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Social Change under Urbanization Process of a Tay Ethnic Commune in Vietnam's Northeast Mountainous Area

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Summary

This project aims to document social changes in a Tay ethnic commune in Vietnam Northeast mountainous area occurring since the 1986 reform, as well as under the urbanization process. To pursue this goal, the key research problems to be investigated are: (1) the urbanization process, factors leading to the change in the area; (2) social change with respect to livelihood transformation, social relation changes and cultural changes taking place among the Tay people after 30 years of the reform process and under the current urbanization, (3) response and adaptation of local Tay people to these changes; and (4) factors which impact on the sustainable development of local ethnic people.

The research result indicates that Tay ethnic people in the Northeast area have been the most dynamic ethnic minority group in Vietnam, integrating themselves into national history and development. Although on a smaller scale than those occurring in big lowland cities, the recent urbanization in this mountainous area, together with other economic and social policies after Doi Moi, has brought many changes in the socioeconomic life of local people. People are more engaged in the market and urban centers as agricultural production increase and livelihood has become diversified. While their natural capital has become more and more restricted and with social capital still limited, the increase in market competition has caused the majority of Tay people to adapt to social change; some, however, have been left behind.

Despite the urban way of life being adopted by a small number of households, the urbanization process has facilitated a rapid pace of cultural change among the Tay people in this commune, compared to other surrounding rural communities.

Keywords: Social change, urbanization, Tay ethnic people, Vietnam

1. Introduction

1.1. Objective

Since the *Doimoi* reform¹ was launched officially in 1986, Vietnam has experienced a rapid pace of industrialization and modernization. Concurrently, there has been a strong urbanization movement throughout the country. In lowland areas, cities have been expanding into peri-urban villages by appropriating the agricultural land of farmers for residential property development and factories. From 2001 to 2005, the state took 366,400 hectares (ha) of agricultural land for the purpose of developing projects. By 2010 the total had risen to roughly 745,000 ha, affecting some nine million farming people, or about 10 per cent of the country's population (Kerkvliet 2014, p.20). In the mountainous areas, urbanization occurs on a smaller scale and has been promoted by the implementation of various development projects of the government. As a result, over the last 20 years, hundreds of towns and district centers have been established and expanded in these areas, especially in the northern uplands. In addition, a commune center has been established in each commune to promote the development of cultural and social exchanges and to develop infrastructure for markets, schools, clinics and shops. Roads were opened, connecting many remote villages to the outside world. This illustrates the intensification of ethnic and upland peoples' integration into the national and global economy. Under this process, the livelihood of ethnic minorities in Vietnam together with their social and cultural life have been transformed. While researches on ethnic minorities in Vietnam have endeavored to change from describing traditional cultural practices to analyzing contemporary issues, knowledge about the social transformations of the 53 ethnic groups in general, and of the Tay ethnic people in particular, remains limited.

Thirty five years ago, a delegation of former Soviet ethnologists, in cooperation with researchers at the Institute of Anthropology of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, conducted a socioeconomic survey on six representative ethnic groups in Vietnam. The Tay people were selected as one of the representative ethnic groups for the Northeast mountainous area. Thousands of questionnaires, each with over one hundred questions, were completed. However, due to the interruption of cooperative relations, the completed survey questionnaires were shelved and left unprocessed. It was not until 2015 that the work of analyzing this data began. Together with another senior researcher at the Institute of Anthropology, I have been assigned

¹ *Doi moi* (Renovation) is a program of economic and social reforms launched in the 1980's by Communist Party of Vietnam. The Renovation policy was officially launched at the sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam in 1986. It can be seen as open door policy, shifting from a centrally planned economy to a market oriented one, inside the framework of state regulations. The main thrust of *Doi moi* is to promote a multi-sector economic system, emphasising the state sector while encouraging the private sector. To achieve economic integration, the open door would be implemented gradually in order to stabilise the political and social situation.

to classify and analyze the survey data using the SPSS program. Results of this work, including several hundred tables describing the socioeconomic circumstances of the six ethnic groups in the 1980's, is available at the library of the Institute and had been published. In this report, it is interesting to note that the life of ethnic minorities in general, and the Tay people in particular, was very difficult. People faced poverty and hunger. Given the centrally planned economic policy at the time, the main income of households came from the economy of cooperatives. Data from the survey also shows that the household economy only played a minor role. Family and kinship relationships among the Tay people still maintained many traditional aspects. Marriage relationships and ethnic relationships mainly occurred within the community.

Although the above data source is useful for research and teaching, it will be even more valuable if follow-up studies are conducted to compare the development of ethnic groups in the two periods. We can then contribute more to the evaluation of the reform task by drawing on the insights gained in the social transformations in Vietnam. In this research, the 1981 survey results are used as reference to understand the social context of Tay people before Doi Moi. These data are also applied and compared to current data to discuss the social life in the Tay community and highlight the social change there.

The Tay people in Quang Lang commune, Chi Lang district, Lang Son province were selected as one of the field sites for the above survey. At the time, this area was remote. As it was the socialist construction period, the collective economy model was applied widely. The livelihood of Tay people in this area relied heavily on the agricultural cooperative with a small contribution from the household economy, but the cooperative model did not work effectively. Market economic exchange was forbidden. Life for the people was difficult and food security became the biggest concern. While the local people maintained their traditional customs in social and cultural life, they were influenced by new factors in their family relations, ritual life and ethnic relations. Some years after the survey was conducted, especially after the 1986 reform, more towns and industrial zones were established in this area, enhancing the connections of the region to the wider society. Our assumption in this study is that, like the Tay in other areas, people in this area quickly built up their household economy and expanded their economic activities following the introduction of the market economy. Their ethnic, social and cultural lives may have changed following the trends observed elsewhere for other ethnic Tay and other ethnic groups in Vietnam (Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2013). However, we still need to examine how the urbanization process and social change occurred in this area after the economic reform: how did local people adapt to that process and which factors influenced sustainable development? Additionally, it is very interesting to conduct a re-visited survey to explore some aspects of social changes in this community after a period of over 30 years.

This project is therefore designed to document the urbanization process, examine social changes occurring since the 1986 reform and under the urbanization process. The specific focus will be on changes in one Tay community in the Northeast of Vietnam from the early 1980's. Comprising the largest group among 53 ethnic minorities, the Tay people mainly reside in valleys of the northeast of Vietnam. Given the advantage provided by the landscape and thanks to the China-Vietnam open border policy since the 1990's, the Tay people have become one of

the most dynamic ethnic minorities in Vietnam during the process of economic reform. Urbanization has taken place rapidly in their region.

Within the scope of this project, we aim to answer four key research questions:

- 1) How has the urbanization process been occurring in this area? What are the contributing factors for change related to the local and national context?
- 2) How has the socioeconomic and cultural life of Tay people changed after 30 years of the reform process under urbanization and current economic and social policies with respect to livelihood transformation, social relation changes and cultural changes? What is the degree of change? Who are affected by the changes, who are not and why?
- 3) How have the local Tay people adapted to these changes? What factors impact on the sustainable development of local ethnic people?
- 4) What policy recommendations can be proposed to support local ethnic people to sustainably transform their livelihood?

This project is a re-visited case study that aims to gain the insights of social transformations in the community spanning 30 years. It also gives a new understanding of the effects of urbanization and industrialization upon a mountainous rural society. By examining how the urbanization process and social change occurred in this area after the economic reform, the research will give a new understanding of how local people adapted to that process and which factors influenced sustainable development. By way of this, policy makers and development workers can better understand these factors in order to promote sustainable livelihood transformations, in particular Tay ethnic villages and ethnic mountainous communities.

1.2. Concepts and Analytical Frameworks

Urbanization is a process, which is often seen as a consequence of economic development. This in turn causes a higher proportion of the total population to live in cities and towns. Some decades ago, urbanization and urban growth were regarded as an indicator of modernization and progress (Evers 1975, p. 775). In broad terms, urbanization is a process that alters the way of life from rural to urban (Mac Duong 2002). This process occurs not only in the big urban cities and towns but also in smaller scale urban centers. In the big cities, urbanization involves infilling and expansion of the city into the peri-urban areas. In places where small centers are being built, urbanization is the formation and development of urbanism. In Vietnam's northern mountainous areas, besides the establishment of new towns, urbanization can be considered as a formation of commune centers in each commune with the development of infrastructure for markets, schools, clinics and shops (Nguyen Van Suu and Truong Van Cuong 2012). Thus, in the case of Quang Lang commune, Chi Lang district, Lang Son province, the urbanization process can be seen as the re-development of Dong Mo town, the establishment of Chi Lang town and Dong Banh industrial zone, and the formation of commune centers in the region.

Another significant concept in this study is social change. It is understood as a process through which patterns of social behavior, social relations, social institutions and the social stratification system are changing over time (Endruweit and Trommsdorff 2002). Social change

can be any change in human society or related to certain milestones of development or modernization such as the French revolution or the industrial revolution in England in the 18th century (Haferkamp and Smelser 1992). Social change under the impact of industrialization, modernization and urbanization brings a change in all spheres of social and individual personal life. People's behavioral patterns are correlated with the living conditions of industrialization, modernization and urbanization (Trinh Duy Luan 1996). A theory on modernization has demonstrated that economic development leads to social change, from traditional to modern society. The content of social change includes economic growth, occupation specialization, increased education, change in gender roles, change in community relations, and increased individualization. In this study, we will focus largely on changes in three spheres: the livelihood transformation of households, social relationship change (family, kinship, community, and ethnic relations) and cultural change (the use of language, ritual and religious life).

Given that economic development plays a significant role in the social change process, this study applies the lens of a sustainable livelihood framework to analyze the impact of the urbanization process on the Tay household economy. With roots in development researches in relation to famine and poverty, the sustainable livelihood framework has been promoted by the Department for International Development in the UK. Based on the notion that people have assets (or forms of capital) which can be drawn upon to reduce poverty and secure their livelihoods, the framework highlights the 'pentagon' of five types of capital: *physical* (infrastructure and input for production), *natural* (natural materials for livelihood, agricultural and forest land), *financial* (financial sources that people use to achieve their livelihood goals), *social* (social resources that people mobilize to reach their livelihood targets like social relations, social networks, exchange relationships) and *human* (skills, knowledge, health, ability). The framework is people-centered, examining their patterns of capital utilization, how they transform their livelihoods to adapt and respond to different impacts or promote their potential strengths in various contexts (Nguyen Van Suu 2010). Research on urbanization in Vietnam has shown that land, labor, financial and social capital are all significant factors which enable farmers to transform their livelihood and cope with the challenges of the urbanization process (Nguyen Duy Thang 2004, Nguyen Van Suu 2010). Thus, in this study we use the sustainable livelihood framework, especially the five types of capital, to examine how livelihoods have been transformed for the Tay ethnic people in Quang Lang commune, Chi Lang district, Lang Son province and how the people have adapted to the new developments.

1.3. Material and Methods

Material of this research was drawn from fieldwork performed in two Tay villages of Quang Lang commune, Chi Lang district, Lang Son province and from relevant research on urbanization in Vietnam and other countries. Materials relating to the project topic and project areas were collected and grouped into three topics: (1) state and government policies and regulations on urbanization and rural development; (2) urbanization, socioeconomic development

and modernization in Vietnam and the world; and (3) documents relating to history, socioeconomic and cultural life of selected villages. This work helped to prepare a desk study of the research topic and a review of the research site. Data and information gleaned from previous publications provided a useful awareness of prior research, as well as areas requiring further study.

This project selects two villages of Quang Lang commune, Chi Lang district, Lang Son province as a field site. Although Lang Son province has several famous border gates where cross-border economic activities and social exchange take place from time to time, the Tay people in Chi Lang district are not greatly involved with transnational business. Located in the south of Lang Son, this area is situated in the interior of the province. Thus, its urbanization and processes of social change share many of the characteristics of other ethnic and upland areas of Vietnam. In addition, this is the location of the previous survey mentioned above that I recently analyzed. I wish to investigate the questions arising from that study and my previous research on urbanization and Tay people.

Quang Lang commune has a total of 1741 households and over 7,000 inhabitants. About 31 per cent of the commune's population are Tay people. The remainder are Nung and Kinh (the majority) people. Of the 13 villages in the commune, Lang Trung, Khun Phang and Lang Dang are the three Tay villages. About 90 per cent of households in these three villages are Tay people, while in other villages Tay people live amongst the Nung and Kinh peoples. This research has chosen Khun Phang village as the field site, which is situated near the highway and closer to Dong Mo town than Lang Dang village (which is about 500 m from the highway). We wish to compare different livelihoods and situations of social change in these two villages under the impact of urbanization.

The project was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. For the quantitative component, a household questionnaire survey was designed to explore three main spheres of social changes in the community after the 1986 reform and under the current urbanization. It attempts to understand: (1) socioeconomic circumstances of households; (2) land ownership and other livelihood capital in each household; (3) occupation of each inhabitant; (4) income and the living standard of each household; (5) family relations; (6) ethnic relations and ethnic self-identification; (7) the use of ethnic language and national language; and (8) ritual and religious life, traditional customs and social practices. The questionnaires were designed for completion by either the head of the household or their spouse. In this study, the 1981 survey results were used as a reference to indicate change at the commune level, therefore we have tried to make sure that the new questionnaires at least cover the same content as the previous one. New questions were added to address other aims of the research. However, given the fact that most respondents of the previous research had passed away, the social context in that period was totally different from present day. Households or individuals

who had been interviewed in the past had different understandings and perspectives about concepts and questions in the survey compared to that of the current respondents. Thus, we also adjusted definitions in each question to ensure that they are appropriate to the contemporary situation.

The total number of households in the two villages is 205. 140 Tay households were invited randomly to participate in the survey in order to ensure that two-thirds of the households in the village are represented in the sample. SPSS software was applied to analyze data from this household questionnaire survey.

For the qualitative method, this research applied semi-structured interviews. We conducted more than 60 individual interviews in the two villages. Half of those were identified from the questionnaires. The remainder was selected to ensure representations of people of different age, gender, educational background, occupation, marital status and economic status. The interview included completely open questions on the informant's personal information, their family socioeconomic situation, occupational transformation and living standards. More importantly, people were free to share their own opinions, feelings and thoughts on urbanization and its impact on their life and their communities. Life history interview methodology was used to understand the experience and emotional feeling in a transitional society.

In addition, participant observation was applied to understand economic activities, cultural customs and daily social interactions of Tay people in the commune. Information collected from the interviews was used to compare with that collected in the household survey questionnaire to see if the two methods both reflected similar situations and trends.

2. Social change under the impact of Doi moi and current urbanization on ethnic communities in Vietnam

From an agricultural society which was colonized for a century, and which underwent two Indochina wars and several decades of building socialism, Vietnam implemented its Doi Moi policy in 1986. This is actually a sequence of reforms aiming at transforming the management from a centrally planned, government-subsidized economy to a socialist-oriented market economy. In fact, these reforms were initiated from the late 1970's to gradually assign ownership of farming land to households and liberalize the economy, opening it up to foreign markets. Thanks to each household becoming a basic unit of agricultural production as well as changes in the production methods, natural resource management, land use and the opening of markets, Vietnam has transformed itself from a country that suffered prolonged food shortages to become one of the leading exporters of agricultural products in the world, and has become a role model of poverty reduction (Kerkvliet and Porter 1995, Castella and Dang Dinh Quang 2002, Luong 2003).

Vietnam is not unique in experiencing recent major social transformations. Close to the

time this country moved from collectivization to a market economy oriented by socialist ideology, a number of socialist bloc countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were “unmaking” socialism by introducing free-market democracy and civil society (Humphrey 2002). Studies of post-socialism have paid considerable attention to social change in these societies. Amongst these, China and Vietnam have been the most two fertile lands for researches to explore the uncertain state of the society after the liberal market economy was introduced and the countries embarked on an era of development and modernization. Studies on social change in these two countries have shown a change of economic structure, family and lineage, gender relationships, cultural and religious life as well as a widening gap between different groups, regions and ethnicities. (Li Pei Lin 2012; Chan, Richard and Unger 2009; Unger 2002; Luong 2003; Kleinen 1999; Taylor 2004).

In the delta regions of Vietnam, Doi Moi has been associated with great changes in the cultural and social life of Vietnamese villagers. The return of the household economy, the enhanced diversification of livelihoods of households and trading activities have helped to improve the lives of people, thus reducing the poverty rate. However, the open market economy also entails many traditional moral values being replaced by new values in line with social, economic and political relations of the times. Social differentiation is becoming increasingly clear. People have to contend with a breakdown in social relations, and the anxieties and uncertainties created by the market economy. In this context, in the past few decades, a tendency to revive traditional rituals and social relations has occurred in this area. People tend to revive and intensify traditional ritual and social practices in keeping with their spiritual needs in order to deal with these risks, and the uncertainty of the market economy (Luong 2003, Kleinen 1999, Malarney 1993, Endres 1999). However, it should be understood that people did not fully restore traditional practices, but drew on a common reservoir of memories and experiences of some traditional forms of practices to build new familiar forms in order to address contemporary issues (Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2010). Change in Vietnamese culture and society in the delta area has accelerated due to the recent process of urbanization, modernization and integration.

In mountainous and ethnic minority areas, in addition to the factors impacted by the Doi Moi process mentioned above, the ethnic policy of the Party and the Government has caused many changes in the economic and social life of Vietnamese ethnic groups from 1986 to the present day. The ethnic policies of Vietnam to date can be divided into two categories: macro policies and micro/specific policies. Regarding macro policies, equality, solidarity and mutual assistance are the recurring ideologies running through the ethnic policies of the Party and the government of Vietnam to date. As for specific policies, by 2011, there had been more than 40 programs, objectives and projects for economic and social development in ethnic minority areas and 182 policies for ethnic minorities in Vietnam (Vuong Xuan Tinh, 2015: 17-19). These policies can be categorized into nine groups: poverty reduction policy, land policy, investment policy, personnel policy, education and training policy, health policy, policy for culture, policies of ethnic minority regions, and policies for some ethnic groups. Among these policies, poverty reduction policies play a key role, expressed through various programs and projects such as: the annual aid

program; agricultural settlement program; program to build communal centers; subsidies, freight subsidies and support product sales; and Program 135 for communes with special difficulties (Bui Minh Dao, 2010). Similar to the delta area, land policies in ethnic minority areas are shown in the implementation of Contract No. 10 (1988) assigning the right to use the land long-term to farming families; and the Land Law (1993 and 2003) licensing long-term land use that would contribute to the promotion of agricultural production, and the development of trade. However, these policies caused land disputes and regional disparities in the mountainous areas.

Another important matter is the investment policy of the State towards ethnic minorities. However, this policy is often expressed in poverty reduction policies, particularly investment in infrastructure (electricity, roads, schools and health services) for the community and investment for households (support housing, water tank, and electricity fees). In general, all ethnic policies are aimed at economic development to improve livelihoods, focusing on education, health, training, human resources and preserving the cultural identity of ethnic minorities in Vietnam.

Although these policies were assessed to be spread too thinly, overlapping and not really effective, especially in human resources policy, poverty reduction policies in ethnic minority areas in Vietnam have achieved many successes, and helped to stabilize the lives of the people. Under the impact of the Reform, integration and policies on ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural life of ethnic groups in Vietnam have seen rapid changes.

Along with the planned migration and settlement policy since the 1960's, the Reform was also associated with free migration and resettlement caused by the construction of hydro-electric dams which has significantly changed the population and ethnic distribution in the mountainous area in Vietnam. To date, there are no communes that have only one ethnic group, thus increasing the intermixing between ethnic groups. Migration and resettlement created changes in the traditional residential localities of ethnic people. Today most people reside in focused groups and close to main roads. Most ethnic groups have been altering their living conditions by shifting from upland farm cultivation to rice cultivation and vice versa². Land policy and the increase in population has led to many changes in the ownership and use of land and forest resources among the mountainous ethnic people. Lack of arable land and residential land is a fairly common situation in many places. In addition, because of the division of land ownership, land conflicts within tribes and between ethnic groups have occurred. After 1986, and especially in the 1990's, forest resources in mountainous areas depleted rapidly due to widespread deforestation. In some northern mountainous areas, forests cover amounted to only about 10 percent of land area (Vuong Xuan Tinh, 2015: 61).

In the early 1990's, the poverty rate of Vietnam was still at 58 percent. In minority areas with special difficulties, this rate went as high as 100 percent. So far, the country's poor household rate has dropped to about nine percent, but the poverty rate in ethnic minority areas remains at 23.1 percent (Tong cuc thong ke & Uy ban Dan toc 2016). Poverty is expressed in many ways,

² Upland ethnic groups like Hmong, Yao people shifted from swidden cultivation to wet rice cultivation due to the policy of fixed settlement and cultivation, while Tai people changed from wet rice farming to upland farm cultivation after they lost their land to hydro electricity dams.

but mainly through income and food situation, housing conditions, access to clean water, education and health. The problem is that minorities account for 50 percent of the total number of poor households in the country. Social disparities between regions and ethnic groups remain to be a problem.

Another problem posed in the ethnic minorities in Vietnam since Doi Moi is the serious effect on cultural identity of the ethnic people. It is a fact that many cultural elements are being eroded or have disappeared; some cultural features have faded; and the culture of ethnic groups has absorbed many cultural elements of Kinh (Vietnamese) and foreign culture (Vuong Xuan Tinh 2015).

Since the reform, the process of industrialization, modernization and international integration have accelerated the process of urbanization in Vietnam. Before the Reform, municipalities were formed and developed primarily for administrative functions, for trading purposes, and partly for the handicrafts industry. Municipalities were often formed around administrative centers, and then others sprang up around them. After the reform, many urban centers with multiple levels and different scales have been established or expanded, from big cities such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong and Da Nang, to small cities more directly under provincial level control, to towns under district level control and even to the smallest towns at the local level (village or commune). The process of urbanization is not only manifested at the macro level, that is, in cities or large urban centers, but also takes place at the micro level (villages) with the expression of urbanism at a lower level. Since the 1990's, many rural areas in Vietnam have been able to observe the presence of the urbanization process of the type *in situ* urbanization³ (Digregorio 2011: 295). Up until 2006, about seven percent of land area and 15 percent of population in urban neighborhoods of Vietnam was urbanized in the style of *desakoto*⁴ (Labbé, 2015: 3).

It can be said that the process of urbanization in Vietnam has been taking place in three main directions. First: urbanization according to trade, services, and transport links by road, waterways and air transport. This is the route to attract investment for the formation of industrial zones and the movement of goods and labor, and the development of townships involving many different types of services (restaurants, hotels, domestic service and so on) in rural areas in the delta and the mountainous areas. In the latter, transport links by road and rail expanded along with the development of centers for administration, prompted by the formation of towns and new towns along the main roads and highways (Mac Duong 2006, Tran Huu Son 2010, Vi Van An 2008). Secondly: urbanization involving the expansion into suburban areas in big cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Nguyen Van Suu 2014, Tran Hong Yen 2013). Thirdly: urbanization trends of small urban centers in the form of small towns or trading centers, industries and services in rural areas far from big cities under the influence of government policies, or on the basis of

^{3,4} “*Desakota*” and *in situ* are two patterns of urbanization which have emerged in some areas of the countryside of both Indonesia and China. These types of urbanization have been driven by the development of market-oriented agricultural production and rural industrial development, and are considered to be very effective in the transformation of the rural employment structure (Zhu 2000; 2009).

the intrinsic needs of the local community (Truong Van Cuong 2011, Pichet Saiphan 2008).

So far, the mountainous urban centers of Vietnam, especially in the northern mountainous area, mainly developed in the first direction (as mentioned above) due to the expansion of roads. With the exception of some urban development due to recent strong industrial development such as Thai Nguyen, Ha Long, Cam Pha, or the development of trade and border exchange of goods such as in the Lang Son and Mong Cai urban centers, in other localities of the northern mountainous region development was slow. Development has relied heavily on administrative functions, and the proportion of the rural population engaged in agriculture was still higher (Mac Duong 2006; Bui Xuan Dinh, Ta Thi Tam 2009). However, the process of urbanization and its impact has transformed the social life of the minority population in the affected areas. Although there have been no in-depth studies in this issue, the results of some related studies show that there has been a career transition towards service industries and commercial or agricultural production, and there has been a shift towards goods and commodity orientation among people living in these regions. Besides family and village life being affected by the new social relations and an increase in social vices, the traditional culture of ethnic groups in urbanized areas has also been declining due to increased exposure and interference caused by national and international culture (Bui Xuan Dinh, Ta Thi Tam, 2009; Tran Thi Hong Yen 2014; Vuong Xuan Tinh 2015).

3. The Tay people in Quang Lang commune

Tay ethnic group - a community of people collectively calling themselves “Tay” - has the largest population among ethnic minorities in Vietnam, comprising over 1.6 million people. It is an ethnic group belonging to the Tay-Thai Kadai linguistics group, having a common origin with the name of the many ethnic groups of Tai - Choang in Southern China and Southeast Asia, such as Tai, Tay, Táy, Thai etc. Regarding the origin, many historical research documents confirm the early presence of Tay people in north of Vietnam, from the end of the first millennium B.C. and is one of the first rulers of ancient Vietnam (Be Viet Dang 1996: 14). Although there was an economic migration of the Tay from the North to the Central Highlands in the 1980’s and the 1990’s (due to population pressure), about 90 percent of Tay people still reside in the northeastern mountains of Vietnam (Ha Dinh Thanh 2010: 26). According to the 2009 census, the Tay in Lang Son province comprise 259,532 people, accounting for 35.4 percent of the provincial population, and 31.5 percent of the Tay in Vietnam, of which Chi Lang is one of the districts with the highest population of Tay residents, accounting for 34.98 percent of the provincial population.

As a beautiful basin surrounded by rocky hills, Chi Lang district has a rugged terrain. It is 40 km from Lang Son province bordering China, and 120 km away from the capital Hanoi. From ancient times, Chi Lang pass was a fierce battle field between feudal Vietnamese dynasties and invading Chinese dynasties. Despite the difficult and remote terrain, it served as a strategic defensive position many years ago. The Vietnamese feudal dynasty was concerned about this area and had close relationships with local chiefs in order to protect the Tay border. Some court officials also fled to this land to hide when falling into disfavor. The exchanges between the Tay people to the central court and to the Vietnamese people were given preferential treatment during

the French colonial period when a number of prisons and mines were built in this area. However, the integration of the Tay in Chi Lang with the Vietnam nation only really occurred after the Vietnam revolutionary government was established in 1945. Despite going through two wars with France and the United States (1946-1975), and the Vietnam-China border war in 1979, the socioeconomic development policy of Vietnam has altered the life of the Tay people a great deal over the last six decades.

Quang Lang is one of the 19 communes of Chi Lang District, a natural area of 30.79 sq km. It has a population of 7,541 people (2015) which is a population density of 218 people per sq km. The commune surrounds Dong Mo town, the administrative center of Chi Lang District. The commune has 13 villages or hamlets and three resident ethnic groups, mainly Tay, Nung and Kinh. The Tay in Quang Lang commune has 542 households and 2,256 people, accounting for 31.13 percent of the population, the second largest group after the Nung people. The hamlets with the highest concentration of Tay residents are Lang Dang, Lang Trung and Khun Phang. The Tay have lived in a settlement manner in the form of villages for a long time and reside closely together. Located in the scenic valleys, the villages of Tay people are often formed in the valley basin or along the hillsides, each village having their own territory and own arable land. Before the Reform, each village usually had only about 30 families, surrounded by rice fields and gardens. Paths within the village, and from the village to Dong Mo town, used to be just small roads, and were used only for walking and biking. Before the new national highway 1A was opened (connecting Hanoi and Lang Son) in 2000, Tay villages here had a solitary appearance, and were hidden behind the trees. Today, due to population growth, each village usually has approximately 100 rooftops and households. From the new highway one could see houses along the road and scattered within the village.

The traditional economy of Tay people is agriculture, consisting of valley rice cultivation combined with swidden cultivation, livestock, hunting and gathering, and handicraft which is a subsistence economy. Having cultivated the land for a long time, Tay people have turned the valleys and hills of their locality into fields, fertile slopes of terraces, forest gardens and orchards. With this combination of livelihood system, the life of the Tay before the 1960s was at a level where they had just enough food because of low rice yield. When the agricultural collectivization movement was implemented in northern Vietnam from 1960 to 1980, the Tay community in the northern mountainous area was one of the first and earliest minority ethnic groups affected, and to the greatest extent. In many places, the cooperatives were formed on the basis of the unity of the households who had reclaimed and developed the land across generations. Due to the pressure of population growth and inappropriate management models, administration of agricultural cooperatives was inefficient. From 1977 to 1980, a food crisis occurred in the highlands in general, and in the Tay ethnic communities in the northern mountainous areas in particular.

The Doi Moi policy - Contract No.10 (1988) - in agriculture was an important step in the

process of decollectivization which had a strong impact on the economic life of the Tay⁵. Due to this policy, agricultural productivity has increased and people gradually overcame the food crisis. Since then, the economy of the Tay in Quang Lang was still mainly based on agriculture (rice, cash crops, livestock, forests), but increasingly focused on crop yield for production and trading of agricultural products in the market. In addition, seasonal migration and diversification of livelihood activities such as petty trade and services helped to encourage the development of employment. This process has also been more strongly promoted recently by the process of urbanization and modernization of the region.

The family of the Tay is usually of a small size and patrilineal. Men are often the pillar of the family and play a decisive role in organizing issues of production, conduct the main important family work, and are the ones who inherit property. Conjugal relationships in Tay families now have greater equality as wives increasingly participate more in social work and economic activities in order to increase family income. The lineages of the Tay in Quang Lang commune are mostly Vi, Lo, Nong and Hoang, along with newly added surnames such as Truong, Luu and Luong. Previously, there were only a few lineages in each hamlet. Now the number of immigrants is increasing, thus adding many more lineages. Until now, people have maintained mutual assistance practices in the community. In particular, members of lineages usually play an essential role in mutual support, both materially and spiritually, for weddings, funerals, housebuilding and holidays. This assistance has created a web of relationships, producing a cohesion amongst the people in the lineage and neighbourhood. However, recently there has been a trend of changes in family and community relations.

The traditional houses of the Tay in Quang Lang commune are « *trình tường* » houses. In these dwellings, the walls are built mainly with dirt. Currently, the local residents' lives have improved, and the type of houses selected by the majority of Tay people is House Level 4. Besides, a number of well-off families have built big, beautiful mansions. The traditional costumes of the people is the indigo cloth tunic, buttoned to the right, belts and silver jewellery. Due to the discomfort during production, they have been wearing the same clothes as the Kinh people since the 1960s. With their identity as an agricultural population, rice is a staple of the Tay. Their diet consists principally of rice, glutinous rice, corn, potatoes and cassava. Food used in everyday meals are mainly vegetables grown and harvested in the forest and usually fried in fat or oil. Today, people often use rice, grow their own vegetables and buy more vegetables, meat and fish

⁵ This formal system allowed the co-operatives to close contracts with households to produce a certain quantity of yields based on the labour input of the contractors. Under the contract arrangement, households were to provide at least 70 per cent of labour for transplanting, tending and harvesting the rice crop. The co-operative took care of ploughing, irrigation and spreading of fertilizer and insecticides. When the households produced more paddy than contractually stipulated, the surplus went to them.

from the market. Regarding the languages, the general trend is for the national language (Vietnamese) to be used more frequently in the Tay community. People can speak both Tay and Vietnamese fluently. Since 1991, communities began to be supplied with electricity from the national grid. In 2004, UNICEF funded a project linking water from upstream to individual household water tanks. So far more than 90 percent of households in Quang Lang have a television set. Some households have some electrical appliances such as refrigerator, gas stove and air conditioner.

Ancestor worship is the most important form of worship by Tay people in Quang Lang commune. For families whose members work as shaman (*Mo, Then*), they also worship the ancestor of their profession - the patriarch of the worship occupation. Tay people also worship Bà Mụ (the midwife god) in the bedroom to protect children, worship the kitchen god, and other gods who have a protective role for families and villages. Like other ethnic groups, the Tay have a deeply religious culture preceding nature and society. Having the concept of "animism" and polytheism, the Tay have formed a rustic and primitive worldview from their origins that prevails up to now, and only gradually trusting in reality. Since Lang Son is the destination of many exodus ethnic groups (from the plains and from South China), Tay people experienced exchange of different cultures, blending folk beliefs and other religions, so as to form a regional exchange and cultural integration of Kinh- Tay - Nung. In particular, the Tay indigenous culture has become the center of tolerance and adjustment of the introduced cultural lines, including *Then* (Nguyen Thi Yen, 2006). *Then* plays a very important role because it is both a form of ancient folk beliefs, and a kind of folk art. *Then* ladies and their three wire pipe instrument has become the symbol of excellent culture of the Tay in Chi Lang. However, like many other ethnic minorities in Vietnam, Tay culture is facing the challenge of change and integration. The elements of material culture have greatly eroded, while some of the cultural and spiritual values of their ethnic identity are still maintained.

Lang Son has historically been known as a border province with a trading history with China going back many centuries. However, the trading activity took place mainly in the town of Lang Son and was interrupted during the decades of war. Since 1991, Vietnam has normalized relations with China. The border was reopened and commercial activities have been enhanced. Thus, the process of urbanization of Lang Son province has been strengthened, but mainly in the town of Lang Son, Dong Dang and some newly opened border crossings such as Tan Thanh (Van Lang district, Lang Son province). The town of Dong Mo in Chi Lang District has a primary role as the administrative center of the district. It is located on the Hanoi - Lang Son Highway, and the urbanization process took place slowly, following the general trend of Northern mountainous urban centers.

In 1960, due to the implementation of the migration policy, and government reclamation of mountainous area to consolidate the border, a number of Kinh people from the delta provinces moved to Dong Mo town and formed a separate village of migrants. In addition to the establishment of a railway factory in 1964 and a mechanical plant in Quang Lang Commune in 1980-1982, factories also attracted a number of workers from the delta area to move here and live in

towns, and in communities by the sides of highways. In 1995, Dong Mo town extended its administrative boundaries⁶ and merged with Đông Mỏ hamlet of Quang Lang commune which numbered 20 households. At the time of writing, the area of the town is 4.73 sq km with a population of over 7,000 people. The proportion of the urban population of the district is 16 percent. Dong Mo town is still on a small scale with a slow development, but with the current strengthening of market exchanges, the trade and services of the town is expanding, creating more jobs for suburban residents and dozens of small business and service households working in town looking to buy peri-urban land in communes such as Quang Lang in order to build houses. These are manifestations of the process of urbanization: expanding the town, though still on a relatively small scale.

Furthermore, the town of Chi Lang - about 20 km away from Quang Lang - was founded in 1983. Dong Banh Industrial Park is located in Chi Lang town, and is one of the two parks in Lang Son province (one among over 200 industrial parks of the country) which have been established since 2007 with an area of about 200 ha. The largest is the Dong Banh cement plant which employs several hundred workers. This industrial park is newly approved for expansion by the government, but it is mostly still in the construction phase, and has not yet entered into recruitment or production.

To sum up, we can classify periods and major policy trends that have impacted on the social life of Tay people in Quang Lang Tay after Doi Moi as follows:

In the early period of Doi Moi (before 1990): Policy Contract No.10 in agriculture changed the partnership model of economic planning to a cooperative model, allowing the freedom for development and livelihood decisionmaking to each household and individual. The open economy also created opportunities for people to diversify economic activity such as small trade, services, work-for-hire and seasonal migration for employment. Hence economic life began to change but only developed to the point of ensuring adequate food.

The period 1990 - 2000: The policy applied to Quang Lang in particular and to other ethnic minorities in the province of Lang Son mainly focused on the goal of ensuring essential infrastructure items such as construction of electric plants, roads, schools and healthcare stations. Specifically, a series of efforts to reduce poverty and develop the state infrastructure were implemented, including the national target program on poverty reduction named “135 Program”; the program of infrastructure construction in remote mountainous areas named “134 Program”; and the national target programs on health and education which have helped to provide basic public services in health and education, thus helping to reduce poverty.

The period after 2000: Policies promoted the urbanization and industrialization of Vietnam. The main urban expansion in Lang Son City⁷ and small towns in the region has prompted the development of Dong Mo town. In addition, the expansion of the national road 1A has had a strong and wide ranging impact on the lives of Tay people in Quang Lang. Recently, the new

⁶ There is no historical data or statistics of the district about the total area of land extension in this process

⁷ Lang Son town was upgraded to Lang Son city in 2002

rural program (2010 - 2015) ensured the continuous building, repair or upgrade of infrastructure: hardening-concretization of inter-village and inter-communal roads, consolidating canals, reconstruction of high-voltage and low-voltage electrical systems, and construction of more kindergartens and cultural community houses, which all contributed to changing the face of the community.

Overall, besides the renovation and rural development policies after 1986, we can see that the two clearest manifestations of the process of urbanization in the region was the construction of the national road 1A in 2000, and the development and expansion of the town of Dong Mo, Chi Lang district. This has had a major impact on the social life of the people here. The opening of the road, and land acquisition, has influenced and changed the livelihood of many families. The local people credit the national highway opening for the strengthening of socioeconomic and external cultural exchanges, and the social transformation process that took place more visibly. In a few years, the Hanoi - Lang Son highway would open, and take away arable land equivalent to the area lost in 2000. Many people are concerned that their lives and livelihood will be significantly impacted by the process.

4. Social Transformation of Tay people in Quang Lang

4.1 Livelihood Transformation

Change of capital resources and economic structure

Prior to taking part in the cooperative movement in the 1960s, almost all of the Tay families in Quang Lang had wet-rice land for cultivation, with each household having on average about two *mau*⁸ of paddy land. The better-off households often owned up to 10 *mau*. At the time of the survey in 1981, most of the natural capital, including forest and agricultural land of the Tay households were under the management of the cooperative⁹. After Doi Moi, the natural capital was allocated to individual households. Together with other policies such as Land Contract No. 10 in 1988 and the exemption of agricultural and irrigation fees in 1995, this made people feel happy, secure, and self-reliant in the production on their own paddy land. It was more effective than the previous situation where “everybody's business is nobody's business”.

Interview results show that in the early years of Doi Moi, the Tay in Quang Lang focused on investment in fertilizer and new hybrid varieties of rice, maize and potato to increase food yield in response to a situation of food shortage and hunger. Throughout the period of the 1990s, they mainly grew these and other fruits crops to meet the household's needs and for sale at the local market. As a result, they had enough food and no households experienced food shortages as they had previously done for seven months in the year. After 2000, as the national road were built, the Tay in Quang Lang started to learn to grow cash crops for sale. Besides crops of rice and maize

⁸ One *mau* (of North Vietnam) is equivalent to 3,600 m².

⁹ Each household was allowed to keep only 5 percent of the paddy land for its private cultivation (Tran Van Ha and Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2016: 33).

cultivated on 21.8 ha of paddy field, they also grew one crop of potato, watermelon, green pumpkin, and more recently chilli for sale to enterprises and private traders. Currently about 60 percent of local households grow cash crops, of which chilli predominates. With the average yield of 170 kg rice and 300 kg chilli combined per *sao*¹⁰ of paddy field, a household would earn annually 340 kg of paddy and VND five to 10 million [approximately USD 250-500] from selling chilli per *sao*.

Similarly, 65 ha forestland of the two villages was also better managed under the forestland allocation and reforestation programs of the Viet-Germany project¹¹ in the years 1997 and 1999. At that time, households that already had forestland continued to manage their own land and received contracts for reforestation from the project. Other households were encouraged to receive reforestation contracts. The key point of the management of new programs is to attach the responsibility and interests of each household to the land that is allocated or contracted to it for protection and cultivation. Owing to this, many forest areas that were cleared before Doi Moi (in order to have land for cultivating food crops in response to serious food shortages), are now covered by green vegetation which is only exploited when trees are mature enough for wood, or intercropped with fruit trees such as banana, litchi, and longan. However, not every household has forestland. At the time of contracting forestland, 80 percent of the households had forestland, but recently, due to population growth, only 40 percent of the interviewed households have this land. Moreover, the types of trees that have been provided by the project, have not yet produced an effective income up to the present time.

In addition to the two types of land mentioned above, the Tay in the two villages have some small areas of swidden land, totalling about nine ha. Forty-six percent of households own this type of land and use it for planting fruit trees such as litchi, longan, and custard apple which are then sold, for an annual income of VND 20 million VND [USD about 1000]. Local land for gardening purposes is limited and only 47 percent of the households have this type of land and most of these have an area of less than 360 sqm. Households often grow vegetables for everyday needs. Some households grow vegetables for sale at the local town, which can bring a household a daily income of VND 200 thousand [about USD 10].

While the management of natural capital improved after Doi Moi the cultivated land area of the people in Quang Lang has been reduced. This is partly due to the process of population growth and partly caused by the urbanization process. In the 1960s, Lang Dang village had only 39 households but now it has up to 122 households¹². In 2000, the National Road No. 1 was

¹⁰ One *sao* is equivalent to 360 m².

¹¹ Viet – Germany Project was carried out in Quang Lang since 1999. The project provided plant varieties, labor allowance for taking care of pine-tree forest. At that time, each household received 300-400 seedlings and the allowance amount of 20 million VND (about 900 USD), some households receive a maximum of 1000 seedlings.

¹² According to interview's results at Lang Dang village, in the 1990s there were only four households of the Tay in the village that migrated to the Central Highlands. This is evidence that population pressure here is not as high as in other Tay regions. However, due to natural population growth, land area per household become less. For example, in the household of Mr. Diep at Dang village; his grandfather owned two *mau* of paddy field.

extended, going through Quang Lang commune, at Khun Phang and Lang Dang villages, taking six ha of the cultivated land of about 30 households. In the coming years, the future construction of the Hanoi – Lang Son highway would take away at least six more ha of residential and agricultural lands from the two villages. About 20 percent of the interviewed households in Quang Lang have no paddy land for cultivation while the remainder have only a small area of paddy land on average, about 1,032 sqm (Khun Phang village) to 1,305 sqm (Lang Dang village) per household. This means that local people lack natural capital in their livelihood transformation and development.

Table 1: Classification of paddy land area according to villages

		Village				Total	
		Khun Phang		Lang Dang			
		Household Number	Percentage %	Household Number	Percentage %	Household Number	Percentage %
Classification of paddy land area	Under 360 m²	17	42.50	7	7.45	24	17.91
	361-720 m²	11	27.50	27	28.72	38	28.36
	721-1080 m²	6	15.00	22	23.40	28	20.90
	1081-1440 m²	2	5.00	14	14.89	16	11.94
	1441-1800 m²	2	5.00	10	10.64	12	8.96
	1801-3600 m²	2	5.00	14	14.89	16	11.94
Total		40	100	94	100	134	100

Source: Household survey questionnaire result in 2016

Similar to the process of urbanization in peri-urban areas of big cities, compensation for the appropriation of land for constructing roads has transferred a part of natural capital – cultivated land - of many households in Quang Lang into another form of capital – financial capital (Nguyen

In the 1960s this land area was divided equally among his father and two uncles, with each receiving six *sao*. In 2000, his father divided six *sao* among him and his two younger brothers, and each received two *sao*.

Van Suu 2009; Labbé 2015). In 2000, each village had 30-40 households which were compensated about VND 10 million per *sao*¹³ for losing a part of their agricultural land. On average, each household was compensated about VND 20 million (equivalent to USD 900). This was a big amount of financial capital at that time, but similarly to other citizens who were compensated during the process of road construction and urbanization elsewhere, the Tay in Quang Lang mainly used the compensation money to build houses, purchase domestic items or as spending on everyday needs (Levien 2012; Nguyen Van Suu 2014; Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2016).

Also, since the road was constructed in 2000, about 30 to 40 households of the two villages have converted the cultivated land that was left over adjacent to the road to residential land¹⁴. There were 23 households in Khun Phang village and nine households in Lang Dang village that built houses, and opened stores and service outlets on this land. Many sold a part of the land adjacent to the road for capital in order to shift to doing trading, providing services, or to build a house. At present, a plot of about 200 sqm of land that abuts the road costs about VND 600 million [proximately USD 30,000]; and at a good location, the cost could reach up to VND one billion. According to the villagers, urbanization has considerable influence on the households that have the converted land because the shift from natural capital to financial capital enables them to change their jobs and participate in a more urbanized lifestyle.

Although land is increasingly becoming an important financial capital, the Tay in Quang Lang are also faced with the challenge that their natural capital is becoming increasingly scarce. In addition to the loss of agricultural land due to road construction, some considerable amount of cultivated land has been lost or reduced by other factors: such as natural erosion, sale of land and house construction. Up until the time of our study, there were about 10 households of Lang Dang village which lost a portion or all of their paddy field adjacent to the banks of Thuong River due to erosion.

Natural resources from the forest such as wild animals and plants – fish, shrimp in streams, beast, birds, and herbs that in the past played a very important role in the life of the whole community of this ethnic group now are becoming exhausted. Most of people no longer see their natural food produce as the main staple for their meal anymore, and instead, buy food at local markets. Many local people say that ‘resources from the forest are no longer reliable for the life of the whole community, although occasionally it might sustain someone’.

Besides crop cultivation, the Tay in Quang Lang also developed animal husbandry as well, with a range of domestic animals such as buffalo, cow, goat, pig, chicken, duck, and aquatic products in lakes and ponds. However, in the last 10 years, there have been some changes in the methods and the purpose of husbandry among local Tay households. In the past, raising buffalo

¹³ Because it happened long time ago, they can't remember the exact amount of compensation.

¹⁴ Under the local policy on conversion of land use purpose, each household was permitted to convert 200 m² cultivated land into residential one after paying tax to the government. In practice, people convert all of their cultivation land into residential land and local government often turns a blind to this.

and cows (especially buffalo) played a very important role in the economic life of the Tay household. Households which had limited capital and lacked labor for tending fields, would have several animals to provide power, mainly for ploughing. Some better-off households could raise tens of heads of livestock in case there was a need for spending on a big event such as building a new house, a wedding or a funeral. Since the policy of land and forest allocation to individual households was promulgated in 1995, the animal range areas of the local people have been reduced. Moreover, because machines are widely used in agricultural production, animal power is no longer as important as before, therefore today there are only 10 households of the two villages raising about 110 heads of buffalo, and 40 heads of goats mainly for sale and for ploughing small plots of paddy field which are unsuitable for machines. Although pig raising has not developed well in recent years due to disease, it is maintained among 80 percent of the households with 230 head in total. Almost all of the households keep chickens and ducks, with about 20 chickens and ducks per household which are used or sold when needed. Since the 2000s, husbandry has brought some additional income to local households but it has not developed on a large scale towards industrial production because of the limited range area, a lack of financial capital, inadequate techniques, and concern over diseases.

Like many other ethnic minorities in Vietnam, the Tay in Quang Lang started to diversify their household livelihoods with small trading, services or hired labor since Doi Moi. Owing to the closeness to Dong Mo train station, some villagers of Khun Phang and Lang Dang villages travelled by train to the Sino – Vietnamese border in the 1990s to transport illegal goods, work as porters or broker or “boss” of porters, or to buy goods elsewhere and then sell in Quang Lang for a profit. Each village had several households buying agricultural products within the village to sell at the big markets of the district. Some worked as hired laborers in Lang Son or neighboring provinces. However, since 2000, with the construction of National Road No. 1, the number of people in Quang Lang who worked in non-agricultural jobs has increased. Today, according to our survey in 2016, the proportion of the people who work purely as farmers is only 60 percent, with 34 percent working in non-agricultural sectors such as trading, services, hired labor, and government officials. The construction of roads does not only help local people access cities and towns to find jobs, but also enables economic activities for towns and communities situated close to it. After completion of the road, the Dong Banh industrial zone was built, and several enterprises, such as brick and construction materials factories appeared in the region, creating numerous jobs for laborers. Because construction projects often have a high demand for building-related workers, common jobs of the Tay in Quang Lang nowadays include porters, mansion coolies, building workers, and plumbers. Up to 40 percent of local households have someone who works all year round as a worker or laborer. These are both men and women; the number of male laborers is much higher than of female workers. Among those, about 22 percent are young people who work in factories in their local areas and other surrounding provinces like Bac Ninh, Bac Giang, Lang Son and Hanoi.

Table 2: Locations of factories and enterprises where young people in Quang Lang are working

Location	Percentage (%)
In their commune and district	20.00
In their province	42.50
In other provinces	37.50
Total	100.00

Source: Household survey questionnaire result in 2016

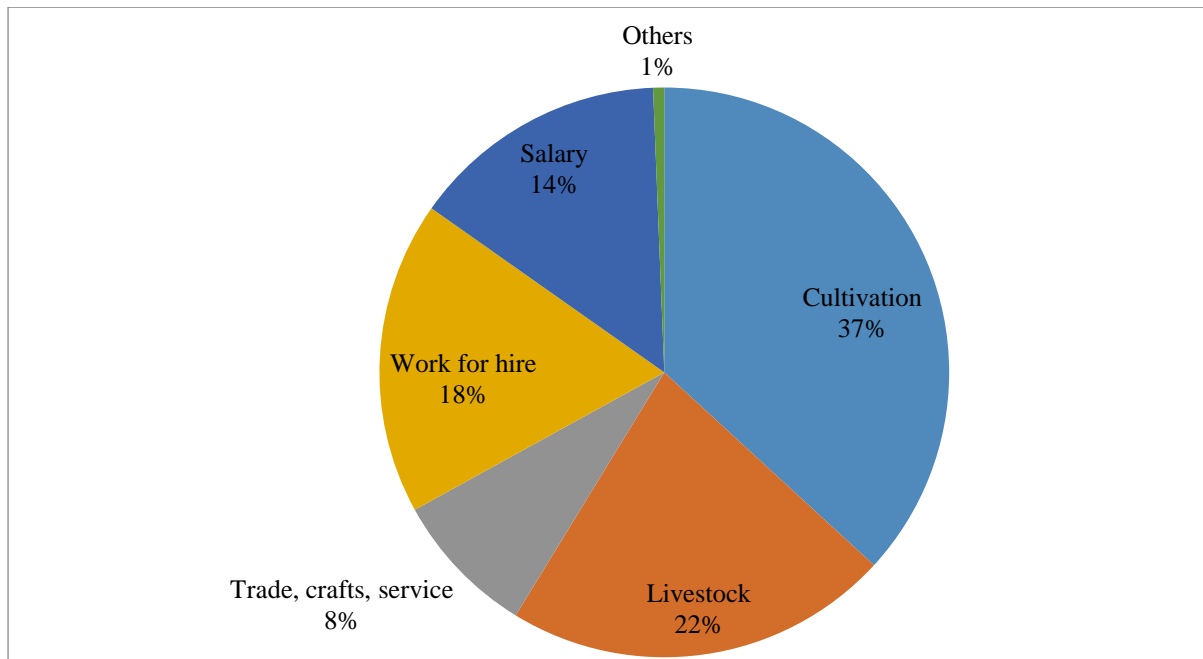
In reality, there are limited numbers of people in the commune working at Dong Banh industrial zone because this zone has not yet been completed, and local enterprises do not always keep their commitment to recruit local people because they want to give priority to their own demands (Nguyen Van Suu 2014: 162, Labbé 2015). Those who are middle-aged, especially men, tend to work for enterprises and projects within the district. Those who are considered purely as farmers in the village, sometimes take part in short-term, seasonal jobs within the local region, such as mansion coolies, hired laborers of processing shops or seasonal hired laborers in agriculture. Local people remark that thanks to the urbanization process in the local region, many of those jobs become available so they do not need to travel to big cities or across the border to find jobs that are often prone to greater potential risks¹⁵.

It can be said that before 2000 more than 90 percent of the households were purely farmers, and since then the urbanization process has clearly changed the economic structure of the local people. Survey results show that the proportion of pure farm households of Lang Dang village make up 80 percent of households and only 40 percent of the total of Khun Phang. Villagers of Khun Phang village tend to abandon agriculture (either having lost paddy land due to road construction or through lending it to others) to take part in other economic activities such as trading, services and hired labor. Our survey results on income also indicate the diversity of income sources of the local households.

¹⁵ In provinces of Northern Mountainous Region bordered to China, in recent years, there are thousands of ethnic minority people cross the border to find hired job, mainly in agriculture. Because they often cross the border illegally, these laborers have to work in insecure condition, some being exploited, tricked by human traffickers, and imprisoned or expelled if found by Chinese police (Tran Quy Long 2015: 139).

Graph 1: Income sources of the household in 2015

Unit: Percentage (%)



Source: Household survey questionnaire result in 2016

Similar to many upland dwellers in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, the Tay in Quang Lang have participated widely in the market and are influenced by market factors (Le Trong Cuc and Rambo 2011; Li 1999; Sikor and Pham 2005). Before Doi Moi, people mainly used social and human capital to directly interact with natural resources such as forest, rivers and streams, and the paddy field in order to generate products for everyday life. In the early stages of Doi Moi, people were still self-supporting in much of their foodstuff, rarely trading at the market due to shortage of financial capital. Today, they often sell their crop and husbandry products in the market and work as hired labor, to earn money for indispensable needs such as healthcare, education, and everyday social interactions. Most of the households, on a daily basis, purchase food, necessary personal and household items, and production inputs such as seed varieties, fertilizers, and pesticides at local markets and from shops in the village and the local town. Some who no longer engage in agriculture even have to buy food at the market.

Increasing interaction with markets, on one hand, help the people to partly improve their living standards, but on the other hand, forces them to be subject to market forces. In the beginning, when the Tay in Quang Lang first took part in producing commodities, they grew accustomed to and accepted the reality of price fluctuations. Having good crops but lower prices, forced them to shift crops from potato to watermelon, then to green pumpkin and chilli. Even chilli that is grown to sell to private traders for export to China, is priced differently year after year. At the start of the season the crop price is VND 50 thousand per kg, and at the end, it is

only VND 10 thousand per kg. Meanwhile, due to the influence of the market, the cost of productive inputs is increasing. According to the calculation of the local people, the cost for paddy field cultivation such as for ploughing, land processing, fertilizer, pesticide, crop varieties, and labor, is almost equivalent to the cost of rice output. In the case of cash crops, the cost of crop varieties is among the highest and local people often have to consider costs while selecting. For example, the cost of one kg potato seedling is VND nine thousand, while the price of its product is VND four thousand per kg. The shift of crops among the Tay in Quang Lang is usually a rapid spontaneous response rather than a strategic response. Whenever the price of a crop is low, or more susceptible to disease, they shift to a new crop. Local programs of agricultural promotion do not help the local people effectively; they only help effectively in production but not in providing information on marketing. Local people have to manage by themselves within their capabilities.

Before Reform, natural capital (land) and human resources were two important factors that determined success and differences in income levels of household economies in upland of Vietnam (Sikor and Pham 2005: 408). However, today for the Tay in Quang Lang, knowledge of techniques, market information and social relations play a very important role. In the production of cash crops, local people have to learn about new high-value crops, search for crop varieties, study how to take care of the crops, and undertake the marketing of outputs. For example, they have to do all that while growing new fruit trees such grape fruit, persimmon, and litchi. Knowing how to use and trade on the internet is very important for those who engage in trading and services, and search for available local goods that are in high demand in a wider market. For those who are seeking a job, social relations play a decisive role in having someone help with applying for jobs or introducing contacts. Therefore, today, social capital (and information obtained via social capital) as well as financial capital become a decisive factor in dividing groups in a community.

Almost thirty years after Doi Moi, the social capital and human capital of the local people have changed. Villagers have invested in education to improve their human capital and expand their social relationship to improve themselves. Survey results indicate that 19 percent of household members are students, 31 percent completed secondary school, 30 percent finished high school and 12 percent graduated from colleges and universities. Although education is a necessary condition for young people to improve their knowledge, skills and applying for jobs, in reality, social relations play a more important role in social capital in Vietnam today (Luong 2003). So far, only a small number of Tay people in Quang Lang have the capacity to utilize social relations to do their business while others have not built or expanded such social ties and are being left behind.

Adaptation strategies

Changes in sources of capital forces the local people to set out livelihood strategies that are different from those strategies used before Renovation. However, there is a division in the ways local people respond to the context of urbanization. Research results indicate that it can be roughly divided into three groups: outstanding (a minority), gradually adaptive, or lagging behind (marginalized) ones.

Survey statistics show that only 31 percent of the households had some savings in 2015 and the rest had no savings. Among those who had savings, the saved amounts vary. Only two percent of the total households saved the amount of more than VND 70 million VND [over USD 3000] per year, 27 percent saved an amount varying from VND 40 to 60 million VND [around USD 2000] per year, and two percent saved about VND 20 million per year. While survey result on savings can only be seen as a reference because interviewees might hesitate to disclose their real income, statistics of local authorities in 2015 show that the rich households of the two villages account for five percent, the better-off is at 12 percent, average households are at 69 percent, and the poor at 14 percent. It is possible to say that about 17 percent of the rich households are quickly adaptive ones, around 69 percent are gradually adaptive, and more than 14 percent are lagging behind and unable to catch up with development.

The quickly adaptive and higher living standard group often have available existing sources of capital such as financial and/or natural ones more than others in the village, and have good strategies for development of their household. They know how to make effective use of financial capital and available land to open shops, motels, and contract building work after 2000. Some of them are inter-ethnic married couples. A Tay wife and Kinh husband are considered to have some advantages in terms of ethnic culture because the Kinh are usually more active and have broader social relations including obtaining information and in taking full advantage of social relations for economic development. Only since 1980 has the difference of ethnic advantage mentioned above decreased.

Mrs. Chien, 50 years old, is a villager of Khun Phang village, and her husband is a Kinh who came from the lowland. Since the 1990s, she and her husband have combined farming with working as hired labor on the border. At present, agricultural activities of her household are various: raising pigs, alcohol distilling, and growing fruits, rice, fruit trees, and timber. In 2000, her household built a new house close to the national road after it was completed. Since then, her husband has worked as a motorbike taxi driver at Dong Mo roundabout. While working, her husband realized the motel had need of long distance lorry drivers, so they decided to repair and transform their three-storied house into an eight-storied motel. The case of Mrs Chien shows an image of action and adaption to change.

Mr. Hien and his wife asked his parents for a paddy land plot close to the National Road No. 1A and opened a small shop to sell goods of Lang Son's strengths: pet birds. Owing to broad social relations and being familiar with the internet to access the market, Mr. Hien sold a lot of pet birds, and via these relations, he also sold small amounts of curcuma starch at first in order to learn about market demand. After 3 years of running this small shop, the married couple earned enough for their everyday life and a two-year old daughter, and they also saved money to upgrade the shop to a large two-compartment store.

The gradual or slowly adaptive groups often have an average level of natural sources of capital (such as land or forest) and basically tend to find all the ways to develop agriculture, as their belief is that agriculture can bring about stability in life. Many households do not have any strategies to develop livelihoods connected with trading and services, but keep on farming or working simple jobs such as motorbike taxi drivers, or porters even if they have land close to the road which can be used for house construction or selling to people from outside. Many households persist on the paddy field, finding ways to shift their crops (in some cases, changing their crop types four to five times within 10 years) to maintain a stable income support because they are afraid that if they sell all their cultivated land, their children would have “no way to come back in the case of unemployment, business failure, or loss of labor”. At the same time, they still practice animal husbandry to create spare assets for the big events of the household.

The house compound of Mr. Do is very close to the national road, but before 2000 it was just a paddy field. After completion of the road, Mr. Do moved his house in 2004 from hill land to the paddy field. By this time, he had also switched to work as a motorbike taxi driver, while his wife - Mrs. Sec continued on with farming work. The motorbike taxi job helped them have enough money to support their two sons to finish college. However, the commercial activity of this household is moderate; the household economy is maintained at a “safe level” with income partly from the non-agricultural job – motorbike taxi work and partly from farming. Now that their children are mature and married, Mr. Do only knows how to work as a motorbike taxi driver to earn his living, and Mrs. Sec is still dependent on three sào of paddy field which provides enough yield for the two of them year-round. Clearly, although having some advantage of land located close to the road, they struggle with finding alternative livelihood strategies, and continue to rely on simple labor.

Mr. Manh struggles to find ways to borrow money to develop new crops on the paddy field and forest of his household. Over the last 10 years, he has planted by himself five sào of litchi

located on uphill land which is difficult to access. Planting litchi is hard work that requires experience, self-management techniques, methods of taking care of the crop and marketing, without support from agricultural promotion projects. Generally it does not bring high economic efficiency. For the last three years, he has grown Dien grape fruit, Taiwanese apple, learning from models of a neighboring commune. These fruit trees have not yet become mature but he is faced with the risk of shifting to new crops as highway construction is supposed to be close to his house and might encroach on all of his three sào of grape fruit and apple garden.

Many households of the “average” group are willing to invest in their children for a stable state-sector job. They would spend a large sum of money on lobbying for a government job, thinking that officials would lead to becoming a rich household who work as officials. These households are situated on the side of big road as a model to learn from and follow for a stable life. For most of the villagers, living within brick walls high over one’s head is a beautiful image and somehow is alien but still attractive to them. They are willing to suffer and wait for one day when their children get a permanent government job. In numerous cases, although their children have been working for several years, they still persist in saving for the college education of their children in order to apply for a government job. They also believe that, only someone who has power in the political system, or who earns a lot of money from business can change the face of the village and make it more developed. Staying attached to farming only makes the village “weak and stagnant” and for them, farming is seen as a “supportive or risk-precaution activity” in a modern context.

After completion of the National Road No. 1A, a part of cultivated land of Mrs. Lien was taken up by road construction, she sold another portion right away (to an official of the district) and all the money gained from selling land and compensation was used to upgrade her family house. After that, in 2015, she sold a plot of paddy field close to the road for a price of VND 40 million for her daughter to apply for a job in a public kindergarten. As land has been sold many times, the paddy land area of her family now is considerably reduced. The land plots left are small in size, near a mountain and impoverished. In general, the way of life of Mrs. Lien’s family is not influenced by the urbanization process, as everyday living habits are the same as before. There is not much natural source of capital nor a specific strategy for financial capital, Mrs. Lien still suffers from instability in life as before, in the context of urbanization.

There are many households that lag behind in the process of urbanization today. Basically, they do not have much natural source of capital, and educational and social capitals are limited. Meanwhile they do not receive active and suitable support from policies of promoting agricultural economic development at the local level. Households that are lagging behind have difficulty

in their livelihood, and many upper households who are “stalled” tend to fall into poverty if they lose their existing limited source of capital or encounter life shocks such as illness or adverse policies.

Mrs. Nang and her husband (from Bac Giang, who came to work as a carpenter at Lang Dang village) used to have a stable life maintained by a carpentry shop business. However, they did not have cultivated land because the husband is not from the village. She was not given any cultivated land but only a small plot of residential land by her parents who had eight children. They decided to leave their house in Lang Dang to go to Bac Giang to continue carpentry work, and asked their paternal parents for several sao of cultivated land. Unfortunately, three years ago, her husband had a traffic accident and died. She and her daughter came back to Lang Dang village without land and money capital. She works as hired labor for a processing shop of bamboo shoot and chilli at Dong Mo town with a daily payment of VND 100 thousand [about USD 5]. The work only lasts four to six months each year depending on the bamboo shoot season. Sometimes, villagers need labor, and she works for them to earn money. She also borrows the paddy field of an acquaintance to grow rice for food. She and her daughter are often sick and in a needy situation.

In discussions with the outstandingly adaptive group, migrants who are visiting their home, remark that in the context of urbanization and development today, sticking to the farming practices of local Tay, especially those of Lang Dang village, makes them come to “a standstill”, or are unable to develop. Compared to the past, people’s lives have improved but they still face difficulties. We argue that these remarks do not objectively view the national and local context. In reality, the Tay in Quang Lang have transformed following the general tendency of villages in deltas and peri-urban areas of Vietnam after Reform, that includes diversity of economic activities based on a combination of agriculture and non-agricultural endeavors. Agriculture is considered a base for stabilizing household economy, but is supported by trading, services and work from the industrial sector (DiGregorio 2011). Young people tend to seek non-agricultural jobs, while the middle-aged and older people mainly work in agriculture (combined with seasonal and short-term hired labor in local areas) because working in agriculture brings them a stable income, and fits with their age and education. Studies of urbanization in peri-urban areas pointed out that when losing cultivated land and being forced to change livelihood, people over 40 years become easily unemployed because they are unable to find suitable work (Labbé 2015, Nguyen Van Suu 2014). In many locations of urbanization, people still find the way to return to agriculture (Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2015; Tran Thi Hong Yen 2013; Luu Duc Khai & Ha Huy Ngoc 2008). In the context of Vietnam society today, agriculture still provides many farmers with a source of sustainable livelihood because industry and other sectors are not strong enough to generate more stable jobs (Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2016: 117).

4.2. Social changes

Population changes

After the Reform, the pressure of population growth and production land shortages were important reasons for the massive population movement of the Tay from Cao Bang and Lang Son to the Central Highlands provinces. In the late 1990s, there were 61,832 Tay (4.19% of the Tay in Vietnam) living in the Central Highlands (Nguyen Ba Thuy 1999: 54). However, in Quang Lang, the number of Tay households migrating to Tay Nguyen was not high during that time, and there were only about 3.4 households in each village. Until 2000, the population growth of the two villages Khun Phang and Lang Dang was due primarily to natural birth and marriages of men and women from external villages. There were a few splits and mergers among villages and administrative units such as the split of Khuon Ang village from Lang Dang in 1970 and the merger of Đông Mỏ hamlet into Đông Mỏ town in 1995. After the new road opened in 2000, many households moved from their villages to the road front. In addition, some public servants and trading households from the town of Dong Mo and other places came to buy land and lived along both sides of the road in the two villages. Since then, nearly 10 families have moved to live in the area of Lang Dang village and nearly 20 households have moved to live in Khun Phang village. From ancient times, the villages of Tay people always welcomed new residents to live together. However, previously there were just a few households coming to apply for residency and to exploit upland fields (La Cong Y 2010: 214). The phenomenon of non-agricultural households (such as public servants and traders) that increasingly purchased land and resided in the village is one of the manifestations of the urbanization process and raised problems of social division and the coherence of the village community.

Families and lineages

The traditional family model of the Tay is of small patriarchal families, both as a social cell and as an economic unit. The head of household is usually the husband who controls all the family work and relations. The nature of patriarchy enhances the status of men. The idea of "gender bias" of the Tay does not differ from that of the Kinh (Viet) people. However, the traditional relation of the Tay is a loving relationship and of mutual assistance, and therefore there should be no excessive inequality between men and women or between the generations of grandparents, parents and children (La Cong Y 2010). The survey questionnaires in 1981 and 2016 showed Tay men in Quang Lang were involved in the care of children at a significant level.

Table 3 : Labour division in child care

Taking care of children on education			Taking care of children's physical needs (feeding, bathing...)	
	1981	2016	1981	2016
	Percentage %	Percentage %	Percentage %	Percentage %
Husband	30.43	7.35	40.74	38.35
Wife	47.1	43.38	54.07	23.31
Grandparent	17.39	2.94	2.96	3.01
Older children	5.07	.	2.22	.
Both husband & wife	.	46.32	.	35.34
Total	100	100	100	100

(Notice: there is no information regarding child care of "Older children" in 2016 and of "Both husband and wife" in 1981). Source: Household survey questionnaire result in 1981 and 2016.

Currently, the patriarchal family is still the typical form of family relationship of the Tay. The patriarchy of the head of the family, oldest son and head of the clan is still maintained. However, in the context of the market economy, the Tay man no longer retains his position as the sole decisionmaker in the family, but will typically have discussions with his wife and all other family members. In 1981, the proportion of husbands in charge of spending decisions in the family in Quang Lang was 22.70 percent, but now that ratio has been greatly reduced. The general trend is for both husband and wife and the whole family to have discussions and make decisions together.

Table 4: Spending decision in household

	Spending decision on big expenditure (buying house, land, motorbike...)		Spending decision on daily expenditure (shopping, education...)	
	1981 %	2016 %	1981 %	2016 %
Husband	22.70	10.71	22.70	4.29
Wife	30.50	6.43	30.50	63.57
Husband and wife	11.35	44.29	11.35	2.14
Parents	12.06	2.86	12.06	0.00
Older children	2.13	2.14	2.13	2.86
The whole family	21.28	33.57	21.28	27.14
Total	140	100	140	100

Source: Household survey questionnaire result in 1981 and 2016.

Structurally, among the Tay in Quang Lang, the extended family type is shrinking, like many other ethnic groups in Vietnam today, while the number of nuclear families is increasing. The survey results showed that 50 percent of Tay families in Quang Lang are nuclear families with two generations. The percentage of three-generation families fell to 36.43 percent. The market economy and changes in cultural values give people more independence materially and spiritually, hence the increasing trend of household split in the Tay families. Due to the impact of family planning policies as well as a change in the perception of the people, the family structure of the Tay is changing in size from large-scale to small-scale. In 1981, the average number of people in a Tay household in Quang Lang was 6.43, but now 82.14 percent of the households have five or fewer inhabitants. Households with four members account for the largest percentage (38.57%). This has been the general trend of families in Vietnam during the period of industrialization and modernization (Le Ngoc Van, 2011).

Table 5 : Number of people in a household in 2016

Number of people in the household	Frequency	Percent (%)
2	7	5,00
3	26	18,57
4	54	38,57
5	28	20,00
6	13	9,29
7	8	5,71
8	3	2,14
9	1	0,71
Total	140	100,00

Source: Household survey questionnaire result in 2016.

Due to the influence of Confucianism in the Tay traditional family, the elderly are greatly respected. They are considered spiritual pillars, as people with experience of correct behavior and are always consulted in the important work of families and clans. Descendants in the household or in the village usually pay them respect, are polite and also care for the elderly. However, today, the relationship between grandparents and children has changed to some degree. The younger generation tends to not respect the elderly as before, saying that old people today do not necessarily have more knowledge than the young. Though the phenomenon of abandoned elderly or ingratitude towards them is uncommon, the tradition of "respect the old, love the

young"¹⁶ (*kính già yêu trẻ*) of the Tay people is influenced to some degree by the market economy and the urbanization process. The majority of older people who were interviewed in Quang Lang complained that the young people are no longer polite, nor show as much respect for the elderly as before, and no longer listen to older people.

Similarly, the husband and wife relationship in the Tay family has changed to some extent. Due to the recently increasing freedom of marriage, most Tay couples are now able to behave more freely than in the traditional framework. With the application of science and technology in production and diversification of jobs, women in the family have the opportunity to participate equally in all stages of production and other economic activities. They have a voice and a higher role in decisionmaking. In some families, women are in charge of the household economy and therefore have a decisive role in the family. However, the modern lifestyle is influencing family relationships. Some young people find work outside, and have the freedom to love and marry without the consideration of the family, and this has led to broken marriages. Locally, the appearance of pubs, karaoke bars and motels has enabled those with a modern lifestyle to engage in drinking, fun, and adultery. The result is that in recent years in Quang Lang, the commune has around one or two cases of separation or divorce every two or three years.

The biggest concern in the Tay family now is the relationship between parents and children. Basically, Tay people still keep the values of loving children, and concern for children's education. Since the diversification of livelihood activities, especially after 2000, the number of parents seeking employment and the amount of external trading have increased, leading to the time for mentoring and teaching children to be reduced. Children and teenagers have more freedom now to experiment in many undesirable things outside the home, causing distress to parents. Although drug addiction in Quang Lang has not become a social problem (each village had one or two addicts) many parents are concerned that today's youth has become lazier and more reluctant to find work. They are stuck to their phones and computer games, and consequently this affects their learning. The general trend now is that parents respect their children's choice in marriage. In 1981, 19.75 percent in Quang Lang Tay respondents said that parents should decide the marriage of their children, but ask the opinion of the children; 72.84 percent said that their children could choose their marriage partner, but should consult their parents. By 2016, this ratio was 1.43 percent and 95 percent, respectively. This model also reflects

¹⁶ Like many other ethnic groups in Vietnam, traditionally Tay people highly respect the old people and love the children. Young people often listen to the old people's advices. People also give the most priorities to the children and rarely scold and curse them.

popular marriage decisions in Vietnam today (Le Ngoc Van 2011: 519). It can be said that the Tay family in Quang Lang has been modified following the general trend of families in Vietnam during the industrialization, modernization and urbanization process.

Besides family, the Tay also emphasize kinship relationships. They perceive that people with the same bloodline who are the descendants of the same ancestor, are their relatives. Some big lineages with many members can be divided into lineage branches. In Lang Dang village, the Vi family has the founding role of the village and so far accounts for more than 90 percent of the village population. In addition, there are five other families living in the village who came later but, in the main, the rest of the population are people applying for adoption into the family, lineage and in-law cases where the husbands live in the house of his wife. In the village of Khun Phang, only the Lo and Vi family were the founders in the beginning, but due to its location near Dong Mo town and station, so far there have been more than 15 lineages relocating and settling there.

In addition to ancestor worship in the family, the Tay also attach great importance to their worship at the house of the head of the lineage. They perceive it as "original" and the worship of ancestors is the tie binding their members. Each year, the head of the lineage hosts the meeting for the anniversary of their ancestors' death. The altar at the house of the head of the lineage is larger, and better decorated than the family altar. Recently, due to the improvement in the economic life and cultural influences from the Kinh¹⁷ people, the Tay people in Quang Lang have tended to build lineage worship houses to worship their ancestors. Typically, the Lo lineage in Khun Phang village builds their lineage worship house, not only as the place of worship but as a public place for the whole lineage. Throughout the survey, the other families also wanted to build their lineage worship house. The construction of the lineage worship house does not only value the spirit of family relationships, but was also an expression both of real power and the economic condition of the family to the community.

In traditional agricultural society, the family played an important role in supporting workers during the harvest, and in helping one another in seed production in manufacturing. This is to help facilitate timely support, and link the feelings of the families in the lineage together. From 1960 to 1981, during the collectivization of agriculture, cooperatives in the villages of the Tay played an important role in the organization of production and distribution, as well as in providing social welfare to individuals and households. This was similar to what was observed with the Viet (Kinh). But the roles of family and kinship became more gradually blurred. However, after the policy Contract No.10 in 1988 and the 1993 Land Law, households returned to be-

¹⁷ Among the Kinh (Viet) in Northern Delta area, after the Reforms, there was a movement of restoring and building clan workshop house (Luong 1993, Kleinen 1999, Malarney 1999).

coming autonomous units in production and trading. In the context of aid and support requirements and cooperation in resources for development, lineage relationships were gradually restored, providing renewed support for the family members.

After Doi Moi, and especially after the increased diversification in livelihood activities in 2000, the Tay in Quang Lang did not exchange much or help in terms of labor in agricultural production. Households with less manpower hired labor for the harvest if they could afford the cost. However, the lineage still plays an important helping role in terms of capital, assistance in job searches, and during seasonal migration. Of the 140 households surveyed, 44 households took up a bank loan, 10 households had borrowed money from cousins or relatives in 2015 to obtain production capital and to settle the necessary family work. In the village, there are several groups of builders and small business groups including siblings, cousins and relatives that work together. Khun Phang village has five “*xe ôm*” (motorbike taxi drivers), in which four are brothers from the Lo family. *"When you get out to look for a job or a better job, we often invite cousins and relatives to go together. Not only does this create jobs for each other, but also for us to protect each other,"* said Mr. Vi Van D., 34 years old.

In particular, young people working in Hanoi, Bac Ninh, and Thai Nguyen usually come back and ask their relatives to work and live together in the same industrial area. They believe that living with people from the same family is more comfortable, doesn't require familiarization to a new way of life with new people, and when troubled or in sickness the family could care for each other.

More importantly, family has always played an important role in supporting the members in terms of the work force, matters concerning marriages, funerals and life-cycle rituals. Before 2000, when life was difficult, families often had to worry about food preparation long before the wedding. At weddings and funerals, cousins often lent wine, rice, and pork and the family were indebted to them for several years before they were repaid. Today, people have more income from crop production for market and non-agricultural jobs, and have access to services and goods available for weddings, and funerals, such as tent rental, dishes, coffins, and food from food stores. Some well-off families can hire caterers and reserve the wedding reception in the town. However, families still play an important role in this ritual, at least in the ceremonial steps. Families with average income still need the physical support of relatives but now when there are weddings or funerals, people often give homeowners cash loans for a short term, usually a few months. Members of the family also play an important role in support for feast preparations and in helping to organize rituals.

Table 6: Sources of support in the wedding of Mr. Vi Van Ph.'s daughter, 2014

No	List of supporters	Relationship with household head	Amount of cash and items donated	Form of support
1	Vi Thi Qu.	Sister of household head	1 million VND	Loan
2	Vi Thi Ph.	Sister of household head's father (aunty)	2 pigs (2.5 million VND)	Loan
3	Vi Thi D.	Cousin (daughter of an uncle)	4 million VND	Loan
4	Nguyen Thi T.	Sister in law	1.2 million VND and 50kg of rice	Loan
5	Vi Van B.	Son of a brother	5 million VND	Loan
6	Vi Thi H.	Mother of household head	1 million VND	Give-away
7	Vi Thi M.	Cousin (daughter of an aunty of the head of household)	30 liter of wine	Loan

Source: Fieldwork in 2016.

Like other ethnic groups in Vietnam after the Doi Moi period, the Tay tends to build social capital through the revival and strengthening of worship and life cycle rituals, not only among the people in their lineage internally, but also with the network of relatives, and of spouses. The members in the lineage tend to link together more to help and to share in everyday life together. However, with the trend of restoration and consolidation, some internal conflicts within the family have arisen. At Quang Lang as with the Tay elsewhere, after the Contract No. 10 in 1988, some conflicts and land disputes have occurred between some families on land left by the father (Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2013). For a long time between 1990 and 2000 no disputes occurred. However, since 2000 when the new road opened, land became more valuable, and some disputes and land lawsuits arose among some families. At the present time there are 38 records on land disputes in the whole commune, including a case in Khun Phang village among six brothers regarding unfair land tenure, where some received valuable land space, while others received low-value land. In the context of land becoming more rare and valuable, the increasing trend of disputes is unavoidable. The intensification of both cohesion and moral conflicts arising from economic benefits is a general trend in the urbanized villages of Vietnam today (Tran Thi Hong Yen 2013).

Community relationship

The Tay village is a social community with its own residential area, and separate streams and land. Formerly, hamlets were sparsely populated places, with only a few rooftops, but over time, due to the growing population each Tay hamlet today has hundreds of roofs. People in the hamlet have both kinship and neighbor relationships. In general, the Tay greatly respect the village and neighbor relationship. They live quite cordially in solidarity and give aid to each

other, and compromise to avoid quarrels or disputes. The Tay in Quang Lang say that up to now the relationships in their village community have retained cohesiveness, and solidarity, with mutual assistance in life and daily activities, especially if there are important events such as funerals and weddings. Before the period of cooperatives and during the busy season, people would often help in the harvest in exchange for reciprocal assistance. However, since Doi Moi, as in other areas of the Tay, the Tay in Quang Lang no longer exchange reciprocal assistance in production. Instead the phenomenon of labor hiring has appeared. In everyday life, however, the villagers still chat and help each other in getting loans, or finding a job. When a family has a wedding in the village, they often invite representatives of all the rural families to attend. When there is a funeral in the village, all the families come to pay condolences, donate and give assistance.

Since the old days, village heads have had an important role in the management and regulation of social relations in the village. In the period of cooperatives, this was replaced by the managing boards of cooperatives, political and social organizations. After the Reform, as with other rural areas of the country, the post of chief official in the Tay village was restored, making the relationship between people and the government much closer. Besides the village management board, including the village head and deputy village head, there is also the presence of the Association for Funeral Business (*Hội Hiếu*) in Quang Lang. This society is a voluntary organization of all families in the village, with its main function being to take care of the funerals of people in the society. In the two villages of Khun Phang and Lang Dang, all the Tay people in the village are involved in this society. Household heads take turns to be the chief of the society. When someone passes away in the village, the society chief will head directly to the family of the deceased to discuss the work needed. Each member of the Society contributes an amount, which could be five kg of rice and VND 30 thousand, for the family with the deceased. The members of the society are responsible for the cooking chores, digging of the grave, erection of tents and doing all other work to aid homeowners. After the funeral, all members of the society will have dinner with the family of the deceased. So far, due to the lack of development of external social relationships, and social networks with their lineage, the Association for Funeral Business, which is the largest nonprofit organization in the village, plays a very important role in the social capital of the Tay family.

The new households buying land to reside in two villages are generally wealthier and often provide contributions that the village asks for. They also establish neighborly relations with the surrounding households, and participate in village weddings and funerals that are nearby. Due to a new and different lifestyle, the newcomers do not play any role in the daily life of the community.

Social Differentiation

One of the most pronounced effects in the social life of the Tay in Quang Lang is the fact that social divisions grew deeper after 2000 when the road was opened and the urbanization process in the region was intensified. In the traditional agricultural society of the Tay, there were social differences reflected in land ownership and property. However, due to low crop

yields, uncertainties caused by natural disasters and epidemics, even those families considered wealthy did not always have enough to eat. In the period of the cooperatives, under a regime of manpower, families with more labor received more grain than other families. After the Reform, those who knew how to do business and had diversified economic activities became wealthier households sooner. However, this was not by a significant amount. In 2000, some households became rich when much roadside arable land was converted to residential land. Civil servants, and trading households from other places moved in. The rate of wealthy households in the village rose to five percent, and 12 percent for above-average households. The average households remain at 69 percent, and poor and semi-poor households at 14 percent.

Increased wealth differentiation is not only reflected in the number of households, but also in the standard of living among households. The better-off households build two to three-storey houses, and fortified houses (15.7%) while the remaining families live mainly in small semi-permanent homes (83.6%) and 0.7 percent of households still live in temporary houses made of bamboo and leaves. Due to the improvement in their lives, the majority of households have televisions, motorcycles, and telephones. Some average families can also afford to buy gas stoves, or refrigerators to use in daily life. Except for wealthy households, washing machines, water heaters and cars are too expensive and out of reach of households with average living standards in the village. Pictures of a beautiful, big house surrounded by a high fence or thick walls with expensive appliances and equipment indoors is a different world, and are considered a dream for about 80 percent of households there.

Table 7: The percentage of household owning machineries and equipment in production and daily life

Items	Quantity	Percentage %	Items	Quantity	Percentage %
Agrimotor	33	23.57	Gas stove	79	56.43
Blending machine	2	1.43	AC	8	5.71
Threshing machine	37	26.43	Landline	6	4.29
Corn/grain peeling machine	7	5.00	Fridge	107	76.43
Pumping machine	75	53.57	Cabinet costing over 1 million	100	71.43
Forage crusher	2	1.43	Washing machine	20	14.29
Car	5	3.57	Water heater	27	19.29
Bike	128	91.43	Others	3	2.14

Source: Household survey questionnaire result in 2016.

Table 8: Percentage of household owning entertainment and communication equipment

Equipment	Quantity	Percentage %
Satellite cable	96	68.57
VCD/DVD	58	41.43
Radio-cassette	5	3.57
Computer	14	10.00
TV	140	100.00
Mobile phone	140	100.00
Others	1	0.71

Source: Household survey questionnaire result in 2016.

A middle-aged man in the village of Khun Phang said as he sat talking with friends in the village, “People often say to each other that the two to three-storey houses belong to the new people migrating here, while substandard level four houses belong to the original inhabitants here.” The local people feel that the suburban areas in their communes have gone through a more pronounced social differentiation than the more remote villages. Clearly, urbanization makes the contrast between rural and urban become more distinct.

Ethnic relation

Tay ethnic people like to have social exchanges, and make friends and alliances with other peoples. It is reflected in the custom of adoption, adoptive parents, and sworn brothers. Many studies have confirmed that the Tay always lean towards the integration of all ethnic groups. Through integration and interaction, Tay ethnic groups existed and developed as it has today (Duong Thuan 2013: 34). Also, the contact process of the Tay and Viet people which occurred very early in the formation process of Vietnam before the 19th century and during the period of modern history, was strengthened when French people built mines, military bases, and prisons in the northeast region. In the war against the French and the Vietnam-China border war, the Tay in Quang Lang increasingly made exchanges with the Vietnamese as the northeast was the base for the revolutionary government of Vietnam. Later, the waves of immigration of the Vietnamese people from the delta area to build a new economic zone in the period between 1960 and 1980 period made Tay contact with the Vietnamese majority and other ethnic groups much more frequent.

In 1981, there were 94.90 percent of Tay respondents who could speak the national language (Viet); 16.77 percent used Viet in the household; 15.85 percent used Viet at work. 20.37 percent of respondents said they were more fluent in Viet than their mother tongue and 40.12

percent were fluent in both languages. In 2016, almost every Tay in Quang Lang speaks Viet fluently. Up to 48.57 percent of the respondents usually use Viet within their families. In addition, 12 percent of respondents can speak Nung.

Mixed marriages are increasingly becoming a trend among the Tay. In 1981, 18.61 percent of Tay people in Quang Lang surveyed were married to other minorities, mainly ethnic Kinh and Nung. 88.24 percent of respondents said that they were agreeable for their children to marry other ethnic people. In 2016, 41.1 percent of respondents have a spouse who is of another ethnic group (which is 12.59% Nung, and 18.52% Kinh); 97.1 percent of respondents who supported ethnic marriages, said that the ethnic composition of the marriage does not matter. In fact, many Tay families are now multi-ethnic, with some families having two to three brides and grooms from other ethnicities. Mixed marriages of the Tay is a vivid expression of the ethnic harmony in the relationship with the Vietnamese and other ethnic minorities in Vietnam in the context of development and current integration.

Before the 1960s¹⁸, Tay people usually resided beside the Nung ethnic group and since then, the residences interspersed with the Nung and Kinh have increased even further. In 1981, 35.71 percent of Tay people in Quang Lang said that they had friends from other ethnic groups. By 2016, this ratio amounted to 81.3 percent. Among them, Nung friends account for 44.95 percent and Kinh account for the same proportion of 44.95 percent. 12.23 percent of respondents said their best friend were Nung and also 12.23 percent respondents had Kinh as an ethnic best friend.

Unlike the Tay in some localities of Lang Son border where there is kinship with fellow clans across the border, no family or lineage of the Tay in Quang Lang maintained kinship contacts with their lineage in China. However, in the process of urbanization and industrialization, Tay people here have increasingly expanded relations with other ethnic groups in the country, especially the Kinh. More and more young people are friends with people in cities, and provinces where they come to work and live. The opening of the highway road promotes even more of the integration and exchange process of the local residents.

4.3. Cultural Changes

Changes of village settings

In the last few decades, due to population growth, policies of sedentarization, hydro-electrical plant resettlement, development projects and expansion of trading and services of the local people, the physical residential settings of villages in mountainous areas of Vietnam have largely

¹⁸ Relating to ethnic relation, since 1960s there was a migration movement of the Kinh (Viet) people to the mountainous area which made a lot of change in the social and cultural life of ethnic minorities like the Tay in Quang Lang.

changed. From scattered settlements of families and villages before Doi Moi, resettlements became more concentrated (Vuong Xuan Tinh 2015; Ly Hanh Son 2016). This change among the Tay in Quang Lang has happened hectically under the impact of urbanization.

Architectural village settings of villages in Quang Lang commune in the olden days were characterized by residential, communal, sacred and cultivated spaces. Houses were arranged into hamlets, running around a mountainside in clusters. The village was surrounded by a bamboo hedge, with a big gate for every hamlet within the village. The village wells and ponds both supplied clean water to dwellers. There was a community landscape and social spaces. Each housing compound had its own space, which was spacious with both garden and pond.

In each village, there was a sacred space for a shrine of God of the soil – the deity who was believed to rule the land occupied by villagers. Khun Phang village also had the Lang Mo communal house (*đình*) for worshipping the tutelary God for all four villages in the commune: Khun Phang, Mo Chao, Na Don, Dong Mo. The shrine and communal house were often located in quiet, deserted and airy places, where villagers frequently came to make offerings, worship, pray, and meet each other. The external setting of the village was open to paddy fields, graveyards, and a network of paths that connected to other communities.

The American–Vietnamese War in the 1960s through the 1970s saw the village gates and sacred spaces such as communal houses, shrines demolished. Since the 1990’s, along with population growth, a large amount of cultivated land was transformed into residential areas, construction and roads. This change blurred boundaries between cultivated and residential spaces, and between villages. Therefore, distinguishing between internal and external spaces, such as village and hamlet gates, no longer fits within the current context. If in the past, land on the margin of villages was of low value, now it is of the highest value. In every household, division of land among the children is a reason that makes large garden and pond spaces vanish. Village wells were also filled up.

Since the National Road No. 1 was built in 2000, a number of people in villages have moved to live near the road. This caused the village landscape and settings to change accordingly. Before, play or leisure grounds of the community were mainly orchards, village wells and ponds. Nowadays, these spaces have mostly disappeared, replaced with new architectural spaces that function to meet the demands of leisure and services which suit the modern lifestyle, such as restaurants, cafés, internet places, hairdressing shops, and grocery shops. In villages or hamlets, most paths are concrete, and public facilities such as village cultural houses are built with new architectural styles. Religious spaces of the Tay were often built simply, situated at quiet and mysterious places where few people frequent. Due to wars and policies of anti-superstition during the early period of building socialism and collectivization (from the 1950s to the 1970s), communal houses, temples and shrines were demolished. Running up to 2014, the communal house of Mo village was built and restored at Khun Phang village, and the shrine of soil God was rebuilt and restored at Lang Dang village, but relocated at a place where many people went by. Notions

of sacred places have changed. Now they only exist in folklore memories linked with place-names of the past.

It can be said that under impacts of population growth, wars, and development policies of the government both before and after Doi Moi, village settings of the Tay in Quang Lang have changed; for instance, residential spaces have become enlarged at the expense of cultivated spaces. Some sacred spaces have gradually disappeared or downsized. Moreover, the process of urbanization since the 2000's has transformed those villages from rural traditional structural settings to modern rural ones with the characteristics of mixed village and city, and with both traditional and modern patterns.

Falling into oblivion: material culture, language, folklore arts and literature

Studies of ethnic cultures in Vietnam indicate that during the process of Reform and integration, languages, material culture, traditional arts and literature changed rapidly (Vuong Xuan Tinh & Tran Hong Hanh 2013). Among the Tay in Quang Lang, these cultural elements were subject to the risk of falling into disuse due to their proximity to an urban environment and influenced by the urbanization process.

In terms of housing, traditional houses of the Tay in Quang Lang commune were houses-on-stilts and rammed earth wall houses. Materials for building these houses were wood, bamboo, earth and rock, and requiring a substantial quantity of good timber. In the wartime of the 1950s and 1970s, local people had to evacuate to the mountains, and several traditional houses were destroyed by lethal weapons. From the 1980's onward, the Tay in Quang Lang have not built house-on-stilts because the surrounding forest was ravaged, and wood was not available for housebuilding. Construction of rammed earth wall houses also became less and less common because it required significant labor and time. Instead, local people constructed common brick houses – the most popular type of house in rural Vietnam today - with simple techniques and designs, and with only several pillars and a roof frame that did not require sizeable, good quality timber, and which could be roofed using flexible materials available in the market such as tiles or fibro-cement plates. In the recent urbanization process, the better-off and newly arrived households have constructed two- or three-storey houses with new and modern architectural designs. Statistics from this study show that the housing changes in Khun Phang village are more vibrant than that of Lang Dang village, because the latter is more homogeneous of the Tay people. The greater vibrancy is also due to the low rate of ethnic co-residence, and because Lang Dang is farther away from Dong Mo town than Khun Phang village. Basically, simple brick houses are the main type of house in the two villages; very few traditional houses remain, and solid houses are increasingly developed in the region.

Table 9: Current housing situation in Khun Phang and Lang Dang villages, Quang Lang com-mune

House type	Rammed earth wall house	Brick house (level 4-house)	Solid cement house	2-3 storied house
Village				
Khun Phang	1	50	3	30
Lang Dang	5	103	8	5

Source: Fieldwork in 2016.

Changes of housing of the Tay are also expressed in terms of living arrangements (sleeping and rest spaces) of its household members, and the appearance of modern appliances such as sets of salon chairs and tables, wooden wardrobes and cabinets, televisions, refrigerators and so on. In the past, Tay people often had their houses oriented in a southerly direction, facing a river or lake, or backed against a mountain. Today, under the pressure of population growth, the option for land locations and directions of a house is no longer important. Mr. Lo Duy M., in Khun Phang village said that: *“This village is almost similar to a town, with many houses aligned in the same direction as for business convenience, but one cannot choose house direction as in the past. Local young people no longer observe what is taboo; they only care about earning money”*.

For clothing, the traditional dress of the Tay in Quang Lang commune were manually woven from natural wool, dyed indigo, and mostly without embroidery designs or patterns. The traditional dress for women includes a short jacket, long dress, pants, belt, head towel and cloth shoes. The traditional dress for men consists of short jacket, long dress, pants and cloth shoes. In the period of collectivization in the 1960’s and 1970’s, land was lacking for cultivating cotton, and it was difficult to buy industrial fabric under official regulations of planed distribution. As a result, local Tay people improved their traditional dress to a kind of short pajamas (*bà ba*) as it was convenient for everyday living and working. From 1980 to the present, most of local Tay people have not maintained this traditional dress. Some old people have kept them as a souvenir, or used by some *Then* ladies for ritual purpose, or for performances in village festivals. Another reason that makes traditional Tay dress gradually fall into obscurity are a change in taste and aesthetics. As residents are living close to an urban environment and often working outside the village, they are increasingly influenced by the way Kinh people dress. This makes Tay young people feel inferior, as they do not attach much importance to their traditional identity. Many young people feel less self-confident when wearing their traditional dress during social communications and interaction. They feel like fish out of water: *“Wearing traditional dress is not comfortable and convenient for everyday living; when going out with it on we are often stared at by*

everyone with curious eyes, as if we are an alien. It's so embarrassing!" says a young boy Vi T. of Lang Dang village during an interview. Recently, young people have had a tendency to follow modes of modern fashion, new hairstyles and colouring.

For eating and drinking, common rice is the every day staple of the local people. Sticky rice is often used to make cakes for rituals and ceremonies. Before Doi Moi, their everyday meals often included rice, green vegetables, bamboo shoots, and green beans, and sometimes chicken, pork, or fish caught in rivers or streams. For rituals and ceremonies, the local Tay have many special dishes such as ant's egg cake, colorful sticky rice, smoked meat, or *khau nhuc*¹⁹. After the Reform, local economic life has improved. Exchange of goods had intensified and natural and forest environments changed, causing changes in the eating and drinking habits of the local Tay. Every day, local people can buy meat and fish at the market for their meals. Dishes that are cooked using ingredients from the forest have disappeared. Instead, local people have become used to dishes that are commonly available in the market such as pork, ham, sausages and seafood and have learned to cook dishes like those of Kinh people. In contrast, several famous dishes of the Tay such as *khau nhuc* have been introduced, penetrating restaurants and stores in neighboring provinces. However, due to the diversity of spices available in the market today, Tay people have changed the ingredients and cooking methods for their traditional dishes. Among the Tay in Quang Lang, there are some innovations in both their traditional eating and drinking, influenced by what they acquire from outside.

Before 2000, the Tay in Quang Lang commune often had three meals per day, and they usually woke up early to cook. After the road was constructed, eating and drinking services have appeared, mainly in Khun Phang village. Government officials and traders who have high incomes often eat their breakfast at restaurants, while farmers who have low income usually eat in their homes. For them, the expense of breakfast in restaurants is unjustified by their income from farming or hired labor.

After the August Revolution in 1945 and due to their early contact with Kinh people, Tay people in Quang Lang quickly assimilated the national language (Kinh/Viet language) on a wider scale and with greater intensity. From the 1960's onward, with the increased number of Kinh (Viet) immigrants in the area, Tay people in Quang Lang commune have used the Kinh language, and speak it fluently. The recent urbanization process has downplayed the role of the Tay language in community life, and heralded a reality that many young people do not know their mother language.

The use of the Tay mother tongue within Tay families in Quang Lang commune now occurs in the following ways: 1) mainly used as an ethnic language; 2) used alternatively with the national language; and 3) mainly used with the national language. Studies in Khun Phang village show that the Kinh language is the main one used within families of the Tay because this

¹⁹ A dish similar to braised pork one but the meat is marinated a long amount of time before being steamed.

village is experiencing a greater impact from the urbanization process, and ethnic composition is diversified. Ninety percent of responders use the national language at home. Meanwhile, for the Tay in Lang Dang village, ethnic language plays a dominant role because most of its people are Tay, and the village is farther from the Dong Mo town centre. Only 26.6 percent use the national language at home. However, only in Lang Dang village is ethnic language mainly used by middle-aged and old people; the national language is commonly used by young people. In community interactions such as at weddings and funerals, people tend to use both ethnic and national languages (Tay and Kinh), while at the market and in trading, they only use Kinh language.

Interview results show that after 1980, younger generations could only understand their ethnic spoken language, but could not speak it; this after several decades of intensifying exchange with the Kinh (Viet) people. Today, many young people cannot understand nor speak their mother language. They consider their ethnic language backward, an unsuitable custom, and are not motivated to learn it. Young children are taught the official language as a preparation for easier education in schools later. Up to 95 percent of respondents in Khun Phang village, and 85.11 percent of respondents in Lang Dang village think that only the official language should be taught to their children at school. Clearly, among the Tay in Quang Lang, their mother language has fallen into disuse, with mainly Kinh language used in education and administration, communication, social interaction, and in the economic activities of the market. The more a location is integrating and urbanized, the greater the influence of the national language (Vuong Xuan Tinh 2015). On the other hand, the Tay language is unable to convey meanings of contemporary socioeconomic issues, so that it has to borrow words from the national language in order to express meaning. The increase of mixed-ethnic marriage is also a factor that influences language usage within a family. This makes elderly people worried that their ethnic identity is being lost.

This identity loss manifests most clearly in the arts and literature. Long ago, the Tay in Quang Lang had a rich folklore literature, which was passed down orally from generation to generation in form of poetry, legend, folk songs, proverbs and tales. These art and literature forms are filled with views of human life, love, fatherland, country, marriage and family. In terms of music, the gourd lute (*đàn tênh*) is the most unique, special music instrument of the Tay. In the past, the lute was used in rituals, and to accompany songs. In terms of singing, the Tay have many tunes such as *lượn*, *then*, *quan lang*, *hát ví*, *foong slu*, lullaby and children's songs. These tunes were sung as flirting songs between men and women, sung at home, and at festival events, weddings, new house ceremonies, or when some guests stayed overnight at the village.

After 1954, as a sacrifice for the war and collective economic development, these forms of arts and folklore literature started to fall into obscurity²⁰. By the 1980s, along with changes in customs and habits, widespread use of the official language, and development of mass media, many local people could no longer remember their traditional songs and games. Research results on the Tay in Quang Lang in 1981 show that only five of 139 respondents remember some folk songs and games. Recently, the boom of modern recreational services such as gameshows and movies is increasingly attracting people. The social network, the internet and new music trends are more attractive to young people. Research results in 2016 show that 96.43 percent of respondents do not know or remember any traditional songs. Mr. Vi Van L. of Lang Dang village said that “Young generations are no longer interested in their old ethnic songs, as the new way of life makes them less passionate about their ethnic culture. They hesitate to learn their ethnic language; if they want to learn hát lượn [glider singing], no one would sing with them. The young now like blue music songs with modern styles.”

Among traditional arts of the Tay, only *Then* singing is maintained and developed now. In the whole period of building a new cultural life from the 1950's through the 1980's, *Then* singing was considered superstitious and banned in rituals. Nevertheless, in that context, some Tay intellectuals created new lyrics into *Then* songs and brought them from being ritual use to art genre on stage, radio and television. From Doi Moi up to the present, *Then* rituals were allowed. Arts schools and troupes of many provinces in the northeastern region even teach *Then* singing, and hold national festivals of *Then* singing with the gourd lute. Also, the revival of rituals and ceremonies related to *Then* singing among the Tay communities helped restore *Then* singing, and continues to play an important role in asserting the Tay's ethnic identity today (Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2013). However, the interview results demonstrate that only old people in Quang Lang like *Then* singing, and young people are not really interested in this form of music.

The revival and changes in family and community rituals

When it comes to beliefs built on spiritism and animism, the Tay have many different forms of worship in the family and the village community. Ancestor worship takes the most important part in the spiritual life of the Tay; Tay families always have an ancestor altar in the middle of their homes. Previously, the ancestor worship ceremony was usually conducted during holidays, weddings, funerals, warming new houses or when there are unfortunate events in the family. Since the Reform, worshipping ancestors of the Tay has been occurring more often,

²⁰ After the 1954 Dien Bien Phu victory which ended the anti-French resistance, the Northern Vietnam entered a period of land reform and then a campaign of socialist construction. Vietnam did not launch a type of cultural revolution like China but implemented a movement of building a new cultural life (Malarney 1993). According to that, new cultural aspects which fit to the revolutionary morality and the socialist construction were promoted while traditional customs and values which were considered backward and superstitious were banned. As a result, cultural life of Tay people as well as other ethnic groups began to change from this time.

especially prior to an important event, like a trading, or when children are working far away and when awaiting results of the university entrance exam. Like Tay people in urban areas, or where there are many Kinh residents, Tay people in Quang Lang have recently lit the perfume stick on the first and 15th day of the Lunar calendar month like the Kinh people (Be Van Hau, 2012). Being neglected and eroded during the war and in the collective economy, after Doi Moi, the festivals during the year such as the Lunar New Year, Wandering Souls Day on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and related rituals, ancestor worship in the Tay has been restored with the desire to show gratefulness to their ancestors and to seek their ancestors' blessing for good luck. Some rituals related to agriculture such as the Double Five Festival and New Rice Festival tend to be minimized.

Table 10: Percentage of households organizing festivals and rituals in the year (%)

Festivals and rituals	1981	2016
Lunar New Year	97.53	100
Festival of Pure Clarity	61.73	27.86
Double Five Festival	59.88	58.57
The fifteenth day of the seventh month festival	96.91	99.29
New Rice Festival	25.93	17.86
Death anniversaries	25.31	97.14 ²¹

Source: Household survey questionnaire results in 1981 and 2016.

Also, in recent years, thanks to improved economic conditions, many families hold an award ceremony and a blessing ceremony at the beginning of the year. Because this ceremony must be performed by *Then* with many expensive gifts (an average of VND five to 10 million), generally only well-off families can afford this or families who are compelled to conduct the ritual. Survey results showed that 38.57 percent of all households in Quang Lang surveyed conducted this ritual in 2015. On the one hand, this relieves anxiety, bringing faith and hope for homeowners on a good new year. On the other hand, through folk performances *Then* ritual gives homeowners and attendees, especially the elderly, strong emotions. Meanwhile, many

²¹ This change is very significant due to the life improvement and the ritual intensification movement among the Kinh (Viet) people generally and the Tay people in particularly.

young people interviewed were not interested in this traditional ritual. They are not interested in the folk rituals and very much doubt the *Then* ritual as commercialization.

In addition to family rituals, worshipping the Earth god plays a very important role in the worship of the Tay in Quang Lang commune; this aims to commemorate the god that led the Tay to the reclamation and mapping of the commune. It is also a means to pray for the family and the health and good fortune of villagers. On the Lunar New Year, considered the anniversary of the Earth gods, most of the families in the village take their offerings to the temple. When there is a big event in the family, an accident, or difficulties at work, families usually opt for Aboriginal rituals. Observations show that the elderly and household heads in Quang Lang attach great importance to this belief.

Before the 1960s, Khun Phang and Lang Dang village had temples for Tutelary god, the lords that helped residents in the region and the country. *Đình* (village temple) is where the villagers gather for Tết rites. Previously, at Dinh Mo of Khun Phang village, on the seventh of January (Lunar calendar), the annual festival *Lồng tồng* (beginning of farming) ceremony usually takes place. This is a ritual involving agricultural production of the Tay.

Besides the rituals of family and village communities, Tay people in Quang Lang commune had some rituals related to agricultural production. One of the most important rituals related to agricultural cultivation is *Lồng tồng*, which was held on the seventh of January (lunar calendar) every year. The ritual took place with a worship ceremony. Then the village people dined together, organizing competitions of folk games, folk dances and songs. Because *Dinh* was devastated during the war, and due to changes in agricultural production under the Cooperatives time, and because of the policy of the government in the period of construction of socialism in the 1960's and 1970's, the cooperatives and local governments wanted people to simplify rituals and focus on production. The *Lồng Tồng* festival which was adhered to by Lang Mo *Dinh* in Khun Phang village has not been held during the past few decades. In 2014, people in the area rebuilt the *Đình* in Lang Mo and restored the festival there. People believed that improvement in life is the main reason that they should think about restoring monuments and rituals in order to show their gratitude to the god who blessed them in the region.

The market economy's intense competition, high risk and uncertainties in life, and the influence of ancestors of the family led to the Tay giving importance to the earth god and the Tutelary god. In addition to annual holidays, important matters like opening a shop, working away from home and going to school prompted many Tay families in Quang Lang to carry offerings to temples and to pray for protection and blessing.

In addition to the above rituals, weddings and funerals are the most important rituals in the life cycle of the Tay. Before 1960, wedding ceremonies in the village of Khun Phang and Lang Dang usually underwent four steps: *lục minh* (see the age of the bride); cutting chicken

neck ceremony (dam ngo-introducing the family); betrothal and wedding ceremony. During the war and the time of building cooperatives in the 1960's, the Tay abolished the *quan lang* singing at the wedding as it was too cumbersome and time consuming. After Doi Moi, due to the development of a market economy and the exchange process, acculturation gradually altered marriage rituals of the Tay. Weddings today are not going through the same four steps as before. Only betrothal and wedding dates are still used. Along with the development of society, all types of modern accoutrements, such as rentals, loudspeakers, canvas and bowls, were used at the services of a modern Kinh wedding, and had a relatively extensive application in the Tay community. They no longer have to cut bamboo to build tents and no longer have to go from house to house to borrow bowls and equipment for cooking. Since 1990, as goods and services have become more available in the area, Tay bride and groom have worn the same wedding gown as the Kinh, and recently had wedding photos taken in the city of Lang Son. With those Tay in Khun Phang village who lived close to the highway and Dong Mo town, a number of well-off families rented a restaurant for the wedding.

Similarly, the time of the funeral held by the Tay in Quang Lang also shortened from five to seven days to just two or three days at present. Many ceremonial steps previously done in one to two hours are now only 10 to 15 minutes long. Many procedures and cumbersome customs in the ceremonies have been removed. Donations to the offering were previously made only in *vàng hương* (paper votive) alcohol and rice, but now has been replaced mainly by cash.

Factors affecting cultural changes

Cultural change is due to the impact of various factors throughout the entire process from before the Reforms. First, the devastation and life difficulties caused by the war from 1954 to 1979, and the period of collectivization, are the main causes many aspects of Tay culture have changed. Also, the state policy to build socialism and a new cultural life, from the revolution until the present time, has gradually mobilized people to abandon many traditional rituals, and modified many traditions in family rituals. In the period of construction of the collective economy, cultural policies mobilized people against superstition, thus reducing family and community rituals. But in recent years, government policies called for the restoration of historic sites, festivals and folk art forms with the purpose of preserving culture. Policies to eradicate illiteracy and develop education is also the cause for the increasingly popular use of national language in Tay communities.

The development of the market economy since 1986 and the process of recent urbanization have promoted economic diversification and increased income while helping goods and services to become more popular and more accessible to everyone. Along with this process there has been the explosion of mass media and entertainment, which has impacted and changed the thinking and lifestyles of Tay people in Quang Lang. Additionally, we have to mention

the process of exchanges, and strengthening contact with the Kinh and other ethnic groups. This process has existed for a long time, but only really had an impact on the cultural transformation of the Tay after 1954 with the migration flow of Kinh people to Chi Lang, and extensive involvement of the Tay in the political system of Vietnam's revolutionary government.

However, the final cause leading to the changes is the perception of the local Tay people as the cultural subjects. When asked whether or not they are satisfied with the status of the current cultural change, three major trends were observed. First, a voluntary group wants to integrate into the Kinh culture, and do not want to preserve the national culture, especially the youth. That made a proportion of seniors experience a feeling of uncertainty, pity and worry about the attitudes and perceptions of young people regarding traditional culture. The second is the middle-aged generation and the elderly who feel regretful about the traditional cultural values of the nation being increasingly eroded. They are well aware that the culture of the Kinh people in particular, and popular culture in general, now have many new things and wherever there is progress, they have to learn to embrace the positive developments. If not they will be lost in the current context. They are ready to assimilate partially, to integrate but not to be insoluble. The third is in the direction of crowd effect. There is no clear direction of the cultural style: "people change, so I change" and a desire not be regarded as backward in the society.

One of the emerging issues in the current culture of the Tay is the introduction of new forms of culture. There are elements that are not in line with national traditions such as modern music, fashion, and lifestyle, and young people are most easily influenced. Many older people in the village feel regret for the contribution in the revolutionary time to build up the old cultural lifestyle - a healthy lifestyle; young people having respect for the older and sacrifice for the younger; a society without dispute and greed. Currently, the alienation in lifestyle such as embezzlement or bribery is becoming increasingly rampant, causing strife in the community. A proportion of young do not receive a proper education, are impolite and dress inappropriately. This does not fit with fine national traditions. Some teenagers are lazy, like to play video games, lottery, suffer from drug addiction and alcoholism, and engage in gambling, leading to family conflict. Economic hardship and theft also negatively affect the security of the village. When the villagers were asked about this issue, they shared these thoughts below:

"In the past, the relationship between men and women of Tay was quite discreet and subtle in the youth this has become casual, losing the good culture of the Tay," says Mr. Lu T. of Khun Phang village in an in-depth interview.

"Young people do not bother about ethnic culture, they run the common life, focus on work, and do not care about the relationships in the community. Young people today live more candidly, but not humbly, and not as considerate as before. Many talk in a vulgar way, like

uneducated people," said Ms. Vi Thi H. Of Lang Dang village in an interview.

"Young people today are immersed in modern society. They do not know themselves. Ninety percent of young people in the village do not speak Tay and voluntarily want to change the culture to Kinh. They do not know how to respect the old and sacrifice for the Young; they are unable to control themselves, leading to loss of cultural identity," Mr. Lo Van Th. Of Khun Phang village said in an in-depth interview.

It can be said that the powerful impact of modern culture in the context of the current urbanization has caused the psychology of each individual person to always change and to keep pace with all developments at all times. In the context of mostly young people who only want to make money, race in modern life, and are not interested in traditional culture, many older people in the Tay community are concerned with the selection and retention of the most unique rituals and traditions in order to affirm the cultural identity of the Tay.

5. Urbanization, modernization and the question of sustainable development in the mountainous area

In the stories of people in Quang Lang, they often share thoughts such as "having enough to eat now is simple but it's hard to become rich". No one denies that the decollectivization policy and contracting in the 1980s promoted the active production and diversification of economic activities, and improved the lives of the Tay people in Quang Lang. The process of industrialization with the creation of industrial parks, the continuing urbanization process in large cities since the late 1980s and the expansion of the small urban centers in the region, along with the upgrade of infrastructure have enabled a considerable workforce of Quang Lang to be employed in non-agricultural activities. Like neighboring countries such as China, the growth of urban centers also created a shift in demand from cereal into other foods such as meat, fish, vegetables, and fruits in agriculture production (McGree 2008: 161). New demand in the market along with the upgrading of infrastructure have strengthened agricultural commodity production in Quang Lang since 2000. This is the most dramatic economic change in the urbanization process in this mountainous commune as urbanization has taken place here on a small scale. Industrial parks have not gone into production, there are too few local businesses, and tourism and services are not well developed. What is happening in Quang Lang is just a manifestation of the urbanization process in the urban areas and townships as a result of the new rural development program of Vietnam. The challenges posed to the economic development of the Tay in Quang Lang are also quite similar to other mountainous rural areas.

There has been much discussion about transforming agriculture and rural development and urbanization in Southeast Asia, focused on the transformation and role of agriculture in this area

in the context of current developments (Rigg 1998; Hirsch 2012; Dominique & Turner, 2009; Bunnell, Parthasarathy and Thompson 2013). The study largely agrees that in the past six decades, and especially in the last 20 years, a robust transition in rural agriculture took place in Southeast Asia. The impact and result of this change in each country may vary, but the general trend is that of more rapid economic integration into the national and global common economy. Commercial agriculture and the contraction of farming in the region began to increase from 1990. Although the overall trend is the decreasing role of agriculture as an important source of income, it is still a persistent part of the rural economy. Overall, the livelihoods of households have diversified more. Some members of the households only engage in agriculture seasonally or permanently work off-farm, often in urban centres. Migration has become an important dynamic affecting population distribution and livelihoods, division of labor, gender relations, way of life, and forms of consumption of rural residents. The presence of technology, such as new techniques in agriculture in rural areas in irrigation systems and machinery, and availability of mobile phones or the internet, have had an impact on the agricultural transformation to varying degrees, depending on each locality and nation (Drahmoune 2013: 116). All of these transformations have led many people to believe that the boundaries of rural-urban areas in Southeast Asia and in China are fading, and that the rural-urban transformation are in a close relationship with each other. Both the growth in urban areas and the agricultural transformation are tied together in the development process (Rigg 1998: 499; McGee 2008: 161). Although the contribution of agriculture to GDP tends to decrease as in the case of China, agriculture still provides for nearly 40 percent of the employment. In Thailand, the number of agricultural households is about 20 percent but agriculture still plays an important role for rural residents (Walker 2012). This poses challenges in the transition from the rural to urban economy (McGee 2008).

In Vietnam, one of the weaknesses and limitations of the process of urbanization is the sluggish, ineffective economic restructuring. The share of agriculture in the economic structure of the country's rural areas still accounts for more than 40 percent. In agriculture, the farming sector still accounts for a large proportion. The share of forestry is low and livestock and fisheries development is unstable. Industrial and rural services, particularly in the mountainous areas grow slowly, and do not promote the process of economic restructuring in these areas. The majority of agricultural products, including low-value added exports and competitiveness index were only average or below average compared to the rest of the world. By 2014, the value of agriculture in GDP had dropped to 18.12 percent, but agricultural labor still accounted for 46.3 percent. This paradox reflects the fact that industry and services in rural areas are not enough to create many new jobs to attract and retain a potential rural labor force. A minority are employed in businesses in the area or alternatively look for jobs in urban areas and industrial zones, but many employees

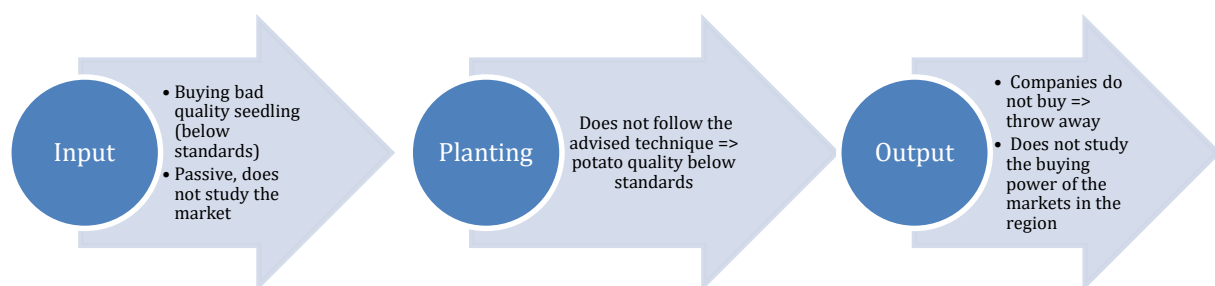
still remain in the agricultural sector and rural areas. A proportion of labor continues to engage in agricultural production but as arable land acreage continues to shrink, many have switched to simple non-agricultural activities under the agreement mechanism. This situation demonstrates that the process of industrialization and urbanization have neither developed much nor created a strong impact on agriculture, rural areas and farmers, leading to increasing unemployment and stagnation in rural development (Phung Huu Phu 2009).

In fact, in Quang Lang, agricultural production is of very small scale, and on average each household has only about 1100 sqm of farmland and 20.303 sqm of forest land to work on. Output is also very low, averaging 1000 kg of rice, 600 kg chili, and a few hundred kilograms of fruit per household per year. Although the agricultural income of the people has increased, the gap between income and expenditure between rural and urban areas has also increased. With an average savings of VND 1.5 million per regular household per year (about USD 70) people could repair their homes, or to save for emergencies, but have no extra capacity for enjoyment of modern urban life. In the near future, people will have to invest in the production system and change and improve the production process in order to meet the needs of the market; however, they could encounter the problem of insufficient financial capital. While their social capital is somewhat improved, the level of education is still low, and so the majority of the labor remains at a simple level. Social relations have not greatly expanded. Another challenge for the people is that the current farming conditions force them to use more fertilizers and pesticides to increase crop productivity. The consequence of this intensive process is environmental contamination and overexploitation of land. The water environment of the whole area is also affected by the discharge chemical residues and waste into rivers and streams. In addition, limited arable land continues to be further reduced due to erosion and landslides, and give way to construction of urban infrastructure. The urbanization process will continue to take people away from their farmlands.

The continued participation in the production of agricultural products sold to market is the choice of the majority of Tay households in Quang Lang as well as many other ethnic minorities in Vietnam today (Turner and Michaud 2016). However, in the production of goods, the participation of many Quang Lang people in the economic chain is still very weak, with each stage presenting flaws and disadvantages. This is the same in many mountainous rural areas in the country as most of the ethnic minorities lack basic resources such as social, human, or physical capital or they may have the capital but do not meet market context (Nguyen Van Huan, 2007). Specifically, in the production chain for agricultural goods, Quang Lang people are all "holding

the sharp edge", while others in the chain are "holding the hilt"²². In the past 10 years, many Quang Lang people have converted from growing rice as a subsistence crop to growing some crops such as melons and potatoes to produce goods for sale in the market. However, the farmers are disadvantaged in the production chain of such crops due to a lack of knowledge about market conditions. For instance, they grow large amounts of watermelon without knowing the capability of the regional market to consume this product, and they do not have sure buyers before planting so that products end up unsold or thrown away. In another instance, they signed a purchasing contract with a number of companies for potatoes, but did not comply strictly to the terms nor grasped the technical standards and specifications for potato planting. In the end, companies did not buy the potatoes; they were sold at a loss or used as animal feed.

For example: Chain value of potatoes - the people are disadvantaged at all stages.



The same weak chain governance problem occurs with many other agricultural products when the Quang Lang people decided to plant to produce goods on a large scale. There is no problem when producing for their own families and selling as agricultural surplus.

Through field surveys in Quang Lang, we have tentatively concluded that the specific issues of people being engaged in agricultural production and selling to markets in large scale goods production are as follows: firstly, many people lack the required skills and knowledge of the market, including the inputs of raw materials, plant and animal breeding and product output. Secondly, their social capital is weak, because most of the farmers only have relationships in the villages and have little chance of expanding the relationship. It is inevitable that there is no relationship from which to learn economic production experience, or the storage and trading of agricultural products, such as transporting cargo to other areas to sell. Staff of the local agricultural sector should have demonstrated a supporting role in involving people in the agricultural produc-

²² The idiom means the danger in a relationship where one agent has a lot more advantage than the other agent.

tion chain, including the very important task of finding a product outlet. However, they themselves are very confused, and often only encouraged production and left all other stages in the chain to the farmer to handle themselves, including all risks. In many cases, the local agricultural sector only encouraged production without boosting market research and ensuring people's participation in the chain of production, raising the people's vulnerability.

Only a small number of households in Quang Lang services seems to be active in approaching the various links in the chain of the market economy. According to our statistics, the number of households in the two villages working in services is not high, and only represents between two to five percent of households usually living near the highway and close to the town. These households often open shops, and factories that can reach the market (both input and output), and are very flexible when responding to market shocks. This is because they have abundant capital and more social networks than other households in the village. With better financial capital and human capital, they are more dynamic.

Generally, only a minority of households at the Quang Lang commune are dynamic and capable of accessing the market with any advantage, and the majority of agricultural households lack the capacity to access markets. This shows that there are many risks and challenges in the development of a sustainable economy in the context of increasing urbanization. Sustainable development here will only occur when the following elements are guaranteed: firstly, people can attain fairly sufficient funds (according to the analytical framework DFID) to develop; secondly, state institutions must have a clear role in supporting people to participate in the economic chain in an active way to reduce the multiple risks. It will involve a long process, in which people are compelled to invest in the enhancement of human capital. Support from institutions - governmental or non-governmental - is also required to solve the problems of economic development in families and communities. Using the support of institutions and individual efforts from each household will lead to breakthrough cases eventhough there will always be cases of those lagging behind.

The facts in this study lead us to believe that the development of agricultural policy, specifically the policy on agriculture and forestry extension, and also loan policies play an important role in helping the people in Quang Lang with current economic development. These policies have good objectives but the implementation is perplexing and incomplete and inaccessible by the people. The program of technical assistance and agricultural knowledge were rated as ineffective as they were not easily accessible by the people and did not take into account the specific elements of the area (customs, topography, climate, soil, and time of sowing). People often used the given technical knowledge as gibberish. They did not plant seedlings in a systematic way with a long-term strategy because the guide and the communication of the extension officers

were without depth and usually not timely. Loan programs implemented by the government through mass organizations were considered to be unclear, and only focused in some parts and did not reach households that needed them the most. In addition, the loan programs seem not to integrate well with both the extension program and agricultural technical assistance to the people, making them highly ineffective. The poor did not use the loan programs, as they did not know how to use the capital for production.

In addition, this study believes that the urbanization projects in the future should consider the effective use of land and restrict the removal of fertile land that supports two rice crops to ensure food security and livelihood of the people. In the context of increasingly limited land, a degraded environment, and the slow process of economic restructuring, the lives of people who depend mainly on agriculture will become more difficult with the further loss of land due to urbanization.

Conclusion

Urbanization is an inevitable process that is actively ongoing in almost all regions of Vietnam. This process began long ago, but because Vietnam experienced a long period of war and economic collectivization, only after economic reforms in 1980s has urbanization been boosted and strengthened like today. Despite being seen as sluggish and smaller in scale than the large cities in the delta area, urbanization did take place in the local mountainous areas, including the area of the Tay in Quang Lang commune, Chi Lang district, and Lang Son province. Like many other mountainous ethnic minorities areas, the process of urbanization here is mainly affected by the development of core urban areas, the development of transport networks, infrastructure and development programs and policies by the government rather than the kinetic energy from within the locality.

As the ethnic group with the largest population among the 53 ethnic minorities of Vietnam, they have had an important role in the process of Vietnamese nation building and early exchanges, and exposed both the feudal dynasties and modern state to one another. However, due to the disadvantages of ethnic minorities in terms of topography, and other special conditions of the mountains, the participation of the Tay in Quang Lang and their integration into national and international markets became truly extensive only after the Doi Moi policy in the 1980s and especially since the recent urbanization.

Within the scope of this report, not all quantitative results are displayed. Instead, only some significant results from the household questionnaire survey in 2016 are drawn upon in order to discuss the social life in the Tay community. Similarly, the 1981 survey results are used as reference to understand the social context of Tay people before Doi Moi, but only some important indicators are mentioned allowing comparison with the recent survey result. However, those

numbers, together with the qualitative result, already highlight a dramatic change in this community.

Like many other ethnic groups in the highlands of Vietnam, after the de-collectivization and Reform, the Tay in Quang Lang began a process of economic transformation with the focus on improving production of food, and the diversification of economic activities of households. This process in Quang Lang became stronger after urbanization. Since 2000 the economic structure of the two villages studied have changed from nearly 90 percent of agricultural households to an average of 66.43 percent. due to the development of population and services at the nearby Dong Mo town, the formation of a number of industrial areas and other towns in the district and especially with the opening of national highway 1A through Quang Lang. In Khun Phang village, in particular as it is closest to the town, this ratio fell to 40 percent. Unlike the urbanization process in large suburban areas where people have lost all or most of their arable land and were forced to change careers, urbanization for Tay people in Quang Lang has brought the job changing opportunities to a proportion of people who own land along the new road. Although urbanization has taken away part of their arable land, the majority of the people, were brought closer to the consumption market of agricultural commodities and goods. It

created a number of jobs and services in the region and made transport easier to cities and other provinces to find work. The general trend now is that the middle-aged and elderly farm at home and combine this with the services and employment in the region, while young people find work in farther regions. The Reform and urbanization process have brought both opportunities and challenges for the residents here. Because 63.43 percent of the households here still rely heavily on revenues from agriculture, farm production to supply the market plays an important role in the development of households.

However, in the process of participating in the recent market, people are experiencing many challenges. Although the financial and human capital of the people have improved, they are not sufficient to meet the capital requirements or to attain the knowledge to invest in producing goods. The social relationships of the Tay are broader than other ethnic minorities but so far these are mainly encapsulated in family relations, and village communities, and not developed outside to increase opportunities to access resources and funds required for development. At the same time, other resources such as natural capital is dwindling due to environmental degradation and population growth while urbanization and infrastructure development have resulted in the loss of land. In the Reform period, the financial, human and social capital have become more important in differentiating between households. Only a small proportion of the Tay adapt quickly to transform their economy, while the majority adapt more slowly, leaving some behind.

In social affairs, since the Reform and after urbanization, family relations changed towards

equality, and became more open due to the role of women in economic life being increasingly evident. However, there arose some of the downside of the market economy, such as the emergence of new forms of entertainment, and the modern lifestyle which raises the issues of adultery, divorce, and children who ignore their parents and grandparents. Social crimes such as theft, alcoholism, and gambling seem to have increased. Family ties seem to be further strengthened through economic links and social support but there also appears contradictions due to land disputes and differences in economic benefits. Community relations still maintain cohesion due to the demand for social assistance, and the development of social relations within the village. Perhaps the greatest impact of urbanization on society is the emergence of non-agricultural residents who came to buy land and live in Quang Lang for business, and practice trading in the town and along the road. This has created social differentiation. Before urbanization, the rate of wealthy households was much lower and the difference among households was not too great. However, after the road opened, the families whose land was along the road benefited the most from urbanization. The increase in the value of land helped them switch careers and change their lives. The wealthier lives of immigrants make the contrast between the rich and the poor, and between rural and urban become more apparent than ever.

Regarding culture, cultural elements of the Tay in Quang Lang began to change before the Reform and have continued changing during and after the Reform. However, the process of urbanization makes the transformation of cultural elements appear stronger. Village space changed into expanding the residency space, shrinking arable space, and the structure changed from traditional rural villages to modern rural villages with overlapping characteristics between the village and the city, and between tradition and modernity. The elements of material culture (food, accommodation, clothing) and ethnic language are increasingly eroded. Most people have forgotten the art form of folk literature. Only *Then* - a ritual form of singing - is proposed to be preserved by religion practitioners and the elderly in the community to promote it as the core of national culture and national identity.

It can be said that what is happening to the Tay in Quang Lang recently is due to the urbanization process and is influenced by many factors such as previous wars, collectivization policy (1960s to early 1980s) and reform policy. Among them are many factors in the social transformation of the people following the Reform. Urbanization makes the change even stronger. Compared with more remote urban areas, the economic restructuring in Quang Lang took place more strongly, and social differentiation was broader and the loss of the material culture and ethnic language also took place at a greater rate. As in many other parts of Vietnam, urbanization brought people for both opportunities and challenges. The biggest challenge is how to develop agricultural production, convert non-agricultural sectors while maintaining the stability in family

relationships, community, and cultural identity to cope with the impact of the downside of the market economy, and the process of modernization and globalization.

Based on the situation in Quang Lang, this study proposes a number of recommendations to assist the local people and community to cope with the impact of social changes in the process of urbanization. They are as follows:

Economic: To help people promote goods production and adapt well to the market, agriculture and forestry extension, as well as government loan programs, should be more practical and effective in order to address the actual needs of local people, especially those from poor households. Because agriculture is still an important source of livelihood to many Tay families, development and urbanization projects in the future should be planned specifically and clearly, consider the use of land in the most effective way, and restrict the acquisition of agricultural land which may affect people's livelihood.

Cultural: To resolve the conflicts between development and conservation of traditional culture, the government should provide financial support to build at least one traditional house (house on stilts) in each village. The house will be a place where cultural subjects can host traditional cultural activities during the holidays such as language, cuisine, costumes, customs, rituals and folk songs. In fact, if the Tay conserve their traditional culture concurrently with the orientation and direction of the authorities, these cultural subjects can effectively exploit traditional ethnic cultural services which would contribute to economic development. Furthermore, villages should create regulations combining traditional and modern culture, and preserve and sustain community culture based on the participation and major contribution of cultural subjects. There should be a focus on introducing ethnic and cultural traditions in the festivals, through ethnic cuisine and cultural performances (singing and dancing). At *Long Tong* festival, a major festival of Quang Lang commune, there should be a section which introduces the unique cuisine in the village of Tay people for tourists to enjoy the dishes, and at the same time enjoy the entertainment shows of all the ethnic costumes and traditional crafts. This is a way of preserving and promoting ethnic culture. At the same time economic resources can be derived from these activities. Preserving traditional culture linked to economic development is the most effective way to raise people's awareness on conservation and sustainable development of their ethnic culture.

Social: Family and lineage is still the most important unit and social institution for individuals. Aside from the trend where lineage records are restored and lineage worship houses are constructed, local authorities should launch a movement for education promotion of lineages in the commune. As a result, lineages will encourage their children to actively learn to gain degrees. It would also encourage people to register for vocational training for occupation transformation or gaining knowledge and skills in agricultural development, thus curbing the unemployment

situation, and help prevent the youth from succumbing to social vices.

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APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire for survey in 2016

SURVEY ON SOCIAL CHANGE OF TAY ETHNIC PEOPLE

(This Questionnaire is only used for scientific purposes, all personal information is kept secret)

Location:

Village:

Commune: Quan Lang

District: Chi Lang

Province: Lạng Sơn

Interviewer:

Examiner:

Date of Interview:

Code:

Hanoi – 2016

INFORMATION ON PERSONAL AND FAMILY

1. Sex:

Male

Female

2. Born in:

Education (class/level):

Illiterate

Literate

3. Class/level?

4. How old were you when you got married :

5. When married, how old was your husband/wife:

6. Ethnicity of your husband/wife:

1. Tay

2. Nung

3. Kinh

4. Other (specified):

7. How long have you been living in this village?

1. Under 5 years

2. Over 10 years

3. Born and living here continuously

4. Born here but did not live here for a period
5. Moved in from another place
8. If moved in from other place, what was the reason?
 1. Change of workplace
 2. Trade
 3. To look for a job
 4. Marriage
 5. Buy residential land, cultivated land
 6. Other (specific) _____
9. If from another place, where were you?
 1. Rural (other village in other commune, district, province)
 2. Small town of districts
 3. Town, city
10. What occupation provides the main income?
 1. Agriculture/Forestry
 2. Worker
 3. Trader
 4. Work for hire (seasonal)
 5. State official
 6. Local leader
 7. Armed force
 8. Retirement
 9. Others (Specified):
11. How many people in your family (including people who work far from home under 12 months)?: person.
12. Number of generation in the family:
13. Information on members of the family, including people who are temporarily absent

No	Relation with owner of household:	Year of birthday	Sex 1=M 2=F	Education: 1=Illiterated 2= Primary	Occupation: 1=State staffs 2= Enterpre-
1	Owner of household =1				
2					
3					

4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					

II. MARRIAGE, FAMILY

14. In your opinion, how many children should a family have? (specified):

15. In your opinion, what are the roles of parents on the marriage of their children?

1. Parent decide without children' opinion
2. Parent decide with consultation of children
3. Children choose their own spouse with consultation of parent
4. Children decide themselves without asking parent
5. Difficult to answer

16. Which ethnicity do you want your family member getting married with?

1. Ethnicity has no meaning in marriage
2. Ethnicity has no meaning in marriage if customs of your ethnic group are obeyed

3. It is better to be in the same ethnic group
4. Difficult to answer

17. In your opinion, what should be the age gap between husband and wife?

1. Should be the same age
2. Husband should be older than wife
3. Wife should be older than husband
4. Difficult to answer

18. In your opinion, what should be the gap of education between husband and wife?

1. Should be the same level
2. Husband's education should be higher than wife
3. Wife's education should be higher than husband
4. The gap has no meaning
5. Difficult to answer

19. In your opinion, in marriage, what should be the correlation of economic life between the husband and wife family?

1. Should be the same

2. The husband's family should be higher than the wife's family
 3. The wife's family should be higher than the husband's family
 4. The gap has no meaning
 5. Difficult to answer
20. In your opinion, in which age should the son get married? (specify):
21. At what age should the daughter get married? (specify):

22. In your family, who often does the following works?

22.1. Teaching the children

1. Husband
2. Wife
3. Mother/mother in-law
4. Father/father in - law
5. Elder children

22.2. Cleaning the house

1. Husband
2. Wife
3. Mother/mother in-law
4. Father/father in - law
5. Elder children

22.3. Cooking

1. Husband
2. Wife
3. Mother/mother in-law
4. Father/father in - law
5. Elder children

22.4. Raising poultry

1. Husband
2. Wife
3. Mother/mother in-law
4. Father/father in - law
5. Elder children

22.5. Shopping

1. Husband
2. Wife
3. Mother/mother in-law
4. Father/father in - law
5. Elder children

22.6. Doing handicraft

1. Husband
2. Wife
3. Mother/mother in-law
4. Father/father in - law
5. Elder children

22.7. Work in the field, garden

1. Husband
2. Wife

- 3. Mother/mother in-law
- 4. Father/father in - law
- 5. Elder children

23. In your family, who makes important decisions?

- 1. Husband
- 2. Wife
- 3. Mother/mother in-law
- 4. Father/father in - law
- 5. Elder children
- 6. Everyone discuss together
- 7. Difficult to answer

24. Who makes the decision on expenditures in the family?

<p>24.1. Decision on big expenditure (house, vehicles...)</p>	<p>26.2. Decision on daily expenditure (shopping, education...)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Husband 2. Wife 3. Mother/mother in-law 4. Father/father in - law 5. Elder children 6. Everyone discuss together 7. Difficult to answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Husband 2. Wife 3. Mother/mother in-law 4. Father/father in - law 5. Elder children 6. Everyone discuss together 7. Difficult to answer

25. In your opinion, after marriage, with whom should the children live?

- 1. With the parents
- 2. Separately from parents

25.1. If with parents, when?

- 1. When there are no children yet
- 2. When their children are small
- 3. Permanently

26. If you already live separately, Do you help your parents?

- 1. Usually
- 2. Sometimes
- 3. Only in case the parent needs help
- 4. Rarely

26.1. What do you do to help?

1. Heavy works (in the field, forest, carry goods...)
2. Houseworks
3. Works relating to skills (trading)
4. Taking care of them when they get sick

27. If you already live separately, does your parent help you sometimes?

1. Usually
2. Sometimes
3. Only in case you need help
4. Rarely

28. What does your parent do to help you?

1. Taking care of your children
2. Heavy works (in the field, forest, carry goods...)
3. Works relating to calculating skills (trading)
4. Take care of you when you get sick

III. HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

29. In your family, does anyone work at factories/entrepreneurs?

1. Yes
2. No

30. If yes, where is the factory/entrepreneur:

1. In the location of the commune, district
2. In the location of the province
3. In the location of other provinces

31. In your family, does anyone participate in trading activities in the border area?

1. Yes
2. No

32. If yes, who?

1. Husband
2. Wife
3. Mother/mother in-law
4. Father/father in – law
5. Elder children
6. Brothers and sisters

33. How long have those people worked there?.....

34. What are specific business of those people?

1. Invest capital to do trading
2. Carry goods for as hired help

- 3. Seller for hire
- 4. Interpreter
- 35. If you invest capital to do trading, which kind of goods?

- 1. Necessities (food, provisions...)
- 2. Electronics
- 3. Luxuries (Alcohol, cigarette...)
- 4. Household appliances, clothes
- 5. Sensitive goods (weapons, video tape, ...)

36. Anyone in your family work for hire at the border?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

37. If yes, which form of migration?

- 1. Seasonal
- 2. The whole year

3. Circle migration

38. In 2015, which were the sources of your family income?

- 1. Cultivation
- 2. Livestock
- 3. Trading, service
- 4. Work for-hired
- 5. Rituals, new year
- 6. Savings
- 7. Gifts
- 8. Salary
- 9. Other (specified):

39. Could you please estimate your income from different sources in 2015?

<i>N o</i>	<i>Income Source</i>	<i>Estimate the amount (VN dong)</i>
1	Selling rice, corn, cassava..., how many kg:	
2	Selling vegetable, fruits, how many kg:.....	
3	Salary from the government	

4	Livestock, raising fishes	
5	Handicraft, mining	
6	Trade, service	
7	Hunting, logging	
8	Work for hired	
9	Gifts, support from relatives	
10	Interest of savings	
11	Other (specified):	
Total:		

40. In March 2016, how much was your family income?:.....*đồng*

41. Could you please estimate your expenditure in 2015?

<i>No</i>	<i>Expenditures</i>	<i>Estimate the amount (đồng)</i>
	The cost of production (seeds, fertilizer, insecticide, ...)/year	
	The cost of raising livestock/year	

	Buying rice, corn, cassava... (day x 365 days)	
	Food (meat, fish, egg, vegetable, fruits...)/day x 365 days	
	Oil, salt, fishsource.../month x 12 months	
	Sugar, milk, cake/month x 12 months	
	Drinks /month x 12 months	
	Soap, toothpaste, haircut/month x 12 months	
	Smoke/ month x 12 months	
	Coal,Gas,electricity/ month x 12 months	
	Clothes, shoes,blanket/year	
	Building, repairing house, kitchen.../year	
	Byuing facilities (motorbike, tivi, beds, cupboard,...)/year	
	Education/ year	
	Healthcare/ year	

	Entertainment/ year	
	Weddings, funerals, rituals/ year	
	Cost of travel/ year	
	Contribution for various funds of local government,.../ year	
	Others:	
Total:		

42. In 3/2016, how much did you spend:*đồng*

43. In 2015, after spent for all expenditure, could you save money?

Yes No

44. If yes, how much did you save?.....*đồng*

45. Do you have to borrow money last year?

	Amount	Lenders	Monthly interest
Borrow on interest			
Borrow			

46. What is the rank of your family following the local government' s criteria?

1. Rich
2. Quite rich

- 3. Medium
- 4. Poor
- 5. Hunger

47. How do you rank your family yourself?

- 1. Rich
- 2. Quite rich
- 3. Medium
- 4. Poor
- 5. Hunger

48. What do you have in these following facilities? (circle the answer)

46.1. Production tools and transport means	46.2. Family equipments	46.3. entertainment and telecommunication equipments
1. Tractor	1. Gas cooker	1. Satellite antenna
2. Rice mill	2. Air con	2. VCD/DVD player
3. Rice thrasher	3. Telephone	3. radio-cassette
4. Corn thrasher	4. Fridge	4. Computer
5. Water pumper	5. Expensive cupboard >1 mil. dong	5. Tivi
6. Livestock food Grinder	6. Washing machine	6. Mobile phone
7. Car/truck	7. Electric heater	7. Other (specified):
8. Motorbike	8. Other (specified):	

9. Motor-boat		
10. Other (specified):		

49. At present, which types of land does your family own?

Type of land	Area (m ²)
49.1.Paddy land	
49.2. Swidden	
49.3. Riverside land	
49.4. Garden	
49.5. Residential land	
49.6. Pond, lake	
49.7. Forest	
49.8. Shop	
49.9. Other (specified):	

50. How did you acquire those lands?

Type of land	Through inheritance	Through byuing	3. Inheritance and buying
50.1.Paddy land			
50.2. Swidden			
50.3. Riverside land			
50.4. Garden			
50.5. Residential land			
50.6. Pond, lake			
50.7. Forest			
50.8. Shop			
50.9. Other (specified):			

51. If you bought the land, which year?

52. During the last 10 years, has your family sold any land?

Type of land	Sold	Not sold
52.1.Paddy land		
52.2. Swidden		
52.3. Riverside land		
52.4. Garden		
52.5. Residential land		
52.6. Pond, lake		
52.7. Forest		
52.8. Shop		
52.9. Other (specified):		

53. What reason did you have for selling land?

1. To move to another place
2. To get capital for investment
3. To pay debt
4. To divide inheritance for the children
5. Others

54. What type of your house?

	1. Temporary
	2. Semi-permanent 3. Permanent

55. What was the main source of money to build that house?

1. Your own money;
2. Through inheritance from parents
3. Money from social organizations
4. Others (specified):

IV. LANGUAGE, CULTURAL LIFE AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

56. Which is your mother tongue?

1. Tay
2. Nung
3. National language (Viet)
4. Other (specified):

57. Beside your mother language, Do you know others?

1. Tay
2. Nung
3. National language (Viet)
4. Other (specified):

58. In which level do you know your own language?

- Speak, read and write fluently
- Speak fluently but illiterate
- Understand but cannot speak
- Do not know

59. In which language are you more proficient: national language (Viet) or your mother language?

- More proficient in national language
- The same
- Less proficient in national language than mother language

60. (If) you speak the national language in which level?

1. Speak proficiently and can think in that language
2. Speak proficiently
3. Not yet proficient, still find language difficult
4. Do not know

61. Where did you learn national language?

1. At home
2. At school
3. In the army
4. At the workplace
5. Market
6. Other context (specified):

62. At home, which is the language you most use?
1. Tay
 2. Nung
 3. National language (Viet)
 4. Other (specified):
63. In daily life in the village, workplace, which language do you often use?
1. Tay
 2. Nung
 3. National language (Viet)
 4. Other (specified):
64. Which language do you want your children to use in studying at school?
1. Only the mother language
 2. Study in the mother language in some years and then the national language
 3. Only study in national language
 4. Difficult to answer
65. If you can choose your leader, from which ethnic group will you choose?
1. People from your ethnic group
 2. Ethnicity has no meaning
66. What do you think if your children or relatives get married with people from other ethnic groups?
- I do not like that marriage
It does not matter as long as that spouse respects our customs
I prefer people of the same ethnic group but do not oppose that marriage
Ethnicity has no meaning in marriage
Difficult to answer
67. Among your brothers, sisters and relatives, has anyone married people from other ethnic groups?
- Yes
No
68. If yes, which ethnic groups?
1. Tay
 2. Nung
 3. Kinh (Viet)
 4. Other (specified):
69. Do you have friends from other ethnic groups?
- Yes
No
70. If yes, which ethnic groups?
- Tay
Nung
Kinh (Viet)
Hoa
Hmong
Yao
Other (specified):
71. From which ethnic group is your closest friend?
- Tay

Nung
Kinh (Viet)
Hoa
Hmong
Yao
Other (specified):

72. What is the occupation of that person?

V. SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT RITUAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

73. Last year, which rituals did your family hold?

Lunar new year
Visiting ancestor' grave (March ritual)
Doan Ngo ritual (5/5)
Mid July ritual (14-15/7)
New rice ritual
National day 2/9
International labor day 1/5
International Women day 8/3
International Children day 1/6
New year
Ancestor anniversary
Birthday party of family members
One month/year ceremony for a child
Bad luck relief ritual

74. Could you list some traditional games of your ethnic group?

75. Could you list title of folk songs?.....

76. In your opinion, should young people consult a fortuneteller before getting marriage?

Should
Should not
Difficult to answer

77. In your opinion, should people invite the priest to do ritual at the funeral?

Yes, should
No, should not

VI. SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

78. Do you or your family have plans to move to another place?

Yes
No

79. If yes, where do you want to move to?

Rural area
Town
City
Lowland area

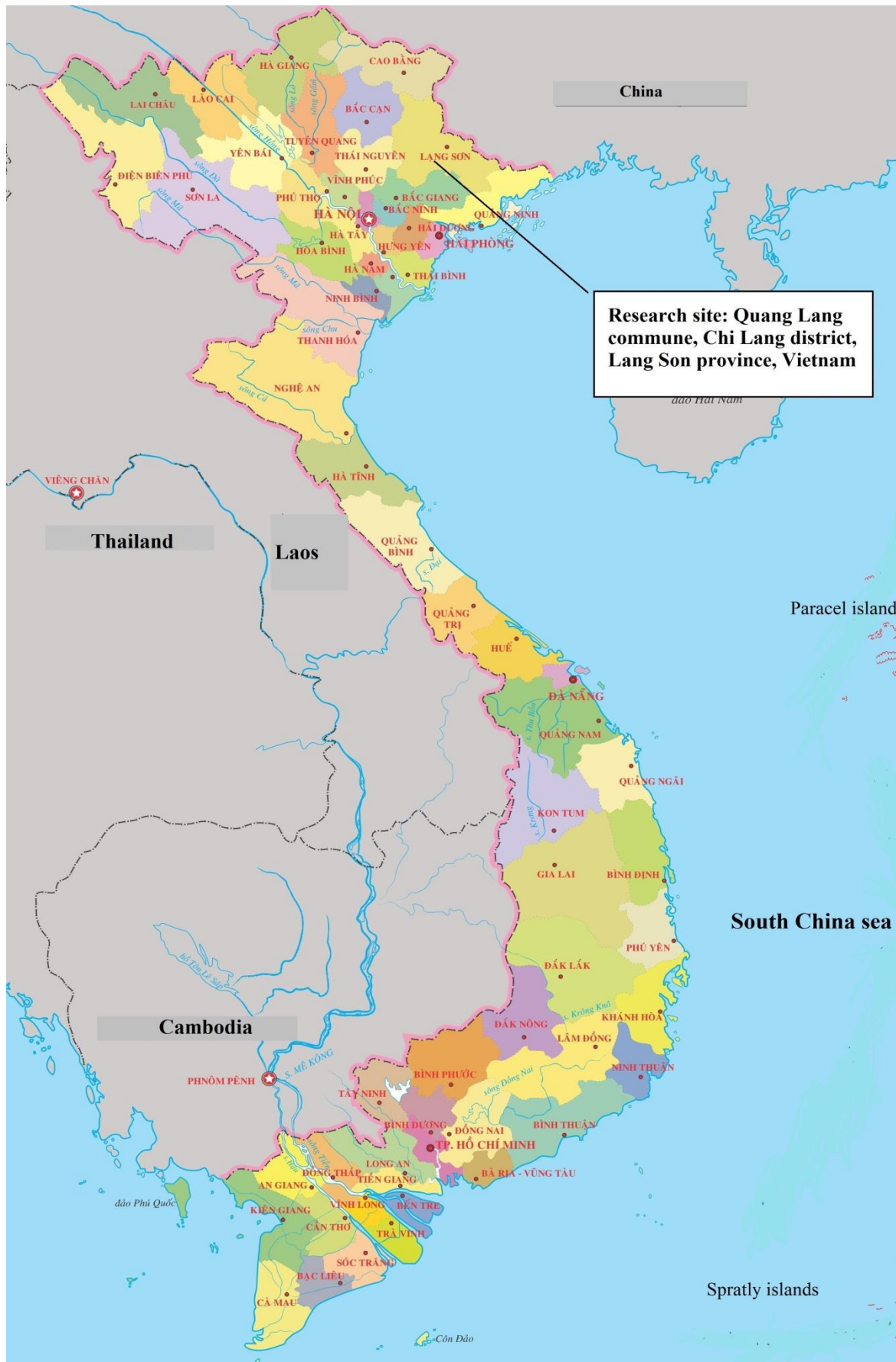
80. If you want to move to town or city, why?

1. To have better living condition
2. Higher cultural life in the city
3. Better health care
4. Better service
5. Access to education easier for the children
6. Higher salary
7. Better working condition
8. More leisure time
9. Other reasons (specified):

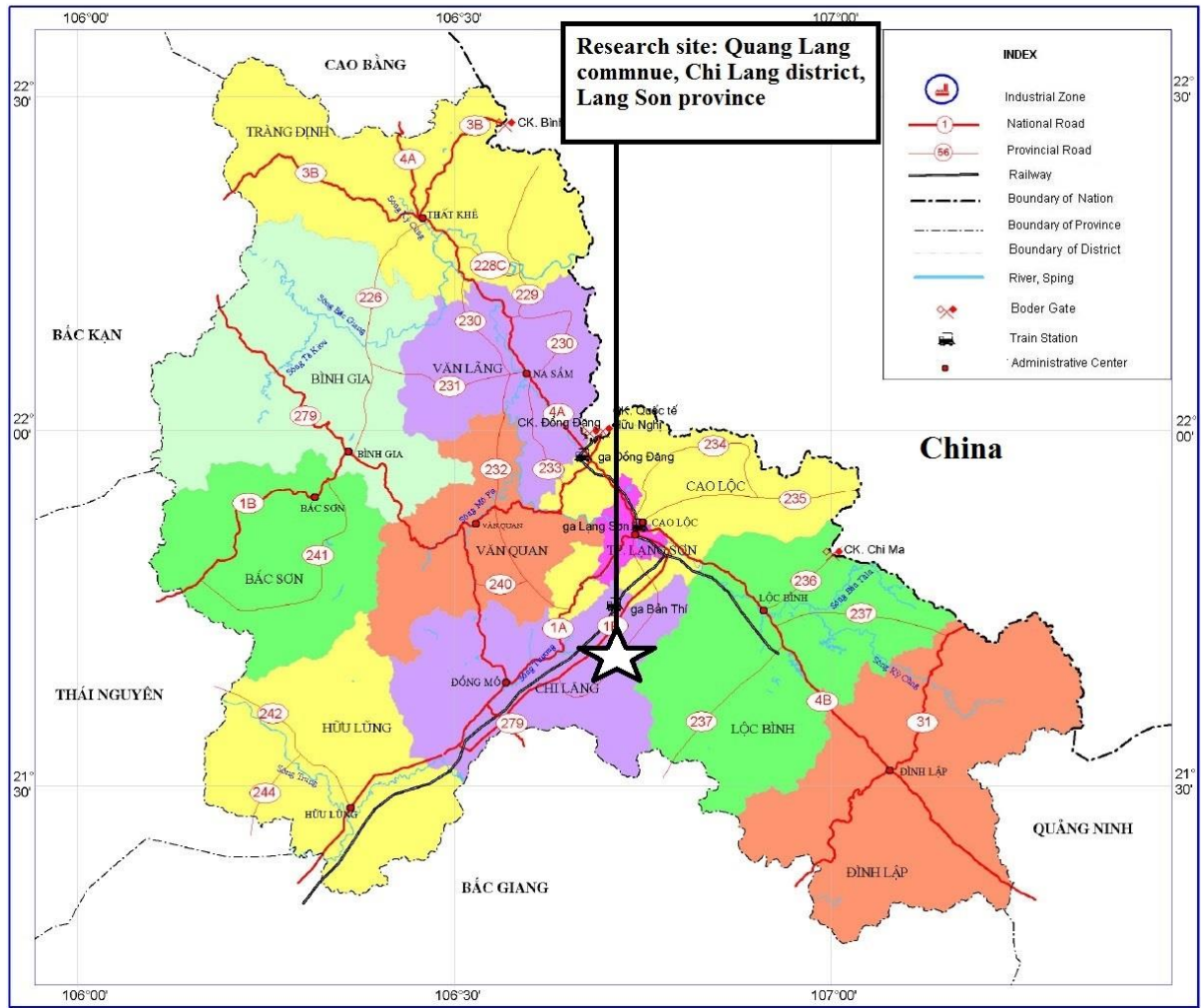
81. If you want to move to the rural area, why?

1. To have better living condition
2. Better food security
3. Closer to relatives
4. Not familiar to city life
5. Quieter surroundings
6. Better climate
7. Other reasons (specified):

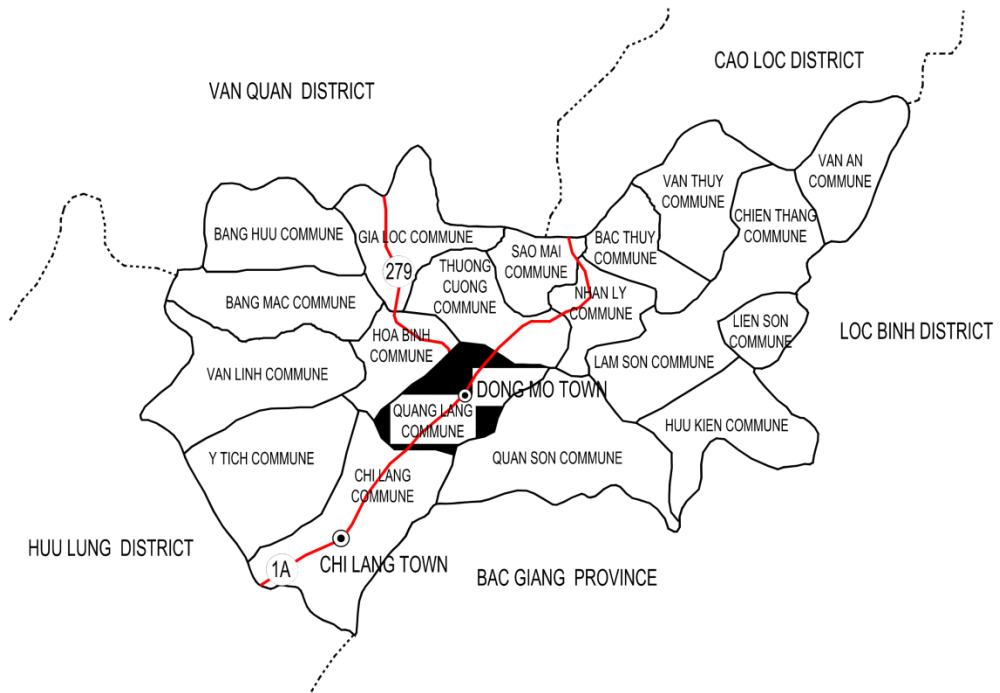
APPENDIX 2: Map of research site



LANG SON MAP



ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF CHI LANG DISTRICT



APPENDIX 3: Picture of research site



View of Lang Dang village, Quang Lang commune



National road 1A running through Khun Phang village, Quang Lang commune



A corner of Dong Mo town, Chi Lang district



Four Seasons (Bon Mua) guesthouse right next to the field in Khun Phang village, Quang Lang commune



A new guesthouse is being built in Khun Phang village, Quang Lang commune



Newly-built houses and factories along National Road 1A



Residential area along National Road 1A in Khun Phang village.



Intersection in Khun Phang village, where there are many farmers working as motorbike driver (xe om) waiting for customers.



A rich family in Lang Dang village, Quang Lang commune (Father and daughter standing next to the new car).



A pathway in the residential area far away from National Road 1A in Lang Dang village, Quang Lang commune



House of a poor agricultural household in Lang Dang village, Quang Lang commune



Inter-village road along the field was concreted in Khun Phang village, Quang Lang commune.