated phenomenon in society, while the social structure has significant impacts on migration. Using the individual as a unit of analysis in sample surveys does not show the whole dynamics of migration, because in the decision-making process concerning movement or migration there is generally more than one person involved (Nabi et al., 1993). Moreover, information on migration collected through specialised migration surveys does not cover all types of migration that make the findings less convincing for policy-makers and the excluded migrants may include vulnerable groups such as the poor and omitted aspects of migration that need urgent attention (Sheng, 2002: 140). Hence, a combination of secondary data such as census data, population registers and primary data such as sample surveys, and in-depth study is necessary in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of migration.
In Vietnam, like other developing countries due to a lack of secondary data on migration, most migration studies are based on data from censuses (Do, 1998). As Sheng (2002) argues, data from censuses have limitations in regard to coverage and are more likely to omit temporary and short-term migrants. As noted in Chapter 1, although there is a growing body of migration-related research after Vietnam applied a market economy in the 1980s, the data to study migration has been lacking because these surveys also have a limited coverage of the migrant population. Before the reforms began, most migration work focussed on organised migration with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of this settlement program (Guest, 1998a). Therefore, there was little research on spontaneous migration, although this migration flow has dramatically increased since the 1980s (Ha et al., 2000). Spontaneous migration has increased not only in scale but also in its complexity as this movement expanded to cover all internal migration in Vietnam. For example, spontaneous rural-rural migration to the provinces in the Central Highlands was estimated to include 100,000 people during 1981-1989. Together with rural-rural migration, spontaneous migrants to urban areas have rapidly increased over time. Since 1986, on average about 22,000 people move to Ha Noi, and 80,000 people move to HCMC per year. Although there were several large-scale studies on migration which were funded by international organisations such as UNDP and UNFPA, the information on internal migration in Vietnam is very limited and “research on migration in Vietnam is in its initial stage” (Dang, 1999:381). Also as discussed in Chapter 1, most migration studies in Vietnam have mainly focused on the economic aspects of migrants such as employment and income, yet migration is also affected by other social factors (Tran Hong Lien, 2004). Studying migration, especially migrant adjustment, and the relationship with other socio-economic, cultural and demographic
elements is necessary in Vietnam, whereas very little research examines migration using a multiple method approach (Nguyen Nhun, 2004).

As indicated by Gil and Omboe (1983), in less developed countries the researcher should be aware of a lack of sampling frames that cover all target populations, while incomplete sampling frames may lead to unrepresentativeness in probability samples. This is the case in Vietnam as choosing a probability sample in social research is a serious challenge to researchers. For example, in this study there is no complete list of all young migrants in HCMC. Regarding the residential blocks in HCMC, while the police keep records of people moving in and out the area, these data are only useful for establishing the list of migrants at the residential block level. Moreover, the records are under-estimated because many migrants do not report when they leave. It is impossible to make a comprehensive list of migrants with these records. The author approached the Department of Statistics to find such a list, but this department did not have one. Due to limited time the author decided to use quota sampling, a form of non-probability sampling.

3.2.2 A Multiple Method Approach

Multiple methods can be used in the social sciences to combat the limitations of each method. Neuman (2003:p124) shows that qualitative data can support quantitative researchers with rich information about social processes in specific settings. The first advantage of multi-method approaches is that it enables the researcher to examine the problem from different perspectives, and enable them to reach conclusions that are less biased and stronger in validity. Secondly, a combination of data from self-reported research and those from external objective observations is the best way to provide a comprehensive view of social problems. Moreover, this combination sheds more light
on the findings with new ideas, perspectives and concepts. Finally, this multi-method approach also provides a variety of values and points of view (Greene, 2005: 275). It is obvious that our society is created by people and its reality is expressed in both external actions and internal emotional factors. One single research method can not cover all aspects of social problems. Deciding which approach to be used depends on the research questions the investigator intends to answer. Sometimes only a single method is applied; however, at other times both methods are employed. It is a question which method is appropriate to the questions we intend to give answers (Bouma, 1996: 173). Qualitative research is often carried out before a survey as a means of providing exploratory information for designing a survey, but sometimes it is conducted after the survey in order to explain the quantitative findings. Both quantitative and qualitative perspectives are necessary as each of them has its own rules and disciplines. As stated by Philip (1998), which method to use depends on the research topic rather than the researcher’s preference. Since social phenomena are complex, using single methodologies or datasets would not give a comprehensive picture of the subject under investigation (Danso, 2001). For this reason the multiple method approach is used in many migration studies. Hugo (1975) used a multiple method approach in his doctoral research on migration in Indonesia, and Hoy (1996) used quantitative and qualitative data to examine the impact of migration on marriage and fertility behaviour in China.

3.2.2.1 Structure of Research

A multiple method approach has been used in this study for the following reasons:

- Quantitative statistical data were used in order to give a general picture of migration in Vietnam and migration of youth specifically.
• Quantitative data were used to investigate the economic disparities between rural and urban places at the macro level that affect migration flows, which can only be depicted numerically and these data can be obtained from statistical data as well.

• Information such as accommodation status, employment and health conditions, which attempts to describe a comprehensive view of the life of youth migrants, is based on primary data collected in an empirical survey.

• In this survey research the author intends to compare the levels of adjustment of different groups of young migrants, for example, migrants separated into sub-groups who share the same demographic characteristics such as education, age, region of origin, etc. Based on the information of each person such as accommodation and occupation status we can then make the above comparison by using statistical methods of analysis.

• In order to understand why someone is very successful or has failed despite having the same background as others, in-depth information was required to obtain adequate level of data for analysis.

The multiple methods used in this study consist of statistical analysis of quantitative data, and thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with authorities and migrants.

An appropriate source of secondary data was identified in the form of the 1999 census in Vietnam and 2004 census in HCMC. Although not specifically focused on migration the censuses comprehensively covered a range of issues related to internal migration in Vietnam. The censuses included questions regarding:

- Date and place of birth
- Educational attainment
- The place of residence at the time of the survey
- The place of residence 5 years ago and the current place of usual residence
These questions make it possible to establish cross-classifications of migration with other demographic and social economic characteristics that are recorded in the censuses.

Data related to the adaptation of young migrants were collected in the 2005 youth survey. The survey involved 300 migrants who were selected from 3 residential wards in three districts where migrants were concentrated. Analysing primary data of previous migration-related qualitative studies are also applied to get more information on the adaptation skills of young migrants. Combining these two types of data can provide a more comprehensive view of the factors influencing the lives of young migrants in the city.

• To assess policy implications of the findings
  - Statistical data at two levels-national and city level
  - Data from previous migration-related studies
  - Data from the empirical survey

This requires an analysis of the planning documents concerning migration at the city level, the findings of previous research and the empirical survey undertaken here in order to identify the negative impacts of policies on how young migrants adapt to a new environment. It is hoped that this evidence will be a useful reference for policy-makers.

Together with the survey, interviews with officials were done in order to identify issues for further explanation. From structured interviews, it was found that many migrants had returned home, especially those from Da Nang. The in-depth interviews with returnees were then taken to explore the life experiences during their stay in HCMC as well as to find out the reasons why they came back to their village. The details of the research steps are provided later in this chapter.
3.3 Background of Censuses

3.3.1 The 1999 Census

Since the first census undertaken in 1979, two more censuses were done in 1989 and 1999. Data from the 1989 census shows a modest level of internal migration during the 1980s, except for the New Economic Zone provinces in the Central Highlands where most organised migrants went (Doan and Trinh, 1998). Like the 1979 and 1989 censuses, the 1999 census collected information of all persons in the household who were present at the time of the census on 1 April 1999. Compared to the 1989 census, the 1999 census was more comprehensive in respect to demographic, social and economic factors (GSO, 2001). The questions about migration concerned: date and place of birth; place of residence at time of survey; and place of residence 5 years ago. These questions make it possible to establish cross-classifications of migration with other demographic and social economic characteristics recorded in the censuses. The information on the place of residence 5 years ago and the current place of residence can provide information on migration flows. This also makes it possible to calculate the number of in-migrants and out-migrants during the 5-year period.

Comparing data on migration between censuses it is useful for establishing trends, despite there being some limitations as a source of data on migration. As Nabi et al. (1993) and Sheng (2002) indicate, census data does not permit information for more detailed analysis. For example, data refer to “5-year migration” does not show the multiple moves and return migration events that took place during that 5-year period (Doan and Trinh, 1998). Census data also systematically exclude non-permanent migration (Hugo, 1982). In Vietnam, census data also has the same limitations. Indeed, since the definition of a migrant used in censuses is a person who moved to another
administrative area, different from his or her place of previous residence for 6 months to 5 years up to the Census, every migrant is counted only once irrespective of how many times they have moved within these 5 years. Therefore these data do not show information on repeated or frequent movements. Also, this information omits return migrants. Since the information on return migration, as well as on persons moving out of their usual place of residence for short periods of time, is not collected, the information on temporary and seasonal migration is unknown, whereas this sort of movement has become more significant over time (GSO-UNDP, 2001 and 2006). Moreover, since the purpose of census data is to provide basic information on a population, these data on migration mainly focus on volumes and trends of rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural and urban-urban migration. As a result, detailed information on moving determinants and the lives of migrants in the place of destination (which is necessary for migration research) is omitted. Consequently, researchers on migration have to use other sources of data in order to shed more light on these issues.

3.3.2 The 2004 Census in HCMC

In order to understand the total population number as well as its growth patterns and characteristics in the city, on 1/10/2004 HCMC’s government conducted a census. Obtaining information on the population is necessary for the city as there has been a significant change in population growth since the reforms began. The census was conducted on 1 October 2004 and included the city’s entire population. There were two types of questionnaires. One type of questionnaire consisted of interviews of all households and another one focused on 10 percent of households that were randomly selected.

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5 A migrant may pass the district border to another district, move from one province to another province or from one major city to another.
In the first type of questionnaires, in addition to information on residential status such as the place of residence 5 years ago, age, gender and nationality, the 2004 Census also collected information on level of education, qualifications, employment status, housing and living standards. The type of questions asked in this census was similar to those of the 1999 census; hence they have similar advantages and limitations. The questions asked in this census were the following:

- Sex, nationality, date of birth
- Residential status
- Education status
- Current place of residence
- Place of residence 5 years ago (i.e. province or city)

In the 10 percent sample survey, the questions focused on education level achieved, qualifications, employment status, accommodation status and living conditions. Comparing data between the two censuses is very useful for policy-makers and planners. In terms of migration, the census provides information on the residential status of people. Indeed, the residential status of migrants and non-migrants was provided in this census as well as their socio-economic and demographic characteristics. The difference in gender, age and level of education between migrants and non-migrants is shown in the 2004 census data. Moreover, the place of residence 5 years ago of migrants and non-migrants is presented and it clearly shows spatial differences in origin or sending places of migration to HCMC over time. These data provide a better overview of recent migration in HCMC compared to other census and statistical data; however, as it is mainly factual information on occupations, education levels, ethnic groups, it can not provide a full picture of the experiences of migrants.
Together with secondary data from censuses, this study also uses research reports and raw data from previous studies. Raw data from a study with 22 young migrants in District 8, HCMC in 2004 was used. This research was one part of the project “Enhancing Capacity to Engender Research for Sustainable Development, Vietnam 2003-2005” (ECERFSD Survey) which was conducted by researchers from different organisations in Vietnam and the Department of Anthropology at Laval University, Canada. Additionally, information from a study involving 23 interviews with young migrants who were street vendors in HCMC was used. This study was done in 2004 by Anh Thu Tran, a junior researcher at the Department of Sociology at the National University of HCMC for her BA thesis titled “Perception and behaviour of street children toward sexual harassment and HIV/AIDS” which is called “2004 Survey” in this thesis. Using a non-probability quota sample, she chose 20 girls and 3 boys for the research. The target population was street vendors aged 13-17 - either migrants or local people. Also, information from 4 focus group discussions with young migrants in two factories in Song Than Industrial Zone was used. These discussions were a part of project “Improving understanding of reproductive health and sexuality of young migrants in industrial zones in Vietnam”. The research was conducted by the Department of Sociology at the National University of HCMC and the National Institute of Sociology with 5 focus group discussions and 20 in-depth interviews with young workers at two factories. The aim of this study was to understand the reproductive health knowledge of young workers as well as their behaviour regarding this aspect before choosing an appropriate action program. In order to distinguish it with other studies, in this thesis the project is named “Xuyen Tran and Huong Nguyen, 2004”. The author selected appropriate data and used detailed information to illustrate quantitative data in her thesis. These data mainly focus on the determinants of moving as well as the experiences of young migrants in the city. The data provide in-depth and a
wide variety of views about the lives of young migrants which cannot be found in structured data.

3.4 Survey of Young Migrants

The survey was conducted using 300 structured interviews with young migrants in HCMC. The survey phases are discussed in the following sections.

3.4.1 Sampling

3.4.1.1 Target Population

In survey research, the term population is defined as all possible elements that the researcher wishes to study (Dane, 1990). In this survey, the target population consists of young people aged 15-24 who had moved from rural areas to Ho Chi Minh City and had been living there for at least 6 months. The sampling unit is the individual who lives either themselves or with their family.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the residential status of people in Vietnam is divided into 4 categories: KT1, KT2, KT3 and KT4. People with KT1 and KT2 are non-migrants and those with KT3 and KT4 are migrants, and most of them are spontaneous migrants. Young migrants with KT4 are the targets of this research. As noted previously, the number of these migrants has rapidly increased. As Dang (1998) indicates, these spontaneous movers have faced many difficulties in areas of destination because of low levels of education and lack of work, which force them to do any type of work to survive. Although temporary and circular migration is another important stream of rural-urban migration in the city (GSO-UNDP, 2006), due to limited time and funding, they are not included in this study. Although students in dormitories are also regarded as KT4, they were not included. This research only focused on migrants with KT4 who
work in industrial zones or in the informal sector and had stayed in HCMC more than 6 months.

3.4.1.2 Survey Location

The sample was drawn from the three districts of HCMC (Figure 3.1). The primary sampling units were defined on the basis of a high concentration of migrants through statistical information and in discussion with the relevant authorities.

Figure 3.1 Study Areas
As indicated in Table 3.1, there were 5 districts having a high proportion of migrants in their population (above 40 percent): Go Vap, Tan Phu, Thu Duc, District 12 and Binh Tan. At the beginning, the researcher intended to choose District 12, Thu Duc and Binh Tan because these three districts have the highest migration rates in comparison to other districts in HCMC (see Table 3.1). However, after talking with an official in District 12, the plan changed and Go Vap was selected instead. According to this official, District 12 is still in the very early stages of urbanisation and thus the proportion of residents working in agriculture is still high. Also, the industrial zones are mainly concentrated in other districts adjacent to District 12 such as Go Vap and Tan Binh.

Table 3.1 Population of Districts according to Residential Status, HCMC, 2004
Source: 2004 Census in HCMC conducted by HCMC Statistical Department (SO, 2005)

After talking this with this official, the author discussed issues with other experienced researchers in the Department of Sociology, at the National University in HCMC. In their opinion, Go Vap has a long tradition of migration. The author and one researcher then went to the Department of Order and Security in District Go Vap to ask for information. After providing some reports on population registers, the head of the
department explained that the migration rate in Go Vap is lower than that in District 12 because the total population of Go Vap was one and half as much as that in District 12, and the absolute number of migrants in this district was much higher. Indeed, in 2004 the number of migrants with KT3 and KT4 in District 12 was much lower than Go Vap and the lowest compared with the other three districts (Table 3.1). In addition, during the 1990s Go Vap experienced a massive influx of migrants due to the concentration of factories. Migrants living in these places had been residents longer than migrants in new districts, they had stayed for much longer than in other new districts and as a result, their experiences in the city are different from those of other urbanised districts in the city.

After the 3 districts were selected, the author and the research team went to meet officials in each district and outlined the purpose of the research. Based on their recommendations, one residential block was chosen from each district. These blocks were Linh Trung Ward in Thu Duc District, Ward 12 in Go Vap and Binh Hung Hoa A in Binh Tan where the number of migrants dominated the total population. For example in Binh Hung Hoa Ward in Binh Tan, more than 90 percent of population were migrants. After the author chose the block, the authority at the district level issued a letter to introduce the research team to the authority in the block and ask for assistance in the project. The research team then made appointments with this person and at the meeting the researchers asked for information about migrants in the ward as well as arranging times for the interviews.

**3.4.1.3 Sampling Method**

As noted already, the survey has conducted with 300 young migrants aged 15-24 who had migrated more than 6 months ago and intended to stay permanently. A non-
probability quota sample was employed in this research. Using this non-random technique, migrants were sampled with the target of 100 people from each of the three residential wards. The characteristics desired in the elements to be interviewed are specified as the age of migrants was limited between 15 and 24. Also, of 300 young migrants, an equal number of males and females were selected. Occupations varied widely, so it was difficult to balance the number of migrants in terms of employment groups. However, the author tried to balance the numbers in each job group in order to avoid the concentration of interviewees in distinct occupations.

For the research to include many kinds of young migrants, at the meetings with authorities at the ward level, the researchers asked them to provide information about the type of jobs migrants in their ward usually did, including basic information about the migrants in the ward such as where they came from, living conditions, etc. With their assistance the researchers learned that in Binh Hung Hoa Ward, in Binh Tan District many migrants worked in workshops in Ward 12. In Go Vap many migrants worked in garment factories, while in Linh Trung, Thu Duc most migrants worked in industrial zones or were street vendors. The researcher talked with local authorities at the ward level to get information about different places where migrants concentrate the most as well as information about the characteristics of migrants in each place. Finally, the researcher decided to select areas for research in the ward. The researcher asked the authority in each area to provide information on households with migrants. Further information such as where they live, how many migrants in the household, how old they are and what kind of jobs they do was obtained and individuals in the households were chosen. From the conversations, the researchers judged that migrants were very busy, so they decided to interview them at night. Because it was not safe to go to the area at night, in order to avoid any inconvenience the author asked some officials to join the
survey and the author paid for their time. Their jobs were to provide information about households having migrants and characteristics such as gender and occupation. After interviewees were chosen, authorities took interviewers to the household to introduce and arrange times for interviews.

Finally, 300 individuals were drawn from these selected blocks, using quota sampling. Of these 300 people, only 5 refused to be interviewed so these people were replaced by other candidates. The results are shown in Table 3.2; 54 percent of respondents were male and 46 percent female.

### Table 3.2 Respondents according to Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the author intended to balance the number of each occupation and age group, these varied widely. Therefore, it was impossible to provide a quota for them. For instance, the migrants’ ages ranged from 15 to 24 and their jobs are very diverse. Therefore, the alternative solution was a quota for choosing labour sectors (Table 3.3). Stated-owned, joint-venture and legal private factories were defined as the formal sector. Private workshops that were registered as a home business or operated without registration were listed as being informal occupations. Migrants working as self business in the informal sector in this survey are people who sell goods in the market or work as street vendors.

### Table 3.3 Respondents according to Labour Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour Sector</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal sector</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informal sector</strong></td>
<td><strong>213</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private workshop</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>297</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To ensure that the sample is as representative as possible, the research team was aware of potential bias. The major problem is that the interviewer might choose only people who are friendly and easy to talk to and avoid houses located far from the administrative centre and are hard to get to (Bailey, 1987). Also, sometimes they asked only their friends or anyone they met on the street. Being conscious of this, the researchers applied very strict rules for interviews in this survey. They could not choose the respondents by themselves but had to follow the research process carefully (Figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2 The Steps of Choosing Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting with authorities at the District level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Presenting the purpose of the study by showing the letter from University of Social Sciences and Humanities in HCMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Asking for advice to choose an appropriate residential block for surveying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Asking the authority at the district level to give out a letter to introduce the research team to the authority in the block and ask for help in the project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting with authorities at the ward level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Getting information about migration in the ward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Arranging people in the ward to join the survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Getting initial information on households with migrants and choosing interviewees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Authorities took interviewers to the household to introduce and arrange times for interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The interviewer would conduct the interview soon after being introduced if available. But he/she must report that to the supervisor by mobile phone.
- In the questionnaire, the interviewer had to write the name and address of the interviewee.
- After the interview was finished, the interviewer gave the answered questionnaire to the supervisor and will then be taken to another household.
- In case the migrant selected for interview was not suitable, the interviewer kept the supervisor posted and moved to another household.

After that, the interviewers were sent to the selected households. The researcher could ensure that the sample basically covered different strata of the target population. Indeed, the age structure of the sample is quite similar to that of the 2004 Census data. Table 3.4 shows that approximately one third were aged 15-19 years and two thirds 20-24 years. Similarly, the percentage of people who had a higher education degree in the sample is
only 1 percent and that from 2004 census is just above 1 percent. In terms of ethnic grouping, 97 percent of migrants from the sample are Kinh people and this is similar to the 2004 census.

**Table 3.4 Age Structure of Migrants in HCMC**

Source: 2004 Census (SO, 2005) and the Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Number of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Of the sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of the sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.4.1.4 Questionnaire**

A copy of the questionnaire is attached in the Appendices A and B. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts: determinants of moving, the migrant’s characteristics and their health status. The first section of the questionnaire deals with determinants of moving. Preliminary questions were asked about the migrant’s place of origin and time of arrival in the city. The purpose of getting information on the period of residence was to understand whether there are differences between levels of adaptation and how long they had been in the city. Like other migration-related studies, the place of origin was asked in order to examine the impact of regional disparities on moving determinants. The following questions were on the determinants of migration. Realising that the factors influencing the decision to move are heterogeneous the researcher listed eleven different motivations of moving and respondents were asked to select as many as were relevant to him or her. Moreover the informants were also asked why they had chosen HCMC as a destination but not other cities and whether they intended to stay in HCMC permanently. One question included in this section was who made the decision to move and how much influence did they have on the decision-making process. The final questions in this section investigated the concerns of movers about the destination.
They asked how many people the migrant knew in the city and what kinds of information were available and how much they knew about HCMC before they migrated.

Since economics plays the most important part in migration and work is the main indicator of economic life, the second section of the questionnaire requested details on the migrant employment status. The first questions related to their type of work before and after moving. This aimed to see whether there was any upward or downward change in terms of the job when they moved. The questions related to sector and legalised status of the job and their knowledge of labour laws were also ascertained. Questions related to the choice of their current job, the requirements of recruitment, length of job search, assistance in finding employment, the cost of obtaining a job, income, working hours per week, their education level before and after moving and difficulties they faced to get the job are asked in this subsection. It is believed that although the migrants needed little time to obtain their jobs, most of them have had unstable and short-term work and they worked on average 57 hours a week under hard conditions (Bach et al., 1997: 48). Questions relating to the method of transport to work, their satisfaction with the job and their future work plans are also taken into account. Here, the questions regarding education and their experiences in the job were included because education and work are related. The difficulties in searching for work as well as information on how they overcame these challenges were collected. The following questions asked their opinions on their work environment and any difficulties they faced at work. The aim was to provide as broad a picture as possible about their problems in the labour market.

The third section looked at accommodation status and living conditions of the migrant such as the kind of houses, household ownership and household goods, access to
infrastructure and access to essential services such as water, electricity, etc. Previous researchers (Dang, 1998; Bach et al., 1997; Guest, 1998a) state that due to their low paying jobs, migrants did not have enough money to secure good accommodation, so they lived in conditions of squalor with poor sanitation, high person-to-room ratios and no access to piped water. Further questions concerned belongings in the household where the migrant lived. They were asked whether they were satisfied with their current accommodation, their income at the time of interview and they were asked to make a comparison between their income before and after moving. This is followed with questions on their expenses and savings.

The information on the consequences of migration was obtained in the fourth section with queries regarding changes in income, education, and other characteristics between the time of migration and the time of the survey. Further questions focused on their social adjustment were asked in the fifth section. To provide a comprehensive insight into their social lives; besides their informal relationships with relatives and close friends, they were asked about their participation in formal social associations and contacts with local authorities. In this section the following questions are included;

1. The role of social networks in adjustment of young migrants:

2. The number of relatives or friends they know in the city.

3. The influence of relatives and friends in gaining information about the city and selecting destinations.

4. What kind of assistance the migrant has received from them: housing, obtaining a job and sharing experiences of work and other facets of life.

5. Questions relating to the role of formal institutions and policies in migrants adapting to the city.
6. Whether young migrants receive any assistance in finding employment, housing, etc. from city officials.

7. Migrants’ opinions about the advantages or disadvantages of how city policies affect them.

The final section requested information on health care: health status of the migrant, access to health care services and health insurance. Due to their limited information on access to health care services, the research tended to investigate the percentage of migrants who had health cover and where those without health cover went when they needed medical help. The study also wanted to find out why they did not have health insurance due to money issues or not being aware of its necessity. Questions on their attitudes toward premarital sex, their sexual knowledge and understanding about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS were also asked. This was followed with questions on their mental health, such as whether they ever encountered stress or depression in the urban environment, as well as whether they took part in high-risk behaviours such as drug taking. The reasons for these behaviours were also sought.

Lastly, demographic questions such as age, religion, ethnic groups, sex and education levels of the migrants were asked. Since the main purpose of the research was to get information on migration, if the author put these questions at the beginning of the talk the respondents may have asked, “Why do you ask so many questions about my personal life?” Moreover, during the conversation the interviewer may get answers to these questions without actually asking them. In order to obtain correct information, the researcher designed the interview as a conversation, starting the interview with many short questions on personal traits which helped in building a rapport between the interviewer and interviewee.
3.4.1.5 Pilot Survey

The research team consisted of experienced researchers and students at the Department of Sociology at the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University in HCMC, Vietnam. Taking part in a training session led by the author was compulsory for all interviewers and supervisors. The author introduced the objectives of the research and explained in more detail the questionnaire as well as the requirement for collecting information. All of the interviewers had experience in interviewing but interviewees varied in terms of culture and lifestyle, so the trainees were also advised how to approach their task. They were required to ask the questions in a simple and understandable way and had one day to familiarise themselves with the questionnaire content. The following day they gathered together and raised questions they may have had about the questionnaire. They also practised asking questions and when the training finished they were sent out to interview one or two migrants they met on the street. The purpose of this was to check the quality of the questionnaire. For example, some questions may have been hard for migrants to understand. After getting their feedback, the questionnaire was revised to see if their comments were relevant. The revised questionnaire was sent to interview again to find any more problems. After two amendments, the questionnaire was photocopied and the next step was to go into the field.

3.4.1.6 Field Work

Since the young migrants are from rural areas and most of them have low levels of education they are not familiar with being interviewed. To solve this problem, the researcher decided to do face-to-face interviews so that the interviewers could correct the respondent’s misunderstandings and to probe inadequate answers (Kidder and Judd,
Personal interviews are likely to have higher rates of responses and the quality of answers will be more accurate, especially questions regarding incomes and other complex issues. Normally, face-to-face interviews may cause bias because the respondent may give answers that satisfy the interviewer but unreliable. In an attempt to avoid this bias, the interviewer was encouraged to create a relaxed, friendly atmosphere allowing the informant to give responses objectively. In order to get structured responses for easier processing of data, most of the questions were closed; however, some of questions required more detail so open-ended questions and instructions to comment about the structured questions were included (Chadwick et al., 1984). Although most questionnaire items were pre-coded, the researcher realised that in many cases the questionnaire items did not cover all of the respondents’ choices in the sample. The only way of overcome this was to include “others” so that the informants could express their opinions openly. The interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour. In general, the respondents had no difficulties in answering questions.

The survey took place in three residential blocks in three districts of HCMC from August 2005 to December 2005. Because the interviewees were busy, most of the interviews were completed at night or on the weekend. However, for the respondents’ convenience the interview was conducted any time they were available. The research team spoke with local city authorities at different levels for permission to conduct the survey. The questionnaires were administered by a group of students from the Department of Sociology and they had some previous experience in interviewing. This group was supervised by two experienced researchers. The main responsibility of the author was to perform in-depth interviews and undertake observations.
Before questioning, the research team met a representative of the local authority at the ward level and they were provided with general information about the area and one local guide (a local authority or a respected person in the community) was asked to join the survey team. The authorities provided information on which households had migrants as well as their ages and occupations. In order to keep the sample in line with quota of selected attributes, the interviewer was required to report to the researcher about the information given by the respondents soon after the interview. The researcher made a list of respondents with their characteristics such as age, gender and usual occupations. At the end of the day, interviewers were posted about the list so that they knew how many and what type of migrants were needed for interviewing the next day.

In the household, the guide talked basically about the purpose of the research and then asked for permission to interview in order to selective migrants. To ensure that the interview went smoothly, two supervisors from the research team stayed in a place near the houses where the interviewing was being conducted in order to answer any questions related to the questionnaire or the sample. During the interviews the author stayed in the centre of the residential block to review the questionnaires and acted as a coordinator. We kept in touch by mobile phone to receive updated information since the area concerned was very large. All of the questionnaires were submitted to the supervisors and checked before being given to the author. The interviewer was in charge of explaining any unclear information; if needed they had to come back to check the information with the respondent. The completed questionnaires were then given to the supervisors to check before they were submitted to the author.
3.5 In-depth Interviews

Five detailed discussions with return migrants in Quan Chau Village, Da Nang (in the Centre of Vietnam, see Figure 1.3) was undertaken. The reason for choosing this place for interviewing returnees was that from talks with a local authority who was in charge of youth, the author found that in this village nearly 70 percent of migrants to HCMC had returned since Da Nang had become more developed. The author made contact with an authority in this community and flew there in July, 2006. After talking with this person to obtain general information about returnees in this place, he arranged for the author to meet 5 young return migrants. From discussions with these people, the author obtained the information such as when they lived in HCMC, when they came back to the village, what kinds of job they did before and currently, how their lives were in HCMC and why they returned to their villages, etc. Their plans for the future were also discussed. In order to understand the local authorities’ opinions about young migrants, some conversations with them were held. Two authorities in ward Binh Tan - one of them was in charge of youth and another was responsible for population issues – one from Binh Chanh and one director of a private garment factory were interviewed. They were questioned about the experiences of young migrants in their communities and what their opinions were of them.

3.6 Obstacles to the Research

As Scott et al., (2006) argued, not only foreigners but younger Vietnamese researchers who study in Western countries and return to Vietnam face difficulties in doing social research in their home country. The older generation of Vietnamese researchers had experienced a different research culture when they went to the USSR and Eastern Europe. Acknowledging this difficulty, the author only chose younger researchers in the department who had previously worked with Western researchers. In Vietnam
authorising field research has to go through a hierarchical and bureaucratic process (Scott et al, 2006). After approval has been granted, the authorities introduce the researcher to officials at the place where the survey is conducted. Normally, the researchers work in collaboration with authorities at this grassroots level. Therefore, with a short timeframe for fieldwork in HCMC, the author asked for permission from the National University and it duly sent a letter to the district government and from the district level to the ward level, etc. The author had to present written copies of the research purpose as well as the questionnaire to the appropriate authorities at all times.

Another difficulty was finding authorities who knew the location well enough to take interviewers to households. Finding the appropriate time to talk with young migrants was also a challenge because the respondents worked late during the day and sometimes on weekends. Therefore, after working hours they are tired and the interviewer was often not welcome. Many of them worked from 7am to 12pm and they had only a two hour break during the day - one hour for lunch and one for dinner. Having very little time to relax, they often declined offers to be interviewed. To overcome this, especially in regard to migrants working in factories, the research team conducted interviews at any time the interviewee was available, even late at night (see Figure 3.3) or on the weekend if possible. Interviewers sometimes talked to migrants who worked at home while they worked. For street vendors, the interviewer often talked to them first and to arrange an interview time or at times interviews were done on the street while they had a break.
Figure 3.3 The author and two interviewers are waiting for other interviewers on the street before they finish interviewing for the day to go home together.

The roads in these districts, especially in Binh Tan District were very hard to travel on at night. The survey was conducted in the wet season and the roads were often flooded after heavy rain (Figure 3.4). Some of the interviewers were young girls, so the author asked them to go in pairs: one male and one female to avoid any problems that may occur. To interview people who worked till midnight, we had to interview them while they worked, if permission was obtained from the employer. This was difficult for two reasons. Firstly they did not want their workers to be disturbed while working. Secondly, they suspected that we were working for the government. The interviewers had to convince these owners that this was not the case. However, some owners were still not completely convinced, so they tried to overhear the conversation. Consequently, the respondents would have felt uncomfortable about talking in the presence of other people. The interviewers tried to talk quietly so that other people could not hear, and if they felt that the information was not trustworthy, the author cancelled the interview.
Young migrants were from rural areas so most of them were not familiar with being interviewed. They often felt uncomfortable and shy when interviewed, and because most of them had low levels of education, the interviewers were unlikely to obtain correct information from them. In some cases we had to cancel the interview because the respondents answered ‘no’ to every question. Visitors often interrupted interviews, as did the presence of housemates or friends. Hence, interviewers had to become used to interviews stopping and starting. Moreover, face-to-face interviews were administered which were costly and took time. Finally, since the survey involved more than 300 migrants this in itself took time to complete the project.
3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Quantitative Data

All questionnaires were checked by research supervisors soon after they were completed so that the interviewers could verify answers with informants if needed. When the survey was completed the data was then processed. Data from 300 questionnaires were entered into the computer and analysed using the SPSS software program (version 13). This statistical software is also suitable for cleaning and editing.

In the analysis process this software allows the analyser to calculate from simple frequency distributions and cross-tabulations to complex statistical procedures such as regression. For instance, the number and percentage of each sex in the sample and the proportions in each job category were measured using frequency distributions. The next step in descriptive statistics was to measure the central tendency such as the mean and the median, to measure average income and average expenses, and then to measure relationships between variables. Cross-tabulations were used to measure relationships between variables such as occupation and income, education levels and their knowledge on Sexually Transmitted Diseases, etc. These helped the researcher to describe her data.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data

All the in-depth interviews conducted by the author and some experienced researchers were taped and transcribed. Since the qualitative data were used as supplementary data, the author read through all of the transcripts and took careful notes of that were useful and ‘put flesh’ on the quantitative data.
3.8 Conclusion

This chapter described the methodology used for studying young migrants in Ho Chi Minh City. It reviewed the methodological approaches, specifically quantitative and qualitative methods. The multiple method research design was also described and this chapter also focused on delineating the sources of data used as well as their role in obtaining the specific objectives of this study. The quantitative data of the research has been drawn from three sources: census data, statistical data and data from the author’s survey with 300 recent migrants in HCMC. Qualitative data has been drawn from raw data in previous studies and from those conducted by the author with migrant returnees and local authorities. The results are presented in the following chapters.
Chapter 4

Urbanisation in Vietnam

4.1 Introduction

In the last two decades, the developing countries of Asia have experienced rapid urbanisation (Hugo, 2006a and 1996; Jones, 1997 and 2002; Afsar, 2000; Mohan, 1996). Their urban populations have increased 6-fold from 285 million to 1.7 billion in the period 1950-1995 (Afsar, 2000:21) and to 1.96 billion in 2000 (UN, 2002). Of the total urban population in the developing world, nearly half (1.38 billion) lived in Asia in 2000 (UN, 2002). Table 4.1 summarises the ratio of urban populations in East and South-East Asia.

Table 4.1 Percentage of Urban Populations in East and South-East Asia
Source: UNESCAP (2004: V)

Table 4.1 shows that the urban population in East and South-East Asia has significantly increased over time. In Vietnam, as a result of low levels of urbanisation, the urban population is small, with 24.2 percent of people living in urban areas in 2000, compared to Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia, which had 58.8, 58.6 and 40.2 percent respectively. However, urban population growth in Vietnam has increased dramatically
since the 1990s, and the number of people living in rural areas has decreased from 75.8 percent in 2000 to 72.9 percent in 2006 (Table 4.2). Between 2000 and 2006, Vietnam experienced an urban population growth rate of about 3 percent per year, while rural population growth was less than 1 percent.

Table 4.2 Distribution of Rural and Urban Populations, Vietnam 1990-2006
Source: GSO (2007a)

Growing rural-urban migration caused by rapid urbanisation in developing countries has created many problems (Afsar, 2000). Most of the literature on migration concurs that internal migration has made a significant contribution to urban population growth in developing countries (Goldstein 1994; McGee, 1994; Hugo, 1996; Jones, 2002) and population mobility is both a cause and effect of socio-economic change. In order to understand the impact of urbanisation on migration, this chapter examines its patterns and trends and the relationship between urbanisation and migration.

4.2 Definition of Urban Places in Vietnam
Before discussing the definition of urban place, the terms ‘urban’ and ‘urbanisation’ need to be clarified. The term ‘urban’ can have different connotations; ‘urban’ not only refers to mega cities, but to small urban centres with populations of only 1,000 in some countries. ‘Urbanisation’ refers to the trend of people living in urban areas and being considered as urban residents (Sheng, 2002:3). In many countries an urban place is
defined on the basis of its political function and the size and characteristics of population (Afsar, 2000). The common requirements used are as follows:

- The place must be an administration centre of an area or region.
- Population size has to be over a certain number.
- Population density.
- Proportion of non-farming population.
- Has infrastructure.

It is difficult to make a comparison of the levels of urbanisation between countries because the definition of urban place varies from country to country and in some countries such as Indonesia the distinction between rural and urban places are blurred (Hugo, 2003). This inconsistency is not only difficult to compare urbanisation between countries, it also leads to different findings in a country if we use different data. This is the case in Vietnam as different results were found in the level of urbanisation in Vietnam from the General Statistical Office (GSO) and United Nations statistics (Gurby and Truong, 2003). The proportion of urban population in Vietnam given by the GSO was 23.5 in 1999, and was reported by United Nations as being 19.7 percent in 2000. This is because data from GSO included small rural populations in the major cities; surveying of the administrative borders of these cities went beyond urban places. According to Gurby and Truong (2003) in order to avoid this inconsistency, researchers should use data which is relatively consistent. In Vietnam, the condition of being an urban centre from 2001 is in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3 Five conditions of being an Urban Centre, Vietnam, 2001**

Source: Ministry of Interior Affairs (MIA) (2001)
The definition of an urban place in Vietnam is determined by Edict 72/2001/ND-CP, enforced in 2001 by the Ministry of Interior Affairs. There are 5 chief characteristics of a city (see Table 4.3) and the 6 levels in which the cities are divided are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Types of Urban Centres in Vietnam, 2001
Source: Ministry of Interior Affairs (MIA) (2001)

NOTE:
This table is included on page 90 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

According to this definition, there were 25 cities, 60 urban places at the provincial level and 573 small towns at the district level in 2003 (Tran Huu Tuong, 2003). In 2004, 25 percent of Vietnam’s population lived in urban areas and the country had 2 special cities, Ha Noi and HCMC; 4 cities were classified at level 1, 14 cities at level 2 and 10 cities at level 3. The number of cities which are under the direct management of the government rose to 5 when Can Tho, a city in the Mekong Delta region, became a national city on 1st January 2004.
4.3 Urbanisation Trends

After a long period with low and stable levels of urbanisation, the urban population rose after 1989. Although the urban population has increased dramatically, Vietnam is still an agricultural country with 73.5 percent of its people living on the land in 2004 (Table 4.5). Of 42 million people employed in 2005, 57.9 percent worked in the primary sector (MOFA, 2008). According to the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (VNN, 2007) in 2005 about 32 million people employed in Vietnam lived in the countryside, which made up 75 percent of the total working population. Most of them worked in agriculture, forestry and aquiculture, which all had low productivity rates.

Table 4.5 Urban Population Rates, Vietnam 1960-2006

Source: Census Monograph on Internal Migration and Urbanisation in Vietnam (GSO-UNDP, 2001: 57 and GSO, 2007a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Urban population (% of total population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary 2006</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With 27.1 percent of its total population living in urban areas in 2006, Vietnam is still one of the least urbanised nations in South-East Asia. Table 4.5 shows that the level of urbanisation in Vietnam between 1960 and 2006. Although it increased during the 1970s to more than 21.0 percent but declined to 19.0 percent during the 1980s and increased to 27.1 percent in 2006. The reason for the higher level of urbanisation during the 1970s was due to the impact of war in rural areas in the South (Zhang et al., 2001).
During this time, many refugees moved to cities such as Sai Gon and Bien Hoa. In 1960 the population of Saigon was 2.3 million and 20 percent of the southern population lived in urban areas (Desbarats, 1987: 46). During the last few years of the war, 10 million people (47 percent of the South’s total population) were urban residents, resulting in the uneven population distribution among regions in the South. After unification in 1975, over-population in the South caused food shortages as well as high rates of unemployment in the city (Bach et al., 1997). To combat these problems, the government set up a program that compelled people to return to their homes in rural areas or go to the NEZs. From 1975 to 1980, over 832,000 people from HCMC were repatriated to their hometowns or moved to NEZs (Chi Cuc Di Dan, 2002). This explains the decrease in the proportion of urban residents during the 1980s. After the reforms, the urban population increased and in 2000, the rate was 24.1 percent and in 2006 it increased to 27.1 percent (Table 4.5).

GSO-UNDP (2001: 60-61) shows that the number of urban inhabitants has increased in the respective regions between 1989 and 1999. However, the process of urbanisation is uneven. The Red River Delta was the least urbanised in both periods and this rate increased only 0.9 percent in 10 years. In less developed provinces such as Thai Binh and Ha Nam in this region, around 94 percent of the population in these places lived outside municipal areas. Except for the South-East, there was little change especially the North-West, Mekong Delta and Middle South regions. This is because the South-East has been the most developed region in Vietnam. Consequently, in the remote provinces in the region such as Binh Phuoc and Binh Duong, the percentage of urban population significantly improved from below 5 percent in 1989 to 15.2 percent and 32.6 percent respectively in 1999. The establishment of some factories in Binh Duong has made this province one of the most urbanised provinces in the country.
In general, urban population growth rate was higher during 1995-2000 than 2000-2005 in all regions (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Percentage of Urban Population according to Region, 1995-2005
Source: GSO (2007a)

While the most urbanised regions such as the South-East including HCMC had a low urban growth rate during 2000-2005, the Red River Delta including Ha Noi experienced higher urban growth rate during 2000-2005. The least urbanised regions such as the Red River Delta, North-West and Mekong Delta experienced high urban growth during 2000-2005. In 1999, the urban population share in these regions was low with 9.7, 13 and 17.1 percent respectively, while in the South-East and the Central Highlands this rate was 29 and 22.8 percent respectively for the same year (GSO-UNDP, 2001:60-61). About 38 percent (8.7 million) of the total urban population in Vietnam lived in the 4 largest cities, of which Hai Phong was the least urbanised with 45.7 percent of its population living in urban areas. HCMC is certainly the most urbanised place in Vietnam with 73.6 percent of its population in urban areas in 1989 increasing to 86 percent in 2006. The concentration of the industrial zones has been the reason for the
high proportion of people in this urban centre. In recent years, Da Nang has also received increasing direct foreign investment and as a result the city has experienced rapid economic development. Therefore, the level of urbanisation here has dramatically risen, and the urban population share increased from 30 percent in 1989 to 86 percent in 2006 (GSO, 2007a). Although Ha Noi is the capital of the country, due to less concentrated industrial zones, its urban population share was less than HCMC and Da Nang (65 percent).

Based on the level of urbanisation the provinces were divided into 4 following categories:

- Level 1: The percentage of urban population of the province greater than 50 percent.
- Level 2: Urban population of the province from 30-50 percent.
- Level 3: 20-30 percent.
- Level 4: Equal or less than 20 percent.

Based on this classification, in 1989 only HCMC and Ba Ria were in level 1, while Ha Noi, Hai Phong and Da Nang belonged to level 2 together with Lam Dong, Khanh Hoa and Quang Ninh. However, in 1999 the number of cities at level 1 increased from 2 to 3 and all of those were the major cities: Ha Noi, HCMC and Da Nang (GSO-UNDP, 2001)

The number of provinces at different levels between 1989 and 1999 is indicated in Table 4.7. This suggests that the number at level 2 increased the most, while levels 1 and 2 did not increase significantly. In 2004 Vietnam had two special cities with populations over 1.5 million and 90 percent of their population were non-farming (HCMC and Ha Noi), 4 cities with populations over 500,000 with 85 percent non-farming populations, and 14 cities with population over 250,000 with 80 percent non-farming populations. As discussed previously, the number of cities under the direct management of the government rose to 5 in 2004. The data from the 2004 survey on
population change conducted by the General Statistical Office reveal that the ratio of urban population in all regions has increased since 1999.

Table 4.7 Number of Provinces by Level, 1989-1999
Source GSO-UNDP (2001:59-60)

![Table 4.7]

The two regions with the highest increase in urban population were the Red River Delta and the South-East where the two largest cities are located: Ha Noi and HCMC. Indeed, in these places the percentage of urban population increased by 11.3 and 24.7 percent in 2004 respectively (Table 4.8). It is clear from the data that the ratios of urban population in regions where the major cities are situated are much higher than other regions, except for the Central Highlands. The proportion of urban population in HCMC was the highest and its population made an important contribution to the total urban population of the South-East region. Due to the high proportion of residents in HCMC, Vung Tau, Dong Nai and Binh Duong, the urban share in this region was the highest compared to other regions. While the urban population in the South-East was 6,497,523 persons in 2004, nearly 70 percent of these people resided in HCMC. This city has had a great impact in making the South-East the most urbanised region. Apart from HCMC, in this region other large cities are located such as Bien Hoa in Dong Nai province, Vung Tau in Ba Ria and Binh Duong of which the proportion of urban people was very high at one third of the population. The reason for high levels of urbanisation in these provinces is due to the number of enterprises located in Binh Duong and Bien Hoa.
Vung Tau is a city along the coast that attracts many tourists and this is helping the service sector rapidly develop.

**Table 4.8 Urban Population Share: Province and Region, 2003**
Source: Survey on Population Change in 2003 (GSO, 2004a: 138-139)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOTE:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This table is included on page 96 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During 1975-1986, urbanisation levels in Vietnam remained low and stable (Dang and Le, 2001) due to the government’s effort to control population growth in large cities by applying policies to control movement to urban areas and a displacement programme to move people to the NEZs in rural areas. Following the economic reforms the GDP growth was 9 percent per year between 1993 and 1997. However, the predominance of urban-based development policy has turned the major cities into centres of rapid socio-economic development. As a consequence of this, these cities have experienced high
levels of urbanisation leading to a rapid increase in their populations. HCMC, the largest city is a good example. Its population increased by 1 million people every 5 years so that by 2004 its population reached 6 million. With this rapid increase, HCMC has gradually become one of the large cities in South-East Asia. Ha Noi has also experienced similar but less substantial increases. With a population growth rate of about 2.8 percent per year, Ha Noi’s population increased from 2.4 million in 1995 to 3.2 million in 2006 (GSO, 2007a), and its population increased by 0.8 million in 10 years. Compared to Ha Noi and HCMC, the populations of Da Nang and Hai Phong were much smaller in 2006 (0.8 and 1.8 million respectively) accompanied by a lower growth rate.

Generally speaking, despite the growing proportion of urban population in the country in recent years, the overall level of urbanisation in Vietnam still remained quite low at only 27 percent in 2006 (GSO, 2007a). Moreover, the share of urban population is unevenly distributed regionally and is mainly concentrated where the major cities are located. While the total population in Vietnam increased by about 4 million and reached 80 million between 1999 and 2004, half of this increase was in urban areas. However, it is unclear whether this increase in urban population was the result of natural increase or from other sources. To answer this question, the next section focuses on the patterns of urban growth.

**4.4 Components of Urban Growth**

As stated by Sheng (2002), Hugo (2003) and Guest (2003), urban population growth is the result of three processes, natural urban population growth, rural-urban migration and reclassification of urban areas. It is, however, difficult to distinguish clearly the contribution between the last two processes. In developing countries in Asia migration
has made a significant contribution to urban population (Hugo, 2003). The contribution of natural population growth usually makes up at least 50 percent of population growth. Reclassification of urban areas consists of two elements: extension of urban areas into the rural hinterland and the upgrade of rural land into urban settlement.

In Vietnam, compared to the population growth in rural areas, growth in urban areas was much higher. Indeed, between 1989 and 1999, the average annual increase in urban population growth was 4 percent, while the rural population grew by just 1.3 percent each year. Between 1999 and 2004, the urban population increased at an average annual rate of 3.5 percent compared with the 0.75 growth rate of the rural population. Due to a lack of available data it is hard to calculate the contribution of each component to population growth in general and to urban increases in particular in Vietnam. However, the contribution of natural population increase rate can be attained by analysing factors related to fertility and mortality rates.

During 1979-1989 the sex ratio in Vietnam was the lowest in the world because many men had died during the war (GSO-UNDP, 2001), but it has become more balanced in recent years. In 1989 the sex ratio was 94.7 and increased to 96.7 in 1999 it remained the same in 2004. However, the distribution of males and females was uneven among different age groups. While sex ratio of people aged under 15 years was very high at 107, this ratio of people at the reproductive ages of 15-49, especially those above 25, was lower at 97. Preference for sons in India, Nepal and Vietnam is the main cause leading to high sex ratios at the ages under 15 years, and this ratio keeps rising at the earlier age group (UNFPA, 2007). Moreover, the sex ratio at reproductive ages between 15 and 49 in rural areas was much lower than in urban areas (88 and 96 respectively)
(GSO, 2005: 198-199). This suggests that rural areas experience a higher number of females at reproductive ages.

Regarding marital status, it is believed that urbanisation plays an important role in changing the marriage behaviour of people at marriageable ages. Males in urban areas were more likely to marry at a later age than those in rural areas (GSO, 2005:36). The singulate mean age at first marriage (SMAM) for urban men was 28.6, while SMAM for rural men was 26.0. SMAM for rural and urban women was the same at 22.9. The proportion of never married for males has increased steadily (GSO, 2005)

In terms of fertility, as shown in Table 4.9, the TFR in both rural and urban areas decreased dramatically. In 1989, the TFR in rural areas was 4.4 and it decreased to 2.5 in 1999 and 2.3 in 2004. Similarly, the TFR in urban areas decreased from 2.6 in 1989 to 1.7 in 1999. However, the TFR in rural areas is far higher than in urban areas as a result of high numbers of women at reproductive ages and lower SMAM for rural men as noted above. In less developed regions like the North-West and the Central Highlands the difference in TFR between rural and urban areas was much greater than in more developed regions.

As can also be seen in Table 4.9, in the North-West the TFR in rural areas was twice that of urban areas in 1999. Similarly, in the Central Highlands the TFR in rural areas was 1.5 times higher in urban areas. The high TFR in these remote regions can be explained by the fact that people in more developed areas are more likely to have less children and live in nuclear families.
Table 4.9 TFR in Urban and Rural Areas and Regions, Vietnam: 1989-2004


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>In 1989</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole country</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red River Delta</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-North</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-South</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>......</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mekong Delta</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As a result of high TFR in rural areas, the natural increase rate in rural areas was higher at 1.4 percent in 2004, while in urban areas the natural increase rate was 1.2 percent (GSO, 2004a: 86). This natural increase rate contributed to 43 percent of urban growth in Vietnam during 1989-1999 and 33 percent in 2004. While the rural population increased by only 4 percent, the urban population increased by 18 percent from 1999 to 2004. This suggests that more rapid urban population growth must be due to migration and urban reclassification.

In relation to migration, Table 4.10 below shows that from 1994-1999 1,182,291 people migrated from rural to urban places. During the same period, about 421,000 people moved in the reverse direction. As a result, net migration in urban areas was 760,343.
Making the assumption that between 1989-1999 the rate of net migration in the city remained the same every year, we find that over this period the urban population increased by 1.5 million due to net migration alone. It has been estimated that this number makes up about 30 percent of the urban population growth between 1989 and 1999, and the remaining 27 percent of urban growth is accounted for by urban reclassification. However, it is clear that rural-urban migration has been increasing over time in Vietnam, so the contribution of migration to urban population growth should be much greater than 30 percent. According to Jones (1997), although migration has made a significant contribution to urban population growth in South-East Asian countries, the situation is gradually changing as their share is decreasing over time due to the smaller number of potential migrants in rural areas. This is not the case in Vietnam as the 1 million young people (the majority live in rural areas) entering the labour market every year have put pressure on employment opportunities in rural areas. Therefore, there is an ample resource supply of rural-urban migrants. As shown in the 2004 survey, the number of migrants to Ha Noi and HCMC remained unchanged, even higher in 2004 compared to 1999. Between 1994 and 1999 on average there were 30,000 migrants to Ha Noi and 100,000 migrants to HCMC. Between 2003 and 2004, 57,000 people migrated to Ha Noi, and more than 90,000 to HCMC (GSO, 2005: 134-144). This suggests that migration within Vietnam has played an important part in urban population growth, especially in the major cities. This is also the case in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia (Ogawa, 1985; Hugo, 1996; Jones, 2002).
4.5 Urbanisation and Development

The increasing level of urbanisation in Vietnam in the last two decades is undoubtedly associated with the social and economic transformation from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy after 1986 (GSO-UNDP, 2001). These changes include diversification of the employment structure and increasing levels of education and living standards. As indicated in Chapter 2, before the economic reforms, the subsidised system of goods and services made people more reliant on the government, which made them less creative or innovative and therefore discouraged from being efficient or productive. The banning of private businesses and the allocation of jobs allocation by the government based on the *Ho Khau* system helped to control people in their place of residence. This centrally planned economy based on public ownership of the means of production led to economic stagnation. The country also experienced poor policy decisions on many issues and the administrative structure did not respond to the peoples’ needs (Porter, 1993).

In order to solve these economic problems, in 1986 at the Sixth Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Vietnam’s leaders approved economic reform policies associated with market liberalisation. Similar to the reforms in China in 1978, the specific objectives of the reforms were relocation of industry, particularly the shift from predominantly heavy industry to increasingly light industry, decollectivation of agriculture and stimulation of the private sector (Griffin, 1998, Garcia, 2004)). In agriculture, land was distributed among farming households, and farmers gained the right to mortgage, lease or transfer the right to use their land (UNESCAP, 2000; Zhan Shaohua, 2005)). At the same time, Vietnam made efforts to improve trade with foreign countries and promote international investment. The transition from a centrally planned
economy to a multi-sector economy had a profound impact on Vietnam and brought about major changes in the economy. For example, the GDP growth rate has rapidly increased since 1986 (Figure 4.1). According to the Asia Development Bank, GDP growth rate is estimated at 8.3 percent in 2007 and 8.5 percent in 2008 (MOFA, 2008).

**Figure 4.1 GDP Growth rate, Vietnam, 1980-2006**

Source: World Development Indicator (World Bank, 2002) and CIA (2007)

As a result of the increasing value of GDP, the living standards of people improved significantly, with the average income per person increasing substantially. For example, the income per capita increased by 10 percent per year during 1999-2002 and it reached 356,000 VND in 2002 (GSO, 2004 b). Similarly, there was a considerable increase of the GDP per capita for all periods between 1995 and 2005 (Figure 4.2).
As in other developing countries in South-East Asia where the development process concentrates in a few large cities (Smith and Nemeth, 1986), in Vietnam, HCMC and Ha Noi are the two major cities attracting most investment and development programs. Indeed, in 2003, 21 percent of total foreign direct investment (US$ 2 billion) was directed to HCMC and 10 percent to Ha Noi (Dang *et al.*, 2004: 3). As a result of the predominance of urban-based development policies, HCMC and Ha Noi have become the major economic, political and cultural centres of Vietnam. As McGee (1967) asserted in his idea of urban primacy, these urban areas dominate over other areas in terms of population size, in the functions they serve, and in the enormous levels of socio-economic inequality. Indeed, the total direct investment capital in these two cities made up 47.4 percent of the whole country during 1988-2002 (GSO, 2003: 341-342). The development of private and joint-venture sectors in the urban areas has contributed to new economic resources for investment. As a consequence of this rapid development in large cities, they play a dominating role in the national economy as the case in other
South-East Asian countries (Jones, 2002; Hugo, 2003). The industrial output value in HCMC and Hanoi accounted for 30 percent of the total value in Vietnam.

The increase in jobs in urban places has encouraged people to leave the rural areas. Consequently, the number of people in these large cities has rapidly risen. In 2004, about 50 percent of the country’s urban population lived in Hanoi and HCMC (GSO, 2004a). The reason for the increasing number of migrants in urban places after the reforms was not only due to more employment opportunities and better living conditions but also due to changes in population policies. As discussed in Chapter 2, although the household registration system has continued following the new economic policy, it is no longer important. The free market has given people more freedom to move between areas and regions in the country, and responsible for their own livelihoods. The urban-based development policies have created many economic problems regarding unemployment, unbalanced employment structures, poverty and income inequality between rural and urban areas for developing countries such as Vietnam (McGee, 1967; Smith and Nemeth, 1986). As a result, people continue to move to the cities to take advantage of more employment opportunities and better living conditions.

4.6 Urbanisation and Urban Growth in Ho Chi Minh City

Post-1986, HCMC became the centre of major socio-economic and political development. Having the highest GDP growth (12.6 percent per year) and GDP per capita 3.3 times higher than the national average level, HCMC also became the most urbanised in Vietnam and the city, therefore has experienced the highest population growth rate. The city’s total population reached 5,037,155 in 1999, making it the most populated city in Vietnam. As a result of rapid urbanisation, the city’s population has
increased significantly. The proportion of urban population of the city increased from 74 percent in 1989 to 80 percent in 1999 and 84.5 percent in 2004 (SO, 2000 and 2005).

As shown in Table 4.11, HCMC’s population growth rate has increased over time. During 1979-1989, the total population of HCMC increased by 1.7 percent annually, and it was much higher at 3.6 percent between 1999 and 2004 (PC of HCMC, 2007). The population growth rate during 1999-2004 doubled that between 1979 and 1989. The result of this rapid rise was that it increased the total population of the city to 6,109,493 in 2004. The population is distributed unevenly within HCMC but is mainly concentrated in the inner districts. In some inner districts such as Tan Binh, its population is ten times more than in Can Gio (a suburb with a high percentage of land still devoted to agriculture) (SO, 2000: 72). On average, each of the inner districts has 243,000 people and each outer district has 183,000.

Table 4.11 HCMC Population by Sex and Area, 1979-2004
Source: SO (2000: 75) and SO (2005: 18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1979</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,622,072</td>
<td>1,890,343</td>
<td>2,424,415</td>
<td>2,934,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,797,906</td>
<td>2,097,781</td>
<td>2,612,740</td>
<td>3,174,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2,700,849</td>
<td>2,946,426</td>
<td>4,204,662</td>
<td>5,207,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>719,129</td>
<td>1,048,698</td>
<td>832,493</td>
<td>901,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,419,978</td>
<td>3,988,124</td>
<td>5,037,155</td>
<td>6,109,493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In recent years, literature on urbanisation and migration has mentioned “in situ” urbanisation in many countries. For example, in China transforming rural communities into urban places in some provinces and the contribution of reclassification to urban population growth is greater in these provinces (over 50 percent) (Jones, 1997). Similarly, in Thailand a program called “Industrialising Rural Areas” was applied during the late 1980s (Prasartkul, 1998). In Vietnam, “in situ” urbanisation has been
applied in the major cities’ outer suburbs. The level of urbanisation in these outer
suburbs has increased rapidly and as a result the number of rural people in HCMC has
dropped dramatically, but the urban population rate has continued to rise steadily. This
is consistent with the situation in South-East Asia (Jones, 2002). The urban population
increased by 1,258,000 in ten years, but rural population decreased by 209,000 (Table
4.11). Furthermore, the amount of urban land has dramatically increased. During 1997-
2004, the land area for construction of industrial zones, residential blocks and other
infrastructure projects increased by 5 percent per year, while land for farming has
decreased considerably (PC of HCMC, 2007). The urban population reached 83.5
percent in 1999 rising from 73.8 percent urban dwellers in 1989. In 2004, the number of
urban population in HCMC accounted for 85 percent of the city’s total population. The
area of HCMC has continued to grow as well as the number of inner districts.

After the unification in 1975 the city consisted of 12 inner (District 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10,
11, Go Vap, Tan Binh, Phu Nhuan and Binh Thanh) and 5 outer districts (Thu Duc, Hoc
Mon, Cu Chi, Binh Chanh and Nha Be). In 1978, the new outer district Can Gio was
established from two districts that belonged to the nearby province Dong Nai. In 1997,
the city had 17 inner and 5 outer districts. Therefore the number of inner districts
increased by 5, while the number of outer districts decreased from 6 to 5 in 1997.
Under Degree No 03/CP/1997 (PC o HCMC website) the old outer district Thu Duc
was completely submerged into 3 inner districts (Thu Duc, Districts 2 and 9). The new
inner District 7 was split from Nha Be and District 12 was from Hoc Mon. In 2004 the
number of districts in HCMC reached 24 with 19 inner districts. District Tan Phu was
separated from the inner district Tan Binh and district Binh Tan was shaved off from
the outer district Binh Chanh. Generally, new inner districts in HCMC were established
by upgrading the rural outer districts into urban ones. Furthermore, the population
densities of the new inner districts such as Tan Binh, Go Vap, Thu Duc grew significantly in recent years. However, compared to the densities in inner and more urbanised districts these figures are still quite low (Table 4.12 and Figure 4.3).

**Table 4.12 Population Density in HCMC, 1979-1999**

Source: HCMC Population, Result from 1999 Census (SO, 2000: 74)

NOTE: This table is included on page 108 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
Indeed, in the most urbanised districts such as District One, Three and Five the population densities have been very high for a sustained period. For example in District Three in 1979 the population density was 51,094 persons per square kilometre. It fell slightly to 50,594 persons in 1989 and in 1999 dropped to 46,343 persons. The same trend was found in District One and District Five. The evidence which was used to explain these decreasing densities is that, due to city planning, the local government displaced many of the slums along Channel Nhieu Loc, Thi Nghe to new residential areas on the outskirts of the city. Moreover, the old industrial zones were relocated and
new zones were built in the outer suburbs, which is called the “extended metropolitan region” (Jones, 1997:240).

Industrial enterprises are built in less urbanised areas surrounding the major cities in order to avoid population pressure in the centre of the city. This pattern is common all over Asia and for example in Thailand, in order to stop population movement to urban centres the government applied program to improve development in surrounding areas of Bangkok (Prasartkul, 1998). In China, the government used the development slogan ‘leave agriculture but not the village’. This means that the government intends to accelerate the level of industrialisation in rural areas by bringing industrial and other non-farming work to the village (Jones, 1997). As a consequence of this “in situ” urbanisation, the population in the outer suburbs of HCMC has risen, while the population in districts in the city centre has declined (SO, 2000: 72; SO, 2005: 61). Thus the population in new districts such as Go Vap, Tan Binh, Thu Duc and Binh Chanh has increased dramatically since the reforms, especially during 1989-1999. In Go Vap this rate was 6.4 percent, 5 percent in Tan Binh and Thu Duc and 4.9 percent in Binh Chanh (SO, 2000: 73). It can be seen in Table 4.13 that the total population of these districts in only ten years has nearly doubled and has continued to increase rapidly.

Table 4.13 Population in 4 Districts of HCMC with the Highest Levels of Urbanisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Vap</td>
<td>127,934</td>
<td>165,158</td>
<td>308,816</td>
<td>449,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu Duc</td>
<td>99,094</td>
<td>122,737</td>
<td>209,391</td>
<td>337,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan Binh</td>
<td>264,315</td>
<td>339,245</td>
<td>578,801</td>
<td>763,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh Chanh</td>
<td>164,935</td>
<td>204,524</td>
<td>332,089</td>
<td>704,150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the economic and financial hub of Vietnam, HCMC has become the centre of migration activity since the reform process began. Over the past twenty years, HCMC has attracted the highest level of migrants from other parts of Vietnam, leading to the highest in-migration rate. On average the in-migration rate has been 0.8 percent per year which is equivalent to 40,000 people since 1989 (Table 4.14). In comparison, Ha Noi’s in-migration was almost 114,000 people and 0.4 percent. During 1991-1995, the migration rate in HCMC reached its highest point with 0.9 percent annually. This was during the period when the city experienced the highest level of development since reunification in 1975.

Table 4.14 Population Growth Rate, HCMC, 1975-1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Natural Increase Rate</th>
<th>Net migration Increase Rate</th>
<th>Total Growth rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975-1980</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1985</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-0.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1990</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1995</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1999</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2004</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the ten years from 1989 to 1999, the population of HCMC increased by 1,049,000 persons, equivalent to the population of one average province in Vietnam. In 1999, HCMC’s population was 5,037,155, excluding temporary stayers as well as non-residents (SO, 2000:8) and it reached over 6 million in 2004 (SO,2005:20).

From 1994 to 1999, 415,387 people moved to the city. During 1999-2004 HCMC’s population increased by over one million. Urban population growth in the city was fuelled by migration since its natural increase rate had been the lowest (1.46 percent per year) compared to other regions. If the level of migration contributing to the city’s population during 1999-2004 has been the same as that during 1994-1999, migration
would make up more than half of this one million increase - equivalent to 500,000 people. Moreover, while the urban population of HCMC increased by one million, its rural population increased by only 69,000 persons in this same period. This indicates that the population growth in HCMC has been mainly in the urban areas.

4.7 Conclusion

The level of urbanisation in Vietnam is still low compared to other countries in South-East Asia. Vietnam was ranked amongst countries with the lowest levels of urbanisation. Vietnam’s urbanisation level was only higher than that of Laos and Cambodia. However, this process is increasing more rapidly since the reforms. In particular, in 1979, the level of urbanisation was only 19.2 percent, increasing to 23 percent in 1999 and to 25 percent in 2004. This process is expected to increase rapidly as Vietnam intends to achieve an urbanisation rate of 45 percent by 2020 (Guest, 1998a) with 6 cities at the special level and level 1, 11 urban places at level 2 (the regional level) and 73 urban places at level 3 and 4, which represent the provincial level (Nguyen Bong, 2006). Urbanisation in the country is distributed unevenly throughout the regions as it is mainly concentrated in the major cities. As the economic and political centre of Vietnam, HCMC is the most urbanised with a rate of 86 percent in 2006. Although Vietnam is still primarily rural, its urbanisation process has increased rapidly since the 1990s. In the major cities the level of urbanisation has increased the fastest. For example Da Nang, a national city, has been in second place after HCMC with 82 percent of the urban population in 2004.

With regard to the composition of urban growth, together with the natural increase, rural to urban migration has made the greatest contribution to Vietnam’s total urban population growth and these factors contribute almost equally. While the natural
increase rate tends to decrease in urban places and the rural to urban migration rate increases, it is possible that the contribution of migration to urbanisation may exceed that of natural growth in the near future. While migration is a very important component in urbanisation, it requires policy-relevant research in order to benefit from this rapid change and to combat the challenges it presents.
Chapter 5

Internal Migration in Vietnam

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 4, migration has made a significant contribution to urban population growth in Vietnam. Internal migration has been both a cause and effect of social and economic development in HCMC. Following the economic reforms, the trends and patterns of internal migration in the country experienced considerable change (Dang, 1999). The first section of this chapter examines the overall pattern of internal migration in Vietnam. The second section pays attention to the characteristics of migrants moving from rural to urban areas. The main sources of data used in this chapter are the 1999 census and the national surveys on population mobility conducted by the General Statistics Office annually between 2002 and 2004 (UNAV, 2003). Since this study focuses on the experiences of young migrants in HCMC, a brief background of the in-migration to the city and the characteristics of migrants are provided.

5.2 Internal Migration before Unification

Before 1975, Vietnam was divided into two separate countries, North Vietnam and South Vietnam. During this period of division patterns of population redistribution varied between the two countries (Jones, 1982; Desbarats, 1987).

5.2.1 Internal Migration in the North

In North Vietnam the socialist regime adopted a centrally planned economy which was based mainly on state-owned industry in the cities and agricultural collectives in rural areas. This planned economy and the associated household registration system was the main cause of holding back the development of the country (CIA, 2007).
importance of population distribution in the socio-economic development of the country, the North Vietnam government implemented programs to adjust what were perceived to be population imbalances between regions (Le, 2000). In 1961-1965 the First Five Year plan commenced to relocate people from “overpopulated” provinces in the Red River Delta to less populated provinces in the North, the North-West and North-East mountain areas. As a result of these relocation programs, during 1961-1975, there were 1 million people moved out of the Red River Delta region to the NEZs in the upland areas (Le, 2000: 22). Of those 796,000 moved from the Red River Delta to NEZs in the midlands and uplands during 1960-1975. Alongside this redeployment program, the government developed a strategy for achieving even development between rural and urban areas. With the purpose of avoiding a highly concentrated population in the large cities (such as Ha Noi and Hai Phong) the government stimulated development in smaller cities. In addition, policies which limited the movement of people to large cities had also been introduced since the 1960s. These policies were mainly rooted in the household registration system (Le, 2000).

As discussed previously, the allocation of essential goods such as food and other services in HCMC was strictly based on residential registration so that in order to gain access to them one had to be a bona fide resident of the city. Accordingly, migrants in the city were unable to stay long because the prices of the food on the black market for essential goods were much higher than the subsidy prices set by the government. At the same time, only urban residents with a permanent residential registration were given permanent jobs. Generally speaking, the policies against migration to large cities at that time were very effective and as a consequence, the population growth rate in big cities such as Ha Noi and Hai Phong over that period was very low. The population of Ha Noi was 643,576 and in Hai Phong was 269,248 in 1960, but in 1979 it had only increased
to 819,913 and 330,755 respectively (Jones, 1982: 795). The population increase rate of about one percent per year in these cities was lower even than the natural rate of natural increase during that time. This confirms that in-migration had little impact on the population growth in large cities in the North before 1975.

5.2.2 Internal Migration in the South

Before unification, development policies applied in the South were very different from those in North Vietnam. Most development investments in South Vietnam were concentrated in the large cities. For example, 55 percent of the country’s GDP was from Sai Gon and 11 percent derived from other large cities in 1971 (NSI, 1973). Despite efforts to control migration flows to the major cities, which were applied by the Southern Vietnamese government due to military concerns, population was concentrated in urban places as a result of the influx of people from rural areas moving to the city to avoid bombing and the impact of the war. Consequently, in the South, urbanisation levels were accelerated, especially in Sai Gon (Table 5.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population of Sai Gon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>2.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>3.5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proportion of the population living in urban areas in South Vietnam dramatically increased (Figure 5.1) between 1954 and 1975, as did the number of population in large cities during that time. In 1960, the population of Sai Gon was 2.2 million, reaching 3.5
million in 1971 and 4 million in 1975. Similarly, Da Nang increased from 385,000 to 500,000 over that period.

Figure 5.1 Proportion of the Population of South Vietnam Living in Urban Areas, 1958-1975

Source: Desbarats (1987: 46)

5.3 Internal Migration after Unification

After the reunification in 1975, the country applied the Second Five Year plan (1976-1980) which aimed to move 4 million people to rural areas during the 5 years. Of these, some 1.5 million persons were expected to move from the large cities to rural areas of the South and 2.5 million people from the most populated rural areas in the North to the rural areas in the South (Desbarats, 1987:50). Together with this movement to rural areas, the government put every effort into urbanising rural areas as they planned to create 500 urban places at the district level. The government initiated several programs to achieve the goals set by the 5 year plan and these programs determined the patterns of internal migration in the period after unification.
In the North, the program to move people from the more populated provinces in the Red River Delta to the highlands in the North-East and North-West continued. In addition, there was movement of people from the Red River Delta to provinces in the Central Highlands including Lam Dong and Dac Lac (Doan and Trinh, 1998). From 1976-1980, about 625,000 people moved out of the most populated areas in the North to the South (Le, 2000). Moreover, 150,000 people from the North were designated to move to the South between 1976 and 1981 (Bach et al., 1997).

In the South “over-urbanisation” in the first years of the war had caused many problems such as food shortages and unemployment. Therefore, the government on the one hand set up a program to move people from urban areas to NEZs in rural areas. On the other hand it introduced a program entitled “Return to the Village”, which sought to return city people to their home villages (Bach et al., 1997). However, this programme faced difficulties because of the severe damage experienced in southern rural areas and many villages had been destroyed during the fighting. Moreover, many people had no farming land left after their move to the city, so they had no way to support themselves in the villages they returned to. Hence, the number of people who went back home was far less than the target set by the government. Particularly, the effectiveness of the returning program was only 25 percent of official targets during the decade after the war (400,000 people returned versus 1,500,000 people set up by the government) (Turley, 1977; Desbarat, 1987).

Another internal migration pattern in the South after the unification was the NEZs. According to the Department of Settlement, Migration and NSZs, from 1976 to 1995 about 4.5 million people moved to NEZs, of whom 70 percent were intraregional movers (Bach et al., 1997: 5). Of them 625,000 people moved from the North to the
South and 847,000 moved out of the southern cities either to NEZs or were repatriated to their villages (Le, 2000: 24).

The government put a lot of effort into making this program successful, such as building infrastructure in NEZs and providing financial assistance for migrants integrating into new environments (UNAV, 2003), and migrant households were allocated land to cultivate. According to Resolution No 327-CT, each household (2 people of working age and one person of dependent age) who moved to NEZs from the North to the South was to be given assistance valued at 3,110,000VND at the sending place and 780,000VND at the receiving place (Bach et al., 1997). Apart from this assistance, the household also received free food in the first six months after their arrival. For households moving within a region, each received 2,490,000 VND.

Despite the government’s efforts, this assistance did not ensure that newcomers stayed in the destinations. The high cost of building new social infrastructure and the shortage of farming land made this displacement program ineffective (Dang et al., 1997). The inadequate social and physical infrastructure, poor health care services and food shortages pushed people out of the resettlement areas. The Department of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs in HCMC reported that 50-70 percent of movers to NEZs from HCMC had returned home to HCMC by 1985 (Bach et al., 1997).

Together with the rural-ward movements, the government applied the household registration system in the North and South of Vietnam as a way of controlling migration flows to cities after unification. These two policies were very effective in limiting population growth in urban areas during the centrally planned economy era (Dang et al., 1997; Guest, 1998a; Jones, 1982). In short, during the 1980s the population
redistribution policy completely focused attention on rural to rural and urban to rural migration (Dang, 1999). This strategy was successful in limiting rapid population growth in the major cities. For example, HCMC’s population decreased from 3.4 million to 3.2 million from 1976 to 1980 (SO, 1982). As shown in Chapter 4, the urban population share during the 1980s remained unchanged at 19 percent of the total population with the urban population growth rate being only 2.5 percent per year, which was one of the lowest in South-East Asia (Jones, 1997).

Internal migration in Vietnam during the centrally planned economy era (1975-1986) was characterised by rural to rural and urban to rural migration. To relieve the overpopulation problems in the city, the government, on the one hand encouraged people in the city to return to their homes in rural areas and on the other hand provided financial support to attract movers toward remote highland areas. Expanding the household registration system through the whole country led to low levels of urban population growth during that time.

5.4 Internal Migration after the Reforms

As discussed in Chapter 4, since the 1986 reforms Vietnam has achieved remarkable success in developing the economy and reducing poverty both in agricultural and industrial areas and urbanisation has increased rapidly. As Zhan Shaohua (2005) asserts, the economic reforms in China inevitably led to increasing population mobility, and this movement has changed in scale and complexity. In this country the number of rural-urban migrants increased from 26 million in 1988 to 70 million in 1994 and 114 million in 2003 which accounted for more than 10 percent of China’s total population and it has become a dominant migration flow (Zhan Shaohua, 2005). This is consistent with
Vietnam’s case as stated by GSO-UNDP (2001), after the reforms the patterns and characteristics of internal migration in the country has changed dramatically.

5.4.1 Patterns of Internal Migration

Rapid development has changed the patterns and characteristics of internal migration in Vietnam since the mid-1980s (Zhang et al., 2001). Although rural to rural movement was still the largest type of migration during 1994-1999, rural to urban flows have become a more substantial part of internal migration (Table 5.2) due to economic development and loosening of the household registration restrictions (Le, 2007). While urban to rural migration was one of the main flows in internal migration before the economic reforms as discussed in the section 5.3, this movement has become the least important (Table 5.2). Due to the high proportion of the country’s population living in rural areas (76.5 percent), most migration was from rural to other rural areas as is the case with other developing countries (GSO-UNDP, 2001:51).

Table 5.2 Migration Streams by Province, Vietnam 1994-1999


NOTE:
This table is included on page 121 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
Rural-rural migration was mainly from lowland to highland provinces, and two highland provinces - Dak Lak and Lam Dong - were these migrants’ main destinations (Do, 1998). However, rural to rural migration into these highland provinces during the 1990s appeared to be less important after 2000. For example, in a receiving province such as Dak Lak, the number of migrants decreased dramatically over time. Between 1994 and 1999 an average of 30,000 rural-rural migrants entered the province per year but this had decreased to only 7,774 people between 2003 and 2004 (Table 5.3). The same pattern can be identified in the Lam Dong province where the number of immigrants was over 16,000 people per year during 1999-2004, but in 2003-2004 it was only 6,486 people.

Table 5.3 Number of Rural-Rural Migrants into some Provinces and Regions, 1994-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kon Tum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gia Lai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dak Lak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lam Dong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh Phuoc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Do (1998), rural-rural migrants in the near future would face quite a few difficulties such as a shortage of arable land due to the increasing number of migrants to these provinces. The shortage of land in these provinces caused deforestation and therefore, in 1997 the government introduced regulations in order to combat this. This policy had an impact on reducing rural-rural movement to provinces such as Dak Lak and Lam Dong (Huynh, 1998). The data in Table 5.2 shows that rural-urban movement became a significant percentage of the internal migration flows, and dominated rural-rural migration during 1994-1999. The major cities such as Ha Noi, HCMC and Bien
Hoa have received the most rural to urban and urban to urban migrants from all over the country. For example, in only 5 years more than 850,000 people moved into HCMC which made up 53 percent of urban-ward migrants between 1994 and 1999. According to the data on population changes in 2004 surveys conducted by the General Statistical Office, in 2002-2003 over 56,000 and 133,000 people migrated to Ha Noi and HCMC respectively. HCMC has clearly been the centre of migration activity receiving the most inter-provincial movers. On average, HCMC received about 100,000 per year from 1994-2004. The motivation of urban-ward movement was due to more employment opportunities, higher incomes and better educational opportunities in the large cities (Dang, 2005; Doan and Trinh, 1998).

Two main streams of internal migration, rural-rural and rural-urban, accounted for 54 percent of all recent migrants, with only 9 percent of migrants moving from urban to rural areas. A substantial part of this movement has been return migrants (ISPST, 1998). In in-depth interviews with return migrants in Hoa Chau District, an outer suburb near Da Nang, the author found that the main reason for their return was the rapid development of Da Nang in recent years, which created more jobs for people. According to an authority in this district, 70 percent of migrants to HCMC from the district returned home in the last 5 years.

In terms of regional differences in migration levels, only the three major cities and one region, Ha Noi, HCMC and Da Nang and South-East regions, had high rates of immigration in 2003-2004. As a result, these three large cities gained migrants at very high net migration rates\(^6\) of over 10 per thousand. Of those, Ha Noi had the highest rate at 15.3 and HCMC was close behind with 13.4 per thousand. Regarding regions, except the South-East, all others regions experienced net migration loss (Table 5.4).

---

\(^6\) Net migration rate is accounted for by the number of net migrants per thousand persons in the area.
Not surprisingly, provinces with the highest population density in the Red River Delta (such as Thai Binh and Ninh Binh) and poor provinces in the centre (Quang Binh and Quang Ngai) of Vietnam were the major areas of out-migration (GSO, 2005:110-111). Some provinces in the mountain areas in the North-West (Dien Bien) and North-East (Thai Nguyen) experienced a net migration gain but with very modest rates (0.9 and 1.8 per thousand respectively). However, as shown in Table 5.3, provinces in the highlands areas such as Dak Lak and Lam Dong, the number of in-migrants has dramatically decreased since 2000. In 2004, Dak Lak received only 6,486 people per year compared with 32,000 in 1999, and Lam Dong received 7,000 in 2004 compared with 12,000 in 1999. The situation was similar in the North-East and North-West regions (Table 5.4). Because the number of rural-urban migration has increased, Ha Noi and HCMC were still the most favoured destinations of migrants in 2004.

Economic reform has not only changed the patterns of internal migration, but also led to a dominance of spontaneous migrants in rural-rural and rural-urban directions (Zhang et al., 2001; Doan and Trinh, 1998). For example, 92 percent of migrants to Dong Nai
province in the South-East were spontaneous between 1981 and 1989 (Doan and Trinh, 1998:104). As reported in Hardy (2000:24), half of rural-rural migrants to Dak Lak province in the Highlands were spontaneous migrants between 1989 and 1999. Also, 80 percent of migrants to HCMC in 1991-1995 were spontaneous and since 1991, some 94 percent of migrants to the city have been spontaneous (Bach et al., 1997:33). As indicated in Chapter 2, the reason has been because the new land law has given people rights to transfer, lease and mortgage land which provides increased flexibility for farmers to move either to other rural areas or to the city. The looser household registration regime in the city with the emergence of non-state market has also stimulated population mobility.

In short, analysing data on migration between regions and between rural/urban areas shows that internal migration has continued to play a significant part in population redistribution in Vietnam after the economic reforms. Literature on migration shows that young people have dominated internal migration in recent years (Guest, 1998b). In order to shed light on this matter, the next section analyses the characteristics of internal migrants.

5.4.2 Characteristics of Internal Migrants

5.4.2.1 Sex and Age of Migrants

In regard to the sex of internal migrants, Table 5.5 shows that males predominated in inter-regional migration. While males were more likely to move out of the major cities such as Ha Noi and HCMC, females tended to move into these cities. The predominance of females in rural to urban migration in Vietnam is consistent with that of other Asian countries (Jacka and Gaetano, 2004; Hugo, 2003; Zhan Shaohua, 2005). There are numerous ‘pull and push’ factors having an impact on female migration (Rushing and Watts, 2005). Firstly, the concentration of textile and garment industries
in urban areas attracts more women, especially young ones to move to the city (Ukwatta, 2003). Also, poor families in the rural areas in South-East Asia are more likely to send young female family members to the city (Curran and Saguy, 1997; Raymond et al., 2002). Increasing numbers of young women in the commercial sex industry is another cause of increased female migration to the city (Hugo, 2001, 2005b; Rushing and Watts, 2005).

Regarding in-migration, as shown in Table 5.5, HCMC attracted the highest level of female migrants compared with other regions, with the lowest sex ratio of 86.

**Table 5.5 Number and Sex Ratio of Internal Migrants, Vietnam, 1994-1999**

Source: GSO-UNDP (2001:16)

**NOTE:**
This table is included on page 126 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
The South-East region and Ha Noi also received more female migrants than males but to a lesser extent. All other regions experienced the dominance of male in-migrants, especially the Middle-North with a sex ratio of 164.4. Compared to Ha Noi, HCMC received more female migrants. The South-East region also attracted more female migrants than Ha Noi because sizeable numbers of females moved to the large industrial zones located here such as HCMC, Binh Duong and Dong Nai (GSO-UNDP, 2001).

Similar to Ha Noi and HCMC, the Central Highlands increased its population due to net migration; however, this region gained a more balanced number of men and women migrants. This may be due to high levels of family migration into this area. From the perspective of out-migration, the Mekong Delta region had the lowest sex ratio of 76.3. This reflects a disproportionate number of females who migrated from this region which was similar in the Middle-North and Middle-South.

Internal migration in Vietnam during 1994-1999 was not only selective in terms of sex, but in terms of age. Table 5.6 shows the predominance of young people in internal migration. Young migrants, especially those aged 20-24 made up the highest proportion of both intra- and inter- provincial migrants. Young people aged 10-14 were the least likely to migrate. The share of migrants aged 15-19 was similar to that of migrants aged 25-30, and migrants aged 15-19 and 25-39 were the second highest after migrants aged 20-24. This is also the case in other countries in Asia such as Bangladesh as Afsar (2003) indicates; migrants in Bangladesh are predominantly young people from poorer families.
Table 5.6 Migration Status by Age and Sex, Vietnam 1994-1999
Source: GSO-UNDP(2001:19)

NOTE:
This table is included on page 128 of the print copy of
the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Table 5.7 and Figure 5.2 show the sex ratio of migrants and non-migrants at different ages. For intra-provincial migrants, young females aged 15-29 predominated in this movement with a sex ratio about 60. Of those, young females aged 20-24 had the highest levels in both intra-provincial and inter-provincial flows (see Table 5.6). Young people aged 15-29 were most likely to be involved in inter-provincial movement compared to other age groups in this stream. However, their ratio differs from that of migrants who move within provinces as males aged 25-39 predominated in inter-provincial migration with sex ratio of 115.

Table 5.7 Sex Ratio\(^7\) by Age and Migration Status, Vietnam, 1994-1999
Source: GSO-UNDP (2001: 22)

NOTE:
This table is included on page 128 of the print copy of
the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

\(^7\) Sex ratio is defined as the number of males per 100 females.
Youth’s dominance in internal migration has remained steady at the same rate over time and increased slightly to 56 percent in 2004 (GSO, 2005). The rate at which youth take part in internal migration in 2004 is shown in Table 5.8 and is clearly different from area to area.

Table 5.8 Regions of Migration Rate\(^8\) (per thousand) of Young People aged 15-34, Vietnam, 2003-2004

Source: Data from the 2004 Survey on Population (GSO, 2005:95-99)

**NOTE:**
This table is included on page 129 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

\(^8\) Migration rate is defined as number of migrants per thousand persons of total population in the area.
From the perspective of youth migration at ages 15-24, the South-East attracted the highest level of young people from other regions, leading to a migration rate of 22.1 per thousand. The second most important receiving regions were the Red River Delta region with 6.3 per thousand. The highest level of out-migration rate for young people aged 15-24 was in the Middle-North at 7.9 per thousand, and the Middle-South at 7.4 per thousand.

Migration analysis from the 1999 Census data revealed that a very high percentage of youth migrants were concentrated in rural to urban movement (GSO-UNDP, 2001). The report also found a very high proportion of young migrants in urban-ward migration and the migration rates at ages 20-24 were the highest in comparison to not only other age groups in the same stream, but to other internal migration patterns. The proportion of young people aged 20-24 in migration streams to Ha Noi, HCMC and industrial zones in the South-East region remained high in 2004 (Table 5.9). HCMC was the leading city receiving the most young migrants as 72 percent of migrants to the city were aged under 29, and of those, migrants aged 20-24 were by far the largest.

Table 5.9 Migration Rate in some Regions, Vietnam, 2004
Source: Data provided by General Statistic Office (GSO, 2006)

NOTE:
This table is included on page 130 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
Similar to migration in 1999, females dominated internal migration streams in 2004, especially the migration flows to the major cities and industrial zones. As indicated in Table 5.10, the proportion of young female migrants aged 15-24 in general was much higher than young male migrants. While the share of young male and female migrants was more balanced in HCMC, the proportion of young female migrants was much higher than that of male migrants in the industrial zones in the South-East. This reflects the expansion of textile and garment factories in the less urbanised surrounding provinces of HCMC such as Binh Duong and Dong Nai in recent years, which attracted more young females.

Table 5.10 Percentage of Migrants by Sex, Vietnam, 2004
Source: GSO (2006)

The ongoing shift in gender regarding urban migration can be explained in terms of gender equity. As with China, the Philippines and other developing countries in Asia, rapid development in major cities has created massive employment opportunities for young women in the textile and garments industries (Sheng, 2002; Gultiano and Xenos, 2004). In addition, as a result of the modernisation process women, especially young girls, are given opportunities to improve their education levels and to escape traditional
social systems and change their family roles. Women in rural areas have more power, this allows them freedom of choice in moving or otherwise. An increasing demand for female labour in light industries and more freedom for women to move cause female urban-ward migrants to exceed male migration (Gaetano, 2004; Gultiano and Xenos, 2004)). It is believed that young migrants in the city mainly work in the informal sector or ‘cash economy’ where they are exploited by employers as their labour rights are seriously violated (Bach et al., 1997; UNAV, 2003). The predominance of young women in rural-urban migration in recent years is consistent with the situation in other countries in South-East Asia and Latin America (Hugo, 1999; Skeldon, 1990).

5.4.2.2 Migration and Education

Education is often considered to be an important predictor of migration as it is believed that levels of education play one of the most significant roles in migrant adjustment in destination areas (Scharping, 1997). People migrate to search for better educational opportunities and education may help people extend their contacts with outside communities and have a better perception of economic opportunities (GSO-UNDP, 2001).

In Vietnam, as shown in Table 5.11, migrants were more likely to have higher levels of education than non-migrants as the proportion of people with a high school degree was far higher among migrants than non-migrants. People moving between provinces were also reported to have higher levels of education than those moving within provinces. In general, males had higher levels of education than females (Table 5.11). Male migrants moving between provinces were more likely to have high school degrees; however, among male migrants moving within a province a higher percentage had tertiary degrees. There was a similar pattern among female migrants.
The pattern of education between migrants and non-migrants in 2004 varied between regions (Table 5.12) with the level of education of migrants to Ha Noi, the North-East and the South-East higher than the non-migrants, while in HCMC and the Central Highlands, non-migrants were more educated than migrants.

Table 5.12 Migration Status and Education
Source: GSO (2006)
A diversified economy has made HCMC attractive to both educated and less educated migrants across the country (not only from the South and Middle Vietnam, but from the North), while many migrants move into Ha Noi in pursuit of higher education at university or college (GSO-UNDP, 2001; GSO-UNFPA, 2006).

Data from the 2004 National Survey on Migration also shows that in general males were more educated than females in Vietnam for both migrants and non-migrants. The reason for this difference between males and females, according to Curran and Saguy (1997), is that in South-East Asian families, daughters, especially older ones, are traditionally expected to work at an earlier age to support younger siblings, while sons are given priority to continue going to school.

In summary, the data on internal migration demonstrate the significant role of migration in population redistribution. While the fertility rate has decreased over time and the mortality rate remains at a low and stable level, migration causes considerable differences in regional populations. The trend and patterns of internal migration in Vietnam have significantly changed since the reforms. The influence of migration on population groups is varied. Rural-urban migration has increased in complexity due to socio-economic and demographic conditions. Young people and females are more likely to be attracted by rural-urban movement. Traditionally, females would stay home since their main role is in the family and young people start working at an early age in the field to help the family, but this has changed as a result of urbanisation (UNESCAP, 1999). Therefore, many young people, especially females have more freedom to choose whether to move or stay, and they are more likely to leave their families to go to the city where the environment is far different from life in the village.
5.5 Migration Streams to Ho Chi Minh City

5.5.1 Trends and Patterns of Migration

The increasing flows of migration to HCMC since the reforms have made a great contribution to increasing the city’s population. Over the past twenty years, HCMC has attracted the highest level of migrants from other parts of Vietnam, leading to an in-migration rate of 0.96 percent per year during 1990-1995 and 0.82 percent between 1995 and 1999 (Table 5.13).

Table 5.13 Population Growth Rate by Migration and Natural Increase, HCMC, 1975-2004
Source: SO (2000: 8) and Le Van Thanh (2006: 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Growth Rate (%)</th>
<th>Natural Increase Rate (%)</th>
<th>Migration-Based Increase rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975-1980</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1985</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1990</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1995</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2004</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This was the period when the city had its most intense development since reunification in 1975. In ten years (1989-1999), HCMC’s population increased by one million. However, the population growth rate during 1999-2004 was much higher than that between 1995 and 1999 (2.3 compared with 0.8). As a consequence of increasing the number of migrants, HCMC’s population has considerably increased over the last 20 years (Figure 5.3). In-migrants to HCMC come from all regions of the country. The major source areas have been in the centre, the Mekong Delta, the Red River Delta and the South-East regions (Table 5.14).
Table 5.14 Percentage of Migrants by Sending Region, HCMC, 1999-2004

Source: SO (2005: 48)

Of these migrants, 37.7 percent were from the Mekong Delta region, 27 percent from central Vietnam, 14.6 percent from the Red River Delta, 13.9 percent from the South-East and the rest were from other provinces.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the residential status of people in the cities is divided into 4 categories (KT1, KT2, KT3 and KT4), and they are defined in this chapter. The residential status of HCMC’s residents in 2004 is shown in Table 5.15. The number of people without permanent residence (KT1 and KT2) has rapidly increased in recent years. Indeed, one third of the city’s population consisted of migrants with KT3 and KT4 in 2004, while this rate was only 15.2 in 2000 and 12.9 percent in 1998 (Le Van Thanh, 2006:2). Moreover, migrants with KT3 and KT4 are mainly concentrated in new
inner districts such as Binh Tan, Thu Duc and Govap. For example, in Binh Tan 52.8 percent of its population were KT3 and KT4 in 2004. The concentration of migrants in these districts might be due to two reasons: 1) the price of land in these new districts is relatively cheaper. 2) the proliferation of industrial zones in these places creates more employment opportunities. In general, the KT3 group was higher than the KT4 group. However, the majority of young and single in-migrants in recent years tend to have KT4, while older and married migrants are more likely to have KT3 (GSO-UNFPA, 2006: 1). Migrants at the young age group 15-29 with KT4 far outnumbered migrants with KT3 (Table 5.15).

**Table 5.15 Registration Status by Age, HCMC, 2004**

Source: SO (2005:70-72)

Moreover, the percentage of KT4 young migrants aged 15-29 in HCMC was above 70 percent of total migrants at this age group equivalent to 600,000 people in 2004. Among KT4 young migrants at this age group, some 76 percent were aged 15-24. It was also found that KT4 migrants aged 15-24 made up half the total of KT4 migrants in HCMC, and they accounted for 26 percent of total migrants in the city (SO, 2005:70). The proportion of KT1 and KT2 young people aged 15-24 in HCMC was only 16.7 percent of total non-migrants. In short, KT4 young migrants accounted for a significant proportion of migrants in the city. The reason for more migrants with temporary residence KT4 is either they are refused a grant of permanent residence or choose to stay for a short time in the city (GSO-UNFPA, 2006). The requirement of having a

NOTE:
This table is included on page 137 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
permanent job in the formal sector and legal accommodation\textsuperscript{11} limits many young migrants with $KT4$ in acquiring permanent residence because nearly all (90 percent) migrants with $KT4$ live in rental houses, and of them young and single people are more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation (GSO-UNFPA, 2006). As indicated in Chapter 2, due to migration control policies, this migration group cannot access many essential social services, and they are the least protected in the city’s labour market and more likely to be marginalised without health and social insurance.

5.5.2 Characteristics of Migrants in HCMC

5.5.2.1 Sex and Age of Migrants

HCMC is the main destination of rural to urban migration and has received many young people from rural areas or from smaller towns across Vietnam. Table 5.16 shows in the early period of reform (1986-1990) about 45 percent of migrants were aged 15-24, which increased to over 55 percent in 1996. The number of migrants aged 15-19 was the highest among all other age groups and this proportion increased over time from 25.7 percent in 1986-1990 to 36.3 percent between 1991 and 1996. In 2004, the proportion of young migrants aged 15-24 remained high at 50 percent of all migrants to HCMC (SO, 2005:42).

Of particular note, since 1986 the number of females migrating to HCMC has overtaken the number of men, especially among younger migrants aged 15-24 years (see Table 5.16). According to the 1999 census, females are more likely to migrate to the city than males (SO, 2000). The great excess of women over men migrating to HCMC was also found in the 2004 census. While the sex ratio of migrants in HCMC in 1999 was 84

\textsuperscript{11} Legal accommodation required to have permanent residence is either the migrant owns a house or lives in a rental house and measures a minimum 8 square metres per person. For migrants living in rental accommodation writing approval from the landlord is needed to register the migrant in her/his house.
males/100 females, this rate was slightly higher in 2004 at 90 males/100 females. This distribution has varied widely with ages and it was the lowest among young migrants aged 15-24 as the number of female migrants was much higher than males in this age group (Figure 5.4).

**Table 5.16 Migration to HCMC by Age, 1986-1996**  

![Table 5.16](image)

**Figure 5.4 Age-Sex Structure of Migrants, HCMC, 2004**  
Source: SO (2005:42)

![Figure 5.4](image)

Figure 5.4 also indicates that while the excess of women over men migrating to HCMC at the ages 15-24 was the highest compared with other age groups, the number of female
migrants was likely to be lower than that of males at ages 30-40 years and for those aged over 40, female migration was more likely to exceed only marginally male migration. This is the case in Thailand as males were more likely to move than females at older ages (Guest, 2003: 3). While the age structure of the urban population in South-East Asia has become younger due to increasing rural-urban movement among young people, the situation in East Asia is different. Due to falling numbers of young people in many East Asian countries, internal migration in these countries has declined (Guest, 2003). However, the dominance of female migrants in rural-urban migration is evident in several countries in both East and South-East Asia such as Thailand and Bangladesh (Guest, 2003; Afsar, 2005; Hugo, 1993). The reasons for the increasing predominance of females in migration to HCMC was explained by Bach et al. (1997) in that light industrial zones such as the garment industry, food processing and services have expanded in recent years, and attracted more women than men. This is consistent with other Asian countries as noted by Lim (1993), that the increase in female migration in many countries throughout Asia is due to increased employment opportunities in the industrial and service sectors.

Because of the high levels of youth migration, the proportion of young people in the city’s population has increased over time (Figure 5.5), and the population aged 0-9 has dramatically decreased from 1979-2004. This young migration flow has made the age-sex structure of HCMC very different from that of Vietnam as a whole (Figure 5.5). Compared with Vietnam’s population which is much more concentrated at ages under 15, HCMC’s population is mainly aged 20-24; the city’s age structure changed between 1999 and 2004. Although in 1999 the ratios of HCMC’s population aged 20-24 and 25-29 were similar and the highest, in 2004 the proportion of people aged 20-24 was far higher than those aged 25-29 and the highest in all other age groups. Rural-urban
migration has been and will be continue to be a major factor in increased proportion of young population in the city over the next decade as in other countries in South-East Asia before this movement will stabilise when the number of young population decreases (Guest, 2003).

**Figure 5.5 Age-Sex Structure in Vietnam and HCMC, 1999-2004**


In addition, as a result of more female in-migrants, the sex ratio in HCMC was lower than that in the country as a whole (92 and 97 per cent respectively) in 2004. The sex ratio differential was most prominent at ages 20-24 years in HCMC. While there was a balanced distribution of males and females aged 20-24 in the country as a whole (sex ratio was 101), in HCMC females in this age group far exceeded males (sex ratio 84).
While the ratio of migrants in HCMC in 2004 was 90 males/100 females, this rate was much lower in 1999 with only 84 males/100 females. However, the sex distribution has varied widely with age. Namely, while the excess of women over men migrating to HCMC at the ages 15-24; the number of female migrants was likely to be lower than that of males aged 30-40. But for those aged over 40, female migration was more likely to exceed male migration in 2004 (SO, 2005: 314). The high demand for unskilled female labour in the large cities leads to large numbers of young female migrants to urban areas. Because the majority of female in-migrants are young and unmarried, the city has many young unmarried females who live far from their family and are targets of sexual exploitation (Rushing and Watts, 2005). Traditionally, women were more likely to migrate due to family reasons such as to live with their partners after marriage or family reunion. Yet, after the reforms the determinants of female migration have changed from being predominantly family-related to increasingly economically-oriented due to increasing independence in patterns of movement. This is consistent with the situation in other countries in South-East Asia such as the Philippines (Gultiano and Xenos, 2004; Guest, 2003). Migration to the city is characterised by a high selectivity in terms of age, with a growing proportion of young migrants aged 15-29 years. The determinants of moving have been strongly linked to the age of migrants (Bach et al., 1997), with most young migrants moving for economic reasons, while more older migrants have migrated due to family reunion or health problems rather than economic drivers.

5.5.2.2 Migrants’ Educational Attainment

Prior to the reform, migrants to the major cities were more selective in terms of education because they had to meet certain requirements to obtain a job in the city (Le Van Thanh, 2006). However, in recent years migrants have become less selective
because of the creation of unskilled jobs in industrial zones and in the informal or cash economy sector. The migrant population in HCMC ranges from university students and graduates to unskilled workers such as street vendors. In terms of the qualifications of the city’s people, 91.4 percent of the residents completed primary, secondary or high school degrees, 8.5 percent had college, university or postgraduate degrees (SO, 2005:148). The level of people with higher education in HCMC was much higher than that in Vietnam as a whole (8.5 and 3.5 respectively) (GSO, 2004b: 42).

When comparing the level of education between migrants and non-migrants in HCMC who had already stopped schooling, it is indicated that overall, non-migrants are more educated than migrants in the city (Table 5.17). This is because of the increasing numbers of less educated migrants into the city. Of those, migrants with KT4 status are the least educated.

Table 5.17 Level of Education by Residential Status, HCMC, 2004
Source: SO (2005: 253, 293 and 337)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Status</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrant KT4</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-migrant</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was also a wide range of educational levels among migrant age groups having KT4 (Table 5.18). All people aged under 19 years finished high school or had lower levels of schooling worked in HCMC. The number of migrants aged 20-24 who had higher education degrees is very small. The most educated people were in the 25-29 age group. This suggests that young migrants aged 15-24 work in HCMC with no qualifications. This is not surprising because they started working at an early age, so they did not have time for schooling. Moreover, it should be noted that there were quite
a few cases (about 0.9 percent) of young people (migrants and non-migrants) aged under 15 working in HCMC.

Table 5.18 Percentage of KT4 Migrants’ Level of Education by Age, HCMC, 2004
Source: SO (2005:337)

5.5.3 Conclusion

In-migration flows to HCMC have become more important than natural increase in shaping the population of the city and made a significant contribution not only to population growth but also to the labour market. The age of migration has fallen as the number of migrant youth has rapidly increased. Migrants’ level of education is lower than non-migrants, especially migrants with KT4. While the city is short of skilled workers, with their poor qualifications they can not meet the city’s needs. Concerning gender, female migrants outnumber male migrants and this difference in age and sex distribution of migrants has significantly influenced HCMC’s age-sex structure. The ratio of young people, especially young females in the city, far exceeds that of the whole country. This on the one hand provides a demographic bonus for the city’s labour market. On the other hand it creates pressure for the city in terms of employment because the majority of young migrants are unskilled.
Chapter 6

Determinants of Youth Rural-Urban Migration

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the determinants of young people’s migration from rural areas to urban centres in Vietnam. Using findings from the survey, the factors which encourage young people to move to the city at both macro and micro levels are examined. At the macro level, the socio-economic, geographic and cultural differences between rural and urban areas as factors in rural-urban migration are analysed. The second section investigates in more detail the migration decision-making process at the micro level as this focuses on the individual and household factors, which influence migration.

6.2 Macro Factors Influencing Decisions to Migrate

As discussed already in Chapter 2, to understand why people move from one place to another, it is important to analyse the social, economic and demographic context in which the move is taking place. Socio-economic development, physical facilities and social infrastructure in communities of origin play an important role in causing out-migration (Afsar, 1998: 330; Guest, 2003; Gultiano and Xenos, 2004). Elements of socio-economic development such as per capita income and employment opportunities, and availability of physical and social facilities such as roads, schools, access to electricity and other services significantly influence out-migration in rural areas (Dang, 2005).

Rural-urban migration in Vietnam occurs in a particular type of setting, characterised by rapid development in metropolitan regions in general and in the major cities in
particular (Dang *et al.*, 2000). A macro-analysis of the context of the sending places and of the destination is necessary to understand the migration process. As the model of migration in Chapter 2 shows, regional differentiation, especially the gap between rural and urban areas plays a major role in driving rural-urban migration. The wide gap between rich and poor and between rural and urban areas has caused rural-urban migration to accelerate in Vietnam, especially that of youth (Helliard and Hocking, 2003; Hugo and Nguyen, 2007). In particular, the concentration of numerous job opportunities, higher income jobs and better services of all kinds in large cities attract people (Lucas, 2003). In rural areas, a lack of land and low levels of economic growth leads to poverty, and high population density and young population age structure creates a labour surplus. Therefore, in an attempt to shed light on the nature of migration, this section discusses the macro-context in which rural-urban migration takes place.

### 6.2.1 Rural-Urban Disparities

As Mortuza (1992:56) states, growth policy and urban bias are the main causes of rural out-migration. The emphasis on urban-based development policy in most developing countries has exacerbated differences between rural and urban places, and Vietnam is no exception. Since 1986, most development policies and programmes have favoured urban centres, while the development of the agricultural sector has been neglected (Dang *et al.*, 2004). In order to understand the impact of these policies on the country’s development, this section uses data from the National Living Standard Survey (GSO, 2004b) to demonstrate the socio-economic disparities between rural-urban areas and between regions. In general, income has increased in both rural and urban areas and in almost all regions across the country since the reform. However, despite this improvement, the gap between regions, especially between rural and urban areas, has
also grown. Over the period from 1986-1995 the annual GDP growth rate was 6.7 percent (GSO, 1996), and this has dramatically increased in recent years and reached 8.3 percent in 2007 (MOFA, 2008). Moreover, the growth rate in agriculture was much lower than that in the industrial sector (Minot et al., 2003). Table 6.1 highlights the large difference between agricultural and industrial output value. While the average growth rate of the industrial output value was 12.5 percent per year during 1990-2002, that of agriculture value was only 5.4 percent.

### Table 6.1 Output Value of Agriculture and Industry, Vietnam, 1990-2002

Source: Statistical Year Book (GSO, 2002a: 74 and 234) and Statistic Data (2007a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Output Value of Agriculture (Billion VND)</th>
<th>Growth Rate (%)</th>
<th>Industrial Output Value (Billion VND)</th>
<th>Growth Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>61,817.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>54,643.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>63,512.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>60,337.3</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>68,820.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>70,655.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>73,380.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>79,606.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>76,998.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>90,535.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>82,307.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>103,374.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>87,647.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>118,096.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>93,783.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>134,419.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>99,096.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>151,223.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>106,367.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>168,749.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>112,111.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>198,326.1</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>114,889.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>227,342.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>122,150.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>261,092.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>127,651.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>305,080.4</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>132,888.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>355,624.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>137,112.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>416,562.8</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 Preliminary</td>
<td>142,014.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>487,492.1</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the agricultural value was much more than that of industry in 1990-1991, it was nearly one third of industry’s value in 2005-2006. Industrial growth is mainly concentrated in major cities, especially HCMC with 24.4 percent of industrial output value for the whole country in 2004-2005, whereas the contribution of the North-East provinces such as Bac Can, Ha Giang and Cao Bang was very small and the share of that entire region was only 4.3 percent (GSO, 2007a). The influx of foreign investment was not equally distributed in Vietnam’s regions. Most investment was directed to the
South, with 21 percent flowing to HCMC, 20 percent to Binh Duong Province, 19 percent to Dong Nai and 10 percent to Ha Noi in 2003 (Dang et al., 2004: 3). Clearly, the South-East region received the most foreign direct investment. From 1988 to 2002 this region licensed 2739 international projects valued at 21538.2 million USD (GSO, 2002a: 341-342). This was 53.5 percent of the total foreign investment capital for the whole country. The second favoured location receiving foreign investment was the Red River Delta region where the capital Ha Noi is located, with nearly 30 percent of total investment in Vietnam.

The majority of the country’s investment capital was directed to urban places as 73 percent of total foreign direct investment was concentrated in 6 cities: Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Da Nang, HCMC, Bien Hoa and Vung Tau (GSO, 2003:341-342). Of these, Ho Chi Minh City was in first place with 1391 projects at valued 10973 million USD, which equals 27 percent of total international investment in the country. Ha Noi certainly was second and the following provinces were Dong Nai and Ba Ria Vung Tau in the South-East region, the same region as HCMC. Hai Phong and Da Nang were cities with the least investment.

While the development of the country was mainly concentrated in the urban areas, the majority of people live in rural areas (75 percent of the population in 2004 (GSO, 2005)). Moreover, rural areas still experience high natural increase rates due to high fertility levels, compared with urban areas (GSO, 2000 and 2005). The TFR in rural areas was much higher than in the urban areas, and in the two major settled regions - the Red River and Mekong Deltas - the TFRs in rural areas were still above replacement level, while those in the urban parts of those regions were well below it. In the mountainous areas such as the North-West and Central Highlands, the TFR was very
high, with the Highlands having the highest TFR. As a result of these high fertility levels, high natural increase in rural Vietnam is inevitable, and this keeps pressure on development processes throughout the country.

As a result of the high rate of population growth, population density in Vietnam is equally high. With 231 people per square km in 1999, Vietnam’s population density was two times higher than China’s (VA, 2005). The Red River Delta was the most densely populated (Table 6.2). As shown in Table 6.2 in only ten years, the Red River Delta region has seen the population density increase by 150 persons per square km. Moreover, the population is also unequally distributed regionally. For example, in the Red River Delta, provinces such as Bac Ninh, Hung Yen and Thai Binh had densities of more than 1,200 people per square km in 2006 (GSO, 2007a). Table 6.2 shows that, with a density of 429 people per square km in 2006 the Mekong Delta was the second most densely populated place in Vietnam. In provinces such as Can Tho, Tien Giang and An Giang, the population density was about 700 people per square km.

Table 6.2 Population Density by Region, Vietnam, 1999-2006
Source GSO (2000 and 2007a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red River Delta</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>1,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-North</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-South</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekong Delta</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>195</strong></td>
<td><strong>231</strong></td>
<td><strong>254</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While overpopulation in the Red River Delta has been regarded as the main factor influencing food shortage (Jones, 1982), in the Mekong Delta, despite being less
densely populated, frequent natural disasters and low levels of education have been the main cause of high poverty rates (Hugo and Nguyen, 2007: 373).

Thanks to the large amount of foreign investment, HCMC’s economy has increased at a rapid rate and it is now the dominant production region in the country. In 1995 the GDP in HCMC was 36,935 billion dong which made up 12.5 percent of national GDP, which had increased to 17 percent in 2000 and 20.1 percent in 2005 (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Vietnam and in HCMC-by Year
Source: Statistical Data (GSO, 2007a) and (SO, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GDP in Vietnam (Billion VND)</th>
<th>GDP in HCMC (Billion VND)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>228,892</td>
<td>36,975</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>399,942</td>
<td>68,752</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>441,646</td>
<td>75,862</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>481,295</td>
<td>84,852</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>535,762</td>
<td>96,403</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>613,443</td>
<td>113,326</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>715,037</td>
<td>137,087</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>837,858</td>
<td>169,559</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short, while still being in the early stages of development, Vietnam has more than 70 percent of its population living in rural areas in 2006 (GSO, 2007a) and with economic growth concentrating in urban places, a rural-urban gap is inevitable. Differences in employment opportunities, earning status, living standard, educational opportunities and health care have occurred as a result of this growing gap. The next sections will examine these disparities further.

6.2.1.1 Employment and Income Disparities

The working-age population\(^{12}\) in rural areas is made up of 73.5 percent of the total working-age population in Vietnam in 2001 (GSO, 2002b: 51). The level of

\(^{12}\)Legal working age is 15-55 years for women and 15-60 for men (GSO, 2004b).
participation in economic activities by the working-age population is quite different between rural and urban areas. While 4.4 percent of people of working-age in urban areas were unemployed, 33.3 percent of those in rural areas were under-employed\textsuperscript{13} (GSO, 2004b: 50). This suggests that one out of three people of working-age in rural areas had worked less than 40 hours per week. Due to lack of work, the average working hours weekly per person in rural places was 10 hours less than that in urban areas (30.6 and 40.5 hours respectively). Moreover, the average pay per hour in rural areas was only 56 percent of that in urban areas (data from the Survey in Living Standard, Vietnam, 1998 (GSO, 2004b: 20)). Accordingly, there is a wide income gap between rural and urban regions.

The data from Figure 6.1 indicates that the proportion of young people aged 15-19 working was higher in rural than urban areas (14.3 and 6.8 percent respectively).

\textsuperscript{13} The definition of under-employment is when a person works less than 40 hours per week (GSO, 2004b:50).
The main cause of this large difference was that young children in poor families in rural areas stopped schooling at an early age to earn a living (GSO, 2004b: 19). HCMC, the most developed city in Vietnam, is creating the most jobs. Expanding manufacturing and services in the city have provided many jobs in both the formal and informal sectors. For example, between 1997 and 2000 there were 300,000 jobs created in the city (Le Van Thanh, 2002:5). There were 1,974,996 people employed in 1997, and in 2000 this increased to 2,237,168 in HCMC (Table 6.4).

**Table 6.4 Employed Population Aged 13 and Over Working during the last 7 days prior to 1 April 2003 by Employment Sector, HCMC**

Source GSO (2004a:297)

Due to the increasing numbers of jobs created in the city the unemployment rate decreased from 10.3 percent in 1997 to 6.9 percent in 1999 (Le Van Thanh, 2002: 5), and 5 percent in 2003 (GSO, 2004a: 295). Most of the jobs in the city are in the private
sector (Table 6.4). Due to the increasing number of cheap labour-intensive enterprises and informal workshops and services, these are suitable for unskilled and cheap labour, especially females which leads to a constant flow of rural-urban migration (Anderson and O’Connell, 2003).

Together with the employment gap, there is an unequal spatial distribution of poverty in Vietnam (Table 6.5). Although the government has set up poverty alleviation programs since 2001, this program appears to be not very successful as the poverty rates vary greatly across the regions and between rural-urban areas (Rushing and Watts, 2005). As can be seen in Table 6.5, while the poverty rate had decreased from 58.1 percent in 1993 to 28.9 percent in 2002 nationwide, the poverty gap between rural and urban areas has widened. The poverty rate in rural places was twice as much as that in urban areas in 1993, whereas by 2002 the rate was 4 times higher (Table 6.5).

**Table 6.5 Poverty Rates and the Poverty Gap: Rural-Urban Areas and Regions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In Percent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty Rate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red River Delta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekong Delta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty Gap</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red River Delta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekong Delta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

14 Poverty rates are measured as a percentage of population. The poverty line is defined based on the cost of a basket of goods including food and non-food items to secure 2100 calories per day (VDIC, 2004).

15 Poverty gaps reflect the average distance between the expenditure of the poor and the poverty line (VDIC, 2004).
Poverty rates also vary widely between regions across the country. The region with the highest poverty rate was the North-West. Although poverty decreased from 81 percent in 1993 to 68 percent in 2002, this region has remained the poorest in the nation. The next poorest region was the Central Highlands. The living standards of the poor in these two regions were much lower than the official poverty line. This is because these two regions are remote and mountainous with difficult access to roads and markets (Minot et al., 2003). The Middle-South region also has some of the poorest areas as it is very arid and the sandy soils make it hard for cultivation. The South-East region is the richest as it had the highest average income per person at 619,680 VND. The reason for this region being the richest is because its rural areas benefit from the access to labour and commodity markets in HCMC ((Minot et al, 2003). The Mekong Delta Region was second highest with 371,300 VND. The average income in North-West Vietnam is the lowest and the poverty rate in this region is very high at 68 percent (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6 Average Monthly Income by Urban Rural Areas and Regions, Vietnam, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Monthly Income per Person (Thousand VND)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red River Delta</td>
<td>353.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>268.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>196.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-North</td>
<td>235.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-South</td>
<td>305.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Highland</td>
<td>244.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>619.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekong Delta</td>
<td>371.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the reforms the gap in earning between the rich and poor has grown significantly. Indeed, the average monthly income per person from the richest group was 7 times higher than that of a person from the poorest group in 1999 and it increased to 8.1 times
in 2002 (GSO, 2004b:86-94). Although in recent years the national poverty rate has fallen considerably due to poverty reduction programs since 2001 (Brassard, 2006), poverty rates are still high. This has been the case especially in some of the poorest regions such as the North-West and Central Highland where more than half of the people live under the poverty line. In addition, 46 percent of households in the North-West and 29.5 percent in the Central Highland have experienced food poverty (VDIC, 2004: 10).

HCMC has the highest average monthly income per person and it has the highest average monthly income per person compared to all other provinces and other cities. The average monthly income per person in HCMC was 904,120 VND in 2002, while in Ha Noi it was 620,980 VND. The incomes in other two major cities - Da Nang and Hai Phong - were only half of that in HCMC. The average monthly income in HCMC compared to that in the poorest province (Lai Chau in North-West Vietnam) was 5 times higher (GSO, 2004b: 93-96). Moreover, when comparing five income groups (Table 6.7) it was found that the income per person of the richest group in HCMC was 27 times more than that in the poorest group in Lai Chau. Economic development in HCMC not only improves economic status, but it also provides more employment opportunities for people.

Table 6.7 Average Monthly Income per Person (1000 VND): Household Economic Status\textsuperscript{16} of HCMC, Ha Noi and the Two Poorest Provinces

Source: GSO (2004b: 93)

| Source: GSO (2004b: 93) |

NOTE:
This table is included on page 155 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
Along with income and employment, living standards in Vietnam vary widely across regions and rural-urban areas. Data in Table 6.8 shows the average monthly expenditure per person in rural and urban areas and in the regions. It can be seen that the average monthly expenditure per person in rural areas is only half of that in urban centres. While urban dwellers are spending an equal amount on food and other needs, people in the countryside spend more on food and less on other items. This indicates that people in rural areas are still relatively poor and need to spend most of their income on food and have little money for other needs such as clothes, education and health care. The VDIC (2004: 9) indicates that 13.6 percent of the population in rural areas faced food shortages\(^{17}\) in 2002, a rate six times higher than in the cities. For example, in the North-West, 46 percent of the population had experienced food shortages.

Table 6.8 Average Monthly Expenditure Per Person (thousand VND) in Urban and Rural Areas and Regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Monthly Expenditure Per Person (thousand VND)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCMC</td>
<td>655,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{17}\) Food shortage households are households who have income per capita less than 146,000 VND in urban areas and 112,000 in rural areas. With this money they can afford daily meals which can provide at least 2100 Kcal for a person.
expenditure per person compared to other regions. The expenditure in the poorest regions like the North-West and Central Highlands was the lowest. Lai Chau, a North-Western province had the least expenditure with only 149,000 VND. Despite slightly higher spending, the average expenditure per person monthly in some poor provinces in the North-East and Central Highlands was low (Table 6.9).

Table 6.9 Expenditure per Person: Province
Source: GSO (2004b: 107)

NOTE:
This table is included on page 157 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Poverty has a direct influence on housing status and while there was no difference in housing ownership between rural and urban areas or each economic status group, the per-capita living space in urban areas is higher than in the countryside. In urban areas, the per-capita living space averages 14.6 square metres, but only 11.8 in rural areas.
Figure 6.2. Also, compared to poor people, the rich live in larger houses and enjoy better housing conditions. There was a very clear difference in living conditions between rural and urban areas. Overall, nearly 12 percent of the population lived in houses that did not have electricity. However, this proportion was more than ten times higher in rural areas (15 percent vs. 1.3 percent) (GSO, 2004b: 180). A lack of work and low levels of income from farming jobs in rural areas result in low living standards. These have been a major factor in pushing people, especially youth, to migrate to urban areas. High levels of development and urbanisation in the city cause urban areas to be attractive migration destinations.

**Figure 6.2 Living Space Per Capita-by Areas and Economic Status Groups, Vietnam, 2002**

Source: GSO (2004b: 172)

**NOTE:**
This figure is included on page 158 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

### 6.2.1.2 Educational Disparities

Since the reforms, education and training have been the priority policies in Vietnam (ESCAP, 2000). As a result, the country has made remarkable progress in education such as universalising education in all areas and improving education quality (GSO, 2000). In addition, the school enrolment rate increased from 82 percent in 1989 to 91
percent in 1999. The number of students in universities and colleges has increased nearly four times from 116,000 in 1992 to 401,000 people in 1998 (UNESCAP, 2000), 908,000 in 2002 (GSO, 2003:458) and 1,666,000 in 2006 (GSO, 2007a). Despite significant achievements, the access to education and educational equity are still a major problem in Vietnam (UNESCAP, 2000:44). Indeed, the net enrolment rates and quality of education for poor children are a considerable concern. As shown in Table 6.10, the net enrolment rates for all levels of education increased during 1993-2002. However, generally, there was a gap in terms of net enrolment rates between rural and urban areas. The rate of the upper secondary level dramatically increased (from 17.3 percent in 1993 to 59.2 percent in 2002) in urban areas. Similarly, the percentage of people above 5 years of age who never go to school in rural areas is still high at 11 percent, nearly twice as high as urban places. This is consistent with the findings of Looker (2001) that young people in rural areas have lower levels of education than those in urban areas.

The net enrolment rate was low among poor people. In 2002, still 15.5 percent of the poorest never go to school (Table 6.10). In 1998, the net enrolment rate for upper secondary was only 4.5 percent among the poorest people, and this reached 17.1 in 2002. However, there was a wide gap between rich and poor children in terms of net enrolment rates. While 67.2 percent of the richest people enrolled in upper secondary school, this rate was only 17.1 percent among the poorest.
Regarding rural and urban areas, the enrolment rates for all school levels in urban areas was much higher than in rural areas (Table 6.10). Furthermore, the number of school drop-outs in rural areas, especially in poor families in the poorest provinces is still very high, and girls are more likely to stop going to school at an earlier age than boys.

It is believed that these children are forced to leave school since their parents are behind with educational costs such as tuition fees, purchasing books and other essential things for school (VDIC, 2004; UNESCAP, 2000). Many poor families are short of labour, so they encourage their children to work instead of going to school. It is also reported that in urban places access is easier and education more diverse (GSO, 2000: 67) and this attracts many young people from rural areas to seek education opportunities in the city. Indeed, of 179 universities and colleges in Vietnam, nearly 10 percent were located in HCMC in 2002. There are two national universities in the country, one in HCMC and one in the Capital Ha Noi. About 199,000 students live and study in HCMC and 379,000 in Ha Noi which accounts for 64 percent of all students in Vietnam (GSO, 2002a: 458). Every year around 50,000 students graduate from universities and colleges in this city. Similarly, the majority of students in vocational training schools concentrated in Ha Noi and HCMC.
The literacy rate of the urban population aged 10 years old and over was higher than that in rural areas (96 percent vs. 91 percent). This rate is also higher among richer people than the poor as 97 percent of the rich were literate, but only 84 percent among the poorest. Overall, the rate of high school and higher education achievement level for population aged 15 years and over in urban places is much higher than in rural areas. The rates of no degree or primary school levels in rural places are also much higher (Table 6.11). Richer people are more likely to be more educated than the poor, and this is the same for all regions.

Table 6.11 Population over 15 Years old with Highest Degrees: Areas, Regions and Economic Status Groups, 2002
Source: GSO (2004b: 42)

As indicated in VDIC (2004:64), there is a close relationship between the cost of education and the level of education attained as the higher level of education a person has the higher the education costs they pay. Indeed, in urban areas, on average, one

18 The highest educational degree here is the degree a person had attained at the time of the survey in 2002 (GSO, 2004a).
A person spends 1,255,000 VND on education per year, while in rural areas this is only 433,000 VND. Similarly, the richest spend 1,418,000 VND but the poorest spend only 236,000 VND (GSO, 2004b: 43). The data show a wide gap regarding education expenditure among the rich and the poor and among urban and rural dwellers. In two regions - Red River Delta and the South-East - where the two largest cities are located the average expenditure per capita is the highest and in the poorest region (North-West) this expenditure is the lowest and is nearly three time lower than in the South-East (277,000 VND vs. 1,139,000 VND).

### 6.2.1.3 Health Care Gap

Like education, health services are also much better in the city than in rural areas. Namely, between 2001 and 2002, 85.2 percent of sick people in urban areas were provided with treatment in the public hospitals, while only 75 percent of those in rural areas were. Accordingly, people in rural areas are more likely to go to regional clinics that have limited services. Also, the rich have better access to health care than the poor. While 37.4 percent of the rich used health care facilities, only 34.4 percent of the poor did so in 2002. Compared to the poor, the rich were more likely to be treated in private Western clinics than the poor (VDIC, 2004:66). The expenditure on health per person was 991,000 VND on average per year in urban areas which was 1.6 times higher than in rural areas (GSO, 2004b:18). Also, there was a wide gap in out-of-pocket expenditure on health between the rich and the poor. In 2002 the out-of-pocket expenditures amount on health per person for the richest was 3 times higher than that for the poorest (VDIC, 2004:67).

Health care services are better in urban areas as most of the large-scale hospitals with advanced equipment are located in the major cities. For example, as shown by GSO...
in HCMC there are 36 hospitals and 29 local clinics with more than 15,000 hospital beds, in Binh Phuoc, a remote province in the South-East there are only 792 beds. On average, with a population of 719,000 people in Binh Phuoc, more than 1000 people share one hospital bed, but this rate is about 1/300 in HCMC. Health workers in the city have increased in quantity and quality. In 3 years (2000-2003) the number of doctors increased by more than 10 percent and that of physicians rose 21 percent (SO, 2004: 250).

Apart from education and health care, HCMC is also the centre of culture, art and entertainment. Throughout Vietnam there are 148 movie houses, 14 percent of which are in HCMC (GSO, 2003: 481-486), as are half of all newspapers, equivalent to 256,000 copies were issued in HCMC in 2003. HCMC also publishes the most books and articles in Vietnam and together these factors contribute to HCMC being the social, economic and cultural hub of the country (GSO, 2003: 479; SO, 2004: 253).

6.2.2 Improvements in Infrastructure
Since the 1980s, infrastructure in the country, especially in rural areas, has dramatically improved. Many large-scale infrastructure projects have been undertaken and investment in transport is one of the important strategies to reduce the gap between rural and urban areas. Highway 5 and the My Thuan Bridge projects are good examples of investment in transport (VDIC, 2004). Many roads in the mountainous regions waterways in the Mekong Delta have been built. Consequently, the poorest communes lacking basic road access has decreased from 518 in 2000 to 269 by 2003 (VDIC, 2004:78). Thanks to this investment access to the more remote regions is easier, and this has improved living standards in these areas as indicated by Hugo (1996), as a result of
urbanisation rural areas have significantly improved in terms of transport, communication and education.

The social, economic and cultural disparity has resulted in significant migration from rural to urban places, particularly among youth. Migration from poorer rural to prosperous urban areas is a common phenomenon in Vietnam as the new market economy creates urban employment opportunities. The increase in wealth in prosperous urban areas leads to increased monetary expectations in the village. Many families in rural areas encourage their family members to migrate to escape poverty (Rushing and Watts, 2005). Personal factors that promote rural-urban youth migration are examined in the next section.

6.3 Determinants of Migration at the Micro Level

In the above section, an analysis of regional and rural-urban development gaps has shown that rural-urban and inter-regional inequalities are powerful macro determinants of urban-ward migration. To translate the macro determinants into micro motives, this section focuses on individual migrants. Using a youth survey conducted by the author in 2005, this section examines the determinants that shape individuals’ decision to migrate. The behaviour of youth in Vietnam has changed in terms of work patterns, perceptions of wealth and educational attainment (Hugo, 2005a; EWCP, 2006). As is the case in other developing countries, youth in Vietnam now have more freedom to work outside of the home (SAVY, 2005) and are more likely to migrate to the city to earn an income and to live independently. This section also examines the role of family on the migration of youth. It is also clear that strong and well-established social networks between communities of origin and the city are also important indicators enhancing out-migration (Afsar, 1995; Gugler, 1997). Therefore, micro-level factors
such as family, friends and other social connections are also analysed in this section. Finally, the demographic characteristics that have an impact on an individual’s propensity to move are examined.

6.3.1 Determinants of Rural-Urban Migration

The main factors influencing migrants’ decisions to move out of their villages as indicated by respondents are shown in Table 6.12. While in developed countries, “Rural teenagers tend to leave their communities to pursue post-secondary education, and despite strong ties to their communities, only a fraction return. Other youth leave to find work” (Looker, 2001: iii), in a developing country like Vietnam the majority of migrants in general and youth migration in particular, is caused by economic reasons (Morrison, 1998). In Vietnam, poverty in rural areas forces young people to move out of their villages to the city (Ridge, 2002). Indeed, this survey found that a high 41 percent of respondents say they moved because there were not enough jobs for them and they were unemployed in their village. A further 38 percent of respondents were not satisfied with their income and 24 percent complained about the hard working conditions on the farm. However, there was considerable variation among regional groups. The highest proportion of migrants who moved for economic reasons was from the North-East. This is similar to the findings of the 2004 National Migration project that found 77 percent of migrants to HCMC had moved due to economic motivations (GSO, 2006).
Table 6.12 Reason for Moving by Region (Percent Respondents to Each Reason)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Red River Delta</th>
<th>North East</th>
<th>Middle North</th>
<th>Middle South</th>
<th>Central Highland</th>
<th>South East</th>
<th>Mekong Delta</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard work</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low pay</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural disaster</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family pressure</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of land</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be independent</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family reunion</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To study</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health reason</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple Response.

It is clear that most people move out of rural areas mainly because of economic and occupational reasons. Economic disadvantages, particularly employment difficulties in rural areas, are significant challenges that force people to leave their communities, as is the case in the Philippines (Gultiano and Xenos, 2004: 15) and Thailand (Guest, 2003: 8). In order to understand what role the city plays in attracting migrants, it was found that respondents had chosen HCMC because of higher pay (40 percent) and more job opportunities (20 percent) as shown in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 Reason for Choosing HCMC as a Destination ((Percent Respondents to Each Reason))

Source: Youth Survey, 2005
It is not surprising that migrants from the Red River Delta have chosen HCMC as a destination despite the city of Ha Noi being much closer to the provinces in this region. Information from in-depth interviews provided further evidence that young migrants had moved to HCMC because their families at home were in difficult financial circumstances. Migration is a way of escaping poverty when there is no other choice for local people to survive (Skeldon, 2002; Cushing, 1997). A girl from An Giang said:

Although my parents wanted us to continue schooling, they could not afford it because we are very poor. So we, all our family, came here to work.

Some of the respondents spoke of their family being deep in debt due to business failure. Other respondents were from large families and were encouraged to leave school and earn a living because their parents could not afford their school and living expenses. Economic factors for migration as well as the specific attraction of the city lead to a conclusion that distances are a secondary concern when the migrant makes a decision regarding migration. Rural-urban migrants are more likely to benefit from economic opportunities. Only a very low percentage (less than 5 percent) of young migrants were interested in better infrastructure and other social services such as health care.

6.3.2 Factors Influencing Migration Decisions

Besides the economic determinants, there are other non-economic factors influencing the decisions of young people to move. As Hugo (2005a:70) stated, migration is a chance for young people to be exposed to new ideas and ways of doing things which are quite different from traditional ones. Migration also gives young people an opportunity to be socially and economically independent. Indeed, more than 12 percent of young migrants interviewed moved for this reason. In some cases, migrants wanted to have independent lives like their friends. A girl from Nam Dinh said:
Going to school makes me bored, while many friends in my village stopped schooling and worked to earn an income. I want to be independent like them, so I stopped schooling and came here. (ECERFSD Survey)

In addition, the prospect of help from successful migrants for their families in the village by providing them the capital for farming or livestock investment made HCMC a promising destination of rural-urban migration.

In order to gain a better understanding of the different influences impacting on the migrants’ decisions to relocate, they were asked to respond to the following questions:

- Who influenced you to migrate?
- How much influence did they have?

In regard to making a decision about moving, as shown in Table 6.13, the migrants themselves played the most important role in deciding to move. Indeed, migrants themselves were mentioned by the majority of respondents. Of 172 people who had one hundred percent in the decision-making to move, 91.2 percent were migrants deciding by themselves, reporting that there were no external influences on their decision-making, and only 8.8 percent of migrants left the decision to their parents. This response was slightly more common among males than females.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Youth Survey, 2005</th>
<th>N=172</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myself</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among young migrants, older migrants were more likely to decide to move by themselves as 59 percent of respondents aged 20-24 and 71 percent of those aged 25 years and over reported that they did not consult any one else about their plans to move.
Whereas only 39 percent of migrants aged 15-17 did so. These findings show a trend that young people, especially young females, are more dependent on other people, while older young adults, especially males, have more power over their life decisions. This is consistent with the traditional culture in Asia in general and in Vietnam in particular; as in the family, older people and men get more respect and more power than younger people and women (Mason, 1994:413-414; Johansson, 1999).

In order to shed light on the level of impacts on the decision-making process, respondents who did not decide by themselves were asked to evaluate the percentage of their decisions which were influenced by other people. Nearly 40 percent of respondents claimed to have consulted with their parents, and of the 117 migrants, who were influenced by their parents, more than one-quarter (27 percent) have fully or mainly left the decision to their parents. Migrants in the youngest age group (15-17 years) were most likely to leave the decision to move up to their parents, with one-third of this group reporting that their parents had decided instead of them. Some of the parents encouraged their children to stop schooling and to migrate to the city to earn money since their families could not afford school and living costs any longer. This finding was also found in Kaime-Atterhog (2000) that the responsibility of earning money to help the family allows young people, especially girls, to accept the decision of parents for them to migrate. Among the older age groups, this rate was less than 10 percent. Older young respondents, if they needed their parents’ advice, were more likely to discuss the decision with them and reach an agreement rather than follow their parents’ decision. In fact, around one-third of these groups discussed it with their parents and reached an agreement. Besides parents, other members in the family such as siblings, partners and relatives were mentioned by 10 percent of respondents as having an influence. However, the level of their influence was much lower than that of parents.
As reported in other studies in migration, friends also play a role in encouraging migration (Rushing and Watts, 2005). In this study, only 5 percent of respondents indicated that they had consulted with their friends about their intentions to migrate. Although these friends did not have much influence, those from the North were more likely to mention friends than were migrants from other regions of Vietnam. This may be explained by the fact that some employers are from the North. When they are short of workers they are more likely to go to their home towns and recruit young people and take them to HCMC. Therefore, young people were more likely to follow their friends in moving with them if their friends decide to leave. The role of return migrants in attracting potential migrants from their villages to move to the city will be discussed in the next section.

In relation to the level of education, the survey found that migrants with higher levels of education were more likely to decide to move by themselves. All those with tertiary degrees had decided by themselves. Table 6.14 shows that migrants with limited levels of education, especially people with primary levels, are more likely to have been influenced by their parents.

**Table 6.14 People Influencing Decision to Move by Education of Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Education High school</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I decide by myself</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents decide</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner decides</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives’ impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends’ impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else’s impact</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N 21</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In short, the migrants themselves have played an important role in making the decision to migrate. However, at the same time, many young migrants have sought advice from other people. Among the advisors from whom the migrants were more likely to ask for advice, parents were mentioned the most. Other relatives and friends also play a part in the decision-making process of these migrants. Moreover, there was variability in the impact of people on their decisions between age and education groups. More educated people were more confident of their decisions to migrate than the less educated. In relation to age, the results are not very surprising as older respondents had mainly taken the decision by themselves and were not influenced by others. Some 94.2 percent of respondents aged 20-24 decided by themselves, while only 64.7 percent of those aged 15-17 did so. In contrast, younger migrants were more likely to leave the decision up to their parents with 35 percent.

6.3.3 Connections in the City

At the micro level, migration decisions are made based on cost-benefit calculations and a person decides to move if he/she expects gains to outweigh costs. Social networks play a very significant role on migration (Massey, 1990; Curran and Saguy, 1997) as these connections make migration less risky by circulating information among potential migrants as well as provides initial assistance to newcomers (Stark, 1991). In order to investigate whether respondents had previous connections to the city as well as what kinds of connections they had before moving, respondents were asked the following questions:

- How many people in HCMC did you have contact with prior to arrival?
- What type of person in the city did you have contact with before your move?
- What did you know about HCMC before moving?
- What type of information did you have about the city before you moved?
- Who did you receive that information from?

As shown by Bach *et al.* (1997) and Guest (1998a), social networks play a very important role in migration to HCMC as more than 80 percent of migrants had known someone at the destination prior to their move. In this study, as shown in Table 6.15, a similar result was found. Of 300 respondents in the survey, 228 people (76 percent) reported that they had contact with someone in the city before moving. Of those, 78 percent had 1-3 contacts. Interestingly, 11 percent of respondents stated that they had contact with 6 or more people in HCMC before they moved. Males were more likely to have had contacts and the number of people that male migrants had contact before they moved was higher than female migrants. Indeed, 13.7 percent of males had known 6 or more persons in the city, while this was only 7.2 percent for females.

### Table 6.15 Number of Persons Having Contact before Moving of Male and Female Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Contacts</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the type of people the migrants had contact, there was a variety of responses. Not all of the respondents who reported that they had contacts in the city nominated the type of people they contacted. Only 65 respondents from 228 respondents answered this question. Of those, most had contacts with relatives as shown in Table 6.16.
Table 6.16 Type of People Migrant Had Contact in HCMC for Male and Female Respondents

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of people known in the city</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First relative</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second relative</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbour</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most were close relatives such as siblings, uncles, aunts and cousins, while 30 percent were more distant relatives. In Thailand, traditionally men are encouraged to develop their non-kin contacts with peers and institutions of power, while women are more likely heavily kin-based (O’Connor, 1987 and 1995). This is also the case in Vietnam where in this study women were more likely to mention relatives than were men, but males tended to have more contacts outside of kinship networks such as friends.

Respondents were also asked whether they had received any information about HCMC before moving and if so, what type of information and from where. Table 6.17 shows that more than half of respondents received information before they moved. Males were slightly more likely to get information than females. Males from central Vietnam were significantly more likely than females to have received information. The reason why males are more likely to have information about the destination before moving was that as noted previously. Vietnamese males tend to develop non-kin contacts with peers and institutions of power than females who are more likely to limit their relationship within relatives. Broader contacts give them more opportunities to obtain information.
Table 6.17 Percentage of Respondents Receiving Information about HCMC before Arrival by Sending Region

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Sending region group</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the proportion of migrants from the central provinces accounts for 49 percent of all migrants, the rate of people from this region receiving information was only 47 percent of all migrants who had received information before moving. By contrast, the proportion of people from the South accounts for 17 percent of all migrants, whereas the rate of people from this region receiving information was 22 percent. This suggests that migrants from the South were more likely to get information about HCMC than those from the North and Central Vietnam. As noted by Scharping (1997), the very important factor influencing information is distance. Another important factor is media coverage. In the countries like China and Vietnam, limited access to media in rural areas leads to gap in knowledge. A lack of this kind of formal information makes people rely on informal information from friends and kinships. This informal source of information is likely to be distorted by distance. Therefore, not surprisingly, it appears that the close proximity to HCMC makes information easier to obtain. As can also be seen in Table 6.18, older youth respondents seemed to be more concerned about getting information, and more educated migrants also tended to be more interested in attaining information than less educated ones. The reason is because older and more educated people are more experienced and therefore they are more aware of difficulties at destination. This is
consistent with Scharping’s statement that the age and level of education play an important role in perception and available alternatives for actions.

The survey indicated that 42 percent of respondents had received information about HCMC from friends and 32 percent from relatives. However, there are disparities in the distribution by age, origin regions and level of education. Those migrants with low levels of education were more likely to have received information from friends, as were respondents from the South and younger migrants.

### Table 6.18 Percentage of Respondents Receiving Information about HCMC before Arrival by Education Level and Age

**Source:** Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relatives were the most common group mentioned from whom migrants received information. Conversely, media, a very important channel for spreading formal information in modern society, played a limited role, with only 15 percent of migrants reporting that they had received information about HCMC from the media. Older young migrants were more likely than younger migrants to have received information from the
media (17 percent). Of the 22 respondents who mentioned the media, 68 percent had reached high school level. This suggests that more mature migrants with higher levels of education were more likely to use formal sources of information (Table 6.19). Respondents from the North were the most likely to report using the media to gain information, followed by those from the central provinces. Males tended to get information from the media more than females, whereas females were more likely to utilise informal channels such as relatives and friends.

**Table 6.19 Informers and the Level of Education of Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were also asked what type of information they had received. The results indicate that generally, the majority (88 percent) had been interested in employment information (Table 6.20). At the same time, 47.6 percent wanted information on living costs and 43.4 percent were interested in accommodation conditions in the city. They also cared about health care and education services; however, the proportion of respondents mentioning this was much lower with only 12.4 and 18.6 percent respectively. Migrants’ motivations were mainly economic so their first priority was to gain employment and of course the cost of living and accommodation costs were also important. The results do not show any obvious relationship between males and females and the sort of information of interest, although males were slightly more likely to mention employment and accommodation while females were more likely to mention living costs. Similarly, respondents from central Vietnam were more likely to seek
information about employment, while they were the least likely to care about health care and education services. Conversely, respondents from the South were less likely to mention obtaining a job, but they were more interested in education. Younger migrants (aged 18-19) were also most likely, compared with other age groups, to report that employment was the first priority. Nevertheless, there is a quite clear relationship between the level of education and the type of information sought. Respondents with higher levels of education not only were more likely to pay attention to employment, living costs and accommodation, but also to other essential services in HCMC. On the other hand, less educated migrants were less likely to mention education and health care, and those with only primary level education did not respond to this question.

Table 6.20 Type of Information Sought about Destination by Sex and Region of Origin (percent Respondents to each Answer)

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Sending region group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male %</td>
<td>Female %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living costs</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other information</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple response

When asked who they migrated with, the majority (75 percent) said that they had migrated with their friends, while 13.4 percent said parents or siblings and 7 percent nominated other relatives. It is obvious that friends and relatives including parents, siblings and other family members are the main people the migrants have moved with. Some respondents from the North, for example, talked about the reason why they were more likely to move with friends. One respondent from Thanh Hoa province said:
…my boss is from my village, he went there to look for prospective workers. In my village about 6-7 young people who are all my friends decided to come to HCMC together to work. The boss bought tickets for us and we came here. (ECERFSD Survey)

These employers found it easy to find workers because people in their communities already knew and trusted them. Parents were willing to send their children to the city with these employers because of their reputation. Many respondents said that they had relatives who had worked in HCMC and when their relatives came back to visit the family they took these young migrants with them to the city. This social network plays a very important role in attracting potential migrants from their rural areas to HCMC.

Social networks of returned migrants play a very important role in providing information to potential migrants in rural areas; however the information provided by friends and relatives is not always correct (Khan Najma, 1986). This survey found that some migrants, especially among people with less education, were provided with false information by previous migrants. A girl from Nam Dinh province stated:

I was told that HCMC is a very beautiful and luxurious city and it is easy to get a job with high pay and no experience needed. So I wanted to go to know the city. But when I came here it is completely different. It is crowded, polluted and …I don’t know what to say. I want to go back home.
(UCERFSFSD Survey)

During my fieldwork, the sad story of a group of 3 young migrants from Cao Bang province was told in a poor café next to their workshop, during their tea-break (from 7pm to 8 pm) before they come back to their normal night shift from 8 pm to midnight. They explained that they had a job in their village with good incomes compared to the local pay. However, when they saw their boss (who was from their community) when he came back to seek workers for his garment workshop, they decided to quit the job in the village and come to work in HCMC. The boss told them that he would pay more and they would work only 8 hours a day during the week. He promised to pay for accommodation and other expenses, so they could save all of their monthly pay. When
they arrived and worked for him, they realised that they had been tricked. They work 7 days a week from 7pm to midnight with only one and a half hours for lunch and tea. They were not allowed to go out any time and all their pay (which was much lower than they were told) was kept by the boss. He only gave them 20,000 VND per week. They tried to escape but were unsuccessful.

6.4 Conclusion

Although rural incomes have increased in recent years, there is still a large gap between rural and urban areas and between the regions. Population pressure and scarcity of resources in rural areas has induced people to migrate. Access to education and other essential services is much easier in urban than rural places and in richer than poorer regions. In the city there also are more employment opportunities with higher incomes. Much foreign investment entering these regions has been concentrated in the urban core and acts as a pull in attracting migrants from rural areas to the large cities. As a result of the uneven development in rural and urban areas, people migrate to cities to seek better lives with higher incomes and better social services.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the change in land ownership laws gives people in rural areas flexibility to move out of their villages. Less strict household registration and the emergence of a free market in urban areas have considerably weakened government control over rural-urban movement. Proliferation of joint-venture and private companies has created more jobs for migrants. Therefore, migrants in the city are no longer dependent on the state employment sector. Poverty and hard lives in the village encouraged parents of young people to get them to stop school and earn a living to support the family. The best way of prospering, according to the parents, was to migrate and work in the city. Young people in Vietnam these days have more freedom to make
life decisions. Many young people who have dropped out of school have encouraged other young people to quit school and migrate to the city.

Social networks created by migrants in the city with people left behind have played an important role in attracting people to the city. They have provided information before moving. While migrants with higher levels of education were more likely to combine informal sources as well as formal channels to get information, the role of formal channels in helping people get information about the city is still blurred, especially among less educated people. The potential migrants should bear in mind that social networks, on the one hand, have been playing a very important part in helping them to get information and other essential needs. On the other hand these relationships were used by people in the city for their own reasons. They came back to their villages with a promising picture about life in the city in order to attract young people to come to work for them.
Chapter 7
Economic Adjustment and Living Conditions of Young Migrants in Ho Chi Minh City

7.1 Introduction

Two important dimensions of rural-urban migrants’ adjustment are occupation and housing, which have not been examined in much detail in developing countries (Speare, 1983; Bilsborrow, 1998). Occupation is chosen because migration to cities in developing counties in Asia is mainly motivated by a desire to get better employment (Guest, 2003:1). Low relative socio-economic status contributes to ill health through factors such as unequal access to education and employment opportunities (Hallman, 2004: 6). Poverty leads migrants in cities to live in poor and unsafe housing and this poses a threat to their health (Jones, 1997:246). Therefore, this chapter focuses on occupation status and accommodation conditions of young migrants in HCMC.

The first section examines the dynamics of migrants’ adaptation to the urban environment such as how young migrants find jobs, their income and expenditure patterns in HCMC. The differences between their experience in rural areas before moving and their current lives in the city are described in order to understand whether their lives have improved or worsened as a result of migration. Information about the migrants’ previous lives in rural areas was collected from the migrants themselves and relates to the year prior to their leaving. This meant that they could readily recall their experience. Because remittances are an important aspect of the migration process and data on migrants’ remittances are limited in Vietnam (Dang et al., 2004:9), this chapter examines this theme. It mainly uses survey data from the young migrants and also data
from in-depth interviews conducted by Tran Xuyen and Hoa Nguyen (2003) and Thu Tran (2004). Migration-related characteristics such as farm and non-farm backgrounds, occupation of parents, age, sex, education, location of origin and duration of residence were used as independent variables to measure the adjustment levels of migrants. This assists in understanding how these micro factors impact on migrants’ lives in the city.

7.2 Employment Adjustment

7.2.1 Occupation Characteristics

Since work is one of the most important aspects of migrants’ lives and urban adjustment, it is important to analyse their work patterns. Because the determinants of migration were mainly economic, the first concern of migrants when they reached the city was to find a job (Cu Chi Loi, 2005). In the survey, all of the migrants were employed at the time of interview. Because their jobs are very diverse, they were divided into formal and informal sector employment. The definition of the informal sector here is drawn from the ILO (ILO, 2000), which sees the informal sector as consisting of 3 three groups: 1) owner-employer of micro enterprises, which employ a few paid workers, with or without apprentices 2) sole traders/self-employed, who own and operate one-person businesses who work alone or with the help of unpaid workers; 3) dependent workers, paid or unpaid, including wage workers in micro enterprises, unpaid family workers, apprentices, home-workers and paid domestic workers. The formal sector consists of workers who work in large-scale enterprises such as state-owned, private capital, foreign or joint-venture companies. Table 7.1 shows the types of jobs reported by respondents, and the majority of migrants (69.2 percent) worked in the informal sector. Only 30.8 percent of migrants worked in the formal sector; however, most of them worked in blue-collar jobs such as seamstresses and garment processing in factories.
Some 15 percent of respondents operated their own businesses in the informal sector. Their businesses were very simple such as street vendors, lottery ticket sellers or grocers in open markets. Respondents who worked in the service sector work in private cafes, restaurants or karaoke bars. Previous research has shown that due to the lack of education and training opportunities, young people, especially girls can obtain only the lowest-skilled and lowest pay jobs (Anderson and O’Connell, 2003; Rushing and Watts, 2005). Moreover, young migrants are also the target of exploitation as they are treated as a source of cheap, docile labour, and are easy to hire and fire. The level of education of young migrants in general was lower than non-migrants as indicated in Table 7.2, with the majority having low-secondary school qualifications (64 percent), and only 1 percent have a tertiary degree. Compared to migrants into HCMC in general, young migrants in this study had a lower rate of tertiary education. However, they are more likely to have high school qualifications than other migrant groups in HCMC. In order to establish whether young migrants had improved their education, they were asked about their levels of education before moving, and it was found that the migrants had not improved their levels of education since moving. All respondents stated that their education still remained at the same level before they moved.
Table 7.2 Percentage of Young Migrant Respondents, Migrants in General and Non-Migrants by Education, HCMC.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Young Migrants</th>
<th>Migrants in General</th>
<th>Non-Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Secondary</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In relation to the duration of residence, it was found that there was a strong relationship with the kind of work migrants did. The longer the migrant had stayed in the city, the more likely they were to work in the formal sector (Lucas, 2003). This survey found that more recent migrants were more likely to work in the informal sector, and migrants who had been in HCMC for 3-5 years were more likely to work in the formal sector than newer migrants (Table 7.3). In short, in terms of duration of residence, most recent migrants were more likely to work in the informal private sector than other groups.

Table 7.3 Work Sector of Respondents (percent) by Duration of Residence in HCMC

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Sector</th>
<th>Up to one year</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>3-5</th>
<th>5+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker in factories</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office staff</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in private shop</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp work</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of gender, Table 7.4 shows that there is a difference in work between males and females. This pattern is more pronounced in large cities such as those in Thailand (Guest, 2003), the Philippines (Gultiano and Xenos, 2004), Indonesia (Hugo, 2005b) and Bangladesh (Afsar, 2003). There was a similar tendency for both sexes to work in
factories and private workshops, but males tended to do more temporary work than females, while females tended to work as housekeepers. Housekeeper positions are more suitable for women than men who are more likely to be employed in temporary work such as a stone-mason on building sites as in the Philippines (Gultiano and Xenos, 2004:13).

Table 7.4 Work Sector of Respondents (percent) by Gender and Education
Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Sector</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Illiteracy</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker in factories</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office staff</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in private shop</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp work</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was surprising that there was no clear relationship between levels of education and the kind of jobs held by migrants (Table 7.4). Excluding respondents with tertiary degrees who constituted only a very small part of the sample (one percent), there was no obvious difference due to level of education. However, it should be noted that to get a job in a factory, employers tended to require workers to have a certain minimum level of education\(^{19}\). It was reported by some respondents that to be employed in many factories, it is required for a worker to have a minimum level of education of secondary school. It is also indicated in GSO-UNFPA (2006:3) that formal sector companies such as foreign investment and private capital companies employ better educated workers;

\(^{19}\) To be employed in the formal sector factories, with a worker must have a minimum level of education (i.e. secondary school).
therefore those with little or no schooling have to work in informal or ‘black economy’
establishments with low pay and no labour contract. Hence migrants who had only
finished primary school had limited opportunities to obtain a job in the formal sector.

The relationship between age and work sector is shown in Table 7.5. Younger migrants
(aged 15-17) had the highest proportion of respondents working in informal private
workshops, while older migrants (aged 20-24) were more likely to work in the formal
sector.

**Table 7.5 Current Job of Young Migrant Respondents (percent) by Age in HCMC**
Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Job</th>
<th>15-17</th>
<th>18-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worker in the formal sector factories</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker in the informal sector workshops</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaving school at a very early age to earn an income, these younger migrants did not
have the required skills or experience to perform skilled jobs. It is not unusual to find
that younger migrants were most likely to have jobs in the informal sector compared to
older migrants. The major concern in this survey is that many young migrants working
in the informal sector have been exploited by working long hours as the case of SCUK
(1999). A boy from Lang Son province who works in an informal sector garment
workshop said:

*The boss told us that if we come to HCMC and work for him we will get
good pay and a good life. But when we got here we have to work every day
from 7am to midnight including weekends. The boss said to us that our pay
is 250,000VND per month which is only one fourth of the amount he told us
before we came to work for him. He only gives us 20,000 dong per week for
daily expenses, the rest he keeps, and we are not allowed to go anywhere and
have any friends. He is afraid that we will escape. I want to find another job
to get money and to go home. I accept to leave this house without pay if
someone helps me to get a job. (In-depth interview in 2005 Youth Survey)*
Moreover, many young girls with no training who work as housekeepers in richer families have experienced many problems. It was reported recently in Vietnamese newspapers that a girl from the countryside working as a housekeeper for a family in Hanoi was seriously abused by her employers for 14 years. It is surprising that many local people knew about the case, even local authorities, but they did nothing to help her. The head of the Women’s Union at the residential block where the girl stayed stated:

> We know that she gets ruthlessly beaten nearly every day, but we cannot do anything because she does not report this. Moreover, she is not a member of our Union, so we don’t report to the police (Cap-Long and Hong- Minh, ThanhNien News, 8/11/2007).

Local authorities refused to help this abused migrant girl because she was not their responsibility. Among younger migrants aged 15-17, 24 percent worked as waitresses in bars or cafes. In large cities in Vietnam, working in these places is not a favourite job for young people, especially young girls. A girl working in café bar said:

> My boss tells us to satisfy clients and never to make them upset. He is not happy and we get told off if we don’t satisfy clients. Some men are very polite but many of them are annoying when they tease and touch us. (ECERFS Survey)

### 7.2.2 Change in Employment since Moving

The migrant’s change of job after moving is shown in Table 7.6. Before moving half the migrants were farmers and 38 percent were students. Only a small number did off-farm work in small workshops in their villages. However, after moving they were likely to change jobs because the work structure in the city was quite different from that in their villages. Not surprisingly, none of the migrants remained in agricultural employment. Of the 129 migrants doing farm work in the village, 98 percent had become off-farm workers when they arrived in the city. Some 97 percent of respondents who were students before moving became workers at the destination.

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20 According to the regulations of the Women’s Union, only females who have permanent residence in the ward are able to become members of this union. As a member of the Women’s Union they can have access to micro credit programs and other services established for women in the ward.
Table 7.6 Change in Employment since Moving of Young Migrants to HCMC
Source Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job before moving</th>
<th>Off-Farm Job</th>
<th>Farm Job</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Off-Farm job N</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.3 Reason for Choosing the Current Job

Respondents were asked why they chose their current job and how long it had taken them to get the job. Table 7.7 shows that very few of the young migrant respondents said “high income”. The most frequently mentioned reason for choosing a job was that the work suited them. Although the young migrants migrated to HCMC hoping for a better income, those with low levels of education did not look for jobs with a high income because they knew that these types of jobs were not possible to obtain. However, the more highly educated migrants were more likely to choose a job because of high income. The next most frequent reason for obtaining the job was that they got it through the recommendation of someone. This reflects the fact that social networks play a significant role in assisting newcomers to obtain a job in HCMC (Bach et al., 1997; Le Van Thanh, 2006). However, the reasons varied widely with such characteristics as age, education, gender and occupation (Tables 7.7 and 7.8).

Table 7.7 Reason for Choosing the Current Job (percent Respondents to each Answer)
Source: Youth Survey, 2005                      N=300

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commensurate with my ability</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job recommended by someone</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred job</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only this job was available</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High income</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.8 Reason for Choosing a Job by Sex, Education and Age (percent Respondents to each Answer)

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>15-17</th>
<th>18-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>15+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High income</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commensurate with my ability</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred job</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only this job available</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job recommended by someone</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple Choice

Some 40 percent of respondents working in factories found the job suitable with their ability and similar number had their preferred jobs. Similarly, migrants in the informal service sector chose their job because it suited their ability, while those in informal workshops obtained their job through the recommendation of other migrants or friends.

Education plays an important part in the current job (Table 7.9). Respondents with higher levels of education tended to do the jobs that reflected their ability, while less educated migrants, especially those with primary school qualifications were more likely to get a job recommended by someone.

Table 7.9 Reason for Choosing a Job according to Work Sector and Education (percent Respondents to each Answer)

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work sector</th>
<th>Formal sector</th>
<th>Private informal sector</th>
<th>Self-business</th>
<th>Education level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High income</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commensurate with my ability</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred job</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only this job available</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job recommended by someone</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of gender, females tended to obtain a job through recommendation more than males did. In relation to age, younger respondents aged 15-17 were most likely to accept the job recommended by other people rather than a job that they liked. Older migrants aged 20-24 were more careful about the type of jobs they chose. Because they were more educated, these migrants had more opportunities to get better jobs. The findings suggest that due to their poor background, young migrants have limited choices in their employment. In regard to the duration of residence, data show that respondents who had stayed in the city longer were more likely to do jobs that suited them and those they liked, while more recent migrants tended to do the jobs that were recommended by someone. It was also found in a study of migration in HCMC that more recent migrants tended to have more short-term and unstable jobs than long-term migrants (Bach et al., 1997:46).

7.2.4 Duration of the Search for Employment

Respondents were asked how long it took them to get their current jobs. Generally, 20 days was the average time they had to wait before obtaining a job. The survey data show that migrants who had jobs they liked, needed more time (33 days) to obtain them (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1 Reason for Choosing a Job according to Time Needed to Get a Job
Source: Youth Survey, 2005
Similarly, on average it took around 32 days to get jobs with higher incomes whereas
the jobs they were forced to do because there were no other jobs available, needed only
4 days. These results may be explained by the fact that more highly educated young
migrants in cities tend to have a relatively high level of unemployment because their
families can afford to support them until they get a job matching their requirements.
Less educated and poor migrants can not afford to be unemployed, and they, therefore,
have to do any jobs in order to earn an income (Hugo, 2005a: 69-70).

The average time respondents waited for a job according to different periods of
residence is shown in Table 7.10 and Figure 7.2. Most recent migrants tended to need
less time to obtain jobs and this time increased as duration of residence increased. While
50 percent of migrants in HCMC needed 30 days to get a job during 1986-1990, and 10
days between 1991 and 1996 (Bach et al., 1997: 42), in this survey half of the migrants
needed only one week. In particular, migrants who had moved to the city recently
needed only 7 days on average to get a job and it gradually increased to 34 days for
those who had stayed 3-5 years and reached 38 days for people who had stayed more
than 5 years. Recent migrants needed much less time to find a job because they had
information about employment opportunities before moving and had support from
friends or relatives in access to jobs (Afsar, 2000; Banerjee, 1998). Also migrants need
to get a job quickly because they do not have other resources to obtain a living such as
social or unemployment welfare. Moreover, in HCMC there is a large labour market
with a big demand of 200,000 jobs per years, and the majority of the jobs are unskilled
(Le Van Thanh, 2006: 7).
Table 7.10 Time Needed to Get a Job according to Duration of Residence
Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of residence</th>
<th>Average Time Needed to Get a Job</th>
<th>Number of Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to one year</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 up to 3 years</td>
<td>10.37</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 up to 5 years</td>
<td>34.62</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>38.54</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20.07</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.2 Time Needed to Get a Job according to Duration of Residence
Source: Youth Survey, 2005

7.2.5 Difficulties in Seeking a Job

Respondents were also asked whether migrants have any difficulties getting a job and 72 percent of respondents said they had none. Respondents working in private shops and in service industries were more likely to have had no difficulties in finding jobs (Table 7.11). Some 72 percent of respondents working in factories stated that they faced no problems in getting a job, while those running their own business were more likely to have difficulties. Little difference in seeking work were recorded by age, sex and level of education.
Table 7.11 Percentage of Respondents Having Difficulties in Getting a Job by Occupation

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Difficulties in obtaining a job</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker in factories</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker in private shops</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp work</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-business</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office staff</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Young migrants from rural areas make up the majority of workers in factories and private shops (Tran Xuyen and Huong Nguyen, 2004) which involve largely unskilled jobs. As a result, getting a job in such places was not a problem, while respondents who operate their own business and students were more likely to find it harder. It is also useful to explore what kinds of work-seeking difficulties migrants had. Respondents who nominated that they had faced difficulties were asked to indicate what these were. The results are shown in Table 7.12, and as may be expected, a lack of work experience was the main concern of those respondents. A lack of information and no transport also contributed to these difficulties. It is surprising that, while in the past without permanent residential registration it was impossible for movers to find a job in the city, nowadays only a few respondents (5 cases) saw this as a problem. This was also reported in the GSO-UNFPA study (2006). During the era of the centrally planned economy, jobs were allocated only to those who had permanent residence in the city, but after the reforms the need to have permanent residential status to get a job no longer applied.
Table 7.12 Reasons for Difficulties in Seeking a Job (percent Respondents to each Answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No experience</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No personal transport</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough money for job expenses</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No degree</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High competition for job</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No permanent residential registration</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated by McNally (2004:118), the places where men frequently go to seek prostitutes are in cafes, nightclubs and karaoke bars. Therefore, many young girls working in these places are exposed to sexual exploitation. For some young women this job is a means to escape poverty (Rushing and Watts, 2005). Although these young women may not view themselves as being coerced, their entry into sex work is due to financial need. This may make ‘the young women vulnerable to sexual coercion in the form of exchange and or transactional sex’ (Jejeebhoy and Bott, 2003:13). In this survey, a girl from Phu Yen working in a café said:

This work is very complex and easy to get seduced by rich men. I cannot tell my family that I work here because they will worry. Before I moved to HCMC, my mother told me to be careful with allurement in the city; therefore I don’t want to worry them. I will save money and come back to open a hairdressing shop in my hometown. (ECERFSD Survey)

7.2.6 Working Environment

Like other developing countries in South-East Asia, working conditions in the industrial sector in Vietnam are very poor (Soin, 1995; UNAV, 2003). Inadequate lighting, noise, overcrowding, heat and other inadequacies are frequent problems in factories. The workers normally work long hours without breaks or safety standards to protect them. These problems certainly exist in HCMC, where to attract foreign investment the government has attempted to compete with other nations in the region in terms of
offering cheap labour. This section investigates the working hours, work place conditions, difficulties at work and the work satisfaction of migrants.

7.2.6.1 Working Hours and Work Conditions

It was indicated by UNAV (2003) that working overtime is common among young migrant workers in factories and urban centres, although the labour law states that the maximum working time should not exceed 8 hours per day and 6 days per week (Brassard, 2006:86). In this study, it was also found that working overtime is common among young migrants. Table 7.13 indicates that the average hours they worked in the village were much lower than they did in the city. Although they worked very hard in the village (13 hours over the standard time of 40 hours per week), in the city they worked longer days.

Table 7.13 Average Working Time per Week of Male and Female Respondents before and after Moving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Youth Survey, 2005</th>
<th>N=300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, half of the respondents worked more than 8 hours a day, with the majority (87 percent) normally working 9 to 12 hours daily and the rest more than 13 hours. In a study of female migrants in HCMC, weekends were considered as normal working days for migrants in factories (MRSC, 2002). In this study, young migrants not only worked long days, but also worked every day of the week. More than half of the respondents worked 7 days per week, while 42 percent worked 6 days and only 3.1 percent worked 5 days. They accepted working long hours as long as the work is available.
From conversations with migrants it was apparent that during the peak season\textsuperscript{21} when there was a lot of work, they may have only 4 hours sleep every day. When asked why they worked so hard, they claimed that their pay was low in comparison with the average income in the city. In addition, when there was much work in the peak season, they took the opportunity to work as hard as they could to earn more money. There was an obvious gender difference between respondents, with males more likely to work 7 days a week, while females tended to work longer hours per day. A few (18) respondents worked 13 to 15 hours a day, and 67 percent of them were females. Similarly, there is a distinct relationship between working hours and age with the youngest age group (15-19 years) having a tendency to work hardest as 70 percent of them worked every day including weekends, whereas only half of those aged 20 to 24 years worked 7 days. Related to the working time per day, 46 percent of respondents aged 20-24 worked longer days (9-12 hours). The younger migrants aged 15-17 years were most likely to work more than 13 hours a day compared to other age groups. Although they worked very hard, they felt happy because they earned higher incomes. They stated that they felt unhappy when they had no work because they were not earning any money. A female migrant from Ben Tre said:

\ldots Some days I work until 3am, although I feel headache and sleepy I try to keep working because the more I work the more money I earn. I have a rest only when the boss has no more work for me. (ECERFS\textsuperscript{2}D Survey)

Clearly, migrants move to the city to gain higher incomes, and regardless of hard work and long working days their first concerns were to work in order to obtain good pay. Their reasons for moving were economic and therefore they did not mind working hard, even harder than in their place of origin. A girl from Phu Yen province who worked in a café said:

\begin{quote}
For migrants working in factories, their work is dependent on whether the company has orders or not. The peak time for these migrants is when the company gets a large order and they encourage their workers to work overtime, even on weekends to finish the order on time.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{21} For migrants working in factories, their work is dependent on whether the company has orders or not. The peak time for these migrants is when the company gets a large order and they encourage their workers to work overtime, even on weekends to finish the order on time.
…I work about 18 hours a day from 8am to midnight and when the shop has more clients we work until 2 am and I feel that it is normal. I am pleased with my current job, although I know that this job is complicated.22 (In-depth interview in 2005 Youth Survey)

Despite the possible negative effects on their health because of overworking (UNAV, 2003) most young migrants did not greatly care. There was a tendency for the most recent migrants to be more likely to work longer hours than those who had been in the city longer (Table 7.14). This may be because when the migrants reach the city, they were more likely to work hard to get money for their initial expenses as well as to have some savings to help the families they had left behind.

Table 7.14 Duration of Residence of Respondents by Working Hours Per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of residence</th>
<th>Mean (hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to one year</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 up to 3 years</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 up to 5 year</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Young migrants in the city not only work long hours but their working conditions are often hard and unsafe (UNAV, 2003), and those in the informal sector are the most vulnerable (Brassard, 2006). In this study, most young migrants in the informal sector tended to work and live in the same place, normally the house of the employer. In all the workshops the researcher visited, the workers tended not to use any safety clothing and there was no First Aid equipment. Especially on small construction sites in HCMC it is very common to see workers on the top of high buildings without safety belts or

22 As discussed in the above section, cafes, nightclubs and karaoke bars are not favoured places for young women to work because men in Vietnam often go to these places to seek sex. Consequently, many waitresses in cafes and bars are more likely to be seduced.
helmets. Generally, people working in the informal sector have no safety protection or accident insurance. For migrants working in industrial zones, work conditions are better. There was a clinic in each factory to look after workers, and in some the workers had safety protection such as masks. However, the medical services provided in these places were often poor and ineffective.

7.2.6.2 Difficulties at Work

Respondents were asked whether they had any difficulties (such as harassment or maltreatment) in their workplace. Two-thirds of respondents claimed to have no difficulties with this. Overall, there was no clear difference found across the migrant characteristics such as sex, age, level of education and origin. Females were only slightly more likely to have more difficulties than males. In relation to duration of residence, migrants who had stayed for 1-3 years were more likely to have had difficulties at work (43.4 percent) than other respondents. Migrants resident for 3-5 years were least likely to mention that they had difficulties at work (23.1 percent). For migrants who had stayed in HCMC longer than 5 years, 37.8 percent of them reported difficulties with work compared to 32.7 percent for most recent migrants. This result reflects a tendency that the longer stay in the city, the more difficulties the migrant is aware of the life there. A girl from Da Nang who had stayed in HCMC 7 years and came back home said:

“At the beginning when we were in HCMC, I felt happy because we got a job and earned an income which was much higher than in Da Nang. However, if I decide to live there permanently, I felt too much pressure. It was impossible to get a permanent job with good income so that you can get married and have children. Working with a pay that could hardly afford food and rental prices made me feel that the life there was very temporary. Therefore, after getting married I decided to come back home.” (2005 Youth Survey).
When asked about the kinds of difficulties, migrants working in private workshops were most likely to complain about long working days and being tired. Respondents operating their own businesses reported that money for investment was their biggest problem. Some respondents reported a lack of work experience and instability in work availability.

The respondents were asked if they experienced any verbal or physical harassment at workplaces; 9 percent of respondents said they had experienced harassment and it was more common among females. There is a strong relationship between level of education and harassment. Less educated respondents were more likely to be harassed at work. This is also consistent with the relationship between age and being harassed as the youngest migrants were most likely to report harassment. If someone reported that they had experienced harassment, they were encouraged to talk openly about their experience. From this discussion, it was found that for migrants who worked in private workshops were most likely to get told off by their bosses. Some girls got teased by men. This would not surprise anyone who is familiar with HCMC. For respondents who were street-vendors the findings are consistent with those in Bromley (1997) and WHO (2000), as people especially women and children working on the streets are much more liable to be subjected to physical threats and sexual harassment. Violent gangs in the city are a threat to young people working on the street (Bartlett, 2002). In this study, it was found that many very young migrants who are street vendors are robbed and harassed by older men. A girl from Thanh Hoa, a lottery ticket seller, said:

I was tricked by a man who bought tickets and he gave me too big money a note (200,000 VND) and I gave him change. But after that I realised that this note was fake money. In addition, many drug addicts rob us. (2004 Survey)
From discussions with young people who were lottery ticket sellers, it was found that they often got robbed. Further, some of the girls had experienced harassment from older men in the city when asking them out. They reported:

…They said to us that they will buy tickets if we agree to go out with them. But we never agree because we know what these men want. Only the girls who are newcomers, especially those from Quang Ngai, many of them get tricked easily and go with these men when they are asked. Also, a lot of young girls from Mekong Delta get tricked like that. (2004 Survey)

In relation to work legalisation, respondents were asked whether they had signed a work contract for their job, with only 34 percent said they had. It was not surprising that respondents working in the formal sector were most likely to sign a contract (67 percent), but surprisingly 33 percent of people in the formal sector worked without a contract. One director of a garment factory stated:

Workers don’t want any ties with work; that’s why they don’t sign contracts regarding the job. Without contracts we have no voice in managing them since they leave work any time they want. (In depth interview in 2005 Youth Survey)

This was more likely to happen in the informal sector as significant numbers of people who worked in this sector had no employment contract (85 percent). Moreover, older respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to sign a contract. The results show that respondents aged 20-24 years with high school level education were the most likely to have a contract (55.4 percent) and this declined with age and level of education.

It is believed that in Vietnam, poor people are more likely to work without a labour contract, especially poor children (Brassard, 2006). In this survey, respondents were also asked why they had a contract and the main reason given was to guarantee stable work as well as ensure labour rights. Those who did not sign, sometimes did not realise the importance of signing a contract, others stated that the boss did not want to enter a contract. Theoretically, according to the country’s Labour Laws, approved by the
Vietnamese Parliament on 23/06/1994, every person who is legally involved in the labour market has to be above 15 years old and must sign a contract of employment (Article 6) (Vu, 2000). For adolescent workers under 18, there are special conditions that require the employer has to comply with. For example, adolescents are required to have medical checks periodically (Article 119). However, in reality, the majority of young migrants in HCMC were working without labour contracts (NACSA, 2003). The employees and employers break the law as they employ workers but have no obligation to provide social and health insurance (NACSA, 2003). The reason is because employees had limited knowledge about labour laws to protect their own interests, and the employers used this to their benefit. On the other hand, from discussions with a boss of a private garment factory it was found that many migrants thought that with a labour contract they had to work permanently in these places so they could not move to another place if they wanted. Moreover, due to ineffective laws, employers have no obligation to provide labour and social insurances for migrant workers (UNAV, 2003).

When respondents were asked whether they knew anything about labour laws, only 26 percent reported that they did. However, their knowledge of the law is very basic and they only knew that it protects their rights regarding work, but they could not provide more details about how it protects them. Only migrants who worked in formal factories had joined labour unions, so their rights were defended by these organisations.

Because of their limited knowledge about labour laws, young workers in general and young migrants in particular are often exploited. The bulk of existing small-scale research on child labour in Vietnam indicates that the majority of child workers have no contract of employment and they work in unsafe conditions without medical and life
insurance (Vu, 2000). In this study, young migrants, especially those working in private workshops mainly live at their work places:

In a one room about 20 sq metres, 7 young people about 16-19 years old were sewing summer clothes for children. Inside was very hot and stuffy since the weather outside was above 30 degrees and the room was full with new clothes around them. During the day they worked and at night they put the machines aside at the corner and slept on the floor with a mat. Although it was very hot, they shared only one ceiling electric fan. (Observation in 2005 Youth Survey)

While many of these migrants worked in unsafe conditions, only a small number (47 cases) had labour insurance, and the majority of these (85 percent) were from the formal sector.

7.3 Income

In regard to income the results from the 2004 National Survey on Migration indicate that the average monthly per capita income for young migrants in HCMC was 985,000VND, compared to 1,064,000VND for in-migrants in general, and 1,264,000 VND for non-migrants. This study established that the average income of young migrants was slightly higher at 1,045,000 VND. This difference could be the result of a different definition used for young migrants in the two surveys. Young migrants in the 2004 research were aged 15-29 years old but young migrants here are 15-24 years old. Also, the two studies were conducted at different times.

Although the average monthly income for young migrants was quite high, there is considerable differentiation among migrants. As shown in Table 7.13, migrants aged 20-24 years were more likely to receive a higher income and more educated migrants tended to get better pay than those less educated. The survey also shows that regardless of this difference, the majority of young migrants (97 percent) received less than 2,000,000 VND per month. Of these people, more than 70 percent received income less than 1,000,000 VND and only a few migrants earn more than 5,000,000 VND. One
person mentioned his income was 8,000,000 and another 10,000,000 VND, and that was not surprising as they were owners of garment workshops.

Table 7.15 shows a clear relationship between the age of migrants and their monthly income. The relationships between income and levels of education, and income and sex were basically the same as more educated and male migrants tended to receive better pay. Also, the most recent migrants received less income than those who had stayed longer in the city. There was no significant difference in monthly income between different working sector groups. This is consistent with the general income model for young migrants as the majority of migrants in all working sectors as a whole got paid less than 1,000,000 VND. Migrants who got less pay were more common among those who worked longer hours for less pay per hour.

### Table 7.15 Income of Respondents per Month by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Income (thousand VND)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>668.4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>1,500.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>902.6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>300.0</td>
<td>3,000.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>1,189.2</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>10,000.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>1,131.2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>550.0</td>
<td>2200.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,072.6</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>10,000.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Related to the length of time resident in the city, a pattern emerges in the relationship between income and duration of residence (Table 7.16). The most recent migrants were more likely to achieve an income of up to 1,000,000 VND per month, while the migrants who had stayed more than 3 years had higher incomes in the 1,000,000-2,000,000 VND range. However, with the income range above 2,000,000 VND there is no difference in terms of residential duration.
In brief, excluding a few cases who received a very high income, young migrants in general received limited pay compared to the average monthly per capita income in HCMC. The poorer migrants were more likely to work longer hours, yet their income was less than others. There was a large income gap among these migrants. Some earned only 200,000 VND a month, but others received up to 10,000,000 VND. However, there were few of these rich migrants, while the number of those getting under 1,000,000 VND was large.

Table 7.16 Income of Respondents per Month (thousand VND) according to Duration of Residence

Source: Young Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Up to one year</th>
<th>1 up to 3 years</th>
<th>3 up to 5 years</th>
<th>More than 5 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 1000.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000.0-2,000.0</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000.0-3,000.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000.0-5,000.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000.0+</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4 Housing and Accommodation Status of Migrants

It is reported that in-migrants to HCMC, especially spontaneous migrants, experience quite a few difficulties when they arrive (Dang, 1998). Due to their low pay, most migrants lived in poor accommodation that lacked comfort and had inadequate sanitation. Some of the migrants become homeless or live in very bad conditions with an implicit threat of disease and social evils. Dang (1998) argues that low pay and the pressure to save money to remit home ensure that migrants do not have a comfortable
life. Living in over-crowded rooms with poor sanitation and a lack of essential services were very common among migrants in urban areas. The survey of young migrants collected detailed information about the housing status of young migrants in order to present a fuller picture of this issue.

### 7.4.1 Housing

Young migrants in HCMC received very modest incomes compared to older migrants as well as non-migrants, and as a consequence, owning accommodation is out of their reach (Tran Xuyen and Hoa Nguyen, 2004). Moreover, their accommodation status is very poor as nearly almost all of the young migrants (93.6 percent) lived in cheap houses. In Vietnam the houses are grouped in 4 levels.

- Level 1: the houses are the best quality, such as villas
- Level 2: are two or more storey permanent houses
- Level 3: are one story permanent house
- Level 4: houses are only slightly better than shacks

Migrants are most likely to live in accommodation at level 4, with only 1.8 percent of migrants living in simple cottage houses, and 1.5 percent in permanent houses at levels 1 and 2. Of the migrants who lived in more expensive accommodation, many stayed with their relatives or with their employers, but they did not own or rent this type of accommodation. This was reflected in the relationship between the type of accommodation and work sector. In contrast, 99 percent of migrants working in the formal sector and 97 percent of those who operated their own business lived in cheap houses at level 4, while only 87 percent working in the informal sector lived at this level of accommodation. Nearly 7 percent of those lived in more expensive houses because migrants working in this sector usually work and live in the same place, which usually belongs to the owner (Figure 7.3). While some migrants in the informal sector lived in better accommodation, approximately 5 percent lived in thatched houses located on
building sites. The reason for migrants who worked in the formal sector or self-employed living in cheaper accommodation is that in order to keep living costs down, they chose cheap houses and shared them with more people. This cheap accommodation tends to be overcrowded, and the quality is very poor due to lack of maintenance. This is common among in-migrants to the city not only in HCMC but in many Asian cities (Sheng, 2002:149). Similar results have been reported in other studies in migration in Vietnam. Dang (1998:15) found that the majority of migrants in cities in Vietnam lived in poor accommodation without electricity and tap water. Dang (1998) also stated that not only migrants working in the informal sector, but those in the formal sector in industrial zones lived in boarding houses or dormitories that were overcrowded and unsanitary. This study also found that, no matter what kind of jobs they did, all migrants tended to live in the cheapest accommodation available if they had to pay for it themselves. Even office staff, students and those who received higher pay were among those who lived in cheap housing. A modest income and the pressure of saving to send money home discouraged migrants from seeking better but more expensive accommodation.
Figure 7.3: This garment workshop is in the house of the owner where young migrants live and work. This 20 sq metre room is a work place, living room and a kitchen (the Youth Survey, 2005)

With regard to the floor area of housing per person, a migrant occupied 7.8 square metres on average in their accommodation compared with 16 square metres per person which is the average in HCMC as a whole (SO, 2004:172). This is very small for one person to live in, but some migrants reported much smaller areas of housing (less than 1 square metre). This is possible in reality when one room of about 10 square metres had more than 5 people living in it. Table 7.17 shows that 67 percent of migrants occupied a housing area less than the average amount, while only a small number of migrants lived in accommodation with more than 7 sq metres per person.

Table 7.17 Housing Area per Respondent of Young Migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- 4 m²</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 4-7m²</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 7-10m²</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 10-13m²</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 13m²</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Youth Survey, 2005  N=300
Migrants in the formal sector were more likely to live in cheaper accommodation; they also tended to live in the most overcrowded accommodation. Some 76.5 percent of migrants working in the formal sector occupied less than 7 sq metres per person compared to 61 percent of those in the informal sector (Table 7.18). Among those working in this sector who lived in very crowded houses more than half occupied only less than 4 sq metres. As stated previously, migrants in the formal sector were more likely to rent accommodation than those in the informal sector, so to keep the rental price down they tended to live in cheaper and more crowded houses.

Table 7.18 Average Housing Area per Respondent by Work Sector
Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m2 per person</th>
<th>Formal sector</th>
<th>Informal sector</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4m2</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7m2</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10m2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-13m2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 13m2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern of about six people living in one room with an area of 15 square metres was quite common among migrants in the city in general and young migrants in particular. They used the room as their bedroom, dining room and kitchen. Some shared the toilet with people in other rooms but the others may have a small toilet in the room and they used it as a bathroom too.

Comparing these data on accommodation area per person with that from the 1999 census (SO, 2000), there was a large gap between the accommodation status of migrants and the city’s residents in general. While more than half of HCMC people occupied above 13 square metres accommodation per person, only 21 percent of migrants did
Also, nearly 6 percent of urban residents live in housing with more than 40 square metres per person, only one out of 300 young migrants occupied the same area. While the living standards of people in the city have improved over the years, it can be argued that if we compare accommodation status of migrants in 2004 with that of the total city population in the same year, this gap has widened.

Table 7.19 Average Housing Area per Respondent, HCMC, 1999
Source: SO (2000: 211-212)

Most of the young migrants rented their accommodation and only a small percentage lived in their relatives’ houses while others lived with their employers. The highest proportion of migrants lived with friends or with their work colleagues (44 percent), 22 percent lived with their parents or relatives, 7.6 percent lived with their partners and 3.5 percent lived on their own.

7.4.2 Access to Essential Services and Household Belongings

All migrants in this study indicated that they used electricity for lighting. However, as did other households in the city, they used different sources of energy for cooking. The majority of migrant households used gas for cooking as it was quite cheap and affordable for most city residents, while about 20 percent still used oil or wood for cooking. Although this sort of energy for cooking is very cheap, it causes environmental problems such as pollution and it is not encouraged. While the migrants lived in very small rooms shared with other people, most of them cooked in the same room as well and this creates problems.
The difference in using sources of energy for cooking was clearly reflected in the income range. None of the migrants who received above 2,000,000VND per month used oil or wood for cooking, while 23 percent of those receiving less than 1,000,000VND and 20 percent receiving 1,000,000-2,000,000 VND used this kind of energy for daily cooking. Similarly, the youngest migrants (who were more likely to be poorer) tended to use unclean sources of energy for cooking. Surprisingly, there was no variation between residential duration and the kind of energy used. The most recent migrants had a lower income than those who had stayed longer and it would be expected that they should use more expensive sources of energy for cooking, but the survey found no difference.

Regarding the source of water the migrants used, it was found that they mainly used taps and wells. Yet looking in more detail while 60 percent of the city’s residents use tap water (PC-HCMC, 2001), only 37.3 percent of migrants did. Hence, migrants had a lower rate of access to clean water than other urban dwellers. Though many people in HCMC are forced to use well water for their needs (in some areas in the city the tap water system is still not available) it has been identified that this kind of water is not always healthy (DNRE, 2005). DNRE reports that to use well water safely, it must pass regular safety check, but this does not happen in reality because people, especially the less educated, do not understand the importance of doing this. As a consequence, those who use this water are susceptible to water-borne diseases.

Respondents were asked what kind of toilet they used. The results show no difference between the type of toilets migrants used and that used by HCMC residents as a whole. Some 94 percent of migrants said that they used flushing toilets, but about 6 percent stated that they used simple primitive toilets compared with 93.8 and 7.1 percent in
HCMC as a whole (SO, 2005:405). This type of toilet is still used in some rural areas, especially in poor households but in the city they are not used very often. Of migrants who used this old-style toilet, 75 percent were among the poorest migrants with incomes less than 800,000 dong but surprisingly, the rest were not in the low income range.

In an attempt to understand their experience in the city, respondents were asked what kind of belongings they had. Table 7.20 shows that, most of the migrants had cheap things like electric fans and rice cookers. A high proportion (62.8 percent) also had colour televisions and 44.3 percent had video, CD or VCD players for entertainment after working hours. However, compared with the total city population this rate is much lower as 92 percent of HCMC’s households had televisions in 2004 (SO, 2005: 421).

**Table 7.20 Percentage of Respondents having Belongings in the House**

Source Youth Survey (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belongings in the house</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>% saying “yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colour TV</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-white TV</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing machine</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video, CD and VCD player</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing machine</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home phone</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorbike</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push-bike</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridge</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric fan</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardrobe</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas or electric cooker</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice cooker</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>296</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding transport, half of the migrants had motorbikes and half used pushbikes, while 87 percent of the total city population used motorbikes (SO, 2005: 412). It is surprising that only 40 percent of these young migrants slept in beds and the rest slept on the floor on mats. Undoubtedly, when such a high number of people stayed in one small room, it was impossible to have beds for everyone, so using sleeping mats would save space. More than half of the migrants did not have wardrobes to store their personal belongings as only 47.3 percent mentioned wardrobes in their belongings.

For migrants working as a street vendor, the situation was the worst. A 18 year old girl, selling lottery tickets from Nghe An and lived with the family said

> In our house, we don’t have either TV or Video player, only some plastic chairs and a plastic table. We have no bed because the house is very small, so it has not enough space to put beds. Two of my brothers sleep on the floor downstairs. I and my sister sleep on half of the floor upstairs and my parents sleep on another half. (2004 Survey)

The relationship between income and belongings in the house suggests that the migrants who had higher incomes, especially those above 3,000,000 VND were most likely to have many belongings. All of these richer migrants have TVs, gas stoves and rice cookers, and 67 percent of migrants with incomes of 3,000,000-5,000,000 VND and all of those with incomes above 5,000,000 VND had motorbikes (Table 7.21). Interestingly, even richer migrants did not use beds for sleeping and they were likely to use sleeping mats like poorer migrants. Moreover, washing machines and fridges were least likely to be used by migrants, even richer ones as it was a luxury for them to buy these things. They wanted to save money for more important things such as helping families or buying land.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belongings</th>
<th>Under 1,000</th>
<th>1,000-2,000</th>
<th>2,000-3,000</th>
<th>3,000-5,000</th>
<th>5,000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colour TV</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-white TV</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing machine</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video, CD and VCD player</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing machine</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home phone</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorbike</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushbike</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridge</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric fan</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardrobe</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas or electric cooker</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice cooker</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at gender, there was a significant difference between males and females regarding the kind of belongings they had in the house. Whereas male migrants tended to own the belongings for pleasure activities like video players, TVs, mobile phones and the like, females were more likely to have domestic goods such as wardrobes, beds, gas and rice cookers, sewing machines, fridges, etc.

When examining the relationship between migrants’ ages and their possessions the results showed that the youngest migrants aged 15-17 were more likely to live in more comfortable houses than migrants in older age groups. However, we should bear in mind that these belongings might be owned by their employers since the majority of them worked and lived with their bosses. A girl, 17 years old from Nam Dinh who worked in a private garment workshop and lived in the workplace stated:

At night I sleep here too with my other 5 co-workers. Five girls sleep in a sleeping mat in the middle of this floor, and the boy sleeps near the door. I feel ok, although it is not as comfortable as my house in rural areas. The
boss has TV upstairs, so when we have time we watch TV with her family. (ECERFSD Survey)

Although migrants working in the informal private workshops were most likely to live in houses equipped with the most comfortable means, working long hours means they have no time to enjoy watching TV or videos. Therefore, they usually listen to TV rather than watch it. A girl from Hue who worked in a garment workshop said:

While working we put the TV on so we can listen since we don’t have time to watch. After finishing the working day, we feel very tired; so normally we sleep soon afterward. (ECERFSD Survey)

While migrants who worked in private workshops lived in more comfortable houses, they had no time to enjoy them because of working long hours. Migrants who worked in factories or operated their own business were more likely to live in poor accommodation. Migrants who operated their own business, especially those selling goods in the street, were very vulnerable. Living in small and poor houses without basic things like toilets, kitchens, beds and the like was very common. For example, a 17 year old migrant working as a newspaper seller confided:

I live with my aunt and her husband who moved to the city with me. We live in a small house and have nothing valuable in the house. We have no TV, no video, only a pair of fans we have - one for me and one for them. We have no bed, so we sleep on the floor. Since upstairs is very hot at noon, hence if I take a nap at lunch time, I have to stay downstairs with them. (2004 Survey)

Another migrant from Bac Lieu, 15 years old said:

There are 9 persons in my family and we all lived in a room around 12 sq metres. Now my two sisters have gone to jail and my two brothers died, so only 5 people left. There is no kitchen, nothing in the house; hence we normally have lunch and tea on the street. We stay outside all the time, only go in when sleeping, because the house too crowded. (2004 Survey)

7.5 Expenditure

Regarding the monthly expenditure of young migrants, respondents were asked how much they spent on food, accommodation and other expenses. However, only half of
the respondents gave answers, since many of them worked and lived with their employers and were provided free food, accommodation and they did not pay bills. Similarly, younger migrants, especially those aged 15-17 were most likely to stay with their families and they gave all of their income to their parents, so they had no idea of this expenditure.

Of those 185 respondents who nominated their food expenditure, overall, a migrant spent on average 322,000 VND per month on food in HCMC. Yet, it should be taken into consideration that this figure might be higher than that which is representative of young migrants in general, since nearly 50 percent of poorest migrants who got under 1,000,000 VND did not report their expenditure on food. This expenditure on food is similar to that in HCMC in general (320,000VND) (GSO, 2004b). Of the total income, spending on food accounted for the highest proportion for migrants and non-migrants as they spent approximately half of their income on food (GSO, 2004b). If one person spent about 320,000 VND a month on food, this means that per day he/she spent just over 10,000 VND, while one meal in a popular restaurant costs more than that in the city. It is clear that cooking at home is much cheaper but with only 10,000 VND a day it is very hard. Consequently, these poor migrants usually had only two meals a day and their food was mainly rice with vegetables and some cheap meat or small fish or shrimp. An example of this was that some migrants did not have their breakfast, as one girl said:

I get up at 8 am and start working soon after washing my face and clean my teeth. I don’t have breakfast because we have lunch at 11 am. (ECERFSD Survey)

Also, some had only breakfast and dinner but no lunch:

We eat only one meal in the morning and one in the afternoon at 5 pm. At lunch time we sleep. My mother buys only one kilo rice a day and it is not enough for 3 meals. My brother gets paid only 1,000,000VND a month, it is not enough for us 3 people, so I sell lottery tickets to help. (2004 Survey)
There was considerable variation in the amount of expenditure among migrants with different income ranges. This expenditure increased with income levels. While migrants receiving less than 1,000,000 VND/month spent only 280,000dong on food, those getting more than 5,000,000 VND spent 1,150,000 VND on average. This average expenditure of migrants on low incomes highlights that the poorest migrants in the city live in very hard circumstances with not enough money for food.

There was no significant difference within the work sectors, levels of education or between males and females. This suggests that generally, no matter how educated they are or where they worked, most migrants spent a modest amount of their income on food which may impact on their health. The priority of these migrants was to eat enough and nutrition was not their main concern. However, there is a slight difference in food expenditure among age groups. This is consistent with income levels as younger migrants were more likely to spend less money on food (Table 7.22).

Table 7.22 Monthly Food Expenses by Young Migrant Respondents according to Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Mean (VND)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>250,769</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>280,303</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>352,302</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>329,738</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding expenditure on going out, health care, clothes and other items, overall, only a small proportion of respondents spent money on these. For example, only 30 percent of respondents stated that they spent money on going out with average amount of 45,000 VND per person. These 84 respondents also mentioned that they spent money on
entertainment; however those with the lowest income level of less than 1,000,000 VND were least likely to spend on entertainment. The rest (70 percent of respondents) said “no” to entertainment costs for two reasons. Firstly, they worked every day and had no time left for going out unless public holidays:

After finishing work at 10pm we only go out for a walk sometimes, mainly we stay home and watch TV before going to bed (Lan from Bac Giang, ECERFSD Survey).

The second reason was that if young migrants did go out, they did not spend much money, only going to cheap cafés and talking:

We go out very rarely, if going out, we go with about 10 people with pushbikes to Bach Dang harbour. We mainly talk and have a cheap drink in a café, we share the bill because we don’t have much money. (ECERFSD Survey)

Similarly, respondents in general did not pay very much in health care costs as they did not buy medical insurance or other health-related items. About 80 percent of respondents said “no” to this question. Normally, young migrants did not go to the doctor when they felt sick, but only bought tablets from the chemist:

I very rarely go to the doctor, though I often feel sick and then I feel like vomiting. If I feel sick, I go to the chemist and buy some tablets for vomiting and it is gone. I don’t know why I have that. My mum has stomach ache but she also does not go to the doctor often, it is costly to go there. Now she feels much better and I don’t know why her stomach ache has become less (A girl, 17 years old from An Giang, ECERFSD Survey).

While the income of migrants is low in the city, nearly half of them brought no money or in kind assistance when they moved. Among people who brought some money with them the amount was very little. On average, a person brought only 700,000 VND with them and this money is not considered to be enough. Moreover, there is a difference in the amount of money brought by migrants from poor and better-off families. Migrants from poor families only brought 300,000 VND with them, while those from families with average and above average incomes brought twice as much as money.
Since their living expenses in the city are not high, nearly 65 percent of migrants have savings despite their modest incomes, and about 45 percent of these migrants wanted to help their families. There is quite a difference between boys and girls in terms of the family assistance in rural areas as 53 percent of girls plan to help their family with their savings, while only 39 percent of boys did. In order to provide detailed insights into this issue, the next section will examine remittances sent to family members by young migrants.

### 7.6 Remittances

As indicated by Skeldon (1997 and 2002: 71), migration is seen as a way of escaping poverty as remittances sent to family by out-migrants from rural areas play an important role in improving household incomes. In Vietnam with the tradition of strong family support, remittances from migrants to their family members in rural areas are an important source of income (Dang et al., 2004:9). Data collected in this survey show that, in general, more females than males sent money to their family. As shown in Table 7.23, while 61.2 percent of females said “yes”, only 37.7 percent of males did so. This is consistent with the results of Curran (1995), Tacoli (1999) and ISPST (1998). According to Curran (1995), in Thailand daughters are more likely to send money to help their family than sons. As indicated by Rushing and Watts (2005: 9), in Vietnam, “growing family dependence on women for income, especially young women who migrate to support their younger siblings” makes these girls obligated to assist their family. Boys are more likely to invest savings for their own family in the future rather than girls.
Table 7. 23 Percent Respondents Sending Remittance to Family by Sex

Source: Youth Survey (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you send money to your family</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although females were more likely to send money to their families than males, in relation to the amount remitted, males tended to send more money. On average, both males and females had sent 396,000VND per year per person. Of this, the average amount remitted by males was 472,000VND per person compared to 344,000VND for females. This pattern may be explained by the fact that male migrants received better incomes than females. Compared with the remittance sent by migrants in Bach et al. (1997), this amount is much higher (396,000 VND and 285,000 VND respectively). This difference may be because most migrants in this survey were young and single and who are more likely to assist families than married people. From in-depth interviews, it was found that some migrants (especially females) spend only 50,000VND per month and save the rest of their income to send to their family.

7.7 Conclusion

Young migrants in HCMC do not need much time or previous work experience to obtain a job and overall, nearly all of them are employed in a wide range of jobs. However, due to their low levels of education and restricted work experience the majority of these young migrants are in unskilled jobs with low pay in the informal sector. Working long hours during the day and 7 days a week is common in order to receive the highest income, which may affect their health. As a result, the migrants had no opportunity to improve their education or work skills. In addition, most migrants do not sign labour contracts; hence their interests are not protected at work. Their limited
knowledge about labour laws make these young migrants open to exploitation by employers. For many young migrants who work in the informal sector, their working conditions are very poor. Although these migrants were facing threats every day, they received no assistance from local people and sometimes they were treated poorly.

As a consequence of a modest income, the living conditions and the accommodation status of the young migrants in HCMC are quite poor compared with the average living standards in the city. Overcrowded and very poorly equipped houses are the choice of most migrants. They are on the margin of society as their living conditions are much lower than that of local people. Because of low income they do not think about comfortable lives in the city, so they are happy to have a place to stay after long working hours and some food to eat, regardless of how bad the accommodation is and whether the food is healthy or not. Working hard, living in poor status accommodation and eating unhealthy food are common among these young migrants. Many of these young migrants cut living costs to save money that can be sent home. Helping family members in rural areas is the obligation of most migrants, especially female migrants. In order to provide a full picture of their living experiences in the city, the following chapter will investigate their social lives and health status.
Chapter 8

Social Adjustment of Young Migrants in Ho Chi Minh City

8.1 Introduction

This chapter examines an important dimension of youth migration to HCMC - social adjustment - which is often ignored in economic research on migration. Migrant integration is a multi-faceted process of adjustment in urban areas involving a physical, economic, social and cultural change (Speare, 1983; Oucho, 1998). The rapid expansion of urban centres like HCMC has given rise to changes in terms of lifestyles and other social dimensions (Dang, 2005).

This chapter investigates migrants’ personal experiences of life in the city, such as social interaction, integration to organisational and informal networks and contacts with family in the rural areas. The health status of migrants as well as their access to the health care system in the city is examined in the second section of this chapter. The role of social networks in assisting young migrants in the city is also explored, and the following section examines the degree of satisfaction of migrants in relation to work, accommodation and social relationships. The final section of this chapter discusses the impact of migration control policy on migrants’ experiences in HCMC. As stated by Scharping (1997), the economic status of the migrant influences other non-economic aspects of their living experiences in the new environment. Three aspects of social adjustment - social integration, social support networks and health care are important in research on migrant adjustment (Speare, 1983).
8.2 Social Integration

Social integration here is defined as following:

“Social integration is the inclusion and acceptance of migrants into the core institutions, relationships and positions of a host society. Integration is an interactive process between migrants and the host society. For the migrants, integration means the process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights and obligation, gaining access to position and social status, building personal relationship with member of the host society and forming a feeling of belonging to, and identification with, that society” (EFILWC, 2006:11).

In order to understand the relationship of migrants with the host place, this section examines the activities of migrants during their free time. In relation to access to position and social status of migrants, their participation in the formal and informal social structures in the host society as well as their connections with their families left in rural areas, is investigated. Their personal satisfaction is also examined in the last section in order to understand the feelings migrants experienced in the city.

8.2.1 Entertainment

It is reported that migrants in the city lack entertainment activities (Clark, 1983). In this study, in order to understand the lives of young migrants after working hours, respondents were asked to indicate their level of participation in different entertainment activities. There are 13 activities and 5 levels of evaluation, with level 1 being if they have never taken part and level 5 indicates whether they participate very often. As discussed earlier, the entertainment activities of young migrants in industrial zones are very limited as the majority of them choose a cheap form of entertainment such as watching TV, reading newspapers or listening to music and many of them never go to the cinema or live music shows (Le Thanh, 2003). These findings are consistent with
the survey of young migrants as shown in Table 8.1, which found that the major activity of migrants in their free time is watching TV, followed by reading newspapers and visiting relatives. Around 75 percent of migrants watched TV occasionally or often, and around 20 percent did rarely. The Table also shows that 16 percent of migrants never read newspapers, while more than 60 percent never participate in activities such as using the Internet or visiting famous places in and near the city. Dining in restaurants with friends or relatives is unaffordable for 75 percent of migrants. Therefore, the level of participation in other activities which are costly such as going to parties, eating out in restaurants or going to visit famous places is very low. Working long hours with low pay prevents these young migrants from taking part in costly entertainment activities. Therefore, watching TV was the main entertainment activity when they had free time.

Table 8.1 Participation in Entertainment Activities of Migrants in HCMC (percent Respondents to each Answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read newspaper</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to radio</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to church or temple</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit relatives</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamble</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook with friend</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating out with friend</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint in Charities</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit famous places</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play sport</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, it should be noted that 23 percent of young migrants gamble when they have time and money. Although most of those stated that they only gambled for fun with friends with small amounts of money because of nothing else to do in their free time.
(Figure 8.1), this kind of entertainment poses a risk. It should be noted that limited entertainment facilities may cause them to become involved in high-risk behaviour such as serious gambling and drug use.

**Figure 8.1 Gambling with Friends for Fun at Home in their Free Time**

There is a difference in the level of entertainment activities engaged in by males and females. Overall, young male migrants are more likely to take part in all kinds of these activities as the mean values for most activities, excluding going to church or temple and listening to radio, are higher than those of females (Table 8.2). While females tended to work hard with longer hours than males and send back money to help their family, males were more likely to enjoy entertainment activities.
Table 8.2 Level\textsuperscript{23} of Participation by Young Migrants in Entertainment Activities

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading newspapers</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to radio</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to church or temple</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit relatives</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamble</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat and drink</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to restaurant with friends</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint in charity activities</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit famous places</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play sport</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other activities</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.2.2 Participation in Formal Organisations and Informal Networks

As reported in Dang (1998), migrants in the city have a low level of involvement in political processes. In this study, only 5 percent of them reported that they were participating in social organizations such as Labour or Youth Unions. According to Vietnamese Residence Laws, when people move out of their place of permanent residence, they must report to the authorities at the place of origin and also register at destination (UNAV, 2003). If someone does not, he/she breaks the law, and these people have no protection from the law if something happens to them and they need legal advice or help. It was found that only 70 percent of migrants had registered and the rest lived illegally in the city. Most migrants do not realise the importance of registration and do not know that they violate the law when doing so. Moreover, because they are spontaneous migrants, 96 percent of these migrants report that they get no help from the local authorities. As local authorities play no role in helping these migrants, there is little trust between migrants and authorities. Normally, the people in charge come to look for migrants when they break the law, but they never come to offer assistance to these migrants. Therefore, in many cases when migrants get assaulted or

\textsuperscript{23} Level 1 is “never”, level 2 “Rarely”, level 3 “occasionally”, level 4 “often” and level 5 “very often”.
robbed, they seek help only from relatives or friends. Asking for assistance from local authorities never occurs to these young migrants. They had no idea why they have to share their difficulties with the local authorities. They seek assistance from the police only when something very serious happens.

Another reason given for keeping young migrants out of the city’s social and political life was its unfriendly environment. Unlike in rural areas where people have close relationships, in urban places people sometimes do not know who lives next door. Crime forces people in the city to leave their doors closed at all times. Therefore, it is difficult to get know each other, even neighbours. Many young migrants, especially females, were disappointed about this. Consequently, after working long hours these migrants (without money to enjoy going out) usually gather in a friend’s house to chat or cook together.

8.2.3 Interaction with Families Left in Rural Areas

When asked how migrants make contact with their families in the village, the most common way of contacting their families is by phone (76 percent), and only 20 percent sent mail by post. Females and the most recent migrants are more likely to send letters to contact their families rather than males and those who have stayed longer in the city. Table 8.3 shows that nearly half of the migrants visit their families once a year, of which respondents from the Central Highlands and Middle-North are the majority. Those who are from the South-East region which is closer to HCMC visit family once a month (41 percent). Those from the Red River Delta and North-East are more likely to visit the family once every two years with many from the North-East never going home since they migrated. Working hard all the time, these migrants could not afford a trip to their home town as over 20 percent of them from the Red River Delta, many who have
lived in HCMC for more than 3 years, have never visited their family. The expense of a visit to the countryside in the North may cost them their savings for a whole year. This is the reason why many young migrants from the North do not visit their families. Although migrants did not visit their family in rural areas often, all of them often contacted the family. The majority of migrants (77 percent) made phone calls and the rest wrote letters.

Table 8.3 Percentage of Respondents Visiting Family by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>Once a year</th>
<th>Once every two years</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red River delta</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central highland</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekong Delta</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because they live far from their families at an early age in an unfamiliar place, nearly half of the respondents reported difficulties. Inhospitality and sometimes being treated like second class citizens by the employer or local people make these young migrants sad and lonely. From in-depth interviews, it was found that migrants, especially street vendors, often receive verbal harassment from local people. A girl from Nghe An said:

To sell tickets I have to offer them, many people when they don’t like to buy they shout at me. They think that when they are rich, they can look down on and offend us. I don’t like them. (2004 Survey)

Most of them feel homesick and unsafe due to a lack of family support. They state:

If I have money I prefer to live in my village with my family. People there are very friendly and helpful. However, if I stay there I can hardly earn any money. I have no choice. I come here for money, so I must accept any problems. (ECERFSD Survey)
8.2.4 Satisfaction with Life in the City

In order to understand the level of satisfaction of young migrants with their life in HCMC, three main indicators of personal satisfaction are used: employment, accommodation and life satisfaction (Clark, 1983).

8.2.4.1 Work Satisfaction

When asked whether they were pleased with their current jobs, respondents were allowed to choose one of 5 levels from ‘not satisfied at all’ to ‘very satisfied’. The respondents were generally satisfied with their current jobs. Particularly, 61 percent of respondents working in factories were satisfied with their life, while only 46 percent migrants who worked in services and operated their own business were satisfied.

The relationship between the reason for choosing jobs and job satisfaction is shown in Table 8.4. Overall, the majority of respondents tended to be satisfied with their current jobs. There is considerable variation in satisfaction levels within and among migrant groups. Respondents with high incomes tended to be the most satisfied with the next group being respondents with jobs that suited their abilities. Job satisfaction appeared to be much less among migrants who were forced to do the job because this was the only job available and half of them were not really satisfied. Although the jobs they did were not chosen by themselves, such respondents overall were satisfied.

Table 8.4 Percentage of Respondents Satisfied with Work by Reason for Taking the Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Taking the Job</th>
<th>Not really satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available job</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job through recommendation</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the job</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable my ability</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High income</td>
<td></td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents were asked whether they intended to look for a better job in the near future. As can be seen in Table 8.5, respondents with jobs recommended to them were most likely to look for better jobs (28.1 percent) as was the case with respondents with limited job choices (27.2 percent). It is rather surprising that some 16.4 percent of respondents with preferred jobs intended to look for better jobs.

### Table 8.5 Percentage of Respondents Intending to Look for Better Jobs by Type of Job

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of jobs</th>
<th>Intention of changing job (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High income</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable job</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred job</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only job available</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended job</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among respondents who mentioned that they might look for better jobs, Table 8.6 shows that only 64.2 percent of respondents with suitable jobs who tended to look for better jobs were very satisfied with their jobs. By contrast, 66.7 percent of respondents with limited job choice were looking for better jobs were not really satisfied. Some 23.3 percent of respondents with limited job choices were satisfied and very satisfied, and 63 percent of those with introduced jobs did so.
Generally speaking, migrants feel very satisfied with their current jobs, and they are least likely to change jobs. Only a small percentage of respondents wanted to change their current jobs. This suggests that moving to the city and getting a job somehow satisfies a migrant’s needs, so nearly all of the respondents felt pleased with their work despite the fact that many of them have jobs which were recommended by someone else and do not always suit them. Working long hours and pressure to have an income make migrants stay in their current jobs as is the case in other South-East Asian countries (Hugo, 2005a).

As well as being asked whether respondents had any work plans for the future, they also were asked to give details of these plans. Some 55 percent indicated that they had some work plans. The most frequent plan chosen by these migrants was to keep working and at the same time study to improve their work skills (38 percent). Many of them intended to change to another job, others wanted to open or extend their business and a few wanted to go home. The reasons for going home were varied, and included not being

---

Table 8.6 Percentage of Respondents Looking for Better Job by Reason for Choosing the Job

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High income</th>
<th>Suitable within my capacity</th>
<th>Preferred job</th>
<th>Only this job was available</th>
<th>I was introduced this work</th>
<th>Other reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not really satisfied</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

24 These respondents were only those who were satisfied with their current jobs but intended to look for better jobs.
able to get used to the urban way of life, they missed their parents, the low incomes, and family reasons.

To understand why some migrants returned to their villages, 5 in-depth interviews with returnees in Quan Chau district, Da Nang province were undertaken. These showed that rapid economic growth in Da Nang in recent years caused migrants in HCMC to return to their village. More employment opportunities in Da Nang were identified as the main factor driving these migrants home. Although the income they received was not as much as in HCMC, living with family and lower living costs made them happy to return:

I move to HCMC during the 1990s, but as a result of rapid development, Da Nang offers plenty of jobs in the last 5 years. Although the pay here is not as much as that in HCMC, I prefer to come back, because living costs here are cheaper as well as I don’t have to pay rent. The most important is that I live in my homeland with family (A man 25 years old, in-depth interview in 2005 Youth Survey).

According to an authority in the village, some 70 percent of migrants had come back to the community since Da Nang provided more employment opportunities. They work in Da Nang but live in the village which significantly reduces living costs.

This finding indicates that the negative factors in rural areas push people out of their village initially and higher living standards and better social infrastructure in HCMC are not the main reasons of migration to the city. Therefore, if there are more employment opportunities in their regions they prefer to return home because many migrants reported difficulties, such as no family support and loneliness, and they stated that if in their home town they could get a job with only half pay compared to the city they would go home. Migrants remain in the city in spite of risks and hardships because job availability that allow them to earn an income for their families and themselves (Dang, 2001).
8.2.4.2 Satisfaction with Accommodation

Respondents were asked if the accommodation in which they lived is satisfactory (Table 8.7). The majority of respondents (83 percent) were satisfied with their accommodation. In terms of the relationship between the level of satisfaction and income, it was significantly more likely to be true for migrants with incomes above 2,000,000 VND per month, while migrants with lower incomes (under 2,000,000 VND) were less likely to be satisfied. This is not surprising because migrants with higher incomes had the ability to afford better accommodation and housing.

Table 8.7 Level of Satisfaction with Accommodation of Respondents by Income

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with accommodation</th>
<th>Under 1,000,000</th>
<th>1,000,000-2,000,000</th>
<th>2,000,000-3,000,000</th>
<th>3,000,000-5,000,000</th>
<th>5,000,000+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not really satisfied</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a great difference between males and females as females were more likely to be more satisfied with their accommodation status than males. As discussed previously, females tended to work harder to get more income to help their families so they did not really care about where they lived or the state of their living conditions. Similarly, more educated respondents were more satisfied with their housing than less educated respondents. This pattern is also found between younger and older (20-24 years) migrants, especially as the youngest respondents, seem to be very happy with their
accommodation. This may be due to the fact that younger people are more tolerant of their accommodation, while older people have higher expectations.

Those who said that they were ‘dissatisfied’ with their accommodation were asked to explain why. The main reason was over-crowded housing with some indicating that a lack of necessary things for their basic needs in the house. Some complained about the high cost of rent in the inner districts, so they were forced to rent accommodation far from their work places, while others said that their houses were noisy and polluted.

8.2.4.3 Satisfaction with Urban Life

As shown in previous research, migrants in the city are not very satisfied with urban life (Cu Chi Loi, 2005). In this research it was found that HCMC is a very strange place that they could not get used to. A girl from Bac Giang said:

The city is very crowded and unsafe. There are too many crimes and people are not very friendly. Even the neighbours don’t talk to each other. Unlike my village, people help each other. (ECERFSD Survey)

Also, many of them complained of disadvantages of city life such as pollution and crimes. As shown in Table 8.8, although most migrants admitted that there are more employment opportunities in HCMC and access to social services, such as education and health, the unfriendly lifestyle and other disadvantages in the city, as well as the absence from family, made it hard for them to adjust to city life.
Table 8.8 Disadvantages of City Life for Males and Females Respondents (percent Respondents to Each Answer)

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic jam</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-populated</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expensive life</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level of accidents</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.3 Health Status

8.3.1 General Health

According to Vanlandingham (2004), unfamiliarity with the new environment may have a negative impact on migrant’s physical and mental health status. Living far from the protection of the family and working in unsafe conditions could affect migrants’ health. Moreover, the level of income significantly determines the health status of an individual (Subramanian and Kawachi, 2004). In other words, individual income has a significant impact on individual health as poor people can not afford to spend much of their modest incomes on health care. Living in inadequate accommodation can also contribute to poor health (Dang, 1998). As a result, the health of poor people is substandard. In this study, because the majority of young migrants are away from their family and in a new location, as well as earning very low incomes, a threat to health is inevitable. A lack of parental control may lead young migrants to undertake high-risk activities that have serious implications for their health.

Based on their self-evaluation, Table 8.9 shows that overall the migrants were healthy as nearly 70 percent of them stated that they have good health, 16 percent quite good
and 11 percent very good, with only 4 percent not very good. There is a slight difference between males and females as more females claim better health (73.2 percent) than males (68.5 percent), while more males considered their health to be very good.

Table 8.9 Health Status of Male and Female Respondents

Source: Youth Survey, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Status</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not very good</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite good</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N %</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The health status of young migrants compared to before they moved is shown in Table 8.10. Sixty percent of migrants expressed no change in their health status after migration, while 20 percent had improved their health, and 16 percent had experienced a decline in their health. More males had improved their health status than females and conversely, more females with health problems reported these problems worsened after moving (Table 8.10). Based on their own evaluation, overall, the health of young migrants was not bad. Yet we do not have enough evidence to make a strong conclusion because it is difficult to measure the health impacts of migration (Vanlandingham, 2004).

Table 8.10 Current Health Status Compared to Before Moving


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly worse</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly better</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much better</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since the majority of migrants do not have access to health care services and do not have their health checked regularly, it is possible that some of those who stated good health may actually face some health problems. Only 17 percent of respondents had health insurance and this is more prevalent among those working in the formal sector (Table 8.11), with nearly half of these migrants covered; only 5.4 percent of respondents in the informal and self-employed sectors were covered. In the formal sector, people such as students, office staff and workers in large factories were more likely to be covered. The reason for higher coverage in the formal sector is that employers usually pay for health insurance for their workers.

### Table 8.11 Percentage of Respondents Having Health Insurance By Work Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having health insurance</th>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Self-business</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high percentage of migrants not covered by health insurance is consistent with the general health care situation in Vietnam where only 12 percent of its population was covered in 2000 (World Bank, 2001). The reason for not being covered (reported by 60 percent of respondents) is that they do not need medical insurance, while 20 percent reported that they had no money to pay for it. However, around 14 percent stated that they do not know where to obtain it. Medical insurance is not common in Vietnam, especially among poor people, for several reasons. Firstly, poor people cannot afford it; however many people who may be afford it, refuse to have it due to its inefficiency. People who have medical insurance get discriminated against in hospitals, especially public hospitals because they pay less for their treatment (LienChau, 2005; DanhDuc, 2004). This means that the hospital has to pay the difference due to a very complicated...
insurance system in Vietnam and as a result, doctors prefer to treat people who pay them privately. As a consequence, many people choose to go to private hospitals and pay to get better services rather than using medical insurance. This is acceptable for rich people but for poor people it is impossible. Despite the poor service in public hospitals when using medical insurance, owning a medical insurance card is out of reach for most poor people in HCMC. Poor people in the city who have no medical insurance must wait for help from relatives, the government or charity organizations if they are critically ill. They only go to the doctor when they feel very sick. In the case of minor illness they tend go to the pharmacy and get some medicine to treat the problem.

Young migrants are among the most vulnerable groups in the city. They are at risk of contracting disease as they live in unhygienic environments. Unhealthy working conditions and unhygienic accommodation may also affect physical health (Soin, 1995). In HCMC, according to Tran Xuyen and Huong Nguyen (2004), although many female migrants realise the importance of keeping their clothes in a clean place, sometimes they can not do so because their low incomes force them to live in cheap accommodation, which is crowded and damp. Living in damp accommodation puts them at risk of catching bacterial contamination diseases. Moreover, the water they use is well water that has not been sterilised. In some places due to soil contamination, the aluminium content of water in wells is over the permitted level. Moreover, some migrants stated that their water tanks have no cap and are outside, so the water they use is not clean. For them, checking the quality of water they use is not considered because they are not aware of the importance of this practice. These people normally evaluate the quality of water visually. If they see clear water they assume that it is clean. Some of them realise that the water is unhealthy, but they do not check it because they suppose that this is the job of their landlords. One worker in Thu Duc said:
Why my landlord does not take the water to check whether it is safe to use or not, we have to use this water but are not sure about its safety for health. (Tran Xuyen and Huong Nguyen Survey, 2004)

As indicated previously, most of the young migrants working in the informal sector work and live in the same place and most of them sleep and cook in the same room without proper ventilation. The resulting indoor air pollution can be as dangerous as outdoor air pollution. For example, indoor stoves using biomass fuel may cause lung diseases and cancer (World Bank, 1993). While these migrants work and live in a single place, the room is polluted by dust and paint and the smell of leather. One girl from Bac Giang province who sewed clothes for her uncle said:

At the beginning I could not sleep because the smell from the glue and the leather is very bad, but I gradually get used to it. Now I am OK. (ECERFSD Survey)

While migrants in the informal sector have no access to health care services, the health care facilities of those in factories is not much better. Sitting long hours without moving in textile and garment factories and being exposed to raw cotton dust may lead to lung diseases and back pain. Exposure to the chemicals used in a factory may cause irritation and skin rashes (Messing, 1991; Puta, 1993). This was identified in two garment factories in Thu Duc as the health workers in these places acknowledged that many young girls complained of stomach ache during their menstrual period. In their opinion, the reason may be due to remaining in a sitting position for such a long time. There are also no sanitary provisions at the factory for women, or a place for them to change when they have a period, while they work long hours in the factory. One female worker in Song Than industrial zones said:

The toilet does not have flushing; we have to put water from the tap after every use, while there is not enough water. There is no place for women who want to have a proper wash when she has a period. We know that this is not good as we leave our body unwashed for such a long day, but unhygienic toilet and no bathroom for use make us wait until we come home. As we know the toilet for supervisors and managers is very clean, comfortable and there is plenty of water there. (Tran Xuyen and Huong Nguyen Survey, 2004)
Although thousands of workers work in these factories, there is only one doctor in each factory accompanied by some nurses. The facilities in these medical practices are very poor. There is no sink or sterile tools so the health workers have to boil the medical tools. A nurse from Chi Hung Footwear Company stated:

> About thousand workers come to ask for help when they have minor health problems such as headache, upset stomach and so on but with only two nurses we are always overloaded. We have only two sets of medical tools. We use them all day and at the end of working day we boil them to sterilise. (Tran Xuyen and Huong Nguyen Survey, 2004)

Moreover, there is no regular health check of workers despite the high risk of working in these places. For example in Chi Hung Company, workers come into contact with a kind of glue which is harmful to their health and only pregnant women do not do this work, but for the other workers this is their daily job. In factories like Chi Hung and Pungkook sometimes they organise general health checks for workers; however, according to the workers the quality of these checks is not very good. They only do this because of the requirement of the City Labour Union. No scanning, X-ray or blood tests were done; they only check ears, throat and teeth. Most of the workers do not trust the health services in their companies; hence they only go there when they have minor health problems. In the case of more serious illness, they go to the doctors in hospitals or private medical practices. It is worrying for their health status because most migrants go to the doctors only when they are very sick. The reason is that they are afraid of getting less pay due to taking a day off to go to the doctor. Alternatively, they would buy some medicine from the pharmacy. However, if they have some serious illness, it is sometimes too late for them to be cured.
When asked what they do when they get sick, only 30 percent of respondents go to the doctor, some 65 percent buy medicine from a pharmacy, 1 percent used herbs and 3 percent did nothing. One migrant who sells goods on the street said:

I always feel like vomiting, and then I know that I am sick. I do nothing when I feel sick, only go to the pharmacy to buy some tablets to take it. I never go to the doctor and I don’t know why I feel like vomiting quite often (2004 Survey)

Surprisingly, the level of education makes no difference, except among those with a tertiary degree. Although migrants with a higher level of education know more about how their health needs; their limited incomes do not allow them to seek the medical assistance they know they need. For example, they know that living in damp and crowded houses is not good for their health but with such low pay they can not afford better accommodation. Similarly, going to the doctor is the best way to look after their health but taking one day off work to go to the doctor means that at the end of the month they get one day less pay. Less pay as well as paying the doctor’s bill is too much for their modest incomes

8.3.2 Reproductive Health

The reproductive health of youth has captured the attention of policy-makers and researchers in South and South-East Asia in the last two decades (Mensch et al., 2002) and in Vietnam a growing body of research in this field has been conducted. It is believed that under the impact of rapid development, the number of adolescents involved in sexual relations at an early age has increased in developing countries in general and in Vietnam in particular (Nguyen et al., 1999). Their knowledge of sexual life and how to protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases or becoming pregnant is limited (Lindahl, 1995). At this age many young people engage in high-risk behaviours which impact negatively on their own lives as well as that of the wider society (UNICEF, 2002). Lack of information about reproductive health has led to
many harmful impacts on adolescents’ health (Dehne and Riedner, 2001). In particular unsafe sexual activities and drug use are the causes of increasing rates of young people with HIV/AIDS and STDs to emerge. To help these young people avoid these risks, the family plays a very important role since young people tend to behave more conservatively when living with them and this connection may help to keep young people away from high-risk behaviours (Blum and Rinehart, 1997).

According to SAVY (2005) the majority of youth in Vietnam are still looked after by their parents. However, for young migrants in the city, most of them live far from their family. Families play a very important part in shaping the behaviour of young people (Hoang, 1999); but migrants lead independent lives outside the family with other young people. As a result they may be at a higher risk of unsafe sex and drug use because without parental control they have more freedom to do what they like (Igwe Aja-Nwachuku, 2004). Being aware of the need to understand sexual and reproductive health of youth migrants, this research has paid attention to sexual knowledge, attitudes and practices of young migrants. Two thirds (66 percent) of respondents reported that they did not agree with premarital sex, with only 6 percent who agreed, and 28 percent had no opinion. According to these migrants, it is hard to give an answer to this question because they believed having sex or not depends on the relationship. They thought that if two people really love one another, having sex was acceptable. These people did not condemn premarital sex; however all of them agreed that it is better not to have sex before getting married. This finding is consistent with Nguyen et al. (1999) who found 98 percent of young people disagreed with premarital sex. The results show quite a wide gap between males and females on this issue. While 77 percent of females disagreed with premarital sex and only 3 percent agreed, 56 percent of males disagreed and 9 percent agreed. The reason is as one worker said:
Males always think about having sex when they have girlfriends, but they lose nothing if the relationship is broken up. So they support this idea. Girls have to protect themselves if they don’t want any trouble. (Tran Xuyen and Huong Nguyen Survey, 2004)

Although premarital sex is no longer a taboo in Vietnam, the value of virginity is still very important for girls (Gammeltoft and Nguyen, 2000:34). The reason is because to lose her virginity the girl might pay a high price in her later married life as many men will not marry them if they know that their potential wives are not virgins. In the past, sex before marriage was disgraceful for the girl, but nowadays people’s opinions have changed. Yet many males including educated men still cling to this idea (Gammeltoft and Nguyen, 2000). The findings in this study show that no matter what religion you are, how educated you are, or whether married or single, the majority of young people still do not agree with premarital sex.

As with other young people in Vietnam, most migrants have never taken part in any sex education courses, except those who had a high school or tertiary level of education. More than 90 percent of respondents with secondary school or lower were never officially provided with reproductive health education information. All of those who had ever taken part in sex education programs were provided by their school and the majority of them (70 percent) had high school level or above, and were working in the formal sector. Although scholars and researchers in adolescent reproductive health have called for the introduction of sex education to all secondary schools, it is still being debated because in the opinion of some leaders sex education actually encourages more young people to be involved in sexual intercourse, since the information provides them with knowledge of how to have safe sex (Nguyen et al., 1999). Therefore, only some schools combine this sex education with a biology class and this occurs mainly at high school. In terms of age, older migrants aged 20-24 were more likely to participate in this
course more than younger migrants aged below 20. This suggests that less educated and younger migrants, especially those in the informal small work units, were more likely not to take part in training courses about reproductive health. A girl, 18 years old from Ben Tre, and working in a small garment workshop when asked why women get pregnant, said:

I don’t know and I don’t care about that because I am still little. I never heard about STDs, but I heard about HIV/AIDS because they talk about it every day on TV. (ECERFSD Survey)

8.3.2.1 Young Migrants and HIV/AIDS

According to the World Health Organisation, in 2007 an estimate 4.9 million people were living with HIV in Asia and South-East Asia had the highest number. In countries like Cambodia and Thailand there has been a decline in HIV levels, but in Vietnam and Indonesia they were increasing (UNAIDS-WHO, 2007: 21). In Vietnam, since the first case of HIV was detected in 1990, the number had increased to 3,000 in 1992, 30,000 in 1996, and 280,000 in 2006 (Smith et al., 2006). It is argued that this number is much lower than the actual amount because many people who have the disease do not know they have it. Despite concerted efforts to control the epidemic, the number of people living with HIV continues to rise in Vietnam. According to Smith et al. (2006), if the country does not find out an effective way to combat this disease, in 2010 this number is likely reach 312,000. Moreover, the age of HIV infected people has fallen over time, with 22 percent aged 20-29 in 1996 increasing to 40 percent in 1999 (UNESCAP, 2000) and over 50 percent in 2005 (Smith et al., 2006). The number of males infected outnumbered females by 2:1. The high-risk population groups of HIV are sex workers, their clients and drug users.
The distribution of HIV infected people is regionally uneven. The Mekong Delta region and HCMC are the most affected areas. As shown in Figure 8.2, the number of infected people in these two areas accounted for nearly half of the total number in Vietnam.

**Figure 8.2 Number of People living with HIV by Region**

Source: Smith *et al.* (2006: 13)

According to SAVY (2005), one third of urban young single men and one quarter of those living in rural areas reported having premarital sex. Of these young single men, 22 percent stated that they had sex with sex workers and more did so in urban areas. Although young people in Vietnam know how to prevent contracting HIV, there was little knowledge about the disease, among young people with limited education. Smith *et al.* (2006) show that youth can be the most vulnerable to HIV because they are most likely to be involved in high-risk behaviour such as unsafe sex and drug use and they do not know how to protect themselves. Although prostitution is still neither recognised nor accepted in Vietnam today, it operates in beer houses, cafeterias, along streets and other places (McNally, 2004). According to Rushing and Watts (2005), without a job or family connections many young female migrants are forced to work in these entertainment establishments. Working in these places exposes these young migrants to the risk of HIV. According to Vu *et al.* (2003:1), migrant workers in large cities,
especially mobile workers at construction sites are among the most vulnerable to HIV infection.

Data in this study show that even though few migrants participated in any sex education courses, many of them knew the negative consequences of unsafe sex. Nearly 90 percent stated that unsafe sex leads to unwanted pregnancy, diseases and mental health problems. Regarding knowledge of STDs, 67 percent of respondents answered that they knew about these diseases. Not surprisingly, a higher percentage of older and more educated migrants knew about them. Many migrants said that they knew about STDs and they could name some diseases such as HIV, gonorrhoea, syphilis and Hepatitis B. The majority indicated they knew about disease transmission; however, nearly 16 percent of migrants aged 15-17 answered incorrectly when they stated that kissing and touching infected persons may transmit the diseases. Although only a small number of migrants took part in sex education courses, quite a high percentage of respondents knew about STDs and HIV/AIDS. However, the information they received was not very detailed as they only knew the ways these diseases are transmitted but they could not describe the symptoms of the diseases. Most respondents had only heard about the diseases from the media. One worker from Pungkook Factory said:

I only heard about STDs, especially HIV-AIDS from TV and know that they are transmitted through sexual relationship and blood infusion, I only know that much, not anymore. (Tran Xuyen and Huong Nguyen Survey, 2004)

Concerning the sources of information from which young migrants learnt about STDs and HIV-AIDS, this study found that the mass media has played a very important role as 76 percent of respondents stated that they heard about these diseases from TV. The next common source was friends (20 percent), while the family has made very little contribution in providing information to migrants (1.4 percent). The result is consistent
with statements by WHO (2003) that in South Asia discussion about sex or reproductive health with parents is taboo and parents are more likely to keep their young children from being informed about sex and as a consequence many young people search for this information from friends or from the mass media.

In order to understand how at risk of HIV young migrants in HCMC are, the study attempted to obtain information about their sexual behaviour and knowledge. As discussed previously, sexual behaviours are a sensitive and private issue in Vietnam and people try to talk about it in indirect ways, so these kinds of questions can not be asked in structured interviews. Therefore, focus group discussions with young people in two factories in Song Than Industrial Zone in HCMC in Xuyen Tran and Huong Nguyen Survey attempted to shed light on the sexual life of young migrants. Although there is no evidence to suggest that young migrants in the city have a higher rate of HIV infection than young non-migrants, the proliferation of large factories in cities in Vietnam has involved the recruitment of many young migrants living in dormitories and crowded boarding houses (Le Van Thanh, 2006). Due to their vulnerable status, migrant women may be forced to work in the commercial sex industry (Hugo, 2001; UNAV, 2003). These groups may be vulnerable to HIV infection (Bal Kumar, 2003). This is consistent with the findings according to young people in the two factories, the nearby residential areas where many workers in industrial zones live, also housed many prostitutes who worked in bars and cafés. In their opinion, all of these prostitutes were infected with STDs including HIV-AIDS. This is really a threat for young migrants who live far from their families as heterosexual intercourse with these prostitutes is a significant risk factor of HIV infection (Chung A, 1998). In this study, although no man admitted that he had ever had sex with prostitutes, some of them said that they knew their friends had done so. They were not sure whether their friends used condoms or
not. However, all of them stated that they would use condoms if they have sex with strangers, especially prostitutes. From the point of view of young females, it is dangerous for young men when they go out and have drinks at a bar because when they get drunk they can not control themselves, and are easily seduced by prostitutes. They said:

Many young boys without family’s control they often go out to drink with friends and when they get drunk they do stupid things. (Tran Xuyen and Huong Nguyen Survey, 2004)

It is reported that in Vietnam abortion rates are very high among young labourers in industrial zones (Thi and Kim, 2003). In this study, there is not enough evidence to prove such a finding. However, from discussions with young migrant workers in factories, it was found that many young couples had premarital sex and even lived together before marriage. Unwanted pregnancy is inevitable according to them due to their limited knowledge of reproductive health. Even though they did not know any cases of unwanted pregnancies or STDs, they were sure that there were problems. Due to social convention, if someone has premarital sex, she/he would keep it in secret, so it is very hard to gauge.

All of the migrants interviewed asserted that when having sex with a partner they knew well (such as girlfriends or boyfriends) they do not need to use condoms, but only with prostitutes. One man stated that during sexual intercourse with his girlfriend he did not use condoms because he felt uncomfortable using them and said, “I know my girl friend very well, I don’t need that”. When asked how sure they were that they did not have STDs or HIV-AIDS no one was 100 percent sure they were clear. Therefore all of them pointed out the importance of getting proper sex education and improving reproductive health knowledge as they affirmed that the information they had was insufficient to protect their health.
Unfamiliarity with the new environment and lack of family support in HCMC may create loneliness for migrants and as a result there may be increased chances of high-risk behaviours, which make them vulnerable to HIV infection (Hugo, 2005b; IOM, 2003). In this study, although not many respondents thought they were stressed, they did often feel homesick. Moreover, since the behaviour patterns in the city were completely different from those in their villages, they found it hard to integrate into urban life and that made them feel lonely. Some of the young migrants, especially street vendors, stated that they felt sad because some local people looked down on them.

8.4 The Role of Social Networks in the Adaptation of Young Migrants

Social networks are an essential aspect of life because satisfaction with life depends heavily on the quality of social relations at home, work and other formal and informal contacts (Mackensen, 1986; Badura, 1986; Curran and Saguy, 1997). Moreover, informal social networks are of great importance in improving the quality of life (Badura, 1986). Young migrants in the city are reliant on informal social networks such as family, kin, friendship and community, not only in one’s emotional life but in the physical aspects of their adjustment to the new environment. As Hagan (1998) indicates, migrants with well-established networks are more likely to adapt smoothly than those with no, or poorly developed, networks. Migrants with less experience about labour market at the destination are more likely to rely on social networks when joining the labour market (Mouw, 2003). As stated by Bach et al. (1997), the assistance the newcomers usually receive from their relatives or friends are in getting accommodation, information related to the labour market and emotional support. In Vietnam as the same as in China, due to policies to limit in-migration flow to the large cities, the government has not encouraged spontaneous migrants to the city, so they have no programs to help
migrants (Gracia, 2004; Guest, 1998a). Consequently, in-migrants rely heavily on social networks to adjust to their new life. The following section will explore the findings of the survey regarding the importance of social networks in providing support in relation to jobs, housing as well as young migrants’ health.

8.4.1 Obtaining a Job

As indicated in GSO-UNFPA (2006), migrants in cities in Vietnam mainly use social networks to find a job. A similar finding was concluded in this study and Table 8.12 shows that 74 percent of respondents had found their current jobs with assistance from their families, relatives, friends or other acquaintances living in HCMC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Young Survey, 2005</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Getting assistance</th>
<th>Formal Sector</th>
<th>Work Sector</th>
<th>Self-business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migrants working in informal workshops were more likely to use personal contacts to find jobs (80 percent of respondents). This is not surprising because no pre-skill conditions applied for employment in the informal sector, and employers in this sector usually hire workers through informal networks such as friends, relatives and other people they know. Females were more dependent than males in terms of getting assistance in looking for a job (82.6 percent compared to 66.7 percent of males). This result was found in all working sectors: formal, informal and self-employed.
The sources of assistance were mainly relatives (50 percent) and friends (31.3 percent) while only 4.3 percent went to recruitment agents to look for employment. The kinds of assistance these migrants mainly received from their relatives or friends were that they were given information about employment. Some of them worked for their relatives and in some cases they were provided with money for employment expenses. There were 5 cases where migrants were given money by their relatives to study so that they could improve their work skills. Research on migrants in Vietnam (Bach et al., 1997) found similar results as the paper reported that in-migrants in HCMC mainly used informal contacts with relatives and friends to find jobs.

8.4.2 Accommodation and Social Adjustment

Social networks play an important role in assisting migrants not only in employment but also in finding accommodation (Curran and Saguy, 1997). The majority of young migrants received assistance in housing and all of them got it from relatives or friends living in the city. Of those who received assistance in finding accommodation, more females tended to receive this assistance than males. Some 36 percent of those who received this assistance were provided with accommodation as they lived in the same house as their relatives, while 64 percent received assistance in looking for accommodation.

As Guest (1998a) argues, because of the importance of social networks in helping migrants find accommodation, migrants are mainly concentrated in certain districts where most people are migrants and these places tend to be in poorer areas of the city. Data from the 2004 census in HCMC show that the majority of migrants are concentrated in poorer districts such as Districts 8, 12 and GoVap (SO, 2005). This of
course limits the opportunities of migrants to adapt to the new urban culture because they limit their social life to informal social contacts with friends and relatives and they tended not to expand their relationships beyond these informal connections. Indeed, from the discussions with young migrants, especially those in the informal sector, it was found that outside working hours they only stay home watching TV or sometimes visit their relatives. They had no contact with local people, except relatives because they did not feel welcome or comfortable talking to them. The people who the migrants tend to ask for assistance when they have difficulties were mainly relatives and friends. Labour Unions or formal organisations played no part in giving assistance to these migrants.

Because access to employment, accommodation and other assistance are mainly provided by social networks such as relatives and friends in the city, migrants had no need to extend their social relationships. Although no one can ignore the importance of the informal social networks in helping migrants adapt to the urban life, these informal contacts limit their ability to extend the living experiences to different social groups. Outside these informal relationships, they become aliens in the city. One girl migrant from Ben Tre said:

When I have difficulties my friends who work with me help. When I have free time I only talk or go out with my friends. I very rarely go out by myself because I know no one and feel scared to go out. I have no idea about the life in this city and I don’t care. My interest now is to work hard get more money for me and my family. (ECERFSD Survey)

8.5 Migrants and Migration Control Policy

In order to limit rural-urban migration, some developing countries such as China (Maxia, 1997) and Vietnam (Zhang et al., 2001) have implemented migration control policies. Regardless of the policy, urban-ward migration has rapidly increased. This control policy instead of preventing migration flow into the city, is acting as a way that limits the development in urban areas and of course migrant life in the city (Skeldon,
Rural-urban migration has made a significant contribution to the increasing number of “mega cities” and to urban population growth in Asia (UNESCAP, 2002). Moreover, this migration flow has also contributed to socio-economic development in the city such as filling the labour gap, especially unskilled and semiskilled labour, as well as contributing to poverty reduction in rural areas through remittances (Oberai, 1983; Sheng, 2002). Despite the contribution of migrants to the place of origin and their new home, policy-makers only consider the high costs of migration to urban places (Dang, 2005: 13-14).

The migration control policy which was successful during the centrally planned economy in socialist countries such as China (Scharping, 1997) and Vietnam (Dang et al., 2004) is no longer effective in a market-oriented economy. This control policy limits the city’s development as this causes difficulties for migrants in labour-intensive industries in urban places, which in turn lead to problems for the city (Skeldon, 1997).

Like China, Vietnam has had these limitation policies for a long time through the household registration system (Le, 2000; Ma Xia, 1997). Although it is widely accepted that urban-ward migration is inevitable, other policies that regulate migration flows, especially those to the major cities have caused many difficulties for migrants as they have limited access to public services (Dang, 1998; Brassard, 2006; Solinger, 1999). Therefore, this section attempts to examine the implications of policies on migration in order to provide evidence for policy recommendations in the final chapter.

In the developing world, economic growth is mainly concentrated in metropolitan regions and migrants are playing a very significant part in providing a workforce (McGee, 1994:73; Becker and Morrison, 1997). Indeed, in the major cities such as Ha
Noi and HCMC, migrants play an important role in employment in industrial zones (Dang, 2005). Although data on the proportion of migrants working in the factories are not available, the data from Pungkook and Footware Chi Hung factories in the Song Than Industrial Zone reveal that nearly all of the more than 12,000 workers from these two factories were migrants from rural areas and over 80 percent were females (Tran Xuyen and Huong Nguyen, 2004). Their levels of education were quite high as all had completed at least secondary school or better. The situation is similar in other industrial zones in HCMC. The reason for not many local people working in factories was explained by the head of District Binh Chanh:

Young people in the city don’t want to work in the factories because of very low pay. While their families have plenty of land for sell, it is not worth to work with such a low income with only 600,000 to 1000,000 VND. Only poor people from rural areas agree to work with this poor pay since compared with their income in rural areas, this is much higher. (2005 Youth Survey)

In newspapers after the Vietnamese New Year, it is common to see articles about labour shortages in factories since many workers go back to visit their families in the New Year holidays and for some reason they do not return to their workplace but look for a job somewhere else or take a long holiday to stay with their family.

Accounting for nearly 30 percent of HCMC’s population (SO, 2005), migrants have made an important contribution to the city’s economic development. Moreover, since the majority of rural-urban migrants are young people, this migration flow has made a significant contribution to the labour market in labour-intensive industries in urban areas. They also allow for the provision of services to urban residents through the informal sector.

The household registration system which has acted as preventing spontaneous migration in China and Vietnam could not stop this movement (Gracia, 2004; Dang, 1999); it ‘just
made it expensive’ (UNAV, 2003:1). As stated by Zhan Shaohua (2005), limited rights and social exclusion of migrants in the city due to this migration control policy need to be taken into account more seriously by policy-makers. In Vietnam, although Ho Khau policy is much less strict than before, Ho Khau nowadays creates many difficulties for migrants in the city (Nguyen Dinh Loc, 2006). Many social services still require permanent registration. For example, vehicle registration had to take place where the person has Ho Khau. So far, of 420 services that required permanent registration, 380 services are still effective at present (Hoang Khue, 2007). They are still applied in the major cities, and these requirements pose a great challenge to migrants (UNAV, 2003). This policy, instead of promoting development, violates the residential rights of people (Zhang et al, 2001). Like in China, without permanent registration status, spontaneous migrants in the city have no protection for their security and health, and they are not eligible for social services such as the Poverty Reduction Program. They are also unlikely to have access to formal sector employment, so they have to do unskilled, low-paid and low–security jobs in the informal sector (SCUK, 1999). These findings were also evident in this study. According to Vietnamese law, Vietnamese people have the right to choose where they live in Vietnam (Vietnamese Parliament, 2006), while in the major cities the government uses discriminatory policies to limit migrants’ movement.

A new law of residence was discussed and approved at the Session of Vietnamese Parliament from 17/10-29/11/2006 (VP, 2006). According to the new law, Vietnamese people are free to live and work anywhere in Vietnam and the government prohibits any attempt by the authorities to challenge this right. Migrants in the city take advantage of this new law as it provides more opportunities to live in the city. According to the old regulations, to be granted permanent residence, a migrant had to stay in the city for more than 3 years and must have a had permanent job with legal accommodation.
However, the new residential law requires migrants to stay in the city for more than one year and live in an owned or rental accommodation. Although the household registration policy has become less strict, the continued use of this policy causes difficulties for migrants in the city. When the new law was approved, it became easier for migrants to be granted permanent residence, but the reality is otherwise. According to Nguyen Tien Hung (2007), although Ho Khau is much easier for migrants than before, the requirement of verifying legal accommodation conditions causes many difficulties for migrants. Migrants who live in rental accommodation and ask for a landlords’ agreement find this hard, and sometimes it is impossible when migrants do not have close relationships with them.

In this study, young migrants did not find Ho Khau as a problem but it should be noted this does not mean that the young migrants do not have any difficulties created by Ho Khau. Owning a house, working in formal government organisations, access to micro credit funds, etc., are out of their reach. Therefore, they do not feel the need for Ho Khau; however, it is affecting their lives. Firstly, for migrants who have vehicles such as scooters they need Ho Khau for registration of their scooters. Although some of young migrants had scooters, albeit cheap ones, they had to ask their relatives to register them under their name because without Ho Khau a person cannot register a vehicle. A scooter costs these poor migrants a lot of money, and they are forced to legally register under a relative’s name. This puts them at risk of losing it. In addition, from informal conversations with some migrants who worked in formal sector factories, in some places the employer asks employees for KT3 registration status when they apply for a job. To get KT3 a migrant has to stay at least one year and have a permanent job, when in fact they have just arrived in the city. Through informal contacts with police they can
buy this registration certificate which costs about three months pay. This is a sensitive issue so it is hard to obtain such information in a structured questionnaire.

The study also found that migrants in the city have no access to micro-credit funds which is established for poor people needing money for small business. The reason why migrants in this research did not nominate this, especially those who are self-employed is because these migrants had never heard about this program. They said, “this is for ‘urban people’, not for us, we don’t care”. Although they live in the city, these migrants also realised that the city is not their land and it is for “urban people”. So they only attempt to get by and do not expect any assistance from local people and the authorities.

Migrants, especially those living in rented accommodation or a boarding house, have to pay higher rates for water and electricity because every household has a limited amount at subsidised prices, and normally the owner of the house uses this subsidised part. Although these migrants are still young and they do not have pressures of schooling expenditure for children, if they stay permanently in the city without Ho Khau they will not avoid this later. If the government continues this Ho Khau policy in the future, these young migrants are more likely to remain “rural residents” forever, even though they live and work in the city. In a conversation with a local official at the ward level, he said:

We don’t prohibit migrants to send their children to public schools, but we have to give priority to permanent residents in the ward first. We are responsible for arranging all children from permanent residential households in the ward to enter public school. After that if some places left we will put migrants’ children. (2005 Youth Survey)

Without the opportunity to improve their education to get a good and stable job in the formal sector, poverty limits their ability to own a house and they never become real urban people, even if they live in the city for most of their lives.
Since migration control policy has not been effective in reducing migration into the major cities, at the macro level the government should find a better way to stop this flow. As discussed previously, many migrants return to their villages due to increasing employment opportunities in smaller cities near their home communities. The in-depth interviews found that many migrants prefer to return to their places of origin if there are more jobs available for them there. This is in contrast to the finding in Rawat (1997) that most of the migrants in cities head back their villages after a long stay in the city. Therefore, in the case of Vietnam as Findley (1987) suggested, any rural development programs should be applied in order to slow migration from rural areas.

### 8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has described the social and personal adjustment of young migrants to HCMC. The results verify that the participation of young migrants in social organisations and events is very poor. Their social relationships are limited to informal contacts such as friends and relatives. The survey also found that the health status of young migrants was generally good. However, hard work in an unsafe environment may pose potential health problems. Moreover, due to low incomes most of these migrants are forced to live in crowded and unhygienic accommodation that can pose a threat to their health. While there are many risks to the reproductive health of these young people, their knowledge of this aspect of their lives is very limited. Lack of access to health service, unfriendly environment and no family support leave young migrants vulnerable to HIV infection.

The literature on migration shows the importance of informal social networks in migrant adjustment, and the survey findings also demonstrate the significant role of
informal support of friends and relatives for migrants in HCMC. Their assistance included providing information on employment and housing and providing temporary accommodation and jobs. While social organisations such as employment agents and labour unions play no role in helping migrants in the city, assistance from relatives and friends is inevitable. While informal social networks play a significant role in assisting young migrants to adjust to urban life, local people and city authorities make no effort to help them. By contrast, household registration is still impacting on migrant life in the city. Limited access to different essential social services creates many difficulties for migrants. These young migrants have to use informal contacts in order to approach local authorities which put them at risk. Using fake registration certificates to apply for a job may lead them to court, and allowing relatives to legally own their valuable property such as a vehicle, may expose them to the risk of losing it. It is uncertain whether they realise the risk or not but to survive, young migrants are often forced to take such a risk.

Regardless of the many difficulties they face, generally these young migrants are satisfied with their lives in the city. They were satisfied not because their lives were really better, but because they had a job and earned more income and than at home. Their limited accommodation options and other issues were secondary. Earning money for themselves and their families made them happy as it is impossible for them to do this in rural areas. Since life in the city and in their village is completely different, many of these migrants did not view the city as their permanent home. Many of them wanted simply to save money and return to their rural homes or villages to reunite themselves with their families or start their own life.
Chapter 9

Implications and Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

The introduction of economic reform policies in Vietnam during the mid-1980s marked a new era in the country’s internal migration. Prior to then internal migration was predominantly from rural to other rural areas, but after the reforms the flow of rural-urban migrants became one of major significance. Rural to urban migration has increased not only in scale but also in its complexity. This study has argued that the transition from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy has advanced the nation but development ‘holes’ between rural and urban areas have widened. This growing disparity has encouraged people to leave their villages and go to cities in order to seek better jobs with higher pay. However, due to their low levels of education, many migrants face difficulties in the city. A detailed examination of youth migrant experiences in HCMC with respect to economic integration, health status and social adjustment has been conducted. This has provided an opportunity to understand the life of young migrants in the city. This final chapter brings together the main findings of the study and discusses their policy and theoretical implications. The limitations of the thesis are discussed and some suggestions about further research on youth migration are made.

9.2 Youth Mobility in Vietnam and to HCMC

The overarching aim of this study has been to investigate youth migration to HCMC, Vietnam. In pursuing this aim, four objectives were established. The first objective was to provide a detailed analysis of the patterns and characteristics of youth mobility in Vietnam in general and to HCMC in particular. It was found that while the fertility rate
has decreased and mortality remains at a low and stable level, internal migration has played the major role in Vietnam’s population redistribution. The research found that migration on both a permanent and temporary basis has increased in importance in recent decades. Rural-urban migration was identified as one of the most important features of internal population movement and it has produced rapid urban population growth and increased urbanisation levels in Vietnam. Rural-urban migrants are unevenly distributed in urban centres and are mainly concentrated in the major cities. HCMC, the most developed city in the country, was found to attract most rural-urban migrants and migration has become a more important contributor than natural increase in the city’s population growth. Migration is not only changing the population distribution but also bringing about socio-economic change. Migration selectivity has declined so that poorer groups are moving more and female migration has increased substantially. The proliferation of labour intensive enterprises was identified as a factor that attracted young people to the cities from all over Vietnam. As a result of the increasing number of youth migrants, urban populations has become younger.

HCMC has not only received the majority of migrants from rural areas but also attracted more young people. The concentration of youth made the city’s population the youngest in the whole country. In addition, as a result of increasing numbers of female migrants the sex ratio of young people was identified as being low, indicating a predominance of females compared to other age groups in HCMC and in Vietnam as a whole. A growing youth population is placing considerable pressure on the labour market due to the large numbers of people entering the labour market for the first time and it has put pressure on education and other essential services offered by the city.
9.3 Determinants of Youth Migration to Urban Areas

The second objective of the study was to understand the determinants of youth migration. In order to understand the decision-making process the causal factors at macro and micro levels were investigated. In pursuing this aim, at the macro level, the development gap between rural and urban areas in a range of spheres: geographical, demographic, socio-economic and cultural has been analysed. The concentration of investment, including foreign and domestic in urban areas, led to rapid economic development and has had a significant impact on the employment structure in urban areas as more job opportunities with higher pay are created. Education, health care and other social services are better in urban areas and the infrastructure such as roads and transportation in rural areas has greatly improved during the last two decades, making travel to the cities easier. All these macro factors have contributed to more rural-urban migration in Vietnam.

Economic difficulties in rural areas emerged as significant in encouraging people to move to cities. Employment difficulties in rural areas due to land scarcity, a lack of jobs and low pay have caused young people to move out of their villages. In addition, the labour surplus in rural areas due to high population growth had led to increased flows of out-migrants from rural areas. The institutional changes in decollectivisation and land tenure have significantly had an impact on changing the patterns of population mobility. The land law gives farmers the rights to transfer, lease or sell their land-use rights, paving the way for them to leave their village to seek better employment opportunities in other places, especially in the urban centres.

Besides the economic motivations, many young migrants go to the city to seek a better life and independence. The present generation of Vietnamese youth differ from older
cohorts in terms of the way they make the transition from childhood to adult life. Traditionally, children stayed with their parents until they got married and had their own family and they were more likely to be confined to rural areas. As in other developing countries in South-East Asia, young people in Vietnam nowadays are exposed to new ideas and ways of shaping their lives; how to be independent in working and living outside of the home (Hugo, 2005a). They are more likely to work in the off-farm sector in locations distant from their home town.

The findings indicate that the economic difficulties faced by households are also factors driving their family members, especially young ones to migrate, and as Skeldon (2002) suggested, migration is the best way to escape poverty when no other means is available. Also, successful migrants come back and help their family in rural areas, a factor which was also found to influence the decisions of other people in the community to migrate. Social networks created by increasing numbers of migrants in urban centres with their friends and relatives in rural areas are important in promoting rural-urban movement. Social networks are not only powerful conduits for information; they also provide initial assistance to migrants when they arrive in the city. This assistance makes migration less risky for individuals because information received from friends and relatives is considered to be reliable. Therefore, potential migrants tend to choose a destination where they have already had connections.

9.4 The Adjustment of Young Migrants

The third objective of this study has been to investigate migrants’ adjustment to their new environment. In seeking to fulfil this aim, four aspects of migrants’ lives - economic integration and living conditions, social adjustment and health status - were considered.
The economic integration of migrants was found to be limited due to poor employment prospects, low levels of education, low income and significant financial difficulties. The experiences of more recent migrants are poorer compared to those who stayed in the city longer. The household registration policy compounded the difficulties faced by migrants. Most migrants in the city work in low-skilled and low pay occupations in labour intensive manufacturing where a cheap labour force can be recruited from young people, especially females with low levels of education (GSO-UNDP, 2006). These factors result in low incomes for migrants, which contribute to financial difficulties. In particular, lower rates of payment for young migrants make it difficult for them to improve their levels of education and work skills. Due to low levels of education and poverty resulting in a limited knowledge of labour laws, many young migrants are often exploited and deceived by employers. The current household registration policy compounds the problems for migrants and creates further difficulties economically. For example, the temporary status limits migrants’ opportunities to work in formal organisations. Migrants with KT4 were more disadvantaged by the restriction placed on their eligibility for access to the city’s services. As a result of financial difficulties, migrants experience poor economic integration in terms of accommodation and their living conditions. Crowded and unsanitary accommodation and poor access to services was typical of migrants at all income levels. Housing was substandard and nutrition was very poor which may result in health problems in the future. Since migrants move to the city for economic reasons, they do not really care about where they live and what they eat. The most important goal of young migrants is to have a job and to save as much as possible, so they try to cut down as much as they can regarding their expenses. Because migrants experience poor economic integration, it is necessary for them to receive additional assistance in improving their education and economic status. Without
additional assistance, migrants are vulnerable to exploitation and frequently marginalised.

In terms of the social adjustment of young migrants, three spheres are considered: activities in their free time, their health and their social networks. The entertainment activities of migrants was found to be limited because working long hours in hard jobs for low pay gives young migrants little time for entertainment and they cannot afford activities like going to the movies or eating out. Their activities are limited to watching TV or chatting with friends (an activity that young women did), and drinking or gambling (typically for males).

Young migrants have a low level of interaction with local people. Different lifestyles were identified as the main problem restricting young migrants interacting with urban people. Cultural differences are most pronounced among those migrants in the informal sector where there are few opportunities for broader social interaction. Moreover, long working hours gave migrants little time for developing social linkages with local people. As indicated by Sheng (2002:138), urban people (including policy-makers) tend to consider farmers as protectors and inheritors of a traditional way of life, therefore they look down on these ‘rural’ people. This study found that some young migrants find it hard to expand their contacts with urban people, especially the rich, because of their hostility and unwelcome attitude.

Learning a new ‘urban’ life style was difficult for many migrants and a basis for their social exclusion. Migrants felt a stronger identification with their village than with the city. This aspect of identity was difficult for migrants especially those who worked in the informal sector. Cultural adjustment problems for migrants were dominated by
changing from traditional community values based on collectivism to individualistic aspects of urban society. Because of their cultural adjustment problems migrants had limited interaction with the city.

It was found that the health of young migrants in general is good and there was no change in their health status after moving. Although there is no evidence to indicate that their health is poor, no access to healthcare and unsafe working environments may cause them health problems in the future. Leading an independent life in the city without family support and protection gave migrants additional health problems as a result of their feeling of loneliness and homesickness. In relation to reproductive health, as indicated in the literature on adolescence, young people are vulnerable to HIV infection and STDs due to their high-risk behaviour such as indulging in unsafe sex (Hugo, 2005a; Ridge and Murphy, 2002; Dehne and Riedner, 2001). This study found that awareness of HIV/AIDS was a problem for some migrants due to unsafe sex. Their limited knowledge about the disease, especially among those with low levels of education, was a significant factor contributing to health problems.

Young migrants did not involve themselves much in formal political and community activities. Only a few migrants who work in the formal sector factories are members of the Labour Union and the Union of Youth. Without permanent registration in the city these young migrants have limited opportunities to participate in local political activities. Moreover, low levels of education and limited knowledge about local politics restrict migrants’ involvement in local and community activities.

The lack of support from formal organisations and authorities make young migrants rely on the assistance of friends and relatives to cope with a wide range of difficulties in
employment, accommodation and other aspects of life. Informal networks such as relatives, friends and village relations were found to be of great significance in job searching. The role of social networks of returning migrants in employment assistance was of great value in the job searching of migrants, especially in informal sector workshops. Females more than males were more likely to rely on informal social networks to obtain employment. The role of social networks was also significant when migrants obtained accommodation in the city. Migrants face discrimination in gaining access to some accommodation services. While people with permanent residence are treated as mainstream residents and have access to a range of subsidised accommodation, migrants with temporary residence are not. This lack of access is compensated for by the assistance of informal support networks. Providing initial accommodation after their arrival, assisting in looking for new accommodation and staying for the long-term with relatives were identified as the major types of assistance migrants received. Social networks were also found to be important in the migrants’ social adjustment. The unfriendliness and cultural differences were reasons why migrants found it hard to integrate into urban life and expand their social interactions. Moreover, no programs have been established by the government to assist migrants to adjust to their new environment. Due to ‘culture shock’ problems, interaction with friends and relatives in the city and contacts with their family in rural areas via letters, making phone calls or visiting, assists migrants in keeping their lives in balance. They also tend to ask them for assistance when they experience difficulties.

The registration policy adopted in cities like HCMC is acting in a way that compounds the adjustment problems for migrants. While the main purpose of this policy has been to control rural population movement into the cities, it has in reality caused difficulties for migrants trying to adjust to city life. Unlike people with permanent residence who are
eligible for a range of social services, migrants with temporary residence are ineligible for essential services such as water, electricity and education. Permanent registration is required in order to get access to services and there are higher costs for services for non-residents. This policy leading to social exclusion of migrants is due to the lack of government assistance in finding accommodation and employment and no access to services.

9.5 Recommendations

The final objective of the study is to make recommendations for policy changes in order to improve the situation for young migrants. It is apparent that a range of policies and actions at both the national and city level are compromising the lives of many young migrants in the city. This section proposes some policy changes which could reduce the problems facing young migrants and enable them to integrate better. The recommendations focus on policy-makers in the national and city governments. Some recommendations are also made for employers.

9.5.1 Recommendations for the National Government

The development gap between rural and urban areas is the main cause of rural to urban migration flows in Vietnam. The concentration of economic growth in metropolitan regions due to a bias in development policy has created more employment opportunities with better pay in cities. Low levels of development and scarcity of land in rural areas has resulted in low productivity and forced people, especially the young, to leave their villages. Thus, an obvious policy recommendation is to narrow rural-urban disparities.
**Recommendation 1**

In order to narrow the development gap between rural and urban areas, the national government needs to pay special attention to improving rural development. The government needs to invest more but should also encourage more foreign and private investment in rural areas, especially in smaller urban centres.

Together with improving development in rural areas, the government should focus on improving education or training programmes for young people from poor families. Financial difficulties force children in poor families to stop schooling and to start earning an income at an early age. Low levels of education and a lack of work experience lead young migrants to undertake physically demanding but low paying jobs which cause them to live on the margins of urban society. Therefore, another recommendation is to pay special attention to the education of young people from poor families in rural areas.

**Recommendation 2**

The national government should provide more opportunities for young people from poor families in rural areas to improve their education and participation in training programmes.

While rural to urban migration has become common for young people, many of them have limited information about potential destinations. The role of formal channels such as social organisations and media is not pronounced and informal social networks were the only channels through which most young potential migrants receive information on destinations; although this information is not always reliable. As a result, a recommendation is to promote the role of media and social organisations in providing accurate and timely information about the city to young people coming from rural areas.
Recommendation 3

The national government should promote the role of the media and social organisations in providing relevant and accurate information about the major cities in order to keep young people updated and to equip them with some basic skills so that they can make better informed migration decisions.

Although the household registration policy has changed and is much less strict than before, vestiges of it discriminate against migrants. Access to social services is difficult and they have to pay more for electricity, water and other essential services. This policy is against the residential law because according to the law, citizens have the right to live and work anywhere in Vietnam. The household registration policy is used by the authorities to control population mobility to the cities. Their arguments are that eradication of the registration system will allow more migrants from rural areas to come; however, even with this migration control the rural-urban migration flow is rapidly increasing. This policy has not stopped migration and at the same time it has created many problems for migrants.

Recommendation 4

The national government should remove the household registration policy and enable all Vietnamese people to live and work wherever they choose, and migrants should have full access to the services and all assistance programs as other urban people. Gaining access to any type of job in the formal sector and having the same educational opportunities as people with permanent residence would minimise migrants’ difficulties.

The number of informal private businesses such as workshops, cafes and restaurants in Vietnam in general, and in HCMC in particular, has increased dramatically, yet many of
their owners break the law because they operate unregistered businesses. Most of them employ workers without labour contracts and health insurance. Moreover, most young migrants work in these workshops and their human rights are seriously violated. Some are treated like slaves. Working long hours with low pay and experiencing verbal abuse are reported by many migrants, while the authorities make no effort to intervene. The reason is because the government’s inspection mechanism is ineffective, so employers who exploit and abuse their workers are not caught and punished by the law.

**Recommendation 5**

That the national government must intensify inspection of labour and business laws in order to detect law-breakers. A strict and clear sanction is needed to prevent employers from abusing and exploiting their workers.

Finally, abused migrants have no idea where to go to ask for assistance or lodge an official complaint. In a modern and complicated society like HCMC the assistance received by young migrants of informal social networks like friends and relatives is not sufficient. It is necessary for the government to provide legal support to assist young migrants.

**Recommendation 6**

Together with effective inspection and sanction, the government should direct and assist local government to establish more programmes and organisations to help young migrants in major cities. There is not only a need to establish hotlines and other services to provide protection for migrants from abuse and harassment, but also a need to find ways so that these services can reach out to young migrants.
9.5.2 Recommendations for the Government of HCMC

The recommendations for the city’s government are less prescriptive, and tend to recommend the government of the city comply with existing laws approved by the national government. While aspects of the household registration system have been relaxed, many regulations in the city’s government still discriminate against migrants. For example, applying for a job in the formal administrative organisations of HCMC requires permanent residence. Access to public school in HCMC also requires permanent residence. According to the government of HCMC, the purpose of keeping this discrimination policy is to limit population movement into the city. Policy-makers do not appreciate the contributions migrants make to the city and they focus too much on the high costs of migration to the city. In their opinion, migrants are the reason for growing social problems, such as overpopulation, pollution, crime and poor health. The household registration policy is no longer effective in limiting rural-urban migration and instead acts in a way that creates many difficulties for migrants. At present, there are many of social service outlets being requested by migrants for permanent residence status, because without this permanent residence certificate they cannot have access to services.

<table>
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<th>Recommendation 7</th>
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<td>HCMC’s government needs to acknowledge the contribution of migrants to the city and make more effort to remove regulations that limit migrants’ access to services. The city should encourage service providers to cease discrimination and permit all migrants’ access to the full range of services available to non-migrants. Moreover, the city should establish more programs to assist them in job searching and providing protection to vulnerable migrants.</td>
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In order to assist young migrants adjust and minimise their difficulties, the city’s government should encourage social organisations such as the Women’s Union, Youth Union and Police to provide effective support to young migrants. Irresponsible authorities who do not give a hand to migrants when they are abused or exploited should be appropriately punished by the law.

**Recommendation 8**

The city’s government should provide legal support to young migrants so that they can feel secure in the city. Limited knowledge of the law makes migrants vulnerable to exploitation. Therefore, the authorities need to equip them with a good understanding of the law concerning labour, residence and other aspects of life as well as direct them to organisations and people they can ask for help if needed to protect themselves.

**9.5.3 Recommendations for Local Government**

Local government is closest to the community, so its role in assisting people in general and migrants in particular, is very important. Whether a policy is effective or not depends on local government. However, as in many other cities in Vietnam there are complaints about bureaucracy and the irresponsibility or corruption of authorities in local government. Therefore, it is difficult for young migrants to receive any help. The people they can only rely on when they are in need are relatives or friends. Every citizen deserves legal protection and only the authorities can help, so they should treat every one in the ward or quarter equally regardless of whether they are permanent residents or migrants.
**Recommendation 9**

Local governments at ward and quarter level should make more effort to help migrants in their areas when they have difficulties. Local authorities should treat migrants as members of their community and encourage them to be involved in community-oriented activities and provide them with opportunities to participate in different formal associations. Taking part in formal associations such as workers’ unions and women’s unions is the best way for migrants to improve their political knowledge and community relationships.

### 9.5.4 Recommendations for Labour Unions in Factories

The rights of workers in formal sector factories are protected by Labour Unions, which are established and controlled by the Vietnamese General Labour Union. However, these unions failed to protect migrant workers. Many migrant workers in factories complain about the uselessness of Labour Unions because they do nothing to improve the working conditions which are unsafe and unsanitary. Therefore, in order to do their job effectively, the Labour Unions in factories should fight for workers’ rights.

### 9.5.5 Recommendations for Employers

In order to defend the rights of both employers and employees, owners of factories and workshops should sign a labour contract with their workers. The labour contract ensures migrant workers’ labour rights and thereby they are more committed to work long-term for the company. In recent years, a growing number of new large- and small-scale enterprises have been established and as a result, a cheap labour force has been in high demand (GSO-UNDP, 2006). Therefore, in order to keep workers on a long-term basis
it is necessary for employers to ensure and guarantee the labour interests of their workers.

9.6 Migrant Adjustment in the Future

From the findings of this study, two issues were identified which have a significant impact on migrant adjustment: the continuation of migration control policies and the failure of government to provide support to young migrants in the city. Although these issues related to experiences in a major city in Vietnam, there is also evidence from the broader global context where migration control policies are applied. Using this control policy, the government is discriminating against migrants in cities. This discrimination was found to affect migrant adjustment, and in any case failed to limit migration from rural areas to cities, which is evident in Vietnam (Zhang et al., 2001) and China (Maxia, 1997). Migration control policy and the refusal of governments to assist migrants are leading to many difficulties for migrants in the cities not only in Vietnam but also around the world.

9.6.1 Migration Control Policy in the Future

Migration control policy has been applied in some countries in Asia such as Vietnam and China for a long time and continues to this day (Scharping, 1997; Zhang et al., 2001). Using the household registration system as a tool to stop rural to urban migration flow was very effective during the centrally planned economy in these countries (Dang, 2005; Maxia, 1997). However, it has dramatically lost its effect since Vietnam and China have introduced a free market economy. It was found in this study that the household registration system has little, if no role in decreasing migration, but it has a significant impact on the day to day life of migrants. The poor integration of migrants
has caused social exclusion. In the near future this household registration system should be eradicated because it no longer fulfils its main task of limiting migration.

While education plays an important role in improving the employment status of migrants, most migrants were found to have limited education. Despite this, the government has made no effort to assist them. Without assistance from the government it is difficult for migrants to improve their education because they are poor. Instead of giving opportunities to migrants, the household registration policy has been limiting their opportunities for schooling and training. This policy creates not only economic difficulties but also unpleasant emotional feelings for migrants. Urban people often look down on migrants, especially poor ones, as they think that urban people are more sophisticated than rural people. There is an argument from policy-makers who do not support the idea of ceasing migration control policy that if this policy is eradicated, this will mean that the population in the major cities will significantly increase and the city will be swamped by demand for infrastructure and services (Vietnamnet, 2005). However, the findings from this thesis show that Ho Khau plays no role in the decision-making process to move among young migrants.

This policy only creates difficulties for them in the city, but none of them indicated that they would not move because of problems resulting from Ho Khau. The migrants accept the challenges of living in the city because that is the only place where they can earn an income for themselves and their families. Compared with many young girls in rural areas who get married to Taiwanese men and move to a strange country with people they cannot communicate (Hugo and Nguyen, 2007), moving to the city to earn money is considered much safer. The difficulties they face are not strong enough to make them stay in their villages.
9.6.2 The Future of Young Migrants in the Developing World

The second important issue playing a significant role in migrant adjustment in the future is the level of government support. While the city takes advantage of migrants, the government does not assist them to minimise their difficulties. Prostitution, drugs and crime are a threat to poor young migrants and has dire consequences for both them and the city. Successful integration of young migrants will only be possible if the government sets up programmes to assist them, such as allowing migrants access to poverty reduction programmes, micro credit for poor migrants who operate small businesses and training courses for young migrants in factories, etc. If the government provides no assistance, it may lead to unknown dangers not only for the migrants but also for the city.

9.7 Implications for Theory

The implications for theory confirm the importance of the influence of host and origin place-related factors on migration and the adjustment process in the city. In particular, it has been identified that the economic or development gap between rural and urban areas influences the decision to move. Some implications for theory arise from the findings in this study will be discussed in relation to the migration model developed by Sharping (1997). Scharping’s model proposed a comprehensive set of variables at macro and micro levels which contribute to the determinants of migration and the adaptation process of migrants. At the macro level, the model presents a wide range of variables that have an impact on migration behaviour. The findings here confirm the importance of the development gap between rural and urban areas in promoting population movement into the cities. Among the macro valuables, the household registration system is considered to be an important policy influencing the decision to migrate.
However, this study found that the continued use of Ho Khau in the city has no impact on the decision-making process of potential migrants, while the change of policies regarding land use rights has been identified as the factor having the most significant impact.

In relation to migrant adjustment the findings confirm the importance of education levels of migrants in the city. Due to low levels of education, young migrants have limited opportunities in job-searching. As a result, they are forced to do hard work with low pay in the informal sector and in industrial zones. Employment and income as the direct result of job-searching have a significant impact on other aspects of migrants’ experiences in the city; first of all, housing status. However, this study has found that together with education, the temporary registration status of migrants also has a significant impact on their adaptation to the city. This must be regarded as another important factor in the adaptation process of migrants because their temporary registration status creates many difficulties in terms of accessibility to essential services such as education, health care and subsidised costs for housing, water and electricity. The implication of this finding is that the importance of variable “residential status” is much greater than previously realised. Therefore, this variable carries additional weight in the migration model.

Finally, the findings of this study confirm the importance of social networks in providing assistance to migrants in a climate of unpronounced government provision of assistance (Guest, 1998; Scharping 1997). Social networks established with people who had already moved to the city such as friends and relatives affect the destination of potential migrants. Migrants are more likely to move to a city in which they already know someone. In this way they expect to save money on moving costs and reduce risks
of expenditure. Without assistance from the government, potential migrants can only rely on informal support such as relatives and friends who provide reliable information about the place of destination. However; this study also found another finding which has implications for theory in that networking does not always provide reliable information to potential migrants in rural areas. Many returning migrants come back to their village and give a promising picture about the city to their relatives or friends, but the reality is different. The theory should consider this factor as an important one that could have a bearing on migrants’ decision-making processes.

9.8 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Although the thesis has made a contribution to providing a more comprehensive picture of the life of migrants in both informal and formal sectors in the urban centres, there are some limitations to the study. These limitations provide some opportunities for further research.

9.8.1 Measuring Adjustment with Periodic Intervals

As indicated by Speare (1983: 25), adjustment is a process which takes place over time. Ideally, the level of adjustment should be measured at periodic intervals following movement to the city. However, such a longitudinal study is impossible and because of limited time and funding, this study only measured the level of adjustment among migrants with different durations of residence in HCMC. While using a ‘synthetic cohort’ in this study was appropriate and acceptable in terms of measuring the level of adjustment, it limited the ability of the thesis to make definitive conclusions regarding this aspect of adjustment. A suggestion is therefore made that further longitudinal research on migrants’ adjustment should be undertaken.
9.8.2 Investigating Migration Consequences in a Broader View.

The consequence of migration is having an impact not only on migrants and their place of destination but also on the origin place (Scharping, 1997; Skeldon, 2002; Guest, 2003). While this thesis investigated migration impacts on those who moved, it did not attempt to investigate their impact on the host society or the migrants’ places of origin. A suggestion is therefore that further research be conducted on the consequences of youth migration in a broader context. In light of the findings on the experiences of young migrants in the city, it is proposed that rural-urban migration of youth is creating benefits and disadvantages for both sending and receiving places. In the place of origin, the impact of remittances on economic well-being in rural areas in general and household income in particular was not part of this study. Besides the remittances, the impacts of migration on population and labour structure and other aspects on the community of origin also need attention. Investigating in more detail the impacts of migration on the city in terms of housing, infrastructure and other demands should be useful. Research into the consequences of migrants in both these places will provide a more comprehensive picture.

9.8.3 Data

A further limitation of this research has been the availability of data for analysis. While the main source of data for understanding migration and urbanisation in Vietnam is from official censuses, it has limitations as a source of migration data because migration is only one part of these censuses. Information on migration is only available regarding volumes, trends and some basic characteristics such as gender, age and place of origin. This type of statistical data omits other sorts of migration such as temporary and return migrants; this type of migration has become important in internal migration in developing countries (Hugo, 1982; GSO-UNDP, 2006) This has severely limited the
analysis undertaken in this thesis, by preventing a detailed analysis of rural-urban migration in Vietnam in general and the migration of youth in particular as a comparison of data for long-term and temporary migrants cannot be made. A recommendation is to consider the inclusion of short-term migrants and more detailed questions in migrants’ characteristics in future censuses.

In addition, the censuses were also limited in their ability to investigate migrants’ adjustment because they only provide some basic information on migration as studies on migration in Vietnam have only focused on economic aspects. Therefore, a suggestion is made that further follow-up research be conducted on migrants in a wider context to enable a fuller picture of migrants’ experiences to emerge.

In addition to census data limitations there were also problems associated with the youth survey. Due to limited time and funding, the sample for the youth survey was not randomly chosen and is only a small sample. Consequently, this limits the ability to draw conclusions which could be confidently representative of the broader population. A recommendation is therefore made to undertake a further large-scale study into the migration of youth with a more representative probability sample. Finally, this research focused on young migrants from rural areas who have low levels of education and who were not familiar with the interview process. As a result, it was felt that this reduced their ability to articulate their experiences more fully. Also, due to the limited time available to migrants, some interviews were conducted while they worked and in the presence of other people. Therefore, there were limitations in collecting accurate detailed data.
9.8.4 Expanding Research into Migrants’ Adjustment to Other Groups

The research found differences in adjustment among migrants with different levels of education and working in different economic sectors. These socio-economic differences exist for every group of migrants and may impact on their lives in the city. As indicated in Chapter 2, migrants with $KT3$ have more access to services in the city than those with $KT4$. This research only concentrated on migrants with $KT4$ who are considered as the most vulnerable group in terms of gaining access to services available to permanent migrants and non-migrants. It would be useful if a study covering both permanent and short-term migrants is undertaken to understand the impact of state intervention and assistance to migrants in the city.

In addition, this research investigated the experiences of migrant groups but did not compare the lives lived by them and non-migrants. The experiences of migrants were found to be somewhat different to those who enjoyed permanent residence. There is little known about the experiences of migrants in comparison to non-migrants. It would be interesting for a comparative study to be conducted on these two population groups in the city.

9.8.5 Examination of Other Temporary Migration Groups

Temporary migration which includes seasonal movement and other short-term moves are an important emerging trend into the city (GSO-UNFPA, 2006:7). Besides this migrant group, there are other newly arrived young migrant groups in HCMC such as students who also need attention. Research into other groups of young migrants will provide a good opportunity to compare the adaptation styles of different migrant groups of young people. Further research into these groups is needed to understand differences in their lives in the city, as the findings in this study suggest that these people may face
discrimination as a result of their residential status. This will provide a fuller picture of young migrants in cities.

9.9 Conclusion

This chapter has summarised the main findings and implications of the thesis. It has shown that the adaptation process of young migrants in the informal sector and cheap labour-intensive industrial zones is rather poor. To cope with the difficulties they face in the city, these young migrants receive no assistance from the Vietnamese government. In fact, the government’s migration control policies are contributing to their social exclusion. In conclusion, this thesis has found evidence to support claims that adolescent or young migrants in the city are ignored by the government, authorities and local people and this leads to many tragedies involving young migrants in the city.
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Because some of family names in Vietnam are quite common, in this reference list the author has chosen to put the full name of Vietnamese authors where needed.


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NOTE:
The appendices are included in the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.