

TRINH DUY LUAN

***Political system at grassroots levels in rural areas in common people's opinions
(Some practical issues and research hypotheses)***

The article has presented some main findings from an empirical survey that aims to serve directly the policy-making in the state management and political system at grassroots levels.

The research issues posed and resolved include: how the resolution on democracy at grassroots levels is implemented in the last three years in the opinions of cadres and people at grassroots levels; achievements and problems that need to be continuously resolved; remarks, evaluations of common people on the political system at the commune level, on each component organization, and the cadre staff of this system, on the role of each part and the coordination organizations' activities in leading and guiding the implementation of local socio-economic plans. The research results have shown the relative stability of the political system at grassroots levels, and problems and challenges that have been brought about by requirements of the renovation, continuity and development in this field. The research has also dealt with voting issues through asking the common people's opinions on how they voted in the 1999 election for People Councils at different levels. The common people's opinions on ways (direct and indirect) to elect the positions of Chairman of People Committees at the commune level are also addressed.

In the last section of the article, the author has made some recommendations on continued institutionalization of the role and activities of the political system at grassroots levels, on democracy implementations at grassroots levels and how to provide information for these processes.

NGUYEN HUU MINH

Urbanization in Vietnam in the 90s: some basic socio-economic characteristics

In this paper, the author has examined major differences between urban and rural areas reflected in the social, economic and demographic indicators. Urbanization process in Vietnam has changed greatly during the past years. Not only the proportion of urban population has increased, but demographic and socio-economic characteristics of urban areas have also changed clearly. The urbanization process in Vietnam has created new development models which are quite different from the rural ones. It can be said that during the last years of the XX century, Vietnamese urban centers have features that are similar to other urban centers in the world, and different from rural areas: smaller family size; fewer marriages; higher ages at first marriage, especially among the young age groups; higher living quality reflected in higher proportion of families living in permanent houses, using electricity and clean water, television, and modern toilets; wider gap in living standards; higher educational attainments and professional/technical skills levels, particularly among high levels of education and training; lower rate of participation in economic activities and accordingly higher unemployment rates.

It is also suggested that although rapid urban growth in the large cities is a response to high levels of development and does generally lead to improved living standards, a small segment of the urban dwellers does not have opportunities to enjoy these benefits.

VU TUAN HUY

Change and continuity of Vietnam's rural family: issues posed in a pilot study in Yen Bai province

Based on results of the pilot study "Vietnam's rural family: change and continuity" and by using in-depth interviews, group interviews and observations, the article's author has brought up issues of family change, of its influencing factors and consequences for Vietnam's rural family, livelihood strategies of households in order to adapt to changing social conditions. Methodological problems are also brought up.

In household formation, in addition to a loosening of group norms related to ethnic intermarriage, other group norms related to marriage and the family will also change under the impacts of migration, better living standards and higher educational levels.

In family life, the peasant households' ability to adopt their livelihood strategies in order to adapt to economic and political challenges will be determined by the family's internal and external factors; features in family's structure, kinship, local traditions and the impacts of urbanization.

The results of this pilot study also require some coordination of the participating institutes in defining their research problems, in combining qualitative and quantitative methods in order to collect enough data that is comparable in order to understand family change.

BUI QUANG DUNG

Disagreement resolving in the family: a glimpse from qualitative studies

This article has briefly presented the results of qualitative studies on disagreements and disagreement resolving in Vietnam that were conducted in October and November 2001 in Soc Trang, Quang Ngai and Hai Duong provinces.

Usually there are many disagreements in poor families, and they are related to livelihood. Poor families readily quarrel and easily reconcile. Therefore private family affairs are likely to become noisy in their villages. Then the so-called reconciliation team appears.

In better-off families it is usually the men who instigate disagreements. However, those families' educational levels and traditions have made their disagreements less noisy. They often deal with their disagreements "behind the closed doors".

In the research sites in the South and the Central part of Vietnam, the disagreement resolving is connected clearly to responsibilities and rights of the patriarchs (men), but in the Northern families, the man's rights are relatively limited. He always discusses with his wife; he doesn't resolve the disagreements alone.

Nevertheless, outside the families, women's status is different. They have never ever attended lineages' meetings. When disagreements break out and require lineages' meetings, it is only brothers who gather in the meetings. When disagreements occur, a common way to resolve them is to invite a representative of organizations whose members are involved in the disagreements. The representative participates in the discussions of the disagreements.

Concerning the disagreements between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, in many research sites, they are resolved by establishing the children's own households.

TON THIEN CHIEU

Sources of labour supplement for industrial workers in the recent years

With the shift from a central-planning economy to a market one, enterprises are given more rights and freedom in their production and business, including labour supplement. Together with this economic transformation, a labour market gradually appears. Production difficulties of enterprises have changed labourers' perception of job choice. These changes partly exert some influence on sources of labour supplement.

The article has analyzed the sources of labour supplement in the following aspects: the labourers' own occupations, their families, residence places and motivation of becoming workers. The article has also made an attempt to analyze causes of the source change.

DO THIEN KINH

An examination of social stratification in history and its application to studying the widened gap between the rich and the poor in our country nowadays

This article has presented some main issues as follows:

1) Historical limits of the concept "social stratification"

K. Marx and M. Weber offered two classical approaches to social stratification. These two approaches have ranked a society's members in one dimension. When societies are more developed later on, researchers around the world assume that it is necessary to rank a society's members according to several, not just one, and different dimensions, as classical sociologists have done. Multidimension is required.

What about Vietnam? The article has given the following brief history.

2) Social stratification in Vietnam's history

Based on historical materials of historians, the article has analyzed a whole picture of social stratification of Vietnam's history from a sociological viewpoint.

3) Applying the social stratification concept to studying the widened gap between the rich and the poor in the reform period (since 1988 up to now) and some predictions.

At present Vietnam is in the context of globalization. Multidimension of social stratification will be seen and applied to studying Vietnam. First of all, in studying the widened gap, one-dimension approach (the use of living standards, income, expenditure and properties) is adopted clearly. What dimensions should be the center of attention when studying social stratification in Vietnam in the coming years? It is predicted that the occupational and educational dimensions may become a basis for ranking in studies of social stratification in the future. This prediction is made on 4 bases that are dealt with in the article.