

## 2.4. Training in Field Surveys in Socio-economics and Anthropology. Differentiation and Inequalities: Realities Perceived, Realities Experienced in the Commune of Tam Quan, Tam Đảo district

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The aim of this workshop is to familiarize participants with the methods and tools of socio-economic and anthropological research by undertaking a short study which will follow the main stages of the scientific approach, from the construction of the subject of research to the treatment and analysis of the data collected as well as reporting them. The survey is undertaken in the village of Đồng Bua which belongs to the commune of Tam Quan: 80% of the population of the village is from the San Dìu ethnic group and 20% Kinh.

The week's programme will start by bringing the participants and trainers together with an introduction to the issue of inequality through three presentations:

*"Inequalities in Việt Nam since Đổi Mới: how can they be discussed?";* the objective is to provide participants with a qualitative and quantitative insight into the polysemous concept of inequality(ies) and to shed light on the notions, indicators and evaluation criteria which will be used to set out a framework of enquiry for the field;

*"Inequalities in Việt Nam: debate and explanations";* this presentation touches on the question of inequalities in the analysis of Việt Nam's socio-economic development; the relativist debate on the growth and scale of inequalities; the different natural and cultural explanations, social factors and the role of the authorities;

*"Gender and ethnic inequalities in Việt Nam: the contribution of quantitative studies";* we propose to open the debate from a quantitative angle to examine what "living conditions" surveys reveal about gender inequalities.

A synthesis of the interventions emphasizes the main notions, indicators and criteria mentioned, which are likely to be used during the field survey stage.

The subject of research "Social differentiation and inequalities", which is common to the three working groups, is approached from three separate but complementary angles:

- *The dynamics of differentiation of systems of productive activity since Đổi Mới* – diversification and intensification of systems of production; development of non-agricultural activities; development of migration, both nearby and distant, and its impact on the domestic economy (changes to the division of work within the household, use of wage labour, resources invested in the village). Particular attention is paid to the process of differentiation between San Dìu and Kinh households, and within the same household between men and women (group led by Christophe Gironde);
- *Differentiation as a cultural construct* – differentiation within various family units on the basis of gender, inter-generational relationships, hierarchies among siblings: access to education (schooling), division of work between genders, rules for the passing down (devolution) of inheritances, matrimonial practices (preferential alliances, village exogamy/endogamy), cultural practices (group led by Olivier Tessier);

- *Inequalities of access to land as a product of regional and local history* – the history of organized and spontaneous migratory movements; means of appropriation and exploitation of land before collectivization (criteria for San Dìu/Kinh differentiation on the basis of ethnicity); level of intensity of collectivization according to the type of land (rice paddies, gardens, hill country, forest land); the criterion and mechanism for redistribution (distribution) of land at the start of the 1990s; undistributed agricultural land and adjudication processes; private right-of-use transactions after distribution and transformations of land use (agriculture, non-agricultural activities, habitat) (group led by Pierre-Yves Le Meur).

For three days (19-21 July), each group is subdivided into pairs to undertake surveys of the inhabitants of the village of Đồng Bua. The trainer follows and advises each pair in turn during the surveys, and can also participate. Follow-up continues each evening with a meeting to synthesize the day's work; there too, the trainer joins the surveyors to examine the results obtained (reflect on their plausibility, possible interpretations, etc.).

Each group's work, and the follow-up by trainers, is structured in four phases:

- 1) Identification and choice of concepts, the framework for analysis and theories and debates linked to research on key ideas: equality/equity, etc.;
- 2) Choice and mastery of survey techniques: assessment during interviews of the level of mastery of survey techniques (tools, methods, methodology), the level of interaction with those being surveyed, etc.;
- 3) Construction of the subject of research: the daily supervision of one or more pairs and the evening's synthesis meeting allow

a dynamic approach to the construction of the subject of research, in line with the progress of fieldwork and the advances briefly recounted by each pair. The aim is to show the participants that the field survey stage includes simultaneous work in treating the information gathered. The elements collected and linked to one another allow the subject of research to evolve during the three days of survey: the pertinence of initial hypotheses and survey frameworks is evaluated during the daily meetings. Adopting this dynamic inductive approach, the day's survey work and its treatment have a continuous influence over the research framework leading to the exploration of new concepts, new dimensions of differentiation, new questions;

- 4) Use of results: this is about exploiting the results of fieldwork by bringing together the three groups, to familiarize the participants with a cumulative approach.

One of the particular features of the workshop is thus to pool the participants' data and analyses to form a synthesis and to include the trainer within the group as an active member, not just as an observer. The aim is from the very start of the training to prepare the general synthesis for the report in plenary session at the end of the week. The result is a real-time record of the participants' awareness of their approach and their evolution over the days in the field: introspection and evaluation of their comprehension of survey method and techniques.

## *(Retranscription)*

### Day 1, morning of Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July

[Olivier Tessier]

I am very happy to be with you for the fourth consecutive year to lead this field workshop. This first day is divided into two distinct parts. This morning, two presentations/discussions on the theme of inequalities will be led by Christophe Gironde and Mireille Razafindrakoto. Then we'll dedicate the afternoon to preparing our surveys, which we'll kick off tomorrow in the field; we'll also deal with the detail of division into groups and pairs.

*Introductions of the trainers and participants  
(cf. trainers' biographies and list of  
participants at the end of the chapter)*

[Christophe Gironde]

The aim of this presentation is to provide an introduction to the results of previous research, what lecturers, researchers and development actors teach us on the theme of inequalities in Việt Nam. We'll ask ourselves: to what extent do they seem to be right and where might we think they are wrong? Any researcher can in fact "be wrong" because he/she asks the wrong questions, poorly understands or interprets the answers, hasn't questioned the right people, hasn't undertaken research in the right place, etc. Secondly, we'll examine our research objectives, *i.e.* what we want to learn.

During this week we're going to be concerned with inequalities, not poverty. It's important to emphasize this, because much has been written on poverty in Việt Nam, notably

on the reduction of poverty, but there has been much less interest in inequalities (c.f. recommended reading). Besides, field surveys show that people are very willing to talk about poverty. How many times have we heard: “How poor Việt Nam is!” during interviews, before understanding that the situation is

more complex. People talk less easily and less spontaneously about inequalities. So it is important in the interviews that we’re going to undertake not to “creep” towards another subject of research; there are links between poverty and inequalities but they are two subjects which we must distinguish.

### Box 24 What Is Said about Inequalities?

Việt Nam was an egalitarian country; not totally...

→ Inequalities “at the outset” (start of *Đổi mới*).

Inequalities have risen since *Đổi mới*, but not much. Especially those of town-country, mountains-plains, North-South, Kinh-other population groups.

→ Inequalities between populations of the same region?

Inequalities remain slight (compared to other countries).

→ What is most important is the reduction in poverty.

Source: Author's construction.

It is often said that inequalities have increased with economic liberalization; now it turns out that Việt Nam before the *Đổi Mới* reforms wasn't as egalitarian as is claimed (Gironde, 2009). We won't be surveying past inequalities, but if we are talking about the evolution of inequalities, this begs the question: when did they start to increase?

It's also often said that inequalities have increased, but only a little. This refers mainly

to inequalities between the towns and the countryside, the North and the South of Việt Nam, between the mountainous regions and the plains and between the Kinh and the ethnic minorities. There is far less work on the inequalities between categories of population within one commune, one village or even one family. These inequalities will be the subject of our surveys.

### Box 25 How Do We Explain Inequalities?

Natural and cultural explanation:

- Regions far from towns and markets, mountainous regions, with no/little irrigation;
- Some populations have values and practices which are less “favourable” to development.

→ Some regions / some population groups develop less rapidly.

An individual's development depends on his/her capital (finance, knowledge, experience...).

Source: Author's construction.

How can we explain inequalities and their evolution? One kind of explanation points to natural and cultural factors. Poverty is thus explained by the distancing/isolation of certain zones in relation to urban areas, markets, focuses of investment; these zones are also "far" from the main preoccupations of the State, which would not implement public policies. One illustration of this kind of explanation is the opposition between hill areas, unsuitable for irrigation for example, and the delta zones, e.g. those of the Red River and the Mekong, which are close to the political and economic centres of the country. These same regions have accumulated natural and cultural conditions which are not very favourable to development. This point has been enlarged upon by Christian Culas in the plenary sessions and you have of course understood the debate which exists on the values, beliefs, practices and choices

of populations which lead to the affirmation that ethnic groups are culturally less suited to development.

The second kind of explanation is social, not natural and cultural. This kind of explanation is particularly concerned with the social relationships between different categories of the population. The question is to know *whether the development of some categories works against, or limits, the development of other categories?* Agricultural development by the best-performing producers can for example raise the price of land, which then becomes too expensive for poorer segments of the population.

We look therefore at the relationships and interactions between different categories of population: producers *versus* traders, lenders *versus* borrowers, "bosses" *versus* wage labour.

### Box 26 Which Explanations for the Inequalities?

"Social" explanations:

1. Relationships and interactions between households;
2. Role of the State (public policies, relationships with local authorities).

Relationships: division of earnings (producers and traders, boss and workers).

Interactions: redistribution of activities with change.

Redistribution of resources (land and land prices).

The role of local authorities in granting access to land (adjudications), credit, educational grants, etc.

*Source: Author's construction.*

With development, activities do not only increase (in volume), but are also transformed. For example in the early 1990s in Hung Yên province, going to buy produce in Hà Nội to resell it in the province was very lucrative;

this trade was done by constant motorbike journeys to and fro. Then business developed with the opening of more and more shops in the rural communes of Hung Yên; the owners of these shops had also bought

motorbikes, then started going to Hà Nội to get stock. They no longer needed motorbike-traders. Then the industrial enterprises, which sell beer, cement, fertilizers, etc. started to provide stock for the rural shops of Hưng Yên. The traders who earned their living going to and fro to Hà Nội or Hải Phòng had still less to do. So households develop new activities, which sometimes replace the activities of other households. We must study this kind of phenomenon. Very often, people say to you in interviews: *"I do this today, but before*

*I used to do that"*. Your task is to ask yourself why the activity has changed. We're also interested in the process of redistribution of productive resources, which I will illustrate with the example of changes in the price of land. Finally, we will look at the role of the local authorities which play a major role in access to land, credit, study grants or tax exemption. It is thus also a question of the place of the State, public policies and their effects on different categories of the population.

### Box 27 *Inequalities... of What?*

#### **Inequalities of results:**

- Of yields;
- Of cropping systems;
- Of income;
- Of possessions (motorbike) and inheritance (house).

#### **Inequalities of opportunity, of access to resources:**

- Access to land (inheritance, distributed land, land under adjudication...);
- Access to credit;
- Access to education/knowledge, to information;
- Access to markets (to sell one's produce or one's labour).

*Source: Author's construction.*

We must distinguish between inequalities of outcomes, and inequalities of opportunity. Often, when you start an interview, you are interested in cultures, areas and outputs: it's about the productive outcomes of the exploitation of family plots of land. Peasants will say to you *"I only grow rice"*, others *"I don't grow rice at all any more, I only grow fruit"*. These explanations allow you to get close to inequalities of outcome or performance (output from land, weight of livestock raised, income from agricultural activity). Beyond income, which is a fundamental indicator

of economic results, we mustn't forget the inequalities of possession: inequalities of inheritance like the value of a house or the size of the area under cultivation.

Inequalities of access to resources can be understood as far as land is concerned, for example, by asking the question: what area of agricultural land did families receive from the 1994 distribution (according to the 1993 land distribution law)? What categories of land (high, middle, low) did they receive? Have they exchanged plots of land since then? We should also look at inequalities of access

to credit, to education, to information (who knows about prices?) and to markets (who knows where to sell a particular product? Who doesn't know the market where a product will sell easily or at a better price?).

Let's take a few illustrations based on research conducted in the late 1990s in Hưng Yên.

Some of the families surveyed explained with pride, *"Rice is finished, we don't do rice any longer, it doesn't yield anything: we grow fruit, medicinal plants, flowers"*, and others told us the opposite. We therefore grouped households according to the area they used to cultivate different plants:

**Table 63** *Inequalities of Outcome. Division of Cultivated Areas According to Crop System (Commune of Tân Dân, 1997)*

	2 rice crops	Diversified system	Medicinal plants	Fruit trees and associated products	Fruit trees only	Total
Group 2	15%	15%	15%	37%	18%	100%
Group 3	34%	18%	9%	8%	31%	100%
Group 4	79%	5%	6%	10%		100%
Group 5	78%	16%		6%		100%

Source: Author's construction.

Some producers have changed little (group 4 and 5) and the twice-yearly rice crop covers 80% of their cultivated land. Others, in contrast, the most advanced (group 2), have

launched into fruit production, sometimes alongside other crops. Their incomes were clearly higher because rice earned on average six times less than fruit trees:

**Table 64** *Inequalities of Outcome. Earnings from Crop Systems by Different Kinds of Exploitation (Commune of Tân Dân, 1997)*

	Annual income per hectare	Area cultivated	Annual income from crops
Group 2	\$ 2,761	3,560 m <sup>2</sup>	\$ 983
Group 3	\$ 3,866	1,190 m <sup>2</sup>	\$ 460
Group 4	\$ 1,158	1,580 m <sup>2</sup>	\$ 183
Group 5	\$ 861	2,380 m <sup>2</sup>	\$ 205

\$: US dollars.

Source: Author's construction.

This is about inequalities of outcome. The same analysis could be done for livestock, trade, etc.

Let's look now at inequalities of access to resources. At that time, all peasants had

received land under the implementation of the law on land redistribution of December 1993. Land under adjudication, which was a sort of land reservoir, was distributed by the drawing of lots.

**Table 65** *Inequalities of Access to Resources. Village of Dương Trạch, Commune of Tân Dân - 1997*

	% having land under adjudication	Average area
Village	33%	2 sào
Group 1	0	0
Group 2	<b>100%</b>	<b>3 sào</b>
Group 3	28%	--
Group 4	0	0
Group 5	<b>35%</b>	<b>0.8 sào</b>

Sào: 360 m<sup>2</sup>.

Source: Author's construction.



The differences in attributed surface areas are, at the very least, surprising. Here we find inequalities of access to resources, because not everyone receives the same cultivable area from the adjudication system. All peasants classed in group 2 benefit from plots under adjudication; in group 5, only 35% do. Thus not everyone has access in the same way to land, which causes an inequality in access to resources.

### Bùi Thị Hồng Loan

I'd like to share my experience of the land issue in South Việt Nam. In the Red River Delta, "good workers" have lots of land – all of us here understand this is oversimplifying things, we're talking here about producers who earn a higher income than the average or the majority of producers. I want to come back to this characteristic in relation to research I undertook in the Mekong Delta in a Khmer-populated area. The "good workers" didn't have more land than the others, and some didn't have any land at all. They rented land from those who had large areas but didn't work. There, private land occupied more area than public. There hadn't been a public policy of redistribution. Originally, it was people from the North who migrated and worked with the initial settlers to clear the land and establish villages. In this way, large parcels of land were created, and their owners lent money to smaller plot-holders and rented them rice paddies. Natural disasters and poor climatic conditions often led smallholders to borrow from money-lenders; sometimes, unable to repay, they lost all their land.

### [Christophe Gironde]

The South of the country has a very different agrarian history. We are not comparing here an explanation which is valid for the Red

River – which will be different at Tam Đảo – and an explanation valid for the South. The processes which you have described are factors which increase inequalities. As you have very clearly explained, it's not a question of "worse peasants", but of families who have worse conditions of access to resources: little or no capital, recourse to money-lenders. The case of money-lenders gives a very good illustration of the interactions between actors. How did this interaction between lenders and borrowers evolve? If interest rates rise consistently for 20 years, logically inequalities should increase. If interest rates fall – because banks develop and sources of credit multiply – inequalities may diminish. The point that you raise is a good example of the range of explanations which can be offered for the same phenomenon. One could give a natural explanation: *"In the South, one must clear the land, it doesn't favour cultivation. Climate conditions are poor, etc."*. One could also give a cultural explanation: *"Perhaps Khmers are not such good farmers, or perhaps they have ways of behaving and beliefs which explain that..."* But the explanation is really social, because it rests on the relationship between families which came from the North and which interacted with the populations of the South. We could also cite the role of the State which, enacting public policies on credit, might perhaps have changed the nature of relationships between borrowers and money-lenders.

### Virginie Diaz

To what extent are inequalities of outcome really inequalities of opportunity? The failure of some producers to diversify their crops may be explained by the inaccessibility of the market or the lack of information about changes in the prices of fruit and vegetables.

[Christophe Gironde]

Two kinds of inequality must be distinguished, but they are linked to each other. Productivity outcomes, income for example, determine the opportunities each person has: the families which earn the most see better opportunities opening up, for example in developing non-agricultural activities which will earn even higher incomes than agricultural activities.

Trần Văn Kiên

I'm interested in economic and agrarian history. When one starts an economic activity in a locality, one is initially interested in its performance, its success. That's why it's essential to define precisely the number of beneficiaries, and categorize the population so as to define the group which will perform best in using land or credit. I wonder if there isn't a contradiction in your analysis because when one starts a project in a locality, it can't benefit everyone. The amount of credit or land available is determined and limited, not everyone can benefit from public policies. How can we resolve this contradiction?

[Christophe Gironde]

I'm not thinking from a "project" perspective and I've no comment on the choice to give credit to everyone. I understand the direction of your remarks but I think they belong to another debate.

[Annuska Derks]

You have presented the differences between inequalities of income and those of resources, in relation particularly to land distribution. A typology has become clear. Could you give us more detail about who these groups are? Are they families? What is happening within each

of these groups? Who has access to what? Who profits? Who makes the decisions?

[Christophe Gironde]

During fourteen months of field surveys I interviewed about 180 village households. Households were grouped according to the transformation of their activities. Group 1, which doesn't appear here, was made up of households which have stopped cultivating or raising livestock, *i.e.* non-agricultural households. At the other end of the spectrum, group 5 is those households which practise agriculture and where at least one of the two adults spends part of the year outside the village, working in town for example. However, I have not systematized the analysis within households: who makes the decisions, who receives what part of the earnings, who controls the earnings, who spends them? The surveys allow us to provide some elements of a response as regards the internal economy of the household, concerning activities – who goes to the rice paddy, to work in town or to trade on the Chinese border, etc. I chose the household as my unit of observation, not the different people who form it.

Hoàng Thị Quyên

I have a question on unequal relationships which affect trading between peasants and middlemen. The producers never see a large part of the earnings from production; the middlemen take the "largest slice of the cake". What solutions could there be to boost the position of peasant producers?

[Christophe Gironde]

I would place this issue within the social explanation, as a relationship of force. I have no solution. Some unions of producers have

been started, as cooperatives or in private, informal groupings, but their success is limited.

**[Pierre-Yves Le Meur]**

I'd like to make a contribution to bring this part of the session to a close.

My comment is in fact a methodological point. Christophe has given us a framework for the analysis of the issue of inequalities which is made up of several types of explanations, several ways of understanding inequalities. These are the questions which researchers ask themselves. At the same time, it's important to translate the questions which we ask ourselves into the questions which we're going to ask others. They are not the same thing. Our workshop aims to do fieldwork, surveys. We must keep in mind this distinction, and use it to help categorize our questions.

Questions about "how". It's a question of getting people to recount events, their life history as an individual and in a family, everything which created the conditions for something to happen at a certain point: they got rich, poor; they changed their activities. These questions can be asked at the individual level, that of the life history of a person. But often, as Christophe emphasized, issues of inheritance, possessions, etc., lead the analysis to take a longer-term view – one or more generations – and to focus on a unit bigger than the individual (residential unit, extended family, social network, etc.).

Questions about "why". People tell you why something happened, why they made a certain choice, why they became rich, poor. These people, like you researchers, have theories on the issue. It's about the way in

which people understand what is happening to them and what they do. Often, this questioning leads to a third level of questions, bringing with it a moral or conventional judgment on inequalities – giving to some extent a moral interpretation of the "why".

The last point relates to Annuska's questions. Finally, there's the "who": at what level do we place our questioning? Are we examining individuals, households or wider social networks? Who are the "actors" – individual and collective – affected by this issue of inequalities?

When we touch on inequalities, we speak of content, concepts, approaches; the methodological issue is essential – how can we access/produce information, what questions can we ask, and to whom, how should we set out hypotheses and fieldwork, etc.

**[Olivier Tessier]**

I'd like to welcome warmly our two speakers for the second part of this morning: Mireille Razafindrakoto who has agreed to speak at this workshop on issues of gender, and Annuska Derks who will help us to analyze the morning's interventions.

### **2.4.1. Inequalities and Discrimination Due to Gender. The Quantitative Approach: Examples of Indicators**

**[Mireille Razafindrakoto]**

First of all, I'd like to thank Olivier, Christophe and Pierre-Yves for having invited me. It's a very great honour to be able to participate in this field workshop; I have been participating in the JTD for five years and finally here I am

at the heart of this original training course. Unfortunately, I cannot participate in the fieldwork but I will listen very carefully to the results which will be presented at the day-long reporting session.

The team asked me to come and talk about how to approach the issue of inequalities and discrimination due to gender in quantitative analyses. The value of my being here is also that I can discuss the complementarity between quantitative and qualitative approaches. A growing number of "quantitativist" researchers are aware of the limits of their approach, which sparks their interest in qualitative analyses and in the quali-quant approach which links the two methodologies.

The indicators presented in this session are often used to examine situations at national level, notably in the urban context. These situations do not necessarily correspond with the local realities of the rural world, and the indicators need to be adapted. The ways in

which they are adapted from urban to local rural context could perhaps be the basis for a discussion – how can these indicators be used at a more local level?

Two levels of gender inequality need to be defined: inequalities within a household or a family – intra-household inequalities – and inequalities from a wider point of view, at the level of a village, a locality or a town. It is more difficult to analyze intra-household inequalities using quantitative approaches.

My presentation will essentially focus on some indicators which cover measurable characteristics, phenomena which we can quantify to analyze inequalities. These indicators are measured using statistical surveys of large samples of individuals. I'm going to present indicators and results by way of illustration, without trying to explain "how" or "why" we obtained these results. I'll stick to making observations. The aim is to stimulate questions.

### Box 28 *Type of Indicators Used*

→ 4 types / categories of indicators:

- Education (% having reached secondary level among those aged 25 or over);
- Labour market (activity rate; unemployment rate; rate of under-employment, etc.);
- Participation/representation (% of women in positions of power/decision-making);
- Health (access to care).

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), UN

OBJECTIVE 3: Promote gender equality and empower women:

- Ratio of girls to boys in education;
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector;
- Women's participation in parliament (presence at the highest levels of government).

OBJECTIVE 5: Improve maternal health:

- Maternal mortality rate;
- Access to reproductive health (access to prenatal care, number of adolescent pregnancies, family planning).

*Source: Author's construction.*

The first indicator covers education – for example, the percentage of individuals from a given place (locality, village) who attained a certain level of schooling (secondary, for example). The second group of indicators which we try to use when we deal with the question of inequalities, and particularly those of gender, is linked to the labour market – the activity rate, the unemployment rate and the rate of under-employment for example. The third group is comprised of indicators of participation and representation – the percentage of women in positions of leadership. The fourth group is a range of indicators of access to healthcare.

These four groups of indicators relate to two of the Millennium Development Goals; those which refer to gender inequalities, which were presented in the plenary sessions. I won't go into detail on these two goals; instead we'll focus on concrete examples. I'm particularly going to present to you all the indicators which aim to measure inequalities in the labour market using quantitative approaches. This is a subject which I am working on in Việt Nam. The indicators can be grouped into four main areas:

- The first concerns the different forms of discrimination in terms of access to employment. It's a question of analyzing the constraints to entering the labour market and accessing certain kinds of employment: do women have as many opportunities as men to start, and continue, working in different kinds of employment?

- The second covers the notion of informality. The idea is that the usual indicators don't allow us to measure the precarious nature of some jobs, their vulnerability. The same kind of job can be formal or informal. But for jobs in the informal sector, the level of social protection is less and, in general, working conditions are more difficult – firing people is easier, no working premises, etc.;
- The third looks at inequalities of income. We'll come back to this question because in Việt Nam we often encounter a problem with identifying income in family businesses;
- The last area, relatively recent, is linked to working hours, and the balance between private life and professional life for women. This is a new approach in quantitative surveys: do women manage to find a balance between professional life and private life?

I'd like to underline a final point, also relatively recent, which touches on the concept of job satisfaction. To what extent is a person, man or woman, satisfied with his or her employment? This issue is important because it is linked to inequalities and discriminations of gender in job selection: some women do not have access to certain jobs. Are the jobs which they do perform the result of a free choice or a more or less restricted one?

As an illustration, I will take examples from Việt Nam of each of the four above-mentioned areas.

**Table 66** *Rate of Activity According to Gender in Việt Nam in 2007 and 2009*

%	2007			2009		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Men	72.1	81.3	78.8	75.3	82.6	80.4
Women	60.8	74.7	70.7	64.2	74.7	71.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>66.1</b>	<b>77.9</b>	<b>74.5</b>	<b>69.6</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>75.8</b>

*Taken from: Razafindrakoto, Roubaud and Nguyen (2011), "Vietnam Labour Market: An Informal Sector Perspective".  
Sources: LFS, 2007 & 2009, GSO. Total: 15 years and over; authors' calculation.*

In 2009, we can see a difference in the activity rate according to gender: it's about 70% for women and about 80% for men. Still making observations, let's note that the level of activity in rural areas is higher than in urban areas, but the difference is unfavourable to

women. To be precise, and to give a quick definition, any person with an activity which earns an income or a benefit is considered "active" – so it's not only formal jobs – and we also add all those seeking work.

**Table 67** *Multiple Activities According to Gender in Việt Nam in 2007 and 2009*

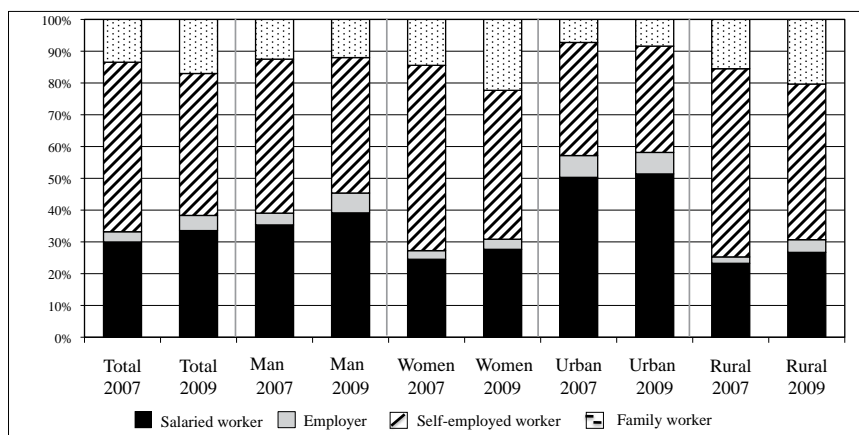
%	2007			2009		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Men	4.1	21.7	17.2	8.9	29.4	23.7
Women	4.2	24.1	19.2	9.8	33.8	27.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>25.4</b>

*Taken from: Razafindrakoto, Roubaud and Nguyen (2011), "Vietnam Labour Market: An Informal Sector Perspective".  
Sources: LFS, 2007 & 2009, GSO. Total: 15 years and over; authors' calculation.*

We can see here that the rate of multiple activities, in a rural or urban context, is higher for women. In the quantitative approach, this indicator is often used to evaluate conditions in the labour market. We consider that those

people undertaking multiple activities are, most often, those who haven't managed to find a principal source of employment which earns them enough money.

**Figure 52** *Employment Status in Việt Nam in 2007 and 2009*



*Taken from: Razafindrakoto, Roubaud and Nguyen (2011), "Vietnam Labour Market: An Informal Sector Perspective".  
Sources: LFS, 2007 & 2009, GSO. Total: 15 years and over; authors' calculation.*

This table clearly shows a difference in status between men and women: far fewer women have salaried jobs. How can we interpret this observation? Is this the result of a choice? Do women prefer to work within a family-based production unit – for themselves or in the role of a family worker? But this observation can also be explained, particularly in the urban context, by less access for women to protected jobs.

Generally, worldwide, the rate of informal employment, or non-registration with social security, is higher for women. Amazingly, in Việt Nam this trend is not seen: the proportion of informal jobs, more precarious and vulnerable, is similar for men and women – around 80%.

**Table 68** *Informal Employment and Gender in Việt Nam (in %)*

Job	Relative “risk” (ratios) for women compared with men						
	Written contract	Wage slip	Paid holidays	Fixed premises	Fixed salary	Hours worked	Income*
<b>All employment</b>							
Formal	1.01	0.99	0.99	1.04	0.93	1.0	0.82
Informal	0.66	0.64	0.76	0.78	0.59	0.95	0.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.74</b>
<b>Salaried work only</b>							
Formal	1.01	1.0	1.0	1.04	0.96	0.99	0.85
Informal	1.32	1.28	1.51	1.47	1.17	0.97	0.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>0.89</b>

*Taken from: Cling et al. (2010), The Informal Sector in Vietnam: A focus on Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.*

*Note: the probability of benefitting from a written contract in formal employment is 1 % higher for women than for men, but the probability is 34% lower in an informal job.*

*\* includes unpaid workers.*

*Sources: LFS2007, GSO; authors’ calculation.*

This observation could lead us to say that there are no differences between men and women in terms of working conditions in Việt Nam. However, a finer analysis of the quality of informal jobs underlines a disadvantage for women – they perform an activity in a fixed location less often than men – they are more often in the street. Besides, judging from our analyses of inequality of income, Việt Nam follows the general trend: women earn less from their informal activities, with a male-female gap similar to that seen in other countries. At global level, the figure most often put forward is an average income 30% lower for women.

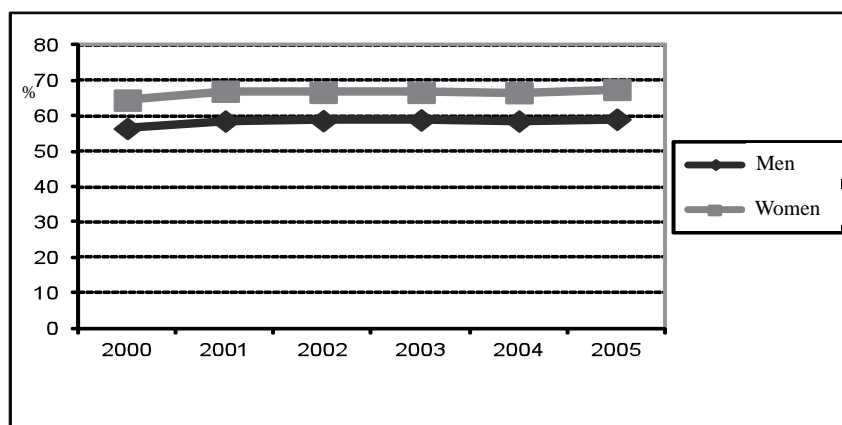
One of the advantages of quantitative approaches is that one can identify and evaluate the influence of different factors on these income inequalities: level of education, type of employment, hours, etc. We saw that a first level of questions emerged from observations – men and women don’t do the same kinds of jobs: what are the reasons

for this? When women have access to the same jobs, do incomes remain unequal? What share of the income gap might be due to differences in education, types of job, of business, of sector? If we control these factors – *i.e.* in simulating a case where one man and one woman have the same level of education, exactly the same jobs – a residual gap nevertheless remains, which we have calculated on average to be 18% – formal and informal sectors together. This residual gap probably corresponds to the effect of discrimination. I must point out that people working in a family business who are not paid are not taken into account in these calculations. Another interesting result is that these discriminations are weaker in the formal sector – like public sector jobs; for the informal sector, the residual gap rises to 22%.

I wanted to show you the following graph on Sweden, which is considered as one of the most egalitarian countries in the world on gender issues.



**Figure 53** *Rate of Economic Activity by Gender in Sweden (2000-2005)*



Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database.

In this illustration, the idea is to show the necessity of using different types of indicators to deepen and refine a result. The gap

between the rates of activity of men and women in Sweden is not very high, compared with other countries, and seems stable.

**Figure 54** *Women and Men 20 to 64 by Status of Activity and Number of Hours in Sweden (1970-2005)*

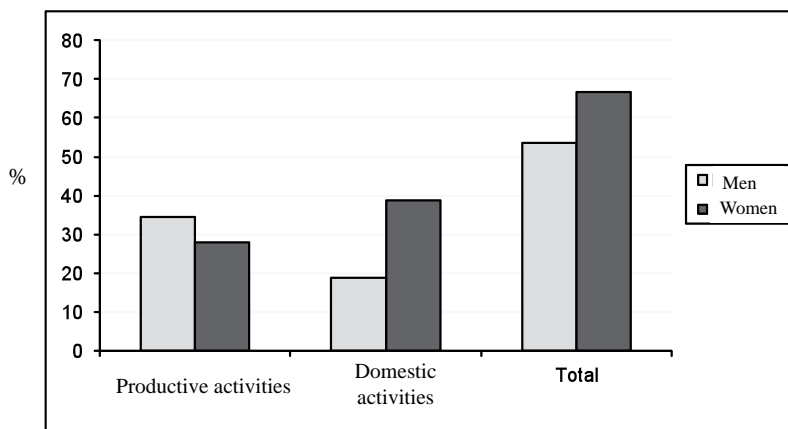


Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database.

But if we look at the number of hours worked in the week – part-time/full-time – the profile is radically different according to gender. The percentage of women who work part-time

is much higher. Despite changes over time, notably a rising rate of activity for women, part-time work remains much more prevalent among women.

**Figure 55** *The Balance between Private and Professional Life. Breakdown of Working Hours in the Week in Madagascar, 2005*



Sources: EPM 2005; Nordman, Rakotomanana and Robilliard (2010):  
[http://www.dial.prd.fr/dial\\_publications/PDF/Doc\\_travail/2009-08.pdf](http://www.dial.prd.fr/dial_publications/PDF/Doc_travail/2009-08.pdf).

This other graph, based on an intra-household indicator in Madagascar, illustrates the “double day” of women. If we look only at productive activities, the women have on average fewer working hours in the week. But if we add hours spent on domestic duties, the timetable is much more heavily loaded. Even though men are completing a few more “productive” hours than women,

the latter spend almost twice as long in domestic activities.

These are observations, but it is important to ask oneself if the differences observed are endured or chosen; I will thus finish my presentation by looking at level of satisfaction.

**Figure 56** *Level of Satisfaction of Workers in the Informal Sector According to Characteristics and Status of the Individual*



→ “Socially dominated” groups are more satisfied: limitation of their own aspirations or existence of actual (unmeasured) advantages?

*Taken from: Razafindrakoto, Roubaud and Wachsberger (2010), “Satisfaction at work and informal sector in Vietnam”.  
Source: LFS 2009, GSO, authors’ calculation.*

This graph comes from a survey undertaken on over 170,000 households at the national level in Việt Nam. It seems that women are more satisfied than men. Qualitative surveys completed the study, and they show that despite the more precarious and more difficult conditions in the informal sector, many women give priority to their independence – it’s easier for them to manage their time.

In general, in Việt Nam, but also elsewhere, groups which are less socially dominant always declare themselves to be more satisfied with their jobs than others. This observation raises a question: are there other kinds of advantages which are non-measurable (which the classic indicators of quality of employment cannot take into account?) Or are we seeing a self-limitation of aspirations, a phenomenon of “attrition” of preferences? You will be better placed,

thanks to qualitative surveys, to answer these questions.

[Olivier Tessier]

On the internalizing of domination, I would direct participants to the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

[Annuska Derks]

It is important to remind ourselves that gender issues point us back to the relationship between women and men. Another important point is the difference in access to the labour market and in income. The points of comparison between different societies – Việt Nam, Madagascar, Sweden – are particularly interesting to me. Comparison is a methodology which helps us to see and understand better, in this particular case, the differences and similarities in gender

relationships in different societies. This is an aspect which can be closely linked to Pierre-Yves' ideas on methodology: the "how", the "why", and the "who" could also be relevant for this workshop – how can we understand the particular characteristics of Tam Đảo, and its similarities with other regions of Việt Nam, and of Việt Nam with other societies?

#### [Christophe Gironde]

As regards work and what relates to the hardship of work, these indicators are extremely pertinent for our week of training. On the gender issue, one can ask: do men and women have the same activities? Are there differences in hardship according to gender?

#### [Đỗ Bích Diễm]

Your presentation emphasizes a significant gap between the urban and rural contexts. Can't we put forward as a hypothesis that in isolated areas, like Tam Đảo, the gap would be even wider?

As regards education: do inequalities of access to education have an impact on indicators like access to the labour market, representation of women in the structures of power or access to public services? I participated in a project led by a foreign NGO in the hilly districts of Điện Biên province and there was a form of gender discrimination in access to education. Moreover, the language barrier could possibly create inequalities in access to education.

#### [Mireille Razafindrakoto]

I think your remark on the key role of education is very important: having less easy access to education obviously has an impact on access to different kinds of jobs. But at the same time I'd like to point out a vicious circle:

if at the same educational level and with the same job, a man earns more than a woman, that will not encourage the education of girls – in whom parents will therefore invest less.

#### Vũ Phương Nga

Is there a concrete definition of satisfaction or non-satisfaction: what are the elements of satisfaction? For some, high income will be a reason for satisfaction, for others it will be linked more to a promotion, for example.

As regards field surveys, I think that the group which will work on the theme "Gender differentiation as a social construct" should first understand the concept of social norms.

#### [Mireille Razafindrakoto]

I wanted to show this indicator of satisfaction, which is more and more referred to, and which is gradually developing. The issue of job satisfaction is simple because we trust the individual's perception: *"All things considered, are you satisfied or not with the job that you do?"*

It's a classic question today, which has been asked in different countries worldwide. What is interesting is that we are going beyond the objective indicators to give more weight to individuals' perception. These individuals doubtless take account of objective criteria – income, hours, hardship, etc. – but this is a way of including a complementary point of view. Of course, many studies show that levels of satisfaction are linked to income, but income certainly doesn't explain everything.

#### [Christophe Gironde]

In the discussion, the importance of differences in perception was emphasized. I've often observed that women described certain events more negatively – and that runs counter to what Mireille presented.

An example from my own experience is a man who returned from his work making bricks during my interview with his wife. He was satisfied with his working day but his wife on the other hand emphasized the hardship of his working life. It's therefore important to take into account people's perceptions, but also the way in which they communicate with interviewers.

[Mireille Razafindrakoto]

We have also observed, through quantitative surveys, that women are most often much more critical than men. This begs the question: are women more critical of general situations, and more flexible when they describe their own situation?

Nguyễn Thị Thu Thủy

In the Cham community, women play the major part in economic decisions and the education of children. They are the heads of the family. However, surveys prove that they endure significant inequalities, even while their index of satisfaction is high. For the Hoa, where patriarchy is the rule, women live in a very unequal situation but they remain satisfied, they accept it. From an outsider's point of view, there are clear inequalities, but from the inside, in both cases, the women are satisfied.

[Mireille Razafindrakoto]

Your remark clearly demonstrates the complexity of gender inequalities. One must simultaneously take into account observations and references based on objective facts, but also the perceptions of the people being surveyed, and of the way these people communicate their points of view. There are in fact constraints on talking

about something which is not very pleasant to experience: people can declare themselves satisfied when this is not the case. These two approaches are complementary: the indicator of satisfaction is not sufficient to analyze the reality.

[Pierre Yves Le Meur]

I just wanted to add a few words on the contradictions we can observe between a series of apparently objective indicators and the testimony of actors, which can appear to diverge. As regards the question asked, it's obvious that it's not a question of choosing between the two: there aren't indicators which are false and testimonies which are more correct, or vice versa. It isn't a choice. Surveys are useful for two things: to provide answers to the questions asked, but also to enrich the questions: we note a contradiction and we ask other questions. The answers can be complex. The contradictions observed often link back to the issue of social norms, *i.e.* the definition of what is acceptable or not in terms of inequalities: *"The situation isn't happy, but at the same time I accept it because it is socially acceptable, it conforms to the norms which seem to me to be just about right"*. They could represent something else, the influence of the survey situation for example, where a person tends to tell the interviewer what he or she wants to hear. Divergences can also mean that the indicators were perhaps not the right ones. In this case, one must revise the framework of the survey. To conclude, these apparent contradictions always generate questions to deal with. This is the way to react to these contradictions.

[Annuska Derks]

The discussion of perceptions, social norms and the degree of satisfaction despite inequalities demonstrate that the researcher has to be very aware that there are differences between what a person says, what he does and what he thinks. It's obviously very difficult to determine this in short-term surveys, because one can only clarify these differences through longer qualitative surveys.

## Day 1, Afternoon of Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July

[Olivier Tessier]

This afternoon is dedicated to the preparation of the field surveys. On the initial programme, as printed in the 2011 JTD files given out to you, there was to be a presentation on the region of Tam Đảo and its foothills. That presentation will now be given tomorrow morning by the authorities of the commune of Tam Quan, who wanted to welcome us and present the region and the village where we will undertake our surveys.

Pierre-Yves and I will make a link between this morning's presentations and the concepts and methodological tools which we will use to put our survey into practice. Then we will divide the workshop into three groups, and each will prepare a first draft of the survey framework which we will use. We will rejoin each other at the end of the afternoon and – as we do every year – present some interview techniques to you.

## 2.4.2. Synthesis: Concepts and Methodology

[Olivier Tessier]

Christophe Gironde underlined that inequality and poverty are different concepts. Poverty is a state: one is poor in relation to a social or economic norm. The concept of inequality is a process of change: either inequalities are growing, or they are diminishing. It is possible to quantify this relationship of inequality: the lowest salary is twenty times lower than the highest salary. We can establish a relationship. It's been clearly stated that inequality is not solely economic; it's also an inequality of access to healthcare, education, etc. The concept of inequality can only exist if it is placed in a social and economic context, in a given society. One cannot talk of absolute inequalities.

I would like to emphasize the concept of equity. Equity is a perception. Real male/female equality is when we have equal incomes: a man earns 100, a woman earns 100. Equity is to believe, or recognize, *via* social or economic standards, that it is normal and acceptable that a man earns 150 and a woman earns 100. We understand that equity is a concept of social norms, there is little economics in the notion. We no longer seek real, quantitative equality, but what is acceptable, or not, in a society. For example, in many peasant societies, but also again in Europe recently, the fact that girls didn't go to primary school was equitable, even if boys went up to secondary. It was equitable because the role of a woman, her position and at the end of the day her future, was marked out and was such that she didn't need a higher education. This situation would now be considered absolutely inequitable and unacceptable. All that is subjective, it's a

question of perception, and I believe that this element must form part of our survey grids.

**[Pierre-Yves Le Meur]**

The aim of this transitional session is to set out a methodological framework.

We are at the stage where we need to translate the questions which we're asking ourselves as researchers – the problem – into questions which we will ask to the survey population. We must also construct indicators: in other words, what will we observe, what will we ask? In our case, they are mainly qualitative indicators.

I want to return to the distinction made this morning between the questions on the "how" and those on the "why". If we ask general questions on the "why", people tend to set out their "local theory": *"that's how it's done here"*, instead of telling us truthfully how it happened for them. With questions on the "how", we're interested in processes and trajectories. In a certain way, people want to tell you about their life. Obviously, we don't ask people to tell us about their life in general, but to focus on certain precise subjects. If we're working on land issues, we will try for example to understand the phases and the modalities as regards access to land (or its abandonment): acquisition by inheritance, purchase, redistribution, expropriation, etc. At this stage, what's interesting is to identify key moments, important events which had an impact on the trajectory of a life – a disaster which caused the person to enter into a cycle of impoverishment, or in contrast access to land thanks to the land law, which might have started a virtuous circle. The identification of these events allows us to move on to our questions about the "why" on a slightly more

solid empirical basis: what happened to make the person make this decision?

The levels of explanation gathered during the interview can be contradictory or different from each other. You have to absolutely take them all into consideration.

Let's take an example. An unhappy event takes place, and the people could tell you *"I couldn't get medicine"* or *"We were the victims of an attack by a jealous neighbour"* or *"I had no money. I had to sell a plot of land to buy medicine"*. Here we have three levels of explanation and none of them is false, none of them is truer than another. If we take the grid of explanations that Christophe presented this morning, when he said *"There are two kinds of explanation of inequalities, those which are cultural/natural and those which are more relational"*, we can see that asking questions on the "why" allows us to grasp both these levels of explanations. So it is important to separate the questions on "how" from those on the "why" because it's that distinction which allows us to show certain contradictions. On this basis, we can return to the interviewees, bring the "why" and the "how" together, and go further in our survey.

Besides, the answers to the "why" yield explanations but also judgments, *"it's acceptable, it's unacceptable"*. These two levels must be differentiated when you analyze your interviews – but often the distinction is made even during the interview. The judgment which people make on their own actions or situations is very important because for them it is explanatory, and as a result it allows the researcher to "enter" their logic.

In relation to all these questions, conflicts are events which are particularly interesting

in surveys. In one way they are a mode of expression, a way of understanding a situation and saying something about it: “I enter a conflict because I am not happy”; in another way, they force people to explain themselves. To enter into a conflict people justify themselves, and suddenly, the principles which guide their action become more “visible” or explicit. And then there is of course another important element in the sequence of conflict in relation to our subject of inequalities: examining the outcome of conflicts. Are conflicts always arbitrated in the same way, to the benefit of the same individuals? Who resolves conflicts? These are very important factors of inequality.

Let’s come back to the question of “who”. You must clearly situate the person you are talking to – in terms of generation, ethnicity, gender, etc., but also whether that person has a diversified economic position, political responsibilities, etc. The aim is to obtain a kind of socio-political identity card. From a horizontal perspective, individuals are integrated in wider units: a household, a lineage and/or in networks or larger entities; from a vertical point of view, they are part of a family trajectory – a shift in the direction of accumulation can come from the preceding generation.

Final point, ethnicity. I believe it’s very important to maintain this criterion in the wider question of origins. The fact of belonging to a group, whether it’s an ethnic group, a lineage, a gender or a nation, determines (and legitimizes) in particular access to some kinds of resources; origin can be considered as a kind of “second order” resource, in the sense that it determines access to other resources.

*The trainers proceed to form three groups following two main criteria: research subject/ discipline and language – five participants do not speak Vietnamese, which raises the question of interpretation.*

*Once the groups are formed, the participants establish their own interview framework. For the group working on land issues, for example, the survey framework breaks down as follows:*

*Initial questions on the social identity of the surveyed person, general situation in terms of land use;*

*Trajectory leading to establishment or expropriation of the surveyed person and his/her ancestors;*

*Collectivization: situation of the person and village lands;*

*Decollectivization: situation of the person and the village;*

*Changes to land assets after decollectivization;*

*Land use and changes to that use (impact on assets, the household’s land-use strategy, agricultural diversification;*

*Status of land (formal registration or not, and the effects of this);*

*Affected, or not, by public policies on land.*



### 2.4.3. Recap on Survey Techniques: Conducting Interviews

[Olivier Tessier]

My intervention is structured around six distinct points. They are the product of my experience of previous JTD workshops, when we – with various different trainers over the years – supervised the pairs of participants in the field.

*Olivier Tessier introduces elements of survey techniques presented during the workshop in 2010: a common basis for every interview, the two levels of recording data, canvas (framework) of the questions and research avenues, the shift from the researcher's question to the field question, attitude during the interview, external intervention. For these: we refer the reader to our previous work: Bourdeaux, Pannier and Tessier (2011), Training in Surveying Methods and Fieldwork Practices in Socio-anthropology: "Issues, Tension and Conflict Surrounding Land Appropriation and Use" in Lagrée (scientific editor) Op. cit., pp. 249-283. Also available on the AFD and EFEO websites and at [www.tamdaoconf.com](http://www.tamdaoconf.com).*

### Days 2, 3, 4

*The workshop moves to the village of Đồng Bua in the commune of Tam Quan to conduct the surveys prepared during the training. Interviews with the villagers are done in pairs; each trainer spends his day following one of the sub-groups which he is in charge of.*

### Day 5, Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July

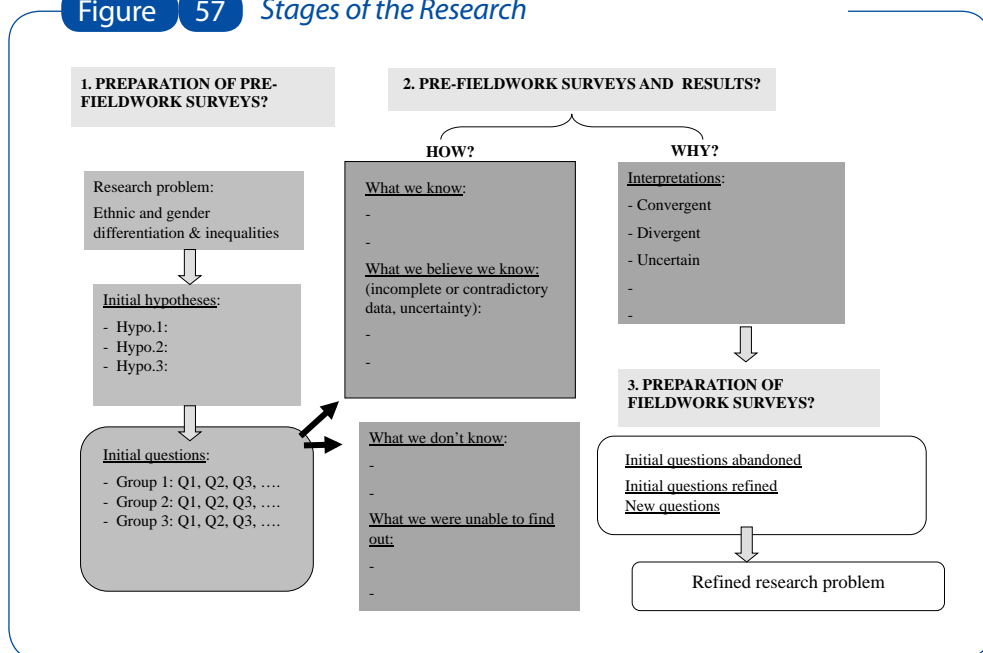
*On return to the hill station, the workshop divides into three groups to finalize the synthesis work which was started on the Thursday afternoon in the foothills, around predefined axes of analysis: dynamics of the differentiation of systems of productive activities since Đổi Mới (group 1); differentiation as a cultural construct (group 2); inequalities of access to land as a product of regional and local history (group 3).*

[Olivier Tessier]

Our main objective is to prepare the report-back for Saturday. I would like to remind you of the overall framework which this field survey fits into. Then each of the three groups will present the main results obtained on this issue "Inter-ethnic and gender differentiations and inequalities", possibly adding other kinds of inequalities which became apparent in the field. At the end of each presentation we will take a few moments to ask for comments from the other groups, so as to bring together data and interpretations. These interventions must be targeted either on new information or on information which is contradictory, or at least divergent from that presented by the group.

We have tried to distinguish three broad stages:

**Figure 57** *Stages of the Research*



Source: construction by the trainers and participants.

- The preparation of the research theme, then the kinds of questions asked by each group – Day 1;
- Results of pre-fieldwork – three days in the village of Đồng Bua. The work done since Thursday midday is a treatment

phase: what we know and what we don't know, interpretation of data collected so as to prepare the report. We are now at the end of stage 2. We must also set out the questions which we haven't been able to address.

*The participants compare and comment on the results delivered by the two first presentations, covering differentiation of economic activities and cultural constructs. The trainers draw the participants' attention to two main points:*

*Political representation of women. Women are little represented in the People's Committee or in associations but scientific literature often shows that their interests are perhaps better defended by others. The underlying question is this: "If men decide most of the policies, are they unfavourable to women?" Work done in the province of Hung Yên shows that paid women's work – while men are sitting in a People's Committee meeting – also confers power. The real process of research between the moment when one identifies an inequality and the next stage is also to ask what that entails;*

*Factors of differentiation according to lineage. It's important to avoid doing inter-ethnic analysis in binary mode, i.e. to avoid representing one ethnicity – here it's the San Diu – in relation to a "standard" – the Kinh ethnic group. The binary man/woman approach tends to homogenize each group: that of men versus that of women, while there are likely to be inequalities within the group – for example daughters-in-law exploited by their mother-in-law. This is an inequality linked to relationships between generations and to do with the social status of an individual, not to do with gender.*

*This is above all a methodological and pedagogical exercise, and only the theme linked to issues of inequality of access to land has been included in this publication.*

## Rapporteurs – Group 3

We studied inequalities of access to land through regional and local history. This analysis of inequalities can be broken down into two parts: chronological – production or reduction of inequalities in the village: transverse or cross-cutting, looking at the different categories of land – agricultural land, forests and habitations.

Four chronological phases need to be distinguished:

- Factors from initial population settlement. This period produces an inequality at the outset in favour of families already settled in the village for four or five generations. They have been able to clear large areas for habitation, which facilitates diversification of economic activities. Also, large residential plots are an additional asset when it comes to passing part of a garden plot on to one's children;
- The period of collectivization. Few data have been gathered, but we have a hypothesis that the role or post occupied by the head of the family in the cooperative must have resulted in differences in income – a contributing factor to significant inequalities today;
- The period of decollectivization and land redistribution. 1981 was the year of land redistribution by the drawing of lots, but families had a number of strategies to get around the redistribution of plots, mainly by informal exchanges – of agricultural land near to someone's house, for example. The redistributions to follow, notably according to the number of economically active people or per capita, would allow for the reduction of some inequalities of attribution. Finally, new factors of inequality appeared

as a result of agrarian demography: families married after 1991 no longer have access to residential land except through purchase (1991), and a plot of rice-paddy is no longer awarded to newborns (1993);

- The current phase: granting of official land titles – the red booklet – and road construction. A new tarmac road crosses the village and begs the question of granting land title for residential plots – only 40% of families had this title. Reasons put forward for this include inequality of access to information and education and relationships with the State. These inequalities of access to land titles are in themselves sources of inequality in accessing credit. The absence of land titles is also a source of inequality when it comes to transferring ownership to the next generation. Finally, there are inequalities of indemnity linked to the possession, or not, of land titles, in negotiations with the businessman in charge of infrastructure works and the choice of plots to be affected by these works – destruction of residences and garden plots.

There are multiple factors of inequality in the attribution of categories – *e.g.* rice paddies. Also, forest lands are currently attributed according to a 50-year right of use, without precise clarification of the modalities for access so as to manage them. Finally, the difference between households in terms of indemnity increased when the road was built – *cf.* red booklet.

[Olivier Tessier]

Based on the reports from the groups, we will reflect in broad terms on how we are going to structure the report for tomorrow. Christophe Gironde, Pierre-Yves Le Meur

and I propose that we prepare a conclusion which includes various elements which have emerged from the discussion during the week. We will base the presentation on the value and the limitations of a short field survey in looking at inequalities of gender and ethnicity. We remind you that the presentation covers the pre-fieldwork and that more precise questions have emerged to construct a more detailed research problem. Finally, we would like to mention the role of the State in causing inequalities – how can the State be seen as a creator of equalities or inequalities?

#### 2.4.4. Synthetic Report of the Workshop

(Retranscription)

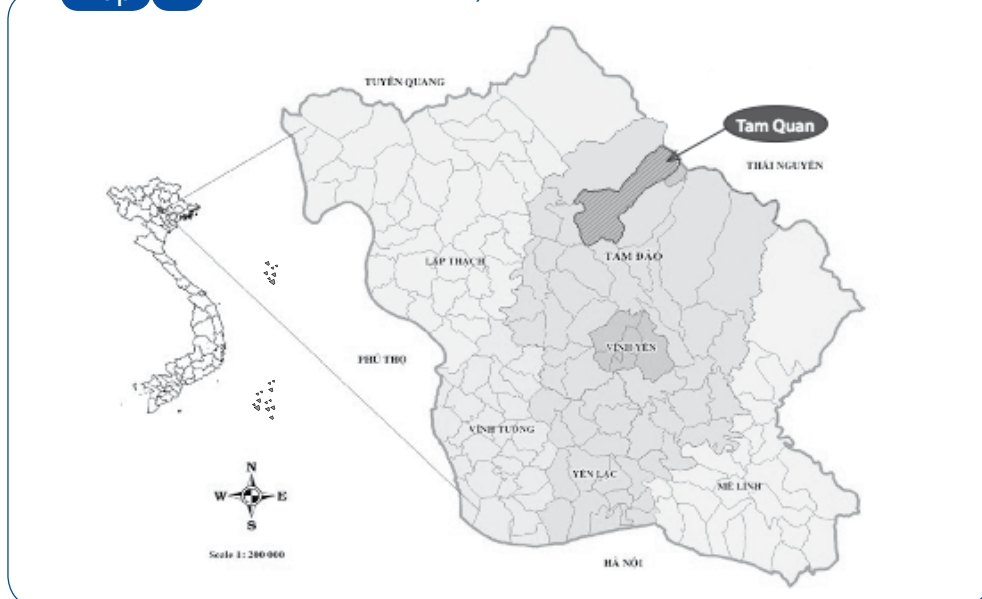
[Christophe Gironde]

Our objective during this week of training has been to give the participants practical experience of a field survey, of semi-structured interviews, based on the 2011 theme of the summer school. We dedicated the first day to defining what we were looking for and transforming our research problem into the questions which we were going to ask; then each group prepared an interview framework. Then the workshop moved for three days to a village in the foothills of Tam Đảo, at Đồng Bua. This village was suggested by the authorities, not chosen by us, but this didn't impose any particular constraint for the intended exercise, because there are no villages *a priori* more or less interesting than others. Once the days of interviews with families were over, our challenge was to report what had been said. Significant work was done in terms of sorting-through and questioning the statements obtained

from the surveyed population: is that true, plausible, realistic? Finally, we grouped all the surveys done in pairs around three pre-defined themes: differentiation of systems

of productive activity since the policy of Renovation, differentiation as a cultural construct and inequalities of access to land as a product of regional and local history.

## Map 7 Province of Vĩnh Phúc, Districts and Communes



Sources : construction by the participants.

*Two rapporteurs summarize the main results for all the participants. Readers should refer both to the discussion on Friday afternoon and to the summary below.*

### [Pierre Yves Le Meur]

I'd like to open a few avenues for reflection, come back to the problem we had at the outset, our first questions, and examine how they have changed in the light of our time in the field. It's also important to draw attention to how our workshop has evolved and progressed along the way, through

animated debates by the whole group; one inescapable conclusion touches on progress made in the field and the very convivial atmosphere of the week.

In relation to the plenary sessions and workshops held indoors in a meeting room, what has it meant, this time in the field? We must be prudent. When you look at local level, there is a magnifying effect: one peers through the microscope at a very small unit, the village, and there is a grave risk of forgetting elements of the wider context – migrations, public policy, higher levels of administration, etc. The village of Đồng Bua is obviously not representative. It's a

single village, where we did a few surveys, and moreover used only one technique. We gathered statements which we tried to match up. In a way, we ask people to tell us their life story. We also ask them to make a judgment on how and why a particular thing happened the way it happened – in general, people judge without being asked. But we didn't observe things in depth, so we must remain prudent in our interpretation. Nevertheless, the results are significant: we heard statements, matched up data and we can say things about what we understood, through about sixty interviews, of the inequalities in a village.

This brings us to the pertinence of the themes identified in advance: are inequalities of gender and between ethnic groups the most important themes, with the most impact? This begs the question of inequalities between whom: are people simply man/woman, San Diu/Kinh? We have identified meeting points between different kinds of inequality: social classes, genders, ethnic groups, generations, etc. Moreover, to understand these inequalities, one must ask oneself where they came from. An inequality observed at household level – in relation to the indicator on domestic tasks, for example, – is not comprehensible unless we compare it with how people behave in public – which also needs to be defined. There are relationships between rising inequalities in different "places" – or between an inequality at one level and a more egalitarian situation at another social stratum; in this regard, the distinction between public and domestic arenas is important.

For the analysis framework, we had an idea at the outset about inequalities. We reflected on these questions based on a presentation by Christophe Gironde. We saw that in the

debate there was a preference for talking about differences rather than inequalities. There is also the question of inequality and equity which brings us back to objective criteria – what level of education, what access to credit, to land? – and to a judgment on preferential access – are people satisfied with their situation, is inequality acceptable? This is how equity is expressed from the actors' point of view. We must also avoid all determinism, and not exaggerate the constraints. As difficult as the situation is, actors do have a margin of manoeuvrability. They can develop strategies and all trajectories are unique. This makes the exercise both more interesting and also more difficult to interpret.

On another point, we saw a distinction emerge from the fieldwork between events which directly and immediately generate inequalities, and events which generate inequalities in an indirect manner, diffused over time. Let's take two examples:

- Precedence of arrival in the village. The people who settled in the village in the 1980s are at a direct disadvantage in terms of access to land. They have less garden and residential land. Precedence directly creates an inequality. In contrast, the San Diu, who were the first occupants of the village area, have been able to retain (although it's not really known how) certain access rights to the land of the foothills. They were able to ensure that their right to cultivate this land prevailed in the late 1980s. The effect of precedence here plays out over the long term;
- After the 1993 law, red booklets were distributed late, and not to everyone, in the years 1999-2002. For many villagers, this land title booklet wasn't really important;

*"We live here, we know what we want to do with our land. We can leave it to our children. We have our house, the neighbours know who we are, we have legitimacy, locally."* But work on the road leading to the village created a context for expropriation. The booklets became important because they affected indemnity. The red booklet is not a direct creator of inequalities but becomes one when an external issue arises.

Finally, in terms of interpretation, we should question the scope and meaning of an observed inequality. For example, women are completely absent from positions of power. It's a glaring inequality – outside women's associations. But what does this inequality mean? Interesting discussions were had: *"While the men are in meetings, we trade."* It's not a question of looking at the situation in a relative way but of understanding where the inequalities are to be found, and the meaning of what we observe.

This led us to review our research problems. Very rapidly, the issues of gender and ethnicity were revisited, because they carry a grave risk of homogenisation of differentiated categories – man/woman, San Diu/Kinh – as if we were dealing with frozen, definitive and eternal categories. Firstly, these are not homogenous categories: there are inequalities within the group "women" for example – the relationship of mother-in-law / daughter-in-law is one of significant exploitation. For the San Diu, some lineages have far greater importance and power than others. It is probably they who managed to gain key posts during collectivization. Did this also involve those who had settled first? The San Diu are far from a homogenous group. Secondly, the debate is often brutal, a caricature: the man decides, the woman

accepts. But one sees that in reality the woman has negotiated a great deal to make sure her point of view carries some weight. We shouldn't exaggerate her power, but behind the observed situation – the decision is in the man's hands – a process exists. To understand an inequality in a particular place, we must go further upstream. This brings us to questions of method: the more one can observe things, the more one can amalgamate the statements gathered, the more solid and pertinent the analysis will be. As regards the question of ethnicity, the risk is to take these categories as inflexible, and to classify them: there are Kinh and there are San Diu, who present "cultural" differences while maintaining relationships at various levels. It's in these relationships that one can potentially find evidence of inequalities.

We could put forward a hypothesis that there is an element more fundamental than ethnicity in the village's development: precedence – the San Diu, the first to arrive, and the Kinh, who arrived in the 1960s. The history of how an area was populated is perhaps as important as the ethnic issue – one can even see, in the place of origin and relative precedence, elements of ethnic origin. Moreover, ethnic groups influence each other: we observed a process of acculturation of the San Diu – some no longer spoke their own language, for example. There is a *rapprochement* between Kinh and San Diu – through marriage – with very complex trajectories, and this contributes to the blurring of dividing lines between ethnic groups. So we've ended up revisiting the notion of ethnicity, which is much more changeable than we believed.

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