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Transnational Impact on Urban Change
Modern Projects in Vinh, Vietnam

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Für Lisann

Abbreviations

ACCA	Asian Coalition for Community Action
ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
ACVN	Association of Cities of Vietnam
Ban KTCB	Ban kiến thiết cơ bản (Department for Basic Construction)
BCHTƯ	Ban Chấp hành Trung ương (Central Executive Committee)
CAC	City Administrative Committee
CAN	Community Architects Network
CDF	Community Development Fund
CESTC	Committee for Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation between the GDR and Vietnam
CODI	Community Organizations Development Institute
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPV	Communist Party of Vietnam
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DELGOSEA	Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in Southeast-Asia
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
ENDA	Environmental Development Action in the Third World
GDR	German Democratic Republic
HĐND	Hội Đồng Nhân Dân (People's Council)
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Konrad Adenauer Foundation)
LA 21	Localising Agenda 21: Action Planning for Sustainable Urban Development
MoA	Ministry of Architecture
MoC	Ministry of Construction
PAC	Provincial Administrative Committee
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PGCHS	Post Graduate Centre for Human Settlements, Department of Architecture, Urban Design and Planning, Catholic University Leuven
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PRC	Peoples' Republic of China
RC&PW	Road Construction and Public Works Company
SBZ	Sowjetische Besatzungszone (Soviet Occupation Zone)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SELAVIP	Servicio Latino Americano y Asiatico de Vivienda Popular (Latin America and Asia Low-income People's Housing)
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SRV	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
SSP	Strategic Structure Planning
UBHC	Uỷ ban Hành chính (Administrative Committee)
UBKCHC	Ủy ban kháng chiến hành chính (Administrative Resistance Committee)
UBKH	Ủy ban Kế hoạch (Planning Committee)
UBKTCB	Ủy ban kiến thiết cơ bản (Committee for Basic Construction)
UBND	Ủy ban Nhân dân (People's Committee)
UCDO	Urban Community Development Office
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Soviet Union
VWP	Vietnamese Workers' Party

1. Introduction

Modern urban change is tightly interwoven with global and international processes that become articulated in cities. Studying such changes in Vinh, capital of Nghệ An Province in Vietnam (Figure 1 shows the location of Vinh), led to ideas, projects, and plans formulated in places far removed from the original object of this study.[1] But in the end, they are brought together in space, and sometimes in time, in the urban fabric. Some express themselves prominently to a visitor, such as housing blocks constructed with assistance of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), symbols of economic growth like high-rise apartment and hotel buildings, or monuments celebrating the city's revolutionary history. Others are less visible: upgrading of a small former collective housing area or new forms of urban management and planning. Such structures were starting points into this study of actors and their visions for the city. The goal was to understand the interplay between actors, institutions, projects, plans, and the urban landscape itself, that leads to urban change.

When doing the rounds of introductions necessary to conduct research in Vietnam, the importance attributed by officials to GDR assistance in the re-construction of the city in the 1970s made clear that this study would have to incorporate the experience of this German-Vietnamese cooperation. It provides insight into a fascinating time of socialist cooperation as well as a counterpoint to contemporary processes taking place in Vinh. An early example of a transnational project, it differed considerably from projects involving international actors carried out since the 1990s. Both the GDR and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam promoted the same vision for the city and for society. In contrast, newer projects bring together different views of what a good city is and diverging approaches to urban development. However, the projects impacting the city and presented in this study have one

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[1] Vinh is the place where these different influences come together and where I spent nearly a year conducting interviews and archival research, as well and wandering the city. (Interviews conducted serve as important sources for this study, but where possible written sources are used as references. In case interviews serve as the only available source, they are cited in the text only with reference to the date they were conducted on to respect the anonymity of the sources. More detailed information, for example the position of the interviewee, might be obtained from the author.) However, studying transnational influences also made necessary an international research agenda. As this implied research in four languages, a note on the use of them is in order. In this dissertation, all Vietnamese words and names are given in their Vietnamese writing including diacritics, apart from the name Vietnam itself and the name of the country's capital, Hanoi, as these are commonly in use in anglophone writing. An exception are archival sources that do not use diacritics or only use some (apparently depending on the typewriter used to write the document), in these cases, the reference and the bibliography adopt the spelling of the respective document. The inconsistent use of Vietnamese names in other works (sometimes the first, sometimes the last name is used to refer to authors) has led me to include the whole name of Vietnamese authors to make identification easier. Again, if the source does not include diacritics, these are not used in the reference. Finally, all quotations are given in English (translations by the author); the original quote is always provided as a footnote.

thing in common: they are informed by a specific view of what a city is and what it should be, and their implementation aims at changing the city in the desired direction. This goal involves not only physical change of the city, but also institutional change in the urban society. This study therefore operates with two specific terms: *modern projects,* and *urban change.*

Modern projects here are understood as concrete actions designed by specific actors to further the implementation of modern cultural programs. Thus, modern projects are intended to achieve concrete betterments in the life of a given social group that point to a vision of society beyond concrete actions. Thereby, analysing modern projects allows for insights into social and political visions informing respective actors, as well as change resulting from such projects.

Urban Change refers to the effects modern projects have in the urban setting. It refers to change in the urban landscape as well as to change in the urban society and the institutions and structures that govern the city. In this context, change is aimed at achieving the goals formulated in modern projects, and at the same time at the cultural programs underlying such projects. However, a multiplicity of change is possible due to transformations resulting from the setting in which modern projects are implemented. Change can thus follow different paths in different spheres of the society targeted by modern projects. As the relations between social spheres differ from society to society, similar changes in one sphere will likely have differing effects in other spheres when comparing several cities. At the same time, change can result from the interplay of a number of modern projects advanced by different actors at the same time. Therefore, changes resulting from the implementation of modern projects can differ markedly from change envisioned by the respective actors.

The following part of the introduction presents the theoretical framework of this study. It starts with elaborating the idea that urban areas express the political, social, and cultural programs of those actors who try to shape them through modern projects, introducing the multiple modernities approach to the study of modernity that informs the analytical tool of modern projects. Secondly, it presents an actor-oriented approach to the study of urban change that is conscious of the power of existing institutional settings.

Figure 1
The location of Vinh on the banks of the Lam River in North-Central Vietam (above picture: Wikipedia Commons: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vietnam_on_the_globe_%28Southeast_Asia_centered%29.svg#filelinks; below picture: Vandenpoel, 2011: p.11, based on: Central Intelligence Agency USA: The World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html).

1.1 Urban Centres as Expressions of Modernity

This study takes the urban landscape as a starting point into visions of modernity put forward by social actors. According to Sassen, urban areas provide suitable sites for the study of major social processes:

> "Today, as we enter a new century, the city is once again emerging as a strategic site for understanding some of the major new trends reconfiguring the social order. The city and the metropolitan region emerge as one of the strategic sites where major macro- and micro-social trends materialize and hence can be constituted as an object of study. Among these trends are globalization, the rise of the new information technologies, the intensifying of transnational and translocal dynamics, and the strengthening presence and voice of specific types of socio-cultural diversity. Each one of these trends has its own specific conditionalities, contents and consequences. The urban moment is but one moment in often complex multi-sited trajectories." (Sassen, 2005: p.457)

Cities play a major role in transnational processes that articulate and make visible new forms of power and politics (Sassen, 2005: pp.459-460; Chang et al., 2004; Korff, 1996; Berner, Korff, 1995). Analysing such processes, Smith argues for an "agency-oriented Urban Theory" that takes into account actors as well as local and historical settings framing their actions (Smith, 2001: pp.6-7; see also Yeoh, 1999). Arguing against a binary global - local dichotomy he uses the term "transnational urbanism" to emphasise both the local embeddedness of "global" flows and the role of the nation state (Smith, 2001: p.3).

> "[…] despite the claims of some globalization theorists, the state has not withered away as a disappearing relic of the end of modernity. Instead, contemporary national and local states have differentially but ubiquitously mediated the flows of transnational investment, migration, and cultural production through their boundaries. Politically constructed state policies, legitimating discourses, and institutional practices are key elements through which transnational social formations are being constituted." (Smith, 2001: p.2)

> "To understand social relations […] with any precision requires us to consider their formation, deployment, and impact as they become localized in single places, articulated with other places in translocal communication circuits, and spread out across societies and national borders. When viewed this way, the global-local interplay becomes a matter of 'locating' both transnationalism and globalization on the ground in all of their untidy contingencies as various

projects get constructed, deployed, accommodated to, or resisted in specific times and places." (Smith, 2001: p.3)

According to socio-semiotics, the urban landscape is the product of "social processes characteristic of specific social formations", involving political, economic and cultural activities (Gottdiener, Lagopoulos, 1986: p.18; see also Lagopoulos, 1986).[2] The urban fabric (including architecture) fulfils functional as well as communicative roles through denotation and connotation[3], whereas the meaning communicated is socially constructed and might differ between social groups and over time (Eco, 1986; Ledrut, 1986). This study therefore takes urban space as the starting point for investigations into actors and change shaping the urban landscape. It analyses how different modern projects were interpreted, transformed and are expressed in buildings and the urban landscape. Evers and Korff draw attention to the role of actors and social visions in these processes:

> "[…] the building of a city involves many resources, the shape of the city can neither be the result of pure chance nor of 'objective' conditions. Most probably, the shape of the city, the main constructions forming the urban structure socially, spatially and symbolically, are results of some sort of planning and coordination. The planning of the city follows, we would argue, an image of what the city is and should be. In other words, the city itself is supposed to carry a message and act as a symbol for society in total. As the idea of the city is socially constructed, the symbolism associated with the city and formed by its socio-spatial structure is the result of struggles among social groups. Those groups dominating society, especially the urban society of the particular city, try to concretize their images and visions, so that the city fulfills functional as well as ideological requirements." (Evers, Korff, 2003: p.17)

This argument points to the importance of urban planning in the production of urban space and symbols. In his history of urban planning, Peter Hall traces the various approaches of urban planning to a small number of influential thinkers who formulated "utopian, even charismatic" visions. Many of them had their roots in the anarchist movement, their planning ideas targeted the goal of a new social order: "The vision of these anarchist pioneers was not merely of an alternative built form, but of an alternative society, neither capitalistic nor

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[2] Gottdiener and Lagopoulos differentiate between on one hand production and on the other consumption or conception of settlement space (Gottdiener, Lagopoulos, 1986: p.18). Throughout this study, I will mostly focus on the production (as well as reinterpretation) of space by actors, as this process is informed by modern projects. Interpretations by users of the urban spaces created by modern projects are treated less prominently.

[3] Denotation refers to the communication of a *"'primary' function"*, while connotation refers to the communication of "a complex of *'secondary' functions*" (Eco, 1986: p.65, italics in original).

bureaucratic-socialist" (Hall, 2002: p.3). Other planners and thinkers who did not share these roots in anarchism, such as "authoritarian centralist" Le Corbusier or members of the City Beautiful movement, also in various degrees expressed social and political agendas in their work that pointed at social, cultural or political issues beyond architectural or urban design (Hall, 2002: p.2; see also McLeod, 1983).

According to Hall, "twentieth-century city planning, as an intellectual and professional movement, essentially represents a reaction to the evils of the nineteenth-century city" (Hall, 2002: pp.7, 14-47). Poor housing conditions in large European cities and industrial centres prompted large scale urban planning projects aimed at relieving these conditions. The basic assumption underlying these projects was a belief in the possibility to alleviate social ills by providing better housing conditions. At the same time, improved housing conditions were regarded as a political means for system stabilisation by the ruling establishment. In contrast, German communists in the late 19th and early 20th century rejected social housing projects, as they regarded solutions to social questions, changes in power relations and the political system, as preconditions to solving housing issues (Richter, 2006: p.15). The poor living conditions of many urban dwellers at that time can be regarded as results of "modern" phenomena such as urbanisation, industrialisation or mobility. However, the approaches to urban planning described by Hall can be called "modern" especially because of their reflexivity regarding the organisation of society and the resulting living conditions, as well as because of their aspiration to create a better future. According to Kuder, urban planning in the 21st century is still informed by ideals underlying specific projects (Kuder, 2004). While research in cities appears as suitable for the study of social processes urban settings are particularly suited for the study of modern projects.

Urban areas allow one to study social processes that led to the emergence of their form and structure. Modern urban planning can play a major role in these processes and is inspired by visions of a better society. This study therefore takes modern projects of urban planning and development as starting points into an analysis of the social and political visions of actors as well as into change that results from such projects. Its focus is on projects that involve cooperation between local, national and international actors.

Modernity has spread globally, and so have modern approaches to urban planning. Their application in the real world saw them "travelling" to circumstances and implemented by mechanisms much different from those envisaged in their formulation. Thereby, underlying visions are transformed through their application in local settings and the ways in which they entered these settings in the form of concrete projects. Compared to the original intentions of early thinkers "the results were often bizarre, sometimes catastrophic" (Hall, 2002: p.3). Focusing on international cooperation projects makes explicit the process of "travelling" of

concepts and ideas between different localities. Furthermore, international cooperation usually implies the formulation of intentions and goals as communication across "interfaces"[4] becomes necessary (Long, 2001: p.65).

1.1.1 The Study of Modern Projects

As described above, this study takes the urban landscape as a starting point into visions of modernity put forward by social actors. These actors try to impact the city through modern projects. The term "modern project" builds on newer conceptions of modernity that regard it as empirically observable processes and conditions, in contrast to normative views of modernity.

In modernisation theories of the 1950s, modernisation was regarded as development directed at overcoming tradition and achieving modernity. In this view, "modernity" referred to an institutional set comprising an industrial market economy and a liberal-democratic political system, administered by impartial bureaucrats in a secular nation-state (Mergel, 2011). The United States were regarded as having achieved the highest form of modernity, marked by democratic association, and as the model for development of less modern countries (Kössler, 2004: p.3). In this conception of modernisation, tradition is conceptualized as an endogenous factor preventing societies from breaking through to modernity, but this stage would be overcome in time and with the abolishment of traditions. As mainly endogenous factors were regarded as responsible for under-development, outside intervention was seen as necessary to overcome these constraints (Long, 2001: pp.10, 30-48).

According to Mürle, discussions and critiques of modernisation theory have focused largely on "great narratives". Such great narratives claim universal applicability and their ability to explain all phenomena in the studied societies (Mürle, 1997: p.7). While different approaches and studies are subsumed under great narratives of "modernisation theory", they had in common a teleological thinking which proclaimed that societies would converge on a state of modernity, including an industrial market economy and democracy (Mergel, 2011; Arnason, 2002: p.64; Mürle, 1997: pp.9-10). In contrast to "classical" modernisation theory, dependence theory did not regard endogenous factors (e.g. traditions) as prohibiting development, but saw the reasons for underdevelopment in the spread of capitalism and colonialism, resulting in unequal global power relations and exploitation of the Third World by the West. Thus, the factors inhibiting development were seen as exogenous of respective

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[4] "the concept of 'social interface' [...] explores how discrepancies of social interest, cultural interpretation, knowledge and power are mediated and perpetuated or transformed at critical points of linkage or confrontation" (Long, 2001: p.50). The focus on such projects also stems from my empirical findings on the importance of transnational cooperation in Vinh (Korff et al., 2013; Kaiser, 2012).

societies, while the general goals of modernisation, namely industrialisation and democracy, were upheld (Mürle, 1997: p.15).

Modernisation theories have been criticized for their teleological orientation (Giddens, 1991: p.5), their simplistic modern-traditional dichotomy (Kocka, 2006: p.65; Mürle, 1997), their use of arbitrarily chosen indicators (Schwinn, 2006; Kössler, 2004; Wittrock, 2002), and as a discourse legitimating imperial policies (Kozlarek, 2007: p.170; Escobar, 1995, 1988). However, modernisation theories characterised by a teleological and convergist understanding of development continue to influence development policies and academic thinking (Schwinn, 2009: p.458; Mürle, 1997; for examples see Schmidt, 2007, 2006; Huntington, 2000). They re-gained in popularity in the early 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union, exemplified by writings such as Fukuyama's *End of History and the Last Man* (Fukuyama, 1992; see also Stark, 1991).

From the critique of modernisation theory grew a strand of academic thinking that describes modernity not in a normative way as a goal to be achieved by development, but as a condition that characterizes the contemporary era. Giddens describes modernity as a set of institutions and structures:

> "'modernity' refers to modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence. This associates modernity with a time period and with an initial geographical location […]." (Giddens, 1991: p.1)

Modernisation can thus be regarded as an empirically observable process of the spread of modernity's characteristic "modes of social life or organization". According to Giddens, this change is different from change experienced by pre-modern societies due to its pace (extreme speed of change), its scope (spanning the whole globe), and the "nature of modern institutions" (Giddens, 1991: p.6). He lists a number of basic conditions that mark modernity, such as the separation of time and space and the disembedding of social relations from local contexts (Giddens, 1991: pp.15, 20). As one core condition of modernity he sees the spread of reflexivity to all aspects of life, including one's own actions, social role and behaviour. Modern reflexivity is regarded by him as different from former modes by the recognition of the vast "transformative scope" of human agency. In modernity, only what is evaluated and approved is accepted, even traditions which continue to play a role in society do so only after they passed through this "modern" process of evaluation. Thus, everything is uncertain, as everything can be changed if new information requires so (Giddens, 1991: p.36).

From the above citation it is clear that Giddens sees Europe as the place where modernity first developed. Globalisation for him is one of the fundamental consequences of modernity, representing "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away" (Giddens, 1991: p.64). Globalisation has led to the travelling of two organisational complexes, the nation-state and capitalist production from Europe to other parts of the world. Thus, in the sense of a spread of these complexes throughout the world, Giddens sees modernity as a Western project (Giddens, 1991: pp.174-175). However, as modernity and as its consequence globalisation allow for the global travelling of ideas, concepts, etc. modernity is no Western project because it enables input from each place into a system of "world inter-dependence and planetary consciousness" (Giddens, 1991: p.175). Furthermore, the shared conditions of modernity allow for a multitude of institutional settings; for example, capitalist societies are regarded by Giddens as only one subtype of modern societies (Giddens, 1991: p.56).

Another approach, led by Eisenstadt, takes further the conceptualisation of the transforming impact of local settings on common aspects of modernity. The differences between the institutional and structural results merit, according to Eisenstadt, a distinction between "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt, 2006a, 2002). As other authors before, this approach to the study of modernity rejects the notion of convergence and the equation of modernity with a liberal market economy and free trade (Graubard, 2002: p.ix). However, in contrast to previous criticism, the "multiple modernities" approach does not stop at refuting modernisation theory on the ground of its over-generalisations, but tries to conceptualize the differences existing between modern societies and to provide a theoretical framework for their analysis (Schwinn, 2006: p.11). Kozlarek points out that "classical" modernisation theory understands societies only in terms of time, in their position on a linear path towards modernity. Thereby, comparisons of societies are made only with reference to their development and achievements of modernity relative to the temporal position of other societies on this path. According to him, this approach inhibits the comparison of spatial factors of development and modernity. In this vein, he also criticizes much of the literature on globalisation for not appropriately considering the local anchoring of global processes. In contrast, taking into account "territoriality and places" would open up space for recognition of differences existing at the same time (Kozlarek, 2007: p.166). Therefore, he praises "multiple modernities" as a useful approach to the study of manifestations of modernity in different locations at the same time.

In the multiple modernities approach modernity is understood as a cultural condition, which rests on the basic and shared premise of the breakdown of traditional legitimations of the

political order (Eisenstadt, 2006a: p.3; 2002: p.5). This results from the spread of reflexivity[5] to the political and social arenas:

> "The cultural program of modernity entailed some very distinct shifts in the conception of human agency, and of its place in the flow of time. It carried a conception of the future characterized by a number of possibilities realizable through autonomous human agency. The premises on which the social, ontological, and political order were based, and the legitimation of that order, were no longer taken for granted. An intensive reflexivity developed around the basic ontological premises of structures of social and political authority […]. The degree of reflexivity characteristic of modernity went beyond what was crystallized in the axial civilizations. […] It gave rise to an awareness of the possibility of multiple visions that could, in fact, be contested." (Eisenstadt, 2002: p.3-4)

According to Fourie, this new conception of human agency was radically new at the time that it developed around 200 years ago. "Societies hitherto embedded in a world-view ordained by God were freed to re-evaluate the foundations on which they operated and to construct new institutions accordingly" (Fourie, 2012: p.56). For Therborn, this created a new time orientation:

> "[…] a time conception looking forward to this worldly future, open, novel, reachable or constructable, a conception seeing the present as a possible preparation for a future, and the past either as something to leave behind or as a heap of ruins, pieces of which might be used for building a new future. Modernity in this sense does not per se designate a particular chronological period or any particular institutional forms." (Therborn, 2003: p.294)

The realisation that the future could be different from the past and actively formed by human agency resulted, according to Eisenstadt, in the formulation of numerous cultural programs. It is through interactions of these cultural programs and societies that specific modernities are formed:

> "The idea of multiple modernities presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world – indeed to explain the history of modernity – is to see it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs. These ongoing reconstructions of multiple institutional and ideological patterns are carried forward by specific social actors in close

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[5] Note that Giddens, as described above, also attributes an important role to reflexivity as a basis of modernity.

connection with social, political, and intellectual activists, and also by social movements pursuing different programs of modernity, holding very different views on what makes societies modern. Through the engagement of these actors with broader sectors of their respective societies, unique expressions of modernity are realized. These activities have not been confined to any single society or state, though certain societies and states proved to be the major arenas where social activists were able to implement their programs and pursue their goals. Though distinct understandings of multiple modernity developed within different nation-states, and within different ethnic and cultural groupings, among communist, fascist, and fundamentalist movements, each, however different from the others, was in many respects international." (Eisenstadt, 2002: p.2)

As a cultural condition, modernity itself has no definite institutional or structural form (Schwinn, 2006: p.25). For Eisenstadt, the modernity posited as universal by modernisation theory (industrialisation, market economy, democracy) is but one of the possible cultural projects of modernity, albeit one that serves as reference point for all others as it was the first to emerge (Eisenstadt, 2006b). Some aspects of it have become globally universal, like the territorial and later the nation-state (Eisenstadt, 2002: p.14). However, societies have continuously selected, reinterpreted and reformulated specific themes and patterns of "the original Western modern civilization", thereby these were transformed by "the combined impact of […] respective historical traditions and the different ways in which they [respective societies] became incorporated into the new modern world system" (Eisenstadt, 2002: p.15). It is one of the central aspects of the multiple modernities approach that no cultural program can be formulated without reference to modernity. Even programs rejecting modernity do so with reference to modernity as the "other", revealing a modern process of reflection on political and social life (Göle, 2002).

In contrast to early modernisation theory, Eisenstadt regards cultural programs and institutional patterns not as evolutionary and potentially available to all societies but as resulting from actor interactions and such factors as power differences, elite conflicts or elite-mass relations (Eisenstadt, 2006a: p.3). According to Wittrock, when put forward by specific actors, "institutional programs" are based on "promissory notes" that have to meet six conditions to be regarded as modern (Wittrock, 2002: p.36-37; see also Kocka, 2006: p.67):

- They have to formulate achievements that may be reached by the members of a given community.

- The state to be achieved refers to a community, not an individual.

- This state appears to be realistically attainable.

- Assumptions about the state and the way towards it are based on claims about the nature and history of human beings (members of the given society).

- Prevalent political institutions embody and give expression to a range of promissory notes.

- Promissory notes have to be put forth in some public forum. In the age of modernity, this has been the public sphere.

Promissory notes form the basis of debates, affiliations and new institutions, as well as for their own realisation through projects (Wittrock, 2002: p.38). Thus, modern projects as conceptualised in this study have to meet these conditions formulated by Wittrock and aim at the realisation of cultural programs.

While reflexivity represents the core condition of modernity, Eisenstadt sees a major division line between cultural programs that adhere either to a pluralistic or a totalistic political vision (Martinelli, 2007; Eisenstadt, 2006b: pp.41-45; 2002: p.8). Thus, he regards Soviet communism and fascism/national-socialism as the first alternative modernities which developed in Europe (Eisenstadt, 2002: p.10). According to Arnason, communism should not be regarded as "pre-, anti-, or pseudo-modern", but as a distinctive version of modernity (Arnason, 2002: p.61). Calic et al. present "socialist modernity" as a developmental project that aimed at surpassing industrial achievements of capitalist development and at the same time avoiding its pitfalls (Calic et al., 2011: p.10; see also Beilharz, 2009: p.xiii; 8-9; Kopstein, 1994). While communism as a radical ideology developed as a response to conflicts resulting from a clash between traditional ways of life and the dynamics of industrial modernity, when the October Revolution took place in 1917in Russia, that country had not been characterized by industrial modernity. Rather, "Bolshevik policies were in fact an attempt to catapult a country perceived as backward into industrial modernity" (Calic et al., 2011: p.10). Communist modernisation in its Soviet version shared with capitalist modernisation key aspects such as "rapid industrialization", "organizational and technological upgrading of state power" (Arnason, 2002: p.66-67), or "secularization", and a belief in the transformability of people, society, and nature (Calic et al., 2011: pp.11-13). Another shared central aspect of both socialist/communist ideology and classic modernisation theory is the teleological view of history.

However, the means to realize the achievements of modernity differed markedly. The capitalist program of modernity relied on individual initiative and competition, expressed in the market economy and democratic political structures. In contrast, the socialist modern program built on an integrative view of society, expressed in three main components:

command economy, party-state, and ideological orthodoxy. In this view, the Party performed the role of a "super-state", capable of supervising, coordinating and forming the ideal society through centralized processes and structures of planning and command. Political actions as well as concrete economic and social projects were legitimized by scientific knowledge[6], thus removing them from public debate and making them subject to expert knowledge. The specific form structures and processes took resulted in part from the critique and rejection of existing capitalism, as well as from the goal to overtake Western modernity's achievements (Calic et al., 2011: pp.11-13; Merl, 2011; Beilharz, 2009: pp.1-2; Arnason, 2002: pp.69-73).

While communist modernity came into practice first in the Soviet Union, Russian legacies impacted the "pattern of modernity" that was subsequently applied by other Communist countries (Calic et al., 2011). The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) used its imperial hegemony to export its model of development to other countries. During this process the model was transformed and adapted to local settings (Arnason, 2002: pp.67-68). Thus, as modernisation theory and the development discourse partly served to legitimize a hegemonic role of the United States and other Western countries, socialist modernisation aimed at establishing the Soviet Union as an imperial power (Arnason, 2002: pp.79-80).

Criticism of the multiple modernities approach has mainly targeted the abstractness of concepts it uses to delineate the commonality and differences of modernities (Fourie, 2012; Schmidt, 2007, 2006; Kocka, 2006). Much of this line of critique stems from a terminological haziness. While the English title "multiple modernities" suggests the existence of a number of distinct modernities, the German title "Die Vielfalt der Moderne", however, speaks of modernity in the singular, proclaiming a multiplicity or variants of modernity. This view is also closer to the conception laid out in the works of Eisenstadt and others. As Schwinn notes, "multiple modernities" is concerned with alternatives *in* not *to* modernity. Each alternative is contained within modernity (thus its unity) but no alternative realizes all possibilities offered by modernity (thus its multiplicity) (Schwinn, 2006: pp.13-14). However, valid criticism concerns the unit of analysis. As Fourie shows, modernities are sometimes presented as identical with civilisations, sometimes with nation states. Furthermore, she shows that inherent in the approach is the danger of essentialising civilisations. While modern influences are presented as highly transformable, civilisations are often presented as quite stable (Fourie, 2012: pp.59-62). Spohn argues that it is necessary to complement the macro-orientation of multiple modernities with a meso- and micro-analytical research perspective to avoid such pitfalls (Spohn, 2006: p.111). Fourie argues that:

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[6] Calic et al. note that this was merely "pseudoscience" (Calic et al., 2011: p.12).

"[multiple modernities] often-sensitive exploration of the temporal, spatial and substantive aspects of modernity has brought important insights from sociology into a field dominated, for several decades, by anthropology and political science. The approach itself, however, is still in need of further development if it is to go beyond the level of critique and make use of empirical findings to strengthen its theoretical analysis" (Fourie, 2012: p.66).

Against this background this work is an attempt to operationalize the multiple modernities concept and provide an empirical study of processes taking place when modern projects informed by cultural programs are subject to transformation by their application in local settings. It is, however, not concerned with analysing a "modernity" or "civilisation", but takes a more moderate approach by following multiple modernities' arguments with an empirical study of actors and change in one medium sized city in Vietnam. As Eisenstadt and others stress the importance of actors as well as existing structural, institutional, and historical conditions in the adaptation of cultural programs, it regards actor-oriented studies as a useful approach to an empirical study of modern projects.

1.1.2 Actors and Urban Change

 "Actor-oriented studies" are designed to analyse social processes including the role of actors and institutional contexts; they have played an important role in development studies since the 1980s (Neubert, 2001; see for example Mosse, Lewis, 2006; Bierschenk, 2000).

"Nourishing (either explicitly or implicitly) this interest in social actors is the conviction that, although it may be true that important structural changes result from the impact of outside forces (due to encroachment by the market, state or international bodies), it is theoretically unsatisfactory to base one's analysis on the concept of external determination. All forms of external intervention necessarily enter the existing lifeworlds of the individuals and social groups affected, and in this way they are mediated and transformed by these same actors and structures. [...] A more dynamic approach to the understanding of social change is therefore needed which stresses the interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships, and which recognizes the central role played by human action and consciousness." (Long, 2001: p.13)

According to Long, this approach allows one to understand different local responses to similar influences and processes (Long, 2001: p.13; see also Mosse, Lewis, 2006: p.11). This is in line with Eisenstadt's conceptualisation of different modernities resulting from

various responses to the shared aspects of modernity, and the role actors play in the formulation of cultural programs. On a level less abstract than modernities, where this study is located, this points to local specifics resulting from the implementation of modern projects.

Neubert emphasises the need to take into account constraints and restrictions that are placed on actors, as well as to be careful not to "hyper-rationalize" human action (Neubert, 2001: p.5). Applying the analytical tool of path dependence, studies on eastern European transformation have shown that existing institutional settings impact the opportunities for action and resulting change. The transfer of Western institutions, market economics and liberal democracy, to former socialist countries was not as easily achieved as envisaged. Attempts to remodel political and economic systems took little account of the historic development of capitalism itself, or of the institutional legacies history (not only socialism) had left in former socialist countries (Stark, 1991: p.18). Stark argues that change depends on a society's willingness "to bear the transition costs", and politicians' perception of this willingness (Stark, 1991: p.19). "It is in the ruins [of socialism] that these societies will find the materials with which to build a new order; therefore, differences in how the pieces fell apart will have consequences for how political and economic institutions can be reconstructed in the current period" (Stark, 1991: p.20).

> "Actors who seek to move in new directions find that their choices are constrained by the existing set of institutional resources. Institutions limit the field of action, they preclude some directions, they constrain certain courses. But institutions also favor the perception and selection of some strategies over others. Actors who seek to introduce change require resources to overcome obstacles to change. This exploitation of existing institutionalized resources is a principal component of the apparent paradox that even (and especially) instances of transformation are marked by *path dependence.*" (Stark, 1991: p.21, italics added)

It is important to note that for Stark, institutional legacies do not only represent constraints, but also resources actors can draw on. Central to his argument is the concept of path dependence. Developed in historic economics, the concept has become influential in social sciences and especially transformation studies (Magnusson, Ottoson, 2009; Pierson, 2000; Goldstone, 1998; David, 1997). It breaks with the notion prevalent in economics that the evolution of institutions, organisations, or practices purely follows the logic of efficiency (Djelic, Quack, 2007: p.163). It is also in contrast to prominent views in political science that "emphasize the prevalence of unique, predictable political outcomes, the irrelevance of timing and sequence, and the capacity of rational actors to design and implement optimal solutions (given their resources and constraints) to the problems that confront them"

(Pierson, 2000: p.251). The core attribute of path dependent processes is "increasing returns" (North, 1991: pp.108-109). According to North, "the institutional matrix consists of an interdependent web of institutions and consequent political and economic organizations that are characterized by massive increasing returns" (North, 1991: p.109). Thus, institutions and institutional change are often marked by path dependence, at times only because path change would incur considerable costs (Beyer, 2005: p.15; Pierson, 2000: p.263; North, 1991). On the other hand, path change becomes more probable where its costs are expected to be low relative to expected gains (Beyer, 2005: pp.15-16).

Mahoney argues that path dependence has a wider applicability than only in economic history. With regards to sociological analysis, he differentiates four explanations for path dependent institutional reproduction: a *utilitarian explanation* regards institutions as reproduced through rational cost-benefit assessment by actors; the *functional explanation* sees the reason for reproduction in the important function of an institution in an overall system; according to the *power explanation* reproduction is due to the institution being supported by an elite group of actors; and the *legitimation explanation* sees actors' believe in the moral justness or appropriateness of an institution as the reason for its reproduction (Mahoney, 2000: pp.517-526). According to Stark, path dependent processes can depend both on former/existing institutional structures, as well as on decisions taken during critical moments (Djelic, Quack, 2007: p.164; Stark, 1991). Path dependence explains why such historical junctures can have lasting consequences (Pierson, 2000: p.263). Collier and Collier refer to such crucial phases during which the course of developments is set on a path as "critical junctures" (Collier, Collier, 2002: pp.27-39). "A critical juncture may be defined as a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries (or in other units of analysis) and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies" (Collier, Collier, 2002: p.29). Legacies do not automatically result from a critical juncture or reproduce themselves, a legacy's stability is rather the result of perpetuation "through ongoing institutional and political processes" (Collier, Collier, 2002: p.31).

Observing an implicit conservatism in social sciences, Beyer warns against emphasizing path dependence and stability of institutions and thereby neglecting the analysis of fundamental change (Beyer, 2000: p.5; citing Wiesenthal, 2003, 1999).[7] He argues that it is necessary to take into account mechanisms that stabilize institutions and thereby hint at possible forms of path change (Beyer, 2000: p.19). Furthermore, while path dependence refers to specific processes, namely those that incur increasing returns, the concept is at times unfortunately employed as "not much more than a metaphorical formula that history

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[7] Note that according to David, processes depend on paths; they are not determined by them (David, 1997: pp.15-16).

matters and that there is continuity also in processes of social change" (Beyer, Wielgohs, 2001: p.387; see also Pierson, 2000: p.252). Therefore, a study of social processes has to be careful not to overstate the continuation in change, as well as to apply the concept only to those processes where it has explanatory value.

The multiple modernities approach points to the importance of actors and local settings in the formulation, implementation and transformation of modern cultural programs. Acknowledging the possibility for path dependence as well as other possible influences of existing institutional, structural and historical factors allows an actor-oriented approach to be sensitive to the settings the processes it studies are framed in. Thereby, it becomes suitable for the study of modern projects, their implementation and transformation, as well as resulting urban change.

1.2 Locating the Study in a Medium-Sized Urban Centre

As described above, the multiple modernities approach regards modernity as a condition that has emerged first in Europe and subsequently spread globally, equally involving the spread of cultural programs of modernity. As Kozlarek has pointed out, the notion of globalisation as a "dis-embedding" process neglects the necessity to regard even globalisation as locally articulated. He therefore calls for studies of modernity to take into account local settings to achieve an understanding of local variations (Kozlarek, 2007). According to Kocka, the spatial dimension plays an important role in the study of the spread and universalisation of travelling concepts (Kocka, 2006: p.63). However, one criticism directed towards multiple modernities is the inconsistent choice of its spatial units of analysis, with some studies arbitrarily equating modernities with territorial states (see page 17; Fourie, 2012). Furthermore, many argue that while national systems are highly structuring and powerful, globalisation has significantly reduced their role in many spheres (see for example Quack, Djelic, 2007: p.162; Giddens, 1991). As this study aims at analysing modern projects, not civilisations or states, it chooses as its setting a medium-sized city in Vietnam. It thus studies modern projects that aim at urban change.

In general, urban research has overly focused on large cities and neglected the study of small- and medium-sized urban centres (Bunnell, Maringanti, 2010; Montgomery, 2008; Ofori-Amoah, 2007). Especially the study of global and transnational influences has so far mainly focused on large and capital cities (Walton, 2000; Yeoh, 1999), as highlighted by such terms as World Cities (Friedman, 1986) or Global Cities (Sassen, 2001). McFarlane calls for research to be conducted in a larger variety of urban centres to overcome this bias

(McFarlane, 2010). Bell and Jayne argue that urban research has focused on "selected cities of the Global North", thereby inhibiting "the development and impact of urban studies in the broadest sense. What is lost as a consequence of the bias towards large cities is a full picture of urban form and function: the urban world is not made up of a handful of global metropolises, but characterized by heterogeneity" (Bell, Jayne, 2009: p.683). While "cities of the Global North" have overly influenced general debates of urbanism, cities of Southeast Asia have for long been depicted as special or distinctly "Southeast Asian", thereby research in and of these has had limited impact on mainstream urban studies (and social sciences in general) (Dick, Rimmer, 1998).[8] According to Goh and Bunnell, scholarship on Southeast Asian cities has long been dominated by "'metrocentricity'" (Goh, Bunnell, 2013: p.826; citing Bunnell, Maringanti 2010).[9] Also in Vietnam, research in urban settings has so far focused on large urban centres like Hồ Chí Minh City and Hanoi.[10] This has led to unduly influence of these centres on the general picture of urban dynamics in Vietnam. Even the edited volume entitled "The Vietnamese City in Transition" focuses on Hanoi and Hồ Chí Minh City, calling for research to be conducted in "medium-sized or secondary cities" (Cusset et al., 2010: p.275; Gubry et al., 2010). In addition to a mere diversification of research settings, studying a medium sized urban centre can reveal dynamics different from large centres (Korff et al., 2013). For the case of urban planning, Del Testa argues that "the study of provincial urban centres reveals cultural changes that the bright lights and careful planning of capital cities may otherwise obscure" (Del Testa, 2007: p.306). It seems appropriate to follow these calls by basing this study in a medium-sized provincial urban centre in Vietnam. Apart from studying modern projects, this study therefore also aims at contributing to the body of research on small and medium sized urban centres in general and in Vietnam in particular.

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[8] This is reminiscent of a tendency to regard knowledge deriving from "Western" societies as generalizable and globally relevant, while relegating social phenomena observed in other parts of the world to the status of "exotic" or "particular" (Kaiwar, Mazumdar, 2011).

[9] For examples see (Douglass, 2005) and the special forum in (Pacific Affairs, Vol. 78, No. 4, Winter, 2005/2006) or articles in (International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, May 2013, Vol. 37, Issue 3).

[10] Some Anglophone exceptions are (Korff et al., 2013; Schwenkel, 2013, 2012; Jennings, 2011; Del Testa, 2007, 1999; Hoang Xuan Thanh et al., 2005). Additionally, there exists a large body of official historiography in Vietnamese for most areas, including smaller urban centers. However, few of these studies relate their research to the size of the respective urban center. One thus has to distinguish between research *in* and research *on* such centers.

Largely building on secondary literature as well as French and Vietnamese archival sources a background on Vinh's history is provided in chapter two. After a short presentation on Vinh's pre-colonial history, the role of colonialism in establishing Vinh as a city is outlined. A third part presents the cycles of destruction and reconstruction that marked the city between the 1940s and the 1970s, setting the scene for subsequent reconstruction with assistance of the GDR.

The third chapter presents reconstruction efforts that promoted the construction of a *Socialist City.* It traces the origins of this vision of the city and its application in Vietnam and the GDR, before moving to the planning and implementation process, highlighting transnational influences. Extensive archival research in Germany and Vietnam, as well as semi-structured interviews with Vietnamese and German planners, engineers, and architects formerly involved in the reconstruction of the city form the basis of this analysis.

Chapter four is concerned with the interplay of diverging modern projects promoted by different actors since the 1990s in Vinh. It presents the *Modern and Civilised City* that functions as a guideline informing provincial and municipal authorities. The projects of international actors, on the other hand, are informed by an ideal of a *Participatory City.* The chapter analyses the implementation and outcomes of projects involving cooperation between actors promoting different views of the city based on published and unpublished documents, as well as semi-structured interviews with actors involved in these projects and participant observation at a national workshop on Community Development Funds in Vinh in May 2011 and at a training course for public servants organized by the Association of Cities of Vietnam and German Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Đà Nẵng in November 2010.

The fifth chapter presents a final conclusion that ties together the different modern projects from the 1970s on. It reviews communalities and differences, and relates urban change resulting from the different modern projects to each other.

2. The History of Vinh

As a prelude to the study of modern projects in Vinh and to set them in an historical background, this part covers the city's history from pre-colonial times until Vinh's destruction during the American War in the 1960s. It is divided into three parts: the first part introduces Vinh's pre-colonial history during which a small settlement including a market and barracks became a provincial centre by imperial decree. The second part presents Vinh's colonial history, which saw large changes in the economic, political, and social spheres. The third and final part covers the transition from French colonialism to the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the first years of Vinh in the DRV until bombing by the United States of America (US) destroyed the city in the 1960s.

2.1 Pre-colonial Vinh (15th Century to 1885)

In pre-colonial times, Vinh[11] mainly served as a market place, imperial outpost and administrative centre. A small market and barracks existed in Vinh from the 15th century on, forming two separate units: Vĩnh Doanh (Vinh barracks) and Vĩnh Thị (Vinh market). While the barracks represented imperial control over the area, the market linked Vinh to regional trade networks, with Vietnamese, Chinese, and Javanese traders present. Traded goods consisted mainly of handicrafts produced in surrounding villages as well as agricultural products (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.13-17). Until the late 18th century, Vinh's importance remained limited with the provincial administrative centre located in Lam Thành about 10km south-west of present-day Vinh, at the confluence of the Lam and La rivers (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.19-20; Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.32).

The second half of the 18th century was a time of great upheaval in Vietnam, resulting in the defeat of the Nguyễn in the South and the Trịnh in the North by a rebellion led by the Tây Sơn brothers (Dutton, 2006). During their campaign against the Trịnh in the North, the Tây Sơn founded the Phượng Hoàng Trung Độ citadel on Quyết Mountain in today's Vinh area in 1786. Chu Trọng Huyến and Bùi Thiết claim the citadel partly served a plan of Nguyễn Huệ, one of the Tây Sơn brothers who proclaimed himself Emperor Quang Trung in 1788, to move Vietnam's capital to Vinh (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.19-20; Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.39-42). However, due to the death of Quang Trung in 1792 and the subsequent defeat of the Tây Sơn by the Nguyễn with French assistance in 1802, no steps to implement the plan were

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[11] The name Vinh was not in use until the colonial period and probably results from the French usage of the name Vĩnh without diacritics (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.38). Formerly, different names referred to the area that today is Vinh City. To make reading easier, I will refer to the settlement that existed in the area of the citadel as Vinh, while Bến Thủy and Trường Thi are referred to separately until their merging with the citadel area to form the administrative unit of Vinh-Bênthuy in colonial times. The term Vinh is used for the urban centre, while Vinh City refers to the administrative unit and respective administrative bodies. For changing names of the area see (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.18).

carried out and the Phượng Hoàng Trung Độ citadel remained unfinished (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.21).

In 1802, after having defeated the Tây Sơn, Nguyễn Ánh proclaimed himself emperor of all of Vietnam under the name Gia Long (Dutton, 2006; Wook, 2004). Gia Long decreed the construction of a new site for imperial examinations in the area of Vinh in 1803; a year later he ordered to move the provincial administrative centre from Lam Thành to Vinh along with the construction of a new citadel (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.22-23; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.21-22).[12] According to Nguyễn Quang Hồng, this decision opened up the way for Vinh to become the economic, political, and cultural centre of Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh provinces (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.24).[13]

As the provincial centre of administration and examinations, Vinh came to form an administrative unit combining different functions and the place through which the surrounding region was integrated in wider networks of power, trade, and information. As the seat of the provincial mandarin, the city linked the region to a centralized system of rule (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.24-27, 68-71; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.23; Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.81). However, central policies often met with local resistance and the new citadel appears to have partly functioned as an imperial outpost against local revolts (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.31, 58). According to Bùi Thiết, 80 years of Nguyễn rule (1802-1885) saw more than 500 peasant risings, of which many took place in or reached the Vinh area (Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.61).

Vinh becoming the provincial centre elevated the status of its existing market to that of the main trading place in the region. Additionally, members of the administration and the military located in the citadel provided new and growing markets for surrounding villages (Del Testa, 2007: p.313). Most traders followed the relocation from Lam Thành to Vinh, where they lived in separated areas according to their ethnicity and their occupations. Manufacturing took mainly place in surrounding villages, where farmers supplemented their agricultural activities with the production of handicrafts (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.41-46; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.33-34). With little production taking place in Vinh itself, its economic role was mainly that of a regional trading place. Through its strategic location at the intersection of the Mandarin Road and a road linking the coast with Laos and the Mekong, Vinh connected its surroundings also to inter-regional and international trade (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.52;

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[12] Del Testa dates the move of the provincial administration to Vinh to 1778 and the move of annual imperial examinations to 1770 (Del Testa, 2007: p.313). However, his is the only text doing so and it provides no references for these dates. As I have found no other documents supporting these dates, I refer to the dates given by all other sources available to me. In any case, all sources agree that Vinh became the seat of provincial administration and examinations around 1800 and regard this decision as the founding of the city.
[13] However, no sources explain the decision to move the provincial centre from Lam Thành to Vinh.

Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.35). Administrative personnel and economic opportunities led to population growth in the 19th century. Del Testa provides the only available population number, of "perhaps 3,000 inhabitants" in the pre-colonial time (Del Testa, 2007: p.313).

As the site of imperial administration and examinations for entry into a meritocratic state apparatus, Vinh became the point of articulation of a pre-colonial Vietnamese modernity (Woodside, 2006). Increased contacts with "modern" technology and ideas expressed themselves in the design of Vinh's citadel. The citadel constructed under Gia Long's reign starting in 1804 had merely been an earthen fortress with wooden gates, which was completed in only one year. However, in 1831, facing peasant revolts, his son Minh Mạng decided to replace it with a stone-citadel combining a Vauban-style design with traditional local elements and materials (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.28-29; Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.54; see Figure 2). The citadel served as the seat of the provincial mandarin and administration, as a garrison, an armoury, a prison, and as barracks (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.31; Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.59). According to Owen, Minh Mạng had been open to Western technology and trade, while at the same time resenting cultural and religious outside influences (Owen, 2005: p.115). His father, Gia Long, had defeated the Tây Sơn with French military aid. Of particular importance in his victory was, according to Mantienne, his citadel in Gia Định, designed by Frenchmen Theodore Lebrun and Victor Olivier de Puymanel following a Vauban-style (Mantienne, 2003: pp.522-525). While French officers only participated in the design of two citadels, 32 Vauban-style citadels were constructed by the Nguyễn rulers between 1802 and 1844 to secure their rule throughout Vietnam, one of them was the citadel erected on Minh Mạng's orders in Vinh (Mantienne, 2003: p.525; Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.30).

> "These citadels were quite perfect replicas of Vauban's designs, but they were nevertheless adapted to Vietnamese particularities. First, and most important in Vietnamese eyes, all of these structures matched the requirements of traditional geomancy: they were built in propitious places where natural irregularities in the landscape such as rivers and the hills embodied the presence of positive forces and prevented negative ones from reaching them." (Mantienne, 2005: p.528)

Indeed, the Vinh citadel is located close to the Vinh River and Quyết Mountain. According to Nguyễn Quang Hồng, the Vauban-design is altered to include Feng shui elements (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.28-29). The citadel represents an early example of foreign influences in architecture and planning that were adapted to local conditions.

Figure 2
One of the restored gates of Vinh Citadel. As a symbol of Vinh's pre-colonial history the citadel's gates have been restored in 2004 (picture taken by author, 9.6.2011).

During the 19ᵗʰ century, Vinh became a small but important regional centre of trade and administration. However, Nguyễn Quang Hồng argues that urbanisation and modernisation processes remained limited, as the imperial administration largely maintained existing social structures and economic modes of production, while investments remained limited to the construction of the citadel (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.46, 77). It was not until colonial rule by France that policies for the development of Vinh were formulated.[14]

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[14] Although colonial urbanism can be described as a modern project, the following part will only provide a sketch of Vinh's colonial history. To do justice to the complexity of the interplay between visions, planning, actors and implementation, extensive archival research in colonial archives would be necessary. The study of colonial urbanism in smaller cities and towns would provide a useful corrective to the focus on large urban centres such as Hanoi and Saigon. For a more detailed analysis of late colonial urbanism in Vinh see (Del Testa, 2007). Wright describes French colonial urbanism in general as a modern project (Wright 1991, 1987; Wright, Rabinow, 1982). Jennings and Logan provide analyses of colonial urbanism in Đà Lạt and Hanoi, respectively (Jennings, 2011; Logan, 2000).

2.2 Colonial Vinh (1885 to 1940)

A permanent presence of the French in Indochina[15] started in the 1860s, when emperor Tự Đức, son of Minh Mạng, was forced to cede southern provinces of Vietnam (Cochin China) as a colony to the French. Over the next decades, the French presence in Indochina grew steadily, between 1873 and 1885 the French established protectorates over Tonkin (North Vietnam) and Annam (Central Vietnam) (Meyer, 1996; Brocheux, Hémery, 1995). However, resistance against the French mounted in July 1885, when the Cần Vương movement called for an armed struggle for the restoration of the emperor as the legitimate ruler of Vietnam. According to Chu Trọng Huyến, the French captured Vinh's citadel on 20 July 1885 as a direct response to political instability resulting from this revolt, and a move to fight the rebels who operated in the mountainous region of Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh provinces (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.39-40). Local authorities handed over the citadel and their insignia without resistance to the French (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.43; Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, Hoàng Kim Oanh, 2005: p.17). Vinh's first role under colonial rule was thus to serve as a base for the "pacification" of its region, a role it had already played as an imperial citadel (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.59; Bévin, 1891: p.8). A residency was established in Vinh in July 1885 leaving intact and relying on the old administrative apparatus and mandarins (Del Testa, 2007: p.314; Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.61).[16]

According to Nguyễn Quang Hồng, the first decade of French rule in Vinh saw little development of the city and its economy, and brought little change for its inhabitants as the French concentrated on subduing resistance in the countryside. Infrastructure works, such as the construction of paved roads in the hinterland and to Laos, served military purposes but were also aimed at economic exploitation of natural resources (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.79-82). Investments in Vinh itself focused on infrastructure, too, such as raising the ground level above that of the surrounding flood plain and imposing a grid pattern on the town's area (Del Testa, 2007: p.314).

Before the First World War, economic development in Indochina, and especially in Vinh, was boosted by newly appointed gouverneur général Paul Doumer's investment program, presented in January 1879 to turn Indochina into a profitable colony. His program included public investments in transport infrastructure as well as production and trade led by French

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[15] Colonial Indochina included the French colony of Cochin China and protectorates over Tonkin and Annam, which now form Vietnam. Additionally it consisted of protectorates over Laos and Cambodia as well as an enclave in Guangzhouwan.

[16] The establishment of French rule in Indochina had created a dual structure of authority in the protectorates, in which the old imperial apparatus was mirrored by a colonial administration. These structures were reflective of the semi-feudal/semi-colonial social order described by Nguyễn Quang Hồng (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.62). However, while the protectorates Tonkin and Annam were formally governed by a system of indirect rule, this system over the years became dominated by increasingly centralised power invested in the gouverneur général residing in Hanoi (SarDesai, 2005: p.44).

capital and based on Vietnamese labour power, focusing on a number of existing and newly established urban centres (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.85; Del Testa, 1999). Thus, in July 1899, Emperor Thành Thái issued a decision to found five urban centres in Annam: Thanh Hóa, Vinh, Huế, Faifo (Hội An), and Phan Thiết. After the decision was approved by Doumer in August that year, Vinh became a focus of French investment in Indochina (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.82-87). As the first French company in Vinh the Lao Enterprise, a wood trading and processing company was established in 1900; the Banque Indochine had opened a branch in Vinh already in 1898 (Del Testa, 2007: p.315; Nguyễn Quốc Hồng et al., 2004, p.18; Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.101-102). In addition, as a distinct administrative unit, Vinh also received its own funds, but its budget had still to be approved by the provincial resident (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.86).

Of particular importance to Vinh were Doumer's plans for railroads that would serve economic and military purposes, as well as nation building (or rather, colony building) by facilitating contacts between different parts of Indochina as well as different "races" (Del Testa, 1999: pp.319-323; Wright, 1991: pp.181-182).[17] The program included eight projects, two of which connected Vinh to Hanoi in the north and Đông Hà in the south (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.92). Additionally, two minor railroad lines would be constructed in Vinh or its vicinity, the Vinh-Bến Thủy line and the Yên Lý-Phủ Quì line, in the early 20th century. The Vinh-Bến Thủy line connected the harbour in Bến Thủy and adjacent industries to the national railroad line, the Yên Lý-Phủ Quì line facilitated the transport of wood and other forestry products, as well as cash crops from Vinh's hinterland to the national railroad (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.95). The importance that Vinh's colonial authorities initially attributed to the railroad project was expressed by the sprucing up of the city and festivities on the day the first train arrived from Hanoi in March 1905 (Del Testa, 1999: p.325-327)

However, the railroad connections themselves did not bring about the desired economic boost, partly because they were finished much later than planned for, partly because their dimensions far exceeded actual demand (Hardy, 1998: p.816; Wright, 1991: p.182).[18] Additionally, the vision of racial association in the colonies had been abandoned by the French by the time of completion, as had been the railroad by the automobile as the favourite means of transport (Del Testa, 1999). Instead, the railroad provided economic impetus to Vinh in another way. The first French companies established in Vinh were trading and processing wood. The construction of the railroad required large amounts of railroad ties,

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[17] Doumer's railroad plan relied on public investment, it passed the French Chamber of Deputies in late 1898 (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.92; Del Testa, 1999: p.323).

[18] Doumer's plans were described as "megalomaniac programmes anticipating by decades the real needs of the country" by a contemporary, banker and economist Paul Bernard (Hardy, 1998: p.816; citing Bernard, 1934: p.178). According to Wright, the railroads and train stations "demonstrated Western power but did so in a way that was at best narrowly partisan exhibitionism, and all too often mindless display" (Wright, 1991: p.183).

boosting the business of French wood traders (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.102). The largest numbers of industrial workers were employed by railroad associated industries in the Vinh depot and the "Atelier de grande réparation de chemin de fer Truong Thi"[19]. The depot was constructed close to the train station (in the area of today's Quang Trung Housing Complex) in 1905, servicing trains and carrying out minor repairs. The more important decision was to locate the atelier, Indochina's second largest railroad repair workshop, in Trường Thi, a village east of the citadel. Construction of the atelier began in 1908 and it quickly attracted about 1,000-1,200 workers. In contrast to the unskilled workforce of other enterprises, many of the atelier and depot workers had undergone vocational training in Hanoi and lived in a separate village close to Trường Thi referred to as "Northerner Village" due to their training in the capital (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.96-98; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.47-48).

Trading in wood and wood products would become the sector in which most French enterprises in Vinh invested (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.102).[20] Probably the company with the largest workforce (300-350 workers) was the Indochina Match Company, founded in Bến Thủy in 1903. The company's products soon drove Chinese matches out of the Vietnamese market and were sold in all of Indochina and exported to other French colonies (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.103). Wood products also dominated trade channelled through Bến Thủy harbour, which mainly served the export of forestry and agricultural products (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.99). While the French dominated industries and export trade, Vietnamese, often from Hanoi, were successful in the transport business (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.47; Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.135-137). Many Vietnamese worked as unskilled labourers in factories, as porters, hairdressers, tailors, or shoemakers (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.149). Especially employment in factories and as porters involved poor working conditions and hard manual labour, women represented a large percentage in both occupations (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.100, 180).

When the First World War broke out in 1914, today's area of Vinh consisted of three separate centres: the administrative and market centre around the citadel, the railroad atelier in Trường Thi, and the Bến Thủy area with the harbour as well as wood and trading industries. Public investments had mainly consisted of infrastructure projects such as streets connecting the three areas, other works focused on the citadel area where most French lived

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[19] "Atelier for large railroad repairs Trường Thi"
[20] One of the larger wood trading companies was owned by Lê Viết Lới, employing up to 50 workers (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.103). However, his company could not compete with large French companies and was driven out of the market in the 1930s (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.140).

(Del Testa 2007: p.315; Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.91, 104-105). Compared to pre-colonial times, the economic role of Vinh had grown relative to its administrative function. Nguyễn Quang Hồng describes Vinh and its surroundings as an assembly of villages interspersed with industrial and trading facilities, rather than an urban centre (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.105). However, the population of Vinh alone (not including Trường Thi and Bến Thủy) had grown considerably in the first 20-30 years of colonial rule, though estimates vary widely. According to Chu Trọng Huyến, Vinh's population was about 12,000 by 1901, of which 40 were Europeans and 161 Chinese (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.49, citing the magazine Annam général 1901). The Annuaire Général de l'Indo-Chine provides population numbers of Vinh for 1904: about 4,600 (including 68 Europeans, 200 Chinese) (Annuaire Général de l'Indo-Chine, 1904: p.562). The population of Vinh in the early 20th century seems thus to have grown by 50% to 300% compared to the pre-colonial population estimated by Del Testa (Del Testa, 2007: p.313).[21]

As the importance of industries and trade located in Trường Thi and Bến Thủy grew relative to the administrative function of Vinh, both were elevated to the rank of separate urban centres in 1916 (Bến Thủy[22]) and 1917 (Trường Thi) (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.107-109).[23] After the First World War, French investments in Indochina grew (Hardy, 1998: pp.808-810). Again, Vinh benefited mainly from expansion of the railway, the Trường Thi atelier's workforce tripled from a pre-war number of about 1,000 to 3,000-3,200 after the war (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.129). The years after the war saw economic growth and public investments in infrastructure; cinemas, a stadium and racially separated swimming pools were constructed. Enterprises and wealthy households were connected to a power grid in 1922-23, electricity was provided by a coal-fed power plant constructed by the Société

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[21] Chu Trọng Huyến probably includes the inhabitants of Bến Thủy and Trường Thi; this would explain the large difference. However, all numbers have to be taken with caution. Del Testa does not provide any reference for his estimate, official figures for the population of Nghệ An and Vinh vary considerably over the years with no explanation given. While the Annuaire de l'Indo-Chine gives population number of Nghệ An province for every year, the numbers for Vinh are unfortunately only provided in the 1904 issue. According to Del Testa, Vinh's population was 35,000 in 1906, including 350 Europeans, and 100,000 in 1937, including 440 Europeans. However, he again does not provide specific references (he summarizes his statistical references on p.312). Additionally, it remains unclear if he refers only to the Vinh area around the citadel, or includes Bến Thủy and Trường Thi in this number. In any case, while the numbers given in the text above might be underestimates especially regarding the Vietnamese population, his numbers seem exaggerated. According to the Annuaire Général de L'Indo-Chine 1906, only 181 Europeans lived in the whole of Nghệ An province in 1906 (Annuaire Général de L'Indo-Chine, 1906: p.399). That number grew to 280 in 1925 (Annuaire Général de l'Indo-Chine, 1925: p.278). While the numbers given for the Vietnamese population are very unreliable due to their unrealistic changes, I expect the number of Europeans living in Nghệ An to be more accurate, as the Europeans were probably better known to authorities. A population size of 100,000 was not reached until after the American War, despite considerable enlargement of the city's area over the years.
[22] While the decision to elevate Bến Thủy's status to that of an urban centre was taken by emperor Duy Tân in 1914 and confirmed by the resident-general of Annam the same year, the governor-general of Indochina confirmed this decision only in 1916 (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.107; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.50)
[23] All three urban centres, Vinh, Trường Thi and Bến Thủy, shared the same assembly of representatives (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.110).

Indochinoise de Forêts et d'Allumettes (SIFA)[24] (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.117-120, 133, 169; Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.154).

Economic growth after the war saw increasing social and occupational differentiation. The industrial workforce grew to about 8,000 during the 1920s, of which most were unskilled labourers whose families continued to farm their own land (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.67-75). The expanding public service provided white-collar jobs to Vietnamese (Del Testa, 2007: p.318). Growing numbers of Vietnamese entrepreneurs benefited from new trade opportunities provided by the colonial economy, modern technologies and improved infrastructure (Del Testa, 2007: p.321; Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.99, 132-137, 143). Chinese traders continued to operate in local trade as well as to sell silk and Chinese medicine, a small number of Indians also continued to specialize in trading silk and fabrics (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.145-146; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.48-49).

By the 1920s, the formerly prevailing subsistence economy had been largely replaced by a money economy in the Vinh area (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.156). However, modernisation did not only affect the economy and infrastructure. In 1918 the local school preparing for examinations was closed as part of educational and administrative reforms abolishing the traditional systems. Instead, a school (trường Quốc học, School for National Learning) preparing for positions in a modern colonial administration opened in 1920 (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.132-133; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.54-66; Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.77-92). Large numbers of students passed through colonial education in Vinh, according to Chu Trọng Huyến, 1,090 students were enrolled in secondary schools in 1940 (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.65).

Due to economic and urban growth, in 1927 Vinh, Bến Thủy, and Trường Thi were merged into the urban centre Vinh-Bến Thủy with a population of about 20,000 (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.152). Thus, an administrative unit had been formed that incorporated the administrative, educational, and trade centre in Vinh, the harbour and industries in Bến Thủy, and the railroad atelier in Trường Thi. However, growth and development in the 1920s was short-lived. From the beginning, the perceived economic potential of Vinh had relied on its harbour that was seen as crucial for exploitation of the region's resources. Yet, the amount of goods passing through Bến Thủy harbour always remained lower than that in Đà Nẵng, Central Vietnam's largest port, and at no point reached the envisaged quantity. Although the mouth of the Lam River was repeatedly dredged, it remained too shallow for the operation of

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[24] The Indochinese Forestry and Match Society. SIFA resulted from a 1922 merger of the Indochina Match Company and a wood trading and processing company, it would become the largest company in Annam, employing 750-800 workers in Bến Thủy (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.155; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.52).

large ships (Del Testa, 2007: p.319; Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.121-124). Plans for a permanent solution were regarded as too costly and never implemented (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.227; Gouvernement général de l'Indochine, Inspection générale des travaux publics publiques, 1930: pp.10-11). The Great Depression starting in late 1929 had severe impacts on Vinh's colonial development. Especially Vietnamese enterprises suffered and had to close, while French companies were often large enough to survive the crisis (Del Testa, 2007: p.321; Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.135-137; Ville de Vinh-Bênthuy, 1933: p.1). Public investments in Vinh, especially in its harbour, were cut (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.194, 227-228).

As in other parts of Vietnam, the Depression worsened the living conditions of many Vietnamese (Duiker, 2000: p.176). Tensions between modernisation, colonialism, and tradition proved a fertile breeding ground for resistance against colonialism and feudalism. Revolutionary groups had agitated among industrial workers in Vinh since the late 1920s, modern printing presses owned by Vietnamese played an important role in disseminating works of European thinkers and revolutionary pamphlets (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.143-4, 169, 195, 231, 259; Duiker, 2000: p.177; see also McHale, 2004). From about 1927 on, strikes took place in the railroad atelier, the match factory, and other enterprises supported by students and teachers of the National School (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.79-80). In 1930, cells of the Indochinese Communist Party existed in most major enterprises in Vinh (Nguyễn Quốc Hồng et al., 2004: p.39; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.88; see also Service de la sureté du Tonkin et du Nord-Annam, 1931). On 1 May 1930, large demonstrations of peasants and workers took place in Vinh, starting a series of uprisings and the establishment of peasant-governed areas that came to be known as the Nghệ Tĩnh Soviets (Nguyen Duy Quy, 2006; Duiker, 2000: p.179). Vinh as a small urban and industrial centre played an important role in the alliance between intellectuals (notably of the Quốc học school), workers and peasants. Industrial workers maintained close ties with surrounding villages, in which their families lived and to which many returned after their day's work. These rural-urban connections and the small size of the city allowed for flows of information between different social groups, which were not as isolated from each other as in larger urban centres (Del Testa, 2007: pp.319-320; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.67-74). It took the French over a year to violently crush the uprisings and destroy the Communist Party's organisations in Nghệ An (Nguyen Duy Quy, 2006; Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, Hoàng Kim Oanh, 2005: p.53; Duiker, 2000: p.197). Undeterred, strikes and uprisings persisted throughout the 1930s, with Party organisations re-established in the mid-30s (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.129, 135, 152; Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, Hoàng Kim Oanh, 2005: p.71). The Dépêche Coloniale of 3.5.1931 judged that the surroundings of Vinh were the area of strongest communist agitation and activity in Vietnam (Dépêche Coloniale, cited by Do Duc Ho, 1938: p.62).

Due to the Great Depression and the unstable and dangerous political situation, nearly no new investments[25] were carried out by the French in Vinh during the 1930s (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.196, 201). The late 1930s saw an "indigenisation" of Vinh as the number and importance of Vietnamese in the administration, the economy and in public affairs increased: "by 1939, more Vietnamese were in charge of more aspects of the 'modern' administration and economy than in 1930. By the late 1930s, the Vietnamese effectively ran the modern state and economic apparatus the French had created" (Del Testa, 2005: p.317). Modernisation under colonialism had, however, not only resulted in widespread changes in the economy and the administration. Especially those Vietnamese living in urban areas of Vietnam experienced important changes in social life during colonial rule (Dutton, 2012; Woodside, 1971). For example, new forms of association and social identity developed in Vinh as a Chamber of Commerce or a club for the promotion of traditional music were founded (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: pp.166-170, 250-252).

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[25] Notable exceptions were the enlargement of the Trường Thi atelier in 1938, which doubled its size compared to the original atelier constructed in 1908, and the construction of an airport to the north of Vinh (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.213; Bulletin administrative de l'Annam, 16.12.1933: p.1973-1974).

2.3 The First Two Destructions of Vinh (1940 to 1964)

Collaboration of the colonial government with the Japanese from 1940 on saw the stationing of up to 10,000 Japanese soldiers in Vinh's vicinity (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.183). The French colonial and Vietnamese imperial administration as well as parts of the population collaborated with the Japanese who imposed corvée labour, land acquisitions, and new taxes (Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, Hoàng Kim Oanh, 2005: p.100-104; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.179). The extraction of resources for the Japanese war efforts, especially of food to supply Japanese soldiers, put a large burden on Nghệ An's economy and the population. In addition, bombing by Allied forces destroyed transport infrastructure and prompted the relocation of enterprises from Vinh to Hanoi (Nguyễn Quang Hồng, 2003: p.220). Chu Trọng Huyến claims that during the 1945 famine in Northern Vietnam 60,000 people starved to death in Nghệ An alone (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.185).[26] The French administration became increasingly powerless during collaboration with the Japanese, according to Del Testa "it seems the city was Vietnamese in terms of its political authority in everything but name" by the time the Japanese abolished French rule in Indochina and interned most French on 9 March 1945 (Del Testa, 2007: p.309).[27]

While the Việt Minh, the League for the Independence of Vietnam, held control of Tonkin's northern-most provinces since 1944, they started to establish themselves in Vinh in May 1945, only after the Japanese had taken the place of the French and established a nationalist government under Emperor Bảo Đại. Shortly after the announcement of Japanese surrender on 14 August 1945, popular uprisings, at times incited by the Việt Minh, seized power throughout North Vietnam (Duiker, 2000: pp.307-308). In Vinh, different groups aiming at overthrowing Japanese rule united under their banner (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.186-193). After negotiating with the Japanese local commander who agreed to hand over weapons and ammunition, the Việt Minh mobilized large groups of peasant and workers to seize power in Vinh on 21 August 1945 (Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, Hoàng Kim Oanh, 2005: pp.111-112; Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: pp.193-197). On 2 February 1945, Hồ Chí Minh proclaimed the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in Hanoi (Duiker, 2002: pp.322-324).

During Japanese occupation, most of Vinh's industries had been relocated or abandoned. When the Việt Minh took power in Vinh in August 1945, only the railway atelier in Trường Thi and the depot by the train station were operational, all private factories had been closed. The Việt Minh aimed at establishing a new administration and a functioning state, responding to a chaotic and lawless situation in the city. While they had seized power from the Japanese,

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[26] As estimates of the total death toll in range up to 1 Mio this number seems realistic (Duiker, 2000: p.308).
[27] In contrast, Vietnamese sources emphasise resistance of common Vietnamese against French/Japanese rule (Chu Trọng Huyến, 1998: p.178-185; Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, Hoàng Kim Oanh, 2005: p.104-106).

they had to cooperate with nationalist Chinese troops that entered the city to disarm Japanese forces. Additionally, different political parties and factions sought to gain power in Vinh (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.9-33). By mid-1946, the Communist Party had largely consolidated control over the city, with the Chinese forces having pulled out in April and the leadership of the Vietnamese Nationalist Party in Nghệ An arrested in June and July (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.32-33).[28] Throughout 1946, tensions between the returning French and the newly established Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) mounted, and open hostilities broke out in the last month of that year (Duiker, 2000: pp.346-398). In Vinh, preparations for hostilities started in October 1946, when fighting escalated in Hanoi in December, the 34 French soldiers stationed in Vinh were disarmed and interned together with the Chinese population (Nguyễn Quang Vinh, Dương Thanh Bình, 2007: pp.56-57; Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.39-48).

Hồ Chí Minh had called for a scorched earth policy[29] in case war with the French broke out; it was carried out in Vinh over a five-month period starting in early 1947. The city's population and facilities were dispersed throughout the countryside. In total 20,000 tons of materials were dismantled; what could not be transported was destroyed, including the citadel, 1,335 houses (including 301 multistorey buildings), 300 train coaches, and twelve locomotives (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.48-55; Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.52). Throughout the First Indochina War (until 1954) only a small population of villagers remained in the area. Previously industrial areas became agricultural land again. Who actually controlled the area during the war remains unclear in light of sources available to me. While the Việt Minh were able to recruit fighters in the area, they and their policies also met with resistance from the remaining population (Nguyễn Quang Vinh, Dương Thanh Bình, 2007: p.61; Nguyễn Văn Chiến, 2007: p.80; Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, Hoàng Kim Oanh, 2005: p.138; Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.78-96). In addition to destruction carried out by the Việt Minh in 1947, the French bombarded and destroyed remaining infrastructure such as bridges during the war. Thus, when the war ended and the Việt Minh returned to power in Vinh in 1954, the city had been nearly totally destroyed (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: p.103).

During the 1950s, DRV authorities focused on the re-organisation of the economy according to socialist principles. Popular resistance especially to a land reform prompted the DRV and the Vietnam Worker's Party to abandon the most radical policies. In Nghệ An, protests against land reform erupted in violence in late 1956, villagers took DRV soldiers and Party officials prisoners (Schwab, 11.1.1957). During rectification of land reform excesses,

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[28] For a detailed account of the establishment of the DRV in North Vietnam see (Marr, 2013).
[29] Phá hoại để kháng chiến (destroy to resist).

between 6,229 and 11,700 families were compensated, 11,646 Party members had been falsely accused and were reinstated (Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, Hoàng Kim Oanh, 2005: p.154; Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: p.118).

While during the war, authorities considered moving the provincial centre away from Vinh, these considerations were abandoned and from 1954 on, people, institutions, and enterprises returned to Vinh (UBKCHC Nghệ An, n.d.). Urban development shows little marks of large scale development projects or the formulation of comprehensive policies for social reorganisation of the city through urban planning or design until the early 1960s. In general, policies focused on the transformation of the economy and the establishment of a functioning state. Collectivisation of agriculture in the countryside was mirrored by expropriation of entrepreneurs and the establishment of collective ownership and state management of their enterprises in the late 1950s. In Vinh, depending on their occupation, 83% to 99% of workers had been organized in collectives by 1961 (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.120-122; Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, Hoàng Kim Oanh, 2005: p.159; UBHC Nghệ An, UBHC Vinh, 8.9.1961; UBHC Nghệ An, UBHC Vinh, 9.3.1961).[30] A multistorey state department store became the symbol of the new economic order (see Figure 3; Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: p.127; see pictures in Thành ủy thành phố Vinh et al., 2003).

Following a Politburo decision, a public investment program focused on the creation of industries and relevant infrastructure. By 1960, 40 factories and enterprises had been established by central and local agencies in Vinh, the industrial workforce had grown to 10,000 workers (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: p.125; Nguyen Sy Thuy et al., 2011: pp.12-13; Nguyễn Quốc Hồng et al., 2004: p.127). The creation of an electricity network, including a new power plant, was assisted by the USSR with experts and 400,000 Roubles (Bùi Thiết, 1984: pp.152-157). In contrast to colonial times, plans envisaged electricity supplied to all of Vinh's inhabitants (UBHC Nghệ An, 9.11.1954; UBKCHC Nghệ An, 27.9.1954).

The state also invested in the social infrastructure focusing on re-establishing Vinh as an educational centre, including a university and two colleges, as well as a primary school in each of the 5 urban areas (khu phố) and secondary schools. Additionally, hospitals (one with assistance of the People's Republic of Poland), cinemas, a theatre, a library, and a museum commemorating the Nghệ Tĩnh Soviets were constructed (Nguyen Sy Thuy et al., 2011: p.13; Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.129-133; UBHC Nghệ An, 28.11.1961; UBKH Nhà nước, 27.4.1962).

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[30] Further documents show that even in agriculture, some families continued to work individually outside cooperatives, see for example (UBHC Nghệ An, UBHC Vinh, 30.11.1962).

During the 1950s, Vinh's inhabitants largely constructed their own housing, using mainly wood and bamboo. Such buildings were repeatedly destroyed by fires, storms and floods (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.105-109; UBHC Nghệ An, n.d.). After large scale destruction caused by a fire in August 1961, Vinh for the first time saw a public housing program (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.110, 145). In 1961 and 1962, a small number of simple three-storey apartment buildings were constructed close to the city centre (Bộ Kiến trúc, Công ty Kiến trúc Vinh, 16.12.1961; UBHC Nghệ An, n.d.). Designs, plans, and funds were supplied by central agencies, while construction materials were sourced locally (Bộ Kiến trúc, Công ty Kiến trúc Vinh, 27.10.1961; UBKH Nhà nước, 20.9.1961). The construction of public housing was in line with plans for socialist urban development (Đảng Lao động Việt Nam, BCHTƯ 28.12.1961). The early 1960s saw the first important decisions for planning and development of Vinh in the DRV. In 1963, Vinh's status was elevated from town to city, after it had been designated to become one of five industrial centres of the DRV in 1961 (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.138, 144-146; Hội Đồng Chính phủ, 10.10.1963). By 1964, Vinh's population had grown to 72,000, the city covered an area of 26km² (Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, et al. 2004: p.147).

The Geneva Peace agreement provided for the temporary establishment of two separate states in Vietnam, the DRV in the north and the Republic of Vietnam in the south. Common elections and unification were to take place within two years. However, the Republic of Vietnam supported by the United States of America (US) refused to hold elections. The conflict turned into armed struggle in the South between the Republic of Vietnam government and the US on one side and the National Liberation Front and the DRV on the other. As the situation deteriorated the US turned to bombing the DRV after the Gulf of Tonkin Incident in August 1964 (SarDesai, 2005: pp.67-100; Duiker, 2000: pp.515-561). On 5 August 1964, the US bombed Vinh for the first time. In May and June 1965, most inhabitants as well as goods, machines and institutions were evacuated (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.167-175). As Vinh and nearby harbours were important nodes in the transport of supplies and troops to the war in Southern Vietnam, US bombing especially targeted transport infrastructure (Nguyễn Văn Chiến, 2007: p.112; Bùi Thiết, 1984: p.143). While a number of workshops as well as the power plant remained in Vinh, intensified bombing in 1968 prompted the evacuation of nearly all remaining facilities and inhabitants (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: p.187). Bombing of the DRV by the US put a hold on urban development in Vinh and totally destroyed the city. Plans for its reconstruction envisaged the creation of a *Socialist City*. As the next chapter will show, two attempts were made to implement this modern project.

Figure 3
The state department store, once a symbol of socialist economic development was destroyed during US-bombing in the 1960s (National Archives Centre III Tài hiệu ảnh giải đoàn 1954-1985 (LIV) Quyển 1/764).

3. The Socialist City

The American War saw the total destruction of Vinh. At the time of the city's reconstruction, modern urban planning had become the norm in the DRV. As in other socialist countries, modern urban planning was assisted, promoted and thereby influenced by the Soviet Union (see for example Zarecor, 2011; Stanilov, 2007; Regulska, 1987; Carter, 1979; Werwicki, 1979). As has been described above, socialism as it came into practice in the USSR presented a particular form of modernity, that was influenced by national factors of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, theoretical input derived from Marx and other writers, as well as from the contestation of the first, Western cultural program of modernity. With regards to cities, developments in the USSR had led to a socialist variant of modern urban planning, the *Socialist City*, a modern project aimed at furthering socialist development and society through the intentional design of urban space (French, 1995).

When the DRV government turned to other socialist countries for help in the reconstruction of its cities, the choice for assisting in the reconstruction of Vinh fell to the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The following parts will first introduce the concepts and elements of the Socialist City of the Soviet Union. After that, the application of this modern project in the reconstruction of Vinh with the help of the GDR is presented and analysed. As the reconstruction of Vinh is the result of the interplay of international politics and urban planning in the DRV and the GDR, the background on urban development in the DRV from 1954 until 1973 and in the GDR from 1945 to 1973, as well as on the relationship between the two countries, is also provided.

Detailed planning to achieve the creation of a Socialist City started in Vinh in the mid-1960s under the leadership of the Institute for Urban Planning[31] of the Ministry of Architecture (MoA, which would later become part of the newly formed Ministry of Construction) (UBHC Nghệ An, 25.7.1966). Apart from reconstruction, planning aimed at enlarging Vinh's area to create an administrative unit able to rely on internal food supply. While the initiative to enlarge the administrative area originated from Nghệ An's Provincial Administrative Committee (PAC), responsibility and decision-making power for such an administrative reorganisation lay with

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[31] The Institute's name changed several times or is abbreviated differently in different documents. Names given are for example Institute for Urban Design and Planning, Institute for Urban and Rural Design and Planning. For readability, I will refer to the institute as Institute for Urban Planning in the text; references give the designation used in the relevant documents.

the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Interior, to which the PAC addressed its request for enlargement (UBHC Nghệ An, 13.10.1966).

Guidelines issued by the National Reconstruction Committee in July 1968 highlight attempts to establish central control over provinces and especially cities (UBKTCB Nhà nước, 1.7.1968). These guidelines stipulate standards for planning and reconstruction of Vietnam's cities after the war. They assigned responsibility for planning to provincial authorities, while plans had to be presented to and approved by the Council of Ministers, the National Reconstruction Committee, the National Planning Committee, and the MoA. Not only did this document in detail prescribe the planning process, it also formulated strategies for new and re-constructed cities. These posited industrialisation and production as a city's most important functions. Guiding concept was the compact city, in which the widespread construction of multistorey buildings makes economic use of space and resources, as well as provides an urban appearance. Housing complexes were supposed to hierarchically structure the urban area. The target of 6m² living space per person is supposed to be achieved 15 years after the end of the war. The city centre is regarded as expressing the cultural and political function of the city, incorporating local natural conditions, as well as symbols of revolution, history, and technological progress, to be achieved by the construction of impressive high-rise buildings and monuments. While the document forecasts that economic conditions after the war will heavily impact such ambitions, it emphasises the communicative effect of the city centre; therefore the construction of several permanent high-rise buildings in the city centre is projected for the immediate time after the war. The city centre is also highlighted by the envisioned Central Place surrounded by administrative and cultural buildings. In addition to ideological symbolism, reconstruction priority lies on the restoration of pre-war buildings and structures, avoiding pre-war mistakes. Reconstruction would thus focus on industries and public buildings; self-supplied temporary shelter is regarded as sufficient for the urban population (UBKTCB Nhà nước, 1.7.1968).

Important elements of an ideal Socialist City are exemplified in this directive: centralized and hierarchical planning, the city as a centre of socialized production and egalitarian consumption, the city centre as a symbol of a new society and its achievements, the importance of the Central Place, housing complexes as structuring urban units, standardized housing conditions. The next section will show how these elements became central to the modern project of the Socialist City, and how the relative importance of these elements shifted. Most influential for theorizing on the Socialist City were urban development and planning in the Soviet Union. As a hegemonic power and the centre of world revolution, concepts developed and applied in the USSR became influential in other socialist countries, among them Vietnam and the German Democratic Republic.

3.1 The Origins of the Socialist City

The October Revolution of 1917 made the USSR the first socialist state; therefore the institutions of existing socialism in other countries were heavily influenced by the forms socialist modernity took in the USSR (Arnason, 2001). It also became the place where ideas and theories of a Socialist City as a modern project were first developed and applied. The Socialist City can be described as a modern projects based on thoughts and plans concerning cities in socialist countries, as well as from the implementation of these plans. Theories and results were, however, not particular to socialist countries. Specifics resulted to a large degree from the application of ideals and theory in the respective institutional setting. The following parts will describe the characteristics of the Socialist City, resulting partly from planning ideals, partly from the application of these ideals. In addition, it will show how urban policies that subsequently became influential in other countries were to a large degree influenced by national politics and power struggles within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

3.1.1 Planning Ideals

Cities were nearly exclusively seen as a desirable form of living in the USSR (French, 1979: pp.76-77). As the urban and industrial proletariat played a leading role in the writings of Marx and the Russian Revolution, the city was perceived as the place where production and proletarian culture could best be developed (Harloe, 1996: p.1; French, 1995: p.3). At the same time, cities were regarded as the social environment that would further collective identity, production, and consumption to achieve an ideal socialist society (Smith, 1996: pp.70-71; French, Hamilton, 1979: p.7). The construction of cities was therefore regarded as contributing to the construction of Socialism (Humphrey, 2005). The roots of poor conditions in existing cities were seen in the capitalist or feudal structures these cities were embedded in. Thus, a new Socialist City would be necessary, shaped by new social and political forces as well as expressing these (Häussermann, 1996: p.214; French, 1995: p.3; Bater, 1980: p.1).

The search for such a city on the one hand followed international discourses on urban planning and architecture; on the other hand the USSR provided a setting for the formulation of utopian models of social organisation and social experiments.[32] Most regarded housing in buildings following a "modern" style, standardized housing in multistorey buildings in a universal "modernist" architecture using concrete and glass as prominent materials, as the

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[32] Large numbers of West European architects participated in these debates (the largest group were German architects), partly because of ideological/idealistic reasons, partly because earlier attempts to apply their ideas of social housing had failed in their home countries and partly because employment opportunities were rare due to the world economic crisis (Richter, 2006: pp.24-26; Durth et al., 1998a: pp.36-37).

suitable form for socialist living. The theoretical argument for this style largely resulted from the rejection of old architectural forms and symbols. This not only symbolic rejection of old social norms also led to experiments with communal living and the rejection of family life (French, 1995: pp.30, 37). However, such experiments were soon abandoned and apartments for the nuclear family became to be regarded as the most desirable form of accommodation; housing in dormitories or of several families in one apartment was later due to economic necessities, not theoretical or idealistic reasons (French, 1995: pp.37-40, 81; Smith, 1996: p.70; Reiner, Wilson, 1979: pp.60-61; Humphrey, 2005: pp.44-45; see also Footnote 34). The search for socialist living and housing forms created diverse debates and lines of thought during the 1920s (Bater, 1980: pp.23-24). According to French most planners and architects in the USSR during that time regarded themselves as "experts" or artists, who planned *for* people but not *with* them. Through their art, plans and concepts they wanted to change society, often with little regard to the wishes of those who would populate their cities and buildings, at the same time they shared a strong believe in new modern technological solutions (French, 1995: pp.33-34, 38-39). Socialisation of the means of production and centralized power of the state were seen as providing the means for effective implementation of planners' ideals (Smith, 1996: pp.72, 75).

Especially the garden city concept became influential in the search for a Socialist City. Ebenezer Howard's ideas presented a way to dissolve the differences between city and countryside and to form a new society by creating a new living environment. Howard put emphasis on sufficient space and green areas for inhabitants, in a city that was planned as a whole unit. His work and the garden city movement had been influential in Russia even before the October Revolution. A section of the International Garden City Society had been formed in St Petersburg in 1913 and was re-established in Moscow in 1922. First garden cities had been constructed during Tsarist rule. The chief planner of one of the showcase projects, a railroad worker dormitory in Prozorovka, would later be responsible to prepare the General Plan for Moscow in 1935. After the revolution, garden cities had been constructed as suburbs of Tver', Ivanovo, and Bryansk. The lasting influence of the garden city concept on the Socialist City lies in its generous open and green spaces as well as in the idea to plan whole cities as one complete unit (Howard, 2001; French, 1995: pp.24, 31-32).

Many of the differences to cities in capitalist countries result from fundamental differences in the economic and political system: "The nationalization of all resources, and the substitution of centralized planning for the market to develop and allocate them, has obvious consequences for the city" (Bater, 1980: p.3). This translates into a number of characteristics of socialist urbanism. As privatism is supposed to be abolished, standardized state-owned apartments were seen as the ideal housing form, although due to economic difficulties

privately and cooperatively owned housing was accepted. Still, land for the construction of these was allocated by the state, as were state-owned apartments (Bater, 1980: p.3). Standardisation and norms were supposed to attain equality of living conditions. As the market was abolished, ideal allocation and distribution were to be achieved by planning, in the Soviet Union by centralized planning by the state bureaucracy. "The assumption is that the Soviet leaders know what is best for the state, that the central planning apparatus can determine the best course of action, and that such directives are implemented all the way down the line" (Bater, 1980: p.4).

Centralised planning is one of the most important aspects of the Socialist City. In contrast to a capitalist city, in which land use and allocation is largely determined by the market, the socialized ownership of all means of production and the pre-dominant role of the state in the economy of socialist states ideally allow for

> "active planning, that is the active projection of economic activities (allocation of resources, distribution of income) as opposed to the passive forecasting of spontaneous development. Though in certain Western countries there is some element of active planning, this is the universal characteristic of socialist planning." (Fisher, 1962: p.251)

According to Fisher, socialist theory of urban transformation regards the plan as the means to achieve politically defined ideals of a Socialist City (Fisher, 1962: p.251). The planner's job is to organize the built environment in such a way as to balance different types of land use by scientific means. The city is to be planned as one, creating no distinction or division between different areas of the city in terms of access to services or the quality of residential areas. One goal is to do away with spatial segregation between different income groups among the inhabitants (Fisher, 1962: p.252).

Among those elements that form part of the ideally planned Socialist City, the city centre takes a special place, because it is one that is functionally different from residential and productive areas. The city centre came to play an important role in the representation of Soviet power and the new society (Bater, 1980: pp.27-30). Contrary to centres of capitalist cities, where commerce and finance dominate, the socialist centre was to be the "political-cultural-administrative center" of the city, the region or the nation corresponding to the respective city's position in the urban hierarchy (Fisher, 1962: p.255). The centre therefore served as the place for important public buildings and monuments, main roads and squares were to provide avenues and place for the staging of large scale demonstrations and

parades.[33] According to Bater, the imperial aspect of the Socialist City is most visibly expressed in the city centre (Bater, 1980: pp.27-30).

The socialist housing complex has been described as the most indicative element of socialist urban planning (Smith, 1996: p.76; French, 1995: p.81). The term refers to a residential complex complete with infrastructure. The complex' size was calculated based on reasonable walking distances, the number of its inhabitants was calculated on the capacity of a primary school, usually numbering between 3,000 to 4,000, sometimes rising to 7,000 (Richter, 2006: p.34).[34] The housing complex served as the lowest unit for provisions with public goods and collective consumption; the next higher order of residential planning and administration was the mikrorayon, consisting of several housing complexes and providing housing for about 8,000-12,000 inhabitants. They included relatively large areas of open and green space, institutions for child care, education, and health as well as shops and other services catering to daily needs (Bater, 1980: p.102). The next higher unit was the residential complex of 30,000-50,000 inhabitants, followed by the urban district of 100,000-300,000 inhabitants and the urban zone of about 1 Mio inhabitants (Smith, 1996: p.75). This hierarchy was supposed to provide each urban resident with equal access to public services.[35] Fisher argues that, "all the preceding features of socialist planning have gradually merged to support an elaborate division of the city into self-contained units. The planned structure of the population defines the ultimate size of the city, and thus indicates the size and number of neighbourhood units and the relationship of each unit's centre to the administrative core" (Fisher, 1962).[36]

The housing complex as an ordering principle became particularly prominent with the construction program beginning under Khrushchev in the 1950s (Smith, 1996: pp.75-76; French, Hamilton, 1979: p.60). Apart from abandoning the ornate architectural style of the Stalin era, this marks another instant in which socialist urban planning re-aligned itself with modern concepts. Although Smith sees the wide-spread application of the mikrorayon system as one of the characteristics of socialist cities in Eastern Europe, he also describes

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[33] These ideals are for example expressed in the planning of East Berlin's centre (Durth et al., 1998b: pp.202-290).

[34] While housing in these units had been envisioned as communal living in the 1920s, the USSR had decreed the construction of apartments for families as the norm in 1932 (French, 1995: pp.42-43, 81; French, Hamilton, 1979: pp.9-11). As the family was considered the basis for living and housing, communal living referred mainly to housekeeping activities (Richter, 2006: p.35).

[35] According to Smith this goal has largely been achieved within mikrorayon, but not between different ones (Smith, 1996: p.77).

[36] This paradox of the separation into self-contained units of a city planned as a whole is exemplified by Richter's presentation of Hans Schmidt's article in "Deutsche Architektur" in 1958, in which Schmidt accused urban development in West Germany as twisting the genuinely socialist concept of the housing complex and producing neighbourhood-units that lead to the dissolution of large urban centres, while socialist housing complexes produced the qualities of a small town (Richter, 2006: p.34-35, citing Schmidt, 1963).

the mikrorayon as reflective of ideals internationally prevalent in modern urban planning (Smith, 1996). According to Richter, socialist housing complexes since the inception of Khrushchev's housing program conformed to the international ideal of a loosely built-up and functionally structured city, where construction of apartment blocks largely followed the needs of industrialized construction. Standardisation and the paternalistic "scientific" production by experts of housing and urban design were by far no unique feature of socialist urbanism (Hall, 2002; Wright, 1991; McLeod, 1983), neither was industrialized construction (Richter, 2006; Hall, 2002). The construction of large housing complexes and new urban centres under Khrushchev can be regarded as a Soviet combination of Howard's Garden Towns and Le Corbusier's "machines for living". A Western interpretation of both concepts was for example Great Britain's New Towns (French, 1995: pp.69-95). It is the large number of such complexes and their dominance in the urban fabric, made possible by central planning and state-ownership of land, that make them a characteristic of the Socialist City (French, 1995: p.93). Additionally, in contrast to such housing complexes in capitalist countries, open space of socialist housing complexes was communal space only (Richter, 2006: p.35).

3.1.2 Unplanned Characteristics

Apart from planning ideals and theoretical considerations, some features have been described as characteristic of the Socialist City that result from the application of these ideals and considerations in the institutional setting of state-socialism and the course of development chosen by the USSR (Szelenyi, 1996: p.287).

Fast, and partly forced, industrialisation relied on massive migration of rural dwellers to urban areas and newly established industrial centres. This resulted in difficulties as the urban environment and living conditions were ill-adapted to the rural lifestyles of many migrants (Enyedi, 1996: p.117; Hamilton, Burnett, 1979). Fisher supports this view: "Peasants with rural attitudes and mores were incorporated into the newly constructed urban environment. The social consequences have often been disastrous for the individual" (Fisher, 1962: p.262). Planners in many cases underestimated the problems resulting from the fast transition from rural to urban lifestyles. However, Fisher indicates that the uncertainties experienced by individuals during this transition were at times part of the construction of a new socialist society:

> "The rural newcomer, housed in a temporary dwelling with little or no privacy,
> was unwittingly engaged in building the socialist future. His initial bewilderment
> provided the opportunity for a new set of attitudes to be ingrained in his mind,

where the only element of stability within his unstable world was the apparent strength of the Party." (Fisher, 1962: p.262)

In most cases plans were oriented towards a politically defined ideal; participation of those who would eventually live in the new apartments was lacking and took place mainly in the form of voicing opinions at organized exhibitions (Enyedi, 1996: p.114). Being oriented towards the ideal city, plans did not take economic realities sufficiently into account. "Standard" living space soon became the maximum space available; housing was in many cases of poor quality and in short supply (Bater, 1980: p.98). Despite the programs to supply adequate housing to all citizens of the USSR, this goal had not been achieved when the Soviet Union fell apart. Furthermore, it resulted in the construction of housing in mikrorayon without accompanying public services and infrastructure. In many cases, these were added after the buildings had been occupied by their inhabitants for many years (French, 1995: pp.93, 107-109). Economic priorities and shortages also compromised the ideal of housing constructed and owned by the state for every citizen. Throughout its existence, the USSR had to rely on housing constructed and owned privately or cooperatively to alleviate housing shortages (Smith, 1996: pp.78-82; French, 1995: p.75; Bater, 1980: p.99).

The ideal of equal access to housing, services, or consumer goods of equal quality and quantity was only partly achieved. While the fact that very large numbers of urban residents lived in mikrorayon indicates some measure of equality in living standards, Bater maintains that in no area was the gap between ideal and reality wider than in the equal access to housing space and quality (Bater, 1980: p.97; Fisher, 1962: p.263). While spatial segregation along the lines of cities in capitalist countries was avoided in cities of socialist countries, segregation largely resulted from the provision of housing by enterprises or institutions, with some being able to provide better apartments and services than others (Matthews, 1979). Access also depended on knowing the right people and how to work the system (Smith, 1996: p.80). Additionally, the new social hierarchy was reflected in access to better housing conditions: "The first class residential areas do not now belong to the capitalists, but to the Party and to the governmental and industrial elite" (Fisher, 1962: p.259). The best apartments were centred in Moscow, where the elites also had access to better facilities and public services. While equal living conditions for all where propagated, access to and distribution of housing in the Soviet Union reflected and reproduced existing inequalities and social hierarchy (Smith, 1996: pp.81-98).

Individual and institutional power did not only affect access to housing. Despite centralized planning structures in the USSR, urban planners and officials had neither the resources nor the authority to enforce implementation of their plans. While urban development was supposed to be the domain of the urban administration, it was the result of a political process

(political here referring to elite-politics of the Communist Party and the socialist state). Land-use planning or the relocation of factories affected vested interests in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) which often defied these policies (Bater, 1980: pp.94-95). Formally cities were supposed to construct and administer housing in their respective areas; however, this function was often taken over by departments of central agencies or SOEs (Bater, 1980: p.105). According to Häussermann, SOEs often played the same role as the landlords of feudal Russia (Häussermann, 1996: p.221).

The problems associated with urban planning in the Soviet Union resulted in major individual and societal deviation from the plan. While urban planning was supposed to provide the politically defined ideal environment for the socialist society, the above described shortcomings resulted in a less-than-ideal reality. Thus, the distorted implementation of "rational" plans promoted "irrational" behaviour of urban residents. Where the ideal environment for the socialist society was flawed, it did often fail to facilitate "socialist" behaviour or values, at times promoting "undesirable" or "un-socialist" behaviour (Hamilton, Burnett, 1979). Where planners did not take into account the needs of rural migrants, these raised pigs on balconies (Fisher, 1962: p.256). When consumer goods were in short supply or housing not conforming to peoples' needs, these resorted to the black market or second economy (Enyedi, 1996: pp.105-106; Alexeev, 1995; Sampson, 1987). As economic growth and attractive jobs were concentrated in large urban centres, attempts to restrict migration were unsuccessful (Fisher, 1962: p.262).

3.1.3 National Politics and Power Struggles

National politics impacted the discourse on the Socialist City and the application of its elements. Thus, the landscape of cities in socialist states was not only expressive of theoretical ideals and their application (or lack thereof), but also of power struggles within the CPSU. Much of the debates on urban planning in the 1920s ran parallel to real developments without much connection between the two. As such, many new cities were constructed in the Soviet Union during the first Five Year Plan (from 1928 on) following no ideal or plan; pressing needs and economic restraints resulted in fast and cheap construction of poor quality (French, 1995: p.41). Such problems eventually led to a radical change in the USSR's construction policies under Stalin. In 1931, the CPSU endorsed the official line that the USSR's cities were already socialist because the bourgeoisie was expropriated, the means of production socialized, and the Communist Party in power (Durth et al., 1998a: p.50; French, 1995: p.4; Bater, 1980: p.26).

The end of debate on the ideal Socialist City was supposed to achieve a shift from theory to action. To this effect, urban planning was centralized and an apparatus set up that was to

carry central decisions down to republic and city-level planning agencies in the 1930s (Bater, 1980: p.26). Still, achievements during Stalin's rule did not meet expectations. The emphasis on accelerated industrialisation to catch up with capitalist countries relegated concerns for urban planning to a backseat. Cities were largely seen as providing resources for industries, they grew both in numbers and inhabitants until World War 2 (French, 1995: pp.52-53). However, industrial growth was not accompanied by residential construction on a corresponding scale. Although multistorey apartment buildings were seen as ideal, the concentration of resources on industrial development and urban growth meant that even in newly established settlements the largest percentage of housing took the form of huts, tents, barracks, or one-storey buildings. More than 1/3 of the nation's total housing stock consisted of privately erected wooden houses in 1940. Where people received housing erected by authorities or enterprises, apartments were divided on a one family per room basis. In general, overcrowding increased in the large urban centres (French, 1995: pp.56-57).

Architecturally, the Stalin period marked a departure from the modern style that was influential during the 1920s. As no new form of living was required anymore for the new Socialist City, the new "content" of the socialist society was to be expressed symbolically and appealing to the masses relying on designs incorporating "national traditions" (Durth et al., 1998b: p.49). In Moscow and other cities, representative ornate housing blocks of relatively high standard were erected along boulevards, providing apartments to the new elite of the Party, the security apparatus, and state administration, as well as to leading academics and artists (French, 1995: p.58). The same style was applied to public buildings such as the Lenin Library, the never built Palace of the Soviets, and the Campus on Lenin Hills. These buildings were intended to express hierarchy, order, the grandeur, power, and greatness of socialism (Durth et al., 1998b: pp.49-50).[37] As construction costs for this kind of buildings were high, they lined major squares and roads, but their number remained small compared to the actual need for housing. The contrast between prestige projects and the housing situation of most of Moscow's inhabitants became even more pronounced after World War 2, from which the USSR emerged as a major power. Stalin himself had promoted this development, deciding personally on designs and urban development plans (French, 1995: pp.60-62).

> "Usually, the lines of Stalinist blocks formed a showy façade along […]
> principal arteries. Behind them remained one- or two-storey pre-revolutionary

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[37] According to Richter, the reasoning behind this emphasis on imposing ornate buildings lies mainly in their ability to inspire awe and a feeling of the grandeur of the new regime. In contrast modern architecture had been enthusiastically embraced by intellectuals but often criticized for its lack of emotional appeal (Richter, 2006: p.29). Schwiedergoll sees the promotion of "national traditions" in architecture and planning as an attempt to make affluence and status of Tsarist Russia's bourgeoisie symbolically attainable for the mass of the USSR's population (Schwiedergoll, 1998: p.46).

houses, often of wood and even more often dilapidated. It was façadism, in a latter-day version of the Potemkin village." (French, 1995: p.59)

The USSR's embrace of traditional symbolism in the Stalin era marked an important shift in its relation to the international mainstream of modern urban planning and architecture. In the 1920s discussions on urban planning, design and architecture in the USSR were part and at the forefront of a global modernist discourse. Rejecting this discourse as part of a nation-building agenda put the USSR on a conservative course that drew its inspirations more from imperial city designs than from urban and architectural forms hitherto associated with social progress. With Khrushchev's rise to power and the accompanying process of de-Stalinisation, this situation changed again. Despite continuing ideological and linguistic emphasises on differences between "socialist" and "capitalist" cities, socialist urbanism after the Stalin period can be described as a partial convergence with modern urban planning in capitalist countries (Richter, 2006: p.32-34; French, Hamilton, 1979: p.18).

In the power struggle following Stalin's death in March 1953, Khrushchev's rise partly built on his promises to solve the pressing issues of housing shortages and the poor living conditions prevalent in the USSR in the early 1950s.[38] In late 1954, Khrushchev criticized construction under Stalin as too expansive, calling for abandoning the ornate and imposing styles. The provision of housing space for the masses came to replace symbolic representations of power as a legitimizing strategy (Richter, 2006: p.30). After Khrushchev's secret speech denouncing Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, housing and planning policies also became part of de-Stalinisation (French, 1995: p.69).

Freed from the restrictions of Stalinism, debates on urban development and architecture picked up on concepts that had already been discussed in the 1920s and contemporary developments outside the USSR, notably the British New Towns, which were themselves indebted to Howard's Garden Cities (French, 1995: p.69; French, Hamilton, 1979: p.2). Architecture saw a return to the simple modern styles that had been applied in the 1920s and had become the norm in the construction of housing complexes in capitalist countries after World War 2. Fast and cheap construction on a massive scale under Khrushchev required the abandoning of brick building techniques and industrialisation of the building process. Most experiments with industrial production and construction in the USSR had ended with the shift under Stalin from the 1930s on. However, from early on industrialisation of construction had been associated with the provision of mass housing and had been promoted as being able to solve the social problem of housing through advanced technical means (Richter, 2006: p.13). Techniques of on-site assembly of prefabricated concrete

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[38] According to French, the housing situation at the time of Stalin's death was similar to that in capitalist Europe during the industrial revolution (French, 1995: p.75).

elements had been developed in the US at the beginning of the 20th century and been applied in social housing programs in Europe from the 1920s on. The decades after World War 2 saw the application of industrial methods in construction on a large scale worldwide, and from the 1960s also in the USSR (Richter, 2006: pp.14-21). By 1972, half the new housing in the USSR was constructed using prefabricated concrete panels (French, 1995: p.77).[39]

The drive for industrialized construction of housing started with Khrushchev, but it was to characterize urban development in the Soviet Union until its falling apart. Under Khrushchev, the housing shortage meant that nearly all existing housing space had to be kept, however poor its quality, and construction of new mikrorayon took place mostly on the fringe of existing cities. Well before the beginning of perestroika in the 1980s, the USSR leadership recognized the inability of existing planning techniques to bring about desired social change. Thus, the task of the planner shifted to satisfying the growing demands for improvements in the quality of life and the material situation of the population (French, 1980: pp.198-199). With advances in production and increasing resources channelled to the construction sector large scale urban renewal took place; building heights and living comfort increased. The 30 years from 1956 to 1986 saw the construction of 2,092,600,000m² of housing in urban areas of the Soviet Union. However, despite these achievements 20% of the urban population still lived in shared apartments or "houses fit to be condemned" in the late 1980s (French, 1995: p.97).

> "By any standard, the Soviet achievement in housing construction over the 30-odd years after 1957, when Khrushchev began the programme, has been truly colossal. The spread of new housing has been accompanied by the provision of services, which in the early 1950s had been seriously lacking. By 1990, 93 per cent of State and co-operative housing had mains water and 91.8 per cent had sewerage […]. In consequence, the desperate conditions, which formed Stalin's legacy to the Soviet City, have been enormously alleviated." (French, 1995: pp.76-80)

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[39] However, industrial building had from its inception on been criticized as producing dull, uninspiring "cages" or "boxes" (Richter, 2006: p.20). With the large-scale application of industrial methods and pre-fabricated elements, criticism grew as technical necessities of the construction process dominated over stylistic, architectural or social concerns as well as over questions of convenience or "inhabitability". Norms, typologies and uniformity were seen as prerequisites of effective provision with housing units. At the same time they attracted criticism that saw them as turning construction and architecture into engineering (Hall, 2002: pp.221, 360-61).

Writing in 1962 Fisher had noted that "The contemporary cities fall far short of the ideal socialist goal. Housing is inadequate and extreme overcrowding exists" (Fisher, 1962: p.265). However, he expressed hope that planners might learn from their mistakes, realizing the planning goals in the internal urban structure and population distribution in cities of socialist countries, thereby making them "truly the cities of socialist man" (Fisher, 1962: p.265). More pessimistically, French concluded in 1995:

> "The USSR developed technical skills that led the way into space and the priorities for heavy industry weakened from the day that Stalin died. Yet the last 30 years did not see the Soviet city progressing towards the ideal goals. Far from bringing about a better life for town dwellers in terms of democracy, social relations, fairness between individuals and groups, welfare and material benefits, the urban plan under the command economy produced minimal results. In consequence, life in the Soviet town was in few, if any, respects better than in its capitalist equivalent; in many respects it was just as bad and, far too often, it was distinctly worse." (French, 1995: p.201)

As this overview has shown, the characteristics of the Socialist City of the USSR are a result of the interplay between theorizing on the goals and forms of socialist urban environment, the means to construct this environment, decisions of powerful individuals, and international developments in the field of urban planning and development as well as the institutional setting of the USSR. The next part will present how the modern project of the Socialist City was applied in Vietnam.

3.2 The Socialist City Travels to Vietnam

The Communist Party of Indochina[40] had from early on called for the liberation of art and architecture from feudal and colonial influences and the building of a "new culture". However, it was not until the end of French colonialism in Vietnam and the ascent to power of the Việt Minh, that this goal could be translated into actual policies (Logan, 1995: p.445, see also Marr, 1981). "Socialist" urban planning had been introduced to Vietnam after the end of the anti-colonial war against France in 1954 and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in the north and the Republic of Vietnam in the south. In the 1950s, the USSR became the main sponsor of the DRV established in the north (Forsberg, Kokko, 2007: pp.2-3; Fforde, Paine, 1987).

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[40] The Communist Party of Indochina was founded in 1930. It was renamed the Vietnamese Workers' Party (VWP) in 1951, and named Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in 1976.

During the first years of reconstruction after the war the DRV government focused on industrial recovery (Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: p.57). Urban planning and housing did initially not follow comprehensive policies; where housing was erected by the state it was to supply desperately needed living space for state employees and mainly took the form of temporary wooden buildings with minimal provision of infrastructure (Trinh Duy Luan, Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2001: p.52; Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: pp.62-63). The first "Soviet-style" flats were erected in Hàng Tre Street in Hanoi's Ancient Quarter (Logan, 1995: p.454).

The late 1950s saw the creation of bureaucratic structures to guide urban development and architecture, as well as to ensure centralized control and coordination with the country's economic and political development (Logan, 1995: p.445). At the same time, large numbers of Vietnamese students started to be educated in the USSR and other socialist countries. This was to have a profound impact on urban development in socialist Vietnam, as those returning to Vietnam were trained in Soviet-style urban planning and architecture and were to form an influential group among Vietnamese architects (Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999; Logan, 1995: pp.446-447).[41] Still, socialist Vietnam relied heavily on the expertise and aid of other socialist countries until the end of the Soviet Union. In the field of architecture and urban planning, the colonial education system, the interruption of training programs, and the heavy human losses during the anti-colonial war resulted in a lack of skilled professionals (Logan, 1995: p.446).

Large scale construction by the DRV started with the first Five Year Plan in 1960. Most construction of "socialist" kind took place in Hanoi, either in the form of state-supplied housing or public buildings (Thong Tho Thi Minh, 1978: table 1). In September 1959 the Vietnamese Workers' Party declared that in the reconstruction and enlargement of Hanoi, the city had to have a "worthy appearance"[42] and to serve the living of the working people as well as the political and cultural centre of the whole country (Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: p.60). Thus, as the country's capital, development there was to symbolize the new regime and new ways of living. Planning of Hanoi's political centre around the Ba Đình Square followed the Socialist City's ideal of providing a system of large streets and squares for mass-demonstrations and parades, combined with iconic buildings of Socialist struggle (Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: pp.60-61; see also Kurfürst, 2012: pp.76-84; Thomas, 2002: p.1617). Representative public buildings emphasizing the new regime and socialist solidarity, such as the Lenin statue, the Hồ Chí Minh Mausoleum, the Soviet-Vietnamese Cultural Palace, or the Hanoi People's Committee Building, came to dot Hanoi's cityscape (Logan, 2000). As the

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[41] A number of Vietnamese architects had been trained at the Indochinese Collège des Beaux-Arts. Having mostly worked on the design of colonial villas, their skills were oriented towards the needs of the colonial regime and were difficult to adapt to the request of the new regime (Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: p.59).

[42] "bộ mặt xứng đáng"

architectural style in the Soviet Union had already moved away from the ornate, bombastic buildings of the Stalin period by the time it became influential in Vietnam, the design of these buildings largely followed the modern international style.

From 1960 on, large apartment complexes were constructed on the outskirts of Hanoi. Among the early examples are the complexes of Nguyễn Công Trứ and Kim Liên. As they provided new and modern ways of urban living, they were intended to house deserving workers, veterans, and civil servants (Schwenkel, 2012: p.449). Nguyễn Công Trứ, the first multistorey housing estate in Hanoi (constructed 1959-1961) was constructed with Chinese assistance (Vandenpoel, 2011: p.37; Geertman, 2007: p.238). In its 16 four-storey housing blocks one staircase usually served two "living groups", each group consisting of shared facilities and three to five rooms each occupied by one family.[43] Construction relied on carrying brick walls, cement, concrete, and steel, and was mainly carried out manually, using only small construction machinery like small cranes (Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: p.64). As the Nguyễn Công Trứ complex was located within the old urban area of Hanoi, dedicated public services and buildings remained small in number (Vandenpoel, 2011: pp.37-38, Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: p.63).

The Kim Liên project marked the beginning of the large scale application of industrial construction techniques and pre-fabricated construction elements that came to form a belt of "neighbourhood units" surrounding the older areas of Hanoi (see Figure 4; Trinh Duy Luan, 2001: p.15; Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: p.65; Logan, 1995: p.454). Buildings were constructed with brick walls and pre-fabricated concrete ceilings (Engemann, 20.4.1970). This complex followed the socialist model of the mikrorayon, intended to provide their inhabitants with equally distributed housing space as well as access to public services and communal consumption according to norms and standards. Planning and construction of the complex was assisted by experts and aid from the USSR, financial support came also from North Korea. Apart from residential housing, Kim Liên contained a guesthouse area for foreign experts (Vandenpoel, 2011: p.40; Marr, 2006). Construction of Kim Liên was carried out in two phases, 1960-65 and 1965-70. Upon completion Kim Liên housed more than 20,000 inhabitants (Vandenpoel, 2011: p.40; citing Decoster, Klouche, 1997 p.30). In the early phase of construction, up to seven families shared sanitary and cooking facilities. This ratio dropped to two families per shared facilities in the buildings constructed later on (Vandenpoel, 2011: p.46, Geertman, 2007: p.240). However, Đặng Thái Hoàng indicates that many apartments were originally designed as single family apartments, consisting of two rooms, a kitchen, and sanitary installations (Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: p.65).

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[43] However, Geertman claims that "The socialist ideology is introduced through collective kitchens and sanitary areas on the second floor" (Geertman, 2007: p.239), although floor plans rather supports Đặng Thái Hoàng's description.

Figure 4
This picture taken by GDR experts in late 1973 shows the on-site production of pre-fabricated concrete panels on a construction site in Hanoi. The building in the background contains two-room apartments complete with individual cooking, washing and sanitary facilities, as well as loggias (Bundesarchiv Koblenz BArch DH 1 Bild-28565-04-01).

According to Schwenkel, most public housing in Hanoi had been constructed in a collective (tập thể) style, i.e. collective kitchens and sanitary areas.[44] This style was often referred to as "Vietnamese" or "Chinese", a characterisation seen as "historically inaccurate and culturally problematic" by urban planners and architects. Schwenkel sees the propagated adequacy of collective housing as conforming to traditional, rural lifestyles of the Vietnamese as a justification for difficult and inadequate living conditions (Schwenkel, 2012: p.450). Geertman on the other hand uncritically states that "this type of living invited the communal lifestyles of the villages to continue here" (Geertman, 2007: p.249). Evertsz attributes the communal kitchen, bathrooms and toilets to "the socialist ideal of a collective society" (Evertsz, 2000: p.41). This argument is also advanced by Trinh Duy Luan, who states that collective housing areas "reflect the idea about collectivism in accordance with the socialist model implemented in the Soviet Union during those years" (Trinh Duy Luan, 2001: p.15).

It is questionable if communal living and shared facilities were advocated because of their suitability to local traditions or because they reflected a "socialist ideal". As shown above,

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[44] Tập thể means collective. The term for such housing areas is khu tập thể, meaning collective (housing) area. It is used by many synonymously with all apartment buildings constructed between 1954 and the late 1980s.

communal housing had been abandoned as the socialist ideal in the Soviet Union, whose experts advised on the designs and construction of Kim Liên, already in the 1930s. Đặng Thái Hoàng recounts how difficult and at times unsanitary living conditions associated with communal living and shared apartments in Kim Liên had prompted architects and planners to introduce individual apartments. While apartments continued to be shared, he attributes this to poor planning, as their large size was not suited to the housing shortage (Đặng Thái Hoàng, 1999: p.67; see also Vandenpoel, 2011: p.46; Geertman, 2007: p.241). In 1970, plans for the reconstruction of cities after the American War aimed at providing families with more than four members with private kitchens and sanitation, only those with up to 4 members would have to share these facilities with one other family (Engemann, 20.4.1970). Shared facilities and apartments in Vietnam's housing estates seem to have been the result of economic difficulties and housing shortages, rather than idealistic or theoretical reasoning. The severity of the housing shortage becomes apparent in a report of GDR experts visiting Hanoi in 1970:

> "Most families are living in one room, some even in corridors which are separated into berths, without sunlight. The construction of apartments is taking place only in small numbers, uncoordinated and therefore effecting no changes on the appearance of Hanoi."[45] (Engemann, 20.4.1970 attachment 1)

In the eleven years between attaining independence in 1954 and the intensification of the war against the US in 1965, urban planning had followed the example of other socialist countries, mainly that of the USSR. Thus, planning ideals of the Socialist City became influential in the DRV, visible in plans for the centre of Hanoi, in the application of the mikrorayon concept, as well as in the architectural style. However, actual construction and implementation of plans remained largely restricted to Hanoi, and even there construction by the state could not keep up with demand. In the years 1965-72, the war economy and threats of bombing by the US Air Force meant that little construction took place. "Many architectural projects and the planning of new districts started in the late 1960s and early 1970s were not finished until after the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement in 1973 and the withdrawal of American troops" (Logan, 1995: p.445). However, planning for the reconstruction and peace-time development of the DRVs cities continued throughout the war time period. As had been the case in the construction of Nguyễn Công Trứ and Kim Liên, other socialist countries were to play an important role for reconstruction and urban development after 1972. One of those countries, the German Democratic Republic had sent a group of specialist to Hanoi in 1970. In March and April 1970, the GDR delegation spent five weeks in the DRV to explore

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[45] "Die Familien wohnen in der Mehrzahl in einem Raum z.T. sogar in Hausdurchgängen, die in Kojen unterteilt sind, ohne direkte Belichtung. Der Bau von Wohnungen erfolgte nur in geringem Umfang, zersplittert und dadurch ohne Effekt auf die Veränderung des Stadtbildes von Hanoi."

possibilities for cooperation in the field of urban housing and related policies. The report on that journey gives an in-depth view on the state of Vietnam's construction industry in 1970, the country's plans for reconstruction, and prospects of future collaboration (Engemann, 20.4.1970[46]).

When the delegation visited the DRV in early 1970, little actual construction took place in Hanoi, and much less outside that city. Only in Kim Liên did the construction of apartment blocks continue, using a combination of traditional and industrial techniques: brick walls with pre-fabricated concrete ceilings and pre-fabricated elements such as staircases. While production of building materials took place in several factories around the city, coordination and centralisation of construction and planning was weak. To carry out its tasks, the Ministry of Architecture (MoA) relied on a number construction enterprises and construction material factories, as well as on its Office for Urban Planning consisting of about 1,500 employees. Although nominally the MoA was responsible for the construction of industrial facilities and housing, the war had made necessary a dispersal and de-centralisation of related industries and agencies. Several other ministries ran their own construction enterprises and produced their own construction materials. In addition, provincial enterprises for construction and construction material production were under the control of eleven different provincial authorities. Provincial construction enterprises typically comprised a workforce of 2,000-6,000 workers; technical expertise and mechanisation in these enterprises were usually much lower than in those of the MoA (Engemann, 20.4.1970).

Planning for the reconstruction and development of the DRV's cities after the war continued despite the above described problems in coordination and the organisational structures. Although shortcomings were acknowledged, Vietnamese authorities saw them as being easily overcome once the war was finished and thus took little account of them in their plans. While American bombing had damaged cities in the northern part of the DRV, destruction in its south had been devastating. There, the report claims, 20 cities had been almost totally destroyed and nearly all villages had been severely damaged. Thus, cities were a major priority in the reconstruction policies of the DRV, placing more importance on industries than on the provision of housing. Furthermore, it was expected that reconstruction in the DRV would take place while the war in the South continued, putting further emphasis on industries and war-efforts on the expanse of the construction of housing (Engemann, 20.4.1970).

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[46] The following section is an excerpt of this report.

Despite the provision of housing ranking relatively low in priority, the urgent need for the creation of living space in urban areas was acknowledged. In the DRV's cities, the average housing space was 3m² per person in 1970; many inhabitants had to endure unsanitary conditions. The strategy to alleviate this shortage consisted of two parts: in the short run, brick building would be rationalized through new techniques and better coordination. In the meantime, industrialisation of the construction process would be completed during the first Five Year Plan 1971-1975. Typing and standardisation were seen as the most important factors for rationalisation of the building process. Only two types of accommodation would be applied during reconstruction: three-room apartments for families, and dormitories. These would also provide more comfortable and sanitary living conditions, for example running water provided by a centralized water supply system instead of open-air water wells or roof-tanks. This strategy was seen as requiring large changes in the material-technical basis, in the organisation of the construction process, as well as in the training of workers and planners. Construction industries would be centralized under the control of the MoA, and reorganized as construction combines. The GDR experts judged these plans as very ambitious and partly unrealistic, as workers were not sufficiently trained and skilled. Members of the delegation repeatedly emphasised the importance of brick building as more suitable to the economic situation of the DRV[47] and generally criticized the DRV's plans for not being realistic and too ambitious (Engemann, 20.4.1970).

One such ambitious project was the construction of New Hanoi, a completely new urban centre located in Đạo Tú village, Tam Dương District, Vĩnh Phúc Province, about 60 kilometres north-west of Hanoi. This settlement was to lessen population pressure in Hanoi, from where 700,000 of its 1,100,000 inhabitants would be relocated. In Hanoi itself, only reconstruction would take place. The old city was seen unfit for further development as it was located in valuable agricultural land, large parts of it lying below the water level of the Red River, its soil providing only limited load carrying capacity, and the ground-water level being too high. Cooperation between the DRV and the GDR specifically focused on the GDR supplying a factory for the pre-fabrication of construction elements and panels as the core of New Hanoi (Engemann, 20.4.1970).[48]

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[47] For example, the DRV had to import all steel, a requirement for industrialized construction, from the USSR and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

[48] When construction of the factory finally took place, plans for New Hanoi had been scrapped and apart from a small number of housing blocks for its own workers, the factory was largely abandoned soon after its completion in the early 1980s (Knöfel, 2011: p.27; Hansen, February 1981).

Urban planning in the DRV had by the 1960s firmly embraced the ideal of the Socialist City. After the war, this model was to be applied through centralized planning structures throughout the country. The large scale reconstruction of the DRV's cities was centrally planned, with authorities in Hanoi issuing guidelines to be applied by provincial authorities. The MoA played an important role, especially through its Office for Urban Planning, which was directly involved in urban planning of the country's cities. Plans for the more important cities were to be approved by the highest national authorities (UBKTCB Nhà nước, 1.7.1968).

As the war against the French ended in the same year as the USSR shifted its policies away from an emphasis on monumental buildings following the national traditions, socialist urban construction in the DRV followed the more functionalist approaches emphasised since Khrushchev's housing programs. It was thus also more in line with international modernist architecture and planning ideals. The planning of Socialist Cities in Vietnam constituted a transnational modern project as concepts and ideas developed in the national framework of the USSR were applied in Vietnam as a means to create an urban environment that expresses and advances the construction of socialism. The next part will return to the planning of Vinh by Vietnamese planners during the late 1960s and the early 1970s, providing an example of how the Socialist City was applied in the DRV.

3.3 Vinh as a Socialist City

Planning for the reconstruction of Vinh had started in 1961 with Politburo resolution 32-NQ-TW calling for Vinh to become a "Socialist City, to serve well industrial development, for production and material as well as cultural life of the urban working population"[49] (Dang Lao dong Viet Nam, Ban chap hanh trung uong, 28.12.1961). While planning rested mainly with the Provincial Administrative Committee, it had to be approved by the provincial Party Committee and the Institute for Urban Planning of the Ministry of Architecture. From the beginning, the Party Committee called for an architectural and symbolic emphasis on the role of Vinh in the revolution and the war against the United States (Tỉnh Ủy Nghệ An, 29.7.1966).

As described above, central authorities in Hanoi issued guidelines for the reconstruction of the DRV's cities along the lines of the Socialist City (see also UBKTCB Nhà nước, 1.7.1968). By 1968, these guidelines had been incorporated into a draft plan for the reconstruction of Vinh by the Institute for Urban Planning of the MoA, emphasizing Vinh's role in the

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[49] "thanh phô xa hôi chu nghia, phuc vu tôt cho ciêc phat triên công nghiêp, cho san xuât và doi sông vât chat, văn hoa cua nhân dân lao dông thanh phô". As the original document does not contain all diacritics, it is cited here as in the original.

construction of socialism (Bộ Kiến trúc, Viện quy hoạch thành phố, 1968; Viện Qui hoạch Thành phố, 1.2.1968). This plan set out most important aspects for the reconstruction of Vinh as a Socialist City, although following plans would make slight changes in the urban design and adjust technical aspects, for example on the water supply and sewerage systems, or increase the percentage of five-storey houses to be built (Bộ Kiến trúc, Viện quy hoạch thành phố, 1968).[50]

The plan stipulated the reduction of countrywide standards for housing space and the built environment (including space used for housing, public buildings, greenery and public space) per person in Vinh's specific conditions. Housing was to be provided mainly in three to five-storey buildings (65%) and two-storey buildings. The city's population was planned to be 50,000 five years after the war, rising to 100,000 inhabitants 15 years after the war. For the first two years, its population would be restricted to 20,000 persons essential for reconstruction and the functioning of factories and authorities. As Vinh's future was seen as that of an industrial city all destroyed centrally and locally run factories were to return and expand in Vinh.[51]

The urban layout of Vinh would adhere to the principle of a compact city, moving agriculture out of the city centre. The plan divided the city into four zones: administrative buildings would be clustered in Trường Thi and along Nguyễn Thái Học road; the area of Quang Trung Street and the market would serve as the seat for state owned enterprises and banks. The industrial area would be split in two zones: one close to the harbour in Bến Thủy would consist of heavy and sea-related industries; the North-Western Industrial Zone to the north of the former citadel would mainly cater to transport-related businesses. Each of these functional zones would be accompanied by a designated housing area: workers and employees of the industrial zones would be housed close to their workplaces near the train station and the harbour, respectively. Employees working in public institutions in the citadel area and Trường Thi would be housed in a complex in Tân Vinh (located approximately between the two places). Thus, zoning was intended to result in a clear separation of working and housing areas. At the same time spatial segregation according to employing enterprise or institution would take place. To create an "urban face", construction of multistorey housing

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[50] Later planning for example specified that five years after the war, 80% of Vinh's inhabitants would live in the three housing areas Tân Vinh, Bến Thủy, and Trường Thi, and that apart from the representative multistorey buildings along the major roads, housing would to a large part consist of temporary houses during the first years of reconstruction. Other temporary solutions would be applied in the early years, such as a temporary system for the treatment of wastewater (Bộ Kiến trúc, Viện quy hoạch thành phố, 10.7.1969).

[51] The occupational structure was intended to first shift more to industries, with 38% of workers employed in this sector. Over time it was estimated that this percentage would fall to 32%, with people increasingly being employed in the service sector. However, employment in every sector would continue to rise in absolute numbers.

was to take place first along the major roads, such as the road leading from the train station to the city centre.

In the initial years, only housing groups would be constructed, which would later be upgraded to form housing complexes. A mixture of collective housing and family based apartments was planned for these complexes, with a clear emphasis on the latter. During the first five years, family based housing would accommodate 25,500 people, 12,800 people would live in collective housing. Additionally, some privately erected houses would be allowed in the Bến Thủy housing area. The number of apartments, schools, nurseries, hospitals, etc. to be built was calculated from standardised figures for the provision of housing space and public services per person. The number of persons in turn was derived from the planned number of employees of the factories, enterprises, and institutions to be located in Vinh, plus their "dependents" (Bộ Kiến trúc, Viện quy hoạch thành phố, 1968).

In addition to industrial, administrative, economic and residential areas, the city's landscape would be dotted by symbols representative of socialist victory. At the central square a Victory Monument would be erected; a Monument to the Martyrs was planned to be placed at the southern entry to the city centre. Vinh's revolutionary history would be represented by a monument to the Nghệ Tĩnh Soviets in Bến Thủy. Other historical sites would be reconstructed buildings destroyed during US bombardments or museums telling of the history and revolutionary past of Vinh and Nghệ An (Bộ Kiến trúc, Viện quy hoạch thành phố, 1968).

3.3.1 First Reconstruction Efforts and the Third Destruction of Vinh

While no plan had been approved by central authorities by then, reconstruction of Vinh started after the US had stopped their bombing campaigns as part of their negotiations strategy in late 1968 (Turley, 1986: p.94). Enterprises began to return to Vinh in the following year (Nguyễn Quốc Hồng et al., 2004: pp.181-182; Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: p.198). By 1969 the Institute for Urban Planning of the MoA had prepared detailed projects for the reconstruction of the city (electricity, roads, water, wastewater etc.). Because of Vinh's political and strategic importance, fast construction of representative buildings was required. The provincial Party and state authorities pressed for buildings such as an international guesthouse, the Nghệ Tĩnh Soviet Museum, a cinema and stadium, as well as the road, electricity and water networks, to be finished in late 1969 to serve the 1970 New Year festivities. The Department of Architecture was to prevent the private construction of wooden housing that did not conform to design regulations (UBHC Nghệ An, 22.9.1969). However, these were piecemeal developments, as no final plan had been approved.

Further work on the plan for reconstruction put additional emphasis on the Socialist City in 1970: "The construction of Vinh has to be based on the national guidelines and plans for economic and cultural development, it has to build on the city's current conditions (re-) constructing Vinh to become a socialist industrial city, a political, economic and cultural centre of Nghệ An province"[52] (Bộ Kiến trúc, 1970: p.2). Reconstruction was also seen as a chance to solve previous problems such as pollution resulting from poor siting of factories or the vulnerability to fire because of the prevalence of wooden housing and the hot dry Lao winds in summer. General guidelines were translated into concrete measures. During the first three years of reconstruction, the plan aimed at providing 30,000m² of housing space to 10,000 inhabitants. Public facilities to be built were schools, kindergartens, a restaurant, and a new market, as well as a cinema (Bộ Kiến trúc, 1970).

More details on the role of the city centre and different housing styles to be distributed according to social status and occupation are provided in a 1970 draft plan by the provincial Party organisation. The city centre would provide space for buildings of the governing institutions of the socialist state, most prominently for the provincial, not the city's, authorities and administration. The provincial and city leadership would be provided with "private houses".[53] At the same time, the largest part of the urban population would be housed in the three above mentioned housing complexes, "following the socialist style". Another form of housing would be in two to three-storey houses along major roads with shops on the ground floor and living space on the upper floors. The central government would be asked to provide funding for the housing complexes, while funding for the semi-commercial buildings would be shared between central and local authorities (Đảng bộ Nghệ An, 1970).

The system of housing complexes was further elaborated in a 1970 draft plan by the MoA's Institute for Urban Planning. The timeframe for reconstruction in this draft was 15 years (1970-1985). By that time Vinh's population would rise to 150,000, these inhabitants would live in six to eight housing areas.[54] Each housing area would consist of three to five sub-areas with 4,000 to 6,000 inhabitants and a size of 16 to 42ha each. The largest inner-city housing area would be Tân Vinh, one of the originally planned three housing areas, with a size of 120ha and a population of 24,000 people. Thus, all inhabitants of Vinh would be organized according to the mikrorayon concept, spatially separated according to their occupation and employer. Distribution of services and consumption in the city would also

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[52] "Nhiệm vụ xây dựng thành phố Vinh phải căn cứ vào đường lối và kế hoạch phát triển kinh tế, phát triển văn hóa của Nhà nước, phải xuất phát từ tình hình thành phố hiện nay mà xây dựng phục hồi làm cho Vinh trở thành một thành phố công nghiệp xã hội chủ nghĩa, một trung tâm chính trị kinh tế văn hóa của tỉnh Nghệ An."

[53] The original draft says "villas", but the word is crossed out and replaced with "private houses" by hand.

[54] The term "housing area" is a literal translation of the term "khu nhà ở" used in this document. The description of its structures and functions given in the plan suggest that "housing area" is a different term used for "housing complex" or "mikrorayon".

follow this hierarchical structure: housing group – sub area – housing area – city, a perfect application of the mikrorayon system. An elaborate system of provision according to standards and norms based on this hierarchical system is attached to the plan. It was estimated that of all costs required for the reconstruction of Vinh, excluding industrial development, about 60% would go into the construction of housing (UBHC Nghệ An, Ban KTCB, 1970).

Planning for the reconstruction of Vinh thus offers a fine example of the principles and elements of the Socialist City: leadership of state and Party in planning and implementation, centralized planning by experts according to standards and norms, a clear division of zones for living and working, a city centre emphasising the power of the socialist state and the communist Party, the city-wide application of the hierarchical mikrorayon system, spatial division of groups according to occupation and employer, mass housing in state-supplied apartment and dormitory blocks.

A secret report by the PAC gives an overview on reconstruction efforts during the first quarter of 1970 (UBHC Nghệ An, 23.3.1970). Efforts focused on the return of enterprises and public institutions (such as schools or the provincial hospital) to their former location in the city. Upon return, they were housed in temporary wooden buildings. Roads were repaired, focusing on National Highway 1 and regional roads. Reconstruction of enterprises focused especially on the production of construction materials. Efforts were undertaken to increase the local production of bricks, as construction continued to rely on traditional techniques. Another priority was the reconstruction of enterprises supplying foodstuff to returning residents (Bô Xây dưng, Viện Thiết kế Quy hoạch thành phố và nông thôn, August 1973).

In general, reconstruction was much slower than envisioned: in the first three month of 1970, only 1/3 of planned investments for that period had been carried out. Among the most important shortcomings was a shortage in experienced and skilled cadres; those present lacked the capacity to comply with too complicated administrative procedures. Planning, implementation, and administration took place uncoordinated, resulting in time-lags and the waste of funds despite a sufficient number of workers. Although a draft plan had warned that it was based on experiences from the peace period of the 1950s and 1960s, and not on actually available economic data, overly optimistic estimates about the DRV's economic situation resulted in a lack of construction material. Both national production and imports did not reach the plan's targets (UBHC Nghệ An, Ban KTCB, 1970).

Despite efforts to alleviate these problems and increasing productivity, reconstruction still lagged far behind plans in 1971. However, this seems to have resulted as much from

unrealistic and overly ambitious planning as from actual shortcomings in the implementation of plans (UBHC Nghệ An, 24.6.1971). It became increasingly clear that many of the structures-to-be-built, such as Quang Trung Street, were poorly designed and not adapted to local conditions (UBKH Nghệ An, 12.8.1970). Another example is a building at a tile-production site in Thanh Lương that had to be torn down and rebuilt immediately after its completion due to its poor quality. Many other projects were started all over the province, but were not completed or of very poor quality (UBHC Nghệ An, Ty Kiến trúc, 23.7.1971; UBHC Nghệ An, 24.6.1971).

While these problems affected the whole province of Nghệ An, a draft report by the City Administrative Committee (CAC) of September 1971 describes the situation in Vinh as particularly serious (UBHC Vinh, 21.9.1971). By that time, Vinh's population had already grown to nearly 54,000 registered inhabitants (despite plans to limit its population to 20,000 in the first two years of reconstruction and to 50,000 in the first five years), of which more than half were engaged in agriculture. This diluted the envisioned clear separation of urban from rural areas. To this number have to be added military personnel stationed in the city, as well as 3,000 to 4,500 visitors each day. It was estimated that because of returning administrative offices, the number of inhabitants would rise to 80,000 by the end of 1973. Planning had estimated this number to be reached about five years later. Clearly, construction and administration could not keep up with the influx of people. Apparently, little had so far been achieved in the supply with state-owned housing, as the CAC urgently called for the beginning of reconstruction of the Tân Vinh housing area and reparations to be undertaken on existing buildings in other areas in 1972. People constructed their own wooden housing, most enterprises and offices also erected wooden buildings, leading to the danger of destruction by fires. Because these buildings were usually only one storey high, space for the construction of housing in the city was soon in short supply. At the same time, agricultural land in the city's surroundings was reserved for the much needed production of food. While the lack of state-supplied housing could be alleviated by private efforts, shortages in the supply with food, services, and consumer goods could only to some part be lessened by the market. Of the daily visitors to Vinh, about 1,000 had to sleep at the bus and train station or along the city's roads, because accommodation was lacking. Roads were still of poor quality and crowded by vehicles, leading to numerous accidents and deaths. Schools, hospitals, and sanitation could not keep up with fast growing numbers of inhabitants. As the police force lacked personnel and equipment, law enforcement was nearly absent. Enforcing migration control was seen as the best measure to alleviate these problems. However, the CAC regarded some of them, like the lack of foodstuff, as unsolvable. As the city itself had little control over resources, its main approach to solve problems was to ask for help from higher-order authorities (UBHC Vinh, 21.9.1971).

Reconstruction of Nghệ An Province slowed in 1971. During the first nine month of that year, investments only reached 81.1% of those in the same period in 1970. While construction of housing in Vinh had begun in 1971, investments only reached half of the plan and no information is available on actual achievements. The reasons given for these failures are the same as above: lack of skilled cadres and workers, uncoordinated efforts, lack of materials and machinery (UBHC Nghệ An, 23.10.1971; UBHC Nghệ An, Ty Kiến trúc, 17.10.1971).

Due to these shortcomings, the reconstruction of Vinh in 1968 to 1972 took place without much reference to the plans formulated for the city's development after the war. As offices, public services, as well as factories and enterprises returned to the city, its population grew much faster than had been imagined. All of the principles of the plan had been compromised. Construction of housing took place individually; separation of housing and work place as well as between rural and urban areas was not enforced. The city's authorities did neither have the capacity nor authority to steer urban growth. At the same time, centralized authority at the provincial level was not able to effectively coordinate the efforts of different actors for reconstruction of the city. While planning had failed as an instrument projecting urban development, the structures of government and administration struggled with even reacting to unplanned urban growth. Hence, a first attempt at creating a Socialist City in Vinh had failed.

As part of their negotiation strategy, the US resumed to bombing the DRV in April 1972 (Turley, 1986: p.141). Already in late 1971 preparations had begun for renewed defence of Vinh against air strikes; from early 1972 on enterprises and offices were evacuated again to the countryside. Only about 3,000 people remained in Vinh to ensure air-defence and the protection of remaining facilities, as well as to carry out repairs on the vital transport network (Nguyễn Quốc Hồng, 2004: p.187). Bombing of Vinh resumed in the early hours of 10 April 1972 with an air strike bombing an area of 6km² (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: p.206). During 1972, the city was repeatedly bombed, the harbour in Bến Thủy and the Lam River were mined. As during the 1960s, bombing mainly targeted transport infrastructure (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: pp.211-212). When bombing stopped as the Paris Peace Agreement took effect in January 1973, nearly all effort for reconstruction carried out in 1968-1972 had literally been reduced to nothing (Nguyễn Quang Vinh, Dương Thanh Binh, 2007: p.89).[55]

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[55] According to Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., during the eight years of air strikes Vinh had been bombed 4,700 times. 250,555 tons of explosives had been dropped on the city, equalling more than 4 tons per former inhabitant (Hoàng Ngọc Anh et al., 2003: p.217). However, no reference is given for these numbers.

In late December 1972, planning for the reconstruction of Vinh began anew with a meeting of municipal and provincial leaders (UBHC Nghệ An, 29.1.1973). Urban development after the war would continue to follow the same plans and directions as during the period of reconstruction 1968 to 1972. Learning from the shortcomings of that period, the PAC emphasised the need for cooperation between provincial and municipal authorities to achieve better coordinated reconstruction. First steps of reconstruction would again focus on transport and sanitary infrastructure as well as the provision of electricity. In the years 1974 to 1975, the city was supposed to ensure the return and stable production of those industries and enterprises that had been located in Vinh before the war, as well as the return of offices, schools, hospitals etc. Compared to earlier plans, the population would increase to around 60,000 people during the first three years (formerly 50,000 after five years). During the first years, 66% of housing would be in temporary one-storey houses, the rest in blocks of four to five-stories (Bô Xây dưng, Viện Thiết kế Quy hoạch thành phố và nông thôn, August 1973). For the second time, reconstruction of Vinh would follow the ideal of the Socialist City. This time, however, with assistance of the German Democratic Republic.[56]

3.3.2 GDR Assistance in the Reconstruction of Vinh (1973 to 1980)

The German Democratic Republic had assisted the DRV in the field of urban planning and construction from 1970 on. However, the two countries had a much longer history of diplomatic relations and cooperation in different areas. The next part will give an overview of the shared history of both countries, highlighting forms of cooperation and political considerations. The GDR-DRV relationship provides an important background on cooperation in Vinh, as it was influenced by Cold War politics and political considerations that would also impact decisions regarding Vinh's reconstruction.

3.3.2.1 GDR – DRV Relations and Cooperation

The Geneva Agreement of July 1954 paved the way for formal recognition of the DRV by the GDR, and to expanding cooperation in a wide range of fields.[57] According to Lulei and

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[56] Surprisingly, documents as late as August 1973 make no mention of the GDR, although negotiations on the assistance by that country in the reconstruction of Vinh had started already in March that year.

[57] Diplomatic relations between the two countries had a complicated start. Although the official date of mutual recognition was back-dated to 3 February 1950, Joachim Krüger, GDR-diplomat and later historian in the GDR, dates the real beginning of diplomatic relations to 8 December 1954. That day, the GDR and DRV ambassadors to China signed a communique agreeing that the two countries would exchange diplomatic missions (Krüger, 2011: pp.23-24). According to him, back-dating to 1950 served political causes. As the DRV had already been declared a sovereign state in 1945, by custom it would have to recognize the GDR upon its foundation in 1949. However, as the DRV was embroiled in the anti-colonial war against France, recognizing the GDR was not of priority. Furthermore, as the USSR and France had to some extend cooperated as occupying powers in Germany and the Cold War had not escalated by then, the GDR did also not seek recognition by the DRV

Schleicher, aid and cooperation between GDR and DRV can be distinguished in two categories: those initiatives and projects run by the state on the one hand, and voluntary, non-state "solidarity" on the other (Lulei, Schleicher, 2011: p.91).[58] Solidarity in the GDR was largely a product of the "anti-imperial" war in Vietnam (Wernicke, 2011). In 1954, the year of the Geneva Agreements, the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED, Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands) turned the former Aid Committee for Korea into the Aid Committee for Korea and Vietnam under the National Council of the National Front. Its mission was to coordinate solidarity projects and donations with state-run projects (Lulei, Schleicher, 2011: pp.87-88). In 1965, the Vietnam Committee was founded as part of the Solidarity Committee, an organisation separate from the organisational structures of the National Front, taking over the tasks of the Aid Committee (Muth, 2000: pp.91-92). According to Zahlbaum, Secretary of the Vietnam Committee from 1965 to 1975, the establishment of the Vietnam Committee served the political interests of the SED (Zahlbaum, 2011: p.76, see also Wernicke, 2011: p.61). The Solidarity Committee increasingly played the role of a clearing house for aid and cooperation funded by donations of the GDR population. It was also an important instrument in the foreign policy of the GDR, carrying out development aid in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (Muth, 2000: p.92). Vietnam was always the largest recipient of solidarity funds donated by the GDR population (Lulei, 1993: p.9). During the American War, the Solidarity Committee organized information campaigns, blood donations, and fund raisers under the slogan "Solidarität hilft siegen"[59] (Lulei, Schleicher, 2011: pp.88-94; Zahlbaum, 2011: p.75). From 1973 on, under the new slogan "Solidarität – jetzt erst recht"[60], the committee mobilized contributions for the reconstruction of the DRV, including projects such as the reconstruction of the Vietnamese-German Hospital in Hanoi and an

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(Krüger, 2011: p.13). The issue of diplomatic relations became more pressing as the State of Vietnam with Bảo Đại at its head was recognized by France in 1949. At the same time, the DRV's efforts were bolstered by the victory of the communists in China. Thus, in January 1950, the DRV declared its willingness to establish diplomatic relations with all countries in the world. The GDR leadership did not respond to this call, nor to direct letters asking for diplomatic relations between the two countries, probably because of interventions by the USSR which was concerned about its relationship with France (Krüger, 2011: pp.15-18). Nevertheless, cooperation between the two countries took place before 1954. Since 1950, the GDR had supported and financed propaganda aimed at German soldiers in France's Foreign Legion, and had cooperated with the DRV in the repatriation of German Foreign Legion deserters (Krüger, 2011: pp.15-20). From 1953 on, the GDR supported the DRV with medicines and medical equipment, part of which was financed by a "top-down initiated solidarity movement" (Krüger, 2011: p.21). The first four Vietnamese students arrived in the GDR in October 1953 (Krüger, 2011: pp22).

[58] However, this distinction is blurred by the actual practices and the role of the state and Mass-Organisations in initiating, organizing and carrying out "solidarity" projects. As I will show below, both forms of cooperation were intertwined in the reconstruction of Vinh.

[59] "Solidarity helps to win".

[60] "Solidarity – now even more".

orthopaedic centre, or the equipment of schools (Lulei, Schleicher, 2011: pp.96-97, Schleicher, 2011: p.7).[61]

The largest part of GDR assistance to Vietnam took the form of inter-state cooperation financed by trade-agreements, loans or non-refundable assistance. According to Schäfer, Vietnam was the most important recipient of aid from the GDR, and no other country assisted the Socialist Republic of Vietnam[62] (SRV) after 1975 in such a variety of fields as the GDR (Schäfer, 2011: p.13). The most important institution for the coordination of aid and assistance was the Committee for Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation between the GDR and Vietnam (CESTC) in which both countries' State Planning Committees played leading roles. Negotiations in this Committee formed the basis for yearly mutual trade-agreements (Knöfel, 2011: p.20).

Classic socialist reconstruction aid was, according to Schäfer, characterized by the supply of complete production facilities planned and designed in the GDR, and subsequently assembled in Vietnam by Vietnamese workers (partly trained in the GDR) under the guidance of GDR experts[63] (Schäfer, 2011: p.15). They were financed by no-interest loans (Knöfel, 2011: p.23). Among such projects were the construction of a printing plant for the Communist Party (1956 to 1958), a steel plant (1975 to 1976), and a glass factory in Hải Phòng (Schäfer, 2011: p.15). Assistance after 1973 focused in many cases on facilities that had been constructed with GDR help but had been damaged or destroyed during the war (Knöfel, 2011: pp.23-28). While some of these projects played an important role for the economic development of Vietnam, this kind of cooperation proved costly and many projects took much longer than initially planned. Some projects, such as factories for the production of tableware and thermos bottles, were never finished (Knöfel, 2011: p.28). Local infrastructure

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[61] To a large degree, these activities complemented official cooperation projects. Lulei and Schleicher as well as Zahlbaum maintain that coordination by the state and the Party was necessary for the efficient use of donations (Lulei, Schleicher, 2011: pp.91-93; Zahlbaum, 2011: p.76). However, Wernicke argues that activities of the Vietnam Committee also aimed at raising the GDRs prestige, especially in the light of Cold War politics and rivalry between the two German states. He also shows how the SED had a firm hold on these activities and the solidarity movement in the GDR (Wernicke, 2011). Decisions on the use of donations also show the influence of the state. Based on agreements between the governments of the GDR and the DRV/SRV, the Council of Ministers of the GDR specified how solidarity funds would be used. From 1965 on, the use of these funds was subject to negotiations in the "Committee for Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation between the GDR and Vietnam" (CESTC) and part of governmental agreements (Lulei, Schleicher, 2011: pp.91-93). Following a decision of the Politburo in November 1982, funds of the Solidarity Committee were increasingly used for activities formerly financed by the state, such as the education of foreign students (Lulei, Schleicher, 2011: p.99).

[62] The SRV was established on 2.7.1976, uniting Vietnam after the DRV victory over the Republic of Vietnam in 1975.

[63] GDR experts working in development projects in other countries were called "Spezialisten" (specialists).

was underdeveloped, supply with electricity and construction materials was not sufficient. Projects prepared in the GDR did in many cases not take local conditions sufficiently into account (Schäfer, 2011: p.15). Thus, when the GDR started to assist in the reconstruction of Vinh, its policies had moved away from classic reconstruction aid towards cooperation in all aspects of planning and implementation, as well as towards reliance on locally available materials.

This shift became more pronounced in projects that started after the reconstruction of Vinh. Realizing earlier problems and the possibility that Vietnam would probably not be able to repay its debt, assistance in the 1980s shifted to cooperation for mutual benefits. This took the form of investments mainly in the production of foodstuff and clothing. From 1981 on, the GDR provided loans and assistance for the production of coffee in Đắk Lắk province, including the settlement of 10,000 workers, transport, and processing machinery, as well as the equipment for a 12 MW water power plant (Kaulfuss, 2011; Knöfel, 2011: p.29; Schäfer, 2011: p.16). 50% of the yearly crop would be delivered to the GDR over 15 years, starting in 1986 (Kaulfuss 2011: 41). From the mid-1980s on, the same system was applied in the production of rubber (also in Đắk Lắk province), pepper (in Quảng Trị province), and coconut-products (in the Mekong delta) (Knöfel, 2011: p.30).

By 1990, Vietnam's debt towards the GDR had reached 150 Million US Dollar, it was estimated that the export of these products would allow the SRV to repay this sum by 2011 (Schäfer, 2011: p.16). State-assistance in these projects was coupled with solidarity activities, like the donation of medical supplies and school materials. Solidarity donations also paid for the salaries of GDR specialist working in these projects, further blurring the distinction of solidarity and official assistance (Knöfel, 2011: p.29, Kaulfuss, 2011: p.41). Investment in the production of clothes built on the cheap and abundant labour force in Vietnam, the GDR supplied most machinery and raw-materials, as well as training (Knöfel, 2011: p.31). These forms of cooperation for mutual benefits were not unlike today's Foreign Direct Investments.

3.3.2.2 Preparing Cooperation
Although the GDR and the DRV had had close relations and assistance from the GDR in the construction of a socialist state had a long history, cooperation in the field of urban planning and development had only started in 1970. A GDR delegation's visit in the DRV in 1970 resulted in a 1972 agreement on the construction of a plant for the production of pre-fabricated panels in the Đạo Tú area that was supposed to start production in 1975, as well as in the exchange of documents on industrial and standardized construction (Präsidium des Ministerrates der DDR, 7.3.1973: p.10). The GDR leadership had expected to widen its

assistance in the building and construction industry in the following years. However, renewed bombing had put a hold on projects for the reconstruction of Vietnam's cities and the DRV had asked for a temporary suspension of joint projects. Nevertheless, during preparations for the 1972 CESTC meeting the GDR leadership expected DRV-requests for further cooperation in the construction of housing and a cement factory (Büro des Ministerrates der DDR, 1.11.1972, Appendix: pp.2-6). However, no such request seems to have been forthcoming at this meeting.

The Paris Peace Agreement of January 1973 created a new situation, in which cooperation could focus on the reconstruction in the DRV. In March, a delegation of high ranking GDR officials[64] travelled to Hanoi to assure the DRV leadership of the GDRs willingness to deepen relations and to assist in the reconstruction of the country on the way to socialism (Präsidium des Ministerrates der DDR, 7.3.1973). As in the previous year, the GDR expected requests for cooperation in housing construction and was ready to provide assistance in the construction of apartments (Präsidium des Ministerrates der DDR, 7.3.1973: p.3). To the apparent surprise of the delegation, during a meeting on 16 March 1973, DRV Prime Minister Phạm Văn Đồng asked for the GDR's help in project planning for the reconstruction of Vinh. Willi Stoph, Politburo Member, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and head of the delegation, answered evasively but Phạm Văn Đồng insisted on the GDR's help in this particular project, revealing the plan to assign each of the large cities to one socialist country for help in its reconstruction:

> Phạm Văn Đồng: "Another problem that I would like to mention again is planning and reconstruction of Vinh. We have not yet heard your opinion on our proposal."

> Willi Stoph: "It is difficult for me to answer this question. We will naturally consider this proposal with appropriate seriousness. We have no idea yet what is connected to this. You will understand that we cannot agree to this casually, when we do not know which tasks and material efforts are connected to this. We will seriously and responsibly consider your proposal."

> Phạm Văn Đồng: "Comrade Lê Thanh Nghị might talk to you about this again. Because it is our plan to reconstruct each destroyed city in North Vietnam, for example Hải Phòng and Thanh Hóa, with the help of a socialist country. For Hanoi we count on the help of the Soviet Union. And we count on your help for

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[64] Members of the delegation included Willi Stoph, Member of the Politburo and Chairman of the Council of Ministers; Gerhard Weiss, Candidate of the Central Committee and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers; Oskar Fischer, Member of the Central Committee and Deputy Minister of Foreign Relations; Werner Fleißner, General Lieutenant and Deputy Minister of National Defence and Kurt Fenske, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade.

Vinh, because this is the most severely destroyed district capital and in addition to that the home of Hồ Chí Minh".[65] (no author, 16.3.1973: pp.54-55)

While the GDR had been prepared for requests for aid in the construction of housing, this proposal by Phạm Văn Đồng clearly came as a surprise. Additional requests of the DRV included the delivery of a plant for pre-fabricated concrete elements for the use in industrialized housing construction and the delivery of a cement plant with a capacity of 1 Mio tonnes per year, as well as assistance in the construction of a textile and clothing industry for mutual benefits. The DRV asked for these three projects to also be located in Vinh, thereby the city would become the centre of GDR assistance in the DRV. At that time the delegation could only agree to provide assistance in the reconstruction of workshops and facilities formerly constructed with help of the GDR, the construction of apartments, equipment of the textile combine, as well as in the training of Vietnamese in the GDR (no author, 16.3.1973).

On 19 May 1973, the DRV Prime Minister repeated the request of the Vietnamese Workers Party and the Government of the DRV in a formal letter to Willi Stoph, expressing "deep trust that […] our people will continue to receive valuable assistance from the brotherly German Democratic Republic"[66] (Phủ Thủ tướng, 19.5.1973). On the same day, similar letters were delivered to the ambassadors of other socialist countries requesting help in the reconstruction of one city or province (Doering, 19.5.1973).[67] Sources available to me give no clear evidence on which criteria the pairing of cities and countries is based. Schwenkel claims that the decision to assign Vinh to the GDR might have been based on the GDR's superior experience in the reconstruction of its own cities after World War 2 (it remains unclear if her informants were actually involved in or privy to the decision of matching cities and countries) (Schwenkel, 2012: p.446). This explanation was seen as unlikely by three of

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[65] Phạm Văn Đồng: "Auch ein anderes Problem möchte ich noch einmal erwähnen, die Projektierung und den Aufbau der Stadt Vinh. Wir haben Ihre Meinung über diesen unseren Vorschlag noch nicht gehört."
Willi Stoph: "Es ist für mich schwer, sofort eine Antwort auf diese Frage zu geben. Wir werden diesen Vorschlag selbstverständlich mit dem gebotenen Ernst prüfen. Wir haben noch keine Vorstellung, was damit verbunden ist. Sie werden verstehen, daß wir nicht leichtfertig eine Zusage geben können, wenn wir nicht wissen, welche Arbeiten und materiellen Aufwendungen in welchem Umfang damit verbunden sind. Wir werden diesen Ihren Vorschlag mit dem notwendigen Ernst und Verantwortungsbewusstsein prüfen."
Phạm Văn Đồng: "Genosse Le Thanh Nghi wird dann vielleicht mit Ihnen oder mit Genossen Weiss noch darüber sprechen. Wir haben nämlich die Absicht, jede zerstörte Stadt in Nordvietnam, z. B. auch Haiphong und Thanh Hoa, mit Hilfe irgendeines sozialistischen Landes neu zu projektieren und aufzubauen. Für Hanoi rechnen wir mit der Hilfe der Sowjetunion. Mit Ihrer Hilfe rechnen wir für die Stadt Vinh, weil das die am meisten zerstörte Bezirkshauptstadt und außerdem die Heimatstadt Ho Chi Minhs ist."
[66] "tin tưởng sâu sắc rằng, […] nhân dân chúng tôi sẽ tiếp tục được sự giúp đỡ quý báu của nước Cộng hòa dân chủ Đức anh em"
[67] The letters assigned the following cities to the respective countries: Soviet Union – redesign of Hanoi and construction of New Hanoi; Poland-Hải Phòng and nearby Đồ Sơn; Hungary-Quảng Ninh province; Bulgaria-Thái Bình; Czechoslovakia-Thanh Hóa; Romania-Phủ Lý; PRC-Thái Nguyên.

 my informants who participated in the reconstruction of Vinh.[68] One argued that other socialist countries had also extensive experience in the reconstruction of its cities. Two voiced the possibility that the decision to assign Vinh to the GDR might have had an ideological base, as Vinh is located close to the home of Hồ Chí Minh and Germany the home of Karl Marx. In his request cited above, Phạm Văn Đồng indeed refers to Vinh as the home of Hồ Chí Minh, and of it being the most severely destroyed city in the south of the DRV. While no conclusive explanation can be reached based on the sources available, it is likely that the decision to assign Vinh to the GDR was influenced by the city's national importance. Vinh had not only been one of the most severely destroyed provincial capitals, it had also been the most important industrial centre in the southern region of the DRV before the war. Additionally, it served as a transport node and provided important services for the support of the war in the South. The experiences of 1969 to 1972 had shown that the DRV lacked the capacities to rebuild the city according to the Socialist City model on its own. While the Soviet Union would be involved in urban development of Hanoi and New Hanoi, the reconstruction of Vinh as the most important city in the south would require assistance of an economically advanced socialist country with large resources and wide experience in industrialized urban construction.[69] Indeed, the GDR was among the most industrially advanced socialist states, in the field of industrialized construction it was among the most experienced countries in the world (Leinauer, 1998: p.164; Shoup, 1975: pp.11-16).

3.3.2.3 Urban Planning in the GDR

To evaluate the influence of the GDR on urban planning in Vinh as well as on the developments in that field that informed GDR actors, this section will give an overview on the development of urban planning and construction in the GDR, before the next parts return to Vinh for a detailed account of GDR-Vietnam cooperation in the modern project of creating a Socialist City. Three phases can be distinguished in the development of urban planning and construction in the GDR. The first phase took place immediately after World War 2 when conflicts between the USSR and the other occupying countries were less intense. The second phase began roughly with the establishment of the GDR on 7 October 1949 and lasted until Khrushchev's speech after Stalin's death called for a turn in architecture and housing policies. The third phase lasted from mid-1950s until the end of the GDR in 1990. This phasing already reflects the strong influences of Cold War politics and the Soviet Union on the development of urban planning in the GDR.

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[68] However, none of my interview partners claimed to know the exact reasons.
[69] This explanation is supported by the Phạm Văn Đồng quotation above. The GDR had already assisted in the reconstruction of the city Ham Hung in North Korea after the Korean War (Kang-Schmitz, 2010; Frank, 1996). However, I could not find any indication that this played a role in the decision.

First Phase of Urban Planning in the GDR (1945-1949)

Urban planning in the GDR was most importantly informed by its competition with the other German state, the Federal Republic of Germany, on the one hand, and the dependence on the USSR on the other (Richter, 2006; Düwel, 1995). During the first phase, however, both influences remained relatively weak. According to Stabenow, political considerations played little role in initial planning for the reconstruction of cities in the Soviet Occupation Zone (SBZ, Sowjetische Besatzungszone) (Stabenow, 1998). While Bauhaus architecture and urban planning had been scorned by the National Socialist regime, attempts were made by architects and planners to revive its principles after the war. In Berlin, this approach, represented by the Baukollektiv, competed for influence with the Zehlendorfer Amt that stood for an approach to urban planning in the tradition of its work for Albert Speer during National Socialism (Durth et al., 1998a: pp.81-99). Architects and planners from all areas of Germany participated in competitions during this period (Stabenow, 1998: p.130). The plurality in discourse and approaches was reflected by decentralized for urban planning and reconstruction (Stabenow, 1998: p.123; Düwel, 1995: p.93). Nevertheless, this period also saw the beginning of centralisation of planning and the increasing modelling of the SBZ's structures along those of the USSR (Düwel, 1995: pp.46-52). Formally, the establishment of the GDR saw the creation of a sovereign state. In practice, however, the Soviet Union continued to exercise its influence in numerous ways. In the case of urban planning and architecture, this resulted in the application of the Socialist City in the GDR. As this model had so far been applied on a large scale only in the USSR, experiences in that country served as examples (Barth, 1998: p.12). Close control over the course of urban planning in the GDR was ensured in different ways. All decisions had to be in line with political guidelines formulated by the SED in close coordination with the Soviet Union (Durth et al., 1998a: p.12). The USSR's influence was also ensured by the presence of its advisors during meetings of the Department for Construction of the SED Central Committee (Düwel, 1995: pp.53, 57). Additionally, German architects and cadres who had lived and worked in the USSR during the war played important roles in the application of Soviet guidelines in the GDR (Düwel, 1995; Kosel, 1989; see also entries in Fürst et al., 2000). Building on these structures established during the first phase, in the second and third phase the GDR closely followed developments in the USSR.

Second Phase of Urban Planning in the GDR (1949 – mid 1950s)

The second phase saw the application in the GDR of the Socialist City as it was promoted in the USSR under Stalin. After the establishment of the GDR as a member of the socialist camp, the SED Politburo sent a number of study groups to the USSR to study Soviet-style development and state-management. Among those groups was a delegation for the study of urban planning consisting of architects and cadres. Until then, no official direction had been

proclaimed for architecture and urban design in the GDR (Düwel, 1995: pp.68-71). According to Durth et al., this journey proved a decisive moment in the adoption of Soviet guidelines. Study visits to Kiev, Leningrad, and Stalingrad, as well as discussions with Soviet experts emphasised elements of the Socialist City under Stalin: monumentalism, open space and axial roads for demonstrations and parades, the compact city, accentuation of the city centre, as well as the expression of "national traditions" in design and architecture. Modern architecture as well as the works of German architects of the 1930s in the USSR were vehemently criticized (Durth et al., 1998a: pp.40-146). Some of the presentations and recommendations of the Soviet officials were nearly literally taken over as part of the decisions and guidelines of the GDR's Ministry of Construction that were most prominently expressed in the 16 Principles of Urban Construction (Durth et al., 1998a: p.120; Düwel, 1995: pp.72-76). In addition to adopting Soviet guidelines in design and architecture, the organisational structures of planning and construction were also reformed along the Soviet model (Bernhardt, 2005; Düwel, 1995: pp.43-84).

While the guidelines emphasised "national traditions" as an integral part of architecture and design, the search for such traditions proved to be difficult. Both Richter and Düwel emphasise the dilemma that the national traditions were in fact expressions of Soviet guidelines (Richter, 2006; Düwel, 1995: p.16). Hermann Henselmann's "Hochhaus an der Weberwiese" came to be regarded as most aptly applying and expressing the national traditions and served as reference in the design of the first section of the Stalinallee (Düwel, 1995: p.113). The Stalinallee, as its name suggests, was the most important project in the early years of urban reconstruction in East Berlin. After two arcade apartment buildings had been constructed in 1949/1950, construction stopped because they were not in line with the politically determined style. In 1952, construction started anew, this time following the politically correct design. The avenue's axial layout, intended for mass-demonstrations, emphasised the entry towards the city centre through a series of gates formed by apartment towers. It was lined by a sports hall, a Stalin statue, and "Palaces for Workers" in a richly ornamented style. These were to symbolize the rule of the new regime by offering workers the best and most beautiful apartments. It was further intended to prove to the population that socialism was able to achieve the promises it held and to express a bright future (Leinauer, 1998; Schwiedergoll, 1998).

While the Stalinallee exemplifies the architecture and design of the national traditions, the ideal Socialist City is most prominently expressed in new founded urban centres such as Stalinstadt (now Eisenhüttenstadt) (Bernhardt, 2005). The city was founded in 1950 to house workers of the newly established Ironworks Combine East. "Stalinstadt documents a finished period of socialist urban planning. It was characterized by ideal planning and ideal

architecture, expression of high-flying expectations"[70] (May, 1998: p.151, italics in original). Although much of the plan was never realized, it is an expression of the goal to harmoniously incorporate the elements of a Socialist City of the time into one whole complex: emphasis on the city centre with the central square, hierarchical organisation of distribution and consumption, a compact city body, design and architecture in line with national traditions (May, 1998).

As has been noted above, the concept of "national traditions" was highly ambiguous, but it came to play an important role in the ideological conflict between East and West Germany. Lothar Bolz, GDR Minister for Reconstruction and Deputy Prime Minister saw architecture and urban planning as elements of cultural policies that aimed at an international profile distinct from the West Germany (Durth et al., 1998a: p.126). After World War 2, urban planning and architecture in West Germany was oriented towards concepts prevalent in capitalist countries, such as modern architecture in the International Style and the ideal of the hierarchically ordered city (Düwel, 1995: p.12). In this context, propaganda praised the GDR-city as the real German city, in contrast to cities in West Germany that expressed the wish of capitalist forces to erase Germany's national identity (Richter, 2006: pp.29-30). Thus, efforts were made to create legitimacy not only by expressing the virtues of socialism in the cities of the GDR, but also by presenting them as truly German, thereby underlining claims to the legitimate representation of the whole of Germany.

The period from 1949 to 1955 also saw the beginnings of industrialisation of the construction process through the application of scientific methods, norms, and standards. From 1950 on each year an improved housing type was distributed to provincial authorities for construction in their territories. While these were not as elaborately decorated and provided a lower living standard than the Palaces for Workers, they were much better adapted to the pressing housing needs (Durth et al., 1998b: pp.156-158, Leinauer, 1998: p.165). Standardisation and the use of pre-fabricated concrete elements were attempts to lower construction costs (Richter, 2006: p.36). However, the first buildings constructed by pre-fabricated elements hid those construction techniques under the ornaments of "national traditions" (Richter, 2006: p.31, Düwel, 1995: p.132).

Third Phase of Urban Planning in the GDR (mid 1950s – 1990)
Khrushchev's speech in November 1954 criticizing Stalin-era architecture and ornamentalism marks the beginning of the third phase of urban planning in the GDR, one that saw an all-out embrace of industrialized construction techniques and the widespread application of

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[70] "Stalinstadt dokumentiert eine abgeschlossene Phase sozialistischen Städtebaus. Sie war gekennzeichnet von idealer Planung und idealer Architektur, Ausdruckskunst hochfliegender Erwartungen."

"scientific" knowledge as the base to achieve the technical revolution. Khrushchev's speech in fact strengthened those who had already argued in this way, among them Gerhard Kosel (Düwel, 1995: p.256). Kosel had worked as an architect and planner in the USSR from the 1930s on. In September 1954 he returned to the GDR to play an important role in the drive towards industrialisation of the buildings process in the positions of undersecretary and Deputy Minister of Construction, and as President of the German Academy of Construction (Müller, 2000: pp.128-129; Durth et al., 1998a: p.466; Kosel, 1989).

Khrushchev's new line of building faster, cheaper and more was soon taken up by the SED leadership (Düwel, 1995: p.257). In January and February 1955, the Central Committee prepared a resolution criticizing the former modes of construction and design and laying out the most important tasks for the construction of the GDR's cities. This turn was accompanied by a restructuring of responsibilities, putting urban planning under closer control of Ulbricht as First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Durth et al., 1998a: p.353). In April 1955, a conference on urban planning and architecture, co-organized by Kosel, paved the way for rigorous, countrywide industrialisation of construction and planning; in autumn that year Kosel led a delegation of cadres and architects to the USSR to study the use of pre-fabricated concrete elements and panels (Durth et al., 1998b: p.76; Düwel, 1995: pp.258-259; Werner, 1981: p.37).[71]

While the shift to industrialized modern construction methods and designs was theoretically executed in 1955, the countrywide application of such methods began in the late 1950s. The first standardized apartment block designs applied in the GDR during the 1950s used traditional brick buildings techniques, bricks were only slowly replaced by large concrete blocks as a transition to wall-high pre-fabricated panels. The first series' of buildings using

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[71] This shift did not go without resistance. Proponents of the national traditions-designs objected and in general scientists had difficulties to theoretically justify the rejection of their former ideals (Düwel, 1995: pp.131-133, 256). As I have described above, the ideal Socialist City under Khrushchev closely resembled that of modern urban planning in capitalist countries. Reuther and Schulte see the shift as a convergence to the Charta of Athens of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) and its ideals (Reuther, Schulte, 1998: p.120). The ordering element of the housing complex followed similar principles applied in West Germany (Leinauer, 1998: pp.165-66; Werner, 1981: p.33). Therefore, while the shift towards modern styles of architecture and urban design had been triggered by developments in the USSR, it appeared as if the GDR had taken over Western ideas (Richter, 2006: p.32; Durth et al., 1998a: p.141). While the shift in architecture in the USSR had been a part of de-Stalinisation, in the GDR it complicated the distinction from the West German state (Düwel, 1995: p.255). According to Richter, Danish, and French systems of construction became most influential in the GDR, as Denmark and France were more advanced in the industrialisation process than the USSR (Richter, 2006: p.32). This dilemma on the one hand led to attempts to construct theoretical distinctions between capitalist and socialist forms of housing (Leinauer, 1998: p.166; Richter, 2006: p.34; Werner, 1981: p.34). On the other hand, attempts were made to present the GDR as the legitimate heir to socially progressive Bauhaus; while arguing that Western Germany had taken over ideas from the GDR. At the same time, GDR guidelines for urban planning and construction were re-interpreted as a critical progression of the Charta of Athens, when formerly it had been presented as an anti-thesis (Richter, 2006: p.33; Weber, 1998; Kosel, 1989: p.289).

pre-fabricated panels were introduced from 1959 on (Richter, 2006: p.36).[72] From around 1970 on, housing constructed using pre-fabricated panels and based on standardized catalogue designs became the most widely applied construction method in the GDR (Richter, 2006: p.37; Durth et al., 1998a: pp.536-537). Industrialisation also resulted in the further socialisation and centralisation of the construction industry, as it required nationwide coordination of production, transport, and assembly of elements and machinery (Werner, 1981: pp.34, 43).

The scientific-technical revolution was proclaimed as a patent to solve all problems (Durth et al., 1998b: p.79). The application of scientific methods in the industrial production of housing space was propagated as ideologically derived from Marxism and as the means to achieve higher productivity, in turn leading to victory of the socialist system and the construction of communism. The techniques of the scientific-technical revolution were: standardisation of construction elements, mass production, industrialisation, and scientifically founded planning methods (Kosel, 1989: pp.286-287).

According to Durth et al., the construction of Halle-Neustadt is an expression of these principles (Durth et al., 1998b: p.80). Construction of that city and the related factory for pre-fabricated panels began in 1964, under the direction of Chief Architect Richard Paulick, who was replaced by Karl-Heinz Schlesier in 1969 (Weber, 2000). The goal was "to build more, faster, cheaper and better, this amounts to nothing else than the consequent implementation of the scientific-technical revolution in construction and urban planning" (Büro für Städtebau und Architektur des Rates des Bezirkes Halle, 1972: p.161).[73] Furthermore, the construction of the city was also presented as a contribution to the creation of socialism:

> "The construction of Halle-Neustadt symbolizes the powerful development of the German Democratic Republic, it tells of the significant growth of its economy and of its peace-policy. The construction of the city of chemistry industry workers results consequently from the social development of the German Democratic Republic and is an element in the complex design of the environment of socialist society".[74] (Büro für Städtebau und Architektur des Rates des Bezirkes Halle, 1972: p.11).

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[72] Early examples of the application of the new techniques are the second phase of the Stalinallee and the second Socialist City Hoyerswerda (Durth et al., 1998a: pp.484, 511; Leinauer, 1998).

[73] "mehr, schneller, billiger und besser bauen, und das bedeutet nichts anderes als die konsequente Durchsetzung der wissenschaftlich-technischen Revolution im Bauwesen"

[74] "Der Aufbau von Halle-Neustadt symbolisiert den kraftvollen Aufschwung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, er kündet vom bedeutenden Wachstum ihrer Wirtschaft und von ihrer Friedenspolitik. Die Errichtung der Chemiearbeiterstadt leitet sich folgerichtig aus der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik ab und ist Bestandteil der komplexen Gestaltung der Umwelt der sozialistischen Gesellschaft."

As in other countries, industrialized building in the GDR had from the beginning been criticized as producing unsatisfactory results. Criticism focused on boring, uniform appearances of housing complexes and individual blocks, as well as on uncomfortable apartment designs and inappropriate sizes (Richter, 2006: pp.39-44). Furthermore, targets in cost reductions could not be achieved. As Gerhard Kosel had been among those responsible for the early drive towards industrialisation, he was removed from his post as Director of the Academy for Construction in 1965 and lost his seat in the Central Committee in 1967 (Kosel, 1989: pp.315-317). However, the question of how industrial construction could be visually attractive and varied continued to trouble decision makers in the GDR. Apart from prestige projects, such as the Lenin Square (now the Square of the United Nations) in Berlin, the possibilities offered by the design series' were not applied due to cost considerations; the layout of socialist housing complexes was determined by the mechanical construction process (Richter, 2006: pp.44-51). According to Hannemann, it was the pragmatic application of an industrial workflow that expressed itself in urban and apartment designs of the GDR (Hannemann, 1996: pp.111-112). Nevertheless, the power of social engineering through a designed urban environment continued to be emphasised, the planning of cities continued to be regarded as a modern project in constructing socialism (Büro für Städtebau und Architektur des Rates des Bezirkes Halle, 1972).[75]

Throughout its existence, the GDR had closely followed political developments in the USSR. With regards to urban planning, this included shifting from costly, ornamentally decorated buildings in the style of national traditions to an emphasis on cheap and fast construction. In the decades following this shift, the GDR had become a leading nation in the use of pre-fabricated concrete panels and industrialized construction; its achievements at the time of cooperation in Vinh are exemplified in the construction of Halle-Neustadt.[76] Drawing mainlyon archival sources and interviews with former GDR experts, the next part will present the Vietnamese-German cooperation in the reconstruction of Vinh as a Socialist City.

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[75] This was also expressed in apartment designs. According to Hannemann, apartment designs in the GDR emphasised the nuclear family (two-generation households) as the smallest unit of society. In GDR ideology, the socialist family played an important role in the development of its members as socialist persons. No ideological distinction between the private and the public existed; family and apartments were regarded as the lowest unit of social and spatial organisation of society, respectively (Hannemann, 1996: p.104).

[76] According to Hannemann, between 1955 and 1990, 2.1 Mio apartments had been constructed using industrialized techniques. Of these 1.45 Mio are constructed using pre-fabricated concrete panels, from the 1970s on most apartments were constructed using this technique. Most apartments were constructed from 1976 on (1.26 Mio), after cooperation in Vinh had started (Hannemann, 1996: p.22).

3.3.2.4 First Steps of Cooperation

The GDR Council of Ministers on 23 May 1973 decided to help in planning *and* the reconstruction of Vinh (Büro des Ministerrates der DDR, May 1973). This went further than the official letter of the DRV, which had asked for assistance only in planning of the city (Phủ Thủ tướng, 19.5.1973).[77] Sources available to me do not fully explain this difference. However, according to Schäfer, the GDR had generally realized that projects planned by German experts and implemented by Vietnamese in the DRV were beset with problems (Schäfer, 2011: p.15). This is reflected in the GDR's refusal to conduct planning of apartment blocks and a concrete factory in the GDR without involvement of Vietnamese experts (Engemann, 20.4.1970). Furthermore, documents related to the March 1973 delegation show that GDR officials were sceptical towards the DRV's abilities to carry out urban reconstruction on its own, as well as their willingness to cooperate in physical construction projects (Präsidium des Ministerrates der DDR, 7.3.1973: p.6). Additionally, visible contributions to the reconstruction of the DRV as well as to the victory of socialism over the US were important political assets in the Cold War.[78] With a letter dated 20 June 1973, Willi Stoph informed Phạm Văn Đồng of the decision of the SED Central Committee and the GDR government to aid and assist in the planning and reconstruction of Vinh (Stoph, 20.6.1973).[79] This decision was soon followed by the first visit of a GDR delegation to Vinh consisting of high ranking representatives of GDR planning and construction institutions[80] (Bộ Xây dựng, 18.7.1973). Gerhard Kosel describes his first impressions of Vinh as follows:

> "One had a view over the city's area from the top of a hill next to the Blue River. The term "city's area" is not chosen accidentally, because nothing was left of the city itself. There are terrible pictures of destroyed Minsk and Stalingrad, of the ruins of Coventry and Dresden, here in Vinh there were not

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[77] However, in the initial request Phạm Văn Đồng spoke of planning and reconstruction (see pages 70-71).

[78] That the GDR leadership saw aid and assistance to other countries as a means of foreign policy has been mentioned above. That this policy also related to the reconstruction of Vinh will be described below.

[79] Note that in general official documents of the time always emphasise hierarchy by putting Party before state, both in the GDR and the DRV. This also applies to positions held by people: the more important position, namely in the Party, is always listed before the position in government or administration.

[80] Most prominently Gerhard Kosel (Ministry of Construction state secretary), Rolf Schüttauf (Vice-President of the German Academy of Construction), and Hans Grotewohl (Chairman of the Vietnam Task Force of the Ministry of Construction). Hans Grotewohl was the son of Otto Grotewohl, GDR Prime Minister 1949-1964. The delegation's head Gerhard Kosel had been one of the leading figures in the GDR's drive for industrialized construction, but was demoted from his post as President of the German Academy of Construction in 1965. He continued to serve as deputy-minister (until 1972); at the time of construction in Vinh he was responsible for international cooperation and foreign trade in the Ministry of Construction (Müller, 2000; Kosel, 1989).

even ruins. A burned out moonscape with countless bomb craters like so many pockmarks stretched before the eye."[81] (Kosel, 1989, pp.324-325)

The Vietnamese report on the delegation's journey describes visits to Vinh and Hanoi, during which the delegation was informed of the DRV's plans for Vinh's reconstruction and the state of the country's construction sector. While most meetings took place with central agencies, both sides agreed that planning was to take place in Vinh, not in Hanoi or Berlin. Responsibility for planning and construction would lie with provincial authorities. Planning would follow an innovative approach that would see planning for the initial phase of reconstruction in parallel with the preparation of a General Development Plan[82] for the city. Cooperation would not only include planning and construction efforts but also re-organisation of administrative structures. Provincial authorities would also be supported by strengthening the provincial construction industry through rationalisation of existing workshops and the creation of construction material factories and construction enterprises (Bộ Xây dựng, 18.7.1973). These measures reflect a pessimistic assessment by the GDR delegation. It reported that planning by central agencies was not based on actually available materials and resources. Additionally, existing designs for apartment blocks required technical equipment and machinery beyond the existing conditions and were seen by the GDR delegation as contrary to the preferred lifestyle of the Vietnamese. Vietnamese planners, on the other hand, rejected traditional building materials like bamboo in favour of modern materials such as concrete, despite the low development level of the construction industry. In a similar vein, urban planning in the DRV was influenced by concepts and experiences of economically far more advanced socialist countries, while Vietnamese planners themselves had no experience in their application. Existing command structures were not able to coordinate construction and planning activities, or to efficiently use available resources and machinery (Ministerium für Bauwesen, 27.8.1973; Kosel, 1.8.1973).

Nevertheless, the Vietnamese side proposed GDR assistance in the following projects (Bộ Xây dựng, 18.7.1973):

- To assist in the preparation of the General Development Plan and technical structures.

- To equip a planning office, a training enterprise, and a construction material laboratory.

- To train cadres and workers, and equip a training school.

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[81] "Von der Höhe eines Hügels am Blauen Fluß hatte man einen Überblick über das Stadtgebiet bis hin zur Küste. Der Ausdruck „Stadtgebiet" ist nicht zufällig gewählt, denn von der Stadt selbst war nichts übriggeblieben. Es gibt schreckliche Bilder von dem zerstörten Minsk und Stalingrad, den Ruinenfeldern von Coventry und Dresden, hier in Vinh gab es nicht einmal Ruinen. Vor dem Auge dehnte sich eine mit zahllosen Bombentrichtern wie mit Blattern übersäte und ausgebrannte Mondlandschaft."
[82] "Generalbebauungsplan"

- To construct and/or equip a brick factory (capacity 30,000,000 bricks per year), a cement factory (capacity 15,000 t per year), an enterprise for the production of sand and gravel, a carpentry for the production of doors and windows, a combine for the construction of 1,000 apartments per year, as well as a provincial construction enterprise and a central construction enterprise.

- To supply construction materials to ensure that construction would soon begin.

The German delegation had no decision making power; its proposals to Minister of Construction Wolfgang Junker largely followed the Vietnamese requests. However, the delegation advised the Vietnamese that the GDR would not be able to supply a whole brick factory as it did not produce equipment for such factories (Kosel, 1.8.1973). Additionally, the earliest possibility for the delivery of a concrete factory would be in 1980, thus not part of cooperation in Vinh that was envisaged by the GDR to last for five years (see below) (Büro des Ministerrates der DDR, 3.9.1973c). More importantly, the construction of a concrete panel factory in Vinh was rejected. The GDR experts saw this construction technology as not suitable to the local context as it would require industrial production and assembly techniques, as well as the respective machinery, all of which were beyond the economic realities of Vinh. They therefore preferred brick building complemented with concrete elements, proposing tunnel forms for a second phase when the technical requirements would be fulfilled (Ministerium für Bauwesen, 27.8.1973). Tunnel form building was also proposed by DRV Ministry of Construction (MoC, successor of the Ministry of Architecture) officials, but in contrast to the GDR experts, they saw this as a transition technique while they envisaged pre-fabricated concrete panels as the ideal solution (Vũ Đức Thận, 10.10.1973). Both the concrete factory and the panel factory were not part of the protocol signed by both sides on the conclusion of the delegation's visit to the DRV (Kosel, Vũ Đức Thận, 20.7.1973).[83] The first delegation's visit to Vietnam had not altered the vision of Vinh's reconstruction as a Socialist City. It had, however, clearly shown that disagreements existed between the two sides on the application of modern construction techniques, as well as on the suitability of concrete panel apartment blocks for Vietnam in general and Vinh specifically. Furthermore, GDR documents make clear that GDR experts saw the need to restructure planning and buildings activities, as well as to train cadres and workers in all aspects of the planning and construction process.

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[83] However, the Vietnamese request for a concrete panel factory in Vinh would continue to trouble cooperation. See for example (Wolters, 20.9.1973), reporting that the DRV ambassador to the GDR repeated the request for a concrete panel factory.

The Committee for Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation[84] (CESTC) meeting of 1973 was the first to take place after the Paris Peace Agreement; it was thus also the first after mutual projects had been put on a hold in late 1972 due to bombing by the US. By incorporating the reconstruction of Vinh into the CESTC framework, the GDR aimed at centralizing all of its activities in the field of urban construction on Vinh, with the exception of the concrete panel factory in Đạo Tú (Büro des Ministerrates der DDR, 3.9.1973c). Based on the findings and proposals of the Kosel delegation to Vietnam in July 1973, the GDR's Council of Ministers had decided that assistance in Vinh would last for five years, 1974 to 1978; total costs were calculated at about 120 Mio GDR-Mark. This would include payment and accommodation for GDR experts in Vinh, equipment for a planning office, machinery for construction enterprises and construction material production, construction material not available in the DRV, training of cadres and workers, as well as transport costs (Büro des Ministerrates der DDR, 3.9.1973a). Of the 24 Mio Mark designated for 1974, 5.2 Mio Mark would be non-repayable solidarity funds contributed by the GDR population spent for experts' salaries, training of Vietnamese, as well as for planning office equipment.[85] Repayable funds would have to be repaid in kind ("traditional Vietnamese products") over a period of ten years, starting in 1980 (Büro des Ministerrates der DDR, 3.9.1973b).

Concluding negotiations on the reconstruction of Vinh were carried out on an even higher level than the CESTC. In October 1973, DRV Prime Minister Phạm Văn Đồng visited the GDR to discuss opportunities for cooperation between the two countries (no author, October 1973). The agreement was signed by Phạm Văn Đồng and Willi Stoph on 22 October 1973 without changes to the GDR draft. It stipulated that the GDR would assist in

- preparing the General Development Plan as well as in planning housing areas, including individual buildings by sending GDR experts to Vinh

- equipping a planning office and construction enterprises

- training of cadres

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[84] Due to the importance and wide range of assistance in the reconstruction of Vinh, the GDR proposed a separate treaty between GDR and DRV on that subject, and that further negotiations would take place in the framework of the CESTC (Wolters, 20.9.1973). To this effect, the GDR prepared a draft agreement to be signed during the CESTC negotiations 1973 (Büro des Ministerrates der DDR, 3.9.1973b). Thereby, the project was both elevated in formal importance, as well as incorporated in the institutionalized channels for economic relations between the two countries.

[85] The use of these funds and the authority of state agencies over them represent a clear example of the entanglement between official cooperation and "solidarity" funded by people's contributions.

- rationalizing production of building materials[86], by sending experts, machinery, and equipment (Government of the GDR, Government of the DRV, 22.10.1973).

While the GDR rejected requests for administrative buildings, several public buildings serving the population were part of the cooperation, such as a cinema and an event centre.

According to the agreement, responsibility for planning and construction would lie with the DRV government. A Task Force would be established at the respective Ministry of Construction for overall coordination, while in Vinh a Vietnamese Reconstruction Supervisor (Aufbauleiter) and the leader of the German expert group would cooperate and be responsible for every day management activities. Further details were to be discussed and fixed in a protocol until the end of the year. As the GDR had proposed, delivery of material and machinery would be agreed on in CESTC negotiations (Government of the GDR, Government of the DRV, 22.10.1973). Thus, in October 1973, structures as well as responsibilities had been agreed on in general terms.

At the same time, first steps for implementation were taken. A Task Force Vietnam had been established under the GDR Ministry of Construction on 1 October 1973, with Hans Grotewohl as its chairman (Nguyen Sy Thuy et al., 2011: p.25).[87] In October 1973, a Vietnamese delegation travelled the GDR to study its advances in construction techniques, focusing on the examples of Dessau and Halle (Nguyễn Đình Châu, 13.11.1973). Among those GDR officials in charge of the delegation's visits was Karlheinz Schlesier, who held important positions as chief architect in Dessau and Halle-Neustadt (Weber, 2000). After accompanying the Vietnamese delegation on its visit to East Germany, Schlesier was appointed deputy head of the expert group in Vinh and head of its division for urban construction and planning.

Schlesier and Grotewohl, two prominent figures of GDR planning and architecture, would thus form part of the leadership of the first GDR expert group in Vinh, reflecting the importance attributed to the project by the GDR. In late November 1973, they travelled to Vietnam as members of a preparation group that was to take first steps in the implementation of the agreement (Phủ Thủ tướng, 22.11.1973). Like the Kosel delegation before, they met with officials at the provincial and national level. Meetings with high-ranking officials indicate the increased attention of the DRV leadership to the reconstruction of Vinh and its appreciation of the GDR's efforts (Knauer, 20.12.1973). However, consultations with officials

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[86] This included production of bricks, concrete elements, cement, sand and gravel, calcium oxide, as well as a lime stone quarry (Büro des Ministerrates der DDR, 3.9.1973b, appendix 2).

[87] However, according to (Bộ Xây dựng, 18.7.1973), Grotewohl had already been head of the Task Force when he visited Vietnam as member of the Kosel delegation. As the Ministry of Construction had already established a Task Force as part of the Đạo Tú project that was turned into the Task Force Vietnam, it is likely that the establishment of the Task Force on 1 October was merely a formal act.

also pointed at conflicts within the Vietnamese administration. Deputy chairman of the State Planning Committee Nguyễn Văn Khá as well as Politburo member and Deputy Prime Minister Đỗ Mười advised the delegation to reject exaggerated requests from lower authorities and to only supply those machines that could be efficiently used under local conditions. Also the Ministry of Construction was criticized by Nguyễn Văn Khá as it had not yet established the Vinh Task Force and neglected its responsibility for preparations (Knauer, 20.12.1973).[88] In a letter to Phạm Văn Đồng, Lê Thanh Nghị and Đỗ Mười, Nguyễn Văn Khá repeated his criticism, stating that by the time the delegation had left Vietnam in December 1973, the DRV had not taken the agreed steps to establish necessary bodies and structures. He called on the MoC to immediately establish a Vinh Task Force, to delegate necessary personnel to Vinh, to supply necessary documents to the German partners, and to establish centralized authority over the reconstruction process (Nguyễn Văn Khá, 21.12.1973). Additionally, Deputy Chairman of the GDR Council of Ministers Gerhard Weiss withheld from the delegation important information that he reported to deputy Minister of Construction Poser (Weiss, 21.11.1973).[89] Withheld information concerned a number of problems in the planning and reconstruction of Vinh. According to Weiss, responsibility for the construction of Vinh had been turned over to provincial authorities who lacked capacity and experience. Provincial authorities claimed that they were informed that the GDR would supply a concrete factory as well as two training facilities for construction workers and cadres. Different agencies proposed different reconstruction strategies. The Ministry of Construction had only recently been established but lacked resources, authority, and efficient structures to fulfil its tasks. Therefore, support from the MoC was not forthcoming. Plans for the reconstruction of Vinh were unrealistic and not covered by available materials and supplies due to uncoordinated planning. Thus, the report again painted an alarming picture of the state of construction and planning in the DRV at the beginning of the reconstruction of Vinh. Coordination, one of the most important aspects of centralized planning and industrialized construction, was seen as critically lacking (Weiss, 21.11.1973).

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[88] During this meeting Nguyễn Văn Khá also pointed to the unrealistic plan of the former Minister of Construction for New Hanoi, a project that by then had been abandoned. This meant that the panel factory in Đạo Tú would, according to the plans of that time, be located far away from any meaningful construction site and without necessary infrastructure.

[89] The document gives no explanation as to why this information had to be kept private and was withheld from the expert group.

Figure 5
Map of Vinh's built-up area in 1975 showing the envisaged location of the first housing complex (green) along National Highway 1 (violet) (adapted from Knauer, 27.2.1976)
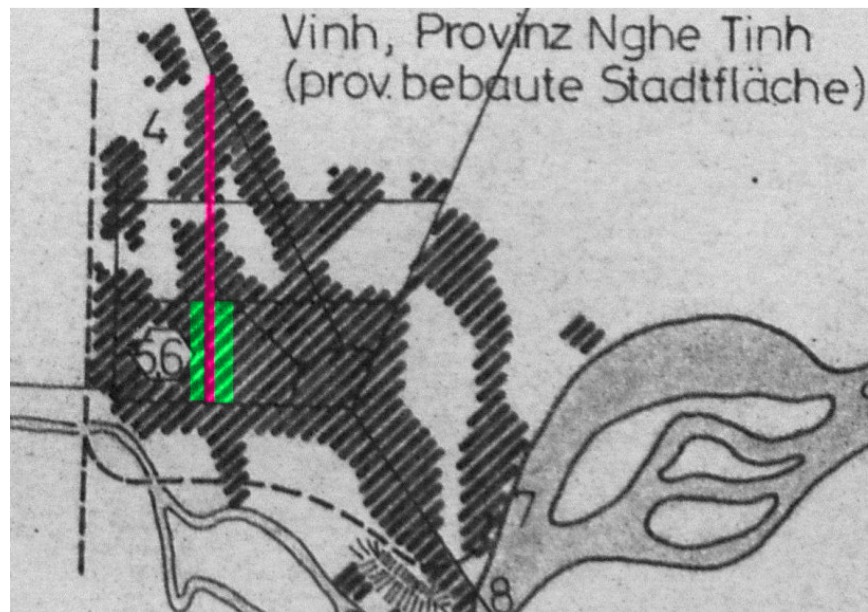
When the second delegation travelled to Vietnam in November 1973 to prepare first steps in Vinh's reconstruction, the kind of destruction in Vinh was different from experiences in the GDR, where bombing had left cities in ruins. In Vinh, the high number of wooden buildings and the scale of bombing meant that only a small number of ruins was left in 1973. Nevertheless, Nguyễn Sỹ Hòa, Vice-Chairman of the PAC, and expert group leader Otto Knauer agreed on first practical steps including agreements on personnel, financial regulations, and milestones for the first year of reconstruction, 1974 (Knauer, 20.12.1973, appendix). The delegation proposed first measures for efficient reconstruction of the city. Zoning was to be applied to steer increasing individual housing construction by returnees to designated areas and to ensure that zones for permanent construction would stay free of provisory buildings. The first housing complex of the city would be erected close to the former city centre on both sides of Quang Trung Street, starting on May 1, International Workers' Day (see Figure 5). This meant that construction of the complex would take place before its design was completed. In a similar fashion, reconstruction of the city would begin before a General Development Plan was completed. Placing the housing complex along Quang Trung Street also followed a political rational: this location was intended to ensure that people, especially those heading to the war-zone in the south, would pass by this symbol of international solidarity and of a believe in victory in the on-going war (Mönnig 1989:13).

Before cooperation in the reconstruction of Vinh officially began in February 1974, important decisions had been agreed on for the reconstruction of Vinh as a Socialist City. A revised planning document (see below) would serve as the formal basis of cooperation. The first housing complex in Vinh would be located on Quang Trung Street.[90] The first permanent buildings to be erected in Vinh would be housing blocks, not administrative or representative buildings. While initial reconstruction would rely on construction material supplied by the GDR, reconstruction of the city was seen by GDR planners as a "complex" undertaking. The goal was to improve existing plans and to enable their implementation. Therefore, planning was to consist of regional planning of Nghệ An province, urban planning of Vinh, as well as the planning of an exemplary housing complex. This was to ensure that as much construction material as possible would be produced locally, replacing prevalent manual labour with rationalised production. In addition to creating a local construction material industry, construction enterprises would be supplied with necessary machinery. Training of cadres and workers would be one of the most important tasks to allow for increasingly self-reliant urban development. This would take the form of on-the-job and class-room training in Vinh and the GDR, as well as the equipment of a vocational school (Mönnig, 1989). It was agreed during this delegation's visit that planning for Vinh would be revised according to discussions between the delegation and Vietnamese authorities. A revised planning document would then serve as the formal basis of cooperation (Knauer, 20.12.1973).

3.3.2.5 Vietnamese-German Planning of a Socialist City

While preparations for GDR-DRV cooperation in the reconstruction of Vinh were carried out, people, institutions and enterprises started to return to Vinh from early 1973 on. After initial repairs to war damaged structures in 1973 only 117,522m² were usable, mostly in bamboo buildings. By August 1973, five km of roads had been repaired provisionally and electricity was provided by six generators. While DRV and GDR central authorities prepared for cooperation from early 1973 on, urban planning in Vinh continued without reference to possible GDR assistance, upholding the guidelines of former plans. Planning by the central Institute for Urban Planning focused on the first two years of reconstruction (1974 to 1975), during which pre-war levels of services, infrastructure and production should be achieved, with a focus on industrial zones and the housing areas for respective workers. Vinh's population for 1974 to 1975 was calculated at about 60,000 people, mainly industrial and construction workers, administration cadres, as well as their families. Three to four m² per person of housing would be provided, 2/3 of which were to be situated in one-storey buildings and 1/3 in four to five-storey buildings (Bô Xây dưng, Viện Thiết kế Quy hoạch thành phố và nông thôn, August 1973). While this plan focused on production and the

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[90] Thus its subsequent name Quang Trung Housing Complex.

provision of housing, other agencies argued for reconstruction to begin with the construction of the city centre as an assembly of administrative buildings, leaving the provision of housing to private initiative (Weiss, 21.11.1973). When the first members of the GDR expert group Vinh arrived in 1974, no plan had been approved by the Party leadership or the DRV government.

After the second GDR delegation's visit in November/December 1973, planning for reconstruction had been revised, importantly from 1974 on it was under the responsibility of Nghệ An's Party Committee and Administrative Committee (UBHC Nghệ An, 17.1.1974). The city's population was estimated to reach 80,000 in 1975, calculated from the workforce necessary for the operation of the city and its industries, plus the number of dependents. However, in contrast to previous plans, permanent housing would only be supplied by the state to those who had to be relocated from designated construction sites, amounting to 12,000 people who would be housed in five-storey communal housing blocks (60%) and family-apartment buildings (40%). The types of buildings were chosen from Vietnamese catalogues, allowing for detailed planning of the required materials and funds. Public buildings to be built in the first two years were to provide services and entertainment; plans for the construction of the city centre were abandoned. With reference to cooperation with the GDR, the Quang Trung Housing Complex was designated as the most important construction project for the years 1974 to 1975, laying out mechanisms to ensure implementation. The influence of the GDR delegation's visit to Vinh is visible in this document (UBHC Nghệ An, 17.1.1974). The delegation had proposed to start construction in Quang Trung with Vietnamese building designs to ensure an early start of construction and to raise the confidence of the Vietnamese partners, and the delegation itself had participated in choosing the building types. The delegation had also played a role in choosing Quang Trung as the first housing complex to be constructed. Critique of GDR officials towards former plans is addressed in the document: it pays much more attention to detail, as well as to materials needed. For the first time material needs are put into relation to locally available resources and production capacities, laying out a plan for the development of construction material industries. Furthermore, the plan requests reliable decisions and information of central agencies (UBHC Nghệ An, 17.1.1974).

When the first GDR experts arrived in Vinh in February 1974, documents that were to serve as a basis for mutual planning of Vinh and the Quang Trung Housing Complex had been prepared. During the next 20 years, the city's population would rise to 120,000-150,000 inhabitants, the housing stock would mainly (85%) consist of four to five-storey buildings, with a much lower percentage of one and two-storey buildings (10%) and high-rises above five stories (5%). Contrary to former plans, Bến Thủy industrial area would be reduced in size

and a more important industrial area focusing on construction materials be located south of Quyết Mountain. For the year 1974, reconstruction would focus on housing, public services, and transport infrastructure. While total investments by the DRV were calculated at 7,500,000 Đồng, funds for 1974 had not yet been allocated by the State Planning Committee. The Provincial Administrative Committee called on central agencies to twin Nghệ An with a home province of Karl Marx in the GDR[91] (UBHC Nghệ An, February 1974a). During 1974 to 1975, 40,000m² of housing were to be constructed in Quang Trung Housing Complex, with 10,000m² in 1974. Planning for housing complexes until that point remained abstract, presenting calculations on costs and materials, but no elaboration on designs and planning principles (UBHC Nghệ An, February 1974b). Both documents were approved by the DRV Council of Ministers on 5 February 1974, thus forming the basis on which mutual planning could build (Schlesier, 25.3.1974). While the documents generally followed previous planning, the emphasis on housing is reflective of GDR priorities.

Mutual planning began in February 1974. Contrary to Vietnamese expectations, GDR experts did not immediately assist in the design of completely new housing blocks. To ensure that construction of Quang Trung would soon begin and the targeted 10,000m² of housing space would be completed in 1974 the GDR expert group convinced the Vietnamese partners to construct the first four housing blocks according to existing Vietnamese designs (Schlesier, 25.3.1974). The jointly developed building concept was planned to be applied beginning with the fifth housing block and to be continuously modified according to experiences gathered during application (Schlesier, 4.9.1974). The expert group estimated the housing complex on both sides of Quang Trung Street to be completed by 1976 or 1977 (Knauer, 25.5.1974). Vietnamese-German cooperation in the planning of a Socialist City focused on two projects: the General Development Plan and the Quang Trung Housing Complex.

The General Development Plan
Not only the Quang Trung Housing Complex was intended as a model, the reconstruction of Vinh as a whole, including construction, planning, organisation, training, and leadership, was intended by the DRV leadership to provide an example for the whole country (Leiter der DDR-Arbeitsgruppe Vinh, 13.6.1974: p.1). Construction activities began in 1974 based on preliminary guidelines while the General Development Plan was prepared. In May 1975, the Administrative Committee of Nghệ An presented the result of cooperation on the General Development Plan to the MoC for approval. It is the most comprehensive summary of the transnational modern project to create a Socialist City in Vinh. Socio-political principles of the

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[91] Maybe unaware that Karl Marx had been borne in West Germany.

plan followed political guidelines laid out by central agencies of the DRV (Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975). These principles[92] emphasised the city's

- regional and national importance

- the function of the General Development Plan to develop Vinh as a "beautiful, well-functioning, city worthy its revolutionary traditions"[93]

- economical use of land, with the mixture of urban and rural land-use in the city representing the "immediate cooperation between workers and peasants"[94]

- future economic structure

- role as a provincial and local centre for administration and education, as well as the symbolic importance of the city centre

- population size and area

- separation into industrial, residential, educational, and recreational zones

- development according to the housing complex model

- development phased according to economic planning

- "'healthy urban structure'"[95]

- need for development of construction material industries

- service to improvements in the living and working conditions of its citizens

- reconstruction ten times more beautiful than before (Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975: pp.6-8).

The city would also continue to follow its role as an administrative centre and a transport hub. Reconstruction at Vinh's old location followed ideological concerns:

> "Reconstruction of Vinh's central part will take place at the city's old location. Thereby existing objects, roads, and installations will be used, above all the traditional location of the 'Red City Vinh', the 'Iron City Vinh' will be preserved

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[92] See appendix for a full translation of the socio-political principles.
[93] " schönen, gut funktionierenden, modern ausgestatteten und ihren revolutionären Traditionen würdigen Stadt "
[94] " unmittelbare Zusammenwirken von Arbeitern und Bauern"
[95] "'gesunde Stadtstruktur'"

and developed for all future and coming generations."[96] (Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975: p.19)

Vinh's economic structure was to follow those directions that had already been laid out in previous plans: transport, harbour and sea economies, light industries, repair industries, and construction industries. These would be located in the Northern Industrial area, as well as a Southern Industrial area encompassing the Bến Thủy area, the northern river bank and Quyết Mountain. While the northern zone would include small scale and transport/repair industries, the southern zone would serve construction material industries as well as those industries relying on water ways. In addition to these two areas, a textile combine would be located close to the city centre in the former Trường Thi area. Cửa Lò would serve as a sea harbour, Cửa Hội as a base for fishery and related industries.

The rationale behind urban planning and design of Vinh was to create a beautiful city:

> "Year by year the image of the city has to be designed, one section, one object has to fit harmoniously and according to plans with the next one. Each building is a stone in the mosaic of the city, experiences teach that the construction of a beautifully designed city, a cultural city with a pleasant environment for its citizens and for the joy of its visitors can not be improvised; neither can it be postponed to a later date – because each building project creates realities.
>
> The mission assigned by Hồ Chí Minh's legacy to also reconstruct Vinh ten times more beautiful is understood as the task to design the houses, streets, squares, complexes, and ensembles of the city worthy and harmoniously, to realize them in such a way that its citizens feel comfortable and at home, in such a way that gradual improvements in the life of the people are expressed in the construction of the city. It [the mission] is understood as the task to effectively apply the means and possibilities of socialist planning and construction arts."[97] (Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975: p.26)

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[96] "Der Aufbau des zentralen Teils der Stadt Vinh erfolgt am früheren Standort der Stadt. Damit werden die vorhandenen Objekte, Trassen, Anlagen genutzt, vor allem aber wird der traditionsreiche Standort der 'Roten Stadt Vinh', der 'Eisernen Stadt Vinh' bis in alle Zukunft für künftige Generationen erhalten und entwickelt."

[97] "Jahr für Jahr muß zielstrebig das Bild der Stadt gestaltet werden, ein Abschnitt, ein Objekt muß sich mit dem nächsten harmonisch und planvoll ergänzen. Jedes Bauwerk ist ein Stein im Mosaik der Stadt, die Erfahrungen lehren, daß der Aufbau einer schön gestalteten Stadt, kulturvollen Stadt mit angenehmem Milieu für ihre Bürger und zur Freude ihrer Gäste nicht improvisiert werden kann, er kann auch nicht auf irgend einen späteren Zeitpunkt hinausgeschoben werden – weil jede Baumaßnahme Realitäten schafft. Erst die sozialistische Gesellschaft bietet überhaupt die Möglichkeit, eine so anspruchsvolle Aufgabe in Angriff zu nehmen.

Der Auftrag des Vermächtnisses Ho chi Minhs auch Vinh zehnmal schöner wiederaufzubauen, wird als Aufgabe verstanden, die Häuser, Straßen, Plätze, Komplexe und Ensembles der Stadt würdig und harmonisch zu

Thus, planners would harmoniously incorporate the different functions of the city with each other and the city's environment. The structuring principle would be the southern axis (now Trần Phú Street), from which axis' would spread north, north-east and along the Lam River. While National Highway 1 would be relocated outside the city, old important streets would highlight historic places and create axial vistas towards the city centre.

The central area is described as the "highlight of urban design". It was to be located along the southern west-east axis, forming a series of three functionally differentiated zones. The first (arriving from the west) would serve as a service and trade centre, including the market that would be reconstructed at its former location. The second zone would be located in the area of the Trần Phú, Trung Tâm (today Trường Thi Street) and Phan Bội Châu (today Lê Duẩn Street) streets intersection. As the city centre, this area would incorporate political, administrative, and cultural institutions for leading and planning of society. "This composition has to consider the leading social institutions (including military authorities), the Central Square, meaningful artistic design, the most important cultural buildings of the city, parks, and water bodies"[98] (Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975: p.31). In a third zone, stretching along Phan Bội Châu street south towards the banks of Lam River, educational institutions would be located.[99]

In combination with the street layout, these three zones would form three axes (see Figures 8 and 9). The first, stretching along Phan Đình Phùng and Trần Phú streets from west to east, would highlight entry to the city close to the citadel by a group of high-rise buildings; its northern side would be lined by representative housing buildings. The second axis would connect the "places of the heroic fight against the US-aggressors" in the Bến Thủy-Quyết Mountain area with the Central Square (Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975: p.32). The southern entry to the city would be marked by Quyết Mountain and a recreational park in Bến Thủy; the street leading into the city would create vistas over the city centre and Quang Trung Street towards high-rise buildings marking the northern city entry. The third axis would follow Trung Tâm Street and connect the city to Cửa Lò and Cửa Hội.

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gestalten, so zu realisieren, daß sich ihre Bürger wohl und heimisch fühlen, daß sich die schrittweise Verbesserung des Lebens des Volkes im Aufbau der Stadt widerspiegelt. Er wird als Aufgabe verstanden, die Mittel und Möglichkeiten sozialistischer Stadtbaukunst wirkungsvoll einzusetzen."

[98] "Die Komposition dieses Ensembles hat die führenden gesellschaftlichen Einrichtungen (darunter auch die militärischen Leitungen), den Zentralen Platz, eine bedeutungsvolle bildkünstlerische Gestaltung, die wichtigsten kulturellen Objekte der Stadt, Parkanlagen und Wasserflächen zu berücksichtigen."

[99] These three functionally distinct and hierarchically ordered centres roughly mirrored Vinh's historic development as three distinct settlements: The economic centre would be located at the core zone of imperial and colonial Vinh around the former citadel, the new city centre at the location of former Trường Thi (later reflected in the re-naming of Trung Tâm Street as Trường Thi Street) where the railroad atelier had been located in colonial times, and the educational area close to Bến Thủy.
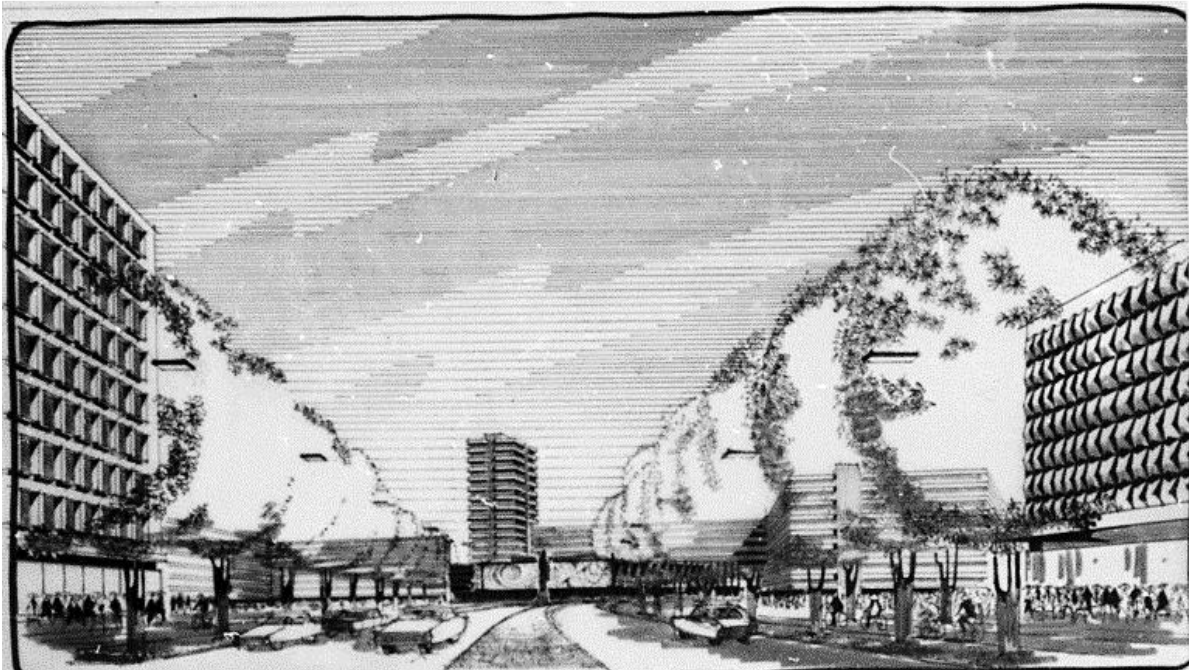
Figure 6
This drawing of Vinh's city centre is part of the General Development Plan's design concept for the city's construction and architecture (Bundesarchiv Koblenz BArch DH 1 Bild-28569-07-02).
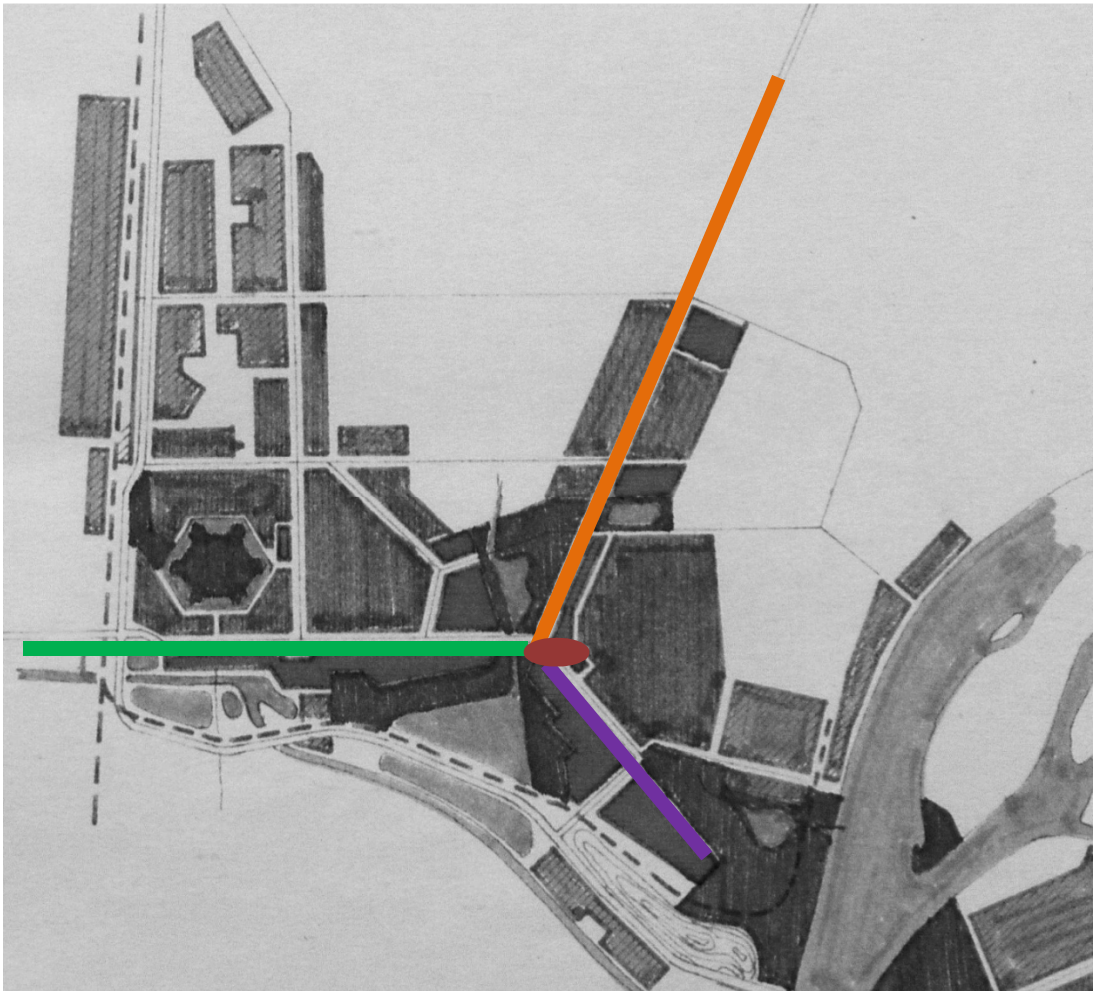
Figure 7
The General Development Plan with the first (green), the second (violet), and the third axis (orange) converging at the Square of Victors (brown) (adapted from Brambach, February 1979).

In the city centre, a central park would be located to the west of Trung Tâm Street. The layout of this axis would allow views towards the Trường Sơn mountain range bordering on Laos. All three axes would converge on a central monumental square, with the Square of Victors at its centre. Designs for the Square of Victors proposed a monumental Hồ Chí Minh statue to be placed in its centre (see Figure 8). The city silhouette would be highlighted by high-rise buildings marking its entries, while an even higher group of buildings would mark the city centre. In addition to industrial and residential areas as well as the above described three central zones, three large recreational parks where planned: one in the former citadel (see Figure 9), a central park, and a park in the Bến Thủy area (Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975).
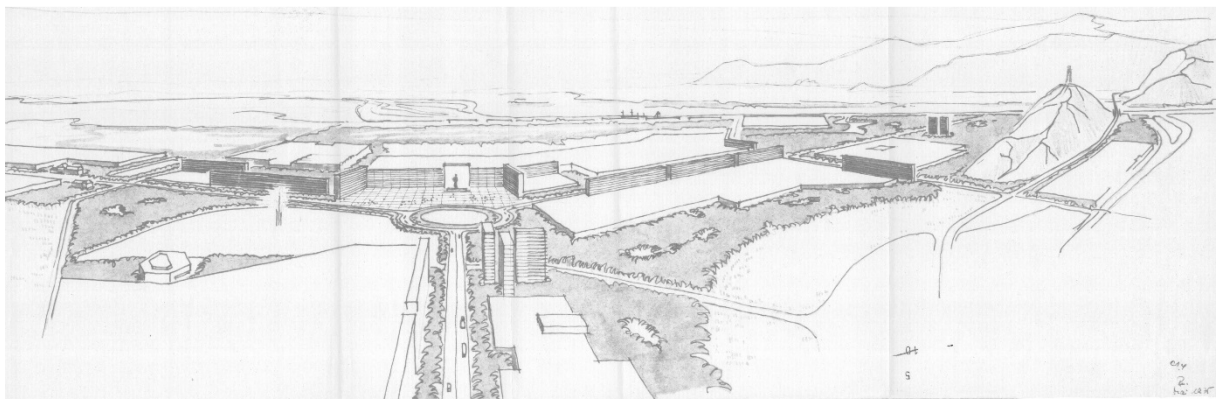
Figure 8
Study of Vinh's administrative centre (Bundesarchiv Berlin BArch DH1/28550). In the centre is visible the Square of Victors, with a monumental Hồ Chí Minh statue. Quyết Mountain is located on the right.
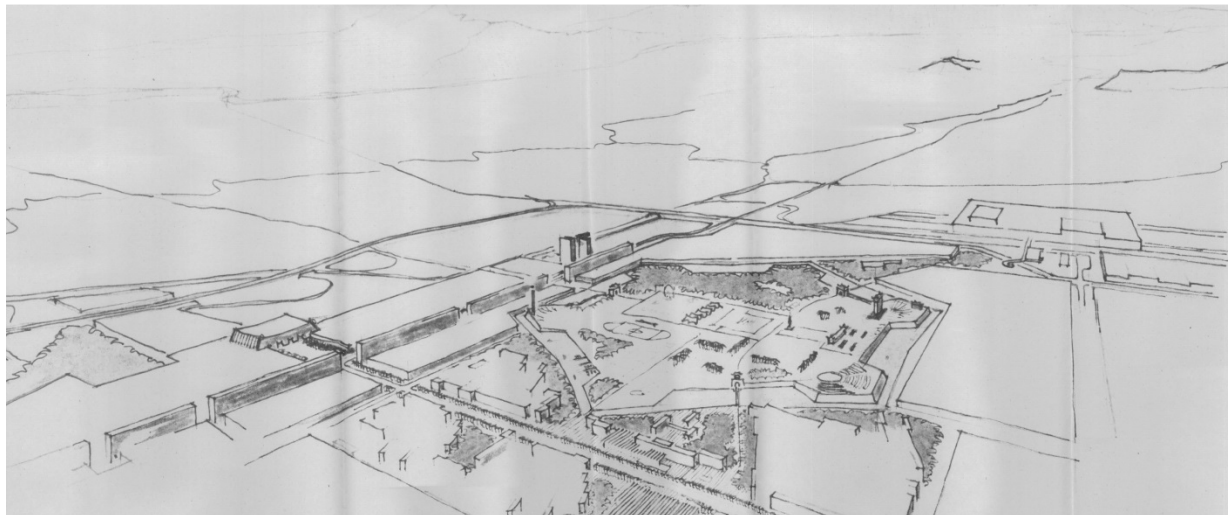
Figure 9
Study of the area around Vinh's citadel, the city's historic centre (Bundesarchiv Berlin BArch DH1/28550). To the left are visible Vinh's market and the west-east axis lined with housing blocks. In the centre can be seen a high-rise building marking entry to the city from the west. The citadel area was to serve as a park for culture and recreation.

Implementation of this plan was envisioned to take about 20 years. While the first phase of reconstruction had lasted for two years (1974 to 1975), the second phase would last for a five year period from 1976 to 1980. More detailed planning for this period was part of the General Development Plan of 1975 and was carried out in cooperation with the GDR group. This early phase was seen as particularly important, as it would crucially influence later development of the city. Thus, it focused on projects and measures that would ensure later implementation of the General Development Plan. Steering construction activities was regarded as the most important measure, the whole city area had by then been put to use by returning inhabitants, enterprises, and institutions. The plan differentiated between areas in which construction would be forbidden, those which had to be cleared for construction activities, and areas for provisory bamboo buildings. Industries were to be located in the designated industrial areas. Of the three parks, only the citadel park received attention during GDR-DRV cooperation. While construction of the city centre had been relegated to a later period, focus during the years 1975-1980 would be on the construction of housing, with the Quang Trung Housing Complex regarded as a model and experimental project.

The focus on housing construction during the first phase and the postponement of the city centre to a later period reflect GDR construction policies that focused on housing construction on urban fringes.[100] This strategy proved controversial. As has been described above, other agencies had previously called for construction activities to focus on the city centre, while housing would be left to private initiative.[101] Lê Duẩn, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), proved to be the highest ranking critique of this strategy. Visiting Vinh in April 1979, he underlined the role of Vinh as the country's third most important city. According to him, the city centre would have to clearly reflect Vinh's political and economic importance symbolized by public buildings, on the expense of housing construction (Brambach, 6.7.1979). Differing views on the strategy for Vinh's reconstruction *within* the DRV/SRV also surfaced when Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Committee Phạm Hào called for a reduction of housing construction in talks with Bruno Lietz[102] in Berlin, without the agreement of Nghệ Tĩnh's authorities or the SRV government (Roller, 3.1.1977: p.9).

The General Development Plan expresses the planning and design ideals serving as guidelines for the reconstruction of Vinh as a Socialist City. However, it was not approved by the DRV or later the SRV government because it provided only outlines and no detailed

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[100] According to Werner, unconvincing theorizing on the forms genuine to a Socialist City was one of the main reasons for the long absence of construction activities in inner city areas in the GDR (Werner 1998: 33-38). Additionally, industrial construction was difficult in city centres where the existing urban fabric complicated usage of large machinery.

[101] However, the relevant GDR document does not indicate which actor/s propagated this course.

[102] Lietz was responsible for agriculture and food supply in the State Planning Committee.

planning of infrastructure (Roller, 3.1.1977). Furthermore, work on the General Development Plan was complicated by a central decision to unite Nghệ An Province with its southern neighbour Hà Tĩnh, forming Nghệ Tĩnh Province in 1976. Thereby Vinh became the centre of a much larger area, and planning would now have to incorporate the southern bank of the Lam River, the former provincial border (Mönnig, 1989; Knauer, 27.2.1976).[103] In 1977, a revised General Development Plan had been presented to the Ministry of Construction and submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval (Kohl, 12.8.1977; Liebe, 10.2.1977: p.6). It complemented the 1975-plan with planning for a larger area south of the Lam River and detailed infrastructure projects, leaving intact the above described aspects (Volkskomitee Provinz Nghe An, 8.11.1977). However, by 1979 the Council of Ministers had still not occupied itself with the General Development Plan, prompting the then head of the GDR expert group in Vinh to complain: "obviously the partner, especially the Ministry of Construction, still underestimates the importance of a General Development Plan for the overall development of a city"[104] (Brambach, February 1979: p.3). In the end, no General Development Plan for Vinh would be approved during the GDR cooperation period.[105]

The Quang Trung Housing Complex
The Quang Trung Housing Complex was a core element of the modern project to construct a Socialist City with assistance of the GDR by providing an example of socialist housing, planning and construction techniques, as well as the institutions and structures necessary for its administration. The basic design of the complex was presented to the Vietnamese Ministry of Construction in May 1974 (Knauer, 25.5.1974). As a result of the MoC review, the housing blocks were turned 23 degrees so as to reduce the impact of the dry hot Lao wind (Mönnig, 1987: p.128; Bộ Xây dựng, 28.6.1974). The original design had paid insufficient attention to this detail (see Figure 10), and the turning of the buildings would later be celebrated as proving the willingness to adapt generic designs of a housing complex to local conditions (Schwenkel, 2012: pp.468-469; Mönnig, 1989, 1987).[106] This and other recommendations by the MoC were incorporated into the plan and design of the complex, which was approved by the MoC in November 1974 (Bộ Xây dựng, 13.11.1974).

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[103] Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh were re-established as separate provinces in September 1991. Vinh remained the provincial capital of Nghệ An.
[104] "offensichtlich [hat] der Partner, insbesondere das Ministerium für Bauwesen, die Bedeutung eines Generalbebauungsplanes als Dokument für die Gesamtentwicklung einer Stadt noch unterschätzt"
[105] The first development plan for Vinh would be approved in 1993 (UBND Nghệ An 9.1.1993; Lương Bá Quảng n.d.).
[106] However, due to urban design, some of the buildings located along major streets were oriented towards these and not to the wind direction.

Figure 10
Design of the Quang Trung Housing Complex by the provincial Institute of Planning and Design, signed by Hoàng Văn Liêu and Dr. K. Schlesier on 14.5.1974 (Bundesarchiv Berlin BArch DH1/28550). Note that in contrast to the above model of Quang Trung most buildings are not yet turned to cushion wind impact.

The MoC approval stipulated that the Quang Trung Housing Complex would provide housing for 15,600 inhabitants in 2,480 apartments with a total floor space of 65,800m² (ca. four m² per person). 30% of the inhabitants would occupy collective accommodation (dormitories), while the remaining 70% would be provided with family apartments (Bộ Xây dựng, 13.11.1974). In contrast, previous planning by provincial authorities had envisaged a much larger percentage of the population to be housed in collective housing blocks (60%) (UBHC Nghệ An, 17.1.1974, see above). Participation of GDR experts in the design of the socialist housing complex thus put more emphasis on family based apartments.[107] The layout and the facilities of the Quang Trung Housing Complex followed the typical ideals of a socialist housing complex (see Figures 11 and 13). According to its plan, it was divided into five groups (A-E), each inhabited by 2,180 to 4,410 people in six to nine blocks (see Figure 12). Public buildings would include crèches, kindergartens, schools, a hotel, and a cinema, as well as a neighbourhood centre including facilities for shopping, services, cultural activities, as well as communications (Nguyen Sy Thuy et al., 2011; no author, 19.9.1977). While

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[107] Schwenkel attributes the insistence of GDR experts on family apartments to a genuine GDR-version of socialist living that might have evoked ideological opposition from DRV officials (Schwenkel, 2012). The GDR's ideological view of the socialist two-generation family as the smallest unit of socialist society was indeed expressed in apartment designs; however, it remains unclear why DRV authorities might have rejected this style of housing (Hannemann, 1996: pp.103-106; see also Footnote 75). As I have described above, communal living had been abandoned as the desired form of housing in the USSR from early on, and was applied in the DRV mainly out of economic rather than ideological concerns. Similarly, many apartments in Quang Trung would later be inhabited by several families each occupying one room while sharing sanitary and cooking facilities. Furthermore, in Quang Trung as in other projects in the DRV, collective housing was intended for singles, not families (DDR-Arbeitsgruppe Vinh, 3.5.1974).

completion of Quang Trung had initially been intended for 1976 or 1977 (Knauer, 25.5.1974), the General Development Plan postponed the complex' completion to 1978.
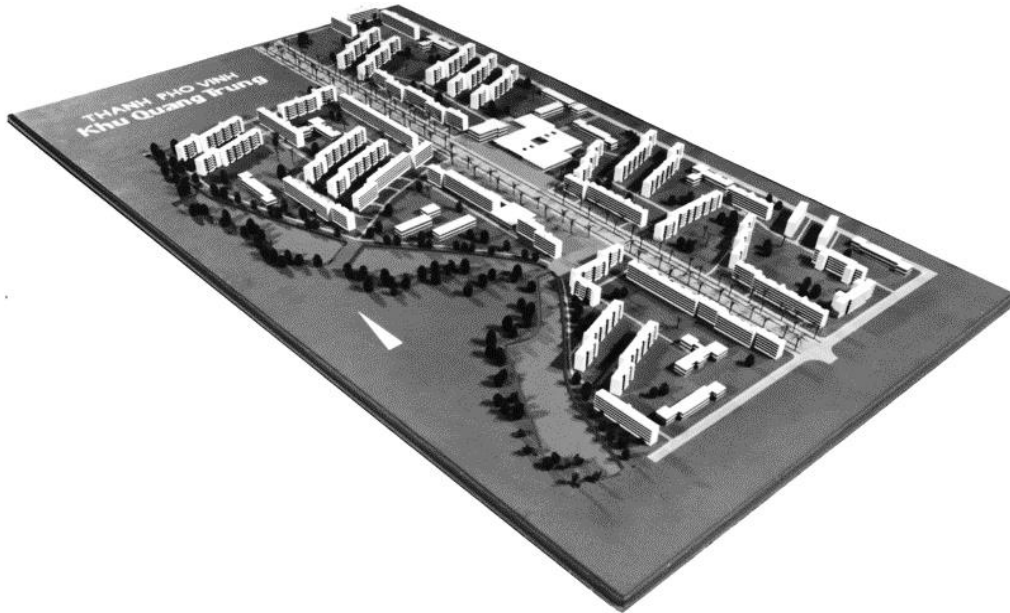
Figure 11
A model of Quang Trung Housing Complex (Bundesarchiv Koblenz BArch DH 1 Bild-28569-07-01). To the left are recognizable remains of the citadel.
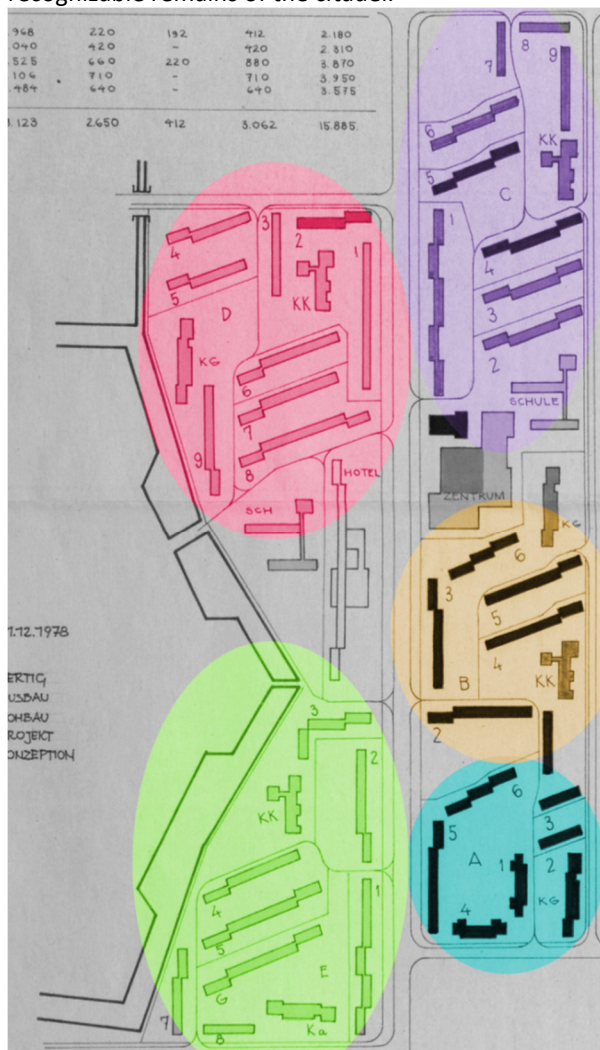
Figure 12
The different housing groups in the Quang Trung Housing Complex (adapted from Brambach, February 1979). Blue: Group A, Orange: Group B, Violet: Group C, Red: Group D, Green: Group E.

Intended as a prototype that would fully express the advantages of a housing complex in bringing about a socialist lifestyle, its function as a model for the development of Vinh went beyond its physical structures and layout. It was to provide an example for Vietnamese planners on how to supply the city's inhabitants with housing and public facilities in one all-encompassing project. Its buildings were intended to serve as model designs suitable to the conditions of their time but adaptable to future developments (Brambach, February 1979: p.6). The designs provided those living in family apartments with electricity, private sanitary and cooking facilities, as well as running water piped into the apartments by a centralized water supply. Balconies provided private open space, while the first floor, half underground, provided storage space (for floor plans see Purtak, 1982: appendix 2). Living conditions were intended to be on the same level or above that in the most modern housing complexes in the DRV (Engemann, 20.4.1970). The housing complex was to be administered by one central agency under the city's Administrative Committee. Apartments were to be allocated to workers of the nearby Northern Industrial Zone, as well as workers and employees of construction and electricity enterprises, again underlining the socialist principle of access to high quality housing for the working class (Dietl, 1.12.1975; UBHC Nghệ An, 24.10.1975).
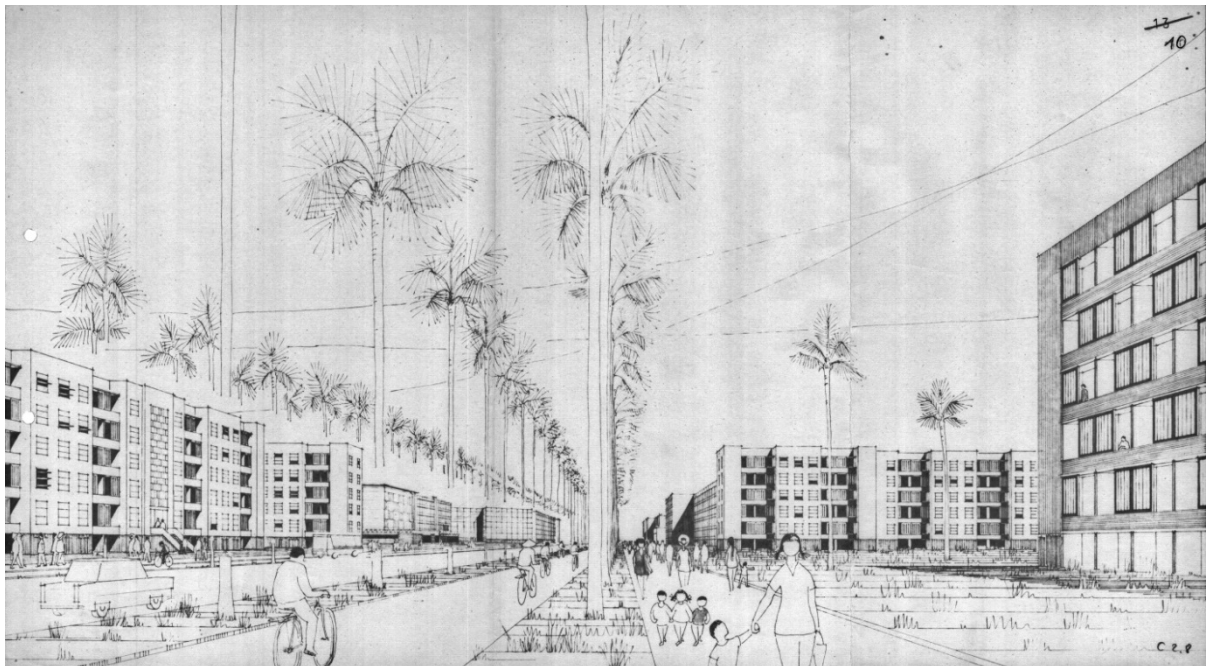
Figure 13
Study of Quang Trung Street with housing blocks on both sides of the street (Bundesarchiv Berlin BArch DH1/28550).

Designing new projects for public facilities and housing blocks was promoted as adding to the catalogues[108] available in Vinh and Vietnam. The MoC recommended the mutually designed housing series "Quang Trung" for further use in Vietnam (Liebe, 3.10.1977).

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[108] "Catalogues" here refers to actual catalogues of buildings and projects that could be reused and adapted in the future.

Furthermore, Quang Trung would serve as a testing field for management instruments such as the allocation of apartments, collection of rents, legal status of apartments and buildings, as well as the administration of the complex. Mutual planning and construction activities were seen as providing a practical training ground for Vietnamese cadres and workers, who would later on apply the experiences of Quang Trung in other housing complexes (Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975: p.40). As such, Quang Trung was supposed to be the first step in a large scale housing program. The General Development Plan envisioned the construction of 6 additional housing complexes. For the first phase of reconstruction, public facilities (especially the neighbourhood centre) of Quang Trung would serve the whole city. The construction of a permanent centre would require a higher development level of technical and planning skills, as well as more resources than currently available (Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975: p.30).

During the construction of the first four blocks following Vietnamese designs, work on the design of the mutual series "Quang Trung" started in 1974. While GDR experts had intended to construct blocks A5 and A6 according to a revised design of the Vietnamese types to allow more time for the design of a completely new, mutual design, the MoC stipulated that the "Vietnamese" designs be totally abandoned and construction after the first four blocks be carried out according to the mutual design (Leiter der DDR-Arbeitsgruppe Vinh, 13.6.1974: p.2; DDR-Arbeitsgruppe Vinh, 3.5.1974). Thus, starting with blocks A5 and A6, this design was applied in Quang Trung and was continuously modified according to experiences gained during the construction process and by inhabitants. The Quang Trung series allowed for considerable diversity in the combination of different building sections (see plans in Purtak, 1982: appendix 2; Knauer, 27.2.1976).

Significant changes to the design of housing blocks were carried out in preparation of construction on the western side of Quang Trung Street. There, the ground floor of buildings located along the street would provide space for shops and services. Plans for the construction of housing on that side of the complex had to be reworked in light of changes in central housing regulations, abandoning designs for dormitories and small apartments in favour of two and three-room apartments. Thus, only 1,650 of the inhabitants of Quang Trung were to live in dormitories, representing only about 10% of the planned residents

(Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.51-52). Open cooking facilities and chimneys would be replaced by a closed system to avoid pollution and health hazards (Brambach, February 1979: p.5).

As described above, conflicts had existed about the construction techniques to be applied in Quang Trung. While central DRV agencies had repeatedly asked for the construction of a panel factory, GDR experts rejected this request on the ground of technological and

economic realities in Vinh, instead proposing tunnel forms to be applied at a later stage (DDR-Arbeitsgruppe Vinh, 3.5.1974). The General Development Plan, however, made no mention of construction methods other than traditional brick building, rationalized by the increasing use of prefabricated concrete elements but not concrete panels. Still, planners of the MoC continued to insist that prefabricated concrete panels should be used in the construction of the second housing complex in Vinh. While this was rejected by both provincial authorities as well as GDR experts, they cooperated in the experimental design of an apartment block constructed in this way (Liebe, 23.7.1976, 12.6.1976; Hansen, 18.6.1976). The Vietnam Task Force in the GDR Ministry of Construction vehemently opposed this approach, as Vinh's construction industries were equipped neither with necessary construction equipment nor with respective production facilities (Hansen, 23.9.1976).

3.3.2.6 Implementation

After the plans for the reconstruction of Vinh were presented, this part turns to the implementation of these plans and the creation of a Socialist City. It is divided into three different phases. Phase one refers to the first months of reconstruction in 1974, in which the most important steps were taken for the construction of five-storey housing blocks (Knauer, 9.5.1974). The second phase lasted from mid-1974 to 1978, the original period of the agreement on Vinh's reconstruction. However, as a multitude of problems and difficulties made necessary an extension of the agreement for two years, a third phase lasted from 1979 until the end of cooperation between GDR and SRV in the reconstruction of Vinh.

First Phase: Early to Mid-1974

The first phase was characterized by organisational decisions, the arrival of the first German experts and German equipment, as well as the beginning of cooperation in the different areas the agreement had set out (Schlesier, 25.3.1974). The landmark event during this phase was the beginning of construction of the first Quang Trung building on 1 May 1974, International Workers' Day, attended by Minister of Construction and Vice-Prime Minister Đỗ Mười.

Organisational activities included the mobilisation of construction workers from Vinh's surrounding areas. This proved problematic, as most districts had not fulfilled their quotas and others had violated guidelines by sending children or pregnant women. By mid-February, only 2,300 of 5,000 workers had arrived in Vinh (UBHC Nghệ An, 20.2.1974). As described above, the Ministry of Construction had so far been slow to establish the agreed on bodies to coordinate Vinh's reconstruction. Only by February 1974, a committee had been established in the Ministry of Construction, headed by Đàm Trung Phường, director of the Institute for

Urban Planning (Phủ Thủ tướng, 21.2.1974). On the local level, Nguyễn Đình Châu, Vice-chairman of the PAC was appointed leader of the provincial working group while Nguyễn Dương Điềm served as the city's head of reconstruction (Nguyen Sy Thuy et al. 2011: p.25; DDR-Arbeitsgruppe Vinh, 3.5.1974).

The GDR was slow to provide experts in Vinh. The first group of three GDR experts had arrived in Vinh in February, followed by members of the group's leadership in March. Former head of the Vietnam Task Force Hans Grotewohl was appointed head of the architecture division, being replaced by Eddy Hansen as head of the Task Force in Berlin. By April, only 8 experts were scheduled to arrive, representing only 50% of the agreed on number, "unacceptable" in light of DRV efforts (Schlesier, 25.3.1974: p.5). Due to these delays and the character of work during the first phase, the experts were largely concerned with immediate problems rather than systematic and conceptual tasks (DDR-Arbeitsgruppe Vinh, 3.5.1974; Schlesier, 25.3.1974). In addition to the reconstruction expert group, German experts assisted in the reconstruction of a carpentry that had been constructed in the framework of GDR aid in equipping workshops during the 1960s, and that was to provide doors and windows for the housing complex (Knauer, 9.5.1974: p.2; Solidaritätskomitee der DDR, Vietnam-Ausschuß, n.d.).

Delivery of GDR machinery and goods was also slow (Knauer, 25.5.1974: p.2; 9.5.1974: p.11; Schlesier, 25.3.1974: p.6). While materials for the planning office were supplied by air transport, shipped goods arrived late (Knauer, 9.5.1974: pp.8-9). Both sides had agreed that second-hand equipment could be supplied by the GDR. Thus, German enterprises were requested to provide stocks of their unused machinery and equipment. This proved a lengthy process. Additionally, some of the equipment provided was not operational or had been damaged during transport due to improper packaging (Ruprecht, 30.11.1974; Knauer, 9.5.1974: p.9). Thus, early construction efforts and the ground-breaking ceremony relied on locally available machinery and heavy manual labour (Knauer, 22.1.1975: pp.41, 47; Leiter der DDR-Arbeitsgruppe Vinh, 13.6.1974: p.3).

Despite these shortcoming, cooperation between the Vietnamese and GDR experts on the local level quickly produced results. While differing views existed between the two groups on details of urban planning and Quang Trung design, the Vietnamese were willing to adjust their ideas to recommendations by the expert group (Schlesier, 25.3.1974: pp.2-3). However, disagreements on the political level surfaced in March, when Otto Knauer, expert group leader, was advised by Berlin to discontinue negotiations on the protocol

supplementing the agreement on Vinh's reconstruction (Knauer, 9.5.1974: pp.12-13; 4.4.1974: pp.1-2).[109]

Despite these issues, optimism seems to have been high during the first phase. GDR experts were met with high expectations which even grew in light of the early construction start, their presence had a positive effect on efficiency and morale (Knauer, 9.5.1974: p.7; Schlesier, 25.3.1974). Construction activities started in April with preparations for ground-breaking in Quang Trung, including the filling of bomb craters in construction areas (Knauer, 9.5.1974: pp.9-10; 4.4.1974: pp.2-3). Work regarding construction material industries during this phase focused on conceptual planning and analysis' for the production of sand and gravel, limestone, and concrete (DDR-Arbeitsgruppe Vinh, 3.5.1974). Additionally, preparations were carried out to use pre-fabricated barracks as planning and management offices as well as a tent as cultural centre once those arrived from the GDR (Knauer, 9.5.1974).

On 1 May 1974, the ground-breaking ceremony took place at block A1 in Quang Trung, attended by Đỗ Mười and GDR ambassador to the DRV Doering (Knauer, 9.5.1974: pp.9-10). This event symbolically marked the beginning of construction aimed at creating a Socialist City assisted by the GDR.

Second Phase: Mid-1974 to 1978

Lightening of the first ship delivering materials and machinery to Vinh in early May 1974 marks the beginning of the second phase (Knauer, 25.5.1974: p.2). This phase was characterized by continuous work on the agreed on projects, substantially increasing the output of construction material industries. However, it was also marked by growing disillusionment because of slow progress and by conflicts between different actors. Political decisions as well as national and international politics heavily influenced progress.

Different circumstances and events impacted the availability of resources. Slow delivery of equipment and material from the GDR continued throughout the second phase, especially since German enterprises had no economic incentive to provide materials to Vinh (Hansen, April 1975: pp.10-15). To prevent delivery of broken or incomplete equipment, the Vietnam Task Force in the GDR started to examine material that was to be sent to Vinh in mid-1975 (Arbeitsstab Vietnam, 11.7.1975). Still, delivery of broken or low quality equipment burdened GDR-DRV relations (Außenhandelsbetrieb Limex, Arbeitsstab Vietnam, 9.9.1975; Liebe, 27.4.1977).

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[109] While documents available to me do not indicate reasons for disagreements, the event highlights central level conflicts that would continue to influence cooperation in the following years (Knauer, 25.5.1974, appendix). The protocol would be signed only in February 1977 (Kohl, Vu Quy, 8.2.1977).

Sea transport remained slow because of long storage time in Rostock and Hải Phòng. Responsibility for shipment lay with Vietnamese authorities after goods had been delivered to Rostock, although transport was usually on German ships (Hansen, 7.12.1978; Knauer, 15.8.1975: p.5). Hải Phòng's port facilities were heavily overburdened by the influx of aid and goods after the war had ended in 1975, causing storage times of up to eight months (Knauer, 22.10.1975: pp.4-5). Open air storage, improper packaging and handling, as well as poor road conditions at times caused heavy damage to and losses of equipment delivered to Vinh (no author, 13.7.1976; Knauer, 15.8.1975: p.5; Schlesier, 15.3.1975: p.3; Eckhardt, 9.12.1974). By 1977, over 400 colli (trading units) had not arrived in Vinh (Liebe, 26.1.1977). To speed up transport, some ships were lightened near the coast off Vinh. From 1976 on, ships were also lightened off Hải Phòng and materials transported to Vinh by a German coastal motor ship (Liebe, 10.2.1977: p.15). Due to siltation of the Lam River, this proved to be a short-term solution and from 1978 on the motor ship had in turn to be lightened again off Cửa Lò (Liebe, 8.3.1978: p.7).[110] However, construction activities in Vinh were more severely impacted by shortages of resources supplied by the DRV (Kaumann, 14.10.1975: p.2; Bernecker, 24.6.1975). Machines delivered to Vinh were often stored in open weather for long times before being installed, resulting in damage and theft (Hansen, 7.12.1978, appendix; Liebe, 10.2.1977: p.23). Additionally, because of untrained personnel and the harsh climate, many machines quickly fell into disrepair while no spare parts were locally available and delivery from the GDR was slow or impossible due to shortages there (Peters, 28.11.1977: p.10; Liebe, 3.10.1977: pp.7-8).

Conflict ensued over these problems during the second phase of the cooperation. Accounting for cooperation activities and deliveries was carried out by GDR's Limex and Vietnam's Technoimport foreign trade firms. During negotiations in September 1975, Technoimport requested that unused non-repayable solidarity funds would be applied to physical goods, while Limex and the expert group insisted that according to government agreements such funds could only be used for expenses connected to the experts (such as salaries, food etc.). Technoimport further demanded that all tools be financed by solidarity funds, while according to agreements, only tools provided for the vocational school would thus be financed. The Germans prevailed in these issues, as former agreements had already stipulated regulations on them (Außenhandelsbetrieb Limex, Arbeitsstab Vietnam, 9.9.1975). As a result, non-repayable funds were from then on transacted through the GDR's Solidarity Committee (Hansen, April 1976). More severe disagreements persisted on the value of deliveries and responsibilities for loss, damages, and slow transport. In a surprise meeting in January 1977, Technoimport insisted that these issues resulted from faulty packaging and wrong information provided by the GDR. Its deputy director blamed the GDR for causing

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[110] Note that this problem had already impacted the development of Vinh's harbour in colonial times.

production losses by delivering late or not at all. The expert group on the other hand rejected these accusations, blaming slow construction entirely on the Vietnamese and claiming that broken machinery resulted largely from faulty use and lacking maintenance (Liebe, 26.1.1977). In the following, at most 50% of the original price could be charged for second-hand deliveries from 1976 on. In November 1977, it was further agreed by the GDR that this rule would also apply to goods delivered in 1974/1975, and that goods unsuitable for local conditions delivered in 1974 would be charged only at 50% of their price. Solidarity funds were used to compensate for the gap in the GDR's accounts (Hansen, 23.11.1977: pp.3-4). These episodes show how during the second phase, good relations between partners were at times overshadowed by economic interests, and how mistakes and slow progress were blamed on each other.[111]

In April 1975, the war ended when DRV troops seized Saigon (Turley, 1986: p.183). Instead of increasing efforts for the reconstruction of Vinh, the DRV's victory in South Vietnam and the subsequent unification of the country diverted resources from Vinh to priority projects in the South.[112] Thus, from 1975 on, cement, electricity and fuel were in increasingly short supply (Liebe, 23.7.1976; Hoffmann, 3.7.1975: p.4). To continue construction even on a low level, cement had again to be imported from the GDR (Kohl, 12.8.1977: p.2; Liebe, 3.10.1977: p.6). This situation was compounded by tensions between the SRV on one side and the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Democratic Kampuchea on the other that escalated into open conflict towards the end of the second phase (Goscha, 2006; Quinn-Judge, 2006). China's closing of the border increased the overreliance on Vietnam's underdeveloped ports, further prolonging shipping duration (Zentrum für Information und Dokumentation der Außenwirtschaft, 1979: p.8). Projects carried out with assistance of the PRC were abandoned or continued relying on other resources. Most importantly, mobilisation diverted workers and resources to the armed forces (Brambach, February 1979: pp.2, 18; Liebe, 5.1.1978: p.4). In addition to mobilisation, shortages were due to economic difficulties (Roller, 18.6.1977). These were so severe that already in 1975 additional workers could not have been supplied with food (Hansen, March 1977: p.17). GDR experts had to rely almost exclusively on imported food from 1977 on (Liebe, January 1978: p.30). According to the expert group's 1978 report, the productivity of available construction workers was low due to the overall emergency situation, poor provisions as well as inadequate diet and resulting worries of workers for their families (Brambach, February 1979: pp.18-20). Adding to existing difficulties, heavy floods and storms affected Vinh and Nghệ Tĩnh in November 1978,

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[111] Furthermore, it shows the necessity for further research to balance the reliance of this study on GDR sources and views expressed in them.
[112] The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) was subsequently founded on 2 July 1976.

causing severe structural damage as well as destruction of material, equipment and machines (Kohl, 30.10.1978: pp.4-5; 16.10.1978).

The GDR had deliberately refused to provide already completed projects and construction brigades to enable Vietnamese workers and planners to improve their skills through on the job training, as well as to emphasise Vietnamese responsibility (Schäfer, 2011: p.15; Gottschalk, 30.8.1978: p.2; Solidaritätskomitee der DDR, Vietnam-Ausschuß, n.d.: pp.34-36). However, due to the low number of experienced and trained workers as well as qualified planners, GDR experts had to carry out numerous planning and manual tasks by themselves (Brambach, February 1979: pp.24-26; Jahn, 20.3.1979; Ruprecht, 30.11.1974).[113] While many experts were loyal to their local Vietnamese partners and willing to extend their contributions to tasks beyond official agreements, they were reminded by their superiors in Berlin that their tasks were not those of a working brigade but of advisors (Hansen, 16.6.1976). Though the work quality of the Vietnamese planners and architects improved over time, it was still heavily criticized by experts at the end of the second phase (Brambach, February 1979: pp.4-6, 19).[114]

Coordination between central authorities and the construction efforts in Vinh weakened during the second phase, especially after victory in 1975. While the DRV leadership repeatedly emphasised the importance of Vinh's reconstruction, the Vietnamese MoC had from the beginning been slow to implement commitments and had only limited resources at its command. While its leadership had been fully aware of the difficulties encountered in Vinh, German Deputy Minister of Construction Kohl judged that the Vietnamese MoC's assistance was not only insufficient, but that it did not assist at all in solving problems (Kohl, 12.8.1977, appendix 2: p.2; Doering, 9.6.1977). According to the expert group leader, the Vietnamese MoC's Vinh Task Force had no resources to devote to Vinh, as it did only consist of the director of the Institute for Urban Planning and one employee. He remarked: "We have the impression that Vinh City and Nghệ Tĩnh in fact receive less support from the MoC than other provinces, because, well, comrades in Vinh have the possibilities of GDR assistance"[115] (Liebe, 3.10.1977: p.6). Furthermore, when cooperation with the MoC took place, it was often uncoordinated with local developments (for example Liebe, January 1978: p.5). In June 1978, conflicts over poor coordination in the construction of the vocational school reached the GDR's Council of Ministers, providing an interesting example of negotiations and alliances between involved actors (Weiss, 20.7.1978). The school had been

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[113] This led to conflicts with at least one expert who was not willing to carry out such tasks (Liebe, 29.5.1976).
[114] However, Brambach reports that also the expert group lacked qualified planners for some projects (Brambach, February 1979: p.4).
[115] "Wir haben den Eindruck, daß die Stadt Vinh und die Provinz Nghệ Tĩnh faktisch weniger Unterstützung durch das MfB [Ministerium für Bauwesen] erhält als andere Provinzen, da ja die Genossen in Vinh die Möglichkeiten der DDR-Unterstützung haben"

designed by the MoC according to a Cuban project. Construction, however, had been carried out poorly by a central construction enterprise. Provincial construction officials agreed with the expert group that the structure would collapse once GDR machinery had been installed and operated. Thus, as provincial authorities saw no possibility to influence work carried out by the MoC, they asked Liebe to intervene directly with the Minister of Construction (Liebe, 28.7.1978). Liebe's letter to the minister following this request represented a severe breach of protocol, for which he was harshly reprimanded by Kohl (Kohl, 21.7.1978; Liebe, 13.7.1978). The GDR Ministry of Education (as the formal partner in equipping the school) demanded clarification; Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Weiss requested the embassy to withdraw the "presumptuous" letter (Weiss, 20.7.1978; Oppermann, 19.7.1978). The SRV Ministry of Construction, however, sent a delegation to Vinh to discuss the issue and to ask for the experts' suggestions. Liebe was thanked, for providing important information and was asked to participate in solving the problem at the school (Jahn, Liebe, 28.7.1978; Liebe, 28.7.1978).

Quang Trung Housing Complex
Construction of the Quang Trung Housing Complex had started as scheduled in April 1974. However, this was to be one of few fulfilled targets in the construction process. After preparations for the ground-breaking ceremony had to be carried out using local materials and equipment, subsequent construction relied heavily on materials provided by the GDR (Poser, 16.9.1974: p.3). Building activities had started well in mid-1974, but quickly fell behind schedule despite increasing replacement of manual labour by machinery delivered from the GDR (Knauer, 22.1.1975: p.7; Schlesier, 4.9.1974). By September 1974, structural works were delayed by 6 weeks, due to poor planning and coordination, as well as inefficient construction techniques (Poser, 16.9.1974: p.6). None of the 10,000 m² housing space to be erected in 1974 was completed, blocks A1 and A4 were the first ones to be handed over to provincial authorities in August 1975. Delays were also due to a lack of interior materials and harsh weather conditions like high temperatures and heavy rainfall) (Knauer, 15.8.1975: p.1). Two years after the agreement had been signed in October 1973, the Quang Trung Housing Complex was six months behind schedule. For the first time it was acknowledged that targets for the following years would not be met without affecting other projects and double the number of actually available construction workers would be required (Knauer, 22.10.1975).

The re-unification of the country in 1975 had further diverted resources. However, according to a report by the expert group leader from February 1976, housing construction had never been a priority for Vietnamese decision makers (Knauer, 16.2.1976: p.2). From mid-1976 on, SRV officials called for cooperation to shift to public buildings on the expense of housing construction. However, the GDR insisted on focusing on the construction of Quang Trung to

create a completed and functioning example of a socialist housing complex as an expression of GDR solidarity (Poser, 18.11.1976: p.2).

Shortages in workers, electricity, and materials continued to plague construction in Quang Trung. Rationalized construction techniques could not be applied because necessary rails for the operation of a new crane were not provided by the Vietnamese (Liebe, 23.7.1976: p.8). Due to lacking concrete, in addition to the above described reasons, construction came to a near standstill in September/October 1976 and mid-1977 (Kohl, 12.8.1977, appendix 2: p.2; Liebe, 16.10.1976). By late 1976, GDR experts had concluded that the Quang Trung Housing Complex would not be completed in the agreement's timeframe and internally discussed options for continued cooperation (Poser, 18.11.1976: p.2). In March 1977, they estimated that until the end of 1978 (end of agreement) in the eastern part all housing blocks, two kindergartens, two nurseries, and one school would be completed. In the western part, structural works of area D housing blocks would be completed (Liebe, 21.3.1977). Until the end of the second phase, this estimate was repeatedly lowered (Kohl, 30.10.1978: pp.1-2; Liebe, 8.3.1978).

By the end of the second phase in 1978, all housing blocks in groups A and B (planned for 4,490 inhabitants), as well as two blocks in group C had been handed over. Structural works of 3 three additional group C blocks were completed, as well as foundations of one block in group D. Only one kindergarten in group A had been handed over, structural works of one nursery were nearly finished. Works on the school had not yet begun (Brambach, February 1979: pp.6-10; UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.2.1979: pp.3-4). In total, far less than 50% of Quang Trung had been completed during the original agreement's duration.

While those buildings that were occupied were of relatively low quality, during a meeting of the local SED organisation in Vinh results were described as impressive for Vietnamese observers, and as an improvement to the current situation in the SRV (Gottschalk, 30.8.1978: p.3). The expert group leader graphically compares the new apartments to former housing conditions in Vinh and the GDR:

> "Visitors from the GDR should not forget how the situation was at home, when one was speaking of 'usable' housing. At the moment the ruin next to housing area A is vacated. 50 people were 'housed' there. A comparison is therefore very dangerous, in my opinion not possible."[116] (Knauer, 16.2.1976: p.2)

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[116] "Betrachter aus der DDR sollten allerdings nicht vergessen, wie es vor 29 Jahren bei uns aussah, wenn von 'nutzungsfähigen' Wohnräumen gesprochen wurde. Z. Z. wird die Ruine beim Wohngebiet A geräumt. 50 Menschen haben darin ‚gewohnt'. Ein Vergleich ist also sehr gefährlich, nach meiner Meinung nicht möglich."

The expert group reported in January 1978 that the apartments were so popular that conflicts ensued during their allocation to residents, despite the prohibition to raise chicken, dogs, pigeons, and pigs or to grow food on public land in the housing complex (Liebe, January 1978: p.21). Schwenkel reports that some regarded it as the best housing available in Vietnam at the time of its construction (Schwenkel, 2012: p.449).

Nevertheless, GDR experts were highly critical of the results in Quang Trung, attributing shortcomings mainly to poor oversight and management (Gottschalk, 30.8.1978; Geiseler, 14.4.1975). While the quality of work by Vietnamese construction workers improved over the years, diligence and precision remained below the experts' expectations (Jahn, 20.3.1979; Geiseler, 9.10.1975). Initially, concrete produced in Vinh was of poor quality, affecting the buildings' quality (Liebe, 10.2.1977: p.10; Mann, 14.8.1976). Many installations and appliances did not fit or were not working well (Liebe, 30.7.1976; Knauer, 16.2.1976). In addition, once the blocks were handed over to be inhabited, their state deteriorated quickly as repairs and maintenance works were not carried out, even after a respective enterprise had been established in 1977 (Brambach, February 1979: p.10; Liebe, 3.10.1977; Thomas, 26.8.1977: pp.2-3).

The state of Quang Trung remained a constant issue for GDR experts during the second phase especially since this was the most visible and prominent example of their assistance in the reconstruction of Vinh (Brambach, February 1979: pp.6-7; Gottschalk, 30.8.1978). In the interest of the GDR's reputation, the housing complex' visual quality and inhabitability was declared to be of highest importance (Thomas, 26.8.1977: p.2; Liebe, 30.7.1976: p.2). Measures proposed by the expert group included technical improvements, such as new plaster material, as well as evoking responsibility of the inhabitants for their environment (Gottschalk, 30.8.1978: p.4).

However, aesthetic considerations were surpassed by concerns for residents' health. While water was supposed to be supplied by a centralized pressure system, Vietnamese data on existing pressure had been exaggerated (Poser, 16.9.1974: p.6). By the time a functioning system was completed, many water taps had been stolen from apartments (Liebe, 23.7.1976: p.6). As the system relied on electricity for operation, it did not become functional during the second phase (Brambach, February 1979: p.9; Liebe, 3.10.1977: p.2). Wastewater proved to be an even larger problem. Already existing designs were judged unsuitable by GDR experts as they relied on electricity for operation (Rudolph, 4.7.1975). A new jointly developed design was dismissed in favour of the application of an older Vietnamese design that soon suffered siltation as it required too large quantities of water for operation (Rudolph, 24.11.1975). By March 1978, the expert group leader judged that untreated wastewater in Quang Trung had created danger of an epidemic (Liebe, 8.3.1978:

p.2). While the construction of a wastewater treatment plant and a new boost water pipe designed and financed[117] by the GDR had been completed by the end of the second phase, they did not become operational by the end of 1978 (Brambach, February 1979: p.8). Additionally, as described above, nearly no public services were available in Quang Trung by the end of 1978. Because of these reasons, it was concluded that Quang Trung did not fulfil its role as an exemplary socialist housing complex by the end of the second phase (Brambach, February 1979: p.6).

Construction material industries and other projects
Other parts of the cooperation were also impacted by general causes such as the end of war in 1975 (Knauer, 27.2.1976: p.5), natural calamities in 1978 (Kohl, 16.10.1978), conflicts with the PRC and Democratic Kampuchea (Liebe, 1.6.1978: p.2), lacking skills of workers and cadres, as well as poor organisation and coordination (Brambach, February 1979). However, construction material industries saw more progress than housing in the second phase. During 1974, preparations were carried out for most construction material projects (Knauer, 22.1.1975: pp.9-11). Practical work started in September with the construction of new production facilities at Rú Mượu quarry, this enterprise was also the first to be completed in 1976 (Liebe, 10.2.1977: p.14; Siegmund, 26.11.1974; Schlesier, 4.9.1974: p.4). Also in 1974 barges and towboats were delivered from the GDR to replace heavy manual labour in the extraction of sand and gravel from rivers (Knauer, 22.1.1975: p.9). Although progress remained much slower than planned for during the second phase, the use of GDR machinery increasingly replaced manual labour and allowed for raising output (Liebe, 3.10.1977: pp.3-4; Betenstedt, 22.7.1976; Knauer, 15.8.1975: pp.2-3; 22.1.1975: pp.9-11; Bernecker, 24.6.1975). However, from early 1977 on, reports by the Vietnam Task Force and the expert group in Vinh regarded completion of most projects by the end of 1978 as impossible (Liebe, January 1978: pp.7-12; Hansen, March 1977: pp.6, 31-32;). By the end of the second phase in 1978 the following successes had been achieved (Brambach, February 1979: pp.10-14; UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.2.1979; Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 25.1.1979):

- The cement factory had been completed and produced according to plan when supplied with energy.

- Production in the Rú Mượu quarry continued according to plan when supplied with energy.

- Rationalizing of the brick factory was completed. Production at times exceeded expectations.

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[117] The water pipe had not been part of the original agreement.

- Rationalizing of the stoneware tube factory was completed and production expected to start in early 1979.

- Construction of two out of four production halls of the concrete element factory had been finished. Production of concrete elements had begun in 1978.

- All repair workshops were equipped and operating. Output remained unsatisfactory because of shortcomings in organisation and leadership.

- Sand and gravel extraction with the use of barges and towboats continued according to plan, while unloading facilities were not finished.

- Facilities at the marble quarry in Quỳ Hợp were nearly completed.[118]

- Equipment for a lime production facility had been delivered, but planning not yet begun.[119]

- Assembly of Vinh's new market hall had begun.[120]

- An ice factory was completed and operational.[121]

- A second brick factory had been reconstructed with GDR equipment after destruction by floods in late 1978.

- The old cinema in Quang Trung had been repaired and equipped with solidarity equipment in 1975.

- A tent served as temporary building for cultural and political events since 2 September 1974 (Schlesier, 4.9.1974: pp.3-4).[122]

- Two pre-fabricated barracks from the GDR served as planning offices (Knauer, 22.1.1975: p.13).

As part of the governmental agreement on economic cooperation in 1975, the GDR had additionally agreed to equip a vocational school for the training of construction workers (Knauer, 27.2.1976: p.12; Zecher, Phạm Nguyên Lương, 5.2.1976; Phủ Thủ tướng, 17.12.1974). Construction began in late 1976, GDR ambassador Doering and deputy Minister of Construction Bùi Van Các attended the ground-breaking ceremony (Roller,

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[118] The quarry had been proposed by the PAC in June 1975 (Hansen, 1.7.1975, appendix 1: p.3). The GDR agreed to assist in the construction of the marble quarry in 1976. It was expected that marble from this quarry would to a large part be exported to the GDR (Poser, 18.11.1976).

[119] This facility had been proposed by the PAC in June 1975 (Hansen, 1.7.1975, appendix 1: p.2).

[120] The market hall had been added to the cooperation projects in late 1977 or early 1978 as a highly visible project of GDR assistance (Liebe, 8.3.1978: p.6).

[121] Documents available to me do not indicate when the ice factory was added to the projects. It was completed in early 1977 (Liebe, 10.2.1977: pp.13-14).

[122] Vietnamese National Day, celebrating Hồ Chí Minh's declaration of independence in 1945.

3.1.1977: p.2). By the end of 1978, the school was partly finished. It was expected that those parts to which the GDR contributed, the school buildings and workshops, would be completed and handed over in mid-1979 (Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 25.1.1979: pp.7-8).[123]

The GDR placed highest importance on the cooperation projects. However, priorities between different Vietnamese authorities apparently differed considerably from each other and from those of the GDR. As described above, focusing on housing had been controversial. Furthermore, diversion of resources indicates that priorities moved away from Vinh to other projects. In addition to practical reasons, the GDR's insistence on the importance of mutual projects was driven by political considerations over national reputation. To reconcile interests, the GDR considered extending cooperation. In September 1976 the head of the Vietnam Task Force proposed reduction of the goals in Quang Trung to the eastern part of the complex including infrastructure and public services to complete a visible and functioning example of GDR aid. He argued that because rationalizing of construction material industries would also not be completed by the original end of the cooperation in 1978, the Vietnamese should be encouraged to request an extension of cooperation that would allow for slower construction activities more adapted to the economic situation in the SRV, without pledging additional GDR funds (Hansen, 23.9.1976: pp.2-3). In October that year, the expert group informed the Vietnamese MoC of a possible extension (Liebe, 16.10.1976: p.2). In November, the GDR MoC proposed extension of cooperation to the German section of the CESTC (Poser, 18.11.1976, appendix 2: p.2). Negotiations carried on throughout 1977, with the SRV aiming at extending the agreement for five to ten years and at including new projects, while the GDR cautiously proposed extension for three years during which the already begun projects would be completed and no material support for new projects be added (Hansen, 23.11.1977; Bộ Xây dưng, Ban công tác Vinh, 11.10.1977; Liebe, 3.10.1977: p.5; 26.1.1977: p.5; Roller, 18.6.1977: p.5). By 1978, the GDR's Vietnam Task Force had become increasingly dissatisfied with negotiations. At a high level bi-lateral party and government meeting in December 1977, the SRV had made no mention of a possible extension. Experts insisted that the GDR should not work towards extension itself, as assistance in Vinh had already been considerable, arguing that "Also between socialist countries, economic relations are for mutual benefits!"[124] (Liebe, 5.1.1978: p.2). While Nghệ

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[123] Buildings to which the GDR did not contribute were dormitories, the kitchen, and the canteen. Those would not be finished by mid-1979.
[124] "Wirtschaftliche Beziehungen auch zwischen sozialistischen Ländern sind Beziehungen zum gegenseitigen Vorteil!"

Tĩnh's authorities and the SRV MoC had already presented a wide ranging proposal[125] for extension to the SRV State Planning Committee and the Council of Ministers in September, this had not been acted upon during the state visit in December (no author, 30.10.1977, part 2). A formal request was finally submitted to the GDR in March 1978[126], calling for a 2-3 year extension but making no mention of additional projects (Le Thanh Nghi, 23.3.1978). The GDR informally agreed to a two year extension and planning for the coming years started around May (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 16.6.1978a; Liebe, 1.6.1978: p.1; Gradl, 5.4.1978: p.2). The document adjusting the agreement on reconstruction of Vinh was formally signed by both governments in July 1978 (Weiss, Lê Thanh Nghị, 4.7.1978). Reduced Vietnamese requests for additional projects in Vinh during 1979-80 included design and construction of (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 22.1.1979; 16.6.1978b):

- a water supply system

- an electricity system

- Vinh's main roads

- a second wastewater treatment plant in Bến Thủy

- a glass factory.

Requests also included additional equipment for the vocational school and the production of cemented carbide, as well as delivery of further construction materials, equipment, and machinery. However, the GDR rejected most of these request, instead focusing on completing existing projects, supplemented by a water supply system to ensure hygiene in Quang Trung (Brambach, February 1979: pp.33-36).

The end of the second phase was thus marked by the extension of cooperation for two years until 1980. However, Khmer Rouge attacks on Vietnamese villages and escalating tensions with Democratic Kampuchea and led to a major attack on that country by the SRV on 25 December 1978. In retaliation the PRC attacked the SRV along the countries' mutual border in February 1979 (Quinn-Judge, 2006). The beginning of the third phase took thus place in a war situation.

Third phase 1979-1980
The third phase was characterized by continuing difficulties due to war and conflicts with Cambodia and China. Nevertheless, most of the projects could be finished by the end of

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[125] This proposal included many additional projects and more funds to be supplied by the GDR than the original 5 year agreement.
[126] The late date of the request complicated planning for 1979 considerably.

1980 or early 1981. Construction materials were to a large extent delivered from the GDR, as shortages did not allow reliance on local resources. Furthermore, the GDR focused its efforts on "bevölkerungswirksame"[127] projects.

Figure 14
The fountain at the northern tip of Quang Trung Housing Complex in 1983 (Thông tấn xã Việt Nam, Xây dựng dânh dung T2, 1983-1996 986/83, T1, T7-83:2955). It was one of several projects later added to create highly visible landmarks of GDR aid. Note that construction of block D2, the only block constructed on the western side of Quang Trung Street is on-going on the right-hand side.

"Bevölkerungswirksame" works were highly visible projects in Vinh that benefited large numbers of people and were agreed on during the last years of cooperation (Hansen, February 1981: p.8; Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 26.6.1980: pp.5, 8-11; see Figure 14). These included Vinh's new market hall, a pioneer club building[128] including a cinema and recreational facilities, floodlights for Vinh's stadium, increased assistance in the construction and equipment of the vocational school, as well as a park on the northern tip of the housing complex including water fountains (Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.54-58, 60). Equipment and construction materials for these projects were to a large extent imported from the GDR (Hansen, February 1981: pp.9-10; Brambach, 6.7.1979; Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 5.5.1979). Especially the market hall was judged to serve as a successful and prominent example of GDR aid to Vinh contributing to that country's prestige (Bùi Thiết, 1984: pp.67-76; Hansen, February 1981:

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[127] "population effective"
[128] The Ernst Thälmann Pioneer Club, named after Ernst Thälmann, chairman of the German Communist Party 1925-1933. The Ernst Thälmann Pioneer Organisation was a GDR youth organisation for children aged 6-14, which also contributed funds the club's construction (Hansen, February 1981: p.16; Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.56-57).

p.16; 8.11.1979: p.3; Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.55-56). To complete important works and ensure operation of delivered machinery the expert group's composition placed higher importance on practical works, with members increasingly taking over manual labour (Hansen, February 1981: pp.9-10; Kohl, 31.5.1979: p.1). After a visit by CPV general secretary Lê Duẩn, planning and design attention shifted away from housing to public buildings and especially to the future city centre (see above, Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 26.6.1980: p.3; Brambach, 6.7.1979). This reflected a general trend in the SRV, which from 1979 on considerably reduced its housing program, especially with regards to pre-fabricated concrete panels (Purtak, 29.06.1979).

Quang Trung Housing Complex

During the third phase, Quang Trung Housing Complex' eastern side was nearly completed. Contrary to their Vietnamese partners' wishes, GDR experts prevailed with their focus on the eastern part (Jahn, 20.3.1979). While in late 1978 construction activities had seen fast progress and large numbers of workers, many of those left Quang Trung to join other projects or the military during 1979 (Jahn, 20.3.1979; Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 25.1.1979). Other workers stayed away from construction sites because of unpaid wages and food shortages (Hansen, February 1981: p.15; Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 24.9.1979: p.2). In mid-1979, 2,200 Vietnamese workers had been sent to construct housing in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where the SRV assisted in planning and construction of a new capital; the SRV had also send construction workers to Mongolia, and to Cambodia after Vietnamese forces had overthrown the Khmer Rouge government (Purtak, 4.7.1979: pp.2-3). During 1979 and 1980, the number of workers in the complex continued to fall, while construction material shortages were even more severe (Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 26.6.1980: pp.6-7; 5.5.1979; Brambach, February 1980: pp.1, 9-14; Hansen, 8.11.1979: pp.2-3). By late 1979, German experts judged that the Vietnamese would not be able to fulfil obligations they had agreed to at the time of the agreement's extension (Hansen, 8.11.1979: p.5; Kohl, 12.10.1979: pp.1-2).

Relying on materials and equipment sent from the GDR[129], a new water supply system and Quang Trung Street could be completed (Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 5.5.1979: pp.3-5,11; 24.9.1979: pp.5-8, 15-16; UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 28.3.1979). Progress was particularly slow at the housing complex centre, which was intended to serve the whole city until a city centre had been constructed in a later development stage (Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 5.5.1979: p.4). Planning of the centre had from the beginning been slow, as contradictory demands were put forward by

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[129] For example, of the 7,246.4 tonnes of cement supplied by the GDR, 5,455 tonnes were shipped to Vinh in the years 1979-1980 alone (Purtak, 31.12.1980: p.67).

different agencies (Liebe, January 1978: p.5). By late 1979 it was clear that the centre could not be completed until 1981 and its design was reduced to one (formerly four) element (Purtak, 31.12.1980: p.54; Hansen, 8.11.1979: p.5). Problems of poor construction quality and lacking maintenance persisted throughout the third phase (Wauer, 22.8.1979: p.4; Jahn. 20.3.1979; Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam. 25.1.1979: p.3). Additionally, electricity shortages heavily impacted housing conditions and water supply (Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.52-54; Arbeitsgruppe der DDR – Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 25.1.1979: p.3). In this light, the housing complex did not become operational and could not demonstrate the advantages of socialist housing during Vietnamese-German cooperation (see previous assessment of GDR experts above, p.109).

Over the seven years of 1974 to 1980, 21 blocks providing 35,533 m² of housing in 1712 units were completed in the eastern part of Quang Trung, according to norms intended for 8,360 inhabitants (1,650 in dormitories). Two kindergartens, two nurseries, one school, and one element of the centre were completed (see Figures 15 to 22; UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.5.1981: p.3; Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.51-55).
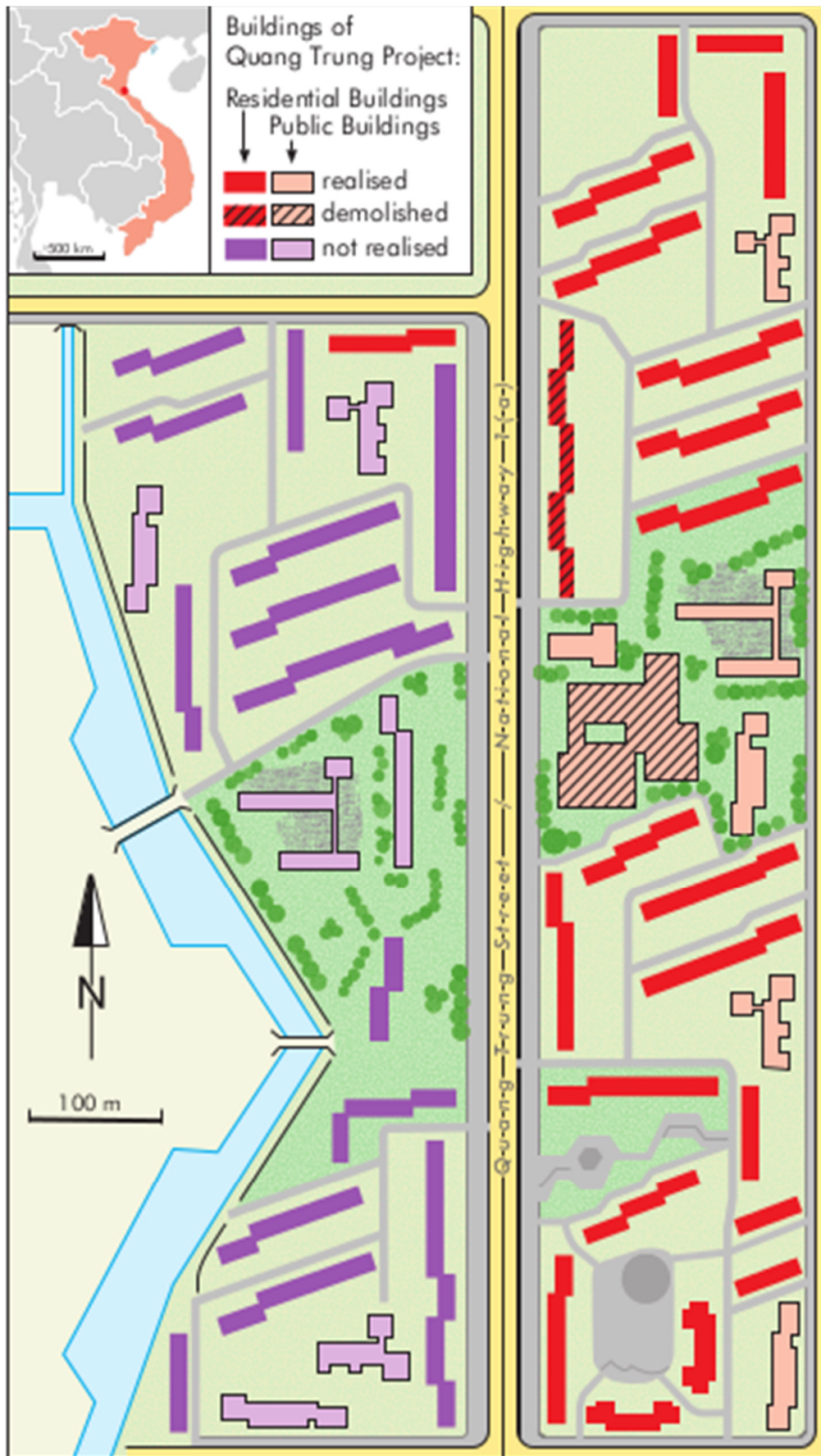
Figure 15
Plan of Quang Trung Housing Complex, indicating realised and not realised buildings (Kaiser, 2012: p.20; map prepared by Pacific News Cartography: © Claus Cartens 2011).

Figure 16
Inside one of the housing complex'
apartments (Bundesarchiv Koblenz
BArch DH 1 Bild-28565-06-03).

Figure 17
Due to power outages, residents of
Quang Trung had to rely on outside
wells (Bundesarchiv Koblenz BArch
DH 1 Bild-28565-06-02).

3.3.2.6 GDR Assistance in the Reconstruction of Vinh (1973 to 1980): Implementation

Figure 18
The location of Quang Trung Housing Complex Area A before construction started in 1974 (assembled from Bundesarchiv Koblenz *DH 1 Bild-28566-07B-02, 03, 04*).

Figure 19
Quang Trung Housing Complex at the end of 1974 (Knauer, 22.1.1975, Bilddokumentation: p.14).
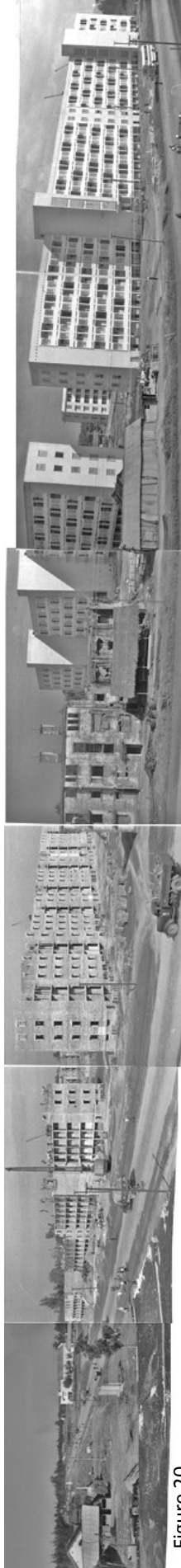
Figure 20
Quang Trung Housing Complex in December 1975 (assembled from Knauer, 27.2.1976).

3.3.2.6 GDR Assistance in the Reconstruction of Vinh (1973 to 1980): Implementation
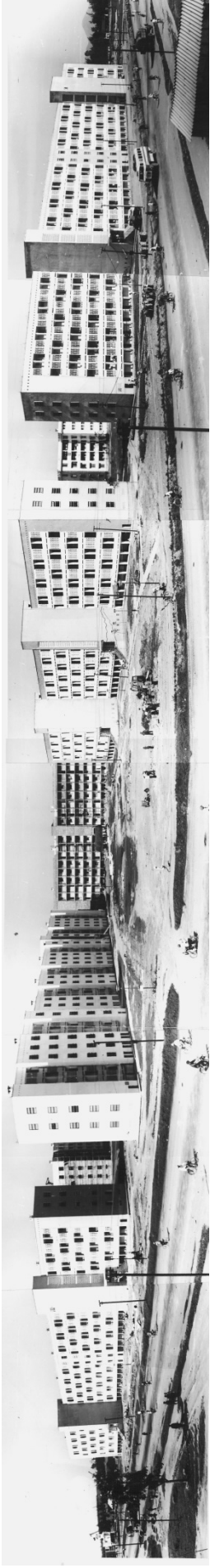
Figure 21
Quang Trung Housing Complex in late 1976 (assembled from Liebe 10.2.1977).
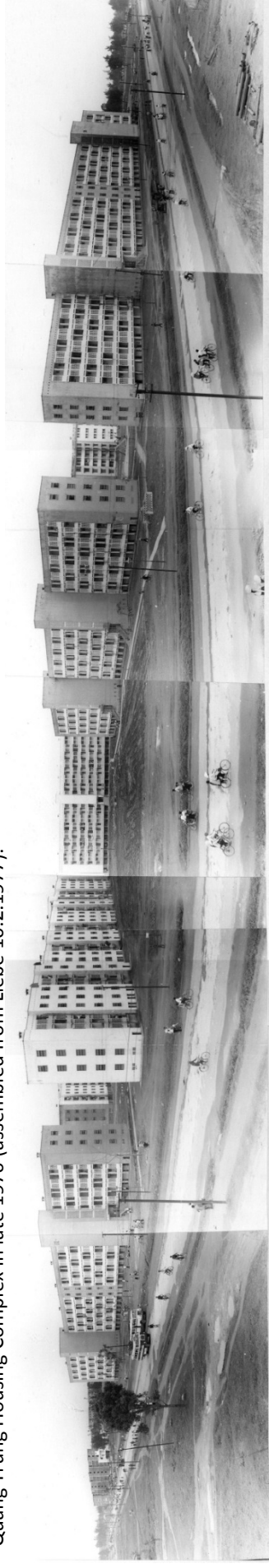
Figure 22
Quang Trung Housing Complex in late 1977 (assembled from Liebe January 1978).

Construction Industries and Other Projects

Construction material industries in Vinh faced similar difficulties as the Quang Trung Housing Complex. Those factories that had been completed by 1978 continued to produce but in industries relying on high amounts of resource inputs such as electricity or fuel, production fell. Others, like sand extraction or gravel production in Rú Mượu, were able to increase output (Brambach, February 1980: pp.15-22). Construction of lime production facilities had not started due to lacking funds and workers. The concrete element factory had also not been completed (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.5.1981: pp.3-5; Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.16-49; Hansen, 8.11.1979: pp.2-7). In many cases, output of the factories and workshops was of poor quality, especially maintenance of machinery was insufficient (Katzenellenbogen, 13.12.1980; Purtak, 31.12.1980). Nevertheless, by the end of 1980, the following industrial projects had been completed, but productivity and production quality varied considerably (Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.16-49; Hansen, February 1981: pp.13-39; UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.5.1981: pp.3-5):

- cement factory with a capacity of 12,000 t per year

- sand and gravel extraction

- quarry Rú Mượu

- marble quarry Quỳ Hợp

- brick factories with capacities of 30,000 bricks and 2,000 tiles per yea,

- stoneware production facilities

- carpentry workshop

- vehicle, machinery, and equipment repair workshops

- transport enterprise to serve construction industries

- warehouse enterprise for construction material, machinery and equipment

- equipment of construction enterprises

- air separation unit for the production of oxygen

- ice production facility with a capacity of 3,650 t per year.

The last experts returned to the GDR in January 1981 (Hansen, February 1981: p.39). GDR officials saw the need to further extend cooperation in Vinh to finish last works in 1981 and to advise on operation and maintenance of the mutual projects over the coming years (Hansen,

8.11.1979: p.5; Hansen, February 1981: pp.39-40). In contrast, Nghệ Tĩnh provincial authorities proposed a new agreement that would continue GDR assistance in the city's development, focusing on the city centre and further development of construction material industries (Purtak, 29.06.1979). While housing had been relegated to a low rank among the SRV's priorities, assistance of the GDR in the construction of the housing complex' western part was also envisaged by provincial authorities (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.5.1981: pp.6-7), as was a twinning arrangement with Karl-Marx-Stadt (Kohl, 10.12.1980: p.4).

As part of general scientific-technical cooperation, it was agreed that six experts would assist in operation and maintenance of production sites erected with GDR assistance, especially of machinery delivered by the GDR. Additionally, two experts advised on the construction of a spinning mill that was erected in Vinh as an investment project from 1981 on (Ministerium für Bauwesen DDR, Ministerium für Bauwesen SRV, 5.12.1980; Knöfel, 2011: p.24). No further measures were agreed on; urban construction and planning played no important role in further cooperation between the two countries (Knöfel, 2011; Schäfer, 2011; Politbüro des ZK der SED, 24.3.1987).

3.3.2.7 Results

While no numbers are available on the funds provided by the SRV, the GDR MoC reported in detail on its accounts. Over seven years, the GDR had spent 113.4 Mio Mark, less than the 128 Mio initially budgeted for the five year-agreement. Of these, 16.5 Mio Mark were non-repayable solidarity funds, the rest would have to be repaid interest free after ten years. In addition, material, machinery, and equipment worth 20 Mio Mark had been delivered to Vinh as part of bilateral trade agreements. In total, 41,500 tons had been shipped to Vinh by 62 sea journeys (Hansen, February 1981: pp.28-31, appendixes).

In light of the described difficulties, the results of cooperation were regarded as important achievements by both sides (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.5.1981; Hansen, February 1981; Purtak, 31.12.1980). The protocol on the fulfilment of the agreement called the reconstruction of Vinh a visible expression of friendship and solidary between the German Democratic Republic and the Socialist Republic Vietnam. Both sides agreed that the agreement had been fully implemented (Kohl, Vu Quy, 5.12.1980).[130] Especially the creation of modern and effective construction industries was regarded as providing an important basis for future development of Vinh and Nghệ Tĩnh Province (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.5.1981: p.2; Kohl, 10.12.1980: p.2). In addition to physical projects, provincial authorities highly valued the experience of cadres,

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[130] While some of the projects had not been completed, this statement remains true as the original agreement had made no mention of specific projects. For example, it mentioned only the construction of a housing complex, not its size. Thus, the completion of eastern Quang Trung could formally be regarded as a full accomplishment.

planners, and workers to work with GDR experts. This was seen as having considerably improved their abilities and working styles, preparing them for future challenges (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.5.1981: p.2). GDR assistance in Nghệ Tĩnh and Vinh was described as exemplary urban development by Trương Huy Chinh[131], as well as an example for international cooperation and regional planning by Mönnig[132] (Mönnig, 1989, 1987; Trương Huy Chinh, 1985).

GDR experts and officials were more pessimistic in their assessment, as reflected in their agreement to provide further assistance in operation and maintenance of cooperation projects. Furthermore, they had judged that important shortcoming in planning, designing, and implementing projects had not been overcome, doubting that provincial capacities were sufficient to carry out urban development autonomously (Brambach, February 1980: p.27; February 1979: p.24; Jahn, 20.3.1979). The leader of the expert group judged in early 1980:

> "However, it has to be critically assessed that even considering all the occurring difficulties construction progress is still too slow. Main reasons for this are subjective. The provincial leadership, the provincial construction authority, and the construction enterprise administrations are over-challenged by planning and administrative decision making. Increasingly comprehensive tasks are not mastered yet by the few qualified administrators. Complicated and inadequate financial regulations for construction and trade as well as lacking cooperation between enterprises especially impact construction progress."[133] (Brambach, February 1980: p.34; repeated in Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.65-66)

The final report by the expert group also regarded the abilities of their Vietnamese partners as insufficient for the design, planning, and building of complicated facilities or high-rise buildings. Additionally, work organisation and processes were judged to still be uncoordinated and inefficient (Purtak, 31.12.1980: pp.8-9).

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[131] Trương Huy Chinh had worked in the provincial planning institute together with German experts and later became its director (Nguyen Sy Thuy et al., 2011: p.37)

[132] Hans-Ulrich Mönnig worked as a planner in Vinh in 1974/75. He later became head of the Department of Building in Tropical and Foreign Countries of the Institute for Further Studies in Urban Design and Architecture at the College of Architecture and Building in Weimar.

[133] "Es muß jedoch kritisch eingeschätzt werden, daß auch bei Beachtung aller eingetretenen Schwierigkeiten das Bautempo noch zu niedrig ist. Die Hauptursachen dafür sind subjektiver Art. Die zentralen Leitungsorgane der Provinz, das Provinzbauamt und die Leitungen der Betriebe sind hinsichtlich der zu treffenden Planungs- und Leitungsentscheidungen überfordert. Der immer umfangreicher werdende Aufgabenkatalog wird von den wenigen qualifizierten Leitkräften noch nicht beherrscht. Besonders negativ wirken sich die komplizierten und unzulänglichen Regelungen zur Finanzierung der Bau- und Lieferleistungen sowie die fehlenden Kooperationsbeziehungen zwischen den Betrieben auf das Bautempo aus."

Nevertheless, compared to assistance by other socialist countries in the reconstruction of Vietnam's cities, GDR efforts were regarded as exemplary by both the GDR and the SRV (Brambach, February 1980: p.33; Hansen, March 1977: p.5). As described above, North Vietnamese cities had been twinned with socialist countries. According to a GDR MoC report, only the USSR had assisted on a comparable scale in the development of Hanoi. Cuba had contributed to reconstruction by planning and supplying material for a number of projects. Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, and North Korea had assisted in planning and designing, but not provided material aid for respective projects (no author, December 1977: p.4). The expert group judged that due to GDR assistance Nghệ Tĩnh's construction industry was most advanced compared to other provinces of the SRV (Brambach, February 1979: p.23). Acknowledging the comprehensive aid program and its progress, Minister of Construction Đỗ Mười relocated a national conference on housing and urban planning from Hanoi to Vinh and promoted application of Quang Trung housing designs in other provinces (Liebe, January 1978: pp.4-5).

The political dimension of Vinh's reconstruction was not only highlighted by the siting of Quang Trung and the fact that its construction began during the war. Construction works were closely aligned with important dates, such as national holidays, important celebrations of the international workers movement, or political events such as the founding day of the CPV or the SED, by setting them as milestones for projects or conducting competitions (Arbeitsgruppe der DDR - Spezialisten Vinh/SR Vietnam, 26.6.1980: p.11; Brambach, February 1979: p.21; Liebe, 23.7.1976: p.23; Schlesier, 4.9.1974: p.2).[134] Reliefs, flags, and banners on Quang Trung buildings marked them as results of GDR-SRV cooperation. As the most visible cooperation project, GDR officials were very conscious of Quang Trung's symbolism. Especially the local SED organisation was concerned over the visible quality of the housing complex and the effect on GDR reputation (Thomas, 26.8.1977). It reported that many Vietnamese saw the housing complex as being constructed by Germans, irrespective of the SRV's responsibility negative aspects were often attributed to the GDR. This was troubling for the SED especially considering possible future comparison with other buildings (Gottschalk, 30.8.1978). These concerns were not unfounded. Hermann Schwiesau, GDR ambassador to Vietnam 1982 to 1986, recounts a visit to Vinh:

> "But when I looked at the badly battered facades of the buildings [in Quang Trung] and remarked that they would have to be maintained a little, the Vietnamese representatives immediately agreed and said that the GDR should consider what it would have to do in 'its' housing complex to fix the situation.

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[134] In addition to examples like the ground-breaking ceremony described above, important national holidays, such as the GDR's Tag der Republik (Day of the Republic) on 7 October, were collectively celebrated by Vietnamese and Germans (Purtak, 31.12.1980: p.76; Liebe, 16.10.1976).

After all, this would be a question of GDR prestige."[135] (Schwiesau, 2011: p.18)

Concerns of the SED were also driven by the conflict with West Germany: "Vietnamese sometimes presented the following problem: The eastern side of Quang Trung should be built by the GDR, the state in the east of Germany, the western side should be built by the Federal Republic of Germany – the state located in the West."[136] (Gottschalk, 30.8.1978: p.1). The Quang Trung Housing Complex was thus an ambiguous result of cooperation regarding its political symbolism, which might also have influenced the decision to focus on "population effective" projects during the third phase of cooperation.

3.4 The Failure of a Modern Project

Socialist urban development had been embraced by DRV authorities and was introduced to Vietnam through Soviet advisors as well as architects and planners who had been trained in socialist countries. Thus, the concepts and ideals that became influential in Vietnam reflected political developments and their expressions in urban design in the Soviet Union. The modern project to create a Socialist City informed urban development in Vinh from the early 1960s to the 1980s. Two attempts to implement this project were abruptly ended by US-bombing that destroyed the city in the 1960s and 1970s.

Reconstruction from 1973 on was carried out with assistance of the German Democratic Republic, building on experiences of GDR assistance in Vietnam. The decision to turn to the GDR for assistance in the reconstruction of Vinh was most likely informed by the economic strength of that country and its advanced construction industries, deemed appropriate to the role of Vinh as the most important urban centre in the south of the DRV and its revolutionary history. The GDR's commitment to Vinh was informed by Cold War rivalry and the country's zeal to contribute to the victory of the socialist camp. Even prior to cooperation in Vinh, the GDR had been eager to export its achievements and expertise in the field of urban construction and planning to the DRV.

The version of a Socialist City promoted in both countries was reflective of changing visions of such a city that originated from the USSR. At the time of Vinh's reconstruction, the ornate

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[135] "Als ich aber etwas kritisch auf die arg ramponierten Fassaden der Häuser [des Wohnkomplexes] sah und bemerkte, dass man das ein wenig pflegen müsse, stimmten die vietnamesischen Vertreter sofort zu und meinten, die DDR solle sich doch nun überlegen, was sie in ‚ihrem' Wohngebiet tun müsse, um dies wieder herzurichten. Das sei ja auch eine Frage des Ansehens der DDR."

[136] "Von Vietnamesen wurde gelegentlich etwa folgendes Problem gestellt: Die Ostseite der Quang Trung sollte die DDR, der Staat im Osten Deutschlands bauen, die Westseite sollte die BRD – der Staat, der im Westen liegt, bauen"

style of the Stalin-era had been abandoned. The housing complex had become the most prominent and widely applied element of the Socialist City, thereby aligning the form of the Socialist City to a large extent with internationally prevalent ideals of modern urban planning of the time. Both countries shared the same view of the city as an object that could be planned as an ideal environment, at the same time expressing and furthering socialist living and development. In this view, such an environment is created through the careful design by experts who balance different politically derived goals by employing scientific means.

While both countries shared the same vision of creating a Socialist City, the GDR left discernible marks on the planning and construction of Vinh. However, contrary to Shannon and Loeckx' assessment that "the East Germans transplanted their mass construction of concrete five-storey walk-up tenements to the extreme heat of Vinh's summers and ravages of autumn's typhoons", the GDR's influence was rather an adjustment of already existing plans (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.129). Because of its experiences with failed or troubled aid-projects in the DRV, the GDR insisted on the participation of Vietnamese cadres in the planning process and overall responsibility of Vietnamese authorities for all cooperation projects. This was part of GDR experts' decision to carry out "complex planning", including regional, urban, and housing planning that was aimed at creating a situation in which local authorities and planners could autonomously replicate and further develop the experience gained by cooperating with German experts on the basis of local materials, enterprises, and factories. This was in stark contrast to DRV plans that called for the application of most advanced techniques such as industrialized construction using concrete panels and other international standards applied in developed countries.

In the design of Quang Trung Housing Complex, GDR cooperation promoted family based apartments as opposed to dormitories. While the DRV did not endorse dormitories because of ideological reasons, its housing policies differed from that of the GDR with regards to the large scale provision with self-contained family-apartments. A compromise is expressed in the composition of Quang Trung. While several buildings are designed as dormitories[137], their number is considerably reduced compared to planning prior to GDR involvement. Contrary to many apartments constructed in Hanoi in the 1970s, nearly all apartments in Quang Trung are self-contained.

While GDR participation in the reconstruction of Vinh contributed large material and human resources, it also restricted subsequent political and economic decisions. As Vietnamese priorities were revised, especially after the country's re-unification and in light of conflicts with Democratic Kampuchea and the PRC, GDR insistence on focusing on mutual projects was in

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[137] Many of these were, however, used as offices or, in the case of A4, a hotel.

contrast to Vietnamese policies which put more emphasis on projects in the South, as well as agricultural and industrial development. From the point of view of respective actors, both strategies are rational: the GDR was concerned about the impact of poorly executed or unfinished projects on its reputation, while many among the Vietnamese regarded housing as a problem that could be solved without large state investments that would be more useful in the productive sector. Shifting priorities, often expressed by re-allocation of resources, do not only highlight differences between GDR and DRV/SRV, but also indicate conflicts and diverging priorities between Vietnamese authorities.

Both the Vietnamese and the GDR had invested large sums in this modern project, thereby creating housing for many and capacities for the production of construction materials. However, with regards to the creation of a Socialist City, it failed. As GDR experts had assessed, the Quang Trung Housing Complex did not become functional during cooperation and could thus not express the advantages of socialist living. This was due to planning that was not adapted to local administrative, economic, and political conditions. A project such as Quang Trung, and for that matter the whole reconstruction of Vinh as a Socialist City, would require strong coordinative and administrative capacities that did not exist in the field of construction in Vietnam. At the same time, the centralized economy relied on a planning process that was not able to provide reliable figures based on which realistic planning could be carried out. These problems did exist in most socialist countries, but were exacerbated in Vietnam by the war situation as well as the lack in experienced and qualified cadres.

While Quang Trung exemplified the best available housing for some (see page 108), it proved ill adapted to the lifestyle of others. For many who returned to Vinh after years of war it was the first instance of living in a concrete home, let alone in an apartment in a multistorey building (Schwenkel, 2013: p.264). This resulted in improper behaviour in the eyes of planners and authorities.[138] The additions and modifications of the apartments, buildings, and layout of the housing complex, like extensions to balconies or vegetable gardens in open areas, are indicative of the shortcomings that were overcome by private initiative (Vandenpoel, 2011; UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 13.11.1985; see Figure 23). The assumptions underlying the planning of Quang Trung had not been realized, such as water and electricity provision or, more importantly in this regard, equal access to apartments. This led to misuse of power in the allocation, administration, and use of apartments (for example UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 21.4.1986, 28.8.1985). Furthermore, contrary to its intended function as a model housing complex Quang Trung remained the only of its kind in Vinh. The SRV shifted its housing policies in the 1980s, giving up the ideal of providing equal living conditions through state supplied housing to all its citizens (see below).

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[138] Interview 9.10.2010

Today, the general spatial zoning of the draft development plan prepared with participation of the GDR is upheld. The city can roughly be divided into an economic (around the former citadel), an administrative (in the Trường Thi area) and an educational centre (around the university in Bến Thủy). Industries are clustered in the north-west and close to Bến Thủy harbour. However, the envisaged separation of residential and recreational areas from work places has not been achieved (Mönnig, 1986: p.127). Additionally, the basic spatial division into three centres is as much reflective of pre-colonial and colonial urban development as of the planning of a Socialist City. The ambitions of the modern project to create a Socialist City did rely on the socio-economic and political setting the relevant city was embedded in. However, this setting has been altered in Vietnam from the 1980s on, giving up the cultural program of socialism that informed the modern project of the Socialist City. In the official vision promoted today for Vinh's development, the most prominent reminder of the Socialist City, the Quang Trung Housing Complex, is now rather regarded as a problem inhibiting the creation of a "Modern and Civilised City".[139]

Figure 23
Inhabitants of the Quang Trung Housing Complex have modified the buildings for example by adding extensions to the structures. Large parts of public space in the complex are used for agriculture (picture taken by author, 12.8.2011).

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[139] Another reminder of GDR assistance in Vinh, the Thälmann Club, is now renamed the Vietnamese – German Cultural House.

4. Multiple Modern Projects in Vinh

From the late 1970s on Vietnam faced increasing international isolation and failure of its economic policies. Additionally, with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries increasingly facing economic difficulties in the 1980s, cooperation with and aid from these countries began to dry up. These developments resulted in Vietnam's economic and political reorientation, highlighted by the Đổi Mới-reforms of 1986, which aimed at establishing a "market economy with socialist characteristics" (Nguyen Tien Dung, 22.4.2013; Masina, 2006: pp.39, 53-64; Beresford, 1998; Fforde, de Vylder, 1996). Accompanying them was a shift in foreign policy that turned away from the reliance on COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) countries and intended to improve relations with Western countries. An important step that paved the way to international integration was taken with the peace progress in Cambodia that began in 1989 and culminated in the Paris peace agreement on Cambodia in October 1991. In July 1995 diplomatic relations between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United States of America were formally normalized. Already in 1993, the US had announced that they would no longer veto lending to Vietnam in multinational agencies and a number of the major international donors resumed their official cooperation in that year (Elliot, 2012; Forsberg, Kokko, 2007). Thus, since the 1990s, large numbers of multilateral and bilateral donors, NGOs, foundations, and development agencies enter the country. Many of these actors bring with them social visions that they wanted to further through the implementation of modern projects. At the same time, the officially promoted vision of cities in the SRV reflected changes in the political and economic spheres. In Vinh this meant that a multiplicity of different modern projects became to be promoted by local, national, and international actors. The following parts will introduce a number of these projects and the involved actors, as well as analyse their strategies and change resulting from the interaction of different modern projects. This includes presentations of the Modern and Civilised City promoted by Vietnamese authorities and of projects by international actors aimed at a Participatory City.

4.1 The Modern and Civilised City

According to Trinh Duy Luan et al., socioeconomic impacts of Đổi Mới are most visibly expressed in Vietnam's cities (Trinh Duy Luan et al., 2000: p.56). Đổi Mới-reforms and subsequent legislation opened up possibilities for private initiative in construction and the economy. However, the planning and management framework was ill adapted at directing urban growth. Despite attempts to make planning more responsive to actual conditions, this

led to a situation in which centralized formal planning is largely detached from informal processes (Albrecht et al., 2010: pp.51-52; Coulthart et al., 2006; Nguyen, Kammeier, 2002). Plans often express an ideal state of a *Modern and Civilised City* emphasizing orderliness and modern styles, rather than building on actually available resources and realistic solutions (Schwenkel, 2012; Coulthart et al., 2006: p.ix; Nguyen, Kammeier, 2002: p.377; Shannon, 2002; Drummond, 2000). According to Pedelahore de Loddis such planning results in the design of "new districts made up of high-rises and lines strongly influenced by trivialized international models" of urban development and architecture (Pedelahore de Loddis, 2010: p.21).

> "Ideologically, self-sufficient housing estates have yielded to business parks and condominiums of the nouveaux riches, community houses to banks, meagerly rationed grocery shops to glitzy shopping malls, and impoverished fishing villages to deep-sea-port. Spatially, this has translated to erasure, and more commonly, bizarre juxtapositions. Modern office buildings, high-rise apartments and hotels dwarf pre-colonial buildings and neighborhoods. New industrial zones emerge from paddy fields. Local urban fabrics near transport corridors of airports are overrun with global advertising and 'big-box' architecture. 'Gated communities' for the rapidly rising middle- and upper-classes of the local societies are appearing as compounds of exclusion and privilege." (Shannon, 2002: p.4)

The opening up to foreign investment is highly visible, new landmarks of economic growth and international integration are created in Vietnam's large cities. Most visible are the high-rise hotel and office complexes of foreign investors, like the Hanoi Towers, proposed by a Vietnamese-Singaporean joint-venture and erected on parts of the former Hỏa Lò prison. Some of these structures have continued the trend of former periods, that is, they were built without much reference to their setting and to local architectural styles. Others, however, have been integrated into the cityscape more carefully, like the Hilton Hotel next to the Opera House, reflecting the architectural style of that building. One new "landmark" of the attention foreign investors pay to Hanoi is the Keangnam Hanoi Landmark Tower.

New buildings with direct involvement by the authorities nowadays symbolize Vietnam's regional and global integration. Noteworthy projects of this category are the National Stadium in Mỹ Đình, which had been built to host the Southeast Asia Games in 2003.[140] Another example is the National Convention Centre, also located near the National Stadium. The Convention Centre was designed by the German company gmp Architekten and is host to

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[140] It also hosted the Asian Games in 2007 and is the site of most of Vietnam's international competitions.

major national events, as well as the venue of Vietnam's important international conferences like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in 2006 or the 9th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Foreign Ministers Meeting in 2009. Other buildings symbolize the economic power of major state-owned enterprises like the Electricity of Vietnam Twin Towers. German gmp Architekten also designed the new Ministry of Public Security, a monumental reminder of state power.[141]

Apart from creating landmark buildings representing economic growth, political stability and national identity, Đổi Mới reforms have considerably impacted the housing sector. On one hand, the state has retreated from the housing sector. Central Party and government decisions allowed for the sale of public housing to current residents since 1985. Because provinces and localities often implemented the policy arbitrarily (for example selling housing units without proof of state ownership, selling at prices too low or too high), central guidelines were stipulated in 1989. The main reasons given for this policy are the poor state of the housing units and the inability of the state to maintain them (Trinh Duy Luan, Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2001: p.123). It was perceived that private ownership would result in private investments and improvements (Hoang Huu Phe, 2001; Nguyen Xuan Mai, 2001; Hoang Huu Phe, Nishimura, 2000: pp. 38-40). A legal framework for the sale of publicly owned housing was stipulated with decree NĐ 61-CP in 1994 (Chính phủ, 5.7.1994). In general, this policy faced considerable problems due to uncertainties regarding the legal situation of ownership. This was partly due to the initial idea that the collective housing areas would have to be redesigned and rebuilt before people could acquire land-use rights. By 2006 only 45% of those housing units designated for sale had been sold, and the government called on provincial and municipal authorities to speed up sales (Chính phủ, 7.9.2006; see also Bộ Xây Dựng, 16.1.2009, 17.01.2008; Chính phủ, 30.8.2007).

On the other hand, reforms have legalized private construction activities that had been responsible for the production of a large percentage of urban housing even before these reforms (Trinh Duy Luan et al., 2000: pp.65-66). Different modes of housing introduced since the late 1980s took the form of state and people partnership, self-built housing by state organisation, self-built housing on subdivided land, and comprehensive housing projects[142]

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[141] See http://www.gmp-architekten.de/projekte.html.

[142] "Under the first model, the household contributes funding while the state provides the basic infrastructure and organizes for construction arrangements. In the second model, the government allocates land to state institutions and then these have responsibilities to mobilize funding for the construction of their employee's houses. In the third model, the construction companies develop the infrastructure and subdivide the developed land for sale; after that, buyers are responsible for building the houses by themselves. Despite contributing to easing the housing shortage, these models have created a number of urban problems, such as inconsistent designs, lack of infrastructure and inefficiency of land use. Free handling of land and housing development by the public organisations and individuals led to chaotic situations of urban development with inefficient provision of infrastructure and property speculation. Since 1996, a new housing model in the form of

(Nguyen, Kammeier, 2002: p.382; Hoang Huu Phe, 2001). However, the private sector was responsible for most housing production (Sun Sheng Han, Kim Trang Vu, 2008: pp.1103-1104). Until the late 1990s, the private sector in housing construction consisted mainly of households that relied on their own funds and private loans (Trinh Duy Luan, 2001; Trinh Duy Luan et al., 2000: p.75; Evertsz, 2000: p.49; Japan Bank for International Cooperation, 1999: pp.iv, 104). Construction activities are largely unregulated and enforcement of existing regulations remains arbitrary (Koh, 2006; Trinh Duy Luan, Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2001).

Since the late 1990s, high-rise apartment blocks and multistorey town houses are built in Vietnam's largest cities by large construction companies (Labbé, 2010; Gough, Tran, 2009: p.175). Many of these projects take the form of New Urban Areas, "large-scale integrated developments displaying standardized urban forms and consumer-oriented architecture", often constructed by state-owned enterprises and increasingly by foreign investors (Labbé, 2010: p.25; see also Albrecht et al., 2010: p.46).[143] Some of these developments, like "The Crescent" or the "Royal City" can be regarded as prestige objects symbolizing economic growth and resulting affluence. Sun Sheng Han and Kim Tran Vu argue that a pro-growth coalition between developers and the state has emerged that carries out large-scale projects on the expense of former residents, creating rent-seeking possibilities for corrupt officials (Sun Sheng Han, Kim Trang Vu, 2008; see also VietnamNet, 26.1.2011).

While the amount of housing space has grown considerably since the introduction of reforms in the 1980s, housing space and quality are now among the most visible indicators of economic and social differentiation (Gough, Tran, 2009).

> "The current boom is geared largely to middle and upper income earners e.g. Ciputra development in Tay Ho, Hanoi and Phu My Hung in South Saigon. It is fueled by increased disposable income, increased savings, changes in lifestyle such as a decline in the role of the extended family, and rapid inflation of housing and land prices. However, the provision of appropriate housing for low-income people, including students and those requiring resettlement arising from development projects, remains a major challenge for Government." (Coulthart et al., 2006: p.21)

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comprehensive projects with the coordinated development of housing, technical and social infrastructure has been introduced. This housing model is reported to be suitable for the development of residential areas, with improved facilities as well as better landscaping" (Nguyen, Kammeier, 2002: pp.382-383).
[143] This approach is favoured by the World Bank (Coulthart et al., 2006: p.x).

A number of authors have argued that no consistent policies exist to address the problems of poor people to access adequate housing (for example Nguyen Xuan Mai, 2001; Trinh Duy Luan, Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2001; Evertsz, 2000). Existing policies mainly apply to deserving social groups, such as veterans, "heroic mothers", families of fallen soldiers, or state employees (Albrecht et al., 2010: p.99; Trinh Duy Luan, Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2001: pp.139-141; Trinh Duy Luan et al., 2000: pp.79-80). Despite large-scale construction activities, demand still by far exceeds supply; housing prices have also been driven by speculation. Thus, apartments in big cities are still out of reach not only for the very poor, but also for middle-income earners (Quang Duan, 28.1.2011; Albrecht et al., 2010: p.108). National and local housing policies targeting these income groups have thus far not had the desired effects, partly due to their arbitrary implementation or a lack of incentives for their application by local authorities (Labbé, 2010: pp.25-27; Albrecht et al., 2010: pp.102-103). In 2001 there existed no widely applied mechanisms for financing housing for the poor (Trinh Duy Luan, Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2001: p.216). Some such instruments (like saving groups, micro-credits etc.) have been introduced by international NGOs, aid agencies, and donors, and are applied in some areas with participation of the Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU), a Mass Organisation (Albrecht et al., 2010: pp.104, 106-107; Coulthart et al., 2006: pp.21-24; Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003). The need for a comprehensive nationwide framework has been recognized by the Government in its "National Housing Development Strategy until 2020, with a view towards 2030". It emphasises the role of the market, complemented by policies to help deserving groups as well as urban poor and workers in industrial zones by setting up social housing funds and respective construction companies (Thủ tướng Chính phủ, 30.11.2011). To work out such policies in detail, the Vietnamese government turns to international examples, notably from Republic of Korea and Germany (DongA.com, 22.1.2011).[144]

The goal of equal housing conditions provided by the state had been given up in Vinh by the late 1980s, planning did not refer to a Socialist City anymore and the socialist housing complex had lost its role as a physical planning unit as well as politically and socially desirable living space.[145] In fact, the eastern part of Quang Trung remained the only such complex in Vinh. Housing supplied by the state accounted for only 10 to 20% of the city's housing stock in 1991, of which 75% were one-storey buildings[146] (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 13.6.1991). When the first General Development Plan for the Construction of Vinh was finally

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[144] Personal conversation 16.7.2013

[145] Extensive research in provincial archives did not reveal any larger housing construction by the state or its agencies after GDR cooperation had ended.

[146] 15% four to five-storey buildings, 10% two to three-stories.

approved by the government, the ideals of the Socialist City and the Socialist Housing Complex had been abandoned (UBND Nghệ An, 9.1.1993; Lương Bá Quảng, n.d.). Regarding housing, provincial and municipal construction authorities were mainly occupied with managing private construction activities and distributing construction materials throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s.[147] From 1988 on, housing owned by state agencies and companies in Vinh was sold to inhabitants (UBND Nghệ An, 26.8.1993; UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 16.10.1990, 15.10.1990, 15.9.1990, 12.7.1990; the earliest document referring to this process permits the sale of apartments in Quang Trung blocks (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 30.4.1988)). Public construction centred on activities (such as the construction of a hotel or street repairs) to commemorate Hồ Chí Minh's 100th birthday in 1990 (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 25.2.1989, 15.9.1988).[148]

Although the effects of Đổi Mới became visible in Vinh's urban landscape later than in larger urban centres of Vietnam, the goal to create a Civilised and Modern City is thoroughly entrenched in official planning documents and public statements by officials, lately "sustainability" has been added as a goal (Schwenkel, 2012; Thu Huyền, 18.3.2011; Đình Sẩm, 9.7.2010; Hoàng Đăng Hảo, 13.5.2010; Phạm Anh Tuấn, 8.10.2008; Shannon, Loeckx, 2004; Shannon, 2000). Every major planning document of the last years refers to this goal, complemented by an emphasis on the historic and revolutionary role of the city.[149] The Plan for Urban Development until 2020 calls for preservation and restoration of the historic and cultural heritage while modernizing the city centre and constructing New Urban Areas "modern, civilised, sustainable, carrying ethnic identity"[150] (Thủ tướng Chính phủ, 21.4.2000). However, the meaning of these terms and how they can be translated into physical layouts and urban design remains unclear. Instead, plans focus on the city's functions in Vietnam's urban network and in regional development. For example, the Prime Minister's decision to elevate Vinh to the centre of North-Central Vietnam stipulates that the city's development would serve industrialisation and urbanisation of that area, while making the city its economic and cultural centre (Thủ tướng Chính phủ, 30.9.2005: Điều 1). Vinh's role in the urban

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[147] Interview 11.5.2011.
[148] Because of shortages, a lottery was organized to raise funds for the completion of these works and provincial authorities repeatedly had to highlight the national importance of the event when calling on other provinces or central agencies for assistance (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 26.10.1989, 8.4.1989, 10.5.1988).
[149] See for example (UBND Vinh, July 2010; UBND Nghệ An, 11.12.2009; Thủ tướng Chính Phủ, 9.3.2009, 30.9.2005; Bộ Xây Dựng, Viện Kiến trúc-Quy hoạch đô thị nông thôn, August 2008; UBND Nghệ An, 5.5.2008; Viện Quy hoạch Kiến trúc Xây dựng Nghệ An, October 2007)
[150] "hiện đại, văn minh, bền vững, mang bản sắc dân tộc"

network is further defined by its status as a Class 1[151] city under provincial administration (Bộ Xây Dựng, Viện Kiến trúc-Quy hoạch đô thị nông thôn, August 2008).

Figure 24
Vinh's commercial centre is dominated by high-rise buildings that dwarf the buildings of the Quang Trung Housing Complex (picture taken by author, 14.6.2011). The grey building to the right has for a short time been the highest building in Vinh. Now, a 135m high 5-star hotel is located next to it.

According to Shannon and Loeckx, such official plans for Vinh's development see the city as a "mini-Singapore", taking little account of local characteristics while resulting in "a series of unbuilt projects and underdeveloped areas of expensive infrastructure – unrealizable dreams" (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.133). A more balanced view is provided by Schwenkel:

> "Urban renewal has meant not only the construction of a new entrepreneurial
> city but also the (re)construction of socialist monuments, museums, and
> martyr cemeteries. […] For example, adjacent to the city's central park, east of
> Quang Trung, an eighteen- meter- high granite statue of Hồ Chí Minh was
> erected in 2003, while the Xô Viết Nghệ Tĩnh Museum of the Revolution, on
> the grounds of the former French colonial prison, has recently undergone
> substantial renovation […]."(Schwenkel, 2012: p.457, see Figures 24 and 25)

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[151] Vietnam's cities are classified into 6 groups: Class one to five and special cities. Classification is according to national or regional importance, percentage of employment outside agriculture, provision of infrastructure, population size, and population density. The higher a city is classified, the more responsibilities its administration has (Coulthart et al., 2006: pp. 56-58). As a Class 1 city Vinh is in the second highest class.

Figure 25
The Hồ Chí Minh statue located at Vinh's central square (pictures taken by author, 29.11.2010). Banners on tribunes located next to the statue read the slogans "The Socialist Republic Vietnam Forever!" and "The Great President Hồ Chí Minh Lives Forever In Our Deeds!"[152] Especially in the evening the square is a favourite location for recreation and socializing.

The power of a "market economy with socialist characteristics" is represented by high-rise buildings combining retail, housing, and office space as well as hotel rooms, constructed by state-owned enterprises and private investors (Thu Huyền, 18.3.2011; Thanh Loan, 23.11.2010).[153] These buildings and New Urban Areas on the outskirts are depicted by advertisement and brochures as "new residential communities that show the middle classes enjoying prosperous, orderly, and moral lives. [...] images depict a disciplined, largely unpeopled world free from the disorder of haphazard construction, informal markets, and swarming motorbikes, with expensive new cars, law-abiding pedestrians, and well-cared-for homes" (Schwenkel, 2012: p.460; see also Nghệ An Online, 29.12.2010 and Figure 27).

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[152] "Nước Cộng Hóa Xã Hội Chủ Nghĩ Việt Nam Muôn Năm!" "Chủ tịch Hồ Chí Minh Vĩ Đại Sống Mãi Trọng Sự Nghiệp Của Chúng Ta!"
[153] Especially TCT Xây lắp Dầu Khí Nghệ An (Petrovietnam Nghe An Construction JSC), Handico 30, TECCO, and the Mường Thanh Hotel Group.

With growing numbers of middle-class consumers, international and national corporations start to eye the market in Vinh. This is most visibly expressed in the presence of car-showrooms, shopping centres, and high-rise apartment buildings. Among the first to arrive were French Casino Group and German Metro Group. These showcases of consumer culture do not only provide shopping opportunities but also stages for new choices in lifestyle and consumption. They attract customers from as far away as Laos, while at the same time many of the people living next door only participate as non-buying spectators. This creation of "internationalised" economic centres follows the provincial authorities' strategy to generate tax-income and job-opportunities by attracting investment, while at the same time setting these areas spatially apart from administrative zones where the revolutionary role of the city as Hồ Chí Minh's homeland is celebrated (Sở Kế Hoạch Và Đầu Tư Nghệ An, October 2010).

As in other cities this modernizing vision is pursued by a coalition between officials and developers (Trang thông tin điện tử tp Vinh, 24.3.2008). As the market is driven by political considerations and speculation, numerous projects remain on billboards or quickly fall into disrepair upon their completion (Nguyễn Đình Cát, 25.7.2013; Đôthị.net, 13.3.2011; Nguyễn Hải, 4.1.2011; Thành Nam, 20.12.2010; Huy Minh, 6.11.2010). From relatively modest beginnings in the early 2000s, the market for apartments and real estate developments has quickly attracted numerous investors (Schwenkel, 2012; Trung Kiên, 11.11.2010, 5.3.2009, 20.3.2008; Đôthị.net, 18.8.2009). Construction companies have focused on apartments for middle- and high-income earners, creating an oversupply in this market that, in combination with economic difficulties, makes it difficult to carry out registered projects and sell completed apartments. TECCO Construction Company for example has reacted to this by expanding into the social housing market (Châu Lan, 29.8.2011). The provincial People's Committee has encouraged activities in this field since mid-2010. Policies are targeted at the supply side of the market, by cutting fees and allowing developers to reserve 20% of the respective area for commercial activities (Thiên Thảo, 7.11.2010). While apartments in TECCO's social housing developments were quickly sold, bitter conflicts ensued as buyers perceived prices as unreasonably high for their incomes and the quality of housing provided (K. Hoan, Đức Kỳ, 4.4.2012; TECCO, 19.4.2011).[154]

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[154] TECCO's project in Hưng Lộc ward was the first housing project for people with low incomes in Vinh, completed in late 2011. Only families with a per capita income up to 1.7 Mio Đồng per month were eligible to receive apartments in the building. Before prices per m² were approved by the provincial People's Committee (PPC), TECCO demanded payment of up to 70% of apartment prices, which were set at about 8 Mio Đồng per m² by TECCO, and later reduced to 7.7 Mio Đồng/m² by provincial authorities. Complaints of resident compared these prices to much lower m² prices in other cities like Đà Nẵng. Additionally TECCO had allegedly introduced unfavourable credit schemes to buyers. TECCO on the other hand blamed the provincial People's Committee for attracting the company's investment with promises to apply favourable policies, but later reneging on that

Figure 26
One of Vinh's first new apartment complexes constructed by Handico, located on Nguyễn Thái Học Street (picture taken by author, 14.4.2011).

Apart from leaving housing development to the market, authorities in Vinh have followed the policy to sell state owned housing to residents. Due to its complete destruction during the American War, Vinh's housing stock consists of a considerable number of collective housing areas constructed in the 1970s. When residents bought units in these areas from the late 1980s on, they often acquired only the housing structures, not land use rights. This created legal uncertainties preventing many from carrying out costly repairs and investments.[155] As a step towards the development of a civilised and modern city, demolishing these housing areas until 2015 became official policy in September 2007, as will be describe in detail below (UBND Nghệ An, 21.9.2007; HĐND Nghệ An, 25.7.2007). Another form of housing that is regarded as being in the way of modern and civilised development is the Quang Trung Housing Complex.

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promise prompting prices to rise. According to the company, contrary to promises by the PPC, taxes were not reduced, favourable credit rates were not available to the company, and buyers were denied access to low-interest credit and special pay-back schemes (Thanh Uyên, 16.7.2013; K. Hoan, Đức Kỳ, 4.4.2012; Nguyễn Phê, 4.4.2012). The provincial People's Committee, in turn, claimed that it had no funds to assist in low-income housing construction and that, while it encouraged such projects, it could not assist in all points. Thus, the prices of housing in the project were close to market prices and were a problem to be solved between the investor and buyers (Nguyễn Phê, 4.4.2012). No solution seems to be in sight as both buyers and developer turn to authorities for help (Thanh Uyên, 16.7.2013; Nguyễn Phê, 4.4.2012). Whether policies applied in new projects avoid such problems as described above remains to be seen (Toàn Thắng, 8.6.2013).
[155] Interview 29.6.2011

As described above, the Quang Trung Housing Complex did not become fully functional during the period of assistance by the GDR and long thereafter. In 1984, open air wells had to be constructed as provisory water supply (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 13.08.1984). Already by 1986, only five years after cooperation ended, the deteriorating quality of many buildings, especially of block C1, created unsafe living conditions for residents (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 22.3.1986). However, due to a lack of funds resulting from economic difficulties and low rents, maintenance continued to be kept to a minimum over the next decades and repairs were carried out in piecemeal fashion (UBND Nghệ An, 16.10.1997, 29.6.1996). A central water supply and a wastewater system became finally operational due to official development assistance from the Federal German Republic in the 1990s (Nguyen Sy Thuy et al., 2011: pp.120-125). However, unsafe conditions persist, during Vinh's frequent storms and heavy rain many of Quang Trung's inhabitants have to be evacuated (Thân Cương, 2.8.2011; see also Lê Thanh, 24.08.2012).

From 1988 on, first attempts were undertaken to sell a number of apartments to inhabitants (UBND Nghệ Tĩnh, 30.4.1988). From 1992 provincial authorities unsuccessfully tried to sell all of Quang Trung's apartments.[156] Finally, in 2001 the Ministry of Construction proposed a plan to rehabilitate the housing complex according to market mechanisms as a national example for the conversion of housing estates. Inhabitants would be given first-buyer priority, but market value-prices and the absence of special consideration other than law-required compensation would put the new apartments out of reach of many (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.145).

> "The MOC project, presented in Hanoi in March 2001, featured an extravagant 'façade of the twenty-first century' (animated by a number of new staircases serving only two apartments per floor), a site plan of decreased density and larger open spaces, and apartments enlarged by six meters along the northern front façades. Examples were drawn from Japan and Finland. […] The local and provincial plans for the rehabilitation of Quang Trung have been superseded. The MOC project takes precedence and it appears only too typical of urbanism in the hands of some central administrators and their docile 'surface designers.' 'Imagineered' (to borrow terminology from Disney) cities

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[156] Provincial authorities planned to sell all housing units in Quang Trung to residents, while the complex would stay under public management. As in the overall policy to sell state-owned housing to inhabitants, this would lessen ideological and financial burdens on state agencies, while encouraging private investment. Funds raised by the sale would be used for other housing projects (UBND Nghệ An, 10.11.1992). However, this plan was not carried out and in 1997, a new attempt was undertaken to sell apartments in the framework of NĐ 61/CP-policies in 1997 (UBND Nghệ An, 17.4.1997). Again, this plan was not implemented, as were plans to carry out the most needed repairs in 1997 (UBND Nghệ An, 23.6.1999, 16.10.1997).

and the theme-parking of urban areas driven by grandiose dreams are still in vogue in some powerful offices. In Hanoi, a considerable number of politicians and planners back their visions with piles of overly optimistic statistics, heavily overestimating the power of their decrees. The fantastical thinking that Vinh can transform itself overnight into an orderly, individualistic-driven market system is irresponsible and results in irrelevant urban visions. Seductive imagery is not the solution for one of the city's most important urban sites." (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.145)

The project would involve demolition of a number of Quang Trung's buildings and the relocation of inhabitants to resettlement apartments in the northern part of the city (UBND Nghệ An, 9.11.2001, 22.10.2001). In 2002, the provincial People's Committee agreed to a proposition by TECCO[157] from Hồ Chí Minh City to plan the redevelopment of the first block to be demolished (C1) as a complex including housing, office, and retail space (see Figure 27; UBND Nghệ An, 22.7.2002). Schwenkel calls the construction of this project, including two high-rise towers, "the most striking visual changes to the cityscape" (Schwenkel, 2012: p.457).

However, as with previous attempts at repair or rehabilitation of the housing complex, the 2001 MoC plan was not implemented. Instead, it was decided that the whole complex would be redeveloped according to guidelines set out in 34/2007/NQ-CP, including the demolition of all buildings (HĐND Nghệ An, 25.7.2007). This resolution prescribes the improvement and reconstruction of housing complexes as integrated projects including housing as well as technical and social infrastructure, similar to New Housing Areas. Again, the goal is to contribute to the development of a civilised and modern city (Chính phủ, 3.7.2007). The planned redevelopment of Quang Trung signifies a shift in ideological emphasis from a socialist egalitarian society towards a market-liberal vision of the city as a creator of revenue and a "modern and civilised" space of middle-class consumer culture (Schwenkel, 2013; 2012).[158]

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[157] Công ty Cổ phần Đầu tư Xây dựng & Ứng dụng Cộng nghệ mới (New Technology application & construction investment corporation)
[158] Schwenkel describes this as a typical case of replacing socialist ruins with lucrative development schemes. This process, according to her, includes complex issues of identity, community, and ideology (Schwenkel 2010, 2012, 2013). While I agree that it signifies a shift in ideological emphasis, I take issue with other parts of her analysis. She overly emphasises the role of international agencies, particularly a Local Agenda 21 program (LA 21) that will be described in detail below, in the promotion of market-liberal policies for the redevelopment of Vinh (there is especially no hint given at why and how "Vinh ironically became a Cold War battleground between the former Germanys" (Schwenkel, 2013: p.268). As will be described below, a market driven approach that would most likely see many of Quang Trung's inhabitants relocating to other places was most strongly advanced by the Ministry of Construction, while the LA 21 proposal was much more considerate of the needs and wishes of inhabitants. Additionally, the logic of market-driven development and an individualistic,

As a first step that was supposed to be completed by the end of 2010, all housing units in Quang Trung were to be sold to inhabitants to enable calculation of compensation by developers (Đình Sẩm, 8.6.2010, 7.6.2010). In mid-2011, Vinh's People's Committee released an article on its website stating that nearly all of Quang Trung's residents had registered to buy their housing units (Hải Yến, 14.6.2011). First land use certificates were handed over to buyers in September 2011 (Hương Giang, 27.9.2011).

The three zones of Quang Trung have been assigned to three developers for this project, as no investor willing to redevelop the whole area could be found.[159] However, so far only one new apartment block has been constructed by Handico at the north-western corner of the complex, where a sports-field had been located, and no buildings apart from C1 have been demolished. Delays are due to prolonged negotiations between inhabitants and developers over compensation, as well as the process of selling apartments to inhabitants as a precondition for calculating the amount of compensation. Only in March 2013 did Petrovietnam Nghe An Construction JSC receive an investment license for its Zone A project (Tổng công ty xây lắp dầu khí Nghệ An – PVNC, 18.3.2013).

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orderly vision of Vinh's future have been vehemently criticized by LA 21, as expressed in the citation of Shannon and Loeckx above, who were members of the international LA 21 team. The current redevelopment project (demolition and reconstruction) had been proposed after the involvement of LA 21 in Vinh. Furthermore, the view of Quang Trung, as she describes herself, had shifted from that of an ideal living quarter to a "socialist ruin" even before the LA 21 program started in Vinh (Schwenkel, 2013: p.267). The role of Vietnamese actors has been more important in the re-evalution of Quang Trung than attributed to them by Schwenkel. In fact, as described above, plans for rehabilitation including the sale of apartments had been formulated before Vinh was chosen for the LA 21 program in late 1996 (UBND Nghệ An, 08.09.1994). Documents of the LA 21 program suggest that Vinh's authorities had even approached the program with the need to rehabilitate Quang Trung during the process of choosing a Vietnamese city (email 11.3.1997; LA 21, 25.2.1997).

[159] Interview 18.5.2011. The three companies are: Petrovietnam Nghe An Construction JSC (Zone A; Tổng công ty xây lắp dầu khí Nghệ An – PVNC, 14.04.2011), CT CP Địa ốc vườn xanh Nghệ An (Khu B; Công Ty cổ phần Địa ốc vườn xanh Nghệ An, 13.6.2011), and Handico 30 (Khu C; Hải Hưng, Lê Xuân Thủy, 14.4.2011).

Figure 27
New high-rise apartment buildings stand next to blocks of the Quang Trung Housing Complex (picture taken by author, 14.6.2011). The building on the left side is part of TECCO's development that replaced block C1. The larger building on its right is the first of Handico's high-rises.

In the above described vision a city's civilised and modern character stems from the outcome of centralized planning by experts, as well as from the promotion of civilised behaviour of its inhabitants. In contrast, international cooperation has shifted to a view of the city in which its modern character results from the ways and institutions that create and govern the city. In this view, modernity is expressed by democratic and participatory processes, not physical outcomes. Made possible by Vietnam's policies of international integration, modern projects promoting a *Participatory City* have challenged the vision of a Modern and Civilised Vinh since the mid-1990s. The following part introduces perceptions of development, participation, and civil society informing these projects.

4.2 The Participatory City

According to Hall, the view of a city as created by its inhabitants can be traced to the anarchist movement in urban planning and is most prominently expressed in the work Patrick Geddes (Hall, 2002: p.263). Geddes advocated close engagement of architects and planners with the working classes and urban population to find out about their aspirations, as well as setting an example of how individuals could make a change to their living environment. Living himself in a simple flat in Edinburgh, he used techniques of social sciences (so called "civic surveys") in activities that would today be referred to as slum upgrading already in the late 19th century (Hall, 2002: p.264). Travelling to India in 1914, he applied his ideas in a colonial setting and "developed his concept of 'conservative surgery' – or, in latter-day jargon, urban rehabilitation" (Hall, 2002: p.265). Geddes' visionary concepts were met with suspicion, and at times open hostility, by the established bureaucracy. While he claimed that they produced better results at lower costs than top-down planning, his methods required careful on-site research and engagement with local populations, which experts were not enthusiastic to undertake. He stressed that planning required "real and active participation", warning of "Dangers of Municipal Government from above", resulting in "detachment from public and popular feeling, and consequently, before long, from public and popular needs and usefulness" (Hall, 2002: pp.266-269; citing Geddes, 1918: p.104).

However, Geddes' views did for long not become influential. International housing policies promoted by governments and international agencies focused on public housing produced by the state and rented by residents, in the early years after World War 2. However, such policies proved to be costly and often ill-adapted to local climates and cultural settings (Harris, Giles, 2003: pp.174-175). Policies relying on self-help and market forces in contrast to top-down state intervention had at times been promoted in colonial urban development from the 1920s on, and were employed by Latin American countries from the 1950s on. Harris and Giles show that "aided self-help was consistently endorsed by the leading international housing agencies" (including the HHFA[160], the IADB[161], the ILO[162] and UN organisations) from the 1950s on (Harris, Giles, 2003: p.176; see also Harris, 2003a). Many writers attribute the spread of such policies to the work of John Turner[163] (Harris, 2003:

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[160] US-based Housing and Home Finance Agency
[161] US-based Inter-American Development Bank
[162] International Labour Organization
[163] A British architect, Turner was influenced by anarchist architects such as Kropotkin and Geddes. Due to the rigidly institutionalized United Kingdom of his time, Turner applied Geddes' ideas in Peru from the late 1950s to the early 1960s in an environment in which self-aid was already being vigorously discussed as a solution to low-income housing (Harris, 2003a: pp.248-249; Bromley, 2003; Hall, 2002: p.271). Contrary to prevalent views of slums in developing countries that saw them as breeding grounds of vice, requiring outside intervention (often slum clearance), he maintained that dwellers in informal settlements did at times rationally choose to stay there, and that if required they knew how to build themselves new homes. Thus, he saw the role of the

p.164; see for example Hall, 2002: p.271). Harris, however, shows Turner's role as mainly that of "a channel for the diffusion of ideas about squatter settlements that probably originated in Latin America and that he helped bring to the attention of housing and urban experts around the world" (Harris, 2003a: p.263). From the mid-1960s on, Turner's views were widely accepted, by the 1970s "Turnerite policies had received the ultimate accolade of respectability: they had been embraced by the World Bank" (Hall, 2002: p.277), although, as Harris shows, in a very different fashion than advocated by Turner himself[164] (Harris, 2003a). Concepts of participatory development were, however, not confined to the development sector, but largely replaced modernist top-down planning in the West in the 1960s and 70s[165] (Hall, 2002: pp.279-293).

According to Evertsz (2000), while participation in urban planning and housing construction has marked development policies (as advocated by the World Bank) since the 1970s, emphasis on the role of different actors has shifted considerably over time. In Site-and-Service projects of the 1970s influenced by Turner's views saw the state as supplying infrastructure and land. However, in line with general changes in the development discourse which moved to the Washington Consensus, the state became regarded as unable to efficiently fulfil this function and housing production by NGOs and the formal market was promoted in the 1980s. In the Post-Washington Consensus of the 1990s, the state plays the role of an "enabler" of housing construction, while projects rely on participation of NGOs, community organisations, or civil society actors for implementation (Evertsz, 2000: pp.25-28).

While following a state-led, top-down approach influenced by Keynesian economics until the 1970s, development actors shifted their focus and approaches in the 1980s. What became known as the Washington Consensus in the 1980s was a promotion of the idea that the market should function unrestricted by outside powers and would thus lead to development. In its more radical versions, this approach promoted market forces as an end in themselves and posited the market against the state, which was seen as being invested with particular interests, captured by elites and generally not able to deliver the goods (Harriss, 2002: p.77). As it became increasingly clear that the market was also not able to achieve the goals of development, the debate about the right approaches to development continued, shifting to the Post-Washington Consensus around 1990. In this consensus the state came back in as a player in development. It was assigned an enabling role; its task was to provide rules and a framework in which the market would operate. Hewison and Jayasuriya argue that this shift

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government and planners as setting a framework in which self-help would be possible, as well as supporting this process by the provision of materials, services, and especially land.

[164] Turner's writing of that time includes for example (Turner, 1976) and (Turner, Fichter, 1972).

[165] As is described in the chapter on the construction of the Socialist City in Vinh, planning was an integral part of socialist economics and politics; therefore centralized planning remained entrenched in socialist countries.

in development politics is not a complete turn-around from the Washington Consensus but rather "should be viewed as an attempt to develop a political and institutional framework to embed the structural adjustment policies of the Washington consensus. […] the PWC [Post-Washington Consensus] complements, rather than replaces, the policies associated with the Washington consensus" (Hewison, Jayasuriya, 2004: p.5). To achieve development a country would thus have to reform its institutional setup to create an environment in which the market would be able to operate in the right way. These "good" institutional structures resembled those of developed countries with a market-liberal system (Ufer, 2008: pp.28-29). Central concepts of the Post-Washington Consensus and the discourse surrounding it are participation and civil society.[166]

Since the 1970s, "participation" has become one of the buzz-words in the development discourse:

> "People's participation as a concept was formulated – or rediscovered – in the 1970s, in response to the growing awareness that the various approaches then employed for rural development, such as community development, integrated rural development or basic needs did not often lead to significant rural development and especially poverty reduction, largely, as was then thought, because there was little involvement in development projects of those undergoing 'development', and particularly the poor." (de Campo Guimarães, 2009: p.5)

According to Mohan, participation in various forms is accepted as an integral part of development projects and policies by nearly all actors in development (Mohan, 2001).

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the interest in civil society regained in prominence, as civil society actors were seen as the major power that had driven the peaceful revolutions in the Eastern European countries[167] (Mitlin, 2001: p.152). According to Lewis, out of the numerous conceptualisations of civil society, two are commonly embraced

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[166] "Today, international development is characterized by the aid system's urgent embrace of the concept of civil society" (Fowler, 2000: p.3). Similarly, participation is referred to as an "emerging new orthodoxy in the world of development" (Henkel, Stirrat, 2001: p.168).

[167] Mitlin identifies three major reasons for the emphasis on the possible role of civil society in development. The first is the role played by civil society actors in the push for democratic changes mainly in Eastern Europe. Secondly, it was recognized that institutions and institutional change do play a role for a country's development, that the market would not solve all the problems. A third reason is a disillusioned view of NGOs, which were criticized as not being able to live up to their previously promoted abilities to provide efficiency and legitimacy to development projects (Mitlin, 2001: p.152). An added reason is that with the end of the cold war, western donors, especially the United States became bolder in their spending to promote democracy through development aid (Encarnación, 2011; Fowler, 2011: p.49).

nowadays.[168] The first one is heavily influenced by de Tocqueville's depiction of nineteenth century associations in the United States as ensuring freedom and providing protection against the state as well as curtailing its powers (Lewis, 2002: p.571). According to Ehrenberg it was Tocqueville's worry about the reach of the state in other societies that led to his claim that voluntary activity connected individuals to the common good (Ehrenberg, 2011: p.24). The second contemporarily influential approach to civil society builds on the works of Antonio Gramsci. He argued "that civil society is the arena, separate from state and market, in which ideological hegemony is contested, implying that civil society contains a wide range of different organisations and ideologies which both challenge and uphold the existing order" (Lewis, 2002: p.572; see also Gray, 1999).

The different conceptualisations of civil society create much confusion for those who seek to apply the concept in their work. As Edwards notes, "civil society is one of the most enduring and confusing concepts in social science. […] civil society is also a […] contested concept because so many definitions and understandings exist" (Edwards, 2011: p.3). However, in the field of development some general views persist on the nature of civil society. According to Edwards, these general views are expressed in Walzer's definition: "civil society is the sphere of uncoerced human association between the individual and the state, in which people undertake collective action for normative and substantive purposes, relatively independent of government and the market" (Edwards, 2011: pp.3-4; citing Walzer, 1998: pp.123-124).

According to Jenkins "The community of scholars, consultants, activists, and policy analysts that influence policymaking in national governments, international agencies, and non-governmental organisations have constructed an elaborate discourse around the role played by civil society in the process of social, economic and political change in post-colonial societies" (Jenkins, 2001: p.1). In this discourse, civil society as made up of associations, plays a major role in the structures of a state that employs good governance[169]. A large number of expectations are connected to the participation of civil society actors in development. Not only is their participation promoted as contributing to efficient project implementation, it is also regarded as a political force that furthers equitable development as well as democratic institutions (Fowler, 2000: pp.7-8). In the promotion of democracy, civil society is supposed to serve a dual role: firstly it is to be a political force that drives forward

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[168] For an overview of the history of a concept in philosophy and the social sciences see (Ehrenberg, 2011).

[169] According to UNDP, "Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. And it promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources" (http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/policy/chapter1.htm, accessed 24.9.2013).

the development into a liberal democracy; secondly it enables the implementation of "good government" and is a part of it. Jenkins describes these two roles as mutually related:

> "The logic runs roughly as follows. Development requires sound policies and impartial implementation. These can only be delivered by governments that are held accountable for their actions. Accountability, in turn, depends upon the existence of 'autonomous centers of social and economic power' that can act as watchdogs over the activities of politicians and government officials. Civil society consists of both the associations that make up these 'centers' and the 'enabling environment' that permits them to operate freely. It is an arena of public space as well as a set of private actors. Therefore, aid to the 'democracy and governance sector', as it has increasingly come to be known within the profession, must be earmarked to support both individual associations as well as the political milieu in which they carry out their functions." (Jenkins, 2001: p.3)

In the discourse of the Post-Washington Consensus, a similar dual role is attributed to participation. It is seen on the one hand as enabling more effective and efficient project implementation, and on the other as furthering empowerment of those who participate and as reducing structural inequalities as well as social exclusion, thereby ultimately altering power relations (Osmani, 2008; Hickey, Mohan, 2004: pp.11-13; Craig, Mayo, 1995: p.2). Projects promoting participation and civil society qualify as modern projects because they are intended to bring about political and social change beyond immediate actions.

When in the 1990s donors explicitly looked for NGOs to implement their projects in Vietnam, one of their goals was to contribute to political transformation through the promotion of participation and the strengthening of civil society actors. However, the situation they faced in Vietnam had been different to many other countries. Having only recently been embraced by the larger donor community as eligible for aid, Vietnam had no experience with the concepts that were the buzz-words of development at that time (Hannah, 2007; Salemink, 2006; Gray, 1999).[170] The next part will turn to two modern projects involving international cooperation in which actors advocate the development of Vinh as a *Participatory City*. It will present the

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[170] Hannah describes how the term civil society in its two translations of xã hội công dân (translated as citizen society) or xã hội dân sự (translated as civilian society) is not used in the media and when used in conversations "elicited blank looks and wild guesses" (Hannah, 2007: p.99). He argues that the use of these terms was a response to the introduction of civil society by donors and that until today they are used extremely rarely in official documents. This is due to its perceived "sensitivity" in the Vietnamese context and the unclear stance of the Communist Party towards it. Today, the term xã hội dân sự is the used more often, while not being exactly defined (Hannah, 2007: pp.108-109).

different actors involved, their strategies to cope with the changing institutional environment and the officially promoted vision of a Modern and Civilised City, as well as the projects' results.

4.2.1 The Localising Agenda 21 Programme (1997 to 2002)

Vinh had been influenced by international politics since its founding as a city by the French. After it had been repeatedly destroyed in the wars following the declaration of independence by Hồ Chí Minh, it was reconstructed with the help of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the 1970s. After that, however, it was not until the mid-1990s when new projects of urban development with the participation of foreign organisations and donors were implemented. By that time the international development discourse had already shifted to the Post-Washington Consensus described above. This shift was marked by the "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro which had called for sustainable development and the promotion of Local Agenda 21 (United Nations Conference on Environment, 1992). Civil society and participation were part of the institutionalized discourse of development in the early to mid-1990s, as expressed by Article 4 of the Habitat Agenda, adopted at the Habitat II Conference: "Democracy, respect for human rights, transparent, representative and accountable government and administration in all sectors of society, as well as effective participation by civil society, are indispensable foundations for the realisation of sustainable development" (UNCHS, 1996). It was in this context that Vinh was chosen to be one city in the Localizing Agenda 21 Programme.[171]

The program Localising Agenda 21: Action planning for Sustainable Urban Development (LA 21) describes itself as being embedded in the discourse of sustainable development, participation, and civil society as outlined above (Verschure, Tuts, 2004: p.15). It was jointly designed by the Post Graduate Centre for Human Settlements (PGCHS) in the Department of Architecture, Urban Design and Planning of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium as well as the Training and Capacity Building Unit of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS, later UN-HABITAT); both institutions had been working together since the late 1970s. Funding for the project was provided by the Belgian Development Cooperation. The partners in the program were thus as follows (Verschure, Tuts, 2004: p.17):

-     UNCHS[172]

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[171] The project program was carried out in three cities. Apart from Vinh, these were Nakuru in Kenya and Essaouira in Morocco.
[172] Now UN-HABITAT

- Belgian Development Cooperation (under the Belgian government)

- PGCHS coordinated a Belgian consortium of universities, NGOs and cooperating municipalities

- Partner cities in selected countries

- National ministries and capacity-building institutions.

4.2.1.1 Approach

Tuts and Verschure cite the general objective of the program as "to contribute to sustainable urban development by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of providing basic urban housing and services through local government and community partnerships in three priority towns and to disseminate the results and lessons learned to other towns and countries" (Verschure, Tuts, 2004: p.17; citing PGCHS, UNCHS, 1995: p.16). Specific goals were improved access by the poor to shelter, infrastructure and services; reducing the burden of poverty of communities through the delivery of infrastructure and the implementation of municipal planning and management actions plans; to integrate these action plans with strategic urban development plans so as to promote urban development policies and strategies for more sustainable urban development. The program thus aimed at both the implementation of action plans and capacity building. In the approach of "Strategic Structure Planning" these both go together.

Strategic Structure Planning (SSP) starts with a critique of traditional approaches of "master planning". Van den Broeck describes SSP as taking "space" as the integrative factor for social, cultural, economic, and ecological activities. SSP activities are divided into three "working tracks" namely working towards a long term vision for the city, daily policy as well as actions, and engaging different actors and citizens in the planning and decision process (van den Broeck, 2004: p.177). Capacity building actions promoting this approach were to be combined with practical implementation of so called strategic projects. Actors to be involved in these processes in the selected cities were to include local government, civil society groups, and the private sector because they "can creatively engage in discussions, in proposing actions and in being partners in execution of projects, as well as in resolving conflicts or removing obstacles towards more sustainable urban development" (Verschure, Tuts, 2004: p.23). The project aimed at "the encouragement and promotion of citizen initiatives with the intention of bringing about direct and concrete change in people's living conditions and to empower them" (van den Broeck et al., 2004: p.205). Additionally, the program was meant to contribute to decentralisation policies. Good urban governance was

later added as a principle in the program (Verschure, Tuts, 2004: pp.19-24). The approach of the program is a typical example of the mainstream policies promoted by donors in the framework of the "Post-Washington Consensus". It thus constitutes a modern project in which concrete actions are intended to bring about political and social change aimed at more participatory development, including participation of civil society, sustainability, and good governance.

4.2.1.2 Implementation

While work in Nakuru in Kenya and Essaouira in Morocco had started in 1995, the selection process in Vietnam took until 1996 (de Meulder, Loeckx, 2004; Loeckx et al., 2004). Cities considered for the project were medium-sized provincial capitals facing explicitly difficult situations such as a lack of resources, environmental conflicts, or social tensions (Verschure, Tuts, 2004: p.19). Vinh had been chosen on the basis of its positive response to the program and its clear statement of needs and priorities and was in general seen as suitable to the program's approach. However, from the beginning it was clear to the project partners outside Vietnam that due to budgetary constraints the intensive preparatory work conducted in the other cities could not be replicated and that they would have to rely more on inputs from the local and national partners (LA 21, 25.2.1997).

During a mission of international experts to Vinh and Hanoi in April 1997 a Local Team for the implementation of the program was setup under Vinh's People's Committee.[173] This five-member team was headed by the director of the International Relations Office of the People's Committee of Vinh. In addition, the composition of an Advisory Board was agreed on: local and provincial government representatives, the Women's Union, representatives of the business community, representatives of selected urban districts and co-operatives. Those partners contacted during the mission in Vinh were all part of the city's and the provincial administration. Other actors involved at that time were the Institute of Geography and the Architectural University in Hanoi as well as employees of the Ministry of Construction. Cooperating international organisations were UNCHS in Vietnam and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Association of Provincial Cities of Vietnam, which was to serve as an advisor and play a role in disseminating the project's results to other cities in Vietnam, was also involved from early on[174] (Tuts, 6.5.1997). This mission set the pattern that would dominate the program's implementation in Vinh: almost all actors involved were part of state organisations or of institutions closely associated with the

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[173] That it was administratively part of the People's Committee is evident from official documents of the Local Team, for example (People's Committee of Vinh City, Local Team of LA 21, 30.9.1997).
[174] See page 164-165 for a detailed description of ACVN.

Party or the state. Indeed, the local priorities had "been identified by different political and technical levels of the People's Committee of Nghệ An Province and Vinh, but there has been as yet little consultation with non-governmental urban actors" (email 11.3.1997). In addition, the actors that were more loosely connected to the state, such as universities, were located in Hanoi, not in Vinh. When later on research centres that were not part of the state were contacted, these were also located in Hanoi and contacts did not lead to further cooperation (LA 21, 1.12.1997: p. 43). However, the NGO ENDA-Vietnam (Environmental Development Action in the Third World), located in Hồ Chí Minh City, would later on become involved in the program.

The issues on which the program's activities focused were the update of the current Master Plan, the rehabilitation of Quang Trung Housing Complex, improvement of solid waste management, and the organisation of training activities for urban planners and managers. To address these issues in accordance with the approach of Strategic Structure Planning workshops were organized on the different topics and strategic projects were identified through which the new approach was demonstrated. According to Shannon and Loeckx "Seminars took the role of brainstorming sessions and the new ideas brought forth by foreign experts were politely listened to and welcomed while simultaneously kept at arm's length from the existing planning complexities" (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.133). However, by opening up workshops to new actors such as the Women's Union or the Fatherland Front, issues of urban development were discussed among a larger variety of actors than usual in Vietnam (Shannon, April 1999).

Strategic projects should serve the dual goal of capacity building and solving urgent problems. Most attention was accorded to the rehabilitation of the Quang Trung Housing Complex. Different solutions were discussed and in March 2001 a strategy for rehabilitation was agreed, largely based on work by PGCHS and a Vietnamese consultant, a former student of PGCHS.[175] They drew heavily on experiences of similar projects from Eastern Europe and the former GDR (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004; Shannon, April 2001; April 1999; October 1997). When this proposal was presented to provincial authorities in 2001, it was revealed that the Prime Minister had taken an interest in the modernisation of the Quang Trung Housing Complex and the province had commissioned the Ministry of Construction to prepare a study for rehabilitation separate from the one of LA 21. In discussions of the two proposals, it was agreed that a third proposal should be prepared integrating the previous two. Provincial and city authorities seem to have been in favour of the LA 21 proposal, in

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[175] Other strategic projects were the redesign of Vinh's main market and of the city's riverfront. Work on both was mainly carried out by the national consultant and PGCHS. While serving as the basis of discussions on the development of the city, none of these have been implemented (Shannon, November 2001; Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: pp.146-148).

which they had been involved. However, a new proposal by the MoC had been adopted by the Prime Minister without consultations with LA 21 or the city. Major characteristics of the LA 21 proposal, such as the inhabitants remaining in the complex after rehabilitation, had not been taken up by the MoC. As a result, PGCHS and UNCHS retreated from the project (Shannon, November 2001).

> "The local and provincial plans for the rehabilitation of Quang Trung have been superseded. The MOC project takes precedence and it appears only too typical of urbanism in the hands of some central administrators and their docile 'surface designers'." (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.146)

As a strategic project the Quang Trung Housing Complex had also been the subject of a pilot project as an example for its rehabilitation. After an initial proposal for the rehabilitation of one of the blocks had been presented by the Local Team at a workshop in September 1997, it was withdrawn by the Local Team in the "light of the workshop and follow-up discussions" (Shannon, October 1997: p.1). It was agreed by the Road Construction and Public Works Company (RC&PW, the agency responsible for the upkeep of Quang Trung), the Belgian Consortium and the Local Team that RC&PW would conduct a feasibility study for another block (B6) of Quang Trung. After a review of the study by UNCHS and the Belgian Consortium the upgrading project would be carried out in two phases (People's Committee of Vinh City, Local Team of LA 21, 30.9.1997). However, without informing UNCHS or the Belgian Consortium, upgrading was carried out by the Local Team and work on the project stopped after the first phase (see Figure 28; LA 21, 29.9.1998: p.38).

Two criticisms about cooperation in the program are recurring themes in project documents. The first refers to communication difficulties and a lack of commitment on the side of Vinh's authorities. Language problems were a large problem, since no member of the Local Team could speak English and no one on the UNCHS-PGCHS side could speak Vietnamese. Project funds were used for English lessons for the Local Team to tackle this problem and Vinh's mayor promised to attach a translator to the Local Team. However, language problems persisted throughout the project (email 6.8.1998; Shannon, October 1997). Additionally, commitment by the city's authorities had been low in terms of human resources, funds, and work invested; the city's lack of commitment can also be seen in the episode described above, where the Local Team started the upgrading pilot without referring to the project partners (Shannon, November 2001; LA 21, 29.9.1998: p.38). Indeed, the case of LA 21 had been a repeated example of bad communication in urban administration in publications of UNCHS/UN-HABITAT (Tuts, 2001; Tuts, Cody, 2000: p.14).

The second line of criticism concerns the lack of civil society, NGO, and community participation in the program. From the beginning, experts of UNCHS and PGCHS raised concerns about the absence of such actors in the program (email 11.3.1997). "Despite repeated advice from UNCHS (HABITAT) and the Belgian Consortium, too little effort was made by the Local Team to invite representatives of the non-governmental and private sectors" (LA 21, 29.9.1998: p.37). The inclusion of such actors had been one of the priorities of the donor, the Belgian Development Cooperation. There is surprisingly little information in both published and unpublished documentation of LA 21 on its focus on solid waste management, given that this had been the area where community and NGO involvement was applied. Activities in this area started in late 1997 with external experts, two Vietnamese and one from UNCHS, assessing the situation in Vinh and making recommendations (LA 21, 29.9.1998: pp.38-39; LA 21, 1.12.1997: pp.41-42). ENDA as an international NGO had also cooperated with the LA 21 Programme in Morocco; ENDA-Vietnam had already gained experience in working with urban communities and consulting in development projects in provincial urban centres. As part of the LA 21 program, a solid waste management pilot project was carried out by ENDA-Vietnam in four of Vinh's wards and completed in 2001 (Shannon, April 2001). This initiative of community based solid waste management was later taken up by a project of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) project (Shannon, November 2001). Community based activities were continued with the establishment of a Community Development Fund in 2002, with capital provided by UN-HABITAT, formerly UNCHS (Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003: p.47).

The program had also been troubled by change of personnel, both in the Local Team as well as in UNCHS. As the last months approached, no Junior Professional Officer (JPO) was assigned to assist the Local Team as the previous JPO had left the project, with consequences on communications between Vinh and the other partners (PGCHS, 2001: p.11).[176] The project had also come under scrutiny by a newly elected Belgian government that evaluated its aid policies, resulting in a lag of activities for nearly one year. As a result, the funding phase was extended until the end of 2001 and the project was to be handed over to local actors by March 2002 (Shannon, April 2001).

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[176] The JPO's were international experts assigned to the Local Teams. However, a new JPO joined the project later on.

4.2.1.3 Results

Published accounts of the LA 21 Programme focus on its achievements, but also acknowledge some of its shortcomings. Raf Tuts, then coordinator of the Localising Agenda 21 Programme placed the program in the context of the development discourse described above:

> "Local Agenda 21 processes encourage more self-reliant local development whereby the key partners include different layers of government as well as the civic society and the private sector. In the Habitat agenda the Local Agenda 21 framework has been reconfirmed as a valuable approach to harmonizing urban development and the environment." (Tuts, October 1998: p.175)

Regarding Vinh, he blames the hierarchical structure of the state in all aspects of life as the reason why strategic planning is not easily understood by decision makers. He adds that "the lack of effective participation of civic society in the consultation process is not conducive to a balanced strategic structure planning process" (Tuts, October 1998: p.184) He claims that one of LA 21's seminars had helped to change the approach to planning and managing public rental houses and that there are immediate physical improvements in housing conditions and improved skills of key actors. Qualifying, he adds that "the full impact of such changes in policy can only be assessed over a longer period" (Tuts, October 1998: p.186). Commenting generally on the process in all the cities, he argues that the involvement of civic society needs to be seen in context and that there should be baseline indicators to measure such participation.

Tuts and Cody, writing on HABITAT's experiences with Local Agenda 21, cite Vinh and Vietnam as a negative example with regards to the sharing of information:

> "Too often there is a lack of communication between municipal departments and state companies, as in Vinh City, Viet Nam, while information is used as a power tool within the organization, or between different public institutions. Information on issues such as industrial or residential investments, land subdivisions, infrastructure development and related budgets is often hidden within one department of the local authority" (Tuts, Cody, 2000: p.14).

In LA 21's concluding publication "Urban Trialogues" a chapter by Shannon and Loeckx is reserved for Vinh (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004). They describe the LA 21 Programme as having served an "advisory role" in Vinh. While being critical of the planning processes in Vietnam, they acknowledge that "the enthusiasm, tolerance and openness towards new ideas from individuals at the provincial and local levels were truly remarkable" (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.123). They aim their critique at several points that they describe as generally applicable in

Vietnam. First is the unwillingness of sharing information, especially maps. Their second critique is that "the city is seen neither as a medium for critical debate, research, planning and decision-making nor for citizen mobilization" (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.123). Thirdly they see the "mini-Singapore model that officials so proudly emulate in the vision for Vinh [as] completely alien to the existing typo/morphology" (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.132).[177]

Figure 28
Buildings of the Quang Trung Housing Complex in June 2011 (picture taken by author, 14.6.2011). The white, renovated part of the building in the foreground is the only visible mark of the LA 21 Programme in Vinh.

The report presents as the main achievements of LA 21 in Vinh the opening up of discussions to a larger set of stakeholders - namely the Fatherland Front, the Association of Women, the Farmer's Association, the Cooperative Alliance and the Youth Union - and the revision of the city's development plan along the lines proposed by the program. The problems they mention are language problems that made reliance on interpreters necessary, the overruling of local planning on Quang Trung by the MoC that was described above, and the non-implementation of the proposal for the market (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: pp.133-148). Despite the apparent problems in implementing the program they maintain that

> "The challenge is to find a complementarity between the control of the centrally vested State and localised urban debates. The process advocated through the LA21 Programme, specifically the dialectic between urban visions and strategic urban projects, can contribute to this search for complementarities." (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.150)

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[177] They underline this point by including a picture of a planned high-rise apartment project. However, the picture shown is of a project in Hồ Chí Minh City, not in Vinh.

Apart from half-completed renovation of one of Quang Trung's blocks[178] the LA 21 Programme left no visible mark in the urban fabric (see Figure 28). Of the strategic projects, regarded as triggers for participatory urban development in the LA 21 approach, none was carried out. A number of them were unrealistic and the one proposed to the MoC was superseded by the centralized, hierarchical planning process. While the program opened up discussions on urban planning to more actors, all of these were part of the structures of governing institutions.

Despite extensive research in the provincial archives of Nghệ An, I was not able to locate documents on the LA 21 Programme in Vinh. When discussing the program with members of the city's administration who had been involved in the program, answers were dismissive on the results of the program, although holding the Belgian and international experts in high regard. The proposals of the program were regarded as interesting by the Office for Urban Administration, but as difficult to achieve because higher levels of authority would have to be involved. The lack of funds provided by the program for concrete projects was also cited as a reason of its limited impact on Vinh's development.[179]

Both answers above point to structural and political reasons for the low impact of the LA 21 Programme in Vinh. These had also been acknowledged by the program's reports, as shown above. The next parts will show how reforms in Vietnam have addressed some of these issues, arguably shifting power relations between different layers of government and administration, as well as improving the possibilities of participation by the people. Following that, findings on a more recent project carried out in Vinh are presented. This project, also promoting a Participatory City, profits from institutional and political change in Vietnam that opens up more space for the successful implementation of such projects. To provide an overview of the mechanisms of the reform process, as well as resulting institutional changes, the following part focuses on two major government-initiated programs: the Public Administration Reform and the process of Grassroots Democratisation.

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[178] Significantly, this project was carried out by local actors in defiance of agreements.
[179] Interview 11.5.2011; Personal conversation 17.5.2011

4.2.2 Improving Possibilities for Participation

The Public Administration Reform (PAR) forms part of the overall reform process in Vietnam, therefore touching on normative and political issues (Painter et al., 2009; Buhmann, 2007). According to Vasavakul, it is "aimed at re-establishing hierarchies of authority lost following Vietnam's move from central planning in the 1980s" (Vasavakul, 2002: p.2). While the Party ran even the day to day issues of governance and administration in the time of state socialism, the responsibilities and tasks of the state and the Party have become more clearly defined and disentangled in the last 20 years; an important marker of this process was the amendment of the 1992 constitution in 2001. The leading role of the Party does nowadays result in the Party defining the overall political orientation, while the state apparatus implements and refines actions (Sidel, 2008; Salomon, 2007: p.200; Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 25.12.2001: Preamble). The restructuring of organisations and relations between agencies takes place, among others, in the fields of: internal authority relations, reform of state institutions, reform of administrative procedures, and improving the relationship with the non-government sectors and society (Vasavakul, 2002). One of the guidelines of the reform process is the decentralisation of responsibilities to levels of government situated closer to where decisions are implemented and their effects felt (Vasavakul et al., 2009). Additionally, new forms of horizontal organisation and networking have emerged, visible in the creation of organisations such as the Association of Cities of Vietnam (UN-HABITAT, 1996: pp.66-67). From the 1990s on Vietnam saw the growth of a multitude of "popular organizations" without state sponsorship. According to Vasavakul, they filled a vacuum after the state retreated from the provision of services, thereby participating in national construction along the lines promoted by the Communist Party. International NGOs were also attributed a mainly functional role as providing financial assistance (Vasavakul, 2003: pp.33, 51-54; see also Wischermann, Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2003). The shifts in power relations between institutions of the Party and the state as well as the increasing importance of private activity also made new mechanism of social control and regulation necessary to retain the Communist Party's legitimacy. One measure of legitimizing the regime's activities is the creation of a modern, legal-rational bureaucracy under the leadership of the Party (Acuna-Alfaro, 2009). Another measure is the Grassroots Democracy process.

The program to promote Grassroots Democracy is an attempt of central authorities to provide more efficient and accountable local governance (Fritzen, 2002). It was introduced as a response to popular unrest such as the violent outbreak in Thái Bình in early 1997. Dissatisfaction of protesters was due to a mixture of inefficiency, corruption, and illegal trading in land rights by local cadres and their families (Dixon, 2004: p.23; Painter, 2003: p.265). In 1998, the Politburo issued Directive 30-CT/TW on the building and implementation of Grassroots Democracy, which was elaborated by a government decree later that year

(Chính phủ, 11.5.1998; Bộ Chính trị, 18.2.1998). In 2007, the decree was superseded by the Ordinance on Implementation of Democracy at the Commune Level (Ủy ban Thường vụ Quốc hội, 20.4.2007).[180] The documents grant people the rights to be informed about issues that concern them, their opinions to be heard in discussions, to take part in decision making processes and to supervise the implementation of decisions. The areas in which people can participate in the respective ways are clearly stated.

One study expressed the possibility that the Grassroots Democracy Decree might "drastically change the power balance between the people and the local authorities" (Center for Agricultural Policy, 2008: p.3). However, while the Grassroots Democracy process led to more accountable and transparent behaviour by the authorities, changes in power relations remain limited (McElwee et al., 2006). The major institution implementing the process is the Grassroots Democracy Steering Committee that is formed at the commune level. The committee is usually led by the head of the commune's Communist Party division, its other members usually being the heads of the People's Council and Committee and representatives of Mass Organisations.[181] Thus, authority control on the overall process remains invested in these organisations (Center for Agricultural Policy, 2008: pp.26-27, 39-43). In many cases, participation is regarded by authorities as a tool in the implementation of pre-defined projects or as financial contribution (KAS, ACVN, 2009: p.30; McElwee et al., 2006: pp.14-17).

The commune, the administrative unit implementing the activities of Grassroots Democracy, is not only the level of administration closest to the people; it is also the one where grievances can be contained by preventing the building of geographically wider alliances. The legislation on Grassroots Democracy does not only provide legitimate channels and instruments of participation, it also rules out other options.[182] The emphasis on political stability over participation is expressed by the ordering of principles in the ordinance (Ủy ban Thường vụ Quốc hội, 20.4.2007):

1. Ensuring order and discipline in the framework of the Constitution and laws.

2. Ensuring the people's right to know, contribute comments, decide, implement and monitor implementation of democracy at the commune level.

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[180] Decrees are passed by the government, while ordinances are passed by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly; ordinances are thus higher in the order of political documents.

[181] Mass Organisations in Leninist state theory constitute "transmission-belts" which transmit the policies of the Party to the people and in turn serve as officially legitimized channels for the articulation of the interest of particular groups in society (Gray, 1946: p. 474).

[182] At a training course on the application of people's participation in urban management and planning for public servants I attended in Đà Nẵng in 2010, the issue of public opposition to the redevelopment of Thống Nhất Park in Hanoi was discussed. Attendants voiced their opinion that this had not been proper people's participation, as opinions were not expressed through the channels laid down by regulations.

3. Protecting the State benefits, legal rights and benefits of organisations and individuals.

4. Publicity, transparency in implementation of democracy at the commune level.

5. Ensuring leadership of the Party, and management of the State.[183]

In addition to the Grassroots Democracy Decree the Vietnamese government's Committee for Organisation and Personnel issued Circular 03/1998/TT-TCCP adapting the decree's regulations to urban areas. On the "building of communities" it stipulates that "group leaders are the representatives of the people in a residential group, under the administration and guidance of the ward's or town's People's Committee, they are directly elected by the members of the groups and recognized by the President of the ward's People's Committee"[184] (Ban tổ chức cán bộ chính phủ, 6.7.1998: chapter 6). The position of group leaders had until then not been formalized. As these circular shows, the structures of authority extending into the residential group were formalized as part of the Grassroots Democracy Decree (Koh, 2004: p.203).

Despite these reservations on the Grassroots Democracy process and the Public Administration Reform, the possibilities for public participation in Vietnam and the legal framework supporting such participation have improved since the late 1990s (McElwee et al., 2006; Mattner, 2004). This has also had an effect on projects by international agencies promoting the participation of civil society in development projects. In the LA 21 Programme participation in discussions on urban development had been confined to members of the administration and Mass Organisations. The next part will present a project with a very different approach to the participation by communities.

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[183] 1. Bảo đảm trật tự, kỷ cương, trong khuôn khổ Hiến pháp và pháp luật.
2. Bảo đảm quyền của nhân dân được biết, tham gia ý kiến, quyết định, thực hiện và giám sát việc thực hiện dân chủ ở cấp xã.
3. Bảo vệ lợi ích của Nhà nước, quyền và lợi ích hợp pháp của tổ chức, cá nhân.
4. Công khai, minh bạch trong quá trình thực hiện dân chủ ở cấp xã.
5. Bảo đảm sự lãnh đạo của Đảng, sự quản lý của Nhà nước.
[184] "Tổ trưởng dân phố là đại diện cho nhân dân của tổ dân phố, chịu sự quản lý và chỉ đạo của Uỷ ban nhân dân phường, thị trấn, do nhân dân trong tổ bầu trực tiếp, Chủ tịch Uỷ ban nhân dân phường thị trấn công nhận"

4.2.3 The Cua Nam Model (2009 to 2012)

The Cua Nam Model refers to the processes of community involvement that led to the upgrading of a former collective housing area in Vinh's Cửa Nam Ward.[185] The term has been coined by the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR), an NGO based in Bangkok, and the International Institute of Environment and Development in London (IIED), describing it as having "re-drafted all the rules" for housing upgrading in Vietnam (ACHR, October 2010: p.5). Apart from providing better housing to residents, it constitutes a modern project as it aims at triggering social and political change through the application of participatory processes in urban development. The following section will describe the project's background as well as the processes and actors that made implementation possible.

After Vinh's destruction during the American War, housing in the completely destroyed city was often provided by state agencies and state-owned companies to their employees. Among these companies was the Hữu Nghị Company, which was responsible for running the city's hotels and restaurants. In 1974 and 1979 the company had built four collective living houses in Cửa Nam Ward that formed the Hữu Nghị collective housing area, providing housing for employees of the company and their families.[186] In line with economic restructuring, from 1990 on Hữu Nghị Company had sold many of the housing units to its inhabitants; other residents continued to rent their units. While the new land law of 1993 practically allowed for the trade in land rights, inhabitants of the former collective housing area were only able to buy the houses and did not acquire the respective land use rights.[187]

In accordance with national policies[188], Nghệ An's provincial authorities decided in 2007 that all collective housing areas in the city would be destroyed and rebuilt, in line with the city's goal to become civilised and modern. At that time, 142 collective housing areas existed in Vinh (UBND Nghệ An, September 2007). Some residents had already rebuilt their housing themselves; these were to be given land-use rights in accordance with legal regulations. Other areas were to be rebuilt, while some of the residents had to be relocated depending on population density in the respective area and legal status of residents (Lê Như Ngà et al. 2012: 32). As Vinh had grown in importance and been elevated to the status of a first tier city as well as the centre of North-Central Vietnam, regulations prescribed a minimum size of 70m² per individual land plot (Lê Như Ngà et al., 2012: p.34; Bộ Xây Dựng, Viện Kiến trúc-

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[185] As an administrative unit I refer to Cửa Nam Ward in the Vietnamese writing with diacritics, as a project or model, I refer to it in the way of respective publications and reports as Cua Nam.

[186] By the time the upgrading was carried out 29 registered households lived in these buildings.

[187] Interview 29.6.2011

[188] See above. Decree 61-CP of July 1994 had established a legal framework for the sale of state owned housing to its inhabitants, as the maintenance (or rather the lack thereof) had become a considerable financial burden and the provision of housing for employees was not the responsibility of companies and agencies anymore. It was also perceived that when people would own their own living quarters, they would improve their housing standard themselves.

Quy hoạch đô thị nông thôn, August 2008; Thủ tướng Chính phủ, 30.9.2005). Such an ambitious plan would involve considerable financial and social costs and the project initially made little progress (Lê Như Ngà et al., 2012: p.33).[189] Therefore, in February 2009, a workshop was organized by the city's People's Committee, the Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN) and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), which introduced a community based way of upgrading in the framework of the Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA) to representatives of the collective living areas.

Figure 29
Buildings of the Hữu Nghị housing area before and after upgrading (left picture provided by Lê Viết Hùng, right picture taken by author, 1.7.2011).

A retired resident of the Hữu Nghị collective housing area, Lê Viết Hùng had been elected as one of its representatives in the implementation of the destruction program of the province. Attending the workshop in February 2009 in this capacity, he recognized "community upgrading" to be an opportunity for his resident group to participate in the re-design of their neighbourhood and for all its residents to remain in the area. He attended a number of training courses and workshops in Vietnam as well as Thailand, during which he became familiar with the concepts and methods of community planning. With this knowledge, the support of the ward's and city's People's Committees, Community Architects, ACHR, ACVN, and ENDA-Vietnam, the inhabitants made a plan for reconstructing their housing area. However, due to the small size of the area and the 70m² set by provincial authorities as the minimum size for individual land plots, some residents would have to be relocated. After

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[189] Cửa Nam Ward authorities had hired an architect to re-plan the site of Hữu Nghị collective housing area in August 2008, but had not carried out any work since (Interview 19.8.2008).

lobbying by ACVN and the city's People's Committee, the provincial People's Committee lowered the plot size to 47m² on the condition that upgrading would follow the community based approach. Thereafter, the ground-breaking ceremony took place on 5 March 2010 and the project was finished ceremoniously on 3 October 2010 (Lê Viết Hùng, 4.5.2011). The project had provided the 29 households of the Hữu Nghị housing area with comfortable housing at costs much lower than in other redevelopment projects carried out in Vinh (see Figure 29). The following table compares figures from Hữu Nghị and the redevelopment of a housing area in Bến Thủy Ward (ACVN, 4.5.2011a).

	Bến Thủy	Cửa Nam
1. Average housing plot size before/after redevelopment (m²)	27.89 / 89.31	30 / 47.30
2. Number of households before redevelopment	114	29
3. Number of relocated households	45 (40%)	0
4. Number of households receiving new plots in the area	69 (60%)	29 (100%)
4.1 Number of households able to construct a new house	42 (61%)	28 (97%)
4.2 Number of households not able to construct a new house	27 (39%)	1[190] (3%)
5. Infrastructure costs per household	1166 US$	303 US$
6. Average costs per m² of housing space (in two-storey buildings)	140 US$	77 US$

Table 1
Comparison of financial and social costs of the Cua Nam Model and redevelopment of a housing area in Bến Thủy Ward according to the original project of the city's authorities.

After this brief overview of the upgrading project in Cửa Nam Ward, the next part will turn to the main actors and their respective roles in the ACCA program. This involves a history of community based development activities in Vinh as well as an analysis of the structures and forms of cooperation which made the successful implementation of the project possible.

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[190] This household did construct a new one-storey building. It is listed here as not constructing a new house as this building does not follow the design of the other buildings.

4.2.3.1 Actors

The Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA) is a project of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) implemented in collaboration with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)[191] and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (11 Mio US$). The first ACCA Program Committee Meeting took place in February 2009, after an initial grant of 7 Mio US $ had been pledged by the Gates Foundation. The program was to upscale the experiences of ACHR, mainly from Thailand, in community-led upgrading (Boonyabancha, 2009, 2005, 2003; Lê Như Ngà et al., 2012: pp.33). Through its experiences and activities in many Asian countries since the late 1980s, ACHR could draw on a large network that would facilitate implementation. Below the important actors of the Cua Nam Model are presented.

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR)
The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights is a network of organisations and individuals promoting community-led urban development; the organisation's office is located in Bangkok. It traces the roots of its community focused approach to Father Jorge Anzorena[192], who promoted community-led development when working with the Belgian foundation SELAVIP[193] (ACHR, January 2000: p.4). In the 1970s, Anzorena was influenced by developments in Latin America, where debates about the role of housing in social change took place, and communities were more organized and more politicized than in Asia.[194] He subsequently joined SELAVIP to promote its work in Asia, concentrating on documenting and disseminating experiences of housing improvements by low-income communities. Through this work, networks were established between different organisations in Asia. Over time, his work has increasingly focused on mechanisms for financing low-income housing (Anzorena, 27.1.2011, 1993).

ACHR's origins lie in the Asian People's Dialogue on Housing and Shelter in Seoul that brought together "community leaders" and NGOs from eleven countries, in light of large scale evictions in Seoul in the lead up to the Olympic Games. ACHR had been founded at this meeting; its secretariat was established in Bangkok in 1989 (Environment and Urbanization, 1993). Participants saw ACHR's main activity as facilitating exchange between grassroots groups through mutual visits (ACHR, January 2000). From the early 1990s, ACHR became active in community-led upgrading in Thailand, where the organisation and its members were

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[191] IIED served as a channel to transfer funds in several instalments to ACHR.

[192] Anzorena is a Jesuit holding a PhD in architecture from Tokyo University, and winner of the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1994, see (http://www.rmaf.org.ph/newrmaf/main/awardees/awardee/profile/153, accessed 24.9.2013).

[193] Servicio Latino Americano y Asiatico de Vivienda Popular (Latin America and Asia Low-income People's Housing); (Anzorena, 1993: p.124)

[194] See above on participation in urban development.

successful in influencing national policies (Anzorena, 27.1.2011). In 1992 the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) headed by ACHR's general secretary was set up under the National Housing Authority by the Thai Government to support people-led improvements in the living conditions of poor people in Thailand (Boonyabancha, 2005, 1999). In October 2006, UCDO merged with the Rural Development Fund and became the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI). This step made CODI a public organisation formally under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. CODI's governing board included "representatives from poor communities, government, NGOs, academia and the private sector, and it institutionalizes the presence of community leaders at CODI's highest decision-making body" (ACHR, June 2001: p.17). One of CODI's main activities is to run a network of funds on which communities can draw to implement upgrading projects (CODI, 2008; Boonyabancha, 2003).

In the early 1990s, visits between communities also started in a number of Asian countries and contacts were strengthened with organisations outside Asia. From 1993 on the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID) funded ACHR's Training and Advisory Programme (TAP). "TAP begins looking around the region at programmes that work for the poor and facilitates visits of community leaders, NGOs and officials involved in these programmes to other cities and countries to advocate these strategies. In its first six years, TAP supports 120 international exposures" (ACHR, January 2000: p.5).

Activities of ACHR in Vietnam started in the early 1990s, when the organisation supported a Project of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the People's Committee of Hồ Chí Minh City. This project resulted in "Vietnam's first community loan for slum upgrading activity in the historical process of urban development in Vietnam" (Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003: p.25). It also led to the first Community Development Fund (CDF) in Vietnam and promoted self-managed savings and credit groups in urban areas (Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003). ACHR as subcontractor also advised and assisted the "Support for Five Provincial Cities Project" funded by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to set up Community Development Funds in participating cities in June 2001. The project's goal was to support poor urban communities and to strengthen the capacity of authorities to promote participatory community development. When it ran into funding difficulties, ACHR took over its activities (ACHR, 2005, May 2000, n.d.; Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003: pp.25-27). Thus, from early on ACHR has been an important actor in community-led projects and the introduction of CDFs to Vietnam.

Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA)

Another very active champion of community-led development is ENDA-Vietnam. The organisation is a local satellite of ENDA, an organisation which grew out of a project of the Institut Africain de Développement Économique et de Planification (IDEP) that started in 1972, financed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Sudanese Agency for International Development. The organisation later on became a NGO active in 14 countries on four continents; it is located in Dakar, Senegal.[195] ENDA-Vietnam was established in the early 1990s and soon became a partner in a number of projects by the UNDP and UN-HABITAT. It had carried out a preliminary study for the "Support for Fiv Provincial Cities Project" described above and had implemented the solid waste management component of the Localizing Agenda 21 Programme in Vinh.

With its focus on environmental issues, ENDA-Vietnam aimed at achieving "sustainable community development, enable self-management of community savings and credit groups so that poor communities can more efficiently use external financial resources" (Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003: p.25). This approach led to the establishment of a Community Development Fund (CDF) in Vinh, funded by UN-HABITAT. However, some of ENDA-Vietnam's projects in urban areas have been criticized for allegedly not achieving their goal of targeting the poorest residents because of their reliance on loans that the poorest cannot repay (Canadian International Development Agency, 2001: p.19). Since the 1990s, ENDA-Vietnam and ACHR have closely collaborated in community development projects (ACHR, April 2005, January 2000: p.27; n.d.).

Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN)

The Association of Provincial Cities was established in 1992 and was renamed Association of Cities of Vietnam in 2000. Its membership today comprises 96 cities and towns. It sees its role as that of a facilitator of exchange between its members as well as that of a link to strengthen international cooperation in urban management and development. "Today the ACVN is the only organisation representing the interests of local governments in Vietnam and operates both as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and as a Social Professional Organization" (ACVN Website[196]). As the only association of local governmental bodies it is approached by numerous international development actors. Among its most important international partners and donors are the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and ACHR.[197] Among the projects which ACVN has implemented in cooperation with foreign agencies and donors, some have promoted the

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[195] See ENDA Website: www.endatiersmonde.org, accessed 25.9.2013.

[196] http://www.acvn.vn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=120&Itemid=47&lang=en, accessed 24.9.2013.

[197] http://www.acvn.vn/index.php/Index/index/name/17/10/http:/index.php?option=com_content&view=articl e &id=101&Itemid=62&lang=en; accessed 22.11.2014.

participation of civil society as well as communities. One of these is the ACCA program that led to the upgrading project in Vinh's Cửa Nam Ward outlined above.

4.2.3.2 Approach

In ACHR's approach to community-led upgrading applied by the Asian Coalition for Community Action, communities and Community Development Funds play a dual role. Firstly, they provide a way of true "bottom-up" development, as opposed to "top-down" (government authorities) or "middle-down" (NGOs) development, which might promote the same principles of "participation" or "empowerment", but fail to address the true issues and interests of the poor (ACHR, February 2009, p.14). Secondly, CDFs and the projects that are implemented with them are not ends in themselves; they are means to achieve goals of community empowerment. It is argued that CDFs would increase the abilities of the poor to manage and decide on their own community's interests, thereby raising their self-esteem and self-consciousness. In addition, it would also strengthen communal identity and ties. Increased management skills and self-esteem would in turn lead to an improved position in negotiations with authorities and ultimately lead to structural changes that would make authorities more accountable and decision-making truly "participatory" (ACHR, December 2009, November 2007, February 2002; Boonyabancha, 2001). In this approach, achieving the goals of empowerment and structural change is seen as usually being hampered by a so-called "project-oriented" design of most development interventions. In contrast to this, ACCA promotes a "strategic approach":

> "ACCA's intervention in a city is not intended to be only a way of channeling resources into poor communities to fund a few specific community-driven drainage or housing projects. The idea is to use those resources more strategically to make a greater impact on the city, by creating new structural platforms at city (and national) level which can allow communities to work as equals with other urban partners and can help mainstream community-driven development and large-scale change by urban poor communities. So the way the upgrading and housing projects are selected, planned, implemented, visited, learned from and repeated in other places are all planned explicitly and strategically to become opportunities to build the negotiating power of the poor, to strengthen working partnerships between the poor, their local governments and other stakeholders in the city, and to create a city-wide problem-solving mechanism with roots in the city that are deeper than any short-term development intervention […]" (ACHR, December 2009: p.8)

Two kinds of concrete projects were introduced: Small Projects would be funded by a grant of 3,000 US$, addressing mainly infrastructure needs such as roads or drainage. These projects are seen as a first step to the process of community empowerment by setting concrete examples of ACCA's methods and their results. Ideally, these projects should also generate (financial) commitment by other actors. While many groups received the money as grants, others have converted them into loans that are to be repaid into a CDF (ACHR, December 2009: p.8). In contrast, Big Projects are housing projects implemented with the real participation of communities. They are intended to strengthen the city-wide process.

> "The big projects are also important because they demonstrate a more comprehensive approach which includes all the key issues of poverty, and they show that total change is possible: houses, infrastructure, land tenure, income, welfare, environment - the works. If the big projects are to have any impact, it is extremely important that they not be stand-alone initiatives done in isolation. They need a fertile soil of relationships and links (between communities and other actors within the city and between cities in that country) that have been built and are growing through many other activities and through the small projects." (ACHR, December 2009: p.10)

Usually the contributions of ACCA to these Big Projects, maximum 40,000 US$ per project, served as capital for a city-wide CDF, in some cases they took the form of grants, especially in post-disaster situations. One of the major advantages cited by ACHR is the contribution of land by local governments for Big Projects, either for free or at subsidized rates, triggered by ACCA contributions (ACHR, December 2009: p.11). Each participating city was eligible for one Big Project (40,000 US$), five Small Projects (3,000 US$ per project, could be stretched to more than one project), and 3,000 US$ for coordination in the city. In addition, a budget of 10,000 US$ was transferred to the national implementing organisation (ACHR, November 2012: p.3).

In addition to CDFs, participation of communities in the planning process is regarded as furthering the goal of empowerment. Community Architects and advisors from ACHR support these participatory processes. Community Architects are described as important actors in the ACCA process of community building and transformation through planning and housing construction (Luansang et al., 2012; ACHR, 2010). In an application of Turnerite ideas on urban development that became influential in Latin America and from there spread to other developing countries[198], Community Architects apply participatory planning instruments to the

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[198] Note the above described role of Father Anzorena and Christian organisations in this process, as well as in (Anzorena, 27.1.2011, 1993).

design and construction process (Hall, 2002: pp.272-293).[199] Community Architects are professional and trained architects who bring technical expertise to ACCA's projects. Special "community architecture" techniques were taught at workshops, exchanges, and meetings financially supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. To facilitate exchange and dissemination, the Asian Community Architects Network (CAN[200]) was formed in June 2010.

The structures of ACCA differed between countries and cities. To be eligible for ACCA-funds, a community had to have a savings group to which the funds are transferred. These were either newly established or already existing groups. Where the funds have to be repaid into a Community Development Fund, this revolving fund was to be managed by community representatives and other actors, including the local ACCA partners and authorities. These CDFs were supposed to create among the poor awareness about their management abilities and their community (ACHR, December 2009: p.7). On the national level a National Joint Committee was in charge of communication with the ACHR secretariat and establishing links between the different cities in a country. In a Regional Process, ACCA Meetings and exchange visits took place so as to connect poor communities as well as members of participating organisations and city authorities (ACHR, December 2009: p.15). Thus, on each level mechanisms were in place intended to connect communities. In this process, Small and Big Projects serve to mobilize people with the goal of empowerment of communities, and ultimately, structural change. ACCA's approach thus combines physical redevelopment with participatory processes and management instruments in a modern project that aims at constructing a social communal identity of "the poor", thereby triggering "empowerment" and subsequent institutional change.

The scope of the ACCA program shifted during its implementation. In the beginning, the implementation of 500 Small Projects and 50 Big Projects in 150 cities in 15 countries was envisaged. The program was scheduled to end in October 2011. In November 2009, the Gates Foundation added a further 4 Million US$ grant to the program's budget, which thus increased to 11 Mio US$ (ACHR, April 2010). By March 2011, only 58% of the program's budget had been spent, the implementation period was therefore extended by 6 months until May 2012. Additional funds by SELAVIP (90,000 US$) were attached to the ACCA program as "The Decent Poor Program". Later on, the program was further extended until July 2012 (ACHR, May 2012).[201] In ACCA's final report, the numbers given for actually carried out

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[199] ACHR has published handbooks describing these techniques: The Community Mapping for housing by people Handbook (ACHR, 5.5.2013) and the Comprehensive site planning Handbook (ACHR, 28.2.2012).
[200] See CAN's website: communityarchitectsnetwork.info, accessed 25.9.2013
[201] Although different proposals for a second phase of the project were prepared, so far no funding for a new phase or a similar project under a new heading seems to be forthcoming (ACHR, March 2012).

projects are 1,185 Small Projects and 110 Big Projects. In all, 165 cities had participated in the program (ACHR, November 2012: p.28).

After having introduced the actors and approach of the ACCA program, the next parts will focus on the Cua Nam Model that had been implemented as a Big Project. They will present the structures of the ACCA program in Vietnam with a focus on Vinh and the roles of actors involved in the upgrading project.

4.2.3.3 Implementation

As mentioned above, ACHR and ENDA-Vietnam had been engaged in community-led development projects in Vietnam since the 1990s. Over time and driven by donor-policies, CDFs had been established in a small number of Vietnamese cities. They were largely dependent on donor funds, as local governments' contributions were not forthcoming (Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003; ACHR, June 2001). However, individual saving groups were not new to Vietnam and the Women's Union, a Mass Organisation, had been implementing a policy to promote savings groups since the early 1990s (ACHR, April 2005; Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003). The idea behind introducing city-wide CDFs was, as in the ACCA program, to link different savings groups so as to pool resources as well as to link communities with each other. In contrast, a report for Homeless International found that CDFs largely followed the usual governmental structures and that their impact on policy had been marginal (Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003: pp.33-37). In general, CDFs "have not been intended to meet the diverse needs of communities and households since the ward authorities have set out rules which allow them to be used only for financing infrastructure projects. When groups have completed these projects, they must repay the funds" (Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003: pp.38-39). Additionally, city-wide processes and the involvement of communities were restricted, as existing saving groups were often not connected to CDFs (Tran Minh Chau et al., 2003: pp.40-44).

ENDA and ACHR had also worked to form a national network of cities which had a CDF. In October 2007, after several months of discussions, ACVN, ENDA, and ACHR signed a Memorandum of Understanding, formally introducing ACVN as an actor in the CDF network. With its membership of 96 towns and cities at that time, ACVN was "to broaden the process around the country" (ACHR Website, n.d.). Although ACVN was seen by ACHR as needing capacity strengthening, its strategic importance was acknowledged:

> "[ACVN] could be very powerful because it links all the cities in the country and has a very good back up from the government. In Vietnam, you need some link with the government and the official system like this - without it, they may

not cooperate that well, and so we think this ACVN is a very important strategic partner". (ACHR Website, n.d.)

Partnership with ACVN was seen as a step towards upgrading and making the CDF process "part of the larger whole" (ACHR Website, n.d.). In the following years, membership of cities in the CDF network grew considerably due to networking activities of ACVN (ACVN, 25.12.2008). In 2011, 29 cities were participating, with 11 more having applied for membership (ACVN, 4.5.2011b).

When the ACCA program started in early 2009, a special body, the national CDF Steering Committee, was created under ACVN to act as the national coordinator and channel funds from ACHR to projects and cities. Vinh and Việt Trì were chosen as pilot cities in the ACCA program, because "there are evictions of communities going on in both of them" (ACHR, February 2009). In Vinh, these would potentially take place as part of the program of demolishing the collective living areas described above. It was agreed early on that Vinh's Big Project would be implemented in Cửa Nam Ward.

Already in August 2003, Vinh had become a member of the CDF network. Upon entering the network, Vinh was praised as "a good example of City Development Vision/Strategic Planning (development of 5-year project under UNCHS framework - LA 21[202]) and how community participation can contribute toward city development plan as a whole" (ACHR, n.d.). The funds (150,000 US$) in Vinh's CDF had initially been supplied by UN-HABITAT, the activities carried out with loans from the fund included environmental infrastructure and economic projects. Vinh could draw on a large number of already existing saving groups managed by the Women's Union. The city's CDF management board was from early on chaired by Nguyễn Văn Chỉnh, Vice-President of Vinh's People's Committee (Nguyễn Văn Chỉnh, 18.5.2008). By 2007, the Women's Union had become another important actor in Vinh's CDF process (ACHR, November 2007: p.27). When in 2009 Vinh became a member of the ACCA program, decision making in its city CDF was divided between the city's Women's Union and its People's Committee (ACHR, February 2009).

When choosing Vinh as a pilot city, ACHR was much aware of the shortcomings of its CDF and the obstacles to community participation in Vietnam:

> "the CDFs in each city are a little stiff because of the process which has been more controlled by the municipality and the Women's Union than by the communities themselves. If we are going to help these funds to address the housing needs, how can we do it in such a way as to adjust the existing

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[202] The LA 21 project described above.

system so that it can open more space to people and create a kind of collaboration that is more a partnership of equals than like a vertical hierarchy?" (ACHR, February 2009)

"Unlike most other countries in Asia, Viet Nam is still under a socialist system. And because of this tight Socialist system, it is not so easy for communities to go here and there, and to do this and that in Viet Nam." (ACHR, April 2009)

The workshop in February 2009 in Vinh, mentioned above in the description of the Cua Nam Model, brought together stakeholders of the ACCA program. Representatives of the city, which needed to carry out the policy to redevelop housing areas in a Modern and Civilised style, ACCA representatives, who wanted to promote community participation and implement a Big Project in Vinh to pilot its efforts in Vietnam, and representatives of the communities who faced dangers of eviction. The attending community leaders agreed on a catalogue of requirements the pilot community would have to fulfil. Cửa Nam and another ward were later chosen out of 16 collective housing areas as potential sites for the pilot project (ACCA, 20.4.2009).[203]

The process of community planning for the project in Cửa Nam Ward included the assistance of two local architects as well as a CODI team from Thailand.[204] After the city had approved the proposal for upgrading, the provincial People's Committee initially refused approval, because the plot size was smaller than the provincial regulations allowed for and officials feared that smaller plot size would result in a "new slum"[205] (Lê Như Ngà et al., 2012: p.34). With lobbying by ACVN and the city's People's Committee, the provincial authorities finally agreed on 15 September 2009 under the condition that the project would be carried out as laid down by the ACCA program.

To be eligible for funding from ACCA, people living in the Hữu Nghị housing area formed a saving group with Lê Viết Hùng as its head and an accountant supporting him. Each month, each family paid 600,000 Đồng into the group's account. By November 2010, this group had saved 216,009,000 Đồng; however, it did not have to use these for construction of their houses. As former employees of Hữu Nghị Joint Stock Company they were holding some of the company's stock, which they were able to sell to raise the money needed for the

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[203] The ACCA program in Vinh also included five Small Projects. To select communities for their implementation, the city CDF board and the wards' administration drew up a list of ten communities that were "stable" , representatives of these ten communities chose among themselves where the project should be implemented. While they reached agreement on one project, they drew lots for the other four. All projects were infrastructure projects and the communities would have to pay back the loans they received into a revolving fund (ACCA, 20.4.2009).

[204] One of the architects had initially been hired by the ward in August 2008, only afterwards had the neighbourhood leader been informed of this decision. Interview 29.6.2011.

[205] "khu ổ chuột mới"

project[206] (Lê Viết Hùng, 2010: pp.39-40). Additionally, they borrowed 40,000 US$, which ACHR had contributed to the city's CDF, and which they had to repay in monthly 20 Mio Đồng instalments (Lê Viết Hùng, 4.5.2011; Đức Ngọc, 11.5.2010).

The new houses were inaugurated on World Habitat Day in October 2010, attended by representatives of communities and administrations from Vietnamese cities as well as from Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines. Speeches were given by representatives of the Ministry of Construction, the Provincial People's Committee, and ACHR. Housing cost about 150 Million Đồng per unit and was thus much cheaper than upgrading in other areas that was undertaken by a developer or individually (see Table 1; ACHR, October 2010). The costs could be reduced by collectively buying materials and hiring workers, as well as by sharing walls and roofs, re-using materials and by the residents doing as much work as possible themselves. However, not all the families could afford to build in the proposed design, their new houses were smaller, and one house has three stories instead of two.[207] Some of the resident families had previously occupied larger land plots; they had to give up parts of these in order to implement the project.[208]

After upgrading was finished, residents were able to buy the land-use rights to their respective lots. In line with legal regulations those who had bought their houses before 1993 were to be given land-use titles without having to pay for them, those who had acquired the houses between 1993 and 2004 would have to pay a fee reduced by 50%, and others would have to pay the full fee (Nguyễn Văn Chỉnh, 4.5.2011; Chính phủ, 7.9.2006). According to Lê Như Ngà et al., successful upgrading of the Hữu Nghị Housing Area has convinced authorities to adjust their policies, allowing plot sizes smaller than official regulations if residents of housing areas follow the Cua Nam Model, especially as it resulted in a more uniform street façade than individual upgrading[209]. However, this applied only to five additional housing areas (out of 142) in 2012 (Lê Như Ngà et al., 2012: pp.35-36).

In Cửa Nam, the interplay of local, national, and international actors has resulted in the upgrading of Hữu Nghị housing area and improved living conditions of 29 households. It had achieved upgrading that was responsive to the demands and suggestions by residents, which was difficult in light of existing policies and the vision to create a Modern and Civilised

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[206] It is thus questionable if the residents needed a savings group to collect money for the project. Also, the funds raised by selling stocks and the high monthly instalments indicate that these households were not among the poorest.
[207] Interview 29.6.2011
[208] Interview 30.6.2011. According to the interviewee, this prompted a prolonged conflict during the planning process that could be solved with mediation by Thai experts. While all of the registered residents were able to stay, another source indicated that some of them had previously rented out rooms in the old structures to migrants who had to relocate when the project was carried out. Interview 7.7.2011
[209] One might also say more civilised and modern.

City. In addition, the ACCA program had aimed at triggering social and political change by implementing the project. The next part will describe ACCA's structures in Vinh and their interaction with the existing institutional framework.

4.2.3.4 Structures

After the initial workshop in January 2009, the city-wide process in Vinh started. It consisted largely of meetings in which the experiences with housing projects were discussed and opinions collected. Those attending were representatives of communities in which housing projects (not in the framework of ACCA) had taken place, representatives of the communities selected for ACCA projects, as well as Community Architects and volunteers of the Women's Union. A report on the city-wide process lists 28 people as having been involved, with no mention of participants who were not directly involved in the management of ACCA in Vinh, members of the city's administration or community representatives (ACCA, 20.4.2009: p.9). The city-wide process was largely dominated and organized by the Women's Union and People's Committees.

The same report gives an account of the structures that were established to run the CDF in Vinh. It mentions that CDF activities were consolidated and the role of the authorities and Mass Organisations strengthened, while the autonomy of individual saving groups was increased. The saving groups were represented by a management board of two members. On the level of the neighbourhood, a management committee was composed of three to five members. The ward CDF Steering Committee consisted of one member of the People's Committee's leadership, a member of the Women's Union and an accountant (ACCA, 20.4.2009: p.18). Vinh's City CDF Steering Committee consisted of a Vice-President of Vinh's People's Committee, the head of the People's Committee Office, the respective Heads of the Offices for Natural Resources and Finance, the Head of the City's Tax Department, and the Vice-Head of the Office for Urban Management, as well as four members of the city's Women's Union, among them the Union's president and one member serving as the Committee's secretary.[210] Thus, the CDF Steering Committees on all levels were composed of members of the respective People's Committee's and the Women's Union.

Communication did usually not take place horizontally between different saving groups, but was channelled through and coordinated by the neighbourhood Steering Committee, which would in turn deal with the ward level. Communication on higher levels is also described as mainly following established vertical administrative hierarchies. According to the report,

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[210] Interview 30.6.2011

communication between the different institutions of the ACCA program took place as part of the regular monthly working sessions between hierarchically connected administrative bodies (ACCA 20.4.2009: pp.18-19). Decision making on the CDF loans and activities thus exactly mirrored the hierarchical structures of administration and authority (see Figure 30).

The usage of the terms "community leader" and "communities" obscures another aspect that furthers the prevalence of "old structures" of authority through which the ACCA program in Vinh is implemented. The groups referred to as "communities" are resident groups (in urban wards) or villages (in rural communes). While these are not formal units of state administration, as they have no People's Committee and are no legal entities, they serve as the lowest level of officially recognized organisation and form the basis for groups of Mass Organisations (Parenteau, Nguyen Quoc Thong, 2010: p.175; Koh, 2004: p.203). The success of the Cua Nam Model has been attributed to the fact that Hữu Nghị's residents were a community and not just a resident group. The application of the Cua Nam Model in other areas, however, has faced problems exactly because communal ties between members of resident groups were low (Lê Như Ngà, 4.5.2011).[211]

According to "communities" being resident groups or villages, those referred to as community leaders in the case of Vinh were usually village heads or resident group heads. As stipulated by Circular 03/1998/TT-TCCP they are the "representatives of the people in a residential group, under the administration and guidance of the ward's or town's People's Committee, they are directly elected by the members of the groups and recognized by the President of the ward's People's Committee" (see page 158). This position thus forms the officially formalized link between the residential group and the neighbourhood leadership. The second member of the saving group's management board is usually a representative of the Women's Union (Xã Hưng Hòa, 5.5.2011).[212] In ACCA publications these are referred to as community representatives. When delegates from Vinh participated in ACCA activities in Vietnam or abroad, "community representatives" were thus often members of the Women's Union or officially recognized village/resident group heads (Lê Quang Thông; May 2012: p.26; Xã Hưng Hòa, 5.5.2011; ACHR, April 2010).[213]

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[211] Interview 3.7.2011
[212] Interview 30.6.2011
[213] This point is not raised to discuss if village/resident group heads of the Women's Union can claim to truly represent the interests of "communities", or if they are part of civil society. It does show, however, that the ACCA program is implemented relying on the established structures of authority. For discussions of this topic see (Wells-Dang, 2012; Parenteau, Nguyen Quoc Thong, 2010; Thayer, 2009; Hannah, 2007; Wischermann, Nguyen Quang Vinh, 2003; Gray, 1999).
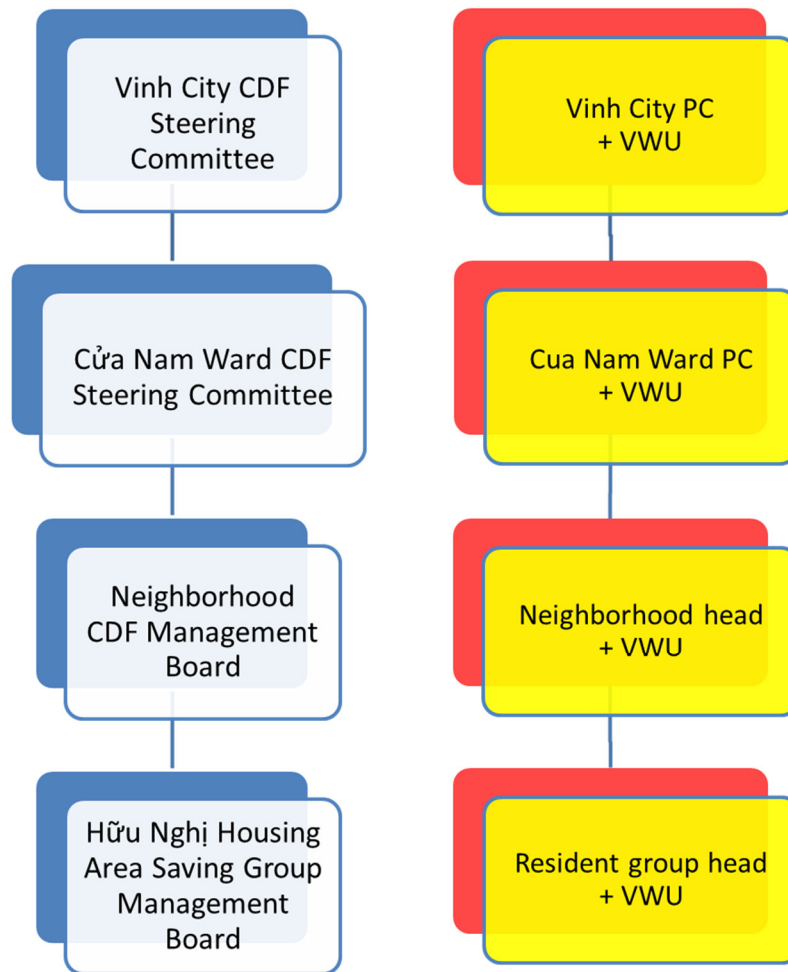
Figure 30
The Community Development Fund structures in Vinh mirrored the hierarchical structures of state authority. On all levels they were dominated by members of existing administrative bodies and the Women's Union (VWU).

Both ACVN and ACHR were aware of this situation. ACVN, in its role as an advisor to participating cities, promoted structures for the implementation of CDFs mirroring those of the city administration (Vũ Thị Vinh, 4.5.2011; ACVN, n.d.). However, ACVN also acknowledged the assessment of an external evaluator who criticized the dominant role of the administration and the Women's Union in many of the participating cities. Critique was also levelled at the issue of saving groups remaining unconnected to city CDFs, as this was regarded as hindering the creation of a city-wide process (Lê Quang Thông, May 2010: p.58).

ACHR saw the need to work closer with authorities in Vietnam than in other countries. The organisation was, however, also aware that this might pose problems:

"Viet Nam is still a bit centralized, with a proper unified system. When we work in any city in Viet Nam, there is a system in the city where the communities have to link to the ward authority, the ward to the district, the district to the city,

the city to the province, etc. It's a system with many tiers and it works very well in Viet Nam." (ACHR, October 2009: p.31)

The following quote also shows ACHR's perception of the relationship between authorities, the Women's Union, and communities: "Verticals and horizontals: We can talk about city-wide saving and community-driven development, but it's not so easy to change the relationships in a city to make that possible, especially in Vietnam, where the relationships between the people and the city authorities and the Women's Union are still overwhelmingly vertical" (ACHR, December 2009: p.67). The approach taken to overcome these restrictions was to implement a large number of projects in Vietnam to create city-wide processes:

> "The reason that so many cities are being brought into the national savings and ACCA process is that there is a need for a platform of people-to-people – both within cities and between cities in Viet Nam. If these platforms are there and have a stronger dynamism, the city-to-city dynamic, which is being supported by ACVN, can make this country's stiff, vertical systems softer and more relaxed. So all these cities are going to use the small ACCA projects in order to make this dynamic link between communities – within the city and between cities - stronger and more active. They will start the savings activities at the same time. This new community-to-community platform at local and national levels will probably make the vertical systems in the cities and in the country soften and relax. That's the strategy, and that kind of strategic thinking is the [reason the] Vietnamese won wars with both the French and the Americans!" (ACHR, October 2009: p.34)

4.2.3.5 Results

Working closely with authorities and replicating the existing structures of the state has stripped the ACCA program in Vinh of much of its ambitions for structural change. As will be shown below, city authorities presented the ACCA program largely as a tool to achieve pre-defined goals and agendas such, as the "destruction of collective housing areas" policy as part of the creation of a Modern and Civilised City or the construction of infrastructure. The dominance of infrastructure projects, especially roads, is seen by ACHR as a sign that ACCA projects can mobilize additional contributions by the state (ACHR, December 2010: p.38).

> "Local governments often want to show they are doing something for poor communities in their cities, and roads are something that is visible to everybody. That's why they contribute so much more to the road projects. Also, in most Vietnamese cities, rural areas surrounding the city have been

brought into the municipal boundaries, but these areas (which comprise a large portion of the urban territory) are still mostly rural, without much infrastructure. So in many cities, the government's action plans put infrastructure development in these rural communes on top of the priority list. In these projects, the money from the city comes to the community directly, and they manage the budgets themselves. There is a long history of this kind of small, local joint ventures between local governments and communities like this in Vietnamese cities - it's not something new. But it used to be that the local government managed the money and the projects and the people would contribute - here in ACCA we're turning this equation around!" (ACHR, October 2009: p.34)

However, due to the reliance on vertical structures and the involvement of authorities and the Women's Union it is not surprising that conventional projects of public service delivery where chosen, to which the ACCA budget was added. Furthermore, the reliance on vertical structures has hampered the city-wide approach of ACCA, promoted as the major factor for overcoming "project-based thinking" and contributing to structural change. While arguably a city-wide process took place in Vinh, it remained in the hands of the People's Committee and the Women's Union. Funds of saving groups did not contribute to the city CDF (ACHR, November 2012: p.8). Leaving individual saving groups unconnected to each other, the structures of ACCA in Vinh fell even short of the Grassroots Democracy process that allows for participation on the ward level. On the other hand, events and activities organized by ACVN indeed introduced new forms of interaction between community representatives and members of the authorities, for example a community leader bitterly complained about the behaviour of the People's Committee of Hải Dương City, confronting its present Vice-President in front of the audience of the National CDF Conference.

The achievements of the ACCA program as a modern project are mixed. While claims such as "having altered all the rules" are exaggerated, participation of residents in the upgrading of the Hữu Nghị housing area went further than in the originally proposed approach of authorities. Additionally, the experiences of the Cua Nam Model have been applied in other housing areas in Vinh. However, the number of other areas in which the model was applied remained very low in comparison to the overall number of housing areas to be redeveloped in Vinh. Thus, city-wide impact of the program has been limited. Impact on institutions and resulting change has been limited especially because implementation of the program relied on already existing structures of power and authority. Depending on these vertical hierarchies, the program was unable to establish horizontal connections and communication between different groups.

Additionally, reliance on existing structures also opened up possibilities for co-optation of the program's achievements by local authorities. When the resident group leader found that after upgrading of his housing area some funds were left, he decided to buy a red flag with a yellow star in the middle for each household in his residential group. When the project was officially inaugurated on World Habitat Day in October 2010, the national flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam flew on the new houses (see Figure 31).[214] This symbolism is indicative of the complex interplay of actors and the application of their modern projects in the institutional setting of Vietnam as it marks a modern project aimed at participation and empowerment as an achievement of the state. The next part will conclude this chapter on modern projects introduced to Vinh by recapturing this interplay.

Figure 31
Like on Habitat Day in October 2010, the national flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam decorates new buildings in the Hữu Nghị housing area as international and national attendees of the National CDF Workshop in May 2011 visit the project (picture taken by author, 4.5.2011; for a similar picture taken on World Habitat Day 2010 see Vũ Thị Vinh, 2010: p. 38).

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[214] Personal conversation 4.5.2011

4.3 The Enabling De-Politisation of Modern Projects

Cooperation between GDR and Vietnam in the creation of a Socialist City had on both sides been informed by the same modern project. In contrast, urban development in Vinh since the 1990s is subject to the promotion of different, often contradictory or conflicting modern projects. The following part analyses the strategies of involved actors to deal with this situation, after providing a short review of the different visions informing urban development projects in Vinh.

The vision promoted by national, provincial, and municipal authorities for Vinh's development is expressed in the slogan "Civilised and Modern City". This slogan is translated into images of an orderly city of consumer culture, represented in New Urban Areas[215], apartment, office and hotel high-rises, as well as shopping centres. In the present official vision, these markers of economic development go hand in hand with symbolic and spatial references emphasizing Vinh's revolutionary history and thereby the legitimacy of the Communist Party. In the case of Vinh, this also amounts to the celebration of a local, not only national, history of revolutionary struggle. Continuity of national history is emphasised by heritage sites such as the Vinh and Phượng Hoàng Trung Đô citadels. However, reminders of the difficult years of reconstructing the country and building[216] socialism, such as collective housing areas and the Quang Trung Housing Complex, have no place in this politicized urban landscape (see Figure 32). While this vision in large parts relies on market mechanisms and individual initiative, especially in the housing sector, the planning process implies that the legitimate formulation of overall development goals and visions is reserved for the Communist Party and the state. Despite the importance of different actors and the market in bringing about this vision, they are ideologically relegated to a functional role of contributing to the fulfilment of this official vision, but have no role in its formulation.[217] This vision regards the city, like in the previously promoted modern project to build a Socialist City, as an area in which different functional and symbolic spaces and buildings are arranged by a centralized planning system so as to arrive at an ideal outcome. This does not constitute a modern project in the sense that it aims at social or political change. Instead, it is a conservative modern project as it aims at securing the Communist Party's constitutional role as "the force assuming leadership of the State and

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[215] The investment license for one of the largest of these has only recently been revoked because the investor, PVNC, was slow to implement the project (Nguyễn Đình Cát, 25.7.2013). PVNC has, however, been granted a license for redeveloping Zone A of Quang Trung. It remains to be seen if this projects fares better.

[216] "Building" here refers to construction activities that aimed at creating a socialist urban environment as well as to attempts to create the institutions and management apparatus of a socialist state.

[217] The distinction between the state and market actors, however, should not be taken too rigidly. Importantly, many of the prominent construction companies in Vinh, like Handico 30 or PVNC, are former provincial construction companies that became part of larger state-owned enterprises. In many "privatized" companies, such as Vinh City Infrastructure Development and Management Joint Stock Company, province or city still hold a controlling interest (WWM Advisory Team, April 2007: pp.3-5).

society" by creating symbols of its legitimacy through conscious urban design (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 25.12.2001: Chapter 1, Article 4).

Figure 32
In 2011 the Housing Complex Centre constructed as part of GDR cooperation was demolished to make way for the Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai Memorial House (picture taken by author, 26.6.2011)

In the official vision of Vinh top-down planning by experts implements political goals that are formulated by central authorities (see for example Thủ tướng Chính phủ, 30.11.2011). In this view, the civilised and modern character of the city is expressed by orderly "modern" physical structures representative of the Party's and the state's achievements. In contrast, the presented projects promoted by international actors see the modernity of a city not in its physical appearance but in those institutions, structures, and power relations that govern it; their modern projects aim at making these more participatory. Both the LA 21 and the ACCA program regarded their physical projects as triggering change through the application of participatory methods. Like the model of a Socialist City had to be adapted to local circumstances, these international actors had to adjust their approaches to urban development to the institutional and political setting of Vinh. Taking concrete achievements as a measure, the ACCA program was more successful in this regard than the LA 21 program. To deal with the institutional and political particularities of Vinh (and Vietnam as a whole), actors promoting these modern projects had to develop particular strategies to make cooperation with Vietnamese actors and implementation of their projects possible. Thereby, the political program informing the modern project of a Participatory City was partly given up and became open for co-optation.

The case for development as "The anti-politics machine" has most famously been argued by James Ferguson (1994). Participation and civil society have a clear political connotation in the field of development (see pages 143-147). However, according to Fowler terms such as "transformation" or "participation" were stripped of their political significance when NGOs promoting these concepts became increasingly co-opted by and depended on donors in the 1980s. When civil society became en vogue in the 1990s, many NGOs' work became further detached from politics as they were directed to "small-p" politics by donors, on whom they depend financially (Fowler, 2011: p.47). Edwards sees a general pattern, in which concepts of the social sciences such as "participation" or "development" are appropriated by different actors, thereby losing their clarity (Edwards, 2011: p.4). On civil society he writes "what was once a conversation about democracy and self-expression has become increasingly technocratic, dominated by elites who seek to shape civil society for their own ends and increasingly mimicking the language and practices of businesses and market-based investment" (Edwards, 2011: p.5). According to Harriss the discourse on civil society, participation, and good governance "represents problems that are rooted in differences of power and in class relations as purely technical matters that can be resolved outside the political arena" (Harriss, 2002: p.8). He argues that those actors chosen for participation and funding are at times chosen because they "offer the possibility of a kind of democracy through 'popular participation', but without the inconveniences of contestational politics and the conflicts of values and ideas which are a necessary part of democratic politics" (Harriss, 2002: p.8).

However, according to Hewison and Jayasuriya, this de-politisation masks the political agenda behind the use of a technique or a tool. Behind that, they see the promotion of a technocratic form of development that presents itself as neutral, while reducing civil society organisations to activities that ensure the smooth implementation of economic reform. In their view, the de-politisation is "instrumental for neo-liberal market programs and strategies; it becomes a means of instantiating the discipline of the market in the core of the individual participation in civil society" (Hewison, Jayasuriya, 2004: p.7). Furthermore, as civil society and "good" modes of participation become associated with a specific form of institutional setting, namely a liberal market economy, political decisions and debates on the forms and goals of development are removed from civil society's scope. Its use is then to bring about and maintain such a system, not to argue if it is desirable (Jenkins, 2001: p.11). Thus, the cultural program informing many development projects is merely covered-up by the use of technical terms. In the following this process is analysed as enabling cooperation between numerous actors promoting different modern projects.

Meyer and Rowan have argued that organisations which employ rationalized concepts of work increase their legitimacy and thereby become more successful (Meyer, Rowan, 1991). However, what is perceived as rational is not necessarily effective. This leads to the de-coupling of the formal structures from the internal working activities that really take place in the organisation. Formal structures then become a way to maintain an organisation's "ceremonial conformity" with the institutionalized perceptions of rationality.[218] They refer to these institutionalized perceptions as myths. "Institutionalized products, services, techniques, policies, and programs function as powerful myths, and many organisations adopt them ceremonially" (Meyer, Rowan, 1991: p.41). By ceremoniously referring to these myths an organisation increases the legitimacy of its actions. Such myths are the result of institutionalized rules in society which may be taken for granted or might be supported by public opinion or the force of law. They are not only powerful in the immediate field of work of an organisation but often spring from wider public opinion and "knowledge legitimated through the educational system". As such they are beyond the discretion of individuals and their truth is established beyond evaluation (Meyer, Rowan, 1991: p.42-44).

While initially applying this concept to the structures of organisations, Meyer and Rowan go beyond this notion by stating that "Modern societies are filled with institutional rules which function as myths depicting various formal structures as rational means to the attainment of desirable ends" (Meyer, Rowan, 1991: p.46). Thus, their argument can also be applied to features of an organisation that are not necessarily part of their structures, for example the goals they pursue or the partners they work with. By ritually referring to myths established around certain goals or actors in its field of action an organisation raises its legitimacy and credibility. Using the right language and terms are an important technique in this (Meyer, Rowan, 1991: p.50). The enactment of myths is especially important in contexts where the output of an organisation is difficult to assess and its relations with other organisations have therefore to be based on confidence and good faith (Meyer, Rowan, 1991: pp.55-58).

As described above, an orthodoxy has been created that sees the promotion of good governance and civil society as a way to achieve both better implementation of development policies and more democratic governance. Despite, much criticism levelled at these assumptions and their interconnectedness by a virtuous circle, the view that participatory development and working with civil society actors yields better results and is morally superior largely persists (Cooke, Kothari, 2001). This institutionalized discourse might be called the myth of participatory development. Actors in the development field ritually refer to this myth by professing their adherence to its principles of working with civil society actors and implementing projects in a participatory way. They do so not only to compete for funding, but

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[218] For examples from Southeast Asian politics see (Helbardt et al., 2012).

also to be part of the wider field of development and to make their actions and methods understood in this field. Although DiMaggio and Powell refer by "isomorphism" to changes in organisational structures, the mechanism of "coercive isomorphism" does also aptly describe the relation between actors in development: "Coercive isomorphism results from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organisations by other organisations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organisations function. Such pressures may be felt as force, as persuasion, or as invitations to join in collusion" (DiMaggio, Powell, 1991: p.67). Indeed, the co-optation of NGOs by donors has led to isomorphism (Fowler, 2011; Craig, Mayo, 1995: p.7), but donor's control of resources and continued cooperation between the two kinds of actors has made the ability to present one's actions in the right terms and using the buzz-words of the time one of the critical abilities for successful actors in development.

Problems arise, however, as development projects and programmes involve numerous actors from different "societal sectors" (Scott, Meyer, 1991) or "organizational fields" (DiMaggio, Powell, 1991). These different sectors or fields have their own myths that legitimize actions and organisations, possibly contradicting each other's (Meyer, Rowan, 1991: p.55). This is often the case with development projects that are presented as conforming to the goals of the donors, to those of the receiving country as well as to those of "the people". Ideally, a project should be able to appear legitimate to all its stakeholders. To achieve this, "translating" of actions is necessary to link to different myths.[219] In the following, the translation strategies of the LA 21 and the ACCA program are analysed.

In Vinh, the first program that became active with a focus on participation and civil society was the Localising Agenda 21 Programme. Throughout the writing on the LA 21 Programme, calls were repeated for the participation of "civil society" and "civic actors" (for example Verschure, Tuts, 2004; van den Broeck et al., 2004). It remains unclear, however, what these are, and what role they played in planning and urban development. The following quote provides an example of this vagueness: "The LA21 process has identified the contested territories in the supported cities and stressed that these very sites are ideal vehicles for negotiation — between private investment and the public realm, between the international donor community and local governments, between global pressures and civil society" (Loeckx, Shannon, 2004: p.163). The idea conveyed here was of civil society as something local, able to mitigate global pressures (but probably not from global actors such as UN-HABITAT or LA 21) and that the involvement of civil society in "negotiations" would somehow

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[219] Processes of translation have for example been the subject of work by Lewis and Mosse or Bierschenk (Lewis, Mosse, 2006; Bierschenk, 2000)

lead to better results. The general thrust of the argument regarding the involvement of civil society in urban planning was expressed by van den Broeck et al. who argued that participation of civil society would result in changes in the political system where the state becomes an "enabler", "sometimes taking on an 'entrepreneurial' style" (van den Broeck et al., 2004: p. 201). While acknowledging that power relations and "cultural backgrounds" can prevent participation of civil society, van den Broeck et al. relegated the solution of this problem to new "policy arrangements", "tools", or "informal forums and policy agreements".[220] Finally, "The pursuit of better democratic decision-making and better government therefore constitutes the main justification of the approach" (van den Broeck et al., 2004: p.209). The inclusion of civil society, Non-Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations (CBO), etc. legitimized the approach taken by LA 21 with "Strategic Structure Planning", while it remains largely unclear what the contributions of such actors to the "negotiations" and the overall process were. However, the lack of involvement of civil society and NGOs has been a constant threat running through reports on the program in Vinh. Also, contrary to the final report on the other two cities, Nakuru and Essaouira, the chapter on Vinh does not refer to the involvement of NGOs or CBOs or civil society organisations (Loeckx et al., 2004; de Meulder, Loeckx, 2004). The final report on Vinh stipulated that the involvement of NGOs as external investors would be required for the revitalisation of Quang Trung, thereby keeping in line with the general view on the positive role of NGOs in project implementation (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.143). Furthermore, at least one unpublished Progress Report referred to Mass Organisations, namely the National Front of Vinh City and the Women's Union as NGOs (LA 21, 1.12.1997: p.41).[221]

Throughout its implementation, the program had faced serious communication problems. Furthermore, LA 21's approach did not sufficiently take Vietnam's institutional settings and structures into account. Even perfect participation at the city level would not yield results if this level is not the one where decisions are made. These are important reasons for the shortcomings of the program. Additionally, it was the lack of concrete action that could be translated into the Vietnamese policy discourse that was responsible for a lack of commitment from the Vietnamese side.[222] As outlined above, in the context of Grassroots Democracy participation in Vietnam is seen as a tool contributing to the implementation of

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[220] This argument is reminiscent of early approaches to development that blamed internal factors for under-development and regarded external intervention as necessary to overcome these restraints, see pages 11-12.

[221] Progress Reports were prepared for Steering Committee Meetings, which served as a link to the Belgian Administration for Development Cooperation and thereby to the Belgian Government, the main donor of the program. A draft application for follow-up funding also lists the Association of Provincial Cities as a NGO (UNCHS HABITAT, LA 21, 31.8.1998: p.24).

[222] Where such concrete action took place, namely in the field of solid waste management, the international actors did apparently not take much interest in it, as indicated by the absence of any reference to that component in the program's final report.

already defined goals and policies, a point it shares with the view of participation prevalent in the development discourse. In contrast to this discourse, however, in the Grassroots Democracy discourse participation is not regarded as a means to achieve political and social change. Correspondingly, participation in the LA 21 Programme went furthest in solid waste management activities that have no apparent connection to social or political issues, thereby relegating participation to activities supporting the vision to create a Modern and Civilised City. Participation of actors, especially of civil society, in questions that refer to larger social units or to power politics such as urban master planning is difficult to express in the official discourse on participation and urban development in Vietnam. This does not represent a failure to translate the approach taken by LA 21 into Vietnamese planning or policy language. Instead, there was no discourse present to which the program's approach and activities to urban development could legitimately attach itself because the official view of cities in Vietnam continues to see urban areas as objects of central planning by experts, not as a public sphere in which different visions of the city can be freely formulated and discussed.

Even without many tangible results to show for its activities, LA 21 could still be expressed as a legitimate initiative in the international discourse. Its ritualistic adherence to the importance of cooperating with civil society and of participation connects the program to this discourse. As concepts such as civil society and NGO are not clearly defined, the program can lay claim to their involvement, even if the respective actor's status is highly debatable. Because negotiations with and the involvement of stakeholders are generally regarded as something good, the LA 21 Programme could still be presented as successful. These achievements were described as even more important in a situation where the program had to struggle with top-down planning and "confusion between a 'map' and a 'plan'" (Shannon, Loeckx, 2004: p.123).

Given its ambitions to start a locally rooted Agenda 21 process and implementing strategic projects to underscore its capacity building activities, the program largely failed. However, the program opened up discussions on urban development to a larger number of stakeholders. However, those organisations involved in those discussions can all be considered extended structures of the state. A number of actors involved in the program would later on become involved in the ACCA program, including the then head of the Office for Urban Management, later to become a Community Architect, and the second head of the Local Team and Vice-President of the City's People's Committee who would later become chairman of the city's CDF Steering Committee, or ENDA-Vietnam, the NGO that ran the solid waste management component of the program and would later on become an important actor of the ACCA program.

In contrast to the LA 21 Programme, the project in Cửa Nam Ward is presented as successful by both international and Vietnamese actors, although in very different ways. In the brochures and reports of the Asian Coalition for Housing Right on the Cua Nam Model, a clear emphasis is put on the actions of the people in Cửa Nam Ward in driving forward and implementing the project. "They used these redevelopment plans, which will be partly financed by ACCA, to negotiate - first with the city government, and once they got the city's support, they used the force of that approval to negotiate with the provincial authority" (ACHR, October 2009). This is presented as a "breakthrough", as "municipal government keen on modernizing their cities are now on the warpath" (ACHR, October 2009). The roles of all other actors, ACCA, ACVN, and the city's authorities, are played down in these descriptions (ACHR, October 2010). One of the most important factors presented is the community's social ties: "Like all the others [inhabitants of housing areas), they were a tightly-knit community and they wanted to stay" (ACHR, October 2010). Examples of the application of the Cua Nam Model in other communities do not mention difficulties because of internal conflicts, keeping up a myth of community based problem-solving free from internal conflict.[223] The impact of the Cua Nam Model on Vinh's policy to demolish collective housing areas is presented as having brought about a general change in policy and that the approach would be replicated in all or a large number of other cases (ACHR, December 2010: p.17; ACHR, October 2010: p.6).[224]

Writing by ACHR highlights the impact of ACCA on existing structures. Significant changes are said to have taken place in communities in Vietnam and their relations to the authorities:

> "The process in Vietnam has led to real and perceivable changes already. After just two years, people in the communities clearly have more confidence in their ability to solve problems, manage their own development and negotiate with their local government agencies for resources and support. The city and provincial authorities in ACCA cities have opened up planning information and investment plans to communities affected by them. The government authorities are also more appreciative of community people's capacity to solve serious urban infrastructure problems and redevelop their own communities, more willing to partner with communities and contribute funds to their projects and more able to listen to the needs of communities and

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[223] Because of conflicts the Cua Nam Model could not be replicated in other housing areas where income and power differences existed (Interviews 29.6.2011, 1.7.2011).A prolonged conflict in the Hữu Nghị housing area developed around the issue of equally sharing formerly unequally distributed land and could only be solved with assistance of Thai experts (Interview 30.6.2011).

[224] However, the province had agreed to the reduced land plot size in those housing areas that replicate the Cua Nam Model, not in general. According to Lê Như Ngà et al., this applies to only 5 additional housing areas out of total number of 142 to be redeveloped (Lê Như Ngà et al., 2012: pp.35-36).

to alter the planning and building regulations to make them more flexible and more appropriate to the realities of the urban poor." (ACHR, December 2010: p.38)

Appadurai has described savings as having "a profound ideological, even salvational status" in NGOs (Appadurai, 2001: p.33). He describes the actions, rituals and language surrounding their work on community participation and savings as means for mobilisation and identity-building. In its reports and brochures, the achievements of the ACCA program are connected to a highly political, even revolutionary discourse:

> "**We want a revolution**! After discussing among yourselves for about an hour, we will ask each country to report - what are you going to do when you go back? How can you make best use of the ACCA Program to strengthen and scale up your people's process? We want a revolution! From now on, we want people to take care of themselves. We want to change things. We want to go forward and we want to do it in a big way." (Boonyabancha cited by ACHR, April 2009, bold in original)

ACCA distances itself from other development projects and actors, precisely with the claim that through real participation by the poor real empowerment and subsequently structural change is possible. The program's internal discourse creates tensions when interacting with outsiders. In the case of ACCA, the revolutionary tone has to be scaled down in two contexts, namely the international as well as the Vietnamese discourse on development and participation.

In an April 2005 report, ACHR wrote on its relationship with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED):

> "[IIED] continues to be an important link for ACHR in the Northern academic side of development. ACHR continues to work very closely with IIED on a variety of projects to document and disseminate the stories of people-driven development that is happening in various Asian cities. It is very often the case that some of the most important, innovative and change-making processes happening on the ground in Asian countries are being led by groups with little time to document their work, or without English skills which make it difficult for them to translate their experiences into language the Northern development audience can understand. Because of this, a lot of this very important work does not become known, and is therefore prevented from being legitimized in the global development arena. IIED (and especially its semi-annual scholarly journal, Environment and Urbanization and Diana's Hi-Fi News - Housing

Finance Newsletters) continues to be energetic partners in the attempt to bridge this documentation gap, and to bring the experiences of Asian people's processes to the world." (ACHR, April 2005: p.21).

In October 2012, IIED published its journal Environment and Urbanization with a special focus on the ACCA program entitled "Addressing poverty and inequality – new forms of urban governance in Asia". It contains a range of articles describing different aspects of the ACCA program.[225] The program is praised for showing a new way that involves true participation of communities, reaching the poorest groups and building city-wide processes[226] (Mitlin, Satterthwaite, 2012). This is positively contrasted with other approaches of the "international development community", as so far in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals "the importance of local government and of grassroots organisations and other civil society organisations for meeting the goals got little attention" (Mitlin, Satterthwaite, 2012: p.398).

In an article by Boonyabancha et al. titled "How poor communities are paving their own pathways to freedom", the salvational discourse on communities and CDFs described by Appadurai is reflected by the use of terms such as "liberate", "force", or "awakening" (Boonyabancha et al., 2012). According to Leonhardt's article in the same issue, the ACCA process is a "political process" and this process depends on the networks between people as well as the number of people involved. The article then goes on to state that

> "The power of people and their mass organization continues to be demonstrated, most recently in the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement. ACCA participants believe centrally in the need to support a people's process of urban development" (Leonhardt, 2012: p.495).

The article by Boonyabancha and Mitlin describes ACHR as a "coalition [that] was formed in 1988 so that civil society groups active in the field of human settlements could improve the effectiveness of their work through collaboration" (Boonyabancha, Mitlin, 2012a: p.404). While they see an important role for civil society in solving urban problems, they use the term in the classic way of the development discourse described in an earlier chapter: it remains unclear what they refer to. However, they present the ACCA program as exemplary in

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[225] This publication provides an interesting study object, as it includes both descriptions of the ACCA program by its practitioners and involved communities in their own terms as well as articles linking the program to the mainstream development discourse, written with the participation of professionals of IIED.
[226] One of the editors, Diana Mitlin, was a member of the ACCA / ACHR Committee (ACHR, April 2010).

bringing about those changes that the promotion of civil society in development promises[227] (Boonyabancha, Mitlin, 2012a: p.419).

As cited above, the International Institute for Environment and Development plays the role of legitimizing many of ACHR's activities in "the global development arena" (ACHR, April 2005: p.21). It is in publications of IIED or its staff that the buzz-words of the development discourse are brought up as interpretations of ACCA's activities and the involved actors. Linking activities to the larger development discourse is not only a legitimizing strategy, however. Expressing activities in the language of shared myths, even if only ceremoniously, enables others to understand these activities and to incorporate them into a system of meaning. This strengthens bonds of commonality between actors with highly different social, political and professional backgrounds. When such bonds have to stretch from political cadres and poor communities to international experts to make the implementation of a project possible, legitimizing concepts have to be sufficiently flexible. This enables them to connect to the institutionalized myths in the relevant societal sector (see Figure 33).

Vietnamese representations of the ACCA program and specifically the project in Cửa Nam Ward follow a very different thrust. They place the actions and actors surrounding both firmly in the processes on Grassroots Democracy and Public Administration Reform in Vietnam.[228] In its yearly report, ACVN describes its own and ACHR's role: "At the moment ACHR and ACVN are helping the three cities Việt Trì, Vinh, and Lạng Sơn to implement Small Projects to improve housing and infrastructure in poor urban areas"[229] (ACVN, 2009: p.8). ACVN presents the role of ACCA as a way to help poor communities to improve their housing and infrastructure through CDFs, and a way to connect poor people so that they can help each other. In the words of, ACVN's Standing Vice General Secretary ACCA's projects aim at "creating consensus, solidarity, and confidence of the people in communities, to enable them to take initiative in implementing the process of improving their housing"[230] (Vũ Thị Vinh, 2010: p.37). The General Secretary of ACVN described the approach and success of the ACCA program by citing Hồ Chí Minh: "A hundred times easier things are still difficult without the people, a thousand times more difficult things can still be achieved with the people"[231] (cited in Lê Quang Thông, 2011: p.30). Lê Viết Hùng stressed the importance of "solidarity" for the upgrading project, linking it to a general perception of the term:

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[227] In another article, focusing on the Cua Nam Model, Boonyabancha and Mitlin argue that the success of the Cua Nam Model was due to the actions of civil society organisations (Boonyabancha, Mitlin, 2012b).
[228] See pages 156-158.
[229] "Hiện nay ACHR và ACVN đang giúp 3 thành phố Việt Trì, Vinh và Lạng Sơn thực hiện các dự án nhỏ về cải thiện nhà ở và hạ tầng tại các khu nghèo đô thị."
[230] "tạo được sự đồng lòng, đoàn kết và tự tin của người dân trong các cộng đồng để từ đó họ có khả năng chủ động trong quá trình thực hiện các hoạt động cải thiện nơi ở của mình."
[231]"'Dễ trăm lần không dân cũng chịu, khó vạn lần dân liệu cũng xong'."

"Dear Uncle Ho has written: 'Solidarity is an extremely precious tradition of our Party and our people. The comrades from the Centre to the cells have to preserve the solidarity and unity of the Party like their own eyes."[232] (Lê Viết Hùng, 2011: p.35)

At the National CDF Conference that took place in Vinh in May 2011, the Vice-President of the City's People's Committee presented CDF and ACCA activities as contributing to the implementation of Grassroots Democracy according to Ordinance 34/2007, explicitly linking the program to the official program of "building a democratic, equal, prosperous, and civilised society"[233] (Nguyễn Văn Chỉnh, 4.5.2011).

Newspaper articles in the regional and national press focused on technical aspects of the project, stressing the contributions of the new model to the national development agenda (Nghệ An Online, 1.12.2010; Đức Ngọc, 11.5.2010; Văn Đoàn, 24.3.2010; Hoàng Vĩnh, 18.3.2010). While the assistance of ACVN and ACHR is acknowledged in these articles, the focus is on the positive cooperation between authorities and residents.
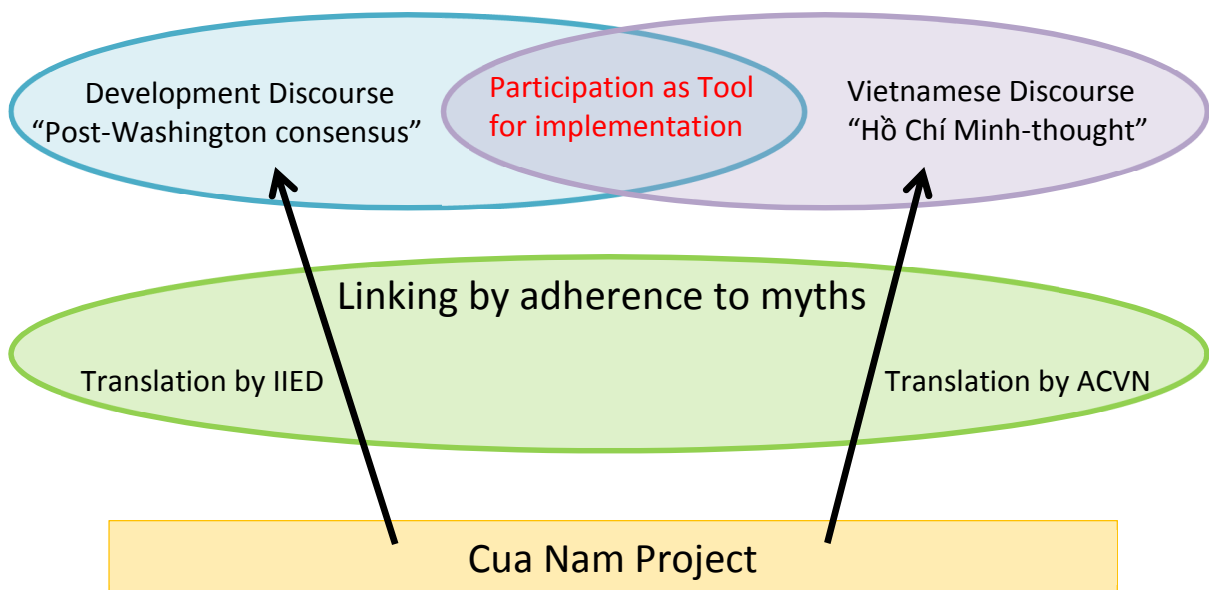
Figure 33
The process of linking to discourses by adherence to myths.

The role of ACVN in legitimizing the ACCA program and specifically the upgrading project in Cửa Nam Ward in the official discourse on participation in Vietnam is evident from the description above. In this context, the ACCA program is presented as contributing new mechanisms to the toolbox of policy-implementation. The references to Hồ Chí Minh-thought

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[232] "Bác Hồ kính yêu đã viết 'Đoàn kết là một truyền thống cực kỳ quý báu của Đảng và của dân ta. Các đồng chí từ TW đến các chi bộ phải giữ gìn sự đoàn kết nhất trí của Đảng như giữ gìn con ngươi của mắt mình'."
[233] "xây dựng xã hội dân chủ, công bằng, giàu mạnh, văn minh"

are the most striking examples of translating the project's activities into a national myth, one on which the legitimacy of the Communist Party and the Socialist State rest.[234]

As outlined above, organisations operating in highly institutionalized settings rely on the perception that their work is legitimate. They do so by ceremoniously enacting legitimizing myths because the output of their operations is not easily accounted for. Organisations face difficulties when they operate in different societal sectors or organizational fields, as these might require ceremonial pledges of allegiance to conflicting legitimizing myths. Among a number of different strategies that can be employed to cope with this dilemma, the de-politisation of concepts such as civil society or participation in development has enabled the cooperation of a large number of actors from different contexts. In Vinh, both the LA 21 and the ACCA program have adapted their approaches of participatory urban development to the local setting, at the same time both have translated their activities in a language that re-enacts the myths of the international development discourse. The ACCA program, in addition, has been successful in connecting to legitimizing myths of the local political setting. Thereby, however, it was open for co-optation by actors whose approach to urban development is informed by visions of a Modern and Civilised, rather than a Participatory, City.

A twist to the representation of the project in Cửa Nam Ward and the role of the city's authorities came with the participation of Vinh in the Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in Southeast-Asia (DELGOSEA) project of the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The project was co-funded by the European Union and aimed at promoting exchanges between city authorities in Southeast Asia to learn from best practices. One of the principles of the European Union's development aid is the promotion of civil society and the cooperation with civil society actors, funding DELGOSEA is part of this agenda (European Commission, 2012; DELGOSEA, 2012a).

Each of the participating cities was called upon to propose one "best practice" to be disseminated to the other cities. Vinh's best practice was called "Community Participation in Upgrading the Old Collective Housing Areas" (DELGOSEA, n.d.a). The best practice document builds heavily on the experiences in Cửa Nam Ward as its model for upgrading.[235]

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[234] These references are also visibly expressed, see Figure 31, p. 177.

[235] Vinh also implemented one of the best practices from another city, the Eco-Savers Project from Marikina in the Philippines. This project is described as an "innovative recycling scheme, drawing on the cooperation with local schools to help collect recyclable waste, for dealing with the problem of householdwaste and encourage environmental awareness in the younger generation" (DELGOSEA, 2012b: p.5). One of the results achieved in Vinh is that "A communication plan and cooperation agreements have been developed and set up, ensuring

> "The community was asked to participate in the urban planning process. The model aimed to promote the role of the community in urban planning and development. It mobilized resources and strengthened the cooperation from economic sectors and the community. It aimed to improve the living quality of people and achieve sustainable urban development. Aside from the support from the community, the model strengthened the cooperation between the provincial and city governments and civil society organizations. Flexibility was allowed in the implementation of state regulations" (DELGOSEA, n.d.a: p.4).

The document also states that people's participation did not only take place in the case of the Hữu Nghị Housing Area, but also in the preparation of the Master plan for the project.[236] Additionally "government and civil society organizations organized campaigns and propaganda to collect ideas, money, and other resources for the project" (DELGOSEA, n.d.a: p.7).

In this account, the achievements of the upgrading project in Cửa Nam Ward with regards to participatory urban development are exaggerated and generalized to other planning and decision-making processes. Through the use of terms like "civil society" and "people's participation", urban planning in Vinh is presented as an exemplary "best practice" in the development discourse language (DELGOSEA, n.d.a). This is made possible by the vagueness of terms such as civil society and participation. However, the very vagueness of such concepts enables cooperation between the numerous actors promoting different modern projects for urban development in Vinh since the 1990s.

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the involvement of the media, civil society, other departments and the private sector in the innovation process" (DELGOSEA, 2012b: p.6). This "result achieved" is, however, a simple copy-paste sentence from the report on Lạng Sơn, another Vietnamese city that participated in DELGOSEA (DELGOSEA, n.d.b: p.8).
[236] However, it is not clear what "the project" actually is.

5. Conclusion

Vinh's urban history has to a large degree been influenced by international factors. Under French colonialism, the former centre of imperial administration was elevated to the rank of an urban centre and became a place where change due to modernity was articulated. During the first and the second Indochina Wars, Vinh was repeatedly destroyed as a result of anti-colonial struggle and Cold War politics. From the 1960s on, Vinh became subject to modern projects advanced by actors to contribute to their respective cultural programs. In the city's reconstruction in the 1970s, the German Democratic Republic assisted in implementing the vision of Vinh as a *Socialist City*. From the 1990s on, diverging and conflicting visions of the city were promoted, on the one hand the *Modern and Civilised City* propagated by authorities, on the other the *Participatory City* advanced by international actors such as UN-HABITAT or the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights. This difference is also expressed in the organisational structures of modern projects aiming at the realisation of the respective vision: cooperation between the GDR and Vietnam during the city's reconstruction relied on hierarchical structures of both states, in contrast to the networks of actors brought together by projects since the 1990s.

During the Vietnamese-German cooperation, actors from both countries followed a view of the city as expressing and furthering socialist development. In this view, the city is subject to centralized planning by experts who incorporate different, often politically defined, functions into a whole urban body. This plan would be implemented by the state through its centralized structures of command and coordination. However, the Vietnamese state lacked the resources and capacities to establish such structures and apply them in the creation of a Socialist City in Vinh. Recognizing this inability, reforms opened possibilities to rely on sources and actors outside the Party and the state, while attempting to maintain control and coordination over the implementation process. The view that the party-state was the sole legitimate source of a cultural program and modern projects was retained. Thereby, the modern projects advanced by other actors were relegated to a second rank; in contrast to a view of a Participatory City that theoretically regards all visions of the city that are based on free and equal participation in a public sphere as legitimate. Eisenstadt has argued that the major division line between cultural programs runs between pluralistic and totalistic visions. The modern project to create a Modern and Civilised City implies a shift from the totalistic concept of the Socialist City. However, this remains a partial move towards a pluralistic concept as other modern projects are selectively accepted based on the possibility to contribute to the Modern and Civilised City.

Modern projects as conceptualized in this work are advanced as agents of urban change. The contemporary local setting in Vinh, in contrast, is highly institutionalized. At the same time, the successful implementation of a modern project, the Cua Nam Model, relied on the flexibility of the project's approach as well as the versatility of terms such as participation, communities, structural change, etc. Due to relying on established structures its impact on the institutional setting was limited. Authorities in Vinh were to a large degree able to co-opt the project and implement it through existing hierarchical structures without participation of autonomous centres of power. They were sufficiently flexible to incorporate a new approach to urban development and adjust it so as to contribute to the creation of a Modern and Civilised City.

The modern projects presented in this work relied on general conceptualisations of the city and methods to bring about urban change. These conceptualisations were to a large degree the result of national institutional settings, national histories and politics, as well as experiences gained in the respective actor's home country. The vision of a Socialist City promoted in Vietnam and Vinh resulted from the specific point in time, namely after re-orientation of urban design and construction in the USSR under Khrushchev, when this vision became influential in Vietnam. While the GDR contributed to the implementation of an already existing modern project, its assistance resulted in an outcome that is reflective of GDR policies that emphasised the construction of housing on the expense of representative public buildings and city centres, as well as the design of apartments for two-generation families. Additionally, the specific forms of cooperation are reflective of GDR-DRV/SRV relations, the experiences of cooperation between the two countries, as well as of concerns for the national prestige of the GDR. The approach to bring about change towards a Participatory City advocated by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights largely built on the experiences of that organisation from Thailand, where close cooperation with state agencies was able to achieve more pronounced institutional change than in Vinh. Similarly, the transformation of modern projects in their application in Vinh was largely due to the national institutional framework, as well as Vietnam's history and politics. Most generally, the country's pre-colonial and colonial history created an urban centre linking its surroundings to larger networks of power, communication, and exchange. The national history of anti-colonial and post-colonial struggle impacted the city in cycles of destruction and reconstruction. From the 1960s on, a centralized apparatus transmitted policies and visions for urban development formulated by central Party and state authorities to urban centres in Vietnam, prescribing lines of development as well as the respective city's place in the urban hierarchy and its regional functions. Generic, centrally proclaimed visions are complemented in Vinh with symbols of local contributions to this national history and of locally manifested achievements resulting from national policies. However, the development of Vinh also shows specific

elements. As a medium sized, regional centre, political changes on the national level are manifested in Vinh not as pronounced as in the largest urban centres of Vietnam; both the Socialist City and the Modern and Civilised City are expressed more prominently in Hanoi (Socialist City, Modern and Civilised City) and Hồ Chí Minh City (Modern and Civilised City).[237] As Vinh does not receive as much attention by donors and state funds as these cities, it is more reliant on those resources available, thereby opening opportunities for programs such as the Asian Coalition for Community Action and its project in Cửa Nam Ward that offer incentives for Vinh's authorities by supplying funds.

The cultural programs articulated by central Vietnamese authorities are translated into generic modern projects of urban development that are applied in Vinh. In both cases of the Socialist City and the Modern and Civilised City, this resulted in the formulation of unrealistic plans unsuitable to local conditions. Existing hierarchical structures created incentives for planners and the administration to produce plans conforming to politically defined ideals, not to local realities and available resources. This is especially prominent in the reconstruction of Vinh as a Socialist City where Vietnamese decision makers continued to insist on the application of international models of industrialized construction. Also the projects to redevelop the Quang Trung Housing Complex or to destroy collective housing areas as part of the creation of a Modern and Civilised City conform to central guidelines but were not implemented according to their original formulations because of high economic and social costs. In all three cases, the contributions from international actors in cooperation with local authorities resulted in more realistic projects better adapted to existing conditions.

The contributions of international actors in Vinh's history have resulted in ambivalent urban change. In the case of GDR cooperation, housing has been supplied to thousands of inhabitants, materials and experts from the GDR have helped to create construction industries as well as planning and other professional capacities. However, the goal to create a Socialist City has not been achieved, and today the most visible contribution of GDR solidarity and aid in Vinh, the Quang Trung Housing Complex, is regarded as a burden in light of changing modes of legitimacy. Modern projects aimed at advancing a Participatory City have resulted in improved housing for a small number of Vinh's inhabitants and demonstrated new forms of participation by citizens in the planning and implementation process. However, they also offered opportunities for authorities to strengthen their legitimacy and have relied on outside actors instead of establishing city-wide processes.

The promotion of modern projects in Vinh has resulted in path-dependent urban change. As modern projects are concretized in the urban fabric, projects subsequently put forward have

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[237] A partial exception is Vinh's reconstruction until 1975, when it was the most important city in the DRV's south.

to take previous projects into account. Furthermore, as construction in and design of urban areas requires high investments, a once chosen path of change can create increasing returns. Actors involved in the reconstruction of Vinh in the 1970s had little influence over the city's destruction and subsequent decision to construct a Socialist City, as both resulted from international and national politics. The decision to invite the GDR as a partner in reconstruction proved a critical juncture.[238] Decisions taken with participation of the GDR put reconstruction on a path that created increasing returns throughout the 1970s because leaving that path would have incurred high costs due to a mixture of re-productive mechanisms proposed by Mahoney (see page 20 and Mahoney, 2000). Focus on the Quang Trung Housing Complex followed a utilitarian and functional mechanism. Focusing on the provision of housing had from the beginning been controversial, but leaving the complex even less finished than it was would not only have resulted in a waste of funds, but would also have incurred high political and ideological costs, due to its function as a symbol of socialist development and solidarity. Secondly, the wish of GDR decision makers and experts to help in the reconstruction of Vinh and socialist development in Vietnam was due to the perception that they were contributing to a morally just cause, thus continued and extended cooperation in the light of difficulties and slow progress follows Mahoney's legitimation explanation. In addition contracts and agreements between the two states resulted in a form of reproduction through contractual obligation.

The vision to reconstruct Vinh as a Socialist City in cooperation with the GDR created a frame of reference for all following development. It resulted in two legacies: Firstly, the structures of planning established in that time continued to impact urban development, partly because cadres working with the experts would later come into prominent positions, partly because urban planning continues to be conducted as a hierarchical process. Secondly, the Socialist City created physical, concrete legacies. The urban layout and the projects that were created opened up possibilities, precluded others, and made actions in some areas necessary in the following decades. For example, machinery and training provided to construction enterprises or the rationalisation of construction material industries created resources on which the provincial construction economy could build. On the other hand, the size of the Quang Trung Housing Complex and the large number of its inhabitants make necessary costly and long term solutions for its future.

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[238] This is, however, not to say that it was the only or most important impact, nor are the legacies resulting from this decision the only ones present in Vinh. As I have shown, urban planning according to this model had already started without involvement of the GDR and incorporated aspects of Vinh's colonial development.

A path dependent process, however, does not preclude path change when following an existing path becomes too costly. Realizing that the focus on housing in the reconstruction of Vinh diverted funds and materials from other projects, priority of Vietnamese actors shifted. However, the GDR insisted on a continued focus on the housing complex as investments had already been high. Therefore, this shift in policy is represented with a time-lag in urban development. Similarly, the political and economic reforms in Vietnam can be regarded as path change or adjustment resulting from too high costs for path-maintenance. Again, as urban design and construction involve large investments, this path change was expressed in Vinh only some years later. The large number of former collective housing areas constructed during the 1970s makes re-development costs so high that a window of opportunity opened up for a modern project advanced by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights that aimed at a Participatory City. As the organisation aimed at social and political change, this presented a risk that can be expressed as costs resulting from a path change. However, these costs were apparently regarded as lower than those of maintaining these housing areas in light of the new vision to create a Modern and Civilised City, especially since the risk could be reduced by relying on established structures in the implementation of the project.

The Quang Trung Housing Complex' history has been expressive of the Modern Projects promoted by different actors in Vinh as well as of a shift in the cultural program promoted by the Communist Party and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Current redevelopment plans present a much larger project than the upgrading of the Hữu Nghị housing area, involving big national construction companies as well as large sums of investment, compensation, and potential profit. In this light, the future of the complex, and most importantly its inhabitants, will indicate the extent of the shift from a totalitarian conception of the city dominated by the Party and the State towards a view of urban society in which participation in not merely a tool for the implementation of already defined goals.

6. Appendix: Socio-Political Principles for the Reconstruction of Vinh

1. Reconstruction of Vinh City as the political, economic, and cultural centre of Nghệ An Province is an undertaking in the process of the country's socialist industrialisation.
   The reconstruction of Vinh City is of significance for the provinces from Thanh Hóa to Quảng Bình as well as for neighbouring central Laos and is connected to the development of industrial and agricultural production centres in the delta, the low-lands, and the highlands. These are, apart from Vinh/Cửa Hội/Cửa Lò, especially Nghĩa Đàn, Đô Lương, and Quỳ Hợp.

2. The reconstruction of Vinh City as a beautiful, well-functioning, modern equipped city worthy its revolutionary traditions is to be carried out based on a long-term urban development concept (General Development Plan). This concept includes traffic networks and is the basis for planning of technical and social infrastructure networks.
   It is the General Development Plan's goal to coordinate contemporary tasks – including provisory and immediate measures – with future demands, to facilitate the designation of reconstruction phases, and to ensure urban development according to the plan.

3. The reconstruction of Vinh City considers the most economical use of construction land. It restricts itself to the use of already built-up or formerly built-up areas and agriculturally not or difficult to use sand- and wasteland. Of these 800ha are available in Vinh and 830ha in Cửa Hội/Cửa Lò.
   The immediate proximity of urban and agricultural areas remain characteristic in the city body, it represents the immediate cooperation between workers and peasants.

4. The reconstruction of Vinh as an industrial city – as a centre of the working class – will be characterized by the following urban functions and city shaping factors:
   - Transport-, traffic- and handling industries
   - Maritime and harbour economies
   - Light industries
   - Maintenance and repair industries
   - Construction industries.

   Vinh is the site of industries of the local, provincial, and central levels.

5. The reconstruction of Vinh City as a centre of authority and administration, of culture and education and revolutionary traditions is characterized by provincial administrative institutions, by locally and centrally important establishments, and by numerous colleges and professional schools.

    Historic sites of special importance, such as Vinh citadel, Quyết Mountain, and others will be accorded important roles in the new urban design.

    The Square of Victory and the political, military, and administrative centre will be located at "Crossroads 6". The establishments and facilities of culture, education, of trade, of sports, and of recreation will be developed along the southern axis.

6. The reconstruction of Vinh is envisaged for a population of 120,000 to 150,000 inhabitants. Of these, about 80,000 will be in the immediate urban area.
    The suburbs Cửa Hội, Cửa Lò, Mi Li and the Hà Tĩnh-banks are part of Vinh City. These suburbs are part of the city, as are connecting transport and infrastructure lines. They are part of comprehensive administration and planning.
    The reconstruction of Vinh City observes the relations to Hồ Chí Minh's home Kim Liên and fosters its further development.

7. The reconstruction of Vinh City should step-by-step contribute to the creation of distinct urban areas for industrial- and work places, for housing, for education, care and recreation. Thereby, the entanglement of work- and housing spaces connected to small-scale production should be overcome. This is to be achieved in all permanent new buildings and to be aimed at in provisional solutions.
    Examples have to be planned, realized, and evaluated, this first concerns the industrial zones Vinh-North and Vinh-Bến Thủy, the Quang Trung Housing Complex, and the recreational centre Vinh Citadel.

8. The reconstruction of Vinh City takes place in new residential areas according to the principles of complex housing construction. Facilities necessary for provisions and support of the inhabitants are to be constructed in parallel to residential buildings.
    New buildings are to be designed considering future demands.
    Multistorey apartment buildings are principally not to be constructed as solitaires but in housing complexes.

9. The reconstruction of Vinh City should follow construction phases according to economic planning.

This allows for concentrated and coordinated preparation of building activities, effective realisation and use, and has positive impact on necessary technical and traffic facilities.

For each construction phase both permanent projects as well as temporary and easy construction measure are to be coordinated. The advantages of territorial, technical, and temporal coordination of investments are to be fully realized.

10. The reconstruction of Vinh City ensures good conditions for national culture and the hygiene of the city. The urban climate will be improved through water bodies, planting trees, green and recreational and agricultural areas. The "healthy urban structure" has to be ensured by proper ventilation and use of shadows and favourable rain water drainage. This is an important expression of the cultural state of the environment.

11. The reconstruction of Vinh City requires substantial development of construction industries. On the basis of the urban development concept it allows for long-term development of cadres, capacities, techniques and technology in construction and construction material production according to plans. This is to be used.

12. The reconstruction of Vinh City serves the gradual improvement of living and working conditions of its citizens. This is an important motivation for citizens to mobilize high contributions in the reconstruction of their city.

13. The reconstruction of Vinh City puts high demands on urban construction, architecture and visual arts.

Vinh will then be ten times more beautiful than before if social authorities consequently pursue this goal, if those designing and those implementing at all times struggle for the beauty of their buildings and if all citizens daily contribute their part for a clean and neat city.

(Verwaltungskomitee Nghe An, 30.5.1975: pp.6-8)

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