

TELEVISION, URBANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT
A STUDY OF HANOI, THE CAPITAL CITY OF VIETNAM

Thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

The pace of urbanisation in Vietnam is increasing rapidly in tandem with industrialisation and modernisation. The government forecasts that 45 % of Vietnam will be urbanised by 2020. An “historical” plan for the expansion of Hanoi received a huge endorsement by the National Assembly in May of 2008 despite public protest. Beginning in August 2008 the capital’s borders were expanded to create a metropolis 3.6 times its previous size of 922 square kilometres. Hanoi’s population will double to 6.2 million as a result creating over 3 million new residents.

This thesis project examines how Vietnamese television addresses and serves the communication needs of new residents - recent migrants from the countryside to Hanoi and those who become new residents through urban expansion.

Theories of media effects, particularly uses and gratifications theory, agenda setting theory, the knowledge gap hypothesis and the media system dependency theory, are adopted to support the study. Focus group discussions with new resident groups and in-depth interviews with television policy makers and programmers are used for data collection with the purpose of determining uses and gratifications on the one hand and approaches, strategies and programs related to those who are new to urban life on the other.

Results from case studies indicated that the individuals with lower socioeconomic status (SES) have a greater dependence on television for everyday information than those with higher SES. In terms of intercultural communication, these individuals tended to communicate merely within their own cultural groups. The TV policy makers and programmers shared their understandings of the current urban issues and pressures of urbanisation but said they had not recognised the new residents as a specific category of audiences. Within these state-owned stations, the policy making process was first directed by the government and then driven by economic factors.

The results of the study will inform policy making and programming within Vietnam Television, Vietnam Television Corporation and Hanoi Radio and Television. The viewers' feedback significantly benefits the station managers, producers and practitioners in enhancing and improving the quality of programs to serve their audiences' requirement.

The study draws contemporary Vietnam into the scholarly discourse on the relationship between communication and development; in this respect, urbanisation in the country has never been studied from the approaches of international communication and media studies.

STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

I herewith certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Television, Urbanisation and Development: A Study of Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam” has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research), reference number FOAHE25SEP2009-D00003.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research's background and context

1.1.1 Communication in development

It has been more than fifty years since Daniel Lerner (1958) marked the emergence of the field of communication and development with his seminal work *Passing of the Traditional Society* in which he addressed the transition of a traditional society towards modernity via the path of Western modernisation. His modernisation perspective subsequently became dominant in theoretical and practical debate surrounding the relationship between communication and development, and in the texts of leading scholars of the field (Lerner, 1958, Pye, 1979, Rogers, 1976, Schramm, 1964).

Broadly speaking, the theme of 'communication and development' systematically underpins all research into the relationship between development and communication in the context of a politico-social nexus (Mowlana and Wilson, 1990, Kazan, 1993). But, in more recent times, the history of the field has witnessed constant shift in the approaches to both 'development' and 'communication': there have been three different perspectives of the notion of development and the role of communication in development. In their review titled *Communication for Development in the Third World*, Melkote and Steeves (2001) summarise these three perspectives as follows: (1) the modernisation perspective based on neo-classical economic theories assumes that the Western model of economic growth is universally desirable; (2) critical perspectives

grounded in Marxist thought challenge the economic and cultural expansionism and imperialism of modernisation, arguing for a new economic arrangement to create more even distribution of rewards in society; and (3) the liberation perspective, developed under the theme of emancipatory perspectives, and derived largely from liberation theology. The latter prioritises personal and communal liberation from oppression, seeing it as the key to empowerment¹ and self-reliance which should be the goal of development. Melkote and Steeves (2001) also analyse other approaches, e.g., basic needs, women and development, sustainable development, and particularly empowerment.

The sum of the different perspectives puts communication at the centre of the debate responding to the understanding of communication itself and its process. In general, there are two major schools of thought depicting the process of communication: first, as a linear process of information transmission; and, second, as a more complex process of shared meaning, which is ‘inseparable from culture’ (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). These different viewpoints lead to the different approaches to the role of communication in development. On the one hand, when described as a process of message transfer, communication is considered an institutional agent which contributes to social change and is believed to have “a great deal of power to affect audiences” (Wilkins, 2000). This perception is illustrated in the theory of modernisation in which communication plays its prerequisite role in the transformation of society from traditional to modern (Lerner, 1958, 1977). On the other, viewing communication as a shared meaning process, both participatory perspectives and empowerment emphasise the central importance of the horizontal communication among local communities (Jacobson and Servaes, 1999) that serves to “facilitate the strategic interests of marginal communities” (Wilkins, 2000).

¹ In his more recent review of the ‘theory of development communication’, Melkote (2003) distinguishes ‘empowerment’ as the fourth perspective of the field of development communication.

In the broader view of communication as the process of development itself, since the 1970s, several scholars (Freire, 1970, Servaes, 1991, Chitty, 1992, Jacobson and Servaes, 1999, Wilkins, 2000, Melkote and Steeves, 2001, Mody, 2003) have advocated that communication should be used in self-development activities to generate, facilitate and advocate dialogue, to help people understand each other, and to identify their problems. Although identified with different themes from Freire's (1970) 'conscientisation' to liberation, participation, self-reliance, and empowerment (see Melkote and Steeves, 2001), the expanded powerful effects of communication are reconfirmed, which help to empower people by sharing knowledge, offering "necessary skills, confidence, and countervailing power to deal effectively with social change" (Melkote, 2003).

The constant change in development communication perspectives reflects a shift in the explanation and assumption of the roles of communication in development. Melkote and Steeves (2001) summarise the following four overlapping approaches: (1) communication effects distinguished in the two opposite notions of powerful effects and limited effects of mass communication, respectively accompanying the bullet or hypodermic theory and the two-step-flow theory; (2) mass media and modernisation embodied in modernisation theory in which mass media are considered ideal vehicles for transferring new ideas and models from the developed nations to the Third World and from urban to rural areas; (3) the diffusion of innovations approach that links with both of the previous approaches and has been replaced by: (4) social marketing, which provides a model for strategic communication to promote social change.

1.1.2 The context of network society

Over the last decades, the world has witnessed an extraordinary increase in information and communication technologies and its global introduction and diffusion. After the Cold War,

changes in global perspectives occurred as new divisions replaced the old East-West and North-South divides of the world system. Fundamental changes appeared in various aspects of culture, economics, geopolitics, religions and, at certain levels of development, the phenomena of interdependence and dependence. As well, changes were noted in the demand for a wider view of international communication in the dominant contexts of globalisation and post-modernisation. Mowlana (1997) stresses both aspects of research into international communication, i.e., the human and technological activities which grew out of the traditions of international relations theories and policies described earlier. Mowlana assumes that global is not universal and that global communication does not mean universal communication (p. 8). Similarly, other scholars viewed globalisation as a “multidimensional process which, like all significant social processes, unfolds in multiple realms of existence simultaneously” (Nederveen Pieterse, 1995, p.3). These viewpoints of globalisation resonate with the culturally determined understanding of globalisation as not merely a process of cultural homogenisation (Holton, 1998) but more complicatedly as “an ensemble of particulars that features long-distance interconnectedness” (Wang and Yeh, 2007) and as a process of hybridization; structural hybridization, or the emergence of new, mixed forms of cooperation and cultural hybridization, or the development of “trans-local *mélange* cultures” (Nederveen Pieterse, 1994).

From this point of departure, it seems appropriate to recover the notions of “hybridity” and “hybridization”, acknowledged as one in key terms of postcolonial theory (Heidemann and De Toro, 2006). Homi Bhabha referred to this notion as “a third place within which elements encounter and transform each other” (cited in Wang and Yeh, 2007, p. 77). The concept of hybridity has recently become a new facet of debate under the theme of globalisation, not only from the major view of cultural studies, but also in the broader approaches of epistemological, social, cultural and medial perspectives (De Toro, 2006). Nederveen Pieterse (1995), who views

the hybridization perspective as a counterweight to the “introverted notion of culture”, claims that it “releases reflection and engagement from the boundaries of nation, community, ethnicity, or class”. Among the latest debates on hybridity and hybridization, Chitty (2009) expands the notion of the creation of new hybridity through exchanging information and knowledge between ‘transactional venues’ - a new term replacing “social space-time”- within which a major transaction is the production of hybridity. According to Chitty (2009), hybridization is an active process, “one of continuous transformations through transduction, or the moving of concepts between knowledge domains”. He values multi-textural “hybridity” over “global” uniformity and sees hybridity as a universal feature.

The notion of hybridity and the recent research into hybridization resonate with Manuel Castells’ theory of “network society”, which is often quoted by social scientists attempting to explain and predict the contemporary dynamics transforming the fabric of everyday life around the globe. In short, and somewhat pragmatically, one might view globalisation as a process of hybridization (Nederveen Pieterse, 1994, 1995) that occurs in “transactional venues” (Chitty, 2009).

The theory of network society presents “a new perspective on the world reconstituting itself around a series of networks strung around the globe on the basis of advanced communication technologies” (Stalder, 2006, p. 1). It describes and predicts a power shift accompanying the increased transcendence of time and space, attributable to information networks (Melkote and Steeves, 2001); that is, a shift from hierarchies to networks in the information age. Although networks, as the name indicates, are based on advances in communication and information technology, debates about the theory have recently focused on interaction between technology and politico-social structure, such as planning and policy designing (for example, see Albrechts and Mandelbaum, 2005), communication and media (Cardoso, 2006), and civil society network (Castells, 2008).

Critical regard of the theory of network society requires an understanding of contemporary society as ‘networks’ and ‘communication networks’, thus providing the fundamental pattern that enhances other theories and research into how communication supports and promotes social changes. To some extent, the theory parallels Habermas’s (1984) communicative action (see Verma and Shin, 2005), i.e., a comparison between the two pairs of category of “Net versus Self” (Castells) and “System versus Lifeworld” (Habermas). More importantly, the theory of network society, along with other related works by Manuel Castells, renews and develops the theory of urban sociology and urbanisation (Stalder, 2006), topics with which my research is strongly concerned.

1.1.3 Vietnam’s background

Since the end of World War II in 1945, in the popular western image, Vietnam has been seen as a “war-ravaged and poverty-stricken country” (Luong, 2003). After the Vietnam War and the reunification of the country in 1975, the Communist Party leaders introduced a Stalinist economic system, i.e., a centrally-planned economy which had earlier been applied in North Vietnam during the War (Le, 2005). However, the country very soon fell into economic disaster. In response, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), at its Sixth Party Congress in December 1986, decided to launch a historical reform program, commonly known as *Doi Moi* (Renovation) which marked a transition from a centrally-planned economy to a market economy with socialist direction (CPV, 2006).

Although heavily criticised and rejected by later perspectives of development and communication, the model of modernisation remains a major goal of development toward prosperity in developing countries; and, Vietnam is no exception. Linked with the rise of the

network society, modernisation seems to have strengthened in the line with the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs). In the globalisation of the network society, which is regarded as the Net, individual countries, which are regarded as the Self, have had no choice but to integrate into this horizontal network. However, the path to 'network' varies among countries due to different levels of development.

From a very low level of development following the cessation of the Vietnam War, and a period of centralised economy, Vietnam has made significant achievements; as well, it has coped with inequality in the social distribution of economic growth brought by *Doi Moi*. The CPV and the Vietnamese government recently set an ambitious goal: to become an industrialised country by 2020, in which a knowledge-based economy and a modern infrastructure of ICTs will be driving forces. However, the renovation of its 'market socialism' signals a dichotomy the same as that in China: *opening the economy and subsequently opening the politics*. Economically, the government maintains state-own enterprises as the dominant economic sector in order to preserve its socialism orientation. Politically, mass media and ICTs are encouraged to develop in terms of quantity and sensational content but under careful restriction and control over political content. Ideologically, the incompatible relations between the state and Vietnam's intellectuals challenge freedom of speech and the liberality of public debate. As a result, political negotiation with the state becomes the most salient characteristic of current Vietnamese media: its outcome varies according to different circumstances.

Since joining the WTO in 2007 and transforming into a middle-income country in 2008, Vietnam has undergone greater integration into the world system. As Manuel Castells (2010) argues, urbanisation in the 21st century network society has witnessed the concentration process of metropolitan regions all over the world. Despite of the low departure, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh

City - two major cities of Vietnam - plan to become the focus of exchange nodes in this global space of flow. Surborg (2009) describes this transition as follows:

“[...] Both cities [Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City] have resumed important commercial functions and become increasingly integrated into the world market and the global ‘space of flow’. Stock exchanges have been established in both cities, international businesses have opened offices and international airline traffic is growing [...], their relation to Vietnam’s rural hinterland can be assumed to be changing as a result of this global integration” (pp. 229-230).

The 2008 expansion plan for Hanoi capital city, which triples its current area and population, reflects this ambition of the Vietnamese government. However, while the network probably provides more opportunities to modernise Vietnam, it also brings class back (Qiu, 2009) by excluding the lower, socioeconomic social groups, particularly the internal migrants in Vietnam’s urban areas, who are information have-nots or have-less.

1.2 Research aims and research questions

So far, several audience surveys have been conducted in Hanoi in particular and in Vietnam in general. A survey by Do Thai Hong (1982), which may represent one of the first studies of mass media and audiences in Hanoi after the country’s reunion in 1975, reported that radio was the most popular medium whereas community radio², television and newspapers came second, third and fourth respectively vis-a-vis Hanoi residents’ choices. This result reflected the centralised context of Vietnam’s politics and economy before *Doi Moi* in the late 1970s and early 1980s

² A form of wired radio used by local people committees at the ward level in both cities and the countryside: several loudspeakers were hung high in front of the ward’s administrative house and in places wherein the local people frequently gathered such as open-air markets. During the Vietnam War, this radio conveyed the war news, informed (and alarmed) the people about the US air force’s bombing raids, and hurried them to hide in the underground shelters. This propaganda system still remains in Vietnam until today, even in Hanoi. It broadcasts three times every day (morning, noon and evening), each broadcast lasting for approximately 15 minutes and containing information about the central and local Party committees’ policies, local production, social security and some music.

when television had just commenced (1979)³ and all of the newspapers were mainly distributed among the Party and government officials, intellectuals, workers, students, retired personnel and veterans (Do, 1982). The survey also revealed that the majority of Hanoi people liked political news; 78% was interested in domestic news while 82.4% preferred world news. According to the study's author, this was one of salient characteristics of Hanoi people in terms of their attention to politics. It was absolutely understandable because entertainment had not developed in Vietnamese media before the advent of *Doi Moi* (Marr, 1998).

More than ten years later, a survey of Hanoi audiences undertaken by Graham Mytton⁴ in 1993 reported that 96% respondents watched TV for information, 91 % listened to radio and 72% said they read the newspapers (cited in Tran, 2008).

In 1997, a survey undertaken by Tran Huu Quang, which was published in his work *The Portrait of Media Audiences in Ho Chi Minh City* (2001), established newspapers as the dominant mass medium for HCM city's residents; however, almost half of the respondents said they did not read newspapers or watch TV for news.

Another survey by Dinh (2001), who compared the entertainment activities of Hanoi's young citizens with the previous data of 1996, found that contemporary youth's interest in reading books and newspapers had dropped from first choices (1996) to fourth whereas watching TV had risen from second (1996) to first choice for entertainment.

Most recently, a survey undertaken in 2006 by Tran (2008) revealed that most Hanoi people liked to watch the news: 85.5% of TV audiences who responded to the survey said they watched the news programs.

³ According to Tran (1992), by the end of the 1970s, there were only approximately 100 TV sets in Hanoi.

⁴ former Head of International Broadcasting, Audience Research, BBC World Services.

All of the above surveys investigated how Vietnamese audiences in general and Hanoi audiences in particular accessed mass media. To date, there has been not any research into their motivations for watching television.

To date, research into Vietnamese urbanisation has been located in the fields of economic geography, health and population studies, information technology, philosophy, political science and particularly sociology; but, not in international communication or media studies. One of the principal ‘problematiques’ in the field of international communication is the relationship between urbanisation, media and development. Based upon the above background and context, the main purpose of my research is to draw contemporary Vietnam into this narrative and extend the narrative further.

Participants involved in this research are the current migrants and those who have become Hanoi’s new residents since the 2008 area expansion⁵. One of the core research questions is how these new residents use television to gratify their communication needs. My research also informs policy making within three Vietnamese TV stations: Vietnam Television (VTV), Vietnam Television Corporation (VTC) and Hanoi Radio and Television (HRT).

This study addresses two major objectives as follows:

- (1) To investigate how the new residents of Hanoi perceive the role of television in their everyday lives; and
- (2) To examine how Vietnamese Television addresses and serves the communication needs of Hanoi’s new residents.

⁵ In my thesis, the phrase ‘Hanoi’s new residents’ is used to combine these two categories of participants.

Based on these two core concerns, seven research questions (RQ) relevant to the project are posed:

RQ One: How do the new residents of Hanoi use Television to satisfy their communication needs?

RQ Two: How do the differences of SES influence the knowledge acquisition among them?

RS Three: To what extent do the new residents of Hanoi depend upon television as a source of information?

RQ Four: How do the new residents of Hanoi communicate with others in terms of interpersonal and intercultural communication?

RQ Five: How are Vietnamese television's channels structured?

RS Six: How do Vietnamese television managers and practitioners perceive Hanoi urbanisation and the communication needs of urban migrants?

RQ Seven: What strategies Vietnamese television employs to serve communication needs of Hanoi's new residents?

1.3 Theoretical framework

The history of communication studies has witnessed a number of shifts from mass audiences to networked audiences (Dijk, 1999); from powerful effects to limited effects and a return to powerful effects (Bryant and Thompson, 2002); and, from a social science approach to cultural studies and a reception analysis approach (Jensen, 1991). One might say media effects research has lost its predominance since the 1980s. However, due to the rapid changes which have

occurred in the recent year, particularly the development and introduction of information technologies into societies, media effects studies seem to have renewed its revival in the context of the 21st century.

Taking this as point of departure, I apply media effect theories as the framework and the core ideas of network society theory as the context. However, my research is not designed to investigate what effects media may have upon their audiences: powerful, limited or moderate effects. Rather, I follow the current viewpoint of development and communication research which sees communication as a process of shared meanings inseparable from culture (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). From this viewpoint, the effects of media and communication contribute to an individual's culture. In his theory of communicative action, Habermas (1984) coined the term 'lifeworld' to refer to an individual's culture when it opens to perceive the outside world. Moreover, Gramsci's model of hegemony and Althusser's concept of ideology provide an background to examine the relationship between media and individuals.

Four theories of media effects were employed in this research:

- (1) Uses and gratifications theory will be applied to investigate how Hanoi's new residents use television programs to fulfill their needs and satisfaction.
- (2) Knowledge gap hypothesis will be applied built upon the assumption that individuals with different socioeconomic statuses (SES) may acquire knowledge form watching TV differently.
- (3) Agenda setting theory will be employed to analyse how TV stations set their program agendas and to examine the need for orientation of the participants involved in this research when they use television as a source of information.

- (4) Media system dependency (MSD) will be employed to critically analyse the interrelationship between television, society and audiences. The structural and historical context of this relationship is urbanisation within a developing socialist country wherein all forms of media are under state ownership and control.

In addition, I employ intercultural communication from a social science approach to examine individuals' interactions within and across cultural groups, and how they link with and impact upon individuals' viewing motivations. Also, the models of ideology and hegemony together with the communicative action theory will support the conclusion of my research in which I answer how Hanoi's new residents perceive the role of television in their everyday lives.

1.4 Methodology

In the 1970s, the emergence of the uses and gratification theory marked a shift from a text-centred to an audience-centred approach and from a media effects notion to a media function assumption (Jensen, 2002). Regarding the theory, Rubin et al. (1996) assume that:

(a) a person's behaviour is motivated or goal-directed; (b) people (for example, media audiences) actively seek communication sources (for example, television or friends) to satisfy their needs or wants; (c) people select from among different communication sources when trying to satisfy their needs; (d) people are influenced by social and psychological factors (such as age, education, personality and life position⁶) when they communicate; and, (e) people can identify their own reasons for communicating (p. 280).

A number of studies applied the model to investigate and examine how people use media to gratify their needs. Rubin (2002) summarises six major approaches to the theory including ways in which: (a) to investigate the links among media use motives and their association

⁶ Rubin et al. (1996) used the term 'life position' to indicate elements that define an individual's position in life including physical health, mobility, social activity, interpersonal interaction, life satisfaction and economic security.

with media attitudes and behaviours; (b) to compare motives across media; (c) to examine the different social and psychological circumstances of media use; (d) to test the link between gratifications sought and obtained; (e) to examine how background variables, motives and exposure might affect the outcomes of media use; and, (f) to consider the method, the reliability and validity for measuring motivation.

However, the theory has in the main been tested by measurement (Morley, 1992), i.e., “[it has] relied primarily on survey techniques to examine the audience experience of media as a whole” (Jensen, 2002, p. 142). Quantitative research treats audiences both as numbers and as units of equal value in the quantification of audience size (Morley, 1992 citing Ang, 1991). In his criticism of adopting a quantitative approach to audience research, Morley (1992, p. 165) argues that: “Statistical techniques are, by their very nature, disaggregating - inevitably isolating units of action from the contexts that make them meaningful”.

Although losing its influence similar to the media effects tradition, the uses and gratifications model is worthy of further support particularly for researchers concerned with audience motivation of media exposure, an interest area that has been neglected by later approaches. As Massey (1995) suggests, it would be “a practical mistake to abandon all aspects of the [uses and gratifications] approach” (p. 331).

In this thesis, the uses and gratifications model is employed as the major theory. Following a qualitative approach, my research is designed to investigate television audience gratification. Focus group interviews constitute the major method of inquiry and will be conducted to answer Research Questions One, Two, Three and Four. The study will involve 48 participants living in the inner and suburban areas of Hanoi metropolitan as migrants or new residents of the expanded city. Focus group data are analysed and presented in Chapter 5.

Through in-depth interviews, I will investigate how television managers and practitioners acknowledge and address the concerns and needs of the migrants and Hanoi's new residents when programming and producing television content. The findings, which will answer Research Questions Six and Seven, contribute to Chapter 6. Nine of the key respondents are managers, producers and reporters working at the three TV stations: Vietnam Television (VTV), Hanoi Radio and Television (HRT) and Vietnam Television Corporation (VTC).

Quantitative content analysis is employed to answer Research Question Five. Based upon random selection, TV programs broadcast by the three stations are classified into different types of content, and analysed to facilitate examination of how the programs were structured according to the proportions of broadcasting time within the selected channel of each station and within each station as a whole. The data are exhibited in Chapter 6.

1.5 Structure of thesis

The thesis comprises seven chapters, including this introduction.

Chapter 2 will present an integrated approach to media and communication research. In the first section of this chapter, I will review the history of the media effects tradition which has passed through three major phases of media effects approaches: powerful effects, limited effects and expanded powerful effects of mass media. In the next section, I will review the four models of effects employed in this thesis as its main theoretical foundation, including the knowledge gap hypothesis, the agenda setting model, the uses and gratifications theory, and the media system dependency theory. Another approach to communication - intercultural communication - will be discussed in the following section according to three perspectives: the social science, the interpretive and the critical, the first of which is applied in my research. Linking to intercultural

communication, I will review the core ideas of Habermas' theory of communicative action surrounding the terms 'strategic and communicative action' and 'the system and the lifeworld'. At the end of this chapter, I will present the theoretical framework for the thesis based upon the four media effects theories, intercultural communication and communicative action theory; of which, the last theory will contribute to the conclusion of my research.

In the first part of Chapter 3, I will first briefly review the history of the field of development and communication studies with emphasis on debate surrounding modernisation and urbanisation. Then, I will review Manuel Castells' theory of network society, and how it is associated with related concepts pertaining to urbanisation. The integration of this literature will provide a fundamental view of the current modernisation and urbanisation processes in Vietnam that are moving towards the dual goal development of a modern society and an information society. In the second part, I will discuss Vietnam's multi-faced background, a subject critical to my research.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the methodology employed in this research project. The research process is presented including: (1) research questions; (2) methodological consideration based on discussion surrounding quantitative and qualitative approaches and a review of television audience research methods; (3) major methods employed in the study to answer the research questions; (4) description and timeline of data collected; and, (5) ethical concerns.

In Chapter 5, I will present the data collected during the 8 focus group interviews conducted in Hanoi, Vietnam, between November 2009 and February 2010. Each section in this chapter provides the answers to Research Questions one to four.

Chapter 6 features the results of the TV programs' content analysis which answers Research Question Six. Also, the key findings from the 9 in-depth interviews with TV managers, producers and reporters, which answer Research Questions 6 and 7, are provided in this chapter.

In Chapter 7, the findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6 are discussed in line with the theories employed in the thesis. The conclusion that may be drawn from the study, plus a summary of the key findings, the limitation of the study and the recommendation for further research, together contribute to this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION

Introduction

Studies of media effects in the early 1920s were coincident with the commencement of mass media research. In the first section of this chapter, I will review the history of the media effects tradition. Adopting the general view taken by many scholars (see DeFleur and Ball - Rokeach, 1976, McQuail and Windahl, 1981, Lowery and DeFleur, 1995, Melkote and Steeves, 2001, Perse, 2001, Bryant and Thompson, 2002), I will briefly review three major phases of media effects approaches with emphasis on the different explanations of powerful effects, limited effects and the expanded powerful effects of mass media. In the next section, and in perhaps the most important part of this chapter, I will review and analyse core ideas, the framework, the application and limitations of the four models of effects employed in this thesis as its main theoretical foundation, including the knowledge gap hypothesis, the agenda setting model, the uses and gratifications theory, and the media system dependency theory. Another approach to communication - intercultural communication - will be discussed in the following section according to three perspectives: the social science, the interpretive and the critical. The two last sections of the chapter takes into account models of hegemony and ideology, and Habermas' theory of communicative action which provides a fundamental platform for recognising and discussing the nature, models and characteristics of the communication processes. The integration of the four theories of media effects, at the end of this chapter, with the first perspective of

intercultural communication, i.e., the social science will contribute to a theoretical framework for the thesis as a whole.

2.1 The “established history” of communication effects

The earliest academic debates on mass communication effects are found in Walter Lippmann's (1922) *Public Opinion* and Harold Lasswell's (1927) *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. More than sixty years later, media effects had become one among the most complex and controversial areas in communication research. Academic answers to the question of how and to what extent mass media influence audiences vary among different scholars according to their varied emphasis on and explanations of media effects (Perse, 2001).

To date, literature addressing the media effects tradition has normally grouped these approaches into three phases including: all-powerful or direct effects, limited effects and expanded or ‘return to powerful effects’ (see DeFleur and Ball - Rokeach, 1976, 1989, McQuail, 1983, 1994, Perse, 2001). This “generally accepted history”, variously referred to as the “received view” (Perse, 2001) or ‘established history’ (Bryant and Thompson, 2002), technically provided a time frame within which to examine the changing process of the research tradition.

However, the received view was criticised for its simplistic explanation and ignorance of some aspects of media effects. Therefore, when examining the history, researchers tend to analyse this view critically, then to introduce their own view of the history.

Perse (2001) analyses the media effects approaches of four major groups of models: (1) direct effects; (2) conditional effects; (3) cumulative effects; and, (4) cognitive-transactional effects. The first is another term for powerful effects in the received view. The second is explained as

corresponding to limited effects, while the third mainly consists of long-term effects drawn from 'return to powerful effects' (Perse, 2001, pp. 23-52). The fourth group highlighted by the author, which is drawn from cognitive psychology (Fiske and Taylor, 1991), is grounded in the notion of 'schema' - "'a mental structure that represents knowledge about a concept'"⁷ - and attempts to explain how attention, knowledge and information including frames, headlines and other pieces of news stories, are controlled, integrated and organised within the operation of schemas (Perse, 2001). Although the idea of schemas may "influence media effects" (Perse, 2001, p. 46), it may more appropriately be applied in the field of media psychology and/or from audiences' reception perspectives.

In the latest edition of his book *Mass Communication Theory*, McQuail (2005) distinguishes four phases of media effects of which the first three correspond to those in the received view. The fourth, 'negotiated media influence', was defined as 'social constructivist' approach to media effects in the late 1970s. This approach emphasised the mediating process in which meaning was produced by mass media and constructed by audiences (p. 461). McQuail states that this particular era witnessed a shift in methodology, particularly a change from quantitative survey methods to qualitative methods, and the 'bankruptcy of behaviourism' which dominated the previous effects research. From the position of media effects review, McQuail considers this meaning construction framework as one phase originally rooted in the history of the tradition. McQuail summarises two main thrusts of this framework including media's construction of social formations, and audiences' construction of meanings based upon their own views or perceptions. The former may link to the 'agenda-setting' theory of media function, while the latter may share common ground with 'uses and gratifications', to some extent resembling audience-centred perspectives (McQuail and Windahl, 1981). Both of these thrusts combined in the construction

⁷ The concept of 'schema' was coined by the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who discussed the concept in his work *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781).

framework are best analysed from media studies and audience reception perspectives respectively, under the overarching umbrella of cultural studies and reception analysis (which emerged in the early 1980s), rather than in the media effects tradition.

In *Fundamentals of Media Effects*, Bryant and Thompson (2002) describe and summarise media effects history within the following four core models: bullet theory model; limited effects model; moderate effects model; and, powerful effects model. This establishment almost resembles the received view, the only difference being that the authors identify a ‘moderated effects model’ comprising several theories of the effects which while limited are in some ways rather powerful.

In this section, I draw upon the ‘received view’ to examine the history of media effects in a time frame which focuses upon the shifts in approaches. The three phases of media effects history will be reviewed: the powerful model, the limited model and the expanded powerful model. Then, in the following section I will review separately the four theories which I employ in my thesis: the knowledge gaps hypothesis, the agenda setting theory, the uses and gratifications model, and the dependency media system theory.

2.1.1 Powerful effects

In his *Public Opinion* (1922), which examined the forming process of public opinion, Walter Lippmann emphasised the role of propaganda in a democratic society. Harold Lasswell, in his doctoral dissertation *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927), analysed the content of propaganda messages during World War I. Lasswell was also well-known for his model of linear

communication that was later developed by Shannon and Weaver, Wilbur Schramm and David K. Berlo.

It was the success of propaganda during World War I (1914-1918) and during the American - Spanish War (1898)⁸ that “simply reinforced the view of powerful media effects” (Melkote and Steeves, 2001, p. 106). Lasswell’s linear model of communication resonated with earlier theories of mass communication effects that had undoubtedly accepted the powerful effect of mass media on audiences.



Figure 2.1 Lasswell’s Formula of linear communication model

Source: Melkote and Steeves (2001)

This powerful effect notion is normally theorised under such colourful labels as ‘the hypodermic needle’, ‘the magic bullet theory’, and ‘stimulus-response theory’(see Lowery and DeFleur, 1995, Carey, 1996, Melkote and Steeves, 2001, Bryant and Thompson, 2002). The assumptions behind these terms were that “mass media supposedly fired messages like dangerous bullets, or shot messages like strong drugs pushed through hypodermic needles” (Bryant and Thompson, 2002, p. 36). They also reflected ‘a frightening view of the power of mass communication’ (Lowery and DeFleur, 1995).

Early communication research depicted media audiences as a ‘mass’, “a new form of collectivity made possible by the conditions of modern societies” (McQuail, 2005). In the view of this powerful model, audiences were strongly dependent upon media information due to their lack of social contact. As a result, they played an entirely passive role in their relationships with the media. For this reason, mass media exercised powerful control over audiences’ attitudes,

⁸ The war between Spain and the US that ended Spanish colonial rule in the Americas

behaviour and their social participation which was depicted as ‘collective’. Accordingly, power belonged to whomsoever controlled the media, i.e., controlled the public (Lowery and DeFleur, 1995, pp. 13-14).

Explaining the emergence and rise of the magic bullet theory, Blumer (1951) claimed it underscored the profound changes brought by urbanisation and industrialisation in western society in the late 19th - early 20th centuries. These changes that occurred in the social order, new institutions, norms, values and beliefs (Lowery and DeFleur, 1995) led to significant changes in individuals; that is: “the strong interpersonal bonds between people that characterised the pre-industrial communities were replaced by the impersonal and tedious life in the newly industrialised societies” (Melkote and Steeves, 2001, p. 106). Subsequent to this turning point, the traditional communities merged into a mass society, a Marxist concept consistent with the widespread acceptance of media’s powerful effect (Bryant and Susan Thompson, 2002).

In mass society, individuals are “detached from customary moorings” and “thrust into a wider world” where they have to adjust “on the basis of largely unaided selections” which make them “a potent influence” (Bryant and Thompson, 2002, p. 37). In the process, individuals become easily influenced by appeals from the mass media: their reaction to media messages would be seen as ‘mass behaviour’ with implications of a uniform effect.

A similar explanation may be found in Lowery and DeFleur’s *Milestones in Mass Communication Research* (1995), wherein the authors note the combination between the views of human nature influenced by Darwin’s ‘*The Origin of the Species*’ with the notion of mass society in the 19th century. From this combination, a theory of mass communication seemed to follow and continued to be dominant into the 20th century (p. 13). A significant shift among behaviourists occurred concomitant with the replacing of the perception of human beings as “rational creatures formed in the image of God” with the conception of the animal and biological

side of human nature. This new interpretation now began to stress ‘a uniform set of instincts’ of human beings similar to those of all animals. In the earlier theories of mass communication effects, it was believed that people accessed media events or messages ‘in similar ways’, then received and interpreted them in ‘a uniform way’ (p. 14). The magic bullet theory implies that “media messages are like symbolic ‘bullets’, striking every eye, and ear, and resulting in effects on thought and behaviour that are *direct, immediate, uniform, and therefore powerful*” (p. 14, original emphasis).

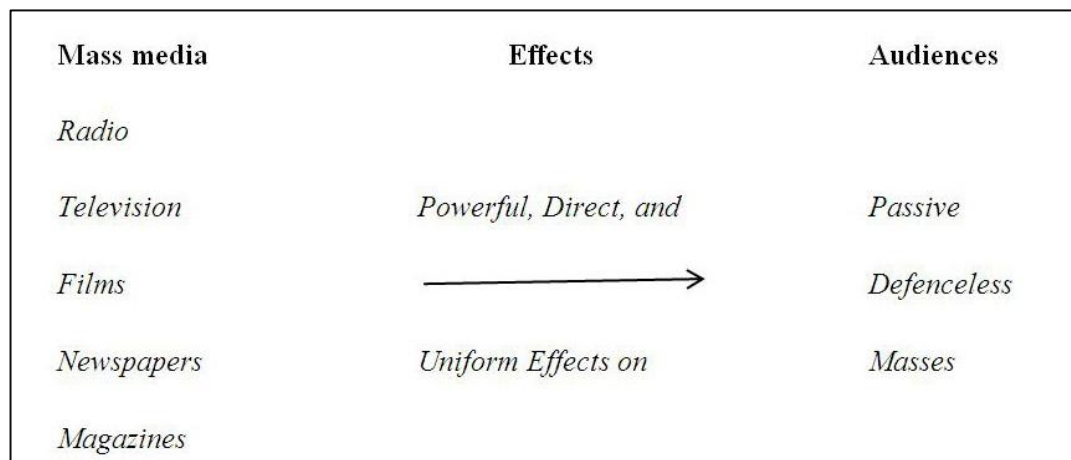


Figure 2.2 Powerful/direct effects model

Source: Melkote and Steeves (2001)

2.1.2 Limited effects

The theory of powerful media effects was predominant during the two World Wars (1914-1918, 1939-1945) (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). The power of the mass media was throughout accepted by early researchers who claimed that the media could “shape public opinion and sway the masses toward almost any point of view desired by communicator” (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p. 163). During these years, the mass media process was generally considered to be a process of propaganda.

However, a range of empirical studies in the late 1940s gradually rejected the general belief in the powerful effects model. For example, Bryant and Thompson (2002) mention Carl Hovland's study of US soldiers from 1942-1945 which found that their attitudes and motivations to fight were not increased by the training or motivational films they viewed. In *The People's Choices* (1948), Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet after examining the effects of the US presidential election campaign in 1940, declared that individuals' political decisions tended to be influenced more by members of their groups than by designed media messages. These findings led to the reconceptualization of media effects from direct to limited effects. Several later studies showed that rather than directly influencing audiences to change their attitudes, a certain medium could only somehow strengthen or confirm their pre-existing attitudes (Bryant and Susan Thompson, 2002). The central argument here of the limited effects notion highlights the fact of "the relative weakness of mass media in directly influencing individual personal decisions" (Melkote and Steeves, 2001, p. 109).

In addition, Lazarsfeld et.al., (1948) discovered that the degree of exposure to mass media differed markedly among people. In other words, certain individuals experience more exposure to the media than others. As a result, some become opinion leaders, who wield a strong influence over their groups or communities. Following this notion, the two-step flow theory emerged to describe the mass communication model as a two-level diagram rather than a linear, one-way process (see Figure 2.3).

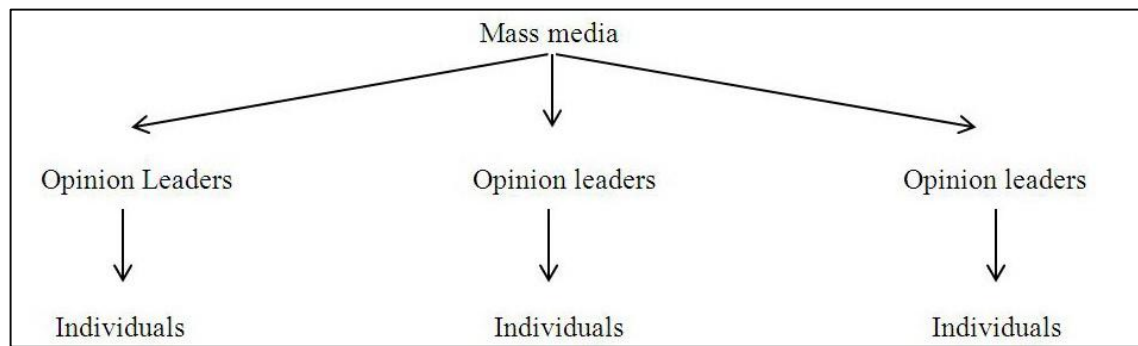


Figure 2.3 Two-step Flow Model of Communication Effects

Source: Melkote and Steeves (2001)

The first step of this model sees information passed from the media to opinion leaders, who in turn pass the information to others as the second step (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955, DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989, Melkote and Steeves, 2001, Bryant and Susan Thompson, 2002).

By ascertaining the interaction between individuals and members of their groups or communities, the two-step flow theory emphasises the significance of individuals' social relationships, which are almost ignored by mass society theory and its mass communication derivative - powerful media theory (Lowery and DeFleur, 1995). The role of interpersonal influences, and interpersonal ties in general, now found its way into the linkage with mass communication territory (1995, p. 91). Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) discovered that not only the elite but also individuals at all levels of society may become opinion leaders. A study undertaken by Hovland et al. (1953) revealed that people were not 'defenceless' as earlier researchers anticipated: rather, individuals defended themselves against persuasive messages via a three-way process: selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention. This notion was further developed by Klapper, who proposed that selective processes are not perfect. In his work, *The Effect of Mass Communication* (1960), he argued that mass media "rarely functions as the sole agent in the process of effect", but rather as "a contributory agent in the service of reinforcement" (p. 8, p. 92). Klapper was the first to

address the ‘extra-communication mediating factors’ that might affect an individual’s motivation to perceive the changes suggested by media content. These factors included individuals’ personal needs, beliefs, values and persuasibility (i.e., ability to be persuaded), and changes in their groups or in their living statuses in general. Due to the existence and influence of mediating and influencing forces, it was not possible for mass media to produce direct effects for individuals; rather, it operated among and through a nexus of them (pp. 65-94).

The idea of people exposing to mass media messages in a selective way marked a significant shift in the general perception of media audiences. First, early research’s belief in entirely passive audiences was rejected and replaced by the notion of active audiences receiving, processing and interpreting information (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). A further assumption suggested that different groups of individuals, or even two individuals in the same group, after exposure to the same messages might interpret them differently (p. 100). One of the more important milestones in media research may be found in the work of Wilbur Schramm et al. (1961), which requested the rethinking of the role of audiences in the communication process: “In a sense the term ‘effect’ is misleading because it suggests that television ‘does something’ to children... Nothing can be further from the fact. It is the children who are most active in this relationship. It is they who use television rather than television that uses them” (Schramm et al., 1961, cited in Katz et al., 1974).

Theoretically, this shift provided a fundamental ground for the later emergence of a very influential approach to media effect research in the early 1970s labelled ‘uses and gratifications’, which served to explore ‘what audiences do with media’ rather than ‘what media do to audiences’ (Katz et al., 1974). It was also the time when media effects scholars recognised existent gaps between high and low educated segments of audiences, and between media content and ‘actual reality’. The former, which referred to studies of knowledge inequality, was labelled the ‘knowledge gap’ hypothesis. The latter, discussed under the terms of ‘agenda setting’ or

‘framing’, examined the role of mass media in setting ‘reality’ as public agenda and transferring it to audiences (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Although having their origins in the notion of limited media effects, the knowledge gap hypothesis, the agenda setting theory and the uses and gratifications framework, which all emerged in the early 1970s, were somewhat more than limited effects models⁹, which led to the “return to the concept of powerful mass media” (Noelle-Neumann, 1973).

2.1.3. Expanded powerful effects model

The development of newspapers, radio, and the widespread adoption of television in the 1960s were consistent with the notion that large numbers of people were heavily dependent upon mass media as a crucial source of information (Lowery and DeFleur, 1995). By 1965, 92.6% of US households possessed a TV set (Perse, 2001 citing Television Information Office 1985). Television became the dominant and most believable medium (2001, p. 26). As a result, this “television-saturated media environment” deterred audiences from selectively using mass communication (Perse, 2001, Peter, 2004)¹⁰. In the words of Noelle-Neumann (1973), “as regards the connection between selective perception and the effect of the mass media, one can put forward the hypothesis that the more restricted the selection the less the reinforcement principle applies, in other words the greater the possibility of mass media changing attitudes” (p. 78). This notion underscored the argument that the media’s function of reinforcement was facing challenge.

⁹ In *Fundamentals of Media Effect* (2002), Bryant and Thompson identify these models as ‘moderate effects’

¹⁰ The notion of audiences’ selective exposure to media is the central assumption of the limited media effects model.

Several studies in the early 1970s revealed that the mass media had powerful effects. For example, the agenda setting theory, which was originally introduced around this time, assumed that it was possible for mass media to tell people ‘what to think about’ (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). In a study of the US election campaign in 1972, McClure and Patterson (1974) found that audiences could not avoid exposure to television news and particularly political advertisements during election campaigns even though they might dislike watching such programs. Gerbner and Gross’s (1976) study of violent content on television reported that audiences, particularly the heaviest viewers, tended to adopt the transferred television world view as their own vision of reality.

However, it was Noelle-Neumann’s (1973) ‘spiral of silence’ theory which examined the processes of public opinion that marked the shift to a “return to the concept of powerful mass media” (McQuail, 1994, Perse, 2001, Peter, 2004). The spiral of silence, according to Noelle-Neumann (1974), was a social-psychological mechanism through which the mass media created public opinion: “They provide the environment pressure to which people respond [either] with alacrity, or with acquiescence, or with silence” (p. 51). Based on the notion of individual fear of isolation¹¹, the theory explained that people tended to be reluctant to express themselves and became silent when they thought their opinions deviated from the prevailing view of a certain media discourse (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). As a result, the spiral of silence operated when “the one view dominated the public scene and the other disappeared from public awareness as its adherents became mute” (Noelle-Neumann, 1984, p. 5). Figure 2.4 shows that together with the decrease in interpersonal support, people with deviant opinions tend either to keep silent or express the dominant opinion increasingly expressed by the mass media.

¹¹ According to Noelle-Neumann (1974), the notion of individual’s fear of isolation or separation was first discussed in works by Alexis Tocqueville (1856), Ferdinand Tönnies (1922) and James Bryce (1924).

Noelle-Neumann coined the term ‘consonance’ to describe a circumstance in which all of the media took the same point of view; or, in other words, there was “a large extent of similarity in the presentation of certain material in all the media” (1973, p. 78). When media consonance occurs, audiences have no other choice but exposure to information that represents an issue. From this perspective, Noelle-Neumann argued that media had powerful effects (1973, 1983).

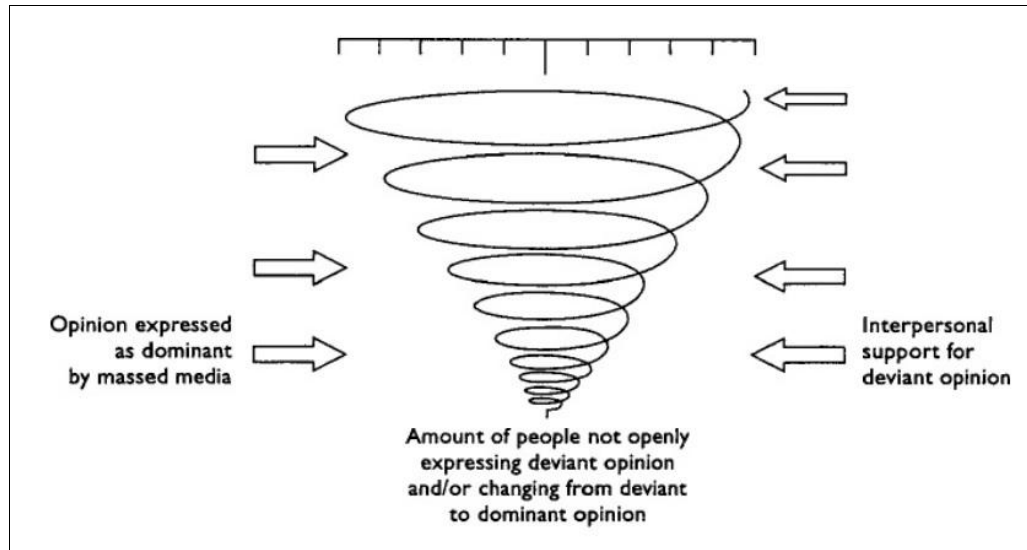


Figure 2.4 Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence

Source: Noelle-Neumann (1974)

The spiral of silence theory shares some common questions with the agenda setting model; for example: “which topics are presented by the mass media as public opinion, which of these are presented as urgent?” (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, p. 51). Therefore, it may be regarded as a form of agenda setting at the macro level, which focuses on audience perceptions of public agenda and the long term consequences (Baran and Davis, 2012).

However, the theory was also criticised for overestimating the negative aspects of mass media while at the same time underestimating the role of interpersonal contact within communities, organisations and reference groups in forming individual opinions (McQuail and Windahl, 1981, Glynn and McLeod, 1985). According to Elihu Kaz (1983, 2002), the spiral of silence repeated

the view of mass society theory which described audiences as entirely passive receivers. In response, Noelle-Neumann (1985) maintained her argument that the mass media, particularly television, presented a 'dominant tendency' by affirming a winning attitude in any public discourse as a matter of course (cited in Baran and Davis, 2012, p. 300). Noelle-Neumann argued vis-a-vis advocates for the return to powerful effects that: "Today, most researchers assume that the mass media have a decisive effect on people's conception of reality" (Noelle-Neumann, 1983, p. 157). Research into the effects of television violence (Stein and Friedrich, 1971, National Institute of Mental Health, 1983), which supported the powerful effects idea, showed a positive correlation between TV violence viewing and the consequent aggressive behaviour of children (cited in Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976, Bryant and Thompson, 2002).

One of the most well-known theories introduced in the 1970s was Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's (1976) model of dependency, the basic idea of which was that in modern societies, people become dependent upon media in numerous ways for the satisfaction of their information needs or the attainment of their goals (p. 6). The degree of media dependence varies according to a number of structural conditions such as social change and conflict, individual differences and the functions that media serve (pp. 6-8). To this end, the theory is distinguished as 'moderate' effect (Bryant and Thompson, 2002) or 'contingency' effect of mass media (McQuail and Windahl, 1981). However, it also implies that in societies based on high levels of media technology, the mass media "take on more and more unique information functions" (p. 6) which increase their influence upon their audiences. The theory which I review in detail in the next section suggests another approach to the conditional powerful effects hypothesis of mass media.

Different from the earlier direct effects model, the 'return to the concept of powerful mass media' directs its attention "towards long-term change, towards cognition rather than attitude and affect, and towards collective phenomena such as climates of opinion, structures of belief, definitions of

social reality, ideologies, cultural patterns and institutional forms of media provision” (McQuail, 2005, p. 460).

Emphasis on the “tripartite audience-media-society relationship” (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976) immersed in the dependency theory was likely to share common ground with the idea of development communication scholars, who asserted that: “The role of communication in society cannot be understood apart from other processes and structures of society, and their unique histories and circumstances” (Melkote and Steeves, 2001, p. 44). In the viewpoint of development and communication research from the 1970s onwards, communication could no longer be defined as a linear process of information and persuasion; rather, it was considered a ‘shared meaning’ process ‘inseparable from culture’. Melkote and Steeves claim that: “Communication is the maintenance, modification, and creation of culture. In this sense, the processes and institutions of communication, of culture, and of development are all woven together” (2001, p. 31).

2.2 Audience-centred models of media effects

Theories and approaches to media effects throughout the three phases suggest that: “Media effects may be either cognitive (affecting thoughts or learning), behavioural (affecting behaviour), or affective (affecting attitudes and emotions), and that the effects may be either direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, intermittent (e.g., sleeper effects)” (Bryant and Thompson, 2002, p. 58). While some theories of limited effects emphasise the active role of individuals and their interpersonal interactions, those of powerful effects assume that the influences of mass media are stronger than interpersonal communication. The results of effects studies “depend in part on the research designs and the research methods used in an investigation” (Rogers, 2002, p.

199). Each media effect theory, which is based upon a specific approach, has its inherent weakness in its assertions of the relationship between mass media and audiences. In this study, I employ four media effects theories in an attempt to interpret and explain cogently ‘how the rural-urban migrants use television to satisfy their communication needs’ - which constitute the major research questions of the thesis.

2.2.1 Knowledge gap hypothesis

Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien originally introduced the knowledge gap hypothesis in 1970 on the assumption that: “As the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socioeconomic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than the lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease” (pp. 159 - 160). The core idea of this hypothesis was that media unequally influenced audiences in terms of knowledge acquisition. Accordingly, segments of audiences claiming higher socioeconomic status (SES, generally regarded as better educated) stood to gain greater benefit from access to media content than the lower SES segments. As a result, the latter lost their opportunity to narrow the knowledge gap (Tichenor et al., 1970, Donohue et al., 1975, Chew and Palmer, 1994).

Within the knowledge gap hypothesis, mass media are regarded as “a constructive social tool” (Ettema and Kline, 1977) which influences audiences according to their varied SES. The hypothesis thus contributes to the notion that there is no ‘mass’ audience out there. Somewhat to the contrary, it provides a “fundamental explanation for the apparent failure of mass publicity to inform the public at large” (Tichenor et al., 1970, p. 161).

To be more precise, the authors emphasised that this hypothesis did not imply that “lower status population segments remain completely uninformed” due to their lack of knowledge; rather, it presumed that “growth of knowledge is *relatively* greater among the higher status segments” (Tichenor et al., 1970, p. 160, original emphasis). However, many current knowledge gap surveys variously reported that the gap increased in some cases, and declined or even reversed in others (see Eveland Jr and Scheufele, 2000). Ettema and Kline (1977), for example, who examined some studies in the early 1970s in both more and less developed societies, found mixed results showing the narrowing or widening of the gap by the long term influences of communication intervention programs.

Gaziano (1997), one of the leading researchers of the knowledge gap, clarifies the conceptual issues that need to be recognised and measured when testing the hypothesis including SES, knowledge, knowledge gap and media publicity. First, SES, as an independent variable, is normally examined within three primary indicators: education, income and occupation, of which ‘education’ has been used to address SES relatively more frequently than the others. Second, knowledge, according to Gaziano’s review of a number of studies, is mostly measured by closed-ended questions classified into different categories such as awareness and depth. Third, measurement of the gap is conducted in two ways depending upon the presence or absence of time as a variable: (1) one-shot studies examining the static gap between the most and the least privileged segments; and, (2) long term studies estimating the correlation between SES and knowledge (pp. 240 - 241). More importantly, Gaziano, highlighting the fourth variable - media publicity - argues that: “The best test of the knowledge gap hypothesis occurs when *media publicity of issues varies*” (p. 242, original emphasis). Notwithstanding, there is little evidence of the correlation between the knowledge gap and mass media publicity as required by the hypothesis (1983). Despite the fact that the majority of 58 reviewed reports support the hypothesis that “the higher the education, the greater the knowledge of various topics”, Gaziano

reveals that few studies have included media coverage of issues and news topics as a ‘variable’ in current data research (pp. 447 - 486).

A later study by Tichenor and colleagues claimed that among small communities, the increasing of national news issues may be correlated with the knowledge gap concerning these items, but there may be no association with issues (Tichenor et al., 1973, cited in Ettema and Kline, 1977). This finding led to the most arguable question of what conditions affect the increase or decrease of the knowledge gap. Donohue et al. (1975) identified four independent variables required to be carefully estimated in the correlation to knowledge gap, which was considered a dependent variable:

- (1) *The basic concerns*: the assumption here is that the gap tended to widen in response to the increase in information flow serving the concerns of specialised groups, while it may be reduced if that information appeals to the basic concerns of the whole community.
- (2) *The system or social conflict*: closely links to basic concerns and can be considered as issues or topics that attract and maintain citizen participation. This variable relates to the knowledge gap in linear and positive, negative or even curvilinear ways depending upon the structure of the particular community.
- (3) *The structure of the community*: refers to the levels and characteristics of the community revealing itself as pluralistic or traditional. The former is more complex, more differentiated, larger in size and more urbanised, while the latter is more homogenous and more self-contained. Apparently, it is assumed that “the more pluralistic the community, the greater the possibilities for widening the knowledge gaps between different social strata within that community” (Donohue et al., 1975, p. 8)

- (4) *The pattern of media coverage*: indicates that greater repetition of a certain topic will possibly arouse the attention of less accessible segments. Thus, knowledge of this topic is expected to be acquired more equally among all segments of the audiences.

The variables listed above have been employed in a number of studies ranging from the macro level of social structure and media publicity to the micro level of the social-psychological motivation of the individual (Kwak, 1999). However, questions pertaining to the relations between media issues and SES-based segments remain unclarified. While on the one hand, it is not easy to define an issue as relevant to lower SES groups' concerns, on the other, repetition of issues which are far from their interests may not serve to narrow the gap. Therefore, as Kwak (1999) argues, increased media use or redundancy of media publicity cannot ensure complete closure of the gap in knowledge.

Ettema and Kline (1977) identified two categories of contingent conditions estimated to predict the gap phenomenon: (1) audience-related factors such as ability (i.e., communication skills or competence), motivation and media behaviour (i.e., media use, exposure); and, (2) message-related 'ceiling effects' with two types of ceiling involved including 'imposed ceiling' and 'true ceiling'. The former indicates that a limited amount of available message or information already acquired by the more informed audiences will later continue to serve the less informed, enabling them to 'catch up'. The latter refers to cases where the more privileged segments achieve a certain 'how to do' ability from the media message, enabling them reach the limit of this knowledge domain. The repeated message then helps the less privileged segments to follow. Of these two categories, audience-related factors normally widen the gap, while the 'ceiling effect' may narrow the gap (Katzman, 1974, Singi and Mody, 1976, Ettema and Kline, 1977).

Gaziano (1997) provides a listed of internal and external variables termed 'barriers' to knowledge acquisition. Consistent with Donohue et al. (1975), he analyses community structure and social

configuration as external variables. Individual internal barriers, according to Gaziano, are grounded in SES, motivation, interest and related factors (attitudes, beliefs, values), media use and exposure, connectedness to family and community, and behavioural patterns (p. 246).

However, the influence of these variables upon the knowledge gap varies across studies (Gaziano, 1997), some of which report that motivational variables exercise a stronger influence on the gap than education while some do not (see Kwak, 1999). A study undertaken by Kwak (1999) during the 1992 presidential campaign in the US estimated the interplay between education, media use and two types of motivation (with two variables employed: issue interest and behavioural involvement). The findings showed that both education and motivation variables were important and “independently contribute to knowledge acquisition” (p. 403). Gaziano (1997) concluded that the “shrinking knowledge gap may depend on decreasing overall socioeconomic inequality” (p. 253). Chew and Palmer (1994) argued that changing SES and other community structural factors would require a long time and be more difficult than fostering lower SES segments’ motivation. Here, Chew and Palmer shared a common viewpoint with other researchers (including Viswanath et al., 1993, Weaver and Drew, 1995) regarding concerns as to how media planners may attempt to stimulate motivation among lower SES groups by increasing their accessibility to media content (Kwak, 1999). When it come to the point, the knowledge gap hypothesis joins with agenda setting theory and links to the uses and gratifications model on the assumption that media set an agenda in response to the general concerns of the community as a whole.

Adopting another approach to the knowledge gap, Neuman et al. (1992) examined the causal effect in gap creation between different media in relation to cognitive skills. The results revealed that audiences with low cognitive skills preferred television, while those with high cognitive skills preferred the press. This is probably due to the fact that television provides more

comprehensive and contextual information enhanced by exciting visuals, while newspapers offers more abstract and more differentiated content (McQuail and Windahl, 1981, Kwak, 1999).

Referring to the knowledge gap from the broader view of development and communication, Roger (1976) argued that there are not only gaps in knowledge but also gaps in behaviour and attitudes affected by communication. Therefore, he proposed changing the term to ‘communication effects gap’. Roger also stressed the important roles of interpersonal contact in motivation, media use, knowledge acquisition and the gap in general.

The interrelations between the knowledge gap and media input still require more research into the operation of SES indicators and other conditions as well. In this thesis, I employ the hypothesis to examine if and how SES differences affect the knowledge acquisition among the groups involved in the study. Some individual’s internal variables are taken into account including education, gender and occupation.

2.2.2 Agenda setting theory

One of the most important milestones in the media effects tradition was the discovery of ‘agenda setting’. In 1972, leading scholars of the time, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, introduced the agenda setting function of mass media as a theory. The central idea of this model had its origin in Bernard Cohen’s (1963) notion that the media “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think *about*” (cited in McCombs and Shaw, 1972, original emphasis). Previously, this notion resonated with Walter Lippmann’s (1922) concept of ‘mental images’, to which he referred in his chapter titled ‘The world outside and the pictures in our heads’. Mental images operate as “an imagined pseudo environment that is treated as if it were the real environment” (McCombs and Ghanem,

2008). Influenced by Lippmann, subsequently Cohen, McCombs and Shaw developed a formal agenda setting in an attempt to systematically explain how these images created and transferred within the relationship between mass media and its audiences. Their study of the 1968 presidential campaign in the US revealed that “the mass media set the agenda for each political campaign, influencing the salience of attitudes toward the political issues” (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, p. 177). The authors then defined agenda setting as “a theory about the transfer of salience from the mass media’s pictures of the world to those in our heads” (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, McCombs, 2004, McCombs and Ghanem, 2008). As illustrated in Figure 2.5, issues that received more attention in mass media were perceived as more important to the public.

Different from the direct effects model, the agenda setting theory is based upon the long-term effects of mass media rather than on single and short-term effects (McCombs and Shaw, 1972); thus, it is normally discussed in the group of cumulative effects (Perse, 2001). However, media’s function of setting agendas operates and achieves effective results in the everyday work of media practices (Shaw, 1979) for as McCombs notes: “The news media exert significant influence on our perception of what are the most salient issues of the day” (McCombs and Reynolds, 2002, p. 1). Furthermore, the effect is on audience cognition rather than on their attitudes: changes in cognition are presumed to be the results of media settings involving the roles of media planners and/or gatekeepers (Shaw, 1979).

According to McCombs (2004), the agenda setting process is composed of two phases, the first being the relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda, and the second being the relationship between these agenda and individuals. This two phase model of agenda setting implies that the model of effects operates not only within media as an information mechanism but also within the realm of audience research.

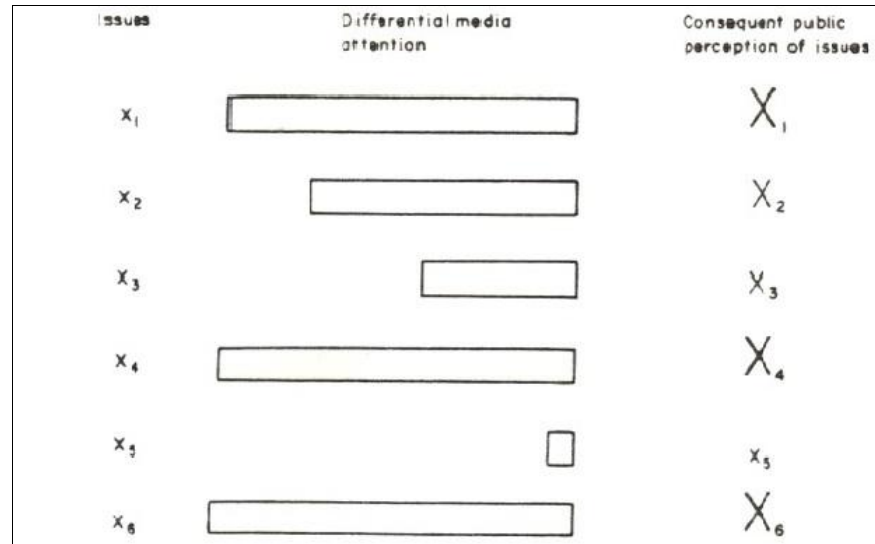


Figure 2.5 The Agenda setting model

Source: McQuail and Windahl (1981)

In the first phase of agenda setting, the theory explains how public agenda is set through the constant process of media input. Public agenda is not merely a list of public issues as the majority of current studies suggests; rather, it is a set of a number of objects (McCombs and Ghanem, 2008) which may vary in salience. Each is composed of different attributes and “both the selection of objects for attention and the selection of attributes for thinking about these objects are important in the agenda setting process” (Shaw and McCombs, 1977). McCombs points out that in public discussion surrounding any given object, while some attributes of the object occupy a central position of concern, others seem less important and many are absent (McCombs and Ghanem, 2008). This notion leads McCombs to recognise two levels of agenda setting: the first is the transmission of object salience; the second is the transmission of attribute salience (p. 68). The second level, which is also called ‘attribute agenda setting’, has been explored more recently and was first introduced in McCombs’s (1994) paper ‘The future agenda for agenda setting

research'. McCombs suggests revising Bernard Cohen's (1963) fundamental notion that media may tell us what to think about but not what to think. As he argues, the second level of agenda setting implies that "the media also tell us *how to think* about some objects" (2008, p. 69, original emphasis).

On the second level, agenda-setting converges with the framing theory of media effects (Weaver et al., 1981, Iyengar, 1991, McCombs and Reynolds, 2002, McCombs and Ghanem, 2008). A media frame is conceptually defined as "a central organising idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987, cited in Scheufele, 1999). According to Entman, "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (1993, p. 52). Emphasising the similarities between the two theories, McCombs describes framing in the language of agenda setting as follows: "Framing is the construction of an agenda with a restricted number of thematically related attributes in order to create a coherent picture of a particular object" (2008, p. 70). Figure 2.6 illustrates the process of agenda setting from media agenda to public agenda, presenting the same process of framing.

In the second phase of agenda setting, the theory is concerned with the individual's cognitive motivation; that is, contingent conditions determining the effect of media agenda. Similar to the diffusion model, with its notion that the process of information is a two-step flow (Rogers, 1976), agenda setting emphasises the importance of interpersonal communication in "determining the ultimate impact of media content on people" (Shaw, 1979).

However, the most important factor in strengthening or constraining agenda effects is the individual's need for orientation (McCombs, 2004) which is defined by Lowery and DeFleur (1995) as "a personality factor that presumably leads an individual to seek exposure to media content". As McCombs's (2004) argues, the need for orientation can serve to foster "channel effects in the agenda setting process" (2004, p. 65). More precisely, he suggests that "the greater an individual's need for orientation in the realm of public affairs, the more likely he or she is to attend to the agenda of the mass media with their wealth of information on politics and government" (2004, p. 66). According to McCombs, agenda setting impacts upon individuals' cognitions consonant to their need for orientation (2004, p. 66). In the other words, the need for orientation is a predictor of the agenda effects. Many studies support this assumption (Matthes, 2006).

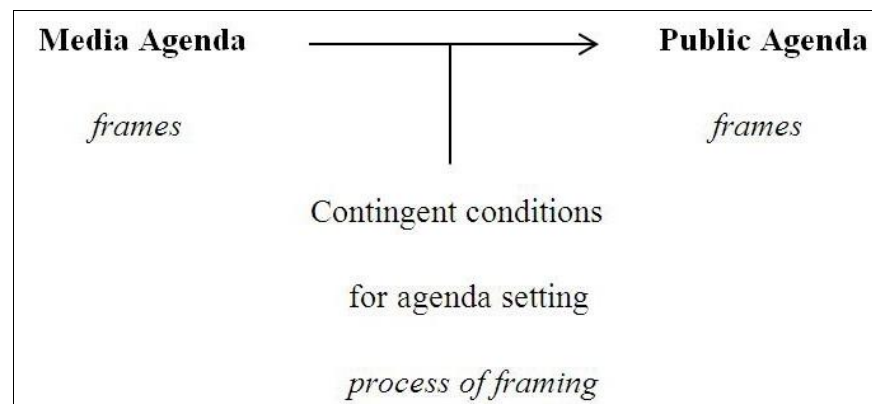


Figure 2.6 Convergence of agenda setting and framing.

Source: McCombs and Ghanem(2008)

Weaver (1980) explained that the term 'motivation' was discussed in utilitarian theories describing how people perceived the outside world and the communications within. Influenced by these theories, McCombs and Weaver (1973) identified two lower-order concepts, i.e., relevance and uncertainty, in an attempt to understand the differences in the need for orientation

among individuals. ‘Relevance’ (or interest) is defined as the feeling in which one perceives a given issue to be personality relevant (McCombs, 2004). If an issue fails to meet the interests of the individual or the public at large, the relevance level is low and the need for orientation to the issue is low. The term ‘uncertainty’ refers to an unfamiliar feeling with an issue. These two concepts closely connect with each other in the consequent relations which are illustrated in Figure 2.7.

The typology in Figure 2.7 shows three cases of ‘need for orientation’ due to the results of an association between relevance and uncertainty. Group I: a strong need for orientation occurs when both the level of interest and the level of uncertainty are high. Group II: a moderate level of need for orientation occurs when the level of interest and the level of uncertainty are opposite. Group III: a weak need for orientation occurs when both levels, i.e., interest and uncertainty, are low.

However, a later study by Weaver and Schonbach (1985) revealed that the individuals in Group II showed the strongest agenda setting effects (cited in McCombs and Reynolds, 2002). The same result can be found in Matthes’s (2006) study which suggests that three dimensions of need for orientation should be included: the need for orientation toward issues, the need for orientation toward facts and the need for orientation toward journalistic evaluations.

It becomes clear that the answers to how media and public agenda impact upon an individual’s agenda initially lay in the operation of need for orientation. Theoretically, the greater the agenda setting theory involves the need for orientation, the closer it relates to the uses and gratifications framework, and to the knowledge gap hypothesis in researching individual’s cognitive motivation. Takeshita (2005) notes that: “On the audience side, the concept need for orientation, a well-known concept representing a contingent condition of agenda setting, has the merit of incorporating the uses and gratifications perspective into media effects research” (p. 291). This

notion was first pointed out by Shaw (1979) who stressed that “agenda setting theory of media effects is indebted to this [uses and gratifications] research tradition for its starting point: an initial focus on people’s needs” (p. 99).

		Uncertainty	
		Low	High
Relevance	Low	Low Need for Orientation (Group III)	Moderate Need for Orientation (Group II)
	High	Moderate Need for Orientation (Group II)	High Need for Orientation (Group I)

Figure 2.7 Levels of need for orientation defined by levels of relevance and uncertainty

Source: Weaver (1980)

Although receiving the support of many researchers, agenda setting has also been criticised. For example, McQuail and Windahl (1981) expressed concern over whether agenda setting directly or indirectly affects the individual through interpersonal contacts. In his paper titled ‘Current critical problems in agenda setting research’, Takeshita (2005) recognises three major problems: (1) the superficial and automatic process of agenda setting; (2) the second level of model, i.e., the affective attribute agenda setting process may be merged with the traditional framing and persuasion research; and, (3) the development of communication technology “might limit the media’s agenda setting effects at the social level” and push the model to risk of “becoming obsolete as the end of era of mass media approaches” (pp. 275 - 276).

However, to date, agenda setting has survived, even flourished in recent years with evidence that more than 400 studies have been published (McCombs, 2005).

The majority of agenda setting studies involve political topics: particular focus is upon the voters' need for orientation during political campaigns (see McCombs and Shaw, 1972, McCombs and Weaver, 1973, Becker and McCombs, 1978, King, 1997, Takeshita and Mikami, 1995). However, "the theory itself is designedly open to other personal and social needs of the individual that could signal the appearance of the agenda setting phenomenon" (Shaw, 1979, p. 99).

In this thesis, agenda setting theory will be employed to fulfil two purposes: (1) analysing the setting of selected Vietnam television channels, based on data collected via content analysis of these channel's programs. The first level of agenda setting, i.e., salience agenda, will provide a platform for discussion; and, (2) examining the need for orientation of Hanoi's new urban residents when they use television as a source of information.

2.2.3 Uses and gratifications theory

Emergence of the uses and gratifications model marks an important shift in mass communication research. Earlier media effect theories which included all approaches to powerful, limited or moderate effects, "take media content and its consumption as their starting point" (Rosengren, 1974, p. 282), whereas the uses and gratifications perspective is concerned with questions surrounding why people use media, what they use them for, and what they do with them' (Katz, 1959, McQuail, 1983).

The original introduction of uses and gratifications research can be found in earlier studies undertaken in the 1940s (see Rosengren, 1974, Shaw, 1979, Jensen and Rosengren, 1990, Lowery and DeFleur, 1995). Herta Herzog's (1942, 1944) studies investigated what gratifications listeners might obtain from several radio programs such as 'daytime serials' and 'professor quiz' programs. The author found that daytime serials provided the listeners with several gratifications including "emotional release, wishful thinking and advice regarding their own lives" (cited in Lowery and DeFleur, 1995, p. 110), while the quiz programs served their competitive feelings, educational needs, self-rating and sporting motivations (cited in Rubin, 1983).

The principal objective of the approach was to investigate the various ways in which "individuals use communications, among other resources in their environment, to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals" (Katz et al., 1973-1974, p. 510). Alternatively, the uses and gratifications approach examines "the personal media choices consumers make to fulfil different purposes at different times" (Sparks, 2009, p. 359).

Grounded in the notion of selective media exposure centred on the limited effects viewpoint, the uses and gratifications approach assumes that different individuals use the same media message in varied ways according to their different reasons (Blumler and Katz, 1974). Starting with the individual, the model stresses 'intrapersonal' needs rather than 'interpersonal' factors (Shaw, 1979) and requires examination and explanation of "the characteristics, motivation, selectivity and involvement of individual communicators". Then, it can be regarded as "a psychological communication perspective" (Rubin, 2002, p. 165).

Elihu Katz, one of the leading scholars who contributed to the theoretical framework of the uses and gratifications perspective, described its concerns as: "(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6)

need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones” (Katz et al., 1974, p. 20).

Rosengren (1974) adapted Katz’s formulation and developed a more concrete paradigm for uses and gratifications research (see Figure 2.6) initiatively based on Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy which identified five sets of human basic needs from lower to higher: (1) physiological needs; (2) safety needs; (3) belongingness and love needs; (4) esteem needs; and (5) a need for self-actualisation. Of these set of needs, according to Rosengren (1974), sets (3), (4) and, (5) would somewhat match the notion of ‘need’ in the uses and gratifications theory.

Rosengren’s paradigm in Figure 2.8 shows that: “basic needs (1), individual differences (2), and contextual societal factors (3) combine to result in a variety of perceived problems and motivations (4-6) to which gratifications are sought from the media (7) and elsewhere (8) leading to differential patterns of media effects (9) on both the individual (10) and societal (11) levels” (Sherry, 2001, p. 275). Importantly, Rosengren noted that it was the task of biologists and psychologists to analyse the ‘basic needs’, while the uses and gratifications approach started its concern with the box (4). In other words, ‘need’ in the model is understood as a consequence of ‘problem’.

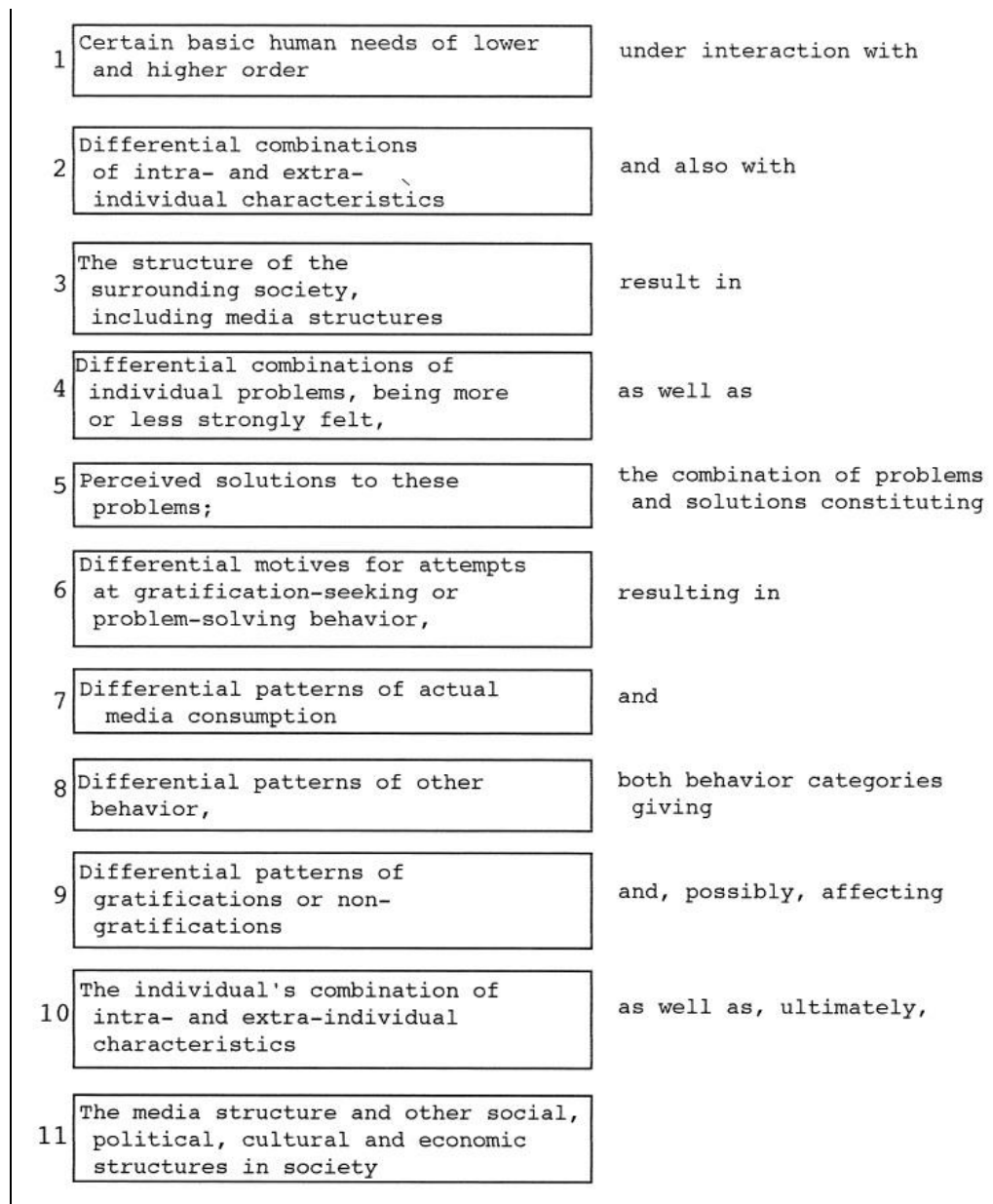


Figure 2.8 Rosengren's paradigm for uses and gratifications research

Source: Rosengren (1974)

Early uses and gratifications studies undertaken in the 1940s investigated the reasons why individuals used certain media content. Researchers in the early 1970s and onwards attempted to develop the typologies of media use to gratify social and psychological needs (Katz et al., 1973). According to Rosengren, the model proceeded through four phases: “from prima-facie (surfacial) descriptions, to typological efforts building on systematic operationalization of central variables,

to efforts at explanation, to systematic theory building” (Rosengren et al., 1985, cited in Jensen and Rosengren, 1990, p. 210). However, the majority of current studies remain concerned with the correlation between ‘media use motivations’ and ‘gratifications sought’ found in box (4) through box (7) in Rosengren’s paradigm (Rubin, 2002). More recently, research into the theme of the uses and gratifications model has opted to classify different gratifications in terms of motivation type, genre of programs (e.g., entertainment), media type and location (i.e., country) (see Sherry, 2001).

Regarding the elements of the uses and gratifications model, Katz et al. noted the following five major factors:

- (1) The audience is conceived of as active (i.e., as an important part of the assumption that media use is goal directed).
- (2) In the mass communication process, much initiative in linking need gratification and media choices lies with audience member.
- (3) The media compete with other sources of need satisfaction.
- (4) Many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves.
- (5) Value adjustment vis-a-vis the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms (1974, pp. 21-22).

The most important element of the model is the concept of ‘need’, which is variously understood as reason, motive and motivation for media use. Based on a list of thirty-five needs drawn from the literature on the social and psychological functions of the mass media, Katz, Hass and Gurevitch (1973, p. 166) categorised five groups of needs:

- (1) *Cognitive needs*: the needs to seek information, knowledge and understanding
- (2) *Affective needs*: aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional needs
- (3) *Integrative needs*: credibility, confidence, stability and status
- (4) *Social contact needs*: keeping contact with family, friends and others
- (5) *Escape needs*: the needs for release from tension due to alienation or deprivation

Alan Rubin, who mainly applied uses and gratifications theory to television studies, proposed nine clusters of viewing motivations which might be understood as reasons for TV use and potential gratification experienced from that use as follows: pass time/habit, companionship, arousal, program content, relaxation, information, escape, entertainment and social interaction (1981). Of these motivations, the term ‘escape’ in particular has been explained and used in different ways. Katz and Foulkes (1962) defined ‘escape’ as related to the status of alienation and isolation. McQuail et al. (1972) argued that ‘escape’ might be regarded as either an inherent characteristic of media content or as a motive for media use (cited in Rubin, 1983). Rubin (1983) ventured that escapist viewing might differ from the motivation of habitus viewing for passing time or amusement.

The uses and gratifications theory is rooted in the functional approach to media which examines the nexus between purpose, function and media choice (Rubin, 2002). Shaw (1979) stressed that this approach to media use appeared to be more humanistic given that focus was upon what media do ‘for’ people rather than ‘to’ people. She noted that: “Uses and gratifications research offers a valuable alternative perspective to our understanding of the media’s function in human society. It has called attention to audiences’ varying expectations of the several media” (Shaw, 1979, p. 99).

Researchers of the times also distinguished the relations between the uses and gratifications model with other theories of media effects. McCombs and Weaver (1985) proposed “a merger of gratifications and agenda setting research” based on the assumption that “these agenda setting effects may occur whether or not an individual’s need for orientation is satisfied by exposure to the media” (p. 102). Rubin and Windahl (1986) suggested combining the uses and gratifications approach with the dependency theory making a “uses and dependency model”. Palmgreen (1985) noted that “much media use [the former] can be conceived as goal directed [the latter]”. Favourable to the proposed merger was the fact that the term ‘gratifications’ in the uses and gratifications process¹² seemed compatible with the concept of ‘expectations’ in the expectancy theories; thus, these two models could be successfully merged into one (Galloway, 1981, Leuven, 1981, Rayburn II and Palmgreen, 1984). In addition, the uses and gratifications and the uses and effects models share common ground in their attempts to “explain the outcomes or consequences of communication such as attitude or perception formation, behaviour changes, and societal effects” (Rubin, 2002, p. 172).

Apropos of methodology, the uses and gratifications theory was based on the notion that “people are aware of their needs and able to identify their sources of satisfaction” (Katz et al., 1973): research data could be collected by “simply asking them” (Katz et al., 1973-1974) and tabled in the form of self-reporting. Recently, not only self-reporting but also other quantitative and qualitative methods are applied to investigate audience gratification (Rubin, 2002).

But, the use of self-reporting survey data was criticised for its heavy reliance “on subjective reports of mental states” and considered ‘too mentalistic’ (McQuail and Windahl, 1981, p. 78). However, from the very beginning of the theory’s introduction, Katz et al. (1974) argued that since audiences were conceived of as active, they had the capacity to explicate their motives for

¹² The process of uses and gratifications passes through two stages: gratifications sought and gratifications obtained (see Greenberg, 1974).

communicating; thus, self-reporting probably provided accurate data. But, in its turn, this assumption of 'active audience' was also criticised (see Swanson, 1977, McQuail and Windahl, 1981). In response, Rubin and Perse (1987) pointed out that the term 'activity', which included the utility, intentionality, selectivity and involvement of the audience with the media (cited in Blumler, 1979), referred to a variable - not an absolute concept. They observed that audiences were not equally active at all times; rather, they tended to swing between being passive (i.e., probably more directly influenced by media messages) and active (i.e., more rational in accepting or rejecting messages) (1987, p. 98).

Another problem peculiar to gratifications research noted by Rubin (1981) was "its failure to recognise that need gratifications may be manifest or latent" (p. 162). Rubin claimed that in many cases, latent and unintended motivations were left unexpressed, causing varied results in studies of television use within the framework of uses and gratifications. In addition, he claimed that some areas within the model had not been explored; e.g., the link between viewing motivations and television behaviour and attitudes, the role of social conditions and interpersonal interaction (Rubin, 1981).

Other criticisms of the uses and gratifications model argued that: (a) it was highly individualistic; thus, it would not provide prediction of casual explanation of media use; (b) it showed little or no concern for media content and messages; (c) it might please the journalists and those who controlled the media by releasing themselves from being responsible for the 'bad' content of media; (d) it was biased in line with the preposition that media were always functional and served certain needs of their audiences; and, (e) it was confused: it failed to clearly define the theory's core concepts. As a result, needs, problems, motives, motivations and gratifications overlapped each other (see Swanson, 1977, McQuail and Windahl, 1981, Noelle-Neumann, 1983, McQuail, 1994, Rubin, 2002).

Notwithstanding, the most arguable criticism of the uses and gratifications approach can be found in the views of researchers of cultural studies and reception analysis. Swanson (1977) claimed that although addressing audience perceptions as the key element, the model failed to “investigate how persons perceive and interpret the content of messages and whether those interpretations do indeed provide the expected link between needs, uses and gratifications” (p. 219). Elliott (1974) argued that television viewing was “more a matter of availability than selection”; thus, the motivations that the audiences attributed to the medium depended upon their familiarity with certain content in terms of its language, conventions and meaning. Morley (1992) argued that while earlier studies took into account specific types of media content and specific audiences, later studies (from the 1970s onwards) tended (a) to be “less sociological” and immersed in the psychological aspect of need and gratification; and (b) ignored the structure of social context surrounding individual media use and gratifications.

Despite these shortcomings in terms of theory and methodology, the uses and gratifications model “has endured for more than 50 years and still inspires cutting-edge research” (Sparks, 2009. p. 358). Since the 1980s, there has been a tendency for researchers to apply more methods such as experimental, ethnographic, diary/narrative to support data research (see Rubin, 2002). To date, people are offered more choices to access a variety of media, which flourish as a result of widespread development and adaption of communication technology. From this perspective, uses and gratifications research has “become [an] even more crucial component of audience analysis”, remaining the basic question surrounding individual motivation and satisfaction within these choices (Ruggiero, 2000).

To date, the majority of uses and gratifications studies has involved television viewing motivations (Greenberg, 1974, Rubin, 1981, Conway and Rubin, 1991, Rubin, 1983, Feilitzen, 2002, Massey, 1995, Webster and Wakshlag, 1983). This model contributes to my thesis as the

main theory which provides a framework for investigation and explanation of how new residents of Hanoi metropolitan use television to gratify their needs and to what extent their satisfaction may be obtained.

2.2.4 Dependency media system

Building upon Walter Lippmann's (1922) notion that people become dependent upon mass media to supply them with information and details of current events, Ball-Rokeach (1974) first expressed her idea of media system dependency by proposing "a shift from persuasion-centred conceptions of the media to a view of the media as an information system" (Grant et al., 1991).

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) introduced the dependency theory with the core assumption that: "The dependencies people have on media information are a product of the nature of the sociocultural system, category membership, individual needs, and the number and centrality of the unique information functions that the media system serves for individuals and for society" (pp. 18-19).

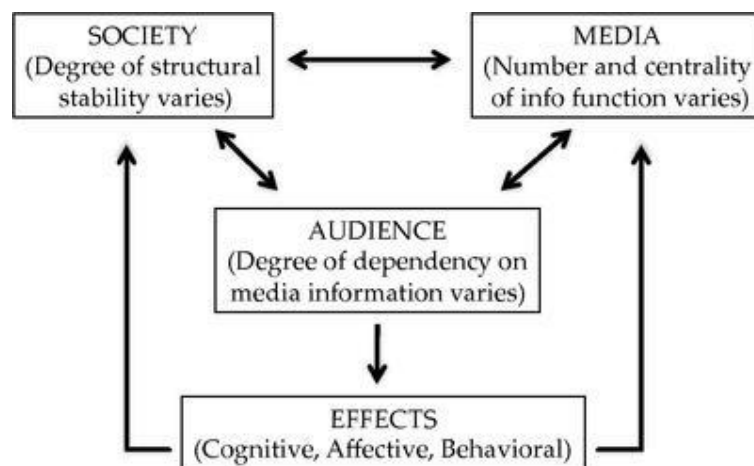


Figure 2.9 Society, Media and Audience: Reciprocal Relationship

Souce: Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976)

Different from earlier effect theories which dealt with the bilateral interaction of media and audiences, the dependency theory systematically examined the tripartite audience-media-society interrelationship: it was accordingly labelled 'media system dependency' (MSD). Dependency is understood as "a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party" (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976, p. 6).

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) assumed that the nature of this interrelationship would determine the nature of effects; that is, cognitive, affective and behavioural effects (see Figure 2.9). In other words, as reviewed by McQuail and Windahl, society, audience and media are variable components: "Effects on the audience may also lead to effects on the social system and on the media system itself" (1981, p. 67). McQuail and Windahl (1981, p. 66) described the variants of these interrelated components as follows: (a) the social system varies according to its degree of stability; (b) the audience will vary in relation to the social system and to changes in social conditions; and, (c) the mass media will vary in quantity, diversity, reliability and authority.

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) contended that due to the increased complexity of the social structure, people appeared to have less contact with the social system as a whole, and, as a result, failed to be "aware of what [was] going on in their society beyond their own position in the structure" (p. 4). It is understandable that the theory initiatively focuses on the high level of dependence of audiences upon information resources of media. In this context, mass media seem to serve their "unique information functions" (p. 6).

In their work *Theories of Mass Communication*, DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1976, p. 182) noted more precisely the context of society: "It was difficult to sort out, but the picture that emerged focused on several significant forms of change that were adding to the complexity of society:

urbanisation, modernisation, migration, expansion of the division [of] labour, increased stratification and increased social mobility”.

Continuing to refine and develop the theory, Ball-Rokeach et al. (1984, pp. 3-4) distinguished five macro-level and micro-level factors to explain audience-media-society interrelationships:

- (1) *structural factors*: the pattern of the media’s independent relations with political, economic, and other systems
- (2) *contextual factors*: the nature of the social environment
- (3) *media factors*: the nature and quality of the media system
- (4) *interpersonal network factors*: the way in which interpersonal networks shape the individual’s media-relevant expectations and motivations
- (5) *individual factors*: the individual’s goals that may be served by media use

Within this framework, the first three factors contribute to the macro level: the last two belong to the micro level of system dependency (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984). Macro levels (also called the organisational levels), describe the dependency relation between the media and other structural organisations of society (Ball-Rokeach, 1998). The micro level or the individual dependency relation is defined as “the extent to which attainment of an individual’s goals is contingent upon access to the information resources of the media system, relative to the extent to which attainment of media system goals is contingent upon the resources controlled by individuals” (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1990, p. 250).

Ball-Rokeach (1998) argues that because “media effects at macro level have consequences for micro levels and vice versa”, a theory of media effects needs to have ‘cross-level applicability’. This cross-level effects occurs when the structural dependencies between media as a social

system and others “set the structural boundaries of media action and thus shape the flow of information that individuals may come to depend upon” (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984).

At the micro level, MSD theory shares several similarities with the uses and gratifications approach. For example, both models conceive of audiences as active, and then assume that to some extent audience activity may strengthen media effects (Perry, 2002). The two models, which are based on an audience-centred approach, attempt to investigate and explain the ways in which people expose to media content for their attainment or gratification (McQuail and Windahl, 1981, McQuail, 1994).

However, there is a range of difference between MSD and uses and gratifications. Not only being discussed in literature reviews by later media effects researchers, these differences are also highlighted by Ball-Rokeach and her colleagues, the authors of MSD, in their attempts to conceptualise the theory. First, while the uses and gratifications theory examines the relations between the audiences and the media system, the MSD theory links these relations to the social context employing an ecological approach (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976). Second, in MSD theory, the term ‘goals’ is used as a substitute for ‘needs’ in the uses and gratifications theory, the argument being that “the latter connotes both rational and irrational, conscious and unconscious motives” (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984, p. 6). Third, the central question of the uses and gratifications approach is: “Where do I go to gratify my needs?”, while the MSD’s central concern is: “Why do I go to this medium to fulfil this goal?” (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1990, Grant et al., 1991). Fourth, Ball-Rokeach (1998) emphasises that the theoretical origin of MSD, which is based on the idea of power dependency relations, totally differs from that of the uses and gratifications theory, which is grounded in theories of perception, attitude and information diffusion.

In an attempt to explain the power relations more precisely, Ball-Rokeach (1998) argues that the individual ambiguity is “an informational and affective problem largely created by social environments that did not (could not) communicate coherent patterns of social relations with which individuals could define their world” (p. 9). This notion was partly influenced by mass society theory which claimed that “isolated individuals are easily manipulated by media messages” (p. 7). However, MSD was not a theory of direct and one way powerful effects which dominated the mass society viewpoint; rather, the concept of dependency was understood as a multi-dimensional relationship of power (Ball-Rokeach, 1998). Influenced by Emerson’s (1962) notion that power was a relational phenomenon, or in the other words, “a product of power-dependence relations”, Ball-Rokeach saw MSD theory as “a theory of media power” (1998, p. 13). Accordingly, power could not be generated solely by one party in this interrelation. Therefore, it is understandable that the authors of the theory avoided the implication of either an all-powerful or a minimal effect media; rather, they attempted to provide a framework for investigation of “a realistic balance between forces that set the conditions for powerful or direct media effects and forces that set the conditions for weak or indirect media effects” (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984, p. 4).

Regarding interpersonal interaction as one of factors at the micro dependency level, Ball-Rokeach (1998) notes that MSD theory shares a common perception with the agenda setting model, i.e., media set the agenda which individuals and their interpersonal network come to rely upon. However, she argues that the uses and gratifications theory’s emphasis on the significance of interpersonal networks is somewhat too optimistic to assume that the “individual is empowered to manipulate media texts, not to be manipulated by them” (Ball-Rokeach, 1998, p. 28). In this way individual appears to “dissemble media power” (p. 29). Interpersonal networks, I will suggest, play a critical role in MSD theory given that “they link the individual to publics and

they link and influence the nature of the individual's relations with the media system" (Ball-Rokeach, 1998, p. 28).

MSD theory was tested in a TV show called *The Great American Values Test* produced by Ball-Rokeach and her colleagues in 1979 (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984). In this test, MSD theory was combined with the theory of belief in social psychology to examine individual responses to the values represented in the program such as antiracist, antisexist and freedom. The result revealed that people would modify their values, attitudes and behaviour if they experienced dissatisfaction with their existing values and beliefs. In this empirical study, the researchers suggested a framework of dependency types and subtypes that individuals with high degree of media dependency might have (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984, pp. 7-10):

(1) *Understanding dependency*: people depend on media information for acquisition of knowledge of the surrounding world and of their own status in relation with others:

a. Social understanding

b. Self-understanding

(2) *Orientation dependency*: can be understood as 'the need for orientation' distinguished in the agenda setting model which assumes that people rely upon the media system for information orientation and explanation. This dependency is included:

a. Action orientation

b. Interaction orientation

(3) *Play dependency*: a combination of several types of needs in the spheres of uses and gratifications such as fantasy escape, social connection and entertainment. This dependency is distinguished as:

a. Solitary play

b. Social play

Ball-Rokeach et al. (1984, p. 13) described the correlation of media dependency and media effects as a process in which: “The greater the media dependency, the greater the level of attention during exposure, the greater the level of affect toward the message and its senders, and the greater the likelihood of post-exposure communication about the message - and, thus, the greater the probability of message effects, intended or unintended”.

It is also noted that in MSD theory, the media system is viewed not only as an information source particularly for individuals who rely on it but also as an active agent for message definition (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984). Furthermore, despite individuals being relatively active in media exposure, they are bound within the media environment because the media messages are beyond their control; in effect, “they are products of the media’s interdependent relations with other social systems” (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984, p. 15). MSD theory originates outside of the media use approach (Perry, 2002) which is contrary to the central concern of the uses and gratifications approach. Ball-Rokeach (1998) maintained that the dependency theory’s central concern is with MSD relations, or, in other words, with the power-dependence relations.

Theoretically speaking, it is the notion of these structural relations that connects the theory closely to the cultural studies tradition emerged in the late 1970s. Both approaches shared the common viewpoint that power was generated through the dependency relations of media system with other social systems and with society as a whole, from which social realities, including conflict and change, were created and negotiated (Ball-Rokeach, 1998).

However, by emphasising the power relations, MSD theory tended to diminish the role of the active individual in selecting and interpreting the media messages (Rubin and Windahl, 1986).

Thus, it was more likely to be a theory of structural conditions and historical circumstances than of individual perception (McQuail and Windahl, 1981). In order to overcome the theory's limitations, Rubin and Whindahl (1986) proposed the integration of MSD theory with the uses and gratifications theory giving form to the 'uses and dependency' model. The combination of the two theories took into account the following major components: "Societal structure and events; media availability, content and functioning; individual needs; interest, and motives; media and functional alternative use; dependency or non-dependency (i.e., whereby people are not inclined to rely upon a channel); and effects or consequences" (Rubin and Windahl, 1986, p. 187). In this thesis, these components will be distinguished and discussed at either the macro or the micro level of dependency system relations. At the macro level, MSD theory connects with agenda setting model to examine the relationship between the public agenda and the media agenda; at the micro level, it shares basic research questions with the uses and gratifications theory that involve audiences' needs and goals, media exposure and gratifications.

In this research, media system dependency is employed using two different approaches: (1) the international communication approach theory provides the foundation for critical analysis of the interrelationships between the media, their audiences and contemporary Vietnamese society. The structural and historical context of this relationship is urbanisation within a developing socialist country wherein all forms of media are under state ownership and control. The audiences in this relationship are recent migrants to Hanoi city and newcomers who have become new residents in line with the city's expansion. And, (2) employing a media effects approach serves to investigate how selected audiences depend upon television for their information needs.

2.3 Intercultural communication: Three Perspectives

Edward T. Hall is acknowledged as the founder of the field of intercultural communication (Rogers et al., 2002). In his well-known work *The Silent Language*, Hall (1959) asserted that: “Culture is communication and communication is culture” (cited in Rogers et al., 2002, p. 9). Although intercultural communication was ostensibly rooted in anthropology and linguistics, Hall differed from other anthropologists by focusing on “the micro-level behaviours of interactions [among] people of different cultures” (cited in Rogers et al., 2002). In his work titled *Beyond Culture*, Hall (1976) defined the culture of an individual as:

the total communication framework: words, actions, postures, gestures, tones of voice, facial expressions, the way he handles time, space, and materials, the way he works, plays, makes love and defends himself¹³. All these things and more are complete communication systems with meanings that can be read correctly only if one is familiar with the behavior in its historical, social and cultural context (Hall, 1976, p. 42).

Social Science	Interpretive	Critical
Culture is:		
Learned and shared	Learned and shared	Heterogeneous, dynamic
Patterns of perception	Contextual symbolic meanings Involves emotion	Site of contested meanings
The relationship between culture and communication:		
Culture influences communication.	Culture influences communication. Communication reinforces culture.	Communication reshapes culture.

Figure 2.10 Three perspectives on defining culture

Source: Martin and Nakayama (1999, 2010)

¹³ Hall’s definitions of individual culture was restricted to the male gender as a matter of dated material.

Culture has been defined in a number of ways according to different disciplines and different contexts (Harrison and Huntington, 2000). An early review of anthropological literature by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) found 164 different definitions of ‘culture’ (cited in Samovar et al., 2010).

In this section, I follow Martin and Nakayama’s (1999, 2010) division of intercultural communication scholarship into three perspectives: social science, interpretive and critical (Figure 2.10).

Social science perspective

In the view of social science¹⁴, culture is considered as a set of achievement perceived through learning and shared (Martin and Nakayama, 2010). Early research within the social science approach, which is based on a psychological perspective, described culture as “a set of conditioned inner states of belief and feeling reference to which ‘explains’ overt or outer conduct of categories of actors” (cited in Young, 1996, p. 58). This individual level approach to culture was criticized by Geertz (1973), who argued that culture was not simply private or psychological; rather, it was public and social. But, Young (1996) argues that this approach fails to recognise the characteristics of culture as a public and group phenomenon. In contrast, later research within this scholarship highlighted group-related attributes as the nature of culture.

For example, Singer (1987, p. 34) described culture “as a pattern of learned, group-related perceptions - including both verbal and nonverbal language attitudes, values, belief system, disbelief systems and behavior”. A similar definition may be found in Rogers and Steinfatt’s (1999, p. 79) work in which culture is viewed as “the total way of life of a people, composed of

¹⁴ As defined by Martin and Nakayama (2010), the social science approach, which is based on research into psychology and sociology and also called a functionalist approach, assumes that individual behaviour is predictable and that the researcher’s goal is to predict behaviour. Functionalism is also the fundamental ground for the media effects tradition albeit the core concern of effects research is not simply behaviour but also recognition and affection.

their learned and shared behavior patterns, values, norms, and material objects”. In addition, they propose that “each different group or population creates its own way of life, with the values, norms, behaviors, and material objects that they feel best fit their situation” (1999, p. 81).

Regarding communication, Rogers and Steinfatt (1999) borrow from Habermas’s (1984) theory of communicative action - which I will review in the next section - to define communication as “the process through which participants create and share information with one another as they move toward reaching mutual understanding” (p. 13) .

Intercultural communication, in the view of social researchers, is “the exchange of information between individuals who are unlike culturally” (Rogers and Steinfatt, 1999). In other words, highlighting that the cultural differences of individuals involved in an interaction is “the unique aspect of intercultural communication” (Rogers and Steinfatt, 1999, p. 79). Individuals tend to differ in a wide range of characteristics called ‘cultural differences’ which include national culture, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference, disability status, occupational acceptability, health and socioeconomic status (SES). Intercultural communication is a form of interpersonal communication which involves face-to-face exchange of information between two or more people from different cultures (Rogers and Steinfatt, 1999).

Interpretive perspective

The interpretive perspective¹⁵, which is influenced by anthropological and linguistic studies, focuses on the macro-level of communication patterns such as the economic, government, kinship and religious systems of a single culture rather than on group-related perceptions (Rogers et al., 2002, Martin and Nakayama, 2010). Geertz’s (1973) view of culture, which is the most

¹⁵ According to Martin and Nakayama (2010), interpretive approach attempts to understand and describe rather than predict individual behaviour. One common tradition within the interpretive approach (called ‘ethnography of communication’), which is rooted in sociolinguistics, is that it aims to describe communication patterns of a specific cultural group. This tradition and the reception analysis share the same qualitative research methodology including field studies, general observation and participant observations.

influential definition within this perspective, regarded culture as an “historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (cited in Martin and Nakayama, 2010, p. 87). Geertz (1973) identified language as ‘the culture’ and speech as ‘the social life’ which the culture framed (cited in Young, 1996). Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon (2001) define culture and the system of symbols as “any of the customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social organization, and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices of a group of people which set that group apart as a distinctive group” (p. 139). Bradford J. Hall (2005), who sees culture as an “historically shared system of symbolic resources through which we make our world meaningful” (p. 3), adds that it is a sequential process of selecting, organising and evaluating meaning.

From the interpretive perspective, which is also referred to as ‘social constructivist’, communication is perceived as a “generated process of meaning” in which meaning is generated through the interpretive practices of communication messages including mass and interpersonal communication (Hall, 2005). Intercultural communication occurs when “groups of people with different systems of symbolic resources come into contact - that is, they communicate with each other” (Klyukanov, 2005, p. 9).

According to Young (1996), anthropologists’ various definitions of culture are open to criticism given that they combine the whole ways of life including artefacts, practices, social structures, technologies, languages, myths, rituals, stories and economic systems.

Critical perspective

The critical perspective, which is also known as ‘critical intercultural communication’, focuses on the historical context of communication (Halualani and Nakayama, 2010). There is common

ground between this perspective and the media system dependency theory in that their central concern is with power relations of socio-political structures and communication (Martin and Nakayama, 2010). However, in the critical approach, which has developed from cultural studies¹⁶, these relations are ruled by the cultural differences between groups in terms of class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity (Martin and Nakayama, 2010). In cultural studies scholarship, culture was described as “an ideological struggle” (Hall, 1985). Theoretically, this is a move “from understanding culture as a neutral, innocent place to one always and already implicated in power relations where differently positioned subjects and social entities compete for advantage and control of the process of meaning production” (Halualani and Nakayama, 2010, p. 6).

This notion of culture is favoured by the interpretive approach which has seen many anthropologists conduct comparative studies which have expanded their view of the cultural process “across national and regional borders within contexts of history and power” (Martin and Nakayama, 2010, p. 90, citing Hannerz, 1996). However, more than simply a comparative approach, the critical paradigm, by emphasising cultural differences and conflicts, depicts the process of intercultural relations as “a battleground - a plan where multiple interpretations come together but a dominant force always prevails” (Martin and Nakayama, 2010, p. 66). It is inquiry that not only allows critical researchers to understand human behaviour but serves to “liberate people from oppression”¹⁷ (Roy and Starosta, 2001, p. 13) or “change the lives of everyday communicators” (Martin and Nakayama, 2010, p. 66).

Similar to cultural studies, critical intercultural communication involves popular forms of communication products (called ‘text’) and their content (called ‘discourse’). But, these studies

¹⁶ Martin and Nakayama (2010) describe this perspective as: “a more recent approach to culture, influenced by cultural studies scholarship, emphasises the heterogeneity of cultural groups and the often conflictual nature of cultural boundaries” (p.90).

¹⁷ Liberating the oppressed is central to Paulo Freire’s (1970) theory of liberation. See Chapter 3 for a review of this theory within the brief review of the field of communication and development.

do not take into account the face-to-face contact of intercultural communication (Martin and Nakayama, 2010). In support of Young's (1996) argument, the critical perspective shows a narrow view of culture which reduces 'culture' to 'text', in the process neglecting the environment and the dialogical interaction.

The three perspectives of intercultural communication link closely to Habermas' theory of communicative action (1984, 1987) in terms of the two concepts 'lifeworld' and 'system'. Yoshitake (2004), summarising and distinguishing these perspectives, applies Habermas' concepts as follows: (1) the social science approach as systemisation or rationalisation; (2) the interpretive approach as understanding the lifeworld; and, (3) the critical approach as a defense against the invasion of system into the lifeworld and/or as empowerment of the oppressed. In the next section of this chapter I will review this pair of concepts employing the communicative action theory.

My study does not set intercultural communication as one of its main objectives. However, as seen in the earlier review of the media effects history, all models from the limited to the moderate and to expanded powerful effects involve interpersonal communication in the process of information exchange. Therefore, in order to explain these effects more precisely it is necessary to take into account the ways in which audiences interact with one another within their interpersonal contact. Furthermore, regarding the three above perspectives, it is reasonable to suggest that interpersonal communication can be distinguished within the broader realm of intercultural communication. In other words, examining the latter enables us to understand not only the interpersonal but also the intergroup interactions of individuals. This is consistent with Singer's (1998) argument that "all communications are to some extent intercultural". My research, which involves the social science perspective of intercultural communication, builds upon Singer's notion of cultural perception, a process "by which an individual selects, evaluates,

and organises stimuli from the external environment” (1987, p.35). According to Singer (1987, 1998), individuals perceive the external world more or less similarly. Those who share the similarity form an identity group. Thus, every identity group has its own culture, which comprises “the total of all of the perceptions, attitudes, values and identities” and is accepted and expected by its members (1987, 1998). The TV audiences who participated in my research represented several identity groups. Based on the idea of perception, I will examine and compare how individuals in different groups perceive TV programs differently. Also, the ways in which these individuals communicate to others in terms of interpersonal and/or intergroup relations will be considered in this research.

2.4. Habermas and communicative action theory

Strategic and communicative action

The core principle of the communicative theory, according to Habermas’s definition of communicative action, is recognised:

whenever the actions of the agents involved are coordinated not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching understanding. In communicative action, participants are not primarily oriented to their own individual successes; they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plan of action on the basis of common situation definitions (1984, pp.285-6).

Habermas described ‘communicative action’ as a special type of social action oriented toward mutual understanding and distinguished by ‘strategic action’ which he called ‘action oriented toward success’ (1976). He also proposed three functions which communicative action served: reaching understanding, coordinating action, and socialising actors. Apropos of reaching understanding, communicative acts serve the ‘transmission of culturally stored knowledge’; when coordinating action, they serve the ‘fulfilment of norms’ appropriate to a given context;

and, under conditions of socialisation, these acts serve the construction of internal control on behaviour, or, in other words, the ‘formation of personality structures’ (Habermas, 1987, pp.62-63). For Habermas, communicative interaction was not merely a process of information exchange but a realm of cultural interaction between individuals including sharing, understanding and connecting.

To achieve mutual understanding, participants involved in communicative action are required to make commitments called ‘validity claims’ (Habermas, 1976). These claims, which Habermas identified in his theory of “universal pragmatics”, included: (1) truth, (2) rightness (appropriateness), (3) truthfulness (sincerity), and, (4) meaning (comprehensibility) (Habermas, 1976). First, the actors must be able to share their understanding of the world around them. This will enable them to discuss the facts of the physical and cultural world. Second, every speaker must speak the truth because in making an utterance they are initiating a social relationship. Third, they must speak of things which are normatively appropriate to general social norms (or values). Habermas noted that on occasion a speaker might be joking, ironic or lying, and that this should be recognised by the listeners if they are to secure, continue and succeed with the communication. And fourth, the speaker’s speech must be interpretable and understandable, i.e., delivered in the common language.

Habermas emphasised that although individual validity claims can be thematically stressed, in every instance of communicative action the system of all claims comes into play and must be raised at the same time (1976: 66).

Paralleling the validity claims, Habermas (1990) proposed another set of conditions, called “ideal speech situations”, to secure genuine and transparent communication. The ideal speech situation, which can be understood as a collection of conditions for a perfect dialogue, allows participants to have freedom and willingness to join in unrestricted discussion of everything of interest, to

express their opinions and move towards mutual understanding and consensus. In other words, there should be neither imbalance of power among participants nor any form of coercion preventing them from raising problems or challenges. Conversation should be not only based upon the force of rational argument alone but aims to gain collective agreement and acceptable decision-making.

Lifeworld and system

A further pair of core concepts addressed in communicative action theory is ‘lifeworld’ and ‘system’. Habermas used the term “lifeworld” in association with “a cultural stock of knowledge from which the participants in interaction draw their interpretations” (1984, p. 82); or, in other words, “a culturally transmitted and linguistically organised stock of interpretive patterns” (1987, p. 124).

Jacobson and Satish (1999, pp.169-170) claim that the system and the lifeworld play distinguishable roles in constituting society and thus operate differently. System maintenance is achieved by orienting human action around “media” as money or power. The mode of reasoning appropriate for such action is instrumental, technical, and achievement-oriented. Alternatively, the lifeworld is reproduced through a different mode of reasoning, and comprises ongoing communicative processes of interpretation and dialogue.

According to Habermas (1987) the lifeworld, characterised by communicative action, represents the everyday lived reality within which individuals interact with others to decide and organise their affairs in the private sphere of their own families or households or in the wider public sphere. The system comprises economy and state, each characterised by strategic action via their respective steering media of money (leading to commodification) and power (leading to juridification or bureaucratisation). When economy and state intrude in inappropriate and

unaccountable ways into the lifeworld, they can be said to ‘colonise’ it. In just this fashion, the ‘voice of medicine’ has partially colonised the ‘voice of the lifeworld’.

Habermas (1987) maintained that the lifeworld should not be understood as a mere stock of cultural resources, but as part of a complex process of interaction through which people use language to establish, maintain and repair social relationships with others. The lifeworld is constituted by a shared cultural tradition among a community, and while on the one hand this “inter-subjectively shared lifeworld forms the background for communicative action”, on the other, “individual elements of the cultural tradition are themselves made thematic”. Participants must “adopt a reflective attitude toward cultural patterns of interpretation that ordinarily make possible their interpretive accomplishments” (Habermas, 1984, p. 82). This means that the lifeworld is not just the “background” of cultural knowledge that enables communicators to arrive at “taken-for-granted” agreement but can also be the setting in which people learn new meaning and knowledge (Thomas, 2007).

In his more recent work *On the Pragmatics of Communication* (1998), Habermas distinguishes three components of the lifeworld: “culture”, “society”, and “personality structure”. Culture is understood as the stock of knowledge from which participants in communicative actions “supply themselves with interpretations”; society consists of “the legitimate orders by way of which the participant regulate their affiliations to social groups and safeguard solidarity”; and, personality structures include “all motives and competencies that enable a subject to speak and act and thereby to secure [his]/her own identity” (p. 248). The three components are embodied respectively in “symbolic forms”, “institutional orders”, and in the “substratum of human organisms” (Habermas, 1998). According to Habermas, “semantic contents”, thus embodied, can also be “liquidated and put into circulation in the currency of normal language”: all meaning is produced in the circumstances of everyday communicative practices (1998, p. 250). The relation

between system and lifeworld thus provides an answer to the classical question of how social order is possible (Edgar, 2006). Habermas (1987) argued that the development of societies might pass through a process that he called “rationalisation of the lifeworld”, whereby the content of the lifeworld was subject to increasingly rational challenges and justification (cited in Edgar, 2006). In effect, the rationalisation of the lifeworld can be seen as an integral part of “social evolution”, as members of society respond to challenges that either affect them personally or affect the society as a whole. Rationalisation stimulates a process of learning that increases their ability to solve problems (Habermas, 1987, cited in Edgar, 2006).

Habermas’s diagnosis of modern society holds that an imbalance exists between the system and the lifeworld, an imbalance in which technical system rationality dominates the lifeworld and sees it ultimately become referred to as “colonisation of the lifeworld” (Jacobson and Satish, 1999, p. 270).

The theory’s central concepts of communicative and strategic actions and related terms provide a framework that may be employed to analyse how communication operates within different paradigms of communication and development including the modernisation perspective, the diffusion of innovations theory or other mixed approaches, and, more particularly, the participatory perspectives (Jacobson and Satish, 1999). These three major paradigms will be analysed in the next chapter wherein I provide a brief historical review of the field of communication and development.

2.5 Ideology and hegemony approaches to mass communication

In the 1980s and 1990s, debate surrounding media effects continued with the approach to the concept of ‘ideology’. For example, George Gerbner (1994) argued that mass media exercise

their most powerful effect on our culture by “reinforcing a particular way of seeing the world by telling the same stories over and over” (cited in Exoo, 2010, p. 11). Through a vast number of these stories, mass media produced symbolic forms which served to maintain relations of domination. From this perspective, issues of meaning and interpretation began to be stressed, marking the emergence of the cultural studies tradition (Devereux, 2007). Thompson (1990) examined the ideological role of media and its effect which was now called ‘ideological effect’. He contended that: “... these products [media messages], like all symbolic forms, are not ideological in themselves; rather, they are ideological only in so far as, in particular sets of social-historical circumstances, they serve to establish and sustain relations of domination” (p. 268).

‘Ideology’ is one of major concepts within the base-superstructure model of Marxism. According to Marx, the ruling class in a capitalist society controls the means of production and the production of ideology as well (Devereux, 2007). However, ideology in the Marxist thesis was understood as the hidden ‘real world’, which the bourgeoisie misrepresented to the proletariat and other classes in the form of material and institutional processes of ideological control known as ‘false consciousness’ (Curran et al., 1982). Engels noted that: "Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process. Hence he imagines false or seeming motive forces" (Engels, 1893[1968]).

Marxist theorist Louis Althusser revisited and developed the concept in a different way, eschewing its Marxist origin. Rejecting the idea of false consciousness, he argued that ideology was the medium through which people perceived the real world (Curran et al., 1982). Althusser argued that for Marx, ideology was “an imaginary construction whose status is exactly like the theoretical status of the dream among writers before Freud. For those writers, the dream was the purely imaginary, i.e., null, [the] result of the 'day's residues'" (1971, p. 108). For him, ideology did not reflect the real world but rather “represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to

their real conditions of existence” (p. 162). He also stressed that "ideology has a material existence" (p. 112). In other words, ideology became real through the practices of material apparatuses rather than existing in the form of ‘ideas’ or in the minds of individuals (Althusser, 1971).

Based on the Marxist definition of the State as a “force of repressive execution and intervention ‘in the interest of the ruling classes’ in a class struggle conducted by the bourgeoisie and its allies against the proletariat” (1971, p. 137), Althusser turned his attention to the apparatuses the ruling classes employed to perpetuate their power. He distinguished the two types of State apparatuses: the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) and the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). The former consisted of the ‘institutions’ of the government, the administration, the army, the police, the courts, and the prisons. The latter variously included the religious, educational, family, legal, political, trade union, communications (mass media), and cultural ISAs. The RSAs activated their function by repression, whereas the ISAs “functioned massively and predominately by ideology” (pp. 143-148).

Regarding the communications ISA, Althusser assumed mass media accomplished their function “by cramming every ‘citizen’ with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc. by means of the press, the radio and television” (p.155). Althusser’s understand of ideology, particularly his notion of ISAs, broadly influenced later perspectives of the ideological role of mass media not only within the field of social theory, but also in the realm of cultural studies. Gray (2005) notes that: “In the context of communication research, Althusser's conceptual framework may provide a language through which the influence the mass media exerts over the public may be identified and articulated”.

For Althusser, our world was more of a ‘virtual reality’, the result of a construction of perceptions inspired by hegemonic institutions and values. The ruling classes sustained the necessary consent for their dominance via interpellation. “Through ISAs, individuals are called

[upon] to participate in particular ideologies, and accept these hailings to participate in mainstream societal activities, groups, and functions” (Gray, 2005).

When explaining the structure and function of ideology, Althusser drew upon Antonio Gramsci’s concept of ‘hegemony’. A Marxist thinker, Gramsci scrutinised the capitalist society in an attempt to ascertain how domination was achieved and sustained by the bourgeois class, who used either consent, force or the threat of force to dominate and control the social order (Devereux, 2007, p. 166). This consent, which Gramsci called ‘common sense’ when referring to “the usually uncritical, often unconscious way in which most people perceive the world”, worked to “protect ruling class power and privilege” (cited in Exoo, 2010, p. 8). Based upon this perspective, Gramsci coined the term ‘hegemony’ to denote the predominance of the ruling classes over others through the practices of dominant ideology (Gramsci, 1971).

For Gramsci, the hegemonic position of the capitalist class could not be considered as taken-for-granted; rather, it had to be negotiated and renegotiated. In this continuous process of negotiation, which Gramsci called ‘struggle’, mass media were seen as an ideological ‘site of struggle’ in the production and reproduction of the dominant ideology that served to sustain capitalism and its hegemonic position (Gramsci, 1971).

The works of both Gramsci and Althusser have been applied widely in mass communication research, cultural studies, feminism, and Marxist media analysis. As my thesis is primarily concerned with the relationship between media and its audiences rather than focusing on message meaning and interpretation, notions of ideology and hegemony are employed in an attempt to discern the nature of this relationship.

Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the histories of the media effects tradition and the four effects models employed in this thesis as the main theories. With regard to these theories, I have carefully highlighted the relations between them and how they can be integrated into building a framework around which to base my research. However, more than previous media effects research, I attempt to link these models with: (1) the intercultural communication scholarship; (2) the theory of communicative action, and (3), the hegemonic and ideological models. Accordingly, a theoretical framework is drawn on as illustrated in Figure 2.11.

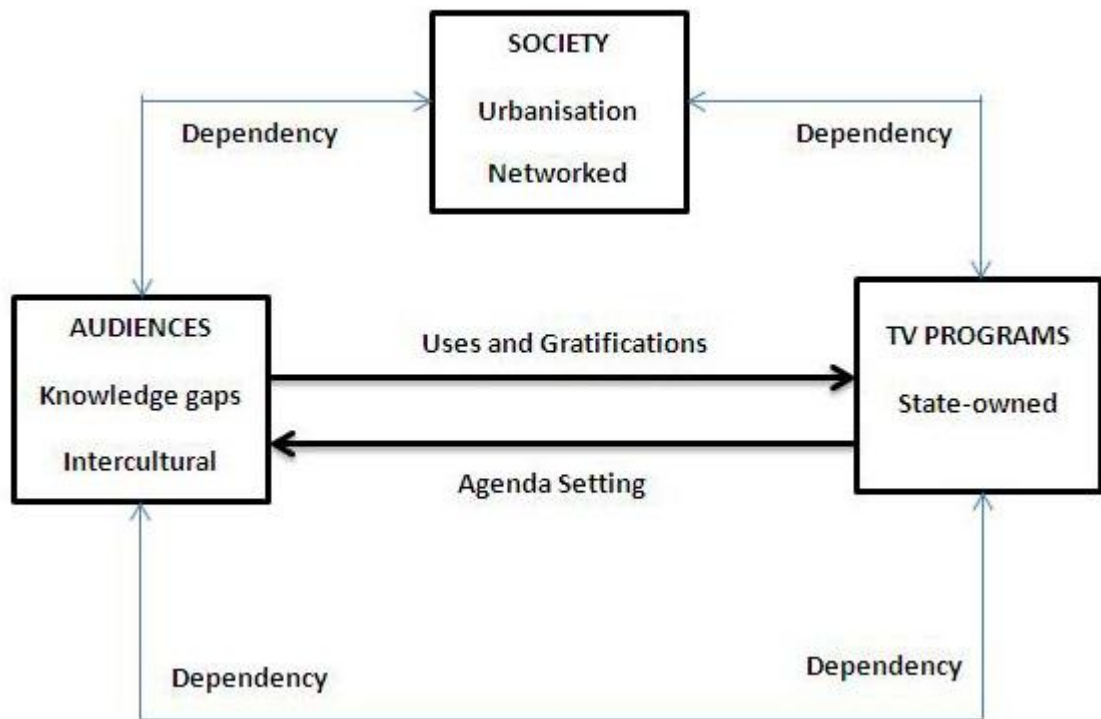


Figure 2.11 The Theoretical Framework

My review of media effects approaches in this chapter reflects the link between the different models which contribute to the audience research tradition. As suggested and applied in earlier

studies, some of these theories may be combined or merged into productive models such as uses and gratifications and agenda setting, and/or uses and gratifications and dependency theory. As the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of television in the daily lives of a specific group of audiences, I suggest that one single model of media effect alone cannot help to obtain sufficient answers. From this perspective, I choose a framework combining the four models in order to investigate and explain the selected audiences' television usage and to carefully examine their living statuses, their needs, motivations and gratifications.

In this framework, the uses and gratifications model is employed as the central component which helps to answer the first and most important research question: How do the new residents of Hanoi use television to satisfy their communication needs? The adoption of the uses and gratifications model in media effects research, which commenced in the 1950s, became widespread during the 1980s. Focus was upon television audience studies, which continues to be crucial in the 21st century together with the development of information technologies. Today, the central task of the model is to investigate audiences' needs, motivations and gratifications in using media. Based upon the assumption that media usage is a part of people lives, the uses and gratifications model is fundamentally compatible with cultural development research. In other words, the model enables researchers to explore – at least to some extent - individual cultures. This corresponds to the understanding of 'communication' as inseparable from culture inferred in this thesis and emphasised in Chapter One.

In order to support the findings of uses and gratifications research, the other three models of media effects were employed in this project: the knowledge gaps hypothesis, the agenda setting model, and media system dependency theory. Theoretically, these all link with the uses and gratifications model discussed in this chapter. First, the knowledge gaps hypothesis serves to examine how the SES differences among the selected audiences might affect their motivations, needs, and the satisfaction they derive from their television usage. Second, dependency theory

was applied to discern the extent to which these audiences depend on television for information and discussion surrounding the interrelationship between television, society and audiences within the contemporary Vietnamese context. Third, the agenda setting model was used for two purposes: (a) to examine the need for orientation of the participants involved in this research when they used television as a source of information; and, (b) to investigate how television stations and practitioners set their program agendas to serve the needs of their audiences.

A combination of the above four models of media effects worked to explain both sides of the communication process, i.e., between the audiences and the medium (uses and gratifications, knowledge gaps and media dependency) and vice versa (agenda setting). However, this framework could not be completed without first examining audience interactions. A review of the literature covering media effects approaches revealed emphasis upon interpersonal communication. The uses and gratifications theory also assumed that media compete with other sources, particularly with communication between individuals. Different from earlier uses and gratifications studies focusing on interpersonal communication, my approach in this thesis has employed an intercultural communication perspective to examine the interrelationships among the selected audiences. As the research is based upon development communication, I suggest that an intercultural approach will facilitate an understanding of the cultural interactions of the audiences given that they all belong to specific socio-cultural groups.

In sum, the findings from my employment of four media effects theories, supported by an intercultural communication approach, will be examined using Habermas's communicative action theory. The brief review of communicative action theory provided in this chapter may extend to a broader vision that will explain whether the nature of the communication process between audiences and medium is communicative or strategic. The theory employed in this framework does not aim to measure media effects or individual's contacts. Rather, drawing upon Habermas's core ideas of communicative and strategic actions, systems and lifeworld, I revisit

the research's overall objective, i.e., questioning the role of television in the everyday lives of Hanoi's new residents.

In the next chapter, I will continue with my literature review of the history of the field of development and communication followed by a brief review of Manuel Castells' theory of network society. Additionally, in the next chapter I will discuss Vietnam in general, and provide a background of the current issues of development and urbanisation in the country, its level of networked communication, and the nature and the relation between Vietnamese media and structural factors such as political and economic dependence. Recent statistics of Vietnam urbanisation in terms of population and migration will be considered in order to support a multi-faceted overview of current modernisation and development of the country.

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPMENT, MODERNISATION and NETWORK SOCIETY

VIETNAM: A COUNTRY IN TRANSITION

Introduction

Habermas's theory of communicative action, which I have reviewed in Chapter 2, provides a foundation for many studies in the field of development and communication. For example, Jacobson and Satish (1999) propose the application of Habermas's theory of validity claims¹⁸ to evaluate the success and effectiveness of participatory campaigns including social marketing and mass media channels. For Habermas (1976, 1984), that which is not communicative action was strategic action. Development and communication scholarship have been filtered passed through various phrases: early perspectives regarded communication, particularly mass media, as an instrumental tool in development; and more recent, some perspectives perceive communication as the mode of sharing meaning (Melkote and Steeves, 2001) i.e., being more dialogic and communicative than strategic. One of the current approaches, known as the 'network society' theory, developed its core concepts of the Net and the Self (Castells, 1996), which may be seen to resonate with Habermas's concepts of 'system' and 'lifeworld'¹⁹, as a means of investigating the relations between information and communication technology and social change.

My research, which does not take theories within the field of development and communication as a foundation framework, may be closely linked with this field, particularly regarding the relations

¹⁸ See Section 2.4, Chapter 2 for a review of Habermas's conceptualisation of validity claims.

¹⁹ See Section 2.4 Chapter 2 for a review of Habermas's conceptualisation of system and lifeworlds.

between urbanisation, modernisation and development in a developing country like Vietnam. In the first part of this chapter, I will briefly review the history of the field of development and communication studies with focus on debate surrounding modernisation and urbanisation. Then, I will review Manuel Castells' theory of network society, and how it is associated with related concepts pertaining to urbanisation. The integration of this literature will provide a fundamental view of the current modernisation and urbanisation processes in Vietnam that are moving towards the dual goal of development: modern society and an information society.

In the second part of this chapter, I will critically discuss Vietnam's multi-faced background. Focus will be upon: (1) socio-economic opening-up, also known as *Doi Moi*; (2) an overview of modernisation and urbanisation in Vietnam; and, (3) the characteristics and development of Vietnamese media, information and communication technologies in the connection with the network of civil society.

PART A: DEVELOPMENT, MODERNISATION and NETWORK SOCIETY

3.1 Approaches to development and communication

In this section, I briefly review the history of the field of development and communication with an emphasis on urbanisation attached in the modernisation perspective.

3.1.1 The three perspectives of development and communication

3.1.1.1 Modernisation perspective

A number of developing countries in the Third World applied the modernisation paradigm when setting their goals for development in terms of their ability to urbanise, industrialise and democratise. This linear route to development was viewed as a unique 'passing' or passage

through particular stages, following those passed in already developed countries. Simultaneously, there was much optimism and enthusiasm for the role that mass communication might play in fostering development in Latin America, Africa and Asia (Rogers, 1976), a belief strongly based upon the modernisation paradigm²⁰, which regarded mass media as a social agent in development. According to Fair (1989), the effects of media on audiences are particularly important in developing countries, given that they help to answer the question of how countries have developed or may develop.

Despite being brightly predicted that it would, by the 1960s it became evident (a) that the media had not produced national development, and (b) that modernisation had not led to development in the accepted sense of an increase in the capability of the people to deal with and control their environment (Sonaike, 1988). By the 1970s, many scholars had begun to critique the ethnocentric nature of this dominant approach, recognising the limitations of seeing development as an isolated national pursuit on the one hand, and drawing attention to the constraints in the global sphere that shaped the development process on the other (Wilkins, 2004). During this decade, the ‘development as modernisation’ paradigm came under heavy criticism and in the process lost its dominant influence.

3.1.1.2 Critical perspectives

After the failure of economic modernisation or the dominant paradigm was recognised, several different approaches to development and communication were developed in tandem, broadening and enriching the field in both theory and practice. The latter perspectives did not reject economic and political development; rather, they emphasised the importance of the dominance of

²⁰ At that time, modernisation was referred to as the ‘dominant paradigm’ or ‘economic paradigm’.

cultural, social and individual development, focused on qualitative growth, and examined the processes of change (Mowlana and Wilson, 1990).

Daniel Lerner, author of the empathy paradigm, admitted that “accelerating industrialisation turned out to be quite disappointing”. He stressed “a transformation of life ways” or “a behavioural transformation” as the prerequisites for development rather than merely transferring “a sum of money” or “a piece of technology” (Lerner and Nelson, 1977) .

Everett Rogers, who continued to promote the modernisation paradigm (albeit mostly emphasising the information transmission model of communication), systematically developed the highly influential Diffusion of Innovations theory (1962, 1983), which has served for several decades as a popular theoretical basis for development communication initiatives. The diffusion model, which resembles the modernisation paradigm in some respects, shares the assumption of the communication process as one-way, multi-step communication from the sender to the receiver (Inagaki, 2007). Rogers replaced the term ‘modernity’ with a major characteristic of modernity, i.e., ‘innovation’, as the goal of development, which should be defined by development experts. Diffusion theory recognised the limits of mass media to directly provoke behavioural change. In response to earlier criticism, the later version of the theory critically stressed the importance of interpersonal communication in the process of adopting new ideas (Nwosu, 1995). In the diffusion model, communication played a major role in informing and persuading aid recipients to participate (King and Cushman, 1994), thus signalling a form of top-down approach. Rogers (1978), in his article on the rise and fall of the dominant paradigm, advocated an alternative approach to development, which would involve “a widely participatory process”.

The rejection of the modernisation paradigm paralleled the emergence of another paradigm of development, i.e., dependency theory. Although the foundations for the dependency approach

were laid as far back as the 1950s, it was not until the end of the 1960s, when the modernisation approach was losing its dominance, that the voice of the *dependistas* (a Latin American term used where the paradigm originated) gained world-wide attention (Sonaike, 1988). In the theory of this paradigm, development and underdevelopment were seen as interrelated processes. The *dependistas* blamed their underdeveloped status not on shortages of capital and management, as the modernisation theorists would have it, but on the prevailing international system, which had polarised the world into a sense of centres and peripheries in the more industrialised countries and in the Third World developing countries. Servaes, with reference to the dependency system, stated that: “The development in the centre determines and maintains the underdevelopment in the periphery” (1986, p. 208). According to the *dependistas*, it was imperative for Third World development that adjustments to the international economic structure and demands vis-a-vis the new international economic order should be met. Similarly, in the sphere of communication, there was a requirement for a new international information order (Reeves, 1993), a notion that had ties with cultural imperialism, meaning that media practices and content were inconsistent with the basic development purposes and the status of developing countries (Hamelink, 1983, Mowlana and Wilson, 1990). Grounded in Marxist thought, the dependency theory, termed ‘critical’ perspectives by Melkote, challenges the economic and cultural expansionism and imperialism of modernisation, criticises the one-way flow of information and communication from the North to the South, and calls for more equitable representations of the voices of the developing countries, as well as for new economic arrangements (Inagaki, 2007, Melkote and Steeves, 2001).

Still on the topic of critics of the dominant paradigm, several African researchers who joined the discussion centred upon communication and development argued that the key to development in the Third World would be found in the various countries’ traditional cultures. To this end, they advocated deliberate integration of both the traditional and modern communication modes to

ensure greater success of the development messages (Boafo, 1985). In the 1980s, the culturist school of thought placed emphasis on interpersonal communication, their criticism of the elitism of modern media distancing them from the traditional communication media (Pratt, 1993). According to Sonaike (1988), the culturalists were “the product of the dialectics of the modernisation and dependency approaches to development” (p. 100). Melkote and Steeves (2001) claim that: (a) upon the capability of both the dependency theorists and the culturalists to expose and critique the flaws of modernisation, and (b) upon their inability to propose concrete alternatives.

3.1.1.3 Participatory perspectives

The third trend, which is perhaps the most important for issues in the debate surrounding communication and development, may be called “participatory perspectives” or “participation communication”. Representative of a variety of new development models since the 1970s, these perspectives consist of, for example: Liberation Pedagogy (Freire, 1970); Dialogue Paradigm (Guba, 1990), Multiplicity Paradigm (Servaes, 1991); Another Development (Fuglesang, 1973, Jacobson, 1994); Autonomous Development (Carmen, 1996), and Empowerment (Friedmann, 1992, Melkote and Steeves, 2001).

The word ‘participation’ first appeared in the theory of modernisation the post-World War II (from 1945 onwards). Lerner (1958) suggested a sequence of institutional developments leading to self-sustaining growth and modernisation: urbanisation, literacy, extension of the mass media, higher per capita income and political participation. The old notion of participation mainly referred to citizen participation in representative democratic processes: that is, in voting in particular. It became clear that political participation was unlikely to develop where the localities

themselves lacked the capacity to participate in planning their own futures (Kumar, 1994). The latter and richer notion of participation was advanced to emphasise indigenous knowledge and local aspirations as the core concern, and horizontal communication among local community members as of central importance to participatory theory (Jacobson and Servaes, 1999).

Paulo Freire's (1970) notion of 'conscientisation' (Portuguese: conscientização) highlighted the importance of dialogue as essential to the development of self-actuated, self-determining individuals and to community development. Melkote (2003) claims that the purpose of development is liberation from oppression, which is central to Freire's theory of liberation. Pedagogy of the oppressed entails the conscientisation of the oppressed; that is, it should attempt to make them aware of their oppressive situation and show them that through their praxis they can transform this state of oppression (Ellias, 1994).

Pursuant to the key tool of liberation theory and other approaches among participation perspectives, Melkote and Steeves (2001) continue to place emphasis on the theory and practice of 'empowerment', which they consider to be the goal of development. Thus, one might suggest that conscientisation and empowerment accompanied by self-reliance, self-expression, self-management and self-development are among the most well-known features of the perspective, having become the core themes of more recent debate surrounding development communication. Participation perspectives differ from the modernisation paradigm and critical perspectives inasmuch as they advocate, emphasise and highlight dialogic communication from the viewpoint of communication as a process of shared meaning.

As earlier discussed, the theory of communicative action critically associates with the theory of dialogue that Freire (1970) developed, and is assumed to be the communication link that can create the understanding that enables a society to achieve its potential. Mowlana (1990), who identified dialogue as "a communication exchange or interaction", argued that this exchange was

recognised by some earlier scholars of the “communication and development” area as critical to the political, economics, and social development of nations and people. Indeed, there is evidence indicating that interpersonal communication, a key to the dialogue model, appears to be an important operational tool used in diffusion of innovations studies, although its expected function in these kinds of communication strategies seems very different from the participatory communication perspective (Inagaki, 2007). In participatory communication, interpersonal communication is used to “explore options, allowing stakeholders to identify common problems and needs and build broader consensus toward change” (Mefalopulos, 2008, p.147). According to Mefalopulos, this notion links with the main scope of participation that he calls ‘dialogic communication’, to “ensure proper dialogue for sharing knowledge and perceptions to achieve broad consensus leading to change” (2008, p. 59).

3.1.2 Urbanisation in the modernisation model

According to Schwirian and Prenhn (1962), early studies of urbanisation normally approached the term from three perspectives: (1) as a process of radiation of innovations from its centres to peripheries, (2) as a change in lifestyles and individuals’ behaviour, and, (3) as a process of population concentration from rural to urban areas. These perspectives are still popular in recent years, particularly in sociological and demographic research.

As reviewed in the first section of this chapter, modernisation theory was developed by Daniel Lerner (1958) in his studies of the passing of traditional Middle East societies to modernity. The above three perspectives can be seen in Lerner’s description of urbanisation: “It is the transfer of population from scattered hinterland to urban centres that stimulates the needs and provides the conditions needed for ‘take off’ towards wide-spread participation” (1958, p. 61). According to

Lerner (1958), developing countries needed to follow the Western model of modernisation, which passed through four stages: (1) urbanisation; (2) literacy; (3) media exposure; and, (4) economic and political participation.

The Western model of modernisation exhibits certain components and sequences, the relevance of which is global. Everywhere increasing urbanisation has in turn tended to improve literacy; rising literacy has tended to increase media exposure; and, the latter has ‘gone with’ wider economic participation (per capita income) and political participation (voting). The model evolved in the West is an historical fact (Lerner, 1958, p. 46).

For Lerner, cities were regarded as “the machine tools of modernisation” (Lerner, 1958, p. 61). He argued to the effect that, when urbanisation reached between 10 and 25 per cent, literacy would increase rapidly, and that after this point, the resultant high rate of literacy would correlate with the growth of media exposure (Lerner, 1958). This casual model was challenged by later studies which could not clarify the functional interrelation of urbanisation, literacy, media exposure and political participation as proposed by Lerner (see Mowlana, 1997).

However, although Lerner’s perspective of modernity was criticised and rejected by other perspectives within the field of development communication, as suggested earlier, modernisation, accompanied by urbanisation and industrialisation, remains the current high option in the quest for development in many developing countries (Mowlana, 2001). Its success underpins the people of these countries’ aspirations to move rapidly from poverty and underdevelopment toward prosperity. The capitalist modernisation paradigm (as opposed to the collapsed state socialism of the 1980s) has survived and acquired increased legitimacy through the processes of globalisation, deregulation and the “information revolution” (Mowlana, 2001). These processes are examined in depth within Castells’ theory of a network society.

3.2 Network society and the transition of societies to network

In this section, I will review the main ideas and concepts of Manuel Castells' network society theory. As earlier discussion suggests this theory, which emphasises the role of information and communication technology, provides a new paradigm regarding the transition of current societies, including the developed and the underdeveloped in the context of globalisation.

3.2.1 The rise of network society

3.2.1.1 What is network society?

The term 'network society' was coined by Dutch scholar Jan van Dijk in his work first published in 1991 titled, *De Netwerkmatschappij (The Network Society)*. In his first and second English editions of *The Network Society* (1999, 2006) Van Dijk defines a network society as : "A social formation with an infrastructure of social and media networks enabling its prime modes of organisations at all levels (individual, group/organisational and societal)" (2006, p. 20). He distinguishes the difference between network society and mass society which is understood as "a social formation with an infrastructure of groups, organisation and communities ('masses') shaping its prime modes of organisations at all levels (individual, group/organisational and societal)" (2006, p. 20). According to Van Dijk (1999, 2006), modern society is in transition from a mass to a network society, i.e., to an information society. However, he maintains that (1) modern society is still based on the organic and material relations of individuals, pairs, groups and organisations; and, (2) social and media networks, while prime and most important structures, are "not the whole substance of society" (2006). Van Dijk appears to contradict himself by on the one hand stressing that "networks are becoming the nervous system of our society" but on the other arguing that "we can expect this infrastructure to have more influence on our entire social and personal lives than did the construction of roads for the transportation of

goods and people in the past” (2006, p. 2). It is understandable that to Van Dijk (1999, 2006), Manuel Castells’ view about network society are an exaggeration.

Manuel Castell develops the term and proposes a systematic theory of network society in his trilogy comprising: *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), *The Power of Identity* (1997) and *The End of the Millennium* (1998). However, while Castells does not provide a definition of ‘network society’ in the trilogy, in an interview titled *Conversations with History* with UC Berkeley’s Institute of International Studies, he stated “[... A network society is] a society where the key social structures and activities are organised around electronically processed information networks” (2001, p. 4). Different from Van Dijk, Castells emphasises the distinction between social networks and a network society in which the former is an old form of society based on its organisational structures while the latter is based on the interaction between information and communication technologies and society as a whole (2001).

‘Network’, the key word of the theory, is defined by Castells as “a set of interconnected nodes” and “a node is the point at which a curve intersects itself” (1996, p. 470). The characteristics of a node depends upon the nature of the particular network to which it belongs to. For example, in the network of global financial flows, nodes are stock exchange markets; in the network of global new media in the information age, nodes are television systems, entertainment studios, news teams, mobile devices, and computer graphics environments (Castells, 1996).

Castells’ definition is more far reaching than that of Van Dijk. He argues that the organisation-based society is gradually substituted by the network-based society (1996), and that: “While the networking form of social organisation has existed in other times and spaces, the new information technology paradigm provides the material basis for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure” (Castells, 1996, p. 469).

Castells proposes the concepts of ‘informational society’ to replace the term ‘information society’ which is frequently used in discussion surrounding the development of communication technology. For Castells, ‘information society’ indicates the important role of information in society while ‘informational society’ is “the attribute of a special form of social organisation in which information generation, processing and transmission become the fundamental sources of productivity and power” (Castells, 1996, p. 21).

If Dijk (1999, 2006) recognises the transition from mass to network society, Castells (1996) emphasises the shift from industrialism to informationalism. According to Castells, in the industrial mode of development, the production process relies upon the application of new energy sources, while in the informational mode of development it is the technology of knowledge generation, information processing and symbol communication that become the main sources. “Industrialism is oriented toward economic growth”, while “informationalism is oriented toward technological development, that is, toward the accumulation of knowledge and higher levels of complexity in information processing” (Castells, 1996, p. 17).

3.2.1.2 The Net and the Self

Manuel Castells’ fundamental idea is the relationship between the Net and the Self. The Net, which indicates the accelerating global networks of communication, is changing the structure of modern organisations (cited in Verma and Shin, 2005) via the “de-structuring of organisations, de-legitimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements and ephemeral cultural expressions” (Castells, 1996, p. 3).

These networks of instrumental interacts, according to Castells, “selectively switch on and off individuals, groups, regions, and even countries, according to their relevance in fulfilling the

goals processed in the network, in a relentless flow of strategic decisions” (1996, p. 3). Under these circumstances, the search for identity at both levels of individual and collective, becomes the main or even the only source of social meaning (Castells, 1996). The growth of the Net has thus led to the emergence of the Self, which means local or individual units of networks. The Self takes control but in the sense of belonging to the Net and normally in the form anonymity (Verma and Shin, 2005). Under the tension of the Net, “people increasingly organise their meaning not around what they do but on the basis of what they are, or believe they are” (Castells, 1996, p. 3). Castells concludes that: “Our societies are increasingly structured around a bipolar opposition between the Net and the Self” (1996, p. 3). He calls this relation “the structural schizophrenia between function and meaning” which restricts social communication; as a consequence “social groups and individuals become alienated from each other” due to the difficulties in sharing identities (Castells, 1996).

In Volume Two of the trilogy *The Power of Identity*, which focuses on identity transformation, Castells describes the overview of the network society as follow:

It is characterised by the globalisation of strategically decisive economic activities; by the networking form of organisation; by the flexibility and instability of work, and the individualisation of labour; by a culture of real virtuality constructed by a pervasive, interconnected, and diversified media system; and by the transformation of material foundations of life, space, and time, through the constitution of a space of flows and of timeless time, as expressions of dominant activities and controlling elites (1997, p. 1).

However, under pressure of network-based globalisation, the last decades have witnessed a variety of social movements, such as environmentalism, feminism, gay and lesbian movements, challenging the process of globalisation and struggling for “people’s control over their lives and environment” (Castells, 1997, p. 2), i.e., for their self-determination (Verma and Shin, 2005). Castells proposes calling the individual’s or the Self’s protest against the pervasion of networks ‘resistance identity’ and ‘project identity’ (1997). Earlier, in Volume One, Castells (1996, p. 25)

claims that: “When the Net switches off the Self, the Self, individual or collective, constructs its meaning without global, instrumental reference”.

Verma and Shin (2005) finds similarities between Habermas’s theory of communicative action²¹ and Castells’ theory of a network society. In the former, the bipolar opposition between the system and the lifeworld is the colonisation of the lifeworld by system; consequently, the erosion of communicative action by instrumental action ends with purpose. In the network society theory, the distance between the Net and the Self is increasing and, as a result, resistance and project identities emerge to protest against the Net’s invasion.

3.2.1.3 The logic of the network: inclusion versus exclusion

As Castells (1996) points out, one of the most important features of the network is that it works selectively and switches on or switches off the individuals involved in its strategic flow. Castells (2002, 2004, 2009), who calls this selectivity “the binary logic of inclusion and exclusion”, suggests that, this global network society, which organises and controls the major activities of human life, does not include all people in its process, but increasingly affects everybody everywhere (Castells, 2004). Due to the relational capacity of power, which is conditional and never absolute, social actors, including individuals, groups, organisations and institutions may exercise their self-determination corresponding with the influence of the domination (Castells, 2004). Due to the dynamic and changeable nature of the network, social actors are free to act and modify its programs according to their abilities and interests (Castells, 2004).

²¹ See Chapter 2 for a review of communicative action theory.

However, “exclusion from these networks is one of the most damaging forms of exclusion in our economy and in our culture” (Castells, 2002, p. 3). According to Castells, people in the time of the network society are divided into two categories: those who are integrated and who are not integrated into the network (2004). This digital divide, which reflects the inequality of information introduction in current societies, particularly in developing countries, is later discussed in terms of information haves and information have-nots or have-less in several studies of the network society in China (Cartier et al., 2005, Qiu, 2009). The concept of information have-less, which indicates “a social, economic and political category for millions of rural-to-urban migrants and laid-off workers”, is employed in this thesis and discussed in the conclusion chapter.

3.2.2 Urbanisation in network society

Here I deem it worth briefly exploring the history of urban studies and theories. In the first half of the 20th century, urban sociology²² predominated in all of the research of the field (Stalder, 2006). In terms of ideology, a number of early British and American sociologists were profoundly influenced by Marxism, which made class relations a central concern in studies of cities (Parker, 2004). After the 1960s, researchers and scholars, including the Chicago and Frankfurt Schools and the French Marxists, revisited Marxism and shifted to Neo-Marxism which stressed the ‘ideological formation’ of the city as the capitalist mode of production (Parker, 2004).

In 1968, Manuel Castells published his earliest article in French titled “Is there an urban sociology?” in which he challenged the narrow main paradigm of traditional urban sociology

²² The central concerns of urban sociology are the integration of immigrants into urban life (i.e., urban cultural approach), and the distribution of land use issues in metropolitans areas (Stalder, 2006).

(cited in Castells, 2000). In *The Urban Question* (Castells, 1977), he supported the structural Marxist approach with the argument that “the urban system is not external to the social structure; it specifies that structure, it forms part of it” (1977, p. 263). Following Louis Althusser (1918-1990), a leading philosopher of the Frankfurt and Chicago Schools, Castells proposed the process of social change in urban research (cited in Parker, 2004, Stalder, 2006). At the time, Castells had not become ‘a Marxist on leave’ (Rogers, 1994); but, his structural viewpoint had moved to emphasis on the mode of consumption rather than that of production to explain the city’s nature. He thus regarded the city as ‘the reproduction of labour power’ (1977).

In his more recent works, particularly after *The Information Age* trilogy (1996, 1997, 1998), Castells admits his shift away from Marxism: “I am not a Marxist any more” (interviewed by Rantanen, 2005). He admits that Marxism’s idea of class cannot explain current social movements such as gay and lesbian liberation (interviewed by Rantanen, 2005). At this point, Castells’ theory of network society appears resonant with the critical approach of cultural studies, which focuses on the power relations between culturally different groups (see Hassan, 2004). However, Castells shares the Marxist concern regarding social change, power relations and technology albeit he does not reject capitalism in the framework of the network society (interviewed by Rantanen, 2005), whereas for Marx (1974 [1846]), only when capitalism collapsed would real change occur (cited in Parker, 2004).

The network society is Castells’ attempt to develop a new theory for urban sociology in the 21st century replete with new concepts, new methods and new themes (2000). One of the core concepts of the theory is ‘the spaces of flow’. Following social theory’s definition of space as “the material support of time-sharing social practices”²³, Castells argues that it is necessary to

²³ For example, David Harvey, in *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1991), notes that: “from a materialist perspective, we can argue that objective conceptions of time and space are necessarily created through material practices and processes which serve to reproduce social life” (cited in Castells, 1996, p. 411).

identify “the historical specificity of social practices” (1996). The network or modern society, according to Castells (1996), is constructed from a variety of flows such as flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, and flows of images, sound and symbols. From this viewpoint, he maintains that “there is a new spatial form characteristic of the social practices that dominate and shape the network society” (1996, p. 412). This new feature which is called ‘the space of flows’, is defined as “the material organisation of time-sharing social practices that work through flows” (1996, p. 412). For Castells, the emergence of this new spatial form is the most important shift in the increased process of global urbanisation that he calls ‘metropolitan region’ which is larger and more connected than ‘metropolitan areas’ as we know them. Castells writes that: “The global process of urbanisation that we are experiencing in the early 21st century is characterised by the formation of a new spatial architecture in our planet, made up of global networks connecting major metropolitan regions and their areas of influence” (2010, p. 2737).

According to Castells (1996), space is constituted by three layers: (1) the layer of infrastructure of information technologies as material support of the space of flows; (2) the layer of nodes and hubs meaning the exchange places or locations that link the localities with the networks; and, (3) the layer of dominant or managerial elites who activate and direct the functions based on which such space operates. But, Castells’ notion that elites control the global economy as a new form of development encounters criticism. Reviewing *The Internet Galaxy* (Castells, 2002), Balganes (2003/2004) challenges Castells’ argument that while the Internet contributes as an integral element in any form of development, it is only the elites of leading countries who find their ultimate freedom in the global network. Those in the developing countries, and people who are information have-less, are becoming increasingly dependent. Balganes argues that the developing countries “focus on real development issues first before the issue of connectivity” (2003/2004, p. 9). But, this criticism is also challenged if one looks at countries like China (see

Qiu, 2009) or Vietnam where the governments set their policies of taking advantage of information technologies to shorten the path to development and modernisation²⁴.

However, it is reasonable to argue that the network society theory seems to recover the major ideas of modernisation; but it is driven by an informational revolution rather than by an industrial revolution as happened in the West in the 19th and 20th centuries (Melkote and Steeves, 2001, Mowlana, 2001). As Balganes (2003/2004) points out, Castells proposes no new solutions for developing countries but widely known factors: infrastructure, political will and political participation. These factors seem to duplicate Lerner's (1958) theory of modernisation in which top-down political decision-making and individual participation accompanied by an appropriate level of urbanisation are required. Nevertheless, Castells maintains his advocacy for network's possibility of decentralisation (Castells, 2004). To avoid being criticised as advocating a top-down approach, Castells admitted that: "If I had to choose now which to oppose, capital or state, I would still say the state" (interviewed by Rantanen, 2005).

In short, for Castells (2010), urbanisation is global urbanisation of metropolitan region coupled with an increase in the number of different centres which are interconnected to each other under their functional hierarchy. Castells (2010) states that the largest metropolitan areas are in Asia; e.g., Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Beijing, Macau and Shanghai. A metropolitan region is a new form of urbanisation "because it includes in the same spatial unit urbanised areas and agricultural land, open space and highly dense residential areas: these are multiple cities in a discontinuous countryside" (Castells, 2010, p. 2739).

²⁴ In the next section of this chapter, I will further discuss Vietnam's strategy for information development.

3.2.3 The transition toward networks and the globalisation of civil society

Dijk (1999, 2006), Castells (1996, 2004) and his followers, for example Cardoso (2005), agree that current societies, particularly developing countries, are in the transition to network societies. However, the pathways to networks differ from country to country Castells notes that: “The coexistence of the network society, as a global structure, with industrial, rural, communal or survival societies, characterises the reality of all countries, albeit with a different share of population and territory on both sides of the divide, depending on the relevance of each segment for the dominant logic of each network” (2004, p. 23). Regarding the inclusion/exclusion logic of the network, Cardoso argues that in a transition society, there is a growing distance between people who use and those who do not use information technologies and between specific groups. For example, “the higher the education level the greater the use” (2005, p. 25).

Castells distinguishes the two concepts of individualism and communalism, which can be seen as the relations between the individual and the community to which he/she belongs in the network society. ‘Individualism’ refers to individuals’ construction of meaning vis-a-vis realising their projects, purposes and needs. ‘Communalism’ denotes collective groups’ construction of meaning as sets of values which are shared internally among members (Castells, 2002). According to Cardoso, these two processes are normally seen as sources of the disintegration of societies because “the institutions on which they are based lose their integrating capacity, i.e., they become increasingly incapable of giving meaning to the citizens” (2005, p. 23). This view of social disintegration was widespread during the 20th century; but, according to Cardoso (2006), there is another hypothesis that argues that social institutions, also known as the structure of society, are reconstructed and promoted by social members. He also argues that the Internet and other mass media are effective tools for social reconstruction and “not a cause of disintegration”: “This social (re)construction, giving rise to the new structure, will not have to follow the same

values logic of the late industrial society” (Cardoso, 2005, p. 24). This argument can be understood from the perspective that the rising of a network society and networked individualism do not dismiss interpersonal interaction: “Our world is the world of communication mediated by technologies such as the pencil, paper, the telephone, television and the Internet. And it continues to be a world of face-to-face communication” (Cardoso, 2006, p. 37). As Castells emphasises, in a network-based society, the space of places and the space of flows are parallel. He calls it a ‘micro network’ to indicate the network of decision-making and that the generation of innovations exercised by face-to-face communication happens in certain places (2010).

Employing the network society theory to examine the working class in current Chinese society, Qui (2009) argues that: “Most of China’s domestic migrants are have-less migrants; they are socioeconomically similar, have the shared experience of being uprooted, and hold common aspirations for human settlement and sociocultural recognition for what they achieve through long-term or temporary migration” (p. 85). In an industrialising country like China, according to Qui, urbanisation is associated with “the emergence of a working class that is seeking more inclusive means of communication” (Qiu, 2009, p. 87). Castells notes that: “China is a network society because it is globally interdependence, and at the same time is also based on specific cultural identity” (interviewed by Qiu, 2008, p. 3)

The network society provides a platform from which to observe current transitional societies. Accordingly, the term ‘developing country’ can be adjusted to indicate the passing from a traditional to a modern society and from an organisation-based to a networked society. This is probably the most important difference between modernisation in the 21st century compared to that in the 20th century. In the next section of this chapter, I will briefly discuss the current period of modernisation and urbanisation in Vietnam, including both industrialisation and transition to network.

PART B: VIETNAM - A COUNTRY in TRANSITION

In this part, I provide a political and socioeconomic background of contemporary Vietnam with focus on the renovation policy (*Doi Moi*) launched by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in 1986. Based on a literature review of *Doi Moi* policy, I discuss critically the dichotomy of development in Vietnam nowadays.

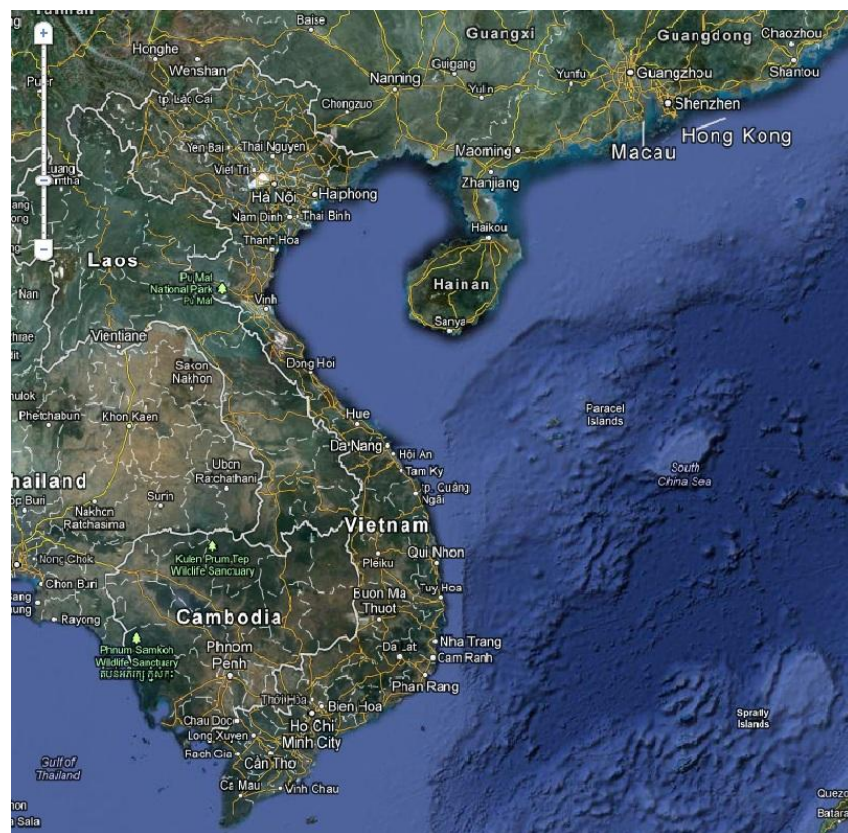


Figure 3.1 Map of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Source: Google Map (available at www.nationsonline.org)

Vietnam, a long narrow country (Figure 3.1) located on the Indochinese Peninsula in Southeast Asia, was occupied by various Chinese feudal dynasties for almost 1000 years before gaining first independence in 938 A.D. In the early 11th century, the first Vietnamese dynasty, the Ly

dynasty, was founded: it ruled Vietnam for more than 200 years. During the second millennium, Vietnam engaged in several wars (for example, against invasion by feudal China) to protect its independence. The Ly dynasty was followed by the Tran, Le, and Nguyen dynasties, which saw Vietnam expand its territory to the south and south west. The expansion ended between the late 17th century and the early 18th century when the country assumed the shape and included the areas that constitute its formation today (Karnow, 1994). In the 19th century, Vietnam became a French colony. After 80 years of colonisation, a communist revolution succeeded and established its official independence in 1945 under the name of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Following its reunification after the end of the Vietnam War (1955-1975), the country became known as 'Socialist Republic of Vietnam'.

Vietnam, which has an area of 331,000 square kilometres and a population totalling 90 million (2011), has two major urban centres: Hanoi the capital city in the North (population 6.4 million), and Ho Chi Minh city in the South (population 7.1 million). The literacy rate for the whole country is 94 per cent (2010) and GDP per capita income is approximately US \$1,100 (2010). In terms of politics, Vietnam is a single-party constitutional Republic dominated by the Vietnamese Communist Party (US Department of State, 2012).

3.3 *Doi Moi* and the reinventing of Vietnam

Since the end of World War II in 1945, in the popular western image, Vietnam has been seen as a “war-ravaged and poverty-stricken country” (Luong, 2003). After the Vietnam War and the reunification of the country in 1975, the Communist Party leaders introduced a Stalinist economic system, i.e., a centrally-planned economy which had earlier been applied in North Vietnam during the War (Le, 2005). However, the country very soon fell into economic disaster due to various difficulties including the legacy of war damage, the inherent deficiencies of the

Stalinist economic system, the economic embargo imposed upon Vietnam by the United States for its intervention in Cambodia in the late 1970s²⁵, the Sino-Vietnamese War²⁶ in 1979, and the Southern peasant farmers' lack of support for farming collectivisation policy (Bui, 2000, Le, 2005). As a consequence, the communist government could not meet even the basic economic needs of its people. By the early 1980s, Vietnam had become one of the world's poorest countries (Le, 2005). Although more than 70 per cent of the labour force and 80 per cent of the population were involved in the agricultural sectors, production was still not enough to feed the people. In 1986, Vietnam imported 1.5 million tons of rice; but, starvation remained the reality for many Vietnamese (Turley and Selden, 1993, Bui, 2000). The Soviet style of economic policy which prioritised heavy industry, failed to serve its role as socialism's economic foundation (CPV, 2006).

In response to the economic crisis, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), at its Sixth Party Congress in December 1986, decided to launch a historical reform program, commonly known as *Doi Moi* (Renovation) (CPV, 2006). With its connotations of 'change' and 'newness', *Doi Moi* marked a transition from a centrally-planned economy to a market economy with socialist direction, which was also called 'market socialism' (CPV, 2006). The major policies of *Doi Moi* were economic reform coupled with reform of the management mechanism, the de-collectivisation of agriculture, trade liberalisation (particularly opening up the country to foreign direct investment), and the marketisation of state-owned enterprises (Le, 2005). These policies

²⁵ During the late 1970s, nearly two million Cambodians (one fourth of the total population at that time) were killed by the Khmer Rouge's genocide led by the Pol Pot government (Yale University, 2011). After accusing Pol Pot of invading its southwest border and killing Vietnamese people, Hanoi sent troops to Cambodia in 1978 to overthrow Khmer Rouge. They remained there until 1989. Vietnam's intervention in this conflict, was normally regarded as its invasion of Cambodia (Morris, 1999). However, more recently, Prime Minister Hun Sen claimed that: "Vietnam was the only country that helped Cambodia during its darkest hours" and "Cambodia is grateful to the Vietnamese soldiers for getting rid of the Pol Pot regime" (Thanh nien, 2012b).

²⁶ The Sino-Vietnamese War, which was also known as the Third Indochina War lasted for one month from 17 February to 18 March 1979. It was between the People Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. China called it a 'defensive counterattack against Vietnam' and accused Vietnam of invading Cambodia and of mistreating Chinese overseas living in Vietnam. Hanoi called it a 'War against Chinese expansionism' denouncing Beijing for arming the genicidal Pol Pot regime's killing Cambodian and Vietnamese people (Chen, 1987). The war involved the Soviet Union's role within a controversial relationship between socialist countries at the time. After the war, when both China and Vietnam announced victory, the formal diplomatic relationship between the two countries was terminated and normalised by 1991.

not only served to recover Vietnam's economy but also directed it into a vibrant economy (Le, 2005). By the early 1990s, Vietnam's economy had become one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with an average annual rate of 7.5 per cent (Turley and Selden, 1993). While on the one hand, the Vietnamese leaders decided to make *Doi Moi* a comprehensive economic, political, and social transformation, on the other, it restricted the progress of reform within the economic sphere (Le, 2005). Political reform in Vietnam, the "broadening of democracy" - one among many slogans of the Vietnamese Communist Party - did not mean pluralism or a multi-party democracy (Thayer, 1991). Vietnam retains its one-party system in which the CPV is the only commanding force in society (Thayer, 1991). Vietnam's leaders are still unwilling to transform their political system into a democratic political system (Luong, 2003, Thayer, 1991). *Doi Moi* in Vietnam, rather than resembling the Soviet Union's and Eastern Europe's reforms, is more like the Chinese model of renovation, which favours gradual openness and political stability over radical change, with economic restructuring to precede privatisation (Turley and Selden, 1993, Bui, 2000).

The success of *Doi Moi* merits critical study, especially the conditions under which it has been implemented. While it is true that Vietnam was a socialist state at the time of its transformation to "market socialism", many of its economic and political characteristics reflect the characteristics of the economic and political systems of other developing countries; for example, its industrialisation, i.e., the country's goal to become a fundamentally industrialised nation by 2020 (Le, 2005). But, the problem with underdeveloped countries like Vietnam is how to move rapidly from poverty towards prosperity; that is, the broad goals of development (Marr, 1998). In a speech marking National Day (September 2, 1990), Do Muoi, Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister), delineated the relationship between economic and political reform as follows: "The need for renovation in our country arises first of all from our economic activities.

Only through economic renovation, the gradual improvement of the people's living conditions, can popular confidence in the cause of renovation be created" (cited in Thayer, 1991).

	1998	2002	2004	2006	2008	Poverty reduction (%) 1998-2008
Viet Nam	34.7	28.9	19.5	16	14.5	58
Urban	9.5	6.6	3.6	3.9	3.3	65
Rural	44.9	35.6	25	20.4	18.7	58
Red River Delta	30.7	21.5	11.8	8.9	8.0	74
Northern Midlands and Mountainous Areas	64.5	47.9	38.3	32.3	31.6	51
North Central Area and Central Coastal Area	42.5	35.7	25.9	22.3	18.4	57
Central Highlands	52.4	51.8	33.1	28.6	24.1	54
South East	7.6	8.2	3.6	3.8	2.3	70
Mekong River Delta	36.9	23.4	15.9	10.3	12.3	67
Kinh majority	31.1	23.1	13.5	10.3	8.9	71
Other ethnic groups	75.2	69.3	60.7	52.5	50.3	33

Figure 3.2 Poverty rates and poverty reduction by ethnicity and region, Vietnam 1998-2008

Source: UNDP Vietnam (2011, citing Vietnam Millennium Development Goals Report 2010)

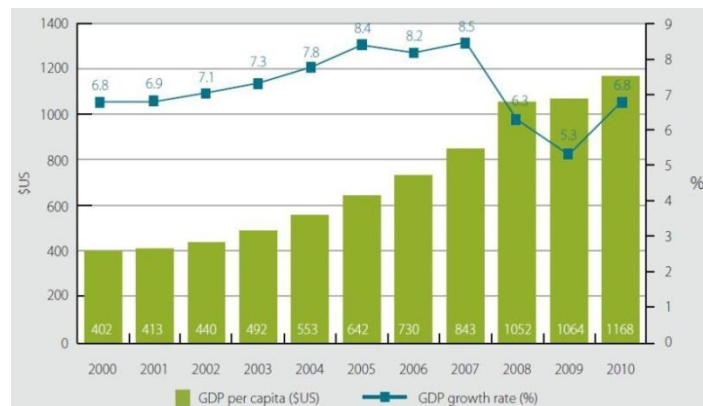


Figure 3.3 GDP growth and GDP per capita \$US, Vietnam, 2000-2010

Source: UNDP Vietnam (2011), General Statistics Office (www.gso.gov.vn)

Ten years after *Doi Moi*, Vietnam has gained ‘outstanding achievements’ (Bui, 2000). During the 1990s, the average GDP growth rate stood at 9 per cent (Tuong Lai, 1997). In 1996 in particular, despite being devastated by natural disasters, Vietnam’s GDP increased to 9.5 per cent; agricultural growth was 4.8 per cent (the country produced 28 million tons of rice); industrial production grew to 14 per cent; and the inflation rate remained between 6 and 7 per cent (Tuong

Lai, 1997). Vietnam has moved from an importer of rice to one of the top two rice exporters²⁷ in the world, with an annual export level of 3-4 million tons of rice per annum (UNDP Vietnam, 2005). One notable achievement that Vietnam gained during the *Doi Moi* process was poverty reduction. Figure 3.2 shows that the country's poverty rate continuously declined during the 10 year period from 1998 to 2008 in all regions of the country.

The first decade of the 21 century witnessed the highest levels of economic growth for Vietnam. Figure 3.3 shows that GDP growth increased by 6 to 8 per cent annually from the year 2000 to the year 2010. However, GDP growth rates declined over the last three years of the period due in the main to the world economic crisis, which has increasingly influenced Vietnam's greater integration into and interdependence with the global economy (Hoang, 2009).

Figure 3.3 also shows a constant increase in GDP per capita income: by 2010, Vietnam was no longer considered a poor country: it had become a lower middle-income country. Along with new opportunities for development, Vietnam is now encountering challenges mounted by the so-called 'middle-income trap' including poorly developed infrastructure, low levels of specialisation and economic competitiveness, poor science and technology capacity and an unskilled labour force (UNDP Vietnam, 2011). UNDP experts suggested that in order to achieve sustainable growth, Vietnam needs to concentrate move on improving human development: "Ensuring a greater balance between economic growth and social, human and sustainable development goals is essential to ensure that all citizens can benefit from the development process, and for Vietnam to achieve its goals of becoming a modern, industrialised nation" (UNDP Vietnam, 2011, p. IV).

²⁷ Vietnam and Thailand are the world's two leading rice exporters.

3.4 Modernisation in Vietnam: the dichotomy of *Doi Moi*

The *Doi Moi* policy, which set Vietnam's economic renovation towards 'market socialism', exhibited its dichotomy of development policy. On the one hand, it opened the economy as a capitalist economy; on the other, it continued to take Marxism-Leninism as its dominant ideology (Raffin, 2008). In terms of a political system, the CPV leaders, while advocating rapid modernisation and urbanisation, restricted freedom of political participation in the public sphere²⁸ and freedom of the mass media (which I will discuss further in the last section of this chapter).

According to Kerkvliet (1995), the common perception of Vietnam as a totalitarian system or mono-organisational or bureaucratic polity was narrow given that it dismissed some important features. He argued that, in order to remain in power, the communist leaders employed various strategies including mass media, along with other measures, for manipulation and undoubtedly for repression. However, they also sought the support of the people to legitimise the Party's domination. Kerkvliet noted that: "While they [the CPV leaders] use resources to control activities and influence, even restrict people's views, they also want to understand and be responsive to what people really experience and desire [...] Political leaders generally are trying to avoid being cut off from 'the people'" (1995, p.8). This dichotomy was described by Womack as "mass regarding in policy and behaviour despite their authoritarian internal structures" (Womack, 1987, p.480).

From a postcolonial perspective, Raffin (2008) argues that the nature of Vietnam's current modernity is a hybrid modernity, which combines the outcome of the history of French colonialism and communist dependency. He emphasises that contemporary Vietnam not only recognises France as the traditional centre, but has entered into a centre-periphery relationship

²⁸ Political participation was one of fundamental conditions for a country passing from a traditional to a modern society (Lerner, 1958).

with three other centres including the former Soviet Union, China and America (Raffin, 2008). First, between 1955 and 1985, the Soviet Union helped to train more than 70,000 Vietnamese intellectuals. Approximately 30,000 were sent to East European countries; and, a comparable number studied in China up until 1978²⁹ (Marr, 2003). Second, due to its long history of 1000 years of Chinese occupation, and to its adoption of a communist system as its dominant hegemony, Vietnam has been profoundly influenced by China in terms of (1) similar institutional and organisational cultures built upon Confucian ideology (Kelly, 2006); and, (2) similar policies of renovation based upon which the mode of development was undertaken in the style of market socialism (Womack, 1987). Third, after Vietnam and the US normalised their political relations in 1995, and after the former officially joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2007, the country became engaged with and increasingly influenced by economic and cultural globalisation with America as the most powerful centre (Raffin, 2008): “Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city [Saigon] are becoming bastions of modernity, with populations eager to embrace current technology and new forms of leisure, music and fashion” (Thomas and Drummond, 2003, cited in Raffin, 2008, p. 340).

In 1996, at the Eighth Congress held in Hanoi, the Party entered a new period of “accelerating industrialisation and modernisation”, its aim being to implement socialism (CPV, 1996). The policies of the CPV, in line with its power as the only force in society, have seen modernisation accompanied by industrialisation become the dominant discourse of development in Vietnam over the last decades (Pham, 2002).

More recently, at its Tenth Congress in 2006, the CPV adjusted and modified its policy of industrialisation and modernisation, emphasising the knowledge-based economy as both an end and a measure for national development (Nguyen, 2004b). This was reaffirmed at the Eleventh

²⁹ Due to the Sino-Vietnamese War, formal diplomatic relations between the two countries ceased in 1979.

Congress in 2011 and detailed in the 2011-2020 Socioeconomic Development Strategy, which “continues to promote industrialisation and modernisation, fast and sustainable development; equitable social progress; while targeting an industrial future with socialist orientation” (cited in World Bank, 2011b, p. 7).

3.5 Urban development in Vietnam

In this section, I provide a brief history of urbanisation in Vietnam. The different stages of Vietnam’s urban development reflect the complicated history of Vietnam as it passed through various periods from feudalism, colonialism, war-time to centralised socialism and renovation (*Doi Moi*). The background to Hanoi’s current urbanisation and expansion is reviewed separately.

3.5.1 A history of Vietnam urbanisation

1858 to 1944

Duy Anh Dao, one of the first modern Vietnamese scholars to systematically research traditional Vietnamese culture from a historical perspective, wrote that an urban area (*thanh thi*) consisted of two components: (1) the citadel (*thanh*) where the central or local administration systems were based including accommodation for their officials; and, (2) the market place (*thi*), where people carried out their everyday business activities outside of the citadel (Dao, 2000 [1938]). The people who owned businesses and lived in this areas were called ‘urban citizens’ (*ke cho*). Dao described the nature and characteristics of early cities in Vietnam as follows:

Our society is fundamentally based upon agriculture. Therefore, early urban areas were primarily political and administrative centres. Due to their political importance these areas attracted the concentration of the population and gradually became centres for exchange and trade, which were busier compared to the hinterland. However, those cities, which were more political than commercial, were inevitably disintegrated

due to changes of various feudal dynasties accompanied by geographically changes of administrative location (Dao, 2000 [1938], p. 84).

Vietnam became a French colony in 1858. In an attempt to exploit the country's natural resource, the colonial government built industrial factories, constructed roads and expanded old cities to form several urban areas all over the country (Karnow, 1994, Nguyen, 2011). This development may be seen as the earliest period of modernisation and industrialisation in colonial Vietnam (Raffin, 2008). However, the growth of Vietnamese urbanisation in the period of 100 years under French colonisation was to say the least low: 7.5 per cent in 1931; 7.9 per cent in 1936 (Nguyen, 2011).

1945-1954

Concomitant with the conclusion of World War II, Vietnam gained its independence from the French in 1945; the country immediately entered into the first Indochina War (1946-1954) to defend its new independence, the French returned and reestablished colonial control over the Indochinese Peninsula (Karnow, 1994, Trinh et al., 2000). Hanoi and Saigon remained major centres of Vietnam's urban network; but, the level of urbanisation and industrialisation was too low to attract more migrant workers (Nguyen, 2011). By 1954, 11 per cent of the Vietnamese population lived in the country's urban areas (Trinh et al., 2000).

1955-1975

During the Vietnam War, Vietnam was divided into two separate nations: the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in the North under a communist government, and the Republic of Vietnam (RV) in the South. Urbanisation differed between the two nations due to their contrary forms of political systems and economies.

The North, which followed the socialist model of economy, was subjected to the US Air Force's sabotage bombing from the middle of the 1960s to the early 1970s. As a result, industrial facilities and urban residents had to be removed from the urban centres, triggering a temporary, de-urbanisation process (Trinh et al., 2000).

In the South, where a neocolonial economy with US intervention was dominant, the government initiated a "forced urbanisation" policy (Trinh et al., 2000). In the early 1960s, millions of peasants were enforced to move to the cities. The remainders were herded into 'strategic hamlets' (*ap chien luoc*) in order to prevent the Northern communists (*Viet Cong*) from penetrating the Southern countryside. This enabled the Southern troops to identify among communist guerrillas who mingled with the local farmers (Bradley, 2009). Due to this program of involuntary migration, the urban population of RV increased from 15 per cent in 1960 to 40 per cent in the early 1970s (Trinh et al., 2000, Nguyen, 2011).

1976-1985

After reunification in 1976, the Vietnamese Government introduced a de-urbanisation strategy countrywide (Forbes, 1996), duplicating the Chinese model of 1958-1975: "industrial growth *without* urban growth" (Thrift and Forbes, 1986, p. 38, original emphasis). Following the war, millions of Southern urban residents were encouraged to move back to the rural areas to support reconstruction (Trinh et al., 2000). Adopting a socialist subsidised model, the government attempted to control the growth and distribution of the population (Trinh et al., 2000). This saw the urbanisation level decrease in the four year period from 1976 to 1979, growing slightly to 2.5 per cent in the early 1980s (Forbes, 1996), and reach 19.3 per cent by 1985 (Nguyen, 2011).

3.5.2 Post-*Doi Moi* urbanisation

Linked with the accelerating process of industrialisation and modernisation, the speed of urbanisation in Vietnam has rapidly increased since *Doi Moi*. A notable change has taken place in the distribution of employment due to the policy of restructuring the economic sector. During the 2000-2009 period, the proportion of employment in the agricultural sector decreased from 65.3 per cent to 47.3 per cent, while that of industries and services increased from 22.3 per cent and 12.4 per cent to 30.6 per cent and 21.8 per cent respectively (UNDP Vietnam, 2011). This change, together with labour market opportunities and the *Doi Moi* policy which exercises less restrictive control over the population's mobility has led to rapid urbanisation (UNDP Vietnam, 2011). According to a World Bank (2004) report, 25 per cent of the Vietnamese population was living in cities in 2002. This rate is forecast to reach 35 per cent in 2020 with an annual growth rate of 3 per cent (the current rate is 3.06%). The Vietnamese Government expects that the country will be 45 per cent urbanised by 2020 (World Bank, 2004). Figure 3.4 shows the urban-rural population changes in Vietnam over a 100 year period, forecasting that the urban population will outstrip the rural from the year 2040 (UNDP Vietnam, 2011).

Despite its overall low level of urbanisation, Vietnam is already one of the most densely populated countries in the world with 259 persons per kilometer, ranking it behind the Philippines and Singapore in Southeast Asia (UNDP Vietnam, 2011). Population density is highest in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh cities - the two major urban centres in the north and south respectively (UNDP Vietnam, 2011).

However, similar to many metropolitan cities in other developing countries, these two urban areas are encountering a number of problems including traffic jams; noise and air pollution; poor water and air quality; the failure of infrastructure to meet population growth; poor drainage and storm water systems which cause flooding in rainy seasons; outward urban planning; and,

insufficient public services, including schools and health facilities, which fail to meet the needs of an expanding urban population (UNDP Vietnam, 2011).

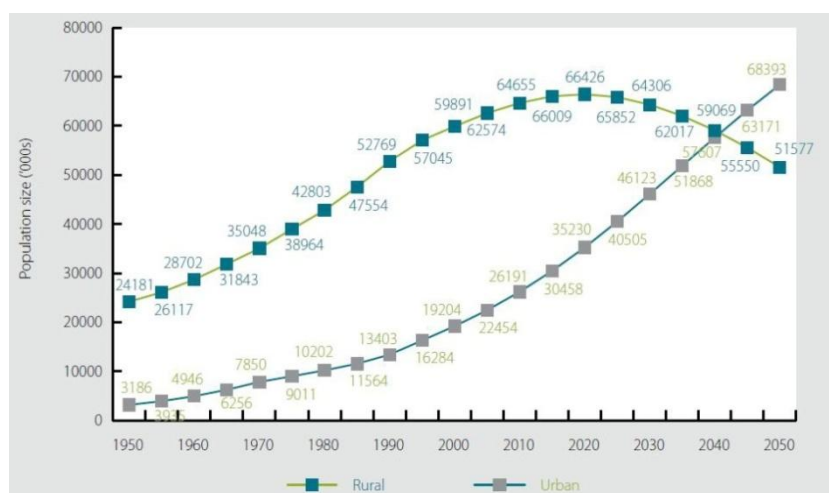


Figure 3.4 Urban and Rural Population Estimates and Projections, Vietnam 1950-2050

Source: UNDP Vietnam (2011), Van Arkadie et al. (2010)

With reference to post-*Doi Moi* urbanisation, Smith and Scarpaci (2000) point out six issues of urban policy, theory and planning in Vietnam: (1) the inequity in the distribution of the economic growth's benefits; (2) uneven accessibility to basic human needs; (3) problems surrounding social justice and human rights, which have deteriorated compared to those experienced in pre-socialist and colonial Vietnam; (4) environmental and agrarian problems due to foreign investment and industrialisation; (5) crises of land use and land ownership attributable to the economic transition, which has had 'alarming results'³⁰; and, (6) uneven development due to the policy of market socialism, which has allowed the state intervention in market forces from orientation to

³⁰ According to current Vietnamese Constitution and Law, all land belongs to the state, a policy called 'social ownership'; thus, Vietnamese peasants have to hire land use rights with a time-limit from the government for their agricultural production. To serve an increasing number of industrialisation and urbanisation projects, the government revokes the land which is under programming including that of peasants' ancestor ownership. The state's compensation, albeit based on current prices, is normally inadequate due to lack of transparency and corruption. A World Bank survey in 2011 revealed that more than 80 per cent of the respondents were not satisfied with the land price applied to calculate the compensation. The current crisis in land use rights, which has led to various complaints and even violence against local governments, challenges economic growth and social equality in Vietnam, particularly in the urban areas (Thanh nien, 2012a, World Bank, 2011a).

socialism, and has distorted the transitional urban development process. Smith and Scarpaci argue that under these constraints, “urban sustainability does not exist for Hanoi” (2000, p. 754).

3.5.3 The expansion of Hanoi: toward a networked metropolitan

Hanoi, the original name of which was *Thang Long* (the rising dragon), became the capital city of Vietnam in 1010 during the Ly dynasty. It remained the political, economic and cultural hub of the country until 1802, when the Nguyen dynasty moved the capital to Hue. Hanoi, one of oldest capital cities in the world, celebrated its 1000th year anniversary in 2010. After gaining independence from the French in 1945, the capital city of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, subsequently the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was relocated in Hanoi, remains until now (Boudarel and Nguyen, 2002, Nguyen, 2004b). Hanoi has a high-context culture³¹ due to its long history. As a centre for political and cultural elites and intellectuals, Hanoi is a source of pride to its citizens (Nguyen, 2004a). Any resident who can claim three generations of his/her family living in Hanoi is called *Ha Noi goc* (*goc* means ‘original’) and distinguished from migrants in other provinces (Nguyen, 2004a). Although this distinction was never particularly marked during the history of Hanoi urbanisation, a certain discrimination persists between former and new residents, particularly in terms of their cultural habitus and behaviour (Nguyen, 2004a). The Vietnamese mass media, while sometimes recalling with respect the high cultural values of the original Hanoi citizens, e.g., their elegant and polite characteristics, imply that these values have sunk into oblivion due to the negative effects of urbanisation in which a current mixed culture predominates (Nguyen, 2010). Since the end of the Vietnam War, Hanoi has expanded its area several times in 1978 and in 1991 (GSO, 2001). Urban expansion normally took place in the suburban districts³² which then became urban districts (Nguyen and Kammeier, 2002). Before the

³¹ See Edward. T. Hall’s *Beyond Culture* (1976).

³² By 1986, Hanoi had only four urban districts including: Hoan Kiem, Ba Dinh, Dong Da and Hai Ba Trung.

2008 expansion, Hanoi had a population of 2.67 million residents and an annual average growth of 2.9 per cent by 2001 (GSO, 2001). The city has been divided into seven urban districts³³ covering an area of 84.1 square kilometres, with approximately 52 per cent of the whole city's population and five suburban districts³⁴ covering 834.4 square kilometres (GSO, 2001).

Despite its area expansion, Hanoi is a city with a densely concentrated population. Almost one third of all Hanoi people live in accommodation with less than three square metres per capita; 300,000 have less than two square metres per capita (Drakakis-Smith and Dixon, 1997). Consequently, housing is the most threatening issue which challenges the sustainability of the city and the quality of life (Drakakis-Smith and Dixon, 1997). Due to Hanoi's high intensity of population, conflict arises over public and private space: "Public spaces are gradually being transformed into private spaces, to be used by a given family for cooking, eating and washing" (Kürten, 2008, p. 71).

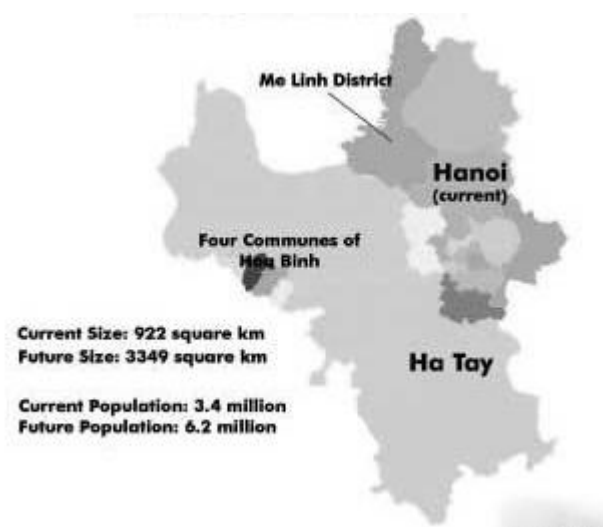


Figure 3.5 Hanoi 2008 Expansion Plan

Source: Vietnam News Agency (2008)

³³ Beside the four existing urban districts, the three new ones included Thanh Xuan, Tay Ho and Cau Giay.

³⁴ In 2003, Hanoi added Hoang Mai (a suburb neighbouring the Ha Tay province) as a new district. In 2008, Long Bien (another suburb) and Ha Dong (the provincial city of Ha Tay province) became urban districts through Hanoi expansion.

In its strategy for the development of the Red River Delta region of which Hanoi is the centre, the Vietnam National Assembly (2006a) recommended: “Build[ing] up the Red River Delta as a strongly developed region in terms of cultural, economic and social development, asserting itself as a focal point for regional and international exchanges and cooperation, helping other regions, particularly the Northern mountainous and midland regions to develop” (p.112). Two years later, in May 2008, an “historical” plan for Hanoi expansion won a landslide vote in the National Assembly despite the public voices raised against it. From August 2008, the capital city’s borders have been expanded to create a metropolis 3.6 times its current size of 922 square kilometers. The city’s population has doubled to 6.2 million as a result of the move. As shown in Figure 3.5, the greater city is formed by merging Hanoi with other agriculture-based provinces, including Ha Tay and parts of Vinh Phuc (Me Linh district) and Hoa Binh (Thanh nien, 2008).

As a consequence, millions of rural people will willingly or unwillingly become urban residents. They will have to confront the resultant changes in their lives, particularly unemployment, as their farming land will be confiscated for use by state-owned industrial projects. This pressure, along with other inherent constraints of urbanisation peculiar to developing countries, plus the absence of a clear, national urbanisation strategy, will challenge the potential success of the renovation of Vietnam under the umbrella of modernisation and industrialisation. Recently, the global economy crisis negatively impacted on Vietnam, a country that joined the WTO in 2007.

The current literature on Hanoi expansion has not recognised its uniqueness. Hanoi is not the only city in the world to expand its geographical areas to become a peri-urban region. Several remarkable reasons made the 2008 expansion of Hanoi historical in terms of the development of the country’s capital city:

(1) The original city before expansion was rather small, covering an area of only 922 square kilometres, whereas the expanded metropolitan reached 3,360 square kilometers, i.e., 3.6 times

the previous size (Labbé, 2010). The so called ‘capital region’ will be formed soon. Through its expansion, Hanoi has become one of the 17 biggest capital cities in the world (Hoang, 2010).

(2) The population of the expanded Hanoi had doubled from 3.4 million to 6.2 million. More than half of this new population was classified as ‘rural’ (3.7 million people, against 2.5 million classified as ‘urban’) (Labbé, 2010). As a result, most of the migrants and new residents of Hanoi, most of whom previously lived and worked in the country’s rural areas, have had to change their occupations. They converged on the urban areas due to the postponement of agricultural production and the suspended status of new urban projects in the expanded areas. These events have not only increased the population pressure on the city, but have threatened its social security.

(3) The expansion of Hanoi, which has been accompanied by many urban problems, remains unaddressed and unresolved in areas such as: overcrowded concentration of population, heritage preservation, public space, transportation, housing production, and peri-urban integration (Labbé, 2010).

(4) Fanchette (2008) claims that despite the fact that city planners first obtained the approval of the National Assembly, decisions regarding Hanoi’s expansion have attracted widespread criticism. “This top-down policy is carried out without consultation with the entire relevant administrations, in particular those of agriculture and water resources management, and with residents. Worse still, it is imposed without taking into account the characteristic of these periurban areas that have extremely long-standing economic and demographic dynamics” (p. 228).

For these reasons, Hanoi is facing a number of challenges in its efforts to achieve its ambitious goal of becoming a capital region for international exchanges connecting to the world. And, it risks losing its way vis-a-vis sustainable development. Therefore, Hanoi’s expansion of population and geography is worth further study, advisedly employing different approaches. In

terms of research into the relationships that obtain between urbanisation, media, and development in the contemporary Vietnamese context, my project is among the pioneers.

3.6 Media, information and communication technologies and civil network in Vietnam

The differences between the Vietnam Government policies vis-a-vis media and telecommunications, including information and communication technology (ICT), are distinguishable: the former is encouraged and open to development as material support for modernisation, while the latter remains under restriction and control albeit some changes are evident. Kennedy (1993, p. 221) describes this dichotomy of communication development in Vietnam as follows: “Development of the telecommunication sector has been liberalised to a dramatic extent, and increasingly placed in the hands of external suppliers and users, while the media have zig-zagged between policies of openness and restriction with, at first glance, surprising speed”. In this section, Vietnamese media and ICT development are briefly reviewed.

3.6.1 The media and state ownership

Up until today, all Vietnamese mass media have been official organs of the state. They continue to be closely controlled by the government under the direction of the Party and the management of the State (Thayer, 1991, Eek and Ellström, 2007). Kerkvliet describes in detail this style of state ownership:

All television, radio, and telephone systems; film making; and Internet service providers are owned and operated by state agencies. All newspapers, publishing houses, and printing presses are owned and operated by government ministries, the Communist Party, and official organisations. Authorities in the Ministry of Culture and Information and the Communist Party’s Department for Culture and Ideology scrutinise and often intervene to determine the content of publications and of radio and television broadcast” (Kerkvliet, 2001, pp. 251-252)

Ideologically, media in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are built upon a Marxist-Leninist prototype (Heng, 1998). Kerkvliet (2001, p. 252) argues that: “The state uses these media outlets not only to inform and educate citizens but also to inundate them with official positions on a wide range of domestic and international issues and to mobilise people to do what government, party and mass organisation leaders require”.

McKinley (2008) identifies three major forms of media censorship in Vietnam:

(1) *Direct censorship*: the CPV control the media via the Department of Culture and Ideology. Media editors have to attend weekly meetings convened by the Department at which they are directed under CPV interference. However, it depends upon the direction taken, i.e., in the ways of “reminding”, “suggesting” and/or “forbidding”.

(2) *Glass ceiling*: “A ceiling prevents coverage beyond a certain level within the state”. Although this form of censorship is never officially proclaimed by the policy makers, media editors have to adhere to limited levels of criticism (no one dares to contradict fight the top officials or members of the superior committee of the Party)

(3) *Self-censorship*: not only editors but practitioners and reporters must learn how to avoid the so-called ‘sensitive’ areas of journalism, particularly anti-corruption topics or criticism of the Party and Government’s general policies.

Nevertheless, State control and Party direction have never been absolute; thus, Vietnamese media professionals and other intellectuals are able to pursue their own agendas within state-owned media organisations to a certain degree (Heng, 2001, Marr, 2003). Marr argues that, a socialist country like Vietnam, while keeping the media under state ownership, has to “commercialise operations, permit some degree of competition and seek out foreign advertising if not

investment” (p. 293). In effect, media censorship in Vietnam has been less evident since *Doi Moi* (Heng, 2001).

3.6.2 Post-*Doi Moi* media

The media openness encouraged by the Sixth Congress in 1986 has moved the media from its purely propaganda role to one of expressing a diversity of views; in short, it is performing its dual role as “voice of the party” and “voice of the people” (Thayer, 1991). Eek and Ellström (2007) argue that: “... Media organisations were no longer completely dependent on resources from the state to cover their cost” (p. 16). As a result, the quantity of Vietnam media has been increasing rapidly together with the quality of media content, which has improved and is more interesting and diverse (Eek and Ellström, 2007).

In 1986, there were only five daily newspapers across the country; this number had grown to 20 by early 2000 (Ta, 2007). In 1995, Vietnam had 375 media organisations covering over 360 million annual circulations; these figures after ten years were respectively 553 and 600 million (Government Decision No.219/2005/QD-TTg, 2005). By the year 2007, there were 600 printed newspapers, 750 publications, one national television station (Vietnam Television), a national radio station (Voice of Vietnam), and dozens of provincial stations (Ta, 2007). In 2003, there was only 15 online newspapers in Vietnam; but, three years later, the number had increased to 50 (Eek and Ellström, 2007).

According to Ta (2007), almost all Vietnamese media organisations³⁵, which earlier served a political function directed by the CPV, now operate according to market-driven forces, serving

³⁵ with the exception of some media organisations, which are entirely subsidised by the CPV and the government, e.g., *Nhan Dan* (the People) newspapers, *VOV* (Voice of Vietnam) and other newspapers belonging to the provincial CPV, for example *Ha Noi Moi* (New Hanoi) ‘the voice of Hanoi Communist Party and People Committees’.

the various public tastes (*thi hieu*). This period, which has seen Vietnamese media bloom, has also witnessed the birth of sensational tabloids that first emerged in Vietnam's socialist media system. Heng (1998) argues that this is the most notable change within the post-*Doi Moi* media despite the fact that "both party leaders and older intellectuals are shocked by some of the consequences; i.e., chequebook journalism, tabloid sensationalism, soft-core pornography and the fostering of middle-class consumer tastes" (Marr, 2003, p.293).

As suggested in Chapter 2, media dependency theory assumed that the nature and characteristics of media depended upon their interrelationship with the nature of society in which politics is the most important structural factor (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976, Ball-Rokeach, 1998). Recent western literature about Vietnamese media normally attempts to explain the relationship between the state and the media by representing Vietnam's political system from one of three perspectives: (a) 'mono-organisational socialism'; (b) 'mobilisation authoritarianism'; and, (c) 'penetrating civil society' (Heng, 1998 citing Kerkvliet, 1995). These various representations are due to the complicated and flexible characteristics of the CPV's control over the Vietnamese media and because "political control is difficult to quantify [...] it depends on what yardstick is being used" (Heng, 1998, p. 46).

Adopting another approach to their interdependence, Marr (2003), who examines the relations between the state and Vietnamese intellectuals, argues that: "The state has never accepted intellectuals as equal partners in a public exchange of views on issues of national importance, although it has sometimes gone to great lengths to incorporate intellectuals into its projects". This unequal relation influences the characteristics of current Vietnamese media: while it restricts intellectuals' political criticism in public, it is open to the expanding tabloid media: "Some intellectuals worry that new media technologies combined with commercial imperatives possess the power to manipulate both individuals and society as a whole, to replace actual reality with

representations of reality” (Marr, 2003, p. 293). As Heng (2001) contends, media practitioners have to negotiate with the state, and the outcome of these negotiations vary according to various circumstances in which no one can predict when and to what extent the state may use its power.

3.6.3 Development of ICTs: the networking process in Vietnam

The Internet, which was first introduced in Vietnam in the early 1990s, provided full access in 1997, the year that marked the emergence of Vietnamese online newspapers (*Eek and Ellström, 2007, Ta, 2007*). Since then, the Internet has rapidly developed in the country in all aspects i.e., users, facilities and infrastructure. Figure 3.6 shows the constant increase in the number of Internet users in Vietnam between 2003 and 2011. For example, by 2007, number of Internet users in Vietnam (20.45 per 100 people) had almost equalled that of Thailand (21 per 100 people) and exceeded that of China (15.81 per 100 people) (Surborg, 2009).

From the outset, the Internet’s introduction was held suspect by the Party’s more conservative members, who viewed connecting to the Internet “as part of a further integration into the capitalist west” (Surborg, 2008, p. 349). In Vietnam, unlike in China, there is neither a ‘great firewall’ nor a ‘sensible’ keyword-searching blocking system that will allow political control over Internet access (OpenNet, 2006). The Vietnamese government owns IXPs³⁶ and ISPs³⁷ through which they control Internet content in a flexible way (Surborg, 2008). While all anti-CPV (*chong cong*) websites run by overseas Vietnamese are prohibited, a style of ‘selectively blocking’ has been applied for other ‘political is sensitive’ news sites such as BBC Vietnamese, VOA Vietnamese, RFI Vietnamese, activists and dissidents’ personal sites and even social

³⁶ Internet Exchange Providers

³⁷ Internet Service Providers

networks like Facebook³⁸ (Timberlake, 2010, OpenNet, 2006, Surborg, 2008, Clark, 2010). Despite this censorship, “a new generation of computer-literate citizens will find ways of evading controls and advancing their own agendas” (Marr, 2003, p. 294). Adopting Habermas’s theory of communicative action, which emphasises open public debate as the standard for rational decision-making, Surborg (2008, p. 355) argues that: “Cyberspace is a no more suitable space for achieving this standard in the Vietnamese context than any other space”.

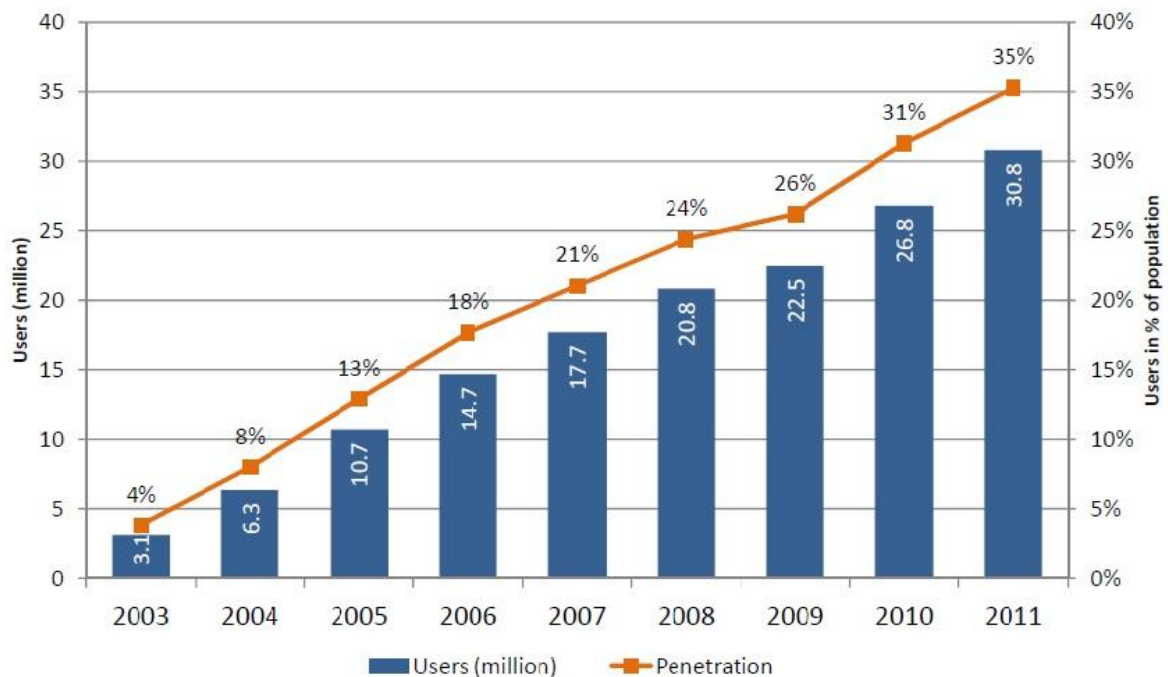


Figure 3.6 Vietnam Internet Users

Source: Cimigo Vietnam (2011); Vietnam Internet Network Information Centre (Minister of Information and Communication, accessed at <http://www.vnnic.vn>)

While political controlled in terms of content, the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) is one crucial part of Vietnam’s modernisation strategy (Surborg, 2008). Supporting the CPV’s policy of accelerating modernisation towards a

³⁸ Since 2009, Facebook has occasionally been blocked in Vietnam at the DNS level i.e., ISPs were asked to redirect their servers away from the network. Young Vietnamese Facebook users can easily bypass this censor by changing the DNS in their computers to use the service (Clark, 2010).

knowledge-based economy (CPV, 1996), the Vietnamese government recently asserted that: “Based on ICT as key elements, Vietnam will quickly transform its social-economic structure to become an advanced country in terms of a knowledge-based economy and information society, and greatly contribute for the success of the country’s industrialisation and modernisation process” (Government Decision No.246/2005/QD-TTg). The government’s strategy for ICT development up to 2010 specified several objectives including extending the application of ICT in all sectors; establishing and developing ‘e-Vietnam’ using e-citizen, e-government, e-enterprise, and e-commerce, ensuring that at least 80 per cent of the young cohort in the urban areas can access and use the services of the Internet (Government Decision No.219/2005/QD-TTg, 2005). However, to date, no official statistics of Internet users by social groups in Vietnam’s cities are available.

Since the beginning of the *Doi Moi* process, particularly after Vietnam joined the WTO in 2007, the country has been successfully integrated into the network of economic and informational globalisation. From a network society approach, Surborg (2009) examines the Internet development and describes this transition of Vietnam as follows:

“[...] Both cities [Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City] have resumed important commercial functions and become increasingly integrated into the world market and the global ‘space of flow’. Stock exchanges have been established in both cities, international businesses have opened offices and international airline traffic is growing [...], their relation to Vietnam’s rural hinterland can be assumed to be changing as a result of this global integration” (pp. 229-230).

3.6.4 The network of civil society in Vietnam

Castell (2008) assumes that: “In every country, there are local civil society actors who defend local or sectoral interests, as well as specific values against or beyond the formal political process” (p. 83). Civil society, according to Castells, comprises grassroots organisations, community groups, labour unions, interest groups, religious groups and civic associations. In

addition, Castells (2008) argues that the global civil society, supported by information and communication networks, has led to the new public sphere in the 21st century. This trend is linked with the rise of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and with a global or international frame of reference regarding their action and goals. Social movements in the global civil society echo the movement of public opinion (Castells, 2008).

Regarding the civil society in temporary Vietnam, Thayer (2008, p. 5) notes that: “As Vietnam opened up to the outside world, foreign donors and government aid agencies, as well as International Non-Government Organisations, rushed to assist Vietnam by applying their own models of development”. The major aims of the international NGOs in Vietnam, a country under authoritarian political systems, are to form partnerships with domestic NGOs and to pursue ‘bottom up’ approaches that emphasise participation development and gender and ethnic equality (Thayer, 2008). In contrast, Vietnamese NGOs view their role as a means to “negotiate and educate state officials rather than confront them as a tactic to bring about change” (p. 9).

In Vietnam, the party controls the state institutions, the armed forces and other social organisations (Thayer, 2008). Comparing the networks of civil society between Vietnam and China, Wells-Dang (2011) argues that:

The Chinese and Vietnamese states have demonstrated their ability to crack down on unwelcome political action at any time, sometimes using external events as a timely excuse. The nature of the state system and structural opportunities changes slowly, yet civil society networks have found ways to organise even in the midst of apparently more restrictive periods (p. 309).

However, although Vietnam is subjected to an authoritarian political system, “the state and Party have been encouraging associational life and the state does not seem to control as much as strictly as many of the foreign sources tend to find” (Norlund, 2007, p. 89).

There are four major types of organisations in Vietnam including: mass organisations, professional associations, Vietnamese NGOs and community-based organisations (Norlund,

2007). All of these organisations come under the umbrella of the Vietnam Fatherland Front (*Mat Tran To Quoc*), which was formed by senior Party members and is controlled by the Party (Thayer, 2008).

Looking to the future of civil society in Vietnam, Thayer argues that:

Vietnam's one-party system is likely to be heavily challenged in the future to make good its goal of creating a 'law governed state'. Political civil society groups will press the party-state to make good on constitutional provisions providing for 'freedom of opinion and speech, freedom of the press, the right to be informed, and the right to assemble, form associations and hold demonstrations in accordance with the provisions of the law' (pp. 19-20).

Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the history of research into development and communication drawing on three major schools of thought: the modernisation paradigm, critical approaches and the participatory perspective. This history reflects the change from regarding mass media and communication as a top-down process of information exchange to a process of sharing information. My review, together with the discussion surrounding the network society theory and background details of Vietnam, have provided a political and social context for my research, which will support the conclusion and recommendations of this thesis.

In the next chapter, I will present an overview of my research questions and research design including methodological considerations, methods application, data collection and data analysis. Additionally, I will provide a brief profile of current migrants in Vietnam drawn from public statistics in order to explain the selection of participants involved in the project.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology employed in this research project. The research process is presented including: (1) research questions; (2) methodological consideration based on discussion surrounding quantitative and qualitative approaches and a review of television audience research methods; (3) major methods employed in the study to answer the research questions; (4) description and timeline of data collected; and, (5) ethical concerns.

Based on the theoretical foundation presented in Chapter 2, a field research was conducted in Hanoi, Vietnam from November 2009 to February 2010 for the purposes of data collection. The nature of this research is exploratory (Rubin et al., 1996) and more qualitative than quantitative.

4.1 Research questions

The term ‘research’ means “to search for, to find”, is of Latin etymology, i.e., *re* (again) and *cercier* (to search) (Berger, 2000, p. 3). Rubin et al. (1996) claim that: “Research is objective because we try to be impartial when seeking the best solutions to the research problem. It is systematic because we move through a series of planned stages when conducting research. It is empirical because we look beyond ourselves to observe and to gather evidence. And, research is cumulative because it builds upon past knowledge” (p. 208). Keyton (2006, p. 2) notes that research is “the process of asking questions and finding answers”; but, what makes scholarly

research different from everyday research is that the former applies scientific and systematic procedures in order to provide valid findings as answers to research questions.

According to Rubin et al. (1996), research questions are normally built around investigation of the following: (1) aspects of past research which remain unanswered or of validity that is suspect; (2) new approaches and views appertaining to the issues; or (c) changes in communication environment that contribute to a need to revisit previous findings. For example, the new context of communication in the 21st century requires new studies to be conducted within the framework of uses and gratifications models³⁹ due to more media choices having been brought to audiences by the development of information and communication technology (Ruggiero, 2000).

To date, research into Vietnamese urbanisation has been located in the fields of economic geography, health and population studies, information technology, philosophy, political science and sociology; but, not in international communication or media studies. One of the principal ‘problematiques’ in the field of international communication is the relationship between urbanisation, media and development. My research draws contemporary Vietnam into this narrative and extends the narrative further. The study also informs policy making within Vietnamese Television.

This study addresses two major objectives as follows:

- (1) To investigate how the new residents of Hanoi perceive the role of television in their everyday lives; and
- (2) To examine how Vietnamese Television addresses and serves the communication needs of Hanoi’s new residents.

³⁹ See section 2.2.3 of Chapter 2 for a review of the uses and gratifications theory.

Based on these two core concerns, seven research questions (RQ) relevant to the project are posed:

RQ One: How do the new residents of Hanoi use Television to satisfy their communication needs?

RQ Two: How do the differences of SES influence the knowledge acquisition among them?

RS Three: To what extent do the new residents of Hanoi depend upon television as a source of information?

RQ Four: How do the new residents of Hanoi communicate with others in terms of interpersonal and intercultural communication?

RQ Five: How are Vietnamese television's channels structured?

RS Six: How do Vietnamese television managers and practitioners perceive Hanoi urbanisation and the communication needs of urban migrants?

RQ Seven: What strategies Vietnamese television employs to serve communication needs of Hanoi's new residents?

According to Rubin et al. (1996), research questions suggest the choice of research methods while literature related to previous studies guides the research design. In the next section, I present in detail the research process designed to answer the research questions of this project.

4.2 Methodological consideration and research design

In this section, I briefly review the qualitative and quantitative traditions in mass communication studies and the application of methods to television audience research. Based on this methodological consideration, I explicate how my research is designed.

4.2.1 Quantitative and qualitative research

Berger (2000, p. 13) notes that: ‘When we think of quantitative research in the media and communication, we think of numbers, magnitude and measurement’. The quantitative approach was dominant in media effects research from the 1920s to the early of 1970s due to the influence of positivist assumptions which were known as objectivist, empiricist and rationalist (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, Jensen, 2002). In the quantitative tradition, “researchers search for and explain mechanism of cause and effect” (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p. 8). According to Keyton (2006) quantitative research uses measurement and observation to represent communication phenomena as amounts, frequencies, degrees, values or intensity.

The qualitative approach to communication research emerged later in the 1970s in line with the rise of cultural studies and reception analysis cored by ethnography (Morley, 1980, Hansen, 1998b, Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). In essence, qualitative research addresses the form and content of human interaction in the way that communication researchers explore “human interaction [as] more complex and intricate than can be captured in the lab or quantified with measuring devices” (Keyton, 2006, p. 59). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offer a definition of qualitative research:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p. 3).

Bryman (2004) summarises the differences between quantitative and qualitative perspectives (see Figure 4.1). Quantitative research, he claims, is deductive, i.e., descriptive and statistical, and oriented to test a theory. On the contrary, qualitative research is inductive, i.e., interpretive and

serves the generation of theory (Bryman, 2004, Rubin et al., 1996). Figure 4.1 indicates that qualitative research aims for subjectivity rather than objectivity.

Three fields	Quantitative	Qualitative
Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Deductive; testing of theory	Inductive; generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Natural science model, in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructionism

Figure 4.1 **Fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research**

Source: Bryman (2004)

Keyton (2006) observes that qualitative researchers' concern is with the whole of the phenomenon despite how complex or messy the data collected may be, whereas quantitative methods "rely on the identification of variables and the development of testable hypotheses and questions" (p. 36). Marvasti (2004, p. 7) notes that: "Quantitative research involves the use of methodological techniques that represent the human experience in numerical categories [...]. Conversely, qualitative research provides detailed description and analysis of the quality, or the substance, of the human experience".

A variety of research methods apply the quantitative technique, for example, content analysis⁴⁰, surveys and questionnaires, experiments, descriptive statistics, testing for differences and testing for relationships. Qualitative research comprises interviews, participant observation, focus groups, narrative analysis, discourse analysis and ethnographies (Rubin et al., 1996, Berger,

⁴⁰ There are two types of content analysis: quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The former, which is more popular than the latter, is regarded as the origin of the method (George, 2008 [1959]).

2000, Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, Keyton, 2006). Although the two paradigms are distinguishable in essence, researchers normally apply a combination of quantitative or qualitative methods in order to systematically collect data that corresponds to the research inquiry (Neuman, 2007).

4.2.2 Methodological approaches to television audience research

The field of audience studies in general and television audience research in particular are predominant in the quantitative empirical approach (Morley, 1992). As already suggested, the media effects tradition, which is grounded in a positivist paradigm, investigates how and to what extent mass media and communication may affect different groups of people (Jensen, 1991, Morley, 1992). In the 1970s, the emergence of the uses and gratification theory⁴¹ marked a shift from a text-centred to an audience-centred approach and from a media effects notion to a media function assumption (Jensen, 2002). However, the theory has in the main been tested by measurement (Morley, 1992), i.e., “[it has] relied primarily on survey techniques to examine the audience experience of media as a whole” (Jensen, 2002, p. 142). Quantitative research treats audiences as numbers and as units of equal value in the quantification of audience size (Morley, 1992 citing Ang, 1991). In his criticism of adopting a quantitative approach to audience research, Morley (1992, p. 165) argues that: “Statistical techniques are, by their very nature, disaggregating - inevitably isolating units of action from the contexts that make them meaningful”. For example, interpersonal communication, which is one of the core interests of the uses and gratifications model (Rubin et al., 1996, 2010), cannot be quantified by measuring devices (Morley, 1992).

⁴¹ See Chapter 2 for a review of the uses and gratifications theory.

Further to the argument surrounding the methodological limitations of the uses and gratifications approach, Massey (1995) notes that people were required to be consumers of certain channels or media content and “asked to respond to pre-existing, researcher-created lists of uses that may or may not relate to their own media uses and gratifications” (pp. 330-331). Survey-based gratification studies let informants who were not objective interpreters construct their own replies; thus, the data collected from their self-reports should be further analysed by researchers (Massey, 1995 citing Messaris, 1977).

While the uses and gratifications model was criticised for its limited attention to media texts⁴², cultural studies, which emerged in the early 1980s, centred their concerns upon meaning construction and the interactions of people with texts within certain contexts (Hall, 1980a). However, as Massey (1995) argues, in the cultural studies approach, “important questions about motivations that possibly lead to interaction or pleasures (gratifications) that might result from such meaning-making are left unanswered [and] interaction with media texts outside of direct personal exposure to them is also ignored⁴³” (p. 347).

In *The Nationwide Audience*, Morley (1980) after testing Hall’s (1980b) model of encoding/decoding in television audiences research, pointed out that the two existing conceptions of communication were opposite to each other. First, the ‘humanities’ paradigm, upon which cultural studies tradition is based, conceived of mass communication as a cultural practice producing and circulating meaning in certain social contexts. Second, the ‘social sciences’ perspective investigated the process of interaction between media messages and their audiences. According to Jensen (1991), the convergence of these two approaches may explain the emergence of reception analysis as a new form marking the qualitative turn of audience research

⁴² See Chapter 2 for a review of the criticism of uses and gratifications model.

⁴³ In her argument, Massey refers to interpersonal communication.

since the 1980s. Methodologically speaking, reception analysis means “a comparative textual analysis of media discourses and audience discourses” in which textual criticism or discourse analysis is the key constituent. (Jensen, 1991, p. 139). However, reception analysis researchers tended to overestimate audience-text relations (Lindlof, 1991) with the assumption that “there can be no ‘effect’ without ‘meaning’” (Jensen, 1991, p. 137). Hartley (1987) assumed that audiences could not be separated from their construction as categories. Following this ‘constructivist’ view, Fiske (1989, p. 56) asserted that: “There is no such thing as ‘the television audience’ defined as an empirically accessible object, for there can be no meaningful categories beyond its boundaries”. This notion ignored Gledhill’s important argument which was made ten years earlier: “But to say that language has a determining effect on society is a different matter from saying that society is nothing but its languages and signifying practices” (Gledhill, 1978, cited in Morley, 1992, p. 170).

Another perspective based on cultural studies and reception analysis is ‘ethnography’ (Ang, 1990), an anthropological approach which analyses “multiply structured contexts of action, aiming to produce a rich descriptive and interpretive account of the lives and values of those subject to investigation” (Morley and Silverstone, 1991, p. 150). Interviews and particularly participant observation are the major methods applied in ethnographic research: “The ethnographer participates in people’s lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking question [...] collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned” (Morley and Silverstone, 1991 citing Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 2). The context of reception is everyday life in which the media are an integral part (Morley and Silverstone, 1991). In the ethnographic approach, the family or household is considered the basic unit of domestic consumption (Morley and Silverstone, 1991). It provides researchers (for example Lull, 1980, Goodman, 1983) with a

framework called a ‘rules-based’ perspective, from which to analyse viewing selection procedures and family communication patterns. However, by emphasising family as the basic context of television viewing, ethnomethodology tends to separate audiences from their broader social contexts⁴⁴. Another limitation is that, when applying an anthropological approach, an ethnography research becomes “a written account of a lengthy social interaction between a scholar and a distant culture” (Radway, 1988, p. 367).

The shift from a quantitative to a qualitative approach to television audience research in the 1980s reflected a move from the predictive-control model of communication science to new critical and interpretive perspectives including cultural studies, reception analysis, ethnography and feminist research (Lindlof, 1991). Although losing its influence due partly to applying quantitative measurement to audience action, the uses and gratifications model is worthy of further support particularly for researchers concerned with audience motivation of media exposure, an interest area that was neglected by later approaches. As Massey (1995) suggests, it would be “a practical mistake to abandon all aspects of the [uses and gratifications] approach” (p. 331).

With a careful consideration of methodology, my research applies a qualitative approach to the investigation of television audience gratification, in which focus group interviews constituted the major method of inquiry. In the next part of this section, I present the research design for this study.

⁴⁴ In my research which involves migrants, the family units of television viewing cannot be applied because the participants represented a mixed of those who watch within their families and those who share TV sets with friends, colleagues or roommates while living far from their homeland and families.

4.2.3 Research design

According to Rubin et al. (2010, p. 198), research can be: (a) descriptive or explanatory. The former, which tends to use quantitative methods, is primarily designed to identify or describe events or conditions; the latter, which applies qualitative methods, is mainly employed to examine causes and explain events.

One of the core questions addressed in my research is how new residents of Hanoi use television to satisfy their communication needs. As reviewed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the questions pertaining to audiences' motivations for watching television have been mainly answered by quantitative studies within the uses and gratifications model. My research applies a qualitative approach to the model in an attempt to investigate and further explain the need gratifications of a specific segment of audiences in a particular context. This study is thus more qualitative than quantitative, and may be considered explanatory rather than descriptive.

Focus group interviews, in-depth interviews and content analysis were the major methods employed in this research.

As shown in Figure 4.2, focus group interviews were conducted to answer Research Questions One, Two, Three and Four. The study involved 48 participants living in the inner and suburban areas of Hanoi metropolitan as migrants or new residents of the expanded city. Focus group data are analysed and presented in Chapter 5.

Through in-depth interviews, I investigated how television managers and practitioners acknowledge and address the concerns and needs of the migrants and Hanoi's new residents when programming and producing television content. The findings, which answered Research Questions Six and Seven, contributed to Chapter 6. Nine of the key respondents were managers,

producers and reporters working at the three TV stations: Vietnam Television (VTV), Hanoi Radio and Television (HRT) and Vietnam Television Corporation (VTC).

Quantitative content analysis was employed to answer Research Question Five. Based upon random selection, TV programs broadcast by the three stations were classified into different types of content, and analysed to facilitate examination of how the programs were structured according to the proportions of broadcasting time within each channel of each station and within each station as a whole. The data are exhibited in Chapter 6.

In section 4.5 of this chapter, I will present the selection of the focus group participants, in-depth interview respondents and TV programs.

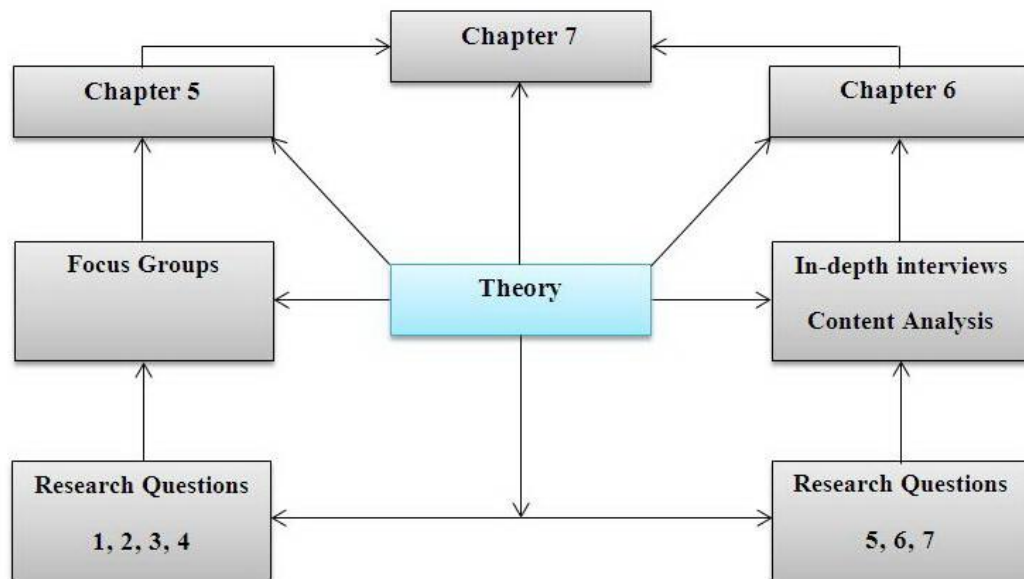


Figure 4.2 Research design outline

Figure 4.2 shows that the literature of theories involved in the study takes the central position in this research design: it was from this pivotal point that the research questions and research methods were constructed. The answers to all seven research questions correspond to chapters 5

and 6. They are presented with a connection to the theoretical framework, and together constitute Chapter 7 (Discussion and Conclusion).

As already suggested, my research primarily adopted a qualitative approach, using focus groups and in-depth interviews as the two major methods of data collection. The key respondents' responses revealed how they understood and perceived the audiences' needs. After linking this information to the feedback from the participants, I proceeded to examine how Vietnamese television producers identify the needs of their audiences and to what extent they serve them in terms of policy-making and producing quality TV programs. As well, the findings garnered from the focus groups interviews helped me to explore the nature and effectiveness of the process of communication between Vietnamese television and its audiences. In addition, my research adopted a quantitative approach to facilitate TV program content analysis. The application of this method was closely linked to the two other qualitative methods: (1) it revealed the current status and policy of Vietnamese television regarding the organising and developing of the three TV stations' channels, issues that the key respondents were invited to discuss in the interviews; and, (2) it provided an overview of the TV channels and programs the participants had been watching to gratify their need for information.

4.3. Research methods

In this section I review the definition, major characteristics, application, strengths and limitations of the three methods employed in this research: focus group interviews, in-depth interviews and content analysis.

4.3.1 Focus Group Interview

Focus groups are frequently used in communication research, particularly in media audience research (Rubin et al., 1996, Morgan, 1997). The method was first introduced by Robert Merton and colleagues in the early 1940s (see Merton, 1987); but, it was neglected by social sciences researchers due to the predominance of other quantitative methods. Merton, who is regarded as having pioneered the use of focus groups in social communication research, saw focus groups as a way of generating new research questions and hypotheses and of providing qualitative interpretation of quantitative data (Asbury, 1995, Lunt, 1996). After being used as a stand-alone method in market research for a considerable period of time, focus group was then adopted by television audience researchers along with the rise of reception analysis (Jensen, 1991, Lunt, 1996, Hansen, 1998b).

Keyton (2006, p. 276) defines focus groups as “a facilitator-led group discussion used for collecting data from a group of participants about a particular topic in a limited amount of time”. Morgan (1997) and Bryman (2004), who emphasise ‘group interaction’ as an area of interest, note that the method comprises ‘group interviews’ and ‘focused interviews’.

As an intensive interview method, focus groups contribute to answering the ‘why’ and ‘how come’ questions (Rubin et al., 1996), something not easily achieved by quantitative survey research (Hansen, 1998b). For example, group discussion can be applied to explore how participants perceive of an organisation, its programs and policies, or to test their reactions to an advertising piece, a new product about to be launched or a broadcasting program (Rubin et al., 1996). Lunt (1996, p. 79) notes that focus groups have been used “to discover consumer attitudes and motivations and to reveal public discourses and interpretive communities”.

In certain communication research projects, focus group interviews can be used in association

with other methods such as questionnaires, participant observation (ethnography) and media content analysis (Hansen, 1998b). Whether used alone or in conjunction with other methods, “focus groups may be particularly well suited for needs assessment, development or refinement of instruments, and exploration of the interpretation of research results” (Asbury, 1995, p. 415 citing Carey 1994). For the purposes of my research, focus groups were used together with in-depth interviews and content analysis of television programs as a means of answering the research questions.

A focused group normally comprises 6 to 12 participants; a certain topic discussion requires at least two group interviews. (Rubin et al., 1996). A time frame of 60 to 90 minutes is appropriate for each group interview to ensure that every participant has the opportunity to answer the moderator’s questions (Keyton, 2006).

Similar to other methods of interviews dealing with people as the sources of information, the selection of focus group participants is very important (Rubin et al., 1996). As Keyton (2006) suggests, selected participants should be homogeneous in their backgrounds, have dissimilar attitudes and opinions, and not know each other. However, he also stresses that “when the focus group topic is sensitive or controversial, it is best to invite respondents who are familiar with one another and who hold similar attitudes” (Keyton, 2006, p. 277).

In a focus group interview, participants are encouraged to interact with each other rather than merely answer the moderator’s questions. The role of the moderator, who carefully controls the discussion, is “the key to successful focus groups” (Rubin et al., 1996, p. 223).

To highlight the focus group interviews’ strengths, researchers usually compare the method with other related qualitative and quantitative methods such as in-depth interviews, participant observation and surveys.

Hansen (1998b) argues that focus group interviewing is based upon a 'natural' activity of conversation and social interaction through which audiences generate meaning, interpret media content and express their opinions of media content. Focus groups thus directly stimulate interaction among participants regarding the research topic, something that cannot be achieved in in-depth interviews and survey questionnaires (Keyton, 2006). This advantage not only enables researchers to collect 'live' data from participants located in 'real life' situations but also suggests another strength of the method, i.e., its ability to generate information about the same topic from different types of participants (Krueger, 1988, Keyton, 2006). Compared with participant observation, focus groups can ensure that the data directly fits the researcher's interest (Morgan, 1997). In addition, focus group interviews are considerably cheaper than individual interviews because a number of people participate in groups at the same time (Hansen, 1998b). For example, Fern (1982) notes that two focus groups with eight participants in each group can provide as much information as ten individual interviews. Based upon semi-structured interviews, focus groups can be applied flexibly: researchers can adapt and expand the technique to their different purposes and diverse participants (Morgan, 1997).

But, the advantages of focus groups, including participants' interaction and the moderator's flexibility, in many cases may prove disadvantageous. For example, without an experienced and skilled moderator, a group discussion may become uncontrolled. Conversely, a powerful moderator may overly influence participants and their reactions, thus hindering the natural interaction among participants (Morgan, 1997, Keyton, 2006). Stewart et al. (2007) note that differences of age, gender, personality, and physical characteristics may well impact upon participants' behaviour: for example, one member may dominate the discussion due to his or her higher social status or degree of intellect. In other cases, participants will quickly reach a consensus because some among them are reluctant to express their opinions which may be opposite to those of the others (Morgan, 1997). The issue of artificial opinions and the untruthful

behaviour of volunteer-participants or experienced-participants poses another risk for focus groups (Stewart et al., 2007).

The validity of data is crucial when using focus groups as a qualitative method. Keyton (2006) suggests exercising careful consideration when conducting focus groups: “Researchers must balance their findings [...] with respect to how focus group participants were found, selected and even encouraged to participate. [...] Thus, researchers must carefully assess the degree to which their focus group results can be applicable to others from the same or similar populations” (p. 282).

In my research, focus group discussion constituted the major method applied to answer the key research questions of how new residents and migrants of Hanoi city use television to satisfy their communication needs. The method employed when recruiting participants and the process of conducting focus group interviews are presented in the next section.

4.3.2 In-depth Interview

In-depth interviewing, a qualitative technique, has recently gained considerable popularity in communication research. Lindlof and Taylor (2002, p. 173) note that: “[Qualitative] interviews are particularly well suited to understand the social actor’s experience and perspective”. A variety of terms are applied to the method including unstructured interviews, intensive interviews, semi-structured interviews, open-ended interviews and respondent interviews. According to Marvasti (2004, p. 21), the word ‘in-depth’, which means ‘deeper self’, can be understood as “seeing the world from the respondent’s point of view”. Based upon this notion, a definition of in-depth interviewing is provided:

[In-depth interview] begins with common sense perceptions, explanations and understandings of some lived cultural experience [...] and aims to explore the contextual boundaries of that experience or perception, to uncover what is usually hidden from ordinary view or reflection or to penetrate to more reflective understandings about the nature of that experience (Johnson, 2002, p.106, cited in Marvasti, 2004).

The goals of in-depth interviews are: “(1) to clarify the meanings of common concepts and opinions; (2) to distinguish the decisive elements of an express opinion; (3) to determine what influenced a person to form an opinion or to act in a certain way; (4) to classify complex attitude patterns; and, (5) to understand the interpretations that people attribute to their motivations to act” (Lazarsfeld, 1944 cited in Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p. 178). As Rubin et al. (1996) suggest, in-depth interviews allow one-on-one contact between the researcher and the respondent for lengthy periods of time. The interview can usually be structured in the form of an interview schedule of questions and question order, which is prepared beforehand: its flexibility enables the researcher “to follow up and probe reasons for certain attitudes and responses” (1996, p. 223). This is because the interaction between participant and researcher is a face-to-face conversation, which is regarded as one of advantages of in-depth interview (Keyton, 2006). Another strength of the method lies in the fact that in-depth interviews provide “the only opportunity to collect data on communication that cannot be directly observed” (Keyton, 2006, pp.275-276). Additionally, they may benefit both the subject and the researcher in terms of sharing knowledge and supporting a multi-perspective understanding of the topic (Marvasti, 2004 citing Johnson, 2002). Morley (1992) argues that the qualitative interview is recommended “not simply for the access it gives the research to the respondents’ conscious opinions and statements but also for the access that it gives to the linguistic terms and categories [...] through which respondents construct their words and their own understanding of their activities” (p. 173).

Different from interviewing employing the survey model, the in-depth interview researcher does not force respondents “to choose from a pre-designed range of answers; instead, they can elaborate on their statements and connect them with other matters of relevance” (Marvasti, 2004, p. 20). Apropos of in-depth interviews, finding respondents who have ‘appropriate experience’ is the key consideration (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). As Keyton (2006) suggests, the number of respondents depends upon the number of people that the researcher can identify who have

knowledge about your topic or who interact in a particular role in the study. An in-depth interview normally last between 30 minutes and 1 hour and can be conducted via telephone or face-to-face conversation (Marvasti, 2004, Keyton, 2006).

As with other research methods, in-depth interviews entail several disadvantages. For example, respondents may be hesitant to share their knowledge or perspectives despite having agreed to participate in the study; or, a respondent may digress during the interview. In such cases, the researcher is advised to ask encouraging questions or carefully and politely refocus the conversation (Keyton, 2006 citing Mason, 1993). As characterised by the principle of open-ended questioning, in-depth interviews facilitate large data collection, particularly where the number of respondents is high. This requires researchers to carefully analyse the data so as to concentrate on the research's interest (Berger, 2000).

In-depth interviewing was the second empirical method used to answer research questions regarding the strategies and approaches employed by Vietnamese television to serve the communication needs of Hanoi's new residents. The key respondents who participated in this study were television managers and practitioners from the three stations. In section 4.4, I will provide in detail how the interviews were arranged and took place.

4.3.3 Content Analysis

As its name implies, content analysis is a research method widely applied in communication research to measure the occurrence of some identifiable element in a complete text or set of messages (Keyton, 2006). Berelson, who is considered to have pioneered the use of the method for analysing media content, regarded content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (1952, p. 18,

cited in Neuendorf, 2002). Pursuant to this fundamental conception of content analysis, Neuendorf provides the following definition: “Content analysis is a “summarising, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity-intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalisability, replicability and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented” (2002, p. 10).

According to Keyton (2006), there are two types of content analysis: (1) the manifest content, i.e., the characteristics of content itself, are countable, easily verified and physically presented in descriptive data; and (2) the latent content, i.e., “interpretations about the content that imply something about the nature of communicators or effects on communicator” (p.233). However, according to Berger (2000), when undertaking content analysis, the researcher should examine only the manifest content of texts rather than the latent content to avoid the assumption that “the behaviours, attitudes and values found in the text reflect the behaviours, attitudes and values of people who create the material” (Keyton, 2006, p. 234 citing Berger, 1998). A similar argument is evident in Wright’s *Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective* wherein he emphasises that: “Content analysis itself provides no direct data about the nature of the communicator, audience or effects. Therefore, great caution must be exercised whenever this technique is used for any purpose other than the classification, description and analysis of the manifest content of the communication” (1986, pp. 125-126, cited in Berger, 2000). As implied in Berelson’s definition, content analysis is primarily a quantitative technique. Based upon scientific methods (Neuendorf, 2002), content analysis is systematic and objective: “it measures and counts certain things” (Berger, 2000, p. 174). However, there is also a qualitative approach to content analysis which has received little attention in theoretical discussion surrounding the method (George, 2008 [1959]). As Keyton (2006) suggests, any message or aspect of a message can be appropriately analysed using the content analysis technique. Neuendorf (2002) claims that:

“Content analysis may be conducted on written text, transcribed speech, verbal interactions, visual images, characterisations, nonverbal behaviours, sound events or any other type of message” (p. 24). Berger (2000) identifies the major advantages of content analysis as follows: (a) it is unobtrusive; (b) it is relatively inexpensive; (c) it can deal with current events, topics of present-day interest; (d) it uses material that is relatively easy to obtain and work with; and, (e) it yields data that can be quantified (p. 182). He also maintains that content analysis research may confront some difficulties in finding a representative sample, in determining measurable units, in obtaining reliability in coding and in defining terms operationally (Berger, 2000). Regarding the process involved in content analysis, Hansen (1998a) summarises the six following key steps: (1) definition of the research problem; (2) selection of media and sample; (3) defining analytical categories; (4) constructing a coding schedule; (5) piloting the coding schedule and checking reliability; and, (6) data-preparation and analysis. In this process, coding and categorising are the keys to the success of the research. Berelson stressed: “Content analysis stands or falls by its categories” (1952, p. 147, cited in Franzosi, 2008). Wrench et al. (2008, p. 247) define coding as “the process a researcher goes through to group one’s variable of interest in a consistent way”.

In my research, which is based primarily upon a qualitative approach, quantitative content analysis is applied as a third method to answer Research Question Five. The application of content analysis in this study describes ‘the manifest content’ of Vietnamese television programs in terms of their ‘schedule time’ and content (Hansen, 1998a), and reports data under percentage statistics. The selection of TV programs for analysis is presented in the next section.

4.4. Overview of the fieldwork data collection

I spent almost three months in Hanoi, Vietnam from November 2009 to February 2010 conducting data collection for my research. Preparation for my fieldwork commenced mid-2009. I was granted Ethics Approval by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (see

Appendix A) to realise the project. The fieldwork comprised two major sections: (1) focus group interviews with selected participants; and, (2) in-depth interviews with Vietnamese television managers and practitioners. The timeline and major tasks undertaken in the process of data collection are shown in Table 4.1.

Weeks	Tasks	Notes
23/11/2009 to 29/11/2009	Sending approval request letter to VTV Head of Human Resource Department Approaching heads of residents communities in eastern suburban districts of Hanoi	Recruitment advts in <i>Ha Noi Moi</i>
		Recruitment advts on HRT
30/11/2009 to 06/12/2009	In-depth interviews with 3 VTV key respondents (1, 2, 3) Approaching heads of residents communities in northern suburban districts of Hanoi Sending approval request letter to VTC Head of Human Resource Department Selecting focus group participants	Recruitment advts in <i>Ha Noi Moi</i>
		Recruitment advts on HRT
07/12/2009 to 13/12/2009	In-depth interviews with 3 VTC key respondents (4,5,6) Approaching heads of residents communities in southern suburban districts of Hanoi Sending approval request letter to HRT Head of Human Resource Department Selecting focus group participants	Recruitment advts in <i>Ha Noi Moi</i>
		Recruitment advts on HRT
14/12/2009 to 20/12/2009	In-depth interviews with 3 HRT key respondents (7,8,9) Approaching heads of residents communities in western suburban districts of Hanoi Selecting focus group participants	
21/12/2009 to 27/12/2009	Approaching heads of residents communities in urban districts of Hanoi Selecting focus group participants	
28/12/2009 to 03/01/2010 ⁴⁵	Approaching heads of residents communities in expanded areas of Hanoi Conducting a pilot focus group interview Completing list of focus group participants and setting timetable for group interviews	
04/01/2010 to 10/01/2010	Conducting Focus Group 1 & 2	Focus group interviews were undertaken on Saturdays and Sundays
11/01/2010 to 17/01/2010	Conducting Focus Group 3 & 4	
18/01/2010 to 24/01/2010	Conducting Focus Group 5 & 6	
25/01/2010 to 31/01/2010	Conducting Focus Group 7 & 8	
01/02/2010 to 07/02/2010	Checking and backing up data collected	

Table 4.1 List of major tasks undertaken in the fieldwork in Hanoi, Vietnam

⁴⁵ Although Christmas Day is celebrated culturally in Vietnam, there is no Christmas holiday season as in western countries. New Year's Day is treated as a single public holiday.

4.4.1 A profile of urban migrants

Ho khau - the household registration system

The Vietnamese household registration system, known as *ho khau*, originated in a population control policy designed to restrict urbanisation and mobility during wartime and in rationing measures under central planning during the post-war phase. To date, a *ho khau* is required for many administrative procedures such as purchasing land or building a house, registering a motor vehicle, borrowing money and accessing subsidised medical care. *Ho khau* is primarily related to issues of internal migration in Vietnam. It controls and records the changes in people's residence by classifying them into four categories: KT1, KT2, KT3, KT4, with corresponding rights and obligations⁴⁶. In general, people holding permanent urban registration are allocated land use rights for their houses and gardens (Hardy, 2001).

Almost all registered migrants to Hanoi city are classified KT2 and KT3, with registered migrant workers included in KT4 category (GSO and UNFPA, 2005). However, migrants who have resettled in urban areas without registering their movement at all are normally excluded from official demographic surveys (UNDP Vietnam, 2011). According to the 2004 Vietnam Migration Survey (VMS), many migrants faced difficulties when attempting to re-register their temporary status in their destination districts or provinces. Of all unregistered migrants, 48 per cent believed that they would not be accepted, 22 per cent considered registration unnecessary, while 9 per cent did not know how to re-register (GSO and UNFPA, 2005).

⁴⁶ Prior to 2007, four categories called 'residence status' existed including: KT1: people who were entitled to full and permanent residence had rights to purchase land-use rights and access schools and medical services within their district of residence; KT2: people, who had moved to a different district but still in the same province had limited rights to access schooling and other social services in the district they resettled in; KT3: people who were registered in one province but resided in another had to renew a temporary residence permit for every six month period and had limited rights to access social services (for example, standing the third priority to KT1 and KT2 to access schooling in case space was available); and, KT4: individuals, who resided in another province away from their home town and had no family, needed to register for a 3 month temporary residence permit. The KT4 migrants could not purchase land titles or access certain social services in the district they moved in (UN Vietnam, 2010).

The changes applied to the new Law on Residence which took effect in 2007 saw the number of residence categories reduced to two: temporary and permanent residents (National Assembly, 2006b). Also, the time conditions for obtaining permanent residency became easier: they were reduced from three years to one year of continuous residence in the relocated areas (National Assembly, 2006b). However, in order to cope with the rapid increase in migration effected by the new Law, the authorities in Hanoi opted to re-exercise their restriction on migrants in the capital city. The 2010 draft of the Capital Law proposed setting more difficult requirements for permanent residency in Hanoi. The draft was finally rejected in 2010 at the National Assembly's May session (UN Vietnam, 2010).

Economic migration

The 2009 Census reports that 6.6 million people, i.e., 7.7 per cent of the population over the age of five, changed their place of residence to a different area during 2004-2009 (GSO, 2010). However, some experts suggested that the real number might be much higher, i.e., between 12 and 16 million people if the missing records of many seasonal⁴⁷, temporary and return migrants were included (UN Vietnam, 2010).

More than 70 per cent of internal migrants in Vietnam migrated for economic reasons; e.g., to improve their living conditions and to seek employment (GSO and UNFPA, 2005). The average income of urban residents in Vietnam has been recorded as double that of people living in the country's rural areas (UN Vietnam, 2010). Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city are among the top destinations of rural-urban migrants, who contribute to more than 50 per cent of the population growth in these two biggest cities (GSO and UNFPA, 2005).

⁴⁷ Individuals who migrate for a less than six month period are regarded as seasonal migrants (UN Vietnam, 2010)

In terms of gender and migration, the 2009 Census reports that women account for more than half of the internal migrant population, with rates of female migration steadily increasing over the past two decades since the 1989 Census (GSO, 2010).

Although migrants have substantially contributed to Vietnam's economic development, many of them are living and working in circumstances which "make them a particularly vulnerable part of the population" (UN Vietnam, 2010, p. 28). This is because of "their inability to access basic services and attain adequate living conditions; their differential treatment in the labour market; and the social stigma⁴⁸ which is attached to them" (p. 28). For these reasons, "internal migrants are in effect unable to access the full benefits of Vietnamese citizenship" (UNDP Vietnam, 2011, p. 36). However, the 2004 VMS revealed the 'overwhelming satisfaction' of the migrant respondents, who claimed that "in spite of the difficulties they face because they moved, they would still do it again were they confronted with the same decision" (UN Vietnam, 2010, p. 28).

Migrants in Hanoi city

The data from the 2004 VMS (GSO and UNFPA, 2005) and the 2009 Census (GSO, 2010) provided the major figures of the current migrants in Hanoi city as follows:

- (1) An increase of migration rate: 21.2 % in 1999; 29.6% in 2004; 35.6 per cent in 2005.
- (2) The vast majority of current migrants in Hanoi are of working age: 20-29 years (50 per cent), 30-34 years (14 per cent) and 35-39 years (6 per cent); with more than 40% of migrants are unskilled workers.

⁴⁸ The social stigma attached to migrants stems from the fact that migrants are usually viewed by local residents with mistrust and discrimination: "They are stigmatised [as] the root of many of the so-called 'social evils' that affect society such as crime, gambling and sex work" (UN Vietnam, 2010, p. 34).

- (3) More females migrated than males: corresponding to every 100 female migrants were 72 male migrants.
- (4) Of those surveyed in 2004, more than 80% claimed better employment and higher income than before migration; more than 40% conceded improved education and schooling; more than 50% believed that their health status was better. These three figures are the highest compared to those of other destinations of migrants in the whole country.
- (5) Housing and accessing to healthcare were reported as the most pertinent issues of dissatisfaction: almost 50% lived in boarding-houses⁴⁹, 13.4% lived in their parents' houses, and 5.6% shared accommodation with their relatives.
- (6) Education and schooling status at the time of migration: year 1 to year 9 = 31%; year 10 to year 12 (high school) = 46%; college = 4%; Bachelor's degree = 20%. The rate of migrant graduates in Hanoi is the highest compared to other cities due to the number of universities in the city and the fact that many students resettle in Hanoi after their graduation.
- (7) The two leading reasons for migration: employment (53.5%) and seeking improved living conditions (30.8%)
- (8) The largest numbers of migrants (50%) moved to the suburban districts, the sites of the industrial zones (migrant workers).
- (9) Lack of social networks: less than 10% of migrants participated in mass organisation activities and community events in their place of residence.

⁴⁹ Vietnamese: *nha tro*, normally shared by pairs or groups of migrants, particularly who are temporary dwellers.

To date, there have been no figures of media accession among migrants in Vietnamese official migration surveys or census surveys. However, UN Vietnam's 2010 report on migration in the country suggests that migrants have little access to media, entertainment or other recreational activities (UN Vietnam, 2010).

4.4.2 Recruitment and selection of focus group participants

As Rubin et al. (1996) suggest, focus group participants can be selected according to the particular interests of researchers. In the case of my research, which employs a qualitative approach, the participants were not representative of the population as a whole. However, based upon the statistics of migrants in Vietnam in general, and in Hanoi city in particular, I planned to organise groups correspondent to their demographic structure and concentration in terms of geography in Hanoi metropolitan. Accordingly, 48 participants (25 women and 23 men) were selected and divided into 8 groups, i.e., 6 participants in each group, as shown in Table 4.2:

- 2 groups of participants who were migrants workers living in the north-east industrial zone of the city.
- 2 groups of participants who had become new residents by the 2008 expansion of Hanoi
- 1 group of participants: students who had resettled in Hanoi after their graduation
- 2 groups of participants: migrants living in the urban districts of the city (temporary and permanent)
- 1 groups of participants who were seasonal migrants or working in the city' urban area while remaining residence in a rural suburban district.

Groups	Description	District /Location	Coding	Examples of quotes
Group 1	Female (6), migrant workers in a suburban industrial zone	Long Bien	F/MW	F/MW_woman_1
Group 2	Male (6), migrant workers in a suburban industrial zone	Long Bien	M/MW	M/MW_man_1
Group 3	Female (6), residents in an expanded area	Dan Phuong	F/EA	F/EA_woman_1
Group 4	Male (6), residents in an expanded area	Dan Phuong	M/EA	M/EA_man_1
Group 5	Female (3) and male (3), students resettled	USSH's seminar room ⁵⁰	STUD	STUD_woman_1 STUD_man_1
Group 6	Female (3) and male (3), temporary migrants in an urban district	Hoan Kiem	T/UB	T/UB_woman_1 T/UB_man_1
Group 7	Female (4) and male (2), permanent migrants in an urban district	Thanh Xuan	P/UB	P/UB_woman_1 P/UB_man_1
Group 8	Female (3) and male (3), residents in a rural suburban district but also seasonal migrants or workers in central urban areas.	Hoai Duc	S/SUB	S/SUB_woman_1 S/SUB_man_1

Table 4.2 List of focus group interviews

As soon as my application was approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, I contacted some local media in Hanoi to lodge some advertisements seeking participants. The most popular local newspaper *Ha Noi Moi* (New Hanoi) set a schedule to publish my recruitment for focus group participants. Having already contacted them via email and telephone from Sydney before the trip, I had obtained an agreement to advertise in *Ha Noi Moi* on three days: 25/12, 5/12 and 12/12/2009. The advertisements were also broadcast by Hanoi Radio and Television on the same days. All of six participants who participated in the student group were selected via these media advertisements.

In case there was a shortage of participants, my second strategy was to visit the community leaders of new residents resettling in different areas of metropolitan Hanoi. During my fieldwork,

⁵⁰ I wish to thank the Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH), where I worked in the Department of Journalism and Communication before leaving to study in Australia, for allowing me to use a seminar room to conduct focus interviews with the student group.

I visited a variety of wards in both the urban and suburban districts of Hanoi and the expanded areas to recruit volunteer participants (as shown in Table 1).

Potential participants living in metropolitan Hanoi were included: (a) rural-urban or urban-urban migrants; (b) long-time (permanent) or temporary or seasonal migrants; (c) migrants came from other provinces; and (d) migrants, who came from the rural suburban districts or the expanded areas, migrated to the urban districts of the city (Cu, 2000, Dang, 2005, World Bank, 2011b).

The criteria for selection required the participants to be: (1) those who migrated and remained uninterruptedly in residence in Hanoi city for up to 5 years but no less than 6 months at the time of the interviews (12/2009); (2) over 18 years of age as of 2009; and (3) those who watched television for unlimited period of time but not those who never watched⁵¹.

The 8 groups were organised according to participants' respective locations (see section 4.4.6 in which I explain this arrangement). Based upon the information each participant provided regarding his/her socio-economic status, I invited them to participate in homogeneous groups. An interview guide listing semi-structured questions was prepared to support the conversations conducted during the group interviews (see Appendix C).

4.4.3 Television in Vietnam

Television in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has a short history. During the Vietnam War, television was developed in South Vietnam with the support of experts from the US for

⁵¹ The criterion number (1) did not apply to participants who were seasonal migrants. The criteria numbers (2) and (3) applied to participants in the expanded areas of Hanoi. For participants who joined the student group, the level of age was 22 to ensure that they had graduated at the time.

“countries in the Free World” (Marr, 1998). In the North, a television studio was first set up in Hanoi in 1968; the first program was broadcast in 1970 (Marr, 1998).

Since *Doi Moi* in 1986, and with more general loosening of government control, television in Vietnam developed rapidly; for example, western films began to be shown on Vietnamese Television, news programs became more interesting, and “reporters greatly expanded their interviewing of ordinary citizens on the street, in the marketplace, and in private homes” (Marr, 1998, pp.14-15). During the last two decades, television has been the dominant mass medium in Vietnam. Market research reveals that 95 per cent of households in Hanoi and 89 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City possess television sets (Forrester, 1998). To date, Vietnam’s television network comprises a variety of stations: one national station (Vietnam Television - VTV); one digital station which also broadcasts nationwide (Vietnam Television Corporation - VTC); and more than 60 local stations (one in each province), which are under the control and management of provincial communist party committees and provincial people’s committees. Since the early of 2000s, all VTV and VTC channels have also been available via satellite. At the same time, a cable television system was introduced and developed in Vietnam offering hundreds of domestic and international channels⁵², particularly in cities across the country.

4.4.4 TV Programs selection for content analysis

The three TV stations involved in my research included:

- (1) Vietnam Television (VTV): the only national station that broadcasts nationwide and has its headquarters in Hanoi. VTV, which is directly controlled by the central committee of CPV, serves an information and propaganda function as a governmental ministry, i.e., the

⁵² Almost international channel broadcast via Vietnam cable system, are English language, some of which has been full or partly translated into Vietnamese such as HBO, Cinemax, ESPN and Discovery Channel.

station's general director must be a member of the Party's central committee and is considered a minister. By 2009, VTV possessed 9 free-to-air channels named VTV1-9 (VTV7 and VTV8 were under construction) and 9 relatively independent cable channels (pay TV) named VCTV1-10 (VCTV4 and VCTV5 were under construction).

(2) Vietnam Television Corporation (VTC): commenced broadcasting in 2004 by the Ministry of Information and Communication. Vietnamese viewers need to purchase a decoder called VTC-Digital modem to receive its signals. Channels by 2009: VTC1-9. Although broadcasting nationwide via a digital satellite system, VTC is not considered an official national station. The station was founded according to a 'socialisation' policy of television (*xa hoi hoa truyen hinh*) designed to encourage state-own corporations and social organisations to participate in television production for domestic market but operate under direction and supervision of the CPV and the Vietnamese government via the CPV's Department of Culture and Ideology and the Ministry of Information and Communication.

(3) Hanoi Radio and Television (HRT): a local station in Hanoi that broadcasts within the city. Rooted in VTV as a specific program, HRT became an independent station in the early of 1990s offering radio and television services for Hanoi residents. After the 2008 expansion plan was implemented, the local station of Ha Tay province⁵³ (HTV) merged with HRT. Channels by 2009: H1, H2 (free-to-air channels), HCaTV (cable - pay TV).

In Hanoi, customers can choose to install cable TV services provided by either VTV (VCTV) or HRT (HCaTV), or access to the digital satellite TV system provided by VTC. Fees of technical instalment and monthly usage are applied. Seven major channels are available on all of these

⁵³ Ha Tay, a western neighbouring province of Hanoi, was totally merged with Hanoi as a result of the 2008 area expansion.

three services including VTV1, VTV2, VTV3, H1, H2, VTC1 and VTC2. For example, VCTV offers its own channels, international channels, H1, H2 and VTC1, VTC2; while VTV1, VTV2, VTV3 are offered by both HCaTV and VTC. These seven channels are offered as free-to-air channels for viewers who use an antenna to receive TV signals.

For the purposes of my research, the three general channels with mixed programs broadcast by these three stations were analysed including VTV1, H1 and VTC1. Foreign channels that broadcast within the cable systems of VTV, HRT and the digital satellite of VTC, e.g., HBO, BBC World News, CNN, CNBC, Bloomberg and Australia Network⁵⁴ were excluded from this study. Domestic channels produced by these three stations for entertainment only (for example: VCTV2 is movies channel, VCTV3 is sports channel) were excluded from the program content analysis.

Broadcasting schedules were gathered by: (1) accessing the stations' official websites at vtv.vn, vtc.vn and hanoitv.vn; and, (2) collecting the stations' official magazines published monthly wherein these schedules were attached. Selection of the schedules was undertaken randomly as suggested by Rubin et al. (1996, p. 217): "Form two composite weeks that represent the entire year by randomly selecting two Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and so on" from the beginning of 2009 until the time of the field work (12/2009). Advertisement programs were excluded from this study as they were not displayed in the broadcasting schedules.

4.4.5 TV respondents and arranging in-depth interviews

After obtaining approval from the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research), I contacted potential key respondents from the three stations via the Human Resource

⁵⁴ For example, by 2009 more than 60 foreign channels had been broadcast via the VTV cable system.

managers: VTV, VTC and HRT. To ensure the period of data collection, a detailed timetable for the in-depth interviews was developed beforehand in consultation with the interviewees.

Before my field trip to Hanoi, Vietnam, 5 TV personnel from VTV (3), VTC (1) and HRT (1) had agreed in speaking and writing to provide me with interviews. Two indicated that they would introduce me to two other potential respondents at their station. I followed the protocol approved by the Macquarie University Human Ethics Committee when arranging these interviews. In the Vietnamese cultural context, as in most high-context⁵⁵ Asian cultures, it is not possible to schedule firm appointments prior to arrival in the city concerned. If one asks for a fixed appointment one is told in Vietnamese “when we meet we design it”, meaning “get in touch after arrival”. Therefore, as soon as arriving in Hanoi, I sent a formal letter of request issued by the Centre of International Communication, Macquarie University, to the heads of the human resources department of each of the three stations seeking their approval of the participation of the potential respondents (see Appendix E).

Finally, nine in-depth interviews were conducted at the respondents’ work places (their offices at TV stations). A digital voice recorder was used to record the interviews. The interviews followed a prepared interview guide (see Appendix D). As presented in Table 4.3, the order of this list is different from that of the undertaken tasks in Table 4.1. Due to the limited number of key respondents, the date of the interviews and gender of the 9 respondents are not shown in this Table in order to preserve their anonymity.

⁵⁵ See Edward T. Hall, (1976): *Beyond Culture*

In-depth interviews	Coding	Duration
In-depth interview 1	TV manager A	1 hour and 20 minutes
In-depth interviews 2	TV manager B	1 hour and 12 minutes
In-depth interviews 3	TV manager C	1 hour
In-depth interviews 4	TV producer A	1 hour and 5 minutes
In-depth interviews 5	TV producer B	1 hour
In-depth interviews 6	TV producer C	1 hour and 5 minutes
In-depth interviews 7	TV reporter A	1 hour and 10 minutes
In-depth interviews 8	TV reporter B	1 hour and 5 minutes
In-depth interviews 9	TV reporter C	1 hour and 12 minutes

Table 4.3 List of recorded in-depth interviews

In this thesis, I have proposed the assumption that television practitioners understand the motives, needs, and gratifications of their audiences. Questions appertaining to this assumption were raised during my in-depth interviews wherein television practitioners were invited to express their opinions vis-à-vis the culture and current development of Hanoi city's policies for its urbanisation, and particularly about the socio-economic statuses of Hanoi's new residents and new migrants. However, the answers provided by the practitioners did not necessarily reflect the focus group responses. The findings of these interviews will be provided in Chapters 5 and 6. Drawing upon these results, I will now discuss to what extent television practitioners understand the needs of their audiences in order to serve them adequately.

4.4.6 Problems and Solutions

When conducting my fieldwork, I encountered no obstacles when connecting and communicating with local people since I have been living in the city for long time and could understand their language and culture. In addition, since my fieldwork was geographically conducted within the

metropolitan area of Hanoi, I could save time travelling. One more significant advantage was that I used to work in the field of journalism; thus I was able to build a career network with other local journalists. This helped me to recruit potential interviewees.

I did, however, encounter some difficulties when conducting the fieldwork. The interviews were scheduled for the in two months prior to the Lunar New Year holiday when people were very busy. Thus, some of selected interviewees and participants cancelled their participation in my study at the last moment, leaving me to have to quickly seek substitutes.

When planning focus groups, organising the sites of interviews is always difficult: the researcher has to gather participants from distant areas into target groups (Hansen, 1998b). Those who participated in my research were new to Hanoi and living in different districts of the large expanded city. Finally I found a solution: with the exception of the student group, participants from the same districts were arranged into one group. But first, I checked carefully to ensure that they resided in different wards so that they did not know each other. Each interview was conducted in a room inside the district's community cultural house that I had hired. All of the participants knew the location of the place and how to get to there.

Among the further issues that I recognised when conducting the pilot focus group, I noted that the participants who comprised this group were among the first volunteers to respond to my advertisement. Although their socio-economic statuses, such as education, occupation and income, were similar, the differences in the places they came from, and in the time since they had migrated to Hanoi, affected their participation in and interaction with the group. For example, one participant, who said that he had been living in the city longer than the others, assumed an influential role in his interaction with other more hesitant participants. Also, at the beginning of this group interview, many participants remained silent: they only answered my questions when I invited them to speak. It is reasonable to assume that Vietnamese people, particularly those from

the north, refrain from sharing opinions and interacting with strangers about whom they know nothing because they do not want to open themselves to judgement. To resolve this problem, I ceased the discussion for a while and reminded the participants that my research aimed to gather their opinions and information which would be treated as research data, not as a justification of right or wrong. I also suggested that they look back at the information provided and the consent form each had signed guaranteeing that their confidences would be respected and preserved. When conducting the 8 focus group interviews, I spent ten to fifteen minutes ensuring that the participants had clearly understood the consent form prior to signing it.

The only reason that the in-depth interviews were conducted prior to focus groups discussions was pressure of time. Arranging the 8 focus groups sessions proved a lengthy process: it involved recruitment, seeking potential participants, arranging pilot interviews, and selecting and finalising the list of participants. I found it easier and quicker to obtain appointments with the television practitioners. Basically, I deemed it advisable to conduct the in-depth interviews first so that feedback regarding the audiences would provide material for the questions I planned to ask the key respondents. However, as my research was primarily concerned with the uses and gratifications of the audiences regarding television content, adopting this sequence promised to be effective. Some of ideas that the key respondents divulged during the 9 in-depth interviews I conducted regarding their production of TV programs were raised with the practitioners in an attempt to determine whether their thought coincided with that of the producers.

4.5 Ethics Review and Consent form

For the purposes of my project, which involved migrants residing in Hanoi city, who were over 18 years of age, I first obtained Ethics Approval from the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (see Appendix A). I attached information and consent forms for approval and had

them signed by all key respondents and participants. These forms provided an overview of my project including the purposes of the study, the research activities schedule, with emphasis on the voluntary nature of the key respondents' and participants' contributions and the fact that they were free to withdraw from the project at any time without having to provide a reason (see Appendix B).

A digital voice recorder was used to record the in-depth interviews and focus group sessions. The purpose of recording was to increase accuracy and to provide a reference source. Prior to the commencement of the interviews, I sought the permission of the key respondents and focus group participants to undertake audio recording. Information about the process and its purpose was included in the consent form. Throughout my project, all of the participants and key respondents permitted the interviews and conversations to be audio recorded: only two groups of participants rejected video recording.

To ensure confidentiality, the research data was stored in a locked cabinet in my home during my field study in Vietnam. After the project is completed, the research data will remain stored in a locked filing cabinet at the Centre for International Communication and on my secured hard disk. Only I and my supervisors will be able access the data.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented an overview of the research design and the process of data collection. Based upon a methodological consideration of the two paradigms - quantitative and qualitative research associated with a review of major approaches to television audience studies, I have designed my research from a qualitative approach. With the exception of my content analysis of the Vietnamese television programs, for which I employed a quantitative technique,

the two qualitative methods applied in this study were focus groups and in-depth interviews. In addition, I reviewed the literature of these three methods including their strengths and limitations as applied in communication research. In this thesis, the above methods are used to answer seven research questions relative to how the new residents of Hanoi city perceive the role of television in their everyday lives and how Vietnamese television serves and satisfies their communication needs.

In the second part of this chapter, I have presented in detail the process of my fieldwork undertaken in Hanoi, Vietnam, between November 2009 and February 2010. As well, I have provided the information and coding of 8 focus group interviews and 9 in-depth interviews conducted during the fieldwork.

In the next chapter, I will present the findings of the focus groups interviews which answer my research questions one to four.

CHAPTER 5

FINDING - MIGRANTS' TELEVISION WATCHING PRACTICES

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the data collected during the 8 focus group interviews conducted in Hanoi, Vietnam, between November 2009 and February 2010. As reported in Chapter 4, four research questions were posed to direct the interviews as follows:

RQ One: How do the new residents of Hanoi use Television to satisfy their communication needs?

RQ Two: How do the differences of SES influence the television choices made by them?

RS Three: To what extent do the new residents of Hanoi depend upon television as a source of information?

RQ Four: How do the new residents of Hanoi communicate with others in terms of interpersonal and intercultural communication?

In the first section of this chapter, I provide more details of both participants and groups. Following that, the answers to each research question are reported correspondent to each section.

5.1 Profiles of participants

Eight focus group interviews were conducted in five districts of Hanoi including urban, suburban and expanded areas. As shown in Figure 5.1, participants from the same district were invited to join the group arranged according to location: Long Bien (Groups 1&2); Dan Phuong (Groups 3&4); Thanh Xuan (Groups 5&7); Hoan Kiem (Group 6); and Hoai Duc (Group 8).



Figure 5.1 Map of focus group interviews conducted in Hanoi

5.1.1 Groups 1 & 2

Groups 1 and 2 each comprised 6 participants, i.e., migrant workers living and working in Long Bien district. Located 8 km from the city central and bounded by the Red River in the north-east of Hanoi, the district consisted of 14 wards and had a population of approximately 200,000 people (2010). In 2003, Long Bien was disconnected from the Gia Lam suburban district to become a new urban administrative unit due to the rapid rate of urbanisation. According to the

Census 2009 (GSO, 2010), the largest number of Hanoi migrants (50%) had moved to the city's industrial zones of which the two earliest zones, Sai Dong A and Sai Dong B, were located in Long Bien district.

Participants	Gender		Ages	Education		Time in the location		Marital status	
	M	F		Highest	Lowest	Longest	Shortest	Married	Single
6	0	6	21-35	Year 12	Year 10	3.5 years	8 months	3	3

Table 5.1 Group 1 - Female migrant workers (F/MW)

Participants	Gender		Ages	Education		Time in the location		Marital status	
	M	F		Highest	Lowest	Longest	Shortest	Married	Single
6	6	0	20-28	College	Year 12	4 years	8 months	1	5

Table 5.2 Group 2 - Male migrant workers (M/MW)

All six participants in Group 1 came from provinces neighbouring Hanoi including Thanh Hoa (2), Nghe An, Thai Binh, Hai Duong and Hung Yen. Four participants in Group 2 came from different provinces: Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Thai Binh, Hai Duong; two were residents of Ha Tay province, which became a Hanoi expanded area in 2008. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 respectively show in detail the profiles of the participants who joined Groups 1 and 2. All 12 participants were living in rented houses in various small hamlets (*xom tro*) across the district.

All of the female participants rented apartments⁵⁶ in the various houses: each had one TV set; one of them used VTC's digital TV, one used VTC's cable services and the other watched free-to-air channels. With the exception of the only married male in the group, the male participants shared an apartment with two or three other male colleagues and shared TV sets.

⁵⁶ I observed that in each apartment there was a kitchen, a bathroom and one main room which had been divided into a living-cum-bedroom by the tenant. One house comprised three to four such apartments. A series of ten or more houses close situated together constituted a migrant hamlet (*xom tro*).

5.1.2 Groups 3 & 4

The participants in Groups 3 and 4 were selected from among residents living in Dan Phuong suburban district. Being an administrative unit of the former Ha Tay province before merging with Hanoi's expansion, Dan Phuong comprised one major town and 15 communes.

Located 15 km north-west of Hanoi, this rural suburban district is designated to become one of Hanoi's satellite cities by 2020, with services and light industry as major economic sectors rather than agriculture.

While Hanoi is the cultural centre for the Red River Delta region in north Vietnam, the former Ha Tay province has its own cultures and customs. The different local areas combine to constitute Dan Phuong district as of cultural activities such as folk festivals, folk sports/games, traditional handicrafts and folk songs.

The twelve participants who joined these two groups watched television with their families: some had more than one TV set at home.

Of these participants, seven were farmers (three had changed to another occupation); two worked in offices; one was a construction builder; and, two ran their own local businesses (an internet café and a hardware shop).

Table 5.3 and 5.4 show more details of these participants.

Participants	Gender		Ages	Education		Occupations		Marital status	
	M	F		Highest	Lowest	Rural	Others	Married	Single
6	0	6	40-55	Year 12	Year 7	4	2	6	0

Table 5.3 Group 3 - Female residents in an expanded area (F/EA)

Participants	Gender		Ages	Education		Occupations		Marital status	
	M	F		Highest	Lowest	Rural	Others	Married	Single
6	6	0	37-54	Year 12	Year 10	3	3	6	0

Table 5.4 Group 4 - Male residents in an expanded area (M/EA)

5.1.3 Group 5

The participants in Group 5, who came from other provinces, had studied and graduated from a university or college in Hanoi. Of these participants, one was living with her parents, who had migrated to the city after her graduation; two were married and living with their own families; and the others were either single, living alone or with roommates. Table 5.5 shows their details.

Participants	Gender		Ages	Employee status		Time in the location after graduation		Marital status	
	M	F		Yes	No	Longest	Shortest	Married	Single
6	3	3	24-31	5	1	3.5 years	1 years	2	4

Table 5.5 Group 5 - Graduates who had resettled in the city (STUD)

5.1.4 Group 6

The six participants who constituted Group 6 were temporary migrants living in the Hoan Kiem area, a district located in the city centre where Hoan Kiem Lake was considered the heart of Hanoi.

Prior to the 20th century, the original area of Hanoi city was limited within a district bounded by 36 ancient streets. Hoan Kiem, the oldest and smallest district of Hanoi, is the busy centre for the small businesses that line its streets.

According to a survey undertaken by *Ha Noi Moi* newspaper (2009), the largest number of temporary migrants is concentrated in the wards of Hoan Kiem; for example, every year, there were between 1,000 to 3,000 migrants residing in 200 boarding-houses (*nha tro*) in Phuc Tan ward. With approximately 150,000 habitants (2009) living in the total area of 5,300 km, Hoan Kiem has the highest density population district of Hanoi (with 33,662 people per km square)⁵⁷.

The six participants who joined this group were from rural provinces including Hung Yen, Hai Duong, Vinh Phuc and the former Ha Tay. With the exception of one construction builder, the other five migrants were unskilled workers: they included two street vendors, two manual labourers and one salesgirl working in a clothing shop.

The participants reported that they shared TV sets with other migrants and normally watched TV in the evening after work.

More details of these participants are shown in Table 5.6.

⁵⁷ Assessed to <http://www.hoankiem.gov.vn> on 31 October 2009

Participants	Gender		Ages	Education		Time in the location		Marital status	
	M	F		Highest	Lowest	Longest	Shortest	Married	Single
6	3	3	20-35	Year 12	Year 7	1.5 years	6 months	2	4

Table 5.6 Group 6 - Temporary migrants in an urban district (T/UB)

5.1.5 Group 7

Group 7 comprised six participants living in Thanh Xuan district, who had migrated to Hanoi some year earlier. Located in the south-west of Hanoi in the neighbouring former Ha Tay province, Thanh Xuan, formerly a rural suburban district, became an urban unit in 1996. Since the early 2000s, the district has been one of the most rapidly urbanising districts of Hanoi. The process of urbanization has seen many new buildings and business and shopping centres constructed. Thanh Xuan has attracted migrants from neighbouring provinces due to its dynamic transitional economy. And, property prices and living costs are reasonable compared to those of other central districts.

Participants	Gender		Ages	Education		Time in the location		Marital status	
	M	F		Highest	Lowest	Longest	Shortest	Married	Single
6	2	4	25-55	Year 12	Year 9	2 years	4.5 years	4	2

Table 5.7 Group 7 - Permanent migrants in an urban district (P/UB)

As shown in Table 5.7, four women and two men were invited to join this group. One man, who was the oldest (55 years), lived with his family and ran a grocery business from home. Another man was a motorbike taxi driver.

Of the four female participants, two were tailors working for local private shops, one was a hairdresser, and one was the owner of a food store at a local open-air market. With the exception

of the driver, five participants reported that they watched TV at home and at the shop/store while working.

5.1.6 Group 8

The group 8 interviews were arranged in Hoai Duc, an inner west district approximately 10 km from the centre of Hanoi. Between the 1960s and the 1990s, the district was part of the former Ha Tay province; but twice it was emerged with Hanoi due to its area expansion, i.e., in 1961 and 1978.

Similar to the neighbouring district of Dan Phuong, Hoai Duc used to be a rural area with one major town and 19 communes. Due to its close position to Hanoi, Hoai Duc was given priority to implement new urban projects, particularly infrastructures and transportation construction. At the time of the interviews (12/2009), almost all agricultural production in this area had ceased. The authorities were waiting for urban construction projects to be implemented.

Due to the 2008 expansion of Hanoi city, which was associated with the decline of land use for agricultural production, many people from the expanded areas and suburban districts had to change their occupation from farming to services or manual labour.

In recent years, Hanoi has witnessed a large number of residents from the peripheries converging on the central urban area seeking employment (Ha Noi Moi, 2009).

The three men and three women participated in Group 6 were Hoai Duc residents, i.e., who now seasonal migrants (sojourners) or daytime workers in the city's urban districts. Of these participants, one was a graduate working in an office; one was a lorry driver; one was a safeguard

officer working for a private company; one was a builder; one was a charwoman; and one was a farmer who grew and delivered vegetables to the city. Their details are provided in Table 5.8.

Participants	Gender		Ages	Education		Employee status		Marital status	
	M	F		Highest	Lowest	Full time Part time	Casual	Married	Single
6	3	3	24-50	Graduate	Year 10	3	2	4	2

Table 5.8 Group 8 - Suburban residents (seasonal migrants) of urban districts (S/SUB)

5.2. Research Question One: Television usage and gratifications

5.2.1 Types of TV viewers

In my attempt to answer this research question, I followed Rubin's (1981) identification of nine clusters of viewing motivation which included: (1) viewing as a pastime/ as a habit; (2) viewing for companionship; (3) viewing for arousal/excitement; (4) viewing for specific program content; (5) viewing for relaxation; (6) viewing for information/learning; (7) viewing as a means of escape/to forget; (8) viewing for entertainment/enjoyment; and, (9) viewing for social interaction.

In his later analysis of a number of TV viewing motivation surveys, Rubin (1983) found that: "Only information and pass time/habit viewing motivation factors are unrelated; all other viewing motivation factors are interrelated to some degree" (p. 44). For example, people who watched TV to seek information probably also used the medium for companionship, entertainment, even for escape whereas entertainment viewers might gather information and consume their time for escape and companionship simultaneously. Based upon this interrelation, Rubin (1983) examined action of the correlation between motivations and levels of viewing distinguished two major types of view: (1) informational viewers, who actively sought information to know and to learn something from watching TV; and, (2) habitus/passtime viewers, who watched TV "when there's

nothing better to do, to occupy idle time, ..., to relieve boredom, and for entertainment” and paid little attention in specific programs and content (p. 48). Apart from these two types, escapist viewers, who used TV to forget, were particularly identified due to their controversial motivations. While most escapists, Rubin claimed, were normally passtime viewers, some might be information seekers, that is, ‘information-escape dichotomy’ viewers (1983).

In the course of my interviews, all of the participants in the 8 focus groups reported their viewing motivations as correspondent to all of the above nine clusters. One participant expressed more than one reason for watching TV. Also, their answers to the interview questions revealed the interrelation among motivations that Rubin proposed. These interrelations, and the connection between motivations and TV programs/content, suggested a classification of participants into different types of viewers. However, different from Rubin’s (1983) classification, the answers provided by a number of participants in my research revealed a close link between entertainment motivation and specific programs/content. To be more precise, participants who watched TV for entertainment differed from those who watched it to pass the time and as a means of escape (regardless of the TV content). While the latter might enjoy entertainment, this motivation was additional for them.

Based upon data analysis, I identified four types of viewers among the 48 participants as shown in Table 5.9. Classification was consistent with the major motivations that participants expressed including: information, entertainment, passing the time and escaping. It is understandable that these types of viewers might overlap each other. For example, a number of participants distinguished themselves as both informational and entertainment viewers; however, their answers to additional questions in the interviews revealed their different levels of interest in correspondent TV programs/content, and thus revealed which categorization they should be identified with; i.e., more as information seekers or more as entertainment viewers. Additionally,

among participants who saw TV as entertainment, some were frequently exposed to even fans of several specific programs whereas others paid no or little attention to any of the programs they watched. The former might be considered entertainment viewers; the latter watched to pass the time or were probably escapist viewers. It is also worth noting that in many cases the additional motivations that participants reported coincided with what they obtained as extended gratifications. For example, participants who were escapist viewers might recognise information and learn something during their TV watching. Therefore, in my data analysis, not only were the major motivations that helped to identify participants according to types of viewers, but also taken into account their additional reasons and obtainment.

Types of viewers	Major viewing for	Additionally viewing for	Connection to TV programs
Informational	information/learning	entertainment, companionship, excitement, specific content, relaxation, social interaction	strong
Entertainment	entertainment	information, companionship, excitement, pass time, specific content, relaxation, escape, social interaction	strong
Time passers	habit/pass time	companionship, excitement, relaxation, escape, entertainment, social interaction	weak
Escapist	escape/to forget	companionship, excitement, relaxation, escape, entertainment	weak

Table 5.9 Major types of TV viewers

In this section, I provide the critical data to answering Research Question One: How do the new residents of Hanoi use television to satisfy their communication needs? Following the qualitative data analysis, this finding concentrates upon the participants who used TV to gratify their needs

rather than examining their different types of motivations. Thus, the data analysed and presented in this section correspond to the groups of participants sequentially. Identifications of different viewer types among the participants in each group, the gratifications they obtained and the specific programs they linked to these gratifications, together constitute this section.

5.2.2 How participants sought and obtained gratifications

5.2.2.1 Group 1 (Female migrant workers - F/MG)

Almost all of the participants in this group said that ‘viewing for information’ was not necessarily coupled with ‘viewing for learning’. For them, the former meant ‘knowing something’ (normally news and events) whereas, the latter suggested ‘being perceived and to acting accordingly’.

Accordingly, one participant, who frequently watched news programs, reported her motivation for information as follows: “I like to watch news programs in order to know what happened ‘outside’ of my life” (F/MW_woman_1). She saw news programs as ‘real’ and ‘meaningful’ compared to entertainment programs, which “merely served people who needed to be entertained”. This woman recalled a news item she had viewed 2-3 days earlier; the news reported that some fruits in the market were preserved using a chemical potentially conducive to cancer.

Three other participants stated that they watched TV because “there are always things to learn on television” (F/MW_woman_3). The programs they liked ranged from news, games shows, cookery, quiz shows to dramas, even advertisements. For example, one said: “I learned how to cook, how to take care of children and how to protect myself to avoid accidents in public transport” (F/MW_woman_2). However, these participants also revealed they were in between

viewing for information (with emphasis on learning) and viewing for entertainment. They appeared to be excited and quickly joined in the conversation when it came to talking about entertainment programs. One mentioned two of her most favourite programs: *Hay chon gia dung*⁵⁸ and *Dao quanh pho phuong, dao quanh thi truong*⁵⁹ because “it helped me to know how to bargain when buying things⁶⁰” (F/MW_woman_3). Another stated:

I frequently watched Vietnamese and Chinese series dramas from which I learned lessons in interpersonal relations, what I should do, what I should not do. I liked the main characters who were normally very poor or in disadvantageous circumstances but tried to cope with difficulties and finally obtained success in their lives” (F/MW_woman_4).

One female participant in this group agreed that viewing to know something and to learn something was relative. She linked her information viewing to specific programs: “I spent most of my using TV time for watching the O2 channel⁶¹ which provided many helpful information of health that I learned and applied in taking care of myself and my family” (F/MW_woman_5).

Only one participant in Group 1 was neither an information nor entertainment viewer. She followed the others when they talked about information or entertainment; but, she could not remember the broadcast schedule of the programs she mentioned. This person appeared to be an escapist rather than a passing of time viewer because “for migrant workers like us who are always busy in working, taking care of children, and encountering many difficulties due to economic deficiency, we do not have much time to pass”, she said. Her escapist viewing appeared linked to relaxation and companionship motivations:

⁵⁸ the Vietnamese version of *The Price is Right* on VTV3

⁵⁹ means ‘around the streets, around the market’- a daily news coverage broadcast on H1 providing updated information about local markets and soft news within Hanoi city.

⁶⁰ In Hanoi, with the exception of supermarkets in shopping centres, there were no fixed prices marked on goods and food in other local markets.

⁶¹ A specific content channel of VTV specialising in health topic only.

I came from Thanh Hoa province⁶². My husband is serving in a military unit located in the south, and my daughter is living with her grandparents in the home town... We are now separated in three distanced places... I usually watched TV when I felt tired and sad, particularly on the days I work on the night shift while my daughter is at school in day time so I cannot telephone her” (F/MW_woman_6).

5.2.2.2 Group 2 (Male migrant workers - M/MG)

According to their responses, all of the Group 2 participants were entertainment viewers. These young male migrant workers revealed that in the main they were fans of entertainment programs. Their favourite channel was VTV3⁶³ and their favourite programs were sports-oriented (particularly soccer), films and TV dramas (Vietnamese and foreign), and game shows.

Of these participants, five were single and sharing a TV set with other male workers (normally three or four men living either in an apartment or a boarding-house). All of the TV sets received only free-to-air channels including VTV1, VTV2, VTV3, H1, H2 and VTC1. The workers watched news programs and were acquainted with some current issues of the time such as the Flower Festival in Hanoi⁶⁴, the earthquake in Haiti⁶⁵, and the global economic crisis of 2009. However, they had a stronger motivation to view entertainment and spent more time on this type of program rather than on information. For example, one said that: “I usually watch TV from 7 p.m. to midnight. I have dinner at the time of the evening news. After 8 p.m., there are mainly films and soccer matches broadcast on TV” (M/MG_man_1). Another stated that: “I like films, game shows, and sometimes scientific documents of technologies because I like mechanisms. I

⁶² located between the north and centre of Vietnam.

⁶³ the specific content channel for sport, entertainment and economic information.

⁶⁴ This was the first and largest flower festival held in the centre of Hanoi to greet The New Year of 2010. However, only one day after the festival commenced, a number of the flowers were either stolen or trampled down by visitors taking photographs of the exhibits. Local media’s reporting of this shameful event drew a lot of comments, many of which blamed the problem on migrants and visitors who were not Hanoi residents.

⁶⁵ This tragic earthquake, which rocked Haiti on 12 January 2010 killed approximately 100, 000 people (Fox News, 2010).

also like cartoons. Sometimes I go out with friend in the evening, but will be back home early if there is a good film on air” (M/MG_man_2).

The only married participant in this group, who enjoyed entertainment and was a regular viewer, mainly watched films. He rented a private house and lived with his wife, who also worked. They had a three year old daughter. This man, who used cable system services, liked specific channels for films such as VTC2, VCTV2 and HBO (which provided Vietnamese subtitles).

These entertainment viewers also revealed their additional reasons for watching TV. The programs they watched gratified other needs including viewing for information, companionship, excitement, passing the time, relaxation and social interaction.

5.2.2.3 Group 3 (Female residents in an expanded area - F/EA)

All six participants in this group identified as information/learning viewers, who knew exactly what programs they liked and when they were broadcast. If they missed a favourite program, they “waited for its being rebroadcast at another time” (F/EA_woman_1). These participants excitedly interrupted each other during the conversation to tell of their viewing motivations. Interestingly, four out of these six participants possessed more than one TV set at home. One stated that:

General speaking, the local economy is getting better, new road has been constructed, transportation and good circulation are more comfortable than 3-4 years ago. I felt being encouraged to think of ways to improve my family’s income. For example, I increased the number of poultry and cattle from which I earned more money to buy modern furniture. Certainly, buying some more TV sets was my priority. My family now has 3 TV sets (F/EA_woman_2).

Another 55 year old participant said “I am old now, so I forget most information right after watched; but, I never missed the evening news at 7 p.m.” (F/EA_woman_3). She mentioned the earthquake without remembering the country (Haiti); but, she stated that on the previous day, a child was rescued after 12 days of being trapped in the ruins.

These participants appeared to share common motivations for watching TV. Although they had little time to watch TV, they actively sought information that served their interests and from which they could learn useful things. As residents who mainly worked in agriculture and cattle-breeding, they liked most of the programs on H2⁶⁶ and VTV2⁶⁷ that focused on agricultural topics; for example, *Cung nong dan ban cach lam giau* (Talking of getting rich with farmers), and *Ban cua nha nong* (A friend of farmers) hosted by famous agricultural engineer Nguyen Lan Hung. One said that: “My family is breeding reproductive cows so I really liked a program on H2 guiding in detail how to feed them, how to keep them clean and warm in the winter. This type of program I never missed for years” (F/EA_woman_4). Middle aged female participants showed their enthusiasm for female programs and their interest in topics related to family violence and gender equality. They tended to dislike entertainment programs such as games shows and comedies. They only mentioned one game show, *Chung toi la chien sy* (We are soldiers)⁶⁸. One explained (and the others agreed) that: “To be honest, entertainment programs were very ridiculous, particularly the comedies such as *Gala Cuoi* (Gala Funs). Sometimes I had to tell my children to turn it off or switch to another channel” (F/EA_woman_5).

For these participants, other viewing motivations closely related to their information seeking included viewing for specific content, companionship, excitement, relaxation and social interaction.

⁶⁶ a channel which belonged to the former Ha Tay province before the 2008 expansion.

⁶⁷ a channel for scientific topics and knowledge dissemination.

⁶⁸ a VTV3 game show whose participants are young Vietnamese soldiers.

5.2.2.4 Group 4 (Male residents in an expanded area - M/EA)

Similar to the participants in Group 5, who were residents in the same district, the six men in Group 6 appeared to be information/learning viewers rather than entertainment or relaxation viewers. However, they differed from their female fellow-town participants in three viewing behaviours: (1) they emphasised information for news rather than for learning new skills; (2) they were interested in hard news (political, social and economic issues) rather than soft news; and, (3) they were concerned regarding television effects related to educating their children rather than television as a means of ‘occupying’ them.

During my interview with this group, the participants spent most of their time talking about current issues they watched. Their interests ranged from the dispute between China and Vietnam in the South China Sea⁶⁹, the 2009 global economic crisis, and inflation in Vietnam, which was the highest in Asia that year. Not only did they mention the news headlines, but these men also took this opportunity to argue with each other regarding several political issues. For example, one claimed: “Frankly, the national news coverage of VTV did not provide enough information, in particular about the relations between Vietnam and China” (M/MW_man_1). Another man, who was the owner of a local Internet café, agreed, stating that: “Not only this topic, but to know other ‘sensitive’ political issues I had to access to Internet to read from unofficial sources of information..., I mean the non-government websites” (M/MW_man_2).

When asked about some entertainment programs, these participants kept silent for a while. Then, one stated: “For this topic you should ask my wife” (M/MW_man_3). Another man smiled and continued: “You are right! My wife watches only films and dramas. She does not have a broad vision. She sometimes asked me why I liked watching news because for her those news reported things happened somewhere far away and did not relate to our life” (M/MW_man_4). Then, the

⁶⁹ Both China and Vietnam claimed sovereignty over the of Paracel islands. China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei claimed their sovereignty over the Spratly islands.

man returned to talking about films and TV dramas screening at that time. The oldest participant said: “Last month, my wife and I voted for *Bong dung muon khoc*⁷⁰ to be the best Vietnamese film of the year. For me, this was the only good film. Many of the others were ridiculous” (M/MW_man_5). Together with his fellow participants, he continued this discussion reflecting upon what he saw as the negative effects of films upon the young generation in terms of cultural behaviour.

It is reasonable to assume that the viewing type for these participants was information seeking, which included other motivations for entertainment, relaxation and social interaction, at least to some extent.

5.2.2.5 Group 5 (Graduate students resettled in the city - STUD)

Viewing motivations varied among the participants in this group. One married man reported that he usually watched the news, scientific documentaries and IT content programs because of their relation to his occupation. He reported an exact daily timetable for watching TV: at 12 p.m. going home from work to have lunch with his wife, and watching the midday news coverage; between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. watching his favourite programs before doing his paper work until 3 a.m. the following day. This man, as well as being an information seeker, also viewed for relaxation. He wished that there was a specific channel covering housing and real estate topics which had been an interest of his for years.

One married woman, who distinguished herself as an entertainment and heavy viewer, watched 4 hours per day between 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. and in intermittent periods during the day. She stated:

⁷⁰ ‘Suddenly I want to cry’ - a Vietnamese romantic film for youth audiences.

“I liked films and dramas on TV but now I am very busy taking care of my little daughter. I usually turn the TV on and we both watch it” (STUD_woman_1).

The other three single participants did not watch TV frequently. One man said that he had no time for TV: he usually had to go out of the city for business purposes and only stayed home 2 or 3 days per week. He said: “On these days, I prefer hanging out with friends. My TV set receives only free-to-air channels but I do not think I will apply cable services. Sometimes I watched TV for passing my time only” (STUD_man_2). Two female participants reported that they spent most of their spare time surfing the Internet. One stated: “Television cannot satisfy my needs. I want to connect with friends, chat with them and share our own information via the Internet. However, I sometimes watch TV for passing time or with my friend and neighbour because I do not want to watch TV alone” (STUD_woman_2). One single man, who could be considered an escapist viewer, reported that he watched a lot of TV programs due to his unemployed status at that time.

5.2.2.6 Group 6 (Temporary migrants in an urban district - T/UB)

The three male migrants who participated in this group were the passtime viewers, who paid very little attention to any specific content and program. For example, one who worked as a manual labourer, stated:

My job is very flexible and depends upon the offer. So I do not have a fixed timetable for every day. Some days I finished work at 7 p.m. and had dinner with other roommates. Some days I came home very late at 10 p.m. due to travelling far away as the job required. And some days there was nothing to do. I watched evening news but not often (T/UB_man_1).

Another man reported as follows:

After a full day working I feel very tired and watch TV for relaxation before I go to sleep. In these boarding houses there are different apartments with or without TV set. If you wanted an apartment with TV set you would have to pay a higher rent and certainly including electricity. To save the rent, my roommates and I just use TV for about 2 hours every day in the evening (T/UB_man_2).

These participants also reported that they liked film programs, particularly foreign action movies. When such films were screened, they usually stayed up late to watch them until they ended.

Different from these men, two female participants, who were street vendors, stated that they did not watch TV because there were no TV sets in their apartment. One said: “I watched TV more often when I was in my home town. In this place I can sometimes join with one of my friends in another boarding-house who has a TV set” (T/UB_woman_1).

Another female participant revealed that she was an entertainment viewer. “Before I migrated to Hanoi, I was a frequent viewer of some game shows such as *Ai la trieu phu*⁷¹ and Vietnamese dramas on VTV3” (T/UB_woman_3).

5.2.2.7 Group 7 (Permanent migrants in an urban district - P/UB)

Of the two men who participated in this group, one who was aged 55 and lived with his family distinguished himself as an entertainment viewer.

He stated:

⁷¹ the Vietnamese version of *Who wants to be a millionaire* broadcast on VTV3.

*My children are grown up, one has got married and one will graduate next year. My wife and I moved to this city in order to help them, particularly the older son. I run a grocery store close to my home. I can watch TV there in the day time. In the evening I watch some quiz shows such as *Dau truong 100*⁷² and TV sports like soccer” (P/UB_man_1).*

The younger male participant, who was a motorbike taxi driver, may be considered an information viewer. He watched very little TV and was interested only in the news coverage at 6 a.m., 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. To this man, television was not important because: “As a husband and a father, I have responsibility to earn money for my own family. To date, I still cope with a lot of difficulties in doing my job... I had no more time to enjoy watching TV” (P/UB_man_2).

The four female participants in this group reported their motivation for watching TV as passing the time. The three who were tailors, together with the hairdresser, linked this motivation with companionship: “I usually watch TV while working in the shop. There is a TV set hanging on the wall. Sometimes I headed up to view if it was an interesting program like game shows or films. But for most of time, I just listen to its sound” (P/UB_woman_1). Another young girl who lived alone stated that she watched TV in the evening after work. This participant, who came from Thanh Hoa, lived for two years in Ho Chi Minh (HCM) city before moving to Hanoi. She said: “I did not feel lonely when I was in HCM city because I had some friends there. Now I have not got any new friends here. I do not know what to do rather than watching TV in my spare time” (P/UB_woman_4).

5.2.2.8 Group 8 (Suburban residents who were seasonal migrants in urban districts -S/SUB)

Two female participants in this group described themselves as entertainment and heavy viewers. One stated that she watched TV any time, both at her home and at the house in the city where she worked as a charwoman. The other said that she was a fan of Vietnamese and Chinese TV drama

⁷² the Vietnamese version of *One vs 100* broadcast on VTV3.

series. During the interview, they became so excited when talking about these dramas that the other participants could not get a word in. “You would not allow yourself to miss any series if you knew that other women watched it. Every day I go shopping in the local market, we easily join with them in discussion about the series which are broadcast” (S/SUB_woman_1).

It was understandable that these participants could learn something from the ‘high educative’ messages that these films conveyed. One reported that this helped her “to teach my children about the life and people” (S/SUB_woman_2).

The only graduate participant in this group reported that she enjoyed and never missed the evening news coverage at 7 p.m. She also used TV for entertainment and relaxation by watching films, fashion shows or music programs in the evening.

The three male participants, who shared a common viewing motivation for information, did not reject entertainment programs: they simply paid more attention to current issues. One said: “When some men sit together and talk, we tend to discuss what recently happened in the world, in this country and this city. Certainly, I like to talk with my friends who have similar education level so that I feel more confident. Also, I found that people in this area are more friendly and amicable than those in the city who are unapproachable” (S/SUB_man_1).

5.3. Research Question Two: Different SES impacts upon knowledge acquisition among the participants

In this section, I present the data analysed to answer the second research question of how the different SES of the participants might impact upon their knowledge acquisition. Based upon the knowledge gap hypothesis, I employed three variables of SES (education, gender and

occupation/income) that determined their viewing motivation to examine the similarities and differences among the participants vis-a-vis acquiring knowledge from watching TV.

5.3.1 Education

In terms of education, those who participated in my research can be classified into the following three categories: 31 lower educated, educated to high school level (between Year 10 and Year 12); 8 higher educated, holders of diplomas or Bachelor's degrees; and, 9 lowest educated, those whose finished their schooling at Year 9 or under.

The causal correlation between the education variable and knowledge acquisition was not found in my qualitative research; however, several noticeable findings revealed the similarities and differences among participants of the three educational categories according to their reports of how and what they learned from watching TV.

(1) When watching TV to learn, the lower and lowest educated participants tended to acquire knowledge from the TV content closely related to their everyday lives. For example, the female migrant workers (Group 1) reported that they learned several useful skills from watching TV. However, while most of them seemed to actively seek information, in the main these participants were oriented towards general knowledge, which served their basic needs such as buying things and taking care of their children. Four of the six female residents of an expanded area (Group 3), who were farmers and educated to Year 7 only, reported that they preferred programs on agriculture which informed their everyday job experiences; e.g., breeding cattle or planting vegetables. In contrast, the higher educated tended to watch specific content that afforded higher knowledge. For example, a graduate student in Group 5 stated that he was inspired by programs featuring financial issues or information technology.

(2) Among the participants who watched TV news segments, the lowest educated participants tended to watch local and soft news, whereas the participants with lower educated status, particularly the males (for example, the men in Group 4) enjoyed watching local, national and world news equally. Interestingly, the higher educated participants did not pay much attention to TV news albeit they watched it: some of them preferred to surf the Internet when they needed information.

(3) There was no considerable difference among the participants in terms of watching entertainment programs because they could be readily understood by all audiences of different levels of education. However, many of the lower and lowest educated participants reported that they learned from these programs, particularly from quiz shows, films and TV dramas. They learned from “real-life experiences” (F/MW_woman_3), and “moral lessons to teach our children” (S/SUB_woman_2, M/EA_man_5). Some among the higher educated and entertainment viewers revealed that they watched entertainment programs mainly for relaxation and excitement rather than for learning something from them.

(4) A number of the lowest educated participants, particularly those who had migrated to the city on a temporary basis, constituted the pass time viewers. They reported that they learned very little from watching TV due to their weak connection to any specific content.

5.3.2 Gender

Gender difference proved an important variable when comparing the participants’ motivations for acquiring knowledge. Male and female participants with similar SES used TV differently to some extent.

(1) Amongst the migrant workers, almost all of the female participants (Group 1) reported their strong viewing motivation for information/learning, whereas males (Group 1) of the same age

preferred to watch TV for entertainment. However, the only married participant in the male group, a heavy entertainment viewer, stated that:

When at home, my wife usually takes care of my daughter while I watched TV in the evening... I liked HBO channel the most. Because this is a foreign channel, so I need to read the Vietnamese subtitles to understand the content. This means that I have to sit in front of the TV set... However, if my wife needs some help, I will have to stand up”
(M/MW_man_6).

All of the female participants in Group 1 were living in either single rooms or, in the case of those who were married with their families. Five out of the six men in Group 2 shared apartments and TV sets with other roommates and usually watched together. One of the women said: “Because my time is limited, I want to take advantage of watching TV. There is a lot of knowledge and many experiences that I cannot learn from anyone else but TV” (F/MW_woman_5). One man reported: “My roommates and I, we all like soccer and films. I think television is to serve my hobby” (M/MW_man_2).

(2) The male and female participants from an expanded area (Groups 3 & 4) revealed the different ways in which they acquired knowledge from watching TV. The men liked learning what happened from the news and to improve their knowledge of political and social issues. The women preferred other specific content such as female or agricultural programs from which they learned everyday experiences. Regarding watching the news, these female participants preferred the local news rather than the national news, and soft news rather than hard news. For example, one middle aged woman, who said her husband was educated to high school level while she finished in Year 7, reported that: “My husband watched news more frequently than me. He then explained them for me” (F/EA_woman_2). One male participant, reporting on his wife’s viewing, said that: “My wife has limited vision. She likes films only” (M/EA_man_4). Supported

by the traditional configuration of a patriarchal society, these men revealed and reported their roles as “the head of the family” who took the responsibility to teach their children, and to some extent, their wives. For example, one man said in favour of the others:

*I also have to watch entertainment programs, particularly films and dramas to know what they [TV stations] are broadcasting on television at the moment. My wife did not know how to tell our children the right and the wrong though she watched a lot of these programs. You know, when the series *Nhat Ky Vang Anh*⁷³ ceased to broadcast, which was not out of my prediction, I sat down to explain to my teenaged daughter that, look, there are some good things but also bad things on TV which encouraged individualism, deviated from our traditional values. You see, many kids now did not know to say hello to the older people, some did not concentrate on learning at school; rather, they played truant and came to the Internet café, which now abounded in this area, to do what if not to play games (M/EA_man_5).*

5.3.3 Income and occupation

The education variable is closely linked to occupation and income which together form individuals' SES. In my research, with the exception of the female and male workers (Groups 1&2), other participants refused to provide their income details. However, they revealed that their incomes were getting better. For example, participants in Groups 3 and 4 (residents in expanded areas) reported that their families' incomes had increased at least 30% compared to two years prior to the 2008 expansion of Hanoi city. Some among them had sold their cultivating land; nowadays, it functioned as civil land. Some had received compensation after their land was revoked for urban projects. One participant in Group 8 observed that:

⁷³ ‘Vang Anh’s Diary’ - a TV drama series for teenagers broadcast on VTV3 in 2007. The teen actress, who played the main character Vang Anh, was strongly opposed by the public after her sex clip was unexpectedly posted and disseminated on the Internet. The series was ordered to cease broadcasting this year.

At the moment, one sào⁷⁴ of land in this district⁷⁵ costs approximately 400 million VND⁷⁶; even in some areas which are close to the main road, the figure might reach 700 million VND⁷⁷, i.e., 20 times higher than its price in 2007 (est. 35 million/sào). As compared to the GDP per capita⁷⁸, if a household sells only one sào, they would probably change their life (S/SUB_man_2).

Another man in this group agreed, stating that:

Generally speaking, due to economic growth and individual's income increasing, people may have more needs for information and entertainment, and other needs for home comforts. Therefore, we earned more but also spent more money... When it comes to learning from TV, because I am working in the city and communicating with people there, the more I improve knowledge of information and news, the better my interaction with them might be (S/SUB_man_2).

In contrast to information viewers, the pass time and escapist participants learned little from watching TV due to their lack of time and lack of a behavioural involvement in TV content. Regarding their particular viewers, there were two groups of participants diametrically opposed to each other in terms of income and perceptions of TV. Some graduate students (Group 5) did not consider the role of television a source of learning, whereas some temporary migrant participants (Group 6) said they “did not know what to learn” (T/UB_man_2).

Participants who lived in an expanded area (Groups 3&4) seemed to earn a higher income than the migrant workers (Groups 1&2). One female resident from Dan Phuong district stated that her family had 5 TV sets because “They are not expensive to buy. A luxury one may cost 4 million

⁷⁴ as calculated by the Vietnamese people in the North, 1 sào = 320 m².

⁷⁵ Hoai Duc district.

⁷⁶ approximately 25,500 USD (the exchange rates in January 2010, 1USD =17.000 VND , source: <http://www.customs.gov.vn>)

⁷⁷ approximately 41,200 USD in January 2010.

⁷⁸ Vietnam's GDP per capita in 2010 was est. 1, 200 USD

VND⁷⁹, while an ordinary one that works well costs 1 million VND⁸⁰” (F/EA_woman_6). These participants also reported that they were waiting for the TV cable service which at that time was connected only to the central town of their district. Those who could not wait bought digital decoders so that they could receive VTC’s channels. One female migrant worker stated that her salary at the time was approximately 3 million VND⁸¹ per month. They “had to consider carefully when buying a TV set” (F/MW_woman_2). Interestingly, female participants in both groups, both single and married, opted to buy the TV sets rather than have their husbands to buy them. They stated: “When we spent money for TV we should use it economically in both terms of saving electricity cost and for learning without tuition fees” (F/MW_woman_3).

In terms of occupation difference, the information/learning participants, who had simple jobs (e.g., migrant workers (Group 1) and the farmers (Group 3)) reported that their knowledge improved through watching TV. Participants who had insecure jobs, and who had to travel frequently (e.g., street vendors and manual unskilled workers (Group 6)), acquired very little knowledge from TV. These participants were representative of most vulnerable and lowest educated group. Television seemed unable to narrow the knowledge gap between them and the other groups of migrants.

5.4. Research Question Three: Participants’ needs for orientation and their dependence on TV as a source of information

In this section, I have applied the ‘need for orientation’ agenda setting theory, which is associated with the major ideas of dependency theory, to examine how the participants depended

⁷⁹ approximately 240 USD (2010)

⁸⁰ approximately 60 USD (2010)

⁸¹ approximately 180 USD (2010)

on TV as a source of information. The data interpreted and presented in this section answer Research Question Three of my research.

5.4.1 Need for orientation

(1) TV news as the most favourite program.

Despite their different reasons for watching TV, i.e., for information/learning, entertainment, for pass time/as a habit and for escapist, all of the participants involved in my research reported that they watched TV news programs, to some degree, particularly VTV's evening news coverage.

To date, Vietnamese TV stations have had two major types of TV channels: (1) General channels, which are called social-political-economic channels. They screen mixed genre and mixed content programs including news, documentaries, entertainment, films, dramas, talk shows, quiz shows, and musical programs; and, (2) Specific channels that focus upon one or two specific genres or content, and serve a specific type of audiences; for example, there is a channel featuring scientific and educational programs (VTV2), a channel for sports, entertainment and economic information (VTV3), a channel for Vietnamese overseas (VTV4), a channel for the youth (VTV6), and a channel for TV dramas and films (VCTV2)⁸². Two major types of news coverage, that is, general and specific are broadcast on the two types of channels. For example, VTV3's news coverage mainly addresses economic, commercial and financial issues.

Each TV station in Vietnam has one general channel titled number one; for example, VTV1, H1 and VTC1; and, each produces several news bulletins every day. For example, VTV1 broadcasts six news coverage programs every 3 to 4 hours from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Of these coverages, the evening news program (*Thoi Su*), which occupies the prime time slot between 7 p.m. and 7:45 p.m., is considered the most important coverage as it disseminates propaganda and the national

⁸² See Chapter Six for more details of Vietnamese TV stations and their channels.

official voice. In the late 1990s the Vietnamese Government ordered all of the TV stations in the country to relay *Thoi Su* on their general channels at the same time as it was broadcast by VTV1. It was understandable that the government wanted Vietnamese audiences, who normally watched TV during prime time, to watch the VTV1's evening news.

A considerable number of participants nominated *Thoi Su* as their favourite program. Some said that they "cannot miss the program" (M/EA_man_4), or "If I come home late someday I will watch the later news coverage at 11 p.m. to gather information summarised from the evening news" (S/SUB_man_2). Some reported their different reasons for viewing this news coverage: (a) to access updated information; (b) because it was national news, thus, it was official, important and trustworthy; (c) because others watched it; (d) because "it was what a man had to know" (M/EA_man_1); and, (e) because "it provided the salient events and issues happened in one day when the fact is that I do not have time to watch and read much" (STUD_man_1).

The six men in Group 4 were avid fans of TV news in general and *Thoi Su* in particular. One of them said:

... You know, at the moment, a lot of changes have happened in our society, in our life and in our area which we need to be informed of. For me, I want to know the authorities' policies because any decision made by them will affect our life (M/EA_man_2).

(2) The relations between 'relevance' and 'uncertainty' in participants' need for orientation

A strong need for orientation was found within groups of participants who viewed TV for information or learning. For example, for the female participants, who worked as cattle breeders, the knowledge and new experiences of this topic were particularly relevant. Thus, relevant programs satisfied their needs for orientation. In addition, some reported that they found the female-oriented programs meaningful. One said:

Years ago, I almost knew nothing about the issues like woman's rights, domestic violence or gender equality. These things are new to me. But now I have learned some new skills to protect my family (F/EA_woman_4).

Five participants in Group 1 expressed their need for knowledge and guidelines from several TV programs on topics that interested them but about which they knew little. For example, one female participant stated that:

When on migration, particularly since I had got married and had a child, I am really worried about food safety issue. - I am interested in this issue. I watched it on TV and knew that there were some dangerous to buy food and vegetables from an open-air market. However, I was unable to distinguish which is safe and which is not when buying them. I just knew that all vegetables bought from the market needed to be soaked into water mixed with salt before cooking (F/MW_woman_2).

When asked to think about and suggest a specific program they would like to watch but had not as yet been addressed by TV, participants in the 8 groups answered as follows:

Group 1: Almost all of the female migrant workers stated that they wanted more information about housing which they saw as particularly challenging (prices, how to deal with landlords and how to access available services). One stated that she wished there was a specific program for migrants to the city on VTV or HRT covering all of the difficulties they were likely to encounter.

Group 2: Five of the six young men in this group wanted to see more soccer games screened on the free-to-air channels. They particularly wanted to watch free of charge the UK's premier league games which were broadcast on VTV cable services only due to copyright issues.

Group 3: Most of the participants suggested that female-oriented programs and specific programs on health care issues should be screened during prime time so that they could watch while eating dinner.

Group 4: the men in this group asked for more political news in the evening coverage. Also, they wanted entertainment programs, particularly TV drama series, to be more carefully filtered to limit their bad effects in terms of “deviated culture”.

Group 5: One male participant suggested a specific channel for housing and real estate issues. Another wanted a specific channel for business content.

Group 6: The participants had nothing to offer.

Group 7: The participants were generally non-committal: There have been many interesting programs but [I] do not have much time to watch”.

Group 8: One participant suggested a specific channel for transportation issue because “transportation is the most challenged subject in the city at the moment”.

(3) Participants perceived TV content as effected by agendas

With the exception of the student group, almost all of the participants in the 8 groups did not use the Internet or read newspapers frequently. For them, TV was the major or only source of information. Some reported that they had no time to read newspapers because they were “too exhausted after working” (F/MW_woman_2): watching TV helped them to “gather information and relax at the same time” (S/SUB_man_1). Across the groups, many participants answered the interview questions by detailing similar events, information about which they said they learned from TV; for example, the earthquake in Haiti and the 2009 global economic crisis.

Some participants, particularly the older ones, complained that there were too many entertainment programs on TV. One said:

Almost all of the famous foreign game shows have their Vietnamese versions which together with films, dramas and others occupied the prime time. I know that these appealing advertisements benefited [the] TV stations. But many other issues of the real life need to be reflected on television (S/SUB_man_3).

Another man stated:

There are a lot of Chinese and Korean films on TV at the moment. Consequently, many Vietnamese people learned Chinese history rather than that of our country; many teenagers copied Korean fashions, life styles and the way they loved each other on films which I saw as unreal and fragile; for example, one main character died of a fatal disease, then her boyfriend would go to suicide because he found the life meaningless without her (M/EA_man_3).

5.4.2 Dependency

The data presented in the previous section only partially answered the question of how the participants depended on TV to gratify their goals: (a) understanding dependency: the participants reported their viewing motivation for information or learning; (b) orientation dependency: the participants' need for orientation; and, (c) play dependency: the participants used TV for entertainment, companionship or social interaction.

The data gathered from the 8 focus group interviews to some extent revealed the correlation between the migrant/residence status of participants and their levels of viewing patterns, i.e., their levels of dependence on TV. The considerable differences that obtained among the participants are analysed below:

(1) Participants whose residence status was secure tended to be heavy viewers; for example, those who were residents of an expanded area (Group 3&4). Due to the improved economic conditions, they bought more TV sets and exercised more choices. These participants reported a high level of viewing (more than 3 hours per day) and a high level of dependence on TV for information (the males) or learning (the females). For them, television provided a number of interesting programs they liked to watch. A man in Group 7 who had migrated to the city with his whole family, admitted to being a heavy viewer also.

(2) Those participants whose migrant status was stable tended to depend highly on TV for information or entertainment. Participants in Groups 1, 2 and 8 were included in this category. Although working hard and having low or medium incomes, their jobs and accommodation had probably remain unchanged over a period of time. They spent a considerable amount of time watching television; for example, Groups 1 and 8 reported that they spent 2-3 hours per day; Group 2 reported that they watched an average of 4 hours per day.

(3) Participants whose migrant status was insecure did not watch TV often. Some of the temporary migrants in Group 6 were examples. While they showed a low level of dependence and a low level of viewing pattern, they coped with the lack of information and were even unable to address their need for orientation. Not one if these participants use the Internet, newspapers or other sources for information.

(4) Not only were they dependent upon TV for information, the majority of the participants depended upon the medium to fulfill their entertainment needs due to their non-involvement real cultural activities.

(5) The graduate students in Group 5 revealed the lowest level of TV dependency. Some among them used the Internet as a major source of information rather than television; some preferred

their interpersonal interaction with friends rather than watching TV for escape. Those who watched either for information or to pass time reported their ability to control the time. Of the six participants, two married persons owned their houses; the other four lived in rented accommodation.

5.5. Research Question Four: Interpersonal and intercultural communication

In this section, I present the data answering Research Question Four i.e., how participants interacted and communicated with others. The findings are presented below:

(1) Some participants expressed their lack of confidence when communicating with persons from other cultural groups. For example, one female migrant worker said:

I could not make friends with local people. There were big differences between living in the countryside and living in the city. When I was in my home land, I found things easier and the people more simple and honest than here. In the city, individual's income and economic conditions are the most important elements determining a relationship. Those who are richer may look down on those who are poorer (F/MW_woman_2)

She continued, saying that: "All of my friends in the city are my female colleagues working in the same factory. They also migrated from other provinces" (F/MW_ woman_ 2). Another woman interrupted her, saying: "In reality, there are always the good and the bad. I agree that it is hard to communicate with some local people who are richer than us. But, to be honest, because we are poor, we usually feel complex and unconfident" (F/MW_woman_5). While this participant was talking, the others nodded their heads and smiled.

(2) The majority of participants said that they preferred to communicate with people who were roommates, old friends and particularly with those who came from the same home town. None of the participants living in urban districts reported making friends with local residents.

(3) Some participants in the suburban and expanded areas distinguished themselves from the local residents, particularly from those living in the urban centre. For example, one man said: “I found those people unapproachable... In the city, many people did not know who was living in their next door” (S/SUB_ma_1). Although admitting that changes had occurred in his area (Hoai Duc district), this participant stated that the cohesive characteristic of the community remained unchanged as of that time.

(4) For all of the participants, communicating with their family members was the most important activity. A number of migrant participants reported that they frequently telephoned their parents or children who remained in their home town. The residents of the Hanoi expanded areas stated that they usually watched TV with their families. However, some admitted that their children no longer liked to watch TV with them. For example, the lady in Group 3, who had 5 TV sets at home, said that she had watched TV alone since the previous year.

(5) Almost all of the participants who frequently watched TV reported that they shared their viewing time with their cultural group members (classmates, colleagues and neighbours). The male participants' discussions usually centered on news issues, whereas the females liked to share their views of TV drama series or films.

(6) Graduate students reported that they experienced no problems making friends and communicating with others of different cultures because they had been living in the city for years, ever since they were students.

5.6 Patterns across focus group findings

There were noticeable patterns across the 8 focus groups as follows:

- (1) Regarding the matter of design selection, all of the participants involved in my research had migrated to the Hanoi metropolitan area less than 5 years earlier. They were living in rented houses rather than in their own accommodation in the city. Those participants who came from the expanded areas only became Hanoi new residents in 2008. All of the participants said that they and their families (parents) either used to be or were currently working as farmers.
- (2) All of the participants watched TV: they either possessed at least one TV set at home or shared with roommates. Only one former student did not possess a TV set at the time of the interview due to having moved accommodation. She said that she planned to buy a new TV soon.
- (3) All of the participants reported that in various settings and for various lengths of time, they watched news programs and all recalled that the VTV evening news program was broadcast at 7 p.m. daily. For most of the participants, this time marked the end of their working day: they arranged dinner to facilitate watching the program.
- (4) All of the participants considered TV to be the most favourable medium, even the members of the student group who used the Internet regularly. When comparing TV to other media such as radio, newspapers, and the Internet, all agreed that watching TV was more relaxing.
- (5) Interestingly, none of the participants reported sending letters to or phoning TV stations to express his/her opinion regarding the programs; however, some admitted that they had generally commented on or complained about particular content. Also, none had participated in the voting recruited by TV games shows.
- (6) All said that turning on a TV set was the very first thing they did when they arrived home irrespective of whether they watched it or not.
- (7) All reported that they regularly talked and chatted with others about specific programs they watched.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented data collected from the 8 focus group interviews to answer Research Questions one to four. Based upon the large amount of raw data assembled, I have analysed then interpreted them carefully to identify the different types of viewers among the 48 participants according to their responses to the interview questions. The point I want to stress is that although certain viewers reported favouring a number of different programs and content, they only revealed what they were or were not oriented towards when answering additional questions put to them during the interviews. It is understandable that the findings corresponding to each research question might overlap each other given that the theories and models applied as the frameworks of my research overlapped to some extent. In the last chapter, I will discuss this matter further.

In the next chapter, I will present data collected from the content analysis of TV programs and from the 9 in-depth interviews conducted with TV key respondents.

CHAPTER 6

FINDING - PROGRAMMING OF VIETNAMESE TELEVISION

Introduction

In this chapter, I first introduce, and then describe the results of the TV programs' content analysis to answer Research Question Five. The content structures of the three TV channels including VTV1, VTC1 and H1), were analysed in accordance with quantitative description.

These findings reveal the proportion of different groups of TV programs which were mainly categorised as news, entertainment, educational and cultural programs.

In the following sections of this chapter, I present the key findings from 9 in-depth interviews with TV managers, producers and reporters, which answer Research Questions Six and Seven.

6.1 Research Question Five: The structure of TV channels

In this section I present the total number of TV channels within the three stations (VTV, HRT and VTC), and exhibit the results of content analysis data of three general channels including VTV1, H1 and VTC1.

6.1.1 The number of TV channels

Table 6.1 shows the list of domestic TV channels available in Hanoi, Vietnam as of 2009. There were four types of channels as follows:

(1) general content channels, which constituted a mix of genres and content and aimed to serve the popular viewers;

(2) entertainment channels screening only entertainment programs such as films, TV dramas, live shows and music;

(3) special audience channels serving a certain social group or segment of audiences;

and,

(4) special content channels covering specific content.

Of these channels, there were 12 entertainment channels; 7 specific audiences channels; 5 specific content channels; and three general channels. This number shows how Vietnamese television developed toward entertaining and specialising in terms of both content and target audiences.

Stations	Channels	Types of channel	Content/Audiences
VTV	VTV1	General content channel	General political and social issues
	VTV2	Special content	Educational and scientific content
	VTV3	Entertainment	Mix of economics and entertainment
	VTV4	Special audiences	For Vietnamese overseas
	VTV5	Special audiences	For ethnic people
	VTV6	Special audiences	For the youth
	VTV7	Under construction	
	VTV8	Under construction	
	VTV9	Special audiences	Broadcast for the south of Vietnam
	VCTV1	Entertainment	Films, music, live shows
	VCTV2	Entertainment	Films
	VCTV3	Entertainment	Sports
	VCTV4	Under construction	
	VCTV5	Under construction	
	VCTV6	Special content	Scientific content
	VCTV7	Entertainment	Foreign films
	VCTV8	Special audiences	For children
	VCTV9	Special audiences	For businessmen
	VCTV10	Special content	Health care issues
VTC	VTC1	General content channel	
	VTC2	Special content	Digital and technologies
	VTC3	Special content	Sports
	VTC4	Entertainment	Music
	VTC5	No data	
	VTC6	Entertainment	Films and fashion
	VTC7	Entertainment	Films and drama series
	VTC8	Special audiences	For businessmen
	VTC9	Entertainment	Vietnamese and Asian films
HRT	H1	General content channel	
	H2	Entertainment	Films, music and live shows
	HCaTV	Entertainment	Films, music and live shows

Table 6.1 List of TV channels

6.1.2 The structure of the general content channels

In this study, I do not aim to conduct content analysis of all of Vietnam's TV channels due (a) to lack of data; and, (b) to the limited number of genres and content within the entertainment programming, some channels broadcasting only films and music. Given that a number of channels revealed a dominant proportion of entertainment over other content, in this research I selected the three general channels to examine how they were organised in terms of program content and how said structure reflected the function they purported to represent.

As suggested by Rubin and Rubin (1982) and Hansen (1998a), television programs are categorised in terms of particular genres including news, current affairs, documentaries, quiz shows, talk shows, drama serials, music programs and films. My research was primarily concerned with TV channel structures and how they were organised in terms of specific content rather than different TV genres. In his study investigating the international flows of TV programs, Varis (1984) categorised TV programs into 8 groups: informative, educational, cultural, religious, children's, entertainment, unclassified programs, and advertisements. This classification of TV programs proved compatible with the purposes of my research for two reasons: (1) it helped to control data analysis given that the research deals with vast numbers of TV programs and their broadcasting length; and, (2) this categorisation corresponds to the classification of the audiences into different groups including: information/learning viewers, entertainment viewers, habit/pass time viewers, and escapist viewers. For example, the information/learning viewers prefer to watch informative or educational programs whereas entertainment or pass time viewers tend to favour entertainment programs.

Based upon this classification and analysis of the broadcasting schedules of the three TV channels, I have categorised TV programs into five major groups of content as follows:

:

- (1) Informative programs: this category comprises all news coverage, news bulletins, news magazines including current affairs, sports and economic news and other informative programs such as propaganda magazine;
- (2) Entertainment programs: these include all forms of entertainment such as films, music shows, live shows and sports.
- (3) Educational programs: as Varis suggested: “These were programs in which the pedagogical element was considered fundamental. They included educational programs related to a specific curriculum (schools, universities), educational programs for rural development purposes, and other educational programs” (1984, p. 145).
- (4) Cultural programs: these groups included programs related to cultural topics. Within Vietnamese television there are programs such as talk shows, historical documentaries, discoveries and travel which could be classified into this group.
- (5) Other programs: due to the differences between TV stations, this group planned to combine programs which were available to only one or two stations. For example, only Hanoi TV broadcasts children programs.

Broadcasting schedules were gathered by: (1) accessing the stations’ official websites at vtv.vn, vtc.vn and hanoitv.vn; and, (2) collecting the stations’ official magazines published monthly wherein their schedules appeared. The selection of schedules was undertaken randomly during the year 2009. However, in some cases, the program titles listed in these schedules did not reveal the programs’ content. In order to distinguish a particular program into the relevant category of content, I referred to the introduction of said program on the websites of the three stations and checked with the TV producers who participated in my research for their advice regarding its content. Fourteen day data

were selected for analysis. The descriptive statistics are exhibited in Tables 6.2, Table 6.3 and Table 6.4 (unit of data: minutes).

VTV1	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Informative	14	285	465	333.93	11.158	41.749
Educational	14	0	50	30.71	3.267	12.225
Entertainment	14	185	430	323.21	18.432	68.965
Cultural	14	150	325	225.71	14.448	54.060
Other	14	50	205	99.64	13.460	50.363
Valid N (listwise)	14					

Table 6.2 Descriptive Statistics - VTV1

H1	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Informative	14	340	575	409.64	21.904	81.958
Educational	14	20	85	52.50	4.739	17.732
Entertainment	14	250	405	362.50	11.041	41.313
Cultural	14	115	185	145.71	5.264	19.695
Other	14	45	110	78.93	6.161	23.053
Valid N (listwise)	14					

Table 6.3 Descriptive Statistics - H1

VTC1	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Informative	14	245	365	302.86	10.635	39.793
Educational	14	0	0	.00	.000	.000
Entertainment	14	570	705	642.14	12.674	47.423
Cultural	14	55	190	124.64	11.900	44.526
Other	14	90	210	145.36	9.295	34.778
Valid N (listwise)	14					

Table 6.4 Descriptive Statistics - VTC1

The results of 14-day analysis of TV content structures are shown in Figure 6.1, Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3 correspondent to the three channels.

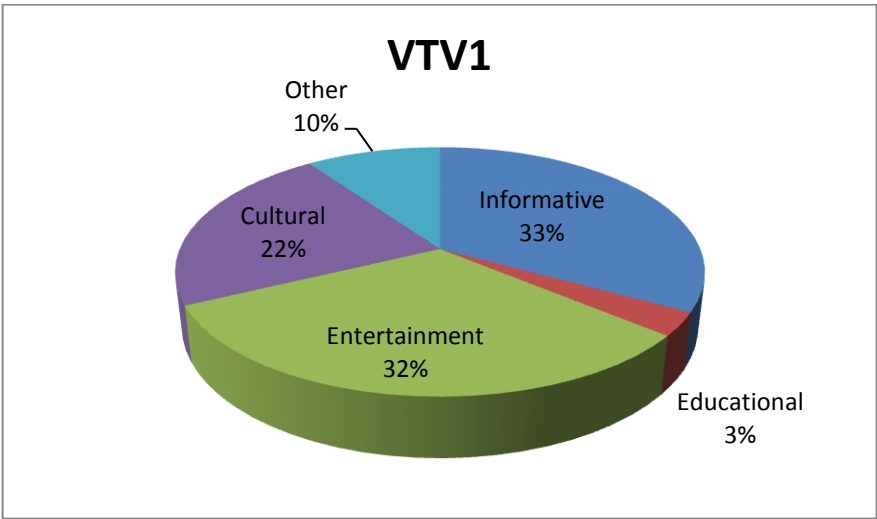


Figure 6.1 VTV1's content structure

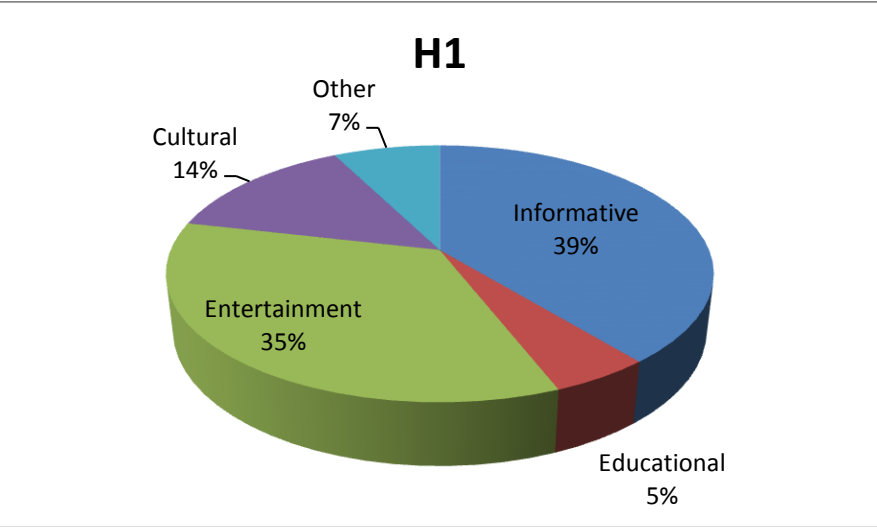


Figure 6.2 H1's content structure

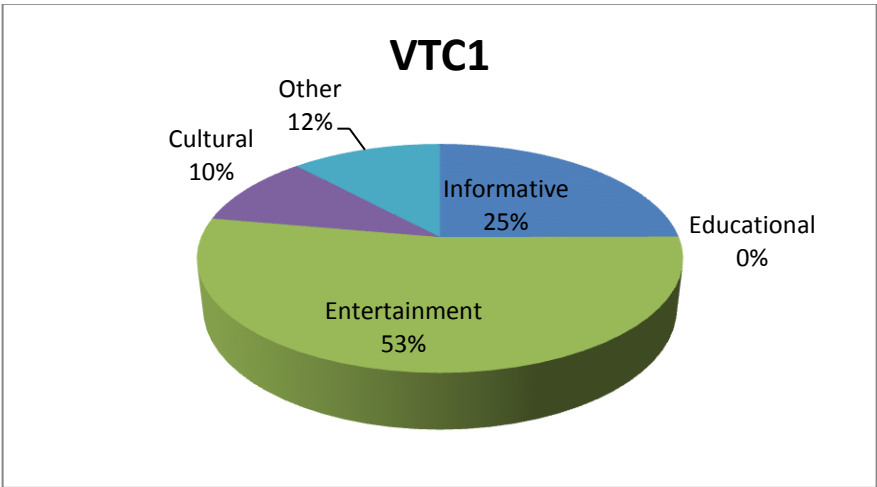


Figure 6.3 VTC1's content structure

As shown in Figure 6.1, the proportions between the different groups of content of VTV1 seem relatively balanced. Of the overall programs screened by this channel, 33% was informative, followed by entertainment (32%) and cultural (23%). Unclassified programs (10%) included a mix of informative, entertainment and cultural, accounting for a long and multi-genred program. There were fewer educational programs because there is a special channel devoted to covering educational topics (VTV2).

Similar to VTV1, H1 - the general content channel of Hanoi Radio and Television - also has a balance rate between the groups of content. Due to the large number of local news and news magazines, the proportion of informative programs stood at the highest in this channel. The term 'other' programs here signifies children's programs, which are only broadcast by H1.

Different from the other two channels, VTC1 appeared more like an entertainment channel despite the fact that it was the most important channel of VTC station. Due to its large number of films, the entertainment section occupied more than half of the total time for broadcasting. However, more importantly, the channel revealed its orientation towards favouring business over serving the public by providing information. VTC comes under the Ministry of Information and Communication, which is not subjected to extreme control by the Party.

6.2. Research Question Six: TV professionals perceive Hanoi urbanisation and the communication needs of urban migrants

In this section, I present the data which answer Research Question Six, which asks how Vietnamese Television professionals perceive the issues of Hanoi urbanisation and the communication needs of the city's new residents.

The data were collected from the 9 interviews with TV managers (3), producers (3) and reporters (3). All of the findings in this section and the next section were transcribed and summarised from the answers of the 9 key respondents. Their opinions are presented according to how they spoke. In cases where similar opinions were voiced, one or two main viewpoints which cover other issues were selected for reporting followed by details of the respondents who shared, said opinions.

6.2.1. Hanoi urbanisation and expansion

The 9 key respondents were invited to express their opinions regarding the current issues surrounding Hanoi urbanisation and expansion pertinent to the time. Major opinions are listed as follows:

(1) Urbanisation, modernisation and the development of the country

All of the respondents regarded urbanisation as the pathway to modernisation and the development of the country.

One argued that:

Urbanisation is the indispensable tendency of the national development and desire of almost all of the people. However, the process of urbanisation should be associated with the policies and management to narrow the gap between urban and countryside. In the other words, the Government should invest more into countryside so that the people there may be offered better living condition as good as in urban areas (TV manager A).

(2) The crisis of Hanoi's cultural identity during urbanisation

In answer to the interview question regarding urban development in Hanoi, some respondents highlighted the changes in Hanoi's culture during the process of urbanisation. For example, one said that:

In the last decades, the cultural characteristics of Hanoi have been dimmed by the mixture with other neighbouring cultures. The high culture which used to be the identity of this ancient city has been affected during the urbanisation. For example, the accent and the everyday language have been changed. In the past, the Hanoi voice was the standard of Vietnamese language in terms of pronunciation and accent. But now it is hard to find someone speaking that way. Architecture is another example: recently, migrants from other provinces have brought their style of 'agricultural architecture' to the city which destroyed the western style of Hanoi landscape that formed in the period of French colony (TV manager B).

(3) Hanoi's culture compared to HCM city's culture: high-context versus low-context

Although they were not asked to compare Hanoi city with HCM city, some respondents emphasised the difference between the two biggest cities of Vietnam in terms of their cultures and structures. One argued that:

It is unfair to blame the downgrade of Hanoi' culture on rural-urban migrants, but frankly speaking, they acquainted with the rural behaviour and brought their habitus to the city. For example, they did not know how to follow the sanitation rules and the transport rules. However, the problem lies in the fact that Hanoi's origin culture did not have an attraction to the 'outsiders' in order to change their behaviour and attitude. In the other words, the host culture was too weak to be adapted (TV manager B).

Another respondent shared a similar argument:

Compared to Ho Chi Minh city, one might say that the biggest city in the south of Vietnam had an identity of 'openness', i.e., it accepted any individual migrated from any province of the whole country. HCM city is a young city and the largest centre for economy with a low-context culture. Meanwhile, Hanoi is an old city with a high-context culture. Ironically, no one can say exactly what constitutes the spirit of the city in terms of culture. At the moment, the city has been mixed of varied segments of residents who differ from each other by their origin of residence: partly Hanoi, partly Thanh Hoa, partly Nghe An⁸³ and so on, but the Hanoi part is very dimmed (TV reporter A).

(4) How Hanoi's culture has coped with pressure during its area expansion

Regarding the changes that occurred following the 2008 area expansion of Hanoi, some respondents concerned with the mixture of Hanoi's culture with other cultures of other provinces, particularly that of the former Ha Tay province, the culture of which is largely based upon its rural economy and traditional social structure. One interviewee argued that:

Due to the 2008 area expansion, Ha Tay province was merged into Hanoi and several new suburban districts were formed. Although the city attempted to boost the urbanisation speed in these areas, there are a gap of urbanised levels between the former and the expanded units. It is not reasonable to simply give a certificate for an agriculture-based province which now upgraded to become a part of the capital city. Culturally speaking, it requires hundreds of years for the two opposite and unequal cultures [Hanoi's and the province's cultures] to accept and tolerate each other (TV manager A).

Other respondents who share this view included TV manager B and TV reporter A.

⁸³ Thanh Hoa, Nghe An are two provinces in the north and north-centre of Vietnam.

(5) Transportation and food safety are among the top issues

When talking of the problems which challenge urban development in Hanoi, all off the respondents mentioned the weak and backward infrastructure of transportation and insecure food safety as the most crucial issues.

(6) Poor management and planning challenge the substantial growth of the city

More than half of the respondents argued that the lack of an overall plan, and the shortcomings of urban management, challenged the substantial development of Hanoi. One commented:

The city is developing without an overall plan. Consequently, when the level of urbanisation is increasing, Hanoi has easily become overloaded. In addition, due to the relaxation of the registration, many people from other provinces have come to seek opportunities for becoming permanent residences (TV Manager B).

6.2.2 Hanoi's new residents in the view of TV professionals

The 9 key respondents were invited to share their views about Hanoi migrants and new residents in terms of their socio-economic statuses (SES) and identities. The key ideas appear below:

(1) Urban and rural residents differ in terms of 'social capital'. Migrants tend to strengthen interaction within their cultural groups rather than opening to intergroup communication.

Some respondents compared the social relationships between the urban and rural contexts, one arguing that:

Recently, in Vietnam, the term 'social capital' has been discussed more frequently in the public. I understand social capital is a new criterion for residents living in city. There are

some Vietnamese idioms emphasising the importance of neighbourhood such as: 'A neighbour is always here as we need someone', or 'Sell your further relatives, buy your nearer neighbours'. However, this old idea can work if one lives in a traditional society or a close community. Nowadays, the modern society encourages individualism. As an urban resident, you need to build a network with other people, i.e., to accumulate social capital to cope with the pressure of modern life and to success. The majority of urban migrants failed to open their networks and remained their relationship with whom they knew before migration (TV manager A).

A similar idea was offered as follows:

They [the migrants] came and resettled in Hanoi but they lacked a sense of belonging. They kept their strong relation and contact with their family, their friends in their hometown. Apart from the kinship, the fellow-hometown relationship between them was a priority which drove them to stick together (TV manger B).

Another respondent held the view that:

The social relationship in urban environment is much more complicated and diversified than that in the countryside. General speaking, the city's social structure is dynamic and changeable, whereas the countryside is more conservative and cohesive (TV reporter C).

(2) Difference between urban and rural residents vis-a-vis taking advantage of TV usage

One respondent, who assumed that urban citizens use TV in a pragmatic way to benefit themselves in terms of time consumption, stated that:

Living in the city and living in the countryside are much different in terms of income, conditions, environment and human interaction. The urban society requires individuals to

follow so-called 'principles of behaviour and attitude' as modern residents. Those who live in the city differ from those in the hinterland in the ways they watch TV. Urban residents are always busier and lack time; thus, they actively and pragmatically use the medium to make their viewing beneficial. Therefore, they learn and apply higher skills in gathering information and taking advantage of television compared to rural residents (TV manager A).

(3) Socio-cultural differences between Hanoi's new residents in the expanded areas and Hanoi migrants

Interestingly, one respondent expressed his opinion regarding the difference between the new residents in the expanded areas of Hanoi and people who had migrated from other provinces to Hanoi.

In terms of civil rights in a civil society, both Hanoi's new residents and Hanoi migrants are among people who have less private opinions. However, the former seem to be more conservative and even extreme in reaction to social issues that relate to their interests. For example, it was always hard to negotiate with these residents when the local government needed to use their land for urban development projects. They did not follow the law and current regulation in negotiating the compensation cost. Consequently, there have been a number of collective complaints happened in the recent years. On the contrary, the migrants, particularly the poor people, appear to be more submissive and reluctant to express their opinions on any issues (TV producer A).

(4) Not all migrants have become 'urban citizens'

Continuing with the identification of urban migrants, one respondent argued that:

At the moment, the urbanisation level in Vietnam is around 30 per cent, i.e., 70 per cent of the population are farmers or living in hinterland. Although, among this 30 per cent living in urban areas as migrants or new residents, I suppose at least half of them have not become 'urban citizens' as its meaning (TV manager B).

(5) Migrant workers, particularly the unskilled, are among the country's most vulnerable groups

Some respondents regarded unskilled migrants as vulnerable. For example, one observed that:

They [the unskilled migrants] are more vulnerable compared to other segments of the residents. They encounter with many of risks when migration in the city. Of these migrants, a large number of people are low educated and living in the poor condition of boarding-houses across the city. They lack of access to social services such as schooling, health care, personal insurance and particularly to media. Different from HCM city wherein the majority of working class people read newspapers, those in Hanoi do not read. Although there have not been demographic surveys investigating media consumption among this people, I suppose that they also spend very little time watching TV (TV reporter A).

(6) The majority of Hanoi's new residents do not use the Internet

Participants in the main believed that the Internet has not been accessed by the new residents of Hanoi city. For example, one argued to the effect that:

I used to make plenty TV reportages regarding the local social issues. As of my observation, most of the poor migrants did not have computers in their rented shelters. Although there are a lot of Internet accessing-points in local areas, just a few of those whom I interviewed reported that they sometimes use the Internet for chatting and did not

know how to gather news and information from it. Of the residents in the expanded areas, only the youth probably use the Internet. Also, the development of ICTs is uneven between different areas, of which the closer distance from the location to the city's centre, the better infrastructure of ICTs (TV reporter C)

(7) The poor migrants are the excluded from civil society.

One respondent observed that:

In Vietnam there have been a number of social organisations such as the labour union, the women associations and professional organisation such as farmers, veteran and peasants; but there is not any for migrant people who are increasing in number. This is unfair, particularly for those who did not register in the destination. They are not the resident of the administrative unit where they are residing, whereas might be not the residents of their origin home town any longer. No one stand for their right in terms of schooling and accessing to social services such as health care and personal insurances (TV producer B).

Another respondent stated that:

I used to make a reportage covered the difficulties in lives of Hanoi migrants. Many of them responded to my interview that they lacked of cultural activities: no theatre, no cinema and even no going-out after work. Particularly, when cultural activities happened in their place, such as open-air performances, Middle Autumn Festival⁸⁴, they were never invited or informed by the local community leaders because they were regarded as 'outsiders' (TV reporter B).

⁸⁴ As with the Chinese, Vietnamese people celebrate Middle Autumn Festival which is annually held in a full moon night (15 August of Lunar Calendar). This is an traditional festival to greet a successful summer harvest.

A reporter shared his similar observation:

If one see the society as multi-layers system, the migrants, particularly the poor, are normally considered the lowest layer. I can give an image that: on a certain day, you might see 10 people getting out in the early morning, five of them would have breakfast and then coffee⁸⁵, two would shoeshine job and other three would do any kind of services for the five to make money. I am quite sure that these people are seasonal migrants from rural provinces. They move across the city, work as manual labourers and will not deny any jobs including bully-man. Therefore, a popular belief blames the challenge of unsecure social securities on the increasing number of unskilled migrants of them many are jobless. Why did they come to the city? There is a saying that 'a general in countryside cannot compare to a 'jobless' man in the city' (TV reporter C).

6.2.3 TV professionals address the communication needs of Hanoi's new residents

The 9 key respondents were invited to share their views regarding the communication needs of Hanoi's migrants and new residents. The key views are provided as below:

(1) Different types of migrants and their different needs

The key respondents' views of the communication needs of Hanoi's new residents were based upon how their SES and identities were distinguished. For example, one respondent argued that:

There are two major types of migrants in Hanoi: (a) those who migrated to the city with their whole family; and, (b) those who are migrant workers including the skilled and unskilled, the permanent and the temporary migrants. The former have higher income and

⁸⁵ Going out for morning breakfast and coffee is the hobby of many Vietnamese people.

economic conditions compared to the latter. These 'rich' migrants can buy houses and quickly stabilise their life in the city and have become Hanoi's citizens. The latter, who are poorer, comprise an increasing number of temporarily and seasonally migrants affected by the 2008 expansion. For the second type of migrants, before asking what they needed, we should first know whether they watch TV, particularly TV cable services (TV manager A).

(2) Vietnamese audiences including migrants prefer watch TV news programs

One respondent believed that Vietnamese views, including migrants, favoured watching TV news programs. He commented:

Vietnamese people really like watching TV news because they interest in political and social issues. I suppose this is one of salient characteristics of Vietnamese audiences including migrants in the city. And I believe Thoi Su [VTV's evening news coverage] is one of the most favourite programs of audiences (TV manager A).

(3) The critical importance of cultural adaption

The above respondent, who mainly focused on the cultural aspects of urbanisation, continued to argue that Hanoi's new residents must learn to adapt to the city's culture. Thus, they needed exposure various types of information:

Generally speaking, cultural adaption needs to be considered the most important to Hanoi migrants. When migrated to the city, migrants need to know how it is structured and how it operates. If they want to reside in the city they should learn and follow the unwritten rules in terms of cultural behaviour which are far different from what they perceive of their rural original location (TV manager B).

(4) Hanoi migrants generally seek information to served their basic needs

All of the respondents agreed that due to their low SES, the majority of migrants and poor residents in the expanded areas in particular and in the city in general, were interested in information relevant to their basic concerns. For example, one respondent addressed their communication needs as follows:

As having talked about the media in Hanoi⁸⁶, it is ironically that the most favourite 'newspaper' with highest circulation in the city at the moment is Mua va Ban⁸⁷. Many people, migrants included, buy it for seeking information of renting accommodation and employment. While orienting to this information, migrant people paid less attention to learn of their civil rights such as accessing to social services or health cares. This is partly because they lacked of self-confidence, and partly for their major concern with making money to improve their lives (TV manager B).

Another respondent addressed both the basic and entertainment needs of the new residents:

If we can say there existing a community of migrants, I think one of this community's characteristics is the temporary circumstance. For them, particularly those who lived in rented houses, 'a home in the city' means a 'secondary' and unstable home; so are their employment statuses. Therefore, these migrants prioritised information that directly served their basic needs. However, due to the pressure of life, they also seek entertainment from television for relaxation and improvement of their view (TV reporter A).

⁸⁶ This respondent's view of Hanoi's media is provided in section 5.3.3 of this chapter.

⁸⁷ *Buy and Sell* - a kind of printed product for small advertisements omitting any news or stories

6.3. Research Question Seven: TV strategies for serving the communication needs of Hanoi's new residents

An attempt to answer this research question, several interview questions were presented to the key respondents for their opinions of and information about: (a) what TV can do for the new residents of Hanoi; (b) what factors have impacted upon the process of policy making, programming and producing; (c) whether and how the communication needs of Hanoi's new residents are taken into account in those processes; (d) what TV programs related to Hanoi's migrants and new residents, have been produced and broadcast; and, (e) what the industry planned to do in the future to serve the needs of these residents.

6.3.1 The role of television

The key respondents were invited to share their views regarding the role of television in the daily lives of the people in general. Key answers were provided as follows:

(1) "Television brings a dream to people who watch"

One respondent, highlighting the cultural impact of television upon audiences, claimed that:

Television was an instrument for communication; but its messages and content are made by human beings who have their mind and heart. Thus, it is not necessary that they have to follow a fixed framework; rather, it should be the process of dialogic communication among people who produce and people who watch. It is a flexible process that may be adjusted and changed according to the context of our society. Television not only reflects the reality but it also provides a dream for people rising toward a better life than today (TV manager A).

(2) TV and mass media can change individuals' behaviour and attitudinal patterns

One TV manager assumed that TV had a powerful effect upon changing behaviour. His assumption was based upon a supposition that television, through “real-life images”, can help and encourage migrant people to change their ‘traditional’ habitus toward the ‘modern’. He argued that:

In the process of urbanisation and modernisation, any country passes through stages from low to high level of a modern society. The key for success in modernisation is people's motivation to become modern citizens. They must abandon several traditional customs which may defer their change and learn to apply new things. To serve this need, it requires the involvement of education and other social cultural institutions such as law, religion, of which television and mass media take a crucial role. Indeed, television can actively involve in this process due to its powerful effects upon audiences. For example, China's society in the 1960s might be similar as that of Vietnam before Doi Moi in the 1980s, wherein almost of population were farmers, i.e., 'rural characteristics' predominated its culture. Recently, China has succeeded in urbanisation and modernisation. The two countries share a number of similarities. We can believe Vietnam will be another successful example of modernisation with the effective support of television (TV manager B).

6.3.2 The process of TV programming and producing

The key respondents were invited to share their information about the programming and producing of TV content. The three TV managers were asked specific questions regarding their policy making guidelines. Key answers were provided as follows:

(1) No more TV free-to-air channels to be developed: no TV cable channels for migrants

One TV manager revealed that not one of the TV stations would be providing any new free-to-air channels; rather, these stations' focus was on increasing the number of cable TV channels. He informed the interviewer that:

To date, the number of the free-to-air channels has been fixed and there will not be any more of such channels. At the moment, only cable TV services are receiving investment for development. As for its technological requirement, cable TV can be offered only in the urban and the expanded areas, i.e., it mainly serves the permanent residents rather than the mobile migrants (TV manager A).

(2) Organising programs for a specific TV channel

The above respondent and another manager talked about the process of setting up a TV channel covering a special content or serving a special segment of audiences:

The programming process passes through two major stages: first, determining who can be the special audiences of the channel (for example, the youth, the children or the housewives) or what can be the specific topic to be covered (for example, a specific channel for digital technologies); second, selecting and organising different genres into the channel. This process is based upon the fact that the existing free-to-air channels cannot afford the higher and diversified needs of the audiences. Thus, different from the free TV network, the cable service will not develop general channels; rather, it aims to construct channel for special content only (TV manager A, TV manager B).

(3) Political concerns influencing the production of TV content

The 3 TV producers and 3 TV reporters were asked specific questions related to what factors they took into account when producing and making TV content. One who used to work as a news reporter stated that:

Generally speaking, there are four aspects of information which can be also regarded as the output or the effect of TV content including: political, economic, cultural and social aspects. Of these elements, political regulation is an absolutely requirement that all TV stations and media organisations in Vietnam need to follow. As I used to work as a reporter, my point is that the social effect of television is the most important. Only when a political, economic or cultural issue impacts upon the society as a whole can it be meaningful. Therefore, when producing television products, we must consider if the programs or the content may reach the interests of the audiences (TV manager A).

(4) Structure of a news bulletin: macro level news (comprising political and economic issues) and micro level news (social and cultural issues)

The respondents, who were TV producers, spoke about the structure of an ordinary news bulletin. One said that:

A TV news bulletin normally last for an average length of 45 minutes (excluding the weather forecast and sport news at the end), of which three fourths are domestic news and seem to be unchanged whereas the world news section is subject to be shortened particularly on the days when happen an important political event such as regular meeting of National Assembly or the Central Party. Domestic section is constituted by macro level news and micro level news. The former covers political and economic issues and activities of the Party and government leaders. The latter, which comprises social

and cultural issues, we call 'live reportage', covers all stories of the people. Although we want the latter to be increased, in fact, it is still dominated by the former (TV producer B).

(5) TV news and news magazine remain under extreme censorship.

All six TV producers and reporters observed that the TV news remains rigorously controlled not only for its political content but also for some 'sensitive' issues. For example, one stated that:

In many cases we had to cut the news or remove some recorded images or even cancel its broadcasting. For example, I used to produce one long reportage telling the story of the residents in the expanded area of Hanoi, whose land were sold out or revoked by Hanoi's authorities for urban construction projects. The main question raised in this reportage was: what will the residents do when they had no land anymore? I found that some of them did not do anything: they bought a house, a car then spent all money from selling land for gambling, and one might be sure their car and house would be gone soon. Some others, who opposed the price of compensation for their land usage, extremely criticised the city's policy. I recorded their voices, but the reportage was never on air because it reflected the most 'sensitive' issue at the moment in the country and particularly in Hanoi (TV producer C).

This respondent continued, saying that:

As a result, all producers must remember that self-censorship is compulsory. If one becomes confused with certain issues, he or she should refer to the senior editors and directors. In many cases, 'safe and sound' is the appropriate choice. Generally speaking, television in Vietnam is being more censored than newspaper because a large number of people watch. Therefore, it is understandable that almost all news magazines are produced in style of propaganda, i.e., a top-down approach to mainly inform and explain

*the government's policies rather than to get feedback from the people. In the former, the selection of residents to speak out their opinion must be under careful control. This is also to explain while we have a number of programs relative to urban issues such as [...]*⁸⁸
almost of which cannot reach audiences' interest (TV producer C).

6.3.3 TV's strategies to serve the communication needs of Hanoi's new residents

The 9 key respondents were asked for their views about what their stations had done and would do to serve the communication needs of the city's migrants and new residents. Their answers ranged from the review of mass media and television products in Hanoi, to the specific programs which had been broadcast.

(1) Hanoi's media do not aim to serve migrants viewing preferences; rather, they primarily serve the local authorities' interests.

One respondent strongly argued that compared with the press in HCM city, there was no special newspaper for migrant people in the sense that they could find their images and personal/communicating problems reflected in the news stories. He said that:

In HCM city, there are a number of press serving grassroots people, particularly the migrants. For example, it is easy to find in Tuoi Tre⁸⁹ and Nguoi Lao Dong⁹⁰ the images of migrants. Conversely, there is not any specific newspaper for Hanoi migrants; or in the other words, Hanoi's newspapers do not address migrants' needs as their specific

⁸⁸ In order to protect the respondent's anonymity, the list of programs mentioned by this producer are not transcribed here.

⁸⁹ *Youth Newspaper* - one of the newspapers with highest circulation in Vietnam.

⁹⁰ *Labourers Newspaper*.

concern. Also, Hanoi television does not serve its residents; rather, it seems to mainly serve the Hanoi's authorities⁹¹.

(2) Too many entertainment programs on Vietnamese television

One TV manager criticised Vietnam's current television programming including that of his station. According to this respondent, TV policy-makers fail to balance the proportion between entertainment programs and other 'real' programs which covers the reality of Vietnam's contemporary society. He argued that:

The broadcasters seem to be irresponsible to their viewers. Recently, there are much more entertainment programs on TV, most of which merely serve the need for entertaining. For example, Chinese movies and TV series are predominating Vietnamese television. Similarly, there are too many music programs but lack of educational guidelines to help viewers to raise their awareness. These entertainment programs can easily satisfy viewers in many ways. For example, while watching a movie, a play or a comedy one can find it interesting and being relaxed. But without an immersion of educational lesson into them, these programs do not bring cognitive effects to the audiences (TV manager B).

(3) Migrant people are not recognised as a specific segment of TV audiences

An important finding gained from the interviews was that all of the respondents, while airing their views about the identity and communication needs of Hanoi's new residents, failed to see them as a specific group of TV audiences. One said that:

We did not consider them [the new residents] as a specific group; rather, we normally recognised different types of viewers which related to certain content or programs such

⁹¹ Because the respondent mentioned Hanoi television in this argument, his title code is not provided here to protest his anonymity.

as the authorities who took responsibilities to solve certain issues, the working class which included migrants, and the intellectuals, the youth, the retire elderly, the businessmen group and the office personnel (TV manager C).

(4) Migrant people are not recognised as a specific segment of TV audiences for a future cable/digital TV channel due to economic reasons

Three TV managers A, B and C argued that there would never be a specific channel for migrant people. One of them explained why:

We are planning to construct more TV cable channels. Due to the extreme competitive between TV stations at the moment, the most important factor need to be considered is the economic concerns. We have to answer the question of whether and how this channel benefits. Precisely, it must have interesting programs that gains high rating, so that attracts the interest of advertising businessmen from both domestic and international companies. To do so, we must choose the social groups who are potential consumers of some certain products. For example, in the near future, there will be a channel for businessmen, a channel for young residents in urban areas who are fans of high technologies and probably a channel for investors who have interest in information of stock market, commercial and real estate. Regarding migrant people, they are not consumers of high value products. Their needs mainly for everyday products, I mean the basic needs of livings. If we produce a specific channel or even a specific program for them, what kind of advertisement would be called for to support the production cost? (TV manager C).

(5) The Government must sponsor an education-content channel and development-content channels/programs

Continuing with the question of how migrants' needs could be served by a specific channel or programs, the above TV managers stated that:

This question should be raised for the state. You might know that television in Vietnam is under the state ownership. We all serve the political task, as one might say. Vietnamese television and other media are the tools for propaganda of the Party and the state. However, they [the leaders] understand that, due to the competition of the market economy, all media organisations must do business to maintain their existence. To date, all types of direct invest from foreign capital to Vietnamese media, particularly television, are forbidden.⁹² Therefore, only way to make benefit is via advertisement (TV manager A).

Another manager observed:

We all know that television can serve a variety of needs of audiences. However, for the channels and programs whose content relates to popular concerns such as education and development needs, I suppose that the government must be the sponsor. In reality, there has been little attention to the role of Vietnamese media for development in this country. Before, its role was perceived mainly as state's propaganda and then changed to 'the official voices of the Party, the government and the forum of the people'. However, all of the free-to-air channels are sponsored by the government. You might say it serves development and communication needs of the population as a whole. To have more such

⁹² This fact is also reported in Marr (2003).

channels the government calls for all kinds of capital in society and also sponsorship by international NGOs (TV manager A).

These respondents mentioned ‘O2TV’ as a successful and only example up to the time of how a specific channel might be constructed to served basic concerns of the people. In Vietnam it was called the ‘socialising television’⁹³. O2TV, which first broadcast on VCTV10 (VTV’s cable services) in August 2008, was a channel covering all issues about public health in order to raise the awareness, behaviour and knowledge of the people in taking care and protecting their health. The channel was sponsored by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Vietnam and the government. Its programs was produced by a collaboration between VTV and S-Media company, and supervised in term of professional content by the Ministry of Health (Gia dinh, 2009).

(6) More attention to migrant residents is needed in the near future given they are one of the more vulnerable groups in the society today

This viewpoint was supported by one respondent as follows:

TV practitioners should pay more attention to the emotion and feelings of the vulnerable groups who have no voice in the public and need to be protected. This tendency can be seen, albeit little, in Vietnamese television at the moment (TV reporter A).

(7) A more democratic atmosphere must be created for television practitioners so that they can raise the voices of the “grass-root” people without any politically related threat.

The respondent who proposed this argument said that:

The aim of television or any other human communications is to achieve a consensus between the communicators and the receivers. However, at the moment, it is more

⁹³ In Vietnamese : xa hoi hoa truyen hinh - a government policy called for all kinds of capital in society and also sponsorship by international NGOs

difficult to obtain this aim compared to the last decades when propaganda predominated over Vietnamese media. The current context of communication process requires a more democratic public sphere (TV manager A).

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented and analysed the results of TV programs content analysis and the findings from the 9 in-depth interviews conducted during my fieldwork in Hanoi, Vietnam, between November 2009 and February 2010. These data have been divided into three sections correspondent to the three research questions Five, Six and Seven.

In the next and last chapter of this thesis, I will discuss further issues surrounding these findings pertinent to consideration of the theoretical foundation of the research. The outcome of this discussion, together with a summary of the key findings, will contribute to the conclusion and recommendations of my thesis.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Introduction

My research into urbanisation and television in Hanoi, Vietnam, adopted a qualitative approach to investigate how Hanoi's new residents perceived the role of television in their everyday lives. My research fieldwork was conducted in Hanoi for the purposes of collecting data to answer the seven research questions. Based upon the research results presented in Chapters 5 and 6, I discuss in this final chapter the significance of these findings correspondent to the theoretical framework employed in my study. In the conclusion, I summarise the key findings drawn from 8 focus group interviews with 48 participants, 9 in-depth interviews with TV professionals, and TV programs content analysis. In addition, I revisit the research aims and explain how the research objectives have been achieved. In the last section, I address some limitations of the research and provide several recommendations for further studies which relate to this topic in terms of both theoretical and practical concerns.

7.1 Discussion

In this section I revise and discuss how my findings may be interpreted in the light of the research's theoretical framework which comprises four media effects theories in association with the social science approach of intercultural communication. Communicative action theory, which also contributed to this framework, provided a fundamental foundation for considering the

communication process between individuals and television, and the interaction among them. Therefore it was employed to support and constitute the conclusion of my research.

7.1.1 Correspondence to the uses and gratifications theory

The major assumption regarding the uses and gratification theory is that “individuals use communications, among other resources in their environment, to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals” (Katz et al., 1973-1974, p. 510). This approach has been employed in a number of studies within social science research in which the potential motivations driving individuals’ use of media, also called ‘needs’, were the central concerns. Katz, Hass and Gurevitch (1973) identified five groups of needs including cognitive, affective, integrative, social contact and escape. Based upon these categories, Rubin (1981), in his surveys of TV audiences, proposed the following nine clusters of viewing motivations: information, pastime/habit, companionship, arousal, program content, relaxation, entertainment, social interaction and escape. As already discussed in Chapter 5, almost all of the previous studies within the model adopted a quantitative approach to describe and predict the interrelations between the different needs; between motivations, behaviour and viewing patterns; between needs, personal characteristics and social environment (see Ruggiero, 2000)

For the purpose of my research, the uses and gratifications model was positioned at the centre of the theoretical framework. Rubin’s set of viewing motivations have been employed to investigate how and why the 48 participants used TV to gratify their communication needs.

My research, which investigates how Hanoi’s new residents watch TV, has supported the model’s core idea of individuals actively using television to gratify their needs. The term ‘activity’, which may be extended to include utility, intentionality, selectivity and the

involvement of the audience with the media, should be understood as a variable, not as an absolute concept (Blumler, 1979, Rubin and Perse, 1987). Based upon interviews with participants, my research found that not all of them were active viewers. Indeed, I found that participants who exhibited a greater interest in the specific content of TV programs were rather more active than those who lacked such a connection. The former reported that they mainly watched for information/learning or entertainment reasons. They found interesting programs on TV that suited their interests. For example, some of the female migrant workers (Group 1) and female residents in an expanded area of Hanoi city (Group 3) were among this cohort of viewers. However, my research revealed that the latter did not pay much attention to TV content: they usually used the medium for passing time or escaping from their daily lived reality. These participants gathered certain information and to some extent enjoyed the content of TV programs due to the fact that television provided more comprehensive and exciting information compared to other media such as newspapers (McQuail and Windahl, 1981); but, they revealed a weak motivation for viewing. One of the main criticisms of the uses and gratifications theory argued that television viewing was more a matter of availability than of selection (Elliott, 1974). My findings suggest that this argument could be reasonable for the passive viewers who did not tend to watch simply to pass the time. The majority of participants involved in my research revealed to the contrary, i.e., they actively selected the programs or channels they liked to watch.

Rubin and Perse's (1987) assumed that 'passive' audiences seemed to be directly influenced by media messages, whereas their 'active' counterparts rationally accepted or rejected the messages. Accordingly, there existed a distinction between 'active selection' and 'active involvement'. Audiences who actively select media may be active or passive in their perceptions of the messages. Some of the participants in my research, particularly those with low SES, while active in selecting the TV programs they liked to watch, proved passive inasmuch as they easily accepted the messages with little or without criticism.

In the 8 focus group interviews, all of the participants were encouraged to discuss in detail what types of programs they viewed. By using this process, I found that some participants in certain groups tended to follow others when reporting what he/she watched and liked. For example, one participant in Group 1 reported that she “also watched news programs”; but, when invited to give more details, she answered that she “not often watched”, “did not remember” and “recently, I did not watch”. Her response was understandable: some tended to stress that they watched the TV news to prove their connection with ‘reality’ albeit the fact was that they might not. Therefore, using a qualitative method for the purposes of analysing and interpreting focus group interviews enables researchers to: (a) distinguish the valid answers among individual’s reports; (b) recognise major viewing motivations among a number of reasons one might hear reported; and, (c) avoid risk when applying the uses and gratifications model. As Rubin cautioned: “need gratifications may be manifest or latent” (1981, p. 162). In addition, the behaviour of participants, and the ways in which they interacted with others in the focus groups revealed some aspects of their motivations. For example, a pastime or escapist viewer appeared unmindful of the discussion surrounding certain content/programs even when she/he was invited to contribute.

It was unsurprisingly that all of the nine clusters of viewing motivations proposed by Rubin were mentioned by participants across the groups. Also, the interrelation among these motivations, which Rubin (1983) pointed out, were found in my research. For example, some participants, who stated that they learned news skills and real-life experiences from watching TV, were among frequent viewers of entertainment programs.

However, my research, which applied a qualitative method, did not aim to identify various viewing motivations or test the correlation between variables influencing their motivations; rather, I attempted to investigate what might represent the major need of each participant within a group and how she/he gratified it. For this purpose, I attempted to identify the different types of

viewers among the 48 participants who joined the 8 group interviews. Based upon the close relations among the different motivations and the idea of viewers deferred in their involvement with TV content (Rubin, 1983), I separated the participants into four major types of viewers correspondent to their major motivations: (1) information/learning viewers; (2) entertainment viewers; (3) pastime viewers; and (4) escapist viewers. No doubt the different types of viewers might overlap each other: some participants could be distinguished between two certain types. However, the levels of involvement with the correspondent content/programs determined which type they were closer to.

Regarding the major motivation of a particular participant, other additional reasons could coincide with some extended gratifications they obtained; for example, information-seeking participants, who used TV for learning or gathering news, stated that they felt relaxed and excited at the same time; whereas, participants who watched TV for entertainment were gratified by the amusement, companionship, and even by information due to the multi-faceted influences that television had on them. Therefore, the findings of my research suggest that, the two stages of gratifications, i.e., ‘gratifications sought’ and ‘gratifications obtained’, were not necessarily distinguishable, particularly the additional motivations which might be considered the consequences of TV viewing and “mostly unintended ones” (Katz et al., 1974).

Of the various needs that TV audiences might have, escape needs can be considered special viewing motivations. Some gratifications researchers have defined this need in relation to their perceived alienation and isolation (Katz and Foulkes, 1962, Katz et al., 1974). Rubin, who emphasised the distinction between escapist and ‘pass time’ (pastime) viewers (1983), regarded escape as a motivation to forget the pressure of life or to get away from family members or others (Rubin, 1981). In the course of my research, only two participants revealed their use of TV for escape: one female migrant worker in Group 1 and one male graduate student in Group 5. These

participants were not only feeling life's pressures: they also felt lonely. The former stated that she was living far from her parents, her husband and her daughter: the latter spoke of his unemployment status. They both watched TV a lot because "there was no one to talk with" (F/MW_woman_6) and to "hide away from my close friends who are all working" (STUD_man_3). The findings supported the above definition of escapist motivation. In addition, I identified the differences between escapist viewers and pastime viewers. Participants who watched TV as a habit seemed to be more active to some extent. They claimed to work hard and seemed not to feel the need to forget or hide away from others; rather, they felt relaxed and amused when viewing. These participants, who were close to entertainment viewers, were, however, different in the way in which they watched TV. They paid little attention to the TV content. My research also supported previous findings that "heavy users of television are not necessarily motivated by a desire to escape from reality" (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, cited in Rubin, 1983, p. 49). Of the 48 participants, the entertainment viewers – some of whom watched more than three hours per day - tended to be the heaviest viewers. This was understandable because entertainment programs are always much longer than others. For example, the male migrant workers (Group 2) said they usually watched one film (approximately 1 hour) and one soccer game (at least 1 and a half hours or more) every night.

Importantly, my research found that some viewing motivations fulfilled the temporary needs of the participants, particularly their pastime and escape motivations. This suggested that motivations for TV use, rather than being unchangeable, depend upon a number of factors. For example, a pastime viewing participant in Group 6 said that if he had more time, he would watch more TV, particularly entertainment programs. A participant in Group 8 stated that he watched a lot when he was single but, since getting married, he mainly watches the news and news magazine. These findings were consistent with Rosengren's (1974) paradigm for uses and

gratifications research (see Figure 2.8, Chapter 2) where he argued that the structure of the surrounding society, including its media structure, gave rise to individual problems; in turn, these problems and perceptions of solutions motivated people to use the media.

In this research, I have focused on particular factors that may influence the participants' motivations including their SES statuses, the ready availability of television and, particularly, their residential circumstances. However, as with a qualitative method, my study does not generalise a correlation between these factors and motivations as causal effects but attempts to investigate and explain the different cases among the participants.

7.1.2 Correspondence to knowledge gap hypothesis

My research found that participants with different SES may use TV for the acquisition of knowledge differently. For example, some lower SES participants, who watched TV for learning purposes, were able to gain basic knowledge whereas the higher SES participants sought specialised content which suited their interests. This finding supports the major premise of the knowledge gap hypothesis, i.e., that “the higher the education, the greater the knowledge of various topics” (cited in Gaziano, 1997, p. 447). However, according to my reports, not all of the participants with similar SES interacted with TV in the same way. For example, there was a big difference between the female and male migrant workers' interaction (Group 1 and 2): the former tended towards being information seekers whereas the latter preferred entertainment. These results were consistent with Kwak's (1999) findings that both education and motivation variables, such as issue interests and behavioural involvement, independently contribute to knowledge acquisition.

Some lower SES female participants who joined in the group interviews seemed to be inspired by information which suited their level of knowledge such as health care, social security, food safety, agricultural experiences, gender equality, and everyday experiences about which they gathered information by watching entertainment programs such as TV drama series and talk shows. In contrast, the majority of male participants did not allude to any specific knowledge they acquired from watching TV with the exception of news programs and profession-related information such as economic and financial issues which were sought by some in the STUD group.

In addition, there may be a gap between male and female participants' knowledge of the news: the men seemed to be more informed about political and economic issues than the women. This finding was probably linked to the traditional beliefs regarding gender roles which continue to prevail in this transitional society, particularly in the expanded areas of Hanoi wherein a rural economy and a culture based upon an entrenched patriarchal system have predominated for hundreds of years. In patriarchal societies, men, who are normally acknowledged as the heads of families, invariably act externally and thus come to know about general issues that support their social contacts. In contrast, women (other than those prominent in matriarchal societies) play an internal role that entails housework and serving the needs of their husbands and children. Their major exposure is to everyday life experiences and to knowledge such as health care and food safety.

In this research, I identified certain internal and external variables which influenced participants' knowledge acquisition (see Gaziano (1997) including SES (education, income and occupation), motivation, interest, media use and exposure and connectedness to family and community.

Television messages that are comprehensive can serve people at all SES levels, particularly those with low educational levels. With the exception of some participants who were news seekers, the

majority of participants in my research did not read newspapers: they preferred to watch TV. When their incomes increased, they planned to buy more TV sets so that they could access cable or satellite digital TV services. This is consistent with Neuman et al.'s (1992) findings that audiences with low educational levels and cognitive skills enjoyed watching TV while those with high cognitive skills preferred the press.

My research, which adopted a one-shot approach to the knowledge gap hypothesis, did not investigate how the extant gap between participants might be narrowed. Rather, my findings suggest that via their broadcasting of a variety of programs such as news, entertainment and education-related and popular sciences, television might help audiences with low SES to raise their awareness of everyday forms of knowledge that suit their interests. However, from reading the answers of the nine TV professionals, it becomes clear that Vietnamese television, while socialising its production process, tends to specialise its content albeit still maintaining popular programs. There has been provision of specific-content channels, particularly within TV cable/satellite digital services, that have served special segments of audiences, mainly those with high SES such as businessmen, intellectuals, and young and high technology masters. But, migrants in general, and poor/low SES people continue to depend upon the existing general-content channels for their communication needs. Thus, the gap in the knowledge between high and low SES residents may continue to remain the same.

7.1.3 Correspondence to the agenda setting theory

One of the core concepts of the agenda setting theory is 'need for orientation'. As McCombs suggests (2004), "the greater an individual's need for orientation in the realm of public affairs, the more likely he or she is to attend to the agenda of the mass media" (p. 66). Thus, it may be

seen that the agenda setting model and the uses and gratifications theory share common concerns with people's needs (as argued by some scholars, e.g., Shaw, 1979, Takeshita, 2005). The need for orientation is consistent with the motivation for information/learning; as McCombs (2004) suggests, the former (the agenda setting model) stresses the need to gather, that is, to be informed by news about politics and government.

In my research, agenda setting theory was employed to fulfil two purposes: (1) to analyse the setting of selected Vietnam television channels, based on data collected via content analysis of these channels' programs; and, (2) to examine the need for orientation of Hanoi's new urban residents when they use television as a source of information.

In terms of programs content analysis, I found that Vietnamese TV channels were organised into several major content groups including informative, cultural, educational, entertainment and mixed programs. I also noted differences among the proportions of these content groups in each channel correspondent to the functions for which they were set. For example, VTV1, H1 and VTC1, which were general content channels, included information and provided entertainment. The proportions of each group's content within these channels were balanced compared to that of entertainment channels such as VTV3, VTC2 or the educational channel VTV2. However, the different function of each channel led to differences among VTV1, H1 and VTC1, the three major channels. For example, national station VTV1 served the views of the whole population albeit under extreme supervision by the Party and government; for this reason, it was effectively committed to screening more informative programs. In contrast, VTC1, a Vietnam Television Corporation (Ministry of Information and Communication) channel, screens more entertainment programs.

Linked with this programs content analysis, my in-depth interviews with TV professionals, particularly the managers, revealed considerable information about the ways these channels are

organised. The three TV manager key respondents unanimously maintained that Vietnamese TV programming is primarily determined by political factors as all of the media organizations in the country remain under state ownership. However, since *Doi Moi* in 1986, and particularly since the country moved to join the outside world, probably marked by its becoming a WTO member in 2007, Vietnamese television has been allowed - and encouraged - to engage in business while still maintaining its political function. This explains the current trend towards increasing numbers of entertainment programs which feature advertisements that financially benefit the stations; for example, many famous foreign TV game shows have been imported and their Vietnamese versions screened in prime time.

When examining the need for participant orientation, my research found that the majority of the participants reported that they liked news programs. As discussed in Chapter 5, VTV's evening news (*Thoi Su*) was the most important program for both the Party and the viewing audiences. Broadcast at 7 p.m. every day, it has the highest rating time (prime time) for television in any country in the region; and, all provincial stations are required to relay it on their channels. Therefore, it is understandable that watching *Thoi Su* had become a habit for many Vietnamese people, particularly Hanoi residents. Some audience surveys reviewed in Chapter 1 supported this fact. However, in my research, the participants differed in the ways in which they watch *Thoi Su*. The majority of male participants reported that they never missed the program while female participants answered 'no problem' if they missed it; on the other hand, some female residents in the expanded areas (Group 3) retained their habit of watching local news on Ha Tay Television (HTV). In 2008, concomitant with the expansion of the city, HTV merged with HRT to become channel H2. Among those who frequently watched *Thoi Su* (the middle aged men in Group 4 were examples), many appeared to be active viewers. They not only watched but usually discussed the news content with others within their location, consistent with the notion that the agenda setting model emphasizes, i.e., the importance of interpersonal communication (Shaw,

1979). While stressing their trust in this national news, which was “under careful censorship”, these participants criticised its content regarding certain issues, particularly the lack and restriction of information about several ‘sensitive’ political affairs. Some of them, who said that depending merely upon *Thoi Su* did not satisfy their need for orientation, nowadays turn to the Internet as a second source. Perhaps not unexpectedly, the younger male migrant workers (Group 2), temporary migrants (6), and seasonal migrants (Group 7) proved passive viewers of TV news programs.

7.1.4 Correspondence to the media system dependency theory

As suggested in Chapter 2, media system dependency (MSD) theory is a multi-faceted approach that comprises two levels of dependency: macro level and micro level. At the macro level, MSD is more likely to be a theory of structural conditions and historical circumstances (McQuail and Windahl, 1981) whereas at the micro level, it may merge with the uses and gratification theory (Rubin and Windahl, 1986) and the agenda setting model (‘orientation dependency’ in MSD may be regarded as ‘need for orientation’ in agenda setting). Therefore, MSD theory would be better applied for an explanation of the context of communication process rather than as a model to be tested.

In terms of the macro level, my research definitely suited the historical context argued by the MSD authors: “It was difficult to sort out, but the picture that emerged focused on several significant forms of change that were adding to the complexity of society: urbanisation, modernisation, migration, expansion of the division [of] labour, increased stratification and increased social mobility” (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976, p. 182). The contexts of urbanisation and modernisation, which I reviewed in Chapter 3, provided a platform for the

consideration of both society and people in change. The expansion of metropolitan Hanoi, while attracting increasing numbers of migrant peoples to the city, transformed a large number of rural residents into urban residents irrespective of the fact that their culture and customs had been grounded in agriculture for centuries. This enforced urbanisation put many people under pressure as it brought change to their lives. Both the migrants and the new residents flocked to the city in search of work opportunities, in the process challenging the sustainable development of Hanoi. Some of the new residents remained on their rural lands, waiting for urbanisation to come to them, bringing with it material facilities, networks and infrastructures. In reality, the Internet and TV cable had reached some of the country's more remote places: some mountainous communes⁹⁴ had been connected to electricity for the first time. Ball-Rokeach et al.'s (1984) term 'contextual factor' has been applied in my research to explain the context of urbanisation associated with networking. In a country like Vietnam, where information and communication technologies have been developing rapidly, the migrant people, particularly those with low SES and low incomes, seem to have been excluded from both the information and civil networks, becoming the country's most vulnerable groups (TV producer B, TV reporter C, TV manager A). For the majority of participants in my research, television was the main source of information and entertainment they depended upon. Notwithstanding, they seem to have been excluded yet again from the development strategies of Vietnamese Television, which are oriented towards serving the high SES audiences, who are more likely to be valuable consumers of potential TV advertisements.

In addition, my research found some changes in the relations of Vietnamese television with the country's political and economic systems, changes which Ball-Rokeach et al. (1984) referred to as 'structural factors'. As already discussed, Vietnamese television nowadays is no longer merely

⁹⁴ According to TV manager C, some mountainous communes in Hoa Binh province were connected to electricity one year after merging with Hanoi.

a propaganda tool of the Party and the government as it was in the past; today, it tends to be extremely commercialised. As a result, it has been increasingly specialising audiences according to their incomes and interests rather than serving its audiences as a whole.

At the micro level, my research found various dependencies proposed by the MSD theory including understanding dependency, orientation dependency and play dependency. These findings have already been presented within the uses and gratification models and agenda setting theory. Another element contributing to the MSD model is ‘interpersonal network factors’ which I discuss in the following part of this section.

7.1.5 Correspondent to intercultural communication

Intercultural communication has been applied in my research to ascertain how the participants communicate with other people culturally. As stated in Chapter 2, there have been three successive major approaches to intercultural communication: social science approach, interpretive approach and critical approach. The latter two are usually applied in cultural studies and reception analysis of media audiences cored by ethnography.

My research adopted the social science approach which views intercultural communication as “the exchange of information between individuals who are unlike culturally” (Rogers and Steinfatt, 1999, p. 79). Due to the fact that the majority of participants selected for my research were migrants domiciled in Hanoi, it is reasonable to assume that they engaged in a variety of interactions with other people in the city in which they had resettled. Therefore, I have emphasised intercultural communication rather than interpersonal communication.

Regarding the answers of the 48 participants in the 8 group interviews, I found that they normally interacted with: (a) their family members; (b) their colleagues; (c) their roommates; (d) their neighbours; and, (e) their home town fellows. Television content played a role in their interaction with others as a connecting medium. Some male participants reported that they frequently met others locally and discussed news items they had watched; some females, on the other hand, tended to share their impressions of a TV drama or film. However, all of these types of interactions can be distinguished as mono-cultural group conversations.

Some of the participants, who lived in an expanded area and worked in the city, experienced more interaction with local citizens. Despite the variety, the outcome they reported was somewhat negative so their first preference remained their former group. With the exception of the graduate students (Group 5), all of the other participants revealed weak intercultural personal competence which restricted them from integrating with the urban dwellers. This finding was consistent with the opinions of some TV professionals who viewed the migrants as closed groups who grouped together rather than opening themselves to learning and sharing, eschewing the way that individual culture is achieved and perceived.

7.2 Conclusion

The pace of urbanisation in Vietnam has been increasing rapidly in tandem with industrialisation and modernisation. The government has forecast that 45 % of Vietnam will be urbanised by 2020. An “historical” plan for the expansion of Hanoi received huge endorsement by the National Assembly in May 2008 despite public protest. Beginning in August 2008, the capital’s borders were expanded to create a metropolis 3.6 times its previous size of 922 square kilometers. Hanoi’s population will double to 6.2 million as a result, creating over 3 million new residents.

To date, research into Vietnamese urbanisation has been located in the fields of economic geography, health and population studies, information technology, philosophy, political science and sociology; but, not in international communication or media studies. One of the principal ‘problematiques’ in the field of international communication is the relationship between urbanisation, media and development. My research has drawn contemporary Vietnam into this narrative and extended the narrative further. The study has also informed policy making within three Vietnamese TV stations.

My research has examined how Vietnamese television has addressed and served the communication needs of Hanoi’s new residents, i.e., recent migrants from the countryside who have become new residents through urban expansion.

Two major objectives have been addressed in this study:

- (3) how the new residents of Hanoi perceive the role of television in their everyday lives;
and
- (4) how Vietnamese Television addresses and serves the communication needs of Hanoi’s new residents.

Based on these two core concerns, seven research questions (RQ) relevant to the project were posed:

RQ One: How do the new residents of Hanoi use Television to satisfy their communication needs?

RQ Two: How do the differences of SES influence the knowledge acquisition among them?

RS Three: To what extent do the new residents of Hanoi depend upon television as a source of information?

RQ Four: How do the new residents of Hanoi communicate with others in terms of interpersonal and intercultural communication?

RQ Five: How are Vietnamese television's channels structured?

RS Six: How do Vietnamese television managers and practitioners perceive Hanoi urbanisation and the communication needs of urban migrants?

RQ Seven: What strategies do Vietnamese television stations employ to serve the communication needs of Hanoi's new residents?

In this conclusion, I summarise the research's key findings and revisit how the research aims have been achieved. Finally, I distinguish some limitations of my research and recommend particular aspects which may invite future research into this theme.

7.2.1 Summary of the findings

7.2.1.1 Focus groups findings

The 48 participants involved in this research were current migrants who had become Hanoi's new residents since the 2008 area expansion. The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted in Hanoi, Vietnam, between November 2009 and February 2010. Eight focus groups were organised in five urban and suburban districts of Hanoi including: Long Bien, Hoan Kiem, Thanh Xuan, Dan Phuong and Hoai Duc. Participants were invited to join correspondent groups to ensure they were homogeneous in SES: migrant workers (Groups 1&2); new residents in expanded areas (Groups 3&4); graduate students who had resettled in Hanoi (Group 5); temporary migrants (Group 6); permanent migrants (Group 7); and, seasonal migrants (Group 8).

Based upon data analysis, four major types of viewers were identified among the 48 participants.

Information/learning viewers:

Almost all of the participants reported that they watched TV for information and news programs. However, less than half of them could be distinguished as information/learning viewers due to the time of exposure and the level of involvement in the informative programs. They included female migrant workers, female and male residents in the expanded areas, graduate students resettled in the city and permanent migrants. Of these participants, those with lower SES liked TV news, particularly VTV's evening news; those with higher SES enjoyed both news and special information such as commercial and financial. The female information seekers preferred soft news and local news over hard news and national/world news. They favoured education-related programs/channels from which they could acquire knowledge about health care, safety food, shopping, agricultural experiences and social issues such as gender equality and social security. Almost all of the information seekers had little pressure in their lives. Some expanded area residents, who possessed more than 2 TV sets at home, said that although some difficulties persisted, their family incomes had improved. The female migrant workers earned lower incomes compared to others in this cohort. However, they stated that they were not among the poorest in the city. All of them had at least one TV at home ('home' being a boarding-house), one had cable TV and one had access to digital satellite services. All of the information seekers demanded more news and more informative programs that would serve their interests.

Entertainment viewers:

Participants who claimed to be entertainment viewers spent most time of their TV viewing time watching entertainment programs. Among these participants, some were male migrant workers who were young and single: there was one graduate student; one middle-aged permanent migrant

and others who lived in rural suburban areas but seasonally migrated to the city. All of the entertainment viewers seemed satisfied with their lives despite the fact that they were probably working very hard; thus, they were easily satisfied by their watching. For example, one was living with his with family and running a small business from home. A young lady, who was a temporary migrant, said she had a job as a sales girl in the city. The six young male migrant workers said they had low incomes but could not expect more. For these participants, gathering together with their fellows and roommates watching soccer and films on TV was their main after work activity.

Passing time or habit viewers:

Not many participants were identified as passing time viewers. However, there were two different types of 'pass time' viewers, some who watched as a habit although they had limited time, and temporary migrants. The others said that they watched to pass the time when there was nothing better to do (e.g., some graduate students in Group 5) or watched while doing their work (some permanent migrants in Group 7). Out of all of the 48 participants in my research, the temporary migrants (Group 6) may well have been the most vulnerable group. They worked hard (an average of 10-12 hours per day) and lived in badly run down shelters. They did not read the newspapers, knew nothing of the Internet, and watched very little TV. One did not have a TV set at his boarding-house. In the main, pass time viewers paid little attention to general TV content: they seemed oriented towards entertainment programs.

Escapist viewers:

Two participants in the group interviews were distinguished as escapist viewers due to having to cope with pressure in their lives: one watched to hide away, another watched to forget. However,

they both stated that their motivation was temporary and would change if their circumstances changed.

7.2.1.2 Content analysis findings

Content analysis of the three general content channels within the three TV stations revealed that while VTV1 and H1 had a balance structure constituted by different groups of content, VTC1 appeared to be primarily an entertainment channel due to the large proportion of films it broadcast. The results of my content analysis clarify the function of these channels: VTV1 belongs to national television which is strictly controlled by the Party. Thus, its important role is to serve its viewers and keep them informed about the Party's policies. This explains the balanced proportions between informative and entertainment programs on VTV1. The channel's entertainment programs are carefully filtered, hence no live shows or games shows are broadcast by VTV1. Similarly, H1 is under the control of the Hanoi Party and People's Committee. However, as criticized by a key respondent, a number of its programs serve the needs of Hanoi's authorities rather than of the city's residents. H1 produces and broadcasts a number of news magazines; but, they mainly take the form of propaganda. VTC1 proved to be a special case compared to the other two channels. The Vietnam Television Corporation (VTC) is an example of the Party's 'socialising television' policy.

7.2.1.3 In-depth interviews findings

Nine in-depth interviews with TV professionals were conducted to gather their opinions and information surrounding three major themes: (1) the urbanisation and expansion of Hanoi; (2) the

communication needs of Hanoi's new residents; and, (3) the strategies Vietnam television might employ to satisfy their needs.

All of the key respondents agreed that there was a general tendency towards urbanization; however, some expressed disappointed regarding what they considered the overloading of the urban population of Hanoi at the time. Some attributed the degrading of Hanoi's high value culture to urbanization, to the large numbers of migrant people "which destroyed the western style of Hanoi landscape ... formed in the period of French colonisation" (TV manager B).

When alluding to the problems which underpinned urban development in Hanoi, all of the respondents spoke of the weak and backward transportation infrastructure and insecure food situation as the most crucial issues. In addition, they argued that the lack of an overall plan, and the shortcomings of urban management challenged any substantial development of Hanoi city.

Regarding the identities of the Hanoi migrants, some of the key respondents observed that the migrants tended to restrict their interactions to family, former friends and fellow-hometown people. One TV manager stressed that Hanoi's new residents must learn to adapt to the city's culture: they needed exposure to various types of information. Another important observation made by a TV producer suggested that both Hanoi's new residents and migrants were people who had few private opinions.

Some of the respondents viewed the migrant workers, particularly those who were unskilled, as among the country's most vulnerable groups. For example, one observed: "They are not the residents of the administrative unit where they are residing, whereas they might not be residents of their origin home town any longer. No one stands up for their right in terms of schooling and assessing to social services such as health care and personal insurances" (TV producer B).

All of the TV professionals agreed that due to their low SES, the majority of migrants and poor residents – those in the expanded areas in particular and in the city in general - were interested in information relevant to their basic concerns. Some of the key respondents argued that the number of extant free-to-air channels was already serving these needs. It was thus understandable that not one of the TV stations was providing any new free-to-air channels: their focus was on increasing the number of cable TV channels.

Additional to this opinion, one important finding gained from the interviews was that all of the respondents, while airing their views about the identity and communication needs of Hanoi's new residents, at the same time failed to see them as a specific group of TV audiences. The migrant groups would be excluded from TV development strategies oriented towards promoting cable channels because “they are not consumers of high value products” (TV manager C).

7.2.2 The exclusion of new migrants from network

As suggested in Chapter Three, the binary logic of inclusion and exclusion is one of the most important characteristics of network society. According to Castells (2004), people in the time of the network society are divided into two categories: those who are integrated and those who are not integrated into the network. A network society as such does not include all people in the process but increasingly affects any individual anywhere. In a society which profoundly transits to the networks, “exclusion from these networks is one of the most damaging forms of exclusion in our economy and in our culture” (Castells, 2002, p. 3).

Drawing upon Castells' concepts of inclusion and exclusion, Cartier et al. (2005) and Qiu (2009) are among pioneer researchers to apply and discuss this digital divide in terms of information haves and information have-nots or have-less in China. People with information have-less in this

country include “hundreds of millions of rural-to-urban migrants, laid-off workers, state-sector employees, pensioners, and other low-income groups [who] populate an expansive gray zone of the digital divide” (Cartier et al., 2005, p.11).

Qiu (2009) argues that migrants constitute a remarkable part of the information have-less population upon which the working-class network society in urban China is formed. He notes that: “Most of China’s domestic migrants are have-less migrants: they are socio-economically similar, have the shared experience of being uprooted, and hold common aspirations for human settlement and socio-cultural recognition for what they achieve through long-term or temporary migration” (p. 85). Compared with the privileged and upper classes, these people have fewer information technologies to draw upon because “they have limited income and limited influence in policy processes, although they have begun to go online and use wireless phones” (p. 4). The have-less migrants in urban China use Internet cafés and “little smart” mobile phones for their information needs (Cartier et al., 2005).

Generally speaking, to some degree what has happened in China tends to resemble the status of contemporary urban Vietnam, including similar periods of urban development (see Chapter Three for a brief review) and a similar system of residence registration known as *ho khau* (Ch: *hukou*). Similar to China, in Vietnam the use of information technologies is uneven between the urban and rural areas. In 1998, the year when the Internet was introduced into Vietnam, initially only 14 of its 61 provinces had Internet connections. Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city absorbed 90% of the country’s connections (Surborg, 2009). In 2003, these two biggest cities, that are home to 11 per cent of the population, held 34 per cent of all telephone lines in the country (Surborg, 2009). Qiu (2009) claims that it is difficult to study have-less migrants in urban China due to the lack of data. The situation is similar in Vietnam where almost all of the official statistics appertaining to demography and migration ignore the figure of Internet usage among migrants living in the cities.

Surborg (2009) notes that the unequal distribution of the Internet between the country's rural and urban areas is "an issue often neglected in analyses of the digital divide at the nation state level" (p. 244).

However, recent statistics pertaining to Internet users in Vietnam reveal some important figures. According to Vietnam NetCitizens' report (Cimigo, 2011), although the development of the Internet has been constantly increasing in the country, only one-third of Vietnam's population (31% or 26.8 million people) had access to the network by the end of 2010. In the main cities, Hanoi included, the penetration of the Internet was approximately 50%. The report also shows a significant difference of penetration between peoples of the various economic classes. For example, 70% of people of the higher economic class use the Internet, whereas penetration at the middle and lower economic classes was 30-50% and less than 10% respectively.

Participants in my research revealed their lack not only of social networks, but also of information networks. Some may be categorized as have-nots and others as have-less(es). Most participants said they used 'little smart' mobile phones to communicate with family, and accessed the Internet in Internet cafés mainly for entertainment or for reading online newspapers. With the exception of the graduate student group, almost all of my participants who reported using the Internet said that they did not know how to use search engines. And, none of them blogged or took part in online forums. These findings were compatible with Qiu's (2009) information about have-less migrants in China: "Many spend more than ten hours a week online, yet they do not know about search engines or possess personal email accounts because they use the Internet mostly for entertainment" (p. 5).

Regarding the gender factor in the development of ICTs, earlier research has revealed the inequality between males and females accessing the Internet. Similar to other developing countries with traditional beliefs vis-à-vis gender roles, Vietnam is a patriarchal society

(Rydstrom, 2004). In such societies, “the role of a mother and housewife [which is] tied to women’s identity means they are often judged by the quality of their reproductive work and childcare” (Hoang, 2011, p. 1448). Hoang’s research into migration decision-making in Vietnam in 2011 found that “women’s migration appeared as the last choice of many households” because it was seen to “reflect the man’s poor capacity to fulfill his role as the breadwinner of the household” (p. 1448). However, the most recent Census data in 2009 shows “a trend towards the feminisation of migration with women accounting for half of internal migrant population, and rates of female migration steadily increasing over the past two decades since the 1989 Census” (UNDP Vietnam, 2011, p. 36). The Vietnam NetCitizens report (Cimigo, 2011) also shows the uneven distribution of male and female Internet users. According to the report, 60% of males in urban Vietnam had accessed the Internet compared to 50% of females; and, approximately half of all men had used the Internet for 5 years or more, whereas the figure for females was 35%. In their recent study of Gendered Impacts of Information and Communication Technologies in Vietnam, Le et al. (2005, p. 21), explain this inequality: “Women work long day and men have some spare times in which they play, read newspapers and do other things. [...] men have more time for having information, including the facility of ICT”.

Female participants in my research revealed two characteristics when using television: (1) they were mostly interested in information relative to their families such as safe foods, health care, and the family economy, e.g., cultivating and poultry farming; and, (2) as they were less socially active than men, they showed less interest in current news and politics than their male counterparts. Apropos of female participants in the expanded areas, there were more dependent upon their husbands when it came to watching and discussing news and current affairs. These participants said they had never experienced the Internet and were not convinced that they would be able to use it. Female migrants who were younger than the other groups, and were working and living alone, found accessing the Internet relatively easy; but, they had no intention of taking

advantage of it. They rarely used the Internet, only for checking their email. They did not know how to use search engines or to insert keywords for research purposes. Most of my participants said that using the Internet was not necessary: it was a waste of time; and, it was rather expensive to use compared to the mobile phone. While mature-aged male migrant workers said that they used the Internet to chat with friends, and that they read the newspapers more frequently than females, the responses of the next generation were different. The young female participants, particularly the graduate student groups, said that there was not much difference between males and females using the Internet in terms of time and connecting with others.

As discussed earlier in my research, most of my participants depended heavily upon television as a major source of information and entertainment rather than on the Internet. The migrants' exclusion from the network may well have exacerbated their lack of access to information systems which in turn has widened the gap between the privileged and unprivileged in society. In the context of a network society, this social discrepancy needs to be addressed and seriously taken into account in future studies.

7.2.3 Achievement of research aims

My research addressed the following two objectives. I sought to establish:

- (1) how the new residents of Hanoi perceive the role of television in their everyday lives; and
- (2) how Vietnamese Television addresses and serves the communication needs of Hanoi's new residents.

The first objective has been achieved via the findings from focus group interviews with the participants: the second has been achieved in part through in-depth interviews with TV professionals and TV programs content analysis.

7.2.3.1 Communicative and strategic actions

My research found that television plays a crucial role in the lives of the participants. Some of them looked upon TV as ‘a friend’, something that was always there for them when they felt lonely. Some regarded TV as ‘a free book’ from which they could learn things about life. Interestingly, one, who I would categorise as an escapist, saw TV as “a place to hide”. However, although they considered television in a variety of ways, the majority of participants reported that they could not imagine their lives without TV.

The term ‘lifeworld’ was used by Habermas in association with “a cultural stock of knowledge from which the participants in interaction draw their interpretations” (1984, p. 82). Lifeworld according to Habermas, is characterised by communicative action - a special type of social action oriented toward mutual understanding (Habermas, 1976). While emphasising communicative action between individuals, he (1987) assumed that the system, which involves both the economy and the state, each characterised by strategic action via their respective steering of media, money and power, colonises the lifeworld. For Habermas (1984), strategic action is “action oriented toward success”. In line with communicative action theory, the communication process between television and its audiences can be seen as a strategic action. Jacobson and Satish (1999) argue that mass media are not merely strategic instruments but also tools for reaching mutual understanding.

In my research, the participants saw the role of television as both a medium of information and a source of culture. In turn, television, while employing strategies to serve their communication

needs with informative and educational programs, at the same time provides them with a number of entertainment programs. According to the participants, television not only stood between them and their everyday life practices: it was also witness to the changes of practice in each family. For example, participants would buy more TV sets or subscribe to TV cable services when their incomes improved. One stated that currently there was a TV set in every single room in her house because for some time her family had not watched TV together as her children did not want to watch with the older members of the family.

Despite the fact that information and communication technologies have been developing rapidly, and despite the network having been connected and informing civil society, migrant people, particularly the poor, were among the information have-nots or have-less. As a group, they were excluded from the network. This, despite the fact that for them television was almost the only source of information. In addition, because they lack social contact with other cultural groups and are thus not included in other's cultural activities, these participants (migrants) tended to depend heavily upon TV which offered them a dream of a better life (TV manager A). While some participants strategically interacted with television to gather information and learn about real life experiences, most of them kept contact with – communicated with - others within their close cultural groups.

7.2.3.2. The ideological role of television

As suggested in Chapter 2, Althusser considered media to be one of the ideological state apparatuses through which the ruling classes obtained the necessary consent for their dominance via interpellation. The term 'consent', which alludes to Gramsci's concept of hegemony, may be understood as "something that is won ... ruling groups in a society actively seek to have their

worldview accepted by all members of society as the universal way of thinking” (Croteau et al., 2003, p. 166). As an ideological state apparatus, mass media help the dominant ideology to be perceived either in a ‘natural’ way or in ‘the way things are’. Through this constant process, the ruling classes achieve ‘common sense’ and maintain their ‘cultural leadership’ (Croteau et al., 2003). The notions of ideology and hegemony have been applied widely across the field of cultural studies in terms of media images, media texts or discourses. Stuart Hall defined culture as “an ideological struggle” (1985), and media as “the politics of signification” (Hall, 1982). In the words of Croteau et al, (2003), media “do not simply reflect the world, they *re-present* it; instead of reproducing the ‘reality’ of the world ‘out there’, the media engage in practices that define reality” (p. 168, original emphasis). Thompson (1990) suggested a tripartite model for studies of media and ideology that focused not only upon media messages, but also upon the whole process of communication. “Rather than assuming that the ideological character of media messages can be read off the messages themselves (an assumption I [Thompson] have called the fallacy of internalism), we can draw upon the analysis of all three aspects of communication – production/transmission, construction, reception/appropriation - in order to interpret the ideological character of media messages” (p. 306).

The notion that media represent reality is compatible with Althusser’s understanding of ideology, i.e., that it “represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (1971, p. 162). Thompson (1990) refer to this as an ‘ideological effect’ of media.

Based upon Althusser’s concept of ideology and Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, I will suggest that the relationship between Vietnamese television and its audiences may be seen as a relationship between an ideological state apparatus and its subjects. This could answer the main objective of my research: what is the role of Vietnamese television in the daily lives of Hanoi migrants and new residents? Generally speaking, as a very important state-owned medium,

Vietnamese television on the one hand helps to sustain the cultural leadership of the ruling class by manufacturing common consent or hegemony. On the other, through its signification process, multiple ideologies are transmitted to individuals. By subscribing to the existence of particular ideologies, the individuals involved in this process accept its interpellation and become subjects of the medium. Althusser (1971) explained the term ‘subject’ as follows: “All ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” (p. 173). He added: “You and I are always already subjects, and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition, which guarantee for us that we are indeed concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects” (pp. 172-173).

However, the relationship between Vietnamese television and its audiences should not be considered merely as a propaganda process imposing on public consent. Rather, as I have argued in Chapter 3, a socialist country like Vietnam, while keeping the media under state ownership and under the direct control of the Vietnamese Communist Party’s Culture and Ideology Department, has to “commercialise operations, permit some degree of competition” (Marr, 2003, p. 293).

Reflecting the dichotomy of Vietnam’s political economy since the introduction of *Doi Moi* or socialism with market orientation, the Vietnamese media in general - and television, in particular - have tended towards becoming extremely commercialised. Vietnamese television accomplishes its ideological role by employing two strategies: (1) by persuading its audiences in order to achieve public consent regarding both Party and State policies; and, (2) by distracting viewer attention from potential social conflicts and directing it towards entertainment content by offering them increasing numbers of entertainment channels introduced over the last decades (see Chapter 6). Driven by the market, Vietnamese television serves the country’s middle-income viewers’ increasing need for information and entertainment and in the process benefits itself. My in-depth

interviews with key respondents reflect this tendency. For example, a Vietnamese television manager said: “We are planning to construct more TV cable channels. Due to the extreme competitive between TV stations at the moment, the most important factor need to be considered is the economic concerns. We have to answer the question of whether and how this channel benefits”.

With reference to migrant people, the manager continued, stating: “They are not consumers of high value products. Their needs mainly for everyday products, I mean the basic needs of livings. If we produce a specific channel or even a specific program for them, what kind of advertisement would be called for to support the production cost?”

After adding more pay TV channels to its cable and digital satellite system, Vietnamese television directed its development strategy towards entertaining and specialising in terms of both content and target (see Chapter 6 for a list of current TV stations by 2009). In accordance with this strategy, there will be no more free general content channels; those that serve the basic information needs for all audiences (like O2 TV, for example, a channel for public health) can only be produced with foreign sponsorship. The development of television as entertainment is considered another form of anaesthetic hegemony. In the words of Exoo (2010), “the media’s job is not to indoctrinate people into capitalism but to anaesthetise them to its injuries”. He further argues to the effect that:

To carry them away from a world full of poverty, rapacity, and indignity, to a realm of undiluted pleasure – a world where laughter and sex and excitement are always available at the touch of a button; where the good guys, the ones like us, always win in the end and find true love; and where the endings are always happy. In our time, even the news media, as we shall see, have been asked to provide this kind of escape into “infotainment.” (Exoo, 2010, p. 10)

Because they lack access to other sources of information and real cultural activities, Hanoi’s new migrants and residents tend to depend heavily upon television; that is, they heavily subscribe to

its particular ideologies and imbibe its ideological effects. From this perspective, the segments of audiences that include almost all of my participants seemed rather passive despite the fact that they were active in choosing what they wanted to watch. However, due to the lack of TV program content analysis (one of my research's limitations), my thesis had no opportunity to comprehensively investigate the images and discourses of Vietnamese television in order to analyse its ideological role. Therefore, I suggest that applying ideological and hegemonic models will benefit future research into the topic.

7.2.4 Limitations

Due to the very small samples and non-random selection techniques, the findings in this research cannot be generalised and transferred to the population at large. But, notwithstanding, the focus group interviews provided a valuable insight into the viewing motivations and needs gratifications of the participants. Due to the above perceived limitations, the outcome should be used only to suggest hypotheses and pose research questions for further studies. Similarly, the answers of the nine key respondents should not be treated as representative of the three TV stations.

As with other uses and gratifications studies, another limitation of the research is the lack of a strong connection to TV content. Although TV programs content analysis was employed, the approach has limited the classification of TV programs to informative, entertainment, cultural, educational and mixed content.

In terms of participant selection, the focus group interviews did not conclusively suggest that young people living in the expanded areas had been particularly affected by Hanoi's expansion. All 12 participants in Groups 3 and 4 were middle aged and older residents.

In addition, the focus groups interviews applied in this study did not enable the researcher to investigate the daily life activities of the participants. Although I had some opportunities during the process of selecting the participants to observe the places where they were living, the period of observation was not long enough to form a method and to provide more information about the interpersonal interaction of the participants. As a result, the data collected for this research is mainly based upon the participants' self-reporting.

7.2.5 Recommendations

7.2.5.1 Application of uses and gratifications model in future research

When criticising the uses and gratifications theory, Jensen (1991) argues that: “Most [uses and gratifications] studies have remained within the dominant tradition, being functionalist in theory, quantitativist in methodology and consensualist in politics” (p.137). I will suggest that my research proves that the uses and gratifications model may be applied using a qualitative approach which will enable researchers to investigate further how audiences use television in particular -and mass media in general - to gratify their needs.

When the uses and gratifications theory was prominent, Rubin (1983) suggested that: “Future uses and gratifications investigations might benefit from attention to viable aspects of other mass communication perspectives, such as dependency theory, and broaden the conception of the audience-media relationship by refocusing questions of individual needs and motivations in light of societal structure, media characteristics and audience relations” (p. 51). My research supports this notion: it has integrated a set of different theories into one framework. The findings reveal a strong relation between the four theories: uses and gratifications theory, knowledge gap hypothesis, agenda setting model and dependency theory.

As regards television research in the 21st century, Ruggiero (2000) suggests that: “Television fell out of favour with some mass communication scholars for several decades, but the advent of telecommunications technology may well have revived it from dormancy” (p. 13).

Due to the rapid development of information and communication technologies in the 21st century, today more media choices are available to people. But, this trend may be blurring the boundary between television and other electronic media. For example, many people now access the Internet when seeking information and as a means of connecting with others, retaining their use of television for entertainment purposes and/or other special motivations.

Based upon these notions, I would suggest that the uses and gratifications model should be applied in future research that seeks to establish whether audiences’ needs have or have not remained unchanged. In terms of methodology, a combination of various methods is suggested. Based upon the limitations of this research (addressed in the previous section), I suggest a combination of focus groups and participant observation should be adopted, the former to gather the required reports and the latter to collect data appertaining to interpersonal and intercultural communication among the participants.

7.2.5.2 Suggestion for future studies of the topic

Future studies of Hanoi’s new residents and Hanoi migrants might investigate the interrelations between their mobile residence and their viewing motivations. The hypothesis suggested could be that the needs and motivations of migrant people are subject to change correspondent to their change in residential status.

In the current context of Vietnam, two tendencies can be observed within Vietnamese Television:

(1) retaining its function as mass media serving the information needs of a large number of audiences; and, (2) moving towards specialising its content, i.e., specialising the viewers in order to serve the special needs of each segment of audiences.

From this viewpoint, it is worth studying the communication needs of certain segments of target audiences. Apropos of the specialising process of TV programs, it would be valid to propose that the individuals' personal choices to expose to specific content/programs may reveal their correspondent needs for watching TV.

My aim regarding this research into urbanisation and television in Vietnam is to inform TV policy makers of the participants' feedback and need for information. In a transition society like Vietnam, migrant people, while unarguably contributing to the development of the country, have been the first group to be affected by the urbanisation process. Many of them, I will suggest, are among the country's most vulnerable peoples. My research emphasises that more attention should be paid to this group by the country's TV policy makers, who should examine the migrant peoples' communication needs and promote strategies to serve them.

7.2.5.3 Application of entertainment-education programs

As suggested in Chapter One, studies of the role of communication in development and social change commenced in the 1950s within the framework of development communication. In 1971, Nora Quebral's work titled *Development Communication in the Agricultural Context* became the manifesto for the field. Quebral, who was recognised as the leading pioneer of development communication (Manyozo, 2006), defined development communication as "the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its

people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential” (Quebral, 1971/2006, p. 102). Accordingly, ‘development communication’ was distinguished in a broad sense as the role of communication in development, a role that was tilted heavily towards the human aspects of development. Although development communication was primarily associated with rural development, it has also been concerned with urban and suburban problems, not only in developing countries, but also in developed societies (Sinha, 1978). The focus of development communication, thought to have emerged in the 1970s as the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1962), was upon the poor majority, their communication behaviour, and the impact of information on their situation (Nair and White, 1993). Development communication plays two major roles, i.e., a transformation role and a socialisation role (Moemeka, 1994). Thus, it has gradually become an integral part of the development process itself (Nair and White, 1993, Quebral, 1971/2006).

In practices of development communication, entertainment-education emerged in the 1970s as a new form of mass communication program serving the development needs of audiences, particularly the poor majority. Singhal and Roger (1999) defined this new phenomenon as follows:

Entertainment-education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate in order to increase audience knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, and change overt behaviour. This strategy uses the universal appeal of entertainment to show individuals how they can live safer, healthier, and happier lives (p. xii).

Earlier studies in mass media in general and television in particular revealed that most audiences preferred entertainment content rather than educational programs (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). Therefore, combining entertainment with education became a useful idea for media programs that “either directly or indirectly facilitate social change” (Singhal and Rogers, 1999). According to

Melkote and Steeves (2001), the emergence of entertainment-education programs was compatible with the notion of the uses and gratifications model, which advocated audiences' activity and selectivity vis-à-vis media programs. Developing countries had applied entertainment-education programs in different forms of mass media and communication such as radio, television and music, both traditional and folk (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). Research undertaken in Latin American and Asian countries also showed that entertainment-education might serve to promote strategies for development (Singhal and Rogers, 1999).

In Vietnam, however, awareness of entertainment-education remained new to media practitioners and policy makers. The 1969 soap opera produced in Peru and titled *Simplimente Maria*, which Melkote and Steeves (2001) saw as entertainment-education, was also broadcast by Vietnam Television in 1990s albeit never recognised as this form of program in the country. In recent years, several programs combining entertainment and education, e.g., *Gap Nhau Cuoi Tuan* (*Weekend Meeting*) and *Tu Nha Ra Pho* (*From Home to the Street*) have been screened by Vietnam Television. Since 2011, Vietnam Television (VTV), Hanoi Television (HTV) and some other local stations have produced a Vietnamese version (*Con Da Lon Khon*) of the Japanese entertainment-education program *Hajimete No Otsukai* (*First Errand*), covering stories about the maturing process of a child in which he/she encountered real life problems. However, together with development communication, entertainment-education still goes almost unnoticed in Vietnam, similar to research in this field (Mai, 2003). What Vietnamese television needs is a strategy to promote this type of media program for development, both practically and theoretically. In 2007, a Vietnamese NGO known as the Centre for Community Health Research and Development (CCRD), which was sponsored by the US, hosted a conference to collect ideas about message designing for a series of entertainment-education programs dealing with health issues. This was the first time that entertainment-education programs was officially produced in the country (CCRD, 2007).

In the case of my research, most of the participants revealed what inspired them to watch certain entertainment programs on television. For some, particularly those marked as entertainment viewers, watching this kind of program was a form of hobby, the only relaxation they experienced due to the lack of other entertainment activities. However, there was also noticeable feedback from the 8 focus groups, some of whom reported that they loved to watch dramas in which the main characters, particularly those with lower and difficult living conditions, struggled to achieve success and improve their lives. These participants explained that they could “learn lessons and hopefully change their current state” (see Chapter 5 Findings for participants’ reports).

Apart from the demand for more information covering housing, health care, job seeking, and personal security, all of which were reported as the most interesting issues by participants, my research suggests that the adoption of entertainment-education programs by Vietnamese television has proven crucial to lower and middle SES audiences, particularly new migrants and new residents. Within the cultural context of contemporary Vietnam, a series of different TV genres can be applied to serve the needs of these audience groups, e.g., comedies, soap operas and drama series, traditional stage performances, and quizzes. Also, the employment of a strategy to recruit investment and sponsorship by the government and other domestic and international organisations is necessary to promote the role of television development in Vietnam.

7.2.5.4 From broadcasting to connectivity: Television studies in the era of information technologies

Television studies have passed through major stages in which different approaches have been employed, e.g., social science, humanities and ethnography approaches, and cultural studies (See

Chapter Four for a brief review). Television studies not only try to understand the medium itself, but also “examine the operation of identity, power, authority, meaning, community, politics, education, play, and countless other issues” (Gray and Lotz, 2012, p. 20).

However, in tandem with the rapid development of information technology over the last decades, various changes have occurred within the television industry and the ways in which people watch visual content. Television is no longer a simple form of mass communication which broadcasts from ‘one to many’; rather, it has become a platform for both ‘one to one’ and ‘many to many’ communication activities (Livingstone, 2004). Turner and Tay (2009) describe the changes in television from the 1970s until recent times as follows:

From the mid-1970s onwards [...] TV screens began to appear everywhere - in shops, in malls, in subway cars, in cars, buses, trains, and on the sides of buildings. Giant TV screens became an everyday component of the spectacle of urban public space. Later, ...still more screens became smaller, radically privatised, as they shrank to fit the mobile phone, the portable DVD player, or the dashboard of the car (p. 1).

The application of Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) blurred the boundary between the Internet and television, and, in the words of Dwyer, “recombined them in a new distribution mode over various platforms and access devices, but then also creatively innovated existing ‘television’ cultural forms” (Dwyer, 2010, p. 2). People are now able to access television content through their computer screens, and to check their e-mail on television (Slot, 2007). Indeed, the Internet enables people to watch their favourite TV shows on Internet sites at any time, either at home, at work, on train, or even on the move (Dwyer, 2010). Media convergence is all around us, evident in “mobile phones with video, radio and the Internet, radio over TV platforms and the Internet and TV over mobile platforms including digital radio, and the Internet – all facilitated by the move to digital technologies” (Dwyer, 2010, p. 4).

Traditional media in general and television in particular now expand into online and mobile media, a trend of media convergence described by Jenkins (2006) as: “the flow of content across

multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want” (p. 2). According to Jenkins, the circulation of media content in this convergence era “depends heavily on consumers’ active participation”. In effect, “convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others” (2006, p. 3). This process of media consumption associated with social interaction becomes what Jenkins refers to as ‘collective intelligence’ which can be understood as “meaning-making” among people.

The computer, iPhone and iPad are now seen as second screens to the traditional TV set. The interactivity between these tools, which is facilitated by the Internet, constitutes what is now called ‘social TV’ (Kennedy, 2012). In other words, the acts of viewing television and contacting via social networks have now merged. A recent study undertaken in Australia revealed that more than a quarter of the approximately eight thousand people who were polled across the country said they had watched a TV show based on a recommendation from a friend via a social networking site (Kennedy, 2012).

Together with the changes in television in the Internet age, television studies too have been subjected to change. Gray and Lotz (2012) suggest that: “Because the boundaries of media are so slippery at the moment, we regard television studies not foremost as a *field* for the study of a single medium; rather we see television studies as an *approach* to studying media” (p. 3, original emphasis). According to Gray and Lotz, even a study of YouTube can be seen as television studies at the moment. Slot (2007) notes a change in the structure of television, i.e., from broadcasting to connectivity in which media parties compete with each other for audiences. Moreover, the notion of audiences also changes: from viewers to participants. In addition, the distinction between the production process and reception has become blurred; at any time, individuals might become producers, broadcasting their visual products via the Internet.

Within television studies, it appears that the most important change has occurred in the sphere of audience research. Gray and Lotz (2012) propose the following argument:

As Nielsen in particular moves toward measuring “television” audiences online and iPod or smart phone-bearing “television” viewers, and as these ratings companies, content creators, and networks battle over the degree to which DVR ratings or online click-through ratings actually count, we are at a point in time when what constitutes “the television audiences” is a hotly debated topic (p. 78).

With reference to the trends in communication and information technologies in the 21st century, Ruggiero (2000) suggests that when individuals have more media choices, “motivation and satisfaction become even more crucial components of audience analysis” (p. 14). For Ruggiero, the basic question remains the same regarding uses and gratifications studies appertaining to this trend: “Why do people become involved in one particular type of mediated communication or another, and what gratifications do they receive from it?” (p. 29). However, he also proposes that what we need is to “expand our current theoretical models of uses and gratifications to include concepts such as interactivity, demassification, hypertextuality, asynchronicity and interpersonal aspects of mediated communication” (p. 29).

Building on Ien Ang (1991)’s notion of audience as constructed and used for various purposes by the television industry, Gray and Lotz (2012) suggest that: “knowing how they are constructed and *how* producers interact with them will remain an important task for television studies” (p. 78, original emphasis).

In this thesis, I will suggest that Ruggiero’s proposal to continue research into individuals’ motivations and gratifications and Gray and Lotz’s notion of audience construction are worth taking into account by future studies of television in the age of the Internet.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

MACQUARIE
UNIVERSITY



Faculty of Arts Research Office
Building W6A, room 233
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Phone +61 (0)2 9850 9663
Fax +61 (0)2 9850 7054
Email ArtsRO@mq.edu.au

Reference: FOAHE25SEP2009-D00003

Mr Duc Anh Do
32/35 Rossmore Avenue
PUNCHBOWL NSW 2196

Dear Mr Do,

FINAL APPROVAL

Title of project: "Television, Urbanisation and Development: A study of Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam."

The above application was reviewed by the Faculty of Arts Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). Approval of the above application is granted effective 13 October 2009, and you may now proceed with your research.

Please confirm in writing that you will send a summary of the results of the research to the people at the television station whom you interview.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is **conditional** upon your continuing compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*.
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports. **Your first progress report is due on 13 October 2010.**

If you complete the work earlier than you had planned, you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report on the project.

Progress Reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years, you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

FACULTY OF ARTS ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HUMAN RESEARCH)
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

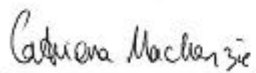
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics

www.mq.edu.au

4. Please notify the Committee of any amendment to the project.
5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at:
<http://www.research.mq.edu.au/policy>

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project, it is your responsibility to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely



Catriona Mackenzie
Associate Professor
Chair, Faculty of Arts Ethics Review Committee (Human Research)

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION & CONSENT FORMS

1.1 Consent form for in-depth interviews with key respondents

Information and Consent form (Translation of the original form)

Project Name: Television, Urbanisation and Development in Hanoi

You are invited to participate in this study to explore the role of Vietnamese television in satisfying the communication needs of newcomers to urban life in the expanding Hanoi metropolitan area. The purpose of this study is to examine how Vietnamese television serves Hanoi new residents by supporting their integration into urban lives with broadcasted information and images. On the other hand, it raises the voices of these new residents as feedback to television programs and content.

This study is fully funded by the Macquarie University Postgraduate Research Fund and being conducted by DUC ANH DO, a PhD candidate, Centre of International Communication, Department of Media, Music, and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts. His contact details are (+614) 34571412 and anh.do@students.mq.edu.au. This study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a Doctor of Philosophy in International Communication under the supervision of Professor Naren Chitty and Dr. Qin Guo at Macquarie University, Australia. Their contact details are (+612) 98502160 (naren.chitty@mq.edu.au) and (+612) 98502158 (qguo@scmp.mq.edu.au), respectively.

If you decide to participate, you will be required to answer the questions during an in-depth interview. In-depth interview will be used to investigate how media practitioners acknowledge and concern about the needs of migrants and new residents in your programming and producing television content. It will take 60 minutes.

The conversation will be recorded using audiotapes. However, if you prefer not to be recorded, please feel free to inform the researcher. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher and supervisors will have authority to access the data. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and, you are free to withdraw at anytime without having to give a reason and without consequence.

Thank you for your cooperation and help.

I....., have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____

(Block letters)

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: DUC ANH DO

(Block letters)

Investigator's signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in the research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through its Secretary (telephone (612)-9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated with confidence, investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

1.2 Consent form for in-depth interview with key respondents (in Vietnamese)

Bản thỏa thuận (được dịch từ bản gốc tiếng Anh)

Tên công trình: Truyền hình, Đô thị hóa, và Phát triển tại Hà Nội

Quý ông/bà được mời tham dự vào công trình nghiên cứu về vai trò của truyền hình Việt Nam trong việc thỏa mãn nhu cầu truyền thông của những cư dân mới do quá trình đô thị mở rộng của thành phố Hà Nội. Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là đánh giá vai trò của truyền hình Việt Nam thông qua thông tin, hình ảnh hỗ trợ, giúp đỡ những cư dân đô thị mới của Hà Nội hòa nhập vào cuộc sống mới. Mặt khác, nghiên cứu này cũng tạo cơ hội và khuyến khích khán giả truyền hình là những người dân nhập cư tham gia vào cuộc phỏng vấn tập thể, và nói lên những suy nghĩ, yêu cầu của họ, mà nhà đài có thể đáp ứng.

Nghiên cứu này được cấp kinh phí bởi Quỹ Nghiên cứu sau đại học của Trường Đại học Macquarie, Sydney, nước Úc, và được thực hiện bởi Đỗ Anh Đức, nghiên cứu sinh tiến sỹ, thuộc Trung tâm Truyền thông Quốc tế, Phân Khoa Truyền thông, Âm nhạc, và Nghiên cứu văn hóa, Khoa Văn hóa - Nghệ thuật. Thông tin liên lạc của nghiên cứu viên là (+614) 34571412 và email anh.do@students.mq.edu.au. Đây là công trình nghiên cứu bắt buộc trong chương trình nghiên cứu bậc Tiến sỹ ngành Truyền thông Quốc tế, dưới sự hướng dẫn của Giáo sư Naren Chitty và Tiến sỹ. Qin Guo của Trường Đại học Macquarie. Thông tin liên lạc của người hướng dẫn lần lượt là (+612) 98502160 (naren.chitty@mq.edu.au) and (+612) 98502158 (qguo@scmp.mq.edu.au).

Nếu quý ông/bà quyết định tham gia, ông/bà sẽ được yêu cầu trả lời các câu hỏi dưới dạng phỏng vấn chuyên sâu. Phỏng vấn chuyên sâu dành cho những người làm truyền hình về nhận thức và quan tâm của quý ông/bà đối với nhu cầu xem truyền hình của nhóm khán giả thuộc diện cư dân mới của đô thị Hà Nội.

Mỗi cuộc phỏng vấn kéo dài 60 phút và được thu âm. Tuy nhiên, nếu quý ông/bà không muốn thu âm/hình, xin vui lòng đề nghị nghiên cứu viên.

Mọi thông tin trả lời phỏng vấn hay về nhân thân của người tham gia sẽ được bảo mật tuyệt đối. Kết quả nghiên cứu khi được công bố sẽ không nêu tên tuổi cụ thể của quý ông/bà. Chỉ có nghiên cứu viên và giáo sư hướng dẫn có quyền tiếp cận tư liệu sau phỏng vấn. Chúng tôi xin cam đoan, không có bất kỳ nguy hiểm hay bất lợi nào đối với quý ông/bà khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

Khi đã nhận lời tham gia, quý ông/bà vẫn có quyền rút khỏi cuộc nghiên cứu bất cứ lúc nào, mà không cần nêu lý do hay chịu hậu quả gì.

Trân trọng cảm ơn sự hợp tác và giúp đỡ của quý ông/bà.

Tôi,..... , đã đọc và hiểu nội dung ở trên và thỏa mãn với điều kiện tham gia cuộc nghiên cứu này. Tôi đồng ý tham gia trả lời phỏng vấn của nghiên cứu viên, và tôi hiểu rằng, tôi có quyền rút khỏi bất kỳ lúc nào mà không phải chịu hậu quả. Tôi đã được nhận và giữ một bản sao của Bản thỏa thuận này.

Tên người tham gia:

(Viết chữ in hoa)

Chữ ký của người tham gia: _____ Date:

Tên nghiên cứu viên: ĐỖ ANH ĐỨC

(Viết chữ in hoa)

Chữ ký của nghiên cứu viên _____ Date:

Cam kết thực hiện các quy định về đạo đức của nghiên cứu này đã được thông qua bởi Ban Thẩm định Đạo đức nghiên cứu (Nghiên cứu con người) của Trường Đại học Macquarie. Nếu quý ông/bà có bất kỳ thắc mắc hay khiếu nại gì về việc tham gia của mình trong nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ với Ban Thẩm định qua thư ký, theo số điện thoại (612)-9850 7854; hoặc email (ethics@mq.edu.au). Mọi ý kiến của quý ông/bà sẽ được xem xét đầy đủ, cầu thị và tiến hành điều tra xử lý, thông báo kết quả đến ông/bà.

(Bản sao của nghiên cứu viên/người tham gia)

1.3 Consent form for focus group participants

Information and Consent form (Translation of the original form)

Project Name: Television, Urbanisation and Development in Hanoi

You are invited to participate in this study to explore the role of Vietnamese television in satisfying the communication needs of newcomers to urban life in the expanding Hanoi metropolitan area. The purpose of this study is to examine how Vietnamese television serves Hanoi new residents by supporting their integration into urban lives with broadcasted information and images. On the other hand, it raises the voices of these new residents as feedback to television programs and content.

This study is fully funded by the Macquarie University Postgraduate Research Fund and being conducted by DUC ANH DO, a PhD candidate, Centre of International Communication, Department of Media, Music, and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts. His contact details are (+614) 34571412 and anh.do@students.mq.edu.au. This study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a Doctor of Philosophy in International Communication under the supervision of Professor Naren Chitty and Dr. Qin Guo at Macquarie University, Australia. Their contact details are (+612) 98502160 (naren.chitty@mq.edu.au) and (+612) 98502158 (qguo@scmp.mq.edu.au), respectively.

If you decide to participate, you will be required to answer the questions during a focus group interview. In focus groups interview, participants will be asked to talk of their reception (their understanding, needs, appraisal and/or criticism) in watching television. It will take 60 minutes.

The conversation will be recorded using video recorder. However, if you prefer not to be recorded, please feel free to inform the researcher. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher and supervisors will have authority to access the data. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and, you are free to withdraw at anytime without having to give a reason and without consequence.

Thank you for your cooperation and help.

I,....., have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at anytime without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:

(Block letters)

Participant's signature: _____ Date:

Investigator's Name: DUC ANH DO

(Block letters)

Investigator's signature: _____ Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in the research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through its Secretary (telephone (612)-9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated with confidence, investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

1.4 Consent form for focus group participants (in Vietnamese)

Bản thỏa thuận (được dịch từ bản gốc tiếng Anh)

Tên công trình: Truyền hình, Đô thị hóa, và Phát triển tại Hà Nội

Quý ông/bà được mời tham dự vào công trình nghiên cứu về vai trò của truyền hình Việt Nam trong việc thỏa mãn nhu cầu truyền thông của những cư dân mới do quá trình đô thị mở rộng của thành phố Hà Nội. Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là đánh giá vai trò của truyền hình Việt Nam thông qua thông tin, hình ảnh hỗ trợ, giúp đỡ những cư dân đô thị mới của Hà Nội hòa nhập vào cuộc sống mới. Mặt khác, nghiên cứu này cũng tạo cơ hội và khuyến khích khán giả truyền hình là những người dân nhập cư tham gia vào cuộc phỏng vấn tập thể, và nói lên những suy nghĩ, yêu cầu của họ, mà nhà đài có thể đáp ứng.

Nghiên cứu này được cấp kinh phí bởi Quỹ Nghiên cứu sau đại học của Trường Đại học Macquarie, Sydney, nước Úc, và được thực hiện bởi Đỗ Anh Đức, nghiên cứu sinh tiến sĩ, thuộc Trung tâm Truyền thông Quốc tế, Phân Khoa Truyền thông, Âm nhạc, và Nghiên cứu văn hóa, Khoa Văn hóa - Nghệ thuật. Thông tin liên lạc của nghiên cứu viên là (+614) 34571412 và email anh.do@students.mq.edu.au. Đây là công trình nghiên cứu bắt buộc trong chương trình nghiên cứu bậc Tiến sĩ ngành Truyền thông Quốc tế, dưới sự hướng dẫn của Giáo sư Naren Chitty và Tiến sĩ. Qin Guo của Trường Đại học Macquarie. Thông tin liên lạc của người hướng dẫn lần lượt là (+612) 98502160 (naren.chitty@mq.edu.au) and (+612) 98502158 (qguo@scmp.mq.edu.au).

Nếu quý ông/bà quyết định tham gia, ông/bà sẽ được yêu cầu trả lời các câu hỏi dưới dạng phỏng vấn tập thể. Những người thuộc nhóm khán giả là cư dân đô thị mới của Hà Nội được mời tham gia phỏng vấn nhóm để nói lên nhu cầu, nhận xét, đòi hỏi của họ đối với các chương trình truyền hình.

Mỗi cuộc phỏng vấn kéo dài 60 phút và được ghi hình tư liệu. Tuy nhiên, nếu quý ông/bà không muốn thu âm/hình, xin vui lòng đề nghị nghiên cứu viên.

Mọi thông tin trả lời phỏng vấn hay về nhân thân của người tham gia sẽ được bảo mật tuyệt đối. Kết quả nghiên cứu khi được công bố sẽ không nêu tên tuổi cụ thể của quý ông/bà. Chỉ có nghiên cứu viên và giáo sư hướng dẫn có quyền tiếp cận tư liệu sau phỏng vấn. Chúng tôi xin cam đoan, không có bất kỳ nguy hiểm hay bất lợi nào đối với quý ông/bà khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

Khi đã nhận lời tham gia, quý ông/bà vẫn có quyền rút khỏi cuộc nghiên cứu bất cứ lúc nào, mà không cần nêu lí do hay chịu hậu quả gì.

Trân trọng cảm ơn sự hợp tác và giúp đỡ của quý ông/bà.

Tôi,, đã đọc và hiểu nội dung ở trên và thỏa mãn với điều kiện tham gia cuộc nghiên cứu này. Tôi đồng ý tham gia trả lời phỏng vấn của nghiên cứu viên, và tôi hiểu rằng, tôi có quyền rút khỏi bất kỳ lúc nào mà không phải chịu hậu quả. Tôi đã được nhận và giữ một bản sao của Bản thỏa thuận này.

Tên người tham gia:

(Viết chữ in hoa)

Chữ ký của người tham gia: _____ Date:

Tên nghiên cứu viên: ĐỖ ANH ĐỨC

(Viết chữ in hoa)

Chữ ký của nghiên cứu viên _____ Date:

Cam kết thực hiện các quy định về đạo đức của nghiên cứu này đã được thông qua bởi Ban Thẩm định Đạo đức nghiên cứu (Nghiên cứu con người) của Trường Đại học Macquarie. Nếu quý ông/bà có bất kỳ thắc mắc hay khiếu nại gì về việc tham gia của mình trong nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng liên hệ với Ban Thẩm định qua thư ký, theo số điện thoại (612)-9850 7854; hoặc email (ethics@mq.edu.au). Mọi ý kiến của quý ông/bà sẽ được xem xét đầy đủ, cầu thị và tiến hành điều tra xử lý, thông báo kết quả đến ông/bà.

(Bản sao của nghiên cứu viên/người tham gia)

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE for FOCUS GROUPS

- (1) Think back to one of television programs you watched yesterday. How did you feel about the information you received?*
- (2) Could you give an example to explain how television helps you to know what happening in your community/location/nation most recently?*
- (3) Tell us if television ever persuaded you to successfully learn new skills or improved the old skills in integrating in the urban life, e.g., transportation, safety food, shopping, entertaining, public hygiene, health care, etc.?*
Probe: What makes the skills so important to you?
- (4) To what aspect television helps you understand about yourself with programs concern to your identity as new residents of Greater Hanoi?*
- (5) Let's have one minute to think of programs broadcasted on VTV and HRT that you know (e.g. current news, education-entertainment, drama, etc.) Please tell us which programs you prefer to view or ignore it?*
- (6) and (7) Now, according to the two most preferred programs you have chosen, let's explain the reasons you prefer viewing it?*
- (8) and (9) And here are the two lest preferred programs, please give your reasons to ignore viewing those. If you could change one thing about the program(s), what it would be?*
- (10) If you could suggest a new program that you would like, what do you expect the content of this program should be? (media uses and gratifications)*
Probe: Do you think the other audiences like you may share the same idea?
- (11) In terms of urban issues, e.g. air pollution, employment, housing, etc., which is the most important to you? To what degree do you think Vietnam television covers this issue? (media uses and gratifications/media interpretation)*
- (12) Last but not least, please tell us any other things you want the TV station to do to provide better quality in terms of programming, and/or content producing?*

Focus Group Interview Questions in Vietnamese:

- (1) *Hãy nghĩ về một chương trình truyền hình mà ông/bà đã xem ngày hôm qua. Hãy cho biết, suy nghĩ của ông/bà về nội dung thông tin mà ông/bà thu nhận được?*
- (2) *Ông/bà có thể đưa ra một ví dụ để giải thích truyền hình đã giúp ông/bà như thế nào để biết được những chuyện xảy ra gần đây trong cộng đồng/đất nước/hay địa phương của ông/bà?*
- (3) *Hãy cho biết, truyền hình đã từng thuyết phục ông/bà thay đổi một thói quen, hoặc học được một thói quen/kỹ năng nào đó, để hòa nhập tốt hơn với cuộc sống đô thị? Ví dụ như an toàn giao thông, vệ sinh ăn uống, mua hàng, cách giải trí, vệ sinh công cộng, hay chăm sóc sức khỏe v.v...*
Câu hỏi phụ: Tại sao những thói quen/kỹ năng quan trọng với ông/bà?
- (4) *Trên phương diện nào, khi xem truyền hình có thể giúp ông/bà nhìn ra bản thân mình với tư cách là những cư dân mới của đô thị Hà Nội?*
- (5) *Hãy dành một phút nghĩ về các chương trình truyền hình của VTV hay HRT mà ông/bà biết (ví dụ thời sự, giải trí-giáo dục, phim truyền hình, v.v.). Hãy cho biết hai chương trình nào ông/bà thích xem nhất và hai chương trình ít xem nhất?*
- (6) và (7) *Bây giờ, căn cứ theo sự lựa chọn của ông/bà, xin hãy giải thích tại sao hai chương trình này ông/bà thích xem nhiều nhất?*
- (8) và (9) *Tương tự, hãy cho biết lý do mà ông bà ít thích xem hai chương trình này nhất? Nếu có thể thay đổi một điều gì đó, ông/bà mong muốn cải thiện điều gì ở những chương trình này?*
- (10) *Nếu có thể đề xuất một chương trình mới về những vấn đề mà ông/bà quan tâm, ông/bà sẽ đề xuất chương trình gì, nội dung chính ra sao?*
Câu hỏi phụ: Ông/bà có tin rằng những khán giả khác cùng nhóm dân cư mới như ông/bà cũng có thể có đề xuất tương tự?
- (11) *Trong số những vấn đề của đô thị như ô nhiễm không khí, việc làm, nhà ở v.v..., vấn đề nào là quan trọng nhất đối với ông/bà? Ông/bà có thể nhận xét về việc truyền hình Việt Nam phản ánh vấn đề này như thế nào?*
- (12) *Cuối cùng, xin hãy cho biết, ông/bà mong muốn nhà đài cải thiện điều gì để nâng cao chất lượng chương trình về nội dung cũng như tổng thể các chương trình?*

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE for IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

1. *What do you identify the main characteristics of new residents of Hanoi (NRH)?*
2. *In your opinion, how important they are as specific social groups of TV viewers?*
3. *What is your personal thought about their general needs of watching TV?*
4. *How do you think television can support their needs?*
5. *Which current programs of your station do you think can meet their needs? Please explain to what extent these programs benefit them?*
6. (For TV managers only): *What are the most important aspects in TV policy making and programming of your station? How were the needs of these social groups (NRH) taken in consideration?*
7. *Has there any change in programming after the time of Hanoi's expansion in August 2008?*
8. *How do you think of television which is believed to become a network connecting people in the urban area?*
9. (For TV reporters only): *While producing TV news or programs concern about urban issues, how frequently do you approach these NRH to broadcast about their social issues, and raise their voices on screen? Please give some examples.*
10. *In your opinion or based on any previous survey, which programs of your station do you think are the most or less preferred to view. What do you comment about these?*
11. *How do you think and evaluate the role of Vietnamese television in supporting development and urbanisation?*
12. *What do you think if your station should do in the near future to improve the quality of TV programs in order to more effectively satisfy these groups of audiences?*

In-depth Interview Questions in Vietnamese:

1. Ông/bà cho biết nhận định về đặc điểm của những cư dân mới của đô thị Hà Nội?
2. Ông/bà đánh giá như thế nào về tầm quan trọng của nhóm công chúng này với tư cách là những khán giả của truyền hình?
3. Suy nghĩ cá nhân của ông/bà về nhu cầu xem truyền hình của họ?
4. Theo ông/bà, truyền hình có thể đáp ứng nhu cầu đó của họ như thế nào?
5. Những chương trình nào của nhà đài hiện nay, theo ông/bà, có thể đáp ứng nhu cầu của nhóm khán giả này? Xin giải thêm những chương trình này có ích cho họ ra sao?
6. (Dành riêng cho nhà quản lý): Đây là những yếu tố quan trọng nhất khi hoạch định chương trình truyền hình ở quý đài của ông/bà? Những nhu cầu truyền thông của nhóm công chúng cư dân mới này đã được xét đến như thế nào?
7. Đã có những thay đổi gì trong việc sắp xếp chương trình ở quý đài, kể từ sau thời điểm Hà Nội mở rộng, tháng 8/2008?
8. Quan điểm của ông/bà về nhận định truyền hình được xem như một mạng lưới kết nối người dân ở đô thị?
9. (Dành cho phóng viên/biên tập viên): Trong khi thực hiện những phóng sự thời sự, hay chương trình tài liệu có liên quan đến vấn đề đô thị, ông/bà có thường xuyên tiếp cận từ góc độ phản ánh, tiếng nói của những nhóm cư dân mới như thế nào?
10. Theo quan điểm riêng, hoặc căn cứ trên khảo sát nếu có, những chương trình nào của nhà đài mà ông/bà cho rằng được xem nhiều nhất/hoặc ít nhất?
11. Ông/bà suy nghĩ và đánh giá như thế nào về vai trò của truyền hình Việt Nam đóng góp vào sự phát triển và đô thị hóa?
12. Theo ông/bà, quý đài cần những biện pháp gì để cải thiện chất lượng chương trình để nâng cao hiệu quả tác động đến nhóm công chúng đặc thù nói trên?