

Governing Masculinity:
How Structures Shape the Lives and Health of
Dislocated Men in Post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

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Since the start of *Doi Moi* (Renovation) over twenty years ago, Vietnam has increasingly opened its society and economy to the global capitalist economy and culture. The country has witnessed numerous changes in all aspect of everyday life, affecting individual men and women, their relationships with each other, and their relationships with other social and political institutions. My dissertation explores the challenges that three groups of dislocated men – men who were migrant laborers from a rural setting; men who were among the first methadone patients in the country; and men who sold sex to other men in Hanoi – were facing as they were struggling to build their manhood and to establish (or reject) aspects of culturally prescribed masculinities in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam. I focus on their experiences with three structures, namely the market-bound socialist state, the fledgling capitalist market, and the patriarchal family, that together shape these men's everyday life struggles, their ethics of the self (especially their imagining of themselves as *trụ cột gia đình*, the pillar of the family), and ultimately their lives and health. I argue that in the context of post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam, these three powerful structures constitute, and are constituted by, the political economy of the male body, and that this relationship between structure and the body are best represented in the experiences of the men in this study. The male bodies examined here include: the exploitable body of migrant labors whose paths to manhood are limited by their lack of resources and capital other than their own sweat, tears, and flesh; the

deviant body of men whose adherence to the regime of state-sponsored methadone is their only hope to recover from social death caused by their past heroin use; and the rejected body of men selling sex to other men who face the “problem of recognition.” My analysis shows that their embodied forms of labor, whether on a highway, in a drug treatment center, or in a sexual marketplace, play a critical role in the making of their manhood. Their bodies are at the same time useful and disposable under the logics of power operated by the three powerful structures that offer possibilities, limitations, and various forms of desire (economic, erotic and ethical). While the male body of dislocated men bears great potential for man-making, they are also highly vulnerable to the exploitative practices of the state, to the vagaries of the market, and to disappointment of their own families.

My dissertation shows various strategies, however seemingly premature, fragile and sometimes detrimental to their health, which these men deployed to overcome barriers and to make the best use of their limited resources in order to make their road to become *trụ cột gia đình*. These strategies, I will show, are forms of “strategic” and yet structurally determined decisions and action of these men, and they reflect constrained agency in confrontation with the “structural violence” that shapes experiences of dislocation, marginalization and stigmatization, and aggravates their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. My dissertation contributes to social science theory of men and masculinities by bringing to the center of analysis the lived experiences of men in post-socialist settings that are often at the margin in studies on men and masculinities. My dissertation also contributes to the burgeoning literature on men and HIV/AIDS, and men’s health in general, through deepened analysis of the political economy of the male body and the relationship of this political economy with vulnerabilities in relation to HIV/AIDS and other health issues.

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

Critical Studies of Men, Masculinities and Health in Post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam

Over the past twenty-five years, Vietnam has embarked on a state-initiated social and economic reform process commonly known as *Doi Moi* (Renovation). Although *Doi Moi* has not been as large scale as a similar transformation (known as *Kaifang*) in China, nor as dramatic and fraught with political change as in the former Soviet Union (known as *Perestroika*), the effects of *Doi Moi* on Vietnamese society and individual men and women have been nothing but transformative. As Vietnam has increasingly opened its society and economy to the global capitalist economy and culture, the country has witnessed numerous changes in all aspect of everyday life. The experiences of these changes on individual men and women, their relationships with each other, and their relationships with other social and political institutions (family, community, the government) have been the subject of great interest to scholars both in Vietnam and around the world (Beresford 2008; Luong Van Hy 2010; Pham Xuan Nam and Boothroyd 2000; Taylor 2004; Tran Thi Van Anh and Le Ngoc Hung 1997; Werner and Belanger 2002a).

My dissertation explores the challenges that three groups of dislocated men – men who were migrant laborers from a rural village; men who were among the first methadone patients in the country; and men who sell sex to other men in Hanoi – were facing as they were struggling to build their manhood and to establish (or reject) aspects of culturally prescribed masculinities in

post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam. I focus on their experiences with three structures, namely the market-bound socialist state, the fledgling capitalist market, and the patriarchal family, that all together shape these men's everyday life struggles, their ethics of the self (especially their imagining of themselves as *trụ cột gia đình* (the pillar of the family, a cultural category that I will discuss in great detail throughout this dissertation), and ultimately their lives and health. I argue that in the context of post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam, these three powerful structures constitute, and are constituted by, the political economy of the male body, and this relationship between structure and the body are best represented in the experiences of the men in this study. The male bodies examined here include: the exploitable body of migrant labors whose paths to manhood are limited by their lack of resources and capital other than their own sweat, tears, and flesh; the deviant body of men whose adhere to the regime of state-sponsored methadone is their only hope to recover from social death caused by their past heroin use; and the rejected body of men selling sex to other men whose expectations of being *trụ cột gia đình* may never be realized. My analysis shows that their embodied forms of labor, whether on a highway, in a drug treatment center, or in a sexual marketplace, play a critical role in the making of their manhood. Their bodies are at the same time useful and disposable under the logics of power operated by the three powerful structures that offer possibilities, limitations, and various forms of desires (economic, erotic and ethical). While the male body of dislocated men bears great potential for man-making, they are also highly vulnerable to the exploitative practices of the state, to the vagaries of the market, and to disappointment of their own families.

And yet, for all three groups of men, returning to the family and doing everything they can to achieve the symbolic capital of Vietnamese masculinity *trụ cột gia đình* could be

interpreted as a way for them to resist the “structural violence” (Galtung 1969; Galtung and Hoivik 1971) caused by the three powerful structures, and to prove their social worth. My dissertation shows various strategies, however seemingly premature, fragile and sometimes detrimental to their health, which these men deployed to overcome barriers and to make the best use of their limited resources in order to make their road to become *trụ cột gia đình*. These strategies, I will show, are forms of “strategic” and yet structurally determined decisions and action of these men, and they reflect constrained agency in confrontation with the “structural violence” that shapes experiences of dislocation, marginalization and stigmatization, and aggravates their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS (Farmer 1996; Parker 2002; Parker and Aggleton 2003). Understanding both constraints and strategies to overcome, I argue, are critical to understand men’s vulnerabilities to severe health issues, including HIV/AIDS, in post-socialist settings. My dissertation contributes to social science theory of men and masculinities by bringing to the center lived experiences of men in post-socialist settings that are often at the margin in studies on men and masculinities. My dissertation also contributes to the burgeoning literature on men and HIV/AIDS, and men’s health in general through deepened analysis of the political economy of the male body and the relationship of this political economy and vulnerabilities HIV/AIDS and other health issues.

In the following sections of the chapter, I will situate my dissertation in the larger body of research on men and masculinity in general, and in particular with studies on men and HIV/AIDS. I will then discuss the context of my study in relation to recent changes in Vietnam, especially in terms of the three structures that are important for the men in my study as well as in terms of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its management. The last section of this chapter describes

the study methodology and the three sub-studies on three groups of men that contribute the empirical material for my dissertation.

Theoretical Perspectives

Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities

The term “critical studies of men and masculinities” have been used to distinguish from “men’s studies” in the sense that the former is “inspired by, but not simply parallel to, feminist research on women” while the latter is sometimes considered as defensive reaction against feminist development in women’s studies (Connell et al. 2005: 2). Indeed, the emergence of critical studies of men and masculinity has been influenced in large part by various paradigm shifts in feminist/gender and queer/sexuality studies which have in turn have been shaped by events in the world outside of the academies (Connell et al. 2005; Whitehead 2002; Whitehead and Barrett 2001b). Since around mid-20th century, feminist theoretical perspectives have shifted from a focus on the question of women in order to raise women’s voices and perspectives (though often a Western one) to the approach that emphasizing gender differences between and among women of different race, class and sexuality and exposing the working of power structures that underline both gender and other social inequalities (for review, see for examples Lewin 2006; Visweswaran 1997; Zinn et al. 2005). A major contribution of feminist scholarship to our understanding of gender is to deconstruct notions that were previously taken for granted such as “patriarchy,” “universal sexual asymmetry,” the categories of “women” and “men,” and even the

notion that gender is socially constructed on the basis of biological given “sex.” Judith Butler, often cited as an example of the post-structuralist turn in feminist scholarship, argues that “gender is not to culture as sex is to nature” and she further proposes that “gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which ‘sexed nature’ or a ‘natural sex’ is produced and established as ‘prediscursive’ prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts” (Butler 1990: 7). Butler further suggests that it is in performativity itself that gender operates, (re)embodies in multiple ways that challenge the rigid binary of man/woman (see also Morris 1994).

Almost in parallel with, and yet significantly influenced by the development of feminism and feminist scholarship, are the efforts to theorize sexuality away from earlier frameworks that treat biological configurations as the foundation, if not determinants, of the experiences of sexual selves and sexual relations. Such frameworks include, for example, the “sexual science” model that are still pervasive in Western medicine, as well as the “culture-influence” model that once was influential in social science studies of “sexual life of savages” in non-Western societies and cultures. Theoretical shift, often known as “social constructionism approach” (Parker and Gagnon 1995; Vance 1991), that challenges such models comes from many sources that may be at odds with each other in terms of theoretical foundation (symbolic interactionism vs. post-structuralism), of social and political commitment (social inequalities vs. academic queering), and of influences by historical and global movements (reproductive health and rights, gay and lesbian rights, and HIV/AIDS). Over the past few decades or so, social science studies inspired by the “social constructionism approach” have furthered our understanding of sexual cultures, sexual identities, and sexual communities in ways that have theoretical and practical

implications. Furthermore, cross-cultural sexuality studies have helped to complicate our understandings of gender and gender identity by pointing out that for many cultures what it is to be male and female, masculine and feminine vary greatly, and that the notion of sexual identity independent from gender relations many not be intelligible in many parts of the world (Parker and Easton 1998; Parker and Gagnon 1995). In recent years, while some scholars within this approach to the study of sexuality have pushed for probing further into political economic structures that shape sexual and gender inequalities in the context of globalized inequalities (Corrêa et al. 2008; Parker et al. 2000a), queer theorists have moved to (de)constructing dominant representation of sexuality in literature and media, including the construct of the heterosexual/homosexual binary, which are viewed as part of a knowledge/power regime that frame sexual subjectivities of individuals and communities (see, for example, Sedgwick 1997; Sedgwick and Frank 2003).

Against the backdrop of this theoretical context, I now move to discuss the development of critical studies of men and masculinity, especially in the fields of sociology and anthropology. Over the past few decades, studies of men and masculinity have evolved rapidly and a number of edited volumes on men and masculinity in different continents have been published (Brownell and Wasserstrom 2002; Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994; Gutmann 2003; Lindsay and Miescher 2003; Louie and Low 2003). A quick review of these various publications shows that studies on men and masculinity are very diverse in terms of scholarly disciplines (sociology, anthropology, history, psychology, cultural studies, women and gender studies and queer/sexuality studies), theoretical perspectives (psychoanalysis, feminism, neomarxism, post-structuralism, post-modernism and post-colonialism) and methodological approach (social surveys, ethnography,

discourse analysis, and others) (Connell et al. 2005: 4). In the space of this section, I will briefly review some recent developments in the fields of sociology and anthropology that have both made significant contributions to critical studies of men and masculinity and are the fields where my study is situated.

Early pre-occupation in both sociology and anthropology, under varying influences of psychoanalysis, functionalism, and emphasis on cultural differences, was about men fulfilling their gender/sex roles. One extreme tendency of this pre-occupation was for some scholars to propose the “crisis of masculinity” thesis as a reflection on the fact that certain dominant ways of being a man were challenged by social and economic changes as well as by the emergence of feminism as a social force. This thesis was the subject of critique both on conceptual grounds (for framing masculinity as singular and unchangeable quality) and on political grounds (for potentially leading to backlash on women and feminism) (Connell 1995; Whitehead and Barrett 2001a). Since the mid-1980s, new attempts to theorize masculinity have emerged, most notably by R.W Connell in Australia, Michael Kimmel in the US, and Jeff Hearn in the UK, who despite their different emphases have contributed to sociological inquiry of men and masculinity in fundamental ways. Connell defines masculinity as “simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices on bodily experience, personality and culture” (Connell 1995: 71). Unlike previous attempts to define masculinity, which put emphasis on essentialist, normative, or symbolic aspects of men’s life, Connell’s definition pays attention to practices of both men and women that shape men’s experiences of being a man in their relationships with other men and women. Connell further proposes three main structures upon which practices of masculinity are

“simultaneously positioned” (Connell 1995: 73) at any historical juncture, meaning that practices of masculinity help to shape as well as are shaped by these structures in inseparable ways. These structures are: power relations, especially the domination of men as a group over women; production relations, or the division of labor between men and women; and cathexis or emotional relations, especially sexuality, desires, love, and other emotionality. A few years later, Connell added another structure, which she calls “symbolism,” referring to discourses, language, and symbolic materials (Connell 2000: 26). The acknowledgment of culture and discourse in shaping practices of masculinity signifies a significant shift from the earlier emphasis on practices and carries with it implications in both theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of masculinity.

Another significant contribution of Connell in theorizing masculinity is her attention to hierarchy among men and among different configurations of masculinity. Partly inspired by early feminist characterization of men’s homogenous domination over women, she proposes the notion of “hegemonic masculinity” as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 1995: 77). Using the Gramscian concept of hegemony, Connell emphasizes the need to understand certain configuration of masculinity as legitimate and dominant in any given social and cultural settings only because they are supported by cultural ideals and/or institutional power. Such configuration exists, she further argues, and maintains the “patriarchal dividend” which is the benefit and advantage to men as a group while maintaining an unequal gender order. The importance of the concept of hegemonic masculinity lies in the fact that it brings attention to

the existence of hierarchy of masculinity and to the fact that not all men who embody different types of masculinities benefit equally from “patriarchal dividend.” As such, Connell points to other configurations of masculinity – namely complicit, marginalized, and subordinated masculinities – that often exist simultaneously and share the same social and cultural space with hegemonic masculinity. The intertwining of multiplicity and hegemony in conceptualizing masculinity has inspired numerous studies of how sub-groups of men from various social and cultural settings perceive and perform their masculinities, feeling empowered and/or disempowered in constant relation to a hegemonic masculinity in their own settings (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009).

Critiques of Connell’s framework point out that while the understanding of multiplicity and hegemony is important, the existence of a single hegemonic masculinity in any society is questionable (Jefferson 2002; Morrell et al. 2012). The notion of multiplicity could lend itself to a simplistic application of constructing endless typologies of masculinities assumed and enacted by different groups of men who are different in such dimensions as race, ethnicity, sexuality and class categories. Such simplistic ways of (socially) constructing masculinities could make invisible variations within subordinate masculinities as well as overemphasizing the cultural prescription of hegemonic masculinity over lived experiences of men (Coles 2009; Morrell et al. 2012). Furthermore, it could reify the category of “man” and take for granted the connection between men, male body and masculinity. Instead of seeing commonality among masculinities in the type of body, some have argued that it is the type of act – one that signifies masculine self – that really counts as important element in constructing masculinity (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009).

Being critical of the gaps in the multiplicity model while paying attention to discourses and practices that construct masculinities characterizes the third wave of sociological inquiries of masculinity, which has emerged since late 1980s (Whitehead and Barrett 2001a). Influenced by the turn to post-structuralism and post-modernism that I discuss earlier, scholars of this third wave lay emphasis on understanding how discourses and practices of masculinity shape gendered subjectivities of both men and women, opening up the possibility of seeing masculinity as well as manhood beyond the confine of male body. One example of this direction is C.J. Pascoe's ethnography of "making masculinity" in the context of high schools in the US (Pascoe 2007). Building on the model of multiple masculinities offered by Connell, and yet using critical insights from queer theory of gender and sexuality, Pascoe shows that masculinity is not a homogenous category that any boy possesses by virtue of being male, but rather "a configuration of practices and discourses that different youths (boys and girls) embody in different ways and to different degrees" (2007:5). Examining in details what she refers to as "deep play" (Pascoe 2007: 151) of gendered and sexualized identities at various situations and moments of conflicts within a high school environment, Pascoe shows how masculinity as a category of gender is constructed, deployed, and negotiated in a power play between various groups of high school students, including both boys and girls, often to the effect of reconfirming the dominance of heterosexuality and boys.

The environment of high school or in the years immediately after (especially workplace or lack thereof) are fertile grounds for studying young men, their masculinities and life struggles, a tradition dated back to earlier work by Paul Willis on young working class lads in high school in Great Britain in 1970s (Willis 1981, 1984). One particularly notable work is the study by

Linda McDowell (2003) among white, working class males (ages 16–17) in two cities in England during the year immediately after their high school in order to examine the impact of place on opportunities and outcomes of these young men as well as the roles of class, ethnicity, and gender on their construction of masculine identity. In industrialized countries, the sea change in the structure, nature, distribution of work and employment, which are characterized by David Harvey (1989) as a movement from “Fordism” to “flexible accumulation” or “casualization,” took place in early 1970s and accelerated in the decades after. Such movement has created increasingly high proportion of low paid, insecure service jobs, which have challenged the long standing image of men as industrial workers and household breadwinners, and are thus feared by some to be causing a crisis in masculinity for working class men (see, for example, Bourgois 1996a for a case of the US). Through interview materials with the young men, McDowell argues that claim of a crisis of masculinity among these young men are exaggerated as they showed strength in their sense of personal masculinity and their desire to establish an independent family in the future. She also challenges what she sees as an unfair characterization of these young men as predominantly “laddish” or “yobs.” She argues that they might best be described as having hybrid masculinity—some “laddish” or “protest masculinity” qualities (rough, antiauthority, aggressive, sexually oriented, concerned with their reputation among their peers) along with a commitment to “domestic respectability” (a strong work ethic and a desire to marry and raise a family) (McDowell 2003: 223-226).

When compared to the field of sociology, it seems that anthropology has lagged although “anthropology has always involved men talking to men about men” (Gutmann 1997: 385). Matthew Gutmann further argues that while anthropological studies of women in a variety of

cultural contexts have made important contribution to feminism and to our understanding of women and gender, most anthropological studies on men have not engaged enough with debates on theorizing masculinity that I have described earlier. In a review that offers a broad critique of both anthropological and sociological studies that take the category of “masculinity” and “man” for granted, Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne are more prescriptive in arguing that anthropology and its ethnographic sensibility has a lot to offer towards “dislocating [hegemonic] masculinity” (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994: 9). They maintain that anthropological studies of masculinity need to align itself more strongly with “feminist interpretations of postmodernism” which focuses on the fluidity of gendering process as well as the multiple locations along various dimensions of differences where masculinity is experienced and enacted to produce competing masculine identities in any given setting. With similar emphasis on the intersections between gender and other dimensions of inequalities, in the first edited volume that incorporates both studies on femininity and masculinity in Southeast Asia, Aihwa Ong and Michael Peletz argue that “the study of manhood is of value not simply because it yields interesting ethnographic data on constructions of masculinity, which enhance our understanding of the dialectically related domain of femininity. It also helps bring into especially sharp focus the merits – indeed the necessity – of describing and analyzing gender in relation to other forms of differences and inequality (class, race, etc.) which are in a very basic sense constituting and constitutive of masculinity and femininity alike” (Ong and Peletz 1995: 10).

Broadly speaking, studies of men and masculinities in anthropology have moved in between an early occupation with what Michael Peletz calls “the political economy of contested symbols and meanings” (Peletz 1993: 69) and a more direct examination of the political

economic structures that shape masculinity and the experiences of individual men (and sometimes women who are important for these men). A brief review of some important work on men and masculinities in anthropology supports this argument. One of the landmark books on gender and sexuality, *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality* (Ortner and Whitehead 1981), includes several chapters on symbolic power of rituals, folklore and myths in shaping the formation and the experiences of men in various cultural settings (Brandes 1981; Nadelson 1981). In his earlier publication, Stanley Brandes (1980) explores a variety of folklore genres associated with hierarchies of gender and status in Andalusian culture. The book argues that folklore has beneficial psychological consequences: it allows men to express potentially disruptive sentiments in socially acceptable ways. These underlying, disruptive sentiments include the bitter class conflict between men of the town's controlling elite, the large landowners, and the landless, dependent, wage laborers. The other is men's simultaneous feeling of hostility and desire towards women, even when they were not physically present while men were drinking and working. Sharing interests on idioms and ritual tradition, Gilbert Herdt (1981) describes the existence of a secret ritual cult among the Sambia, one which mandated a prolonged period of homosexual experiences for all young men prior to marriage. Herdt focuses on the description and analysis of Sambian men's "idioms" or the practices involved in Sambia male initiation rites, the general beliefs supporting these practices, the meaning these experiences have for the initiates, and the role played by these experiences in the development of their masculine identities. Gilbert Herdt's important contribution in challenging Western notion of sexual identity and practice aside, his work raises many questions about the structure of gender power within Sambian society as well as the effects of changing social and

economic conditions on the “idioms” of masculinity at work. Following earlier tradition in anthropology of profiling cultures around the world, David Gilmore’s (1990) book titled *Manhood in the Making* explores the commonalities in men's need to demonstrate manhood in a range of a wide variety of cultures, from ancient Greece to Japan, China, India, tribal groups South America and in Africa. Building on claim of the existence of “deep structure of masculinity,” Gilmore uses examples from “each of the basic socioeconomic types” and “all the inhabited continents” to question whether there is a “global archetype” of manhood that cuts across time and space (1990: 99). His “panoramic” and arguably positivistic examination of masculinity offers the answer to this question by describing cross-cultural similarities in the prescriptions for men to nurture, sacrifice, and provide as opposed to women and femininity. However, one could argue that Gilmore focuses on versions of hegemonic masculinity, and therefore turns a blind eye to variations and differences of masculinity in the cultures under examination, and uncritically accepts the assumptions that “men” exist as a natural, unmediated category.

The complexity of gender in general and of masculinity in particular in real life, which sometimes defy the symbols and ideologies that contribute to shaping gender practices, is the focus of later work. In his study on gender and sexual cultures in Brazil, Richard Parker (1991) emphasizes that Brazilian sexual culture in its remarkable complexity opens up experiential possibilities as much as it constrains them. He argues that from the time of the Portuguese explorers sexuality has been a focus of self-conscious, ambivalent cultural fabrications, and it is a key metaphor for *brasilidade*, or “Brazilianness.” In addition to Brazilian “gender ideology,” which emphasizes patriarchal tradition, with its polarization of male and female roles, its double

standard, and its sharp distinction between masculinity (activity, domination) and femininity (passivity, submission), there exist other formal, specialized discourses that shape Brazilian sexual culture. They are Catholicism's discourse of sex and sin; medicine's discourse of health and sickness, normality and abnormality; and the liberal, modern discourses of psychology, sociology, sexology, gay liberation, and feminism, which highlight sexual diversity rather than sexual perversity. Moreover, Parker shows another frame of reference, the "ideology of the erotic," a discourse at odds with the gender hierarchy and the formal discourses of sexuality. The complexity of various frames of reference shape a Brazil whose "reality is complex and multiple, and ... nothing is ever quite what it appears to be" (1991: 164) as the experience of yearly Carnivals, a symbolic centerpiece of Brazilian identity, exemplifies.

Two other studies in Latin American settings are worth noting for their attention to both endurance and significant changes in gender ideologies and practices and especially the macro and micro-level structures that shape those characteristics. The book *Life is Hard* by Roger Lancaster (1992) traces the unfolding of the Nicaraguan Revolution through the 1990 electoral defeat of the Sandinistas, but from a micro-level perspective. Concentrating on power relations within the family, Lancaster argues that the revolution failed to address and transform the culture of machismo as well as the system of gender relations between both men and women, and men and men. "Machismo is resilient," he further argues, "because it constitutes not simply a form of "consciousness," not "ideology" in the classical understanding of the concept, but a field of productive relations" (1992: 19). Specifically, machismo requires that a man play to two audiences, other men and women. In relation to women, Lancaster argues that machismo is "an ongoing exchange system between men in which women figure as intermediaries," bearing the

children, suffering the blows and abandonment, and compensating for the irresponsibility of their partners. Furthermore, a specific type of men, the *cochón*, who are stigmatized for engaging in passive anal intercourse with another man and are unconcerned with their “macho” reputations, plays an active part in sustaining the culture of machismo by participating in the system as passive partners of “normal” men. The latter’s standing is not diminished, and may even be enhanced, by their active role, which is not stigmatized as homosexual.

A major gap in Lancaster’s analysis, however, is the lack of explicit discussion how men and women in that part of the world engage in resisting and even redefining gender ideologies and practices. That is the gap that Matthew Gutmann (1996) addresses in his insightful work on men and the meanings of macho in urban Mexico, where he seeks “to imagine and invent new ways of describing, interpreting, and explaining cultural emergence and variation” (1996: 13). For the *colonia* popular of Santo Domingo, Mexico City, Gutmann argues that the traditional macho stereotype is inappropriate for describing the multiple and changing meanings of contemporary Mexican masculinities. He asserts that the static and monolithic definition of the Mexican macho is problematic not only in its failure to capture the diverse social locations of Mexican men but also in its assumption that Mexican gender identities are locked in time. In various chapters dealing with “what men say and do to be men” (1996: 17) with regards to fatherhood, violence, alcohol, and sexuality, Gutmann reveals how Mexican men both contest and assert the meanings of macho and what it means “to be a man.” Gutmann finds that although machismo does play a role at the micro and macro levels of a patriarchal Mexican society, it is an ideology with contested meanings that shapes and is shaped by an ever-changing nation. Thus many Mexican men in Gutmann’s study reject the extremes of a machismo ideology, even as

they assert newness of macho masculine identities that include integrity, responsibility, and even caring. Arguing that Mexican women not only have an intense interest in men's evolving gender identities but that, in many instances, they are serving as the "catalysts for change" (1996: 92), Gutmann dedicates a chapter to transformations among women, paying attention to women's formative role in Santo Domingo's consolidation as a community, and to the implications of female activism for gender relations in the neighborhood. Throughout, Gutmann makes a convincing case for according importance to differences within gender groups as to those between men and women and builds a strong argument for viewing gender relations, in Colonia Santo Domingo and beyond, as a series of creative contradictions. He persuasively shows that masculinity must be understood as historical constructions, which are shaped by changing political, social, cultural, and economic conditions.

One could find some of the best features of critical studies of men and masculinities among various studies in Asia. Problematizing structures that shape the contradictions between gender mainstream ideologies and gender alternative ideologies and/or practices, Michael Peletz focuses on what he coins as "practical" and "official" ideologies of gender in Malaysia (Peletz 1996). Peletz's rich account aims to document and analyze cultural constructions of gender and the political economy of contested symbols and meanings, and to elucidate the historical, social, structural, and other dynamics that help reproduce, challenge, and subvert these representations. He is especially concerned with the inconsistencies, contradictions, and paradoxes in the ideology of gender, focusing on a central opposition between *akal* ("reason," "rationality," "intelligence"), associated with men, and *nafsu* ("passion," "desire," "animality"), associated with women. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of official and practical kinship to explain

some of this divergence, Peletz contrasts official views shaped by Islamic ideology that support male dominance with the practical views of daily life that are much more critical of masculine behaviors. While official views positively value male reason over female passion, daily discourse in some instances describes men as neither reasonable nor responsible. According to Peletz, these practical perspectives arise at least in part from the inability of some men to meet the cultural expectations placed on them by wives (and women in general). He attributes their failures to economic disparities caused by colonial and contemporary state development policies that have made it difficult for certain classes of men to live up to more official cultural ideals..

Since Peletz's work, social scientists interested in masculinities in Asia have engaged with men and masculinity from a number of theoretical perspectives as well as on various groups of men. For example, research on men and masculinities in Japan has examined corporate masculinity among business men and their culture of drinking and visiting sex work after work hours (Allison 1994), the hegemonic image of masculinity embodied in the contemporary category of salaryman (*sarariiman*) (Hidaka 2010), and various other groups of men who are in different positions in their relations with the hegemonic masculinity of salaryman, including those who embodied the traditional image of *samurai* (Frühstück and Walthall 2011; Roberson and Suzuki 2003). In India, Joseph Alter has written extensively about male body and masculinity and its complex interstices with nationalism in India, including the body of those who practice national sports of wrestling as well as of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi (Alter 1992; Alter 2000). Caroline and Filippo Osella have written extensively on working class men in South India, where they examine a wide range of aspects of these men including their work, their relations to money earned and spent, their sexuality, their religious initiation and

practices and their consumption of public culture in rapidly modernizing India (Chopra et al. 2004; Osella 1999; Osella and Osella 2006; Osella and Osella 2000). In China, in addition to the first volume that brings together studies on both historical and contemporary perspectives on masculinities and femininities (Brownell and Wasserstrom 2002), Kam Louie is probably the first author who has written extensively on masculine ideals in traditional China, proposing the *wen-wu* dyad (literally means literary-martial) which signifies values of culture/education achievements versus mastery of martial arts for men in traditional China (Louie 2002). It is interesting that most studies on Chinese masculinities, unless they draw from past cultural materials and fictions (Louie and Low 2003), have not built on this dyad as a theoretical frame for understanding men and masculinities in contemporary China. One study examining modern literature since 1980s does not use this theoretical framework, and have approached the topic from other more Western theories, including psychoanalysis (Zhong 2000). Some more recent studies have examined business men and their practices of drinking and visiting sex workers for network building (*goudui*) among themselves and with state officials (Zhang 2001a; Zheng 2006; Zheng 2012; Uretsky 2008; Uretsky 2011). One study focuses on the experience of male factory workers who lost their life-tenured employment as a result of massive economic restructuring in urban China, which creates major tension between workers and managers of state enterprises that in turn is expressed in conflicts over meanings and management man hood and masculinity under social change (Yang 2010). And last but not least, given the massive scale of internal migration (or floating population) and of the socialist legacy in China, it is interesting that only a couple of studies have taken up the challenge of studying working class men who migrate from rural to

urban China (Liu 2011b; Zhang 2011) (especially in comparison to the number of studies on female migrants, see for examples [Chang 2008; Gaetano et al. 2004; Zheng 2007]).

The dearth of studies on men and masculinity in China is unfortunate because learning from the recent transformation of men (and women) in China and similar settings could be revealing for our understanding of gender. Up until recently many of the organizing principles in relation to gender and sexuality in China were different from those in the West. As Brownell and Wasserstrom point out in the first comprehensive volume on men and women in China, the notions of femininity and masculinity are still heavily anchored in relationships to others through the roles of mother/father and wife/husband (and recently much less on daughter/son) rather than around concerns with embodied characteristics and individual identity (Brownell and Wasserstrom 2002: 34). Furthermore, the recent upheaval and transformation during the past few decades in China have affected or occurred in every aspect of China culture and history, “from national politics to everyday life” (2002: 1), of which gender is an important domain. How such transformation from the socialist context to a social and economic configuration that some have termed post-socialism or late-socialism (see, for example, Zhang 2001b for the distinction) affect the ways men and women in China redefine their understanding and practices of masculinity and femininity is an important question to ask. The question of how post-socialist upheavals have affected gender configuration, gender ideologies as well as women’s and men’s subjectivities are as imminent in China as in other similar settings. Writing on post-socialist gender transformation in former socialist countries in Europe and their impacts on gender, Susan Gal and Gail Kligman (2000) observe that “since 1989 the withdrawal of the state from the support of prices, services, and health care and the more general marketization and privatization of the

economy have transformed virtually all the institutions – state, schools, workplaces, households – through which socialist gender regimes were constituted” (2000: 55). Drawing from empirical as well as literature evidence in post-socialist East Central Europe, Susan Gal and Gail Kligman discuss a wide range of gender transformation, from relationships of men and women to the state, to reproduction politics and reproductive life, to gendered division of labor inside and outside of the household, and show how gender ideas and practices have contributed to shaping political, social and economic changes in these countries. And yet, the dearth of studies on men and masculinities in China and other post-socialist settings (see rare examples of studies on men in Russia Ashwin and Lytkina 2004; Hinote and Webber 2012; Pollock 2010), especially when compared to those on women and femininities, have left the category of men as an unmarked, if not silent, area of inquiry.

In summary, my dissertation is situated theoretically in relation to this body of literature, so-called critical studies of men and masculinity. Such studies are at their best when they pay attention to practice, discourse and structures that shape, and are shaped by, multiple and unequal masculinities (and of course in relation to femininity and women) in any given social and cultural settings. They are also at their best when attending to local categories that entail “local moral world” of being a man or woman, and how these categories are contested and even reformulated under influence of changing structural conditions. My dissertation will contribute further to this literature by asking the questions of men and masculinities in a socialist setting, by probing further into the three structures at work as well as the changing meanings of *trụ cột gia đình*, or in other words by combining both sociological and anthropological approaches to the study of men and masculinities.

Men, Masculinity and HIV/AIDS

Over the course of the past three decades, since the arrival of HIV/AIDS epidemic, attention to the relationship between gender and HIV has shifted significantly (Hirsch et al. 2009: 6).

Attention has moved from awareness of the fact that women in many parts of the world accounted for the majority of new cases, to increased analysis and action to address gender inequalities as well as other structural factors that shape their vulnerability (Farmer et al. 1996; Farmer et al. 1993; Gupta 2000), and to the call for more attention to men as both “problem” and “solution” to address HIV among women and among men as exemplified by slogan of “AIDS: Men Make a Difference” in the 2000 World AIDS Campaign (Lindblad 2003; UNAIDS 2000).

While the subsequent increased attention to men and masculinity is a welcome breakthrough in both academic and programmatic concerns with HIV/AIDS, the attention to men and masculinity, as Jennifer Hirsch and colleagues (2009) pointed out “diverges in critical away from transformational promise of the original feminist impulses on which it draws” (Hirsch et al. 2009: 7). They go on to criticize the emphasis in the field of HIV/AIDS on conceptualizing masculinity as sets of beliefs and norms that are internalized by men, rather than as social practices and relational products that are shaped by, and help to shape, institutions and structures of importance for men. Solution that are prioritized by many programs on men and HIV as to raise “critical consciousness” of men’s role in gender inequality and the spread of HIV among both men and women are, therefore, represent “both strategic and intellectual imitations” (2009: 7). More complex solutions and underlying conceptual foundation, which pays attention to

structural inequalities that shape many men's limited life choices and therefore their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, are therefore needed to advance our efforts and to "make a difference."

While literature on men, masculinity, and HIV/AIDS are limited, as compared to the body of literature on vulnerability of women and girls, and most existing literature focuses heavily on homosexually active men and their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, some recent studies have advanced our understandings of heterosexual men and HIV/AIDS. Recent studies have paid attention not only to men's vulnerability to HIV (Barker 2005; Dworkin et al. 2009; Peacock et al. 2009), but also to men's limited access to HIV services (Skovdal et al. 2011), the role of men and masculinity in perpetuating HIV stigma (Mfecane 2012; Wyrod 2011), structural inequalities that shape men's vulnerability, and men's responses to HIV (Campbell 1997; Fordham 1995; Hirsch et al. 2009; Hunter 2007; Hunter 2010a; Hunter 2010b; Liu 2011a; Setel 1999; Setel 1996; Smith 2007; Tersbøl 2006; Vincent 2008).

The later group of studies often share acute concerns over and delve deeply into political economy of various social and cultural configurations that are important to understand vulnerability to HIV/AIDS among their study populations. One example is the work by Mark Hunter (2010b), who brings love and intimacy into the analysis and holds them in dialectical tension with political economic issues such as chronic unemployment, poverty, persistent social and economic inequalities as the legacies of apartheid and colonialism that have received far more attention in studies on HIV/AIDS in South Africa. He argues that AIDS in South Africa is not only "located in apartheid or gender inequalities but in the reconstitution of intimacy as a key juncture between production and reproduction in a period of unemployment and capital-led globalisation" (2010b: 4). Proposing the notion of a "political economy of intimacy," Hunter

examines “the materiality of everyday sex” and discusses the difference between “romantic love” and “provider love” to show that everyday boyfriend-girlfriend “gift” relationships that are based on material rewards, together with affective relationships and moral and reciprocal obligations, are significant factors in understanding the scale of South Africa’s AIDS epidemic. One important insight is that no longer do only men hold the privilege of having many girlfriends, but that women themselves also have several boyfriends, including one for love and others for additional money for food and rent. Within such a context, Hunter argues that masculinity in South Africa has been shifted in new ways, showing, for example, the changing construction of local category of *isoka* (men with many girlfriends) from the early twentieth century to the present time. Hunter argues that the meanings of this category have shifted from one that denoted a stage of life where men could play around with wage-earning power to seduce many women but would eventually ended up in getting married and becoming household head to one that presently signifies almost a perpetual status of not being married and living with many girlfriends without being condemned socially.

In a similar interest on intimacy, love, and HIV in the context of marriage, Jennifer Hirsch and colleagues (2009) propose the notion of “extramarital opportunity structures” (2009: 13-16) as a conceptual tool to explain extramarital sex among men and consequential HIV risks for women in various countries. They argue that this notion “emphasizes the ways meso- and macro-level factors enable men’s participation in extramarital relations” (2009: 7). Throughout the book, drawing from ethnographic evidence, the authors call attention to such factors as restructured economy that confine some women to domestic labors while letting their men off the hook, poverty and economic inequalities that make some men more vulnerable to labor

exploitation and therefore seek alternative means to assert their masculinity, social and economic policies that facilitate labor migration among men as well as create time and space for them to hang out more intensely with other men, changing urban landscapes that create more spaces for sexual exchanges, and booming digital technology (such as cell phones) that facilitate exchanges of sexual innuendos and intimate talk among lovers in extramarital relationships. These factors, Hirsch et al. argue, have permeated and changed the meanings of love, trust and intimacy, and have made sexual risks part and parcel of the marital contract in many parts of the world.

Of particular relevance for my dissertation are studies that analyze relationships of men with political and economic structures that help us to understand men's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Two early studies by Campbell (1997) and Setel (1996, 1999), both in the context of Africa, trace changes in population dynamics, transformation of economic structures as a consequence of colonial and post-colonial legacy, modernity and its moral economy to show how these structural changes have impact upon changing manhood, men's roles in their clans and families, men's sexuality and subsequently men's migration and their exposure to HIV risks. Phillip Setel's work, in particular, brings into focus a broad and yet detailed analysis of various paradoxes that shape the complexities of AIDS in Tanzania up to late 1990s. They were the paradoxes between promises and pitfalls of modernity, between traditional moral system that underlines a folk model of etiology and modern demographic and economic necessities that create vulnerability, between reproduction and sexual risks, and between language about AIDS in epidemiology and clinical practice and the ambiguities grounded in lived experience of his informants. At the center of the book is an ethnographically grounded and historically informed analysis of changing manhood and changing meanings of various traditional institutions,

especially the shrinking of *kihamba* regime (the center of reproduction at biological, social and economic levels on a piece of fertile mountain land) and the subsequent migration of young men to urban settings for economic pursuits where they are exposed to HIV infections. In a similar analysis of the impact of modernity among ethnic minority youth in Southwest China, where the Han/Chinese state always has great interest to both control and transform so-called “backward” minority to become the modern citizenries of the Chinese nation-state, Shao-Hua Liu (2011a) exposes the impacts of various state-initiated transformations during both socialism and recent decades on what she considers as the increasing individualization among Nuosu’s youth, especially young men. Tempted by the lures of money and modernity in urban cities, young Nuosu travel to seek both pleasure and opportunities to prove their newfound meanings of masculine identity. She argues that for young Nuosu men, the stints in the city, with its enticements and dangers, have become important ingredients in constituting a new “rite of passage.” Yet this sojourn often has devastating consequences, whether because of heroin addictions, AIDS or prison, or any combination of these problems, these young men frequently return home with broken dreams. Throughout the book, Liu emphasizes the inter-linkages between transformations brought about by policies of the Chinese state, the globalization of capitalist market economy, and the breakdown of traditional community structures as a consequence of both, in shaping possibilities and constraints for Nuosu men growing up in post-socialist China.

One important feature of the above mentioned studies, which has had significant influence on my work on men growing up in *Doi Moi* Vietnam, is the attention to both what Hirsh et al. called the meso- and macro-level factors, especially the political economic conditions

of men's life, and the everyday life experiences of men that are embodied in their individual and collective practices. On the other hand, my dissertation will provide what is lacking in most studies on men and HIV/AIDS, and that is an analysis of the political economy of the body, especially of the male body. It should be noted that this is not a gap particular for the nascent literature on men and HIV/AIDS, but for the larger body of literature on HIV/AIDS. While the focus on political economy of HIV/AIDS has received increasing attention in the past couple of decades, including a call for "forging a political economy of AIDS" (Singer 1998), an analysis of globalization and the political economy of AIDS (Altman 1999), and an emphasis on "structural interventions" instead of continued investment on individual and behavioral programs (Gupta et al. 2008; Parker et al. 2000b), the attention given to political economy of the body has been anything but adequate.

The body has long been at the center of analysis for social scientists in various fields. In medical anthropology, the body has received attention for its significance in enriching our understanding of the world from phenomenological, symbolic and political economic perspectives (Farquhar and Lock 2007; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987; Sharp 2000). The body has also long been at the center for theorizing about gender (see, for example, Bordo 1989; Butler 1993; Connell 1987; Grosz 1994) and sexuality (see, for example, Fausto-Sterling 2000; Parker 1991). As Susan Bordo (1989) argues, although Foucault was among the first who called attention to body politics through his analysis of the body as both object and site of power that are disseminated through such institutions as prison, school and hospital, feminist scholars have re-appropriated the analysis to make women's bodies visible in the nexus of power and knowledge. The term "corporeal feminism" (Grosz 1994) was coined precisely to delineate

feminist analysis of women's body as an important site for this nexus that often produces women and femininity as the inferior "other" to men and masculinity, and as a site of discipline and disempowerment.

Scholars of men and masculinity have recently started to pay attention to the male body, and the work of R.W. Connell (Connell 2005; Connell 1995) again has provided important insights. At both local and global levels, the male body plays important role in maintaining the various structures of genders relations that I discussed in the first section of this chapter. That is the male body perpetuates violence in the power relations with women and other men; the male body is central to cathexis or emotional relationships, which involves sexuality and other bodily exchanges among and between men and women; the male body has always been subject to regulation as well as had shaped labor, migration and immigration regimes; and the male body has increasingly been object of media that promotes certain kinds of gendered subjectivity while suppressing others. Connell has further called attention to bodily subjectivity of men, which she calls "body-reflexive practices," that described men's experiences with their bodies in their relationships with hegemonic as well as other patterns of masculinity. This is quite similar to phenomenological approach to the body that medical anthropologists have engaged with all along, except that in this case it is the gendered body that matter.

The analysis of Connell, however, has paid more attention to the roles of the male body in maintaining social and cultural structures that shape gender relations among men and between men and women. The analysis, I would argue, has not paid sufficient attention to how various structures and institutions shape the male body, or in other words, the political economy of the male body. Writing in the context of post-socialist Nicaragua where the Revolution failed to

transform the culture of machismo which upholds certain types of body (those of heterosexual men) over others (those of women and the *cochón*), Lancaster elaborates: “the political economy of the body alludes to that ensemble of representation and relations configured around the human body; to all the social, cultural and economic values produced out of the raw material of the physical body; to the sum of gender transactions and sexual exchanges that collectively constitute the social body; and to all those power relations [that are] supported by and which support a given body regime.” (Lancaster 1995:146). My dissertation advances the understanding of the political economy of the male body in a socialist setting by examining the ways in which three structures produce, and are produced by, the types of male body that are embodied in three groups of men who were growing up in post-*Doi Moi*. By paying attention to both the political economy of the male body as well as the experiences of the men whose bodies are at the lowest rank in the post-*Doi Moi* body regime, my dissertation makes a necessary contribution to advance existing knowledge of the connection between men, masculinity and HIV/AIDS. I will now turn to the discussion of the post-*Doi Moi* in Vietnam, in which I will discuss various characteristics of the three structures as well as some characteristics of gender relations and the HIV/AIDS epidemic emerging during this period.

The Context: Post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam, Women and Gender Relations and HIV/AIDS

Vietnam is a country in Southeast Asia with a population of about 86 million, with approximately 70 percent of the population living in the rural countryside (Vietnam General Statistical Office, 2010). After the end of the Vietnam-American war in 1975, Vietnam was

reunited as an independent country for the first time since 1884 and the country embarked on the path of building socialism. Numerous mistakes in managing a centrally planned socialist economy after the prolonged and devastating war led to subsequent years of serious economic crisis (Fforde and De Vylder 1996; Pham Xuan Nam and Boothroyd 2000). In 1986, at the brink of economic collapse and under enormous pressure both from inside and outside of the state bureaucracy, the 6th Communist Party Congress launched a number of economic policy measures that started a process which has become known as *Doi Moi* (Renovation). *Doi Moi*, at the initial stage, introduced various market economy mechanisms in order to boost agricultural production and to reduce the size of the state-controlled economy in order to stimulate economic growth. In rural areas, this practically meant the return of de-collectivized land to farming households for rent over an extended period time, a subcontracting system between the state-sponsored cooperative system and the households, and hence effective transfer of economic power and responsibility from the cooperative to the household. In urban areas, the shrinking state-controlled economy, including downsizing of state workforces in both administrative and industrial sectors, and various measures to encourage the private sector have resulted in a growing presence of private sector jobs as well as a flourishing informal economy.

In subsequent years, the state introduced further changes that have been important for both economic and social developments: relaxing of household registration system in urban areas which has allowed for freer migration for both work and residential purposes, the introduction of education and health care fees which have created a new burden for households, and the loosening grip of the state over health care and education service provision which has allowed the private sector to make inroads with regard to these essential social services. The later

development meant a wider choice for certain sections of the population in terms of where they could obtain essential services but it also meant that those services were no longer guaranteed by the state. Studies show that high poverty rates at the beginning of *Doi Moi*, rising opportunity costs of enrolling children in secondary school education, and a lack of state enforcement in education contributed to a sharp decline in the rates of children enrolling in secondary schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially in rural areas (Glewwe and Jacoby 1998; Nguyen Nguyet Nga 2004) (see Chapter 2 for the impacts on a rural village). As households have taken on more responsibilities for financing the essential needs of their members, the main strategy for households in both rural and urban areas is to diversify their income sources and to maximize all economic opportunities. This means, for example, that women have returned to some of the roles they once occupied, such as market women. Men in rural areas have migrated out of their villages for wage labor jobs, and both men and women members of the household in rural and urban areas have been engaged in many forms of work at the same time in order to ensure maximum income for their families.

As a result, the economic picture of the country changed rapidly in the years immediately after *Doi Moi* and the decades that followed. Vietnam has become one of the largest rice exporters in the world and exports of other products such as tea, coffee, and fish have risen dramatically over the past two decades. According to a UNDP report (UNDP 2011), in the 2000s, Vietnam achieved a GDP of 6 to 8 percent annually, and GDP per capita also rose rapidly from US\$402 in 2000 to US\$1,168 in 2010, moving Vietnam to middle-income country status according to the World Bank classification. Another achievement in economic development is the reduction of the poverty rate from 37.4 percent in 1998 to about 15 percent in 2008 with

larger reduction in urban areas as compared to rural ones (UNDP 2011: 25). While the income level has risen rapidly over the past few decades, inequalities have also risen sharply, albeit relatively slowly over time compared to other countries in the region. According to the same UN report, the gap between the incomes of the richest and poorest quintiles was 8.94 times, up from 8.1 times in 2002. The contrast between the haves and the have-nots, between urban and rural areas, and between rural lowland and rural highland, between men and women have become permanent fixtures of post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam (Luong Van Hy 2003; Luong Van Hy 2009; Taylor 2004).

In the later part of 2000s decade, especially in the environment of recent economic crisis, Vietnam is faced with other economic and social development challenges as well (UNDP 2011). Despite the steady GDP growth, the macroeconomic environment of Vietnam is still unstable. Very high inflation rates as compared to other countries in the region, persistent current account deficit in the balance of payments, and low return on investment signifying a declining effectiveness of investment in Vietnam have led foreign investors to find Vietnam a less attractive environment as compared to the earlier decade of *Doi Moi*. This has resulted in recent decline in GDP contribution of industrial/manufacturing and service sectors, which means that many people have become jobless in urban areas, and yet are not able to recuperate their loss of income in agricultural activities. The pressure to generate jobs will be even higher in the coming years as the current population structure, with the largest age cohort in the age range from 15 to 24, means that hundreds of thousands of young people are entering labor market every year. However, the labor workforce of Vietnam is still largely unskilled with low levels of education, with only about 35 percent having some form of technical or advanced education in 2007.

Booming geographical expansion of cities and increasing migration from rural to urban areas in the second decade of *Doi Moi* have led to rapid urbanization, with an estimate of 3.4 percent population growth in the decade between 1999 and 2009 (World Bank 2011). The 2009 census shows that about 30 percent of the population is now living in urban settings, with other estimates putting this figure as large as 40 percent because the census failed to account for a large number of temporary rural-to-urban migrants who were restricted in terms of household registration in urban settings. The 2009 census also showed a clear trend toward an increasing number of women and young people in migration during the decade between the two censuses (see, also, Resurreccion and Ha Thi Van Khanh 2007). Studies have showed many migrants are facing social exclusion from services and other opportunities as compared to urban residents (Kim Le et al. 2012; UNDP 2011; World Bank 2011).

The State, The Market, and The Family in Post-Doi Moi Vietnam

This section aims to situate my analysis in the following chapters of the interplay between three structures – the state, the market and the family – and three groups of men by describing some of the characteristics of the three structures. In describing these structures, I follow the suggestion by Sharma and Gupta (2006) to avoid engaging with the state as a clearly identifiable object with boundaries, geographic or otherwise (e.g., the nation-state, the state as administrative structure with clear distinction from the civil society, or the state as the instrument of class power) as many political scientists would have. Instead, they suggest that an anthropological approach to the state should focus on the cultural constitution of the state through experiences and practices

of state-society encounters in everyday life well as through the representation of the state and by the state in media and other symbolic means. As such, the discussion below will not engage with the three structures by defining what they are in theoretical terms, but by bringing into focus some of the empirical analyses of how these structures are experienced by Vietnamese people in the years after *Doi Moi*.

In a study covering a wide range of state practices in contemporary Vietnam, Martin Gainsborough (2010b) argues that a political environment where networks and relationships are powerful in shaping political career and engagement, the Vietnamese state has some important characteristics. One is the “highly particularistic nature of the different institutions, offices and personnel ... comprising ‘the state’” (2010b: 186). And this means in practical term that institutions and individuals working for the government may even compete for the right to control (and to extract profits) from the same social or economic terrain. Secondly, the boundaries between public and private in the state institutions are not clear, as reflected in the frequent practices of using public office for private gain or claiming ownership of business activities and profits of ostensibly state companies (see Fuller [2012] for an example of “crony capitalism” where sons and daughters of high-level state officials are appointed to lead state-owned companies or government offices even without prior experience or credentials). Third, it is “the importance of uncertainty as an instrument of rule” (2010b: 181). It is often time unclear to people on what they can and cannot do, and the risk of crossing the boundary is always present, making people vulnerable to disciplinary power of those in control. On the other hand, once the boundary is crossed people often find ways to negotiate disciplinary power of the state and the state could become more lenient as long as the violence has nothing to do with attempts

to overthrow the government and the Party (see, for example, Koh 2006 for elaboration of this issue through the concept of “mediation space” between the state and society). This is because, despite the changing social and economic landscapes, the one-party state has refused to engage in political reform and has not relinquished, at least in official discourse, the socialist ideology as well as some of its governing and enforcing mechanisms.

In terms of governing mechanisms, the picture is quite complex and is often a mixture between the legacy of the socialist past and new forms of governance (Gainsborough 2010a; Kerkvliet 2001; Kerkvliet and Marr 2004). In the case of HIV/AIDS, for example, one study argues that over the years the government has shifted from technique of “enforcement,” where emphasis was placed on incarceration and forced “rehabilitation” of sex workers and drug users who were labeled as *tệ nạn xã hội* (social evils), to technique of “adherence,” where the same groups are now required to adhere to social and public health measures to foster behavioral change (Montoya 2012). The author also shows how the state has shifted its official language, especially in policy documents, from caring for “the People” (*Nhân Dân*) to caring for “the Human” (*Con Người*), with the former resonating with the socialist legacy of delineating a clear enemy of *Nhân Dân* and the role of the state in protecting its citizenry while the later doesn’t require such delineation. Similarly, in another study on state management of prostitution from the socialist period to the years after *Doi Moi*, Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong (2008) argues that the technique of governance in Vietnam has shifted from a Leninist mode where the state monopolized power to a mode where the state delegates certain functions of governance to experts and to the market. On the one hand, the state continues to exercise repression through police campaigns to arrest sex workers and through forced “rehabilitation,” but this is now

justified by the language of the police and the rehabilitation/social work experts. On the other hand, the state allows public health and medical experts to develop materials and services in both public and market domains to cure and prevent lower class sex workers from diseases, and at the same time offer middle-class housewives a choice to learn how to satisfy their husbands sexually in order to keep them away from sex workers. The existence of both repression of the socialist past and choice of neoliberal present, Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong argues, is not a contradiction, but is part and parcel of the Vietnamese state's approach to governance as the country opens to global market economy. This is because "the global neoliberal economy's requirements for various labor and consumption needs rely on governments that will deliver by promoting choice and applying repression to different segments of their populations," she argues. "In turn, government rely on the same economy to bolster their own agenda through the use of new techniques of choice in governance as well as through the more familiar repressive ones" (Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong 2008: xxii).

Since the opening of *Doi Moi* the global capitalist market has made inroads into almost all corners of Vietnam, and has made even some long-term observers surprised by changes that have happened under the influence of the market (see Luong Van Hy [2010] for an longitudinal analysis of change in a village during and after the socialist era). Like many other countries, the market has created both opportunities as well as made negative impacts on individuals and communities alike. Social science studies in Vietnam have paid attention to ways in which the introduction of the market has produced social inequalities and social suffering along the lines of gender, geographical location, and ethnicity (Jacobs 2008; Lainez 2012; Luong Van Hy 2009; Taylor 2004; Taylor 2011); to the power of the market in helping individuals to embrace and

embody new identities, gendered and otherwise, especially in urban settings (Drummond and Thomas 2003; Leshkovich 2008; Leshkovich 2011; Nguyen Thi Bich Thuan and Thomas 2004; Truitt 2008); to ways in which individuals in Vietnam, ordinary citizens or state officials, make use of the market possibilities to enhance their negotiating power, gendered and otherwise, with various structures that influence their lives (Drummond and Thomas 2003; Duong Bich Hanh 2008; Harms 2012; King et al. 2008; Leshkovich 2011; Nguyen An Phuong 2007; Vu Thi Thao and Agergaard 2012); and how the new logics of neoliberal market intermingle with, and sometimes are supported by, the entrenched logics and system of meanings under socialism to create a post-*Doi Moi* era characterized by both familiarity and novelty (Christina and Ann Marie 2012; Phinney 2008). Regardless of the research foci that are as diverse as discussed here, one common point that literature on the development of the market economy in Vietnam has come to an agreement about is that the power of consumption has risen rapidly and help to shape new forms of identity, ethics of the self, and relationships that were impossible to imagine few decades ago.

The impacts of market-oriented development on post-*Doi Moi* families have been quite profound, not least compared to endless transformation during both colonial and socialist era (Bélanger and Barbiéri 2009; Pham Van Bich 1999). And yet, with exception of some demographic studies (Hirschman and Vu Manh Loi 1996; Hirschman and Nguyen Huu Minh 2002) there have not been many studies that take the family as the main unit of analysis (cf. Barbiéri and Bélanger [2009]; Le Ngoc Van [2011]; Pham Van Bich [1999]). In most studies on impacts of post-*Doi Moi* on women and men, the family – with various members of different genders, age and other background as well as the dynamics created by both individual and

collective family decision making – is left untouched and left to feature as a structure that works somewhere behind the stage to influence individual decisions and action, whether in relation to the market or the state (but examples of difference to this approach exist, see Truong Huyen Chi 2009; Vu Thi Thao and Agergaard 2012). Indeed, the editors of a volume on post-*Doi Moi* Vietnamese families state as much when they point out that “[s]ome other edited collections have examined the widespread implication of the transition to a market economy for Vietnamese society.... This volume, however, is the first... to focus exclusively on processes at work in the everyday lives of families and on the implications for gender, and intergenerational relations” (Barbiéri and Bélanger 2009: 2)

One important starting point to understand the family structure in Vietnam is to note that the family structure and kinship system in Vietnam has been under influence of both Confucian ideas from China as well as patterns of norms and beliefs from neighboring Southeast Asia. The influence of the Confucian system reflects in the lineage systems which emphasizes patrilineality and son preference (Luong Van Hy 2010; Pham Van Bich 1999). Sons are accorded status and legitimacy and when they grow up often represent their parents within the community. They also have important religious functions since only they can perform funeral and ancestral cult rituals. On the other hand, sons are supposed to obey and owe filial piety to their parents until their death and beyond through ancestral cult rituals. The Confucian teaching of *tam tông* (three obedience) for women, which includes obedience to the father, to the husband, and to the son should the husband die, are known among many generations of Vietnamese (Rydstrom 2003). Kinship patterns in Vietnam, however, were and are also influenced by the more egalitarian gender patterns of Southeast Asia (Luong Van Hy 2003). Women assume, and are recognized

for, their important roles in household economy as well as for their work in the markets. Women also maintain strong links with maternal kin, due to endogamous marriage norms (Jacobs 2008; Tran Van Anh and Le Ngoc Hung 1997). Similarly young people assume more autonomy than prescribed by the Confucian teaching. Variations of family practices with regards to gender and generational hierarchy are also found between regions (Bélanger and Barbiéri 2009).

Another important understanding about the Vietnamese family is that it has always been at the center of serious attempts by the modern state to reformulate and transform the family for nation-state building projects, whether in the name of socialism or newer slogans in the post-*Doi Moi* period (Bélanger and Barbiéri 2009; Pettus 2003; Werner 2002). This reflects as much in the number of iterations and amendments of the Law of Marriage and Family. The version of the Law was promulgated in 1959 during the socialist period; a new version was sanctioned by the government in 1987, just one year after *Doi Moi* was initiated; the latest Law came into effect in 2000, at the time when heightened impacts of *Doi Moi* were observed; and the last amendment to this version was made in 2010, and already some suggestions about the possibility of making more amendments have been made by the government to take into account, among other things, a recent burst of unsanctioned same-sex marriages. Under the period of socialism, the family was considered as one of the key sites for class struggle and therefore for direct intervention of the state to build new socialist subjects and a new egalitarian and socialist nation. As such many features of the pre-socialist family were labeled as “feudal” and “backward” and were subject to various institutional and social reform measures introduced by the socialist state. In terms of the state introduced various institutional measures such as *lý lịch* (official document which contained the political, personal and familial history and which could be used to judge eligibility for social

and political mobility) that were obligatory for all citizens to have (and currently are still obligatory for state cadres); or *hộ khẩu* (household registration system that aimed to restrict migration that were perceived as harmful for state planning and allocation). Other social and economic measures were also introduced by the state, including the introduction of cooperative and collectivization of land in rural areas which theoretically took away the economic function of the family; the mobilization of the eligible labor force in urban areas, including in particular women, to factory jobs which theoretically promoted women's emancipation by freeing them from housework; the introduction of free social services such as childcare centers and health services in order to theoretically lift the burden of domestic work off women's shoulders; and the direct intervention of state officials in marriage and reproduction with the claim of ensuring happiness as well as socialist modernity (see, for example, Khuat Thu Hong 1998; Pettus 2003). Since the introduction of *Doi Moi*, the family has again been subject to and influenced by incessant social and economic reforms introduced by the state. The family now has become the bedrock of economic development of the nation, and as the post-*Doi Moi* state has relinquished many of its past responsibilities for social welfare, and the family has become even more central in meeting the needs of its members (Dollar et al. 1998; Glewwe et al. 2004; Werner 2002).

While the impacts of pre- and post-*Doi Moi* on families have been profound, studies have shown that the Vietnamese family as a social institution has been quite resilient and has shown its enduring agency in the face of transformational impacts of social change (Luong Van Hy 2010; Malarney 2002; Pham Van Bich 1999). Commenting on the use of family rituals and kinship systems to effectively build social capital for various purposes, Bélanger and Barbiéri (2009) note that although these cultural practices were suppressed during the socialist era

“through a process of selective revival, families have looked into their toolbox of traditional practices to choose the mechanisms most deemed to facilitate their integration into the market system and to mediate the sometimes harmful effects of reform” (2009: 422). On the other hand, it is no doubt that such strategic adaptation, negotiation and self-transformation on the part of the family and its members have contributed to changing the course of *Doi Moi* as well as changing the state and the market economy in ways that perhaps are uniquely Vietnamese (see, Koh 2006, for examples of families in Hanoi negotiating their space for petty trades with ward officials).

Women and Gender Relations in Post-Doi Moi Vietnam

Family members, especially women, have developed strategies that are suitable to negotiate pressure on their families and themselves that have been created under *Doi Moi*. Partly because of these reason, academic interests on women, their welfare, and gender equality have developed rapidly, creating one of the richest bodies of literature among topics that could be studied under *Doi Moi*, and have contributed immensely to the understanding of social change as well as gender in former socialist settings (see the review of gender studies in Vietnam by Rydstrom and Drummond [2004]; Scott and Truong Thi Kim Chuyen [2007]; and Werner and Belanger [2002b]). Indeed, as these reviews of literature on gender and *Doi Moi* show, the topics of research have expanded rapidly from a narrow focus on women and gender within the family (household structure, family planning, marriage patterns and socialization of children) and women and gender in agriculture and the labor force (women’s involvement in informal economy, women’s entry to expanding export-led industries, and women’s increasing burden in

agricultural activities as their husbands are laboring away from home). Recent work have expanded to other territories, including sexuality, reproductive technologies, women and HIV/AIDS, consumption, new identities and femininities, women's relationships with the state, and with men, as well as expanding some of the old topics on women and work and women and family with new findings and new theoretical insights. Facilitated by improved access and travel in recent years, scholars have also expanded their scholarly interests geographically to not only women in urban areas, but also women in rural and remote areas and even to women who are engaged in transnational migration. As a result of this amazingly fast expansion of scholarly work, from both within and outside of Vietnam, our knowledge on Vietnamese women and femininities under *Doi Moi* has expanded. The dominant image of women as victims and sufferers of market economy no longer exists; women's agency and women's newfound identities along the line of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and in relations with the family, the state, and the market are central concerns in the rich body of recent studies (Duong Bich Hanh 2008; Gammeltoft 2008; Hoang Lan Anh 2011; Leshkowich 2008; Leshkowich 2011; Nguyen Bich Thuan and Thomas 2004; Truong Huyen Chi 2009; Vu Thi Thao and Agergaard 2012).

Studies on women in Vietnam also show the centrality of the three structures – the state, the market and the family – in shaping women's lives and femininities. In terms of the state, throughout its history the socialist state has constantly sought to define the images and meanings of womanhood, especially in the complex relations between women, the family and the nation, for political and ideological ends (Pettus 2003; Werner 2004). As Ashley Pettus (2003) shows in one of the most comprehensive treatments of this subject, the state's efforts to define womanhood have been fraught with contradictions, resulting primarily from the tension between

aspiring to modernity (whether socialist or Western) and longing for Vietnamese traditions, both of which are embedded in the endless project of nation building. During the years of heightened socialist modernism, the state promoted *giải phóng phụ nữ* (women's emancipation) from the bonds of the feudal family structure, especially in such domains as women's right to vote, freedom of marriage and divorce, equal pay for equal labor, and women's participation in public spheres such as cooperatives and factories, as symbols of the nation's progress towards socialist modernity. In the years after *Doi Moi*, the state has revitalized its project of building a modern nation on the basis of modern, prosperous and happy families. The post-*Doi Moi* women are directed to emulate the civility of Western modernism and the prosperity of the Western market economy, while at the same time being warned to guard against becoming culturally "Westernized." At the helm of this new project are women, who since the beginning of *Doi Moi*, have returned in great numbers to the domestic sphere, fulfilling the traditional role of women as caretakers in the newly defined modern domestic households. The new campaign, labeled *Ba Chỉ Tiêu* (Three Criteria), was launched in the late 1990s by the Women's Union, and asks women to "study actively, work creatively, raise children well, and build prosperous, happy families" (Hoang Tu Anh 2005). In this campaign, the "new woman" in post-*Doi Moi* embodies some of the values of their mothers and grandmothers, as extolled during the era of heightened socialist idealism, albeit under the new mantra of serving their families as the way to build the modern nation.

In relation to the working of the state and the market, as I once discussed earlier, (Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong 2002, 2008) shows the intertwining connection between the role of the state agencies in managing female sex workers – though with expert knowledge as a new mode

of the governance of prostitution in the post-*Doi Moi* period – and the market-based promotion of middle-class heterosexual norms and behaviors aimed first and foremost at the growing legions of middle-class housewives. As social and economic transformations accelerate during the post-*Doi Moi* years, the number of female sex workers has reportedly been increasing. In this new context, Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong (2002, 2008) argues, the state has identified a new mode of governance through the use of public health and medical expertise. These professionals now identify sex workers and their health risks as an imminent threat to the health of the nation. The fight against the “imminent threat” posed by largely lower-class prostitutes, however, does not just involve the state with its administrative measures, or public health and medical professionals with their more “humane and effective” interventions. Also engaged are the housewives of the expanding middle class with their newfound femininity and their bodies. As Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong shows, the state offers little prevention guidance but to use market-based mechanisms to guide the “wives and potential wives of the middle classes to compete for their men’s sexual interests against the lure of prostitutes” (2002: 144). This is evidenced in the growing industry of self-help books and counseling centers that focus mainly on teaching middle-class housewives in urban areas about “bourgeois femininity” and “sexual necessities” that could help them to provide class-appropriate pleasure to their husbands. Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong (2008) goes further to connect the growing sex market in Vietnam with the integration of Vietnam into the global market and argues for a dynamic and interrelated view of the relationship between the state and the market.

On the link between the state and the family and how this linkage affects women, Werner (Werner 2009) argues that economic liberalization in Vietnam has facilitated new forms of state

intervention into families as the household has become the center of economic productivity and the focus of economic development policy. By positioning itself in alliance with the global capitalist market through emphasis on privatization of economic growth and yet holding onto the socialist ideology of taking care of population welfare, the Vietnamese state has developed an agenda of developmentalism-cum-welfarism that too often are in conflict, and the ones who suffer the most are women. The state has maintained this conflicting agenda through delegating many of its function to *hộ gia đình* (the household) by turning *hộ gia đình* first into the primary economic unit and subsequently into the main site where social and economic (re)production take place. Indeed, the notion of *xã hội hoá* (which literally means socialization, but effectively means shifting financial burden from the state to the society) that is often found in government officials' speeches and documents, makes it clear that households and individuals are increasingly responsible for their own welfare. Jayne Werner (2002, 2009) shows that as women's labor and the household took on new economic and political meanings in the realms of both production and reproduction, women's morality became a site of increased scrutiny and intervention by the state as well as by revitalized kin groups that attempted to restore neo-traditional values. Family and state discourses thus became realigned: women emerged as symbols of cultural authenticity and the preservers of family and national stability. Furthermore, the state has assigned the state-sponsored Women Union as its sole legal representative to protect women's interests, which has effectively denied women their rights to form their own collective voice and representation. As such, Werner maintains that the post-*Doi Moi* state – as “a deeply gendered unit” (Werner 2002: 45) – has been complicit with the market forces in strengthening

patriarchal institutions and forms of power in post-*Doi Moi* era, which works against the interests of women in general.

HIV/AIDS in Post-Doi Moi

Since the first reported case in 1990, the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Viet Nam has developed quite rapidly into many sub-epidemics across the country while remaining concentrated primarily among three populations: injection drug users (IDUs), men who have sex with men (MSM), and female sex workers (FSW). According to 2011 sentinel surveillance data, HIV prevalence among IDUs and FSW remains high, at 13.4 percent and 3 percent respectively (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2012). The Vietnam Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance round II (IBBS round II) data indicate that prevalence among MSM also remains high, at 16.7 percent (Socialist Republic of Vietnam n.d). IDUs, most of whom are men, are the predominant group of HIV-positive people in Vietnam. According to sentinel surveillance data, HIV prevalence among IDUs decreased steadily from 2004 through 2011, falling below 15 percent in 2011 for the first time since 1997 (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2012). HIV prevalence among FSWs began declining in 2002. At 3.0 percent in 2011, it reached a level not seen since 1998 (highest at 22 percent in Hanoi). Studies have shown HIV among FSWs has been somewhat influenced by injection drug use among sex workers (Tran Nam Trung et al. 2005). Among MSMs, the rate seems to go higher in between the two rounds of IBBS surveys (2005/20066 and 2009/2010). According to the IBBS Round II results, HIV prevalence among MSMs was over 10 percent in three provinces (HCMC, Hanoi and Hai Phong), and as high as 20 percent among MSMs who

had not sold sex in Hanoi (Socialist Republic of Vietnam n.d). In terms of gender disaggregation, the epidemic has been dominated by men and recent increase in the number of infected women reflects the fact that they got infected from their husbands and/or other male sexual partners.

As early as 1995 there was a policy response from the highest level of state power in the form of a directive by the Party Central Committee on strengthening leadership in the prevention and control of AIDS (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 1995). Early responses put strong emphasis on linking HIV/AIDS prevention and eradication to control of drug use and prostitution, which has been labeled as *tệ nạn xã hội* (social evils). A number of policy documents on prevention and control of drug abuse and prostitution were enacted before or around the same time that the policy documents on HIV/AIDS were issued, including the infamous Decree 87/CP giving instructions on how to abolish *tệ nạn xã hội* (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 1993). In 2000, the National AIDS Committee was merged with the National Committee for Prevention and Control of AIDS, Drug Use and Prostitution, confirming the emphasis on linking HIV/AIDS prevention to the fight against *tệ nạn xã hội*. It should be noted that these early responses from the state reflect, perhaps, the state's anxiety at being confronted with whirlwind societal transformations during the years after *Doi Moi*. In early 1990s, when the first cases of HIV/AIDS emerged in the country among injecting drug users and female sex workers, the state, equipped with limited alternatives, resorted to what it knew best – the Leninist mode of governance to exert state administrative power on HIV/AIDS and its perceived linkages to drug abuse and prostitution (Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong 2008).

In recent years, the state has acknowledged that HIV is an important socioeconomic and public health issue, and has produced a range of progressive policies to support HIV prevention

and control activities. The law on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control that passed in 2006 provides the legal foundation for a strong, multisectorial response to HIV, and for the protection of the rights of PLHIV (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2006). In recent years, the state has enacted, supplemented, and amended numerous policies and legal documents, creating a stronger and more consistent legal framework for prevention and control activities. Over the past decade, the Vietnam National HIV/AIDS Program, with support from PEPFAR and other international donors has built an impressive system for HIV/AIDS care, treatment, and prevention. Both the Vietnam Administration for AIDS Control and Provincial AIDS Control Centers in 63 provinces and their affiliated service delivery system have expanded rapidly, and at the same time, have been structured to become a vertical system, which has supported an ever-growing number of HIV/AIDS programs. Both the system and the programs, however, are faced with a number of challenges and dilemmas. Despite encouraging indications of national commitment to funding and managing HIV-related activities, there are serious concerns regarding sustainability, since Vietnam's response to HIV continues to rely heavily on international assistance. In addition, many argue that underlying structures that have shaped the epidemic, and will continue to do so, such as stigma against drug use and sex work and a range of other structural inequalities have not been challenged substantially (Hammett et al. 2008; Le Minh Giang and Nguyen Thi Mai Huong 2007; Montoya 2012; Nguyen Thu Anh et al. 2008; Nguyen Tran Hien 2011; Vu Minh Quan et al. 2009; Vuong Thu et al. 2012).

In summary, being situated at the center of several cross-cutting issues in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam – the interrelationships of the state, the market and the family, the impacts that *Doi Moi* has on women and gender relations, and the emergence of HIV/AIDS epidemic as a major public

health concern – my dissertation has implications for both academic inquiry and program implementation in Vietnam and beyond. In terms of academic inquiry, although the number of studies on women and gender relations have increased in recent years, there is still an urgent need for substantial and long-term academic engagement with men and masculinities in Vietnam. In recent years, scholars in and outside of Vietnam have begun to pay more attention to men and masculinities, probing into socialization of boys and young men (Rydstrom 2006); meanings of masculinities and men’s role in the family under new political economic configuration (Hoang Lan Anh and Yeoh 2011; Phinney 2008; Phinney 2009); relationships of men to the state through warfare and its aftermath (Rydstrom 2006) or other socioeconomic changes (Phinney 2008; Vu Hong Phong 2008); men and men’s sexuality embedded in social change (Martin 2010; Thai Hung Cam 2006) as well as new modes of consumption (Phinney 2009). While one could learn a number of things from these studies the connection and tension between men and masculinity and the three structures as they continuously shape, and are shaped by, Vietnamese men (in their relationships with other men and women), there has not been a single study that systematically examines these inter-relationships. My dissertation is the first attempt to bridge this gap by attending to the lived experiences and various struggles of three lower-class groups of men whom I met at some critical junctures in their lives. By doing so, I attempt to force a deeper analysis of the political economy of the body that is sorely lacking in the current critical studies of men and masculinities in general. In terms of HIV/AIDS program in Vietnam and beyond, attending to the political economy of highly vulnerable male bodies in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam and examining structural inequalities that shape their vulnerability is a significant contribution. The current lack of attention to “structural violence” in global HIV

programming has been highlighted, yet the fact is that “structural violence” continues to play a major role in relation to some of the most vulnerable bodies of men who dominate the epidemic in Vietnam and other parts of the world, and this phenomenon deserves some serious attention if we are to understand and ultimately respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The Ethnographic Journey: Extended Case Study of Dislocated Men in post-*Doi Moi*

A key issue that should be further explained at the outset of this dissertation is why there is a need to attend to three groups of men at the same time in an academic inquiry, and what could such endeavor bring to our understanding of men living in Vietnam and beyond. Although anthropologists have always attended to many groups of people while they are living in the field, and try to bring into their writing multi-voices and multi-perspectives that make anthropological writings as holistic as possible, my approach to bring into the focus several groups of men who were situated in different geographical and social locations across one country is still quite rare (but see, for examples, multi-sited ethnographic engagement within and beyond boundary in Hirsch et al. [2009]; Parker [1999]). I believe that the answer lies partly in the ethnographic journey that I have traveled, and from which I have learned immensely, during the past ten years, but that it is also important to emphasize what this kind of endeavor could bring forwards in terms of epistemological gain.

In terms of epistemological gain, I am referring the concept of “multi-sited ethnography” (Marcus 1995). Writing in mid 1990s to explain and advocate for the emergence of “multi-sited

ethnography” in the increasingly globalized world, George Marcus noted the virtue of this new mode of inquiry in anthropology:

The other, much less common mode of ethnographic research self-consciously embedded in a world system, now often associated with the wave of intellectual capital labeled postmodern, moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space.... This mobile ethnography takes unexpected trajectories in tracing a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity... *Just as this mode investigates and ethnographically constructs the lifeworlds of variously situated subjects, it also ethnographically constructs aspects of the system itself through the associations and connections it suggests among sites* [Marcus 1995: 96, my emphasis]

Pulled together, the three ethnographic case studies also make the case of extending ethnographic inquiry beyond its methodological boundaries (which is already extended with multi-sited ethnography). In his article, Marcus goes on to elaborate on different ways in which ethnographic endeavor could methodologically make use of a multi-sited mode of inquiry. They include to study the people who move around nationally or transnationally, to study flows of commodities, gifts or money, to track circulation of metaphors in language and visual media, and to follow the conflict and the parties involved (such as conflict over abortion) (Marcus 1995: 105-113). He does not, however, see the possibility for pulling together ethnographic materials across cases for comparative purposes. This is where “the extended-case method” (Burawoy 2009) sheds light. Michael Burawoy argues that while multi-sited ethnography pays more attention to flows and connections, the extended-case method pays more attention to understanding and explaining difference. He further elaborates that by developing case analysis through understanding “the social forces within which it is embedded and the social process it expresses, and ...the position we hold in the field and the theoretical framework we bring to

bear” (Burawoy 2009: 203), ethnography will start posing questions of how difference among cases is produced and reproduced.

I propose that in my study both associations and connections in Marcus’s sense and difference in Burawoy’s sense are important, and they in reality are not mutually exclusive, as Burawoy tends to argue. In terms of the difference, I develop the analysis of how interrelationships between the three structures and male bodies play out in different ways in each of the cases. For example, in the case of men who were migrant laborers, the state values their bodies because of productive power; in the case of men who were methadone patients, the state values their bodies because their bodies become examples of docile bodies as well as successful stories of state intervention; and the bodies of men who sell sex faced the problem of “recognition” (Fraser 2000) as they state continues to keep silent on the issue homosexual desire. In terms of connections, however, in all of the three cases the state and the market are complicit in displacing the men from their social and/or geographical locations. By pulling together these differences and connections between the three cases of dislocated men, my dissertation enriches our understanding of the working of the state, the family and the market in a late-socialist setting.

The three cases of different groups of young men in this dissertation are drawn from my extended ethnographic journey since 2002 when I started to embark on what many consider as *rite-de-passage* for students of anthropology – my ethnographic fieldwork. For better or worse, the ethnographic journey that I travelled during the past decade or so in my own country has never been a smooth path, not so much in geographical sense (although the distance of the journey was not small nor easy to traverse, see map 1 for study sites) but more in the experiences of field work that I had. I offer here some snippets from my field notes of this ethnographic

journey as a way to introduce the path that I travelled through, while more methodological details will be introduced in subsequent chapters.

Winter of 2002, 3:30 pm, Ho Chi Minh highway (study of migrant men)

Tired and, more than anything, worried on a cold and dark afternoon, I was lying down on a hammock at the backyard of the house where company X has rented as their field office for the past two years. Over the past several months, I have scoured the whole section of the highway and made stops at all of company field offices, rented houses, and temporary tents to introduce myself with the hope that I would be able to identify a group of young men who shared a village of origin and whom I could follow over the next year or so as proposed to my dissertation committee. Such groups exist everywhere along the highway section that I chose to start in my fieldwork because that was how laborers were recruited to build the highway, but I often met with reluctance, if not outright rejection, either from foremen or from the companies that hired them.

Fall of 2007, around noon, Hanoi (study of men who sell sex)

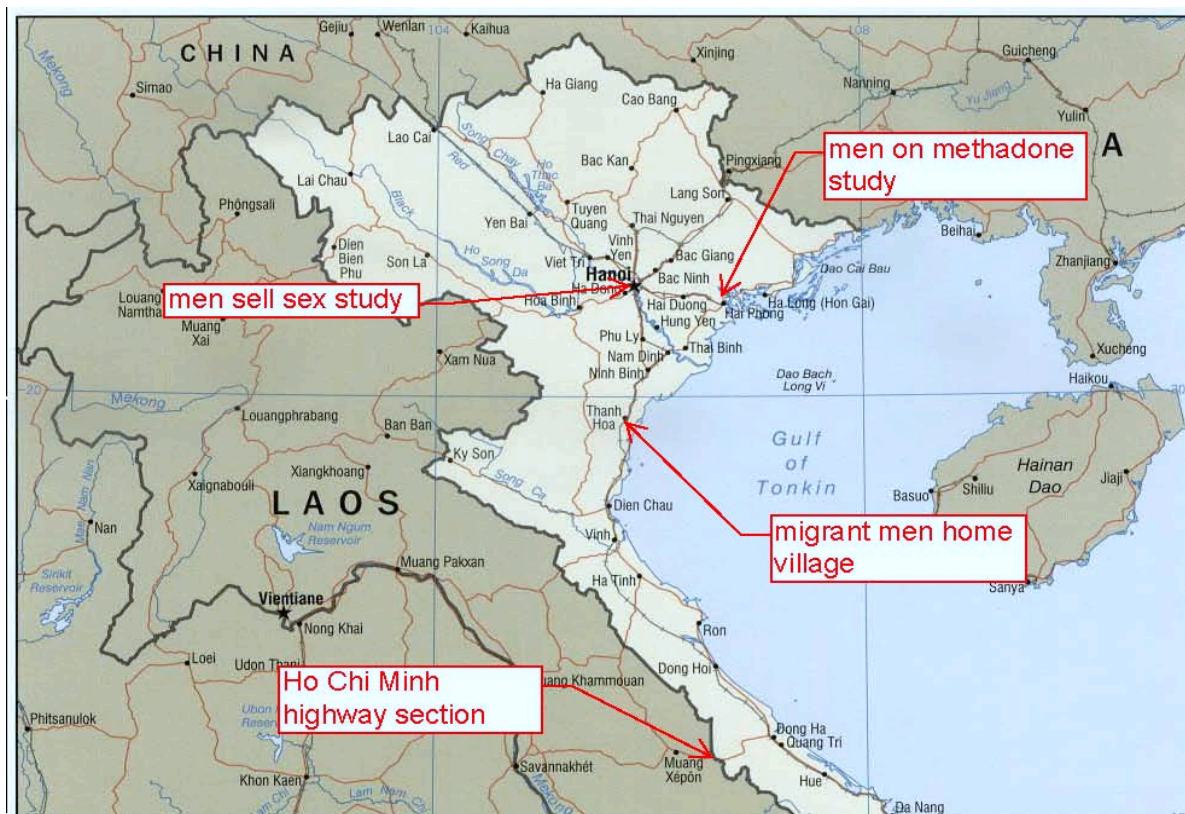
Today a field researcher made an appointment for me to do the first life history interview with a young man named Tuấn. The field researcher told me that Tuấn was one of few college students who were trying to maintain his studies while selling sex. The field researcher had made an appointment for me to talk to Tuấn alone at the clinic where we set up for the survey and it is an environment that Tuấn and other study participants felt comfortable with. When I asked him about his place of origin, he told me that he came from *Phố Kê*, a small township that is adjacent to Luu Khue village (the home village of migrant workers). It caught me off-guard and I had to ask him again to check if he was born in and his family was still in *Phố Kê*. His immediate reaction was to ask if I knew the place and somebody there.

Spring of 2009, around 2:00 pm, Haiphong (study of methadone patients)

We had an appointment for an interview with Dr. Q, the only medical doctor at one of the first methadone clinics in the country. While my research assistant and I were talking to him about the reason that made him switch from an ER doctor to his current work, a patient entered the room to ask to Dr. Q for his signature so that the patient could get some further testing on liver function. Dr. Q asked “Everything going ok for you, right? I can see that your shop is very busy lately.” While the patient was about to answer, Dr. Q’s cell phone rang and he picked up

the call immediately. His face was intense. Later, when the patient left the room, Dr. Q told us in a low voice as if to avoid eavesdropping that the call was from a policeman of the precinct and they informed him that one of the drug users who were caught in the police morning raid told the police that he was a methadone patient. The addict, while running away from the police, fell down and hurt himself in the face. So the police asked Dr. Q to check if any patient who reported to the clinic that day had such an injury.

Figure 1: Map of Northern Vietnam and Location of The Research Sites



Spanning over a period of almost ten years, the expanded-case ethnography traversed several sites in Northern Vietnam, including a remote area, a rural village, an urban city and a health clinic, and followed the lives of more than 60 men and other people who were associated with them in various ways. As the field note extracts show, my experience with study among migrant men was not as smooth as I had expected while preparing for the dissertation proposal.

While the plan on paper was quite convincing, the reality was not smooth. I had difficulties in identifying a group, starting from the highway rather than from a village, as both workers and foremen were skeptical of my purpose and identity in the context where both had something to hide (see chapter 2). I also had difficulties with finding a space to conduct planned interviews, despite ample opportunities for observation and informal talk. This was not only because the lack of private space in the highway, but also because of the mobile nature of the group. Some workers I never met again after the highway as they travelled on for another job elsewhere. But insights from migrant life helped me a great deal when I started to develop fieldwork for the study on men who sell sex in Hanoi, many of whom were migrants to the city. Also, being situated in Hanoi and being part of a public health study team helped me great deal in terms of having access to and arranging interviews with the men. However, I didn't have as much "excitement" of living for extended period of time "in the field" as I was juggling between home, workplace and sex marketplaces all at the same time. Mistaken identity, whether for being a customer or being a homosexual, was constantly part of my experience throughout the period of the study. By the time it came to the study on methadone patients in Hai Phong, I was able to develop a fairly good knowledge, theoretically and empirically, of studying with and about disadvantaged men, albeit for entirely different reasons. However, what my assistants and I experienced was the challenge of working with government officials who controlled the life of these men through what supposed to be a humanistic endeavor. Observation in the clinics was not easy; arranging interviews with clinic staff was not welcome; and trying to paint a different side of what is considered to be a successful program was prohibited. Reflecting back on these experiences of a student of anthropology engaging in the discipline's *rite-de-passage* teaches me

as much about the working power of the three different structures and how they affected me as much as I learn about from the men that I had the privilege of knowing and learning from.

I conducted interviews with men and women by using a life history approach that emphasizes understanding and theorizing life stories of individuals within their respective and collective contexts (Cole and Knowles 2001). Appendix 2 contains information on the interview instruments that were used in the three studies.

Structure of the Dissertation

In the next chapter, I will focus on the first group of men, the men who migrated out from a rural village in Thanh Hoa province, and I will compare them to their parents' generation. Through comparing their experiences of migration (or known locally as *đi ra ngoài*), I hope to elucidate the three structures (the state, the market, and the patriarchal family) that shape their differences and similarities. Then I will illustrate the working of these structures in the ways men go about achieving their role as *trụ cột gia đình* (the pillar of the family) that has been reconstructed to involve new meanings and practices. The key is to show how the vulnerable bodies of rural men with little resources other than their own bodies were subject to exploitation and, at the same time, courting on the parts of the three structures. In Chapter 3, I move to the group of men who once were heroin users and are now taking methadone to assist their recovery from drug use. Here I will situate their experiences within the changing action and discourse of the state, as well as examine their experiences with the methadone clinic, the omnipresent structure of state biopower. I argue that their social death status created by stigma against drug use and their

experiences with inhumane rehabilitation made them accept such structure much more easily. Furthermore, their acceptance of methadone and its power also stemmed from their longing for the path to *trụ cột gia đình*, a path that was delayed almost indefinitely due to heroin use. In all, I argue that the state builds its power on the deviant body of heroin users and therefore need to maintain both the system of inhumane rehabilitation and the more seemingly humane methadone clinic system. In Chapter 4, I will describe the emergence of same-sex sexual marketplaces for men in urban Hanoi and examine the confluence of various factors that contribute to such development. I show, for examples, the role of the state that allows the existence of such marketplaces in public venues, the effects of *Doi Moi* on urbanization and rural-urban migration that make available a large number of young men whose bodies were vulnerable to exploitation (sexual and otherwise) in urban settings, and the effects of state's refusal to address stigma attached to homosexuality while sanctioning HIV/AIDS prevention activities for MSM (men who have sex with men). On the part of men who sell sex, I show that while feeling detached and sometimes rejected by their families, they often longed for returning and rebuilding relationships with their parents and siblings. I argue that expressed desires to do so, and actual action taken, are parts of strategies that men who sell sex use to negotiate experiences of stigma and self-stigma as well as to reclaim their masculinity. In all, the three structures that produce the body of men who sell sex continue to reject them, as much as they are rejected by their clients as well as by themselves as they get deeper into sex work. In the conclusion, I draw on some comparison of the three groups of men to analyze further the political economy of the male body in a socialist setting, and offer some preliminary thoughts on how to move forward more effectively in the future in theorizing the relationship between men, masculinity and health.

Chapter 2

The Social and Cultural Construction of Vulnerable Bodies:

Men Who Migrate in Rural Thanh Hoa

In this first of the three case studies that make up the main body of this dissertation, I seek to do two things that will not only illustrate the specific experiences of men who were migrant labors but also form the foundation for understanding the experiences of men in the next two chapters. While the three groups of men are subjects who were differently situated and were facing different challenges in their life, they certainly find in their experiences in the influences of many cultural and structural factors as illustrated throughout this dissertation. First, I will examine the notion of *trụ cột gia đình* (the pillar of the family) that culturally prescribes what many Vietnamese men define as who they are in relation to women and other men in their families as well as the larger immediate community (village, neighborhood). Instead of conceptualizing this cultural conceptualization of men as a fixed identity or role as many studies on gender relations in Vietnam have assumed (see Scott and Truong Thi Kim Chuyen 2007 for a detailed discussion), I will show that while the concept is an important ideology that governs men's lives and their relations with other men and women, men and women also negotiate to expand, revise and even resist some of the more rigid characteristics of the concept. Furthermore, I will show that when they were growing up, the young men in this study didn't assume that they would automatically become *trụ cột gia đình* one day. They understood *trụ cột gia đình* to be a status that they needed to work hard in order to achieve and then maintain. As such, while men in this

study thought of the culturally prescribed notion of *trụ cột gia đình* as “symbolic capital” (Bourdieu 1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), a resource that they can draw from as they do with other forms of capital, they knew full well that they had to work hard to maintain it. And for men like those in this study, who were migrant laborers with few resources other than their own bodies, the challenge of achieving and maintaining such a status is not small.

Secondly, I will explore the working of three powerful structures – the state, the market and the family – on the lives of the men in this study by comparing and contrasting the trajectories of and experiences with migration of the migrant laborers in this study and those of their parent’s generation. While both generations may agree on the values of the age-old practice of *đi ra ngoài* (going out of the village) for men to become *người đàn ông trưởng thành* (a mature man) and eventually to assume the role of *trụ cột gia đình*, their experiences were qualitatively different. The differences, I will show, stem from the changing characteristics of the structures that shape decisions related to *đi ra ngoài* in the first place. By examining these structures that share the paths to and the relationships with *trụ cột gia đình*, I hope to show how the state, the market and the patriarchal families play their parts in shaping the bodies of rural men – the type of body that is highly vulnerable to exploitation by both the state and the market. For many rural men such as those in this study, the body is often the only capital that they possess, just migration for labor was the only way that helped them to achieve *trụ cột gia đình*. I will also show how young working men use their bodies in creative ways, albeit being constrained by various structures and conditions beyond their control. In sum, the chapter is about social and cultural construction of the vulnerable body of working rural men, and how this construction is shaped by political economic conditions of post-*Đổi Mới*.

Conceptually, the chapter is situated in relation to two theoretical perspectives: R.W. Connell's on notion of structures in gender relations and Raymond Williams' concept of "structure of feeling," which, I argue, are complementary. As discussed in the introductory chapter, R.W. Connell brings to the study of masculinity a number of significant theoretical contributions. First is her notion of "hegemonic masculinity" which emphasizes not only the multiplicity of masculinity but also a hierarchy among different masculinities that exists in any social and cultural settings. "Hegemonic masculinity, as Connell defines it, is "a configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell 1995: 77). In relation to "hegemonic masculinity," Connell proposes other patterns of masculinity that are marginalized, subordinated or in complicit relationships with dominant configurations of masculinity practices (Carrigan et al. 1985). Since its formulation, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has received a great deal of attention, ranging from examining various forms of hegemonic masculinity in particular social and cultural settings (e.g., Morrell et al. 2012), to using the concept to explain men's behaviors (e.g., Courtenay 2000), to offering critiques as well as possibilities to expand the concept (e.g. Coles 2009; Hearn et al. 2012).

Another contribution by Connell to the theory of masculinity, which has received much less attention I would argue, is a framework of "structure of gender relations" (1995: 73) which helps to analyze the social organization of masculinity. Her framework builds on three major domains: production, cathexis (or emotional attachment) and power relations. With production, Connell refers specifically to gendered division of labor that sometimes has reached

an “extraordinarily refined level” of task allocation. She defines power relations in his framework as domination of men over women and subordinate men, with the latter contributing to the formation of a hierarchical structure among various types of masculinities within any society. For cathexis or emotional attachment, Connell discusses specifically sexual desires and other aspects of “sexual social relationships” that are often ignored in the study of gender. In her later work on theorizing masculinity, Connell adds another structure which he calls “symbolism” (Connell 2000: 26), referring to the relationships between masculinity and symbolic culture and discourse. In the second part of this chapter, I will build on Connell’s framework by adding consumption as another structure which has become increasingly important in shaping both masculinity and femininity in a world of globalized capitalism.

Furthermore, the framework by Connell doesn’t make explicit the role of various forms of emotion in shaping masculinity. Although a structure in her framework involves desires (cathexis), the way she frames it relates more to emotional attachment between men and men and between men and women. Meanwhile, as I show in this chapter, men are also attached to various structures that shape their lives, including the state, the market and the family, as each of these structures creates a form of desire that maintains certain forms of masculinity that men are attached to. In this regard, I find the notion of “structure of feeling” by the Marxist literary critic Raymond Williams particularly useful in thinking about emotional relationship between structures and men. In his writing, Williams tries to bring structure and emotion closer together while not privileging one over another, whether in Marxist materialist sense of super-structure determining ideology or in Althusserian sense of ideology determining human action and feeling. Raymond Williams (1977) defines “structure of feeling” as “a particular quality of social

experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives us the sense of a generation or a period.” (1977: 131). He further emphasizes that “structure of feeling” is about “meanings as they are lived and felt, and the relations between these and formal or systematic beliefs are in practice available” (1977: 132). As such, Williams stresses the importance of lived feeling and emotion even though they are shaped by structures and beliefs of any historical period or generation. As I will show in the third part of this chapter – in my examination of the practice of *đi ra ngoài* – the state, the market and the patriarchal family are part of the “structure of feeling” of the emotional attachment between men in this study and structures that shape their lives.

This chapter is organized in three major sections. The first will present the village of origin for the migrant men and the methodology of this study. In the second section, I will examine the notion of *trụ cột gia đình* as it is narrated by men and women in the village in light of the revised framework of the structure of gender relations that Connell proposes. The third part of the chapter focuses on exploring “structure of feeling” for men of different generations through their relationships with the practice of *đi ra ngoài* at different historical periods.

The Rural Economy and Mobile Ethnography

Luu Khue Village: The Rural Economy in Decline

Luu Khue, the village where the migrant laborers came from, had a little more than 1400 residents, which is an average size as compared to other villages in the area. The village was one

of six villages that made up the Yen commune with a population of about 5000 people at the time when I started the fieldwork. Unlike many other villages, however, Luu Khue's economy benefited significantly from its geographic location. Its location at the end of the Mã river, the largest river in the region, ensured that the rice fields in the village were watered throughout the years and were constantly refreshed with alluvial soil. Its proximity to two main provincial roads and one commercial town named *Phố Kê*, which had the largest market in the region, ensured that villagers did not have to go very far to sell what they produced in their fields. Older people in the village told me that their ancestors had settled in this area as long as two centuries ago and they therefore were also immigrants who came from another province in northern Vietnam. In the village, there were only two main family names, Trịnh Hữu and Đàm, which accounted for about 70 percent of the population. People of these two family lineages were friendly to each other and cross-lineage marriages happened frequently. Villagers preferred their sons and daughters to get married with other families within the same village or in nearby villages, and that remained the majority of the cases. In a couple of marriages I attended that were against this rule, mostly because the young men moved out to work and found their wives in another provinces, the brides told his friends and relatives that the grooms were unfortunate not to be able to find a suitable girl closer to home and that this created more burden for his family. This was because the wedding ceremony and subsequent exchanges between the two families would involve a significant amount of travel and resources that his parents and/or he himself would need to invest in. Another reason, which was a shared opinion among many that I talked to, was that young men in Luu Khue were attractive because of the location of the village and that many parents in the region would have wanted a bride from Luu Khue so that their daughters could

move into an area with more economic opportunities. Similarly, on the part of the young women, their parents also didn't want them to get married to young men who stay too far away from the village since they believe that staying close to Luu Khue would give their daughters the best economic options.

Over the past decade, benefiting from the two main provincial roads, *Phố Kẽ* developed rapidly into a trading hub in the region. Local authorities were quick to build many small shops on the sides of the main streets and at the market, and they sold or rented out these shops to people living in the region. Those who were able to buy or rent such a space were often ready to leave their agricultural activities for other alternative in trading and service sectors. It appeared that these people made good money from such activities, and the spaces were filled up quickly, which drove up the prices of these shops as well as the land price within a short period of time. Owning a house and/or a small shop in *Phố Kẽ* or at its market had always been a dream for many people in Luu Khue. However, only some families had made the dream come true. Some extended families contributed money to support one or two of their members to buy a small shop in *Phố Kẽ* as a way to show its economic potential; others have invested their savings to rent such a place and rarely regretted their decision. For the majority, however, agricultural activities and migration remained the mainstay of their household economy.

While the location of the village at the end of the Mã river made agricultural activities a lot more productive as compared to other neighboring villages, agricultural subsistence had become an obsolete investment due to very low return. As the rice field had become increasingly limited due to population growth, villagers tried to make the best use of cultivable rice field by planting other agricultural products such as maize, sweet potato and other products in the same

field in between the two rice seasons. They tried to make the best use of their time as well as of agricultural products that are not suitable for human consumption by engaging in husbandry of animals such as pigs, ducks, and chicken, which were useful for both household consumption and as a source of cash just in case their family needed it. However, what I constantly heard from the villagers were that the investment that they made on agricultural activities didn't yield enough return because the initial investments such as fertilizer, pesticides and veterinary care for husbandry were getting higher while they could not sell their products for better price. At some point in early 2004, we did the calculation that for every single *sào* (equivalent to about 500 square meters) they could have earned as much as 150,000 VND (equivalent to about 1 US dollar) for every month of the rice season that lasted for about four to five months. And since every villager was allocated a little more than one *sào* this meant that all villagers had to find other ways to supplement the little income that they received from what supposed to be their economic mainstay.

In addition to survival necessity, the burden of finding income generating activities stems to a significant degree from the increasing need for cash in order to pay for emerging needs and desires. Services that once were free such as schooling, health care and electricity, were getting more expensive. The amount of contribution that villagers were asked to make in order to build public facilities such as schools, roads, monuments and other public facilities were getting higher. More significantly, while the proximity to *Phố Kê* made it easier for villagers to sell their products, it had also created other opportunities for them to spend the money that they were working hard to earn. For example, the number of ready-made food shops and coffee shops that sprung up in *Phố Kê* relied on a certain stream of customers, mostly young and male, from

villages around it. A single photo studio also served an increasing demand of young couples for whom a photo album before their marriage ceremony had become as important as the ceremony itself. This practice, while not at all popular when I started the fieldwork in the village, had become a must-do for those who were getting married several years later, and I found it amazing when the young men in my study regularly showed me and their friends the photos that they took with their wives in outfits that were often rented at the studio itself. Motorbikes, a dream item for young men like Ngoan who were saving up money from their laboring days in order to acquire one, were become ubiquitous in the village just a few years after I started my study. As a result, the number of motorbike repair shops grew significantly and created job opportunities for young men in the region. Last but not least, home appliances such as electronic rice cookers, electric fans, and color television had become necessities for many families.

The fact that many in the village were still working on their land and didn't give up agricultural activities all together, as had happened in other areas of Vietnam during my fieldwork (Duc Anh 2006), was a little surprise. When asked about why they didn't leave their agricultural activities altogether, people in the village told me that they wanted to keep the land that generations before them had owned and worked on, and that they would not be able to other alternatives should they leave the agricultural activities (Hoang Xuan Thanh et al. 2005) In fact, there were only a limited number of economic activities beyond agriculture and trading that many villagers could have participated in while staying in the village. As mentioned before, economic opportunities in Phố Kiều were not open to everyone. There were no factories in the area that could absorb the substantial un- and under-utilized labor force in Luu Khue and surrounding villages. Some limited and labor intensive such as construction of houses, well

digging, and hired laboring during harvest season – paid on a cash basis -- were occupied by middle-aged men. As such, middle-aged women were left with little choice but to take care of the family's agricultural activities and young people with little choice but to move out.

Since the beginning of *Doi Moi*, migration for cash-paid jobs continued to be one of the main strategies for people in the village to improve their household economy. Patterns of migration clearly differed among various population groups. Should they not be able to enter college and/or vocational school after high school, young men and women would immediately look for opportunities to work elsewhere. Some young men preferred to migrate out for construction and other labor intensive work; some preferred to go to provincial city or even Hanoi to work for free in small workshops such as motorbike repair shops, home utilities repair services, and other craftsmen work that would teach them the kinds of skills that they hoped could help them to obtain a job in the future. Young women preferred to apply for jobs in food processing and garment factories in the southern part of the country. As far as I knew, few young men liked the work at these chain factories since the work didn't provide them with enough freedom to move around. When couples in the village moved to search for jobs in the south, this was the kind of job that they preferred since both could join a company and establish a family home away from home.

In early 2003, when I started doing fieldwork in Luu Khue, a policeman in the village estimated that as many as 70 percent of unmarried men left the village for migration jobs. A common joke in the village was that if a large fire happened, there would hardly be any young men left in the village to help stop the fire. While this might be a joke, the fact was that in most instances when I spent time in the village outside of holiday or harvest seasons, it was hard for

me to meet young men who were in the age range that were amenable to moving out for migrant jobs. It was not a coincidence that when I travelled with any of the men and spent time in the village with him outside of holiday or harvest season, I unwittingly became his companion the whole time we were in the village since most of the guys in his age range were not at home. It should be noted that the phenomenon in Luu Khue was not unique. In both *Tet* of 2003 and 2004, I spent a couple of weeks in the village and went to observe the bus station where there were daily buses that transported hundreds of migrants to southern provinces looking for or returning to jobs in factories. These buses usually started to operate ten days before *Tet* to get migrants home and then started to transport them back to their workplace ten days after *Tet*. In both years, I observed a couple of hundred people every night, mostly young and single, filling the buses to the roof and they came from all over the places surrounding Luu Khue.

Older women opted for work as household maids in other countries such as Taiwan and, more recently, South Korea and Macao. These jobs paid better salaries and provided them with more opportunities to have a significant savings when they returned after two or three years of working away from home. Migration for work abroad was also available for men, albeit much more limited, but men generally didn't prefer this type of job since the opportunities for them to make money in Vietnam were still abundant. Those who opted to travel abroad for jobs often had to pay a large sum of money to a recruitment company which meant that they had to borrow money from elsewhere and their salaries of the first six months or so would be used to pay back that debt. And yet it was not at all guaranteed that they could stay on for the whole period of the contract since they could be rejected by families they were servicing and then might have to

return home early, which had always been a constant stress for both the women and their families in Vietnam.

Follow the People: Mobile Ethnography

The materials presented in this chapter are drawn from more than 24 months of intensive anthropological fieldwork spanning from 2002 to 2004 that aimed to understand the intersection of labor migration, manhood and nation-building in Vietnam and the implications of this entanglement for the course of the AIDS epidemic in the country. To this end, I focused on a group of two dozen young men who were born a few years after the Vietnam War ended in 1975 and who all came from a village in northern Vietnam (Thanh Hoa province). It is important to note that these young men were from the cohort of young people who came of age during the period immediately following *Doi Moi*. Among many things, *Doi Moi* relegated the burden of paying for school fees to individual households. And while other economic reform policies were introduced as well, positive effects of these economic policies took time to make up for consequences of the abrupt introduction of school fees and costs. Consequently, a large number of children, especially those from poor and rural background, dropped out from schools during the period immediately following the introduction of *Doi Moi*. Although the scale and timeframe of this phenomenon vary in different areas of the country, depending on coping capacity of communities and households, the phenomenon was widespread (Bélanger and Liu 2008; Glewwe and Jacoby 1998). Renovation policy, thus, unwittingly disfranchised a large

number of young people, including both men and women, of the cohort that was in their teens around the time when the policy was introduced.

I first met these young men while they were working as migrant laborers to build the Ho Chi Minh highway in a location about several hundreds kilometers away from their home. The construction of this highway, a two thousand kilometers road running almost the entire North-South length of the country, took more than four years, thousands of billions of Vietnam dong and involved thousands of men and women. The highway, one of the most intensively invested infrastructure projects in the years after *Doi Moi*, was built largely on the ground of the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail that came into the national history book as a product of ingenuity, braveness and determination of thousands of Vietnamese young men and women who sacrificed their lives during the Vietnam-American war. In official discourse, the highway was symbolically dubbed as “bridge [from the past] to a brighter future” of the nation, and it was (now proved optimistically) projected to quickly bring prosperity to many poor and remote areas along the West side of the country, mostly populated by ethnic minority groups. While the highway represented a lot more than a symbolic remembrance of the past, its construction stirred up many buried memories, both joyful and painful, of the far past. As I travelled along a forty-kilometer section of the highway where the group of migrant laborers worked, I heard so many stories from people who worked on the highway as well as from local ethnic minority residents about how they themselves related personally to those who once lived and died here. I met families where the husbands were local residents and the wives were from far away areas and were once *thanh niên xung phong* (voluntary youth) who worked to maintain the trail during the war. *Thanh niên xung phong*, mostly young women who were drafted on a voluntary basis to serve in civil units

that provided support for army units, played a critical role in making sure that the trail was up and running during and despite fiercest bombings by the Americans. I met older construction workers, usually in senior management positions, who had plenty stories to tell about how deadly it was for them as army soldiers, drivers, and other types of army servicemen to travel and oftentimes walk along the trail to reach the frontlines. I also rested at several deadly curves along the road section, turning myself into an eager listener to mystical stories of dead soldiers and *thanh niên xung phong* who now returned as ghosts to take life of those who were driving recklessly.

The migrant laborers in this study were working for a foreman who was married to a woman from their village and had recruited laborers, including some of the young men's fathers, from the area for many years. The group worked in the highway for a total of nine months, completing the work that was contracted to the foreman by an army construction company. Since the road construction took an extended period of time and in a remote area, the company figured out that it would be cheaper for them to hire migrant laborers as well as drafted soldiers to do some of the so-called *lao động phổ thông* rather than to bring their own *công nhân*. The term *lao động phổ thông* is used in popular and official discourses to describe the kind of work (as well as the group of people who do this kind of work) that only requires physical labor and could be done by people with limited education and/or vocational training. This is in contrast to the term *công nhân*, which is used to describe people who are skilled from their vocational training, or *kỹ sư* (engineer) who have college degree in engineering or, in the context of the highway, road construction. There existed a clear hierarchy of power between these three groups of road builders, reflected for example in the fact that both *công nhân* and *kỹ sư* were guaranteed

monthly salaries and other benefits regardless of number of actual working days. For migrant laborers, they only receive payment calculated on daily rates for days that they actually implemented the work, and this number was limited during the raining season that lasted several months on the highway. As such, all laborers aspired to receive monthly salaries from the foreman, who was not interested in providing such guarantee since his goal of course was to cut costs.

After the team completed their work on the highway, I followed these young men as they moved on in different paths of their lives: some continued to work with the foreman and moved to work in other parts of the country; some returned to the home village and settled down with marriage and various kinds of work; some traveled to the south seeking for jobs in the booming new economic zones where foreign-owned assembly lines attracted millions of young people every year. In some cases, I continued to travel with them to their new worksites; in others, I received updates through conversations with their families and neighbors or when they returned home for *Tet* (Vietnam's Traditional New Year). At the home village of these young men, I had opportunities to study men and women who were from the parents' generations as well as younger men and women who were still in high school. These opportunities allowed me understand better the young men's lives as well as the challenges they faced while they were working away from home yet were never disconnected from what was going on in their families and their home village.

While travelling between the multiple sites, including the Ho Chi Minh highway, several new construction sites that the young men moved to after their stint at the highway, and their home village, I conducted many hours of observation and conversation, open-ended interviews

and life history interviews with both the young men and their village fellows, as well as mapping their movements and plotting out routes traversed by the migrant laborers. I conducted life history interviews with ten young men, interviewing each of them at least twice (and sometimes more), and I also conducted even longer history interviews with more than ten other men and women in the village who were often the immediate relatives and/or neighbors of the young migrant men. I also conducted interviews with various people in the village to collect a village history and to understand their views on migration for cash-paid jobs as well as the larger phenomena of *đi ra ngoài*. I found it more difficult to organize the interviews with the migrant laborers, not because of their reluctance to talk, but mainly because it was not at all easy to find a space for private conversation at their work sites. If they worked in an urban area, they usually set up a tent, and this also was the case had they worked in a remote setting such as the Ho Chi Minh highway when they didn't live near any local villages. If they worked in a rural setting they usually were luckier as they could rent a local house cheaply. In both settings, usually two dozen men or more shared a limited space, to which they all returned to in the evenings, being very tired after a long day working day. I of course could not ask them and the foreman for some time off as that proposition would create an awkward relationship with the foreman who, while knowing about my study, would prefer the migrant laborers to focus on the work. In such a circumstance, I conducted almost all the interviews with the young men when they returned to their home village for any extended periods of time during harvest seasons in the summer and the winter as well as during *Tet*. On such occasions, I often planned to travel on the same bus with them on their way home as well as to spend several weeks in the village with them in order to observe their life in the village and to conduct interviews with other villagers.

Being a Vietnamese man certainly made it easier for me to conduct the fieldwork, especially in talking to men (both younger and older) on matters such as love and intimacy. On the other hand, I couldn't disguise the socio-economic differences that have made my journey through life completely different, if not desirable, to the young men and their village fellows. I believe that my interpretation of their narratives, as well as ways in which they narrate their experiences, is not totally independent from this difference. The challenge that I had in approaching the young men at the beginning of the study was to get the permission from the foreman so that I could spend time with his men. It was not easy in the context that most foremen, and the companies that signed subcontracts with them, were trying to cut costs by skipping payments or, more often, the expenses that could have been paid to the laborers. They were understandably concerned over the purpose of my proposed study and the fact that I wanted to hang out for an extended period of time with the laborers, which was quite unusual for most research conducted in Vietnam. While I explained to them the study in terms of HIV prevention among migrant laborers, they were of course more interested in controlling any information that would come out from the laborers that could harm their business. Luckily, the foreman from whom that I finally got the approval was a relative of my former mentor at Hanoi Medical University and this connection helped enormously in terms of establishing trust and eventually an inroad into the circle of young laborers. Over time, my relationships with the young men grew and I became more aware of exploitative practices of the foreman that the young men complained to me. However, had I not questioned them about such practices, often in the context of discussing challenges that they faced in their work, they would not have divulged these practices to me since they were concerned that their complaints would go back to the

foreman. Well into the middle of the study, at the time of *Tet* in 2004 (around February), then only could I win their complete trust by not telling the foreman of their plan to leave him once they returned home for *Tet* and that I refused to side with the foreman at his request of helping to persuade many of the men to continue to work for him.

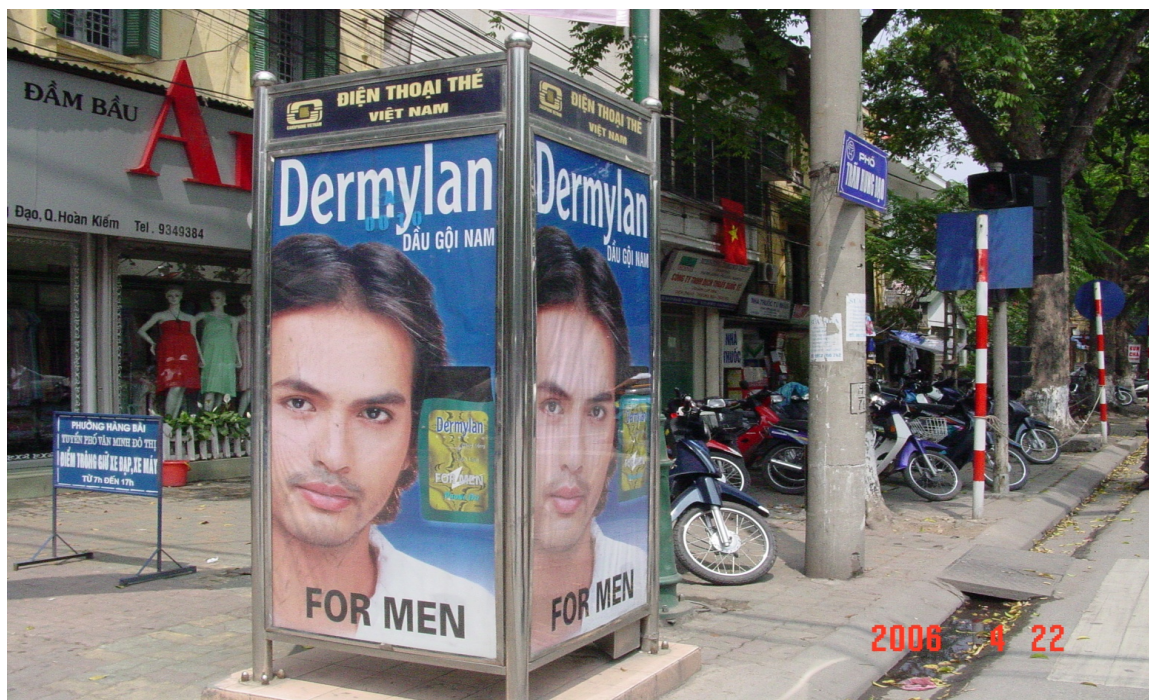
Since 2005, while I stopped going to the village as frequently as I had, I still maintained contact and received updates on the new paths that each of the young men took. I made yearly visits during *Tet* and stayed for a couple of weeks to meet with people that I interviewed to get their updates on the village; I attended all the weddings of those who got married in the subsequent years; and I welcome to my home those who passed by Hanoi on their sojourns to and from the village. Appendix 1 provides information on 22 young men and villagers with whom I conducted life history interviews.



Photograph 2.1: Socialist Image of Men and Women (photo taken by the author)



Photograph 2.2: State-Sponsored Image of Gender in Post-Doi Moi (photo taken by the author)



Photograph 2:3 Market Image of New Men on the Streets of Hanoi (photo taken by the author)



Photograph 2.4: Power of Consumption – Wedding in Luu Khue (photo taken by the author)



Photograph 2.5: A Happy Men after Work (photo taken by the author)



Photograph 2.6: Killing Time While Waiting for Work in Hanoi (photo taken by the author)



Photograph 2.7: Life on the Highway (photo taken by the author)



Photograph 2.8: New House of a Man who was a Migrant Laborer (photo taken by the author)

***Trụ Cột Gia Đình* (The Pillar of the Family): On Being a Man in Luu Khue**

In this section, I will examine how men in Luu Khue understand and negotiate the role of *trụ cột gia đình*. I argue that while *trụ cột gia đình* is a kind of “symbolic capital” for men in his relationships with others in the family and in the community, it is important for men to earn respect from other men and women by showing that they are worth such kind of “symbolic capital” and therefore *trụ cột gia đình* is not static nor undisputed status of a man. As the Vietnamese practice patrilineal ancestor worship, under the influence of Confucianism, men (and especially the eldest son) play a key role in maintaining family lineage. According to Helle Rydstrom (2003) in her extensive study of children upbringing in a rural community, the son also embodies patrilineal *danh dự* (honor) and ultimately *đạo đức* (morality). She argues that these values are transferred from one generation to the next, which means that the past, present and future actions of patrilineage’s male members are not clearly demarcated. Therefore, representing these values and generating good *danh tiếng* (reputation) for the family and his lineage has always been more than a personal matter for a man and a son. Rather it is always about his family and the *họ nội* (literally means inside lineage, but used to denote paternal lineage) that he belongs to. On the other hand, a daughter and a woman is not imbued with symbolic meanings and values and therefore are not considered as part of the inside lineage. Rydstrom also observed in her setting that “a senior man is usually perceived as the head of a household and is thus recognized as the *trụ cột gia đình*. The notion that a man assumes the role of *trụ cột gia đình* is often defined as a condition that a man is culturally imbued with power to

make final decisions on matters related to his family, especially those considered as *vấn đề quan trọng* (key or important issue) (Horton and Rydstrom 2011).

A recent study by Hoang Lan Anh and Yeoh (2011) is a rare examination of how men respond to changing circumstances (when their wives left home for international migration work) and shows that the men were not against doing housework and at the same time tried to establish their own economic foundation at home. The study, while not referring to the concept of *trụ cột gia đình*, shows that men still maintain their position as decision makers by negotiating multiple demands. With the exception of this study, most of the literature that examines the notion of *trụ cột gia đình* has focused primarily on unwanted consequences of this culturally defined role on gender relations, especially on women and children. Some studies have examined men's lack of participation in reproductive health matters or men's buying sex with severe negative consequences for women (Johansson et al. 1998; Nguyen Thuy Hanh 2009; Horton and Rydstrom 2011; Phinney 2008, 2009). Studies that discuss this concept, however, have yet to provide engaged discussion on how this role of *trụ cột gia đình* has been received and/or rejected by men and women in specific settings. Furthermore, most of the research literature has assumed that this culturally imbued role is a given status, despite the fact that this role requires men to show various qualities, including the ability to provide economically and to develop a good knowledge of the world outside that would be relevant for the family, and these qualities are not static.

In Luu Khe, one common way that people define a man is the saying *đàn ông phải ăn được, nói được, làm được* (a man needs to know the right things to consume, the right things to say, and the right way to get things done). This local way of defining a man puts much emphasis

on men's having the right know-how, rather than simply on what men do and say. A man has to know what to consume and how to consume things in ways that prove to others that he has the right knowledge of the world outside. He also needs to know what to say and how to say things in order to make others believe in his knowledge and his conviction. And last but not least, he needs to know how to do things in the right way to achieve his goals. As compared to Connell's framework, this local definition of being a man brought into focus another important aspect of being a man, which is consumption. As I will elaborate in the later section, consuming right things in the right way is important for a man to claim his role as *trụ cột gia đình*. To elaborate more on the role of a man to be *trụ cột gia đình*, Chú Lắm, a 47-year-old man who had two grown-up children and who had a brief experience in the army before returning to the village to take care of his parents, offered his view:

Interviewer: What do you see as the role of a married man to his family?

Chú Lắm: The role of a married man in a family, especially when he has his own family, is to be a *trụ cột*, a head of the household. This means that you assume an essential role, which is to become someone that your wife and your children could lean on when they need to, and of course you are the face of the family in the community. Should, for example, your children have some problems in the community then you would be the one who takes care of it since you are responsible for it. So when you are a *trụ cột gia đình* then your wife and children could lean on you when they have difficulties. You could support them emotionally, and you could provide them with advice on what to do. And all your hopes are on your children, as you wished that they would carry on the things that you had wished to be able to do. Then you need to make money and to make decisions on your family life. Simply something like building a house, or buying things for the household, or doing things to create wealth for the family, and all those things you have to make decision on. If your wife and your children are capable and helpful, that would be good for you since they can lift some of the burden. Otherwise you will have a really difficult time, and you would have to work really hard, even to the point that you can't carry it any longer (laugh).

In these comments, Chú Lắm emphasized several aspects of the role *trụ cột gia đình*. They are: to become a source of support and advice for others in the family, to build future for the children, to make money, and to make decisions for the family, especially when it comes to key issues. Above all he emphasized the fact that men had to work hard to fulfill all these tasks of the role.

Similar to the view of Chú Lắm, another view of being *trụ cột gia đình* is for men to take care of “major businesses” in the family. Chú Cừ, a 55-year-old man who was a father of two daughters and had served in the army for more than twenty years before retiring to the village, explained “major businesses” as follows:

What I mean by “big businesses” is that he needs first to create a strong foundation for his own family. Now that they have lived separately from his parents, he would have to worry about family economic situation, hence would need to work hard and make saving in order to buy a piece of land and later to build a house on it. Having a house means that you have settled and that is a foundation for prosperity. Then he would have to pay attention to his children’s education so that they would be able develop and mature in the future. Thirdly, he would need to learn and engage in some kinds of extra work beyond agricultural work. Most of the agricultural work now, except for things like ploughing or harvesting, could be taken care of by his wife and children. So in his free time, he would need to do other work in order to boost the family economy. Of course, all those things would require some learning and some investment. Like my nephew whom you met when you visited the first time... He bought some rice mill machines and he also had a pond to raise fish... All those things he had to learn how to do it.

Production: The Importance of Non-Agricultural Work

While Connell doesn’t organize her proposed domains in any particular order, it is instructive that, in his comment, Chú Cừ first emphasized the capacity of a man to be productive economically. A man in Luu Khue became economically productive not only by working hard

on agricultural activities, but more importantly by acquiring skills in and developing income from non-agricultural economic activities. These activities have become increasingly important for all families in the village. Although the word that is used to describe non-agricultural activities is *nghề phụ*, or a side job in addition to the main occupation in agriculture, income from these activities pay for most expenses that are beyond food and other daily consumption of the family. While rice and other agricultural products were necessary for daily consumption, the needs for cash were enormous. They needed cash, among many other things, to pay for the types of food that they didn't grow themselves and other countless number of expenses such as children's schooling and clothing, contributions to various construction schemes in the commune, gifts for weddings and other important events. During my fieldwork, for example, people in the village often prepared an envelope with 10,000 to 20,000 VND in cash as a gift they were invited to a wedding, and this amount of money was equivalent to about 3 to 7 kilograms of rice. This amount became significant in the months of wedding season, given the average rice yield of 100 to 150 kilograms per capita per harvest of about five months, and many villagers became worried about the burden that these unavoidable obligations would bear on their family. One way to obtain quick cash for these kinds of expenses was to sell reserve of rice or other agricultural products to the market. This was, however, not easy in between the two harvest seasons, usually in late summer and early fall, when they were running out of agricultural products to sell. Since agriculture work doesn't produce enough profits, selling agricultural products to pay for other needs was considered as a loss. The non-agricultural work, therefore, provided income sources that were considered as more stable than the agricultural work was considered to be. The comment below from Chú Bảo, a 44-year-old man whose family didn't

have any rice fields as they moved in from another commune and whose family relied on trading pigs, summarized the advantage of non-agriculture work:

Honestly, you could hardly find anyone in this village who makes money as easily as we do. In this village, earning 5 to 6 million on average per month is very significant. People are working on hectare of rice fields and yet they don't have much profit after expenses are accounted for. For me, our investments were only some dozens of million and yet we earn money regularly like people squeezing a lemon. We eat what we like, we spend on things that others don't have. So you see how our life is, and that's the most satisfying aspect. We couldn't be luckier!

The range of non-agricultural economic activities that men in Luu Khue engaged in were large, thanks in no small part to its proximity to *Phố Kê*. Some men worked as porters and motorbike taxi drivers in the bus station; some worked as daily laborers on construction and other labor-intensive jobs; some stayed around the market and loaned money to those who needed quick cash in order to earn interests; some travelled around the area and bought various types of agricultural products and resold them in the market to earn the differences; some with more resources invested in machines such as rice mill or tractor and made money from providing services to others in the village; some others helped their wives to operate or they themselves operated a shop in *Phố Kê* under envious eyes of others in the village.

Some of the ways to make money were, of course, preferred over others. Those that produced regular income were preferred over those that depended on others; those that were brought about by some skill-based occupation were preferred over those that came from just using raw labor; and those that were family-based were preferred over those that had to rely on cooperating with someone outside of the family. Of the various options, working as hired

laborers or motorbike taxi drivers were not valued since the job depended on others and didn't develop any skills beyond utilizing raw labor. Some forms of government salaries were desirable since they were provided on a regular basis, were based on current or past skills and/or training, and were not dependent on joint business with others. Families of retirees were often referred to with some degrees of envy since their incomes were most stable because they had pension from past government jobs and their pension allowed them a comfortable life in rural setting. Furthermore, they could mortgage their salary books at the local bank and collect a large amount of advance without having to pay high interest rates just in case their families needed a large amount of cash. Some retirees, however, returned to the village before they served enough years for the state or for reasons that were not considered to be legitimate, and didn't have a pension or had their pension reduced, and often regretted what had happened. Having some kind of small businesses was also greatly valued. However the type of businesses varied depending on the skills and investment required. Up until late 2000s, operating a motorbike repair shop was a dream job for many young men but it required time and resources to learn the trade and to invest in a respectable shop in *Phố Kẽ*. Among the migrant laborers that I studied, Ngoan was the only one that I knew was able to achieved that dream job, mainly because he had help from a friend of his brother who had established a motorbike shop a few years before that. For other young laborers, they were still searching for that non-agriculture work that could keep them in the village.

As mentioned above, jobs in the public sector and employment by the government was the most preferred type of jobs among young people and their parents alike. Again, Chú Cũ who had a government pension for his years in army service explained this preference:

Interviewer: So the job situation for young people nowadays is really difficult, right?

Chú Cừ: The challenge is that although there is no shortage of jobs, there are not a lot of stable jobs out there. And the work environment is so bad that in some cases the work environment actually makes our children become bad. If they work in a bad environment, then sooner or later they will become bad people. You can see that even a job in the private sector could easily earn two to three million dong but people still don't like it as much as they do for a government job. The government sector is usually better and more responsible [towards their employees]. Of course there are not a lot of government jobs out there since most companies are now privately owned.

Chú Cừ appreciated what an employment opportunity with the government could bring, including working in what he considered as a safe and structured environment, benefits including insurance. He believed that such working conditions were not only better and more stable than jobs in the private sector, but also that these conditions would provide his children with an environment to ensure that they develop into good people. And this is also the view of Chú Bảo, who made lots of money on trading pigs but still preferred his children to be employed by the government. He was convinced that employment with the government brought many positive aspects that his current work couldn't provide, despite the fact that working with the government earned less money than what he did. Importantly, working for the government provides stability and tranquility that his own work is lacking. He complained that his work involved a lot of maneuvering and mind-boggling calculation (*tính toán*) that working for the government doesn't involve. He believed that investing in children education was the best way to get them a "dream job" with the government.

Interviewer: So you prefer your children working for a government company rather than a private company, even if it is a big company. Do I understand it correctly?

Chú Bảo: Yes that's correct and that's why I invested in my children's education [*Có thích làm nhà nước thì chú mới để, cố gắng cho con chú học*]. I think that there is no better investment than getting a good education for children and then getting them a good job. Working for the government doesn't require a lot of hard work, and government employees can take a rest in the evening after the work hours and have vacation. It's not like what I am doing [he refers to the fact that he and his wife are working long hours and can't control their time]. Therefore, there is no work that offers as much stability as the work with government. So, as I told you yesterday, although their salaries were low, I am very happy for them. If I didn't have great foresight, and had I thought that I could have easily paid them that much money if they worked with me in my business, then I would have not done that [investing in children education]. No, I can't allow them to do the work that I am doing now.

Implicit in the statement by Chú Bảo is a comparison between his type of work and the work in the government sector. Despite some insistence on mindful aspect of his own work, Chú Bảo still compared his work that are harder and more labor intensive, and therefore involve heavily the body, with what he considered as less labor intensive and therefore preferable for his children.

The concerns of Chú Bảo were not entirely groundless. The issue at stake was not just about the bodily intensity, but also bodily safety as well. There were a lot of health concerns for which migrant laborers had no or little control over, and it was the risk of accident. Having very limited protective gear and working under extreme pressure at times, including constant night shifts when the company and the foreman wanted to race against time, the migrant men were subject to high risk of accident. Ngoan had a cut on his hand while working on cement cutting machine; Thủy himself had several smaller accidents that scared him and made him decide to

quit the work earlier than others; Trùng burned his foot while preparing hot asphalt; and a brother-in-law of Hoan accidentally sucked gasoline into his lung, which resulted in repeated hospitalization in years after. Having no insurance and no saving for health hazards, the migrant men often relied on the mercy of the foreman who reluctantly paid for some of their health care fees. While some young men like Thuỷ could afford quitting the work altogether, others had no choice but to continue the work and considered those events as accidents that would not happen frequently. However, they do complained about the hardship that they had to endure and, coupled with diminishing stability of payment and limited savings, they were all looking for a way out and for a more “stable” job.

The importance of production, especially with the preferred types of job, was quite popular in the village. Chú Cừ, the man who had highest educational level among the men I interviewed and who also had experience of studying and living in Russia, believed that getting a stable job and/or work is the first priority for a man before he could think of getting married. He also voiced the view that a mature man (*đàn ông trưởng thành*) was someone who first had a stable job, and who then had the ability to support the stability of his job and his work by building strong relationships with others. For many families in the village, getting married with someone who had a stable job and/or work was the goal, as they believed that it was a strong foundation for a stable marriage. Some groups of young people faced more difficulties than other groups in finding future husbands or wives who met those criteria. One was young woman who had completed some forms of education beyond high school, and secured a government job in the area. Most common were young female school teachers. Chú Cừ himself had a daughter who finished pedagogical school and was teaching in a nearby village and still was not married.

And this was a major concern for him and his wife. *Chị Xuân*, a 44 years old school teacher whose daughter just finished a pedagogical school and got married with a classmate, was happy that her daughter was able to get married soon after she finished her education. She said: “The boy [her daughter’s husband] was from this area; they studied together and he has a stable job. I think it’s very good that my daughter finished her education, got a stable job and good career, and got married. We are very lucky!” The other group was the young men with a low educational level, and especially if they came from a poor family. For most young men in the migrant group, it was not easy for them to find a suitable girl to get married. While most of them didn’t have a stable job and work themselves, they preferred young women who were engaging in a stable job, such as tailoring or working in a beauty salon, the most two common types of work for young women who only had a high-school degree. However, these women also preferred young men with more stable jobs and work other than migrant labor. It was no wonder that among the young men in the migrant group, only Ngoan got married with a young woman who was a tailor in the *Phố Kê* and he knew her while learning motorbike repairment across the street. Other young men either had a hard time finding someone, and some got married when they had tried almost all options and realized that they couldn’t get the wife of their dreams, or they accepted that they would get married with a young woman whose primary work was agriculture.

Cathexis: Taking Care of Children’s Future

Taking care of children in terms of job placement and secured marriage was the second “major business” that Chú Cừ mentioned, and I propose to expand the cathexis domain of Connell to

encompass this important aspect of being a man in Luu Khue. As mentioned above, having children, especially sons, has always been considered an important obligation of a man towards his family lineage. However, taking care of children's future, especially making sure that their children having a strong foundation including education, a stable job especially in public sector, and even better with some cash reserve had become increasingly an important business for all men. Men like Chú Bảo, who lived well on the basis of work that didn't build on a high level of education, still appreciated education and salaried jobs and showed his satisfaction with what his children achieved:

Interviewer: What were some of the things that make you happy in your life?

Chú Bảo: I feel very satisfied with my life now. Why? If I compare my life to other people, it might not be as good as some but much better than others. My family situation now is better than that of many others. I have two children who have good education. If they are uneducated then it's useless even if I gave them 100 million dong since they will spend it all. Nothing is more satisfactory than the fact that parents are able to give their children an occupation with good prospects. Their salaries might be low now, but they all have jobs and they receive monthly salaries. It may be low now, around 3 million dong, but it will improve as their job skills get better. That's what makes me so satisfied. It's very simple!

Men who had money like Chú Bảo invested heavily on establishing their children in stable jobs once they finished their college and they were able to do so. Both parents and children preferred jobs in government sector as they believed that such jobs would offer significant stability (Nguyen An Phuong 2002) even though starting salaries could be low and parents had to continue to provide support. They often had to heavily bribe government officials who were in the positions to make decision on recruitment, even without a significant guarantee

that their children would eventually be recruited for *biên chế* (tenure or official position in state agencies). Fathers who had worked in the public sector and didn't have a lot of money, like Chú Cừ (a retired army official) and Chú Giang (a retired school teacher), made use of their connections with people were either their friends in high school or whoever they knew from their past job, in order to support them to achieve their plan. Chú Giang, whose son had finished a master's degree in history, once asked for my support to find his son a job in Hanoi while still making contact with people he knew in the provincial town in order to obtain a job for his son at the provincial people's committee office. For Chú Giang, who didn't enjoy a high pension because he retired early from the government job, helping his son to obtain a public sector job became a pride for him in his role as *trụ cột gia đình*. Some men who didn't have money or connections still considered getting their children a job in the public sector as one of their most important tasks. Chú Bộ, whose family was among the poorest in the village, told me in 2008 that he invested most of his family's savings and took out a loan as well in order to obtain a job in a nearby commune for his son who trained as school art teacher. He told me that it was a good investment so that his son could stay near the village, although he admitted that they were not sure when his son would earn enough money to pay back the loan, let alone return the saving to his parents. Later, it turned out that the government official that Chú Bộ asked for help accepted the higher bid from other people and his son had to accept a job offer in a remote province near the border with China. For Chú Bộ and for others in the village, it was considered as another failure on his part.

Besides taking care of children's future, caring for siblings and male friends were also considered as important qualities of being a man in the village, and in certain circumstances, of

being *trụ cột gia đình*. Hoan, the oldest in the group of migrant laborers, had an older sister and Ngoan as his younger brother and since his father left their family when they were still young, he filled in his father's role as *trụ cột gia đình*. He considered taking care of his sister and his brother as his own responsibility. He shared with me story of his sister getting married in the mid-1990s. His family had to borrow money to buy a motorbike and other household utensils for the newly-wed couple as the dowry from the bride's family. He then added that "We had to borrow all the money for the wedding and the gift.... and eventually I worked hard to pay for all the debt." While Ngoan, his brother, was staying at home to learn motorbike repair, Hoan supported his brother with daily expenses for almost a year and this was in addition to what he had been providing for his mother as well as his two small children. In contrast to Hoan is Quân, another young man in the migrant labor group, who had two younger brothers and his mother had been taking care of most family business since his father had poor health. Quân was often ridiculed because he was not as active in making money and supporting family as his brother Dân, and some even said that he should not have been born as the older brother. For older men such as Chú Bảo and Anh May, who both left their government jobs elsewhere to return to the village while they were still young, the decision to return home was attributed to their responsibility as a son towards their parents and/or their siblings. One of the first things that Chú Giang, a school teacher who retired early because of his sickness, did was to reallocate the garden that was allocated to him by his parents so that his brother and his family, who at that time returned to settle in the village, could have a larger piece of garden. Chú Giang did so against the interest and advice of his wife who complained that he didn't help his own family

while he was away, and yet was more concerned about his brother when he just returned to the village.

Another important aspect of cathexis for men in Luu Khue was caring for and bonding with male friends, many of whom were considered to be their next-to-kin brothers. For younger men who were not married, they spent most of their daily time hanging out with male friends had they not been engaged in work and other family businesses. During the time when they returned to the village for *Tet* and other holidays, I often found it amazing that they continued to spend hours together and even slept over while I had thought that they would have spent more time with their parents upon return from extended travel away from home. They spent their time on drinking, on visiting other male friends that they had not seen for a while, on visiting young women that they were interested in, and on chatting with people in the village about their experiences and the places that they had been to. Another aspect of bonding among men was to show their generosity towards other male friends and to help them in case they needed it. Men who were willing to share their money with other male friends were often praised and considered as examples for others to follow. It was not uncommon that men of both young and older generations shared stories about their willingness to provide, money and other material supports, and at the same time complained about others who didn't return the favor. Chú Bảo prefaced his own stories by saying that he learned a lot from his experience and agreed with what his father told him earlier that “there were more of those who wanted to follow you than those who were willing to be your true friends (*bạn thì ít nhưng bè thì nhiều*) since many wanted your help more than actually returned it (when you need it most).”

Visiting sex workers, however, was prevalent and was experienced by almost every young migrant laborers that I knew. But not all migrant laborers were actively searching out for female sex workers in the same degree. Some were concerned with diseases; other believed that it was a waste of money; some told me that they can't spend too much money on their own pleasure as they wanted to save money for other needs. A common phrase that they used to describe visiting sex work was *chơi bời* (to play around) and this was often contrasted in a negative way to the purpose of their migration, which was to work and save money for the future of themselves and their families (see examples of experiences of migrant laborers elsewhere Bui Thi Thanh Thuy and Kretchmar 2008; Nguyen Huong Ngoc et al. 2011). Among the migrant laborers, Quân was considered as the most willing man to seek out for personal pleasure. It was not for no reason that the foreman often asked Quân to accompany him when he wanted to visit sex workers as Quân was often willing to accommodate such a request. For this reason, other men often teased him that he had blood of a goat (*có máu dê*) and that he could spend his whole fortune on "the hole." Quân, however, told me that the foreman often paid for sex work since he would not have money to visit sex workers that often. When I asked him whether his closeness to the foreman gave him any advantage in work or payment, he said he didn't expect that because he would be at odd with others. He said that it was just because the foreman wanted to visit sex workers so much and he didn't want to do it alone in a strange place. And in Quân he found a willing company.

All migrant men that I talked to about their experiences with female sex workers insisted that they used condoms as they didn't want to risk getting diseases. And yet they often were not prepared to use condoms with those they considered as girlfriends as well as young women they

considered as non-sex work partners. The fact that Thuý, among others, got his girlfriend pregnant, which resulted in a marriage that he was not entirely prepared for, was a case in point. He reasoned that he loved her and he wanted to get married eventually. Whether it was the real reason or an afterthought, the fact that he didn't use condoms with his girlfriend tell us more about his willingness to take risk in situation where he felt he could take control of. For the later, another man got gonorrhoea from sexual relationship with a young ethnic minority woman was a case in which he (and his friends) developed a belief that having sex with ethnic minority women in a remote area was safe. As I have argued elsewhere (Le Minh Giang 2004), the experience of getting infected in a relationship with a young ethnic minority woman was more than just not knowing the risk associated with it. It was also about leaving behind concerns and protection when one felt that one could control the situation and one felt closeness in the context of being isolated and poorly treated by the foreman and other hierarchies of a construction company. In both cases of unprotected sex, with women who are not female sex workers, the migrant men developed a fantasy that they were in control of the situation, which is a contrast to the experience with female sex workers where they consider as dangerous for both their health and their economic motivation.

Power Over Others: Relationships with Men and Women

Giving support, but also expecting a return, from male friends was a common feature of being a man in Luu Khue, and this is not at all uncommon among Asian men (Louie and Low 2003; Mann 2000). And yet it is important to conceptualize these relationships as more than merely

exchanges of money and material between men, but rather as forms of power negotiations between and among men, especially when men relied on their relationships to other men to build up economic and other forms of capital. It was often the case that men who were older and men who had more wealth were expected to support men who were younger and had less economic power. While doing the fieldwork, it came as natural for all young migrant men that I would pay for food and other expenses while I was spending time with them. For example, when I travelled with one or two of the young men to and from the village, although they never asked me to buy them tickets, they would never decline or even react to my offer and we both knew that it was acceptable that I would take care of their tickets and other expenses on the road. Younger men received support from men who had more economic power, either from an older or the same age cohort, knowing that they owed these men and would need to repay the favor at some stage, whether in economic or other forms of return. Those who declined to do so would commit the kind of mistake that they could eventually have to pay for, usually at the risk of losing support from friends and being ridiculed by other people in the village. For this reason, Ngoan and his family were very reluctant to break away from his brother's friend even though Ngoan had worked for him without pay for more than a year and felt that he had been able to do a lot of the work at the motorbike repair shop by himself. They eventually decided to ask another friend for help in raising the issue with the shop owner and Ngoan had some kinds of payment. Similarly, in the relationship with the foreman that both Hoan and Ngoan had worked for over many years and had borrowed money from on numerous occasions, it took them many months of debating and planning after I first met them before they decided to quit completely despite the fact that their frustration with the work and the payment was simmering for a while. Once they felt that

they had gathered enough support for their decision as most other young migrant laborers had left the foreman and many other people in the village knew about how the foreman had treated them, then they decided to quit. Even then, Hoan only quit six months after Ngoan had done so, in order to make sure that no one in the village could blame the brothers for what they did to the foreman.

While the men I talked to often openly acknowledged and even boasted about the importance of relationships with other male friends, they didn't normally talk openly about relationships with their wives and/or their girlfriends. And yet, when probed, men in Luu Khue were willing to talk about relationships with their women, but they often maintained a dual view. On the one hand they maintained that men should be *trụ cột gia đình* and that women should serve in a supporting role. On the other hand, many men showed their appreciation for what women brought to the relationship. As in the case of Chú Bảo, on the one hand, he was adamant that the husband should be the one who make more money in the family, and he also maintained the wife should be the one who control how money should be used in the family. He believed that should the wife earn more money than the husband, then the latter would not be respected both inside and outside of the family. He, however, used the old saying "*chồng là cái giỏ, vợ là cái hom*" (meaning "if the husband is the basket used to catch fish, then the wife is the cover of the basket") to explain that women should control expenses in the family since the husband would spend more what he had earned. Chú Cừ, who earlier emphasized that men should take care of "big businesses," used the old saying "*chồng con cá, vợ lá rau*" (if the husband catches fish, then the wife collects vegetables) to explain a common view that while the husband should

take care of “big decisions and businesses” in the family, the wife takes care of “smaller issues” in and around the household.

Interviewer: Tell me what you think about the role of the woman or wife in the family?

Chú Cũ: About women and their role, we have an old saying: “*Chồng con cá, vợ lá rau*” (“if the husband catches the fishes, then the wife collects vegetables”). Nowadays, when the husband takes care of big businesses then the wife takes care of children, prepares food for the family, and works in the field to produce vegetables and other stuff that could be sold in the market, and brings those stuff to the market. That’s a lot of work for women, so much burden for her...so what I think with the old saying is that this is a joint effort by both the husband and the wife to take care of the family, an essential cell of a society (*tế bào của xã hội*).

While separating the tasks and contribution that the husband and the wife could make to the family, Chú Cũ made sure that I understand the importance as well as complementary nature of the contribution that his wife made. In his family, he had the pension from the years that he worked in the army and therefore was able to afford not engaging in non-agriculture work like other men did (and in fact most men in Luu Khue who had pensions didn’t get involved in extra income-raising activities). He spent most of his time participating in various communal and village activities, hanging out with his male friends, and occasionally during harvest season supporting his wife in agricultural work. While he acknowledged that he didn’t get involved directly in her work, he insisted that he continued to be consulted by his wife and yet left most details for her to decide. He described his involvement as “support in spirit”:

So let me take an example like this. In our family, my wife takes care of agriculture work, raising pigs or chicken and other husbandries, as well as

overseeing other household stuff. Now she told me that it would be good if the family would do some more work for the winter agricultural season – for example planting maize and raising some kinds of husbandries. But then I said that it doesn't bring much profit so it's not worth it. And I advised her not to do anything in the winter. But she didn't agree with me and she said that it would be useless not to do anything during those 4 or 5 months of the winter. And she asked me to let her do it. So I just let her do it. So I told her if you try then we could have a little more money, maybe 10 million dong or so per year. So I encouraged her to do what she liked. It should not be that I now have salaries so I don't really care about what you do. I supported her in spirit.

In most families in Luu Khue that I knew, it was rare that both husband and wife were involved in the same economic activities with equal share of responsibility, except for cases like Chú Bảo's family where they didn't have rice field and the family relied on trading of pigs. This had created a situation in which most men depended on a pension and/or economic activities that involved a lot of hustling outside of the household, while most women continued to take care of so-called "domestic" activities such as agricultural work that have increasingly become less important in terms of contribution to the family social and economic foundation. Despite the fact that some of the men like Chú Cừ showed their appreciation towards contribution made by their wives, this situation continued to put the wife in a less powerful position than her husband in the family, and also continued to support the belief that men played the role of *trụ cột gia đình* because they earned money from economic activities that were increasingly important for the family. This dual perspective on the role of women – that they were inferior and yet an important supplement to what were provided by men – reflects the ambivalence that most people in Luu Khue had about these issues.

These dual roles of women, however, were believed to be important for family happiness as commented by Anh May, a 36-year-old policeman in the village whose wife just returned

from Taiwan after a short spell when an unfortunate illness forced her to return home. There was a rumor that she was pregnant before she left for Taiwan and could not stay on as she could not afford an abortion.

Interviewer: What are some of the things that could help prevent potential conflicts between husband and wife to get worse?

Anh May: Honestly, in order to have a happy family, and to prevent potential conflicts to get worse there are three important factors. The first one is about understanding and trust between husband and wife, which means they love each other. That's the most important thing. Secondly it is the family economy; and it's very important to have a strong economic foundation in the family. Thirdly, the wife needs to take a second role in relationship with the husband (*nhường nhịn người chồng*). If those three factors are there then the family will have happiness. If the family economy is bad, with lots of debts, and the wife never gives in when she argues with her husband, and they don't have trust in each other, then that family will never find happiness. Such a couple will not only have conflicts at the time, but they could soon come to divorce. And the children too are also important to keep a family happy.

Consumption: The Right Thing and in the Right Way

Another ambivalence was towards the relationship of men to consumption, and here I want to broaden the notion of consumption to include not only consumption for men's needs but also consumption as a way to build the image of men as *trụ cột gia đình*. On the one hand, as the old saying "*chồng là cái giỏ, vợ là cái hom*" goes, there always existed the concern that men would spend all the money they make on activities that were not warranted, and therefore it was important that women were there to make sure that there would be a balance and, better yet, savings for the family budget. The other side of this old saying was the fear that a man would

become too stringent had he known how much money he had spent, and therefore would be ridiculed by other men. On the other hand it is important to note that in the belief that a real man is someone who has the qualities of *ăn được, nói được, làm được*, a major part of this know-how is about consuming things in the right way.

Consuming activities incurred by men in Luu Khue ranged from consumption that served the needs of not just men (such as building a house for the family, buying a motorbike and other household appliances) to consumption that was deemed solely for men's needs (such as new clothes, drinking, and other leisure activities with men). As shown in the comment at the beginning of this section by Chú Cừ, building a house had always been the ultimate goal of all men in Luu Khue that I met. Had they been given a house by their parents, their next goal was always to build a new house on the ground of the old one. It was not uncommon that men in Luu Khue and their families borrowed money to build a house and, depending on the availability of money, it could take two or three steps before a house was completed. In early 2003, Hoan built a new house on the ground of his parents' old house and yet left a lot of uncompleted items since he borrowed a large amount of money at that time. It was a way for him to show to others in the village that he had been out working and able to make some savings for a house. At the end of it all, he organized a house warming party in which he received a lot of praise from attendants, mostly men, for his hard work and for the house that was large and built with a modern design. I was amazed after the party to learn how much he had to borrow from friends and other people he knew, including the foreman, and yet he seemed to be unfazed by the daunting tasks of paying back the loans. Others, like Cô Tấn (mother of Quân) decided to build a foundation first when she was able to have some savings, and told me that Quân would build a house later on that

foundation. It was a clear and constant reminder for Quân that he had an unfinished piece of business waiting for him. Other activities that were closer to conventional definition of consumption such as owning a motorbike, preparing food in way that deemed better than the way food was prepared in the village, wearing the right type of clothes and shoes, and boasting about their know-how while drinking and/or hanging out with friends were part of what men in Luu Khue proved to onlookers that they had the know-how of the world outside of the village and therefore was ready to lead the family.

The ambivalence toward men's consumption became clearer when a man could be criticized for consuming beyond his means and consuming without caring about the needs of others in the family. This was the case of Chú Bộ whose family was one of the poorest in the village. Below are the comments made by Hoan when he compared between himself and Chú Bộ:

Interviewer: You said that Chú Bộ has a better life (*sống hơn*) as compared to you because although his family is poor he still enjoys better life and still goes to the shop for breakfast every morning. Do you want to have a life like that?

Hoan: Of course not. As you know we are quite frugal since we are much poorer as compared to other families in the village. So we have to be very careful in our spending so that we can have many things like other families [Hoan refers to his newly built house and other family appliances]. If I were spending like Chú Bộ, then my family would not have as many things as I have now. The main purpose is family economy so we have to work hard, even in places very far away from home. I am not too stringent in my spending, though. When necessary, I can spend big too (*chỗ nào đáng chi là chi đáng ăn là ăn*) and no one can criticize me when it comes to maintaining relationships with my friends [it means that he is willing to spend in order to maintain relationships with his friends]. But being prudent is another matter. Some people make 10,000 dong per day, but they could spend the whole amount or even more on food, and make no saving at all. How come that they could have a strong economy?

In the morning, Chú Bộ often helped his wife to prepare for her shop in the market, and before long, he adopted the habit of eating out every morning. Almost all food shops for breakfast in *Phố Kẽ* were full of men, and they often had other male companions. Rarely I observed men who were not from *Phố Kẽ* that came to the shops on their own and/or ate there almost every day. In contrast to men, women often had breakfast at home or even skipped it all together. The issue that Hoan complained about was both the fact that Chú Bộ had breakfast on his own and the fact that he spent most of the hard earned money on breakfast rather than saving while his family was still poor. Consumption, therefore, plays an important role in creating a *trụ cột gia đình* and yet at the same time could destroy someone's reputation for that role.

For people in Luu Khue, *đi ra* played an important role in shaping who they are as men and as *trụ cột gia đình*. One of important quality that *đi ra* brought about was the knowledge of the world outside, which has become increasingly important for men to become *trụ cột gia đình*. Cô Tấn often compared herself to her own husband whose illness kept him from any chance of *đi ra* and therefore didn't have as much exposure to the world outside of the village like she did. This was not a coincident that she had to assume the role of *trụ cột gia đình* in the family until their sons grew up and assumed this role:

Interviewer: So what do you see the benefits of *đi ra*?

Cô Tấn: For example when go out to sell and buy things in the market, people make inquiries, answer my questions, as well as make comments. I learn a lot from talking to many people, keeping wise things for myself and leave ill-advised things out. So when I go out I learn a lot, and I understand more about life out there, the society out there (*cuộc sống bên ngoài, xã hội*). My husband didn't go out much, so he doesn't know any people outside of the village. He doesn't know whose house it is in *Phố Kẽ*. So he always thought of life as in the past, not life as

it is today, which has changed so much. Each time has its own features, but he always thought of the past, life in the past.

In this case, *đi ra* was mostly about going to the market in *Phố Kẽ*, and it already made a difference as compared to her husband. Similarly, Chú Bộ, a man who had both experiences of serving in the army and later venturing on long-distance trading, emphasized the benefit of *đi ra* as a way to learn about new things and therefore change oneself:

As long as you experienced *đi ra*, whether it was for short or long term, then you had exposure to the society. You had exposure once, then you learn once; you had exposure twice, then you learn twice. So you would become more matured, and gain more experiences. Then you see yourself change over time too. Once you have gained more experiences and knowledge, it certainly has impacts over you. When you have not experienced *đi ra*, then your knowledge is limited. But once you have experienced it, then you have gained something useful.

As suggested by Chú Bộ, the first benefit of *đi ra* is to learn from exposure to “the society” and this is an important quality to become *trụ cột gia đình*. As explained earlier, becoming a *trụ cột gia đình* requires men to have a lot of know-how which is summarized in the saying “*ăn được, nói được, làm được.*” This saying emphasizes the know-how on what to do in order to boost family economy by creating non-agricultural economic activities for themselves and their family members, how to build social relations to support personal goals by saying the right thing and to the right people, and how to show knowledge of the world outside to others by consuming the right thing and in the right place. To achieve all of these know-hows, it is not surprise that men can’t stay in their own village, and they do need to learn from their own exposure, both successful and failed, to the society. In addition to economic benefits, *đi ra*

therefore brought new knowledge for men, and what came with it was the privileged position of some men over others. Men learned about non-agricultural work that they could establish at home, and motorbike repair is the case in point. All men who owned motorbike shops in Luu Khue had at some points travelled to the provincial town and/or Hanoi to learn the trade. Men also learned about new ways of expressing themselves, new ways to consume food, and new ways to dress up that make them different from those who stayed behind. Every time young migrant laborers get together, one of the things they loved to do is to boast about and argue with each other over knowledge that they gained from their exposure to the world outside the village, ranging from ways to make money to ways to prepare and consume food. During *Tết*, as young single men return to the village in a large number after months, and even years, of working away from home they loved to show off their achievements (and know-how) that were often associated with consumer goods such as motorbike, shoes, clothes, hairstyles and other. Such items were not only significant to show others how successful they were while working away from home, but also were evidence for their readiness to become *trụ cột gia đình*.

The Practice of *đi ra ngoài* in Luu Khue and the Shaping Structures

Temporary Migration Over Generations

The word migration (*di dân*), often used in official and academic language, was almost never used in daily language in the village, despite the fact that *di dân* was not at all a new phenomenon to the villagers. After all, their ancestors moved into the place and established the

residence almost eight hundred years ago, according to some older villagers who were working to collect materials from national archives on the village history. Almost all men and women of older generations in Luu Khue who were interviewed for this study had some experiences with some forms of migration, either for a few months like the case of Cô Tấn or for more than a decade as in the cases of Chú Phong and Chú Giang. There were many terms that people used to describe migration in the village. The most common term was *đi ra* or similarly *đi ra ngoài*. The word *đi* mean going or leaving and the word *ra* or *ra ngoài* means out of a place, and in this case is the village boundaries. These terms were used to describe the practice of leaving the village for work and for study, either for short or long term. The places that were considered as beyond the village boundaries could be as far as another country or as close as the district township. The most important criteria for using this term is to leave agricultural work, or described as *ly nông* (leaving rural life and work), in order to engage in other non-agricultural work. The fact that people in Luu Khue emphasized the purpose of leaving the village to qualify as *đi ra* signifies the importance of this practice as a way to build a life not based mainly on agricultural activities.

Another common term that was used by older generation was *thoát ly* and this term was used to refer to the practice of leaving the village with the intention of to work and live elsewhere permanently. The motivation for *thoát ly* at the time, according to Chú Giang, is related to the devotion to the causes of the nation. He explained it as follows:

Interviewer: So what is the difference *đi ra* was for your generation as compared to the current generation?

Chú Giang: Although it was the same activity of leaving for a place far away from home, but the purposes were different. But at my time, it was all about the pressing needs created by the two consecutive wars, one against the French and

then one against the Americans. All villagers were mobilized to travel far away from home for various activities. You know, the Điện Biên Phủ battle [the battle in 1954 that ended the war against the French colonialism in Vietnam] demanded a lot of people: the strong went to the frontline; the weaker served in civil units to support those in the frontline; those who stayed home were mostly the elderly. Very few people travelled for their own benefits, and all were united for the call of the country.

It is important to note that Chú Giang emphasized the fact that rarely people ventured out because they were concerned about their own affairs. Other older men like Chú Lắm concurred with this observation when he stated that: “The whole purpose at the time was to devote everything [for the larger cause]. Nobody cared about how much sacrificing it was to serve in the army. Nobody cared about how hard it was to work as state-sponsored workers. The work was not easy at all, despite the fact that we were paid some money.” For men from an older generation like Chú Giang and Chú Lắm, joining the army, *thanh niên xung phong* (youth volunteers who work in civil units to support the army in the frontline), and other state-nation building efforts was the highest calling and was considered as noble way of developing into matured men and women. They always referred to their past experience with certain levels of pride when they emphasize the fact that they completed all the tasks assigned to them by *tổ chức* (institutional establishment) and *cấp trên* (direct boss/supervisor) and by that way developed themselves into better individuals. As such, the personal was subsumed under the national, and both goals were achieved by going out of the village and participating in state-sponsored activities.

Thoát ly for older generation involved permanent employment by the state and therefore offered them opportunity to qualify for pension and other benefits during their retirement. It turned out that the hard work during *thoát ly* paid off since having retirement pension was what

many in the village considered as a privilege. Chú Lắm, who decided to quit the army and returned to the village because of his responsibility with his ailing parents, explained his decision not to pursue *thoát ly* with certain degrees of nostalgia:

Interviewer: I want to ask what event that you consider as important for your life, or event that should it not happened then you would be a different person than who you are today?

Chú Lắm: It was because of my family conditions, and they were not changeable. I was the eldest son and my parents were severely ill. So when I started to appreciate the situation, I decided to stay with agricultural work at the village and to forego the possibility of *đi ra*. Should I have an elder brother or a young brother, I might not have decided to stay home. And my life would be totally different. Sometimes I think to myself that it was because of my family conditions so I had to accept [my lot in life]. Should my family's conditions were different, then I would never stay at home and I will be much better off. Also, had my family had more wealth I would have had much better education than what I am now.

Chú Lắm felt that he could have been luckier had his family's conditions allowed him to have better education as well as helped him to opt for *thoát ly*. Other men and women that I talked to often either expressed similar feeling or recalled with nostalgia their period of *thoát ly*, and more often than not they cited family reason for their decision. Like Cô Tấn, she returned because in the first place she went for *thanh niên xung phong* against her parents' will, so when they demanded her to return to get married she reluctantly obliged. Others who got married during their period of *đi ra ngoài* explained their reasons to return, oftentimes before their retirement age, because they wanted to take care of their wife and small children who faced difficulties in making ends meet during the years immediately before and after *Đổi Mới* (around 1986). While

they didn't regret their decision to return and settled in the village, they felt that had they decided to go for *thoát ly* their life would have been different altogether. For one, they would have gotten pension (or improved pension) that would have made their life easier. It should be noted that in early 1990s, the time when most decided to return to the village, working as government employees didn't offer much advantages as compared to rural farmers in terms of economic stability. Government employees in urban settings lived off government rationing of food and meager salaries that in fact forced many of them to raised pigs and other husbandries even at their crowded homes (MacLean 2008). As in the case of Chú Giang, he recalled of hauling rice and other food supplies every time he made visit home in order to supplement his rationed food. Nowadays, things had changed so dramatically that people often referred to those who decided to opt for *thoát lý* or had government pension with certain degrees of proud if they were within their lineage and of envy if they were outside.

While the term *thoát ly* was not often used nowadays in the village, opportunities to secure a job within the public sector were highly valued as I would turn to later. There were, though, other reasons for *đi ra* that were more common in the village. Chú Giang explained different reasons that made people leave the village.

Interviewer: So what are some of the reasons that make people to accept *đi ra*?

Chú Giang: Although they all experience *đi ra*, but the reasons were different. Some did that because they were recruited by the state, such as recruitment for the army, police or other government positions. Some accepted [*đi ra*] because family conditions were poor; some were because of family divorce so they wanted to separate from each other; some wanted to search for new life opportunities and they decided to settle in a new place one they found it a good place to live. And some had to leave the village because they got themselves deep into debt because of the big gamble scam in the last decade...Lots of reasons for *đi ra*.

Since the opportunities to secure a job in the government sector has become increasingly difficult as well as costly, and as market economy has opened up more opportunities for people to seek work and employment outside of the public sector, people in Luu Khue have been presented with more opportunities for *đi ra*. People remembered two major periods that marked the surge in number of people leaving the village for new opportunities. One was in mid 1980s, just around the time of *Doi Moi* (1986), when the introduction of market economy suddenly opened up more work opportunities. Most people who ventured out were men who already had a family and needed extra cash to boost their family economy. They were involved mostly in construction work, especially road construction, and they were recruited by a couple entrepreneurs who lived in or were connected to the village in one way or another (as the foreman of the migrant group who was married to a woman from the village). Later, other work opportunities emerged such as coffee plantation in the Central Highland, chain factory jobs in various locations in the country, and especially long-distance trading for those more adventurous. Young men and women were increasingly participating in these activities. The other period was about a decade later, when many lost big in an infamous gambling scam and, being chased by their debtors, had to flee the village to avoid potential violence and conflicts. This time, the number of couples who left the village was higher than any other time in the village history. In recent years, the most remarkable group who started to opt for *đi ra* more were married women, and their destination was in Taiwan where they worked as housemaid or service women in elderly care centers. Together with changing reasons for people to migrate out of the village over the years, the structures that shape these very reasons and their experiences with migration have changed as

well. I will examine such changes in the next section by comparing the experiences of Ngoan, a migrant laborer, and Chú Phong, a retired soldier of Ngoan's parents' generation.

Đi Ra Ngoài and Structure of Feeling Over Generations

Ngoan: A Migrant Laborer of Post-Doi Moi

Ngoan was an unmarried, twenty-one year old man when I first met him in the Ho Chi Minh highway section. It was in late 2002. In the group was also his brother, five years older than Ngoan, who was married and had two children. His brother was appointed as the leader of the group since he had been the longest serving migrant for the foreman. By the time I first met Ngoan, he was already seven years into living the life of a migrant laborer and was one of the veterans of the group working in the Ho Chi Minh highway. His first work away from home was for his uncle's military company in Nghe An province, where he worked as a cook's assistant. He told me that although he was earning money in those days, his uncle kept the money and gave it to his mother when they returned home for *Tet*. After an initial period of mixed feelings of excitement and home sickness, Ngoan eventually became more comfortable with living away from home and started learning the trade of road construction. After two years of working for his uncle's company, his brother persuaded him to join him and work for a foreman, who was married to a woman in the village and had recruited laborers from there for many years. Ngoan was told that he would be able to earn more money by working for a private group, rather than a company, and the prospect of working with his brother made it impossible for him to refuse.

Their relationship with the foreman and his private group of migrant labors has been not as smooth as both his bother and Ngoan had imagined it would be. At our first interview in the summer of 2003, Ngoan expressed his desire to stop working on road construction at the end of that year and he was pondering about a plan to head south looking for jobs in bustling industrial zones. Despite the fact that his earning capacity with the foreman has increased over the years as he had become more experienced on the job, his spending had increased as well, sometimes faster than his earning. He complained about the wage scheme that the foreman has been applying, which built on daily wages and the number of days that migrant labors were actually productive, which meant that those days when Ngoan and his friends were waiting for the weather to improve or for construction materials to arrive, or any other reasons that could stop them from being productive, they didn't get paid. Unfortunately, the number of such days was not small and could account for as much as one third of his working year. Ngoan emphasized that he was looking for jobs that offer monthly salaries since this type of job would provide some stability in his earning that he didn't have while working as a migrant labor. When I reminded him about his plan to buy a motorbike, he admitted that the plan had to be delayed "[until] after I returned from the south, when I shall show people that I could make some money." I came to understand that for him a motorbike was not just, if at all, a flashy commodity for his own consumption, but a signifier to other people in the village of his hard work and his earning ability.

Eight months later, Ngoan was still working with the foreman as he had given up the idea of going south. Several young men from the village had returned and didn't have any savings as they originally expected. They all complained that "life in the south is very expensive,"

especially for young and single men living away from home. It appeared in the second interview that Ngoan was struggling to strategize about his next move. One possibility was to continue the life of a migrant laborer, for which he wanted to find a new foreman who would be willing to pay more. A second option was to return home and to learn how to repair motorbikes with his brother's best friend. A third option was to learn how to drive and take care of a bulldozer. The last option was his preference as he believed that this type of skills would enable him to apply for jobs with large construction companies and the prospect of being a *công nhân* (skilled and fully employed worker) in such companies would ensure him better earning as well as the type of stability embedded in monthly salaries and other benefits that he was looking for. The major constraint was that he would have to borrow a large amount of money – about 20 million VND in his estimate – to be able to go through two years of official training in a vocational school. In addition he would have to acquire a junior high diploma in some illegal way since he didn't finish elementary school when he dropped out for migrant work.

Chú Phong: *A Retired Soldier*

I first met Chú Phong in the summer of 2003 at a wedding where he served as *chủ hôn* (representative of the groom's family). The groom, named Thuỷ, was one of the young men working in the Ho Chi Minh highway. Of several people who made speeches that day, Phong was the only one who criticized the young man for his gambling activities and warned him against destroying his new family with his habit. After the ceremony, I asked him why he decided to criticize the groom in the middle of the wedding, he told me that although he retired

from the army long ago and he still wanted to keep *tác phong quân đội* (army demeanor and) in his daily life. Chú Phong joined the army when he just turned 17. For young men of his generation, several career options were popular. They included joining the army to fight in the war, becoming a worker in many newly established factories at the heyday of socialist building, and getting a community college (*cao đẳng*) degree. According to Chú Phong, it was the worst scenario for a young man if he didn't qualify for any of those paths and therefore had to stay home working on the rice field. His father, who worked for the district trading company, showed his support by organizing parties for all people in the village who came to visit and offered encouragement for the young Phong.

Throughout the interviews, Chú Phong often insisted on the important influence of *tổ chức* (*institutional establishment*) and *cấp trên* (*supervisor/direct boss*) in shaping his life and the man he is today. In the mid-1980s, for example, he refused an offer of going to the former Soviet Union a *công nhân hợp tác lao động* (term used to denote oversea workers who came to socialist countries as agreement between former socialist countries), which was considered as a privilege at the time. He thanked his *cấp trên* for persuading him to drop that offer and stayed with the army unit as he felt that his life could have been messed up with what happened during the reform period in the former Soviet Union. Again, in late 1990s, when he wanted to retire from the army and return to his home village, he again had his *cấp trên* (supervisor/direct boss) to thank for because they told him to stay for few more years until his years in service would qualify him for better pension that has helped his family with a stable source of income. Despite his smooth experience with the army, Chú Phong decided to retire and return to the village at the age of 43. He attributed the retirement decision first to the condition of his family at that time:

“my children were growing up and they need more attention...and my house too, it was in a shambles.” He said that his wife also wanted him to come back home because she couldn’t handle the difficult economic situation by herself.

While internal migration was not new in Vietnam history, the introduction of *Doi Moi* at the end of 1980s which effectively introduced to the country a series of neo-liberal economic and social policies has transformed the dynamics of internal migration in several important ways (Dang Nguyen Anh 1997; Zhang et al. 2006). First, the dismantling of the cooperative system and the return of the household as the main economic unit in rural areas has turned farmers into real decision makers on how to use their land and their labor power. The increasing influence of the market economy on rural livelihoods, including the growing need for cash that cannot be met through agricultural activities alone, has become an important force in dispersing the rural workforce to urban and other areas in search of wage labor. It should be noted that the rural workforce are largely made up of young people who were born during the years after the end of the Indochina War in 1975 (currently 50 percent of the population are under the age of 30) and they are hungry for jobs as well as for opportunities to fulfill their modern aspirations. Second, the growing anxiety for economic development among the state and the donor community has resulted in the booming of infrastructure building and of export-oriented industrial development, which in turn has created an enormous demand for labor that can only be filled by migrant workers coming from rural areas. Third, while the extensive *hộ khẩu* system (household registration) that essentially classifies citizens according to their residential status and rationed their access to goods and services accordingly and, in the past, hindered population movements

was still in effect, this system could no longer restrict access to essential goods as well as employment for migrants.

All the above processes have led to significant increase in internal migration in Vietnam since the end of the 1980s. Two population censuses in 1989 and 1999 showed a one-third increase in reported lifetime experience with migration and two nationally representative surveys on living standards showed that from 1992 to 1998 circular migration from rural areas increased nearly six fold (Dang Nguyen Anh et al. 2003). As is the case in other countries, internal migration in Vietnam has been highly selective in several ways. In terms of demographic characteristics, the population census showed that more than half (52 percent) of internal migrants were younger than 25 years of age, with the highest concentration in the age group 20 - 24, and only 10.5 percent of migrants were over the age of 45. Furthermore, despite the fact that migration has grown both in scale and significance, temporary migration (sometimes described by other terms such as circular or seasonal migration) has remained the main mode of migration for many people from rural areas (Dang Nguyen Anh 2005) The 2004 Vietnam Migration Survey reported that fewer than half (48 percent) of surveyed migrants in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, two major urban centers in the country, expected to stay in their current place of residence permanently, and not surprisingly this rate was lowest (about 20 percent) among migrants with temporary resident permits in the two (Vietnam General Statistical Office and UNFPA 2005). This phenomenon is captured in the idiom of *ly nông bất lý hương* (leaving agriculture, but not the homeland) which has been used to emphasize the reliance on non-farm employment even for those who choose to stay in rural settings (Hoang Xuan Thanh et al. 2005). In relation to migration out of rural areas, this idiom shows strong ties that most migrants have

with their villages and/or their land, either through regular home visits to help out with agricultural activities, to participate in traditional festivals and/or ceremonies, and through remittances to maintain their homestead.

For both generations of men in Luu Khue, it is not an overstatement to say that the state has always been important in shaping many aspects of their life, including their experiences of *đi ra*. For young men of Chú Phong's generation, their paths of *đi ra* were almost guaranteed by the state. The major intervention of the state was the creation of *biên chế* (a state-sponsored employment system) that helped to motivate young people from rural areas for vacancies in factories and construction sites, the showcases for the government's [or State's] project of building socialist modernization and industrialization. *Biên chế* was the only form of employment in the socialist era, and the entry as well as exit from that system was tightly controlled by the state. Once accepted into that system, individuals were guaranteed lifetime employment, with salaries, pensions and benefits provided for entirely by the state (Nguyen An Phuong 2002). Most young men in the generation of Chú Phong wanted to leave their home communities at their first opportunity. They joined state-created and state-sponsored institutions such as the factory, the higher education system of college and university, or the army because, as Chú Phong explained, "young people wanted to be at the frontline for the country (*đứng mũi chịu sào cho đất nước*)... we were ready to go anywhere the country needed us."

Unlike their fathers' generation, for young migrant laborers, *đi ra* is all about personal and family business. However, by promoting their desires to achieve personal and family goals and by connecting these goals with *đi ra* for nation-building projects such as road construction, the state has also achieved its goals of making the best use of bodies of working rural men. For

the generation of Ngoan, the state seems to play less of a direct role in defining the paths that young men could take in their transition out of school and their village into the world of work and the larger society. In the context of post-*Doi Moi*, the relationship between the state and individual laboring bodies is quite complex. On the one hand, individual laborers are no longer subject to the direct management of the state, but rather to decisions made by the household as well as themselves, which in turn have been influenced by the market forces at local, national and global levels. This means that the responsibility of allocating labor force has shifted from the state with its *biên chế* system to the household, subjecting households and individuals to the mercy of the market. On the other hand, although the size of state-sponsored employment has reduced significantly, the state has continued to maintain its major role in the labor market, by being the single largest source of employment (about 10 percent of the labor force) and by providing jobs that come with certain prestige and security still desired by many young people and their parents (Nguyen An Phuong 2002). Ngoan's difficulties in securing job stability highlight the type of struggle that many young men with low educational and economic background faced in their transition from school to work. Among various options that could be available for young men like Ngoan, joining the army with the goal of becoming officers (i.e. professional soldiers rather than short-term draftees) or joining state-sponsored companies to become contracted workers are still important options that are much preferred. However, young men like Ngoan and his fellows in the group of migrant labors that I studied were not at all equipped to compete for these increasingly competitive opportunities. The struggle of Ngoan to get himself into the job of driving a bulldozer in a large construction company reflected the facts that young men like Ngoan were facing an uphill battle to claim those opportunities. Besides not

having required educational level as well as financial resources, they also lack *quan hệ* (knowing someone who is in the right position and who has right connections). The fact that the foreman was the one who stopped Ngoan from realizing his best plan to become a bulldozer and, more importantly, that Ngoan could not do anything about it tell us that the importance of having the right *quan hệ* in building one's own career for young men like Ngoan should not be undermined. After all, for young men like Ngoan, the only resource that they had was their own bodies.

Although the state does not get involved directly in shaping career paths for young men of Ngoan's generations, it does not mean that the state was short of mechanisms to regulate the laboring bodies that young men like Ngoan have to offer. First, the development-driven nature of post-*Doi Moi* state, especially its growing anxiety desire for modernization, as well as its fascination with planning have resulted in countless number of infrastructure projects throughout the country such as the Ho Chi Minh highway. These infrastructure-building projects would not have been completed without the laboring capacity of migrant men like Ngoan. Secondly, the disengagement of the state with agriculture-based economy, reflecting in its abandoning of the cooperative system as well as its practices (if not policies) of neglecting proper investment in agriculture while promoting service and industry-based economies, have resulted in increasing vulnerability of peasant households under the pressure of market economy. This has made migration work to be the best, perhaps the only, options to make ends meet, and is widely perceived to be the key to improving peasant household wellbeing (Hoang Lan Anh and Yeoh 2011; Hoang Xuan Thanh et al. 2005). While migrant laborers are often portrayed in both media and some research studies on migration as *lao động nông nhàn* (surplus labor from agriculture) (Dang Nguyen Anh 2005; Resurreccion and Ha Thi Van Khanh 2007), such images

do not take into account the fact that many migrants could have been used more efficiently should they have stayed in their own villages and have had the opportunities, including proper investments, to develop other types of economic activities beyond agriculture. Coupled with restrictive policy on household registration that does not allow rural migrants to build permanent residences in places where they work without facing major difficulties as well as the above-mentioned state control over certain sectors of labor markets, the disengagement of the state with agricultural economy has created a “migrant labor regime” that channels young men like Ngoan into certain areas of labor market that are less desirable. In the case of Ngoan, although migrant work was desired by both him and his family in early years, this desirability, especially the types of work that do not offer job security, dwindled significantly over time as he became tired with the “migration labor regime” that had been maintained in an exploitative labor market.

In the relationship between Ngoan and his foreman, the latter embodied the capitalistic labor market with profit making as the main driving force and motivation, that has played important role in shaping the career paths for rural young men. Initially, the foreman was trusted by his hired hands as well as their family members because they believed that he would treat migrant laborers fairly. This trust was built on personal relationships that he and his wife had with parents of the hired hands. They believed that as friends and people with the same village origin he would not treat Ngoan and other young men in a bad way, because such behaviors would be damaging for his and his wife’s reputation as well as their capacity to recruit new labors. Both migrant labors and their family, however, became increasingly frustrated with the foreman and his labor regime because that regime didn’t reward them as they had expected, which was interpreted as a violation of trust. It should be noted, however, that managers of

private groups like the foreman in this study often ran into many problems in getting their payments released from the companies they received the contract from. As the highway project was too large for any single companies to complete, the construction was divided into many sections and these sections were contracted to state-owned companies. The foremen had to borrow money from commercial banks or other private sources with high interest rates so that they could pay for expenses such as food and travel of their hired hands. Once they finished their work, they would be reimbursed from the state-owned companies. This process of getting reimbursed by the contractor was usually not as smooth as in theory; some newspaper, for example, reported that the backlog of payment for companies involved in the construction of Ho Chi Minh highway amounted to several thousand billions of Vietnamese Dong even when the road had been completed for a couple of years. In this context, foremen would have to do everything they could to cut down the costs and one of the easier way for them is to reduce the payment of their hired laborers when, by the end of the year, they themselves didn't receive as much money as they had expected.

As such, the state (embodied in the state contractor and state companies) and the market (embodied in the foremen) interact with each other in ways that deepen the level of exploitation for migrant laborers, whose strategies then are to look for other options. I often heard Ngoan and his friends talk about their plans to switch to other foremen whom they became acquainted with from their work and who promised them better pay. In the case of Ngoan, his plan was to head south where he hoped working in factories for a couple of years would help him improve his earning and saving. However, just as in the case of Ngoan, their plans often were impossible to realize because the promises they received were often false or because they found out that the

other plan(s) were not as good as what they actually had with their current foreman. They then returned to work for the foreman with the hope that the relationship will improve. This type of vicious cycle could be going on for a couple of years, until something really bad happened like the case of Ngoan where the relationship could no longer be amended. This type of struggle made me believe that the frustration that Ngoan had with the foreman was not necessarily with that person or with his particular labor regime. Rather it reflects the frustration and the anxiety that these young men had with the labor market in which they are both disadvantaged as well as exploited. While the *đi ra* of men in both generations required some guarantee, either by the state or by someone who had know-how in the market, the latter seemed to fail young migrant labors more often than the state did to the older generation of men.

In the particular case of Ngoan, the decision to return to the home village stemmed from his struggles with the labor regime of the foreman as well as his failure to secure a more stable job. This had left him with no choice other than returning to his home village. I would further argue that the return to home village of Ngoan epitomized a high level frustration in his relationships with both the state and the market at that particular moment in time. The length at which young migrant men in the village left this frustration grow varied quite significantly. I knew a couple of young men that I met only once during their work on the Ho Chi Minh highway. Later, they took an extended sojourn in the southern part of the country, although they originally had planned for staying “only for a year.” Some contacted home regularly and therefore I was able to know their where-about from their parents; some made sporadic contacts, usually with not-so-good news, which added more burden and stress for their parents. I also met other young men, whom I didn’t know at the beginning of the study, upon their return from

working for a few years with various types of jobs in Ho Chi Minh City and other adjacent provinces. They returned home after failing to gain a foothold in the labor market as well as gaining a resident permit that would allow them to build a long-term future in the place(s) they had worked. They also returned because it was not unusual that migrant men like Ngoan made very little savings that could help them to build new economic prospects elsewhere. Despite the expectations of most parents as well as young men themselves that they would be able to make some savings, the labor regime with its exploitative motivation that I described earlier more often left young male migrants with little resources by the time they decided to return home. As in the case of Ngoan, he didn't have money to invest in his own motorbike repair shop and had to work for another shop to both learn trade and to make some saving for his own shop in the future.

When men of Chú Phong's generation decided to return home after a period of *thoát ly*, they often do so in response to the call of their family (both natal and marital) that required their presence as a husband or a son. The experience of Chú Phong's return home was quite different and could not be categorized as failing to live up with the expectations of both his family and himself. In fact, he received a decent pension that was the desire of many people in the village since state pension and salary could be used for many purposes. In the case of Chú Phong, he used that pension as collateral to borrow money from the district bank and repaired his crumbling house. It is important to note that borrowing money from state bank in rural areas was not easy, and often required putting down more substantial collateral such as the house itself. Even in his retirement, Chú Phong continued to receive support from the state, which had shadowed most important decisions of his life. Symbolically, the state continued its paternal role

in providing Chú Phong with non-stop support and ensuring that the state's dutiful son enjoyed all privileges and opportunities. While not all men of Chú Phong's generation were as lucky as he was, the fact is that there were differences among men in the same village constituted yearning among middle-aged men who were less lucky than *Chu* Phong as well as among young migrant men who never had a fulfilling relationship with the state in the first place. Various scholars have examined the masculine features of the state. Connell, for example, argues that "the state is a masculine institution [because] there is a gender configuring of the internal division of labor and systems of control, a gender configuring of policy making, practical routines, and ways of mobilizing pleasure and consent" (1995: 73). Others have called attention to the notion of "state fatherhood" (see, for example, Heng and Devan 1995) to describe the paternalistic policies and practices of the state that overshadow its citizen's power to make choices meaningful to them rather than to the state agenda for nation building. In the case of Vietnam, by creating an eternal dependence and yearning for state support, the Vietnamese state has effectively infantilized men in rural areas of Vietnam, while maintaining its power over their lives.

Returning Home and Becoming a Family Man

In the cases of both Chú Phong and Ngoan, the return to home village after extended periods of time doing service and/or job for the state or the market marked a significant decision. For many men, it was the time they realized that they can't continue dreaming of life away from home, and that they needed to invest their time and efforts in supporting their family and building

themselves to become a real family man, especially a *trụ cột gia đình* for their families. As in the case of Chú Phong, despite being well-liked by his *cấp trên* and having opportunity to move higher in the army ladder, he determined to return home in order to support his struggling family. Many of the men I talked to returned to home village during the years before or immediately after the introduction of *Đổi Mới* (in 1986) when the economic conditions were worse off in both rural and urban settings. Living the life away from home was not easier than living at home, and as their loved ones were struggling many of the men like Chú Phong considered returning home as call of a dutiful son and/or husband. As soon as they returned home, their minds immediately focused on working to rebuild their families. When Chú Lắm retired from the army despite an offer to stay on and become an officer, he decided that he would settle in and focused on getting back to agriculture work in order to help his parents and his family:

Interviewer: What happened when you returned home?

Chú Lắm: When I was in the army and separated from my family, I missed my parents and thought a lot about my responsibility to them. So it made me feel that I must settle down once I was back in the village and never think of *thoát ly* [leaving the village permanently to live and work elsewhere]. It meant that I had to focus on rebuilding the family economy, and because of that I decided to get married. And because what a man should do after staying away from home for too long and after spending time on playing around was to stop all of the dreaming. The ultimate goal now is to build a family. And once you have a family you will find stability for your own mind (*ổn định tư tưởng*).

Interviewer: Why is it that you would find stability in your mindset once you get married?

Chú Lắm: It is because when you get married and have family in the village, you decided that you will live on agriculture and live in the village. You and your wife will be working together to build a family, supporting each other, so you don't think of leaving the village for work elsewhere or going to learn a new vocation anymore. And of course when you have a wife and children then you have more

responsibilities ... Getting married and having children would help you to settle down and have stability in your mindset.

In his explanation, Chú Lắm emphasized further that getting married was also helping him to focus on staying in the village and working on agriculture, rather than venturing out to find other jobs. In this case, Chú Lắm found *ổn định tinh thần* by focusing on his obligation towards his parents and by making himself a married man and taking on more responsibilities as the man of his family. In Luu Khue, people used the word *ổn định* and its antonym *chưa ổn định* (unstable) most often in several situations: when they talked about someone's job (*công việc ổn định*); when they got worried about a man not getting married at a certain age (*gia đình chưa ổn định*); when they assessed their own or another family's situation (*cuộc sống ổn định*), especially in relation to economic status (*kinh tế ổn định*), and when they referred to their own or someone else's state of mind (*tinh thần ổn định*). As such both words, *ổn định* and *chưa ổn định*, are adjectives that are used to describe the situation of some individuals and their families.

In the case of Thủy, whose wedding was when I first met Chú Phong, he got married soon after returning to the village and his parents were very supportive. This was because his parents were concerned that while his work as a motorbike taxi driver earned some decent money, it didn't create a regular source of income and there was no guarantee that it would remain profitable forever. Moreover, as Thủy was gambling away most of his money, his parents thought that one good way to help him keep his money and settle down was to make him become a family man. Many parents in Luu Khue believe that their sons and daughters would settle down and become more *ổn định* if they get married. This is especially the case when the son and daughter didn't get a chance to develop their education and job prospects elsewhere. Some

young men in the migrant groups, in the case of Hoan for example, got married at quite a young age as he believed that having a wife at home would help his mother while both him and his brother were away from home. Furthermore, it would help him to pay attention to saving from his migrant work since he then had a family of his own to take care of. It should be noted that the practice of getting married in order to build one's own family and/or to have additional labor for the extended family in order to reach *ổn định* is not new. For example, several older men who I interviewed got married soon after they returned home from the army or from working away from the village, and got settled down only when a new set of responsibilities took their toll on them. Anh May, who got married soon after returning home, explained the difference that marriage made to a man:

Interviewer: What I mean here is how does having a family have any meanings for a man? If a man gets married, how does it change him?

Anh May: When a man gets married, he will have more responsibility and more burdens. His responsibility will be larger than that of a woman since he will have to prove to others that he is worth the role of *trụ cột gia đình*. If he could rely on his parents in the past and his father or mother was someone he could lean on, then when he has his own family he will have to become the pillar. He will have to navigate the difficulties; he will have to put a lot of thinking on how to navigate the family to a happier land. It means that when it comes to marriage, it is a major challenge for a man. He now has to rely on himself; he now has to navigate the family ship to a land of happiness. It all depends on his decisions.

As in the case of Ngoan, he quickly realized returning home was one of the best things that could happen to him at that point and ever since he never regretted his decision. He became busy with learning how to repair motorbikes and was soon busy with a plan for marriage. What he probably didn't plan for when returning home was that he was falling in love with a young

woman, named *Minh*, who eight months later became his wife. At the time, Ngoan had a girlfriend, a young woman from an adjacent commune, and she stayed in Hanoi working in a garment factory. Ngoan was pondering about their future since his family didn't approve her due to some conflicts in the past between the two mothers. People in his family and many others in the village told me that the *Minh*, who happened to work at a tailor shop across the street from his motorbike shop, was much a better match for Ngoan.

The return of Ngoan to his home village, and his decision to settle down with a new job as well as to get married resulted from the tension as well as the frustration in his unfulfilling relationships with both the state and the market. This decision also highlighted the expectation of many families in the village that had sons who were working away from home for an extended period of time. They expected that the return to the home village, and consequently a marriage, would help their sons to settle and concentrate on building their own families. This reflects their belief that migration was only temporary and that building economic foundation at home is the long-term future for their young sons to establish *ổn định* and to become *trụ cột gia đình*. Many young sons, like Thuỷ and Ngoan in this study, agreed with this expectation and got married soon after they returned from their migration work. As the number of young men who returned and got married increased, this put pressure on both families as well as young men who have continued to do migratory work.

The decision to get married clearly reflects the fact that returning home, getting married was what young sons like Ngoan considered as fulfilling their responsibility and, at the same time, as a way to build something significant for themselves. It should be noted that for older men, even though they were quite successful in their ventures in various state-defined jobs,

returning home and especially taking good care of their families was also significant for their own reputation and status in the village. The patriarchal family in this case depends on the body of temporarily migratory men to fulfill both productive and reproductive expectations and the men were dutifully obliged as that's how they define themselves as respectable men in the village. I now turn to the notion of *trụ cột gia đình*, a symbolic capital that many men in Luu Khue strived to achieve in their adulthood.

Shifting Structure of Feeling, Becoming *Trụ Cột Gia Đình*

The experiences of Ngoan and his fellow migrant laborers from the village of Luu Khue captured many characteristics of migration in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam. Leaving home permanently was not an option for many migrant laborers who were not equipped with material and social resources to acquire a life path that they may have wished to have. While *Doi Moi* has opened up many aspirations and dreams for young men from rural areas, it has also created many barriers that make these dreams constantly out of reach for many of them. By juxtaposing their experiences with those of their parents' generation, I propose that the experiences of male migrant laborers in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam with the state were qualitatively different from those of their parents' generation, and hence a shifting in structure of feeling has occurred. While the term *đi ra ngoài* has always signified temporariness of migration, such temporariness differs markedly between generations not only because the context of migration has changed significantly but mainly because the relationships of these men and the structures that shape their experiences have changed. In examining such structures, I argue that for Ngoan's generation while the state no

longer holds the prominent role in shaping career and job prospects, it remains a powerful structure and maintains strong interests in the bodies of working men who are productively useful for various nation-building projects such as the construction of the Ho Chi Minh highway. In the years after *Doi Moi*, on the other hand, the state has ceded its influences in regulating life choices of individual citizens. The market has emerged as another powerful structure that shapes the ways men use their bodies, not just for their production but also for their consumption power. Increasingly, rural and working men express their power through consumption since it's how they were measured against their peer and those who are wealthier. In co-producing economic and consumptions desires, the state and the market have created the will to work and the will to consume among the most vulnerable bodies in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam.

The third structure which maintains strong interests in relation to working men's bodies is that of their own families. Unlike the socialist building and war periods (i.e. before *Doi Moi*) when familial interests were to a large extent subsumed under the interests of the state, the patriarchal family in post-*Doi Moi* are increasingly demanding for the bodies of working men in order to maintain its economic and cultural existence. On the other hand, for most young migrant men with limited educational and economic capital, their bodies and their families were perhaps among the limited sources of capital that they possess. Yearning for a location in which they could assert their meaningful selves, the family is the only structure that they feel most comfortable and therefore could fall back on upon failing in their negotiation with the other two structures. Therefore, returning home, making decisions on what to do to support their family, negotiating familial decisions such as courtship or marriage, I would argue, are really about

(re)claiming a place for oneself in a family-kinship network that has gained renewed importance as opportunities to improve their placement in the society have significantly diminished.

In examining various aspects of *trụ cột gia đình*, a culturally prescribed and yet historically changing notion of being men in the family, I would further argue that not only young migrant men need their family as the last resort, but the state and the market also need the family in the cushioning role to support the flexible body that are increasingly in demand in the context of globalized neoliberal capitalism (Ong 1987, 1999). Moving back and forth between the village and work site; returning to the village and the family at times of crisis and travelling to the work site when healthy and ready; receiving support from the family (in both material and mental terms) and working hard in the market to return this favor; and having no insurance other than some compensatory payments in case of accident as all the costs would be borne by the family were some of the characteristics of the flexible body that is demanded by the market and the state.

The male body of migrant men is also desired by the patriarchal family because of its productive and reproductive power. Young migrant men were encouraged by their parents and their relatives to get married, to produce children, preferably sons, to settle with some kinds of job that could support their own newly established families. Young migrant men were pressured by their peers and others in the village to produce what they were supposed to as *trụ cột gia đình*, including many decorative and consumer items that were increasingly popular in the village. By examining the experiences of young men like Ngoan, I also show their creative use of their bodies for strategic action in the face of mounting constraints and challenges. The use of their own bodies are embedded in their strategic decisions in working for whom, for how long, and

under what terms; their decision in when and what they would do in returning home; their decision on whom they would want to get married and produce children with; and increasingly their decision on when and how they would engage with the culturally prescribed and yet historically changing notion of trụ cột gia đình. All these strategic decisions, albeit in trying circumstances, make the negotiation of young migrant men and the structures that shape their lives as well as their bodily experiences important aspects of changing gender relations in post-Đổi Mới.

Chapter 3

The Management of Deviant Bodies:

Men Who Are On Methadone in Urban Hai Phong

The previous chapter explored the social use of the body of vulnerable young men in a rural setting. I argued that the state, the market and the patriarchal family, have vested interests in productive and reproductive bodies of young working men who have little resources other than their own physical bodies. By examining the working of the state in shaping migration experiences of men of different generations, I showed that the state makes use of the bodies of men for nation building projects at various periods in the nation history. In post-*Doi Moi* era, the vulnerable body of young men has become increasingly available under the restructuring of the economy where agricultural activities have become less important than other non-agricultural work. On the other hand, the state and the market have produced economic desires to incite young men to labor at the expenses of their health and other consequences. In the relationship with the family, I showed that many young migrants were pushed to become *trụ cột gia đình* (the pillar of the family) in the early years of their youth as their families needed them both for their productive and reproductive power. While some of them became successful, others were struggling with the burden of this expectation. In the face of challenging relationships with both the state and the market, many rural men embraced the return to the family as a way to prove their self-worth.

This chapter focuses on the experiences of young men who were undergoing the first experiments with methadone treatment sponsored by the government of Vietnam and funded by the US government through its President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). I will continue to probe into the production of the deviant body of men who are methadone patients, as well as the relationships of the state and the family with these men. I show ways in which the state both punishes deviant bodies of heroin users through harsh measures used at rehabilitation centers (also known as 06 centers), and disciplines such bodies through the methadone clinic. Both punishment and discipline have become handy for the state to achieve its goal of managing dangerous and immoral bodies of heroin users. In this regard, their bodies become a site for the state to exercise its power in order to ensure the availability of productive and docile bodies. I will argue that the state, through the introduction of the methadone clinic with rigid codes of conduct that are promoted as the only way for heroin users to recover their lives, has introduced ethical desires for methadone patients that make them into compliant subjects.

The family is both the place where the men in this study sought support during their heroin years, and also the place where they believe they can prove their self-worth once they are on methadone. On the other hand, the family also needs the once rejected bodies of young sons and husbands, who hold the potential for both productive and reproductive power which are desired by the patriarchal system. However, while men who were methadone patients had found some stability as compared to the chaotic life of heroin addicts, their maturity into manhood had been delayed. They may never become *trụ cột gia đình* (the pillar of the family) as they and their families had hoped for because of continuing societal stigma that the state has refused to address. As such, methadone in and of itself, may not have offered the transformative

experiences that many heroin users have expected, whatever the positive impacts in the early phase it may have had.

Methadone is a synthetic opioid developed initially for treatment of pain, and yet over the past five decades it has been known around the world as a main medication for treatment of opioid dependence (Courtwright 1997; Farrell et al. 1994). It carries an opioid agonist effect, which effectively blocks receptor sites in the brain that otherwise take up heroin, and this effect prevents heroin users from enjoying the high of heroin when they have taken a sufficient amount of methadone. Unlike heroin, methadone has a long half-life of twenty-four to thirty-six hours, which means that methadone users only need to take a daily dosage to maintain its effects on the brain. As such methadone treatment is often dubbed as maintenance or substitution therapy, signifying a long-term replacement of one substance considered as harmful and illegal by another substance less harmful and legal (see, for example, Ward et al. 1999). Importantly, unlike heroin, methadone can be taken orally, a fact not lost among those who have been concerned with the ravaging effects of blood-borne diseases, including HIV/AIDS, among drug injecting populations in a number of countries over the past three decades (WHO/UNODC/UNAIDS 2004). Like most long-term medications, however, the success of methadone treatment depends on compliance of patients to their treatment regime as well as their willingness to part way with the heroin lifeworld.

In the past four decades, in a number of settings such as the USA, many of the countries of Western Europe, and a number of countries in Asia, methadone has been used as a maintenance treatment for heroin addiction, initially for managing heroin dependence and subsequently for HIV prevention. In the case of China, methadone maintenance treatment was

introduced in 2004 with the primary goal of preventing the spread of HIV among heroin users as well as to their sexual partners (Li et al. 2010; Yin et al. 2010). Since the implementation of methadone in China, there have been a growing number of studies on various aspects of the methadone program, including the impacts of methadone treatment on drug users in relation to HIV risk behaviors, various aspects of quality of life, relationships with family members, and their more general living conditions (Chen and Fujiwara 2009; He et al. 2011; Li et al. 2011; Lin et al. 2011a; Qian et al. 2008; Xiao et al. 2010). Studies have also shown challenges to retention of patients in methadone treatment, including stigma and discrimination against drug use, lack of community and societal support, limit of the drug distribution time, lack of comprehensive treatment of other health concerns other than HIV/AIDS among injecting drug users, and various barriers on the part of service providers (Che et al. 2011; Lin et al. 2011b; Lin et al. 2010; Liu et al. 2009a; Zhao et al. 2012).

Although methadone has been one of the most well-studied medications for treating addiction in the broad field of addiction science, there has been comparatively little social science research on the administration of methadone and on methadone patients. A comprehensive literature search turned up two book-length social science publications (Fraser and Valentine 2008; Friedman and Alicea 2001), and more than two dozen articles that appeared mostly in the past decade. Social science research on methadone treatment regimes and the experiences of methadone patients have overwhelmingly emphasized deserved cautions against the liberating promises of methadone treatment, showing for example issues around diversion and misconceptions rather than smooth operation of the treatment (Agar and Stephens 1975; Koester et al. 1999), problems of dependency and resulting resistance (Holt 2007), stigmatizing

and dehumanizing experiences of patients (Anstice et al. 2009; Bourgois 2000; Vigilant 2008), and tension in the inherent tension between clinic staff and patients (Järvinen 2008; Lilly et al. 2000). Recent social science research on methadone treatment in various countries has brought significant contributions to our understanding of the power structures of methadone treatment regimes in different social and cultural contexts (Bergschmidt 2004; Fraser 2006; Gomart 2002a; Gomart 2002b; Jarvinen and Andersen 2009), questioning the taken for granted attributes of methadone as a “neutral” substance independent of its social and political context (Fraser and Valentine 2008; Järvinen and Miller 2010; Valentine 2007).

While social scientists are cognizant of the fact that drug use patterns are gendered and drug treatment is a gendering process (Campbell 2000; Fraser and Valentine 2008; Hansen 2012), the number of studies on gender aspects of drug treatment are very limited when compared to those on the linkages between gender and initiation into addiction (Bourgois 1996; Liu 2011a; Liu 2011b; Penglase 2010; Singer et al. 1992). In a study subsequent to his ethnographic venture among crack dealers in East Harlem, Philippe Bourgois described how Primo, one of the two main characters in his early book, had been chained to methadone and experienced difficulty in adjusting his daily life and work to frequent changes introduced by the methadone program (Bourgois 2000). Bourgois reported that Primo, who had used heroin and cocaine for many years without getting addicted, had now become dependent on methadone and found this new dependency and its impacts on his daily life to be humiliating experiences for him both as a man and as a father. Using Foucault’s insightful concept of bio-power, Bourgois exposed the administration of methadone in a clinic setting as a way to “discipline addiction” to the extent that it serves to “reduce even the most oppositional outlaw street addicts [...] into

stable patients once their bodies have built up a large enough physical dependence on methadone to make it too physically painful for them to misbehave” (Bourgois 2000: 183). While exposing the brutal effects of the disciplinary power of methadone treatment on the lives of heroin users like Primo, Bourgois falls short of reflecting on various technologies of the self that have always been the other side of disciplinary power (Foucault et al. 1988).

In *Surviving Heroin: Interviews with Women in Methadone Clinics*, Jennifer Friedman and Marisa Alicea (2001) traced stories as narrated by women of difference races and cohorts from the time when they initiated heroin use in 1960s to when they were receiving methadone treatment in early 1990s. Interestingly, the authors showed that perceptions of women in the study over heroin and methadone changed over time. While they recalled their initiation of heroin use in 1960s as a revolt against restrictive expectations in terms of gender, class and race, they also remembered suffering from gender- and race-based oppression in their relationships with male partners and pimps while being on heroin, which contributed significantly to their rejection of heroin for methadone in the first place. As they got into methadone, they started to adopt discourses and practices instilled on them by the clinic through counseling and multitude of rules about space, time and behaviors in order to explain their heroin addiction and to project their future. The clinic also endeavored to instill in them expectations related to class, race and especially traditional gender roles as women and as mothers (Friedman and Alicea 2001: 130 - 169). The clinic, the authors argued, aimed not only to reform heroin use among these women, but more importantly to create “safe deviants and docile bodies.” Women in the study, however, were seldom completely reformed as they simultaneously resisted and reproduced messages conveyed to them at the clinic site. “The new drug,” they poignantly pointed out, “is not just

methadone, but rather the whole apparatus of power centered at ‘the clinic’ ...[which produces] the dilemma of women on methadone: on the one hand they need this treatment to maintain a semblance of normality and structure, but on the other they are abused and demeaned by the very process” (2001: 131).

The production of conformity and nonconformity is a dominant theme in studies that critically engaged with the power structure and the resistance capacity among patients of methadone clinics in various settings. In their book titled *Substance and Substitution: Methadone Subjects in Liberal Societies*, Suzanne Fraser and Kylie Valentine (2008) challenged the binary of victimization and resistance by conceptualizing the substance of methadone as a phenomenon – “an assemblage of human and non-human actors made in its encounters with politics, culture and research” – that needs to be examined, rather than as a primordial entity that the politics of methadone rest upon (Fraser and Valentine 2008: 3). The authors argued that conformity and non-conformity were co-produced by both the expectations given to the substance as well as by the patients themselves. For example, resistance on the part of some methadone patients came into existence because the methadone clinic’s regulations create the kind of subjects who will be held as bad examples against those who are “compliant” and will be blamed for certain failures that will teach other lessons about consequences of resisting the status quo. At the same time, the methadone patients strategically violated certain regulations that they considered as harmful and not suitable to their lives, but often to the effect of making those regulations even more tighter and reinforced. As such, both the patients and the treatment constituted each other, and therefore couldn’t be separated and put on opposite sides. On the subject of gender, the authors noted that the methadone regime, by putting emphasis on repetition of daily routine (versus the chaotic

nature of their heroin lifestyle), on passivity (versus the aggressiveness of their heroin past), and on compliance (versus their rebellious attitudes), was often experienced as a feminizing experience for men on methadone. On the other hand, women on methadone were denied their needs and agency in a men-dominated world, and this was evidenced in the fact that women's experiences of drop-out were often interpreted by the clinic staff as related to their relationships with male partners. Furthermore, the authors observed, gendered agency of men and women on methadone formed their treatment because the clinic staff reacted to what they interpreted the presence, or lack thereof, of agency on the part of their clients.

This chapter builds on theoretical insights discussed above and contributes to the much-needed literature on gender and addiction in a number of ways. I first situate the methadone treatment regime at the clinic level, which is the focus of most of the work mentioned above, within the larger context of the three major structures that shape the deviant male body of heroin users, especially the working of the state in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam. As the state is maintaining both the "enforcement" and the "adherence" approaches to social issues (Montoya 2012), the form of ethics produced by the methadone clinic, I will argue, is a question that needs to be probed. Secondly, while the experiences of men are often damaging in previous accounts of men on methadone, I will argue that the experiences of the men investigated in this chapter are more varied, primarily depending on the ties that they have with their families. In the following section, I will describe context for the introduction of methadone in Vietnam. I will then describe the setting of the methadone clinics where this study was conducted as well as the experiences of methadone patients in these settings. The description points to the disciplinary power at work in the clinics that are aimed to transform the deviant bodies of heroin users into socially acceptable

bodies. While the resistance to such a power regime is visible, the more important question is to ask why most methadone patients found such a power regime acceptable to them, which resulted in a fairly high retention rate. To address this question, I turn to the comparison of experiences that the men in this study had while dependent on heroin and their new-found experiences with methadone dependence. With new-found stability and sense of self-confidence, the methadone users started to imagine and plan to fulfill their roles as *trụ cột gia đình*, as expected by their families. As such, the family is an important structure in co-producing the ethics of the self that the state invests in the body of methadone patients.

The Context of Methadone Treatment: State Action and Discourses on Drug Abuse

State Action and the Co-Existence of Two Contradictory Approaches

Drug use has a long history in Vietnam. By the late 19th century, opium smoking was already perceived to be a stylish habit among urban elites. After Independence in 1945, opium smoking was banned in the North by the new Communist government because the practice was considered not suitable for building the new Vietnam's "socialist lifestyle." In the South, during the Vietnam War, the number of drug users (of both opium and heroin) climbed to 150,000 (Trang Vu 2001). After 1975, the Communist government introduced measures to ban drug use and sent many southern drug users (DUs) for "reeducation" to help rid them of the "bad remnants of capitalism." Despite these punitive measures, drug use still lingered on in some pockets of the society, particularly in mountainous areas where opium was grown and in some

urban underground communities where the state apparatus had limited reach. The beginning of *Doi Moi* in 1986 marked a full-swing return of opium and then later heroin, initially among former drug users in the South in the early 1990s before ravaging many northern border provinces in late 1990s and early 2000s as these provinces became important nodes in the regional and global networks of narcotic trading in the South and East Asia region (Beyrer et al. 2000). As of 2009, official estimates put the number of injecting drug users at about 140,000, though the number was a severe underestimate by all accounts (FHI360 n.d; Ray 2008). Since the introduction of *Doi Moi*, the drug market has not only expanded in terms of geographical boundaries but also in terms of types of drugs that are available, following trends that are observed in other countries in the region such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. ATS (amphetamine-type stimulants) such as crystal methamphetamine and ecstasy have become trendy among growing number of young drug users in urban settings, replacing opium and heroin as these two drugs are associated with HIV and other unwanted social and health consequences (Nguyen Thi Van and Scannapieco 2008).

Punitive approaches to drug use dated back to the socialist building period when it was believed that laboring and other education measures were the only effective way to reform drug users and other unwanted “remnants of capitalism” such as sex workers and gamblers. As early as 1945, few days after the birth of Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh declared that one of the tasks of the new government would be to fight against “alcohol and opium that our people were toxified by the French colonialists” (Tran Dan Tien 1976: 122). In the years that followed the Reunification of the country in 1975, the Ho Chi Minh City local authority introduced a guidance that labeled drug use as a “social evil” that could potentially lead to other

crimes and therefore needed to be eradicated (Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee 1977). Consequently, thousands of drug users, many of whom were soldiers and/or civil servants of the former US-supported regime in the South, were sent to *Trung tâm phục hồi nhân phẩm* (Center for reeducation and rebuilding personal qualities). In those "reeducation center," labor in arduous conditions coupled with learning endlessly about socialist ideals was used to reform these individuals and turn them into "new citizens" suitable for the project of building socialism (see the case of female sex workers described in Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong [2002]). However, it was only in the years after *Doi Moi* that the expansion of punitive measures has entered a new phase. This expansion followed a Resolution issued by the government in early 1993 (Resolution 06/CP on January 29, 1993) aimed at reinforcing punitive measures to address growing problems of drug use in all over the country. Together with another Resolution addressing prostitution that was issued on the same day (Resolution 05/CP on January 29, 1993), they have officially popularized the expression "social evils" in both official channels and daily discourse. The peak of this approach came in late-1990s when for the first time criminalization of drug use was introduced the 1999 Criminal Code.

After the introduction of Resolution 06/CP, the number of rehabilitation centers, now referred to most commonly as "06 centers," grew rapidly. They have taken on new names such as *Trung tâm giáo dục và lao động xã hội* (Center for social education and labor) or *Trung tâm giáo dục và dạy nghề* (Center for education and vocational training) or *Trung tâm dạy nghề và giải quyết việc làm* (Center for vocational training and job placement). By the end of 2010, there were as many as 109 centers nationwide, which collectively detain up to 60,000 people who use drugs each year (Human Rights Watch 2011). The required duration of stay for a heroin user

ranges from one to two years, and at some points and in some locations this duration was extended to as long as five years. Although the 06 center system has changed over the years, including a growing number of privatized centers and adding more services to be responsive to expressed needs of residents and their families, the system of 06 centers has been subject to severe criticism from international observers and serious doubt among certain domestic quarters. Many international organizations have raised serious concerns about the centers and their effectiveness at treating drug addiction. Relapse rates are extremely high, estimated at about 70-80 percent within one year of release. Human rights groups have labeled the centers inhumane because of the lack of due legal process or informed consent in admission to the centers, the non-existence of drug treatment and services that are internationally recognized as effective, and what they consider the exploitation of “forced labor” in many of these “drug detention centers” (Human Rights Watch 2011). Inside the center system, growing resistance and reaction by the residents were evidenced in increasing number of unrests, escapes, and other violent incidents. However, the government, especially the Ministry Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), have resisted many criticisms and continued to maintain that the system still serves effectively a large number of drug users who want to quit drugs completely.

Almost in parallel with the above developments of the system of 06 centers is the emergence of harm reduction as a concept and practice in the country in response to rising HIV among populations of drug users. Ever since the first HIV case was reported in 1990, the public face of the epidemic in Vietnam has been dominated by male injecting drug users (IDUs). Although the share of injecting drug users among people living with HIV in Vietnam has declined from 75 percent in mid-1990s to about 50 percent in mid-2000s, reports from sentinel

surveillance have shown steady increases in prevalence rates in this population, from 9.3 percent in 1997 to the highest level of about 25 percent in early 2000s (Vu Minh Quan et al. 2009).

Although this prevalence was down to 18 percent around 2009 (and reasons for this decline was largely unexplored), the burden of HIV/AIDS among drug using populations, their sexual partners and their children remain a major concern.

From early 2000s, in order to confront with growing HIV cases among drug users, harm reduction has emerged as a parallel trend in the state policy and action. Over the years, harm reduction approach, which is sponsored mostly by the Ministry of Health (MOH), has developed into a force in and of itself. In a Decree issued by the government in 2003 (Decree 05/ND-CP on January 23, 2003) regarding international cooperation in drug prevention, for the first time the expression “harm reduction” (*giảm hại*) was mentioned in a legal document in Vietnam (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2003). In the same document, however, the need for other more punitive measures such as “organized detoxification, management of drug users” and “construction of wards/ communes without drugs” were still stressed. Such differing ideas within one decree underscore the contradictions in ideologies and approaches apparent in Vietnam’s drug policies today. Later, in 2004, Vietnam has made significant advances toward reducing the harm associated with drug use with the approval of the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS Prevention, effective until 2010 with a vision towards 2020 (Reid and Higgs 2010). In this legal document, the Australian model of harm reduction, including needle exchange programs and methadone maintenance therapy, has also been cited as effective and used in the written justification of the national strategy. The Law on the Prevention of HIV/AIDS in 2006, and its subsequent governmental guidance on how to implement the Law, clearly defines

legality of harm reduction measures in co-existence with other measures to control drug use and its consequences. In 2009, along with Vietnam's international commitments, the 2009 Criminal Code removed the 199th article of 1999 Code and with it, the criminal status of drug users. This means that heroin users who possess a small quantity of drug for their own use would theoretically not be subject to any administrative detention and punishment. However, they were still vulnerable to compulsory detoxification either in community-based facilities or in 06 centers without any due legal process.

In Vietnam, methadone came out in a context where the number of HIV/AIDS cases were increasingly rapidly, while the effectiveness of interventions such as detoxification in closed settings, free condom and needle distribution was still limited and drug relapse rates remained high. However, it is no coincidence that the first legal document that mentioned harm reduction approaches was related to international collaboration. As I have argued elsewhere (Le Minh Giang and Nguyen Thi Mai Huong 2007), the donor community has played a major role in pushing to broaden approaches to drug use in the country. In June 2004, Vietnam became the 15th country that has received support from the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and has since been the target of extensive international funding and advocacy measures around HIV prevention and treatment. While various incarnations of needle exchange have been implemented since mid-1990s in some localities, the introduction of methadone maintenance therapy (MMT), sponsored primarily by PEPFAR under the name of HIV prevention, has been considered as the most successful case for harm reduction program in Vietnam. In early 2008, the website of the Vietnamese Communist Party presented an article which supported the implementation of methadone and quipped methadone as "an arrow that kills two birds," which are

reducing HIV transmission and keeping under control criminal activities associated with drug users (Vu Hung 2008).

The Government directed the Ministry of Health to implement the “Pilot Model for the Substitution Treatment of Opiate Dependence Using Methadone in Hai Phong and Ho Chi Minh City” program in April 2008 with an aim to “contribute to reduce the HIV infection rate” among drug users, to “improve their health and life quality” and to “help them to reintegrate with society” (Hoang Dinh Canh and Nguyen Thanh Long 2009). This pilot scheme was supported by PEPFAR in two cities (Hai Phong and Ho Chi Minh City). At the time when this study was completed (in early 2010), more than 1,500 methadone users were enrolled in the first five clinics in the country in the pilot phase, and the Ministry of Health (MOH) was gearing up for the full-blown phase where the goal is to expand methadone clinics to as many as 30 provinces serving about 80,000 heroin users by 2015. Once methadone is introduced, studies have been implemented by agencies such as FHI360 and Vietnam Administration of HIV/AIDS Control (VAAC) to document the effects of methadone on patients, especially in relation to behaviors that are often associated with heroin use such as drug use, illegal activities, sexual risks, retention at methadone treatment as well as quality of life (FHI360 n.d). Similar to the case of China, most studies have focused on the programmatic aspects in order to identify ways to improve the implementation. There has yet study on the social dimensions of the program, especially in the context where stigma against drug use and drug users still loom large.

So how do we explain the fact that the state continues to reinforce the existence of the 06 centers in parallel with the methadone clinics, despite doubts and criticisms from both inside and outside of the country? One explanation offered is that methadone system is managed by

Ministry of Health (MOH) while the system of 06 centers is managed by Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and both system are vying for resources and attention from the government. Another explanation is that the government has not put complete trust on the methadone system as evidenced by the fact that methadone regimes are still strictly controlled and regulated by both national and local authorities to ensure little margin of errors. Putting aside explanations such as fractional politics or the lack of total trust on the new approach, I believe that the co-existence of two forms of power are necessary for the state's governance in post-*Doi Moi*.

In *Discipline and Punishment* (Foucault 1979), Foucault identifies a “disciplinary” mode of power that became visible by the 19th century . The distinction that Foucault makes from torture or even punishment is the way in which discipline individualizes bodies as it normalizes an individual's will through corporeal techniques of spatial arrangement, surveillance, and judgment by experts. In this case, the key goal of the state in sanctioning the introduction of methadone is transforming deviant male bodies that are perceived as holding destructive tendency and therefore threatening the project of building a prosperous nation. The disciplinary power exercised at the methadone clinics produces “safe deviants” and “docile bodies” that are congruent to the goal of taming undesirable and unwanted male bodies of heroin users. By maintaining somewhat contradictory discourses on drug use both as a moral issue and a medical condition, and a parallel discourse of methadone as a solution to these problems (“an arrow that kills two birds”), the state hopes to produce desirable male bodies at the very site of methadone clinics.

Examining the management of female commercial sex, Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong argues in her book titled *The Ironies of Freedom: Sex, Culture and Neoliberal Governance in Vietnam* that the contradictory co-existence of repressive and neoliberal governance in Vietnam can't be attributed to "a result of just historical residuals but as a paradoxical product of how [Vietnamese] government deals with the neoliberal freedoms of a new transnational market economy" (Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong 2008: xix). Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong shows that on the one hand, the government promotion of entrepreneurial and consumerist freedoms has contributed to new masculinity fuelling the sex trade (see Phinney 2008). On the other hand, she shows that by employing different modes of directing the behaviors of lower-class female sex workers and middle-class housewives, the government has sought to reinforce class-differentiated femininities and women sexualities that are differently useful for state governance. In post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam, policing and forced rehabilitation are deployed to target lower-class sex workers with the goal of reforming their femininity to be in line with traditionalist culture. At the same time, choice-based sexual self-help materials and beauty consumer products are allowed to flourish targeting middle-class housewives with the goal of promoting certain notion of modern femininity as a way to stem the tide of female commercial sex and keep sexual pleasures of the husbands within the confine of the conjugal bed. Nguyen-vo argues that by targeting both groups of women, albeit with different modes of governance, the Vietnamese state has maintained certain order of femininities, which are gender and class-differentiated, that are useful for its legitimacy and existence in a neoliberal market. Unlike the case of governing commercial sex where repressive and choice-based governance are applied on different types of women's bodies, i.e. lower-class sex workers and middle-class housewives, the case of

methadone patients in this study begs the question of what if both repressive and choice-based modes of governance are mapped onto the same body, albeit at different temporalities.

State Discourses and the Co-Existence of Different Discursive Frameworks

Reflecting the action of the state are official discourses and debates around drug use. Pham Thi Thu Huyen and colleagues examined articles published in the Nhan Dan newspaper, regarded as the voice of the Communist Party in Vietnam, from 1951 to 2009 to show how state-sponsored media present drug use, drug users as well as drug treatments and services to the public (Pham Thi Thu Huyen et al. n.d). Over the years three discursive frameworks have been used by the Nhan Dan newspaper in reference to drugs and drug use. First, beginning in the 1950s, drugs and drug use were presented as social evils with an emphasis on moral and mental weakness. Much later in the 1990s, a new framework emerged that focused on drug use in relation to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and yet putting more blame on drug users. Most recently, since mid-2000s drug use has been framed as an issue of chemical dependency and therefore as a physical problem rather than merely a moral and mental one. In addition to presenting differing images of people who use drugs, the three discourses have also prescribed differing, and sometimes conflicting, social responses to drug use according to their respective framework: drug rehabilitation centers were presented by Nhan Dan as a cure for the social evil of drug use; harm reduction efforts were presented as prevention from potential HIV/AIDS infection; and various forms of treatment were presented to cure drug addiction.

The first, longest-running, and most widely published framework through which drugs and drug users were portrayed as *tệ nạn xã hội* (social evil). Under this framework, many words that describe drug users, such as *nghiện* (addict, junkie), *thằng nghiện* (drug guy), or *đối tượng nghiện* (drug using subjects), consistently connote personal failure and contribute to stigmatization. Under this framework, the Nhan Dan newspapers emphasized not only the negative physical and mental images of drug users individually but also the threats or risks that they posed to their families. According to this framework, drug users were incapable of earning money, damaging their families' images, and as socially irresponsible. Drug users were also depicted as menaces to social order: drug users were described in the newspaper as criminals who caused social chaos, namely through theft and murder. The second key discourse regarding drugs and drug use in the Nhan Dan newspaper was that of intravenous drug use as the harbinger of HIV/AIDS. The rise of this theme specifically corresponds to the HIV/AIDS outbreak in Vietnam, starting in the mid-1990s, when a majority of drug users moved from smoking opium to injecting heroin, and injection drug use became the main form of transmission of HIV in Vietnam. Because of the spread of the epidemic within injecting drug populations, a new topic emerged: injecting drugs is the primary cause for HIV infection. The association between drugs and HIV/AIDS first had solely an epidemiological meaning but later, the association adopted other complicated meanings related to morality, culture and society. Though they had previously been represented with images of "ghosts, skulls, cemetery and coffins," after the onset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, drug users were double-labeled with negative, often morbid, depictions related specifically to HIV/AIDS. Drug users infected with HIV were regarded as "ending their life" and "having no other way out." As a consequence, stigma against drug users within the Nhan Dan newspaper seemingly doubled.

The third and most recent way in which drugs and drug users were portrayed has been under the notion that drug use is a chemical dependency. Within this discourse, drug users have been portrayed as *con nghiện* (animalized slaves of drugs); in other words, drug users were the victims of drugs. In accordance with this new framework, a variety of remedies were presented as options for healing: folk remedies, traditional remedies and Western treatments were all presented in the paper as viable options for treating addiction. Under the guidance of this discursive framework, the once exclusively mandatory and State-run detoxification centers expanded to include private detoxification centers with variety of processes and remedies. However, the relapse rates were high and were often attributed to the lack of *ý trí và nghị lực* (determination and strong will), a throwback to the days of drug users as morally bankrupt and “socially evil”. Although the term *ý trí và nghị lực* continued to be popular within the newspaper, scientific and medical interpretations emerged alongside such conceptions of drug use and drug users. In mentioning methadone, among other medications, the newspaper was not shy in citing the medical explanation that methadone has an effect on receptors on brain like heroin or morphine, and hence has been used to treat chronic disease or heroin detoxification in medicine. In a similar vein, the newspaper also for the first time used the word *người bệnh* (patient) to describe drug users participating in the methadone program, which signifies a new way of viewing drug users

The Introduction of Methadone in Hai Phong and the Ethnography of the Clinic

Why Hai Phong?

Hai Phong, the largest port city in northeast Vietnam with a population of about 1.8 million people, has been considered as one of the most economically prosperous urban centers in Vietnam since the start of *Doi Moi*. Rapid economic development, booming urbanization and whirlwind expansion of entertainment services (e.g. the opening of the first casino in the northern part of the country), and increasingly connection through sea and air (the first airport outside of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) are some of the post-*Doi Moi* characteristics that have created a fertile harbor for heroin trading since early 1990s. While the first person with HIV reported in 1994 was a sailor, by 1998, almost 90 percent of people infected with there were IDUs of adolescent age (Nguyen Anh Tuan et al. 2001). According to the Vietnam National AIDS Committee, Hai Phong has about 8,000 DUs, 48 percent of whom are HIV positive compared with the national rate among DUs of 18.4 percent (32 percent for IDUs). It currently ranks third among provinces with highest HIV prevalence among IDUs, after Dien Bien and Quang Ninh province (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2010). In the early years of 1990s, as opposed to southern Vietnam where injectors mainly used opium, the majority of injectors in Hai Phong used heroin (72 percent) (Nguyen Anh Tuan et al. 2001). In Hai Phong, drug users have more risk factors than other groups, including sex workers (SW) and men who have sex with men (MSM). A respondent-driven sampling study conducted among 415 men living in Hai Phong who had been injecting drugs for over a month found that 53 percent of IDUs got

needles/syringes from pharmacies, 47.3 percent from dealers, and only 0.3 percent from peer educators. The condom use rate was low; about 65 percent of IDUs never used condoms while only 7.6 percent bought condoms at pharmacies, and the rest got them free from bars/restaurants or peer educators. The study also revealed that only 6.7 percent of IDUs had access to voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) services. Of the IDUs who had recent VCT services, fewer than 30 percent reported ever using government health services; most received services through the system of 06 centers in the city. About 77 percent of IDUs with 06 center experiences said that they had participated in the health services on mandatory basis, including tuberculosis, sexually-transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS education, HIV testing, HIV risk reduction counseling, and drug education. Most IDUs (69.2 percent) who were surveyed have never received HIV/AIDS information; the rest received information from TV/radio (7.9 percent), peer educators (8.2 percent), and healthcare workers (14.2 percent). In the context of low access to services and information, it was a major concern for local public health authorities that a large proportion of IDUs in Hai Phong still engage in high-risk behaviors as it was reported that about 68 percent of IDUs in the city shared needles/syringes in the previous six months before the study (Phan Thu Huong et al. 2005).

Because of the burden of HIV among IDUs in the city, since late 1990s Hai Phong authorities have taken on various measures to address the problem. Early in the PEPFAR program in Vietnam, Hai Phong was selected as one of the priority provinces. With the support from PEPFAR, the city has applied a comprehensive and continuous prevention and care model for People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA). The model includes a network of preventive, care, treatment, and support services provided by different sectors and managed by a coordination

board. The model aims to offer PLHA and their families access a comprehensive set of services, including targeted prevention, primary care, VCT, social services (vocational training and job services), peer education, and peer supports. Advocacy campaigns have been implemented to raise social awareness on HIV/AIDS topics and reduce stigma against PLVH. These include workshops with local leaders, themed performances, and meetings between those HIV-negative and HIV-positive. Hai Phong has also sponsored DU peer education and self-help groups like *Vòng Tay Bè Bạn* (Friendship Hug), where DUs can meet, discuss their situation, share experiences and support each other to avoid risky behavior. Most recently, with support from a US-based private philanthropy, a program to build community-based case management has been implemented, with the goals of connecting active and recovering DUs with social and health services that are available in the city as well as providing critical interventions such as counseling and psychological therapy, in order to help heroin users manage their addiction and reintegrate with their families and communities.

It was therefore not a surprise that Hai Phong was selected to pilot the introduction of methadone treatment program. (A second program was piloted in Ho Chi Minh City where the burden of HIV among IDUs was high and where commitment from local authorities to address the issue was clear.) In April 2008 Hai Phong established two MMT clinics, a number which has since rapidly expanded to ten clinics with more than 1700 patients receiving methadone daily (Nguyen To Nhu 2010). Those who were recruited had to go through a screening process that started from a committee at the precinct level and ended up at a committee at the city level, and the rumor was that as many as 17 signatures were required before they were admitted into the program. Their eligibility criteria include: using heroin for at least two years; having

experienced many failed attempts in detoxification; and heroin habits causing many problems to family and community. Women and HIV positive IDUs were given priority methadone treatment. After the first few months when the efficacy of methadone was still questioned by heroin users and their families, and when recruitment was challenging, the number of applicants has surpassed the capacity of services in existing facilities. Unconfirmed rumors floated that many had to bribe and/or to mobilize connections to government officials in order to get ahead of the queue. Besides methadone treatment, these clinics also offered other social support services such as employment service, referral to vocational training and employment opportunities, although with much less success.

In the first half of 2011, two major developments in the program in Hai Phong took place. One was the opening of the first methadone clinic where patients and their families pay some amount of money every month in order to stay in the program. This clinic is dubbed as *cơ sở điều trị theo mô hình xã hội hoá* (methadone clinic building on socialization model). It should be noted that the word *xã hội hoá* (literally meaning socialization) is used in Vietnamese context to denote the fact that the costs are born primarily by families, individuals and private philanthropies. This was born out of the concern that PEPFAR will withdraw from Vietnam in a few years and therefore will not continue to bear the majority of the financial burden that these clinics incur. While various schemes of financing have been discussed, this first clinic attempted to test a mechanism where majority of financial burden, at least for the costs of medicine and related services, are paid for out-of-the pockets. The other development was the establishment of the first methadone clinic under the purview of the provincial branch of Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). While most methadone clinics have been under the

management of the Ministry of Health (MOH) system, the push for the first clinic under MOLISA could be understood as a significant step taken by the donor community to challenge MOLISA to expand its horizon from 06 centers to alternative treatment modalities, including methadone maintenance programs and centers.

The Ethnography of the Clinic

The materials for this chapter are drawn from ethnographic fieldwork that was part of a larger study on harm reduction policy in post-*Doi Moi* and its impacts on the life of heroin users in Vietnam. Other components include a discourse analysis of how the Nhan Dan newspapers represent drug use and drug users, and an oral history with Vietnamese policy makers and donor community to understand to process of policy change. The ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in two methadone clinics over a period of nine-month, from February through October 2009. During the ethnographic fieldwork, I worked with two research assistants to collect and analyze the data. I first worked on the study design and study instruments and trained the research assistants on data collection. We worked together on the first field trips in order to help them feel comfortable with doing ethnographic observation and participation in the clinics and surrounding environment. When we first approached the clinic directors to get permission for the study, they suggested that the clinic would help to recruit participants for the study, as it would help to speed up the study process. We, however, politely declined the offer, citing reason that we could potentially receive biased answers from the participants should they be recruited through the clinic system. We then got approval from the directors to hang out at the clinics and

their surroundings, usually a couple of tea stalls outside or across the streets of the clinics where many of the patients spent time hanging around before or after receiving their daily doses, and to post study announcements around the clinic. This was, for sure, an unusual approach since another then on-going study to evaluate the first twelve months of program implementation actually recruited participants with the help of clinic staff. That study was sponsored by FHI360, the organization that received funding from PEPFAR to provide technical support for the methadone clinics. This was not to say that the FHI360 study was more biased and/or less objective than our study, but to point out that our way of recruiting participants actually raised more eyebrows as well as doubts among both participants and the clinical staff.

The study was conducted at the time when the pilot phase of methadone program was in full course, and was subject to both unwavering support as well as rising doubts from various sections of policy makers in Vietnam. A Deputy Minister of Health, I was told, once asked whether the methadone program should be turned over to MOLISA, which meant that he himself had some doubts about the success of the program as well as about the role of MOH in administering the program. Future expansion of the program, therefore, hinged upon success of the pilot phase, which meant that “curious outsiders” were not totally welcome. One month into the ethnographic fieldwork, an incident in one of the clinics illustrated the tension that this burden of success created. That day, a research assistant was surprised to be asked by one of the methadone users whether she was a reporter in disguise. She also observed that as she approached any tea stalls in the area, where she used to hang out and had no problem with striking up a conversation with the owners as well as customers, most methadone users would stand up and/or refused to engage in a conversation with her. She later learned that the head of

the peer educator group of the clinic was recently punished because the group collected money from the patients and their family members for motorbike parking. The clinic director considered the practice unwarranted because it would tarnish the image of the clinic as a friendly place for the clients. She explained that the punishment was necessary because she had warned the group a couple of times and they had promised to stop the practice. The head of the group explained to other methadone users that they had to collect the parking money because the salaries provided by the clinic were not sufficient for their daily needs, and they had to spend all the at the clinic, losing other opportunities to make money. He, however, was most critical of someone who secretly took pictures of them taking money from patients and family members and submitted them to the clinic director. That is how the director had evidence of what they did and used it against their denial. Suspicion then was laid upon the research assistant who, according to some methadone users, were spying on them rather than doing research since she “didn’t have invite them to a room and ask questions” like they did in the other study.

After overcoming suspicion and other barriers in the relationship with methadone users, we started recruiting participants for the interviews. The ethnographic fieldwork took place almost one year after the establishment of the clinics and therefore most of the patients had gone through the period in which a stable dosage was identified and individualized. Some who entered the program earlier had already experienced greater effects of methadone on their life, compared to others who entered the program more recently. Some have found a job, while others spent most of the time hanging around with newly acquainted friends at the clinic and/or staying home to help with family business. As such we selected methadone users with differences in terms various identifiable variables such as duration with the program, their job status, and their marital

status. We also deliberately selected one or two women into the study since the number of women was small in both clinics. After two months of doing ethnographic fieldwork, we were able to recruit some of the first study participants who met the study criteria. From then on, recruitment became easy as study participants introduced their friends to us. Field researchers and I conducted life history interviews with a dozen of methadone users and active heroin users. We also conducted briefer interviews with some family members of methadone users and several methadone clinic staff in the two clinics. The research team also conducted ethnographic observation at the clinics to document daily routines as well as interaction between methadone users and the clinic staff. The final number of interviews in this study were 33 life-history interviews with 10 methadone users (one woman) and 1 heroin user; 6 in-depth interviews with families; 11 short interviews with clinic staff and managers; and more than 200 pages of field notes. Appendix. 1 presents brief summary of each methadone and heroin users who were involved in the study.



Photograph 3.1: A Ministry of Health's Poster Photos of Methadone Program (opening ceremony on first and second from left and visits by Government and Ministry of Health leaders first and second from right)



Photograph 3.2: A Happy and Healthy Couple: Poster Photo by FHI360, the Main Technical Assistance Agency



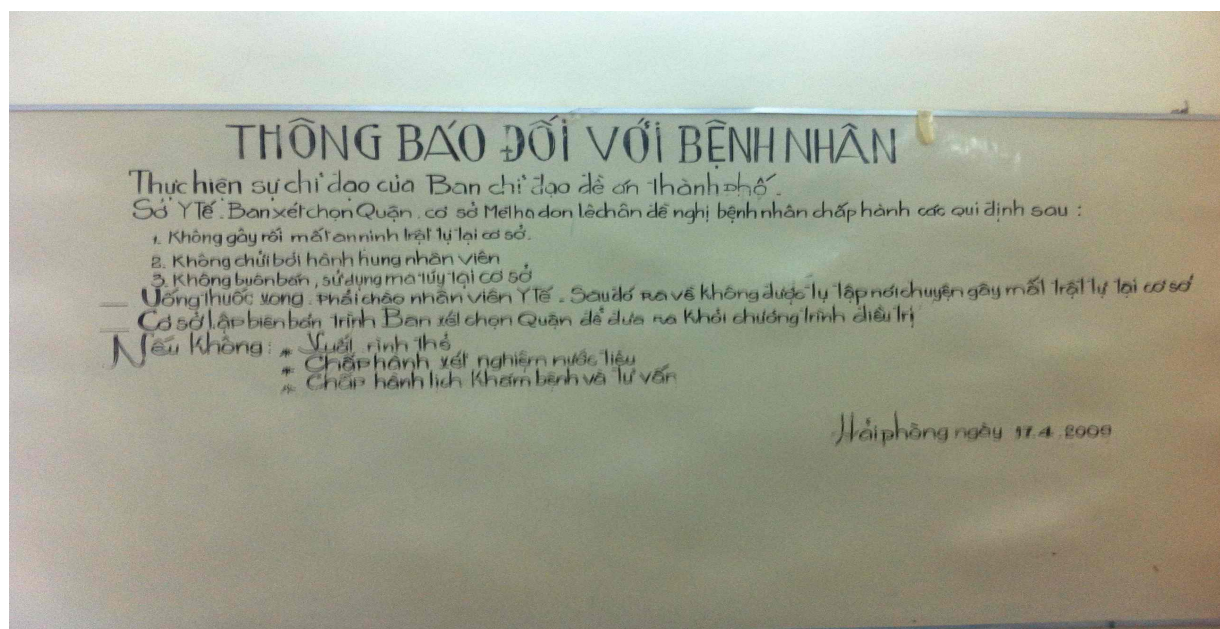
Photograph 3.3: Patients Taking Water from the White Tank to Swallow Methadone Doses (courtesy of field staff)



Photograph 3.4: Queuing for Daily Methadone Doses (number 1 on the floor is where the queue starts) (courtesy of field staff)



Photograph 3.5: Hanging Out at a Tea Stall After Taking Their Doses (courtesy of field staff)



Photograph 3.6: Notice Board with Instructions on Prohibited Activities and Violations (photo taken by the author)

Managing Deviant Bodies: Disciplining and Ethics in a Methadone Clinic

Today at the waiting room of the clinic there was a large white board that had some information that stirred up a lot of discussion among patients and their families. It was a list of 11 patients who were asked to invite parents or wives to come to the clinic and sign on a form to commit to closer supervision of the patients. They were patients who continued to use heroin despite the fact that their dosages had been stabilized. As soon as the director of the clinic was finishing writing the last name on the list, one patient immediately reacted strongly by cursing and yelling out all the bad words very loudly. He swore that he had stopped using for two months and didn't know why it happened to him. He said that no one could force him to bring his family to the clinic. It was not unusual that patients reacted strongly to the staff, but it was rare that they dared to do so in front of the director since they knew that they could be punished. The director didn't say a thing and continued to finish writing on the board. It didn't mean though that she chose to ignore the incident. Later she called another patient (named L) who was a close friend of the man who reacted and took L to her room. When I entered the room with her permission, she immediately launched into an verbal attack on the guy who reacted. She talked almost non-stop and didn't let L speak a word, and she concluded that the behavior of the other patient was very unruly (*quia láo*) and unacceptable. She said that had all the patients behaved in the same way then she would have to close the clinic. L was listening and occasionally uttered a word that only the director could hear. The scolding from the director lasted for about 15 minutes and then she called another patient on the list in. This guy didn't curse in front of her but did so to other staff. She told him how difficult it was for him to get into the program, and reminded him that he cried when he first met her in order to persuade her to let him in. She said she had tried everything to admit him so that he could become a different person, a nice and well-behaving one, rather than for him to come and curse clinic staff. Unlike when she was talking to L, she changed her voice and her tone quite a bit during the conversation. Sometimes she was like a teacher who gently advised her students; sometimes she raised her voice and was so aggressive that the man could do nothing but listen. (Field notes)

The above incident was one of many tense moments taking place at the two clinics where this study was conducted. The clinics were located on busy streets of Hai Phong, and were specifically chosen to establish pilot methadone program in the city. Both clinics were most busy

in the morning, when a majority of the patients coming to receive their daily dosages. Most patients who come in the afternoon were at the early stage when their dosages were not stabilized. Although the sizes of the clinics were not the same, they were structured in pretty much the same way with rooms for waiting patients and family members, for dispensing methadone, for individual counseling, for the medical doctor to see individual patients, for group counseling as well as common room of the clinic, and public toilets. Various security measures were quite visible for all to see. There was a thick glass separating the room where methadone was dispensed room and the room where patients were waiting for their turn. Patients were not allowed to enter staff and counseling areas until called upon in certain areas of the clinics and there were closed-circuit cameras that, as the rumor went, were connected to nearest police station. In each clinic, only the room of the doctor was air-conditioned because of the concern with tuberculosis that was quite prevalent among patients. Although there were no police on duty at the clinics, we were told, there was direct line to a police station nearby and the police were heavily involved in the process of selecting and monitoring methadone patients (see Jardine et al. 2012). Each clinic was staffed with one doctor, two to three counselors, two nurses and drug dispensers, one pharmacist, as well as a cleaning person and a guard. All of them were recruited locally, with doctors and pharmacists more difficult to find since few experienced professionals were willing to work with drug users. All of the staff worked full-time and were paid for by the pilot methadone program, which was funded by PEPFAR through FHI360. This organization also organized training for all the Vietnamese personnel who worked in the first few methadone clinics in the country and they invited American and Australian experts to conduct the training courses. All staff were working under the supervision of a manager who worked

part-time at the clinic and spent the other part-time working for either the district AIDS office or district health bureau.

In the two clinics where this study was conducted, many elements of the techniques of disciplinary and bio-power that have been discussed in studies on methadone clinics in other countries were evident. After a lengthy process of screening and selection that involves as many as 17 signatures of approval from various levels of bureaucracy from the commune, admitted patients had to undergo a number of individual counseling sessions on various topics related to methadone use. During those counseling sessions, they typically had to bring along one of their family members in order to show family commitment on “helping one of their own to overcome addiction”: i.e. watching over heroin behaviors of the patients. By infantilizing drug users, many of whom are well over their 30 years of age, the technique of discipline layered more weight of expectation on both the body of the methadone user as well as on their families. Now becoming patients, they would then have to go to the clinic at certain time every morning or afternoon and wait in line for receiving their prepared portion of methadone daily dosage. They had to swallow fully a cup of methadone solution (diluted with water) in front of the dispenser and to say goodbye out loud before they left the clinic to make sure that they didn’t keep any methadone solution in their mouth before leaving the clinic (to avoid illegal trading of methadone). While queuing for their turn to receive the methadone dosage, they were constantly reminded by the staff, the guard, and by their peers about their behaviors, their appearance, and their ways of interacting with each other and with the staff in the clinic. Occasionally, which could be as frequent as once a week, they were required to submit urine samples on the spot to make sure that they were completely abstaining from heroin. Sometimes, the clinic staff requested them to

provide urine under supervision to make sure that they didn't get urine from other patients who stayed clean. Other regulations included that patients were not allowed to curse and physically used force against the staff, and that patients were not allowed to gather in a large number inside or near the clinics' areas. Last but not least, patients couldn't leave the city for more than 24 hours since they couldn't receive methadone anywhere but in the clinic that they registered with (not even from the other clinics in the same city).

Patients who did not obey the clinics' regulations were subject to certain punishments issued by the clinic. The punishments ranged from giving warnings, requiring patients to go through extra counseling sessions, asking the patients to write a self-reflection form, inviting parents or a wife to counseling sessions and signing commitments of closer supervision. Patients were also warned that had they violated the regulations several times, they would have been dismissed from the program or sent to an 06 center in the city (which is not linked to the methadone clinic). During the time of our study, we heard of warnings and threats but not actual cases where patients were dismissed, probably because no one wanted that to happen. The clinic staff encountered difficult situations when applying these regulations with their patients. In some situations, such as when the patients had to go to a relatives' funeral, especially their parents' funerals, which were far away from the clinics, it was difficult for the health staff to apply the regulation that patients have to take the methadone regularly and on time. Although the clinic staff thought that the regulations had to be in place to make sure that former heroin users adhere to treatment regime, they also felt bad when having to apply those regulations to patients. One of the factors that made them reluctant to apply strictly the regulations was fear of retaliation. Based on their perception that the patients had *quá khứ phức tạp* (complicated past social

backgrounds) and the conflicts with these patients may therefore cause harm to the health staff, it was believed by the health staff that they need to “treat the weak with strong methods, and the tough with more leniency” (*mềm nắn, rắn buông*) which meant that they would choose methods to reinforce regulations, depending on individual cases, in order to avoid conflicts with the patients.

All of the above regulations and punishment mechanisms, we were told, aimed to keep patients adhere to treatment as well as to help them get rid of bad habits from their past heroin use. In the clinic, the patients were often referred to as *những người làm đường lạc lối* (people who went the wrong way) as it was believed that heroin degrades the consciousness as well the human dignity of these users. It was purported by the health staff that successful treatment does not only mean helping the patients to stop using heroin but also turns them into *con người có nhân tính* (persons with human dignity) again. As explained by one medical doctor:

The criteria to evaluate a patient include: first, at the stable dosage, the patient does not use heroin anymore; second, the patient has a good mood that allows him to reintegrate into the community and feel confident when communicating with other people; and thirdly, the patient acquires a job and gains trust from his/her family and other surrounding people... (Conversation with clinician – Field notes).

Therefore, patients came to the clinic not only had to adhere to the treatment but also had to improve their behaviors by wearing neat and clean clothes, having proper behaviors inside the clinic areas, showing that they had gained trust from family and community, making new friends, and, most difficult of all, as it turned out, finding a new job.

The health staff had a number of ways to control and assess patient adherence to treatment. As for patients who insisted on reducing their dosages, the doctors had to reluctantly

reduce by a small amount every time in order to “satisfy” the patients’ wish. As for patients who still used heroin, the doctors divided the dosage into smaller portions so as to make the patients feel “drunk with beer and thus unable to drink alcohol”, meaning that the patients may always be under the effect of methadone and not be able to use heroin anymore. Regarding the assessment of patients’ adherence, it was believed by the health staff that they can be 90 percent certain of the adherence to treatment of patients by looking at the facial expressions of patients when they were on their way to the toilet to get the urine for the tests and the attitudes of patients when talking to the counselors:

We can assess attitudes of the patients without having to resort to the urine tests’ results. When the patients get the test form from the admin room to the testing room until when they take the urine sample, we can 90 percent tell whether they are telling the lie or not by looking at their facial expressions and their attitudes when talking to us (Conversation with a counselor – Field notes).

All participants in this study agreed with the idea that there need to be some regulations so as to ensure the effective operation of the clinics. In practice, however, some regulations were more often violated than others, including: bowing and greeting the health staff, queuing up, taking methadone on time and regularly. It was also thought by some patients that some regulations and punishments were not suitable with their personal values in terms of age, life experience and their positions in the families. Some complained that counseling activities took much of their time, that most counseling contents were boring, and that the counselors were much younger than the patients and had less life experience. The patients thought that writing self-reflection reports and inviting their parents to the clinics were methods applied among children, not adults like them:

When hearing that he was required to write the self-reflection forms, the patient immediately reacted. He said he was not a child anymore, so it is unreasonable to make him write the forms all the time. He said he was nearly 50 years old and he had a mind to think. He was not a pig without the ability to think or no self-esteem. He also had to work hard to earn money, life was already hard for him. He was a human being, so the health staff shouldn't have scrutinized his mistakes like that.... (Field notes)

The reactions of patients when they did not agree with the regulations were expressed at different levels. The most common place for patients to vent their angry feelings was outside of the clinic, usually in a couple of tea stalls outside where other patients would often hang out. Some chose to remain silent because they were now “dependent” on the clinic. Others might complain about the regulations to the clinic staff in a polite way. Some patients reacted in ways that were not appreciated by the clinic staff such as keeping a “non-expressive face” in counseling sessions, squabbling with clinic staff, especially counselors, and even cursing them. The situations where patient reacted most angrily was when their urine tests came back positive and for that they were requested to write self-reflection reports and/or to invite their parents or wives. Most often, however, patients find ways to make sure the clinic staff believe in them or have sympathy for reasons of violation that they considered as inevitable. Older patients swore that bad things would happen to them if they lied to the health staff or expressed their worry that revealing their use of heroin would destroy the trust that they had been trying hard to create from their families. Because of this, the health staff sometimes found it difficult when applying punishments to these patients:

“Many patients came here, hands on their heads, trying every way they could to explain to us that they had stopped using drugs 2-3 months earlier. They said their children and wives put great trust in them. Their families were very happy then. If the test results are active with drugs, they wouldn’t know how to explain it to their families. They swore to the medical doctors and counselors that they would be killed in a car accident if they told lies.” (Conversation with clinician – Field notes).

Patients often shared tactics to make them look like behaving and compliant methadone users. They told each other to go the clinics early and wait in line because the clinic staff preferred seeing the patient waiting rather than having to wait for patients. In the patients’ conversations, they advised each other to wear clean and tidy clothes, because there was usually a prejudice that heroin users wear dirty and untidy clothes. Patients in the clinics always tried to have polite behaviors, talking with full sentences, although they could become entirely different people the moment they stepped out of the clinics. Furthermore, some patients also regulated the treatment themselves by reducing their doses without doctors’ approval: some did not drink all the methadone given without the permission of the doctors, or they would spit it out as soon as they stepped out of the clinic.

In summary, this section has described the disciplinary power that were at work at the two methadone clinics. As revealed in social studies in other contexts, the disciplinary power of methadone regime centers on the bodies of former heroin users in order to transform them into the types of body that are acceptable to the society. As such, the methadone patients are not just under surveillance for their heroin use, but also for their demeanors and their ways of expressing themselves in a social setting. Therefore, they were under surveillance for not just their drug use behaviors, but also for their social behaviors and, perhaps more importantly for the power structure, their moral standing. In this respect, the state-sponsored methadone clinics were not

much different from the state-sponsored system of 06 centers in the sense that both expect to produce morally renovated subjects and socially accepted bodies. Importantly, regulations and rules at the clinic reinforce stigmatized and prejudiced images and understandings of drug use and drug users that are popularized in the official media for over decades. For the state, these regulations and rules were designed to make sure that there were little margins of error in the new intervention to transform deviant bodies. On the part of methadone patients, to the extent that they put up some strong reaction against regulations and rules of the clinics, some of which really undermined their sense of self-worth, such reaction often led to consequences of even more damaging to the patients themselves. Consequently, regulations and rules that were designed to transform deviant bodies of heroin users were tightened and reinforced. At the early stage of methadone intervention in Vietnam, the overwhelming experiences were therefore of conformity to the power regime institutionalized at the methadone clinics, which have resulted in a highly successful rate of compliance as initial reports have showed (FHI360 n.d). The question is why the program is so successful in the context of Vietnam as compared to the experiences of other settings (Liu et al. 2009; Yin et al. 2010). Part of the answer, I believe, lied in the transformative that the methadone patients had undergone in the first year of their exposure to methadone as a new mode of addiction treatment to which I will turn to in the next section.

Heroin Dependence and Social Death: Embodied Experiences of Punishment

The changing action and discourses of the state manifest in no other places clearer than the bodies of heroin users. In this section, I will examine their experiences with both heroin and

methadone in order to show such effects. Participants in this study clearly separated two critical moments of their lives, comparing their present dependence on methadone with their past dependence on heroin. They referred to the past by using various phrases and terms such as *trước đây* (during my old days), *đời con nghiện* (my past heroin life), or *con người trước đây của tôi* (my old personality) and almost invariably associated their past times with many bad experiences under the influence of heroin. They talked at length about their experiences with heroin dependency, the loss of trust on the part of their families and their neighborhoods, their attempts to quit heroin use through multiple methods, and especially their painful experiences with detoxification in rehabilitation centers. They talked about the past with a range of emotional expressions as if the interviews were another opportunity for them to get rid of their old selves. There were three major characteristics of past heroin dependence in the stories of the participants: their changed personality; their experiences of social death and social isolation even from their own family; and their experiences with 06 centers.

Unlike the popular notion that heroin users who could not give up drugs despite the help of detoxification were mentally weak or were short of *ý trí* and *ngệ lực* (determination and strong will), the participants in this study often attributed their inability to quit drugs to various detrimental effects of heroin. Some described heroin as a *dã man* (barbarous) and *tàn ác* (extremely malicious) substance that drove them to action that they would not have done otherwise. It should be noted that those who criticize drug users for their inability to give up drug often put emphasis on the mind by portraying them as short of *ý trí* and *ngệ lực*. On the other hand, the drug users themselves often condemned the bodily pain of craving for heroin as what drive them to action that change their personality and their own self. In the case of Quân, whose

story was described in the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, his mother often told him stories about how she felt ashamed of meeting her friends because their children were all successful in their careers. While being attentive to his mother's feelings and complaints, Quân explained how heroin was like a ghost that turned him into a different person.

Indeed I felt a lot of pain and suffering when I heard what my mother told me about her shame and her own feelings. But heroin was very *tàn ác* and *dã man*. When I was not in craving I could still think about my mother, but when I was hungry for heroin I couldn't control myself. Just a few hours apart. Then I had to find all the ways to obtain money to satisfy my needs, otherwise I couldn't bear the feelings ...you know...it was craving. I was not myself anymore. I changed completely when I got the craving. Heroin was a ghost that changed me completely.

Taking away one's true self, as explained by Quân, was one of the most common attributes that the participants expressed in their reflection on the past of heroin dependence. This would often mean several changes: one could do almost anything that one never dared to in order to get money for drugs; one could lie and trick one's family members and other people to whom one had never lied before; one could become indifferent to criticism and verbal attacks from others, including loved ones; and one could ignore basic hygienic habits such as daily bathing and tooth brushing for days. Some attributed this characteristic as the most cunning aspect of heroin: once it was in the body, it could drive someone's behaviors like a *con ma* (ghost). Tuấn, a forty two years old man who had many experiences with detoxification during his decade of heroin use, talked about heroin "like a ghost which roped you into a never ending cycle" of trying to give up but eventually being hooked again. On a daily basis, the effects of heroin, according to Cường, a

35 year old man who had a college degree and a decent job as an insurance agent before becoming a heroin addict, was that it makes heroin addicts never completely *tỉnh táo* (conscious and aware of what one's doing). Their minds were always occupied with how to have heroin for the next use, and this severely destroyed their daily rhythm and their daily lives were driven by the need for heroin

Participants in the study believed that the change of their own selves led them to experience most negative impacts of heroin addiction. One common feature was a withdrawal from social and family life. Quân, for examples, described a large part of his ten years of heroin addiction as going back and forth between his home and the “railroad” (the biggest drug market in the city) and never spent time anywhere else. Similarly, Cường explained his withdrawal as followed:

Interviewer: Tell me how your life changed since you got addicted to heroin?

Cường: It changed a lot. I always felt that I was very restricted and always in need of money (*túng quẩn*). I no longer have any relationships or friends; I dared not to go anywhere. Before I got into heroin, I had a lot of friends and I liked crowded places. Since I became an addict, honestly I didn't want to go anywhere and didn't have any more friends. Even some old friends asked me out but I refused.

Interviewer: Why did you refuse to go out?

Cường: First, it costs money to go out with friends, and when I spent money on things other than heroin then I would not have money when I needed [in craving]. Second, had I go out with friends I need to prepare to take some heroin with me, and I could not take too much with me [because of limited money] so I could not go anywhere with friends for more than one or two days.

In addition to the two reasons that Cường explained, another reason often cited by the participants was that their friends were worried that they would bother them with requests for money that would never be returned. Similarly, the suspicious attitudes and stigma against drug users were most prevalent among neighbors who often guarded against drug users, even if they didn't cause any troubles in the neighborhood. Stigma from people around them often resulted in self-stigma, which made heroin users withdraw even more from social life. Gradually, their only friends were other heroin addicts who they only met when they had a need for sharing money and/or heroin arose. Once addicted, their only friends were other drug users and yet they rarely trust those friends out of fear of being cheated and taken advantage of.

Aside from the effects on their relationships with friends and acquaintances, for many participants the most important effects were on their families. Fighting with their loved ones was very common. Some men experienced divorce and/or separation from their wives and their lovers, and those who were not married regretted the fact that their heroin habits caused much damage in their relationships with parents and siblings. In the case of Quân, his drug use made his mother withdraw from her own social environment because she was ashamed of talking about her son when she met her friends whose children had become successful and established. Since some parents had initial expectation that their sons would be able to give up drugs with their help, they became depressed when their sons got further into drug use. In the case of Cường his parents harbored such high expectations for him as the eldest one in family and as a young man with a good education and a decent job that they found the prospect of ruining everything because of heroin use unbearable. His mother tried to find ways to cover and/or provide money for addicted son, out of the fear that he would steal from others and be severely punished.

Meanwhile his father wanted to apply severe punishment, and blamed the mother for sustaining the habit of the son. Later, his father got seriously ill and became paralyzed by a stroke, a fact that Cường continued to feel responsible for. For families of drug users, social death manifested itself in the fact that their families were looked upon as unfavorable in the community and the society. Furthermore, families throughout Vietnam are required by the government to register for the title of *Gia Đình Văn Hoá* (Family that maintains appropriate culture) for which they must meet many criteria such as no domestic violence, no family members involved in “social evils” activities such as drug use, and sound economic foundation (see also Pettus 2003; Phinney 2009). As families of drug users certainly don’t meet these criteria, they experience further shame and social isolation as a result. For individual drug users, employment opportunities, their participation in neighborhood activities, and other social ties are severed, if not completely killed. Once addicted, sons and husbands are considered worthless by their families, and their social worth diminishes substantially in the community.

Family tension was so high that in some cases family members either rejected the addict and/or wished that they were dead – the most painful wish that any parents and/or siblings could ever think of. At that point, they not only gave up hope about their sons, but also wished they hadn’t had those sons in the first place. Trường, a 40-year-old heroin addict who had used heroin for more than ten years, explained that his family was so frustrated with him that they gave up on him by ignoring his existence in the family. They ignored his existence and didn’t talk to him unless unavoidable; they didn’t let his son get close to him out of fear that his son would pick up the habit; and they didn’t welcome him at family events. Trường, however, didn’t complain about what his family did to him and he seemed to show that he accepted such a

treatment. He further confirmed that his family was not unique and many other families would do the same: “When the addiction became unbearable and when the son’s behaviors gone really bad, probably ten out of ten families would say something to the effect that they wished their addicted sons were dead...No family could stand by their sons for that long.” Confronting with rejection from their own family, on top of stigma and other pressure from people outside of the family, it was perhaps somewhat surprising that the drug users in this study chose to take the blame on themselves, rather than to vent out their frustration towards others. While stories of drug users threatening their own family members and strangers abound in public media, most drug users in this study emphasize the fact that they had resorted to suicide attempts at least once. Quân, for example, had thought seriously of suicide numerous times, and had cut his wrist once amidst hopelessness and depression.

All participants in the study had at least one time experienced staying at a rehabilitation center for an extended period of time, and their experiences with these centers were nothing but torturous and inhumane. The regular procedure started with a cold-turkey detoxification, which was then followed by months and even years of daily hard labor, of attending moral and civic sessions, and severe forms of punishment upon violation of both informal and formal rules and regulations. The experiences of drug users in this study was not unique; reports from international organizations also exposed similar experiences in other parts of Vietnam (Human Rights Watch 2011). The reports of these organizations also emphasized the fact that too often there were limited access to health services at the centers, including HIV/AIDS services, where there were a large number of young men who were infected with HIV/AIDS. Various forms of forced labor and physical violence are intrinsic to the power structure established at the centers

with the goals of producing bodies that are not only clean from heroin, but also fearful and obedient to the production system that has been established for the economic profits of the power-that-be at the centers and beyond. Furthermore, physical violence inflicted by 06 centers on drug users are a form of punishment supported ideologically and socially in the society where drug users are believed to deserve such treatment. Hidden under seemingly humanistic names such as job placement, vocational training and social laboring that emphasizes the values of labor and of work for human decency were monstrous forms of destroying human relationships and values. Despite, or perhaps because of, inhuman treatment, almost all participants experienced relapse, with some like Quân, as soon as he stepped out the center gate. And because of this inhumane treatment, it is not a surprise that there have been numerous incidents where drug users rebelled violently, with incidents that have been reported in both national and international media (Amon Joseph 2010).

What motivated heroin users and their families to endure such painful experiences of broken relationships, stigma and violence? In their narratives, male heroin users often cited damages that they had done to their families and their desires to repay what they considered as immense debt to their families as the main reason for them to continue their painful trials. Even if they had thought of suicide it was mainly because they didn't want to create more pain for their families. The weight of expectation for a son, and sometimes the only son, in a family of aging parents was often considered an important reason for both family and individual heroin users to put up with suffering. Furthermore, social death that resulted from societal stigma and discrimination against drug use and drug users played out as a major motivation. Such status of social death produces enormous pressure for both individual users and their families to search for

magic remedies in order to build a new life and a new future. Under such circumstances, the introduction of methadone carries an immense burden of expectation from all parties involved.

Methadone Dependence, a New Ethics of the Self, and *Trụ Cột Gia Đình*

A New Ethics of the Self

In the past, it was never the case that my family would give money to me. Money for buying expensive things, for paying bills... they never entrusted me with that money. Now I can go and pay for electricity and water bills; I can go and buy a motorbike on my own; and I can borrow a motorbike from others in the family. As for neighbors, now they trust me so I can borrow money from them when I need to. If I went out for breakfast and forgot to bring money with me, then they would be fine and would allow me to pay the next day. If this happened in the past, they would not be happy at all as they thought that I don't have any money. My friends now, knowing that I have stopped using heroin, have approached me and asked me out. In the past, they would never do that since they were concerned that I would borrow money from them. So it changed a lot in terms of relationships with my family, my relatives and other people out there. Of course it's not completely back to normal like 100 percent normal, but it could be 70 or 80 percent or even 90 percent normal. But some families were still not confident that it would stay that way. (Cường, 35, college degree, married and employed by a trading company)

The main thing for any human is to live and to work, and without those things life becomes meaningless. In the past ten years, I had been working but I was on and off, and it didn't mean anything. It was not stable so it didn't mean anything. At the beginning I drove a taxi and it was two years into it that I got addicted. That was the only time meaningful to me. Once I got addicted, the work didn't mean a lot. It was not real work; it was just maneuvering (*xoay sở*) to get money day by day. I used to have a driving license. As you know, I used to drive long-distance bus had a license, but then I prawned it to get money for heroin. For a few months now my life has become stable and I want to find a new job, probably back to driving taxi. But I have to get some saving first, some million dong (Mạnh, 34, high school education, married and helping his wife to operate a food cart)

In the past, before using heroin, I didn't want to do anything like brushing my teeth or cleaning my face. Only after the first dose of methadone that I started to care about those things. In the winter I didn't want to take a bath since it would make my craving come much quicker, only 3 to 4 hours after the high and then I would need it again. Now I wake up and first things first I go to brush my teeth, clean my face, take my breakfast, say goodbye to my parents and then go to work. When I was using heroin, I never thought of buying gifts for anyone. Now I just bought a gymnastic ring for my cousin as a birthday gift, and it made me happy. When I go to work, I would wait for other patients to take their medication first and wait until it was less crowded. I get home by 11:00 am and have lunch with my parents and my cousin, then I clean the dishes, take a nap, and go to work again from 2 to 5 pm. In the evening after dinner I hang around a little bit with my cousin and my parents then go to bed. On Saturday and Sunday when I don't have to work I just go to the clinic to get my dosage and hang around a little with other patients, then I return home to help my mother with her alcohol shop. (Quân, 30, high school education, unmarried and working as peer educator at the methadone clinic)

The description of how life changed for these three men from very different backgrounds since they started taking methadone illustrates both the positive effects and the challenges that patients on methadone faced at the time of the interview. While their heroin life was mostly characterized as chaotic, methadone helped to restore some of the daily routines. As explained by Quân above, he was able to establish some rhythm in his life and participated in daily activities of his family after more than ten years of spending most of his time on heroin. A fixed dosage of methadone also helped some methadone patients to keep their jobs, which otherwise would have been jeopardized by frequent and increasing use of heroin. Others switched to a job that was more suitable with the schedule of the clinic. In the case of Giang, a 27-year-old man, he switched his job from a personal car driver to a service job in a restaurant so that he could do the afternoon shift and therefore go to the clinic in the morning. Some were thinking of returning to jobs that they quit because of heroin use. As Mạnh said, he wanted to leave his

current work helping his wife with a food cart and to return to driving taxi, which he had to give up earlier. Even for Quân who was happy with his current job, he also wanted to find something that would allow him to earn more money.

Like these three men, most methadone users appreciated certain levels of *ổn định* (stability) that the methadone program brought for them. The notion of *ổn định* was first introduced during first phase of methadone intake, when a fixed dosage was identified and individualized. During this period, patients may continue to use heroin, though less frequently, which made many of the first patients of the methadone pilot program have doubts about the effects of new treatment. This period was understood as “unstable” by many patients in the program. As methadone has a longer half-life than heroin, meaning that methadone users only need one administration of the drug per day, as the dosage of methadone doesn't increase, methadone users could theoretically build a life around methadone use just like other chronic diseases. Thanks to the sense of stability and other changes in life that came with it, some methadone users described experiences with methadone as *tìm lại con người thực của mình* (recovering their true selves), or *lại trở thành người* (becoming human again). This sense of recovery of lost selves was certainly in contrast to what they described of being driven by the ghost of heroin that I describe earlier. With the introduction of methadone, heroin addicts in this study have found a new sense of life, if not a totally new life. With the introduction of methadone, building a new life became an expectation from various parties involved in the recovery process of methadone patients.

One important aspect of *ổn định*, and also one of the most satisfying aspects of their new life, was that they have regained trust from their family members and other people who knew

them. First and foremost was the belief that they finally had an effective method that helped their sons stop using heroin. As family members observed changes in their sons' daily routines and their appearance (especially weight and dress), they realized that methadone had done wonders. Furthermore, families now started to entrust them with money and other expensive possessions like motorbikes, and even giving them seed money to set up their own small businesses. As explained by Cường in the earlier interview excerpt, receiving money and borrowing a motorbike from family members would have not happened had they had not trusted him. While trust from family members was most important to methadone users, they also noticed and appreciated changing behaviors of others towards them. Old friends started to call them again and asked them to hang out; neighbors started to invite them to their homes and started to say hello and chat on the street; and local authorities stopped checking on them but rather encouraged them to stay in the program for good.

For methadone users, gaining trust from others also means improving self-confidence.

Tuấn, a 42-year-old man who was unemployed at the time of the interview, explained this feeling:

Tuấn: It changed a lot of things in me, from my behaviors, my gestures, the way I talk. When I was still an addict, I always tried to stay away from friends and relatives since I felt inferior to them. I just felt that myself. Since taking on methadone, I no longer feel that way. I felt less depressed and my family and my friends were all very happy for me. As they were nicer to me I felt less depressed and became more self-confident (*tự tin*).

Interviewer: What do you mean by self-confidence?

Tuấn: You know people often say that drug addicts always behave as if they are trying to hide something and are always obsequious. Now I am no longer an addict so I feel normal like others. I can talk to others as normally as I am talking

with you now. Before I was an addict, no one could criticize my behaviors. Now I return to become like I was before I got addicted, so I feel self-confident.

Methadone users often contrasted the feelings of self-confidence with the time when they felt inferior to others because of their heroin use. Tuấn explained that he didn't feel able to participate in events of his extended family because he had to make special efforts to make them feel comfortable with an addict around who could ask for money at any given moment. Similarly, Cường said that he once was not welcome in his relatives' home because they believed that he was there mainly for money and/or to steal valuable possessions from them. Now he said he could confidently reject money from his relatives when they offered it to him out of their good will. He felt that his changes made them "treat me differently" in the sense that they respected him more than ever. Cường was also able to secure a job pretty quickly after participating in the methadone program for a couple of months. He attributed this chance to his confidence in going out and talking to various employers as well as his friends who eventually helped him to secure a job. Not everyone, of course, had that kind of confidence as it depended on their educational and other background.

For all the changes in their life, many methadone patients realized that they have become dependent on methadone and things that came with it, such as the doctors and the clinics' regulations. One methadone user told me that "my life used to be dependent on drug dealer, now I am dependent on Dr. Quan [the chief doctor of the clinic]." While many patients at the beginning of the program had misunderstandings of the effects of methadone, with some considering it as a poison to kill or control drug users and others considering it as a magic bullet

that could cure heroin dependency, they came to realize that they now had a new dependency. Most, however, didn't have any qualm over this dependency, especially when they compared the daily routine of methadone with their experience while using heroin. Some talked about methadone as a *ma túy sạch* (clean drug) as compared to heroin, which was a *ma túy bẩn* drug (dirty or malicious). Cường explained the difference as followed:

Interviewer: What is the difference for you in taking methadone as compared to using heroin?

Cường: Yes they were different. Using heroin was like a forced thing. Even though I was tired of it, I still was forced [to use]. Taking methadone and going to the clinic was really voluntary and joyful. The other [using heroin] was subconscious thing and it forced me to go and get it. It was like a habit. I was aware of how bad it was and how dirty it was, but I was forced to take it.

Many shared the same feelings with Cường as they felt that, unlike heroin dependency, they could still continue to conduct their lives. The fact that the clinic staff, as evidenced by the director in the vignette at the beginning of this section, often threatened patients to throw them out of methadone program, whether or not it became a reality, was another factor that made many patients feel dependent on methadone and the program. Not all patients, though, shared the joyful feelings of Cường, especially when they didn't have a stable job like him and/or had other inhibiting health conditions as a result of heroin use.

Becoming a Mature Man and Trụ Cột Gia Đình

The men in this study felt that the years of heroin use had delayed their process of becoming a *người đàn ông trưởng thành* (mature men) in many ways. They often compared themselves to

their friends who were not using heroin and found their friends much more “mature” than themselves. This was evidenced in their stable job, their happy family and in the amount of wealth that they were able to accumulate. Tuấn explained his feelings as he compared himself to other friends:

Since I was an addict, I have to accept that. My friends who were at the same age as mine, they are now very different and they are all accomplished and mature (*vương trưởng*). They could not be compared to me ten or fifteen years ago, and I don't say that for no reason. They are now doing very well as they didn't stray. Meanwhile, I had the best help from my family but now I am empty-handed. The more I think about it, the more I feel ashamed of myself. It is the fact, indeed, and I can't say that since I was an addict so I am resigned to the fact that they are doing better than me.

While the feeling of *mặc cảm* (inferiority) and *xấu hổ* (shame) was also prevalent during the heroin years, the fact that they have now resumed many functions of a normal life made them acutely aware of the differences in relation to their peers. The feeling of nostalgia of the pre-heroin years, as evident in the interview excerpt by Tuấn, was another common feeling. Some reminisced about the success that they had; some reminisced about their family happiness that might never be recovered; and some, like Thành, reminisced about his friendship during school years:

When I had craving (for drugs) all I wanted was to go out there and get some heroin and I couldn't think of anything (else). But when I was more sober, I opened up the high school album to recall my memories in school and I cried. I just wanted to meet my old friends again, to talk with them about our good time together. Some nights I had a dream of my high-school time and our picnics and I didn't want to wake up because it was such a good dream. Now I am 28 years old, from 17 to 27 I didn't have any (work) experience and didn't have any exposure to society other than the drug circle. I was just like an 18 or 19 year old, and many people including my parents told me that I was like a teenager.

As Thành explained further to tell us why he was crying, he revealed another reason for what he considered as delayed “maturity.” For most methadone users, the period in which they should have invested in activities that could turn themselves into mature men was lost in heroin.

The notion of *đàn ông trưởng thành* meant different things. It could be getting married and building one’s own family for those who were still single; it could mean re-establishing one’s broken family and taking care of it; it could mean taking care of parents and other family relatives to make up for those years that were deep in frustration and tension; it could mean finding a job that could earn decent income in order to support themselves and their loved ones. As the sense of *trưởng thành* becomes more urgent for methadone users, it makes sense to understand why some reacted strongly to the infantilizing method of the clinic when the clinic asks them to bring their parents and/or wives in for counseling sessions and for signing the commitment form to supervise the methadone patients more closely. Some put a more positive spin on the lost years, though, as in the case of Cường who believed that the difficult years with heroin should be considered as a mishap that would make him stronger:

It is not simple to become “a mature man” (*người đàn ông trưởng thành*). Not just like that! When one experienced difficult things then one become more matured. When one falls then one rises up and continues to walk and one learn from that fall. When one man tells me that he just simply grows up and becomes a matured man then I don’t believe him. If one doesn’t face difficulties in life – sometimes moving up, sometimes stepping back, sometimes winning, sometimes losing – then one can’t become matured.

Closely linked to the notion of *đàn ông trưởng thành* is the notion of *trụ cột gia đình* that the men on methadone were acutely aware of. First and foremost, they were aware that to maintain *trụ cột gia đình* they needed to be productive again by finding a decent work and/or job. The fact that their past heroin habits had damaged their family economy registered strongly among many participants, and they all wished to find ways to make up for it. However, the challenge was not a small one. Tuấn explained this challenge as follows:

Interviewer: You said that your friends are now all accomplished and matured (*vuơng trưởng*). What do you think as the role of a man in the family?

Tuấn: If one talks about the role of a man in his family, it must be *trụ cột*. But not all families are the same; in some families the wife was *trụ cột*, since she is the main provider, and the husband is the second. My wife, although she is working now, she is still employed by others, and ever since we got married I have always been *trụ cột*.

Interviewer: Do you or can you perform that role now?

Tuấn: Now honestly since I was addicted for quite a number of years, almost ten years, I couldn't do much economically. My family economy, well, it could be recovered but it would take time. It could not be recovered entirely, but certainly at some level. For me I have to try and work harder. My parents on both sides [natal and in-law] for sure will support us. Now I no longer use heroin so they will support us, they will encourage us to have our own business to recover our economy.

Although many of the men who were methadone patients were aware of the need to be economically productive, this wish seemed not as simple as it may appear since many heroin users have neither the social nor the cultural capital necessary to acquire jobs in an economy of scarcity. It is worth noting the case of Giang, who was happy with his work at a restaurant, and the case of Cường, who felt confident that he could support his own family with his current job. But men like them were far and few between. Tuấn believed that it would take time for him to be

productive again, and that with the support from his parents he would be able to establish his own business. Đình, who lost his older brother to AIDS, was still living with his parents and was unemployed, feared the fact that he would have to become a *trụ cột gia đình* when his father passed away since he would not be able to do so without a job. He said that he would not want to think about this prospect because it would scare him even more. Mạnh was still pushing a food cart for his wife in the market and dreamed that they would be able to save enough money so that he could get a better paying job at a taxi company. Quân, while happy working as peer educator for the clinic, already dreamed of taking a driving license and become a driver for his brother-in-law's company so that he would not have to depend on his parents and would eventually be able to support his future family. There were countless other men who were not as fortunate as Giang and Quân who had some types of long-term formal work, and the other men in this study either depended on family business, worked for the clinic and/or peer educator network, or were still searching for work. The number of men who would hang out at tea stalls outside of the clinic was a significant indicator of joblessness. Since they didn't have jobs, they would spend time hanging out with their newfound friends, engaging in drinking, gambling and other economically unproductive activities. It should be emphasized here that for most men in this study, it is the family business rather than formal job opportunities elsewhere that provided them with opportunities to be economically productive or to bear the economic burden that their sons continued to maintain.

As mentioned above, the trust of the family and improved relationships with friends and people around them have motivated the patients to gain confidence, to feel “valued” by their family members. For some men, gaining trust from others and improving their self-confidence were

transformative. For others, they felt that this put more pressure on them to maintain such levels of trust that they never experienced before. Some tried to show how healthy they were by participating in drinking and other activities with friends to show they were completely ready to do things that normal people could do. Another way to wave off concerns of family members was to spend money on family matters and/or buying gifts for other family members, even though they didn't earn even enough money for their own expenses. Quân, as explained in his interview excerpt, always tried to return home and was very hesitant to spend time out with his friends because he didn't want his parents to worry about his whereabouts.

Taking care of natal or martial family was another aspect of *trụ cột gia đình* that was important for many of these men. For them this meant that they would need to make others in their families happy. For Giang, it meant that he could buy gifts that his mother liked. He contrasted the time when he was on heroin with his current gestures towards his parents:

I used to wallow in addiction and didn't care much about my family, my parents. Now I feel like caring more for my parents, I go to work to earn money for myself and sometimes I buy some clothes and rings for my mother. I know that I care for my mother, and I want to make it up to her for all the difficulties and sorrows she used to suffer because of my faults.

For those who were not married, like Quân, as shown in the interview excerpt at the beginning of this section, he felt happy that he could buy birthday present for his cousin and that he showed up on time for family meals and helped out with family chores. He also wished to be able to get married so that his parents would have grandchildren. In the case of Mạnh, although married and not as young as other participants in this study, he and his wife decided to delay having a baby since they believed that they ought to concentrate on rebuilding family economy in order to be able

to raise their children properly in the future. In the case of Cường, he got married soon after being sober and was already looking forward to his first child. He was much happier than other men like Thành and Định, both of whom didn't know when they would be able to raise families of their own, or like Mạnh, who decided to delay the first child. For the patients who are married, they would like to recover their position as a husband, a father. Tuấn, a father of two children but with a pending divorce, believed that he still receive respect from his children and hoped that he would have a job to recover his marriage and to support the children better in the future.

Last but not least, most of the men on methadone believed that their spending should be more careful so that they don't burn all the money they earned on his own needs, like they did in the old days. The fact that Quân or Giang bought gifts for family members, despite their limited incomes, showed that they were more aware of the need to spend money on their loved ones rather than just on themselves. Mạnh was working hard to make some savings, which would not have happened had he not been receiving methadone. And Cường, the men who made the most money of the group, explained the need to save money:

Interviewer: Do you have any difficulties in fulfilling the role [*trụ cột*] in your relationship with your wife and your mother?

Cường: In general it is difficult, especially in terms of expenses. My relationship with friends will be restricted, and I can be a free man as I used to be. In the past I could hang around with friends whenever I wanted to. Now I have to show up at home on time. If I used to drink three beers with my friends then, now I can only drink one and have to save [the money to buy] the other two for my wife and my future child.

Not all men, however, were as responsible as Cường and the cases of Quân and Giang mentioned above. Some of the men urged their families to buy them expensive possessions and

yet continued their reckless spending. One possession of the patients that was often observed by the clinic staff was a motorbike, since buying a motorbike showed a high level of trust from family on their children. As the demand for motorbikes was high, many families had to borrow money to purchase them so that they could travel to and from the clinic and/or work. However, many methadone users still have other habits from the old days such as gambling, so they could not keep hold of their possession for long. The vignette below was one example of how some methadone users continued to be a burden for their families:

By the time I was about to leave, one patient arrived with a bicycle and his mother was on the seat behind. The patient was about 30 years old, skinny, and he looked very down. The mother looked really tired and depressed, and she was crying. The man came straight to the dispenser to take his dose, right at 4:45 pm, and the pharmacist was about to close the drug cabinet and clean up the equipment. While the guy was waiting for the staff to prepare his dosage, his mother stepped into the clinic and started to cry louder. She was complaining that her son was on a stable dosage for a few months and had given up heroin. But he had not found any job and was waiting for the employment service of the clinic to make a referral to an employer. But he still insisted that she buy him a motorbike because he needed it to go around and to go to find work. She gave in and borrowed 18 million dong [around 1 thousand US dollars or three months of salary of the clinic doctor] and had hoped that he would be able to find a job. Just two weeks after that, the methadone patient, who was unmarried, gambled his motorbike and lost it. She cried harder and louder, and said that she now doesn't know what to do and can't complain to anyone so she came to the clinic to tell people how bad her life is. (Field notes)

While the motorbike, as an expensive consumer good, has become a symbol of both trust and freedom for many methadone patients, it has become a burden for many families whose economies were destroyed during their son's heroin years. Although it signals some departure

from the past, it could also be a constant reminder of the past that never completely disappeared as far as methadone patients and their families are concerned.

While methadone is helping them to return to their normal life and to their roles as husbands, fathers and sons, many methadone users in this study expressed the view that societal stigma towards drug use and drug users continued to haunt them even when they have moved to a new chapter in their lives. First of all, stigma put limits on the chance for methadone patients to find jobs. Few patients were employed at the time of the study. Among those who did have jobs, most of them participated in family businesses. Some people running their own business also faced certain problems because of their “addiction” past; for example, they find it difficult to attract customers. Since their “reputation” as an addict still lingered on, methadone users felt that they received very little trust from other people and it was hard for them to get jobs which deal with finance or to ask for high prestige at work. While the methadone program established an employment service, many patients felt that if they got jobs from this service they would forever be labeled as “addicts” as shown in the vignette below:

“When I asked Th about this vocational program, Th said only crazy ones would go for it. According to Th, participating in this program would register the addiction reputation forever. Because if the service referred patients to employers, according to Th, the company would immediately know where the future employees come from and wrote that down on employment records. Then methadone users would have limited chance to find new employers in the future. Th preferred to go finding a job by himself. In his opinion, stigma would last long and last forever because it is simply registered in the society that addicts are never going to change” (Field notes).

For those methadone patients who had jobs, they had a high risk of being expelled from their jobs.

They were always afraid that their colleagues and managers would know about their addiction past.

Giang, for example, worked in a restaurant where only his boss knew of his past as a heroin user. They both had to keep the secret out of fear that other employees and hence customers would find out and the restaurant business would be ruined. Thành, the man who had never been identified by local authorities as a drug user, preferred to taper off his methadone dosage and leave the program completely so that he could find a job in another city.

Besides the problems in finding jobs, stigma also made it harder for some in searching for love, marriage and maintaining the happiness of their family. For the unmarried people like Quân or Định, most of them feared that they would not be able to find a partner who understands, accepts their past and is willing to get married with them. Or they were afraid that their girlfriend/lover would know soon about their addiction past. As a result, some patients decided to hide the truth about their past and their methadone treatment from their wife/girlfriend, as in the case of Thành. There were some differences between the married group and the unmarried group. Most married men were no longer worried about getting married; they were more concerned about employment and finance. They were afraid that they might not fulfill their role as a husband and a father as they cannot earn enough money for their family. In addition to the above differences between the married group and unmarried group, internalized stigma and past obsession also differed because of their individual characteristics such as self-confidence or their abilities to secure a job. For those patients who used to have some degrees or work skills, like Cường, they were usually more confident about themselves in approaching marriage. But these men were far and few between. On the contrary, for those patients who had little schooling and no work experience, they were often more pessimistic and even inactive in finding themselves a future wife. The influences of stigma and “the past” have made the methadone patients feel

pressure to prove that they were “no longer using drugs (heroin).” In his study, Lee Garth Vigilant (2008) points out that methadone users have to face a challenge of “becoming another person” in order to remove the “addict” label from themselves. They have to search for “a new definition” of themselves in responding to the separation and stigma of others. In this study, it is clear that proving that he has quit heroin completely is important to the patients in order to win the trust from everyone else. Moreover, patients always tried to find different ways to explain and analyze reasons to lessen the stigma from society about drug users. However, the harder they try to explain the past, the more obsessed they are about the past, and the more difficult for them to overcome self-stigma and pessimism.

The Changing State and Reshaping Ethics of the Self

This chapter examines the experiences of men who were undergoing first experiments with methadone as a solution for both drug use and HIV/AIDS in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam. It generates, however preliminary, understandings of the connections between methadone as a socially and politically grounded public health intervention and the experiences of masculinity and new ethics of the self in post-Vietnam. As the chapter describes the experiences of the men in this study as they painfully reflected on their heroin-using past and at the same time joyfully narrated their methadone present, it explores the meanings of being a man for a group whose passage to maturity and manhood had been delayed for an extended period of time. As the chapter seeks to understand how these men made sense of their heroin past as well as their early exposure to methadone, especially in relation to their expected roles as son, husband, and father, it brings to

the fore the working of power structures embedded in methadone in the context of post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam. As a background to the introduction of methadone, I have shown the changing and yet ambivalent discourses and practices on the part of the state over the past two decades with regards to drug use and drug users. Moving from a position dominated by ideological and moral conceptualization of addiction as a “social evil” to a position that accepts medically-driven understanding of addiction in which drug use is conceptualized as disease, the state has sanctioned approaches other than punitive measures to address drug use. It should be noted that the co-existence of both punitive and medical approaches is urged in no less by the concern with skyrocketing HIV prevalence among drug users, which is believed to threaten other groups of the population that are not using drugs such as female partners of drug users and their children. And yet, the state continues to maintain and even reinforce certain punitive measures in the forms of the 06 centers. To a certain extent, methadone and the associated power regime governs the deviant male bodies and subjectivities of heroin users by offering them a choice. That choice is between going back to heroin and the repressive mode of power as represented by the system of 06 centers on the one hand, and on the other are the plans and dreams that are essential for them to achieve the role of *trụ cột gia đình*. While some may have some doubts or concerns about their ability to meet these expectations, I have not met one who rejected this role outright.

As the state is maintaining both “enforcement” and “adherence” approaches to social issues (Montoya 2012), the methadone clinic has produced a new ethics of the self. This new mode of being is not just about conforming to the ethics of the clinic, but more about what is expected of them as men in the family and the society. What new experiences with methadone brought to many men in this study was not just a new-found stability and new-found sense of

confidence, but also an ability to dream of, and to a certain extent actually implement, some of changes in their life to fulfill what they were expected of as son, husband, and father. For some, these plans are also for them to achieve the status of a maturity, which had been delayed due to heroin use. They started to plan for marriage; they started to plan for securing themselves a new job; they started to plan for taking on greater responsibilities with their families in order to heal some of the scars and damages incurred in the past; they started to plan for rebuilding some of their social ties that were lost; and some already planned for a day when they are free from both methadone and heroin. With new found stability and sense of self-confidence, the methadone users started to dream up various projects in life and planed to fulfill their roles as *trụ cột gia đình* as expected by the families. As such, the family is an important structure in co-producing the ethics of the self that the state invests in the body of methadone patients.

All of these plans and dreams illustrate the high expectations that the introduction of methadone has made possible for the men in this study and their families. Following Fraser and Valentine, these newfound beliefs and plans were certainly co-produced by both the methadone treatment (of which the role of counselors and doctor's daily preaching was not small) and by the patients themselves. And yet, neither the methadone treatment nor the state that has sponsored it has done much to address a major stumbling block that could derail these plans and therefore the very existence of the methadone treatment. That stumbling block is the haunting stigma and discrimination against drug use, which continues to exist given the ideological and moral position maintained by the state. It is too early in the methadone program of Vietnam to predict anything with certainty, but experiences in other countries have provided good lessons of methadone being "liquid handcuff" rather than a liberating force for many methadone patients.

Chapter 4

The Production of Rejected Bodies:

Men Who Sell Sex in Hanoi

During the summer, morning is usually the best time to be around the lake, when the sunlight is not so bright and when blowing wind brings cool air to freshen up tired souls after a long summer night. Many Hanoians gather around the lake after their morning exercises or just before they begin their daily chores. Of the many gathering places around the lake, the “nine-root” tree is the preferred gathering spot for homosexually active men. It is a huge Indian Oak tree that has nine large branches, creating a large, shadowy area by the lake. Under the spread of the tree is a tea stall that has become a fixture of the scene over the past many years. The owner of this tea stall, a woman in her sixties, is Cô Xuân (Madame Xuân). Homosexually active men enjoy her shop because she is tolerant of their sexual lives, behaviors, frequent use of profanity, and sexually explicit language. In the evening, many of these men gather at another tea stall on the other side of the lake. As the night passes by, the market gets livelier with laughing, argument, cursing, and playful activities that are often sexually explicit. *Đồng cô* (spirit women) or *bóng lộ* (open shade) usually make up the largest group.¹ They often show off their riches by wearing gold bracelets, rings, riding expensive motorbikes, and talking out loud about their possessions. They also like to brag about their sexual adventures, especially with new *trai* (young men) young heterosexually-identified men who sell sex). One of the activities that many homosexually active men like to participate in is *cân hàng* (literally meaning to measure the weight of the good) which often involves them grabbing the penises of men who sell sex and then telling others about the size and weight of the *trai*'s penis. Soon enough, information about the *trai* is spread throughout the market. Interestingly, most *trai* do not offer strong resistance against such advances from *đồng cô* and *bóng lộ*, as they seem to enjoy the fact that their sexual capacity becomes known in the market.

Not too far from the lake is a street that has become known as *phố tâm quật* (traditional massage street) where the male sex market is relatively more hidden. The street is about two kilometers long but more than 15 massage shops are

¹ Both terms are used to denote homosexually-identified men who don't hide their sexual preference and like to show their effeminate manners, although they may not cross dress or undergo gender-reassignment surgery. They are used interchangeably by men who come to buy sex around the lake when they describe themselves, as well as by men who sell sex. *Bóng kín* (secret or hidden shadow), homosexually-identified

concentrated on a section of about 500 meters. By six in the evening, most shops have their lighted signs out up in the air or on the walkway, and they often read something like “traditional, family-inherited massage techniques, telephone number 0437....” which no passers-by could have missed or mistaken for something else. There are usually four to five young men hanging out in front of each shop and they wave at every single man who passes by with invitation such as “*quát đi*” (massage please) or “*quát anh?*” (hey man, want a massage?). If the customer accepts the invitation, then one of the waiting young masseurs will take the customer to a massage room hidden away from the street. All massage shops have both public and private rooms for clients to choose. Most sexual encounters take place in private rooms and they often take the form of oral sex. As the night falls further into the wee hours, the street gets empty, yet the shops become busier. Most customers prefer to arrive at these late hours to avoid the curious view of onlookers, or they just stop by after a long dinner with lots of drinking. At dawn, most shops close, the lighted signs are taken down, and the street becomes just like any other business street of busy Hanoi.

The scenes described above, a lake site and a *tâm quát* street, are two of the most recognized “sexual marketplaces” (Laumann 2004) in Hanoi. As shown the coming pages, while sexual exchanges between men for monetary or other material benefits have existed for many years, the development of such marketplaces and the larger “pleasure industry” (Padilla 2007) are quite a new phenomenon. In the recent years, the knowledge of such “sexual marketplaces” for men in large cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City is no longer confined to those who were directly involved or those who were parts of the scenes such as Cô Xuân. As early as 2001, one of the print newspapers with large circulation published an article titled “*The ‘night bread’: male sex workers on the streets*” (Thanh Nien 2001) which described the emergence of sex work among men in some areas in Ho Chi Minh City. In recent years, media coverage of commercial sex among men has increased significantly, and it is not surprising to find reporters paying attention to details that often add to the stigmatization of same-sex relationships between men. For

example, several articles in both print and on-line media that appeared in 2008 gave the public warnings about the increasing number of *chợ tình cho gay* (love markets for gay men) in big cities including Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh, and Hanoi (An Ninh The Gioi 2008). They reported that the sex workers now pursued men whom they considered as potential clients more vigorously as well as exposed other semi-public venues such as bars, cafés, saunas, and bath houses in cities like Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi where sexual exchanges between men took place. Sex between men, especially commercial sex, has become public knowledge on a scale that has never been seen before in Vietnam. Putting aside the salacious details and commercial purposes of these media expose, observers may wonder what factors have led to the increasing emergence of “sexual marketplaces” for men in major cities over the past decade or so. Drawing from ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews that were conducted with men who sell sex in Hanoi from mid-2007 through late 2008, this chapter examines some of these factors as well as the experiences of the men who are working in these marketplaces. By doing so, this chapter contributes to the understanding of a global phenomenon of men selling sex to men, which has received increasing attention over the past decade.

As Dennis Altman noted in the introduction to an edited volume on men who sell sex, “to speak of male sex work is to break several taboos simultaneously and to bring together discussion of (at least) two topics, namely homosexual desire and prostitution” (1999: xiii), the challenges of studying men who sell sex are not small. Although sex work among men seems to be a cross-cultural experience (the edited volume mentioned above presented case studies from 15 countries in all four major continents), the number of studies on the topic is relatively small compared to studies on commercial sex work by women. This is illustrated by the two most

notable reviews on the study of male sex work being published nearly a decade apart; one cross-cultural study (Vanwesenbeeck 2001) and another focused primarily on Anglo-American societies (Weitzer 2009). While limited in quantity, studies on men who sell sex have evolved over several paradigms that are common in the study of sex work in general. In broad terms, studies have shifted from the bio-psychological paradigm in which men who sell sex are conceptualized as sociologically and psychologically deviant to the sex-as-work paradigm that focuses more on the characteristics of the work environment rather than the individuals involved (Bimbi 2007; Browne and Minichiello 1996). With the later paradigm, studies also emphasize the importance of understanding heterogeneity of men who sell sex, debunking the simplistic images of “runaway” or “delinquent” youth that dominate studies of the earlier paradigm. However, with rising concerns of HIV/AIDS, David Bimbi argues that another paradigm has driven many studies on sex work by men, putting emphasis on “sex workers as vectors of disease” (Bimbi 2007: 25). Indeed, as is the case of China, the concerns of rising HIV cases among MSM and the impact on the population at large, has driven many epidemiological and behavioral studies on MSM in general (see, for example, Guo et al. 2010; Jia et al. 2010; Lau et al. 2011) and on men who sell sex who are known as “money boys” in particular (Chen et al. 2011; He et al. 2007; Lau et al. 2009; Liu et al. 2009; Liu et al. 2012a; Liu et al. 2012b;). Most studies, however, were driven by the concerns of HIV/AIDS to the point that they largely ignored other life circumstances that drive men who sell sex to engage in risky practices in the first place. Furthermore, these studies fail to explore how those risky behaviors are shaped by factors that are not often measured in epidemiological studies. As pointed out by Jan Browne and Victor Minichiello in their seminal review of studies on male sex work, more attention needs to

be paid to “the role of economic forces and social constructions of male [sic] sexuality...if sex work is to be understood within a broader structural context that will enable it to be removed from the discourse of deviance.” (1996: 52)

Although social science studies on sex work in settings outside Anglo-America are few, they have decidedly moved in the direction of focusing on how the local construction of gender and sexuality, rapid transformation of political economy, and changing meanings of sexual exchanges in the context of globalization shape sex work by men in various social and cultural settings (Aggleton 1999; Allen 2007; Kong 2011; Kulick 1997; Lockhart 2002; McCamish 2002; McCamish et al. 2000; Padilla 2007; Parker 1992). Some studies have raised questions on assumptions underlying the inordinate amount of attention given to men who sell sex in recent epidemiological and behavioral literature on HIV/AIDS, which have contributed to further stigmatization against such men in their own societies (Kong 2009; Padilla et al. 2010; Rofel 2010).

Two studies are of particular relevance for the issues that I will examine in this chapter. In *Caribbean Pleasure Industry*, Mark Padilla describes the “complex linkages between macro-level structural changes, such as the growth of the tourism industry in the Caribbean and changing construction of sexuality in” the Dominican Republic (2007: 24). As Western gay men increasingly find gateways to satisfy their sexual desires and fantasy, many men in the Dominican Republic have engaged in selling sex primarily to make ends meet and support their families in the context of growing unemployment among urban men and the increasing dependence of the national economy on foreign tourism. One specific outcome of this “political economy of sexuality” is what Padilla calls “international economy of stigma” where, on the one

hand, Western gay men enjoy the status of being the preferred customer, and on the other hand most men who sell sex struggle against the stigma of homoeroticism. Along the line of probing the connection between global and local processes in transforming local sex/gender system, Travis Kong provided a sociological analysis of “money boys” in Beijing and Shanghai where recent economic and social openings have created burgeoning gay spaces that mirror those in Western urban settings (Kong 2009, 2011). Kong shows that “money boys” in two urban settings in China, who are mostly homosexually-identified migrant young men, are faced with three major layers of discrimination that threaten their dreams. These are described as discrimination against the “floating population” that are systemic in the Chinese system, discrimination that is associated with the nature of sex work, and discrimination against homosexual identities and activities. While the informants in the study devised many ways to alleviate the burden of discrimination, Kong argues that “the interlocking effects of three identities – those of rural-to-urban migrant, sex worker, and a man who has sex with other men – produced the complicated ‘bare life’ of the money boy...in globalizing China” (2011: 193). Unlike the case of the Dominican Republic where the growth of global tourism has major influence on the development of the “pleasure industry,” Kong argues that the Chinese state, with its governance style that is “at once authoritarian and neoliberal,” has played a major role in creating various hierarchical and unequal social spaces in which money boys are operating (Kong 2012: 285). They are: (1) the blooming labor market in the cities where labor migrants are discriminated against by the household registration system; (2) the growing sex industry which resurfaced thanks to the neoliberal market policy and yet curtailed by the state’s antiprostitution measures; and (3) the emergent gay and lesbian communities that are encouraged by lessening control of private life

and yet are influenced by queer consumerism and cosmopolitanisms that marginalizes money boys.

In this chapter, I seek to contribute further to the literature of men who sell sex by examining the emergence of same-sex marketplaces for men in Hanoi as well as the experiences of men who operate at these sites. After the introduction of methodology and some description of the same-sex marketplaces and men who sell sex, the chapter examines the shaping structures through the experiences of both the men who buy sex and of the men who sell sex. I argue that while, according to some written records, sexual exchanges among men for love and/or material benefits at the sites captured in this study dated back as early 20th century, there has been a confluence of factors since the introduction of *Doi Moi* that contribute to what I consider as the increasing commercialization as well as formalization of sexual exchanges among men at these sites. Definitely, a “pleasure industry” (Padilla 2007) has started to developed in urban centers like Hanoi, where pimps, referrals, specific hotels favorable for quick sex with sex workers, virtual spaces, and other technologies that facilitate intimate exchanges between buyers and sellers are all part of the growing industry. Men who buy sex prefer to buy quick sex rather than engage in a process where they have to spend more resources and efforts in getting sexual favors from *trai* (heterosexually-identified men who sell sex). Homosexually active men have carved out physical spaces in urban cities for themselves, not only at nighttime as in the past but also at daytime in some areas. I argue that in recent years their efforts have been aided in no small part by HIV intervention activities targeting cruising sites of homosexually active men, which have made the awareness and recognition of same-sex relations among men become public knowledge in these spaces. Growing urbanization coupled with declining dependence on agriculture in rural

areas has attracted a large number of rural men leaving their home to search for jobs in urban centers like Hanoi. However, despite the growing informal sector, their limited capital and resources have made it difficult for them to sustain themselves in urban settings and have contributed to the growing availability of a larger number of young men whose only capital sometimes are their own bodies. The fact that many of these men left their home because of family tension, especially in their relationships with their fathers, keeps them from returning to their home communities when facing difficulties in the city.

The chapter will go on to describe the struggle that these men face negotiating the stigma that is part of the everyday life of sex workers. While both Padilla and Kong point to the ways in which men in the Dominican Republic and China deploy qualities associated with masculinity as a strategy to reduce the pressure of stigma, I argue that the practice of maintaining relationships with families and fulfilling the expected roles of *trụ cột gia đình*, or the expressed desires to do so, is another strategy to simultaneously negotiate stigma and to claim their masculinity. If the previously described migrant laborers and methadone patients faced enormous challenges in attaining this goal, the male sex workers that I will examine in this chapter are confronted with even greater challenges. This is because, as I will illustrate in this chapter, while the migrant laborers and methadone patients still had their families to rely on as their last resort, many male sex workers face greater difficulties re-building linkages with their natal families and/or building their own. While sex work provides many young men with an escape from their conflicts with their families, whether of economic, sexual, or other natures, they continue to negotiate a hierarchy of masculinity where they are expected to fulfill the role of a *trụ cột gia đình*.

Men Who Sell Sex in Hanoi: Changing Landscape and Ethnographic Encounters

This chapter draws from the first substantial study of men who sell sex in Vietnam that was conducted in 2007 and 2008. Despite the fact that the HIV epidemic among MSM (men who have sex with men) in Vietnam commands increasing attention both nationally (as shown below) and globally as evidenced in the number of studies published in peer-reviewed journals in recent years (Blanc 2005; Blanc 2004; Colby et al. 2008; Colby 2003; Ngo Duc Anh et al. 2009; Nguyen Anh Tuan 2004; Vu Ngoc Bao et al. 2008; Vu Ngoc Bao et al. 2004), and that the HIV risks of men who sell sex has received some attention (Clatts et al. 2007; Colby et al. 2004), there existed no study focused exclusively on men who sell sex. This section describes in detail the methodological approach that was used as well as provides some description of men who sell sex and the marketplaces in Hanoi. Information on the context of same-sex desires, practices, and of attention to HIV risks among men who have sex with men is in order.

Changing Landscape for Same-Sex Desires and Practices in Vietnam

As compared to what was documented in Vietnam a decade or so ago (Blanc 2005; Khuat Thu Hong 1998), many significant changes in societal and governmental acknowledgement of same-sex desires and identities have taken place. Increasing numbers of urban gay men and women are seeking to advance the legitimacy of same-sex desires and identities as evidenced in the succession of wedding ceremonies of young same-sex couples as well as the first public gay pride events in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City that have made international news (AFP 2012; USA

Today 2012). At least two local non-governmental organizations, iSEE (Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment) and ICS (Information, Connecting and Sharing), have declared fighting for LGBT rights as part of their mandates. These events and the pressure from such organizations have undoubtedly contributed to serious consideration by the Vietnamese government and other law making bodies to sanction more tolerance of same-sex union in the upcoming revision of the Law on Marriage and Family (Vu Quy Hao Nhien 2012).

The picture is of course not changing as fast as one might hope for. Same-sex practices still occupy a hidden, unspoken, and highly stigmatized status within the larger society. For one, many homosexually-identified men and women are still negotiating powerful, culture-bound ways of defining the self that do not necessarily privilege sexual identity over other sources of social and cultural identity. In contemporary Vietnamese society, as in many other Asian cultures, social position and role in the predominant family-kinship system (e.g., husband, son, etc.) are the primary sources for defining the self (including concepts of sexual self), not sexual desire (Aronson 1999; Blanc 2005; Chou 2000; Kong 2011). This may explain the widely observed 'mismatch' between sexual behavior and sexual identity in Vietnam where many men who love men marry women to fulfill strong socio-cultural expectations of patrilineal continuity and succession through traditional marriage institutions, and also maintain concurrent sex partners (male and female) outside the household. This may also explain the fact that although some state officials have voiced their opinions on the subject in public media, the general stance of the state has been to keep the topic under the carpet (Aronson 1999; Blanc 2005; Vu Quy Hao Nhien 2012).

In the field of HIV/AIDS, attention to MSM and their HIV risks have also increased in recent years. As recently as 2004, HIV surveillance data collapsed cases that could not be attributed to injection risk, heterosexual transmission, mother-to-child transmission, or blood transfusion into an unelaborated (and functionally invisible category of “Other.”) It was quietly recognized that this group was largely composed of men who have sex with men but this was seldom acknowledged in public discussions of HIV. The near exclusive focus on IDU and FSW populations in both epidemiology and prevention in the early HIV epidemic in Vietnam, together with the stigma and concerted silence associated with HIV risk among homosexually active men, left these populations especially vulnerable. MSM has been added as a defined high-risk group in the biannual PEPFAR-sponsored Integrated Behavioral and Biological Surveillance (IBBS) survey in four provinces since 2005 . MSM has also been included in the government-sponsored sentinel surveillance system in a number of provinces since 2010. The most recent IBBS report (2009-2010) compares trends from the 2005 with more recent data collected in 2009. Alarmingly, the prevalence of HIV among MSM in Hanoi is now estimated at 17.4 percent (a significant increase from 9.4 percent in 2005); in HCMC the current HIV prevalence estimate is 16.7 percent (up from 5.3 percent in 2005) (Socialist Republic of Vietnam n.d). Projection analysis has shown that the increase will likely continue in the coming years and the government has prepared a draft National Guidelines for Comprehensive Intervention for MSM with technical support from international agencies (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2012).

Ethnography of Men Who Sell Sex in Hanoi

Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam and the second largest metropolis in the country. In 2010, the city celebrated 1000 years since its establishment and became one of the oldest cities in Asia. With the 2008 expansion plan in which a number of large rural areas of adjacent rural provinces were incorporated into Hanoi, the metropolis tripled its size and the population doubled to more than 6.5 million people in 2010, of which 2.6 million live in the inner city area (Vietnam General Statistical Office 2011). The urban population growth rate in Vietnam is at the level of other countries in Asia and the urbanization rate of Hanoi is among the largest in the country despite the 2008 merger plan (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2010). Furthermore, official statistics show that migrants account for about 10 percent of the Hanoi population, which many believe as an underestimate since temporary migrants may not register their status with local authorities (Agergaard and Vu Thi Thao 2011). Indeed, the inner city areas are filled with young people who moved to cities for jobs and/or study opportunities, a number of slums filled with labor migrants are well known in the cities, and the number of unofficial labor markets where temporary migrants and city residents waiting to be hired for daily work has increased significantly over the years. Temporary migrants surely add further burden in terms of job creation for the city while the official unemployment rates among population of 15 to 29 years of age are as high as 8 percent (as compared to the national rate of about 4 percent). Although the population density of Hanoi (about 2000 people per square km) was relatively low when compared to other urban centers in Asia, urban infrastructure has not developed fast enough to meet the demand of rapid urban population growth, resulting in over-population.

We conducted the study at several sexual marketplaces for homosexually active men in the inner city areas. As in the study with methadone patients presented in previous chapter, this study is a team product where I led a team of field researchers, two men and one woman, who were recent college graduates. Various major locations where sex work among men took place were identified through interviews with key informants, including some homosexually active men who then introduced us to men who themselves sell sex. I then trained field researchers at these sites on how to conduct participant observation and worked with them in the field for the first few months. The experiences of hanging out with them in the field also helped me to identify issues that needed immediate attention such as inappropriate attitudes and expressions towards people they met in the field, poor questioning technique, as well as situations where ethical principals in conducting research could be violated. While none of the field researchers had personal and/or professional experiences with homosexuality before participating in this study, their confidence and understanding of what was required of them to conduct ethically sound ethnographic research grew rapidly. Over the course of the ethnographic fieldwork, it was common that field researchers' identity and reason for being in the field were mistaken for different reasons. The young woman researcher was initially mistaken for a media reporter (*nhà báo*) and therefore was confronted with uncooperative attitudes. She later learned that many reporters had previously come to these sex work scenes to identify hot stories without any respect for or regards to the welfare of those they reported on. The identities of the two young men were occasionally mistaken as potential customers (for men who sell sex), potential competitors (for men who sell sex), or potential sellers (for men who buy sex). Besides participating in daily conversations and activities at the study sites, the field researchers also

brought condoms and lubricant to the field to distribute to male sex workers or anyone asking for safer sex supplies. This helped to identify them as involved with an HIV-related research study. As they spent a significant amount of time at sex work scenes, they gradually developed acquaintanceship and trust with men who sell sex as well as various groups of individuals whose ominous presence in the field were relevant for the study.

As the field researchers and I learned more about cruising sites and about different groups of male sex workers, we drew up a plan to recruit the sample for the survey that was based on a time-location sampling method. This method has been used extensively for hidden populations such as drug users, female sex workers, and homosexually active men (Magnani et al. 2005). Additionally, this sampling method builds on extensive mapping of types of male sex workers who showed up at different time periods during a day and week in order to draw up a sample quota that reflects the diversity of the population characteristics known to the researcher. Based on this sampling method, we recruited 110 men who had reported selling sex in the past 90 days for a behavioral survey with HIV testing. Due to a three-month time constraint, we decided this was the maximum number of participants we could recruit.

Of these men who were involved in the survey, 21 were invited for further in-depth interviews that took place over the next several months. The interviews with these 21 men covered a range of topics including their childhood, relationships with families, experiences with other jobs prior to or in concurrence with sex work, experiences with sex and with sex markets for men, knowledge and understandings of health risks including HIV/AIDS, and their future plans. The men were selected in order to maximize diversity on key dimensions of differences among male sex workers in Hanoi, including years of sex work, sexual/gender identity, and

whether they were migrants (see Appendix 1 for detailed description of these men). We also took into account their experience with different types of sexual behaviors, especially anal sex, which was closely related to their sexual identity. In addition, we invited four men who were openly homosexual in the market. These men were slightly older than the 21 men selected from the survey, and although some of them had previous experience with selling sex, they were now clients of male sex workers. Five men in the survey sample tested positive for HIV and they were lost to follow up after the survey, despite our attempts to contact them for life history interviews.

Some Characteristics of Men Who Sell Sex in Hanoi

The surveyed sample had an average age of 21.9 years old with a range of 15 to 43 years old. Approximately 50.9 percent of participants completed high school while 13.6 percent completed college or university, representing a fairly high educational level. A significant proportion of participants (73.6 percent) regarded themselves as heterosexual (*trai, đàn ông*) and 26.4 percent as homosexual/bisexual (*đồng cô, bóng lộn, bóng kín, gay, hifi*). A relatively small proportion of participants had a job with a monthly income (18.2 percent). The average income in the last month was \$200 (3,485,780 VND) with a range of \$18 (300,000VND) to \$ 1,171(20,000,000 VND). Thirty percent of participants considered sex work as their primary economic resource in the last year, 60.9percent earned other income from formal work, and 9.1percent made money from informal and even illegal activities (e.g. gambling, robbery). The majority of participants (79.1 percent) migrated to Hanoi from other provinces. Most of participants (58.6 percent) moved to Hanoi for seasonal work, 3.4 percent for family reasons, and 13.8 percent for school.

In terms of sex work, the average age at initiation of sex work was 19.6 (SD=3.6) years old with a range of 11 to 34 years old. The primary reason of the initiation of sex work was for monetary and other economic benefits (70.6 percent), curiosity about sex (9.2 percent), coercion or violence (0.9 percent), and drugs (3.7 percent). The average number of male clients in the last 30 days was 4.5 (SD = 6.2) with a range of 0 to 32 people. The average amount of money obtained in the last sex transaction was approximately \$18 (320,850 VND) with a range of 0 to \$187 (3,200,000 VND). During the last sex transaction 76.4 percent of participants had oral sex, 14.5 percent had insertive anal sex, 6.4 percent had receptive anal sex, and 42.7 percent had hand jobs. Interestingly, about 50 percent of the men in the sample reported engaging in sex work for a year or less, reflecting the fact that the turnover of sex workers was high.

Ethnographic observation and interviews provide more nuanced information on characteristics of men who sell sex in major sexual marketplaces. As the survey results show, in addition to selling sex all men in this study had many other ways to make money, including both legal and illegal ways. Some stole money and expensive belongings from their clients. Such scamming has become notorious in the area, and stories of male sex workers who were caught by the police for robbing their clients abound. Stories of criminal activities, including drug use to more severe forms of criminal activity such as robbery and even murder, are commonplace. Most men were involved in some form of gambling, and those who had more money were involved in pawn-shops or high-rate lending to other people in the market who needed quick money.

In terms of initiation into sex work, some heterosexually-identified men recounted that they were almost unprepared as they were not aware that they were being solicited to sell sex when clients offered them a warm meal or an overnight stay in a safe place. They usually blamed

drinking with clients for the initiation as they recounted that being drunk made them give into the demand of clients more easily. Sometimes sexual coercion took place. More often, though, heterosexually-identified men had some understanding of the sex market for homosexuals before they got involved in sex work. They had obtained information about the sex market as they hung out in the areas where activities of the sex market for homosexuals were popular. They learned from other young men who were getting involved in sex work and especially from other individuals such as tea stall owners and motorbike taxi drivers whom they depended on when they needed help in an unfamiliar environment. A majority of men said that the primary reason for their initiation into sex work was money. While alcohol was used before sexual intercourse, many explained the use of alcohol as a way to help them to forget that they were engaging in sex with another man.

Differently, homosexually oriented men, especially *đồng cô* or *bóng lộ*, almost self-selected themselves into sex work. They often claimed that they learned of their “true self” during their childhood but always had to suppress their feelings for other men. When they got older and felt sexually attracted to men, some of them dressed up as women and visited areas where there was a large concentration of female sex workers and where they could disguise themselves as girls. By doing that, they would have more chances to find male clients thanks to the appearance of being a girl. Thus, contrary to men who sell sex in the two other groups, these *đồng cô* and *bóng lộ* were well equipped with sex work knowledge and skills before they began to practice sex work. They actively learned skills of hustling, price negotiation, and client selection through observing female sex workers in the area. Noticeably, as they often claimed, money is not the primary reason for their initiation of sex work. They told interviewers that they

decided to get involved in sex work because of their desire for the feeling of being treated as a woman and for the sexual pleasure they derived from sex with “a real man.”

For many men who sell sex, especially those who don't identify themselves as heterosexual, learning about sex with other men usually started with their first clients. While young men could learn about sex from many groups, including pimps and other male sex workers, they usually learned the most from their own clients. They learned about various sexual techniques and ways to satisfy another man. They also learned about their clients in terms of their preferences when it comes to sex and their willingness and ability to pay. Young heterosexual men who sell sex preferred clients who were not too demanding during sex and yet would pay them well. Young men also learned to assess their value vis-à-vis their clients' preferences. They also learned how to negotiate prices with their clients depending on the different kinds of sexual acts that they would engage in and whether or not they were one-time or long-term clients, in ways that would not offend their clients. Last but not least, young men learned how to avoid violence caused by their clients. Sexual violence can include unwanted and/or unsafe sexual acts, usually involving some level of physical violence. Violence may also manifest itself in terms of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991; Parker and Aggleton 2003) in forms of cursing words and insulting behaviors from their clients. And last but not least, some clients didn't pay money, whole or part, as was agreed upon before sex, although the negotiation was not always explicit.

Since most heterosexually-identified young men who were interviewed didn't have much knowledge about sex with men, they described their action during their first sexual encounters with clients as mostly passive and in the receiving position. They often told stories indicating

that their clients took the initiative in sex and that they didn't have to do much but make themselves available for oral sex and/or a hand job. Most men told stories of feeling uncomfortable and of giving in to client demands because they could not withdraw from the situation. Some recalled their first sexual experiences with clients with some pleasure. This is the case of *Quyết*, a twenty-eight year old man from Hanoi and one of the more seasoned sex workers at *Hoàn Kiếm* lake, who was led to believe that doing sex work is a simple job that could earn him good money.

Interviewer: What did your first client was like?

Quyết: He was from Hàng Bạc street [near the lake] and he was a very nice man. He was gentle and made me quite comfortable. And since I knew what it was like having sex with a man [from his experience during childhood when a hairstylist sexually aroused him with porn video and sucked his penis], so I was not scared. The man was very understanding and he made love to me in way that I really enjoyed. The next day he gave me money, almost 500,000 VND [about 30 dollars] and bought breakfast for me. The problem was that the guy made me believe that selling sex to other men was easy and could also earn me lots of money, and that's why I have continued to slide down that road (*nhúng sâu vào*).

The men who sell sex in Hanoi have many different ways to classify their clients. One such way is related to the concept of “*căn*” (literally meaning someone's destiny), which is used by homosexually-identified men to explain why they were interested in men. The concept is also used to explain sexual preference. Those who have a high sexual demand, including preference for physically violent sexual acts, are believed to have heavy *căn*. Those who have a light weight *căn* are believed to have lesser sexual desires and demand. They also classified the clients according to appearance and sexual orientation, resulting in categories such as *đồng cô* and *bóng lộ* who are homosexually-active and effeminate men, *bóng kín* who are homosexually-

active men and yet are not easily recognized through appearance, *bóng non* who are young homosexuals, and *hi fi* who are homosexuals who have sex with both men and women.

Customers were also classified according to the type of relationship that they maintained with the sex workers. They include customers who preferred or actually lived with a male sex worker, frequent customers, or first-time customers. It should be noted that many Vietnamese come to sites like the lake not always to look for sex partners. They also come there to meet friends, to exchange information on business opportunities, to make plans on various activities with their friends, or just to hang out as part of their daily routine.

While the majority of customers were Vietnamese, foreign customers also frequented the market. Many of them came to Vietnam to work or just as tourists, some came to the lake purposefully as they searched for information on the internet or through friends, and others bumped into the sexual scene as they strolled leisurely around the lake. Most male sex workers have fond memories of foreign clients and they often preferred foreign clients to Vietnamese clients, although many of the male sex workers have limited English capacity. They preferred foreign customers because they could get more money from these clients, and more importantly because they felt that they were treated with respect when it comes to preference in terms of sexual practices. According to the sex workers we interviewed, most foreign clients don't force them to perform sexual practices that they didn't like.

Most men in the market worked in groups in which one introduced his clients to the others. This type of organization of sex work was most common since it created a larger client base for those who were involved. When one introduced his friends to his clients then he also had to make sure that the person he introduced would be well liked by the customers. Some sex

workers earned decent income from getting tips from customers and/or their friends for introducing new men who sell sex to the clients. Another benefit of participating in this network is that sex workers also get much more information about potential clients from their friends, including information about personality, preferences of sexual practices and positions, and the kinds of payment that he could expect. The customers themselves also get more information about their potential partners. Some sex workers worked independently and they built relationships with clients upon whom they relied as long-term customers. But very few men described themselves in this way since they will get bored with their clients or vice versa. There existed a saying in the market that “*đồng cô thích giai trẻ*” (meaning that homosexually active men prefer young men, especially those who are new to sex work). Men who sell sex therefore don't stay long at any particular venue. In Hanoi, they often moved from one public venue to another, for example moving from a central lake to another lake in the southern part of the city or to a bus station. They could also move from a public venue to a semi-public venue such as *tắm quất* and/or a sauna and spa shop for men. They could also move to another city to look for a new environment. Some were looking for clients through other forms of communication such as cell phones, chat rooms, and emails. Such frequent movement was due to the fact that they would not be able to remain attractive to customers if they remained in one place.

One limitation of the study was the fact that all male sex workers were recruited from public and semi-public venues, such as lake sites, public parks and *tắm quất* shops. While other categories of more hidden sex workers exist, such as call boys and *trai bao* (literally meaning pocketed young man, an expression used to denote young men living as partners and receiving

material support from homosexually active men), we were not able to recruit them for the study.² However, stories of sex workers moving from fee-for-service mode to a more long-term engagement with social and emotional attachments in addition to monetary exchanges and from working on the streets or in semi-public venues to living with *đồng cô* were abundant. Some sex workers expected their clients to find jobs for them, some have expectations that they would be provided with more expensive gifts, including money to build their houses, and some have expected that they would receive a more regular flow of clients through networks and relationships of their existing clients. Some men actually lived with their clients for an extended period of time as lovers but such couples face many challenges in maintaining a long-term relationship. This was true in the case of Thắng, a *đồng cô* in her mid forties who had experience with both selling and buying sex. She had experiences of living for extended periods of time with sex workers whom she considered as “real men.” Similarly, some sex workers moved in opposite direction, from living with homosexually-identified men to working on the streets. These men agreed to live with *đồng* initially because they needed help but eventually they had other plans such as getting married, finding a job, and moving back to their own communities. Young men who had experiences of living for extended period of time with their clients complained that although *đồng cô* took good care of their “real men” they usually became possessive and didn’t want to share their men even to the extent that they didn’t want these men to travel out at nighttime without their company.

² Although we attempted to recruit these two groups, call boys were not interested in the amount of money that the study was allowed to pay while *trai bao* feared that they would be identified on the streets. I also believe the distinction between these two categories of men who sell sex and men in our study is not clear since some men in the study also had experiences with being call boys or *trai bao*.



Photograph 4.1: A *Tắm Quất* Shop at Night (photo taken by study participant)



Photograph 4.2: Night Market by the Lake Site (photo taken by study participant)



Photograph 4.3: No Place Called Home: A Common Experience (photo taken by the author)



Photograph 4.4: Home Away From Home: A Girl Friend and a Place To Stay (photo taken by study participant)

The Shaping of Same-Sex Sexual Marketplaces in Hanoi after *Doi Moi*

In their seminal book titled *The Sexual Organization of the City*, Edward Laumann and colleagues postulate a theory about sexual markets in urban settings to explain the fact that sexual partnering has never been a random phenomenon (Laumann 2004). They first propose the concept of “sex market” as a metaphor that, unlike other economic markets, “places the explanatory focus on local social and cultural structures that limit or channel sexual behaviors” (2004: 8). This means that the notion of “sex market” does not literally convey the concept of an economic market where consumers and sellers are rationalized and therefore individual

characteristics are valorized over other structural characteristics. Rather the concept of “sex market” puts emphasis on various structural factors that shape patterns of sexual partnering, whether transactional or relational in nature. This concept is in distinction from the notion of “sexual marketplaces,” or the specific places where one goes to find a sex partner. Laumann and colleagues specify structural factors that they consider as important in shaping the urban “sex market,” which include sexual network, sexual culture, space and institutions of both internal and external natures to the market that have stakes and interests in shaping sexual partnering and behaviors (see, for example, Parker 1999 for an extensive treatment of the shaping of same-sex markets in Brazil over the past two decades). In this section, I will explore some of the structural factors that have contributed to the changes in the landscapes of sexual exchanges among men, especially the emergence of sexual marketplaces, in Hanoi. I will first describe the two cases of men who have come to sex work with men through different routes as their stories tell us about various conditions that I would argue as playing important roles in shaping the emergence of sexual marketplaces for men in Hanoi.

Early Spaces for Homosexually Active Men

Thắng, *A Đông Cỏ*

Thắng is in her forties, and one of a few well-known transgendered individuals in Hanoi. She openly cross-dresses, wears make-up, and her straightened hair is about half way down her back. She often wears a large golden necklace, a thick gold ring and a golden bracelet, which make her

look more like a rich owner of a shop in *Đông Xuân* market (the largest retail market in Hanoi). However, her voice betrays her appearance, as one can tell it is a man's voice. It doesn't really matter since most people call her *chị* anyway (third pronoun for an older woman) and that is what she prefers to be called. *Chị Thắng*'s stories of her childhood were filled with details of how much she enjoyed playing games with other girls, of how she liked wearing girl's clothes, and using redden paper to color her lips. By the end of junior year in high school, *chị Thắng* knew that she liked boys more than girls. She recalled with excitement playing masturbation games with other boys in her neighborhood in the evening when the lights were out. For other boys, it was just a "boy game" but for *chị Thắng* it was a defining moment of her sexual preference.

After high school, she decided to try a small tofu shop in a major local market near her home. Despite being ridiculed for wearing make-up and doing women's work, her shop became increasingly popular and among those who came to buy her tofu there were men who dressed up like women. *Chị Thắng* told me that she learned from them that men like her often gathered at *Hoàn Kiếm* lake at night. The first night that she spent at *Hoàn Kiếm* lake changed her life completely, as she felt really positive about her own self and that she had found the type of life that she really belonged to. And there, for the first time other people called her *cô* (third pronoun for a young woman) rather than *anh* (third pronoun for an older man) *Thắng*. She also learned at the lake site about how to make money and at the same time get sexual experience with other men by dressing up as a woman and hanging out in areas where female sex workers were waiting for clients. She sold sex for the first time when she was 17 or 18 but she told me that she didn't

do it primarily for money, rather for the sex that she could get from other “real men” (defined as those who don’t like to sleep with men but are forced to do so for economic or survival reasons).

Ever since, going to the lake and hanging out for hours has become almost a daily routine for her. She said that she no longer needs to disguise herself as a woman to sell sex to “real” men, as she has shifted to buying sex from young men whom she meets at the lake, some of whom she then takes home to live with her as *người tình* (lover). Chị Thắng often used the word *mê* (being obsessed) rather than *yêu* (love) in referring to her relationships with such men. She was especially interested in getting young men to agree to live with her and she would take care of everything they needed, including their family needs. In return she wanted to keep the young man for herself and would get upset very easily if he had eyes for a girl or another *đồng cô*. However, it was not easy to find young men whom she could trust and could bring home comfortably. Stories of robbery and even homicide carried out by young men who needed money from *đồng cô* were not rare in Hanoi. She was torn between taking young men to live with her or buying quick sex from the market places if she wanted to. She, however, preferred to have a young man living in with her as such relationships made her feel like she “was in love and having a family.” Recently, she has spent time in other places such as dancing clubs where most customers are older women and dancers are younger men and in bus stations where she thinks she could find young men who would need her help.

The story of Chị Thắng represents experiences of many homosexually active men in their late forties who have lived through the changing landscape of sexual exchanges among men in Hanoi over the past few decades. The fact that Chị Thắng has moved from selling sex to buying sex,

that she has become a master of cruising spaces in Hanoi, and that she has more options when it comes to finding sexual partners are all important aspects of the changing landscape. One could be misled by the media reports to believe that the sex market for men is a new phenomenon in Hanoi and other major urban centers. However, this is not the case. Jacob Aronson noted in his chapter on public spaces of homosexually active men in Hanoi that colonial records and books showed that a sex market for men existed in early twentieth century, serving many French colonialist and Vietnamese urbanites in those days (Aronson 1999). At the same site that such scenes entered into colonial records in early 20th century, one could find in mid 1990s sexually charged encounters happening between Vietnamese men and foreign clients as vividly described below:

The *Tet* holidays in February 1996 coincide with the campaign by the Vietnamese forces of public order to increase enforcement of laws regulating “social evils” such as prostitution and gambling...At Hoan Kiem Lake, the shoeshine boys are more insistent than ever, even if their English vocabulary still goes hardly further than a few words. And maybe it is the cold weather that impels some young men to speak more directly than they would have in previous years: “Let me invite you to a very special bar I know about, where men go with women,” one tells me, “or men go with men.” Another man move in quick succession from asking the innocuous questions, “What is your name? Where do you come from?” to the straightforward, yet still exceedingly polite, “Pardon me, I am gay. Do you want to sleep with me?” Some, though, take on a hectoring tone: “I know what you want, you want a boy. Why are you talking to that one? Why don’t you take my friend here? What’s the matter, don’t you think he is handsome? I know a hotel you can go to.” [Aronson, 1999: 214]

Stories told by older *đồng cô* support the belief that the lake site has long been a cruising and meeting place for homosexually active men in the city. Chị Thắng, for example, had fond memories of the lake site during her youthful years. She recalled that she came to the lake to

meet other *đồng cô*, and the area around the “*nine-root*” tree and the old public toilet were where they often gathered. As the place became known to *người đồng tính* (men who love men), Chị Thắng and other *đồng cô* devised ways to identify men who came to the lake site looking for sexual partners.

Interviewer: Were you not afraid [of going there at night time]?

Thắng: There were several *chị em* [pronoun used to denote women] who come there very often and if we saw men whom we thought as part of our group we would invite them to join us. We often gathered by the entry of the public toilet and it was very easy to identify men who came there for some reasons [other than releasing a full bladder]. We followed men inside the toilet and took a peek at them when they undressed, and of course some of the men showed their interests in us. My group included anh Thành, anh Hiếu [other *đồng cô* who were familiar faces at the lake site], and some of them are in their fifties now and they came there long before I did. I came to the lake very often, at least five times a week. Sometimes I took the train; sometime I just rode my bicycle there....I went there just like others going to work, from the morning till lunch or even staying till late evening if there were things that I liked to do. Most often I went there in the afternoon and stayed till late night.

In this vivid description of Chị Thắng and other *đồng cô* as they ventured to seek out men at the lake, one could discern the sense of excitement of both exploring forbidden pleasures and especially of meeting other men who share the same desire. Although she didn't mention the act of men exchanging sex for money or other material benefits at the lake, one could see that sexual exchanges among men were very much part of the daily routines at the site. However, despite the existence of sexual transactions among men at those early years, it was clear from the description of Chị Thắng that it was difficult for homosexually active men to find sexual partners. Some *đồng cô*, as the story of Chị Thắng revealed, desired to dress up as women and hang around the lake and other places in Hanoi to get men who look for female sex workers. Some public

cruising sites for homosexually active men were also where female sex workers are active. *Đông cô* tried to trick men who were half-drunk and/or men who came to the area for the first time. Usually some *đông cô* would go together so they can protect each other in case the customer found out and got angry. These stories were quite common among older *đông cô* and they recounted with excitement such incidents of their first experiences with homosexual sex at a very young age.

In those days, however, not all men shared the experience that Chì Thăng described, and they had to find other ways to get sexual favors from other men. Sơn, another *đông cô* in his late forties that didn't dress up like a woman, recounted his experience of "buying sex" for the first time in 1979 as follows:

Interviewer: Can you tell me about the first time that you bought sex (*mua dâm*) from another man?

Sơn: Oh that was when I invited a friend to cinema and while watching the movie I caressed his back and inner side of his legs, and then after the cinema I invited him for an ice cream. Two days later, we met at my home and *trao đổi tình cảm* [exchanged our emotion and love]. So I thought that was the first time I bought sex since I spent money to buy tickets and ice cream to make my friend interested in me.

Interviewer: How about the first time that you actually bought sex with money?

Sơn: It was back in 1978 or 79 when we were fighting against the Chinese. I met a soldier at Hoan Kiem Lake, and he lost his way while traveling to Lang Son [border with China]. As we sat down at the lake to chat, I cuddled him and he didn't react. So I invited to my home to have dinner and stay overnight so that he didn't have to travel to Lang Son immediately that evening. When we slept [in the same bed], I kissed him and he didn't push me away so I told him that had he done this or that to me I would give him 20,000 VND [equivalent to about 3 USD back in 1979] so that he could have money to travel to Lang Son. He agreed and we had sex that night. That was, I guess, my first experience with buying sex.

It is notable in the story told by Son how homosexually active men offered material benefits, rather than cash, to get the attention and then consensual sex with men they were interested in. Even when Son offered money, it was not to pay for sex directly but rather as a way to help the other man who faced difficulty. The notion of “buying sex” is quite new for these men, as evidenced in the way that Son reluctantly interpreted his offering of a nice evening in the movie or money to support another man for his travel as *mua dâm* (or buying sex). Like other Asian cultures (Mann 2000), bonding and hence mutual support between men has always been part of Vietnamese culture of homosociality whereby it is culturally acceptable that a more resourceful man, usually older and in a powerful position, to provide material support or opportunities (including access to job and business favor) for less resourceful man in exchange for his commitment to return the favor usually in terms of labor or other services. As described in the previous section, many men who sell sex recalled their stories of initiation as situations in which a homosexually-identified men offered them a warm meal or a place to stay overnight while they were hanging around hungry and lonely in public spaces like the lake site. Young men who sell sex often described that they accepted these offers without much hesitation as they could not imagine that they would have to return sexual favor to the older men. It was too late for them to withdraw, they claimed, when they realized what the older men wanted and therefore had to give in to the men’s advances.

One particular instance taught me of the way in which older homosexually active men get sexual favors from young men. I had known Hải, a veteran man at the lake site and a peer educator for a HIV prevention project, for a while when we first met at a conference that I organized for CDC on HIV prevention among MSM back in 2005. He was slim and had an

unusual white complexion that turned out to be an asset as customers preferred that type of skin more than a darker one. He lived with a girlfriend who knew about his work. When we started the study, I asked him to be a key informant since his years of working as a male sex worker in Hanoi and other cities made him an ideal person to help us break new ground. One night, after strolling around the lake, we were on my motorbike travelling to a new cruising site that Hài told me about. I had told him that I knew the place since it was near my apartment. As we approached the site, Hài asked me about where my apartment was. As we passed by my apartment, I pointed out the location and told him that I looked forward to returning to it after a long day at work. Hài then asked me if my wife was living with me. Being unprepared for his next move, I told him that my wife was travelling for business. After visiting the new cruising site, I invited Hài for *phở* (noodle soup) as he told me that he had not had any food since the morning. In the middle of our conversation, Hài asked me again whether my wife was at home that night and he moved on to ask if I needed a massage to relieve my tiredness. He was looking into my eyes as if he was waiting for some signal of interest. I told him that it was not my intention and we would part ways as soon as we finished the dinner. Later I learned from doing interviews with male sex workers that inviting young men around the lake to dinner and/or offering them a sleeping place was a way for homosexually active men to get attention in order to make further sexual advances in the evening. Hài probably interpreted my various expressions, verbal and otherwise, in the same way as he experienced other customers. Unlike his previous experiences when his clients usually initiated sexual advances, this time he made the first move and this revealed how he perceived his role as well as my interests. We never spoke about that evening ever again during our next year or so of working collaboratively together on this study.

Many *đồng cô* spent ample amount of time at public spaces like the lake site to identify young men who were migrants and faced difficulties in finding a stable home or job in big city or who were homosexually active young men from Hanoi who ran away from home. Lake sites in Hanoi, and recently some trans-provinces bus stations, were places where these young men usually ended up because they could spend days at these places without being disturbed and because they could meet other young men who were in similar situations. One explanation for the preference of material-based transaction with young migrant and heterosexually-identified men was that *đồng cô* preferred to own men who they considered as “real man” (defined as those who don’t like to sleep with men but are forced to do so for economic or survival reasons). They also explained the transaction as a way for *đồng cô* to compensate their partners who had to spend their bodily resources to do things that they would not otherwise have done. Below is what Sơn explains as the difference between men who received money versus men who received material compensation for having sex with him:

Interviewer: What did those whom you bought sex with cash think of you?

Sơn: How do I know! These guys just completed their job, took the money and left. They were different from those who didn’t ask for money upfront. These lovers (*người tình*) actually spent time with me, over several months or even a year. They were not stupid to ask for money directly and they often left it up to me to decide what to give them. So I had to consider that they actually spent time and efforts on and with me. I did not think of myself as someone that they would otherwise have had [sexual] desire for. But they did have sex with me because, quite frankly, they needed my help and they needed my money.

Interviewer: How did you pay them without giving them cash?

Sơn: I offered them nice clothes, or offered them money to help their families back in rural villages, or to buy them some other expensive possessions such as gold rings or other stuff.

It is interesting to note how Son referred to men who stayed with him for material benefits and sometimes money as *người tình* (lover). Most homosexually-identified men have stories of working very hard to establish and maintain relationships with young “real” men whom they brought home for extended period of time. And yet such relationships often ended up in frustration and heart-break as these young men usually had other plans and opportunities, including getting married, as well as getting tired of being tied to relationships that are unacknowledged. Recently, although many *đồng cô* have increasingly shifted to paying for sex with money (see more below), some still preferred this form of long-term material-based transaction. This is because, as Chị Thắng explained, they could find a sense of “being in love and having a family” in such relationships as compared to buying quick sex.

Homosexually Active Men and The Making of Sexual Marketplaces

Interviewer: How do you compare the sex market then and now?

Son: It was difficult to find guys who one could buy sex from then. Now, they are all over places, just coming onto you in the street to get your attention by saying things like “do you want to go with me?”

Interviewer: So why was it difficult to find to a man who would sell sex then?

Son: There was nothing like a trend for men who have gone out to sell sex like it is today. Now you have young students who were waiting for money from home; you have young men coming from rural villages to find jobs in Hanoi because their work at home was too hard for them; and then some young *đồng cô* who want to make money easily. It was also difficult to find place to have sex then and the bushes in a park, public toilets, or even dark corners around the lake were where we had quick sex. Now cheap hotels are everywhere and it’s a lot better to have sex in a hotel room since you can take the clothes off. It’s also easier to pay for sex now. I can just ask a guy how much he wanted, and if what he asked for suited me then I would go with him. They all have some fixed price, for example

100,000 or 150,000 or 200,000 *dong* depending on what you want to get from those guys. Sometimes I even gave him more than what he asked for if I felt really satisfied with what he did [sexually].

Stories of Chì Thắng and Sơn discussed above are stories of how sexual transactions among men in public spaces, involving money and other material benefits, were taking place long before the notion of a *chợ tình cho gay* (love market for gay men) was popularized in the media. Prior to the burst of economic growth that has taken place in recent decades, the sex market in public spaces was far less developed, and often times the forms of exchanges involved such things as an overnight stay in a comfortable home and a warm meal. Because of heavy stigma against men who behave like women, either through their mannerisms (effeminate behaviors) or through their appearance (clothing, make-up), *đồng cô* and *bóng lộ* like Chì Thắng often hang out in certain public spaces such as lakes, and parks where people of lower socio-economic status (such as migrants, homeless people, and people who are involved in the informal economy) are concentrated. In these settings, *bóng lộ* feel comfortable to communicate with people who are of similar social and economic background and to share sexual feelings without feeling stigmatized.

And yet, as the interview with Sơn revealed, it has never been easier to buy sex as there have been more formal or explicit sexual marketplaces developing extensively over the past ten years or so. Besides public venues, there have been a growing number of semi-public venues such as *tắm quất* (traditional massage shops) and, even saunas and spas exclusively for middle and upper-class men. Some other remarkable changes are the unrestrained approaches of potential customers by men who sell sex, even during day light, the availability of facilities such as hotels and motels where sex workers and their customers can easily rent by the hour, the routinization and monetization of sexual transactions so that everyone involved knows what they

will get in terms of sexual acts for a certain amount of money, and a growing number of men working as pimps who used to be sex workers themselves. Both men who sell sex and their clients are more prevalent and recognizable to trained eyes at various sites around Hanoi, even during daytime. Sexual transactions between men have increasingly involved monetary exchanges. Pimps and referrals have started to appear more frequently, and they could be tea shoppers, motorbike drivers, men who sell sex, or even clients of men who sell sex. Through their reference to clients, pimps and referrals help men who sell sex to reduce the burden of their hustling, and this is especially important for men who just initiate their sex work or who are new to the area. Clients have also started using intermediaries and referrals to look for men who sell sex, and as such they can get a guarantee that the sex workers would not trick or rob them. Furthermore, sexual spaces where men could buy sex have become known more widely due to the media that tend to capture salacious details of a new phenomenon.

The development of public sexual spaces for and by homosexually active men, especially those who are willing to come out and to occupy such spaces, is a major factor that shape sexual marketplaces for same-sex exchanges in Hanoi. Evidence of the growing visibility of homosexually active men in public spaces is seen in the growing list of local terms for homosexual identities that have been collected over the past decade. While a study in early 2000 (Blanc 2004) revealed a few terms such as *đồng cô*, *bóng*, and *pê đê* that were used to describe homosexually-active men, another study published a few years later (Ngo Duc Anh et al. 2009) showed more than 20 local terms. Some terms discussed in the later publication were quite new, including *gay* and *supersim* (a sim card that can be used in two networks, which is used to denote behaviorally-bisexual men), which only emerged with the integration of Vietnam into the global

world. If a few years ago, homosexually active men like *Thắng* and *Son* had been hesitant to come out and claimed spaces like the lake site during daytime, they certainly don't feel that way nowadays. The lake site and other public spaces have witnessed an increasing number of *đồng cô* and *bóng lộ* who are willing to make sure that certain corners of these spaces are of their own. They come to meet their friends, to meet with acquaintances, to boast about their success and to bemoan their losses in business as well as in love affairs, and to find sexual partners, especially young men who need their help, or to just spend some time in spaces where they don't have to hide their identity and preferences. Another major factor that draws many homosexually-active men to these spaces are the availability of many young men who would be willing to sell sex for survival and/or for sexual pleasure. Some interviewed *đồng cô* and *bóng lộ* mentioned that they had changed the way they sought for sexual partners because it has never been easier to buy sex and it is actually cheaper and certainly less time consuming to buy sex than to establish relationships with younger man whom they consider as *người tình* (a lover).

One of the factors that I would argue has played an important role in opening up spaces for male commercial sex activities in Hanoi and other urban centers of Vietnam is the increased attention to "MSM" (men who have sex with men) and their HIV risks. As explained in previous sections, Vietnam's early response to HIV was to demonize injection drug users and female sex works as socially and morally evil. In recent years, prevention activities targeted to MSM have significantly increased, largely due to PEPFAR funding which since 2005 has prioritized the development of MSM prevention programming. Modeled on earlier activities targeted to IDUs, and often using a self-help "club" metaphor, peer educator programs have been established in major cities (including the *Niem Tin Xanh Club* in Hanoi and the *Blue Sky Club* in HCMC).

MSM peer educators generally span a wide age range (20 - 60), have limited formal education (less than high school), are primarily gay or transgender-identified (*bóng lộ* and *bóng kín*), and have included both HIV-positive and HIV-negative individuals. Service activities are primarily venue-based (e.g., public parks, saunas, massage parlors, night clubs, public sex environments, internet chat rooms, etc.) and include provision of safe sex information and HIV awareness, distribution of condoms and lubricants, and referrals for STI screening and treatment. Peer educators are recruited from those who openly come out to the community and society and those who frequent public sites. Many of the homosexually-identified men such as Chì Thắng, Sơn, and veteran men who sell sex like Hải, were recruited as peer educators for various MSM clubs in Hanoi. Sometimes they presented themselves at the lake site and other public venues as peer educators; sometimes they presented themselves at these places as who they were. These mixed identities seemed to give them more freedom as well as confidence to travel to various sites where same-sex sexual exchanges between men are taking place. They also travelled for exchanges visits with peer networks in other cities. The activities of peer educators, focusing on disseminating HIV prevention message and tools, have helped to open up flows of talk, people and other materials that signify the existence of same-sex activities in these spaces. This in turn has created spaces where more homosexually active individuals could come and feel comfortable about themselves and their identities, and for at least some of these men the category of “MSM” that has been created through HIV prevention activities has even begun to become a form of self-identification.

Another important aspect of the changing urban landscape of Hanoi is the commercialization of sex and sexuality in general (Phinney 2009). For example, Valentine’s

Day has become a fashion for young people in urban centers where money is made by selling love gifts and flowers. The number of motels where couples can spend as short a time as one hour together has increased exponentially, opening up spaces for extra-marital sex, including homosexual sex. Ten years ago, only one street was known for having such rent-by-the-hour motels, but many streets and neighborhoods are now known for having such services. It is reported in the media that during events such as New Year, Valentine's Day, and other holidays these hotels often do not have enough rooms to meet the demand. Just like most Vietnamese who during the years before Doi Moi had a lot of difficulties in finding private spaces to have sex, most homosexually active men relied on spaces such as public toilets, parks, pathways under bridges, and mostly for quick sex. This was also another reason that *đồng cô* prefer to take on young men who accept to live with them and they could disguise such relationships as brotherly relationships between men. In recent years, as the number of rent-by-the-hour motels increased rapidly, homosexually active men prefer to take their sexual partners as well as sex workers to these places without fear of being ridiculed since it is more socially acceptable for two people of the same gender to rent hotel room than for two people of different gender. There are also a number of hotels that are known to both sex workers and clients to be friendly to gay sex, especially where they don't need to show any types of identification cards. Together with people like pimps and referrals, various spaces at and around the lake such as tea stalls, rent-by-the-hour motels, and cyber rooms increasingly make up the "pleasure industry" (Padilla 2007) in the context of Hanoi.

Growing Commodification of Male Bodies

Toàn, A Migrant

Toàn was about twenty-three years old, and yet the many years of making a living on the streets of Hanoi have given him a street-wise appearance. He had a hair-do that was popular among young men in Hanoi and an earring on one side. After finishing high school, Toàn served in the army for two years. After the service, his family tried to *chạy* (a colloquial term for bribing someone in position to make decision) so that his application for international labor export got accepted and that Toàn had a chance to earn money in another country as a manual laborer.

After that failed attempt Toàn decided to try his luck in Hanoi. He travelled to the city and stayed with his friends who introduced him to a company that recruited salesmen for cosmetic products for men. He also enrolled in a vocational school in Hanoi where he studied computer-based designing. In the middle of the first year, Toàn started to spend more time and money with his friends on leisure activities such as billiard games, karaoke, and other activities that were very attractive for him. “It started one day when I went to Thuyền Quang lake [another lake in Hanoi where men who sell sex often gather],” Toàn told me about how he got into the commercial sex,

I had been there before with my friends so I knew how to get there by bus. I sat down at a tea stall near the bus station and a few men were there before I arrived. I found the way they talked to each other very strange because they used a lot of profanity. The tea stall owner, whom I later knew as Cô Mây, asked me what I did at the lake and whether I wanted her to introduce *khách* (clients). When I asked what she meant, she explained that clients were *đồng cô*, gay and other

homosexually active men who would take me to dinner and other entertainment places, and if I spent the night with them, they would give me money the next morning.

One major factor shaping the emergence of sexual marketplaces in Hanoi, as Son pointed out, is the fact that there have never been more men who were out in the public venues with the purpose of selling sex like nowadays. There are many groups of men who sell sex in urban setting like Hanoi, and some classifications involve lower class (*bình dân*), higher class, and early career (*bóng non*) sex workers. Students who sell sex were considered as high class; migrants from rural areas and urban poor men belonged to the lower class sex workers. The former usually dressed up more than the later and were believed to attract more clients. The majority of men who sell sex at the lake, however, were lower class sex workers and it was rare to meet high-class sex workers at the lake, who were rumored to go with clients who preferred to meet them in private places and arranged meeting by phone. As such, the “commodification of the body” (Sharp 2000) of men who sell sex has intensified over the past couple of decades.

Ever since Doi Moi, Hanoi’s frenzied urbanization has transformed it from a quiet city with little commerce to a city with lively exchanges both on the streets and in the offices. For example, industrial production in the city has quickly grown up since the 1990s, with an average annual growth of 19.1 percent during the period of 1991–1995, 15.9 percent during 1996–2000, and 20.9 percent during 2001–2003. Industrial parks have fast sprung up in the city. In addition to eight existing industrial parks, Hanoi is building five new large-scale industrial parks and 16 small- and medium-sized industrial clusters. This significant shift, therefore, has opened numerous employment opportunities in both formal and informal sectors, resulting in the increasing influx of migrants from rural areas and other provinces. The 2004 Vietnam Migration

Survey reported that the proportion of migrants without household registration in Hanoi was almost three times higher than in Ho Chi Minh City (4.5 vs. 1.4), reflecting both high volume as well as high turnover rate of temporary laborers in Hanoi (Vietnam General Statistical Office and UNFPA 2005). Nevertheless, without necessary skills and education, many migrants can hardly find decent job opportunities in Hanoi. The story of Toàn exemplifies the experiences of many men who sell sex in this study. Before engaging in sex work and even while engaging in sex work, most men had already tried other jobs in the city. Time and again, many factors in the labor market have operated against their willingness or ability to engage with formal economy and/or to stay away from sex work. These factors include the requirement of certain educational levels, the requirement for certain skills and/or lifestyles that are often lacking in the lives of these young men, limited types of jobs for which they are eligible, and the fact that those jobs that are available often pay less than what they could make in the sex market. The constant flow of male migrants going to Hanoi searching for jobs has become an incessant source of supply of young men for the sex market.

Economic factors appear to push men in this study to join the sex worker labor force in the streets. Most of these sex workers were born into poor families and some had to support themselves since childhood. Once they dropped out of school, they had to work harder to support themselves as well as their families economically. This pressure was particularly intense for older siblings, who were expected to not only be independent economically but also take care of their younger siblings. Most young men interviewed experienced other types of jobs before engaging in sex work. They often started with informal jobs when they moved to the city; some were in school or university and few were working in formal sector. Some came to Hanoi to

work as masseurs in the *tảm quất* street but they did not know about male sex work until they worked there for a few days. Most compared sex work favorably to other kinds of work that they had done in terms of ability to earn money under relatively easy working circumstances. They especially valued the opportunities that sex work brought by connecting them with customers who could help them with future opportunities in addition to material benefits.

One important characteristic of the pathways to sex work for men in this study were family troubles. A majority of sex workers in the study came from provinces outside of Hanoi and had left their families. Some felt that nobody in their family cared about them, as in the case of twenty-five year-old Huấn who dropped out of school at 6th grade and left home for Hanoi when he was a teenager. His mother passed away when he was four-years old and his step-mother didn't take good care of him while his father was busy working away from home. Huấn had worked for more than six years selling sex. Along the way he got involved in drug use and was using drugs heavily at the time of the study. He constantly complained of sadness and loss during the interviews, saying he had nobody to lean on in life when he needed it the most. Similarly, Kiên wanted to leave his home when his father divorced his mother (who committed suicide a few months later) and his father sent him to live with his aunt in Hanoi because his step-mother refused to take care of him. Others may not have as a dramatic background as Huấn and Kiên, but they also experienced their childhood with the physical absence of either one or both parents, or lack of attention from parents who were busy making ends meet. Some left school early in order to support their parents and younger siblings, as in the case of thirty-six year-old Ngọc who had engaged in many types of migrant work to support his family since leaving school.

Some came to Hanoi after they engaged in activities that severely damaged the relationship with their families such as losing family money on gambling or putting their family possessions in pawn shops, which made it impossible for them to face their parents and other family members. This was the case with Đứ́c, an 18-year-old young man from a fairly wealthy background. His father, who owned a construction company, often resorted to beating and slapping to teach Đứ́c and his siblings. Đứ́c came to Hanoi after a series of incidents made it impossible for him to remain home:

Interviewer: What made you decide to come to Hanoi?

Đứ́c: Things started about a year ago, I stole about 90 million dongs [equivalent to about 6 thousand dollars] from my family to gamble. My family didn't find out until a month later, and I was very scared of my dad so I had to hide myself at my friend's home in the adjacent village. They [his family] eventually got me and they told me that I had stolen that much money. When I took it I didn't know how much money was in the package and I went straight to the gambling place [and lost it all]. When I was gambling, I lost count of how much I actually lost.

Interviewer: How come you stole the money from your family?

Đứ́c: I was gambling at my friend's place and I lost a few hundred thousand dongs. My friends kicked me out because I didn't have money at hand so I was very upset and embarrassed at the same time. I went home and decided to steal money from my family just to show them that I had more than enough money to gamble. Then I spend almost a month at their place to gamble all day. I didn't go to school and only went home in the evenings to sleep. It lasted for about a month until I lost everything, and I didn't know how much I lost really.

Interviewer: What happened after you returned home?

Đứ́c: My grandparents and my uncles had to intervene to prevent my father from beating me to death, and they told me that if I did it again they would just send me to a rehabilitation center for unruly youth. So I promised to them that I would never do it again. But I think there was something in my blood that made me really addicted to gambling. After two months of returning to school regularly, my parents bought me a nice bicycle since the old one was broken. I brought the

bicycle to a festival in a village nearby and I used my bicycle to get some cash from a pawn-shop in that village. I told my parents afterwards that I lent it to one of my friends. Luckily, I later won some money from the lottery and was able to take the bicycle back. My gambling addiction was even worse during the summer. One day, I stole my parent's motorbike for some money, and after winning some more money I went to Vũng Tàu [a province in the southern part of the country] with my friends for a few days. When I returned home, everybody in the village told me that I would be beaten to death. So I fled to Hanoi after stealing another million dongs from my family.

Đức's case was not unique. The fear of family reaction, especially from fathers, drove many young men away from their families after they had committed activities that were considered bad for themselves and their families. As in the case of Tuấn who was attending college at the time he started sex work, and a few others who had pushed hard for their higher education, their common story was that they spent the money given to them by their parents in order to pay for tuition and living expenses on activities that they were not supposed to. Since college education was the hope that many parents pushed hard for their sons to accomplish as a dream ticket for them to get out of poverty and to secure a job in the city, failing their parents by spending money for college on unruly activities was understandably a shame for the young men like Tuấn. Although Tuấn was able to maintain his college education, earning money through *tắm quất* and sex work was a way for him to keep his and his family's hope, some others abandoned that dream altogether. The case of Phuong, a thirty year-old man, was slightly different. He abandoned his pursuit of college because his brother, one of the main providers in the family and the one who provided him with support for college education, became paralyzed after an accident. Not only did he not have support to continue his education, he also felt the need to engage in economic activities in order to replace his brother as an economic provider in

the family. He then engaged in many types of work, including both work at and away from home, before doing sex work.

One important aspect of their memories was their relationships with fathers. All acknowledged the importance of a father figure during childhood as well as adulthood. As part of being *trụ cột gia đình*, a father not only played an important role in providing for the family economically, a father also provided advice, guidance and other kinds of support when they needed. Ngọc, a father himself, referred to his father as “always being there as a source of mental support for me” (*chỗ dựa tinh thần*) although his father was in his old age. Some only realized the kind of support that a father provided when they got into troubles and when they missed their family. Hạnh, who dropped out of vocational training and stayed in Hanoi because he feared that his father would beat him as he always did when Hạnh did something wrong, explained how he learned about his father’s love for him:

My father actually loved his wife and children a lot. He also had a good heart for others so he was cheated by his friends who robbed him after they all lost in a big gamble. Let me tell you that even now I feel very disappointed with myself that I fought against him and said things that I should not have said. I am thinking that although I am a man but I have made so many mistakes that are bad for my family. I wished I could have done differently and have opportunities to correct those mistakes. Now I am starting to earn money with this kind of work, and I realize how much love my father has given me. Although I was the only son in the family, my father never expressed his warmth or love for me publicly. My mother, however, told me that he cared about me a lot when I am out of the family like this, and he often had a dream of me returning home.

As the old saying in Vietnam goes, “*yêu cho roi cho vọt, ghét cho ngọt cho bùi*” (when you love someone you give that person harsh words and even sticks, when you hate someone you give

that person sweet words), it was perceived by many that scolding and beating is a way for a man to express his affection and concern for his children. Ngọc, a father himself, believed that it was the role of the father to teach their sons and that beating was necessary when other means were ineffective. However, not all young sex workers shared the feelings of Hạnh and Ngọc. This was the case for Huấn and Kiên mentioned earlier, as they perceived that their fathers were the cause of breakdown of their families and therefore what subsequently happened to them.

The relationships between homosexually-identified men and their families were somewhat more complicated. Only two out of six male sex workers who identified themselves as homosexual remembered what their father did that made them unhappy during their childhood. That was the case of Thuận, a twenty-five year-old who identified himself as *gay* and whose father was absent for most of the time during his childhood, and the case of Khiêm, a twenty-two year-old who identified himself as *hifi* and who decided to leave home because his father squandered the family fortune on drug use. In the other four cases, the men complained that their families didn't want to acknowledge their self-identification as female when they were young. They often received ridicule from their parents and siblings as well as neighbors and classmates for their behaviors and preferences such as wearing women clothes, using lipstick, playing with girl's toys and games, as well as showing feminine gestures. Chị Thắng, who identified herself as *đồng cô* recalled stories that her father had beaten and cut her women's clothes and thrown away lipstick in order to force her get rid of "strange" behaviors that had become a shameful topic for ridicule by neighbors and others who knew the family. Dương, who identified himself as *bóng kín*, recalled stories of being isolated and stoned by his classmates because he played girl games and once wore girl clothes to school. Meanwhile, his

parents and siblings also made fun of him and demanded him to change his behaviors, although they didn't resort to violence. He identified these violent behaviors as the cause for his dropping-out of school at 6th grade. While Chi Thăng continued to push on and her family gradually made peace with the way she wanted to behave and with who she was, Dưong decided to keep his identity to himself and at the time of the study he thought that nobody in his family knew the fact that he loved men and therefore they continued to put pressure on him to get married.

Negotiating Stigma and Masculinity: The Role of Family Ties and Responsibilities

In *Caribbean Pleasure Industry*, Mark Padilla argues that one specific outcome of the “political economy of sexuality” is an ‘international economy of stigma’ where, on the one hand, Western gay men enjoy the status of being preferred customers, and on the other hand most men who sell sex struggle against the stigma of homoeroticism (Padilla 2007; Padilla et al. 2008). One of the “stigma management techniques” (Goffman 1963) is that the men and their family members engaged in extensive “system of sexual silence” (Padilla 2007: 130-132, see also Carrillo 2002 for extensive discussion of homosexuality and sexual silence in the context of Mexico) where their taboo sexual activities were not talked about at the discretion of all parties involved. Other techniques involve elaborate stories and “little lies” to keep their activities hidden from their wives, girlfriends and other people in the neighborhoods. Padilla argues that engaging in such evasion and covering in and of themselves are not necessarily problematic as seen by both the men and their family members, but are expressions of the masculine qualities associated with the culturally imbued identity of *tigueraje*. This is “a specific Dominican expression of masculinity

that valorizes (and sometimes disparages) ambiguity, trickery, and opportunism among men” (2007: 132). As such, Padilla further argues, “*tigueraje* is the great Dominican complement to sexual silence..., allowing men to maintain a degree of masculine esteem through their opportunistic behaviors, while contributing to the gender inequalities and communicative breakdowns that characterize their spousal relationships” (2007: 132). Therefore, both the *buggaron* (a long established ideal type of men who engage in insertive sex with men and yet maintain their appearance as a normal man) and the *sanky panky* (young men who hustle both men and women along the beach) are positioned within hierarchies of gender, sexuality, and power where men become both reproducers of patriarchy as well as equally disadvantaged by their gendered and racialized position in the developing economies. While men who sell sex are disadvantaged in the international economy of stigma, they also participate in the maintenance of the patriarchal gender dynamics that systematically subordinate their female partners.

In the context of China, Travis Kong shows that homosexually-identified sex workers in urban China face three major forms of discrimination, which are embedded in their three identities, that threaten their dreams of being fully incorporated into the cosmopolitan development of the country during the past few decades (Kong 2009, 2011, 2012). “The interlocking effects of three identities – those of rural-to-urban migrant, sex worker, and a man who has sex with other men,” Kong argues, “produced the complicated ‘bare life’ of the money boy....[who] struggle for an identity in the hierarchy of urban citizenship along the lines of class, gender, sexuality, work and migrancy” (2011: 193). As they struggle to overcome marginal status that are produced by these hierarchies, homosexually-identified money boys in China devise various ways to counter various stigma and discrimination. In relation to stigma against

migrant, many money boys while talking at length about qualities of rural people that are superior to urban ones, they actively attempt to adopt urban identity, mostly through consumption of stylish dresses and other consumer goods. In relation to sex worker identity, money boys engage in various strategies of hiding their work from family members, friends and colleagues. Some of them deploy strategies to disassociate themselves from the work by telling stories of being cheated or seduced by homosexually active men and pimps or by making sure others understand that sex work is only a temporary stage in their life. Others, however, insist on other values of the work such as financial rewards, sexual pleasure, freedom, and flexibility. They claim that they have chosen the work and project themselves as autonomous and rational sex workers who are proud of their ability to provide quality service and their ability to insist on condom use with their clients. By doing so, Kong argues, money boys both distance themselves from the stigmatizing values of sex work and “re-claimed their masculinity as respectable and responsible men, despite their inferior class and social positions” (2009: 738). Consuming expensive clothes, hairstyles and accessories that are associated with “proper” gay identity in urban settings is again the strategy that money boys use to negotiate stigma associated with the identity of “money boys” which are often disparaged by gay men in urban China (see also Rofel 2010). Homosexually-identified money boys also separate between “sex for work,” which is regarded as meaningless and money-driven, and “sex for love,” which is regarded as passionate and intimate and is exclusively for gay men that they are in love with. This boundary, however, is easy to breakdown as money boys get affectionate easily with clients who they consider as “regular” after a few visits and with whom they want to build long-term relationships.

It is particularly notable that despite different cultural settings, the Dominican Republic and China, and different sexual orientation of men who sell sex, heterosexual and homosexual, respectively, the men in both studies negotiate and counter stigma associated with a feminine job through deploying some of the culturally acceptable qualities of masculinity. As Travis Kong points out, “male sex work is both a stigmatized occupation *and* a form of ‘deviant’ or ‘subordinate’ masculinity, and the stigma management techniques a male sex worker employ is simultaneously as gender strategies he uses to accomplish masculinity” (2009: 722). In both studies, however, the practice of maintaining relationships with families and fulfilling their roles as sons and husbands, are not discussed as a strategy to both negotiate stigma and achieve masculinity. If such practice is discussed, as in the case of Padilla’s study, it is often used by *buggaron* and *sanky panky* as a bargaining tool to keep family silence, especially in the context where sex work is a viable strategy to overcome economic hardship. In this section, I will argue that maintaining relationships with families and fulfilling certain responsibilities, or at least the desire to do so, is a way for men who sell sex to men in Hanoi to negotiate the pressure of stigma and to achieve their expected masculinity.

Perceived Stigma Of Sex Work

Toàn, the migrant whose story was discussed in the previous section believed that selling sex to other men is morally problematic.

Toàn: It was of course morally wrong as they often say about *phò* (female sex workers). Of course the current law doesn’t prohibit it, but it is equally wrong as

for women selling sex to men. When it [the phenomenon of men selling sex to men] spreads out then the law will intervene and prohibit it. On moral terms, people of the older generation (*ông cha*) often said that selling sex is morally wrong. It is a common opinion in my village when they think of someone who goes out to the city and sells sex. Not only people in the village but also other people in the family would look at that person with different perspectives and would wonder how come such people could do such a morally low thing? They would wonder that there were many other morally proper (*chân chính*) jobs and why on earth those people don't get involved in those jobs. So I often felt very ashamed of myself.

Interviewer: Who are you feeling ashamed with?

Toàn: With many people, first of all to myself and then to other people such as my friends, my family. That's why I have to hide what I do here from these people. Although they don't know yet, I have always felt something wrong inside me and I have felt guilty all the time.

Despite an increased level of comfort, Toàn emphasized the fact that he didn't plan to continue selling sex for a long time. Deliberately, he dissociated himself from sex work by not making friends with other men at the lake and by not coming to the lake regularly. He believed that the less people at the lake site knew about him, the better for his future. Although he knew that if he agreed to live with a *đồng cô* he could make a lot more money, Toàn was concerned that such an arrangement would make his identity even more known among people at the lake site since *đồng cô* loved to boast about young men and their ability to live with them as their "lover." Toàn explained to me his plan to give up selling sex: "I always thought to myself that I would just spend a couple of years doing this and once my job provided me with more income I would stop." He further explained his plan for the future when he could stop selling sex: "...I would never go back to the lake. I will bury all the bad memories associated with this work and will try to return to a normal life, and to be myself. I would not have to worry about lying to many

people as I am doing now, and would never worry about having someone finding out what I am doing.”

As the case of Toàn shows, self-stigma was common among men who sell sex in this study and they have deployed various strategies to reduce the effects of stigma. Some men emphasized that they had no other choice but to engage in this kind of “shameful” work. Many men equated what they did with work done by female sex workers, and therefore they described themselves with words used to describe female sex workers (such as *phò*, *cave*). Some, such as Hạnh, a 23-year old who had sold sex for two years, always thought that those who were selling sex was very much like “*thú vui chơi*” (entertainment stuff) for homosexually-identified men and that most of these men would look down upon them. He therefore believed that is the main reason why homosexually-identified men would want to constantly look for new young men. In their relationship with customers, men who sell sex expressed their concerns and dislike for the fact that some clients showed their contempt and conducted sexual acts that made them feel low. They especially hated customers who used cursing language and/or forced unwanted sexual practices because they believed that their behavior was justified by the amounts of paid they had paid.

In interviews with homosexually active men who had become customers of younger male sex workers, some expressed their suspicion of the men they bought sex from since stories of robbery and other violent behaviors incurred by male sex workers were well known at the lake. In the case of Sơn, a *đồng cô* in his forties who was described earlier, he just wanted to “finished it [sex] quickly and each person parted his own way” and he rarely brought any men whom he bought sex from to his home because of concern about safety. While most *đồng cô* always

wanted to have a young man living with them so that they could feel warm love by a “real” man, most *đồng cô* and *bóng lộ* in the sample believed that they couldn’t trust those men since those men would never be able to keep their fidelity. Sơn, again, explained that, “they are men so they would never be faithful. Furthermore, they really belong to their ‘real’ women rather than those who are “not real” women like me. They come to *đồng cô* mostly because they need money so we have to be careful.” Those male sex workers who were rumored to use drugs and/or to gamble were even further stigmatized against.

Some men told stories of advising other young men who wanted to make money by selling their bodies about the “shameful” nature of the work. Đức, an eighteen year-old who had more than a year working in sex work, once told a young man he met at *Hoàn Kiếm* lake who just left home that he would give money to him so that he could return to his family. When the young man refused to return home and expressed his willingness to sell sex to *đồng cô*, Đức told him that “It’s really up to you since I can’t do more to help. If you decide to stay here in Hanoi and at this lake, then you would have to do this [selling sex]. But it’s very shameful kind of thing to do.”

Some men who sell sex showed self-stigma through their relationship with the money they earned through sex work. They described the money as “easily earned but also easily spent,” and explained that they don’t feel comfortable or joyful when receiving the money from their customers as the money was not earned through hard and honest work or the work in the profession for which they had studied. Tuấn, the young college student who earned his money from selling sex to customers of a *tẩm quất* shop described his feelings when receiving money as follows: “Although I enjoyed the fact that it was the first time I was able to earn some money

myself, I also felt ashamed. It was not money from the work that I learned to do at school. So when I my hand touched the money, I was not really happy. But that was a lot of money and everybody likes to have lots of money, so I accepted it and have continued to do the work (*tiếp tục làm công việc ấy*).

Most men kept their work secret from their friends and families since they believed that should their friends and their families know they would be considered as people who are “morally low” and “lack of ability to think straight.” They often told their families lies about how they were making money in Hanoi. Those who had been spotted by friends and/or family members while hanging around in cruising areas of men who have sex with men told their families and friends that they were working for a large project to prevent HIV among those men. That’s what Phiên, a twenty-two years old male sex worker who identified himself as *hifi* (bisexual), did when his parents once spotted him carrying male-to-male safe-sex pamphlet and lubricant in his pocket. As he stayed with his parents in Hanoi, he told them that he was working for a project at Hanoi Medical University. He went further by saying bad things about homosexual people when and if such a topic was brought up in their family conversation. He explained: “When I come home I have to act like a real man, 100 percent a real man. I would not mention about it [homosexuality] first, and if it was brought up by my family in conversation I would say that was a terrible thing. I would tell my parents and my sister that I don’t know anything about it and ask them if they know.”

As was the case of Toàn, plans to leave sex work were constantly on the minds of men in this study. They thought of sex work as an unstable job and, moreover, as “unruly activities” (*chơi bời*) that young men could engage in when they are still immature. As the young men spent

more time in the market, they often planned for an exit: they thought of getting married, and of getting a more stable job. Toàn explained that what he had been doing would stop when he got married and when “I would have more responsibilities on my shoulder.” He continued to elaborate “then I would need to find a stable and decent job (*công việc đàng hoàng và ổn định*), and all of the *chơi bời* (unruly activities) would need to stop. Of course I would want a good and stable income so that I can pay for expenses [of my family] but that’s just my hope.” Other reasons for planning to quit were related to their concerns about diseases such as HIV/AIDS, sexual violence as well as the greater risks of getting involved in alcohol, drugs and criminal activities. These activities were very common in the sex market, especially at the lake sites. As in the story of Toàn described earlier, he tried to keep a distance from the lake because he didn’t want to get involved too deeply in such activities at *Thuyền Quang* lake. In the case of Đức, who fled home after stealing money from his parents, he believed that he must make sure that he didn’t get involved in any illegal activities such as robberies or using drugs so that his family’s reputation would not be tarnished further. Another factor forcing them to plan for such exit was that their status as a hot property in the market faded as they got older and as the number of potential clients reduced. This diminishing value of a male sex worker after a couple of years was explained by the common saying in the market that “*đồng cô thích trai trẻ*” (homosexually active men prefer new and young guys). In fact, the turn over among men who sell sex in Hanoi was high and there were young men who could stay in the market for more than two years. More than 50 percent of male sex workers in the survey sample of this study had less than a year of working in the market, and the number of men who engaged in sex work in between two to three

years were few. Those who decided to stay on often turned themselves into pimps, combining both selling sex and getting new young men involved in sex work.

Some sex workers were able to quit, and their stories encouraged the young men to plan their own exit strategies. Among the men, however, only Quyét were able to do so within the time frame of this study. And this was because his family had a strong economic foundation that could offer him a job where he worked for his brother. Other men often mentioned that they were planning some savings in order to get another job. While most men hoped to make some saving from sex work, it was not easy to do so. Young men spent a lot of money on activities that could actually cost them more money than they made, such as gambling, drinking and types of clothes that made them more attractive to their clients. Once they had more money, they also wanted to buy motorbikes, cell phones and other more expensive items that were considered as necessary for life in the city. Some of them also got into drug use, either heroin or club drugs, which made their hard-earned money disappear very quickly. The more they spend their money, however, the more they became dependent on sex work in order to make up the difference. Some became dependent on long-term relationships with one or two regular clients with the hope that such clients would bring them more stability and material support.

Negotiating Family Responsibilities

Despite conflicts with their families, most men in this study thought of their families with fondness, especially in the context of the city where they don't have many people who they felt could offer them the love and the support they needed. This was often the case in the hours of

lonely nights when they couldn't find a place to sleep, at times they felt hungry and had no money, and at moments when people around them get back to their families for festivities like *Tết* (Lunar New Year). They complained that city life was often full of people who scrambled for opportunities to move themselves ahead of others (*bon chen*), of people who cheated and took advantage of each other, and of people who lacked real love for each other. Life in the city, according to many of the men, required that one always be on guard, even with those whom they considered as friends. Stories of "friends" cheating on each other, ranging from taking tips from clients they introduced to stealing other's valuable possessions to pawn shops, were quite common. Although they knew that any of their so-called "friends" could cheat on them at any time, they still needed to depend on these people to fight against hardship of daily life in the city.

Perhaps because of this bonding with families and perhaps because of conflicts in relationships with the family, most men felt that they had not fulfilled their responsibilities towards their families. This was especially the case for those who were the only son or the elder brother in the family. *Hạnh*, who had a younger sister and who realized the love of his father only when he was out making money himself, explained the connection that he had with his family:

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your home visits? How often do you do that?

Hạnh: In the past I only visited home when there were some big events that required me to do that. For example, the year before last my family built a house and since I was the only son, so I had to return. I didn't have much money but I helped my parents with the construction work. I often return home for *Tết* and it is always a must for me. I always make sure that I am home on the New Year's Eve and only return to Hanoi a few days later. I love the fact that people in the family get together during *Tết*. If there was only one occasion that I wanted to return home during a year, then it was *Tết*.

Interviewer: Did you make any trip before the recent *Tết*?

Hạnh: Yes I returned once when my grandmother had a new house and she opened it at the same day of my grandfather's death ceremony (*giỗ*). I had not attended that ceremony for a long time so I decided to make it. But I missed the trip to visit my father when he was sick, and I had much regret about it. The reason that I couldn't make it was because I didn't make much money at that time and my attitude is that I would rather stay in Hanoi than return home empty handed.

For young men who were not married, it was clear from what Hạnh explained, the responsibilities with families were first and foremost to fulfill their roles as a son and a brother who cares about parents and siblings. They were required to attend major events of the extended families, to care for their parents when they got sick and/or get to old age, and to take care of their younger siblings. For Hạnh, he also wanted to show others in the families that he could make money while living in Hanoi by himself, and therefore hoped to lessen concerns of his family members over him. Similarly, Tuấn, whose stories were described in the second section of this chapter, felt that he must take care of his grandparents as well as his younger sister, as his parents didn't stay at home and were busy with making money elsewhere. Tuấn made attempts to call his younger sister frequently and sent money for her to buy books and other necessities.

Some men come to Hanoi to search for a new job with the hope that they could make more money to support their family. This was especially important for men who had their wife and children staying at their home village. They often mentioned the responsibility of earning money as a way for them to show their role as *trụ cột gia đình*. Ngọc, a married man at his late thirties, had gone through many types of work before coming to Hanoi as his last resort in order find a job to support his wife and two children at home.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about the work that you did before going to Hanoi?

Ngọc: After I dropped out at the 8th grade, I started to think about what I would do for a living. I thought to myself that I have grown up enough and was thinking about what to do. I felt that I could make an independent living so that I don't have to rely on my parents. The first job that I got involved in was gold digging, in a very far away place in *Thái Nguyên* province. While the money was good, I also spent a lot so I was not able to save much money. I stopped working at the goldmine after two years and returned home to work as a construction worker for a few years. I earned as much as 20,000 dong per day and had some savings to send home which really helped my family. As long as my family needs cash, the only way to support it was for me to go out and do some work away from home. After a few years, I got married and it was in 1995. I stopped travelling for a while and both me and my wife stayed at home to work on the rice field and raise pigs. My family life was stable for a while, and I forgot about construction and other migrant work until we had the first child. Then one of my friends in the village who worked as a masseur in Hanoi told me that it was an easy job that could earn good money, so I followed him to Hanoi to do *tắm quất rạo* (a type of massage service for both men and women where masseurs were often freelance and mobile) in 2001. Then I only worked a few months per year, and returned home from time to time to support my wife. But since 2003 when I moved to work for a *tắm quất* shop I spend more time in Hanoi. I find the job quite stable and not as hard as construction work, so I have stayed with it ever since without thinking of other work. The only drawback is that I have to stay very late in the evening. But I have gotten used to it now.

Interviewer: So how long are you planning to work [in *tắm quất* shop] in Hanoi?

Ngọc: I am thinking about quitting once I am done with building a house at home. I am trying to reduce my spending here so that I can have more saving for my family. I am going out to work in order to provide for them so I have to spend less on myself.

Ngoc is a typical example of heterosexually-identified men in the sample who strictly considered selling sex as just another type of work for him to make money. He refused to go further than receiving oral sex and giving hand jobs, which has limited his ability to make money. He also refused to express any sympathy towards his clients, despite the fact that he had been in the job for almost five years. Other heterosexually-identified men, mostly younger and unmarried, were

not reluctant to say that they had sympathy for what their clients had gone through because of their love for men, and cited such attitudes as one of the reasons that kept them doing what they did. Ngọc kept the distance partly because he thought that he felt satisfied with the money that he made and partly so that his future would not depend on him getting closer to his clients.

Doing sex work made many young men worry about maintaining their sexual capacity, especially in relation to their future role as a husband and as a son who is supposed to maintain the lineage by producing boys. They were concerned that having sex with men in significant frequency would weaken their sexual prowess and would affect their future ability to get married and to have children. They believed that receiving hand-jobs with man would make them ejaculate early when having sex with women and therefore would affect their ability to have children. Tuấn, the young man who was still in college while selling sex, expressed his concern as follows:

Interviewer: How important is the work [selling sex] for you now beside the fact that it helped you to pay for study and expenses in Hanoi?

Tuấn: I think that this work is really bad for health, and secondly it reduces my sexual capacity to the extent that I might not have children in the future, and thirdly I think that this work might brought me the habit of my customers (*mình thành thói quen giống khách*).

Interviewer: Can you explain more about your concerns? What makes you believe that those things might happen?

Tuấn: First of all, when I want to have more money I would have to please my customers. When they masturbate me they often do it very harshly but I can't stop them. Similarly, they would want to have sex their own way and even though I don't like it I would still have to let them do it. Secondly, when I have sex frequently with customers and lose semen, I am wondering whether my sexual capacity would remain as normal as other men. I am worried that I would not be able to have children. In terms of getting the habit like my customers, I have seen

other guys who have turned into and have acted like *đồng cô*, just by their appearance, and now they wanted men more than women. They were just normal men as I am when they started this work.

Interviewer: Have you asked anyone about your concerns?

Tuấn: I have looked for information, and I have wanted to ask you as well.

Kiên, a young man of twenty-three years of age, was well known at *Hoàn Kiếm* lake for his ability to *chài Tây* (lure Western customers). Although Kiên was married, he rarely spent time with his wife but rather spent most of his time at the lake site. This imbalance made Kiên worried that he would not want to have sex with his wife anymore, as he explained:

Interviewer: How does it [selling sex to other men] affect your life?

Kiên: It will always haunt me if I don't make a decision soon, a correct decision. I need to decide whether I would continue doing this job or I should stop doing this job but keep going to the lake, or I should I stop going to the lake all together. Going to the lake is a bad thing for me since I would be haunted by two things. One is that I would see opportunities to make money but I would not be able to do it. The other is that I would be haunted by my own fear. I fear that I would love men one day. Honestly, I have not had any sex with a woman for about half-a-year now.

Interviewer: How about your wife?

Kiên: Honestly when I return home from the street, I don't have much interest in my wife. Sometime my wife cries at night; she can't give up on me nor can she persuade me to give up what I am doing. Lying next to my wife crying, I really don't know what to do so I just let it go (*nhắm mắt buông xuôi*). Really, I just let her cry.

To allay concerns about turning into homosexually-identified men (*đồng cô* and *bồng lộ*), some had gone out to buy sex from female sex workers to make sure that they still had sexual desires and feelings for women.

Longing for family relationships, for some kind of stable relationship, was also manifested in the fact that many male sex workers lived with female partners whom they met on the street. Building a new family in the city was especially common in the cases when the ties to their families were broken completely. However, they also faced with a lot of challenges in maintain these new families. Huấn left his family because he felt rejected by his step-mother, and didn't have any plan to return. Huấn once lived for a few years with a woman whom he called "my wife" and with whom he had a child, but then she left him because of his drug habit. Forming a new family, therefore, was a challenge for men still involved in sex work and other activities associated with it, unless they formed some partnerships with women who were under similar types of pressure. Many of the women that the young men partnered with were also working in sex work, and although they may knew about each other's work, they often chose to keep silent and accepted the fact that living together in the city was the best way for them to support each other during difficult days. Hạng, for example, lived with a female sex worker and they shared housing and other expenses as well as provided each other with emotional support when needed. He said that she earned more money than he did and he spent more time to take care of the rented place they call their home.

Homosexually-identified men are faced with other types of challenges in fulfilling the expectations of them as a son in the family. As their families continued to put pressure on them to get married, even when they got past the ideal marriage age (late twenties and early thirties),

they continued to face with the challenge of negotiating this pressure. Perhaps because of the sample of homosexually-identified men in this study were in their late thirties and forties, their stories of fulfilling expectations as sons were a bit different from those of the young men described earlier. The story of Dương, a *đồng cô* in his mid-thirties who has accumulated some wealth from his years of doing small trading and lending money to small businesses, sums up the sad feelings that were shared by many homosexually-identified men:

Interviewer: What are your plans for the future?

Dương: I think that all parents who have children would want their children to grow up healthy, get a good education and become good people. A son will get a wife and a daughter will be married to a husband (*con trai lấy vợ, con gái gả chồng*). I myself have always thought that I have achieved most of what my parents expect of me, except that having my own family is something that I can't deliver for my parents. Having a small family full with happiness is that most important thing in someone's life, but that's is exactly my unfortunate which will continue to haunt me at my old age. Over the past four or five years, I have tried to imagine what my last years of life would look like. Some people who belong to our group [of homosexually-identified people] didn't have much money so they sold their house and everything to pay for their medical care. Just like the old Trường who rented a room to live by himself only to die in that rented room without anyone noticing until a few days later. Did you go to his funeral? It was so sad. Funerals are usually sad but the funeral of a homosexual is even more sad. Most people who went to his funeral were friends and guys he met at *Hoàn Kiếm* lake. Others who were richer turned to gambling to spend their time away and just to have some friends at old age. Had they had a family, they would have spent those hours and days with their children and grandchildren who would definitely enjoy financial support from their grandparents. To be honest, my life is really unfortunate and sad, and I have not found any meanings. Since my parents gave me life I need to try to live in the best way that I can. I have tried to live in ways that would not leave any bad reputation for me and my family. And honestly, I have tried to live better than those who are normal so that they can't look down upon me and can't stigmatize me (*không kỳ thị được mình*).

As explained by Duong, he portrayed himself as a good son who was always obedient to his parents and siblings, except for changing his preferences to be of different gender, and he was working hard to support the family. Similar to Duong, other homosexually-identified men also portrayed themselves as doing well economically and therefore able to support their parents in their old age. The importance of taking care of old parents has always been considered as an important responsibility of a son and the homosexually-identified men in this study preferred to emphasize this point. Chị Thắng and Sơn explained that since they were the only child currently living with their parents and didn't have any plan to get married soon, they were happy to shoulder the burden of taking care of their parents and other siblings were happy for them to do that. Chị Thắng was given a piece of land by her parents so that she could build a house next to the house of her parents and stayed close to them when they needed her help. In some ways, they have fulfilled the role of *trụ cột gia đình*, not of their own families but of their parental families. However, the fact that they don't have children who continue the lineage is always a responsibility gap that they would never be able to fulfill. The importance of having children was even more acute as they were also concerned about their loneliness in their old age and when they get sick. For them, having children is still the best way to get a life of their own. As described in the story of Chị Thắng and Duong, the wish to have children is really strong among many *đồng cô* and *bóng lộ*.

Last but not least, they portrayed themselves as someone who longed to have a family of their own rather than living alone to enjoy themselves. While they experienced some forms of selling sex in the far past, most of their sexual experiences were characterized by buying sex and by forming some forms of partnerships with young heterosexually-identified young men, who

usually came from other provinces. The homosexually-identified men in this study often associated themselves with a female gender, and therefore having a “real men” whom they consider as their husband was considered as an important experience of their life. Chị Thắng, Son, Lâm, and Dương, the homosexually-identified men in this study, all had experiences with moving in with or taking young men to their home for extended periods of time. They told stories of providing for these men as if they were assuming the role of *trụ cột gia đình*, and at the same time serving these men as a dutiful wives in exchange for love, compassion and sex. They preferred young men they considered as “real men” i.e. men who identified themselves as *đàn ông* or *trai* despite the fact that these men have engaged in sex with men. These “real men,” they explained, were men who don’t associate themselves with a female gender and, while engaging in sex with men, preferred to have sex with women and eventually would get married with a woman. However, these “real men” who initially, if not primarily, agreed to live with them out of the need for economic support, would never be able to form a stable and long-term partnerships. Circumstances for breaking up could be that the “real men” got attracted to women and planned for an exit in order to get married eventually; it could be that “real men” stole money and took off after feeling that they had gotten the best out of their relationships with their rich “wife”; it could be that these “real men” were felt tired with the fact that they were completely owned by their rich “wife” who forbid them to get in touch with other men and women out of jealousy. While stories of partnerships were not uncommon on the streets, stories of painful and even violent break-up were also abundant. Some homosexually-identified men like Dương and Lâm felt that it was better to pay for quick sexual encounters than it was to go through mentally and financially exhausting relationships with young heterosexual men. These

relationships were not just more costly in terms of money, but also more costly for them in terms of the mental burden caused by suspicion, jealousy and eventual break-up. As they frequently changed their partners, either under circumstances of quick paid sex or of long-term relationships, such practices have added further evidence to the saying “*đồng cô thích trai trẻ*” that was very popular in the market.

The Changing Shape of Same-Sex Markets And Marketplaces in Post-*Doi Moi*

This chapter examines the production of sexual marketplaces for men in an urban setting in Vietnam in post-*Doi Moi* era as well as the experiences of the men who were sex workers in this market. I have argued that although sexual exchanges among men, including exchange of sex for material benefits, were not entirely new, various conditions in post-*Doi Moi* era have made it possible for the emergence of a market that has become more publicly recognizable. First, the urbanization process and the development of informal economic sector have drawn thousands of young men coming from rural areas in search of wage labor. Young men from other areas came to Hanoi because of family conflicts, hoping to get a job and make money independently from their families. The challenges of making money and sustaining themselves in urban setting like Hanoi, however, was not a small task, givent the fact that many of these young men left home with limited social and other capital to start with. As young rural men ended up on the streets – frequently hungry, lonely and lost – they became vulnerable and ready for offers that could seemingly be helpful for them at first. Second, as the society have opened itself to various expressions, sexual and otherwise, homosexually active men became more active in claiming a

space for themselves. The fact that although areas around a couple of lakes in Hanoi have been cruising areas for men for decades, mostly at night time, and have only recently become an active market in day light is an evidence for this active contribution on the part of men who identified themselves as *đồng cô*, *bóng lộ* and *bóng kín*. I have also pointed out that recent HIV prevention activities, including outreach and peer education, have also contributed significantly to the production of this space for men who love men to express themselves in public. Last but not least, the emergence of sexual marketplaces in other more commercial forms such as rent-by-the-hours motels and *tâm quất* shop also contribute significantly to the production of spaces where men could have sex without being watched and without fear of being intruded by strangers as well as known individuals alike.

On the part of male sex workers, their experiences with the same-sex sex market – including initiation into, living with, and exit from – varied according to their family background, their sexual preference and their perspectives of what a post-sex work life would be like. The initiation into sex work is different for men who identify themselves as heterosexual versus those who identify themselves as homosexuals. While the former group told stories of getting into sex work out of desperation and under circumstances beyond their control, the latter seemed to find sex work as a way for them to find their true selves (in addition to making money). While the former group continued to negotiate relationships their clients and with themselves, including practices such as insertive and receptive anal sex that they didn't like in the first place as well as their own identities as *đàn ông* and *trai*, the former became more comfortable with their own identities as well as their sexual practices. While the former group told stories of trying to get out of sex work, often unsuccessfully for many until the point that

they were kicked out of the market because of their diminishing value, the latter told stories of turning themselves into clients in the market. Both groups, however, shared some commonalities when it comes to the relationship with their families, and the negotiation with families were affected by severe stigma towards men-to-men sex as well as to sex work. This tension becomes most clear by the time of Tết, when family members get together to strengthen their bonding and love. Some heterosexually-identified men looked forward to this event in order to show their parents and other family members that they could make a life in Hanoi independently of the families although they can't tell the whole truth. These men wanted to show their families and loved ones that they have become mature and therefore could be ready to support a family of their own, even though they were struggling hard in the city. Some felt lonely in the city as they had no where to go while their friends return to their families for Tết, and these men often have limited opportunities to become *trụ cột gia đình* of their own and/or their parental families. Homosexually-identified men don't like Tết because they don't like to be reminded of their responsibility to get married and have children. Until then, they would never be considered as dutiful son and as *trụ cột gia đình*, however they try to make the case that they could do so by taking care of their aging parents.

Like the case of migrant laborers in Chapter 2 and the case of methadone patients in Chapter 3, the life of male sex workers in this study was shaped primarily by these important structures: the state, the market, and the family. The process of urbanization would not have happened without the working of the state and market forces; the production of space for sexual exchanges among men would continue to face challenges without various state-sponsored HIV prevention programs targeting men who have sex with men, even if the state may not anticipate

such effects of the programs; the production of space for sexual exchanges among men has always been in and of itself a market process as these spaces were created first and foremost for and by the commercialization of sexuality among men. Both the state and the market, however, have not addressed the stigmatization of sex among men as well as sex work, which have turned male sex work into an object of shame that constantly posed challenges for these men to overcome. In terms of the family, cultural notions such as *trụ cột gia đình* continue to put pressure on men who were either rejected by the family and/or left the family because of various conflicts. The fact that men in this study continued to assert their importance and their attachment to the family speak volume about their agency as well as about the burden of family as a cultural institution on their lives. On the other hand, I would argue that various strategies intended to make their roads become *trụ cột gia đình* – such as planning to quit sex work, expressing their desires to return to their parental families, building their own families in the city, supporting elderly parents and siblings, even planning to get married to hide their homosexual identity – are parts of the strategies for men who sell sex to negotiate with the pressure of stigma and to claim their masculinity. Overall, while the new body of men who sell sex in Hanoi is a product of a confluence of various factors emerging in the period of post-*Doi Moi*, men who sell sex face the “problem of recognition” (Fraser 2000), but not so much in the sense of an identity as a sex worker but more in the sense of the type of body that is rejected by the state, the market (those who buy sex), their families, and even by the men themselves.

Chapter 5

Doi Moi and The Male Body:

Implications for Theory on Men's Health

Over the past decade or so, the body has become a terrain for rich theoretical work in social sciences and humanities, including the field of medical anthropology, to challenge the essentialist and dualistic accounts of natural sciences, including medicine and public health, that tend to emphasize the mind/body dualism. Judith Farquhar and Margaret Lock (2007) maintain that social scientists and humanities scholars have “expanded the classical social science concerns with either minds or bodies, meanings or behaviors, individual bodies or the body of the social to focus on a new hybrid terrain, that of the lived body” (2007: 5). Work by a number of medical anthropologists, building on theoretical insights of phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the experienced body) and/or post-structuralism (Foucault's theorization of technologies of the self), have advanced our understanding of the body as a material, social and symbolic foundation for framing human experiences, including those related to gender, sexuality, morality, sickness, affliction, and health. In relation to the study of gender and sexuality, scholars have argued for leaving behind the old tradition of social constructionism that treats the body as a kind of *tabula rasa* upon which social and cultural forces shape gender and sexuality. R.W. Connell, for example, proposes the notion of “body-reflexive practices” to reflect both the agency and materiality of the body as well as the role of social structures (Connell 2000 : 26). Roger Lancaster, in relation to his work on machismo and homosexuality in Nicaragua, argues

for the need to pay attention to “the political economy of the body” which he defines as “power relations supported by and which support a given body regime.” (Lancaster 1995 : 146).

Yet both Connell and Lancaster offer little guidance on how one goes about unraveling the linkages between structure and the body, especially the male body. The analysis in my dissertation is inspired by these theoretical insights and yet has moved further to analyze such linkages by addressing a number of questions. What kind of body regime exists in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam when it comes to the male body? How is it that the state, the market and the family shape, and are shaped by, this body regime? What values, whether social, economic, or cultural, are produced under this body regime, especially in relation to the body of men who are socially and spatially dislocated, as are the three groups of men examined in this dissertation. Last, what are the consequences of the body regime on dislocated men’s lives and health under *Doi Moi*?

The Political Economy of the Male Body in Post-*Doi Moi*

After over a little more than two decades, the introduction of *Doi Moi* and subsequent renovation policies have transformed all aspects of the society, especially with regards to gender relations. A number of studies on women in Vietnam (see, for example, Leshkovich 2008; Leshkovich 2011; Nguyen-vo Thu-Huong 2002; Pettus 2003; Werner 2009) have shown that a new woman’s body and new meanings of femininity have been produced, and yet that certain values of femininity have been reinforced, albeit for different purposes. In this study, I argue that in the period after *Doi Moi* a new male body and new meanings of masculinity have been recreated by both the structure and by individual men alike. While migration or the practice of *đi ra ngoài*

(going out of the village) is not new, the new body of migrant laborers is a product of *Doi Moi*, and is highly vulnerable to exploitation by both the state and the market. Similarly, the body of methadone patients, most of whom are men, is produced out of the need to search for new ways to address growing heroin addiction in the country since *Doi Moi*. The male body in this instance is a deviant body, and therefore is subject to some of the most rigorous technologies of discipline aimed to reform the body for social and political purposes. Finally, sexual exchanges among men in Hanoi, whether for love or material benefits, have existed for a long time. And yet the growing “pleasure industry” in a number of public and semi-public sexual marketplaces, as well as the monetization of sexual exchanges among men, are new phenomena that help to create the new body of *trai bán dâm* (boys/men who sell sex). The body of men who sell sex faces the “problem of recognition” as this type of body is rejected by the state, the market (those who buy sex), their families, and even by the men themselves.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, the power structures that maintain the body regime under *Doi Moi* are not all new, except the fledgling capitalist market. However, they have all found new ways to govern different types of male body as is shown in this study. The post-*Doi Moi* state has increasingly governed the male body through new desires, whether economic desire as in the case of migrant laborers or ethical desire as in the case of methadone patients and sex workers. By promoting economic desires, the state has mobilized bodies that are useful either in terms of building the foundation for the post-*Doi Moi* economy, such as highways or factories (as in the case of migrant laborers). The state, by promoting desires to be healthy and to be “normal” among certain bodies (as in the case of methadone patients and sex workers), has exercised effective technologies of disciplining the body, including public health programs that

are designed for other purposes. In all three cases, however, the state has refused to address stigma and discrimination that are pervasive in the wider society against migrants, drug use, and homosexuality, thereby endorsing, and sometimes reinforcing certain social orders of bodily desirability. Once certain bodies are no longer useful for the state, they are disposable and left to the vagaries of the market or the exhausted support of the family. On the part of the market, the availability of the vulnerable body (as in the case of migrant laborers) and the body that is rejected (as in the case of men who sell sex) has made it possible to develop and sustain respective markets that are for the most part exploitative and dehumanizing. The creation of the unmarketable and unproductive body (as in the case of drug users and most methadone patients), on the other hand, underlines a certain order of bodily desirability maintained by the market. By refusing to address stigma and discrimination against drug users and sex workers, the state has been complicit in the generation of a market-driven notion of desirability.

The state and the market have also built their power to regulate and discipline the male body on certain cultural logics that are embedded in the notion of *trụ cột gia đình*. The state has issued policies explicitly promoting the notion of *Gia Đình Hạnh Phúc* (the Happy Family), in which a gendered division of labor is defined along the lines of traditional femininity and masculinity (see general discussion of this notion in Pettus 2003, and of its implication for maintaining extramarital sex in post-*Doi Moi* in Phinney 2009). By promoting the notion of *Gia Đình Hạnh Phúc* as a national image and goal, the state is building its legitimacy and its very existence on the symbolic capital of masculinity embedded in the notion of *trụ cột gia đình*. Promoting this culturally and socially constructed meaning of masculinity has opened up a new way to govern citizens under *Doi Moi*. On the other hand, the market has benefited from these

policies and the cultural logics by creating possibilities for men and women to believe that they could make happy families by working hard, being successful in the market, and making “rational choices” in choosing appropriate commodities for consumption. Consequently, the state and the market have reinforced the productive and reproductive expectations of the family, including the expectation of men being *trụ cột gia đình*, thereby setting limits on how the patriarchal family sustains its influence on men’s lives.

In the period after *Doi Moi* the family has become a key site where both new economic and social engineering efforts of the state are built. The family has played a central role in new economic policies as the state has reassigned the household as the key primary economic unit. As such, creating and maintaining economic desires on the part of both the family and its members are an essential mechanism through which the state has mobilized the exploitable body of migrant labors as well as managed the deviant bodies of methadone patients. The family is also essential for new social policies as the state relegated many of its responsibilities to the household during the socialist era. The family, as such, has become an essential buffer mechanism for failures in new experiments of the state as well as the market. The family, however, is not just a channel through which the state and the market exert power. The family also exercises its own agency to make, renew, or break the ties with sons, husbands, and brothers, depending on how these individuals meet the family’s expectations. For instance, homosexually-identified men who sell sex are still respected if they are willing to maintain certain responsibilities towards their aging parents, as well as to not shame them by publicly showing their sexual orientation. Men who are on methadone are aided in multiple ways by other family members on their road to recovery because they are considered as having the

potential to fulfill their roles. Men who work hard as migrant laborers are loved by their families because they bring resources and knowledge to their families that may help to lift them out of poverty and make their families respectable in the village.

As I show in individual chapters, doing everything they can to achieve the symbolic capital of being *trụ cột gia đình*, or the expressed desire to do so, is a way for the men in this study to negotiate with the body regime and “structural violence” created by the three structures of the state, the market and the family. With some twists and turns that reflect new ideals in a market-driven society, the goal of *trụ cột gia đình* for men continues to be as powerful as ever, despite decades of a socialist construction of gender equality. Despite their difference, the three groups of men in this study were using their embodied forms of labor to build their manhood and to achieve the symbolic capital of *trụ cột gia đình*, at varying degrees of success. As in the case of migrant men, they were working hard on the highway and other construction sites to build their own reputation as responsible young men and to become *trụ cột gia đình*, whether in their parental or their own families. In the case of men who were methadone patients, they were laboring in the clinic to adhere to the restricted treatment regime in order to kick their past image and habit with the hope that they would regain respect from their family members and those who knew their past, and would be able to build their own families at some point in a near future. Last but not least, young men who sell sex were doing sexual labor out of their immediate survival or sexual needs, but they were still longing for maintaining (in the case of heterosexually-identified men) or reshaping (in the case of homosexually-identified men) their manhood.

In short, in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam the state, the market and the family are powerful and pervasive social structures that shape the body regime of dislocated men. By creating for these men possibilities and desires, they turn the men into subjects conforming to certain rules, regulations and cultural logics that in turn maintain these structures and its persistent power to govern life and health of dislocated men. Yet at the same time, the post-*Doi Moi* body regime of dislocated men makes them highly vulnerable to a host of health issues, including HIV/AIDS. It is important, therefore, to also seek to think more analytically and conceptually about the relations that exist between the political economy of men's bodies and the bodily regime of masculinity and the social production of men's health.

Theorizing Men's Health

The legitimacy of the state, the growth of the market, and the stability of the family are all premised upon a healthy and happy population. A number of public health issues have arisen since *Doi Moi*, including HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and domestic violence, posing major challenges for both the life and health of men and women (UNDP 2011). They lead us to question the implications of *Doi Moi* on health, especially men's health. What if we think of public health issues with serious consequences for both men and women as "externalities," or unmeasured costs, of *Doi Moi* (Hirsch et al. 2009: 213). What lessons could be learned if we compare and contrast the situation in post-*Doi Moi* Vietnam with men's health crisis in other former socialist settings (see, for example, Cockerham 2012; Kay and Kostenko 2006; Leon et

al. 2009; Tomkins et al. 2012)? What would insights in relation to these questions tell us about actions that are needed to transform global public health? I do not attempt to explore all these questions in detail within the scope of this concluding section, but would like to offer some suggestions related to theorizing men's health, which I think would be the first step towards this goal.

It has long been recognized that men face many health issues that ultimately result in health statistics – whether in terms of general indicators such as life expectancy or specific indicators such as morbidities and utilization of health services – that tend to favor women despite global gender inequalities (Courtenay 2003; Sabo 2005; Williams 2003). Because of this, a number of attempts to theorize men's health have emerged during the past decade (Evans et al. 2011; Lohan 2007; Robertson 2007; Sabo 2005; Schofield et al. 2000). While most authors that are cited are associated with critical studies of men and masculinity, as well as having been influenced by R.W. Connell's theory of gender and masculinity in a number of ways, each of them adds some nuanced elements through their proposed theories. Lohan (2007), for example, proposes marrying theories on health inequalities in general with theories of critical studies on men and masculinity. She shows what each of the theoretical frameworks on health inequalities, whether from a social, cultural, economic, or psychological perspectives, could offer to explain men's health and, on the other hand, how they could benefit from critical studies of men and masculinity. In the case of Evans et al. (2011), adopting both social determinants of health language and life course approaches, he proposes to examine masculinities during the life course as another social determinant of men's health. In a very early theoretical piece that was widely cited, Will Courtenay offer what he called “social construction of gender” approach to theorize

men's health (Courtenay 2000: 1387). Courtenay puts much emphasis on the role of hegemonic masculinity and how men's efforts to conform with and/or resist such socially and culturally prescribed ideals of being men put them at risk. On the other hand, he points out, men's attitudes and practices towards their own health help to constitute their own masculinity in a socially acceptable manner. In terms of structural conditions that shape men's health, Courtenay offers little analysis but concludes that:

The institutionalized social structures that men encounter elicit different demonstrations of health-related beliefs and behaviors, and provide different opportunities to conduct this particular means of demonstrating gender. These structures – including the government and the military, corporation, technological industries, the judicial systems, academia, health care system and the media – help to sustain gendered health risks by cultivating stereotypic forms of gender enactment and by providing different resources for demonstrating gender to women than they provide to men. Institutional structures, by and large, foster unhealthy beliefs and behaviors among men, and undermine men's attempts to adopt healthier habits. [Courtenay 2000: 1394]

Although Courtenay's analysis pays attention to social structures (which curiously misses the family) and how social structures shape men's health, he shows little interest in explaining how engaging with certain health-related behaviors, whether healthy or harmful, could be seen as a way for men to negotiate with or even stage resistance against social structures that affect their life.

I would argue that the theorization of men's health could draw from recent developments in studies on HIV risks among men, especially the finding that for many men, engaging in unprotected sex could be a way for them to negotiate social risk and social repression. The notion of social risk, as defined by Jennifer Hirsch et al. (2009) in the context of studying HIV

risks, refers to the fact that “people are navigating opportunities and constraints that are often economically, socially, and culturally more salient, significant, and obviously consequential than the biomedical risk of HIV” (2009: 19), and offers a good way to think about this issue. Harriet Phinney (2009) provides a concrete example in the post-*Doi Moi* context, where engaging in extramarital sex is socially and economically productive for men because it offers men opportunities to prove their sexual and economic prowess which in many instances help to connect them to new business opportunities. Similarly, Tiantiang Zheng (2012) shows how building relationships with state officials through commercial sex visits and drinking are essential for business men in China to gain business favor (see also Uretsky 2008). On the other hand, and this is an important point, Zheng shows that engaging in commercial sex without protection was considered by business men in her study as a way to show their resentment and rebellious attitudes towards the state’s monopolizing power over sexual ideology as well as business opportunities.

My analysis of the political economy of the male body in post-*Doi Moi* pushes for a deeper engagement with the body regime in theorizing men’s health. This engagement resonates well with the long-term interests in medical anthropology on “the political economy of health” or “critical medical anthropology” (see, for example, Singer and Baer 1995; Inhorn and Wentzel 2012) as well on the body and embodiment (see, for example, Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987; Sharp 2000) . However, most existing theorization of men’s health have not paid sufficient attention to the body regime, and it has not received much attention the theorization of men’s health. In most existing frameworks mentioned above, I would argue, emphasis has been either on social and cultural construction of men’s health risks, with heavy emphasis on hegemonic

masculinity as ideology rather than the configuration of practices as Connell intends for it to be understood (Courtenay 2000; Evans et al. 2011; Lohan 2007), or a combination of this perspective with an emphasis on embodiment of health (Robertson 2007). What is lacking is an engagement with the powerful social structures, such as the three structures analyzed in this dissertation, and how they produce, and are produced by, the types of male body that are highly vulnerable to health problems and other social issues. Furthermore, as my analysis attempts to show, in the complex world that we are living in today, one could hardly deal with one without engaging with other institutions, since the inter-linkages between and intersections among them are at the heart of what produces severe vulnerabilities. My analysis also shows how the male body of highly vulnerable groups of men, by conforming to rules, regulations and sometimes the cultural and moral logics of these institutions, helps to sustain the configurations of structures that are bad for their own health in the first place. This analysis, perhaps, would lead the theorization of men's health to conceptualizing men's health not so much as determined by who they are, where they live, and what they do to be gendered men, but more as determined by structures that define their citizenship and even their kinship. If this is the case, teaching vulnerable and marginalized men about how to take care of their own health, creating friendly health services for them, or developing other "business-as-usual" approaches to public health is not enough. New approaches that enhance their claims to citizenship and rights, and new ways to create bonding that are less power laden, whether in terms of gender or other identities, might be what would help them the most.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Some Characteristics of The Interview Participants

1.1 Some characteristics of men and women interviewed in the study on migrant laborers in Thanh Hoa (chapter 2)

No	Name Gender and Age at the time of first interview	Some characteristics of informants and their families
Interviewed villagers: 12 people, including 3 women and 9 men		
1	Ông Me Male, 74 years of age (born in 1929)	He was the only son in the family, and his parents had 13 children of which many died young. His father also passed away when he was still a young boy. Although he passed the exam to study in China, his mother didn't let him go. He joined the revolution at youth and worked in a variety of government posts at the district and provincial levels and retired at the age of 52. Since retirement, he stayed at the village and assumed various positions at the commune level. A respected man in the village and was often referred to as a source of authority on knowledge of village history. He had 8 children, with 4 boys and 4 girls. 8 interviews including village history, marriage customs, and life history
2	Chú Cừ Male, 54 years of age (1949)	Eldest son in a family of 6 children, and 5 of which were men. He was the brightest of them and his parents pushed him through a college degree. He joined the army when he was 23 and received training in former Soviet Union for a few years in order to become a military technician. He decided to retire from the army after more than twenty years since his family needed him. Had two daughters, one of them died young and the other was a school teacher. 7 interviews including village history, migration pattern, and life history
3	Chú Giang Male, about 60 years of age (born in 1944)	Youngest son in a family of 3 children. After studying for a secondary teacher degree, he was sent to a remote area near the border with China and taught in schools there for almost twenty years. He retired at the age of 40 because of various sicknesses accumulated during the teaching period. He had three sons, of which two were in university and the eldest had a clock repair shop in Phố Kẽ. At the time of interview, he was the chair of a committee to support schooling among youth in the commune. 9 in-depth interviews on life history, and plans of the committee to support schooling

No	Name Gender and Age at the time of first interview	Some characteristics of informants and their families
4	Chú Bộ Male, about 42 years of age (1961)	The only child in the family. He served in the army for over two years, and got married soon after her returned to the village. He then engaged in many trading and gambling activities. He and his wife once were on the rich list, before loosing to a gambling scheme in mid 1990s which almost forced them to leave the village because of debt. He has two sons, one of them was a school teacher in a province far away from home. His wife was selling home-made cake in Phố Kẽ's market. At the time of the interview, he stayed at home and helped his wife. His family was one of the poorest in the village. He was often taken as an example of what could have gone wrong with a man and his family. 5 interviews on migration pattern and life history
5	Chú Lắm Male, about 47 years of age (1957)	Eldest son and had two sisters. He joined the army when he was 19 and returned to the village a few years later because his parents and sisters needed his help. He had two grown-up children, one of which was a high-school teacher. 6 interviews on migration pattern and life history
6	Anh Máy Male, about 36 years of age (1967)	Born in a family of 6 children and his younger brother was mentally disabled since childhood. He finished high school and went on to study at a vocational school on railroad maintenance. He worked in a number of provinces before returning home because his parents were sick and other siblings were not able to take care of their parents. He and his wife lost heavily to the gambling scheme in mid 1990s. He had two children and his wife was one of the first women who went to Taiwan for maid service. She was, however, got sick and had to return to Vietnam for treatment. They were in heavy debt because of this failed attempt. At the time of the interview, he was the chief police of the village. 6 interviews on marriage customs, migration pattern, and life history
7	Cô Tấn Female, about 43 years of age (born in 1958)	She was youngest daughter in a family of eight. She was at one point a factory worker for three years, which was against her parents' wishes. She was in love with another man in the village, but her parents forced her to get married with her husband. He had been sick for more than a decade and she had been the main bread winner until recently when two of their three sons had moved out to work as migrant labors. She often blamed her parents for her unfortunate marriage and life. 8 interviews on life history, the role of a woman in family, and migration pattern of youth
8	Chú Phóng Male, about 45 years of age (1959)	He was the eldest son in a family with 8 children, and both of his parents were government cadres. He joined the army at the age of 18, and three years later got married to a young woman who worked in the same military unit. In the army, he learned to become a driver and served in the army for more than twenty years before returning home in late early 2000s. He and his wife had three children, one eldest daughter and two sons. 7 interviews on life history and on migration pattern

No	Name Gender and Age at the time of first interview	Some characteristics of informants and their families
9	Bà Gấm Female, around 73 years of age (born around 1930)	One of the most unlucky women in the village. She had eight children, one of them died young and five of them were mute. She was also forced to get married with her husband. Both of them worked as non-military labor during the war against the French and then returned home to work in agriculture. 3 interviews on life history and on village history
10	Chị Xuân Female, 44 years of age (born in 1960)	She joined the army when she was 16 and worked in a construction unit for three years. She then returned to work as a janitor in the school of the commune, and had the two years later had gone to pedagogical school to become a certified teacher. She got married to a high-school mate and they had three children. The older daughter just finished study to become a school teacher. 7 interviews on life history, love and sexuality among youth in the village
11	Chú Bảo Male, 45 years of age	He had a successful business in pig trading, and his whole family has been involved. He has supported, though, for his daughter to become a government cadre.
Interviewed young migrants: including 10 men and 1 woman		
12	Hoan Male, 28 years of age (1974)	Eldest son in a family with an older sister and a younger brother. His parents separated when he was still a boy. Got married when he was 22 and had two kids, one girl and one son. His wife was in Taiwan for almost five years. He started working as a migrant laborer at the age of 16, and dropped out of school during junior high school. He stopped working as migrant labor in late 2004 and stayed home to take care of his small children and lived on money that his wife sent home. He and his wife later rented a shop to sell clothing in Phố Kẽ with the saving of his wife. 3 life history interviews
13	Ngoan Male, 22 years of age (1981)	Younger brother of Hoan, and his parents separated when he was still a toddler. He dropped out from school when he was only ten years of age and few years later started to work as a migrant laborer. As a result of early drop-out, he could not read and write. He started learning to repair motorbike in a workshop owned by one of his brother's friends and later got married in late 2004, at the end of my intensive fieldwork. Later, he opened his own motorbike repair shop, and his wife worked in a tailor shop nearby. They had two kids. 2 life history interviews
14	Quân Male, 24 years of age (1979)	Son of Cô Tấn (#7). He dropped out of school during junior high, and had been engaging in road construction since he was 15. His construction work ended in late 2004 and then he went to the south to work in a factory where his brother had worked for about a year. He returned home a few years later and got married in 2009. He then opened a hair-cut shop and got two children. His wife stayed at home to work in agricultural activities, and they had one son. 4 life history interviews

No	Name Gender and Age at the time of first interview	Some characteristics of informants and their families
15	Thùy Male, 24 years of age (1979)	He had a sister and they were born to a family that both parents were government cadres. His father worked for a trading company before retirement, and his mother was a school teacher. They both had pension and therefore his family was one of the better-off among the migrant laborers. He also dropped out during junior high-school and joined migrant labor work few years later. He, however, went back to the village in early 2003 and stayed at home to work as a motorbike taxi driver in Phố Kê. Later he got married and his wife stayed at home to take care of his parents and their two kids. He later became embroiled in gambling and took money from his parents to pay up the loss. 2 life history interviews
16	Thành Male, 22 years of age (1981)	He was the fourth in a family of five children, and one of them disappeared from the village because of heavy loss in gambling in late 1990s. Both of his parents were farmers and his family was one of the poorest in the group. He didn't feel comfortable with his family background and therefore often shied away from large gathering, especially where there were young women. Probably because of this, he got married latest among the group and they left the village to work in a factory in the south. 3 life history interviews
17	Hùng Male, 24 years of age (1979)	Similar to Thuy, he was born in a well-off family where both parents were retired government cadres. Hung had a sister who owned a hair-cut shop in Phố Kê. Hung never had a lengthy engagement with migrant work since he preferred to stay around his parents. He was known for frequently engaging in fighting with men in other villages and was often called upon when his friends needed protection. 2 life history interviews
18	Tâm Male, 22 years of age (1981)	He lived with his mother and was the only child. His father died when he was in junior high, and his mother kept him going through high school. He had highest educational level among the group. After several attempts with university entry exams, he decided to try out migrant work. However, he could only stay for a few months and returned home after Tet 2003. He then went on to work in the provincial town and I lost contact with him. 1 life history interview
19	Tinh Male, 19 years of age (1984)	He was the eldest in a family of four children. His father was notorious for drinking and wife beating, which created a source of shame for Tinh. He had been a migrant labor since he was 14 and together with his mother were the only earners in the family. After Tet 2003, he decide to move south to work in a factory. Then I lost contact with Tinh. 1 life history interview

No	Name Gender and Age at the time of first interview	Some characteristics of informants and their families
20	Trường Male, 20 years of age (1983)	He was the only son in a family of four children. His eldest sister worked in a factory in the South. His father used to work for the foreman as well, and when his father stopped he introduced his son. He later moved south to stay with his sister and worked therefore for a few years before returning to the home village. He later worked for his friend who owned a bus that operated between Phó Kê and a number of provinces in the South. He was still single. 2 life history interviews
21	Dũng (mén) Male, 24 years of age (1980)	Youngest son of a family of three and both of his siblings had their own families. He was involved briefly in road construction, but then returned to the village to work for his brother in a well-digging enterprise. He then spent a few years in the South to work in a factory. Last time I met him in 2009 and he was not married. 1 life history interview
22	Sinh Female, 18 years of age (1985)	She had a brother who also worked as a migrant labor and then became a foreman after getting married with a young woman whose family had money. After finishing high-school and didn't get into college of her dream, she moved South to work in a factory. She then returned in 2005 and got married. The couple then travelled South to work and only returned in early 2008. 3 life history interviews

1.2 Some characteristics of men and women interviewed in the study on men on methadone in Hai Phong (chapter 3)

No	Name/Age	Some characteristics
1	Tuấn Male, 42	A married man with two children, and his wife was demanding a divorce. He had used drug for ten years before enrolling in methadone as one of the first patients. He was working as a peer educator for a syringe exchange program while learning about the opening of the first methadone clinic. He had experience with both 06 centers and self-detoxification. He still depends on his parents for economic support. His plan was to gradually phase out of the treatment program since he didn't like the dependence on methadone. One of his reminiscence was the fact that his peers who didn't get into drugs already has established themselves as successful people. Life history interviews (3 interviews)
2	Mạnh Male, 34	A married man. He had used drug for almost twelve years. He had no less than twenty times of trying to get rid of heroin before ending up at methadone treatment. He had travelled to other places in the country in order to stay away from drug environment in Hai Phong. He recalled his past as the time that he "destroyed families" (of his own, his parents and his parents-in-law). He learned about methadone from his friends who had enrolled and been able to stay clean. Since enrollment in methadone, he had been able to gain "50% of trust" from his family and neighbors. His family allowed him to keep his motorbike and money, which they would never do while he was still in heroin. He worked hard helping his wife with her small food shop, and tried to save up money to make up for the "lost years." One complaint that he had while on methadone was reduced sexual capacity. Life history interviews (3 interviews)
3	Định Male, 35	Unmarried and living with his parents at the time of the interview. He had been using heroin for more than 12 years before enrolling in methadone treatment. His brother was also on heroin and had died of AIDS. He had numerous unsuccessful detoxification experiences and could not stay clean for long after each. He had served two short prison terms due to his involvement in trading drugs. He learned about methadone from his mother who was an active member of local Women Union. He complained about various side effects of methadone, including sleepiness which prevented him from running about his daily chores. However, he was most happy that his parents found joy again in life and his family atmosphere improved greatly. He had some unsuccessful attempts to find a stable job as well as a fiancé as his past kept haunting him. Life history interviews (3 interviews)
4	Trường Male, 30	He had used drugs for more than 12 years and had more than three occasions of detoxification in various 06 centers. His mother helped him to get enrolled in methadone treatment program. Although he applied for the first round, he was not admitted into the program and had to wait for almost a year. Since enrollment, he had found a job in a mechanical repairmen shop which earned him good money. He had been using the money to buy a number of household items to prove to his parents that he stayed clean.

No	Name/Age	Some characteristics
		Despite various side effects, he considered them as minor in comparison to what methadone has brought him. His only complaint was that the clinic didn't open earlier so that he could go to work on time. He determined to stay in the program for a long term. Life history interviews (3 interviews)
5	Quân Male, 29	He had used heroin for about 12 years before enrolling in methadone. He is HIV positive and was stigmatized against by other methadone users. He had two experiences with 06 centers and more than ten times of self-detoxification. He and his family learned about methadone through a television program and was admitted in the second round of recruitment. He stayed home most of the time helping his father with a small convenience shop. He considered the strict regulations of the methadone program as necessary in order to help heroin users, who according to him usually lived "unregulated lives" to stay clean and to rebuild a new life. He felt ashamed of his past and hoped methadone would help him to rebuild his relationship with family and the neighbors. He was working as a peer educator for a HIV/AIDS prevention program of the city. Life history interviews (3 interviews)
6	Thành Male, 29	He had used heroin for about ten years, but never had experience with 06 centers. He had tried many ways to stay clean, including moving to Ho Chi Minh City to work for a period of time. He had one son and his wife didn't know about his heroin and methadone use. He was also not on the list of registration of heroin users in the precinct so he had to prove to the local authority that he had used heroin in order to get admitted into the program. He was working in a small factory producing plastic chairs in the city which often required overtime. This was a challenge for him since he had to arrange time to come to the clinic daily. He wanted to go to work in Ho Chi Minh City where he believed that many people didn't know his past. This means, however, that he had to give up methadone which he was not ready for. Life history interviews (3 interviews)
7	Cường Male, 35	He had used heroin for more than 10 year, and had many experiences with 06 centers as well as self-detoxification. He once spent 18 months in a 06 center in Ho Chi Minh City and yet was not able to stay clean afterwards. He enrolled in methadone in the third roud of recruitment and got married soon afterwards. He and his wife were expecting a baby at the time of the interview. He and his wife stayed with his mother since he was the youngest son in the family. He had highest educational level among the study participants, finishing a college degree and had good background skills in English. As such it was not difficult for him to find a job in an export-import company in the city port. His biggest challenge in his job was that some of his clients, who knew about his past, didn't believe that he was able to stay clean. Life history interviews (3 interviews)

No	Name/Age	Some characteristics
8	Hà Female, 36	She had used heroin for about 13 years and got the habit from her husband. She had to sell sex in order to feed her habit. She had a son who was 19 years old and she was happy that he didn't get into drug. They were living with her father who spent a lot of time going with her to the clinic almost everyday for several months to make sure that she got everything right and that she didn't make friends with "bad friends." She was working with an auntie in a clothing shop and although she earned little money from the work, she was happy that she didn't have to sell sex again. She wanted to stay with methadone for a long time as she was concerned that there were still many bad things remained from her past that would make her to return to heroin once she is off from methadone. Life history interviews (3 interviews)
9	Giang Male, 27	He had used heroin for more than six years, and had limited exposure to detoxification as compared to other study participants. He learned about methadone through a peer-education program. He had to change his job from an administrative position to a service position in the same tourist company so that he could have time to go to the clinic everyday. He often feared that his past would haunt him and prevent him from finding a good wife. He was planning to gradually reduce methadone dosage so that he could leave the program completely. Life history interviews (3 interviews)
10	Long Male, 30	He had used heroin for almost ten years and his older brother was also a drug addict. He didn't have experience with 06 center, but had numerous times to detox at home and once they both went to a province in Central Highland to stay with their uncle in order to give up drug. He was admitted in the second round and had been happy with methadone except for some side effects such as sleepiness and feeling heat inside his body. He also complained about the timing of his medication since he started working from early in the morning till the middle of afternoon which left him only a couple of hours to go to the clinic. He was helping his mother with a food cart in the market, which made his mother really happy. He wanted to prove to his father that he no longer use heroin and that he is not useless. Life history interviews (2 interviews)
11	Trùng Male, 40	He had been using for more than ten years and had many experiences with detoxification. He always regretted that he destroyed his own family because of his addiction. He had one son who stayed with his parents. He was working as a motorbike taxi driver, just to get money for his heroin use. He wanted to enroll in methadone program but was concerned that he was too old for the program. Life history interviews (2 interviews)

1.3 Some characteristics of men interviewed in the study of men who sell sex in Hanoi (chapter 4)

No	Names, and self-identification	Some characteristics of participants
1	Cảnh, 24, <i>trai</i>	A twenty-four year old who identified himself as <i>trai</i> or <i>đàn ông</i> (man). He dropped out after finishing the 9 th grade and cited his family's poverty for this reason. He is one of three sons whose father was a drunken. He had been engaged in many types of migrant work before deciding to try his luck with <i>te quuh</i> . He had been doing this work for about two years before the interview. He had a girlfriend who didn't know about his selling sex to other men. He had experience with insertive anal sex.
2	Ngọc, 36, <i>đàn ông</i>	This thirty-six year old man had been married for more than ten years and had two children. He dropped out of school at 8 th grade, and since then had experienced many types of migrant work. He moved to Hanoi seven years ago, initially working as a construction worker and then his friend introduced him to work at <i>tâm quất</i> . The clients, however, don't like him because of his older age as compared to other young men at the shop. Unlike other younger men in the study, he also didn't show much emotion and/or sympathy towards his clients and considered what he did merely as "work." He returned home periodically to help out his wife with agricultural work, but kept his wife and other family members in dark about his work in Hanoi. He hoped to save enough money to renovate his family house at the home village.
3	Sông, 27, <i>đàn</i>	A twenty-seven year old man who was married for about three years and had one daughter. He dropped out at 8 th grade and since had been engaged in many types of work as a migrant laborer. He had worked in <i>tâm quất</i> for about two years, and he expressed sympathy for his clients. However, he feared that his sexual behaviors (mostly receiving and giving oral sex) could get him infected with infectious diseases one day and could spread to his wife. He identified himself as <i>đàn ông</i> and continued to refuse anal sex with clients. He hoped to find another type of work and a stable job in a near future.
4	Thuận, 25, <i>gay</i>	A twenty-five years old who dropped out of college in his third year and ever since doing various kinds of odd jobs. He was born and raised in another province. His childhood was characterized by the absences of his father, who travelled frequently to other provinces for business. He identified himself as <i>gay</i> , and believed that he had doubts over his true self while in junior high when he liked a male class mate. His first sexual experience, however, was with a girl in high school. His exposure to homosexually scenes and individuals in Hanoi during the first year in college made him believe in his own sexual identity. He had experiences of living with other men for extended periods of time, where he received both money and other material support. He also had experiences of buying sex from other men in the lake. At the time of the interview, he was working during daytime at a restaurant and at nighttime he

No	Names, and self-identification	Some characteristics of participants
		worked for a MSM peer-education network outreaching to male sex workers and MSM in public venues.
5	Phuong, 30, <i>đàn ông</i>	This thirty year-old man was married and had one child who stayed at his home village. He identified himself as <i>đàn ông</i> . Although his parents were poor, they pushed him hard to get into college. However, he dropped out at the third grade after an accident paralyzed his elder brother and made his family burdened with debt. Ever since, he had been engaged in various kinds of work, and engaged in sex work for more than ten years. He once lived with a <i>đ more</i> who provided support for him during his difficult years of living in Hanoi, but said that he had never been engaged in anal sex. He hoped to get a more stable job as he felt that as he was getting older his sex work would not be able to support him and his family any longer.
6	Quyết, 28, <i>đàn ông</i>	This twenty-eight year-old man was born in Hanoi in a well-off and supportive family. However, he dropped out of a vocation training school only two months before graduation and he wanted to live independently from his family by working as a migrant laborer. He got married few years later, but the first child was born with deformities, which made him distraught. He resorted to alcohol use and the marriage broke down. His involvement in sex work, one year before the study, took place in that context. His first homosexual experience, however, was with a man in his neighborhood who gave him oral sex when he was still a teenager. At the end of this study, he had returned to his family and was working for his brother.
7	Tuấn, 20, <i>đàn ông</i>	This twenty year-old student was born in another province and moved to Hanoi for his study. He was born as the eldest child in a family of two and his parents were staying far away from home most of the time. He got into <i>tắm quất</i> after spending the money given to him by his parents for tuition and living expenses. After working in <i>tắm quất</i> for a while, he decided to move out to work as a freelance masseur so that he could still maintain his schooling. he developd a list of regular clietns, with whom he wanted to build a relationship that could support him in the long-term. He had experience with insertive anal sex. He also had a girlfriend with whom he wanted to get married after he graduated and therefore kept her in dark about his sex work
8	Hạnh, 23, <i>trai</i>	A twenty-three year old who identified himself as <i>trai</i> or <i>đàn ông</i> (man). He is the elder of two children and had younger sister. He dropped out from a vocational training school and cited conflict with and fear of his father as reasons for his decision to stay in Hanoi. He had been engaged in sex work for three years, during which he twice lived in with gay-identified men for extended periods of time. He had experience with anal sex during these periods. At the time of the interview, he was living with a female sex worker whom he considered as a girlfriend.

No	Names, and self-identification	Some characteristics of participants
9	Dương, 34, <i>bóng kín</i>	Born as the youngest son in a family of eight children, he was thirty-four years of age and identified himself as <i>bóng kín</i> , and this implied that no one besides his homosexual friends knew about his sexual identity. He said he always thought of himself as belonging to female gender since he was a young boy. He never got married although he had a brief period of living with a woman, which he considered as a time when he tested whether he was truly was a homosexual. Since then he had lived with several younger men, relationships in which he always provided material support for them. He experimented with selling sex in his early years of venturing out to the lake when he was not comfortable yet disclosing his identity. He was doing well economically and also worked as part-time peer educator with a MSM peer education network in the city. He said that the biggest pressure for him now was to get married to satisfy the wishes of his parents and his brothers/sisters.
10	Đức, 18, <i>trai</i>	He was 18 years of age and had been living in Hanoi for more than a year. He dropped out from high school and left for Hanoi after repeatedly stealing money from his family. His first work in Hanoi was sex work as he landed at the lake when he first arrived in the city. He learned quickly during the first year and had become one of the hot properties in the sex market at the lake. He identified himself as <i>trai</i> (young man selling sex) and had not engaged in anal sex at the time of the study
11	Huân, 25, <i>đàn ông</i>	A twenty-five years old man who had more than 6 years of selling sex in the streets of Hanoi. He dropped out at 6 th grade and left his home because his stepmother treated him poorly. He was also sexually abused by one of his uncle when he was a boy. He started to engage in sex work ever since arriving in the city. He used drugs regularly as he felt that he needed drug to carry on his life. He had lived with a women for a couple of year before she left him with their child. For a while before the first interview, he had been working as a pimp rather than selling sex himself since he became known around the lake as a drug addict and therefore his value was diminished. He constantly complained of sadness and loss during the interviews.
12	Lâm, 36, <i>bóng lộ</i>	A thirty-six year-old man who was born in a family of six children and he recalled that his parents were too busy making ends meet. He grew up knowing that he liked men more, but he only knew of the existence of place where men like him met by the time he was twenty. Since then he had a brief experience with selling sex, and had mostly bought sex from young men in the lake. He kept his family in total dark over his behaviors, and they continue to put pressure on him for marriage. He thought to himself that he just needed a marriage to please his parents and, more importantly, to have a child who would take care of him in his old age. He identified himself as <i>bóng lộ</i>

No	Names, and self-identification	Some characteristics of participants
13	Son, 48, <i>bóng lộ</i>	He was the oldest man in the group of participants. He was born in a family of six children, and his family knew about his sexual preference. He supported himself and his old parents by engaging in small trading and services for <i>lên đìces</i> (spirit possession ceremonies where dead persons were connected to living person through a medium). He once sold sex on the street when he disguised as a woman. He said that he preferred buying quick sex from younger men on the street as opposed to taking one home and keeping one for himself. He feared that one day he would be disappointed and betrayed by one of those men as it was often the case for other men like him. He identified himself as <i>bóng lộ</i>
14	Toàn, 23, <i>đàn ông</i>	A twenty-three year old migrant who worked in Hanoi for almost three years and got involved in sex work for about a year. He served in the army for two year and after that moved to Hanoi because he wanted to earn money independently from his family. He always felt guilty about being involved in sex work and tried to keep his involvement at minimum out of fear that someone would noticed him going out with men at the lake. He planned to exit sex work, or at least quit selling sex himself, and hoped that his job would get better and allow him to take care of his brother when he moved to Hanoi for study.
15	Phong, 26, <i>đàn ông</i>	He was twenty-six year-old and had been selling sex for almost five years. He dropped out of college after spending more time hanging out with his friends than studying. He was selling sex around the lake while living with his girlfriend who also provided support. He also worked as a lender for those who needed immediate cash around the lake. He had engaged in insertive anal sex and felt that he could make more money doing that for his clients. He identified himself as <i>đàn ông</i>
16	Tân, 25, <i>đàn ông</i>	This twenty-five year-old man dropped out of college after tuition money on gambling. He was one of the most attractive guys at the lake and had many customers, even though he had been selling sex for almost four years. He wanted to quit selling sex but had not found ways to do it. He had been engaged in insertive anal sex for two years, and identified himself as <i>đàn ông</i> since he still preferred to have sex with women. At the time of the study, he was working as an assistant for a physician office and the boss also paid him for sex occasionally. He had not returned to his family for almost two years since he felt that he felt that there was nothing he could tell his parents and made them proud of.
17	Hoàng, 28, <i>đàn ông</i>	A 28 year-old man who finished vocational training on electrical engineering. Since then he left his home in Hanoi to live on the streets. He felt that his parents didn't care about him and cited his constant fight with his father as the reason for leaving home. He never engaged in anal sex and identified himself as <i>đàn ông</i>

No	Names, and self-identification	Some characteristics of participants
18	Tú, 22, đàn ông	He was twenty-two years old and had been living in Hanoi for almost two years. He left his home to study in a vocational training school in Hanoi, but then dropped out after spending the money that his parents gave him for tuition and living expenses. He worked for a restaurant near the lake before moving across the street to sell sex. He identified himself as <i>đàn ông</i> and hoped that he would return home one day to offer apologies to his parents.
19	Khiêm, 22, <i>hifi</i>	A twenty-two year-old who identified himself as <i>hifi</i> (those who love and have sex with both men and women). He dropped out at 7 th grade as he felt upset with his father who was a gold digger and a drug addict who spent his family money on drugs. He had been staying in Hanoi for almost seven years, but engaging in other work before doing sex work for almost two years. He enjoyed sex with both men and women, and felt that he was increasingly interested in dressing as a <i>bóng lộ</i> . He had been engaged in both receptive and insertive sex.
20	Phiên, 22, <i>hifi</i>	A twenty-two year-old who identified himself as <i>hifi</i> . He was born in Hanoi and had been engaged in sex work for almost five years. He also worked as a bar attendant and yet still engaged in sex work frequently. He had a frequent client from Ho Chi Minh City with whom he spent time with every time the client came to Hanoi on business trips. He had been engaged in insertive anal sex.
21	Thắng, 45, <i>bóng lộ</i>	One of the most famous <i>bóng lộ</i> in Hanoi. She had a brief period of selling sex to men by disguising as a woman. However, most of her sexual experiences were with buying sex and with taking on young men who were lost in the city. Her family accepted her for who she is and she was proud that she could take care of her parents by staying with them more closely than other siblings. She had given up marriage for a long time and yet still wanted to have a child of her own so that she would not be lonely at old age.
22	Giáp, 24, đàn ông	A twenty-four year-old man who had two stints of working as male sex worker in Hanoi. In between he returned to his home village and travelled to other places to work as migrant laborer. He was also a drug addict and had spent time in 06 center once. His clients were mostly foreigners and he had two frequent customers who were foreigners working in Hanoi. He was living with a girlfriend and she knew about what he was doing but chose to keep silent. He identified himself as <i>đàn ông</i> and never engaged in anal sex. He planned to learn driving to become a taxi driver and got married as soon as he could
23	Ninh, 20, đàn ông	The twenty year-old dropped out of school at 11 th grade when he stole a bicycle of a friend and was punished by the school. He then left his home for Hanoi, and since had been engaged in sex work for more than two years. He had experience with insertive anal sex, however he insisted on having sex with women after each time he had anal sex in order to make sure that he would not become a homosexual man. He only returned home recently when his father passed away, and he felt that he was not welcome

No	Names, and self-identification	Some characteristics of participants
		at his home. At the time of the study, he was living with a female sex worker and found the relationship supportive for him. While he got involved in selling sex less, he started to get involved in breaking into others' home in order to steal money.
24	Kiên, 23, <i>đàn ông</i>	The twenty-three year old was born in a well-off family, but when the tension in the family got worse, he became distressed. He left his home after his mother died, presumably committing suicide, and he could not stand living with a step-mother. He had been engaged in sex work for about three years with a brief period that he stopped because he got married with a woman who was working in Hanoi. The couple lived happily for a few months and when she got pregnant and couldn't work, he returned to sex work and got even more involved. He also became a drug addict and spent almost all money he earned and therefore not able to support his wife. The woman left him after the childbirth and he was distraught. He never engaged in anal sex.
25	Lộc, 24, <i>đàn ông</i>	He was twenty-four at the time of the study. He was born in another province but moved to Hanoi since he was in junior high. He was kicked out of high school for beating a teacher. He had engaged in sex work for over two years but never engaged in anal sex. He identified himself as <i>đàn ông</i>

Appendix 2: Interview Protocols

2.1 Ethnographic interviews with migrant laborers (chapter 2)

SESSION 1: MAJOR LIFE EVENTS

I want to start our series of interview by getting a general picture of what your life has been like, especially the important events that have happened to you. Then I want to hear more about each of the events.

Some questions ask for information that you might consider as personal. Remember that you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to or find disturbing. I hope, however, that you will try to answer as many as you can, and to be as open as you can because I want to understand you as well as I can. But I am not here to judge you.

Draw a time line, and add to it throughout the interview in order to obtain a chronology of major life events in the person's life and major themes that require further attention in the next interviews

Can you start by telling me about some of the events in your early life that stand out in your mind as significant?

For each event, determine at what age it occurred, and if appropriate, the duration of the event, and get some factual details. Ask for both typical [e.g., school milestones] and atypical events [e.g., the first job away from home]. Probe further for details and 'stories'.

Some probing questions:

What were some of the happiest times for you? Some of the saddest times?

What would you say were some most significant events in your life up to the age of ...?

Tell me about some school events that are significant to you? Tell me about some friends that you had at school that you still remember?

What were so special those events that make you remember?

Can you tell me about events that happened to you or your family when you were a small boy? A teenager?

What about events that happened more recently?

Of those events, which made you the ways you are today? Which events made you become the man that you are today? Why so?

Do you think of any important things/events in your life that we have left out? What are they?

SESSION 2: CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Today I want to talk with you more about your childhood and adolescence periods, about your village and neighborhood where you grew up and about your memories of your childhood. Or in general I am going to ask questions about what it was like for you growing up.

Some questions ask for information that you might consider as personal. Remember that you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to or find disturbing. I hope, however,

that you will try to answer as many as you can, and to be as open as you can because I want to understand you as well as I can. But I am not here to judge you.

Comparing to the time line developed in the first interview in order to add or clarify events and milestones as appropriate.

Tell me about your village

When you were little, what was it like?

What was growing up in your village like?

How long has your family been living in the village? Were both your parents born there?

Tell me about your family

What were they like when you were little?

How many were in your family? Any siblings who died? Where did you fall in the lineup? Did everyone line together? Tell me about your siblings.

Do you remember anything positive that happened to anyone of your siblings? Anything negative?

Who did you play with most in your free time? What were the games that you liked the best?

Did you play inside or outside the house for the most parts? How were they different?

What were your parents like? How would you describe your relationships with your parents?

Who was the baby of the family, or were you all equal? Were there differences in how they treated their children e.g., between older and younger children, between boys and girls?

What were the things that your parents always telling you to do to be well behaved, to be a 'real boy'? Were there any differences in what your mother and your father told you?

What did you do that made them angry? What sort of things would they punish you for, and how would they punish you? Give me some examples.

Did they punish the girls for things that they let the boys do? Give me some examples.

When you got older, did they give you more freedom? Did they let you go late in the evening with or without friends? Did they let the girls go?

Do you remember something that they would not let you do that you wanted to do? Did you do it secretly? What else did you do secretly?

How did your parents raise you as a boy? Was there any difference with the ways they raise your sister? How?

How did your parents get along? How did they meet and get married? Would you like a marriage like theirs?

What was your father like? Was he living with your family? Did he drink?

Did your father join the army during the war? Has he ever talked about the time when he was in the army, or when he was young? Tell me about his stories.

And your mother, what was she like? Was she in the army or vanguard youth during the war? Tell me about her stories.

How did your parents made decision about things? For example, if they were going to spend some money on home furniture or buy an animal, who decided?

When you would all eat, who eat first and who waited on people? When your family received guests, who would eat with them?

How much conflict was there in the home when you were growing up, for example, arguing, fighting, or hitting? If so, how did family members resolve disagreements?

How would you think your future marriage would be different or same?

How did your family support itself? What kind of work did your father do? Who else worked to support the family?

Was there someone who worked far away from home that sent money? What kind of work did they do?

How much land did your family have? Besides paddy rice, what else did your family grow on that land? Was the rice yield sufficient for your family food needs? If so, was there any saving?

In both cases, what else did you family do to support other family needs such as house building, buying furniture?

Did you do something to contribute to supporting the family? If not, would you have liked to and what would you have done? If you did, did you have to give all the money to your parents, or did you keep some?

Did your sisters or brothers do anything? How were their money treated differently?

How about the housework – who did what? What were your jobs? What about your brothers and sisters – what did they do?

Tell me about your family's house

What was it made of? How did your parents get the money to build or to expand it? How big was the land around the house? What was it used for?

Did everyone share one room to sleep in, or were there several rooms? Who did you share a bed with and until when?

How did your house compare to others in the village?

How was the land divided among yourselves when you guys started to have your own families?

Who live with your parents now? How that decision was made?

Tell me about your school experiences?

Did you go to school? What is the last grade that you finished? What about your siblings?

How was it like to be in school? What were the best parts, the worst parts?

Who helped you get through school? Was there anyone in school you look up to?

When did you leave school? Why and how the decision was made? What were your parents' reactions?

More general questions

What were your happiest memories from childhood? What are the memories that seem a little sad to you?

When you were a boy, were there any adults you felt you wanted to become like when you grew up? Who was that person? Why did you want to become like that person?

When you were a boy, what kinds of ideas did you have about how your life might be when you grow up? What were your plans and dreams?

What did you parents want for you as a boy and as a man? What did they tell you about their expectations? Were there any differences from what they expect for your brothers, or your sisters?

Now when you reflect and compare between what they expected from you and what you are today, what are some of the differences, similarities? How so?

SESSION 3: WORK, MIGRATION AND MONEY

Today I want to talk with you about your work history, especially work for which you have to travel away from home, and how you spend the money that you have earned. Please keep in mind that we will talk about things that maybe you are not so used to talking about, and that you might find some questions disturbing. If you are not comfortable talking about any questions, you should just tell me and we will skip those questions.

Working and Earning Money

For single man:

When did you start working to earn money? Why did you want to work?

Tell me more about the first work for money that you engaged in – what kind of work was it?

Did you decide on your own that you wanted to work, or did someone else tell you to? If you decided on your own, did you have to ask someone's permission?

Some probing questions:

What was your first work for money like? Was it inside or outside your home, inside or outside your village? Did you work with others in your village?

Why did you want/choose to work in? Were there other kinds of work that you could have chosen? If so, what were they?

What did you like and not like about your first work?

How much did you earn? What did you do with the money? Did you give it to your mother or father, or did you keep some back for yourself?

Now when you think about that first job, tell me how important was it for you? What did you like and not like about your first work?

Tell me about other jobs that you have had since your first work?

What make you decide to work on the highway? What were some of your concerns when you were making the decision? Did you discuss with someone? What were some of your family's concerns? Now when you think about those concerns, what have been relieved or what still remain?

In general, what do you think about the importance of work for money for a man and for a woman? How about the importance of work away from home for a man and for a woman?

Additional questions for married man:

Tell me about the jobs that you have had since you got married? When did you start working outside your home after you got married?

How did you decide to work outside your home? Did you discuss your decision with someone? What did your wife say about your decision, about your working?

Tell me how your jobs differ before and after you got married? Tell me how your use of the money that you earned differ before and after you got married?

When you are not working away from home, what are the things that you usually do in a normal day? What about your wife?

In general, what do you think about the importance of work for money for a married man and for a married woman? How about the importance of work away from home for a married man and for a married woman?

Migration for Work

Before your first work away from home, did you ever stay away from your village, even for a short period of time? Tell me about that particular experience of yours. Where did you go? Whom did you stay with? Who took care of you while you were away from home?

Tell me about your first experience of staying away from home for work. Were your experiences different from what you had imagined before leaving home? How have your experiences changed in your subsequent trips away from home for work?

Tell me about different places that you have been to work or to stay. Where did you stay longest? Where do you like most or hate most, and why? Have you ever gone to work with strangers i.e., people who are not from your village or whom you met for the first time? If so, tell me about those experiences – how were they different from working with people you know or from your village?

In general, how do you stay in touch with your family when you are away?

Money: do you send it to whom, and how, and how often, and how much?

Letters? Phone Calls?

What do you miss most when you are away from home for work?

How often did you come back when your first worked away from home? How often do you come home these days? What do you do when you come back home? How do your family members and your village fellows look at you when you come back home? What do they usually ask you about when you come back? How do you see your village life and your family life changing in between your trips away from home? Do you find it hard to fit again into the life of your village and your family?

Moving to your impressions of life in the highway, what are they? How are they different from your previous experiences of working away from home?

What had you heard about life in the highway?

From where had you heard it? People who had gone there, or the movies or the newspapers?

Among your relatives and/or your village neighbors, who had gotten to the Ho Chi Minh Trail during the war? What did they tell you about their experiences?

In general, why do single men go to work away from home? And why do men with families go? Do they look for different things when they decide to work away? Why do some men decide not to go? Who are they?

How do men manage without a woman to take care of them? What are the things that they might miss about a woman?

How common is it for women in your village to work away from home, for single women and for married women? For single women who go, even if they are few – what might be their reasons? How about women with families? Why do so few women in general, especially single women, go?

In general, if a man or a woman in your village wants to work away from home, what he or she has to do? Who helps them to get started?

Would you like your siblings to go work away from home?

What are some of the things that people take into account when they are deciding if they will go to work away from home or not?

Spending Money

I would like you to tell me how you manage the money that you earn. Do you keep it for your own use or do you give it to someone else? If you give it to someone else, do you usually give a small part, a major part or the total, of what you earn? Why do you give money to that particular person?

Do you feel that you have been able to save money from your work? What are you going to do with that money?

It seems that it is more difficult for young men to save money than men with families and young women – why is it the case? What are some of the expenses young men have that the other groups don't? What are some of the ways that young men do to reduce expenses and to save money?

My observation tells me that workers usually do not receive their salaries on a monthly basis. Rather they receive money when there are advances from the company or when the group finalizes their contract. Tell me if that's the case of your group or not? Is that's the case, from whom do you usually borrow money in case of emergency or when you need the money for some urgent expenses? Why those persons? How difficult is it for you to borrow money?

For married men:

Do you give money that you earn from your work to your wife? Does your wife make money at home too? What does she do? Does your family have any other sources of income in terms of cash e.g., support from siblings, parents, or children? Who would you both go to ask for money if your family needed to borrow?

Do you have your own money that you don't have to account for or explain how you spend it? If you needed money and don't want to tell your wife, who would you go to?

What if you want to give money to your parents, to your siblings or to someone else, do you talk about it with your wife?

How are financial decisions made in your family? Give me an example.

If you and your wife don't agree about how to spend money, how do you and your wife come to an agreement? What are some of the things that your wife wants to buy and need to discuss with you? What are some of the things that you want to buy and need to discuss with your wife? What if she doesn't agree?

SESSION 4: MEN'S BODIES AND MEN'S HEALTH

Today I would like to hear from you what it means to be a man in terms of our bodies, our health and our virility. We will talk about things that maybe you are not used to talking about, and I do not want to offend you. If it seems too uncomfortable to you, or if you don't want to answer some questions, that's fine and you should just let me know.

Men's Bodies

So first, to understand what you think and know about men's bodies, I would like you to draw for me how you imagine a man's body inside (do body mapping.)

How did you learn about a man's body? What are some of the most important organs for a man's body? Why?

Tell me some of the differences between men's bodies and women's bodies. Do you remember how you learned about those differences?

So where does semen come from?

How did you learn about semen – do you remember your first experience with 'night wetness'?

Did you talk about it with someone – and whom did you talk with?

What does semen do for a man's body? How important is semen for a man's body, for a man's health? What are some of the things that a man should do to nurture his semen?

Men's Health

What is health, for you?

What are the things that a man should do, to be in good health? Are they the same for men and women?

What are the things that you manage to do to take care of your body, of yourself, and to be in good health?

How can a man know if he is healthy or not?

What are some of the illnesses that men have a lot?

In general, what are the things that you think can make you sick? Are there some that just affect men, or illnesses that men are more disposed to than women? Tell me why.

Now, tell me about your health. Tell me about any health problems that you are dealing with or are worried about. Has a doctor or health professional ever given you a diagnosis? Do you agree with it? Tell me about that experience. Were you ever in the hospital and for what reasons?

Tell me about the last time you got sick. Did you go to the doctor? Where did you treat it, and with whom, and how did you pay for it? Did you have to borrow money, and from whom?

What have you heard about illnesses that men who run wild can catch, or give to their wives or their lovers?

What are the names of those illnesses? What are their symptoms, and how are they transmitted? How can they be prevented?

Do you know (whether man or woman) anyone who has had one of those sicknesses? Without telling me his or her name, tell me about what happened to that person.

How can you know if your partner has an infection?

Among your various worksites, where do you think there is a greater risk of getting an STD? Is there a greater risk in this highway as compared to your home village or other worksites? Why?

Now let's talk about HIV/Aids.

What do you know about Aids? What do you know about Aids? How is it transmitted, and how can it be prevented? Where do you think it comes from? Have you known anyone who has it? Do you know anyone who has taken an HIV test?

Let's talk about condoms.

Do you know other names for them?

Have you ever used one? How did it happen that you used one – with whom, why did you choose to use a condom? Tell me about that experience.

If you have never used one, have you ever seen one yourself? When was the first time that you saw a condom? Why didn't you try to use condom once? Do you know anyone who has used condom?

What else do you think about condoms?

Mental Health

What about your 'mental health'? Are you experiencing any concerns about your mental health, such as feeling anxious or nervous, depressed or something like that?

Have you felt 'stressed' over the past month? When was the last time that you felt 'stressed' out?

Tell me about that experience. What kinds of things stress you out? What do you do to deal with stress?

Were you ever in a psychiatric hospital or institution? Why?

Experience with alcohol and smoking

What does alcohol do to a man's body and to men's health? What does alcohol use mean to a man – what if a man can't drink alcohol?

What does smoking do to a man's body and to men's health? What does smoking mean to a man – what if a man can't smoke?

Tell me about your family's attitudes towards alcohol and smoking when you were growing up. How are your attitudes similar to or different from your family's attitudes?

Did members of your family use alcohol or smoke when you were growing up? Tell me about that. Do your fathers or brothers use alcohol or smoke? How do you compare to them in terms of alcohol use and smoking?

When did you first use alcohol? Tell me about that story (where, with whom, what contexts, what thoughts did he have, what effects, like or not like)

Was there a time when you drank frequently or heavily? Tell me about that experience. Why do you think you were drinking heavily or frequently at that time?

Did you ever have problems because of alcohol use – such as conflicts with friends or wife, job problems, health problems?

Tell me about the times you drank alcohol in the past month (where, with whom, what contexts, what thoughts did he have, like or not like)

What does drinking alcohol affect sex, for you? When you drink, are you more or less likely to have sex? Or do you avoid sex when you are drinking?

When did you first smoke? Tell me about that story (where, with whom, what contexts, what thoughts did he have, what effects, like or not like)

Was there a time when you smoke more frequently or heavily than what you are doing now? Tell me about that experience. Why do you think you were smoking more heavily or frequently at that time?

Men's Virility

Some men have experience with premature ejaculation when having sex, what do you think as reasons for that kind of experience? What are the things that a man should do to avoid that kind of experience?

Some couples have difficulty in having a child – what do you think as reasons? What happens to the couple who can't have children – to the husband and to the wife?

What is a marriage like without kids, and without a son?

How important is it for a man to have children, to have many children? What does it mean for a man to have many children?

What are some of things that a man should do to keep his virility?

There are some alternatives for couples that can't have children in 'natural' ways, such as IVF or adoption. What do you think about those options? Do you know any couples that have used IVF or adopted a child?

What are the reasons that people want: to wait to have a child, to have another child, or to not have anymore? What about if husband and wife do not agree about whether they should have more kids or not – who would have the final say and why? What if the woman uses a method to prevent pregnancy without letting her husband know?

What do you know about the things that can be done to prevent a pregnancy? Which ones are best for recently married couples, for the couple that already has some and wants more but not right now, and for the couple that definitely does not want any more? What do you know and think about male sterilization, female sterilization and abortion?

SESSION 5: SOCIAL NETWORK, COURTSHIP, SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL BEHAVIORS, AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Today I would like to hear from you what it means to be a man in terms of our social relations, love relations, family and sexuality. The questions that I am going to ask you are pretty personal, and even though you know that I am not doing it to offend you, I want to remind you that you don't have to answer them if you don't want to.

First let's go back to childhood, so I can learn a little bit more about how you learned about what goes on between men and women.

When did you start to feel more like a young man and less like a boy? What is the difference between being a girl and a young man? What was changing then? How did you feel? How did you feel about your body then? Who did you talk with about these changes? Did your family do something to celebrate your shift from being a boy to being a young man? Afterwards, did they let you do more things, or did they keep a tighter rein on you?

Social Network

Who are the people that you get together to chat, to hang out, and to spend time drinking with the most? Who is important to you? Who could you ask for help if you needed it? Who can you count on if you have a problem?

How do people get to be part of your social world? How important are these people to you? How are these people similar to and different from you? What do you and these people do together? What are the social groups you are part of? What does it mean for you to be part of those groups?

Did you ever fight? Tell me about some of your experiences with fighting (with whom, what contexts, reasons, feelings afterwards, any injuries)

Courtship: Now I'd like to talk a little bit more about courtship, its customs and practices at your home village.

What does it mean to you to have a girlfriend and to be a boyfriend? How is courtship different from friendship? Could one have more than one girlfriend at a time? What does having a girlfriend mean for being a young man?

How did you choose a girlfriend? Did you have any suitors that you didn't want as a girlfriend? What didn't you like about them?

What is a good girlfriend? How do you know if she has good intentions? What would you do so that your girlfriend would love you? What does the idea of love mean between boyfriend and girlfriend? Was trust also important? What does trust consist of between girlfriend and boyfriend? How about respect?

Tell me some stories about your courtships? Tell me about your first relationship? How did you meet each other? What did you do while courting? How did you see each other? Secretly? If so, for how long?

Were you ever jealous as a boyfriend? What kind of thing made you jealous or mad? What about her?

Did you talk? What were some of the things that you talked about?

Did you hold hands, kiss, or what? What kinds of fooling around did you do?

How does courtship change, as you get older? For married man, how did you decide to marry your wife or how did you two decide?

How has your relationship with your wife changed, since you got married? What about other people, how do they treat you differently once you are a married man?

What was your parents' attitude towards your courtships? Did they let you talk and meet with your girlfriend? Did her parents let her talk and meet you? Were you allowed to visit her at her house? If not, why? Did you parents tell you what you had to be careful about? And if you were careful, what was it that you were caring for, and why?

What were your friends' roles in your courtship? Did they play any roles at all?

In your view, how has courtship changed today as compared to what it was in your parents' generation?

Marriage and Family Life/Sexuality and Sexual Behaviors

Some questions are appropriate either married men or unmarried men, some for both groups.

What did you know about relations between men and women, including sexual relationship? How did you learn? What did you imagine? Who else told you things?

At what age did you first sexual experience occur? Who was it with? How old was your partner? Tell me about that experience. Was it the first time after you got married, or had you done it while courting? How did you feel at your first experience?

I would like to have a picture of the rest of your life, focusing on your sexual relationships. You already told me about your early experience, now tell me some other 'milestones' you have

experienced, such as the first time you experienced some other sexual practices or when new relationships occurred?

And now that you have been married (or in a relationship) longer, how do you communicate about what you are doing or going to do? When you are going to have sex, do you talk and touch each other? How do you know what and if she likes – does she tell you? Who often initiate when you have sex? How does it usually happen?

There are couples that, for example, have oral sex, that is with the mouth of one and the genitals of the other. Is that something that people here do? What about other practices?

And what about desire for sex – what causes it? Can men control themselves when they are in the mood? Why? What about women? Why?

Can men be harmed if they are very horny and do not get satisfied? How about women?

And if you want to have sex, can you say that to your wife? How does it usually happen?

What do you think about married men having flings with other women? What about women who do that? Is desire the same for both?

What does orgasm mean to you? If men are not satisfied in bed, what could happen? How important is it for a man to be satisfied in his sexual relationship with his wife?

How about women – do women have something similar to like the man comes and feels relaxed?

What happens if women are not satisfied in bed? How is the same or different, what men and women want from sex?

What are some of the things that prevent you and your wife from being satisfied in bed? When you have sex, do you worry that your kids will hear you?

What are some of the methods that you and your wife/girlfriend have done to get pregnant or to avoid pregnancy?

The first time that you had sex, did you think about using some methods to avoid pregnancy?

Did you talk with your partner about it? How long did you use that method? If it wasn't the first time then, when was the first time you and your partner took precautions? What methods did you use then, and why? Why did you want to avoid pregnancy?

Did you talk with your wife about when you were going to have children or did you decide alone? How about the number? Why not more or less?

What were things that you and your wife took into account when deciding if you were going to have another child or not? (probing: economic reasons, the meanings of a good family)

Tell me, what are men's responsibilities in marriage? Women's?

What does one need, to be a good husband? A good wife?

Why are there women who put up with men who drink or hit them or run around on them? Are there men who put up with wives or girlfriends who run around with other men?

What are some of the reasons for a husband to hit his wife? Have you ever hit your wife or your girlfriend? Tell me about that experience (reasons, contexts, feelings afterwards, reactions of wife or girlfriend, reactions of others)

How can you tell a married man from an unmarried man? What about women?

What is the role that sexual relationship plays in married life? What should ideals for a marriage be like? Would you like a marriage that is like your parents? In what ways?

Tell me about what it's like to be a father.

When you were a young man, what did you think it would be like to be a mother?

How has it been for you, fatherhood?

What does one need to be a good father? A good mother?

How has your relationship with your wife changed, since you have had kids?

What about other people, how they treat you differently once you have children?

What kind of father do you want to be? How do you want to be similar or different to your own father? What are the things that fathers have to do or give to their children? How is it different for mothers?

And to finish, what sort of life would you like to imagine for your sons? For your daughters?

2.2 Life history interviews with methadone users in Hai Phong (chapter 3)

SESSION 1: LIFE STORY, DRUG USE EXPERIENCE

Thank you for spending time on our research. This is the first stage in the three session indepth interview that you are cordially invited to join in the coming month. In each interview session, we always start off by listening to your life story. You can start your story telling in any way you want to. We will not interrupt you and do not ask any further question while you tell your life story.

After you finish your life story telling, we will pose you some questions of different subjects which vary from one interview session to another. In this interview session, you will be asked about your first drug use, your personal situation and drug use, methadone experience as well as your future plans in life.

During the interview session, if there is any question you do not want to answer, do not hesitate to let me know and we could move on with another question.

Part 1: Life story

If a stranger (like me) wanted to get to know more about you and had a desire to listen to your story of life, how would you narrate your story? You can start off at any period of life since you were a kid till now, or you can choose to talk about any subject of your life that you want to.

Feel free to tell your story because I will not ask any further question on it. It does not mean I have no interest in your story. It is because we will have chances to return to the story and ask for more information in the next sessions. It is when you can change or add any details of your life story.

- Each person have their own life history, what about your story?

Do not ask anymore. When the interviewee finishes their story, move to the next part.

Part 2: Childhood

1) Please tell me about **your family when you were a kid** (*these are some suggestions for interviewers to make if the interviewee do not mention*)

- Most of us have our own model of person influencing us (or important to us) in a special way when we were a kid. Did you have that role model? If yes, please tell me something about that person and explain me how he/she influenced you?
- How was your family financial situation when you were a kid? What did your father do for a living?
- Please tell me about **your parents when you were a kid**. What kind of people is your dad? Please tell me about his life. And how about your mom, what kind of people is your mom? Please tell me about her life?
- **How is your relationship with your parents now?** Is there any difference between your relationship with your parents now and it used to be when you were a kid? How is your relationship with your siblings? Is there any difference between your relationship with your siblings now and it used to be when you were a kid?
- **What kind of people or men your parents expected you to be?** Did they tell you about their expectations?
- How your current self similar and differs from your parents' expectations? In your opinion, what are the reasons for that?

- 2) Please tell me about **your schooling: how did your learning at school go?**
 - What do you like and dislike the most about school? What are memorable events of your schooling?
 - *(If the subject dropped out their school)* When did you drop out school? Why did you drop out? How did your parent think about it?
- 3) When you were a kid, **did you have a role model and you wanted to grow up becoming like them?** Please tell me about that role model and the reasons why you wanted to become like them?

Part 3: Drug use experience

- 1) I would like to know about **your first time using drug (heroin)**. How did that happen?
 - Where did you first use drug? Why did you use drug that time?
 - Who was the one that instructed you to use drug in your first time? What did they tell you about drug?
 - Please tell me about your feelings and thinking in the first time using drug?
 - When you recall that first drug use now, what do you think of how that first time means to you and your life after that?
- 2) How long did it take for you to **become addicted to drug** after that first use? Please tell me some key events of that period.
 - When did you find out that you were officially addicted? How did you find out about it?
 - How did that affect you and your family members?
 - Please tell me about how did you subsidize drug use before and after you found out that you were addicted?
- 3) Since you were addicted to drug, how did your life change? Please tell me about some important changes that you think.
 - During your addiction, was there anything you wanted to do but you could not do it? And why?
- 4) When you were drug addicted, how did your daily life go since you woke up until you went to bed?
 - How often you use drug? And where?
 - Did you hang out? If yes, where did you hang out and who did you go with? What time did you often go home?
- 5) When did **your family found out** that you were drug addicted? In which case? How did your family respond to it?
 - What did your father/mother say?
 - What did you think about your family's response?

- 6) How long did it take for **your neighbors and local administrators** to find out that you were drug addicted?
- What were their attitudes toward you? What did you think about it?
 - What words do local people use to refer to an addict? What do you think about those words?

Part 4.1: Addiction treatment and relapse experience

- 1) What kind of addiction treatment models that you have used? *(Let the subject make their own category)*
- 2) Please tell me about the addiction treatment of which you have best memory? And the one you have worse memory? *To each good or bad treatment, ask them about:*
- Why did you take up that addiction treatment model (reasons, thinking)? Who decide your addiction treatment?
 - How did that addiction treatment go? How long did you undergo addiction treatment?
- 3) *(If the subject experienced addition treatment at 06 Center or any close addiction treatment settings before)* Please tell me about your addiction treatment at 06 Center.
- What is the name of the center? Where is it?
 - What did you think about **the first day** at the center?
 - How long did it take for you to stop craving? In the center, what did they do to help you and other people overcome craving?
 - Please tell me about your daily life at the addiction treatment center? What did you do in the morning, at noon, in the afternoon and at night?
 - Regarding that addiction treatment experience, why and how were you chosen to go for addiction treatment center by your local authority (or you voluntarily choose to go for it)? *(Interviewers pay attention to decision making process: the family members agreed with the decision, the family members opposed it, the role of local authority, the role of local police, is there any adequate procedure of selection, is there any "gap" that people can take use to be out of sight, how do they take use of the "gap"?)*
 - What is the best memory you have living and getting addiction treatment in the center? And what is the worse memory of it?
 - I could never imagine the relationship between an administrator and an addiction treatment patient in the center, could you please tell me about how did they treat you and your fellows? ?
 - What is the most important rule you have to follow in the center? If a person violates the rule in the center, what is the punishment? Have you ever been punished?
 - Please tell me about some friends you usually communicate with the addiction treatment center?

Part 4.2: Relapse

- 1) Please recall **the first day you coming back home from the first addiction treatment in the center**, how was the day?
 - What were the expectations of the new life that you have before coming back home? How did you feel when you returned home?
 - How did your family (your parents, your siblings) welcome you home? What did you talk about?
 - What did you first do when you got home?
 - Who did you first when you got home?
- 2) How long did it take for you to relapse after the first addiction treatment? In which circumstance?

SESSION 2: METHADONE TREATMENT AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Thank you for participating in the second interview session of our research. Today I would like to talk with you about your methadone treatment, your situation and methadone experience, your relationship with your family, friends, neighbors during your methadone treatment as well as their expectations of your methadone treatment. We will also discuss about your occupation in the past and what you think of stigma you have to suffer from in life.

Part 1: Life story

Similar to the previous session, I would like to start off by asking you to continue with your life story. In the first interview session, you told me some details of your life story (*interviewers would remind the subjects of the content of their life story*), do you want to change or add many more details in your story? (*Do not ask anymore. When the interviewee finishes their story, move to the next part*)

Part 2: Methadone treatment experience

- 1) Please tell me about your methadone treatment. You can kick off by saying anything you want to tell me about the most.
 - When did you start interested in Methadone? In which circumstance?
 - From whom you heard about methadone? What did they tell you? How did you think of what they said?
 - At that time, what was your first imagination of the treatment? How did it mean to you taking part in this treatment program?
 - What are the reasons for that you decide to choose Methadone treatment?
 - Who decide your Methadone treatment? You decided it on your own or under anyone's influence?
- 2) Please tell me about the first time you took in methadone
 - How did you feel in that first time taking in methadone? Was there any similarity or difference from heroin use prior to it?
 - How the feelings have changes so far?

- 3) How many times did it take until you have a stable dose of Methadone? What are the difficulties of dose diagnosis? What did the doctors explain you?
- 4) How long did it take since you first used methadone till you felt you could no longer use heroin? How did it feel? How could you explain it?
- 5) What are the personal changes you experience since you used Methadone till now?
 - How do the changes differ from those of other addiction treatment you had before?
 - What you failed to do before but you can do it now? Why do you make the change?
 - Is there any place that you never hung out before but you start to hang out there now? What make the change?
- 6) Please tell me **about your typical (normal) daily life since you started methadone treatment.** What happen in a day?
 - What do you often do when you wake up?
 - What time do you often go to your clinic? Who do you often go with?
 - When you are in the waiting list to take medicine, what do you often do or what do you often talk to others about? After taking medicine, what do you often do?
 - Where do you often go after you take the medicine? What else do you often do?
- 7) On reference to the methadone clinic that you attend, what comforts you? What discomforts you? And why?
- 8) On reference to the regulations at Methadone clinics, what do you think of these regulations? Which one of them is the hardest to follow? And why?
 - If you can make any change, which regulation will you change? And why?
 - What is the most frequently violated regulation?
 - What are punishments for people who violate regulations? How do they face the punishment? Have you ever been punished before?
- 9) Please tell me about healthcare providers in this methadone clinic. How do they treat you? And other people?
 - How do they call you and other people who receive methadone treatment? What do you think of it? (*Interviewers might make suggestions: for example I often heard of them referring people who take methadone to treatment patients, in your opinion, why do they do that, what kind of disease is it related to?*)
 - How do they holla at you? When do they call methadone user as “that guy”, “it”?
 - In your opinion, what do methadone treatment provides most expect in methadone users like you? What worries and upsets them the most?
- 10) Please tell me about changes in your family since you started this methadone treatment routine?

- What did your father/mother or brother/sister say about their expectations when you started this routine?
 - What did they advise you? What do you think of those advices?
 - How do they treat you? Is there any change compared to the way they treated you before? Is there any thing you start to do to your family now that you never did it before?
- 11) What are the changes in your relationship with other people in your neighborhood (neighbors, friends, relatives, local administrators)?
- 12) What are the major difficulties you have in life now? Which of those difficulties relates to methadone use? Which of those do not relate to methadone use? And why?
- Do you have any problem in proving people that you no longer use drug? Who do you have to prove? How do you prove it?
- 13) Who support you the most since you started methadone use till now? Could you please elaborate the support that you receive from that party?
- 14) Have you ever bear in mind the plan to quit this methadone treatment?
- 15) What is your future plan in life? Could you please tell me about that? (*the plan might related to occupation, family, friends, ect*)
- When did you have that plan? Since when it become more obvious?
 - What are the obstacles that your plan has to face?

Part 3. Occupation

- 1) What is your first paid job? Please tell me about that job.
- 2) Please recall all the jobs you have had so far, which job do you like the most? Which job do you dislike the most? And why? What kind of job that you dislike? And why?
 - *Interviewers pay attention to learn more about the meaning of each paid job to the subject (for example, what does the job mean? To whom? In which case? What pressures that make the subject worry about it?)*
- 3) What is your paid job now? How does this job mean to you?

SESSION 3: LIFE STORY AND PEERS, LOVE AND SEXUAL EXPERIENCE AND HEALTH PROBLEMS

Thank you for participating in our interview session today. This is our last interview session with you. Today, I would like to talk about your relationships with your friends, love and sex experiences as well as some health related issues. At the end of this interview session, you will have a chance to change or add any details to the life story that you have told us in the last two interview sessions. You can also provide feedback on the interview sessions.

Part 1. Friends

- 1) Please tell me about some closet friends of yours at the moment
 - How long have you been close friends? What make you close together?
 - How do these closet friends mean to you in life?
 - How is your relationship with these closest friends now?

Part 2. Marriage/Sexual/Love experience

- 1) Could you please tell me about your first love?
 - How did you two meet? What made you felt in love with that person?
 - Could you please tell me about the most impressive memory of you?
 - Did you have sex with your partner of the first love? What did it mean to you?
 - How is your relationship with your partner now? If you broke up, what are the reasons for that?
 - At that time, what did you think about most important things to lovers? Is there any change in your thinking now? And what are the changes?
- 2) Please tell me about your sexual life during your drug use and now? What are the differences?
 - *Interviewers investigate more about: sexual desire and behaviors, the role of sexuality in marriage life and self affirmation, in family planning like having kids, ect.*
 - *Interviewers also should pay attention two how drug (or methadone) use affects the subject and which treatment they use to improve the situation.*
- 3) *(Whether the subject got married or have trial marriage or not should be clarified before interviews)* Please tell me about your spouse (or the partner living with you) and your current family?
 - How did you and your spouse meet? How long have you been marriage? What make you live together?
 - When did you start using drug? Before or after getting married?
 - What does your spouse think of your methadone treatment?
 - What are the difficulties of your current marriage life?
- 4) Which difficulties you have to face in your current (trial) marriage life related to methadone use? *(Interviewers could pay attention to sexual life, occupation, daily life activities which are influenced in both good and bad way by methadone use)*
- 5) What is the plan of yours and your (partner's) spouse's to your family? *(Interviewers could pay attention to having kids, occupation, building house, ect)*
- 6) *(If the subject is single)* Please tell me about your future plan in love or getting married in the next few years?
 - Do you have any plan to find a partner/wife? Why do you have that plan? Why do not you have a plan?
 - What are criteria for you future spouse?

Part 3: Health issues

- 1) What is your biggest health issue now? And why?
- 2) How do you think of your health since you started to have methadone treatment?
 - What are the biggest differences compared to the period when you used drug?

Part 4: Gendered social characteristics

- 1) What is your family responsibility now? Regarding this question, I want to know about your big family instead of your own family (*if the subject is married*)
- 2) Being a husband/wife/partner (*Interviewers choose the best word*), what is your responsibility toward your family life (or love life)? Do you think that you are a good husband/wife/partner? Why and why not? How does your husband/wife/partner think of you as a spouse/partner?
- 3) What are the difficulties you have to face in fulfill your responsibilities with your own family and your big family? What difficulties related to methadone treatment? Which of them relate to drug use?
- 4) When did you start to feel like man instead of feeling like a boy? (*this question is only applied to male subjects*)
 - In your opinion, what is a truly man? How a man differs from a boy or a youngster?
 - How did you think when you started to feel like a grown up man?
 - How does it mean to you **becoming a grown up man**? What make you scared or worried the most becoming a grown up? What do you expect the most when you become a grown up?
 - When did you (start to) feel that you can make your own decisions without your parents' permission?

Part 5: Life story and thoughts of interview sessions

- 1) In the previous session, we have had chance to talk about your life story, do you want to change or add any detail to it?
- 2) The last question: Thanks to the interview session, we have had chance to discuss and I have get to know more about you and your family. What do you think of the interview sessions? For example, do you get to know anything new about yourself that you never aware before?

Interviews should prepare details you want to clarified or ask for further information about life story of the interviewee or other content to add to this part beforehand.

2.4 Life history interviews with men who sell sex in Hanoi (chapter 4)

SESSION # 1: LIFE HISTORY, SEX WORK AND SEXUALITY

This is the first interview of four indepth interviews that we ask you to join in the next one month. In every interview session, we always kick off by asking you to tell us about your life story. You can refer to it by any mean and in any way that you want. While you are telling us your story, we only listen and do not ask any further information.

After you finish your life story telling, we will pose you some questions of different subjects which vary from one interview session to another. For example, in the first session, we will ask you about the circumstance in which you first provide sexual services, about your daily life related to sex work and some questions about your sexuality. Please kindly note that we might discuss about subjects which can discomfort you. In such cases, please let me know and we will move on with another question.

Part 1: Life history

If a stranger (like me) wanted to get to know more about you and had a desire to listen to your **story of life**, how would you narrate your story? You can start off at any period of life since you were a kid till now, or you can choose to talk about any subject of your life that you want to.

Please be alert that I will not ask any further information about your story does not mean that I do not care about it. We will have a chance to come back to your life story in the next sessions. It is when you can change or add some details in your life history and it is also when I can ask for more about it.

- Each person have their own life history, what about your story?

Do not keep asking. When the interviewee finishes their story, move to the next part.

Part 2: Childhood memories

- 4) **What is your oldest memory** of your family or hometown? Please tell me about that.
- 5) Please tell me about **your family when you were a kid**.
- 6) Most of us have our own model of person influencing us (or important to us) in a special way when we were a kid. Did you have that role model? If yes, please tell me something about that person and explain me how he/she influenced you?
 - How was your family financial situation when you were a kid? What did your father do for a living? Was there any others who played as key bread-winners in your family?
- 7) Please tell me something about your **schooling**: How did your school go?
 - What did you like the most about your school? And what did you hate the most?
 - When did you drop out your school? Why did you decide to drop out school? How did the decision making process go? How did your parents response to it?
- 8) When you were a boy, was **there anyone that you wanted to grow up becoming like him/her**? Please tell me about him/her and the reasons why you wanted to become like them.
- 9) **What kind of people or men your parents wanted you to become to?** Did they share with you're their expectations?
 - What is the common and differences between your current self and your parents' expectations? According to you, what are the reasons for that?

Part 3: Sex work and sexuality

1. Sex market

- 1) I want to understand the reasons why **you came here (the lake or places that interviewees come to sell sexual services) and your impressions of the first time you came here?**
 - Why did you decide to do it at that time (in the first time)? I want to get to know about events, reasons or figures that influence your decision to come to work by the lake
 - What memory impressed you the most (the most memorable thing) the first time you came here? And what was the most surprising thing to you?
- 2) Please tell me about **your typical daily routine** when you are here (in details). How is a typical day going?
 - How long do you often spend here everyday?
 - What time do you often arrive? How do you prepare before you go? What activities you do here? How many customers do you often have everyday? What time do you often come home?
 - Are you familiar with all people who have come here frequently? Who do you most often communicate or meet when you come here?

2. Sex work

- 7) I want to know more about **the first time you sell sex to a customer** (the term customer I use here refer to those pay your sexual activities money or other material stuffs such as accommodation, food, clothes and valuable products like cell-phones, vehicles, ect). How did it happen?
 - *Interviewers pay attention to uncover details like: locations, events that lead to the first time of sex selling, the interviewee's explanation for the first time, the role of "customers" (the interviewee might not consider them as customers) in the first sex selling, the way to have sex during the first time (it may be or may not be insertive sex) , the person who were more active in having sex and whether the interview were sober, the feelings of the interviewee after having sex, the common things and differences of the first time having sex (exclusively to those who had sex before)?*
- 8) **Some details of the work:** You do your sex work on your own or you do it with your friends? How much money you often get? From what jobs? You usually wait for your customers to come or you take the initiative to contact them? Where do you often have sex (where did you meet your customer before?) Have you ever sell sex at other places in Hanoi or other province? Do you have anything to tell me more about your current job (sex work)?
- 9) Please tell me about your most favorite customer (uncover details about context, way of having sex, how the interviewee feels at that time and why you like that person the most?). How about the customer you hate the most? Please tell me about him (also try to get details like those of the most favorite customer). When you meet your customers, what are your expectations and what do you (want to) avoid?

3. Sexual experience/Sexual desire

- 1) I want to know about your sexual experience, your **first time of having sex** for instance? Please tell me about it as much detailed as possible.
 - *Details interviewers should pay attention to: person (or people) the interviewee have sex with at their first time, the relationship of the interviewee and that person (or*

people), the ways they use in that first time having sex, the location of sexual activities, condom use during insertive sex and how the interviewee feels about that first time having sex ?

2) **How important that first time matters to you?** In which way?

3) Since the first time, **how your sexual life has changed?**

- The changes related to sex partners (gender, sex partner's socio-economic features, etc), ways of sexual activities, your sexual desire (your feelings towards different sex partners), and any other things related to sexual life they you have experienced changes.

4) According to you, among these terms (*đồng cô, bóng kín, bóng lộ, trai, đàn ông, gay, pêđê, phụ nữ, hai phái...*) and other words I did not mention in the list, which word best describes you? Please explain meaning of the word you choose and the reasons why you choose it?

(Interviewers pay attention to details related to self-defined gender, sexual desire and sexual trend that the interviewee disclose in their answers)

5) Is there any difference in the way you judge yourself now compared to it before? Before, did you think of yourself that way? What about you changed and according to you what are the reasons for those changes?

6) Do you have a **wife or girlfriend (date)**? If yes, tell me about your girlfriend, wife or your current family.

- Interviewers pay attention to details like: how long has the relationship been lasting? What are your expectations of this relationship? Do your relationships with other men influence this relationship? Do your wife, girlfriend know about your relationship with other men? If yes, how did she respond to it? If no, how you keep it as a secret from her?

7) Do you have your **frequent male sex partner**? Or do you live with another man? If yes, please tell me about your current frequent male sex partner(s) (or any term the interviewee refers to)

- Interviewers pay attention to details such as: his age, his occupation, his personality and things about the man that the interviewee feel attracted to? How long has the relationship lasted? Do you have any expectations of this relationship?

8) Please tell me about **the first time you consume sexual service of another man**. When I use "consume sexual service", I refer to all kind of exchanges including not only money. It can be when you offer other men accommodation, clothes or presents, money lending for that they have sex with you. *(Interviewers should be aware of how sensitive the interviewee is with "consume sexual service" so that you can explain the interviewee that you do not intend to judge them ethically.)*

SESSION 2: LIFE STORY, WORKING LIFE AND PEERS

Today I would like to discuss with you about your working life, especially about jobs you have had after leaving your hometown and your current job in Hanoi. I also would like to know more about your connection with your hometown, your family as well as people that you can rely on in your daily life in Hanoi. Please kindly note that we might discuss about subjects which can discomfort you. In such cases, please let me know and we will skip those questions.

Similar to the previous session, I would like to start off by asking you to tell me about your life. You would mention anything or any story that you want to tell or recall. During your talk, I will not pose any question. When you finish, we will move on with the next part in which I ask you about some above mentioned subjects.

Part 1: Life story

If a stranger (like me) wanted to get to know more about you and had a desire to listen to your story of life, how would you narrate your story? You can start off at any period of life since you were a kid till now, or you can choose to talk about any subject of your life that you want to.

- Each person have their own life history, what about your story?
- In the first interview session, you already told me some stories of your life (*at this point, it would be better if interviewers rewind some details of those stories*), do you want to add anything or change any details of your stories?

Do not keep asking. When the interviewee finishes their story, move to the next part.

Part 2: Working to earn for a living process

1. Occupation: expectations, efforts, success, failures and experiences

When did you start **working to earn for a living** of you and your family?

I would like to know about **your first paid job**: the reasons why you took that job, what you remember about those jobs including its difficulties and things you like about it, your experiences with your first paid job.

- Why did you decide to work? How the decision was made? I mean whether it was your own decision driven or it was other people's will? If it was your own decision, did you get permission from anybody?
- Information about your first job including: Where did you work? Did you have a colleague who is from your village? What did you like about the job? What did you dislike about the job? How much money did you earn? What did you do with that amount of money? Did you give it to your parents or did you save some money to yourself?

Now what do you think about that job, how **important it is to you**?

Tell me about your **other paid jobs that you have had since the first one**? When you recall those jobs you have had, what do you think as the best and worse memories?

What is your ideal job? What are the reasons you think it is an ideal job? What did you do to find that ideal job?

2. Immigration and working (*Skip this part if Hanoi is listed as the interviewee's hometown*)

Now try to remember **the first time you left your hometown for a job**, please tell me about that first time:

- Including details about: Location, kind of job, who did you work for, who were the people from your hometown worked with you, salary, money use and the importance of that first experience.

Tell me about **different places that you came to work or to find a job**. What kind of job you have done at those places. Where did you stay for the longest period of time? Where do you like/dislike the most? And why?

I want to know more about **your experiences in the first time you came Hanoi to find a job**, tell me about that first time you work in Hanoi.

- Details including: What made you come to Hanoi to find a job? What made you worried when you decided to come to Hanoi? What are the worries removed or still growing? Some information about your first job: place, the kind of job, who did you work for, who were you fellow, salary, money use and the importance of that first experience.

Tell me about **the jobs you have had since you came to Hanoi**. Do not hesitate to tell about the jobs that would make you confused letting others know. I concern to challenges that youngsters including you have to face while they are searching for a job in Hanoi. I do not intend to make any judgments on your morality or capacity.

- Details including: the kind of job, your boss, the relationship between you and your boss, your ability to make money, what you like or dislike about the job and the reasons why you dropped it.

Part 3: Working and living environment, social network

Interviewers to identify question for interviews from other provinces or listed Hanoi as his hometown.

1. Environment in term of various risks and behaviors

Tell me about the place you had lived before you moved to Hanoi

- Had you lived there for long period of time? You had lived with someone or you had lived on your own?

What would you say when you make a comparison between Hanoi and your hometown (place where you lived)?

- What do you like/dislike living in Hanoi? Living in your hometown?
- Is there any activity you can do in Hanoi but you can not do in your hometown? What is that?
- Do you want to stay Hanoi in long term period? Why? What is your plan?

What are the difficulties of living in Hanoi to you? What did you do to overcome those obstacles?

2. The hometown-city connection - *Interviewers pay attention to the place the interviewee sited as their "home". That place might not be their hometown but the place they live in Hanoi*

What do you **miss the most about your hometown when you are living away from it?**

How do you **keep in touch with your family when you are away?** Do you send your family money? How? How frequent and how much money? **Does your family in your hometown support you, if yes, in which way?**

Tell me about the times you returned to your hometown. **What do you miss the most about those trips?**

- What do you often do when you return to your family? How do your family members and neighbors treat you when you come home? What do they often ask you when you return home? What do you often tell them? What discomforts you when you talk with your family members?
- Do you find it difficult to reintegrate into living style in your hometown with your family? Do you miss Hanoi when you come back to your hometown? You wish to come back Hanoi right away or stay at home as long as possible? Why?

3. Social relations/ network

Where do you often hang out in Hanoi? Where do you like the most in Hanoi and why? How are the people that you often meet, gossip, hang out or drink with (you first met them in Hanoi, your hometown fellows, your working friends, your customers, your MSM peers...)? Could you please tell me about some friends like that of yours?

Who is important to you in your daily life in Hanoi? Why are those people important to you?

Who do you often ask for help? For example, when you need money or special assistance. Who can you rely on when you have some troubles with the police or your customers?

SESSION 3: LIFE STORY AND LOVE EXPERIENCE

Today I would like to talk with you about your experience in love. I also would like to know about your definition of a man, especially in social relations, in love, in family and sexuality. The questions I prepared are quite private and sensitive. I want to affirm with you that I do not ask these questions on the purpose to make judgments on you and your ethical values. You have the right to refuse any question you do not want to answer.

Similar to the previous session, I would like to start off by asking you to tell me about your life. You would mention anything or any story that you want to tell or recall. During your talk, I will not pose any question. When you finish, we will move on with the next part in which I ask you about some above mentioned subjects.

Part 1: Life story

If a stranger (like me) wanted to get to know more about you and had a desire to listen to your story of life, how would you narrate your story? You can start off at any period of our life since you were a kid till now, or you can choose to talk about any subject of your life that you want to.

- Each person have their own life history, what about your story?
- In the first interview session, you already told me some stories of your life (at this point, it would be better if interviewers rewind some details of those stories), do you want to add anything or change any details of your stories?

Do not keep asking. When the interviewee finishes their story, move to the next part.

Part 2: Experiences in love

1. First love and first date:

Now I would like to talk with you about your experience in love. **How being in a relationship matters to you? (Or How love means to you?)**

Please tell me about your **first love** (*interviewers can make suggestions so that the interviewee understand that it would be a relationship with a man or a woman*)

- How did you meet each other? While “hooking up”, what did you do? Could you please tell me an impressive memory that you have? While dating, do you have to hide your relationship from your family or friends? If yes, for how long? While dating, did you kiss? Apart from kissing, did you do anything else? (*it is to talk about other sexual activities like physical touch at private parts, having sex. Interviewers can give further explanation*). Are you currently in relationship with the same one? If you broke up, what are the reasons? How that breaking up influences you? If now you recall the relationship and get some lessons learned, what are the lessons?

Now, when you become more mature, **how your relationship in love changes?** Please tell me about your recent love affairs, including the relationship which you are in now. Do you want a durable relationship or do not want a long-term commitment? What factors influencing your decision (the decision to maintain a stable relationship)?

Part 3: Men and masculinity

1. The role of a son:

Please tell me about **your parents when you were a kid**. What kind of person is your dad? Please tell me about his life story . And how about your mom, what kind of person is she? Please tell me about your mom’s life

How is your relationship with your parents, what is the difference in your relationship with your parents when you were a kid and your relationship with them now? How is your relationship with your siblings, is there any difference in that relationship when you were a kid and now?

When you were a boy, **what were your responsibilities to your family?** Do you think that you are a good kid? And why do you think so? How your parents think about you?

Being a husband/ a partner (*interviewers choose the word best describes the interviewee*), what are your responsibilities to your family life (or your love life)? Do you think that you are a good husband/ a good partner? And why do you think so? How do your wife/ partner think about you as a husband/partner?

2. An independent man- desires and expectations

Since when you started to feel like a man, no longer a youngster (*Interviewers should notice that the question not only mentions time point but also try to identify the perspective of the interview on a man and how a man differ from a youngster and a boy, and the signals that the interviewee think when a boy becomes a man*)? What did you think when you felt the transformation into a grown-up man? When did you (start to) think that you can make decisions on your own without asking your parents for consultation?

What are your responsibilities to your family? Do you think that you fulfill your responsibility to your family? In which way? Since when did you think so?

How becoming a grown up means to you? Do you feel that you are a grown up (mature) now? And why? What makes you worried or scared the most when you become a grown up? What do you expect to see the most when you become a grown up?

At the moment, is there anything you expected to happen or to have in your life but it has not come? How important it is to you?

What makes you satisfied the most about your current life? What makes you disappointed the most? In the coming year how do you want your life to be? Is there any a similarity or differences compared to your current?

3. Experience with alcohol and smoking

In your opinion, **how alcohol influences body and health of a man?** How consuming alcohol means to a man- what happens if a man is good at drinking alcohol?

Have you ever drink alcohol frequently or drink a large amount of alcohol in a period of time? Tell me about that period of time. Why do you think that you drank alcohol frequently or drink much alcohol in that period of time?

Does alcohol consume influence your sex? Could you tell me about those influences? When you drink alcohol, you are more interested in having sex or less interested in it? Or do you have sex when you are drink alcohol?

How smoking influences body and health? How smoking means to a man- What happens if a man do not smoke cigarette?

SESSION 4: HEALTH CONCERNS AND LIFE STORY

This is our last interview session. Today we would like to talk with you about some health problems and your experiences with health programs including your interaction with our clinics. After this interview session, you will have a chance to add more details or make changes to anything about your life stories you told us in the three previous sessions. You are also encouraged to give your feedback on how you feel during all interview sessions.

Part 1: Health risks and experiences of health care

1. Health

How health means to you? Do you feel healthy? What have you done to protect your health and your body?

Tell me about any **health problems that you are facing or worried now**. Tell me about your experience of that health problem including different ways you use to solve it.

Tell me about the nearest days **when you were ill**? How were you and why did you do to solve your health problem at that time? Did you have to spend money on it and if yes, did you have to borrow from anybody?

What have you heard about sexual transmitted diseases (STDs)? Tell me your knowledge of STDs , for example its names, its signals, its ways of transmission and how to prevent it?

Do you know anybody that have STDs? You do not have to provide their names but please tell me about what happened to them.

Doing your job, do you think that **you are at risk of getting STDs transmitted**? If yes, what did you do to prevent yourself from getting it transmitted? Why did you do it that way?

- Interviewers should notice that you ask the interviewee about what they did instead of which way they know. The ways the interviewee did might not be regular scientific ways like using condoms. Those ways might consist of choosing their sex partners, applying preventive methods with sex partners at high risk, ect. Researchers should pay attention to all these ways and how it means to the objective.

Let talk a little bit about condom. When was the last time you use condom? Say something about that time, what made you use condom with that sex partner? How did you and your sex partner fell about condom use at that time?

Do you have one or some sex partners that you never apply condom while having sex with those special parties?

Have you ever get worried about your mental health? For example, have you ever been being worried or stressed, kind of fed up or disappointed?

Did you feel fed up or stressed in the last one month? When was the last time you felt unhappy or stressed? Tell me about that.

- What are the things often make you unhappy or over-worried? What do you often do to release those unhappiness or stress?

2. Drug and drug use

I would like to talk about **your experience when you are “proposed” to use drug by others**? I want to ask about all the substances you classify as drug (that might be heroin, ectasy or any other substances). Please tell me about the first time you are “proposed” “drug” use by others. I concern to details such as what kind of drug was that, who proposed sharing you their drug and how they relate to you, what was your experience of that drug use?

Tell me about the **lasted time you use drug**. I would like to listen to all details such as reasons for your use, time, location, your fellows, who paid for that, what kind of drug was that and what made you decided to consume drug at that time?

3. Violence

When you grow up, **have you ever witnessed domestic violence or violence in the neighborhoods?** Tell me about the time you still remember in most details.

Tell me details about your latest experience of violence, no matter what it is and who it happened to? I concern about details including: location, who were involved, what are the main reasons you think, is there any differences from other experiences of violence that you have had.

4. Clinic surroundings

Let talk a little bit about your experience of clinics or health services. Tell me about the latest time you come to a health facility for health check and treatment regardless of whether it is state-owned or private-owned.

- When was that (time)? What health service, what do you remember the most about that health service. What do you like the most about that experience? What did you dislike the most about that experience?

You have come to our clinics for several times. What do you like and dislike about those time? You are ensured that your information will be kept anonymous. It means that I will only mention our feedback to improve the health service standards. Your name will not be listed in my report.

Part 2: Life stories and thoughts on interview sessions

During previous sessions, we were talking about your life stories, is there anything you want to add or change?

The last question: During our interview session, we have discussed on various subjects and I have get to know about you and your life more and more. Do you have any thoughts during these sessions? For example, is there anything you find it new to you and you have never heard of it before?

Interviews should prepare details you want to clarified or ask for further information about life story of the interviewee or other content to add to this part beforehand.