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**Divergent Repertoire of Peasants –
Land Acquisitions in Silk Village**

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List of Acronyms

CHN	Flat land for planting other annual crops (According to Circular 25/2015/TT-BTNMT, Land Law 2013)
CPC	Commune People's Committee
CLFD	The Center for Land Fund Development
LUC	Plain Land - Land specializing in wet rice cultivation (According to Circular 28/2004/TT-BTNMT, Land Law 2013)
LURC	Land Use Right Certificate
SCCC	Site of Clearance and Compensation
SFC	State Forest Companies
VFFC	Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee

Abstract

This study explores rural politics in the context of the State implementing land accumulation and a series of large- and small-scale land grabs in favor of industry and urbanization in Vietnam. By investigating various political reactions towards land expropriations in a village in the fringe area of the capital, this study challenges the idea that people everywhere make a stand against the insertion of expulsion to protect their land. Combining political economy, agrarian studies and rich data from the field, I attempt to discover both internal and external factors that are correlated with how people react and forms of resistance take place in the grab-site, revealing the political stance chosen by affected villagers. The shift of political stances and strategies reflects the strong influence of extra-economic coercion in analyses of land relations embedded in a society. This paper demonstrates that the impact of land loss is not similar among individuals, among communities, with the emphasis on the existing social differentiation and power configuration.

Relevance to Development Studies

This study is in attempt to contributes to the understanding of rural politics in the context of the State promote neoliberal policies and institutional mechanisms to control over the peasantry for the expansion of urbanization and industry. This trajectory can deepen the power relations through restructuring the agrarian system promoting neoliberal enclosure. The analysis of rural mobilization and resistance reflects the emergence of unthodox methods via digital platforms and external collaborations can bring up a powerful effect and create spaces for subordinate to act out effectively. This paper provides voices from below in the hope of opening up solutions.

Keywords

Political reactions; land acquisition; resistance; land relations; social differentiation.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Contextualizing the research problem

It has been about 30 years since the Communist Party and the State allocated land to peasants according to the principle of equity and democracy; the household economy was promoted by Resolution 10 in 1988 as the bureaucracy had observed the failure of collective farming and the centralized economy (Akram-Lodhi, 2004). While this promotion of individual household's control in farming is sometimes referred to loosely as 'land justice' idea, several aspects of inequality related to land have been uncovered regarding social differentiation since decollectivization (Nguyen Van Suu, 2004). Other issues appear one after another under the era of industrialization and modernization gradually impede the idea of 'land justice' through a series of agricultural land acquisitions for development projects. Kay, C (2009) shows a common phenomenon emerging in many countries as States promote neoliberal policies and institutional mechanisms to control over the peasantry in favour of industry and urban. The impacts industrialization and modernization drive on rural society and peasantry are directly proportional to Vietnam's macro-economic growth; both are massive and intensive. From 2002 to 2018, GDP per capita increased 2.7 times, reaching over USD 2,700 in 2019 (World Bank, 2021). The urbanization rate increased from 19.6% in 2009 to 40% at the end of 2019 (Ministry of Planning and Investment¹). The loss of arable land is the most visible consequence of rapid urbanization. Up to 2.5 million farmers are affected by the clearance of 73,000 hectares of agricultural land annually (The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs) that were converted to industrial, commercial, residential and urban purposes, leading to what many refer to as 'land grabs'.

Ordinary rural villagers affected by such land acquisitions react to this process but in different ways. Most recent studies related to land grabs have striking commonalities in various debates about unfair compensation processes, and coercion exercised from top-down, while 'from below' manifests political responses by affected villagers as divergent and diverse (Han & Vu, 2008; Labbé, 2011; Kerkvliet, 2014; Dao Nga, 2015; Nguyen, Zoomers & Westen, 2015; Duong et al., 2020). Responses of affected villagers vary from region to region, from case to case, from one social group to another, and from individual to individual. The disparity in political response of villagers towards land grabbing seems to emerge in part from the pre-existing social differentiation among the rural villagers in any given peasant society that has started to be penetrated by the forces of capitalist relations or commodification (Lenin, 1982; Bernstein, 2010).

For most rural villagers, land is a resource and a means of production to make a livelihood. Appropriating such land, therefore, means not only dispossessing those directly affected but dislocating their livelihoods (Fairhead et al., 2012; Borras & Franco, 2013). Moreover, because it is ultimately about livelihood, the reactions by villagers to land acquisition are calculated based on their attachment to land but go beyond it – and ultimately about their livelihood more generally. Going beyond resistance and collective actions, this study explores how the divergence of political reactions from different social groups towards land grabbing

¹ The data is collected from the National Center for Socio-economic Information and Forecasting. Available at: <http://ncif.gov.vn/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?newid=21873>, accessed: 24th June 2021.

have formed and the reasons for these types of collective actions. This paper will explore the repertoire of various reactions of affected villagers in one village located in the fringe area of Hanoi.

1.1.1 Dynamics of land grabbing in Vietnam

The drivers of land grabbing in Vietnam come from various factors of development and economic growth processes such as urbanization, international corporations/foreign investors, the transformation of political and economic, and green-space consumption trends. According to Berg, Wijk, and Hoi (2003, p.36), the reduction of the state's role and opening the economy to foreign capital should be counted as one of the drivers of land grabs. However, the study of Cotula et al. (2014) criticized the dominant claims about land deals and the role of a reduced task of the state and offered an alternative explanation that perceives a proactive and critical role of government in land grabs in different countries in Africa. This also seems to be the case for East Asia and the Pacific; State participation in land deals in this region accounted for 81.2% và 89.6% respectively as buyer and seller (Table 3, Arezki et al., 2013, p.220). It is relevant to Vietnam, where the state is key in land acquisitions.

In Vietnam, the provincial government units have been given increasing power over the decisions related to issues about the land by the 2003 Amendment to the Land Law. This is an important source of problems in the implementation of land acquisition and compensation in Vietnam. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment report, disputes and bribery denunciations related to land were increased sharply since 2003 – to over 30,000 between 2003 and 2006. In the case of Hanoi, the government shows their active involvement in the dynamic of land grabbing and acquiring agricultural land. In the past 60 years, Hanoi has adjusted its administrative boundaries four times (large) in 1961, 1978, 1991 and 2008, respectively (Quân đội Nhân dân, 2014), which means an expanding urban sprawl. The area of the first adjustment was 586km², and the current figure is 3,344km². Land prices in suburban districts along with peri-urban villages spiked sharply.



Map 1 The localities have a large amount of agricultural land acquired in relation to Hanoi
(Source: Author, ARCGIS)

Localities with fast economic growth and substantial economic restructuring are places where agricultural land has been acquired intensively, including Tien Giang (20,300 ha), Dong Nai (19,700 ha), Binh Duong (16,600 ha), and Vinh Phuc (5,500 ha) (Mai Thanh, 2009). The data show two important land processes. On the one hand, the total agricultural land has steadily increased due to the reclaiming of unused land (Table 1), and on the other hand, the amount of agricultural land acquired by the State relatively surged along the way. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, massive land acquisition in the period of 2003-2008 affected more than 627,000 households and 2,5 million people; the influence on agricultural households was much more intensive (Hong Minh, 2005).

Table 1 Land use change between 2000 and 2013 (Unit: 1,000 ha)

Land use types	2000		2013	
	Area	Percent	Area	Percent
Total	32,924.1	100.0	33,097.2	100.0
Agricultural land	20,920.8	63.5	25,616.6	77.4
Special-use land ⁴	1,532.8	4.7	1,884.4	5.7
Residential land	443.2	1.3	695.3	2.1
Unused land	10,027.3	30.5	4,900.9	14.8

Source: General Statistics Office of Vietnam. Available from:
<http://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=713>

Table 1 Land use change between 2000 and 2003

Facing the loss of land

The loss of land has occurred on a large scale giving way to numerous development projects. Individuals and households were impacted and have responded differently. In general, many reports and journals have identified far-reaching impacts on the livelihoods of affected people in rural and peri-urban areas. Partly because of these land acquisitions, peasant

societies have observed important changes, such as intensifying agricultural land and diversifying livelihoods.

Nevertheless, according to the study by Nguyen, Westen and Zoomers (2021), the adaptability of individuals and households is firmly connected to their livelihood choices, as 84.1% of surveyed households improved their income after land loss. The authors suggest that some elements have a strong influence on their income levels, such as “people’s own initiatives, choices, efforts and ingenuity exerted when working with the shock of land loss” (ibid., p.48).

Add up to that, peasants’ choices largely depend on whether they see new markets as opportunities and/or risks because urbanization may narrow the amount of agricultural land available for rural productions but may lead to the high demand for food and its prices (Berg, Wijk & Hoi, 2003; IFAD, 2011). The number of families in rural areas with family members are actively shifting to non-agricultural sectors based on their calculations of potential job chances, not from the pressure of land loss. In some urban-rural fringe areas of Hanoi, villagers have been looking forward to investors and local authorities deploying a project quickly and distributing compensation to take advantage of it as a capital for various potential investments (i.e. Xuan La and Tien Duong, Ha Noi). However, due to “the uncertainty of when exactly the land might be taken over urban structures is too great to make it worth their benefits while continuing with serious, intensive agricultural production” (Berg, Wijk & Hoi 2003, p.44), more and more fallow and unused plots of land appear around the suburbs.

While the State is often seen as a land supplier/key grabber, land has been turned into a commodity that brings up great profits to foreign and domestic actors. Land Laws (and their revisions) over time and the opaque compensation framework in Vietnam turned out to be unfavourable to many affected people in different aspects, especially in the context of land acquisition by the State. As Borrás and Franco (2013, p.50) argue: “[e]merging out of and embedded in existing power configurations, there is a strong tendency for the changes wrought by land policies to favour (or end up favouring) dominant landed classes and groups, as well as powerful state officials and bureaucrats”.

From what I present above, I suggest that land grabs often have different impacts among villagers, which, in turn, spark different forms and degrees of political reaction within a community and among villagers. Agrarian mobilization is a barometer showing contemporary political-economic relations (McMichael, 2008). This paper aims to contribute insights to the state-society relationship (Labbé, 2014) and power relations in Vietnam’s society by opening up conversations from below. For the scope of this study, I will not consider how rural movements bounce back and shape the way land deals are constructed. Instead, social and economic coercion, alongside pressures of land relations, the market economy, and livelihood changes, will be taken into account to understand the nature of rural mobilization.

1.1.2 Concepts clarification

In this section, I would like to explain some concepts used and their relevance in the research context of land acquisition in this study.

(1) Household:

It was Chayanov (1925) who formulated the theory of peasant family economics when he realized that the family farm was both a unit of economic production and a unit of consumption. I want to explain the notion of 'household' as it is crucial for two reasons: (1) small household farming plays a crucial role as a component of the National Economy; and (2) the characteristic of Vietnamese agriculture is small-scale peasant society (Nguyen Tu Chi, 1996). Resolution No. 10/NQ-TW (1988) on "Renovation of agricultural management" issued by Politburo is an important milestone for the transfer of land and other means of production to farming households for management, i.e. recognition of households as a basic and autonomous economic unit in production and business. Thus, the household economy is understood as a household-owned business, in which members have common assets and contribute efforts to common economic activities in agricultural and forestry production, fishery or other productions fields as prescribed by law.

A farming household is a family, but a family can be divided into many households (Dao The Tuan, 1995). Due to the socio-cultural nature, the family-relative relationship is very strong in Vietnamese society. As family members, they can pool their fields to cultivate together or support each other with labour annually. It is essential, especially in the context of land acquisition in rural areas. I want to emphasize the understanding of the 'household' notion as I found that it is one of the elements that contribute to the formation of political reactions of villagers in my case study.

First, a plot of land is a property of an individual on the land certificate, but many family members may invest in the farmland in different forms (i.e. labour, finance). Second, as the tradition of property division, farmland will be the property of many family members. Finally, the extra loss occurs when multiple plots [of one family] are acquired simultaneously. The cost deficit is much larger when calculating the total loss of farmland for an entire family compared to the way of calculating loss for one smallholder. Therefore, I assume that the more family members depend on the production of the field or the more members invest in this field, the greater the loss. Thus, it contributes partially to the decision to counter or not after the land loss.

(2) Repertoire:

The notion 'repertoire' was developed by Charles Tilly in 1970-1980s, and it revolves around the means of protest used by different individuals or groups to make claims or oppose allegedly unjust decisions. The concept of 'repertoire of contention' is widely used to analyze social movements. Tarrow (1993) mentions two different forms, which are 'the conventional repertoire' and 'the inherited repertoire'. The first form is used to describe legal actions, strikes, marches, petitions, while; the second "as the presence and relative frequency conventional forms of collective action as opposed to both confrontation and violence" (ibid., p.290). Following Tilly and Tarrow, Zhang Wu (2013) uses this notion to analyze the relationship of forms of protest and protest leadership in Hunan, China. In general, most authors use 'repertoire' to imply visible and public manoeuvres.

For my study, I take up an open definition raised by Tilly in 1995 as follows: "a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice, [they] emerge from struggle" (p.42). Build up from that point, the notion of 'repertoire' in my study refers to a process of learning, sharing, calculating and acting coming from both practical and intellectual ground. I do not want to limit 'repertoire' as limitations; it (a set of skills) is learned, developed and deployed flexibly by agrarian subjects in order to

make sense of their reaction choices. The means by which people use to protest is not only in tangible form but also intangible form. Like different forms of resistance, which can be overt (i.e. public demonstrations, rightful resistance) or covert (i.e. hidden protest, everyday resistance) (Scott, 1985; Kervliet, 2009).

First of all, repertoire in my research context is not represented by a fixed group since affected villagers may move from one political position to another, based on the constantly changing economic, political, and social context at each moment of their decision making. Therefore, the repertoire is likely abstract and not a fixed performance for any individual, group or community. ‘Repertoire’ is used to refer to a set of thoughts, concerns, skills, calculations and actions of a group of individuals – forming a process that leads to their political response. Furthermore, ‘repertoire’ in this paper will not be seen as a close, but an open process even after the land acquisition and compensation procedures settle because political stance and reactions can change if unexpected changes or interferences occur in the future.

To support this point, one can find such cases reflected in different academic articles, such as the case study of Han and Vu (2008) in Ha Noi. People in Dong Anh district (Hanoi) agreed to give up their land after the investor Daeha agreed to support extra money and offered job opportunities; the clearance and compensation deals were settled in 1998. Until 2001, some households found that the Government had issued a new compensation frame (in 1999 and 2000), which offers higher compensation prices applied at the time they receive money. These residents moved back and prevented developers access to the site in order to reclaim the compensation based on the new rates. The investors refused to pay. Disagreement between the two parties led to a riot involving about 200 residents in 2004. Eventually, the developer had to pay an additional 6 million VND (375 USD) per household. Their repertoire is a series of actions acted out by people, which was motivated by potential gains.

(3) Agrarian subjects

What is a peasant?

To define the concept of ‘peasant’ and ‘peasantry’ is a tough task as these concepts are defined based on the purpose of using, time and context, and the writer’s stance. In general, they are both contentious. Marc Edelman (2013) compiles four types of definitions of ‘peasant’, including historical definitions, social scientific definitions, activist and normative definitions. Meanwhile, Kurtz (2013) focuses on a more in-depth analysis of how ‘peasant’ is formulated in social science by making a comparative table of five schools: Minimalist, Anthropological, Moral economy, Marxian and Weberian.

Eric Wolf was the one who evoked the concern of distinguishing peasants and farmers. Looking at the social structure and access to land, Wolf makes a clear distinction between peasants/primitives who have no land and farmers who own land to cultivate. He believes that peasants do not operate a business; in other words, they do not have enough capital to raise a business. In some publications, authors consider farmers as the emerging class of ‘new peasants’ – people with a few tens of hectares (Bui, 2015, p.42). In contrast to Bernstein (1979), the term ‘peasants’ is abstract and easily misunderstood as simple producers who are closely associated with the market (Friedmann, 1980). The essence of peasants must be understood as a unit of household production and partly related to the market.

Going back to Kurtz's summary, the 'Minimalist' school is said to introduce the concept of 'peasant' in the broadest sense – that is, 'rural cultivators'. There are prominent names in this school like Popkin, Lichbach and Bates – those scholars focus on the self-interest of peasants and claim that “most of the world's peasants live in open villages” (2013, p.98). Consequently, the peasant actors of this group appear to be more active with connections beyond a traditional rural village. Meanwhile, the 'Moral Economy' school with Scott or Kervliet demonstrates that peasantry is associated with a closed village, narrowing down the connotation of the term 'peasant'.

Among the research papers on defining agrarian subjects in contemporary Vietnamese society, Nguyen. T. T. B (2007) illustrates the breakdown of the homogeneity of the peasantry, and the concept 'peasants' is no longer suitable to imply the whole rural society. The abandonment of preconceived notions and concepts about peasants and peasantry is necessary to move towards more relevant approaches to agrarian subjects. The emerging classes in the new era, such as 'peasant-worker', 'peasant-officer' or 'peasant-businessman'... are no longer odd in peri-urban and rural society in Vietnam.

With the research context in a peri-urban village affected by urbanization, I suggest that agrarian subjects should not be confined to a homogenous group. Because of my research setting, all land users of acquired agricultural land will be considered. They can be peasants or semi-peasants, they can depend solely on farming or have extra income from other jobs/non-farm work. Villagers can be active agrarian subjects and develop their network beyond the relationships they have within a rural community.

1.2 Research Question and subquestions

Research Question:

- How and why do people affected by land grabbing respond differently?

In order to answer my research question, I pose three sub-questions. The first one is to explore internal factors behind various reactions at individual level, which will contribute to the understanding of social differentiation (e.g. social status) and its impacts among community members. The first question firmly contributes to and forms the foundation of two other sub-questions that discover a broader context and level. The second question helps to reveal the political stances chosen by the affected people in land acquisition in the field site. The shifting of their political stances and views is examined to analyze the relation between making decisions and context (change). The third question examines the land relations in reality, to see how villagers act out interacted by these structural components.

Sub questions:

- What are the motives for peasants reacting to land grabs in different ways?
- Why are groups united and divided within a community?

How are power relations embedded in land confiscation and in villagers' responses?

1.3 Analytical Framework

1.3.1 Dynamics of land grabbing in Vietnam

The choices of how to react and factors influencing farmers' responses to land grabs have been uncovered by some prominent scholars.

For Scott (1976), collective actions are to defend intimidations from the State and powerful forces. Scott argues that 'subsistence crises' as an indicator reveals the impact of *longue dureé* in life threatening moral order and producing rebellion and resistance. Meanwhile, Popkin countered this argument by pointing out that the "greatest subsistence threat" and the "greatest political activity" do not show a direct connection (Popkin, 1979). No revolts occurred in some areas where the famine was more severe in Vietnam. He emphasizes "the difference [...] was not level of misery: it was organization, particularly communication and coordination". (ibid., p.248). For Popkin, rational peasants can be persuaded to participate in producing collective actions or collective goods by considering their personal cost-benefits, along with the credibility of 'the political entrepreneur' to reduce the cost of collective action (Popkin, 1979: 259). However, power relations and the stratification of rural communities were not taken into careful consideration in Popkin's approach.

Similar to Scott's idea that the poorest strata of the village were likely to be the first join resistance, Kolko (2003) states that the landless peasants in the South were more enthusiastic in social and political movements, compared with small-owners in the North (cited in Bui 2015, p.17). However, Popkin (1979) suggests "the class most threatened [landless agricultural labourers] need not be the first to act, even when it is the most 'political conscious' group" as they "are harder to organize or less likely to protest" (p.250).

Add up to this, some studies have found that groups capable of generating collective actions often include movement entrepreneurs or leaders who are able to mobilize and access different resources (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tarrow, 1994). Similarly, Eric Wolf observes that [without sufficient resources] poor peasants or landless labourers are "unlikely to pursue the course of rebellion unless they are able to rely on some external power to challenge the power which constrains them" (1969, p.290). These resources mentioned by various scholars can range from institutional to financial aspects, which Kerkvliet (2009) referred to more generally as the 'political conditions' to form resistance.

Considering the rationality of farmers who do not participate in collective actions, Scott brings up a notable consideration that "peasants will not rebel when they perceive the power of the state to be overwhelming" (cited in Feeny, D. 1983, p.782). But other scholars try to embrace the idea of personal benefits. Mancur Olson (1965) built a pioneering argument that there are people not attempting collective actions as a collective good can be obtained without participating, taking into account that human beings are rational and self-interested. Popkin developed more specifically the idea of peasants' rationality with the notion of 'free-riders' through his analysis of rural society in Vietnam.

This rational choice theory is favoured by mainstream economics explanations to explore the relation between rational responses and livelihoods choices after the land have been taken away as urban growth decrease land acreage but demand for food increase. From that point,

they are opening up narratives of how peasants tame capitalism in the new market mechanism where their agricultural products are ready for market with higher selling prices and market demand (Berg, Wijk & Hoi, 2003). The rational peasants are assumed to allow elaborating on 'push and pull' factors triggering reactions and how people make use of their land, compensation, or any forms of achievement resulting from an individual's choice of political response.

Scholars influenced by the rational choice approach by Popkin may take this approach to analyze the divergence within a rural community, and different choices of responses towards land grabbing are rational peasant to see if "without an incentive to contribute to collective actions as no special personal benefits" (Popkin 1979, p.25). In the assumption of scholars using this perspective, this approach may help to frame peasants' repertoires in dealing with the capital market and the assertion of agrarian subjects' agency. In addition, discussions around the rationality of farmers will be developed by looking at each group of farmers considering gain and loss (spatial and contextual) with respect to compensation prices and comparable land deal offers.

Reactions have diversified from overt to covert, from noisy to quiet, from public to disguised. Sometimes resistance forms are not apparent as visible protestation or rightful resistance (O'Brien, 1996; Kerkvliet, 2014). Subordinate groups have been described with a strategy of fleeing from the State's arm length (Scott, 2009) or using subtle tactics as 'everyday politics' (Scott, 1985; Kerkvliet, 2009) to undermine the State's governance capacity. Hall et al. (2015) discuss more complex patterns, which are "far beyond 'resistance' in its many manifestations" (p. 467).

As analyzed above, subordinate classes seem incapable of turning the tide or mobilizing resources when the power of the state is overwhelming (Scott, 1976) and no favourable conditions to establish open resistance (Kerkvliet, 2009). Scott and Kerkvliet discovered a form of bottom-up advocacy that peasants can preserve their safety when implementing hidden transcripts. Both authors, in general, promote the idea of building social capitals to access resources and toward the common good, also explain the peasant resistance that occurs when certain norms are threatened.

O'Brien (1996) introduces a new form of struggle that he calls 'rightful resistance' through a more than ten-year field study in rural China. This form is a hybrid type, which is more overt than 'everyday politics' and more secure than open confrontation through rebellions. He found that Chinese rural resisters challenged and compelled the authorities to realize policies, statements or even promises made by the state and cadres to make use of their legal rights. Rightful resistance emerges from the notions of equality, rights and rules of law. O'Brien argues "with recent socioeconomic and political reforms that rural residents have begun to blend traditional tactics with self-directed, legalistic, and sometimes proactive struggles to restructure village-wide governance and effect institutional change." (ibid., p.43). With many similarities between political thought and land reform, the idea of equal income and wealth distributions characterized both China and Vietnam. Kerkvliet (2014) studies how Vietnamese villagers intervene and compel local authorities to justify their rights with rightful resistance theory and explains why some cases exceed the frame of rightful resistance.

The land reform of the 1950s and the land allocation program of the 1990s were carried out with the promise of equitable land distribution for all. The idea of distributive equity is

supported by the people, they also closely monitor the decisions made by the Party and the government to ensure their rights. That is why the clause of ‘Allowing households with a better productive capacity to bid on land for farming’ (of Resolution No. 10/NQ-TW dated April 5, 1988) was rejected by the peasantry, arguing that it would contribute to inequalities in rural society. (Bui 2012, p.18). To this day, people make use of these ideas and statements as a springboard for their arguments and claims. I will clarify further in the next chapters.

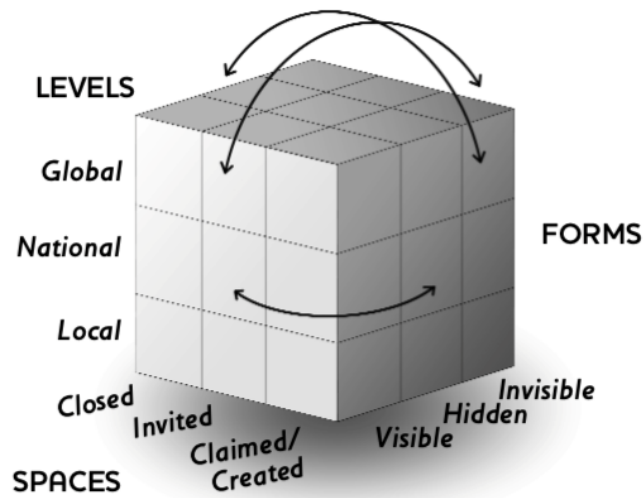
1.3.2 Power relations

Although “the party-state had progressively loosened its control over the land by recognizing household-economy in the 1980s”, its power over developable lands has been consolidated, creating a hybrid movement (Labbé & Musil 2004, p.1150). Power relations embedded in society directly relate to unequal distribution of rights and benefits, resulting in exclusion (Hall et al., 2011). I include power relations to complement identity-based exploration in this study, elaborating on landlessness among rural households. I bear in mind that the differentiation in rural communities is intertwined with social and economic constraints that always exist before and after land grabs. “Peasant protest movements reveal the structure of peasant world” (Brocheux, 1983, p.795); thus, the presence of power relations needs to be clarified in the process of land acquisition and compensation. John Kleinen (1999) found that a particular cadre took advantage of their political positions in Tø (Silk) village². The state-society relations will be examined (Hall et al., 2015; Wolford et al., 2013) to explore the reproduction of power relations.

Gaventa (2006) proposes a power analysis tool based on three dimensions ‘Form-Space-Level’ as the edges of the power cube, and states that ‘transformative changes’ can occur “when social movements or social actors are able to work effectively across each of the dimensions simultaneously”. Using the dimensions of ‘the power cube’, I want to examine the ability to mobilize resources of villagers associated with the form of resistance they manoeuvred in my case study. As there is a spatial geometry relation among three edges, ‘Forms’ of resistance can be decided to what extent an actor can reach in vertical line ‘Levels’ and extend its influence in horizontal line ‘Spaces’.

² John named the Silk village ‘Tø’ in his study.

Figure 1 The 'power cube': the levels, spaces and forms of power



(Source: Gaventa, 2006)

In order to open political space and influence level, subordinate alone does not have a capacity to act. It is clear that the establishment of horizontal alliances is possible to affected villagers, but to ensure a real change must form a vertical alliance (through partnership and collaboration) on the power cube. Eric Wolf (1969) once mentioned that the poor peasants and landless laborers have latitude of movement if 'external power' is present. He argues poor peasants and landless laborer "are unlikely to pursue rebellion, unless they are able to rely on some external power to challenge the power which constrains them", because he lacks "sufficient resources of his own to serve him in the power struggle" (p.290).

1.4 Research Methodology

Case study research design

At first, I chose to employ a single case study as it has an advantage in terms of the concentration of data and is able to present a strong causal relationship. However, travel restrictions were tightened in Vietnam around the time to conduct fieldwork. It was unable to send a research assistant and use participant observation to capture everyday practices of chosen groups and examine why they come up with a particular reaction. I decided to redirect to employ a *typical case*, which focuses on one representative and presents some sub-cases to bring "insight into a broader phenomenon" (Gerring 2007, p.91). Based on a set of characteristics (i.e. locations, available data), some other cases come up to complement the main analysis case to fill the gaps of data in the field. For example, Duong Noi, La Khe and Dong Tam are three villages located very close to the village where I conduct research. Land acquisitions happened in these villages provide rich data on different forms of resistance and extra-economic coercion. Furthermore, affected villagers in the research site also reflected that their decisions were more or less influenced by what was happening in the neighbouring villages through observing, consulting and evaluating of available resources locally.

Location of the study

Silk³ is located to the west of Hanoi, where many developers targeted to invest after Hanoi merged a series of neighbouring areas into its administrative boundaries. Silk is a relatively small village in comparison to other sub-urban villages of Hanoi, with more than 600 households and 2300 people. The livelihood of villagers is mainly agriculture; some have additional income from petty trade or manual labour. The total annual crops area is 24.5 hectares, and the total area growing rice is 47.5 hectares (Dong La commune report, 2020). Incomes from annual crops (such as pomelo, apple) seem to be more stable and higher than that of rice; villagers tend to convert plots of land specialized in rice cultivation to growing annual crops. There are two types of agricultural landowning by the village, which are plain land (LUC⁴) and alluvial land (CHN⁵). LUC is located in the middle of the village to specialize in rice cultivation, while CHN, about 6km from the village, specializes in growing annual crops.

It was not until 2010 that the State developed a project planning scheme that involved the land of the Silk village. Planning projects in Silk exemplify the State's role as a land grabber, seller and buyer (Wolford et al., 2013; Arezki et al., 2013, p.220, Cotula et al., 2014). In 2017-2019, the third land acquisition carried out in Silk was for government projects consisting of social housing, an elementary school, and a hospital. 2.9 hectares of land were taken from 48 households, of which less than one-third of households objected to land acquisition and compensation rates. As there was no presence of corporations, the insertion of people's expulsion "into land deals as workers or contract farmers to counter-mobilization against land deal resisters" (Hall et al., 2015) will not be considered in this village.

Silk was chosen as a research site for some reasons as follows:

(1) Geographical location and connections

Due to the complicated pandemic situation in Vietnam at the time of conducting fieldwork, I chose Silk village as it is geographically accessible (in case it is possible to send research assistants to the field to collect information directly). Secondly, this is a research area I am familiar with as I have done a few studies here. Therefore, I have background knowledge about the village as well as existing connections, which make my data collection possible more feasible given the time constraints and the pandemic context.

(2) Its speciality

Compared to Silk, other peri-urban villages have shown a dramatic shift in livelihood diversification towards industrial and service sectors. Some villages such as Co Nhue, Phu Dien, Thanh Tri have started the urbanization process in the early 2000s (Berg, Wijk & Hoi,

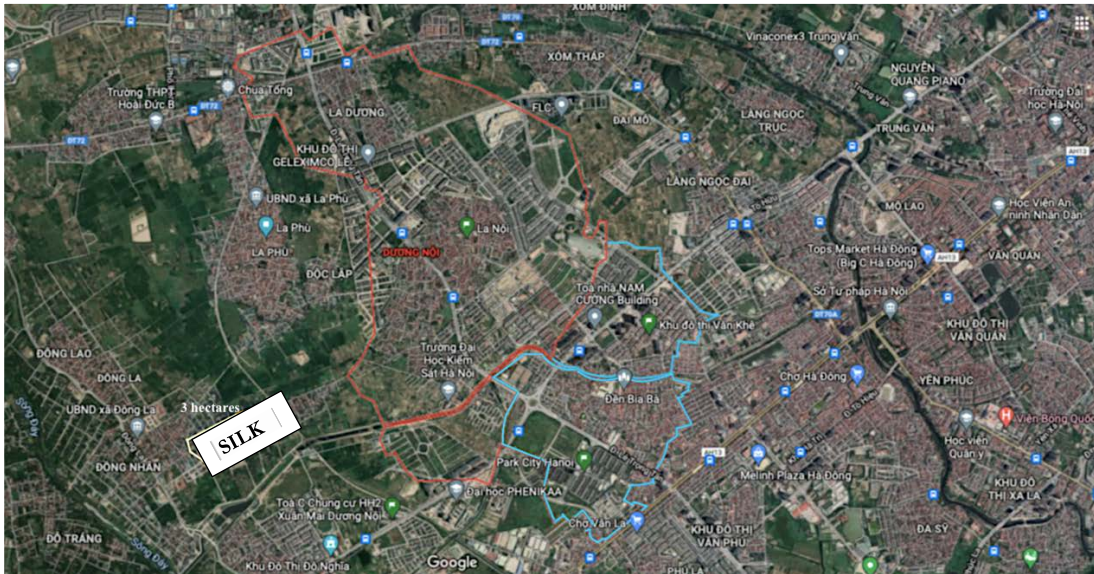
³ The village has been given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. I picked the name Silk as the village belonged to the ancient village's system close to Thang Long citadel. Most of these villages were well-known for supplying silk and high-class fabrics to kings and the elite class in the past.

⁴ Land specialized in wet rice cultivation: This type of land can be grown from two wet rice crops in a year according to the provisions of Clause 2, Article 3 of Decree 35/2015/ND-CP.

⁵ According to Circular 28/2004/TT-BTNMT: Land for annual crops is land specialized in growing plants with a growth period from planting to harvesting that does not exceed one year; including land for rice cultivation, grass land used for animal husbandry, land for planting other annual crops.

2003; Nguyen, B. 2014). The growth rate of Silk village gradually slowed down along with agriculture. Its location further away from the city centre and arterial roads is considered the cause of the late exposure to the urbanization process. The village land prices were not rocketed like other villages in suburban districts, but their prices have given an impressive 30 fold increase from 2000 to now. In 2000, the land price was two million VND/m², increased to three million VND/m² in 2005, and rose to 30 million VND/m² in 2009-2011.

Map 2: Silk village, in comparison of the village size and amount of land acquired with neighboring villages – La Khe⁶ and Duong Noi⁷



Given that, Silk and its neighbouring villages belong to a special area, which is defined as part of the Greenbelt – food provision for inner citizens in the Red River Delta region. Looking at the map, we will see that much agricultural land in the surrounding villages had been acquired for urban planning. For example, Duong Noi village (in the red border) where more than 90% of agricultural land has been acquired for urbanization projects. Protests in Duong Noi marked an escalation of battles over land in modern times with peasants who have been fighting over the land for more than a decade. In La Khe village, there were also protests to reclaim land in this village a few years before land acquisitions happened in Silk village. In 2009, 1,638,450m² had been acquired out of a total agricultural land area of 1,718,159m² (Vietnam Lawyer Journal, 2017). Compared with neighbouring villages, the area of agricultural land acquired in Silk was small and sporadic. The forms of protest in Silk were

⁶ La Khe is one of the villages whose land was acquired in the suburban area at a very early time, in 2005. Four hectares of agricultural land was acquired to build residential apartments. Affected farmers protested and signed a petition because they found that Ha Dong district had not followed certain procedures properly (see more: <http://hanoimoi.com.vn/ban-in/Xa-hoi/300851/nhieu-van-de-can-duoc-lam-ro>, Hanoimoi- Agency of the Communist Party of Vietnam Party Committee in Hanoi).

⁷ Duong Noi village had a large amount of agricultural land confiscated in 2008. The Duong Noi petitioner group consisted of more than 1,000 people, they regularly protested publicly in 2008-2009. Although not many people continued to protest after that, there are still some enthusiastic opponents who file denunciations and collect evidence till these days.

not as strong as those in the two neighbours, but reactions in all three villages showed common ground as various among villagers.

Data collection

Conduct qualitative method: in-depth interviews with different peasant groups based on their reactions to land deals, together with local cadres. Sampling technique: purposeful sampling.

Firstly, I worked on archive sources like legal documents on acquisition and compensation procedures, reports and documents stored locally related to the recovery, compensation and enforcement process in the field. However, I was not able to reach local/provincial archives as I wished. With legal documents I found, I look at how the State calculates the compensation rate (compared to the market price) for agricultural and residential land, contributing to understanding different responses from villagers. Add up to different sources such as research papers, bibliographies, and reports, I also used my own data collected in 2018-2019 from my previous research project.

Secondly, In-depth interviews were conducted on two main groups consisting of (1) villagers and (2) local/provincial officials (please see Appendix A – List of participations). To group 1, I focused on understanding the narratives of each key informant, thereby providing context, factors, and motivations leading to their decisions. This group is divided into two main categories: an opposing group and a consensus group with an equal number of informants from each group to ensure the representativeness of samples. Unfortunately, I could manage to reach seven out of ten informants on my wish list for this group due to the travel restrictions and limited time. Disparate sample sizes of each group might lead to disadvantages in empirical data analysis and interpretation. Apart from that, the difference in scale-farming and levels of farming intensity of each respondent was carefully considered.

Group 2 includes provincial officials who are in charge of/involved directly in the acquisition, compensation procedure and the enforcement implementation in the field, and hamlets' leaders/local officials - whom villagers elect to represent the community to communicate with the authority. Interview data from this second group is used to investigate their roles and stance in the acquisition procedure, and how officials respond to affected villagers will be revealed.

Ethical issues:

Till the end, I could not send my field assistant to the field, given that the travel restrictions were imposed in many cities including Hanoi. With a tight connection I have with the field, I was able to ask for support from a villager to put me on her phone with other villagers. With the support of my contact bridging person, I was able to conduct all interviews by myself over the phone. However, it raised some ethical issues during the data collection, for example protecting and leaking confidential information on the phone. As soon as I discovered there were gaps in information protection, I discussed and instructed my assistant on why it is important and how to solve the problem.

Moreover, the lack of data in the field also creates gaps in this study. With the lack of some legal documents, I could not reach some essential data related to 48 households having acquired land in 2017 to give an overview of their commons and differences through

variables such as economic status, livelihoods, and intensification farming, age, etc. The picture of social differentiation will be clearer and more convincing if the aforementioned characteristics are collected and analyzed.

For the data collection, I informed the consent document and got all respondents' approval to record, protect their personal information, and use data for this study. However, to maintain respondent confidentiality, their real names had not been used in this research, taking into account the sensitivity of the topic.

Chapter 2

Distributive equity and the legal procedure of acquisition and compensation

This chapter introduces agricultural land reform programs and the legal procedure of acquisition and compensation, which contributes and supports analysis in the following chapters. Different land redistribution programs have been closely connected and shaped the current agrarian society and system. The primary means employed by the Communist Party were justified as the establishment of social justice and the dictatorship of the proletariat with a spirit of radical class struggle. Such ideas, pledges and programs had been developed to gain great support from the peasantry and working class. Until urbanization and land rush take place across the nation, the people notice the shift away from original ideas. How and why people make use of the idea of distributive equity to claim their land rights will be explained in the next chapters. Meanwhile, the acquisition and compensation procedure discussed in this chapter is to complement and compare the procedure implemented in the grab-site.

2.1 Back to the history and the idea of distributive equity

In contrast to the trajectory of land concentration “in the hands of a few” in Russia and Ukraine in the post-Soviet era (Mamonova 2016, p.32), Vietnam’s agrarian system reveals the fragmentation of land ownership. Referring to fragmented land in the North, two reasons are often considered: (1) several times of land reform in the past, and (2) the inheritance custom (dividing land/assets for children). In 1992, the equal division of land per capita also contributed to land fragmentation. After that, the establishment of land funds for social welfare in the localities, according to the policy of the State, further narrowed the land area of private ownership in the North (Robequain and Yves Henry, cited in Bui, 2015).

However, besides implementing ‘nationalization’ in upland or peripheral areas, the government has redirected and promoted different forms of land accumulation in the central provinces in recent years. The State captures from within in the northern mountainous areas and the Central Highlands where uncountable large-scale agro-forestry farms and plantations are continuously formed and controlled by the State Forest Companies (SFC's). According to FAO (2009), “State owned forest and forest land amounted to 10,940,379 hectares and covered 76% of the total forest and forest land area” (p.18). On the other hand, in the central areas, the cherished intentions of promoting land concentration to overcome the low productivity emerging in the 2016 Party Principle Document was considered a shift from “Land to the Tiller to the “New Landlords” (To et al., 2019).

In the setting of a socialist country, this move so far has not received positive responses but endless controversies regarding state legitimacy (ibid, p.121). The situation of fragmented land that already existed, now due to land acquisition, the level of land fragmentation is aggravated. This section wants to recall the historical process that formed the characteristics of the agricultural system and agrarian society in Vietnam. Not only that, the flow of history reflects how the Communist Party won the support of the peasantry by implementing a series of reforms and formulating the ideal of equal distribution on land. This lays the groundwork

for the analysis in the following chapters, anchoring the arguments for land rights and political reactions that come from below.

2.1.1 Land Reform (1953-1956) and Collectivization (1950s-1980s) Periods

During the Anti-French Resistance War, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's government recognized private ownership of land. Until the end of 1953, the National Assembly approved the "Land Reform" law and implemented reforms step by step in the North. The classification of peasants has been carried out by the State along with the anti-landlord campaigns that had been going on since 1949.

Class division for the Land reform according to Decree 239/B.TLP (March 2, 1953) includes five components in the peasant regime:

1. Landlords: who have a lot of land, do not cultivate directly but collect land rents, often through intermediaries because many landowners still have careers and businesses in urban areas.
2. Rich farmers: who do not have as much land as landlords and engage in farming but hire tenants or have land for rent.
3. Middle farmers: who have just enough land, livestock and farming tools to feed their families.
4. Poor farmers: who have little land, not enough to support their families, so they have to hire land and buffalo to plough from landlords or become tenants.
5. Landless farmers are proletarians who can only make a living by working as hired labour for landlords or rich farmers.

The core task identified by the Indochinese Communist Party at that time was to destroy the remnants of feudalism and pre-capitalist exploitation, that is, to eliminate the capitalist/landlord class. Acknowledging mistakes from a conservative point of view and implementations in land reform campaigns (the 'rectification of errors' in 1956), the government returned confiscated assets to some households. However, the Party advocated promoting "Cooperative Agriculture" since 1958 after a short time allowing private ownership (Nguyen, V. Khanh, 2003). In 1959, the National Assembly of Vietnam issued a Resolution on Agricultural Cooperatives, bringing all northern farmers into cooperatives following the communal farming method and dividing the profits among members. This is the step marking the agricultural reform policy in the direction of building a collective and socialist economy.

"The prospects of developing economies of scale and increasing output made collectivization an appealing option for Communist leaders" (Scott, S., 2009). The result after two years was that 73% of the land area had been grouped into cooperatives, with 85.8% of farming households participating in agricultural cooperation. Thus, State-owned property and collective ownership were encouraged, while private ownership was dramatically reduced. Because all the farmers participating in the cooperative did not own the land but became contracted workers, which had destroyed their motivation. Kerkvliet (1995, 2009) illustrates that the cooperative members put the collective farming in a tense state with their small tactics as no personal benefit was found. The proactive mobilizations from the

subordinates' position destroyed the collectivized farming structure and prompted the power elite to introduce appropriate changes in policy. As a result, the national agricultural productivity fell to the bottom, led to the new reform of the agricultural system later.

2.1.2 Land Allocation Program since 1992:

In 1986, the 5th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam launched the reform policies known as Doi Moi to accelerate industrialization and modernization of the country and build a socialist-oriented market economy. The first Land Law (in 1987) was enacted, stipulating the slogan of “Land belongs to the entire people, is managed by the State” but imprinting “a legal ground for the State to unify its management of all land capital in the country” (Nguyen, Q. T., 2010). The Land Law 1993 opened up a broader and clearer connotation of land ownership “Land belongs to the entire people, land use rights belong to land users”. This further reveals the shift away from a centralized economy and collective farming made by the Communist Party. Decree 64/CP was issued in 1993, marking the milestone of implementing the Land Allocation program simultaneously to households and individuals with a term of 20 years (i.e. until 2013). The land was allocated to each individual in the household (based on the household registration book); those born later than the completion of the land allocation program (1992-1993) were not granted. Depending on the agricultural land fund of each commune, each individual got one to three sào⁸. Vietnam has witnessed significant productivity gains from the incentive of household farming in the following years.

“Both China and Vietnam benefited from the equal income and wealth distributions that characterized them at the outset of their decollectivization efforts” (Akram-Lodhi et al. 2007, cited in World Bank 2009, p.68).

In 1993, every inhabitant in Silk joined the Union Cooperative of Dong La Commune⁹ was allocated 10 *thước*¹⁰ (240m²) of plain land (LUC) and 6 *thước* (144m²) of alluvial land where villagers can cultivate up to 20 years (see Figure 2). Like other villages, the land was divided based on the fair mechanism, which means that each house was equally divided between fertile and non-fertile land, nearby and farther land. This way had made the land fragmented, making it very difficult to bring mechanization into the fields in many places. In Silk, 30 households refused to join the Commune Cooperative. They thus did not receive land from the State, as they managed to keep their private land after land reform and collectivization periods (see Figure 3). The allocation of land serves as a backup for farmers if their land becomes the target of future urban planning and land acquisition by the State shortly.

⁸ ‘Sào’ has been the unit of land measurement since the Nguyen dynasty. It is widely used in the agriculture field till today. One sào equal to 360m².

⁹ It is important to distinguish this model cooperative, which is not the same as the communal cooperatives in 1950-the 1960s. The Union Cooperatives serves and supports farmers in farming techniques, materials supply, and technology application to increase productivity. Goods produce on the fields are land users’ property.

¹⁰ ‘Thước’ has been the unit of land measurement since the Nguyen dynasty. In the North, 1 *thước* = 24m² (while in the South, 1 *thước* = 33.3m²).

Figure 2 One of the hand-drawn maps of agricultural land allocated to Silk villagers in 1993

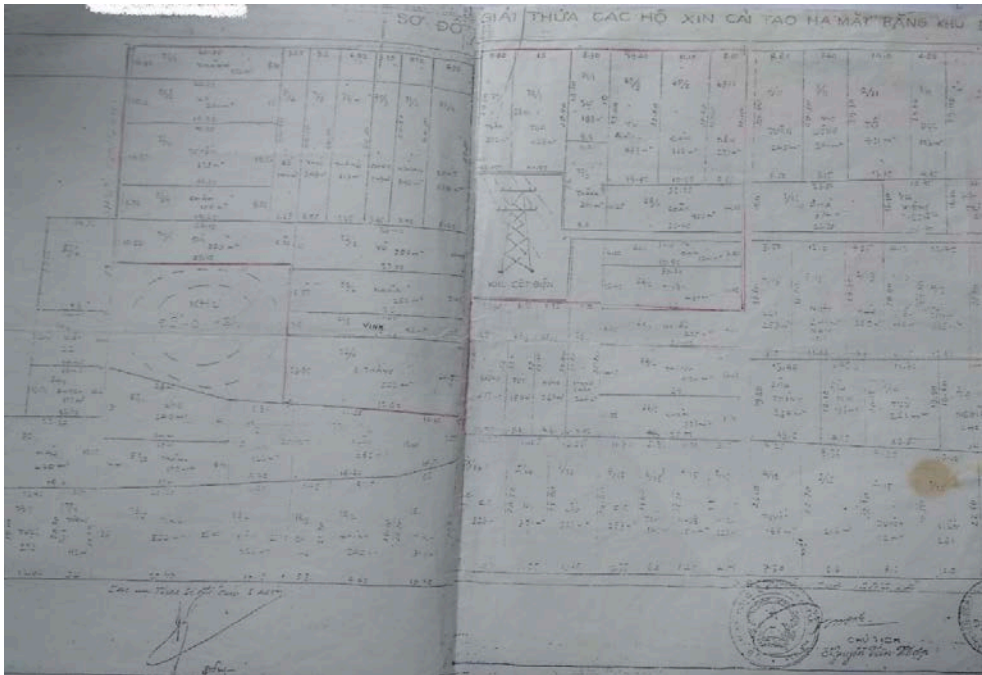
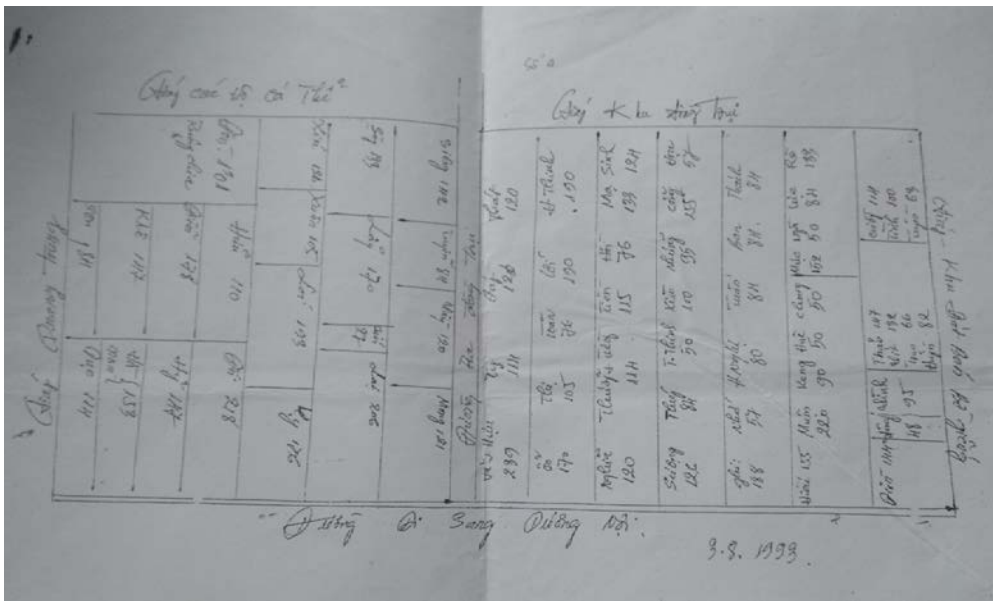


Figure 3 The hand-drawn map of private agricultural land plots in 1993



(Source: Author, provided by the Silk Village Cooperative)

In 2012, the National Assembly promulgated the Law on Cooperatives No. 23/2012/QH13 to divide commune cooperatives into smaller cooperatives at village level for management, and supplemented a number of regulations on land accumulation such as promoting ‘Exchanging and Re-allocating agricultural plots’ (Đồn điền đổi thửa) program. The Silk village cooperative officially became independent in 2013. At the same time, the government re-granted the Land Use Certificate Rights (LURCs) as the 20-year term expired. The important point is that plain land was not re-granted, while alluvial land was granted an extension of 50 years. The Silk village cooperative has developed well and currently has 319 members.

2.2 Land Governance and Legal procedure of acquisition/compensation by law

To concretize and guide the provisions of the Constitution in 1980 and 1992, the State of Vietnam has promulgated and amended the Land Law 6 times, including the Land Law of 1987, 1993 (amended and supplemented in 1998, 2001), 2003 and the latest in 2013. This section focuses on clarifying the provisions related to the process of acquisition and compensation under the Land Law 2013, as it is the most related one to the acquisitions that occurred in Silk village.

The revised land law in 2013 was born due to the orientation of Resolution No. 19/NQ-TU at the 6th Communist Party Congress Meeting, with the aim of overcoming and solving the arising shortcomings and limitations of the Land Law 2003. The revised Land Law 2013, approved by the XIII National Assembly on 29th November 2013, officially took effect from 1st July 2014 with 14 chapters and 212 articles, added up 7 chapters and 66 articles compared to the Land Law in 2003. The Land Law 2013 stipulates three land acquisition procedures corresponding to three cases of land acquisition, including: (1) expropriation for socio-economic development for national and public benefits; (2) expropriation due to violation of the Land Law and (3) acquire the land due to legal termination of land use, voluntary return of land, or any reasons posing a threat to human life. The land acquisitions in Silk village correspond to the first case of expropriation, which is for socio-economic development implemented by the Land Fund Development Center. I will therefore detail this procedure.

Land acquisitions in Silk village were sporadic and relatively late compared to surrounding villages (starting only from 2010 onwards). In which two expropriations were completed in the period 2010-2012 and 2017-2019 (details of the acquisitions will be presented in Table 2, Chapter 3). In the period 2010-2012, the land was acquired to build local public non-business constructions in accordance with Clause 1, Article 38, Section 4 of the Land Law 2003 (equivalent to Clause 3a, Article 62 of the Land Law 2013). The next acquisition was for an auction project to build local technical infrastructure, according to Clause 3b, Article 62 of the Land Law 2013. Technical infrastructure projects must simultaneously determine the location and area of confiscated land in the vicinity for auctioning land use rights to implement housing, commercial, production and business service projects (Point d Clause 4, Article 39 of the Land Law 2013).

The order and procedures for land acquisition under Article 69 of Land Law 2013 can be described into 10 steps, in which:

- Step 1: Determine land acquisition purpose and prepare cadastral documents. The Center for Land Fund Development (CLFD) coordinates with the District People's Committee to conduct a survey, investigation, preliminary statistics of cadastral documents, and propose the land fund to be acquired, so the Department of Natural Resources and Environment can submit a plan to the City People's Committee for consideration and approval.

- Step 2: Submit for approval to change the use purpose of rice land, protection forest land, and special-use forest land.

- Step 3: Develop and approve the land recovery plan, assign the task of formulating and implementing the compensation, support and resettlement plan.

- Step 4: Establishment of a Site of Clearance and Compensation Council (SCCC). Based on the land expropriation plan, the Chairman of the District People's Committee is responsible to form SCCC.

- Step 5: Notify people of land acquisition. CLFD or SCCC shall coordinate with the commune-level People's Committees in notifying the land recovery according to the approved plan to each person whose land is located in the planning area (through meetings, mass media, posted at the headquarter of the Commune People's Committee).

- Step 6: Prepare compensation, support and resettlement plan.

(Note: In case a land user do not allow officials to do the investigation, survey, measurement and inventory, CLFD or SCCC coordinates with the Commune People's Committee (CPC) and Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee (VFFC) at the commune level to mobilize and persuade land users. If the land users do not cooperate within 10 days from the date of being convinced, the Chairman of People's Committee at district-level shall *issue a decision on compulsory inventory*. If the land user continues refusing to comply, the Chairman shall *issue a decision on enforcement* of the decision on compulsory inventory and organize the enforcement in accordance with Article 70 of this Law.

- Step 7: Completing, appraising and approving compensation, support, resettlement plans and decision on expropriation. The CLFD or SCCC is responsible for making compensation plans, supporting and coordinating with the CPC in organizing the consultation of the people (arrange a direct meeting and record a report signed by the representatives of CPC, VFFC and local people).

- Step 8: Prepare the annual budget plan (expected budget for compensation and site clearance)

- Step 9: Organize the plan of compensation, support and resettlement according to the approved plan.

9.2 LFDC & SCCC coordinate with CPC to disseminate and post up publicly the decision on approval of the compensation plans, support and resettlement at the CPC's offices and at common public places of the residential areas of which land is acquired. The responsible agencies shall send the decision to each person whose land is acquired. In case users of recovered land fail to hand over the land, CPC and VFFC in the locality and the organization in charge of compensation and clearance shall mobilize and persuade the land users.

In case the land users fail to comply with the decision for handing over land even after the mobilization and persuasion, the chairperson of CPC shall issue a decision on enforcement of land recovery and organize the enforcement (the order of implementation shall be carried out by the Enforcement Board in accordance with Article 71 of the Land Law; members of the enforcement committee as prescribed in Clause 3, Article 17 of Decree No. 43/2014/ND-CP dated May 15, 2014 of the Government).

(Note: Compensation payment must be completed within 30 days from the date of decision on recovery. Past the aforesaid time limit, an additional amount of money equal to

the late payment interest shall be paid according to Clauses 1 & 2, Article 93. In case land users refuse to receive compensation or support according to the approved plan, the compensation money is deposited into the custody account of the State Treasury, according to the provisions of Clause 3, Article 93 of the Land Law).

- Step 10: The organization in charge of compensation and ground clearance shall manage land which is already cleared (Clause 4 Article 69 of this Law).

In the Land Law 2013, there are a few notable points as follows. First, in step 6 and step 9, the State empowers the provincial level to issue and organize enforcement if land users fail to cooperate with the organization in charge of compensation and ground clearance for investigation, survey, measurement and inventory and/or fail to hand over the land. Thus, people have no choice other than to comply with the approved plan. Second, the Commune People's Committee only organizes consultations with the land users after formulating the compensation, support and resettlement plan (Step 7). According to Land Law 2013, Articles 112, 113 and 114 regulate that the Government issues a land price bracket every five years for each land type and region. The provincial People's Committee is responsible for building a specific price list and land price based on the principles and methods of land pricing and land price frame. It can be seen that the power of the local level is increasingly enhanced due to the degree of its participation in both the appraisal process - setting the compensation framework and the right to organize enforcement.

In relation to the research site

As mentioned above, there were two land acquisitions in Silk village in 2012 and 2017. Before the 2013 Land Law was enacted, people were entitled to consult at the stage of land use planning in accordance with Clause 5, Article 25 of Land Law 2003. The form of compensation in 2012 is also very different from 2017. In 2012, people were allowed to convert 360m² of agricultural land for every 50m² of service land [of which equal value to residential land]. The value of service land was around 20-30 million VND (~\$880-1320) per one square meter in 2012. This was considered beneficial by many residents. Meanwhile, people were paid one million VND (~\$44) for one square meter of farmland in 2017. Although the market price of land was much higher in 2017 than the price in 2012, the money compensation was just half of the previous compensation in value. Thus, the system of a compensation frame built every five years (based on the proposal of the provincial level), and the adjustment of land users' participation in the land acquisition process (in 2013) seems to create a disadvantage for land users whose land was acquired in 2017.

Chapter 3

Rural Responses and Strategies

In this chapter, different narratives will be given to interrogate who adapt, who resist, and what are considered gains and losses for affected villagers, based on two land acquisitions that occurred in 2012 and 2017 in the grab-site. In both cases of gain and loss, the repertoire of villagers is found as strategies to not only seek benefits but also minimize losses and risks. In the section explaining the divergence that happened in the community, I will go deeper on political reactions associated with biographies, well-being and narratives of my respondents. From this departure, I generalize my findings and summarize why people united and divided within the community to answer my second sub-question.

3.1 Who adapts and who resists?

Compared to neighbouring villages, Silk village seemed to be affected later by urbanization (Nguyen, T. T. B., 2017) and agricultural land acquisition. While neighbouring villages started taking farmland from farmers for infrastructure, service and urban planning before Hanoi's expansion in 2008. It was not until 2010, the first plots of agriculture land of Silk were taken away, which was to serve the National Target Program on New Rural Development¹¹, according to local officials (Interviews, August 2021). Acquisitions were generally small and scattered, unlike the other cases of concentrated land acquisition with a large area in the vicinity. To compare, in Duong Noi village, 197 hectares of land was acquired to build modern apartments in 2009, accounting for 90% of the village's agricultural land. In order to have an overall picture of land context in Silk village, it is important to give an overview of the timeline and purposes of land acquisitions.

Table 2 Land acquisitions in Silk village

Year	Purposes	Type of compensation	Total area/households
2010-2012	To build New Cultural House, Sport Stadium and Kindergarten	1 sào (360m ²) exchange to 50m ² service land	2.9 hectares (of 43 households)
2017-2019	For Auction Land to raise local funding	Get paid 970.000 VND (~43 USD) for 1m ²	0.77 hectares (7731.7m ² of 48 households)
2022 (tentative)	Low-income housing apartments	?	?

The first land acquisition in the village was in 2012; 2.9 hectares of agricultural land of 43 households was acquired for the construction of public facilities of the community. The

¹¹ The National Target Program on New Rural Development is a comprehensive program on socio-economic development, politics and national security developed and approved by the Government of Vietnam in June 2010. The ambition is that 20% of communes will meet new rural standards by 2015 and 50% of communes will reach those criteria by 2020.

procedure for withdrawal and compensation was carried out smoothly and quickly. No one objected or expressed any dissatisfaction at that time. The outcome of the subsequent acquisition in 2017 turned out to be completely different. In fact, the call to give up the land had been made since late 2012 by local officials, but most people disagreed (Interview with Ms. Thy). Until 2017, the local government decided to implement coercive measures. Forty households agreed to give up, while the remaining eight households continued to oppose the notice of acquisition.

The purpose of acquisition and the use of acquired land are thought to be factors that influence how and to what extent farmers' responses can be made. "Resistance to the expropriation of land for urbanization has been far stronger than resistance to the transfer of land to large farm operators" (Andreas, J. et al. 2020, p.1129). More positive responses from farmers for another form of land accumulation is leasing or transferring the land to large farm operators. A farmer can still work on their land and earn up to 6 million VND per month, which is higher than the income from 3 sào of growing rice before (National Media VTC16¹², 2019). Becoming a contract farmer, earning a stable monthly salary and continuing to own the land is not a bad option for many farmers. To explain from farmers' beneficial perspective, there are reasons for them taking opposite side to land grab operators: (1) they only get one-time compensation, (2) completely lose land ownership and the main livelihood source and (3) always there is a big gap between compensation price and market value.

In Silk village, most projects that fall under the hat of urban planning are for social welfare purposes, raising funds to improve the local infrastructure system and/or converting to residential land. So far, these projects have no foreign elements or conversion to commercial uses. However, it is important to emphasize two critical points between land acquisitions in 2012 and 2017. The first point is people got back 50m² of service land (equal to residential land) for every 360m² of agricultural land acquired in 2012, while the compensation for 2017 was nearly one million VND per one square meter. Secondly, the construction of public facilities immediately commenced after the procurement in 2012. The villagers witnessed these projects being implemented on their land, so that no question about the purpose of land use had been raised. In 2017, the acquired land was for resale to raise funds for Dong La commune and Hoai Duc District with the aim of improving the local infrastructure system, as they explain. While villagers did not know how the local authority would use the money earned from their land, they observed that land was sold at a very high price compared to their compensation.

3.2 Gains and Losses

This section will analyze in detail the context of land acquisitions in Silk village to demonstrate many factors farmers consider to make their own political reactions.

¹² VTC16 channel belongs to the Digital Television Station of the Ministry of Information and Communications. On June 2nd, 2015, the Prime Minister signed Decision No. 752/QĐ-TTg on transferring the VTC Digital Television Station to the Voice of Vietnam (VOV) – a National press agency.

3.2.1 Gains

In a brief conversation with a person who was supposed to be a tentative interviewee¹³, he commented: “Anh không nằm trong diện được đền bù” (I am not subjected to land acquisition). He used the word ‘được’, which refers to expecting something to happen rather than being passive and reluctant. So is land acquisition perceived as coercion or opportunity? This may explain why land deals are not always and everywhere considered as a loss and trigger resistance from below. In some circumstances, land acquisition can be seen as a life-changing opportunity.

“With 360m² of agricultural land exchange to 50m² of service land, some people become billionaires... Many wished to have their land acquired.”

Interview with Mr. Linh (57 years old)
The chief of Hamlet 1, 30th August 2021

Between 2010 and 2012, the first land acquisition carried out in Silk village was the multi-construction complex to improve local facilities consisting of a community house, a kindergarten and a stadium. To date, this project acquired the largest area of agricultural land in Silk. It was considered a very good location, right in the middle of the village and in Hamlet 2. For every 360m² of agricultural land, a villager can exchange 50m² of service land. Service land (also known as commercial land) is an area of land with favourable locations for business and trade granted from the acquisition of agricultural land. In Article 125 of the Land Law 2013, Clause 4 states: “If the commercial and service land currently being used by households or individuals is not land allocated for a fixed term by the State, it may be used permanently as residential land”. Service land is the part of the land that the state compensates for those who have more than one-third of their agricultural land acquired to support a career change. This will help land users to generate their income. Each land plot is often about 40-50 square meters. Once the local authority completes the infrastructure constructions, a draw will be held for a specific number of plots. The infrastructure of the service land will be built before or concurrently with the construction of the urban area.

A total of 43 households had converted from agricultural land to service land, which many correspondents consider is ‘once-in-a-lifetime’. Depending on the amount of acquired agricultural land of land users, the corresponding area of service land will be allocated. Although many farmers lost most of their agricultural land, they did not seem to worry much. Because what they received in return was another piece of land that opened up future opportunities and personal benefits more than cultivating farmland. As they know, service land is usually located next to or in urban areas with convenient transportation and infrastructure. Mrs. Na - who got 36m² of service land from 9 *thước* (216m²) of agricultural land, shared that:

“I gave up the land because it was a good deal. My farmland was in a low-lying area, cultivating so difficult with a low-productivity. At that time, there was no one wanted to buy that kind of arable land. Meanwhile, service land is always at a higher price, and many people want to buy it.”

(Interview, 10th October 2021)

She illustrates that her family was no longer dependent on agriculture even though they owned two plots of agricultural land (the total area was 18 *thước* including one piece for her

¹³ Due to some technical problems, I could not have him as a key respondent, but his statement is really important.

and one-piece for her husband). After more than a year of converting to the service land, Mrs. An sold the land to get capital to invest in other business activities, which were opening a convenience store and expanding her clothing store. Not only her, many households got a plot of service land in 2012 chose to sell that land instead of keeping it. Although the price of service land was very good, Mrs. An feels regretful that she could have earned a few tens of millions more if she sold the land earlier – at the right time of ‘land rush’.

Service land was given in exchange for agricultural land actually brought up indirect (but valuable) benefits for villagers in several ways. When granted service land, people are given a land ownership certificate, and they can use it to build houses as residential land, according to the service land-use regulations. Locating next to urban areas, service land is suitable to be suitable for doing different types of business such as renting houses, opening convenient/groceries stores or even reselling it at a high price. In Silk, many people sold their service land. The selling price was as high as that of residential land. “They can sell at 15-20 million VND/m² [in 2012]. With 50 square meters, they earn over 700 million VND, which is double the compensation price in 2017. So to compare, affected villagers in 2017 were much more disadvantaged”, Mr. Linh said. By doing a simple calculation, villagers can clearly see the loss-gain situation of each compensation in the two phases. As time went by, the land price increased, but the land compensation price was reduced by half. Perhaps this reverse deepens the consciousness of injustice from farmers whose land was expropriated in 2017, leading to their resistance.

3.2.2 Losses

To look at the loss of affected villagers, I focus on four main aspects in this section: (1) the compensation price (in 2017) in the comparison to the previous compensation (in 2012) and the actual land market price at that time, (2) the significant disparity of the compensation price and the land price selling by the authority later, (3) the lack of transparency in the purpose of land acquisition and (4) the loss calculated on the household level.

The acquisition 2017 was considered much loss, compared to the compensation in 2012. The amount of land acquired was 7731.7m² from 48 households. The process of informal land acquisition took more than six years. All households refused at the beginning with a reason that the expropriation procedure was not legitimate without a formal decision from the higher level, confirmed by Ms. Thy and Mr. Hung. Later in 2016, the district authority started establishing a Site of Clearance and Compensation Council and implemented stronger measures to recover the land. 40 households agreed to give up their land, leaving 8 households to continue to defend land acquisition. These refusals led to a very slow compensation process that took more than two years and resulted in rough enforcement on farmers’ farmland by security forces, policemen and county officials in April 2018.

For compensation type, instead of exchanging 50m² of service land, this time, less than 360 million dong was paid for 360m² of agricultural land (970.000 VND/m²). As mentioned above, people who got 50m² of service land can make use of it by opening a shop, renting out or selling the land at a very high price. The land price of 50m² of service land was sold at >700 million dong [in 2012], more than double the compensation in 2017. Secondly, agricultural (auctioned) land will be converted to residential land by the provincial level through the bidding procedure and then sold at very high price. The starting auction price often ranges from 15 to 20 million VND/m², depending on the time of purchase and location of a plot. After the auction completes, the land price is around 30-40 million VND

(i.e. 30-40 times higher the acquisition price) per square meter. The price can be sold higher with individual deals outside the auction. “My son just asked the price a few months ago, they informed us 45 million VND/m²”, Ms. Nha said.

Furthermore, the exact compensation was paid at 970,000 VND (~43 USD) per square meter, while the price of agricultural land at that time was 2 million VND (~ 89 USD). This had brought unexpected losses in investment to people like Ms. An. In 2015, she bought 360m² of agricultural land in the village to grow fruits and vegetables for about 1.8 million VND/m², i.e 648 million VND. Until 2017, her land was in the area for acquisition and like everyone else, Ms. An received less than 345 million VND in compensation (after deducting some fees required by SCCC). I have asked some respondents what did they do with the money compensation, the response was not only them, but most of the [not well-off] households spend for daily expenses and they spend every last after one to two years. The answer for why do not they invest in something even come up from normative villagers: “Because our knowledge and our money is limited, we cannot make big investments. That’s the problem. If you want something big you need to invest big!” (Nguyen Ngoc Giang – a farmer and a member of Elderly Association in Silk, quoted in *The Vanishing Village*¹⁴, directed by John and Lennart Kleinen, 2015)

The compensation price is way too far from the actual land market price is a long-term shortcoming in Vietnam, even though the Land Law 2013 stipulates a mechanism for determining and appraising land prices (Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Hung Yen). According to the statistical system of PAPI, only 16.83% of respondents said that the compensation level is close to the market price (see Table 3).

Table 3 Transparency of Local Decision-making on Land-Use Plan/Price in Hanoi

	A	C	D
1		Point Scale	
2	Provinces/Cities under the command of the Central		Hà Nội
3	Weighted PAPI Score	10-80 points	43.70
4	PAPI 95% CI Low		41.55
5	PAPI 95% CI High		45.84
6	PAPI Standard Error		1.30
7	Unweighted PAPI Score	10-80 points	41.63
8	Unweighted 95% CI Low		40.08
9	Unweighted 95% CI High		43.17
10	Unweighted Standard Error		0.94
36	Dimension 2: Transparency of Local Decision-making	1-10 points	5.24
53	Transparent Land-Use Plan/Price Frames	0.25-2.5 points	1.28
54	Aware of Local Land Plans	0%-100%	14.97%
55	Comment on Local Land Plans	0%-100%	5.05%
56	Land Plan Acknowledges Your Concerns	0%-100%	84.58%
57	Impact of Land Plan on Your Families	1-3 points	2.24
58	Did not Lose Land as a Result of New Land Plan	0%-100%	0.89
59	Compensation Close to Market Value	0%-100%	16.83%
60	Informed of Alternative Land Usage	0%-100%	92.88%
61	Land was Used for Its Original Purpose	0%-100%	92.33%
62	Know Where to Go to Get Land Price Information	0%-100%	49.10%

(Source: PAPI)¹⁵

¹⁴ The author of the book “Facing the Future Reviving the Past” – John Kleinen returned Silk village after more than 20 years since his field trip in the early 90s and made this short documentary about urbanization in Silk.

¹⁵ PAPI: The Vietnam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index.

The non-transparency of compensation pricing methods and frameworks¹⁶ is often raised by civil organizations, NGOs, and farmers. The absence of a unified land price bracket from the State has created gaps for ambiguity in determining compensation prices for people. It comes to the fact that many cases of land acquisition present significantly different compensation rates in close geographical proximity and in the same year. The different and precarious compensation framework is also due to the increasing power of the provincial-level on expropriating the land. As local authority is entitled to decide how much local people can receive, the less compensation paid to affected people, the more money will be collected for local funding.

Thirdly, the lack of transparency in the plan to use the funds collected from the auction of agricultural land was also the reason why many affected villagers protest at the first place. All agricultural land acquired was not for building any public constructions but for auction¹⁷ to raise funds for development projects (later) in the locality. The commune government was the agency responsible for the land auction. Residents worry that their farmland would be beneficial to a certain group since there is no mechanism for local people to participate in the planning process and monitor the fund consumption. Political criticisms from villagers in Vietnam are often found to include corruption and democratic procedure (Kerkvliet 2019, p.57). The purpose of land acquisition is ‘to raise funds for the implementation of development projects, which leaves villagers confused about what and how the funds will be used. “It is no coincidence that the two areas of land policy most subject to corruption have been identified as the issuance of LURCs and the resale of land after compulsory requisition by the State” (Embassy of Denmark et al., 2011, cited in Wells-Dang 2015, p.2). The proliferation of land auctions to raise funds for urban development projects can further complicate the notion of ‘virtual land grabbing’ (McCarthy et al., 2012) as the form of capital changes from land to money.

Lastly, I found a common among respondents who opposed to land acquisition in 2017, that is the loss at household level. For the household of Ms.Nha, two family members had their land confiscated at the same year, in which she lost 1 sào and her sister-in-law lost 1 sào 2 thước. The total lost land area of their household farming was 768m². Both land plots were cultivated by different family members and served food for their extended family. According to Ms. Gong, the other reason why she wanted to resist is the total amount of land loss was far more than other households. Not only her land, but also her sister-in-law's land were taken away, which doubles the family's loss. The second case is Ms. Thy, she said that this was not the first time facing the loss of land. She was originally from the neighboring village (in the same commune) before getting married and moving to Silk village. In her village, she owned 360m² of agricultural land, which was taken away in 2015 for a project to build a lake of the commune. In 2017, 360m² of agricultural land of her husband was also

¹⁶ The land price and compensation frame are developed by the People's Committee of the province (not by the State) and submitted to the People's Council at the same level for approval before promulgation. The land price list is built every five years and publicly announced on January 1 of the first year of the period.

¹⁷ Auction land is a land area that is publicly auctioned by the People's Committee (usually at the district level) to raise funds for the locality. According to the State's regulations, the auctioned land must be (1) not encroached on, leased or disputed; (2) approved by the Department of Planning and Architecture and articulated the general plan; (3) approved by the Department of Finance the starting unit price as the basis for auction; (4) have adequate infrastructure, roads, power supply, and drainage systems.

confiscated. 720m² of land had been taken away within two years, causing the complete loss of agricultural land for her household. Similar to two above cases, both Ms. Nha and her 90-year-old father lost their land, with a total area of 205m².

Once the offer comes with a lot of disadvantages, options like bargaining will be reckoned, before it comes to resistance.

“I offered to buy back the land at auction for three times the price they compensated for our agricultural land, but they flatly refused.”

(Interview with Ms. Thy (44 years old)

Resisted against land acquisition, 3rd September 2021)

“We asked if each of us could buy one plot [at a starting bid]. They said if we want, we have to buy at the same price as everyone else, which means participating in an auction. I insisted them to sell me one plot for the purpose of resettlement, but they did not hear me.”

(Interview with Ms. Nha –

Resisted against land acquisition, 3rd September 2021)

In modern times, the land loss to peasants with small farming brings them uncertainty in life and threatens their self-sufficiency as losing the chance to generate profits and annual income from the land. Knowing that the chance of claiming the land was not high, they did not give up easily. Affected farmers constantly strive to negotiate an option-based optimization. Due to the explanation of some key informants, they were trying to reduce their losses to some extent. From minimizing the loss, they found there are benefits to reap later through reselling the auctioned land if they can manage the negotiation with authority. Given that, “land prices have risen quickly, 10% a month on average. In some places, it has increased 2-3 times in just 1-2 months” (Vietnam Real Estate Brokers Association, cited in Vietnamnet News, 2021). Thus, Silk resisters had offered a profitable deal for them, no matter buying at three times the price or at the auction’s starting price. Auction land prices in this area used to be up to 45 million VND per square meter by the end of 2020, increased by 30% in over three months.

3.3 The divergence among affected villagers

The divergence among affected farmers within the Silk community towards land acquisition was observed. Most of the protesting households lost more than 360m² of agricultural land. Those who agreed to receive the compensation were believed that the amount of their land lost was small to pay off efforts to claim over the land. As confirmed by an official in the commune government, along with the informants, it is true that seven out of eight Silk resisters lost more than 360m² and larger amount of land than most households agreed. However, there were two households in the consensus group with a relatively large area of land loss that gave up the land. I did the interview with the representative of these two households (Ms. Uyen and Mr. Hung) to explain their decisions.

In the interview, Ms. Uyen shared that she and her husband both have stable jobs with monthly salaries, so they are no longer farming. The agricultural land of her family, which had been taken away, was given to her uncle to cultivate since 2015. To Mr. Hung, the amount of land acquired was 360m², accounting for 30% of his extended family’s agricultural land. Like Uyen, Hung and his wife do not focus on farming and have main income from other jobs. The farmland was mainly cultivated by different family members, and he did help them on the field when he had time.

Looking at the data synthesis of the respondents (see Appendix A), I realize that the livelihood and main source of income were partially involved in the process of making decision to refuse or agree to give up their land at the first place. I briefly present the main source of income and the total area of land loss of each respondents in the table below:

Table 4 Main source of income and land loss size, in the comparison between the opposing group and the consensus group

Opposing Group	Consensus Group
Ms. Gong (62 years old) - Loss: >360m ² - Job/main income: Peasant	Ms. Uyen (40 years old) - Loss: 396m ² - Job/main income: Kindergarten's teacher
Ms. Thy (44 years old) - Loss: 360m ² - Job/main income: Peasant + Street vendor	Mr. Hung (48 years old) - Loss: 360m ² - Job/main income: Mason
Ms. An (57 years old) - Loss: 360m ² - Job/main income: Selling fruit in the city + peasant	Ms. Na (45 years old) - Loss: 216m ² - Job/main income: Doing business
Ms. Nha (58 years old) - Loss: 105m ² - Job/main income: Peasant (was a street vendor, selling vegetable produced from her own field)	

(Source: Author's elaboration)

In fact, Silk villagers who agreed to give up their land were not necessarily in favour of the land expropriation decision. They discussed the transparency of land use and money from land auctions and raised a rumour about bribe-taking (Interview with Ms. Gong, 64 years old). So instead of taking an opposite side, obedient villagers were likely to scrutinize and expose the conspiracy theory of how will the corruption be? The way they acted reminds those manoeuvring everyday politics who do not undertake organized and overt resistance “to mitigate or deny claims made by superordinate classes” (Scott 1985, p.32). Annoying the local authority will trigger difficulties that might come in the future when they need to get any administrative papers done.

As for the opposing group, no public/overt protest had been done but they did not give up expressing their displeasure. Learning from land keepers in Duong Noi village, Ms. Nha and seven other households took advantage of the power of unorthodox media such as Facebook to livestream their picture of misery. Affected villagers defended their rights on land:

“We have filmed it, and we got many audience supporting us online because the money by selling auctioned land is not for the State's funds, not taken by the State's order.”

(Interview with Ms. Nha, 3rd September 2021)

Regardless of the fact that their audience is outsiders, Ms. Nha asserted that much sympathy comes from their random audience through interacting online. Silk resisters partially achieved their goals to make more people know about their land loss cases and

persuade them that the acquisition procedure was unjust to them. This form of external influence-seeking and coalition-building is a recent phenomenon in peasant resistance in Vietnam (Wells-Dang, Pham and Burke, 2015).

Not only express their grievances and frustrations, Silk resisters also sought out potential benefits by negotiating to buy back their agricultural land at a lower price and/or starting auction price. The large disparity between auctioned land prices and actual compensation was recognized by affected farmers and became a driving force for them to resist. They could have lost all chances to pursue benefits and minimize losses themselves without making any efforts, so did they oppose and negotiate. All my respondents expressed a concern that officials in the SCCC department were threatened by saying if they do not receive compensation and continue to be stubborn, the compensation money will be deposited in the State treasury. Moreover, their cultivated fields had been flattened with excavators and tractors as the communal and district authorities issued a decision on enforcement in April 2018. Considering time and effort constraints, most people in the opposing group in Silk village gave up and persuaded the rest to stop resisting not to lose the compensation at the end. For others who resisted and were forced to give up their land, knowing the possibility of taking back their land was not much, based on their social status, power and other existing conditions in Silk village.

Respondents from the opposing group explained their adaptability to urban growth is low. Diversifying livelihoods seemed to be impossible as they are unskillful and old labour, said Ms. Gong. Meanwhile, Ms. Nha honestly shared that she was able to earn a living as a street vendor five years ago. Since a few years ago, her health did not allow her to ride a bicycle to the city centre and sell things. With the amount of agricultural land she has left, Ms. Nha cannot produce excess vegetables and fruit. All these uncertainties, of course, acknowledged by the commune authority:

“Once the villagers lose their agricultural land at an age where it’s hard to cope with development and change...It is unavoidable that some people will get lost. While, young people will be a free-land generation [...]. Urbanization is something irresistible.”

(Chairman of People’s Committee of Dong La Commune,
quoted in *The Vanishing Village*, 2015)

His last sentence seems to imply acceptance instead of a solution. The loss of agricultural land (at a large scale to them) not only pushes them into unemployment but also threatens their ability to be self-sufficient as farmers. The study conducted by Nguyen, Westen and Zoomers (2021) illustrates two critical points: (1) “the financial compensation and support packages do not appear to be strong determinants of household income after land loss” (p.53); and (2) there are indicators firmly connected to the adaptability of households after the land loss such as household size, human capital and household income (which present the social differentiation), along with livelihood assets and land loss characteristics.

3.4 Chapter Conclusion

Through the analysis of gains and losses, we can see how social differentiation can be raised from enclosure and dispossession (Hall et al., 2015) and affected their responses to land loss. For households who have money to spare, like Mrs. Na’s family, the acquisition was a great deal coming at the right time to expand her business and make her one of the wealthiest families in the village for now. Meanwhile, a hunger-prone group or households that rely on agriculture as the main and only source of livelihoods were completely passive and found it

hard to handle after the land loss. Depending on the social differentiation of each individual/household, land acquisition has different impacts among villagers in the community, and hence their reactions can be seen as the after-effect of the situation they are in.

As Hall et al. (2015) argue that “reactions are shaped by and in turn shape social differentiation... and possibilities for political alliances” (p. 483). Instead of forming collective actions, the divergence takes place within Silk village as the impacts of land acquisition are different among the socially differentiated members. From the above analysis, I suggest that gains and losses do not merely depend on how compensation and acquisition are implemented at different times and grab-sites. Gain and loss can be twisted at any time. Like people in Thuy Duong quickly moved from confrontation to agreement when investors added more benefits to the compensation with financial incentives and valuable gifts (Nguyen, Zoomers and Westen, 2015). The degree of loss depends a lot on the context and social differentiation of each household and individual. I synthesize notable features emerging from the data collection and their relations through the diagram below:

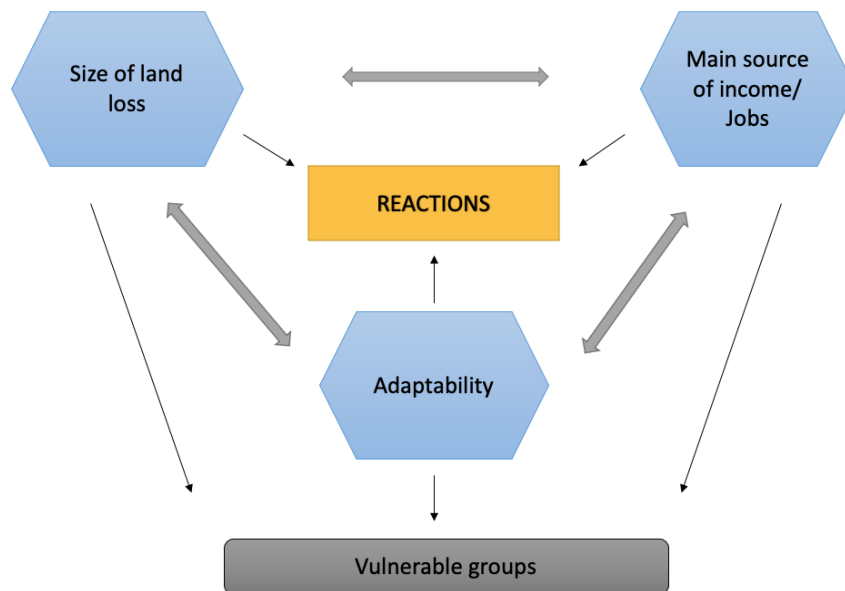


Figure 4 Notable factors in the relation to political reactions of villagers to land loss

First of all, size of land loss, main source of income and adaptability form a circle of mutual influence. All three elements contribute to how affected villagers react to land acquisition, and in any cases the change of these element can push the individual/household into a vulnerable group. In particular:

- Job/main income influence the adaptation of an individual/a household to urbanization and after land loss;
- Jobs/main income also determines how much impact land acquisition will have on an individual/a household and is therefore directly related to the amount of land taken;
- In turn, the amount of land taken can also shape the change in livelihood of an individual/a household.
- The vulnerability of an individual/household is connected to their level of adaptation and in return, the adaptability reveals the vulnerability of an individual/a household.

- Similarly, the amount of land lost can push an individual/a household into a vulnerable situation, which is exacerbated if they are already a vulnerable group but lose their land.
- People are no longer engaged in farming activities seem to have higher adaptability in urban growth and after land loss. As they do not depend on farming or annual income from the agricultural land, compensations can become potential capital that will be invested and used in different activities for profits. In the diagram, I introduce the notion of 'Vulnerable group', which I will clarify further on the next chapter.

People are no longer engaged in farming activities seem to have higher adaptability in urban growth and after land loss. As they do not depend on farming or annual income from the agricultural land, compensations can become potential capital that will be invested and used in different activities for profits. In the diagram, I introduce the notion of 'Vulnerable group', which I will clarify further on the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Agency and Extra-Economic Coercion

Diverse rural reactions expose the agency's agrarian subjects and their decisions. The differentiation in rural communities is intertwined with social and economic constraints that always exist before and after land grabs. "Peasant protest movements reveal the structure of peasant world" (Brocheux, 1983, p.795); thus, the presence of power relations needs to be clarified in the process of land acquisition and compensation. This chapter will explore how people perceive their social status, possibility and ability to deal with land acquisition implemented by (legitimate) power holders. In the later part, the various form of extra-economic coercion imposed in the grab-sites and how affected villagers respond to it will be discovered.

4.1 Agency

“- Can you tell me the reason why you gave up the land?

- Just a simple reason: I am a normative villager, no hope of getting back anything from the State. Till the end, those people who protested for their land were forced to comply by violent methods.”

– Mr. Hung (Interview, 24th October 2021)

The respondent recognizes the lack of agency under the structure of society in which he was. His choice reveals 'the choice of powerless' where " 'prioritised concern' (Moser, 1989) is often central to the agency of the powerless whether in exercising choice or making decisions or in resistance" (cited in Banerjee 2017, p.32). In other words, the subject's perception of the ability to act can be shaped by 'visible power'¹⁸ and 'hidden power'¹⁹ embedded in social structure that lead to 'invisible power' by "influencing how individuals think about their place [...and accept] their status quo – even their own superiority or inferiority" (Gaventa 2006, p.29).

Regarding the collection of opinions on land use master plans and plans, Article 43 (Land Law 2013) stipulates that the agency organizing the formulation of the master plan and plan on land use is responsible for collecting local people. On the one hand, the law does not provide for direct consultation of the people when making master plans and plans on land use in urban areas, as well as adjusting land use master plans and plans. On the other hand, the consultation is primarily formal and not transparent in receiving comments (World Bank, 2013).

The participation of Silk villagers into this process was really limited in practice. All respondents who were affected in the land acquisition in 2017 illustrated that the meetings to collect people's opinions actually turned into the sessions of announcing an order. All affected villagers came to express the objection to the land acquisition, but their opinions

¹⁸ Visible political power – the formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions and procedures of decision making (Gaventa 2006, p.29)

¹⁹ Certain powerful people and institutions maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda (Gaventa 2006, p.29)

were ignored by the authority. They also complained that the local authority asked them to join so many meetings to propagandize the benefits of the New Rural program rather than to answer questions and seek solutions, which led to fatigue for the villagers. Holding the meeting was a formality and did not promote democracy in the participation of villagers in the acquisition process were emphasized in many interviews. Not just had a little chance to participate in the process, they did not get any additional supports for training or job change after the land loss. The promise of employment arrangement had been said by the local officials; however, the authority never mentioned it after the land acquisition completed.

While reflecting the unequal participation, Silk resisters found themselves as vulnerable people within a community and in society. Ms. Nha emphasized how others should see them as fragile people, and therefore the land acquisition process was unjust to them:

“We have Ms. B, V. T. L., T. T. B., V. T. T., V. P. A., V. T. A²⁰. We are all people who if were not poisoned by Agent Orange, so are Osteogenesis Imperfecta and/or old and weak people. Because we are old and weak, we want to keep the land. If the land can be turned to residential land later, so we can sell it and have money to live on... We are rabble and couldn't make our voice heard.”

The study of Nguyen, Zoomers & Westen (2015) demonstrates that “who are elderly, widowed or disabled, their participation in the land acquisition process was more limited” (p.6). And, the reason why vulnerable groups tend not to join in the collective protests was “either because of the lack of abilities to understand the current laws and regulations or because of the risks if their protests fail” (ibid., p.10).

Not just paint a picture of ‘a vulnerable group is being oppressed’, some Silk resisters convince the legitimacy of their actions and rights for land justice by emphasizing the inconsistency of the Party and the Government in implementing the ideas of democracy and land justice. Like, Ms. Nha claimed the injustice towards revolutionary soldiers who sacrificed to bring independence and freedom to the Vietnamese nation:

“My father was a revolutionary soldier. [no exception] Police came and tore down his house. [...] Our villagers did not dare to cry because this government states ‘Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom’, so our poor people have to accept the reality

(Interview, 3rd September)

The Communist Party preached the ideals of ‘egalitarian’ approach to land access to gain the support of the peasantry during the Indochinese war” (To, Mahanty, Wells-Dang, 2019). In return, after the reunification of the country, Ho Chi Minh claimed: “For those who bravely sacrificed part of their blood and bones... The Party, Government and compatriots must find a way to take care of them, food to eat and a place to stay... For fathers, mothers, wives and children (of wounded soldiers and martyrs) who lack labor capacity and are in need, the local authorities must help them find suitable jobs, determined not to let them go hungry” (p.616). In 1988, Resolution 10 was informed, which “entreats the cooperatives to provide appropriate jobs and good arable land to the families of war heroes and martyrs, to those who significantly contributed to the revolution, to the injured and unable-bodied and to others facing considerable difficulties” (Ravallion, M. & van de Walle, D. 2001, p.4).

²⁰ To protect the identity of the people mentioned in the conversation, I abbreviate their names.

Later, these pledges, propaganda and speeches used by powerful officials and Communist Party became the basis for protesters resist against land acquisitions. Similar forms of rightful resistance were presented by Chinese resister to call for the loyalty to the revolution and its founder known as Maoist norms (O'brien, 1996). Meanwhile, Kerkvliet (2014) argues that Vietnamese protesters' arguments go beyond rightful resistance since "they also reject ones authorizing the state to unilaterally claim their farmland" (p.29). In Silk village, while alluvial land for annual crops was renewed with Land Use Certificates (LURC) for 50 years, households did not get the extension of LURC for the plain land since 2013, confirmed by the Director of Silk Village Cooperative. Whether ignored the fact that they were not granted LURC for plain land or they were not aware of the change, they found their benefits in the repulse.

4.2 Extra-Economic Coercion

Extra-economic coercion here is understood as the exercise of political and legal powers and violent force (Derek Hall, 2013). This section reveals various forms of coercion implemented by different levels of the central and provincial government to seize agricultural land for development projects and how it influences the way people act out.

4.2.1 Different forms of extra economic coercion

Apart from the land acquisition in Silk village, I would like to bring up two other cases in Dong Tam and Bang Ta village, which support a more complete reflection of extra-economic coercion taking place at different grab-sites in Vietnam.

Case 1 – Silk village

Like many other farmers, affected farmers in Silk did not expect to be acquired the land at that low compensation as they had invested labour and money in the land themselves for a period of time. However, affected villagers failed to protect their legitimate rights by making use of rightful methods such as expressing opinions at consultations, filing petitions and appealing to local authority. After more than a year without receiving any positive response, the number of opposing households was only eight. These households decided to mobilize at a higher level by going to a legal agency at city-level and connecting a lawyer specializing in land issues. However, their efforts were seen as stubborn against the local authorities and as such, local power holders took stronger measures. They sent the police to arrest a representative of the dissident households.

"They drove the police car to our house, parked in front of the door. My sister-in-law was arrested, they put her in a car and sent to the commune's office. They kept my sister there for a day, and sent her back home at night."

Ms. Gong (Interview, 3rd September)

Kerkvliet (2019) suggests that political criticism from villagers often revolves around corruption and the lack of democracy in Vietnam. One popular saying of Vietnamese is: "Thieves steal by night, officials steal by day". Distrust powerful groups is probably rooted in the minds of many Vietnamese people, despite the fact that the Communist Party attempts to demonstrate the equal distribution of socialist ideology. No doubt, Silk villagers used to mention ambiguous elements in the land acquisition and auction process. One of the respondents hinted at the possibility of an interest group reaching out to buy and sell plots of auction land, which ordinary people like them cannot afford: "You know what, only cadres/officials are allowed to buy, [them] who have 'long-arms'", said Ms. Nha. While such

suggestions stem from people’s grievances and a lack of transparency in the mechanism of consuming local funds, other forms of visible coercion were exercised.

In Silk village, the local authority violated the property rights of land users by destroying their land in the process of implementing compulsory inventory. According to Article 69 of Land Law 2013, the Chairman of People's Committee at district-level shall issue a decision on compulsory inventory if a land user do not allow officials to do the investigation, survey, measurement and inventory. But, there is no rule that the local government is allowed to destroy the property of land users in this enforcement step. On April 2018, the district authority imposed a coercive measure using forces and machines.

“Many parties involved, including policemen, security forces and officials of the district and of the commune. They brought excavators to shovel everything on the field. [...] I ran in and picked up young pomelos, trying to save them, but they wouldn't let me in. Scooped all, broke all, crushed all. They made barricades around, armed police stood everywhere.

(Interview Ms. Gong, 3rd September)

We opposed but were so worried as we saw many policemen coming. Like the case of Dong Tam²¹. We were so panicked. As we are farmers, who protect us?

(Interview Ms. Nha, 3rd September)

Case 2 – Dong Tam

Mentioned by one respondent above, Dong Tam seems to be an example of a lesson and expensive cost of resistance to Silk resisters.

In Dong Tam, the incident started from a dispute of 59 hectares of land between a communal authority and peasants in 2016. A communal authority declared the agricultural land called “Senh field” as defense land and handed the land to Viettel – Army Telecommunication Industry Corporation. In 2017, Senh field had been flattened and signposted as “Forbidden zone - Military area” by the authority. This action provoked outrage from local people who boldly arrested 38 cadres and policemen, and kept them in a communal house for nearly a week. Chairman of the Hanoi People’s Committee Nguyen Duc Chung had a dialogue with the people and handed over a handwritten document pledging not to prosecute them for criminal responsibility.

However, two months later, on 13th June 2017, the investigative police of the Hanoi Public Security Department issued a decision to prosecute a criminal case related to the confrontation of Dong Tam residents for two crimes of “illegal arrest or detention” and “destroy property or intentionally damage property”. On 9th January, the Government launched a violent attack into Dong Tam village with over 300 armed policemen. The land keepers fought back with homemade weapons, which resulted in the deaths of the village leader and three police officers. The Hanoi People’s Court issued two death sentences, one life sentence, and more than 80 years of prison for 29 villagers.

Case 3: Bang Ta village

This case informs a (more) hidden coercion exercised by power holders, compared to Silk and Dong Tam.

²¹ A [violent government attack](#) (BBC News, 2020)

In Bang Ta village, 160,000m² of agricultural land of 267 households suddenly fell into the hands of businesses after 11 years of leasing land (VTC16, 2019) since the State has encouraged small-holders to lease their land to businesses for effective farming performance. It was not until 2013, when the State re-granted the 50-year land use right, did the households know that the enterprise owned their land while they still kept the Red Book.

Farmers who tried to reclaim their rights and property were often mistreated by commune officials. To push them to give up, various psychological tactics are also applied to their offspring. In particular, at school, their children's names are frequently written on the board with the note underneath 'whose parents are dissidents'. Some decided to give up as they feared their children would get hurt or ridicule by friends and teachers.

Ignoring the petitions from and the loss of land of villagers, the People's Committee of Ba Vi district responded that it was the fault of former officials and all documents were lost. While, the excuse of local officials for mental abuse [villagers and their children] is to ensure local security. In stead of re-granting land use rights in 2013, the authority of Ba Vi district claimed these 267 households had no land use rights with old papers. The district-level has requested the Hanoi People's Committee certify the rental price in 11 years as compensation for site clearance and issued a red book to another company. During 11 years of the rental period, all households were paid in paddy, which is much lower than the value of compensation for agricultural land.

4.2.2 Conditions that shape resistance and decision-making upon extra-economic coercion

Why did the villagers of Silk not raise collective actions?

Political reactions should not be considered common in everywhere and to everyone. "A spectrum of reactions to land deals" which constitutes the politics from below is recognized in the global land grab (Hall et al., 2015). If external power are not present (Eric Wolf, 1969), internal resources [of normative villagers] and their grievances are unlikely to be sufficient to formulate a resistance and challenge a power constrains them. External resources and power, which are often outside the power space and influence level of subordinates groups, restrict alliance building and turn them down for resistance. More general is Kerkvliet's argument: there will be needed elements as such, which are "political circumstances that favor peasants and disfavors individuals and agencies" (2009, p.235) to contrive collective actions.

As a matter of fact, in Silk Village, there were not enough good conditions to formulate extreme confrontational and organized resistance. First is the incapacity for action. The role of national and international civil and non-governmental organizations (CIVICUS, 2017, p.3; CIFOR, 2014; Carlyle A., 2009) in community land-rights and political mobilization is increasingly recognized. In Vietnam, public and dominant uprisings often have more or less support or involvement from different organizations. They did not have support from outside, nor do Silk Villagers actively seek external power for their resistance campaign. While themselves and their social status shaped by power relations.

Second, there was no leader presented to generate collective actions in Silk. McCarthy and Zald (1977) suggest that potential leaders "usually have access to resources such as

organisational structures, finance, and communication” (cited in Turner 2009, p.958). Among Silk resisters, the one who appeared as the most enthusiastic resister was Ms. B - villagers called her “Old Maid²²”. But she is shunned and estranged by most of the villagers.

“Ms. B is well-known as a bold, fierce and weird person . On the day her father died, she wanted to use a cane like men”

(shared by a researcher/a colleague who used to live in Silk, not my informant)

Lacking a firm leader with a good command leads, Silk resisters did not show a consensus and confidence at the same level on resisting within a group. In many discussions, some people expressed concern of threats and risks in the near future (Interview with Ms. Thy). In addition, they not just lacked a potential leader, but also members who were able and/or determined (enough) to inquire about legal documents and record their cases properly. The opposing group in Silk came to consult for legal advice in Duong Noi. And, they once visited a government agency (Interview with Ms. Gong) and met a lawyer (interview with Ms. Thy) under the guidance of land keepers in Duong Noi, but soon gave up.

Furthermore, there were limited spaces for participation in Silk village. Widening political space horizontally is easier than vertically as less powerful actors may find ‘a set of common concerns or identifications’ (Cornwall 2002, cited in Gaventa 2006, p.27). Though, the number of protesting households was inherently a minority and the agency of Silk resisters emerges as vulnerability. Not forget to mention, most of them are labeled as ‘strange people’ by villagers for different reasons (as I mentioned above about ‘the Old Maid’ for example). This made it difficult for them to form alliances even within the village.

Land acquisitions happened earlier in Duong Noi village few years, compared to Silk. While the antagonistic form of Silk villager was somewhat reserved and cautious. Duong Noi villagers were active on collecting legal documents, searching for violations committed by local power holders and seeking help from different Embassies and international media. They intended to contact the ICC international court and some international human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to sue the Vietnamese government to the International Criminal Court (RFA, 2016). International media organizations such as RFA, RFI, VOA, BBC and well-know bloggers/activists have put the Vietnamese government under the pressure to demand accountability on human rights and democracy related to land issues. Getting support from external power, they could build effective horizontal and somewhat vertical alliances (Gaventa 2006, p.27) to mobilize needed resources and operate activities. As a result, Duong Noi resisters could organize many prominent public protests and reaped some rewards for their unrelenting struggle. In 2013, the Deputy Prime Minister issued a request to justify the complaints of residents of Duong Noi ward. Three departments and four individuals in Duong Noi’s administrative apparatus were disciplined and criminally handled for violations in land acquisition (My Hang, BBC News, 2018).

Several factors that a peasant considers costs and benefits such as expenditure of resources and punishment for participating if the action fails, value consideration, the efficacy

²² Old Maid – ‘bà cô già’ is not merely defined as an unmarried and old woman. In Vietnamese culture and society, Old Maid refers to a shrewish (or fierce) woman who has weird personality. People simply explain that no man wants to marry a woman has such a character, or saying in a the other causal way that because of being single for so long, unmarried women get cranky.

of the endeavour, and leadership viability and trust (Popkin 1979, p.24). Silk resisters did not perform any public demonstrations; their rationality manifested through the way they thought and acted out. Silk resisters first had consulted Duong Noi's land keepers for their action of resisting land acquisition. Ms. Na, as a fruit seller in the central districts of the city, made use of her social capitals/network to connect with one lawyer to consult on land issues. Other opposing households travelled to the city centre and visited a particular legal agency at the central government level. Capturing the idea of the 'power cube' (Gaventa, 2006), I see that the opposing group in Silk attempted to mobilize some means in spaces and levels they could reach to formulate the most appropriate resistance. However, with the low influence level and limited ability to achieve countervailing power, they did seriously consider redirecting their political acts.

In addition, witnessing strong enforcement imposition and a despondent outcome in two neighbouring villages led these resisters to the final decision: "Yes, we discussed to find the way, but could not bear for longer. As we have seen, in Duong Noi and La Khe village, those households that oppose land acquisition... until now they have not been able to get a coin as well as their land.", said Ms. Nha. According to Silk resisters' point of view, their neighbours fought bravely for years for their rights but lost the battle. Despite all efforts, from rightful resistance to violent methods, resisters in Duong and La Khe failed to reclaim their land but sacrificed all money, time and even blood. Some people were laid down, and some have become jailbirds.

The logic of peasants is also expressed that refuse to carry out a rebellion once the power of the State is supposed to be overwhelming (Scott, 1976) in the current context to preserve what they have left, even though the land loss would threaten the minimum subsistence level of some people. This was seen in the case of the Silk village, where many times they faced various forms of coercion. Summarized from interviews with respondents, notable things constrained villagers in the acquisition procedure are described as follow: (1) Asking villagers to come to meetings to propagandize why their land must be acquired while ignoring when villagers bring up the issues of refusal; (2) promises of future employment but no written commitment, and so far no support has been made; (3) warning about the possible loss of compensation; (4) enforcing violent, coercive measures and ruining their cultivated fields.

As there is "the probability and severity of retaliation" (Scott, 1985, p.34) by oppressors, villagers have few opportunities to generate declared political reactions. By various forms of coercion from powerful groups, farmers are likely to put on the scale which will be gained and which will be lost. Until confronting violent coercion from the local government, Silk resisters chose to stop resisting so as to preserve the money compensation and their safety, which shows their rationality. In another case, Duong Noi villagers gathered some favorable social and political conditions to formulate rightful and open resistance. Although resisters in Duong Noi did not get their land back, local officials were punished by the State for their wrongdoing against the law in the land acquisition procedure. Just because all protesters did not achieve their goals does not mean their choices aren't rational. This explains that the choices of affected villagers do not always lead to a peaceful outcome.

However, uprisings are not always preferred but need conditions where subordinate groups have power spaces to create influence. That is why protesters first make use of institutionalized forms, from complaints to petitions against (from) local level (to) the central government. "When such remedies [...] were not satisfied with positive responses, public

forms of resistance, such as sit-ins, picketing, rallies, and marches are applied” (Nguyen Van Chinh 2015, p.85). Nguyen also mentions that the State’s response to land resistance remains unchanged despite the increase of collective protests; however, violent methods applied by armed/mobilized police tend to lift up as indicated by the number of shot dead and injured protesters.

The extra-economic coercion from the State actors often leaves affected people with no power space to mobilize allies both horizontal and vertical alignments. The imposition of political and legal powers and violent force “which allow resources to be forcefully expropriated and redistributed to capital, are usually directly employed by state actors, although other organizations (including gangs and capitalist firms themselves) may also mobilize them” (Derek Hall 2013, p.1586). In Vietnam, the most prominent recent in Thai Binh (1997), in the Central Highland (2001 and 2004), in Duong Noi (2008 and 2009), in Van Giang (2012) and Dong Tam (2018) all have ended with violent riots from the State. Meanwhile, many affected people claiming for their land rights have been languishing as no responsive accountability from legitimate agencies, despite sending a series of petitions and complaints.

In conclusion, the power over the land management of local governments does not weaken the State’ power but highlights the unbalanced land relationship between the state-society. That is proved by a series of rapidly accelerating development projects through the ‘Land-for-Infrastructure’ redevelopment mechanism, which reveals “new forms of alliances between the state and private capital” (Labbé and Musil, 2014). With limited participation in most stages of the land process, affected villagers in Silk felt that they were not part of the decision-making process. Using the concept ‘power cube’ of Gaventa (2006), political spaces for participation and levels of engagement are examined in the grab-site. The absence of external resources and power, which are often outside the power space and influence level of subordinate groups, restricts alliance building and resistance form in Silk village. Not always favourable conditions all converge to formulate collective actions, and likewise resist is not always a pattern picked by peasants and small-holders in response to land acquisition.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This study wants to contribute to understanding the political responses of the agrarian subjects towards land acquisitions. The paper attempts to unpack why the divergence emerges from within and what factors influence their various responses from a bottom-up approach. Villagers affected by land grabs reacted differently because of their own socially differentiated context; and that and that it is important to disaggregate what is meant by “impact” on the villagers – which is seen here along ‘gains and losses’, where I further explain what it means ‘gains’ and ‘losses’.

Here, gains are seen when offered land deals open up opportunities to generate personal benefits either directly or indirectly, which exceed the actual market prices or income produced from their agricultural land. Meanwhile, losses are seen when compensation price is lower than the actual market value of agricultural land and depletes their current personal assets. The more people in a farming household lose their land, the higher degree of loss is evaluated. Even the losses are present to affected villagers, the political responses among them are not uniform, which not only rely on the context of acquisition and the forms of compensation. The critical point is that each socially differentiated individual reacts differently to land deals, and in return, land deals shape and reproduce social differentiation. I have attempted to show that there are notable elements involved partially in the decision-making to react, including the adaptability to urbanization, the degree of loss (at individual and household level) and the main source of income of land users. Land deals can generate valuable profits for well-off households; at other times, their impact exacerbates the social marginalization and threatens their self-sufficiency of others poor. Thus, the correlation between social differentiation and the way people act out is visible.

While the more adaptable individuals often pull back from the opposing position by the emergence of ‘invisible power’, the least adaptable individuals are prevented because of ‘visible political power’ and ‘hidden power’ (Gaventa, 2006) embedded in the structural and institutional system. The findings of this study illustrate that limited ability to mobilize ‘external power’ (Eric Wolf, 1969) and resources at ‘power spaces’ and ‘power levels’ constrains different overt forms of resistance and its outcome. As opposed to the argument of ‘safety-first’ and peasant’s defences against different forms of intimidation coming from the State, smallholders, in this case, at first pursue options that maximize their gains and minimize the losses. However, gains and losses are not merely estimated based on market mechanism and relations but can be shaped by extra-economic coercion. Unable to manoeuvre for horizontal participation and vertical coalition cooperation, actors tend to give up claims and preserve residual interests, considering the power constrains them to take countermeasures beyond their control.

Appendices

Appendix 1 List of respondents

Respondents	Role	Date of interview
1. Ms. Gong (62 years old)	- Opposing group - The land was taken in 2017 (loss >360m ² under her name, her family lost 768m ² in total) - Job/main income: Peasant	3rd September 2021
2. Mrs. Thy (44 years old)	- Opposing group - The land was taken in 2017 (360m ² – under the name of her husband. She lost another 360m ² of agriculture land in the neighboring village of Silk in 2015) - Job/main income: Peasant (was a street vendor before the last plot of land was expropriated) → now working as a cleaner in the city.	3rd September 2021
3. Ms. Nha (58 years old)	- Opposing group - The land was taken in 2017 (105m ² , her dad lost >100m ² in the same year) - Job/main income: Peasant (was a street vendor selling vegetable in the past)	3rd September 2021
4. Ms. An (57 years old)	- Opposing group - The land was taken in 2017 (360m ²) - Job/main income: Fruit retailer + peasant (Single and infected with Agent Orange)	5th October 2021
5. Mrs. Na (45 years old)	- Consensus group - The land was taken in 2012 (216m ²) - Job/main income: Doing business	5th October 2021
6. Ms. Uyen (40 years old)	- Consensus group - The land was taken in 2017 (396m ²) - Job/main income: Kindergarten's teacher	24th October 2021
7. Mr. Hung (48 years old)	- Consensus group - His land was taken in 2017 (360m ²) - Job/main income: Mason	24th October 2021
8. Mr. Linh	The Chief of Hamlet 1	30th August 2021
9. Mr. Phu	The Chief of the village	30th August 2021
10. Mr. Thu	The Head of village cooperative	30th August 2021
11. Mr. Phung	Communal official	29th August 2021 & 2nd October 2021

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