

Industrialization and The Changes of Vietnamese Families

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Abstract

Through out checking three aspects: number and rate of urban population in the country; the growth of GDP; and the shift of economic structure, the article affirms the industrialization process in Vietnam now. Besides it, Vietnamese families are changing, too. It is examined at living standard of family; the average age of first marriage and household size. From that, we could see the relationship between industrialization and the changes of Vietnamese families at present.

Keywords: Industrialization, Vietnamese, family.

1. Introduction

Since 1986 - under the Doi Moi slogan of the Sixth Party Congress, Vietnam has carried out the most comprehensive and profound renovation in its modern history. This economic renovation, aimed at creating the fundamental conditions for economic development, has already helped Vietnam overcome severe difficulties, and substantial progress has been achieved. The country is expected to graduate from the status of a low - income country to a middle - income country by 2010 and in the five - year plan it is projected that Vietnam will become a "*modern industrial country by 2020*". Industrialization, however, did affect major changes in family. What are these changes? We will clarify the relationship between industrialization and the changes of Vietnamese families at present.

2. Definition Of Industrialization

Industrialization is normally interpreted as a process whereby the share of industry in general and of manufacturing in particular, in total economic activity is increased. A large number of studies have shown a clear tendency for industrialization, defined in this way, to be associated with rising income (Weiss 2002:3-4).

Goode gives a definition of his own about industrialization. In his view, it is not possible and useful to distinguish clearly between the separate effects of urbanization and industrialization; the effects of industrialization include those of urbanization. Furthermore, he includes the improvements of technology in industrialization (Goode 1963).

From these two definitions about industrialization, I will check the industrialization process in Vietnam throughout three aspects: number and rate of urban population in the country; the growth of GDP; and the shift of economic structures.

Industrialization in Vietnam

Number and rate of urban population in the country

Urbanization is the physical growth of urban areas as a result of global change. Urbanization is also defined by the United Nations as movement of people from rural to urban areas with population growth equating to urban migration. The Vietnamese definition of urbanization unusually excludes those residents in the urban area but engaged in rural activities (Smith and Dixon 1997).

In general, urbanization in Vietnam is basically divided into the following stages. Each of the historical stages is clearly identified by the distinct and rapid change. Urbanization process in Vietnam reflects the complicated and diverse circumstances of the different periods of development (Luan et al. 2000:54).

The feudal period (from 1858 onwards)

The city in Vietnam during this period was mainly an administrative and commercial center. It was usually advantageous geographical location for exchange and trade. It could not actually become the economic center in accordance with the nature of urban concept. In the framework of agricultural, self-sufficient and closed economy, the city has no important role for rural areas and the whole country. Factors necessary for industrial and trade development as well as commodity production in general were very weak. The study of history also shown that, in the sixteenth century, the big city of Thang Long, Hoi An, Pho Hien had been developed prosperously. There were seeds of producing goods - basic for urban development. However, in the quite strong feudal centralization with the intervention of the feudal class, and due to the policy "*favoring agriculture and limiting trade*", the urban did not grow up. On the broader scale, this is also the real state of other oriental cities (especially in China). It can be said that the process of urbanization in Vietnam at this stage has not really started.

The colonial period (1858 - 1954)

After establishing the colonial government stably, the French increased exploiting natural resources of Vietnam to move his country. To do that, it is necessary to build and broaden roads; to expand the old cities and to build the new ones. The commercial ports of Hai Phong, Da Nang, Sai Gon are opened to trade. Hai Phong in 1872 as a fishing village, but in 1953 it was a busy port. The population of Sai Gon - Cho Lon in 1943 was 498,000 people; compared to 1,600,000 people in 1953. Ha Noi in 1943 was 119,700 people; but it was 297,000 people in 1953 - more than 2 times in 1943 (Luan 2002). However, the growth rate of urban population for nearly 100 years of colonial domination was still very low. In 1931, the percentage of urban population in Vietnam has reached 7.5%; in 1936 was 7.9%; 20 years later (1955) only achieved 11%. Meanwhile, the urban population in the world for 20 years has increased by 31% to 48% (i.e. 17%), reflecting a five-fold increase in Vietnam growth (only 3.1%).

In essence, the city of Vietnam this period was only the administrative center and the shelter of feudal government as well as the last station to collect natural resources of Vietnam to France. Socio - economic status of the city was too weak to attract more workers and people from rural to urban. However, we could say that in 1955, the urbanization was really begun in Vietnam with 11% urban population.

The 1955 - 1975 period

It is a special period in the history of Vietnam in general and in the process of urbanization in particular. The country was divided into two parts with two different political - social modes. These two modes had opposite effects on the development of urban in Vietnam during this period.

Years 1955 - 1964 was a period of urbanization increasingly in both North and South of Vietnam. Network of the city gradually formed and developed. It began influencing on the development of rural society and the whole country.

Years 1965 - 1975 was a period of war in both two parts of Vietnam. Normally, war is a factor hindering technical infrastructure and urban structure, reducing the number of urban residents. However, Vietnam has its own characteristic. In the North, after nearly ten years of peaceful construction in the socialist model, the country had to cope with the sabotage war of the US Air Force. To limit destruction caused by war, industrial buildings and urban residents temporarily moved to the countryside, especially in the early 1970s, and resulted in a temporary deurbanization process. This means the process of urbanization was slowly this period in Northern of Vietnam. In the South, neocolonial economic development was followed by local and special wars with US interference. In contrast to the North, because of "forced urbanization" policy of America, millions of Southern farmers forced to leave their villages to become refugees and pulled into the cities. As a result, the urban population of Southern Vietnam increased from 15% in 1960 to 60% in 1970. The population of Sai Gon increased from 300,000 to 3,000,000 people (10 times). Da Nang is even higher: from 25,000 to 300,000 people (12 times). The refugees continued flowing to Sai Gon, where became the highest population density in the world: 34,000 per km² (Luan 2002). After the liberation in 1975, a reverse migration from cities to rural areas took place. But the consequences of "forced urbanization" during the American war has affected on the social life of the Southern cities until now.

The 1976 - 1985 period

After a few years to restore what is being destroyed by the American war, the process of urbanization gradually regained regular pace in peaceful condition. Many new cities were founded; many rural areas became urban ones. Urban network of the country is formed, including more than 500 cities, towns and townships of various sizes. Two biggest cities are Hanoi - the capital in the North and Ho Chi Minh city in the South. It is noted that after the war, because of the reverse migration from urban to rural areas, the urban population decreased in five years by 21.5% in 1975 to 18.6% in 1981. Since 1982, the rate of urban population has been increasing (1982: 19.2%; 1985: 19.3%). However, this growth rate is very slow.

The 1986 - now

From 1986, urbanization has also accelerated under the “Doi Moi” reforms; the UN estimates that the proportion of the population in urban areas increased by only two percentage points, from 18.3 percent to 20.3 percent between 1970 and 1990; but reached 26.7 percent in 2005, reflecting a three-fold increase in urban growth.

According to the 1989 census, 12.74 million people, or 19.8% of the population, were classified as urban; of these 8.5% (1.08 million) were resident in Hanoi, and 24.9% (3.17 million) in Ho Chi Minh City. Outside of these two centers only three settlements had more than 300,000 inhabitants, Da Nang, Bien Hoa and Hai Phong, the latter two closely linked to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi respectively. The urban population of Vietnam is heavily concentrated in and around the two major centers, and the southern part of the country remains far more urbanized than the north.

The general impression of the rapid growth of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City is confirmed by other official figures. Between 1989 and 1994, these centers increased their share of the total urban population to 15.9% and 31.0% respectively. Such an increase in the population of the two centers in the period 1989 - 1994 amounts to 2.25 million (Smith and Dixon 1997).

Over the past decade, Vietnam’s urban systems have developed rapidly. Urban population has risen to nearly 26 million people in 1999 with the annual average population growth rate of 3.4%. Urban network has developed widely across the country while the number of urban areas has soared to 754 from 629 in 1999. According to the Ministry of Construction’s urban development department, Vietnam’s urban population rose to 31.7 million people as of June 2009, accounting for 37% of the national population. Of whom, 25.5 million people are living in the inner city, representing 29.7% of the national population.

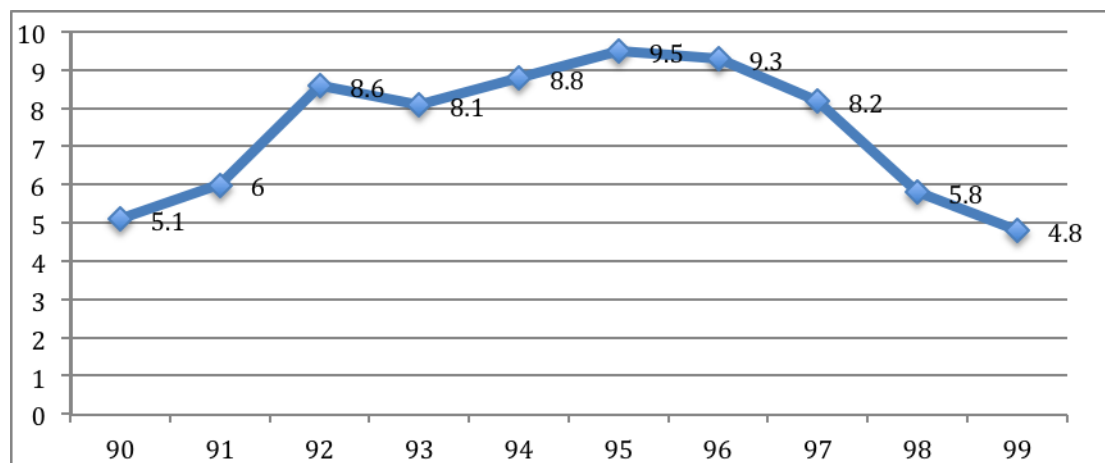
Development plan for Vietnam’s urban in the future

The main trend to develop Vietnam’s urban in the future is focus all resources, attract foreign investment to consolidate existing cities and build large cities - based economic development. Urban and large urban areas lead positions in growth at national level. It is estimated that by 2015 the number of urban is 847, and by the year 2025 is 1000. The urban population by 2015 and 2025 reaches 35 million and 52 million respectively. The urbanization rate is about 50%.

The growth of GDP

The face of Vietnam’s economy and society has changed significantly since the introduction of market - oriented reform and opening of the economy in 1986. Vietnam escaped from the crisis in the mid - 1980s and its annual GDP growth rate averaged 3.9 percent in the 1986 - 1990 period (General Department of Statistics and Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2000)

In the mid - 1990, Vietnam was considered one of the most promising markets and investment locations in East Asia. The GDP growth rate averaged almost 8 percent per year during the period 1990 - 1995, with over 9 percent recorded in 1995 (Hakkala et al. 2001)

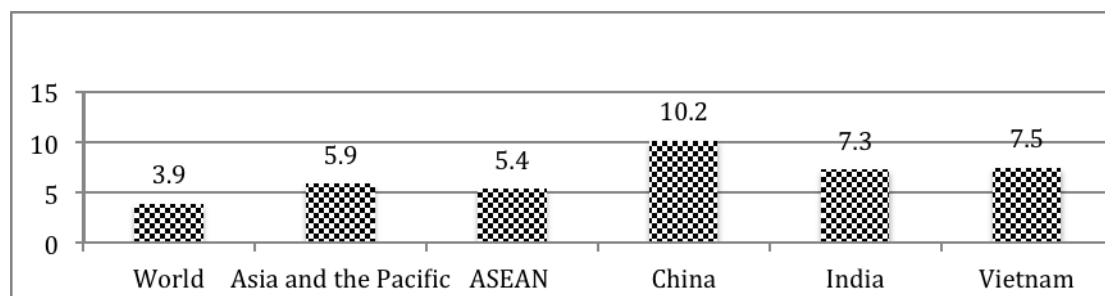


Source:

Institute for development strategy (various years)

Fig. 1. GDP growth in the period 1990 - 1999 (%)

Over the present decade, and especially after the acceleration of economic reforms that followed the 9th Party Congress, in 2001, Vietnam has experienced high rates of economic growth with an average of 7.5% per year from 2000 to 2008. Annual growth of GDP peaked at 8.5% in 2007 before falling to 6.2% in 2008 as a result of high consumer price inflation and then falling external demand. This was high by both global and regional standards as is evident in fig. 2.



Source. IMF: World Economic Outlook Database (October 2009)

Fig. 2. Gross domestic product, annual average growth, 2000 - 2008 (%)

For the first quarter of 2009, GDP grew by only 3.1 per cent compared to 2008 but steadily climbed throughout 2009. By the end of the 2009 growth figure is relatively strong compared to estimates for many countries in the Asia region.

According to a study of Institute of development strategy of Ministry of planning and investment, a forecast of social - economical development in accordance with 3 different scenarios (high scenario, base scenario, and low scenario) is presented in table 2.

Table 1: GDP annual average growth rate (Unit: %)

Year	2011-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030
High scenario	7.5	7.0	6.2
Base scenario	7.1	6.9	6.1
Low scenario	6.3	6.5	5.5

Source: Institute of development strategy (2006).

The shift of economic structures

The shift of economic structures has always been one of major concerns in the renovation and economic development policy of the Party and government. In the Tenth National Congress of Communist Party (2006), achievements were highly evaluated.

The Vietnam economy has been experiencing a rapid structural transformation, which is reflected in the shifting sectoral composition of employment. In 2000, almost two-thirds (65.3%) of all workers were employed in agriculture (see table 2). However, by 2007 this had inclined to 52.2 per cent. The most substantial shift from 2000 to 2007 has been toward the industrial sector, which account for nearly one - fifth of the workforce, while services employed remaining 28.6 per cent of all workers in 2007.

Table 2: Distribution of employment by sector, 2000 - 2007 (%)

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Agriculture	65.3	64.0	62.0	59.7	57.9	56.7	54.7	52.2
Industry	12.4	13.9	14.7	16.4	17.4	17.9	18.3	19.2
Services	22.3	22.1	23.3	23.9	24.8	25.4	27.0	28.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

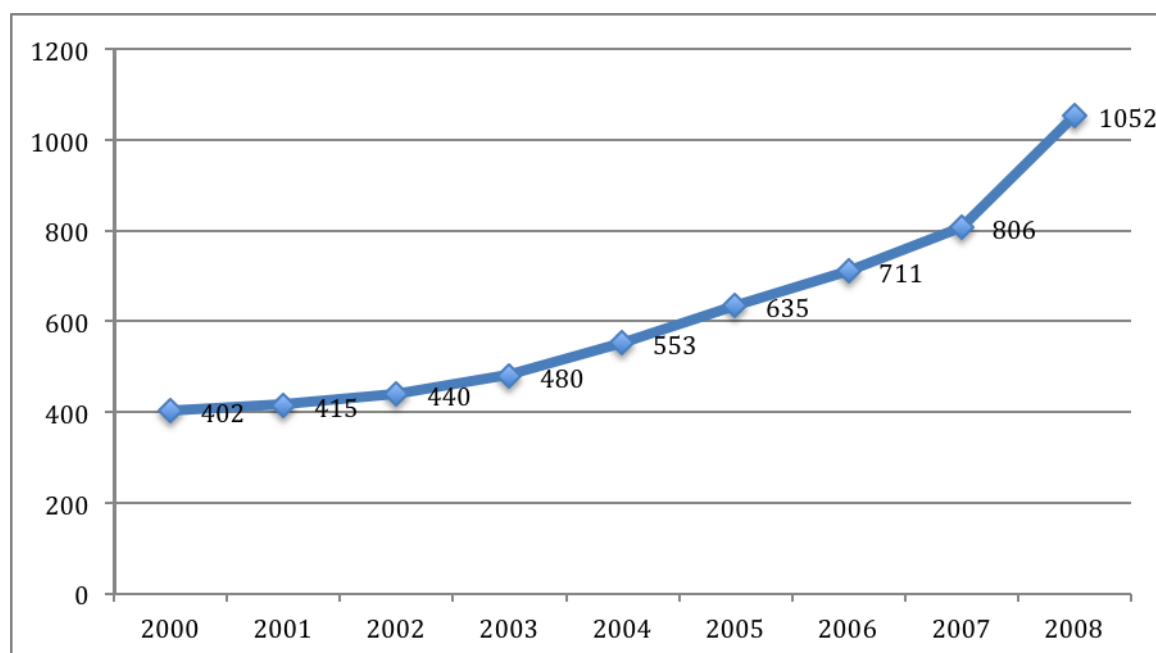
Source: Ministry of Labor-Invalids and Social Affairs: Labor and employment survey (various years)

According to assessment of the implementation of the five-year socio- economic development plan (2001 - 2005), Vietnam has succeeded in both agriculture, industry and service sector (The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006). The pattern of growth in all economic sectors reflects the significant structural change, which is occurring in Vietnam. The proportion of total GDP accounted for by agriculture declined from 23.3% to 17.6% between 2000 and 2008 although there was a 35.1 per cent increase in the value of agriculture GDP over that period. On the other hand, the industry and construction sector increased its share of the national economy from 35.4% in 2000 to 41.6% in 2008. Meanwhile, the services sector consistently contributed around 40% of GDP during the 2000 - 2008 period.

3. The changes of Vietnamese families under the impact of industrialization

3.1. Living standard of families is increasing

Due to economic progress, family life has improved. The common way to measure development progress is the GDP per person. From this perspective, Vietnam climbed from a GDP per person of 413 dollars in 2001 to 836 in 2007, and will most likely surpass the 1000 milestone in 2008, a couple of years ahead of the target set by the socio - economic development plan 2006 - 2010. At 12.5% in the period 2001 - 2007, Vietnam ranks 24 among 139 countries in terms of the growth of its GDP per person measured at constant prices (Vietnam development report, 2009).



Source: General Statistics Office; World Bank: World Development Indicators (2009)

Fig. 3. Gross domestic product per capital, 2000 - 2008 (current USD)

To sum up, the growth of GDP per person since renovation reflects the positive significant change in family life. In addition, many families have purchased modern refurbishment. In cities 99% of households own television sets; 77.7% have radios; 66% have video players; 79%, refrigerators; 75.7% with telephones; 15% with air conditioners; 81%, motorbikes and; 38.7% with washing machines. In the countryside 55.4% households have television sets; 30.7% have radio; 91.9% have bicycles; 23.9% expensive furniture and; 13.9% own motorbikes. Meanwhile, in the midland and highland areas, 62.5% of households own televisions; 25.5% have radio; 32.6% have expensive furniture; 89.1% have bicycles; 19.9%, motorbikes (Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the United States of America, 2002).

3.1.2. The average age at first marriage is higher than in the past

The average age at first marriage shows the average number of years males and females had been single before entering into their first marriage. For women, the first entry into marriage marks an important social event and is closely linked to the starts of childbearing. Thus, this can be an indicator of a woman's entry into the childbearing phase of her life. In the April 2005 Population change and family planning survey (PCFPS), the reported the average age at first marriage for men was 26.8 years and 23.5 years for women. The World fertility report 2003 reported that in 1997 the average at marriage for females was 22.1 years (Weiss, 2002). The average age at first marriage was higher for men in both rural (26.1 years for men vs. 22.9 years for women) and urban areas (28.7 years for men vs. 24.9 years for women), indicating that men marry much later than women and more men do so in the urban areas.

Table 3: The average age at first marriage by sex and residence, 2005

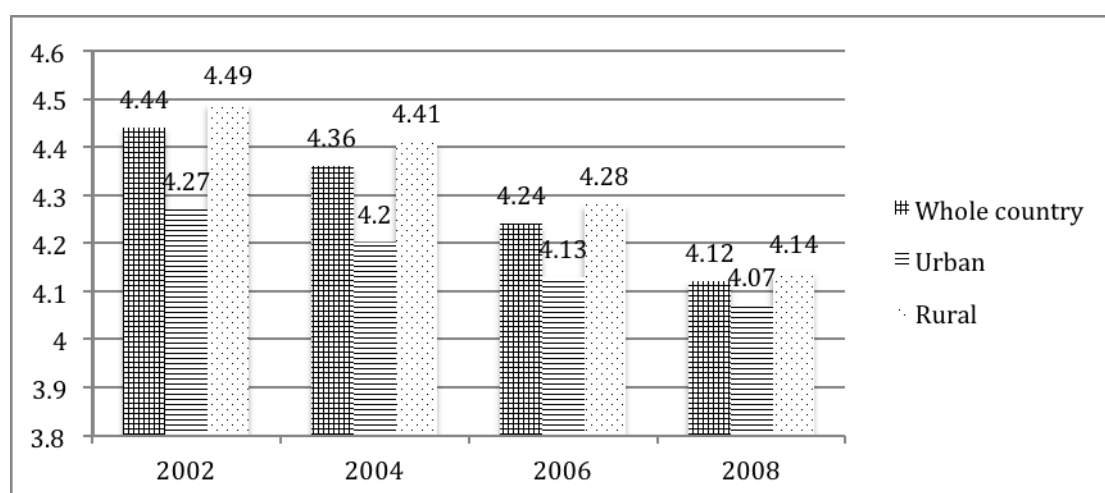
	Male	Female	Difference
Whole country	28.6	23.5	3.3
Urban	28.7	24.9	3.8
Rural	26.1	22.9	3.2

Source: General Statistics Office (GSO), Vietnam, Population Change and Family Planning Survey, 2005.

Trends show that the average age at first marriage has been increasing in recent years. There was a rise in the average age at first marriage from 25.3 years for men and 22.7 years for women in 1999, to 26.8 years for men and 23.5 years for women in 2005. This indicates that the Vietnamese are opting to marry late (Vietnam population change and family planning Survey, 2005).

3.1.3. Household size is declining

Average household size in 2008 was 4.12 persons overall with a gradual decline seen over time (it was 4.44 persons in 2002, 4.36 persons in 2004 and 4.24 persons in 2006). This trend was seen in both urban and rural areas, in all regions and for different income quintiles.



Source: General Statistics Office (various years)

Fig. 4. Household size in Vietnam (Unit: Person)

The cause of this change can be explained as follows:

Firstly, in the context of the industrialization, forms of nuclear family seems to have many advantages over other forms of families (extended family, single-parent family, etc) because it is organized as an independent unit and able to adapt quickly to the transformation of society.

Secondly, the society of industrialization is very “dynamic”. Therefore, a wife or a husband in the nuclear family can choose career in their own way to meet the demands of industrial society without pressure from their families.

Thirdly, there is a trend that young people move to the city for work and then get married and settle down in the city.

To sum up, because of industrialization the household size is declining. In other words,

the nuclear family is the most suitable in industrial society.

4. Conclusion

Vietnam has been significantly changing its economic and social systems in the last decade under the fundamental reform of development patterns. With the transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, the Vietnamese families are changing, too. The economic reforms express in three aspects: number and rate of urban population in the country; the growth of GDP; and the shift of economic structures. Industrialization impacts Vietnamese families on living standard, the average age of first marriage and household size. Specifically, living standard is increasing; the average age of first marriage is increasing, too. The household size is declining.

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