

SOCIOCULTURAL LIFE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

IN LOWLAND VIETNAM

HY V. LUONG & PHAN VĂN DỚP¹

Abstract: This chapter examines contemporary sociocultural life and living conditions in lowland Vietnam, with close attention to the variations through space and time, as well as to the differences among ethnic Vietnamese, Chinese, Cham, and Khmer. It suggests that while living conditions have significantly improved for most rural dwellers in the Vietnamese lowlands in recent decades, there has been a considerable sociocultural continuity over time. The chapter also discusses some major theoretical and analytical frameworks that Vietnamese and international social scientists have used to explain these variations through space, time, and among different ethnic groups.

Keywords: Social organization, kinship, socio-economic inequality, economic and sociocultural changes, cultural models, Vietnamese lowlands

¹ This manuscript is an expanded version of our chapter in the *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Vietnam* (Routledge, 2022). Routledge has granted us the permission to expand our chapter, and to add the part on urban social organization, for a possible publication in Chinese. In this manuscript, Phan Văn DỚp contributes ethnographic observations mainly on ethnic Chăm and Khmer in the Vietnamese lowlands, as well as some supplementary data on recent land issues, especially involving ethnic Khmer, in the Mekong Delta. Hy V. Luong is responsible for the rest.