

IMPACTS OF MIGRATION ON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE RED RIVER DELTA, VIETNAM



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DEVELOPMENT IN THE RED RIVER DELTA,
VIETNAM**

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Dissertation originale présentée en vue de l'obtention du grade de docteur en sciences agronomiques et ingénierie biologique

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Abstract

Thi Minh Khue NGUYEN (2019). Impacts of migration on agricultural development in Red River Delta, Vietnam. (PhD Dissertation in English). Gembloux, Belgium, Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, University of Liège, pages, tables, figures.

This thesis explores the impacts of rural migration on agricultural production in the context of 30 years after the *Đổi Mới* (renovation) reform based on a systematic survey of a Vietnamese village, key informant interviews and participatory observation. All data was collected in Mai Thon Village, Bac Ninh province, a typical Red River Delta village. It features the comparative perspective, comparing the situations of household groups participating in different types of migration and non-migrant households and the impact thereof on their agricultural production. This thesis shows that the increasing rural out-migration flows have become more circular with the development of infrastructure. Normally, migrants send remittances back home and bring food from their homes back to the city. Moving back and forth, the migrants themselves are the key factors of rural-urban continuum. Migration has, therefore, become an important generator of change in farming in Mai Thon village.

Remittance plays a central role in local household income and shows a positive case of remittance spending in farming activities. The groups involved in diversified migration types made more remittances to overcome farming constraints than other groups. The remittance used for agricultural production is four times higher than for non-farm. Agricultural production and non-agricultural production are complementary to each other in household earning activities. The majority of migrant households keep their paddy fields and manage to maintain agricultural production on their land in the context of labour lost due to migration in multiple ways including partial abandon, partial leasing, partial lending and partial producing. Agricultural land and farm work, however, are retained as a stable resource, a guarantee of subsistence or a safety net for rural people while boosting their autonomy. In terms of an agricultural production choice, most of Mai Thon households keep rice production as the fundamental agricultural activity, while cash-crop cultivation and livestock raising are vastly reduced. The thesis also explores the expansion of multifunctional households and multi-spatial households to maintain agriculture under the influence of migration. Moreover, households with a migrant labourer continue agricultural production, giving priority to home consumption, which encourages Mai Thon households to keep farming on a small-scale, using local varieties or breeds with a higher nutritional value, enabling better local resource usage and hence more environmentally friendly for their own family and friends. This reaction shows the interesting resistance

of peasant farmers in a context of global food crisis, not only in terms of food security but also food safety and food sovereignty. Most migrants prefer declaring their status as “peasants” and “village members” to keep their sense of social security, meanwhile integrating the outside world as “flexible peasants”. As a result, rural households become multi-site households with multiple job holdings and the village becomes a hybrid village where the traditional institutions have mixed with modern ones. This implies that although migration would be considered as a supplemental strategy for agriculture production to increase household security and autonomy, decentralised rural industries provide rural people with close-by extra job opportunities beyond farming, which could prompt people to continue farming.

Even though family farming has an important role in rural household livelihoods, the contribution of agriculture to farmer incomes and rural development depends on the active participation of youth who are the potential labour force. In Mai Thon, a wide range of constraints discourage the youth active participation in agricultural production activities includes: Inadequate credit facilities, low and unstable returns from agricultural investment, the drudgery of agriculture work and availability of employment alternatives. Indeed, those constraints have complex interlinks with each other. The prospects for success in the future lie in the fact that despite farming low return, most rural youths still engage in agriculture and consider it as their way of life.

Key words: migration, remittance agricultural production, youth, gender, peasant, de-agrarianisation, Mai Thon, Red River Delta

Résumé

Thi Minh Khue NGUYEN. (2019). Impact de la migration sur le développement agricole dans le delta du fleuve Rouge, Vietnam. (Dissertation de doctorat en anglais). Gembloux (Belgique), Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, University of Liège.

Résumé

La présente thèse explore l'impact de la migration rurale sur la production agricole dans le contexte d'un écart de 30 ans depuis le lancement de *Đổi Mới* (rénovation). Elle est basée sur une enquête systématique des habitants d'un village au Vietnam, des entretiens d'informateurs clés et une observation participative. Toutes les données ont été recueillies dans le village de Mai Thon, province de Bac Ninh, un village typique du delta du fleuve Rouge. L'approche se caractérise par une perspective comparative, rapprochant la situation des groupes de ménages participant à différents types de migration et des ménages n'ayant pas de membre migrant et l'impact de cette situation sur leur production agricole. Cette thèse montre que l'exode rural sans cesse croissant est devenu circulaire avec l'évolution des infrastructures. En temps normal, les migrants envoient de l'argent aux membres de leur famille qui sont restés et rapportent chez eux en milieu urbain des denrées de leur village. Grâce à ce va-et-vient, les migrants eux-mêmes assurent le continuum urbain-rural. De ce fait, la migration est devenue un important générateur de changement dans le secteur agricole au village de Mai Thon.

Le transfert de fonds joue un rôle capital dans les revenus des ménages ; il favorise les dépenses en faveur de l'exploitation agricole. Les groupes présentant différents types de migration ont envoyé davantage d'argent pour surmonter les contraintes à l'exploitation que les autres groupes. L'argent consacré à la production agricole est quatre fois celui consacré aux activités non agricoles. La production agricole et la production non agricole se complètent s'agissant d'activités génératrices de revenus. La majorité des ménages ayant un travailleur migrant gardent leurs rizières et réussissent à maintenir l'exploitation agricole sur leurs terres dans le contexte d'une perte de main-d'œuvre causée par la migration, et cela de multiples façons, notamment l'abandon partiel, l'affermage partiel, la location partielle et la production partielle. Le foncier agricole et la main-d'œuvre sont conservés. Il s'agit d'une ressource stable, d'une garantie de subsistance ou d'un filet de sécurité pour les habitants de zones rurales, tout en renforçant leur autonomie. Quant au choix d'exploitation, la plupart des ménages à Mai Thon s'en tiennent à la riziculture, activité agricole fondamentale. Les cultures de rente et l'élevage ne sont que très secondaires. La thèse explore aussi l'expansion des ménages multifonctionnels et celle des ménages 'multi-spatiaux' dans une tentative de préserver l'agriculture face à la migration. De plus, les ménages avec un travailleur migrant poursuivent leur exploitation agricole. Ils privilégient la consommation domestique, facteur qui encourage les habitants

de Mai Thon à garder leurs petites exploitations agricoles, en ayant recours à des variétés locales ou à des espèces locales ayant une plus grande valeur nutritive, permettant ainsi un usage plus rationnel des ressources locales et donc plus convivial pour l'environnement pour les membres de leur famille immédiate et leurs amis. Cette mentalité illustre la résistance des paysans dans un contexte global de crise alimentaire, non seulement en termes de sécurité alimentaire, mais aussi de salubrité alimentaire et de souveraineté alimentaire. La plupart des migrants se disent « paysans » ou « membres du village », conservant ainsi leur sens d'identité sociale, tout en intégrant le monde extérieur comme « paysans flexibles ». En conséquence, ces ménages en milieu rural sont devenus des ménages à sites multiples, cumulant divers emplois et faisant du village une communauté hybride où les institutions traditionnelles s'intègrent à des institutions modernes. Cela implique que, même si la migration serait considérée comme une stratégie complémentaire pour la production agricole, visant à augmenter la sécurité et l'autonomie du ménage, les industries décentralisées en milieu rural assurent aux habitants de zones rurales des possibilités d'emploi à proximité en plus de l'exploitation agricole, ce qui pourrait inciter les personnes à poursuivre l'agriculture.

Même si l'exploitation agricole familiale joue un rôle important dans les moyens de subsistance des ménages en milieu rural, la contribution de l'agriculture aux revenus des paysans et au développement rural dépend de la participation active des jeunes, la main-d'œuvre de demain. À Mai Thon, de nombreuses contraintes n'incitent pas les jeunes à participer activement à l'exploitation agricole, notamment le manque de facilités de crédit, le revenu bas et peu stable d'un investissement dans l'agriculture, la pénibilité des travaux agricoles et la disponibilité d'autres emplois. En effet, de telles contraintes sont imbriquées. Les perspectives de succès à l'avenir reposent sur le fait que, malgré la rentabilité faible de l'agriculture, la plupart des jeunes ruraux s'y livrent quand même et considère celle-ci comme leur mode de vie.

Mots clés : migration, transfert de fonds, production agricole, jeunes, genre, paysan, dé-agrarianisation, Mai Thon, delta du fleuve Rouge

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of five years of hard work, during which I have been accompanied and supported by many people and organisations. This is the time to express my sincere gratitude to those who helped me directly or indirectly throughout my studies. The journey started before September 2014, the official PhD enrolment date. I must acknowledge my MSc thesis supervisor, Professor Ben White, who encouraged me to tackle the challenge of doing a PhD and who continuously taught me how to think critically and gain the in-depth knowledge and theoretical insights necessary.

I was very fortunate to have Professor Philippe Lebailly and Professor Nguyen Thi Dien as my promoters, for their understanding and patience during the entire journey of my PhD study and their continuous stimulation and guidance, at both the scientific and personal level. It was certainly a great pleasure and a privilege to have worked with them. I also express my deep thanks to Professor Peemans who offered me precious suggestions and raised insightful questions which contributed to the overall improvement of this work. I would like to extend my gratitude to my committee members Professor Phillipe Burny and Professor Thomas Dogot for their academic support during my study. Their critical comments and thoughtful guidance positively influenced the way my research was conducted.

I am profoundly grateful to the ARES_CCD, for providing me with the financial support for my PhD study. I am indebted to Mme Ho Thi Minh Hop not only for her academic support but also for many an interesting and thought-provoking discussion. I appreciated her for always keeping an eye on me and my fellow students living in Gembloux. My deep appreciation goes to Nadine, Christine and Lindsay for all their help in administrative matters, and logistics support always given with a smile during the days of my study. Many thanks are due to the Gembloux Vietnamese community and the friends in Hamande's house for organising many fascinating events and parties which were refreshing and encouraging. Gembloux become my second home thanks to you.

I am grateful to my colleagues in the Sociology Department, Vietnam National University of Agriculture, for their assistance in data collection and their contribution to the successful accomplishment of my fieldwork. And due to my sandwiched programme, how thankful I am for their unconditional support for my work in the university whenever I was absent or in need. Above all, I sincerely thank the villagers of Mai Thon village, Chi Lang commune, Que Vo district, Bac Ninh province, my study area. Despite their busy schedules and the fact that a researcher does not have anything to offer financially in return, they were always ready to open their doors and share their life experiences with me.

At this moment, I am very much privileged to be able to send words of appreciation back home, especially to my family members, my parents and my brothers. I would like to express my genuine thanks to them, because they have constantly encouraged me and supported me to come this far. Their love and memory were a source of inspiration for me to work hard but never forget to enjoy life. My deepest thanks go to my beloved husband Cong. This thesis could indeed not have been completed without his love, dedication, and patience. Finally, I send my special gratitude to my cherished daughters Na and Nguyen. You may be too young to understand what I am doing and why I am not at home to take care of you but your presence in this world means so much for me.

CONTENTS

Résumé.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF PICTURES.....	xii
LIST OF BOXES.....	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xiv
CHAPTER 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background and problem statement.....	3
1.2 Research objectives and research questions	5
1.3 Overview of the thesis structure	6
CHAPTER 2 Literature Review.....	9
2.1 An overview of migration theories	11
2.2 Migration and rural development.....	17
2.3 Household strategy, gender and generation.....	23
2.4 Peasant mobilisation: The agrarian question revisited	29
2.4.1 Peasant concept and agrarian change	29
2.4.2 The northern Vietnamese village in transition.....	32
2.5. Conceptual framework	34
CHAPTER 3 Historical overview of migration and agricultural production in Vietnam.....	37
3.1 The period before 1954	38
3.2 Collective Agriculture Period in Vietnam: 1954-1980	39
3.3 Transition Period: 1981-1988.....	43
3.4 De-collectivization Periods (1989-1995).....	45
3.5 Expansion & International Integration Period	48
CHAPTER 4 Research site and research methodology.....	53
4.1 Research site	55

4.1.1 Overview of the Red River Delta and Bac Ninh province.....	55
4.1.2 Mai Thon profile	59
4.2 Fieldwork process	62
4.3 Methods of data collection	63
4.3.1 Primary data collection.....	63
4.3.2 The importance of secondary data.....	70
4.4 Data management and analysis.....	70
CHAPTER 5 Migration characteristics.....	73
5.1 Mai Thon Village migration timeline.....	75
5.2 Migrant characteristics	79
5.2.1 Demographic characteristics of migrants.....	79
5.2.2 Migrants' work characteristics	84
CHAPTER 6 Agricultural production in the context of migration.....	93
6.1 Remittance: A new capital source for farming investment.....	95
6.2 Impact of migration on agricultural land.....	99
6.2.1 Overview of agricultural land in Mai Thon village.....	99
6.2.2 The change of agricultural land use.....	103
6.2.3 Agricultural land exchange in transition.....	106
6.3 Impact of migration on agricultural production choice	111
6.3.1 Rice production and vegetable growing	111
6.3.2 Animal husbandry	115
6.4 Adaptation of household labour allocation and organisation for agricultural activities.....	119
6.4.1 Labour management in agricultural activities.....	119
6.4.2 Multiple-site household: labour adjustment in the context of migration	123
6.4.3 Gender dynamics in the links of migration and agricultural production.....	132
CHAPTER 7 Who tend to farm? Future of small-scale farming.....	139
7.1 Role of small-scale farming in the households	141

7.1.1 The importance of agricultural income	141
7.2.2 Factors impacting on youth participation in agricultural activities	155
7.3 Mai Thon in a comparative Southeast Asia perspective.....	161
7.3.1 Panorama of rural out-migration in Southeast Asia	161
7.3.2 Remittance as a capital investment for agriculture.....	163
CHAPTER 8 Conclusion and discussion.....	173
8.1 Answering the research questions.....	175
8.2 Implications of the study for theory, research and policy	181
REFERENCES.....	184
ANNEX.....	205

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework of the impacts of migration on agrarian change	35
Figure 3.1 Historical overview of migration and agriculture in Vietnam	47
Figure 4.1 Agricultural production yield changes in nine main agricultural provinces in Vietnam	58
Figure 4.2 Summary of the fieldwork procedure.....	62
Figure 4.3 Stratified researched households in Mai Thon village	65
Figure 5.1 Migration timeline in Mai Thon village	77
Figure 5.2 Age pyramid between male and female villagers.....	84
Figure 5.2 Age pyramid between male and female migrants.....	84
Figure 6.1 Main purposes of vegetable growing and chicken raising	117
Figure 6.2 Model of labour division in group 1 households	124
Figure 6.3 Model of labour division in group 2 households	127
Figure 6.4 Model of labour division in group 3 households	129
Figure 6.5 Agricultural work division after migration.....	131
Figure 7.1 Contribution of agricultural income.....	142
Figure 7.2 Income distribution among households' sources of earnings	144

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Basic features of Bac Ninh in comparison with other provinces of the Red River Delta	56
Table 4.2 Mai Thon village characteristics in comparison	60
Table 4.3 Systematic questionnaire respondents' information.....	64
Table 4.4 Socio-economic characteristics of surveyed households	67
Table 5.1 Demographic characteristics of migrants	83
Table 5.2 Mai Thon migrants' characteristics	86
Table 5.3 Sending remittance behaviours	89
Table 5.4 Mean remittance among migration household groups	90
Table 5.5 Correlation of remittance amount with migration characteristics .	91
Table 6.1 Use of migrant remittances	97
Table 6.2 Remittance investment in farming	99
Table 6.3 Mean agricultural land-holding among Mai Thon households	102
Table 6.4 Migration and agricultural land use change.....	105
Table 6.5 Land exchange transactions among household groups.....	109
Table 6.6 Migration and agricultural production choice change.....	113
Table 6.7 Labour management in agricultural production activities	120
Table 6.8 Gender dynamics in agricultural activities	134
Table 7.1 Reasons for self-identifying as a peasant.....	150
Table 7.2 Demographic characteristics distribution of the respondents	152
Table 7.3 Attitude of rural household regarding the next generation's participation in farming	153
Table 7.4 Mai Thon youth participation in farming and opinions.....	154
Table 7.5 Perceived constraints for rural youth participation in agriculture .	157
Table 7.6 Supportive factors for youth to participate in farming	159
Table 7.7 Needs of rural youth to participate in farming	160

LIST OF PICTURES

Map 4.1 Bac Ninh province in the Red River Delta, Vietnam	57
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LIST OF BOXES

Box 5.1 Mai Thon’s “junk dealer” trade – how it got started78

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DFID	: Department for International Development
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization (of the United Nations)
GDP	: Gross domestic product
GSO	: General Statistics Office (of Vietnam)
HCMC	: Ho Chi Minh City
HH/hh	: Household(s)
IFAD	: International Fund for Agricultural Development
NELM	: New Economic Labour Migration
OECD	: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SOE	: Security of Employment
VHLSS	: Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey
WB	: World Bank
UN	: United Nations

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and problem statement

More than 30 years after the introduction of the *Đổi Mới* (Renovation Policy) reforms in 1986, Vietnam's economy has seen fundamental changes in social and economic relationships that have led to unprecedented economic development and agrarian change. This reform program has boosted Vietnam's annual economic growth rate from 6% to 8% since the early 1990s. In rural areas, the return to household-based agricultural production initially prompted a rapid growth in agricultural production, transforming Vietnam from a rice-importing country into one of the world's top rice exporters (Gironde & Golay, 2015; T. T. T. Tran, 2007). However, after that initial spurt of growth, the expansion of agricultural production has slowed and shifted to the industrial and service sectors. In terms of output value, the share of agriculture has declined from 42% in 1989 to 26% in 1999 and 21% in 2009 while the industry sector has more than doubled from 23% in 1990 to 47% in 2009 (GSO, 2010). Despite this shift, Vietnam's economy still depends on the agriculture sector which is over one-quarter of the GDP, provides 85% of exports and employs about 60% of the work force. A large part of the Vietnamese population (Dieu, 2006; McCaig & Pavcnik, 2013; World Bank, 2016) resides in rural areas which makes farming continue to be an important part of the lives and livelihoods of many Vietnamese, especially the most vulnerable people. When the world food crisis occurred in early 2008 it was ironic that in spite of being the second largest exporter of rice, Vietnam was classified as one of the hunger hot spots in Asia and the Pacific at that moment (Timothy Gorman, 2019).

Among a range of constraints on agricultural production including lack of credit, rural labour shortages, poor mechanisation, environmental change and limited access to land, a few elements were boosted by the *Đổi Mới* process. One of the most influencing factors is the shift of agricultural resources to other sectors, for example the large and rapid conversion agricultural land due to industrialisation and urbanisation. This process has, on the one hand, dramatically reduced farmable land areas and, on the other, generated large numbers of landless and jobless peasants (T. D. Nguyen, Lebailly, & Vu, 2014; V. Nguyen, McGrath, & Pamela, 2006; Ravallion & Van de Walle, 2008) who were attracted more into the expanding opportunities in the non-farm sector and out of their home villages either by preference or obligation. Rural households have become increasingly dependent on the off-farm and delocalised activities of their migrant members to sustain their livelihood (Khai, Kinghan, Newman, & Talbot, 2013; Pham, Bui, & Dao, 2010; Tuyen, Lim, Cameron, & Van Huong, 2014).

Therefore, one integral part of the overall economic development process has been the steady increase in rural-urban migration. The gap in income earning opportunities between rural and urban areas continues to grow in absolute terms. It has been a major driver of migration within Vietnam. This domestic migration has been multi-directional, and more than two-thirds of

internal migrants have moved from rural areas to cities in 2000s (Kim Anh, Hoang Vu, Bonfoh, & Schelling, 2012). Results of the 2009 census show that 7.7% of the population (6.6 million people) aged over 5 migrated, up from 6.5% in the 1999 census (GSO, 2011a). Moreover, many types of migration, such as short-term, temporary and circular movements, are not included in these figures because the main sources of data, including VHLSS, do not collect information on households that are not registered in the location where the householders actually reside (B. D. Le, 2005). Meanwhile, an enormous proportion of recent arrivals to the cities are unregistered, referred to as the “floating population”. In fact, the number of unregistered people in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City is even larger than the number who reported living elsewhere five years previously. In the 2009 census, approximately 350,000 people in Hanoi and 1 million in Ho Chi Minh City reported living in a different province five years previously (Coxhead, Nguyen, & Linh, 2015). Increasing migration reflects not only economic growth but also important regional socio-economic disparities, particularly between the cities and the countryside, and the growing labour market in large cities and the expanding industrial zones. For example, the net migration rates are highest for Ho Chi Minh City (116%) and Hanoi (50%), the two largest cities, and Binh Duong (341.7%), Da Nang (77.9%) and Dong Nai (68.4%), which are the most industrialised provinces. In 2009, 29.6% of the population lived in urban areas, compared to 23.7% in the 1999 census (GSO, 2011a)

Rural out-migration is, on the one hand, purported to have been an integral component of the sustainable urbanisation and national economic transition. On the other hand, migrating labourers became an essential source of workforce in urbanized areas and industrial zones during this process. Various research studies in Vietnam conclude that migration is one of the key households and individual strategies in response to both economic difficulties and livelihood opportunities (Guest, 1998; Harigaya & de Brauw, 2007; Kim Anh et al., 2012). However, the impacts of out-migration have had a complex and multi-dimensional impact on agriculture and the rural areas. Vietnam’s agricultural sector is characterised by small household producers with 70% of households having less than 0.5 ha in 2011 and the share of the largest category of holdings – above 2 ha – constitutes only close to 6% (McCaig & Pavcnik, 2013; World Bank, 2016). Therefore, Vietnamese agriculture faced significant constraints on production, which is exactly the context in which migration is expected to impact on agricultural production. Rural migration has affected agricultural production in two ways: out-migration of labour and remittance flows. The first aspect refers to the process of withdrawing labour from agriculture and rural areas and moving it to other sectors in urban areas. The second aspect concerns facilitation of on-farm investment and relief of credit constraints that prevented farmers from purchasing key inputs. These two facets interact and determine the impact of migration on agricultural production (agricultural land use, kind of crops, use of inputs, productivity). This poses major questions regarding the relationship between migration and

agricultural production and the impacts of migration on livelihoods, identities and social relations. Data are gathered about what is happening to the farmers and farmer families when they have to deal with spreading their work and personal life across the spaces. A matter of societal significance is also the contribution of this thesis to the food security debate. Most of the existing research assumes that migration leads to a regression of agricultural production and implies that it would have a negative impact on Vietnam's food security and food sovereignty. This research examines this issue starting from the peasant's own experiences and farming practices

Moreover, the relationship between migration and agricultural production is much more complex than what is recognised in the current migration discussion at the intra-household level (Deshingkar, 2012; McCarthy, Carletto G., Davis B., & Maltoglou L., 2006). As far as theory is concerned, this thesis addresses knowledge gaps in the existing literature about migration and its impacts on rural areas and aims to help fill those gaps. The knowledge gaps will be elaborated further throughout the thesis but the shortcomings identified come down to 1) the lack of attention to the historical view of the interaction between migration and agrarian change; 2) the dichotomy between rural and urban areas and between agricultural production and other sectors; 3) the pluriactivity of rural individuals and households are absent in many studies; 4) a lack of analysis of the intra-household gender and generational dimension in agricultural production, household relations and village institutions.

1.2 Research objectives and research questions

This thesis is a sociological analysis of the impact of circular migration on agricultural production in rural Vietnam. It is about small-holder farmers who are working on their own farms and who migrate back and forth from their hometown to the outside world to deal with more comprehensive requirements from the viewpoint of national and global economic growth. Migration and agricultural production have been studied from different perspectives. In this study, I apply the livelihood approach. It implies that rural households still keep their important position as the production unit in the farming and migration decision. However, to analyse the intra-household arrangements for migration and agricultural production, I use an actor-oriented approach. This implies that the peasants' own understanding of the processes in which they are involved is central. Especially important is the question whether or not the patterns of agrarian change are affected by or through the process of rural out-migration. Other main questions concern the impact of circular migration on the well-being of rural households and the possible effects of migration on food security and food sovereignty in Vietnam. This research also explores and examines the factors that condition the attitude of peasants toward agricultural production, intra-household gender and generational relations related to farming and their own perception of their identity.

An overall aim of this research is to understand the complex interactions of migration and agricultural development. This aim will be achieved through the following sub-objectives:

- Explore the migrant's characteristics, remittance patterns and the investment behaviour of remittance recipients.
- Analyse the sustainable impacts of migration on agricultural production through four main dimensions: 1) Remittance as a source of farming investment; 2) land use and land holdings under cultivation; 3) agricultural production choice; and 4) labour division in agriculture.
- Explore the social impacts of migration including social differentiation, intra-household gender and generational relations related to agricultural activities and revising the peasant concept.

Within this framework, the question of how migration influences agricultural development, including social, economic, institutional and cultural factors, becomes the most important issue. More specifically, this study will seek to figure out under what circumstances remittances enable migrant households to invest more in their agricultural land, but why agricultural land is abandoned. Does it happen due to the institutional system or cultural norms that are affected? This paper also aims to assess the extent to which the loss of farm labour resulting from migration is mitigated, in particular, by the use of remittances reallocated as labour resources for agriculture. Given that those who migrate out are likely to be younger and male, this paper tries to unveil the labour resources necessary to sustain agricultural production in the villages and whether migrant households have to invest in technologies to compensate for the labour loss for agricultural activities. Thus, this study seeks to combine both the gender and generational lens in exploring the relationship between migration and agricultural activities. In addition, the study will analyse the term "peasant" in the changing global context. It will also investigate whether remittances lead to productive investments in agriculture and if such investment choices in agriculture depend on the amount of the remittances sent, the type of migration, and the previous agricultural activities or on the willingness of the remitters to return or not to return home.

1.3 Overview of the thesis structure

This thesis encompasses an introduction, six discussion chapters, followed by a conclusion and recommendation section. Chapter 1 (the introduction) provides general information on migration and agricultural production practices in Vietnam to provide a background for the statement of the research problems, followed by the objectives of the study and research questions. Finally, an overview of the thesis and the interrelationship of the chapters are given.

Chapter 2 comprises a literature review and discusses key concepts and the theoretical framework used in this research. The main concepts include migration, agrarian questions related to small-scale farming, gender, generation and peasant identity, aiming to present the conceptual framework of this thesis.

Chapter 3 provides a basic background of Vietnamese agricultural production and the country's population movement from a historical perspective. Through four periods of contemporary history, this chapter emphasises that migration has always been the response of Vietnamese households to each of the historical watersheds. This chapter also highlights some facets of the *hộ khẩu* (household registration) system due to the precise impacts of this policy on agricultural land division and migration regulations.

Chapter 4 introduces the fieldwork process, methods of data collection and sampling, data management and analysis. The research methods used include a survey, key informant interviews and participant observation. This chapter also highlights a general description of the research site and the respondents. It aims to give a picture of the social context in which the author conducted the research and the demographic characteristics of the household respondents.

Chapter 5 firstly scanned the Mai Thon migration background from an historical view. Through an analysis of the migrants' characteristics, this chapter mainly focused on the differences in migration selectivity, remittance behaviour and the relationship between different migrant households.

Chapter 6 explores whether migration leads to a regression of agricultural production on the part of small-holder farmers by firstly analysing the management and utilisation of remittances as a source of capital. Then it focuses on the three dimensions that migration has been shown to influence farmland use holdings, agricultural production choices and labour management for farming.

Chapter 7 presents the contribution of small-scale farming to household income, social differentiation and food security. It goes beyond to determine the peasants' perception of their own situation as well as their identity. This chapter also synthesises a comprehensive understanding of youth and their participation in and expectations from agricultural work, attempting to show that it is a positive contribution to the elaboration of agricultural policies. The final part will provide a zoom out lens to put Mai Thon in a comparative Southeast Asian experience.

Chapter 8 contains conclusions and a discussion. Firstly, the main findings of the paper according to the research questions are synthesised. Secondly, some discussion and policy recommendations are put forward to pursue positive aspects of agricultural production, gender relations, peasant well-being and rural development. Finally, some critical reflections generated by this thesis are elaborated on.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on rural out-migration and its impact on agricultural production. Both theoretical and practical studies have been investigated to structure the research paper. Before explaining the different migration theories, the migration concept will be defined. The first section then gives a short overview on the different migration theories over time. The second section elaborates on the linkage between migration and rural development in terms of remittance and the human resource movements, followed by an introduction to the concepts of rural household livelihoods, gender and generation and their relationship with farming. The paper goes on to review the impact of migration on agriculture from the politico-economic perspective. The final section proposes an analytical framework, which highlights the social dimensions of investigating the impacts of migration on agrarian change.

2.1 An overview of migration theories

Before discussing the theoretical aspects of migration, it is important to describe the operational definition of migration adopted for this study. Migration is difficult to conceptualise due to its intertwined temporal and spatial dimensions (Jones, 1999). Generally, migration is explained as a type of spatial or geographical mobility that involves a semi-permanent or permanent change of usual habitation between geographical units. The labour migration type which this thesis focuses on is subject to the temporary movement of individuals or groups of individuals from rural to urban areas both within and outside the country. To characterise migration, various differentiations have been made in the course of time. Firstly, there is a difference between forced and voluntary migration. In the first, migrants are forced to leave in order to survive or because of safety reasons. In contrast, voluntary migrants leave their original homes in order to find better economic or social conditions (De Haas, 2007). However, that distinction between types of migration is not always clear. The motivation of voluntary migrants may be suspect if the decision to migrate is motivated by economic need or forced by an untenable situation in their area of origin. Here, some scholars question the real freedom of migrants in choosing to move for a better life. Despite that uncertainty, migration for economic reasons is not considered to be forced migration. A second distinction is between temporary migration and permanent migration. Permanent migrants do not have the intention of returning to their place of origin in the future. Therefore, their migration results in a permanent change in residence. Temporary migration, in contrast, refers to the migration of people who have the intention of returning to their residence of origin. The purpose of their migration is mostly to supplement their original livelihood or to improve their standard of living. Within temporary migration, a distinction can be made between a short-term and a long-term move. In order to determine whether migration is permanent or temporary, the crucial factor is the intention of the person who migrates. However, it can happen that a migrant initially had the intention to return yet decided to stay in the destination area permanently (De Haas, 2007). The final distinction relates to internal migration and

international migration. The latter type of migration refers to migrants that cross the national borders of their country of origin, while internal migration refers to the movement of people within the national borders of their country.

Many definitions of this type are not strict regarding the distance moved but focus more on the duration of the change of residence. Mobility is the most general concept. There is spatial mobility and social mobility. Roland (1990) distinguishes non-recurrent extra-local movement from recurrent local movement, involving no change in residence, e.g. the movement of seasonal or temporary workers. Furthermore, migration also includes circulation – recurrent extra-local movement. According to Ellis (2003b), internal migration can be divided into many categories, including circular migration, seasonal migration, rural-rural and rural-urban migration, all of which have different motives, causes and consequences in both the area of origin and that of destination. This thesis focuses on the internal migration – seasonal and rural migration – giving special attention to the households of the migrants left behind in rural areas and the relationship with agricultural production. I will group migration into (longer-term) migration and local circular migration. Longer-term migration is defined as moving out longer than three months consecutively; I define local circular migration¹ as moving out fewer than three months consecutively, something that usually includes commuting.² Circular labour migrants in Vietnam have two characteristics: they have both a production income and a circulation income because they still have to cultivate land while they earn non-farm income.

Migration can take place at the individual and the household level. It is a kind of household or individual strategy, linked to livelihood diversification. In his study on migration in East Java, Indonesia, Spaan (1999) found that labour circulation is one possible outcome of the interplay between households and individuals, and the influence of changing structural conditions. Other household coping strategies or adaptations to socio-economic transformations are usually considered as well, such as cash cropping, economic diversification, land tenure changes, and modifications in the use of household or external labour. Circular migration arrangements are part of a rural households' labour allocation strategy (Mallee, 1997). Circular migrants usually maintain their relationship with their families.

Migration has received much attention in the field of development studies, dating back to the 1880s when Ravenstein first proposed the concept of "*laws of migration*". Since then, due to the dynamic morphology of migration and the

¹ There is no standard definition of circular migration. ILO or United Nations' international migrant worker instruments have all used the term 'temporary migration' without any reference to 'circular migration'. In simple terms, the phenomenon of circular migration means repeated migration experiences involving more than one emigration and return. (Wickramasekara, 2011)

² IOM (2005) highlighted that commuting has become a feature in many peri-urban areas and villages near cities and the phenomenon is growing but there is a serious shortage of data on commuting. Due to my focus is on labour mobility, I have also paid attention to commuting.

diversified factors causing it, there is no consensus about the impacts of migration. In general, debate emerged among the different migration theories and even within the same principle from the neo-classical theories or developmentalist optimism in the 1950s and 60s, to neo-Marxist or structuralist pessimism in the 70s and 80s, to more nuanced theories like the New Economics of Labour Migration and Livelihood approaches in the 90s (De Haas, 2010a). These theories have fundamental differences in how they explain why people migrate and the insights regarding the relationship between migration and development. In the absence of a single, coherent theory of migration, I will briefly review the migration theory, then summarise my own approach.

Neo-classical theories pre-dominated the migration debate up until the 1970s. According to these theories highlighting the neo-classical principle, migration happens in response to the imbalance between the supply and demand of labour. The shortage of labour in the destination resulted in high-wage opportunities caused by a flow of labour forces. In other words, the expectation of better salaries in the destination is considered as a fundamental motivating factor for migrants. These neo-classical theories proposed the individualistic approach to migration which stress the rational choice of the migrant for utility maximisation, expected net return and wage differentials (Arango, 2000). The most popular neo-classical approaches related to migration include Lewis' surplus of labour theory, Lee's push and pull factor approach and Todaro's migration model. Among them, Lewis's model of development first emerged in 1954. This model provides insight into the pathway in which traditional rural-based economies can transform into modern urban-based economies. The rural areas are assumed to suffer from unemployment and underemployment conditions, while industrialised urban areas have an abundance of employment opportunities (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). Rural-urban migration is considered as a process of labour movement out of the agricultural sector in rural areas which has a "surplus" of labour to other sectors in urban areas which lack a labour force. Throughout this redistributive labour process, the proponents of this approach are quite optimistic about the impacts of migration on both the place of origin and that of destination. It has been said in this regard: "*Migration is the oldest action against poverty for those who most want help. It is good for the country to which they go; it helps to break the equilibrium of poverty in the country from which they come. What is the perversity in the human soul that causes people to resist so obvious a good?*" (John Kenneth Galbraith cited in R. Skeldon (2003:9))

The basic assumption of Lewis's model is a large surplus of labour in rural areas and the agricultural sector. Therefore, the human capital withdrawn from the agricultural sector could supply the need brought on by the industrialising and modernising of sectors in the city. The resulting transfer of labour forces from the rural to the urban creates a redistribution of people from places of low-population density in rural areas to those of high-population density in urban areas. This flow will end when the labour surplus is all absorbed by the modern, industrial sector (Lall, Selod, & Shalizi, 2006). The Lewis model was heavily criticised firstly because it assumes extremely low to zero agricultural productivity, yield and income in the rural areas. Secondly, the reality of the urban and industry sectors in many

developing countries in the late 60s also went against this model prediction. The industrial sector in urban areas could not absorb the large labour force coming from agricultural areas. The flow of the labour force appeared to continue even when all urban employment opportunities were filled.

To overcome the weakness in his model, Lee (1966) developed a second migration theory which is also based on dual economic ideas. This theory proposed an accessible conceptual framework by which many migration processes can be explained. Lee's model divided the influencing factors on migration into positive and negative categories and stated that the migration decision is the result of the interaction between both the attractive and unattractive sides. On the one hand, the push factors that are likely to drive people out of their place of origin mainly refer to unemployment, poverty conditions, infertile land and other hostile situations in that area, such as family conflicts, war, natural disaster, etc. On the other, there are pull factors that are an incentive for people to move and promise better living conditions in the destination area. The major pull factors are employment opportunities and higher wages. Lee (1966) claimed that migration is the result of a combination of push and pull factors and is based on the migrant's individual rational decision. This approach also pointed out that people only chose migration if they expected a positive net impact in terms of economic progress (De Haas, 2010a).

The last influential neo-classical migration theory that appeared in the 1970s was Torado's model. His theory is based on the observation that in many developing countries the rural-urban labour flow exceeded the urban employment rates and the capacity of urban social services and industries. Todaro stated that the urban sector appeared to be unable to absorb the increasing human resources (Todaro, 1976). Even though Torado also put rural-urban migration in the framework of a dual economy in which the rural sector is a source of labour for the urban sector, he claimed that migration is the result of a disparity between the expected income in rural and urban regions, compared with the net migration costs (McDowell & De Haan, 1997). Todaro's model gives insight regarding the continuing of the rural-urban migration, even when the unemployment rate in the urban sector is high and known by rural people. Rural-urban migration will continue because rural people expect that they will end up in an occupation that compensates the migration costs and gives them a higher income than they got before migration. This migrant optimism remains even when they become unemployed or get underpaid jobs, because the migrants tend to wait for better job opportunities in the future (Arjan De Haan, 1999).

Todaro's theory is criticised for not reflecting the complex dynamics of rural-urban migration. Other researchers showed that internal migration also can have a significant negative impact on both rural and urban regions (De Haas, 2010b). Todaro's model proposed a static explanation for rural-urban migration but did not pay enough attention to its complex nature, the heterogeneity of the people who migrate, the presence of rural joblessness and the return of migrants. Moreover, empirical studies show that migration happens even when the expected income in the urban sector is lower than the income in the rural area (Timalsina, 2007).

The optimistic views of migration in the neo-classical theories were increasingly criticised and there was a shift in the scientific world towards a historical-structural approach to development, which had scientific roots in the world systems theory and in the political economy of Karl Marx during the 1960s. According to that approach, rather than being an individual, rational choice, migration is shaped by wider forces of structural and economic changes (Arjan De Haan, 1999). It is argued that rural labour is involuntarily withdrawn to fulfil urbanisation and the transition to capitalism. The poor have no other choice than to migrate following the capital mechanism after losing access to their own land (J. Breman, 1996), therefore its proponents seem pessimistic about the impacts of migration on rural areas: significant departure of human capital, increasing dependence and decreasing socio-economic stability. The concept of “*brain drain*” emerged in this approach, pointing to the increasing shortage of human labour resources as a result of migration, specifically the movement of sound human capital, mainly well-educated individuals.

In addition to this concept, Penninx (1982) used the term ‘brawn drain’ to refer to the migration of young, able-bodied men from rural areas (De Haas, 2007). Moreover, the historical-structural approach showed the mechanism born of that migration; remittances were seen as a cause for growing inequality within sending communities (Abreu, 2012). Lipton (1980) debated that intra-rural inequality was the main reason that generated rural-urban migration, and in turn, its effects will upsurge disparity rather than equalise earnings between and within regions. Inequality would rise firstly because the better-off migrants are more active in mobilisation toward more developed areas while most of the poor are pushed who migrate by poverty reasons. It resulted in higher returns to the better-off and better-educated migrants while the poorest migrants have restricted chance to improve (J. Breman, 1996). Secondly, the cost and the barriers associated with migration tend to support the better-off to migrate rather than the poor (Lipton, 1980). Thirdly, remittances are usually low, and only benefit individual families; the amounts do not contribute to community development. The migration pessimists found that the remittances were mostly spent on consumption and basic investments to improve housing conditions and seldom spent on investment in small businesses or commercial activities. Migrant families supposedly prefer to use the money to buy western luxury goods, resulting in increasing dependency on western countries in the worldwide capitalistic system. According to them, migration and remittances stimulate and support the worldwide capitalistic structure based on inequality.

Both these dominant theories - neo-classical and Marxist - have however been criticised as taking only a one-sided point of view of migration flows and neglecting the complicated, multi-dimension of migration when explaining migration only as “*a matter of individual choice or structural coercion*” (Ashwani Saith, 1999:285). Therefore, to paint a more mosaic-like picture of migration, the last 30 and more years have witnessed the emergence of more pluralistic theories on migration, like the New Economics of Labour Migration Model (NELM) and livelihood approach. The NELM model considers migration as a household strategy and offers a more

nuanced view of migration and development by including both positive and negative effects in the analytical approach (A. De Haan & Rogaly, 2015).

Migration is not initially seen as the outcome of an individual migrant decision, but rather as the strategy of the migrant household as a whole in order to diversify household income sources and to become less vulnerable to shocks, risks or local constraints affecting its livelihood (Abreu, 2012). The household made its decision on migration mostly considering the benefits of migration such as remittance flows, social services or the dispersal of risks and the costs of migration such as the cost moving or labour loss (Lindley, 2008). The pluralistic model focused on the role of remittances in the migration process and to all members of the migrant household, which acts strategically as one decision-making unit (De Haas & Van Rooij, 2010). A migrant household is defined as an alliance in which the family members commit to the profits and costs of migration. Thus, migration is accepted as a means of livelihood diversification in the migrant households. It is a response to threats and difficulties facing the household and in this way remittances are considered as a type of income insurance as far as the migrant households are concerned. NELM takes greater account of the fact that much migration is circular or seasonal with continuous interactions with the place of origin rather than a one-way and permanent move. However, this new economic school only emphasised the way that migration can mediate risk for the whole household, while less concern is put on the complicated intra-household relationship (Williams & Balaz, 2012). Therefore, gender analysis has filled in the lacuna, not only in understanding the causes and impacts of migration, but also in the way migration processes are structured, emphasising power and exploitation (Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Nawyn, 2010).

In parallel with the New Economics of Labour Model, the “livelihood approach” became increasingly popular in social scientific research on development issues in the late 70s, but it investigated migration from a slightly different angle. In contrast with the structuralist or neo-Marxist approaches, the livelihood approach debated that poor people in less developed areas cannot be considered only as passive dependents of the worldwide capitalistic system (Solesbury, 2003; Williams & Balaz, 2012). Instead, poor people are also acting as active agents by seeking for livelihood improvement within their challenging living conditions. Under the livelihood framework, migration is considered as a household strategy to reduce the vulnerability to shocks and stresses, to improve and diversify the household’s livelihoods and to increase its resilience (Ellis, 2003b; Lindley, 2008). Ellis and Freeman (2004) showed that diversification often results in less vulnerability because of greater ability to deal with unexpected difficulties, crop failure and labour or income constraints.

As a result of diversification, households are no longer dependent on the success of one activity. Moreover, migration would provide households a higher and more stable income and better human capital, thus contributing to poverty reduction and rural development in the long run (Stifel, 2010). Unlike individuals, households are in a position to control risks to their economic well-being by diversifying the allocation of household resources, such as family labour. While some family

members can be assigned economic activities in the local economy, others may be sent to work in foreign labour markets where wages and employment conditions are negatively correlated or weakly correlated with those in the local area (Massey, 1998). This perspective views migration as an economic strategy of households to allocate their human resources rationally to increase income and minimise economic risks (Cohen, 2011; Hagen-Zanker, 2008). It must be noted that migration is an important livelihood strategy, not only for survival and minimising risk for the households involved (Deshingkar, 2012; Williams & Balaz, 2012), but also for improving standards of living (A. a. P. L. Niehof, 2001; Siddiqui, 2012). Stark and Bloom (1985:174) also highlighted the importance of household strategy when showing that migration decisions are often made jointly by the migrant and by some groups of non-migrants. Costs and returns are shared, with the rules governing the distribution of both spelled out in an implicit contractual arrangement between the two parties.

However, the above approaches still mostly focus on characteristics and reasons for the typologies, often subsuming social and cultural factors under demographic, political, economic and structural contexts. There seems to be a gap in the migration theory with regard to investigating the connection between migrants and their family members not only prior to migration, but also during and after migration (Chant, 2004; Willis, 2010). A continuous connection between migrants and their households back in their place of origin is a significant phenomenon in contemporary migration and creates the interconnectedness between the sending and receiving areas, especially in the social and cultural aspects of migration. The next section will review the impacts of migration on rural development through the labour movement and remittance aspects. That section will conclude by highlighting the migration-left-behind nexus.

2.2 Migration and rural development

The interaction between migration and development in rural areas is complex, context-based and barely studied. Even though migration worldwide offers an exit from poverty for many rural households, there are inherent risks in migration-related livelihoods, so outcomes are highly contingent (Portes, 2010). Consequently, besides opening up opportunities for rural households, migration also generates processes of adverse incorporation and deeper impoverishment amongst the poor. Even migrant households that escaped poverty owe their success to a diversification strategy by combining migration with other agrarian and labour opportunities, not just through the migration pathway alone.

As mentioned in the previous section, there is no consensus on the impact of migration on rural development. Overall, two contrasting views emerge. In the first perception, migration processes not only had mainly positive impacts on the sending households, but also for whole communities, regions, and even countries. Migration is considered as a household strategy, a strategic household response to scarcity and poverty conditions, in order to reduce vulnerability and increase income and investment opportunities. As a result, migration affected positively the economic

and social flows and networks, which has a practical influence on the resource flows from the migrant to the sending area, including money transfers, in-kind remittances, and innovative techniques and ideas. Some authors, such as Bimal Ghosh (2007), based on the equilibrium mechanism, optimistically assume that migration would reduce unemployment in rural areas, offer financial and knowledge inputs (remittance and labour skills), eventually smoothing over the region's uneven development and making migration unnecessary.

Similarly, many poverty studies conducted by the World Bank claimed that migration is an important factor leading to upward mobility (Priya Deshingkar, 2006). A wide range of research argues that migration in Southeast Asia has been the key to enhancing rural household well-being and rural development (Jonathan Rigg, 2007; R. Skeldon, 2009). In Vietnam, out-migration has had significant effects: improving rural livelihoods in many ways, such as migrant households directly benefiting through positive income growth. Migration in Vietnam increases income by 9% to 20% and such effects are more pronounced in provinces with fewer job opportunities (D. L. Nguyen & Grote, 2012). Indirectly, migration can also reduce rural unemployment and poverty, and create conditions for the diversification of the rural economy through cash and commodity redistribution, labour transfer, information dissemination and the modernisation of traditional rural social structures (Khai et al., 2013; Lahiri-Dutt, Alexander, & Insouvanh, 2014; T. T. Tran, 2004).

In contrast, the second opinion highlights the negative effects of migration for both sending households and rural areas. J. Breman (1996) revealed the classic urban bias under the assumption that migration would stimulate rural development through remittances and labour absorption. Therefore, this second view supports policies that stimulate economic development in rural areas in order to restrict migration processes (N. A. Dang, 2008). It emphasises the disrupting effects of the departure of the labour force from rural areas and the overloading impact on the urban sector in terms of increasing unemployment rates, booming informal sectors, and growing poverty (De Haas, 2009).

However, both views are criticised as not reflecting the reality, which is more complicated. There are a variety of factors that influence the extent to which migration has negative or positive effects on rural households and sending areas. The impact of migration is dependent on, for instance, the type and the duration of the migration, the local context and the amount of remittances (Adger, Kelly, Winkels, Huy, & Locke, 2002; Cohen, 2011; Sasin & McKenzie, 2007). There is not always a clear-cut relationship amongst the consequences of different types of migration in the same area. Diversified patterns of migration are expected to have significantly different effects, and internal migration usually has more positive impacts on rural areas (De Jong & Graefe, 2008; Deshingkar, 2005; Hugo, 2009a; Lucas, 2007) in comparison with international migration. Similarly, regarding impacts of migration on inequality, some studies (Gubert, Lassourd, & Mesplé-Somps, 2010; S. Scott & Truong, 2004; Tuyen et al., 2014) suggest that it can help to reduce inequality, but it is also very dependent on the context. Researches in Laos

(Jonathan Rigg, 2007) and Indonesia (Yamauchia, Budy P. Resosudarmo, & Effendib, 2009) revealed that international migration created more inequality than internal migration. Besides, in some cases like Vietnam, while migration could widen income disparities within villages, it may reduce those between provinces (D. L. Nguyen & Grote, 2012). At a more macro level, D. Phan and Coxhead (2010) explore the determinants of inter-provincial migration and the effects of migration on inter-provincial inequality. Using a gravity model, the authors showed that migrants move from low-income to high-income provinces and the results show that the impact of migration on inequality can be either negative or positive. Therefore, migration and remittances have the potential to contribute to development, but it will depend on the specific political, economic, and social circumstances in both the place of origin and that of destination (Ronald Skeldon, 2008; Willis, 2010).

Recent empirical studies, reviewed briefly below, show a more diversified picture of the impact of migration on sending households and rural areas, with a focus on the effects of the human capital loss and remittance flows.

2.2.1 Roles of remittance

Remittance is a word that was coined and popularised by the World Bank and typically refers to international migrants sending money back home. There are numerous research and policy debates on international remittances but the internal remittance, in contrast, has been little studied even though internal migration is important to sustain local economies (A. McKay & Deshingkar, 2014). Sander (2003) explained the main reasons are not only due to the lack of statistics and the difficulty of capturing flows through informal channels, but also because of the view among national accounts organisations that tracking internal remittances is not needed. Unlike international remittances, there are no estimates of the size of total internal remittances (Deshingkar & Grimm, 2005). Accounting for the fact that Vietnam's temporary migrants tend to move circularly between their hometown and destination, this research included commuting as a type of labour mobility (Coxhead, Nguyen, & Vu, 2019), therefore, wages from commuting which is abstracted for commuter spending during their working time can also be considered as the remittance. Focus on internal remittance not only showed a striking feature of Vietnamese internal migration but also provides a way to analyse about intra-familial relationships (Hu, Xu, & Chen, 2011)

Some recent studies have shown the importance of remittances as a supplementary source of income for rural migrant households and communities (De Haas, 2009; J. R. Hull, 2007; Sasin & McKenzie, 2007). For example, evidence from the Philippines shows that over 7% of households depend on remittances as their primary source of income (Yang, 2008). The internal remittance enable rural households to diversify their livelihood and maintain a living standard which is now close to the poverty line. Rogaly et al. describe remittance as "a way of hanging on" (Royal B. & Rafique, 2003) and according to Ellis (2003b), for the poor who live under the poverty line, the contribution of a small remittance can make "*a huge difference to the options available to people to get a toehold on ladders out of poverty*" (Ellis, 2003b, p. 7). It is noticed that the context, the duration, the migrant

pattern and social structure also resulted in diversifying the volume and the stability of remittances (de Haan, 1999: 27), and in turn would show the different consequences. Moreover, regardless to the amount of remittance, it still plays an important role in food security as a way to spread risks and guarantee maintenance in times of low harvest (ibid: 27). Nevertheless, Priya Deshingkar (2006:55) argues that migration in some areas is for accumulation rather than just a strategy to cope with rural distress. Better outcomes appear when the remittance contributes to “saving up” when households invest in land, agricultural inputs, education or a non-farm business (Ellis, 2003b:7) which later allows them to have a better quality of life. Frank Ellis (2000:70) remarked that “*migrants maintain the flow of remittances to their families maybe because of the need for a fall-back position if urban income sources collapse, and the protection of land and other assets to which the migrant has a claim back home.*” The impacts of migration are considered to depend on the methods that rural areas rearrange labour inputs and invest remittances productively (Arjan De Haan, 1999:29)

In terms of remittance usage, rural households can use the money received for different purposes but do so mostly for basic needs such as increased consumption and investments in housing, health and education. Recently, there is a shift in literature from stress on the “*conspicuous consumption*” of the remittance to investment of the remittance when investigating the influence of migration on the rural areas. The impact of the remittance depends on the spending behaviour of the receiving households. When the financial capital received is used to improve farming productivity or to make non-farm investments, the impact has proven to be positive for both rural employment and agricultural production (Vargas-Lundius & Lanly, 2007). Also, to be kept in mind are the multiple impacts of the remittance even if it is spent for daily consumption (Massey, 1998). Remittances do not always go directly to production investment, but they are a crucial part of household strategies (Arango, 2000; A. De Haan & Rogaly, 2015). Even though the remittance is spent on consumption rather than investment, migrant households have a higher propensity to invest than non-migrant households (Cohen, 2011; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Some research has shown that remittance flows can foster employment in sending areas and can have positive impacts on both migrant and non-migrant households. The general tendency seems to be that remittances have a stimulating effect on off-farm investments and employment outside the agricultural sector (IFAD, 2016)

Furthermore, most empirical studies on remittances show a positive impact on the well-being of sending households. Remittances often result in a higher, more diversified household income, increasing food consumption and food security, allowing better access to health and educational opportunities (D. L. Nguyen & Grote, 2012; T. M. K. Nguyen, Nguyen, & Lebailly, 2016; Roa, 2007). However, there is no general agreement on the impact of migration and related resource transfers on education and health. Some research reveals that children of migrant-sending households score better in terms of health and education than non-migrant households, whilst other studies show that remittances also can have negative effects on health and educational status and do not compensate the high social costs of

migration (Knodel & Nguyen, 2014). However, the majority of migration studies show positive impacts on household health and education. However, the impact of migration and remittances is dependent on various factors such as duration and patterns of migration, the educational level of migrants, livelihood assets, social structures, and institutions (Cohen, 2011). Because of the complex nature of migration, it is difficult and not meaningful to make generalisations about the impacts of migration. However, it is possible to arrive at some short conclusions below. The decision to migrate is often part of a risk-spreading strategy of households regarding their livelihoods. In most cases, remittances appeared to have a positive impact on the living conditions of receiving households in terms of education, health, and food consumption. They lead to a higher, more diversified household income and thus to less vulnerability to stresses and shocks. Moreover, in some cases migrant remittances may lead to more investments in farm and non-farm business even though such investments are influenced by a range of factors including globalisation, environmental, and demographic changes (Willis, 2010).

In terms of the impact on agriculture, it is clear that migration is more than an outcome of agrarian transitions; it is also a driver of change in rural areas ranging from the reworking of household labour to new cropping patterns, to inflated land markets that create pressure for land use conversion (M. D., 2005; Hecht, 2010). There is no consensus on the impact of remittances on agriculture, because so much depends on the context. Some studies show positive effects in terms of an increase in agricultural production and farm investments, while other empirical research shows the opposite effect (Lucas, 2007). Sometimes, remittance flows can have a compensatory influence on the negative effects of weak human capital resources because they enable households to hire additional labour. However, in other cases, the transfer of financial resources from the migrants may result in a decrease of agricultural production, for instance because it reduces the motivation of rural people to participate in poorly paid farming activities, thus stimulating non-agricultural activities (Siddiqui, 2012)

2.2.2 Labour resource movement

A direct impact of migration on the sending households and communities is the loss of human resources. There are numerous elements affecting the extent to which this labour loss distresses the sending households such as the family organisation, the duration of the migration, the migrant characteristics, and the relationship between the migrant and sending household. Out-migration from areas with a high population density creates relief in terms of less underemployment and less pressure on natural resources (Von Braun, 2007). In other words, the movement of residents generated an insurance of rural livelihoods for the remaining rural households. Furthermore, rural out-migration has significant impacts on rural labour markets, which has hardly been focused on in the migration research literature. Out-migration decreases the supply of labour in the sending areas which sometimes can lead to higher wages and less under- or unemployment. Whether this is the case or not depends, according Lucas (2007), on the presence of an oversupply of labour, the flexibility of wages and the replacement possibilities in sending areas. In some

regions rural out-migration results in higher wages, while other regions have no gains, because the lack of labour is replaced by unemployed people (Vargas-Lundius & Lanly, 2007). Some empirical studies show that the resource flows from the migrant to the household of origin can compensate the lack of labour. Normally, the lack of labour may also be fulfilled with inexpensive labour from other rural areas. The hired labourers are often paid with the remittances received from the migrants. The extent to which these remittances are sufficient to replace the labour shortage depends on the amount of migrant remittances (Deshingkar & Grimm, 2005).

The duration of the migration has a significant influence on migrant sending areas, particularly in terms of employment. Long-term migration to urban areas or other countries generally means that migrants do not frequently return to their original place of living. This type of migrant especially induces a labour shortage, resulting in the destabilising of the traditional household and farming structures (Tacoli & Mabala, 2010). In rural areas, migration of youth has resulted in an increase in the mean age of the labour force (Jonathan Rigg, Phongsiri, Promphakping, Salamanca, & Sripun, 2019). This aging has a negative impact on agricultural production and revenues (Huang, 2012; Le Thi Quynh Tram & McPherson, 2016). Some researchers raise concerns about another loss, that of well-educated and highly-skilled labourers due to rural out-migration, while others claim that those negative effects could be compensated by a later return of more skilled migrants or by structural investments in the destination area (Ronald Skeldon, 2008). Moreover, temporary or seasonal migration can enhance the allocation of labour, because migrant workers are flexible and able to return when their households or communities need them. In other words, the labour circle does not show a negative impact on their family's economic activities.

However, migration can have a major impact on labour divisions and the workload within sending households. The remaining family members have to take over the tasks performed by the migrating members, such as performing domestic work, caring for children and the elderly or handling agricultural activities. The departure especially of a young, able-bodied man often results in a heavier workload for the women staying back with the household. Besides household duties and caring for children, they have to work in agriculture and to handle the household problems that arise (De Haas, 2010a). Such increased responsibility can be an emotional burden for the women. Finally, the departure of parents or husbands can cause feelings of loneliness and emptiness in household members remaining back home, especially in the case of long-term migration (M. M. B. Asis, 2006; Dreby, 2006). The related concept including gender, generation and household livelihood will be discussed in more detail in the following part.

2.3 Household strategy, gender and generation

2.3.1 Household, family, and livelihood

Household

There are numerous and even contradictory ways of defining the concept of household. Clay and Schwarzweller (1991) described household as “*the basic unit of human social organization. To a large extent, they represent the arena of everyday life for the vast majority of the world’s people.*” Rudie (1995:228) considered household as “*co-residential units, usually family-based in some way, which take care of resource management and the primary needs of its members.*” A. Niehof (2011) defined the household as: “*A social unit that effectively over long periods of time enables individuals, of varying ages and of both sexes, to pool income coming from multiple sources in order to ensure their individual and collective reproduction and well-being.*” Household is considered as mediating between individual and society, because the individual is an actor in the political and economic system and – at the same time – is a member of a family household, contributing to its productive and reproductive functions. Therefore, this research uses household-based approaches as a mediate disparate but equally important level of analysis in rural communities (Diane L Wolf, 1992:13) even though I keep in mind that household is still a “problematic concept” (White 1989:22). There remains, after all, considerable agreement about the nature of households in general: they characteristically engage in some combination of production, distribution (sharing, consumption, and so forth), biological and social reproduction, transmission of property, and co-residence (Netting 1993:59).

Both Sen (1990) and Kabeer (1991) recognised household is an arena of cooperation as well as conflict. The allocation of time among members within the household is much diversified and depends on many factors, its composition, life course, resources, and power as A. Niehof (1998:44) stated “*The allocation and use of resources for the household involve social mechanisms, e.g. the division of labour and decision-making*”. Therefore, intra-household dimensions such as gender or generation are critical concepts in analysing household (*which will be discussed in more detail below*). The interests and activities of individual members also need to be given attention. Somewhere this research employs the term “household strategy” which simply refers to the varying economic activities of households, as their members respond to the changing situations around them, i.e. family labour migration (Clay & Schwarzweller, 1991:5). One principal criticism of previous household strategy research is that it showed an uncritical tendency to merge analytically the individual and the household, thereby treating both the household itself and the individuals within it as identical and interchangeable units (Diane L Wolf, 1991:14). But, as Wolf observes, households do not decide things, people within households do and, more particularly, certain people as opposed to others. More often than not, household decision making involves complex processes of domination and resistance between genders and generations, and at the very least, it cannot simply be assumed that the interests of the household head are the same as

those of less empowered household members (Diane L Wolf, 1992:15). A further and equally unfortunate tendency has been to extrapolate household strategies from observations of completed actions rather than from consultations with individual household members about their own reasons for their behaviour. These are all important concerns, and while some are difficult to attend to empirically, I have attempted to come to incorporate them as much as possible in the discussion on gender and youth participation in farming.

In the rural context, households are mainly farming households in which both reproductive and productive activities are carried out in the domestic sphere of the household (Clay & Schwarzweiler, 1991). A. Niehof (1998) pointed out that farming households function in a specific economic, ecological, cultural and political environment and consisting of three subsystems: “family, farm and household”. Roquas (2002) identified a farming household as a household that has at least one member involved in agricultural production. The household as a collective has its own life course which is related to the individual household member’s life course even though the relationship is weak (Pennartz and Niehof, 1999). The household’s economic situation, household members’ roles and power change at different stages of the household’s life course and according to the phase in the life course of the individual members concerned. (Agarwal, 1997). A household can also be regarded as having agency, which is reflected in household strategies (A. Niehof, 2011; Wallace, 2002). Within the household context, household member joint strategies and individual strategies of individual members coexist in a harmonious and sometimes unharmonious way. However, when members only pursue individual strategies and do not cooperate, the household will fall apart or individual members will move out (A. Niehof, 2011). Household level analysis is important in human-environmental analysis, with regard to, for instance, agricultural intensification and extensification (Zimmerer, 2004). In this research, the household is defined as a unit in which a group of people related by kinship and/or marriage, individually as well as jointly use resources for producing their livelihood. This definition is used because of its emphasis on joint resource management for basic needs, which is important because a household is a key agent in linking resources and livelihood. The household is seen as the locus for livelihood generation, taking into account the debates on the relationship between gender and household (Kabeer, 1991, 1994). Besides, households are not closed units but are embedded in kinship networks and neighbourhoods. The agricultural producer do not rely on free labour from other household members because of their mutual kinship bond (Roquas, 2002). For farming households, land is one of the main resources for generating a livelihood. The concept of family, different from that of household, even though the two are often used interchangeably will be discussed in the coming part.

Family

Routhausen (1999:818) pointed out that “*Most uses of the word family in research indicate that it was often defined as ‘spouse and children’ or ‘kin in the household’.* Thus ‘family’ as defined in economics, sociology, and psychology often was a

combination of the notions of household and kin". No clear definition of family emerges, but is increasing recognition of the complexity and diversity of household types (Allan & Crow, 2001). Family is more about the relationship of marriage and blood-related connections, while household is the unit which included both family-based and non-family-based members (Allan & Crow, 2001). Therefore, family emphasises the unity and conflict between people who are linked through kinship whereas the household focuses on a different set of concerns, such as the division of responsibility and workload, the household strategies, and the joint resources. Stack (1996:31) suggested that "*family as the smallest, organized, durable network of kin and non-kin who interact daily, providing domestic needs of children and assuring their survival*". Even though Stack already reduces the importance of kinship in defining family, this concept still fails to capture the increasing reality of family migration that stretches their right and responsibility over regions. McDaniel, Campbell, Hepworth, and Lorenz (2005:2) offered a flexible way to define family as "*any group of people related either biologically, emotionally, or legally. That is, the group of people that one defines as significant for his or her well-being*". This research employs the concept of Routhausen (1999:820) "*There are diverse types of families, many of which include people related by marriage or biology, or adoption, as well as people related through affection, obligation, dependence, or cooperation*" which is most suitable to illustrate the diversified and complex family that stretches out its their livelihoods, rights and responsibilities across households, regions, and nations (Stack, 2001).

Being aware of the importance of all family-based agricultural activities, the International Steering Committee of the IYFF proposed a conceptual definition of family farming: "*A means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production that is managed and operated by a family, and is predominantly reliant on the family labour of both women and men. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions.*" (FAO, 2014a). They estimated at 500 million the different types of family farming units in the World, which represents, on average, over 80% of farms and the main paradigm of sustainable food production and rural development in job creation, income generation, promoting and diversifying local economies (Da Silva, 2014). This implied a new way to perceive development which is not only based on economic growth but also in livelihood improvement – the important concept which is reviewed in the next section

Livelihood

The term livelihood is not new, but its current conceptualisation represents a new theoretical perspective (L. De Haan & Zoomers, 2005; Kaag, 2004). Livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including material and social resources) and activities as means of living (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Frank Ellis, 2000) . The UK Department for International Development (DFID) and others have distinguished five type of capital (natural, social, financial, physical and human) that together are modelled in a pentagon. The stronger the relations between the elements

of capital, the higher the resilience and strength of a household's livelihood (Carney, 1999). The livelihood approach was further advanced to include the concept of livelihood security. Frankenberger and McCaston (1998) define livelihood security as "*adequate and sustainable access to income and resources to meet basic needs.*"

However, human creativity and resilience in making a living seem to have been largely ignored in conventional livelihood approaches where resources are considered as "capital" and viewed as accessible or inaccessible to people mainly based on structural factors. Ignoring the creativity and context-specific nature of generating a living yields a superficial picture of reality (Ontita, 2007). The language of "capital" implies fixed rather than variable values relative to the autonomy of the actor(s) involved (S. White & Ellison, 2007). Because of this, A. a. P. L. Niehof (2001) talks about resources in livelihood generation, seeing those as more dynamic than assets or capital that people turn into resources in the process. Moreover, Arce (2003) argues that in a society where many resources are owned in the mixture of individual and collective ownership, and livelihoods are organised in more complex ways, "*the term 'capital' cannot apply to them as a yardstick to judge their livelihood vulnerability or strength*" (Arce, 2003).

In the framework of the sustainable livelihoods approach, the notion of capital has been replaced by that of assets. Accordingly, "*a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base*" (Carney, 1999, p. 2). However, the frame of reference is still underpinned by neo-classical economic assumptions that largely ignore the balancing of the goals of economic viability and environmental sustainability in the pursuit of livelihood and underestimate the issue of value contestations that are shaped by everyday life experiences (Arce, 2003). Using the actor-oriented approach, Long (2001) elaborated the concept by explicitly including the agency of the actors and evaluation of their livelihood, what they have and how they value what they do, as they always seek for alternative means to improve their material and social conditions. As he stated, "*livelihoods are made up of practices by which individuals and groups strive to make a living, meet their consumption necessities, cope with adversities and uncertainties, engage with new opportunities, protect existing or pursue new lifestyles and cultural identifications, and fulfil their social obligations*" (Long, 2003). Livelihood research has recently given more attention to culture and social and political contexts (J., A., & K., 2007) and recognised livelihood as an open system, interacting with other systems, and using various resources and assets with the household as the locus of the livelihood generation. Kaag (2004) suggested that livelihoods are not static; they are subject to change. Based on his research in South Africa, Frank Ellis (2000) revealed that many rural households dropped their main source of livelihood and had to return to a mix of activities: small-scale farming, wage labour work, petty trading. He further pointed out that none of these activities was very remunerative. Therefore, a change in livelihood resources will raise new issues in rural households, such as the division of labour (Francis, 2000). Moreover, the achievement of increasing productivity in small-farm agriculture has been the central orientation in rural development from the

1970s onward (Scoones, 2009). This research will take into account livelihood as a system, in which resources are needed for livelihood generation and household is the locus for generating the livelihood. I also will give attention to the household's land use for on-farm livelihood activities because land is an important natural asset at the environmental level for rural livelihood systems and access to land is very critical in the livelihoods of rural households (Gironde & Golay, 2015)

Livelihood diversification is important to understanding the new livelihood system in rural households. Diversification on farm is a livelihood strategy *“by which households construct increasingly diverse livelihood portfolios, making use of increasingly diverse combinations of resources and assets”* (Niehof, 2004: 321). Frank Ellis (2000:15) suggested *“Rural livelihood diversification is defined as the process by which rural households construct an increasingly diverse portfolio of activities and assets in order to survive and to improve their standard of living”*, while van der Ploeg and Jingzhong (2010) refer to livelihood diversification as multiple livelihoods. Many researchers look at migration as a type of livelihood diversification (Francis, 2000; McDowell & De Haan, 1997) which are gender-related (A. Niehof, 2004)

2.3.2 Intra-household interaction: Gender and generation

Gender is a cross-cutting theme in the livelihood framework, related to the division of labour and control over resources. In this research, gender is conceptualised as the socially constructed difference between women and men (Kabeer, 1999). Men and women have different roles, both in society and in the household. The household is internally complex and provides the context for diverse activities. *“So it must be disaggregated: hence the different roles and activities of individuals (men; women; natural and adopted children) must be considered”* (Hussein & Nelson, 1998:23). Men and women in the household have unequal positions, especially with regard to the distribution of resources within the household (Sen, 1990). Thus, gender is about how society gives meaning to differences in femininity and masculinity, and the power relations and dynamics that come about as a result of this (Laven & Verhart, 2011). Njuki, Kaaria, Chamunorwa, and Chiuri (2011) defined gender as *“the socially constructed roles and status of women and men, girls and boys. It is a set of culturally specific characteristics defining the social behaviour of women and men, and the relationship between them. Gender roles, status and relations vary according to place (countries, regions, and villages), groups (class, ethnic, religious, and caste), generations and stages of the lifecycle of individuals. Gender is, thus, not about women but about the relationship between women and men.”* A. a. P. L. Niehof (2001) notes: *“The gender-based division of labour within households is one of the most recognised aspects of how a household pursues its livelihood strategies. What men versus women do is in part reflective of their culture, that is, male and female roles are constricted by what is deemed fitting male and female behaviour.”* Not only what men and women do, but also household headship and decision-making are important in the pursuit of livelihood. Traditionally, female-headed households are often portrayed as the

‘poorest of the poor’, given the assumption that female household headship is associated with economic deprivation and insecurity (Chant, 2004). However, it is naive to generalise about women’s poverty and engage in superficial dualistic comparisons between male and female-headed households because female-headed households are not necessarily worse-off compared to their counterparts (Chant, 2004; A. Niehof, 2004).

The gender aspect in this research relating to the notable trend in recent migration flows is the growing number of independent female migrants (M. M. B. Asis, 2006; Liem Nguyen, Yeoh, & Toyota, 2006). This development has enabled many women to acquire independent incomes and to take up new social positions in families and local communities (IOM, 2005). Women’s absence from their home creates severe impacts relating to the female migrants and the families left behind as opposed to migrating men (M.M.B Asis, 2003). Reconstruction of gender roles occurs, creating uncomfortable situations for the men of communities within Vietnam (L. A. Hoang & Yeoh, 2011). When a household suffers from a lack of female farm labourers, this seemed, in many ways, to be more problematic than when there was a shortage of male labourers. The same situation is found in the Philippines (M. M. B. Asis, Huang, & Yeoh, 2004). When women migrate, men are confronted with the need to take on childcare duties, traditionally ascribed to women, while at the same time being under considerable pressure to live up to locally accepted ideas about masculinity.

Moreover, evidence from the Philippines shows that when migrating women withdraw their labour and knowledge from the household’s agricultural activities, their spouses usually shift to plant new, input-intensive crops with the cash remittances they receive from their absent wives (D. McKay, 2003). Men’s interests in commercial crops may overrule their wives’ preferences for more secure and ecologically sustainable cropping patterns which may influence long-term agricultural sustainability (M. D., 2005). Migration clearly presents an opportunity to challenge the traditional gender division of agricultural work (Piper & Yamanaka, 2008) if that has not been the intended effect. Thus, migration and livelihoods are an area in which appreciation of gender is a key issue to understand the intra-household relationships.

Another important intra-household notion is generation, normally defined as “*the social (or macro-) structure that is seen to distinguish and separate children [and youth] from other social groups, and to constitute them as a social category*” (Alanen & Mayall, 2001). In terms of youth, B. White (2012) remarked that youth are socially constructed, not biologically fixed; therefore, the meaning of the term and its boundaries vary over time, between societies and within societies. Therefore, all age-based boundaries of the categories of youth, whether established by UN agencies or by national governments, are subjective and problematic. Youthhood is coming to be increasingly defined as a being transition from childhood to adulthood and the process of being independent from parents economically and socially (Bennell & Hartl, 2010; Leavy & Smith, 2010). Theories about youth propose to

study youth in different dimensions: youth as action, youth as sub-cultural practice, youth as identity and youth as generation (Jones, 2009).

Taking a youth perspective on several of the key challenges to development work provides new understandings and insights to complement and inform our existing tools for analysing the interaction between migration and agricultural production (Jamieson, 2000). Investigating the inter-generational aspects of asset and resource ownership and management of such as an inheritance provides an important entry point, alongside gender, with which it is possible to go beyond the household level to explore the dynamics of intra-household relationships. Huijsmans (2016) emphasised that focusing on the generational dimensions in the rural communities will offer a better understanding about the juveniles, their role in agrarian changes and reasons of their farming escape. Those ideas reflect the importance of a relational approach to studying young people's experiences with farming, the dynamics of relations between younger and older generations, and the role of these dynamics in the social reproduction of agrarian communities (Berckmoes & White, 2016; Clendenning, 2019). At the same time, B. White (2015) and Jones (2009) reminded that young people are not homogeneous; generation must be "intersecting" with other important social categories such as socio economic class and gender. Crosscut with other sectors, empirical research shows the interesting aspect of the relation between migration and agriculture. Agriculture, especially family farming, is still the most important employment source which provided around 40% of all employment in less developed countries (ILO, 2017:42). Therefore, it is essential to take a close look at the prospects for rural youth related to agriculture in the context of migration. Hereby, B. White (2019) highlighted the necessity to apply the life-course perspective of young migration studies. The outmigration of youth should not be simplified as a permanent abandonment of rural life and the possibility of the youth's return to farming as "*an open question*" (ibid, 2019:9). The next part will critically review the impact of migration on agricultural development through the lens of political economy, within the framework of agrarian questions.

2.4 Peasant mobilisation: The agrarian question revisited

2.4.1 Peasant concept and agrarian change

Global economic change has been driving the contemporary "*agrarian transition*" in many developing countries, a process whereby national and local economies move from being predominantly agricultural and rural to predominantly industrial and urban (Deborah Fahy Bryceson, 1996; Rob A Cramb et al., 2009; Tomich, Kilby, & Johnston, 2018). The agrarian change has transformed the character of rural landscapes, livelihoods and social relations, creating a large wave of peasant mobilisation (P. F. Kelly, 2011; Li, 1996; Santasombat, 2008), which has been widely foreseen as a de-agrarianisation process and with it the demise of rural areas. However, that forecast seems far from the reality. So the new focus of agrarian study is moving to explain why peasant mobilisation is "*casting a long shadow of nostalgia and melancholy over modern society*" (Bartra, 1992:17).

This thesis uses the concept of peasant proposed by Friedmann (1980): *“those agricultural producers who, first, use family labour and thus the household as the unit of production to produce mainly for subsistence and, second, depend on non-commoditised relations for the household’s reproduction”*. The notion “forms of production” was used by Friedmann as the dominant concept in analysing agrarian social relations and defined forms of production through a double specification of the unit of production and its social formation. Social formation here refers to the context for reproduction of units of production. In this way, peasant production, as a form of production, is then distinguished from other forms by combining the two characteristics: household as a unit of production and a non-commoditised reproduction. The latter, according to Friedmann, means that *“access to land, labour, credit and product markets is mediated through direct, non-monetary ties to other households or other classes, and these ties are reproduced through institutionally stable reproductive mechanisms”* (ibid: 63).

This definition of peasants is criticised because it excludes other characteristics associated with peasantry, such as suppression to more powerful outside interests and embeddedness in the traditional rural community (Shanin, 1971). However, it succeeds in proposing two common aspects of peasantry: household production and non-commoditised reproduction. This definition is also particularly suited to investigating the agrarian question in the context of migration (an important aspect of penetration capitalism) – how massive migration transforms agricultural production.

The process shifting peasant to wage-labour was pointed out by (Chayanov, 1966) as a household strategy to fulfil the whole family needs rather than to gain a profit and could adapt with the external conditions. The equilibrium of activities is defined by the interaction between labourers and consumers among family members. That mechanism could sell farming labour which is temporary surplus in the idle seasons and withdraw wage labour to supplement its own resources at peak periods, given that labour and employment respectively are available. That internal flexible mode of family labour could reduce the need of wage labour for farming, which could sustain the low prices for their agricultural production. Based on Chayanov’s idea and Friedmann’s concept of peasants, this thesis deductively hypothesises the main direction taken by transformation of the peasant form of production in the Red River Delta of Vietnam as follows: The rural households remain as family units of production, even though farming households are integrated into markets for exchanging land, credit, farm inputs and products needed to secure their subsistence and production. Therefore, Friedmann’s term applied in this thesis, still based on households as units of production but with commoditised reproduction of the households, constitutes simple commodity production; the simple commodity producers can be called family farmers.

In the agrarian studies, farming was regarded as necessarily a full-time occupation up until the 1980s. If a peasant became a part-timer, one was assumed to be on the way out of agriculture. It was only after decades of diversification of activities that there are new approaches recognizing the importance of ‘multiple job holding’ (van

der Ploeg & Jingzhong, 2010), or ‘occupational multiplicity’ (Breman, 2007) or ‘diversified livelihoods’ (Frank Ellis, 2000; Krishna, 2012; Lahiri-Dutt et al., 2014; Scoones & Thompson, 2009). Schmitt (1989) also emphasises the higher efficiency of family farms who allocate labour between farm and non-farm work in comparison with the farms using hired labour. The phenomenon referred to as de-agrarianisation described the process in which a rural household progressively dependent on non-farm activities, was found (Deborah Fahy Bryceson, 1996; Deborah Fahy Bryceson & Jamal, 2019). It specifically comprises a move away from dependence on farm production. In the end, some writers have even identified the ‘end of the peasantry’ and ‘de-agrarianisation’ as the defining features of the current transformation of rural livelihoods (Deborah Fahy Bryceson, 2000; Elson, 2016).

In all the debate around these agrarian questions, peasant and family farming were mostly visible as the passive victim of capitalism’s dominance. Besides, there is the long-lived assumption that family farms must predictably change into large-scale farms, rather than exploring the vibrant range of the family-farm size. Moreover, most of the studies overlook how rural households engage social relations to access opportunities in diverse social and environmental settings. Consequently, the assumption often still remains that agrarian change unfolds in a lock-step, linear fashion from subsistence to commercial agriculture (Hall, 2007; Raintree & Warner, 1986; Jonathan Rigg, 2007), missing how and why farmers negotiate agrarian change through multiple, diverse pathways, working social relations to access resources beyond their locality (James F. Eder, 2005; Tsing, Fried, & Roseman, 2003; Zerner & Warren, 2004). Thus, van der Ploeg and Jingzhong (2010) remarked on the success with which a pluriactive farm family distributes its family labour force and other capitals, combining economical farming methods. It is manifest that migration has changed the small-scale farm household, but as an institution it does not vanish. Rural households rather adapt to the loss of labour to migration rather than adopt or expand agricultural production and widespread land abandonment to form households that have multiple-job holdings and are multi-locality. The multi-locality of livelihoods caused by labour migration was defined thusly by Elmhirst (2012): *“Multi-locality is understood in two senses: (1) in a temporal sense in terms of livelihood trajectories and movements through different spaces; and in a spatial sense, in terms of networks that usually link household members as they each seek livelihoods in different places.”*

Multi-local livelihood corresponds to the notion of trans-local living, an emerging phenomenon of contemporary migration. The peasant becomes both a family farmer and labourer at the same time. The multi-function becomes the migrant’s nature when he/she normally undertakes several different jobs and, presents several identities in several places. Migration, therefore, is not only a linkage space from rural to other areas but also the bridge among sectors: agriculture and other sectors. In this new reality of urban and rural expansion, the peasantry is prone to present *“hybrid features: peasant workers and urbanised villagers”* (Peemans, 2013). This thesis shows that supplementary farming can be a fairly stable adaptation in its own right and the peasant migrant or part wage farmer expresses a mix for identity and meaning within the community itself. Farming households with wage-earning

members may only be part-time farmers but by farming only part-time such households remove themselves from the agrarian nexus and may create a different, and potentially more remunerative, set of production activities (James F Eder, 1999). These peasants demonstrate their capacity to reconstruct new images of agrarian change in order to create a more dynamic symbolic representation of themselves.

Rural out-migration, in most cases, is associated with agrarian change in rural areas, but normally not a spectacular transformation. Agriculture is likely to continue in a similar form despite large outflows of labour and some inflows of cash income. Earnings from migration are not competitive with other sources of incomes from agriculture. Adaptation rather than the abandonment or expansion of agricultural activities is likely the more popular trend in developing countries. Migration should be seen as a livelihood, investment and resilience strategy rather than the significant disruption of agriculture production. McMichael (2010) pointed out that “*‘peasant mobilisation’ is transcending conventional peasant politics, reframing its ontological concerns via a critique of neoliberalism, and reformulating the agrarian question in relation to development exigencies today.*” Moreover, it should not be assumed that the impact of migration on agriculture takes place in a certain linear movement or is unidirectional. Rather, peasant migrants move back and forth and maintain their social relationships in their place of origin, i.e. their village in this thesis, which will be reviewed in more detail in next section

2.4.2 The northern Vietnamese village in transition

“*Làng*” was once the most typical institution of ancient rural Vietnamese society (Bui, 2010; Gourou, 1945). Paul Mus (1952: 240) stated that “*Vietnam is a network of villages*”, stressing that “*it was villages that produced Vietnam and it was in them that one learned to apprehend it, at decisive times, in its national spirit*” (Mus, 1952:21). Every village had its own lands, method of farming, its own possessions and institutions, with distinct customs, cultures, politics and economy (Khoang, 1966). The concept of the village applied in this research originated from the villages in the lowlands of northern Vietnam, bearing in mind the diversity of Vietnamese villages³ and the fact that “*variations in landscape, physical attributes, socio-cultural circumstances and historical background do not warrant a comprehensive description of ‘the’ Vietnamese village*” (Kleinen, 1999).

Regarding the Vietnamese traditional village, a number of authors put emphasis on its political autonomy and economic self-sufficiency. D. H. Tran (1996) observed that the traditional village was not only an administrative unit but also a community with many functions. Though small, the village was tightly structured, suitable to the demands of everyday life, and able to cope with difficult situations such as natural

³ There are “*differences in the pattern of village administration and society between the North, Centre and South, as beneath the broad picture of institutional conformity there was probably considerable diversity in actual village arrangements, particularly regarding differences of origin and size, and patterns of power and wealth involving the dominant village families*”. (TAnh, 2003 #302)

calamity, banditry, and warfare. The particular trait of the village was its closed life. The village was a distinct world by itself. All villagers could depend on village institutions, a communal spirit, and village sentiment without going out or making exchanges beyond the village gate (D. H. Tran, 1996). After fulfilling its obligations to the state, the village could run its own affairs. The state had no affairs with individuals but with the village (Gourou, 1936). The distinct world of village life depended on the autonomy of religious, social and political affairs, and self-sufficiency.

Today, while the commune, or “*xã*”, is considered only as an administrative unit, the village, or “*làng*” is actually the cultural and social unit of the countryside with its traditional settlement. The “*làng*” still has a certain territory, structure and customs where peasants actually share their sentiments. Do Thai Dong remarked that Vietnamese villages always exist in terms of maintaining a village mentality, village behaviours, and relations regardless of the changes (T. D. Do, 1991). Approaching the matter from the value of the neighbourhood, Appadurai finds that the village is not naturally given but constantly reproduced through the efforts of local people in relation to a wider world (Appadurai, 1996). Appadurai showed the relation between neighbourhood and locality as follows: On the one hand, a neighbourhood or village is a context or set of contexts, in which local subjects carry out their actions as well as interpret those actions. On the other hand, the neighbourhood or village produces contexts through activities of production, representation, and reproduction that are carried out by local subjects. Those processes happen constantly in a wider context. Appadurai (1996) remarked that because the production of locality happened constantly, the village cannot be seen as a status quo before modernisation happened but was historically constituted against the backdrop and in the context of this change in the past already. Therefore, locality is considered as the social achievement. The local villagers make a constant effort to keep the village remaining much the same in a situation of perennial change (Appadurai, 1996).

In the case of Vietnam, processes like war, colonisation, economic change, political integration and recently migration have impacted on and often constituted historical villages. Thus, villages cannot be viewed as existing in opposition to the outside world, and outside of history. In line with Appadurai’s conceptualisation, Vietnamese villages are not “natural” as such but historically constituted and constantly reconstructed through social actions of local subjects in terms of villagers, in relation to the wider contexts outside. In other words, through social activities of production, representation and reproduction carried out by the villagers in relation to the world beyond the village, the village is constantly reproduced. Therefore, even though the perception of the closed characteristics of Asian villages has to be reconsidered⁴, northern Vietnamese villages do not need to change into

⁴ Breman (1995) argued that the perception of the village as “*a unique, distinct, compact and isolated community*” has to be reconsidered. Breman emphasises that there is no common concept that

“open villages” as Popkin and Popkin (1979:1) suggested. “*Most (but not all) of the world’s peasantry today live in open villages.*” This thesis works with the hypothesis that the northern Vietnamese village has been transformed to become a more flexible model while at the same time remaining a locality. In other words, it becomes a new type of mixed village, sharing both the characteristics that J. C. Scott (1977) and Popkin and Popkin (1979) pointed out regarding the traditional Vietnamese village. On the one hand, migration becomes an important issue. The individual calculations and decisions or rational choices of individuals, and the village, as Popkin highlighted, were not egalitarian, levelling, welfare-oriented nor necessarily harmonious. There was at once both cooperation and conflict, and individual behaviours in the village were governed by considerations of self-interest (Popkin & Popkin, 1979). On the other hand, agricultural production still needs the moral arrangements that minimise risks and sustain the subsistence of the peasants (J. C. Scott, 1977). Although the traditional Vietnamese villages were to keep subsistence security and collective welfare for peasant life, faced by “*the spectre of hunger and dearth, and occasionally famine*” (ibid, 1977:1), the new mixed Vietnam village is to provide social protection and welfare for the “*hybrid peasant*” against the uncertainty of the capitalism market and modernity. The subsistence of peasants depended on “*patterns of reciprocity, forced generosity, communal land, and work-sharing*” (ibid, 1977:3). Involving the village as the institution gives me a hint to understand many cases which fall between the cracks of the agrarian theories.

2.5. Conceptual framework

The previous parts of this chapter demonstrate the fundamental complexity of agricultural transformation currently taking place in developing countries, and the equally complex associations between these transformations on one the hand and rural out-migration, on the other. The potential impact of migration on agrarian change is high, but this impact is mediated by various other contextual variables. The framework of the impact of migration and agrarian change with a focus on the social dimension, as described below in Figure 2.1, suggests a possible approach to this challenge. Migration should be seen as a livelihood, investment, and resilience strategy rather than the significant disruption of agricultural production as Hussein and Nelson (1998) already stated “*Migration and investment in agricultural intensification are often combined with a range of income diversification activities to form the basis of rural people’s total livelihood strategies.*”

embraces all Asian villages because the Asian village is too diversified. Therefore, it is not warranted to simplify the Asian village into an inflexible model. Firstly, it is difficult to say that the village is isolated, exerting self-control when it had to give up a large part of its production to the state. Secondly, its self-sufficiency is doubtful because its economy depends on the transacting of a diversity of products, the role of money and the variety of land in its possession. Thirdly, the validity of political autonomy is highly questionable because the village’s political life is linked with the broader political world outside.

The influences of migration on agricultural production are vastly variable; therefore, the pole of migration in this framework suggests considering three aspects which heavily affect agricultural production: the migration patterns, characteristics of migrants and remittance behaviours. As the consequence of the migration process, farming needs to adapt to the new source of capital investment from remittances, the change in land use and agricultural production choices combined with technology development and labour adaptation. This interaction needs to take the local context into account, including the globalisation process, the national macro policy, local historical context and household options reflecting often unique combinations of the complicated and even contradictory processes.

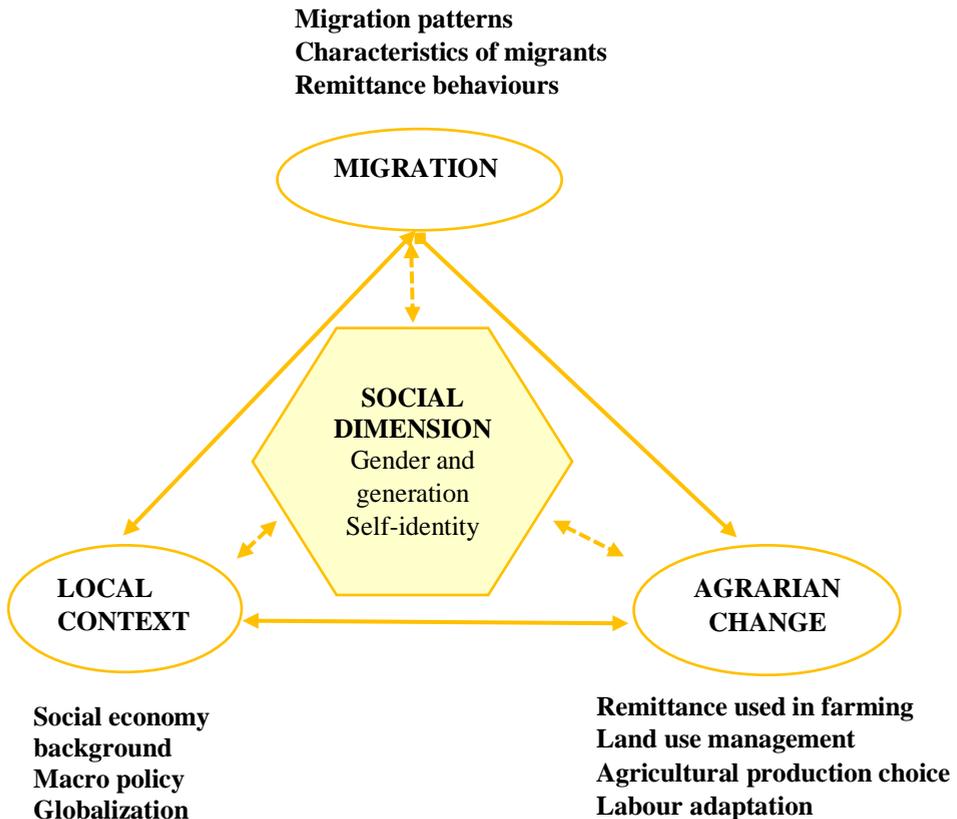


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework of the impacts of migration on agrarian change

The centre of the framework focuses on the social dimensions highlighting the class or social differentiation impacted by peasant mobilisation which put more emphasis on the way people think they are. The social aspects also highlight the gender and generational dimensions of the social reproduction of rural communities. Each rural household has different livelihood strategies, and these differ according to age, gender, and educational background. At the same time, members of families are not homogenous, i.e. different members of the households have their own interests, aspirations and perception. Moreover, this paper emphasises the need to include the gender, generation, and perspectives of the migrant peasants in further research, not only as a subject, but also as an object of migration because they are proactively involving themselves in the agrarian change process as analysed above. The gender relation intertwined with generation shows that migration enhances the resilience of both females and youth in traditionally agrarian societies which are typically patriarchal in both the gender and generational relations within these societies. Migration is supposed to be an effective strategy for females and youth to take advantage of additional earning opportunities whilst keeping their link with agricultural work. Rural out-migration, in most cases, is associated with agrarian change in rural areas, but it is not normally a dramatic transformation.

CHAPTER 3

**Historical overview of migration and
agricultural production in Vietnam**

This chapter presents an overview of agricultural production and migration in Vietnam for a better understanding of the country context as it relates to the study objectives. Retracing Northern Vietnam's contemporary history, this chapter aimed to provide a basic canvas on which to picture agricultural production, migration interaction and related issues. The first section covers the period before 1954 while the second describes the collective period that followed. The agrarian reform period is reported on in Part 3 while Part 4 highlights the main characteristics of the de-collectivisation period and the last section describes the expansion and integrated period. Due to the specific impacts of this policy on agricultural land division and migration regulations, the *hộ khẩu* (household registration) system is reviewed to provide a backdrop to the relationship between rural population, agricultural land, and rural out-migration.

3.1 The period before 1954

Figure 3.1 describes the relevant political and institutional affecting both agriculture and migration in defining part of Vietnam's history. On the one hand, Vietnam's agricultural sector has made enormous progress over the more than 30 years since *Đổi Mới*. Steady advances in small-holder rice productivity and intensification through the 1990s and beyond have played a central role in Vietnam's successes in poverty reduction, national food security and social stability. The country has also achieved explosive growth in agricultural exports and now ranks among the top five global exporters of products as diverse as shrimp, coffee, cashews, rice and pepper. Wetland rice farming has traditionally been the fundamental activity of agriculture. In the historical context of agricultural production, it is helpful to understand the historical changes in farming households. On the other hand, in recent history, Vietnam has witnessed many large waves of migration due to the impact of war, economics, and politics. The Vietnamese trace the origins of their culture and nation to the fertile plains of the Red River Delta in northern Vietnam. After centuries of developing a civilisation and economy based on the cultivation of irrigated rice, in the 10th century, the Vietnamese began expanding southward in search of new rice lands.

During the feudal period, the mainstream migration of the Vietnamese people was from north to south. In the wake of invasions and territorial expansion through the various dynasties, we see enormous flows of migrants, leading to the creation of northern, southern and central Vietnam. In general, the more recent historical development process of Vietnam's agricultural production at the household level can be divided into four periods (see Figure 3.1), namely: the Collectivisation (1954-1980), and Transition Periods (1981-1989), the Revolution Period (1989-1994) and the Expansion and International Integration Period (from 1995 onward) even though the actual timing is somewhat more complex than the table suggests.

Until the mid-19th century and the beginning of the French colonial period, all societies in the country were agrarian, subsistence and village-oriented. The colonisation of Vietnam started in 1883 when the French colonialists finished occupying Indochina. The colonial exploitation made Vietnam into a satellite of global capitalism. Under colonisation, Vietnam's traditional agriculture gave way to an unstable change, to a monetary economy, which depended on the market and global agricultural production prices (Gourou, 1945). After many centuries of isolation, its traditional agricultural structure was affected by the market, when colonial tax policies rapidly pauperised the peasantry. Before 1954, private land ownership existed, and land transactions occurred quite frequently. A household's wealth was directly correlated to the amount of land possessed. After centuries of being cut off from the outside world, hiding behind the village bamboo groves (Rambo, 1973), traditional agricultural societies began to be influenced by new market forces while the policy of the colonial leaders was rapidly impoverishing the peasantry

In this colonised economy, migration dynamics were mainly the organised migration of labour to meet the growing demand for manpower for coffee or rubber plantations and mining. Many people were forced to move from their hometown villages in the North to work in the plantations (Kolko, 1985). Besides, the impoverishment and economic insecurity in the countryside led to the fact that by the mid-1930s, at least two-thirds of farmers in the North had to leave their hometowns during their seasonal downtime to find temporary jobs (V. Thompson, 1937). However, the colonial socio-economic structure did not really bring major changes in the economic geography of Vietnam. Agricultural production remained relatively close to the external market. Exchanges between villages and outside areas were very restricted. Some trade routes were built through to some major trading ports, but the scale of trade was still very limited, and the colonial economy had not developed enough to give rise to densely populated urban areas. Saigon became the most important port city to serve France's exclusive traders, while Hanoi became the modest administrative centre in the north. Because there was no demand for labour and industrial development, rural-urban migration during this period was very limited.

3.2 Collective Agriculture Period in Vietnam: 1954-1980

The Geneva Accords in 1954 divided Vietnam into two countries: the North following Socialism and in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam while the South adopted capitalism and formed the Republic of Vietnam.⁵ In Northern Vietnam, to reduce social inequality and to consolidate political power, a Land

⁵ The very different characteristics between two regions must be borne in mind. The analysis in this chapter mostly focuses on the northern Vietnam as the context of the research.

Reform Policy was launched in 1954. Land from the landlords was confiscated and redistributed among the population. Every household then got private land rights. In 1954, the government started to promote mutual-aid teams which implied mutual assistance among rural households. These groups of households formed production brigades, which were in charge of reaching government quotas for farming production in the North. Starting in 1959, the establishment of agricultural cooperatives was promoted. Collectives required farming households to pool their labour, land, draft animals, and other means of production and then work together for crop cultivation, livestock raising, and crops. In the collective era, 95% of agricultural land belonged to the commune and was managed by the collective's production team (Kirk & Nguyen, 2009). Farming households made their living by cultivating collective land. In exchange for contributing labour to the collective, they gained working points. The number of working point the people could earn depended on such things as their physical strength and skills; higher skilled work generated more points (Wertheim, 1973). The number of working points a family earned was important because it determined, together with the size of the family, the distribution of food. In 1960, collectives were built on a village scale (Kerkvliet, 2005). The leaders of the collective organised all the agricultural activities in the village.

By the end of 1960, the North had 85.8% of farm households with 68.1% of the cultivated land area, and 40,422 cooperatives were set up for business (Truong, 1987). Construction of the agricultural cooperatives was basically completed. Due to that priority, the North experienced a very slow urban growth rate of 7.4% in 1955, 10.9% in 1965 and 12.2% in 1975 (T. T. T. Tran, 2007). The state assumed that urban development had to be balanced with rural development in the interplay between industry and agriculture. Within this interaction, middle-sized cities and small-town systems were able to achieve high levels of growth as well as self-sufficiency and contribute simultaneously to both the industrialisation processes and agricultural co-operation. Populations in the north were also distributed from places with high population density such as the Red River Delta to newly established economic zones in the northern midlands starting from the first five-year plan (1961-1965). About one million people settled in new economic zones by 1975 (Pingali & Vo, 1992).

In contrast, de-colonisation in southern Vietnam strengthened and diversified the existing economic exchanges between regions and the world, such as the export of rice and rubber. Therefore, agriculture in southern Vietnam was highly commercialised and more oriented to the export market, with tenant farmers cultivating land owned by landlords (Q.-T. Do & Iyer, 2003; Kirk & Nguyen, 2009). Economic growth on the one hand contributed to an increase in urban population in the south. On the other hand, the war also contributed to a fundamental change in the urban landscape of the south. Due to the state of insecurity and the devastation of war, a large part of the rural population had to leave their farms and market gardens to live in the city. By the early 1960s,

about 15% to 20% of the population of the south lived in urban areas (Woodside, 1976). By 1974, this proportion had risen to 47%. This urban population growth rate was five times higher than that of developing countries in the same period and makes southern Vietnam the second most urbanised area in Southeast Asia, after Singapore. As a result, as many as one in five newcomers to the city became street vendors, sellers of food or footwear or providers of various services. In 1974, “the pavement economy” was the major economic sector for non-farm labour in southern Vietnam (Kolko, 1985).

After Reunification with the South in 1975, the North Vietnam tried to apply its collective system to the whole country, but the central planned system did not succeed in the South (Truong, 1987). Only 24.5% of farm households participated in the Collectives in 1980 and many cases were reported to be collective on paper only (Pingali & Vo, 1992; Truong, 1987). At this stage the collectives encountered little opposition from peasants, but as they grew larger the resistance grew stronger. Peasants did not take care of collective property because egalitarianism gave them little or no incentive to work hard. No difference was made between people doing agricultural production work and those not, between people doing more or less, and between people doing well or not. Besides, instead of supplying their farming outputs to the government procurements, collective farmers tried to sell their produce through informal markets (H. A. Akram-Lodhi, 2001; Fforde & De Vylder, 1996). The resistance became stronger when collective members quit and withdrew their labour from collective tasks in the 1960s (Naziri, Aubert, Codron, Loc, & Moustier, 2014).

Regarding migration, no doubt after the unification of the country, the view of balanced development and rural-urban management in the north were applied throughout the country. Priority was given to policies that restricted migration from rural to urban areas, reduced urbanisation in southern cities and reduced the imbalance of population density between the North and South. The government also attempted to relocate 2.5 million people from the most populated provinces in the North to the South, which is described as state-led migration during the period from 1994 to 1999 (Zhang, Kelly, Locke, Winkels, & Adger, 2006). Those migration flows were just under half of the 4.5 million migrants recorded by census for the same period. By 1999, the highest out-migration rates were found in the Red River Delta provinces of Hai Duong, Thai Binh and Nam Dinh and the north central coast provinces of Thanh Hoa, Nghe An and Ha Tinh (N. A. Dang, 2006; Harigaya & de Brauw, 2007; Vargas-Lundius & Lanly, 2007) while the main receiving provinces were those adjacent to the Cambodian border and to the central highland provinces. The policy of sedentarisation, which encourages ethnic nomad people to settle down and practice fixed farming created the state-led migration which generally moved people to new economic zones (*vùng kinh tế mới*). However, those population redistribution initiatives met with great difficulties in terms of resources, organisational issues and disagreement on the part of the people involved (Hill, 1985). Of the 1.3 million who migrated to new economic

zones, 20% left immediately because of the lack of basic infrastructure and lack of arable land. Over time, up to half of the migrants left the new economic zones to return to the cities or their home provinces. Reportedly, since the 1990s the policy of sedentarisation has no longer been carried out extensively but has rather been linked with forestry and poverty reduction projects in particular areas (Bass & Morrison, 1994b).

On the surface, the migrant labour regime in Vietnam is not too different from the labour market in many developing countries, where a cheap and unskilled labour force fosters labour-intensive industrialisation. The labour market segmentation theory, in particular, explains the channelling of migrants into the secondary, informal sector in cities. This theory, however, assumes homogeneity among migrants and does not highlight the role of the state (J. Breman, 1996). What makes Vietnam stand out is the central role of the state in channelling and constraining peasant migrants to specific sectors and jobs – construction, garment factories, housework through control instruments in connection with the *hộ khẩu* system. Temporary migrants in urban areas are blocked by state institutions from entering the primary sector. The migrant labour regime is, in essence, the product of a system that defines opportunities by *hộ khẩu* status and locality and that fosters a deep divide between rural and urban Vietnam. Despite *hộ khẩu* reforms that have taken place since the late 1980s, the vast majority of peasant migrants continue to be inferior in terms of institutional, economic and social position compared to urban residents.

Hộ khẩu is a complex household registration system in Vietnam, which records the residency situation of Vietnamese people. *Hộ khẩu* refers to the family members registration record, regularly updates the births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and moves of all members of the family. *Hộ khẩu* is considered as “a measure of administrative management by the State to determine the citizens’ place of residence, ensure the existence of their rights and obligations, enhance social management, and maintain political stability, social order, and safety” (Decree No. 51/CP issued on 10 May 1997 and Circular 06/TT/BNV). *Hộ khẩu* refers to the system of residency permits which dates back to the 1960s, closely related to other benefits such as agricultural land distribution, housing, education and administrative papers. The possession of a rural registration document entitled the holder to receive agricultural land and house plots. People holding an urban registration would be allocated land use rights for their house and gardens (Hardy, 2001). During the war time and the period when the national economy was centrally planned and managed, *hộ khẩu* was an effective mechanism that helped the government to mobilise people for national objectives because it was linked to government subsidies, rations, and access to certain basic necessities and services. Hardy (2001:192) also highlighted the role of *hộ khẩu* which embraced all the spheres of people’ lives: “Even when one died, the *hộ khẩu* was still of importance. Unregistered residents were not entitled to commune land for burial. Before *Đổi Mới*, the link between identification and access to rights and services was all embracing... To live without a *hộ khẩu* was to live

without the rights granted to Vietnamese citizens under the law. And the hộ khẩu...was intimately tied to place of residence. Rights were granted in the place of registered residence, and in that place alone.” The system was also a critical management tool for the government to regulate the geographical movement of the population (B. D. Le, 2005).

3.3 Transition Period: 1981-1988

This period witnessed an important change when the independent role of households was gradually endorsed by the “Product contract” and the “Household contract”. The underground actions of the “household responsibility system” originated in Vinh Phuc province in 1966 and marked a turning point in the organisation of agriculture. The peasants signed a secret agreement in which farmland owned by the People’s Commune was divided into plots on which individual families could grow their crops. They agreed that each household would deliver a full quota of grain to the state as well as to the commune, and that it could keep whatever remained. They risked their lives with this agreement at that time during the collective period (as privatisation went against the communist non-capitalist direction for development). The secret experiment proved to be very successful and productivity increased substantially. This system however was not adopted nationwide until 1988. That was because in the early 1980s, Vietnam faced an economic crisis when Western and Chinese aid was cut. A food crisis soon followed which resulted in the fall of Collective agriculture (Fforde & De Vylder, 1996; Kirk & Nguyen, 2009) and the issuing of Directive 100 on 13th January 1981. Following this Directive, the Collective allowed rural households to sell their surplus output on the private market besides the certain amount that they had contracted. This partial reform had boosted the agricultural growth by 10.6% in 1982, but soon slowed down in 1983 and was negative by 1987 (Pingali & Vo, 1992) because this directive did not provide farmers with real incentives to cultivate more. Hunger was back again with the food production per capital fell below the minimum level needed of 300 kilograms per year (Bass & Morrison, 1994a).

All these issues led to the failure of collectivisation and induced the hatching of the Household Responsibility System – Resolution 10, in 1988, which shifted the centre of the rural development from collectives to household unit. At the outset of the HRS, collective land was redistributed and allocated for management to every individual household; each villager was entitled to use an equal amount of land (Kerkvliet, 2006). Thus, the HRS brought agricultural production back to the level of the individual household; the individual household replaced the production team system as the unit of production. The household was entitled to all the production benefits after paying taxes to the collective and the state. The market was soon opened for both domestic and international trade, combining with the State managing prices. The Vietnamese *dong* was sharply devalued which increased the competitive advantage of Vietnamese exports on international markets (Fforde & De Vylder, 1996;

Lamb, 2008). This reform brought agricultural growth back up to 3.8% in 1992 (C. P. Timmer, 1996). The farmers had enough incentives to produce and sell their farming surplus output so that from dependency on food imports, Vietnam became the third-largest country exported rice in 1989, ensuring national food security (P. Timmer, 2004). Agricultural success became one of important drivers of economic growth, which later increased the construction and services sectors. Inflation fell to 36%⁶ in 1989 and Vietnam's economy remained stably regardless of foreign aid cut due to the Eastern European Socialism system collapse (Benjamin & Brandt, 2004). Since 1992, Vietnam economic has fully recovered and economic growth reached 8.7% (P. C. Do & Tran, 2002). However, the farmers still did not have long-term land use rights and local governments still played the central role in determining the agricultural patterns for each types of land. The majority of agricultural land had to be devoted to for food cultivation while agricultural diversification and commercialisation were limited.

One of the incredible impacts of the *Đổi Mới* the economic reform in 1986 was that it allowed and encouraged peasants to migrate out of their place of origin to earn money from non-farm work. That was strictly forbidden earlier in the collectivist period because it was considered a capitalist phenomenon. The spontaneous migration of the rural labour force started around 1990 and became mainstream afterwards. It, in turn, became an important driver for rural development and agrarian change. Agricultural technologies, resources and capital for production were still difficult to access for many rural households, particularly the poor and smallholders (Q.-T. Do & Iyer, 2003; Kerkvliet, 2006). The 1989 household survey showed that during the period from 1984 to 1989 over 2,400,000 persons or 4.4% of the population aged five and over had migrated to another district/province. (A. Dang, Goldstein, & McNally, 1997)

Since the market reforms, the function of *hộ khẩu* in controlling the mobility of people has gradually declined, due largely to the rapid growth of employment opportunities in the non-state sector. Because *hộ khẩu* registers the moves of all members in the family, if a person changes his or her place of residence, the *hộ khẩu* should change to reflect that. Therefore, in principle, no one can have his or her name listed in more than one household registration. The *hộ khẩu* of a person is intimately tied to place of residence. *Hộ khẩu* is related to issues of internal economic migration in Vietnam as it controls and monitors changes in people's residence in Vietnam by classifying them into different residential categories, associated with certain rights and obligations. Yet, the *hộ khẩu* of any person remains a prerequisite for him or her for certain administrative procedures, such as buying land or building a house, registering

⁶ Before *Đổi Mới*, Vietnam faced an economic crisis and trade deficit; inflation soared to over 700% (Van Arkadie & Mallon, 2004)

a motor vehicle, borrowing money, accessing subsidised medical care, water and electricity, or participating in the national targeted programmes for poverty reduction. Only permanent residents who are registered in their living place have full rights to public services while the rest are eliminated or need to pay not only for these services but also extra fees to access to them (Deshingkar, 2006). The governance of rural-urban population mobility was relaxed in 1988. Rural dwellers were now allowed to stay in cities for up to six months (N. A. Dang, 1999). This adjustment was to adapt with the economic reforms but also in response to changes that had already occurred on the ground. Li (1996) reported that soon after the official introduction of *Đổi Mới*, rural migrants “flocked” to Hanoi where they gathered at *chợ lao động* - labour markets to sell their labour power. The numbers of returning, circular and temporary migrants were not counted in the 1989 household survey census; hence, the true extent of migration in Vietnam was normally underestimated (A. Dang et al., 1997).

3.4 De-collectivisation Periods (1989-1995)

During this phase, many more market-reliant policies took shape as the logistics of *Đổi Mới* continued to play out. Chief among these was a greater reliance on output markets and the introduction of an institutional framework for land markets. The 1993 Land Law had extended land use rights for annual crops to 20 years and those for perennial crops to 50. Households were granted certificates in the form of red books that formalised their usufruct rights. . The assigned rights could be leased, inherited, and used as collateral for loans. That was important in the land market because the law not only guaranteed the allocation of farmland for long and stable use but also allowed the assigned rights of households and individuals to be leased, inherited, and used as collateral for loans. Before 1993, rural households had no right to transfer agricultural land officially to others even though it was recorded to be happening underground, as Kerkvliet (2006:295) pointed out that farmers still found their ways to “*buy and sell land use rights, transfer them to their heirs, lend them to other people and use them as collateral*”. It was that practice that the 1993 Land Law officially authorised. Moreover, the revised Land Law in 2003 recognised agricultural land as “*a special good, having a value and hence able to be traded*”(V. Q. C. Phan & Fujimoto, 2012:123)

The Land Law 1993 of 1993 permitted rural households to have usufruct rights for 20 years for annual crops and 50 years for perennial crops while the land ownership still belonged to the country, represented by the government. In the “golden age” of the market economy in Vietnam from 1993 to 2000, the agriculture sector increased by 4.6% per year while national growth was more than 8% annually based on large foreign investment in Vietnamese industries (Kirk & Nguyen, 2009). That strong economic performance and agricultural growth averaged 3.9% per year and was maintained through the Asian crisis from 1997 to 2001 (Ravallion & Van de Walle, 2008; T. T. T. Tran, 2004). Since the Sixth National Party Congress in 1986, the policy of modernisation

had aimed to stimulate economic growth and accept the relaxation of restrictions on mobility. However, a large wave of temporary internal migration was spawned due to sharp regional inequalities in the early 1990s. Due to the war-ravaged infrastructure and the unbalanced distribution of resources, the fast-track renewal policy created unequal growth and development across the country, resulting in a significant increase in regional disparity and economic growth. In the early 1990s, the per capita income was \$690, more than triple the nation's per capita income of \$220 (Isaacs, 2000). The average income of people in the richest region (southeast) and the average income of the people in the poorest region (northwest) increased from 2.1 times in 1996 to 2.5 times in 1999 and 3.1 times in 2002 (GSO, 2005). In the early 1990s, spontaneous migration was also booming in the north, for example the pattern of rural-urban migration of migrant workers to Hanoi and Hai Phong for temporary jobs in the informal economy. Families and friends went to seek economic opportunities through migration. From 1986 to 1993, migration from rural areas to cities was still 45.5%, from small towns and provincial centres 39.3%, along with immigrants from one major city to another (P. C. Do & Tran, 2002).

The *Hộ khẩu* system also experienced an important change in 1997, when temporary residence was granted, even though restrictions on permanent residence remained in place, particularly in cities. Besides legal proof of house ownership as a prerequisite for any permanent residence, to acquire permanent residence in cities non-local residents had to fulfil other requirements, for instance receive a state job, for education purposes, or family reunion reasons. This development was reflected in four categories of *hộ khẩu* registration, according to GSO (2011a), for four categories of residents (KT1, KT2, KT3 and KT4), identified as follows:

KT1: A person registered in the district where he/she resides.

KT2: A person not registered in the district where he/she resides, but registered in another district of the same province/city⁷.

KT3: A person from another province/city who has temporary registration in his/her place of destination for a period of one year.

KT4: A person from another province/city who has temporary registration in their place of destination for a period of six months.

During this period the enumeration of KT4 migrants is still difficult, and there were still numerous un-registered migrants. Re-registering (changing residency status) is highly reported as time-consuming and burdensome, although unequally so across the country (Khuat & Le, 2008; B. D. Le, 2005).

⁷ There are two forms of KT2 registration: KT2 'arrived' (or KT2 *đến*) and KT2 'left' (or KT2 *đi*), the latter held by the authorities in the migrant's place of departure and the former in his/her place of arrival.

Period	Political system	Agriculture	Trading	Migration control	Hộ khẩu
1954-1980	Collectivization	Collective production - households are not allowed to engage in independent production/consumption	"Private" trading is prohibited	Strong regulation	Strong restriction of population movement
1981-1989	Transition	Households' independent role is gradually endorsed by the 'Product contract' and the 'Household contract'	Market reforms	Regulation is accommodated	Loosening of regulations on temporary urban residence (6 months)
1990-1994	De-collectivization	Gradual allocation of land to households - production collectives are dissolved in 1993		Relaxation of control	Further loosening of regulations on temporary urban residence (12 months)
1995-now	Expansion and International Integration	- Modernised and industrialised agriculture - Quotas removed - Bilateral and regional trade to open market - New form of collectives	Capitalist market system is established Globalization-increasing orientation towards the global market	Gradual endorsement of free population mobility	4 KT categories of hộ khẩu Free choice of residence from 2007

Figure 3.1 Historical overview of migration and agriculture in Vietnam

Source: Author adaptation from literature reviews

It is not surprising that many migrants do not register their arrival in a new place (or their boarding house landlords do not do it for them). Moreover, if they did register, since renewal of absence certificates is required every six months, many migrants may choose not to renew their papers depending on their circumstances and the attitude of the local authorities (Winkels, 2009). Temporary status, according to the law, must be registered with the local government by anyone who lives in a locality for more than 30 days, but changing one's residential status has never been easy. In requesting KT4 registration, migrants need to submit many documents, including a letter of release from their place of origin where their *hộ khẩu* is held and evidence of employment at their destination. Hence, many migrants choose to migrate informally without either the release paper to leave and the permission paper to relocate one's place of residence (N. A. Dang, 2006). Therefore, most recorded figures on KT4 migrants were still underestimated.

3.5 Expansion & International Integration Period

During this phase, many more market-reliant policies took shape as the logistics of *Đổi Mới* continued to play out. Chief among these was a greater reliance on output markets and the introduction of an institutional framework for land markets. The 1993 Land Law had extended land use rights for annual crops to 20 years and those for perennial crops to 50. Households were granted certificates in the form of red books that formalised their usufruct rights. The assigned rights could be leased, inherited, and used as collateral for loans. That was important for in land market because the law not only guaranteed the allocation of farmland for long and stable use but also allowed assigned rights of households and individuals to be leased, inherited, and used as collateral for loans. Before 1993, rural households had no right to transfer agricultural land officially to others even though it was recorded as happening underground. As Kerkvliet (2006:295) pointed out, farmers still found their ways to “*buy and sell land use rights, transfer them to their heirs, lend them to other people, and use them as collateral*”. The 1993 Land Law officially authorised those practices. Moreover, the revised Land Law of 2003 recognised agricultural land as “*a special good, having a value, and hence able to be traded*” (V. Q. C. Phan & Fujimoto, 2012:123)

The latest revised Land Law promulgated in July 2014 extended the usufruct rights of Vietnamese households and individuals for another 50 years, which proposes long-term transactions for the land use right market. Land use right transactions are likely to become increasingly popular in Vietnam's countryside despite its unclear transaction rate (Kerkvliet, 2006). The real figure of land transactions was normally underestimated because many of these transactions were informal and unregistered. However, 15% of the rural households queried in a 2002 national survey had rented agricultural land use rights (V. Nguyen et al., 2006). P. Taylor (2004) and Kerkvliet (2006) both observed that social differentiation increased due to these land use right transactions. Related to agricultural production, the Law on Agricultural Land

Use Tax dismantled the compulsory quota system and the agricultural output tax and instituted a land use tax for the farmers. Besides, the restrictions on internal and international trade were loosened.

Vietnam signed a preferential trade agreement with the European Economic Community in 1992, and in 1995, it joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and became a member of the ASEAN Free Trade Area. In response to large gains in rice production, export quotas were raised to 4.5 million tonnes by 1998; however, participation in the export business was still limited to a handful of national and provincial state-owned enterprises (Le, Singh, & Nguyen, 2015). It would not be until the late 2000s that private sector involvement in this export trade would be encouraged. The high point during this period is that despite its expansion, the agricultural household segment continued to be dominated by the very small farm and only minor changes over time in agrarian transformation, especially in northern Vietnam (World Bank, 2016)

Since the Sixth National Party Congress in 1986, the policy of modernisation had aimed to stimulate economic growth and accept the relaxation of restrictions on mobility. However, a large wave of temporary internal migration was spawned due to sharp regional inequalities in the early 1990s. Due to the war-ravaged infrastructure and the unbalanced distribution of resources, the fast-track renewal policy created unequal growth and development across the country, resulting in a significant increase in regional disparity and economic growth. In the early 1990s, the per capita income was \$690, more than triple the nation's per capita income of \$220 (Isaacs, 2000). The average income of people in the richest region (southeast) and the average income of the people in the poorest region (northwest) increased from 2.1 times in 1996 to 2.5 times in 1999 and 3.1 times in 2002 (GSO, 2005). Broad migration trends in Vietnam over nearly three decades are briefly reviewed. Vietnam's migration patterns appear to follow the general trend found in other Asian countries (Priya Deshingkar, 2006; Hugo, 2009a). Recent reviews of migration patterns (GSO, 2011a; Kim Anh et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2006) identify four important features: 1) the level of internal migration is increasing; 2) rural-urban migration is growing; 3) high proportion of temporary migration; and 4) significant rise in the proportion of females in the migration flows. Differences in urban and rural development have increased the pressure of migration to cities in the south. Few employment opportunities are created in rural areas and most of the economic growth is concentrated in the urban areas, pockets of agricultural productivity, and industrial zones (GSO, 1999) . According to the Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey in 2002, the income gap between the top and the bottom income quintile groups in 1996 was 7.3 times, and it was 8.9 times in 1999 and 8.03 times in 2002 (GSO, 2005). The average income of urban people is about double the average income of rural people.

As industrialisation and economic development continued which supported the manufacturing and industrial sectors in urban areas, disparities between urban and rural areas soon expanded. As a result, a large wave of rural people migrated out of rural areas to find jobs in the manufacturing sectors in urbanised areas which are normally five to seven times more income-generating than farming in the village. Similarly, traditional production reduced the viability of rural livelihoods. Therefore, many researchers considered migration to be the result of region disparities due to the market reforms and Vietnam's vibrant economic development. The vast majority (70%) of internal migrants in Vietnam migrate for economic reasons, including to find employment and to improve their living conditions (GSO, 2005). However, many studies showed that that individual and household reasons to migrate could not be simplified as a one-dimensional motivation (Khuat & Le, 2008; W. D. Pfau & Long, 2010; Winkels, 2012). These studies noted a range of motivating factors that account for most internal migrations in Vietnam. For instance, the main reason a household migrated might be climate change, including the economic determining factor which aimed to change the household's livelihood because soil salinity had already made crop cultivation impossible (V. Q. Hoang, et al., 2008). Even within the economic determinants, there were some cross-cut purposes such as to expand livelihood security, to increase coping strategy, to extend economic opportunities or to accumulate for upward mobility (Winkels, 2009). Besides, it must be noted that spontaneous migration often occurs along existing networks between former migrants and families and friends in their home villages (N. A. Dang, 2006; Guest, 1998; Harigaya & de Brauw, 2007). Despite the fact that some rural-urban migration took place prior to Đổi Mới, this process and how it is intertwined with the transition process itself has not previously been subject to critical analysis. Vu and Agergaard (2012) argue that peasant migrants relied on assistance, sympathy, and money from social networks to negotiate these structural obstacles erected by the *hộ khẩu* system. By so doing, they undermined the governance of mobility and contributed to its remarkable reform with the issuance of the Residence Law in 2007. As the head of the General Police Office stated: *'Those people [millions of temporary migrants] do continue to live and to work in cities, even though they are not given permanent resident permits. Therefore we [the state] have to loosen the hộ khẩu regulations [by issuing the Residence Law] in order to secure them better living conditions'* (Duy, 2007)

Despite the *hộ khẩu* revolution, there were still many migrants who did not attempt to register because of being unsure about their migration and the administrative process is complicated for them. UNDP (2010:5) took into account that *"there is a significant gap in data on internal migration, which carries widespread implications for understanding and measuring the parallel processes of migration and development, as well as for exploring how migration can be used to enhance Vietnam's socio-economic development"*. Dapice, Gomez-Ibanez, and Nguyen (2010) also reported a widening gap

between official data on residence and the real number of residences, with a substantial and growing 'floating' population. An indication of the size of the under-reporting of migration flows is evident from the data on population, on the one hand, and number of workers employed in enterprises in Ho Chi Minh City, on the other: the former grew by 7.5% between 2002 and 2005; the latter by 39% (ibid,2010:3). There is every reason to suppose that a similar discrepancy applies to Hanoi, and Vietnam's other larger urban centres such as Danang. Across the country, it has been suggested that this floating population numbers between 12 and 16 million which, if broadly correct, represents between 13% and 18% of Vietnam's population (UNDP, 2010:5). Khuat and Le (2008) identified the difficulties. The *hộ khẩu* system prevented 42% of the migrants in the VHHS 2004 from acquiring KT1 registration. Of those who did not register their temporary status in their destination place, 48% thought that they had no authorisation to re-register in the new place, while 22% believed it was not compulsory and 9% did not know the process. A new Law on Residence was introduced in 2007 which, on paper, has loosened some of these restrictions⁸ but there is evidence that it has been unevenly adopted, leading to a degree of confusion among migrants as to their rights (UNDP 2010, 8).

Moreover, in many cases a person's migration experiences may involve many different types of migration. For example, temporary stays may become permanent, undocumented migrants may decide to register in the destination after a few months, registered migrants may move on to another destination to find better employment or land and may decide to not register there. This process of negotiating the household registration rules has been described in detail by Hardy (2001). This reality, on the one hand, raises the concern about privilege and social protection for migrants who have not registered for KT3 or KT4 in their destination. While many migrants without permanent registration (KT1 or KT2 status) can find work in many urban and rural areas, limitations exist in terms of gaining access to formal sector jobs, education, healthcare, housing, land tenure, registering businesses and assets, and obtaining credit. Furthermore, most temporary migrants tend to isolate in certain areas that are often deficient in water and sanitation infrastructure. In Hanoi, for instance, most migrants and temporary residents live along the Red River and suburban areas where the water supply is poorer. On the other hand, it has impacts on the reality in rural areas. People are absent from their

⁸ For instance, Decree 108 of the Prime Minister and Circular 11 of the Ministry of Public Security in 2005 lessened some of the requirements such as owning a house for KT3 status to upgrade into KT1 status. Since July 2007, a migrant with KT3 or KT4 registration can, after one year of living stably in their new location, request re-registration to KT1 with the important proviso that the owner of the house where they have been living supports the application.

hometown and neglect their farming activities, but they keep their *hộ khẩu* KT1 or KT2 at home to maintain their land use rights (B. D. Le, 2005). This would affect the formal redistribution of agricultural land and agricultural production (Bui Minh, 2012). The debate about the *hộ khẩu* system is ongoing. On the one side, one *hộ khẩu* supporter successfully argued that it is “very necessary” to maintain the current administrative system using *hộ khẩu* for the sake of social order and security. He also suggested that the procedures for registration should be improved and simplified, rather than replaced with a new structure. On the opposite side, the anti-*hộ khẩu* policymaker proposed “a residence permit” which combines the *hộ khẩu* and the identification card; or *hộ khẩu* must be considered as a residence certification only, but not be linked to any other economic, social, and political interests of the citizens.

The paradox between migration and agriculture is that people wanting to migrate wish to hold on to their own land at the same time. Therefore, some young people or beginners who want to farm could not easily get access to land. One scholar stated that one of the problems related to agricultural land in the north is that peasants who have abandoned agriculture do not yield their land to others. Besides, the small size of agricultural land for each household is normally considered as a constraint to agricultural development, especially when the growth of the active rural population tends to reduce the size of the farms and leads to under-employment (Ravallion & Van de Walle, 2008). However, southern Vietnam experienced strong land consolidation but has another problem with the increasing number of landless farmers (H. A. Akram-Lodhi, 2001). The agrarian reform process thus is not over; new institutional arrangements are necessary. This implies a certain redefinition of the respective roles of the government, the market, and civil society (which is not officially acknowledged). In addition, new land policies are required that are adapted to the new context of migration in which land transactions could resolve the above-mentioned dilemmas. The revival of small-holder farms, after diverse agrarian reforms which established a relatively egalitarian structuring of the farming sector, is an undisputable achievement. Along with this process, migration becomes an important strategy for rural households in response to modernisation to retain their own autonomy. Vietnam’s history illustrates that peasants, with the might of their knowledge accumulated through the centuries, are capable of very dynamic evolutions, but need to adapt to the wider context of national development strategies in order to express their full potential.

CHAPTER 4

**Research site and research
methodology**

This chapter focuses more on the methodology of this study which develops the methodological traditions of anthropology and sociology. There are two parts in the chapter. The first part provides a general introduction to the Red River Delta and Bac Ninh province, selected as the study site, and outlines the village profile. The second part of the chapter explains the methods used to reach the study objectives. In addition, the research design, the sample selection, the data collection and the data analysis methods are explained for application as research methods. It has a design that combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches, and uses surveys, in-depth interviews, biographies and participatory observation as research methods.

4.1 Research site

4.1.1 Overview of the Red River Delta and Bac Ninh province

The Red River Delta region of Vietnam shares the common features of the agrarian transition prompted by the *Đổi Mới* reforms. Agricultural land has undergone conversion toward a more market and industrial orientation to accelerate economic development. According to the recent National Survey on Land, in the decade from 2000 to 2010, non-agricultural land increased by 89,000 ha while land for rice production decreased by more than 34,000 ha annually (N. C. Nguyen, 2012). The overall number of landless farmer households in the region was 3.3% in 1999 and 13.9% in 2002, rising to 22% 2012 (FAO, 2014b). The Red River Delta historically is also the most densely populated region in Vietnam with an average 0.04 ha per capita⁹. Therefore, since the late 1990s this region witnessed its most significant increase in off-farm business ever. The Red River Delta has the smallest area but highest population and population density of Vietnam as a whole. Most of the agricultural land is devoted to rice production. The Red River Delta is the second most important rice-producing area in Vietnam, accounting for 20% of the national crop. Rural households often adopt more than one strategy to diversify their livelihood such as intensifying agricultural production and diversifying their economic activities in non-farm business. It is noteworthy

⁹ The area of land devoted to agricultural production accounts for 29% of Vietnam's total land area; Vietnam currently has only 0.11 ha of agricultural land per person. This area however is distributed unevenly across the regions. In the Red River Delta, the land area for agricultural production amounts to 0.04 ha per capita. In the Mekong River Delta, the average landholding is 0.14 ha of agricultural land per person (Bui Minh, 2012)

that this area has a good infrastructure and transport links that allow people to seek employment in the capital Hanoi or local urban centres.

Table 4.1 Basic features of Bac Ninh in comparison with other provinces of the Red River Delta

	Area (thousand ha)	Agricultural land (thousand ha)	Average population (thousand ppl)	Population density (ppl/km ²)	Labourer over 15 years old	Agricultural land/labour (ha)
Red River Delta	2126.0	799.0	21133.8	994.0	11992.3	0.067
Ha Noi	335.9	157.1	7328.4	2.82.0	3820.9	0.041
Vinh Phuc	123.5	55.8	1066.0	863.0	631.4	0.088
Bac Ninh	82.3	43.8	1178.6	1432.0	661.7	0.066
Quang Ninh	617.8	61.5	1224.6	198.0	692.4	0.088
Hai Duong	166.8	86.4	1785.8	1.70.0	1037.5	0.083
Hai Phong	156.2	51.0	1980.8	1.68.0	1128.1	0.045
Hung Yen	93.0	54.1	170.2	1258.0	702.4	0.077
Thai Binh	158.7	93.7	190.0	1128.0	1110.8	0.084
Ha Nam	86.2	42.6	803.7	932.0	472.1	0.091
Nam Dinh	166.9	91.4	152.6	1110.0	1150.5	0.079
Ninh Binh	138.7	61.6	953.1	687.0	584.5	0.105

Source: GSO 2018, adjusted by author

The fieldwork was conducted in Mai Thon village, Chi Lang commune, Que Vo district, Bac Ninh province. Bac Ninh is located on the Red River Delta, about 30 km north of the capital Hanoi, along the recently upgraded National Highway 1A. Having an area of 823 km² in total and with around 1.038 million inhabitants, it is the smallest province of the Delta. Regarding to the land area, Bac Ninh is the smallest of provinces in Vietnamese. It has, however, the highest population density of any province. On average, there are over 1,200 people for every square kilometre of land in Bac Ninh. Calculated from the 2016 census, table 4.1 showed that the Bac Ninh population was 1,117,600 people with a density of 1,432 people/km², five times the national average. However, the province is considered as prominent in terms of industrial development in Vietnam. It has been ranked fifth amongst provinces that have the highest investment in the whole country. At the time of its formation in 1997, Bac Ninh was an agricultural province, with only several handicraft villages and no industrial zone or industrial cluster. Since 1998, the provincial government started taking over agricultural land for industrial purposes, after which the first industrial zone was built. To date, Bac Ninh has

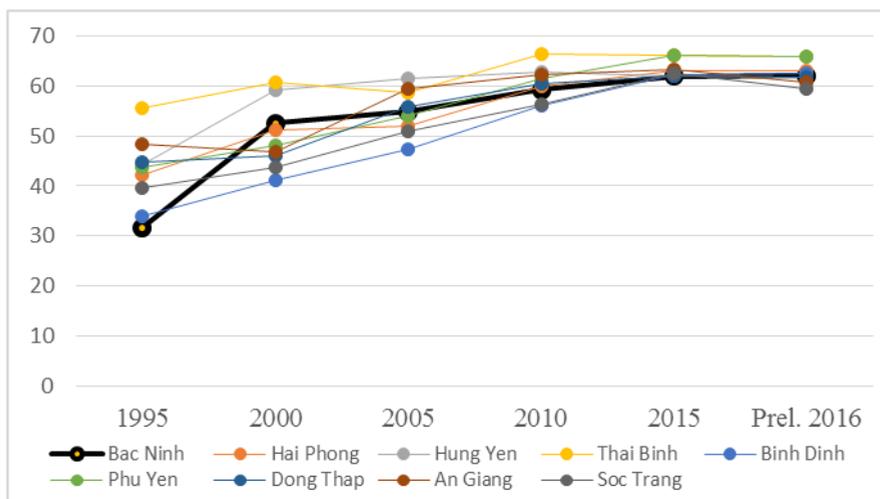


Figure 4.1 Agricultural production yield changes in nine main agricultural provinces in Vietnam

Source: GSO 2018, adjusted by author

Those diversified and complex patterns of migration flows make Bac Ninh a suitable place to research the interaction of migration and agriculture. Among the eight administrative units of Bac Ninh (seven districts and one city), Que Vo district was selected for this research because it is the first district which built up industrial zones in Bac Ninh and thus it has had a long and complex interaction between migration and agriculture. Que Vo district is located in the east of Bac Ninh province, belongs to the Red River Delta, about 10 km from Bac Ninh centre and 40 km from Hanoi. Que Vo has 22 km of national road 18 connected to the important socio-economic centres in the north such as Hanoi, Hai Phong, Quang Ninh, Hai Duong, Hung Yen and Vinh Phuc. Que Vo district saw its agricultural land decline during the period of 2010-2014 from 9,494.31 ha to 8,652.71 ha.

The district also has the largest industrial zones in the province with 1,204 ha for industrial zones which provide employment for more than 39,000 people. Chi Lang commune in Que Vo district was chosen as the research commune. Chi Lang has 8 villages and a population of 8,556. Its total area is 964.96 ha, including 612.23 ha of agricultural land, accounting for 63.4%. From 2000 to 2015, Chi Lang experienced a growth rate over 11% per year. The agriculture sector declined from 53% in 2005 to 22% in 2015, while the industry sector grew from 27% in 2005 to 48% in 2015 (Chi Lang report, 2015). After the Que Vo industrial zones were established and operating well, about 60% of households in the commune have labourers working in the zones. Because of land availability, livestock husbandry including cattle, water buffalo and pigs has also been maintained as one of main sources of income in Chi Lang.

4.1.2 Mai Thon profile

The village is viewed as the most appropriate entry point for investigation into rural situations and transformation in rural Asia, particularly in studies pertaining to Vietnam. For this thesis, I chose Mai Thon as a typical Vietnamese village in Chi Lang commune to research.

Firstly, I focused on a single village due to the greater manageability of data collection which was done by the author personally. Secondly, focusing on one village allowed me to achieve a much deeper understanding of the complex phenomena of circular migration, the village community, and its members than would have been possible using large-scale surveys of selected individuals from different villages. The experience of living in the community allowed for continual clarification of findings and interpretations that could not otherwise have been explained. For example, discrepancies or distortions in the survey information, such as the issue of “empty village”, could be further observed and revised with author’s stay.

The trust built through longer, continuous contact with the villagers facilitated such investigations. A further benefit of sustained participation in the life of a community was that it facilitated the discovery of new hypotheses. A large-scale survey tends to be dominated by prior expectations or hypotheses and hence *“the unexpected is frequently unobserved or neglected because there is no way to revise the initial research design”* (Aaby, 1984). In participant observation, by contrast, looking for unexpected or new experiences is part of the overall research endeavour, permitting considerably greater power of explanation. Aaby (1984) also highlights another advantage, not generally recognized, of having complete data on all households in a study area.

Mai Thon village was specially chosen based on three main reasons: it showed a resemblance, in demographic and socio-economic characteristics, to other villages in Bac Ninh province (table 4.2). It is large enough to allow for the inclusion of a wide variety of respondents; and, it has some modernising influences, in order to determine how agricultural production and migration were affected by these changes. In Mai Thon village, around 82% of households have one member who has travelled out of the village for off-farm jobs which is relatively in keeping with the Bac Ninh migration rate (77.4%). In the past five years, I witnessed many changes and patterns in Mai Thon village. Migration is one example of a pattern, while changes mainly include the migration destination, the duration of the migration, and migrant return, which will be described more in Part 5.1. The most general trend is that recently most households have maximised diversification of their livelihoods or participated in nearly all possible sources of income. Back in 1993, most of the households in the village still relied mainly on agriculture.

Table 4.2 Mai Thon village characteristics in comparison

	Mai Thon village	Bac Ninh province	Red River Delta
Distance from Ha Noi (km)	45.6	38.9	
Population (pers.)	699	1178600	21100000
Agricultural land (ha)	57	43800	799000
Agricultural land/ labour (ha)	0.12	0.066	0.067
Out-migration rate (%)	82	77.4	

Source: GSO, 2018 author adjusted

Since 1989, Mai Thon village has experienced dramatic changes as a consequence of the general process of urbanisation, modernisation, and economic *opening up and reform*, based on the policy enacted in 1986 in Vietnam. Broadly, the changes induced by the modernisation and urbanisation process are clearly visible at the village level. Going back 35 years, there were no tile-roofed houses and tarmac roads, nor even a gravel road, in Mai Thon village. At that time, the collectivist period had just ended, and people started to organise farming at the household level under the household contract responsibility system. The state had just released the regulations about mobility. Rural villagers had more opportunities to migrate far away from home to work and earn additional money beyond farming. As a result, the standard of living in Mai Thon village improved visibly. Currently, most villagers live in tile-roofed houses and some even have two-floor tile-roofed buildings. They have televisions, refrigerators, solar water heaters, mobile phones, and even computers at home. Overall, Mai Thon is observed to have kept pace with the mainline agrarian transformation in Vietnam and with the broad trends of decline in the relative share of agricultural labour force, combined with the high proportion of rural out-migration. By the time the systematic household survey was made in 2015, migration had become an adaptive strategy and even a main source of income for the households. Migration to Hanoi and local industrial zones to work as hired labourers had become a crucial need in nearly in every family in the village.

However, farming remains one thread in the multi-stranded livelihoods of the households. Mai Thon seems to show a harmonious interaction between non-farm employment and migration. The socio-economic conditions of Mai Thon used to be characterised by rice monoculture. The land area for rice production has decreased a little because some low-level land has been switched to aquaculture (which has now been leased by Chi Lang commune). However, there has been no significant change overall regarding agricultural land and people also do not have any intention of land conversion. A very limited number of farms plant fruit and vegetable crops. The number of paddy

fields in each household, however, has decreased remarkably due to the land consolidation policy which was applied throughout Bac Ninh province. Mai Thon village does not yet display the phenomenon of abandoned fields. Plots of agricultural land that are not used primarily by households would be leased or freely lent to other villagers. Recently, the conditions for agricultural production have changed. In 2004, the State Council began to reduce or grant exemption from agricultural tax in some experimental places and the agricultural tax was abolished in the whole country at the end of 2005. In addition, peasants can also get subsidies for agricultural production every year, such as a subsidy for quality seed and grain.

In terms of handicraft, Mai Thon villagers at one time used their spare time to produce sedge bags for sale. However, the demand for sedge bags has slumped. Also, the source material has become extremely scarce, so the craft of weaving sedge is gradually being eroded. That is challenging the creativeness and talents of local artisans to move to bamboo weaving. Inhabitants of the nearby village of Lang Ho specialise in this handicraft. Now, both villages possess bamboo weaving skills and produce bamboo and rattan household items such as baskets, rice-washing colanders, sieves and specific pre-finished products of “votive objects” (*hình nhân*).¹¹ People go to Lang Ho village which is 11 km from Mai Thon village to buy bamboo, and then the male members of the family split the bamboo into bamboo sticks. After processing, the women, the elderly and children will complete the weaving of these inner votive objects. Once these products are finished, the dealers in Lang Ho village will come to pick them up. The income of votive weavers averages 2 million VND per month. Although this income is not high, people accept the work because they can stay at home and take advantage of normally unproductive labour resources such as the elderly and young children. Therefore, about 50% of households in Mai Thon village do votive weaving. Overall, Mai Thon is limited in its potential for dynamic non-farm business diversification within the village boundaries. However, Mai Thon is still considered to have the highest economic status due to the number of its migratory population. Mai Thon also has the advantage of being located 20 km from the capital of the province and 40 km from Hanoi. It has good telecommunications, electrical power, and local road infrastructure.

Thus, the migration patterns of Mai Thon are diversified, especially circular migration, a prominent feature of households. Migration is normally explained as a type of spatial or geographical mobility that involves a semi-permanent or

¹¹ These votive objects are used for ancestor worship events, an ancient Vietnamese ritual practice. This practice originates from the perception that death is not the end of one’s life, but just another state. Burnt votive offerings are meant to be sent for the dead to use in the afterlife. Usually, votive items represent valuable objects (money, clothes, houses, cars...). It is as if the deceased could still enjoy a material life in his new state of being. Votive papers actually symbolise the link between life and death.

permanent change of usual habitation between geographical units. However, due to the local characteristics where commuting constitutes a large proportion of migration movement, and the complicated mixed type of migrant mobility¹², commuting has been defined in this research as a type of seasonal labour migration, either inter-village or inter-municipal, but does not change the dwelling place of the migrant. It is characterised by daily travelling. Besides, Mai Thon, Bac Ninh province, is in the centre of the Red River Delta. With its well-developed infrastructure, its inhabitants can easily commute to other provinces. Therefore, the commuting typologies in Mai Thon village are diversified.

4.2 Fieldwork process

The fieldwork consisted of three parts, in overlapping phases: the try-out/preparatory phase, the quantitative data collection phase and the supplementary phase. The preparatory phase consisted of two activities: developing the connection and getting all the broad background information about the village from collecting secondary data and interviewing the key informants. Key informants include elderly villagers, local teachers, village cadres and local leaders. Two focus groups made up of migrant and non-migrant households were also established in this phase to get an overarching view of migration. This phase was mainly conducted from April to July 2014.

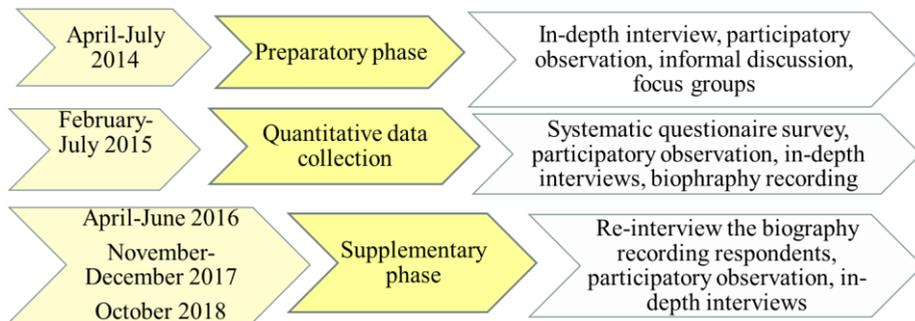


Figure 4.2 Summary of the fieldwork procedure

¹² This content was published in Nguyen Thi Minh Khue et al (2018) Leaving the Village but Not the Rice Field: Role of Female Migrants in Agricultural Production and Household Autonomy in Red River Delta, Vietnam; Social Science 2018, 7(10)

In the quantitative data collection phase, I did a systematic household survey in May and June 2015. Before the official systematic household survey, the draft of the questionnaire had been tested twice to fine-tune it with the Mai Thon reality. Meanwhile, I conducted more in-depth interviews and informal group interviews with other local villagers. I also had the opportunity to do participatory observation during this period.

In the supplementary phase, I went back to Mai Thon village every year to re-interview the biographical recorded respondents and to investigate any changes that had taken place in their lives over the past year. Especially, due to some specific information on youth which had not been collected in 2015 survey, I conducted a further survey in 2017 with a greater focus on youth preferences and their opinions about the future of agriculture. These supplementary phases took place at a different time of the year due to the large number of migrants who were absent at a given point. I had to choose the busy times, such as rice transplanting or harvesting periods when the seasonal migrants come back home to support farming. Besides, I also needed to spend nights and weekends to do interviews to accommodate migrants working the day shift and/or schedule obligations of factory workers. When I went through the village in the daytime, I could only meet the elderly and young children. Mai Thon well illustrates the “empty village” in the daytime with its floating population. However, by sunset, the village becomes much livelier, with many people to talk to. The data collection process itself during these years showed me how quickly the rural reality has been changing and in such a complex manner, while giving me a nice surprise to observe its sustainability and dynamism.

4.3 Methods of data collection

The systematic questionnaire investigation and participatory observation were used to obtain a broader picture, while the in-depth interviews and biographies were specifically directed to paint a comprehensive picture of the peasant’s daily life and to see the longitudinal aspect.

4.3.1 Primary data collection

The systematic questionnaire survey (2015)

There are three methods for collecting survey questionnaire data: personal, face-to-face interviews, self-administered questionnaires and telephone interviews (Bernard, 2017). For this research, I used face-to-face interviews because I also wanted the questions to be understood in the same way by all the respondents, especially the open questions. Completing the questionnaires is not an end in itself. Interviewing every respondent as a case study to gather more information is also an objective. With the notes made along with the questionnaire answers, most of the respondents can be treated as in-depth

interview respondents. Mai Thon village had 158 households (as of July 2015) with a total of 699 villagers. In each household I interviewed one person from 16 to 60 years old who could comprehend the household information. I interviewed 128 households, equivalent to 81% of the total village households. I was unable to interview 30 households. These were households with long-term migrating members or made up of children too young to be interviewed meaningfully. However, I still collected general information about those household from their *hộ khẩu* books (updated to September 2014).

Table 4.3: Systematic questionnaire respondents' information

		N (122)	%
Gender	Male	66	53.1
	Female	56	45.9
Relationship with household head	Household head	62	50.8
	Spouse	47	38.5
	Children	12	9.8
	Others	1	0.9

Source: Household survey 2015

With 53.1% male and 45.9% female, table 4.3 describes the equality of gender of the Mai Thon questionnaire respondents. In a related vein, most of male respondents are household heads, and the female interviewees are their spouse, and some are children. This implies the caution that many scholars expressed: Household decision-making very often comprises complicated processes of domination and resistance between genders and generations, and it should be kept in mind that the interests of the household head are not necessarily synonymous with those of less-empowered household members (James F Eder, 1999; Diane L Wolf, 1992). To overcome this limitation, this thesis is supported by many in-depth interviews conducted during three research phases, which focus more on intra-household dimensions.

Therefore, in the upcoming sections, I examine what it is about household organisation (households being, according to some, the crucial level of analysis) that works out its way to resilience in the context of mass-out migration. One ready answer is suggested by Wilk (1991) that households are extremely flexible, adaptive units. The notion that households “adapt” is criticised as a cliché without a convincing explanation. Therefore, this research aims to take a micro look at the household’s adaptive process and verify what and how a farming household in Mai Thon village needs to “adapt” with regard to migration.

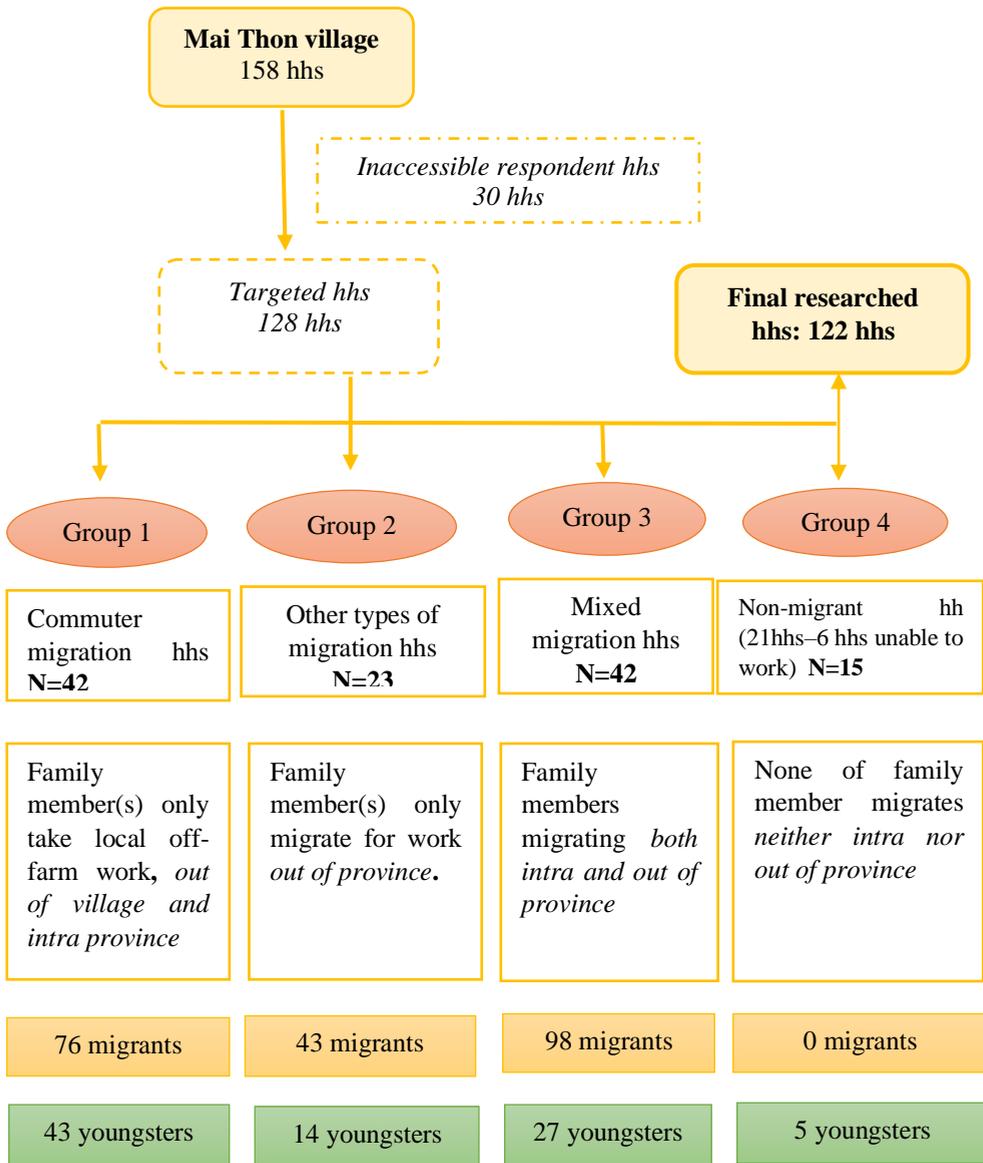


Figure 4.3 Stratified researched households in Mai Thon village

The impacts of migration on agriculture are often complex and a precise examination requires a comparison of the conditions before and after migration. As discussed before about the new reality of migration patterns combined with the specific patterns of a village in Vietnam, a migrant is

defined in this research as a person who still keeps his/her *hộ khẩu* in Mai Thon where the interview was conducted but has moved out of the village for work abroad, or to another village or urban area within the country, for at least the last six months. Remittances (both international and internal) are defined as person-to-person transfers of resources (both money and in-kind) sent by migrant workers and others. After the systematic survey, households in the village were overall divided into four groups, as detailed below:

Group 1: Households whose family member(s) participated in *out of village* and short-distance migration enabling *them to commute daily*. There are 42 households in this group. These households have 76 members who commute daily and 43 young family members. The characteristics of those migrants will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, while the youth perception of farming will be described in Chapter 7.

Group 2: Other types of migrating households: family member(s) only migrated for work *out of province, and normally long-distance*. This type of migration is very diversified, including both national and international migration, seasonal and long-term migration. There were 23 households in this groups. In fact, 30 of the inaccessible households belong to this group but I could not collect information from them. For 23 respondent households in this group, there are 43 migrant workers and 14 young people.

Group 3: Mixed migration households: family members who participated in both short-distance and long-distance migration. There were 42 households in this group, which included 98 migrants and 27 young people.

Group 4: Non-migration households: no family member participated in any type of migration. At the time, in 2015, there were 21 households of which all members stayed in the village, not migrating at all. However, among those 21 households, six households were affected by illness and/or a lone elderly member. In other words, they were incapable of working, living under the poverty line and totally dependent on the social allowance. Thus, I subtracted that number of households from this category, leaving only 15 total households in this group. There were only five young people in those households.

Main features of respondent households

Even though the industrialisation process has been underway in Bac Ninh province since 2001 with an enormous area of agricultural land converted to Que Vo industrial zones, Mai Thon village totally stands out from this movement. However, associated with the rise of industrial zones nearby, the village's agricultural labourers have an increased opportunity to find non-farm jobs. This has dramatically changed the labour structure of farm households. Table 4.2 describes the main characteristics of the surveyed households, focusing on their demographic features, including household/family size, number of labourers and number of labour migrants.

Table 4.4 Socio-economic characteristics of surveyed households

Indicators	Group 1 (n=42)	Group 2 (n=23)	Group 3 (n=42)	Group 4 (n=15)	Sig
Household labour					
Family size (<i>mean, pers.</i>)	4.8	5.1	4.6	4.3	0.026*
Labour size ¹³ (<i>mean, pers.</i>)	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.6	0.026*
Male labour (<i>mean, pers.</i>)	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.2	0.230
Female labour (<i>mean, pers.</i>)	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	0.469
Migration labour					
<i>Mean, pers.</i>	1.8	1.9	2.3	0	0.000*
Number of migrants (<i>pers.</i>)	76	43	98	0	
Male migration labour ¹⁴ (<i>mean, pers.</i>)	0.9	1.0	1.1	0	0.000*
Female migration labour (<i>mean, pers.</i>)	0.8	0.9	1.2	0	0.000*

Note: * indicates a 95% significance level. Source: Household survey 2015

Household or family size is a unit of measurement used to show the number of members making up a family. Household size depends on the couple's birth rate and the model of different generations living together in a family. In traditional Vietnamese agricultural society, a large number of offspring is a symbol of a prosperous family, providing required manual labour, which resulted in a high birth rate and large household size. Also, in a Vietnamese family, many generations traditionally live under the same roof. However, impacted by the process of industrialisation in recent years, the birth rate in Vietnam has fallen. Grown up children no longer live with their parents, so the household size is smaller (Bergstedt, 2012). The household size in Vietnam decreased from 5.22 persons per household in 1979 to 4.48 persons per household in 1989, and 4.61 persons per household in 1999. This number was 3.8 in 2009, declining by 0.81 person compared with 1999.

Table 4.2 shows that the average family size of a Mai Thon household is 4.6 people, higher than the average family size for the Red River Delta as a whole (3.79), rural areas (3.9) and the country as a whole (3.8) according to the 2009 Vietnam population and housing census conducted on 1st April 2009. It substantiates the claim that Bac Ninh has the highest population density in the Red River Delta and in Vietnam. Among the four groups, the smallest household size is the non-migrant (4.3) while the largest one is the family whose has members pursuing migration over a long distance (5.1). While the labour size of the three migrating groups is relatively equal (2.7; 2.8 and 2.8),

¹³ Including migration labour

¹⁴ Migration labour during the research period, 2014-2015

the migration size of these groups is quite different. Table 4.2 pointed out the migration labour of group 3 is highest at 2.3 persons per household.

Supplementary questionnaire survey on youth

As discussed before, the economy of Vietnam depends on agriculture which accounts for more than one-quarter of the GDP, provides 85% of exports and employs about 60% of the work force (GSO, 2011b). The contribution of agriculture to farmer incomes and rural development depends on the active participation of youth¹⁵ who are the potential labour force. They are characterized by innovative behaviour, minimal risk aversion, less fear of failure, less conservativeness, greater physical strength and greater knowledge acquisition propensity (Leavy & Smith, 2010). In Vietnam, according to the 2012 census youth constitute about 35.5% of the population (UNFPA, 2012).

In order to gather supplementary data on the opportunities, constraints, and barriers faced by youth to effectively participate in the agricultural sector, a second questionnaire survey was conducted in 2017 focusing on youth respondents in Mai Thon (*from 16 to 35 years old*). This survey analysed rural youth in terms of accessing resources and services; receiving training, skills and knowledge development, markets and employment opportunities, understanding workloads, and having their voice, wishes and intentions recognised. This research was field survey using designed questions and including 89 samples, which were later divided into four groups of households as described in figure 4.4.

Group discussion

In the first phase in 2014, two group discussions (migrant household group, non-migrant household group) with Participatory Rural Appraisal tools were conducted in the village to investigate what issues rural households have to face when a member migrates, and how the use of agricultural land changes, including opportunities and threats. In the PRA tool set, I applied a timeline to get an overview of the village's history. A timeline is constructed by looking back over a given period, mapping critical events and writing them up in chronological order. It facilitates a discussion of events, consequences and associated issues in a historical context. In this research, this method was firstly used to trace the history of the agricultural land. The purpose was to assess the effort involved in maintaining and protecting land, the initiatives of

¹⁵ 2009 Population and Housing Survey, GSO. Unless otherwise specified, throughout this document the term 'young people' refers to individuals aged 10–24 years. As per the WHO definitions: young people 10–24 years, youth 15–24 years, adolescents 10–19 years. The Vietnamese Youth Law (Law no. 53/2005/QH11) defines youth as 16–35 years.

the village people to use, to keep and to preserve their land. Secondly, it helped me to outline the flow of migration during the economic transition.

In 2017, when the supplementary survey focusing on youth was carried out, I also conducted two focus groups (farming youth and non-farming youth) to explore the prevention factors, the supportive elements and the need for rural youth to participate in agricultural activities. Both survey interviews and focus groups were conducted in the evening or on the weekend depending on when the young people were home from work.

In-depth interviews and participatory observation

Nilsen and Brannen (2010) pointed out: “For biographical research, it is especially important that tradition sets the stories informants tell into a multi-layered social framework rather than merely analysing them from a discourse and narrative approach.” On the one hand, I tried my best to select the respondents representatively to explore the underlying social framework. On the other hand, in this research, I also conducted in-depth interviews and did participatory observation to back up the information from the questionnaire survey and biography recording, making sure it was valid and reliable.

The informants included village cadres, town leaders, commune leaders, and around 135 villagers. I also focused on the elderly, the youth, and the women to supplement the data collected from the systematic household survey. Some information regarding long-distance migrants was also collected through telephone or informal visits to their working destination to cross-check data provided from their households. Besides, due to most of the questionnaire respondents also being treated in in-depth interviews, I was able to collect much valuable information between the lines of the coded questions. From the in-depth interviews, I gathered much information about the current situation and the social changes in past years in Mai Thon village, which was very helpful in understanding the peasants’ behaviour and attitude. Furthermore, I also engaged in participatory observation when conducting this research. As mentioned in the foregoing field work process part, I lived right in Mai Thon village during the investigation. It was especially during these periods that I had the chance to engage in participatory observation and conduct informal individual and group interviews to get more information.

Participatory observation is a method “*in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study, either openly in the role of researcher or covertly in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time*” (Becker & Geer, 1957). It aims to understand the social world from the perspectives of the research population. Participatory observation can be divided into complete participant, participant observer and complete observer; these three types vary according to the three different roles of the researcher involved in the fieldwork, as mentioned by Bernard and Gravlee (2014). In this study, I acted as the second type of researcher, the participant observer. Participatory

observation plays at least two functions: First, it is helpful to find out the answers to some difficult questions with hidden answers, such as the intra-household labour division questions. A common situation is that the respondent to the question claims to be a stay-behind person, the main actor in the household's activities, here, for instance, rice cultivation. But I was able to observe during my stay the reality of female migrants' support in transplanting, even working the whole night to keep up with the season calendar. Second, it is also useful to get a more profound understanding of the rural household's living conditions. For instance, I was able to get a more comprehensive picture of their living conditions from the perspective of different actors. I could also explore the difficulties they face in daily life or agricultural production when listening as they chatted with each other.

Besides, to meet the needed respondent, as mentioned in Part 4.1, the research schedule required me to choose a flexible interviewing time, sometimes at night, on the weekend or during Lunar New Year celebrations (*Tết*). In addition, to confirm information about the migration process, and information provided by migrants, I also conducted telephone interviews or email surveys with migrating correspondents living far away.

4.3.2 The importance of secondary data

Secondary data related to the research sites and the issues of migration were collected from available official statistical sources such as the Vietnam and Bac Ninh statistical yearbooks. Besides, unofficial sources such as local reports and the website of the Bac Ninh Industrial Zone were used to capture different complementary data. Other publications and relevant research related to rural-urban migration, agricultural production and rural household economy were also collected and reviewed

The first and very important secondary data that I acquired when beginning to do research was the complete list of households (*hộ khẩu* record) which supplies the basic characteristics of the villagers. In this study, I use *hộ khẩu* as the official definition of the household which includes a person or a group of persons living under the same roof, eating and cooking together. If an adult child gets marriage and goes to live separately, that person will be officially registered as an independent household (*hộ*), not a household member. However, if an adult child (usually the eldest) gets married but still shares the same hearth with his or her parents, that person is considered as a member of the household. In case a household member migrates out without being deleted from the *hộ khẩu*, he or she is still considered as part of the household and as a villager.

4.4 Data management and analysis

The method mix applied in each distinct chapter was informed by the logics of '*Forschung*'—the systematic search for new insights and deeper understanding (Warde, 2005). Further, the method mix was designed to allow

for triangulation and validation of the data collected for filtering out atypical performance aspects. I combined quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to have measurable results from questionnaire data, as well as more comprehensive contextual information about the community to enhance the analysis and interpretation of the findings. It was felt that the complex phenomena of rural culture, intra-household relations and many social, economic, and demographic factors could not be understood without an in-depth understanding of local beliefs and practices. The sensitivity of many of the study questions also necessitated deeper exploration than would have been possible based on simple “yes/no” or other pre-coded responses. I therein privileged qualitative data collection methods over quantitative.

Quantitative methods were merely used for sketching out the contextual setting and control purposes, rather than as primary social practices data sources. The quantitative data obtained through the survey was entered to SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17.0 version 11) by me. Before typing the answers into the SPSS, I coded the questionnaire myself and checked for any inconsistencies. Frequencies, cross-tabulations, bivariate correlations and stepwise regression analyses were performed to provide descriptive statistics of and test for significant relations between variables under consideration.

The qualitative data from biographies and in-depth interviews were either audiotaped or manually noted in the field diary. The information obtained through participatory observation was written down, while some events were photographed. With the interviewees’ consent, I recorded some interviews by using a voice recorder. The audio files were later on transcribed and documented.

CHAPTER 5

Migration characteristics

This chapter provides the main information about the characteristics and remittance behaviour of migrants on the research site. As already mentioned, there has already been a long history of population movement in Mai Thon village. It has been diversified in the modernisation process. Based on the household survey, this chapter first supplies the essential data about the demographics of the current migrants. Following is an overview of their jobs and incomes. The last section examines the remittance behaviour of the recipients and their use of the remittances. The unit of analysis in this chapter is the individual.

5.1 Mai Thon Village migration timeline

Although the smallest village in all of Chi Lang commune, the living standard of people in Mai Thon village is relatively high in comparison with other villages in Bac Ninh and higher than in Dong Village, the neighbouring village that shares the same topography and conditions. This is supposedly due to the significant contribution of labour migration. Local people are proud of being hard-working and that migration is part of their history. *“Our villagers are used to living actively. They never stay at home during their free time like the residents of other villages. They go anywhere; do anything as long as it supports their family, their home living.”* Villagers today recalled that some villagers migrated during the French colonial period (1883-1946), worked for the French as mason coolies and cyclists, or did petty trading. Later, there were also five households mobilised following the State-planned migration to Tay Nguyen. However, they had little knowledge of migration in the early periods. Hence, in the analysis that follows, we focus on the movement in these years after *Đổi Mới*. During the 1980s, Mai Thon witnessed a rare migration to Hanoi. Most of these early migrants were high educated and had a good *“lý lịch”* (curriculum vitae), thus they had chance to *“thoát lý”* – escape from farming and village in pursuit of a bright future. These migrants mostly became permanent migrants and moved their family to the place of destination. Interestingly, some of the early migrants gradually returned to spend their elderhood in Mai Thon even though their second generation remained in the place of destination. The requirements for migrants controlled by the *hộ khẩu* system was still very strict and a migrant without *hộ khẩu* confronted numerous difficulties, for example inability to rent a room to live.

The migration wave in Mai Thon village followed the national migration movement. In the late 1990s, early 2000s, there was a first wave of massive migration to the south, specifically concentrated in Ho Chi Minh City. According to the villagers, 50% of women and youth in the villages were involved in this exodus. In Ho Chi Minh City, they mainly did garment outsourcing, worked in industrial zones or sold fruits. It was a large movement not only because the economic gap between the rural and urban areas had and transport facilities had

been improved, but also the *hộ khẩu* system started to become more flexible. During this period, the *hộ khẩu* system no longer resulted in difficulties for the migrants in finding a place to stay. All temporary migrants were able to rent dwellings, and, except for their identity cards, they did not need any documents. However, many Mai Thon migrants at that period ignored the *hộ khẩu* registration because it was still very complicated.

However, around 2003, there was a massive withdrawal of that migrating wave back to their home village. Currently in Ho Chi Minh City, there are seven Mai Thon households living as long-term migrants. The reason for that large withdrawal was because adapting to a totally new way of life in the south was not easy because they had to leave their families back home. Especially noteworthy at that time, communication was still relatively difficult. There was only one telephone in the village. If a labour migrant wanted to contact family at home, he or she needed to make an appointment in advance. And at exactly that time, the family members needed to be there, awaiting the conversation. Also, in 2001 the Que Vo Industrial Zone started operating, so villagers wanting to return could find employment opportunities closer to home.

However, it appeared that there were not enough employment opportunities in the Bac Ninh Industrial Zone for everyone, so in 2004-2005, there was a second large migration wave. This time, around 100-150 households had members who migrated to Hanoi to work as maids, motorbike drivers and small traders. They often refer to their work in “junk dealing” (*nghề đồng nát*), a term that is applied to many activities: private home or commercial cleaning, collecting and selling recyclable scrap items or selling helmets, gloves, shoes, glasses, etc. Due to the migration network, Mai Thon villagers usually worked in the My Dinh area (Nam Tu Liem district, Hanoi) and along Giai Phong Street (Hai Ba Trung district, Hanoi). However, around 2007-2008, this second wave also withdrew, mostly because of new work opportunities in the industrial zone. Currently only about 30 households still have members who do some form of “junk dealing” in Hanoi.

It must be borne in mind that in 2007 the *hộ khẩu* system was changed significantly. Its major positive impacts were on temporary migrants because the procedure for temporary household registration was very simple, only requiring an identity card. However, the *hộ khẩu* system still caused them problems in accessing social services. For instance, without a Hanoi permanent *hộ khẩu* registration, the migrants could not own a house in Hanoi, and their children could not go to school there. To deal with these constraints, Mai Thon relied on remittances and social protection in their hometown. Most temporary migrants leave their children at home and return home if they had health problems. This implied that the peasant migrants continued to resist to the *hộ khẩu* system to protect their rights.

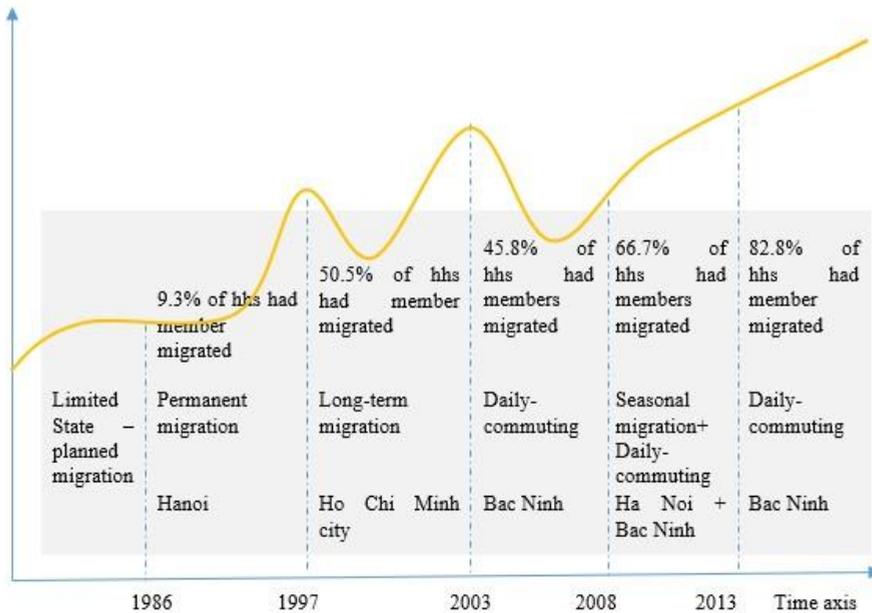


Figure 5.1 Overview of migration timeline in Mai Thon village

Source: Household survey 2015

Figure 5.1 depicts the change in Mai Thon migration out-flows. Firstly, the estimated number of people participating in migration had increased constantly over time: from 9.3% of the population in the first period to half of the population in the second, third and fourth periods. Recently, as much as two-thirds of the village have family members participating in migration. However, although the first and second periods witnessed mostly permanent and long-term migration, the remaining periods experienced more of the short-term movement, such as seasonal circular migration, daily commuting to and from work. The destination of Mai Thon's migrants was diversified. Migrants in the first period mostly moved to Hanoi for work and permanent settlement. The later periods witnessed the boom of spontaneous migration further abroad, as far as Ho Chi Minh City. However, when nearer destinations such as Hanoi or Bac Ninh province offer work opportunities, even though with lower pay than in Ho Chi Minh City, Mai Thon villagers still prefer to come back, live and work in or near their hometown.

Box 5.1 Mai Thon's "junk dealer" trade – how it got started

The initial migrants from Mai Thon started up in Giai Phong district selling hats and accessories, and then helmets. These migrants created a network that drew along their family members, relatives or acquaintances (almost always female) to become small traders and vendors. In 2004-2005, some began working as part-time household cleaners, which gave them more free time for other work. They often combined cleaning jobs (not only private homes but also construction sites) with collecting recyclable waste (paper, plastic, iron, etc.) that they could trade. Males preferred to be motorbike drivers. In 2003-2004, Mai Thon village's windling land was being converted and built up for brick kilns, which gave households in Mai Thon compensation money. In addition to home construction or improvements, some used the money to buy a motorcycle, enabling them to migrate to Hanoi later and work as freelance motorcycle drivers. The 2007-2008 period was the highest year when most unemployed or young persons who did not continue their education moved to Hanoi to be motorcycle drivers or junk dealers. The migrant workers from Mai Thon chose mainly to work and rent accommodation in My Dinh ward, Nam Tu Liem district, a newly developed zone in Hanoi. However, in 2011-2012, Mai Thon village witnessed a large number of returnees when the Que Vo industrial zone started recruiting many workers. At that time, motorbike drivers and junk dealers were having a hard time making a living due to high competition. Therefore, many Mai Thon villagers came back to find opportunities in the Que Vo Industrial Zone. Only older persons whose age or failing health does not allow them to work in the new industrial zones keep on working in Hanoi. Today, there are about 30 people from Mai Thon still working as motorbike drivers or junk dealers in Hanoi.

—In-depth interview, 2016

The long-term migrants still retain their *hộ khẩu* registration and their houses in Mai Thon village. Most of them return to visit their hometown and maintain their social network even though in some cases, they even moved their whole family with them. This gives Mai Thon villagers a strong connection with their hometown and their identity, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. R. Skeldon (2005) criticised the classic migration assumption that most migration was made up of permanent moves from one place to other whereas, in reality, migration is a complex system of various types of movement which would happen throughout an entire lifetime. The counter flow and its socio-political effects have been researched in Southeast Asia recently. Because migration is not a new phenomenon in this region, its characteristics have, however, fundamentally changed due to revolutionary technological and infrastructural advancement and rapid urbanisation (Hugo, 2009a; P. F. Kelly, 2011; Lebailly Ph., J.Ph. Peemans, & Vu D.T., 2015; J. Rigg, 1998). Due to industrialisation and modernisation, most of these countries have essentially experienced an adjustment in their agricultural labour resources in rural areas as well as in other sectors and areas. However, due to the modernity process, places of origin and destination of rural out-migration are relatively close together.

Similarly, improved transportation and telecommunications innovations have made regular home visiting increasingly feasible over increased distances. Therefore, rural out-migration is on the rise not only in volume but also in the types of migration which depend much on the interval of migrating, including daily commuting, seasonal migration, temporary migration and long-term migration. For example, migration in Vietnam has always had an important role in long-term changes within social processes; however, it was only after the 1980's, during the transitional economy, that Vietnam saw a significant expansion of voluntary internal migration. In the early stages, for rural out-migration, the trend was prone to be permanent from rural-rural, but from the late 1990s onwards it, shifted from rural to urban and remained in circular patterns (Kim Anh et al., 2012; Khuat & Le, 2008). Other countries in the region also share the same characteristic of migration flows when temporary movement has been the dominant mode of labour migration in the region. For example, the Philippines and Indonesia, in the contemporary period, both experienced circular labour migration and both reached unprecedented scales and diversity (Yamanaka & Piper, 2005). Modern forms of transportation and communication have reduced the challenge of distance and allowed migrants to maintain closer and more intimate linkages with their place of origin than before.

Circular migration is no longer just a temporary solution but has become a long-term practice of many rural Vietnam. Compared with other types of migration, circular migration is preferred because it permits migrants both to keep a foothold on land in their villages and to seek cash incomes in other areas (Portes, 2010). In addition, migrants can obtain the best of both worlds by earning in high-income destinations and spending in low-cost origins. Also, keeping their family at the origin, migrants can maintain valued traditions and family ties and make frequent visits. However, the relationship between migration and development in rural areas is affected by changes in migration patterns. The next section will highlight some of the main characteristics of Mai Thon's recent migrants.

5.2 Migrant characteristics

5.2.1 Demographic characteristics of migrants

The important aspects of the relationship between migration and agricultural production relate to the quality of labour and the decision-making process. Table 3 describes the main demographic characteristics of the migrants among three groups of households, including gender, marital status, age, and education levels which are important indicators that reflect status of migrating labourers. While most migrants are currently married (82.6%), the proportion of men and women participating in the survey sample was relatively balanced (50.2% and 49.8% respectively). The same trend is also observed in three groups of migration households. The number of female migrants has risen over time in keeping with the trend of the national movement (Coxhead et al., 2015; Kim Anh et al., 2012). Women now represent 52.4% of all Vietnamese migrants (GSO, 2016). However,

some women migrate to cities to work as men do, but female migrants are not as stable as male. They usually stop their migration work when the family, especially the children, need them. In-depth interviews show that 65% of women have migrant work experience, in particular women 45 years of age and younger, but now they are at home. They stopped being migrant workers after marriage, after the birth of the children or when the family, especially the children, needed their support.

In terms of age, the majority of migrating family members are around 30, with 37.4% of the entire sample aged 16-30. The age group 30-40 accounts for 33.3% of the sample (see figure 5.3 and table 5.1). The age group 40-50 and over 50 years of age accounts for only 22.4% and 6.8% respectively. The average age of migrants is 35 which is remarkably older than the national median age of 27.8 (GSO, 2016). Group 1 tends to move at a younger age while 51.3% of group 1 migrants are under the age of 30, only 20% of group 2 and 34.7% of group 3 belong to this category. The main reason is because the industrial zones around Mai Thon village prefer youth labour, which allows the young people to commute daily. The majority of group 2 falls in the age range from 30 to 40 – the period that people are still in their productive period, however being excluded from the IZs.

A similar alarming situation was encountered in many other industrial zones in Vietnam, referred to as a “soft firing”. Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (2017) stated that there were nearly 300 industrial zones all over Vietnam, attracting 2.8 million labourers with the mean age of 31.2 and the average working time in industrial zones was 6-7 years. The mean age of factory workers revealed the truth of the high proportion of dismissed labourers over 35 years old, especially female. (T. Nguyen, 2017, 2018). *VnExpress* also reported that approximately 80% of female workers over 35 were fired in 2016 (Thuy, 2017) (*see more in the annex 4*)

This phenomenon of firing factory workers by age 35 is considered as the black side of wage labour, making workers always feel unstable and needing to prepare a backup strategy (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6).

Ms Huong shared her experience in migration work.

“After finishing high school in 1996, I could not pursue higher education, so I followed my cousins to Ho Chi Minh City to work and stayed there for nearly four years. At the beginning I also applied for work in a garment factory, but I was refused so I sold street food for a living. When the Que Vo Industrial Zone opened, my parents called me home and I applied for a job with Rang Dong Company. In 2000 I got married and had two children, so my work was unstable. I moved from one factory to another, then worked for Samsung for seven years. But when I turned 35, I could not do as much hard work and frequently got sick. One time due to being very sick, I took a five-day break without a doctor’s paper, so was dismissed.”

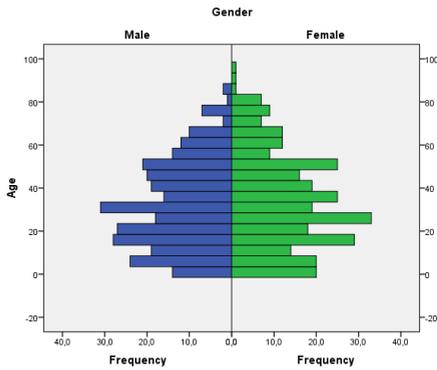


Figure 5.2 Age pyramid between male and female villagers

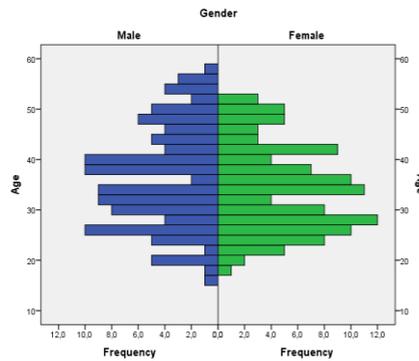


Figure 5.3 Age pyramid between male and female Mai Thon migrants

Source: Household survey 2015

Ms Huong found it hard to find a new job at the age of 35, so she chose to migrate to Hanoi. *“In 2012, my children were older and could take care of themselves. My husband could take care of farming, so I decided to migrate to Hanoi with my cousins to work as a domestic helper. At first, I only wanted to give it a try, but the work was suitable for me and I worked there until 2016 when my children entered high school and had to focus on studying. That year my daughter finished high school and enrolled in the University of Commerce, so I followed her and came back to Hanoi to work and take care of her at the same time. Life in a big city is not easy for a young girl, you know. We are now living in the My Dinh area with some fellow villagers and I continue to work as a house cleaner.”* – Interview, 2018.

Ms Huong’s story also reflects the relationship between the life cycle of rural women, the gender division of labour and migration patterns, which is complex, dynamic and diversified. Migration is not a simple single move, especially for rural women. Since *Đổi Mới*, rural girls and women are confronted with different facets of migration. After school and before marriage, some of the girls had an experience with migration working far away from home. After marriage, there are also different “turning points” in female migration decisions and experiences. The first turning point is pregnancy and giving birth to a child. Before pregnancy, the woman could migrate easily with or without her husband. After pregnancy, she usually comes back to the village whether the husband continued working away or not. After several years, women prefer to migrate again when somebody can take care of the child, usually the mother-in-law acting as guardian.

The second turning point is associated with the child’s education. The high school entrance exam is essential to students in Vietnam. In order to enter a good

university, they need to get good study results in high school first. Therefore, some women like Ms Huong come back to supervise their child. Even though they may not be able to give any direct educational support, they can prepare a good learning environment for the child. Then, it is interesting to observe a popular trend in Mai Thon: A mother or a father will migrate in order to support their children's education process in combination with expansion of their livelihood. After caring for the child during their schooling, some women choose to migrate again, which depends on their age. Usually, when they are around 50 years old, which is no longer favourable for migration, most women prefer to stay at home and take care of their grandchildren, which is the third turning point. This circle of migration is reflected in Figure 5.3 when no female migrants fell into age group above 55 while male migrants keep migrating up to 60 years old.

In Mai Thon, when a woman has a grandchild, no matter where she is and what she is doing, she will come back home to care for the grandchild. This is the most important thing in the whole household. In the overall process of migration, the pressure from the children's education and marriage are the driving forces and the core points of an adult's livelihood. During this caring period, the husband usually continues migration work. Ms Xe's story also illustrates this.

“Ms Xe is 53 years old. Her household has seven members: her mother-in-law, she and her husband, two sons, a daughter-in-law, a grandchild. Recently, her husband worked as a motorbike driver in Hanoi and usually came home every half-month. Her first son works in the Que Vo Industrial Zone while the second son is still a student in the Posts and Telecommunications Institute of Technology. When the first son studied in Hanoi in 2011, she and her husband migrated there to work and take care of him. They worked firstly as street vendors selling hats and later on helmets. She had spent 12 years in Hanoi, from 2001 to 2013. At the beginning, they just migrated in the inter-season free time. Then they spent most of their time working in Hanoi, only coming back home two days a week. However, when the first son finished his studies and her elderly parents-in-law suffered from failing health, their family decided that the wife would return home while her husband continued on in Hanoi with the second son. In 2013 when she came back home, she mostly worked in agricultural production and weaving sedge bags, then weaving hand-made bamboo products, usually earning 120,000 VND per day.

When she and her husband worked together in Hanoi, they saved enough to buy land and build a house. However, being a vendor came with numerous risks, such as bad weather or being chased by the police. Her husband had migrated to Hanoi and had been there already 20 years until this point. Her husband has been gone for a long time, so he does not want to come back to the village. If he continues working, he keeps earning money; more importantly he prefers being active rather than being idle in the village.” – Interview, 2018.

Table 5.1 Demographic characteristics of migrants

		Group of migration households							
		Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Total	
		N (76)	%	N (43)	%	N (98)	%	N (219)	%
Gender ($r=-0.001$, $sig = 0.994$)	Male	37	48.7	24	53.3	48	49.0	109	49.8
	Female	39	51.3	21	46.7	50	51.0	110	50.2
Family migrating member ($r=-0.143^*$, $sig=0.034$)	Husband	14	18.4	15	33.3	30	30.6	59	26.9
	Wife	18	23.7	16	35.6	30	30.6	64	29.2
	Son	24	31.6	8	17.8	18	18.4	50	22.8
	Daughter	20	26.3	6	13.3	20	20.4	46	21.0
Marital status ($r=0.016$; $sig = 0.813$)	Married	63	82.9	38	84.4	80	81.6	181	82.6
	Single	13	17.1	7	15.6	18	18.4	38	17.4
Age ($r = 0.212^*$, $sig = 0.002$)	<30	39	51.3	9	20.0	34	34.7	82	37.4
	30-<40	28	36.8	20	44.4	25	25.5	73	33.3
	40-<50	6	7.9	11	24.4	32	32.7	49	22.4
	50-<60	3	3.9	5	11.1	7	7.1	15	6.8
Education levels ($r=-0.161^*$, $sig = 0.017$)	Primary school	1	1.3	0	0.0	9	9.2	10	4.6
	2nd school	33	43.4	28	62.2	57	58.2	118	53.9
	High school	42	55.3	11	24.4	27	27.6	80	36.5
	University	0	0.0	5	11.1	4	4.1	9	4.1
	After graduated	0	0.0	1	2.2	1	1.0	2	0.9

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Household survey 2015

For most migrants, the main aim for migrating far away from home to work is to earn money to support their children's education and marriage. And it is interesting because that is among the reasons why female migrants paused their mobility. Of course, the migration process can stop when the couple think it is time to come back to the village. That time usually includes the following three aspects: first, when their physical condition does not allow them to do the migrant work; second, when they have other better job opportunities around the village compared to the migrant job (*Mrs Xe does bamboo weaving now. At the beginning, she needed to split the bamboo into laths by hand which took a lot time and skill. Recently, people bring her the bamboo laths and take the finished products, so it has become much easier and the income at times is as high as working in an industrial zone*); third, when the migrants think they have earned enough money from the outside job ("*enough money*" in the case of Mrs Xe was to buy more land and build a new house).

In terms of the level of education of the migrants, based on the data collected, 4.6 of migrant workers have primary education, 53.9 have lower secondary education; 36.5 have high school education; and 5.0 have a university degree or higher. The three groups surveyed tend to have a similar level of education with 43.4 of group 1, 62.2 of group 2 and 58.2 of group 3 finishing their education upon completion of lower secondary school. But there is remarkable difference in the high school and university level among the three groups. At high school level, group 1's proportion (55.3) is double that of the other groups (24.4 and 27.6 respectively). In contrast, at university level group 2's proportion is highest (11.1) while only 4.1 of group 3 and none of group 1 is at that level. Groups 2 and 3 also have members who took up higher education after graduating with their bachelor's degree.

It is noteworthy that many of the present young generation in the village are pursuing college and university degrees. However, I didn't categorise them as labour migrants because they mostly do not have jobs and depend on their family's financial support (this specific group will be discussed more in chapter 7). Even though it is not very far from Mai Thon to Hanoi (around 35 km), members of this group mainly rent a room to live in Hanoi. However, they usually come back home to visit their families as well as to pick up money and food (such as rice, vegetables, and prepared food) on weekends. Many in this group, after graduating from a university in Hanoi, will stay on in the city in order to find jobs, even though their *hộ khẩu* is still in Bac Ninh province. In sum, the majority of village migrants have secondary and high school education (53.2 and 54.5 respectively). Among the migrants surveyed, very few have gone for higher education.

5.2.2 Migrants' work characteristics

The majority of the migrants (45.2) are industrial workers, far more in comparison with other occupations. Notably, 75 of those in group 1 belongs to this niche, which means most of the day commuters work in an industrial zone

around Mai Thon village. Group 2 and group 3, in contrast, have more diversified types of jobs. Most of the group 1 members are living in the village (96.1) while 86.7 of group 2 live and work away from the village, mostly in Hanoi, and 4.6 of the permanent migrants work in the south. The number of group 1 mainly work as day commuters to Que Vo and Yen Phong Industrial Zones, working in factories such as Rang Dong, Temma and Canon. Mr An, a migrating worker, is typical of the Mai Thon villagers who prefer wage labour, especially in the young people group.

Mr An is 32 years old. He finished high school in 2002 and went on to get training in electrical equipment repairing in a vocational school. When studying in Hanoi, he also joined fellow villagers as a motorcycle driver to earn extra income, around 50,000 VND per day, enough to cover his own living costs, so his parents only needed to pay his school fees. After two years of training, he came back to work in Que Vo Industrial Zone as an electrical equipment repairer until 2009, when he had the opportunity to become a driver. His work recently is not really demanding, although he still needs to do shift work: one weekday the day shift, the next night. He normally works 9 hours a day and receives 9 million VND per month, relatively high in comparison with other jobs. Moreover, he also has social insurance coverage and gets a bonus when his work takes him on a long distance. His wife works 8 hours a day and receives around 6-7 million per month.

The average wage is much dependent on qualifications, skills and seniority, fluctuating between 4 million to 6 million VND per month as net income. If they are skilled, their net wage could be between 7 and 8 million VND a month. Compared with agriculture, this wage is considered much higher and more stable, therefore many youths like Mr An prefer wage labour. Besides, they escape farm work, which is considered dirty, heavy, low-paying and backward compared with jobs nearby. According to Mr An, “*working in an industrial zone is much cleaner and the income steady, whereas farm income only comes at the end of season*”. Mr An shared that he does not want to migrate far for his work; he prefers to live with his family and near his acquaintances. Life in Hanoi, for him, was too fast and unsuitable. Choosing wage labour opportunities nearby permits migrants to live at home and thus considerably reduce their cost of living. It is noteworthy that the recently vastly improved information and communications technologies and local road networks in the province have contributed remarkably to daily commuting. For example, the motorcycle plays a big role in promoting this. “*In the 1980’s I began to teach biology in Bac Ninh High School, 30 km from Mai Thon. I only had a bicycle, therefore I had to cycle from Bac Ninh city to visit home on Saturday afternoon and came back on Sunday night. The road was terribly rumble-tumble. It took me more than two hours to cycle each way. Now it takes only 30 minutes. The road is much smoother, so it is easy to go home every day.*”

Table 5.2 Mai Thon migrants' characteristics

		Group of migration households							
		Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Total	
		N (76)	%	N (43)	%	N (98)	%	N (219)	%
Occupation ($r=0.226^{**}$, $sig = .001$)	Peasant/ Farmer	3	3.9	2	4.4	7	7.1	12	5.5
	Industrial worker	57	75.0	7	15.6	35	35.7	99	45.2
	Office worker	2	2.6	6	13.3	7	7.1	15	6.8
	Wage- labourer	4	5.3	7	15.6	16	16.3	27	12.3
	Seller	4	5.3	8	17.8	15	15.3	27	12.3
	Handicraft maker	6	7.9	12	26.7	16	16.3	34	15.5
	Other	0	0.0	3	6.7	2	2.0	5	2.3
Work sector ($r=0.094$, $sig=0.167$)	Public service	1	1.3	5	11.1	10	10.2	16	7.3
	Domestic- owner company	20	26.3	7	15.6	25	25.5	52	23.7
	International company	46	60.5	2	4.4	22	22.4	70	32.0
	Self-employed	9	11.8	26	57.8	34	34.7	69	31.5
	Other	0	0.0	5	11.1	7	7.1	12	5.5
Living place ($r=0.342^{**}$, $sig=000$)	In village	73	96.1	6	13.3	52	53.1	131	59.8
	Out of the village	3	3.9	39	86.7	45	45.9	87	39.7
	Overseas	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	3.1	1	0.5

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Household survey 2015

In terms of gender, it is noteworthy that twice as many female migrants as males engaged in industrial work. This can be explained mostly by the truth that most factories in the Bac Ninh IZs are the labour-intensive manufacturing industries which recruit mainly female workers. Besides, the female migrants surveyed prefer the stability of these jobs rather than high-earning jobs; and their actual frequency of movement as well as their need to return home due to family obligations is higher than that of the male respondents. Male migrants tend to seek a higher income job over employment stability. Therefore, the number of female migrants who chose to work in an industrial zone around their hometown is much higher than that of their male counterparts. Actually, this reflects the continuity of the traditional gender-based division of rural household labour. “*Women inside and men outside*” is the traditional cultural norm in Vietnam. Many studies reported that the existing division of labour and the informal rules and norms in intra-household relations have been strongly influenced by gender. Gender perspective influences who migrates, as well as when, where, why, and how they migrate. It also affects the amount and frequency of the remittances that migrants send, the way in which these are spent or invested, as well as their potential or limitation to contribute to household and local development in rural areas (De Haas, 2009; Bimal Ghosh, 1992; Lucas, 2007). Although reasons vary, women are found to be less likely to migrate for work than men in many developing countries (M.M.B Asis, 2003; Dreby, 2006; Kraler, Kofman, Kohli, & Schmoll, 2011). For example, in Vietnam (Paris, Truong, Rola-Rubzen, & S.Luis, 2009; D. W. Pfau & Giang, 2008) and Indonesia (Elmhirst, 2012; Yamauchia et al., 2009) women’s overall participation in migrant labour markets has lagged behind that of men even though in the last decade or so, more women have joined in rural-urban migration. The lag in female migration is also due in part to women’s occupational options as migrants, which tend to be less than what is available to men (Rao, 2009; Resurreccion & Tran, 2007; Tacoli & Mabala, 2010). In addition, the traditional gender norm still considers migration as a man’s thing (T. M. K. Nguyen, Nguyen, & Lebailly, 2018; Resurreccion & Tran, 2007). Besides, there are various constraints on opportunities that stem from market and governmental failures that are more binding for women (Kabeer & Tran, 2006; B. D. Le, 2005)

The Mai Thon migration flow timeline also reveals the differences in gender participation and the migration period. Right after *Đổi Mới*, mostly only males migrated, at that time considered to be upper mobile, reflecting the age-old cultural norm of the male being the bread winner. Recently, when migration opportunities opened up more for women with a large demand for female labourers, there is a feminisation trend with regard to migration. However, in terms of migrating distance, when there are opportunities to work outside, the male labour force has the lead with regard to migrating far away to work and for longer periods, thus fulfilling their earning duty. The women represent their traditional division in household labour by choosing to work nearer their homes to take care of the children and do the farming work for the household.

5.3 Remittance characteristics

As a household economic strategy, remittance plays an important role in circular migration purposes in the village. According to migration literature, numerous reasons push migrants to send remittances back to their households in the hometown. However, the volume and frequency of remittances sent back are largely determined by the level of income earned at the destination and the commitment within households (Adger et al., 2002; Cohen, 2011). Part 5.2 shows the positive picture of Mai Thon migrants' work and income. Therefore, even though the amount of money depends on numerous factors, most migrants (94.5) report that they send half of their income back home. There is no significant difference in the remittance sending decision among the three groups of households. Moreover, one of the remarkable features of remittance on the research site is its stability and frequency, which is the result of numerous interactive factors. Firstly, family member movement is usually a decision of the whole family instead of an individual member. Households expect to have a higher income due to the remittances, so they send their members for migration. Thus, after finding jobs and getting an income, migrants are expected to send remittances to contribute to the household income and savings. The case of Ms Huong in Part 5.2 illustrates this point. Whatever type of migration she took up, the majority of her earnings were sent back home. Besides, for some households, migration is costly, and they have to borrow to pay for migration. Remittances are used to pay off this debt.

Secondly, many Mai Thon migrants send remittances simply because of altruism. According to altruism theories, the value of a person depends not only on her own consumption but also on the consumption of her/his family, and as a result sending remittances to family can increase the value of migrants (Adger et al., 2002; Cohen, 2011). The remittances are expected to increase not only the income but also the consumption of households. Long-term migration from Mai Thon to the south supported this idea. One elderly woman in a group 2 household whose son migrated to Ho Chi Minh City shared that her second son keeps sending her pocket money every month and she can do whatever she wants with it. She is now living with her first son and all of her expenses are covered.

Thirdly, as interpreted by the theory on exchange motives, migrants can send remittances to home households to get some benefits in return (De Haas, 2007; Osaki, 2003). In Mai Thon, migrants can send remittances so that the recipients will take care of their assets or family or invest in activities with higher capital return than in destination areas. Thus, remittances can lead to a change not only in consumption but also in the labour output and productivity of the home households. Sharing the same intuitions, migrants in Mai Thon village may send remittances home for altruistic motives, a sense of social responsibility, as a risk-sharing mechanism to buffer consumption in the face of external shocks, or as a combination of these reasons.

The frequency of receiving money, however, was found to depend upon on the distance and the social networks which permit them to visit or send money home. For most migrants who are located nearby and find it convenient to remit, 73.4 of households' report that they received remittances monthly, in line with their monthly wage payment. It is important to note that financial services for money transfer have been developed well in this locality and that the local people are now familiar with those services. Most migrants and their family members have a bank account. However, most migrants prefer combining the monthly remittance with a visit home. In this niche, group 1 accounts for 81.6 which is highest among the groups.

Table 5.3 Sending remittance behaviour

		Group of migration households							
		Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Total	
		N (76)	%	N (43)	%	N (98)	%	N (219)	%
Sending remittance ($r=0.177^{**}$, $sig=0.009$)	Yes	76	100.0	42	93.3	89	90.8	207	94.5
	No	0	0.0	3	6.7	9	9.2	12	5.5
Sending remittance frequency ($r=-0.04$, $sig=0.513$)	Every week	4	5.3	1	2.2	8	8.2	13	5.9
	Every month	62	81.6	31	68.9	61	62.2	154	70.3
	Once per few months	0	0.0	2	4.4	5	5.1	7	3.2
	Annum	0	0.0	3	6.7	2	2.0	5	2.3
	Limited	10	13.2	5	11.1	13	13.3	28	12.8

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Household survey 2015

Regarding the amount of remittances, Table 5.4 shows that the mean remittance in Mai Thon village (2.37) is similar to the mean national remittance amount of US\$1,200 (General Statistics Office, 2016), equivalent to 2.40 million VND per month. Group 1 and group 3 tend to send a little higher remittance back home than group 1, and the remittance of group 2 only accounts for one-third of their earnings while the remittance of group 1 and 3 accounted for half of the migrant's income. However, there is no significant correlation between the migrants' earnings and remittances with the different groups of households.

Table 5.4 Mean remittance among migration household groups

	Group of migration households			
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Monthly earnings (million VND) (r=0.86, sig= 0.217)	4.89	6.06	6.20	5.71
Remittance (million VND) (r= -0.004, sig = 0.957)	2.45	2.14	2.43	2.37

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Household survey 2015

Overall, Table 5.5 shows the values affected positively on the remittance amount sent to their home households, including marital status, recent living place of migrants, their earnings and their sending decision. When migrants are married and their earnings higher, they are more likely to send money back home. Oppositely, the nearer migrants live, the larger remittance they send home and the less their sending frequency is, the bigger amount they send home. In summary, internal migration and its associated remittance flows act as an income diversification strategy for numerous rural households and communities – especially those vulnerable households that have less access to resources in Vietnam (Harigaya & de Brauw, 2007; Oxfam & AAV., 2012). Migration helps rural households to cope with the risks and take advantage of revenue opportunities by distributing household labour in many different spaces, to maximise family incomes and reduce risk (X. T. Hoang, Truong, Luu, Dinh, & Dinh, 2013; T. P. Nguyen, Tran Ngo Thi Minh Tam, Nguyen Thi Nguyet, & Oostendorp, 2008). In the Red River Delta, migration is an important way to diversify household earnings and/or to ensure the accessibility of resources. Through migration, household members would contribute income, accumulate capital for development.

Table 5.5 Correlation of remittance amount with migration characteristics

Remittance	Migration type	Gender	Marital Status	Education levels	Occupations	Working sectors	Receiving place	Monthly earnings	Sending remittance	Sending remittance frequency	Age	Years of education
Pearson Correlation	-.021	-.033	.173*	.046	-.046	.064	-.140*	.431**	-.214**	-.079	.099	.018
Sig. (2-tailed)	.765	.638	.012	.511	.506	.352	.042	.000	.002	.256	.154	.797
N	211	211	211	211	211	211	211	211	211	211	211	211

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Household survey 2015

This chapter aims to explore the differences in migration selectivity, remittance behaviour, the relationship between different migrant households and the management and utilisation of remittances. The study shows that the majority of migrants are young, married and well-educated. The largest proportion of migrants in the daily commuter type of migration mostly works in an industrial zone. While male migrants prefer high-income jobs, females search for stability. Twice as many female migrants as males work in industrial zones, which have flexible working hours, thus enabling the migrants to support their household and assume care-taking responsibilities.

Remittances play a central role for the families of all respondents. Remittances are spent mostly on consumptive expenses. When they are invested in capital goods or in a household enterprise, it usually involves traditional economic activities in the locality. The main benefit of remittances lies in increased purchasing power and sustaining a robust demand that creates opportunities that, in turn, fuel private sector development. Those that see the opportunities and act upon them, whether receivers or not, take advantage of the inflows of remittances as the bloodline that sustains the local economy. Given these prospects, the potential of internal remittances needs to be recognised by policymakers and service providers to maximise the development of internal migrants, their families as well as agricultural and rural improvement. The coming section shows the way rural households spend

the remittances they receive. It is important to note that there is a gap between their intended use and the actual use of remittances. Another crucial point is that these statistics only reveal the number of people when indicating the remittance purpose, it does not reveal the level of importance of each purpose. For example, if the household has sick or elderly members, they will devote the remittance to health care first and foremost. In the sample, 48.4 of respondents reported using remittances for that purpose.

CHAPTER 6

**Agricultural production in the context
of migration**

Agricultural production is essential to the food security issue, at both the farm household level and national level. With the migration of the rural productive labour force and changes in the agricultural labour force, an investigation of what is happening in agricultural production at the farm level is becoming more and more essential. Is migration leading to the regression of agricultural production? This chapter identifies and analyses four dimensions of migration that affect the agricultural production of rural households, which corresponds to four parts. The first part analyses the investment of remittances in agriculture as one source of capital. The second part highlights the impact of migration on land-holdings and land use change. (*This content has been published in Nguyen Thi Minh Khue et al. (2019), Agricultural Land Use Change under Migration Context: evidence from a Vietnamese Village, Journal of Sustainable Development 12 (4)*). The third part focuses on the agricultural production choice which has adapted to the development of migration. The fourth section analyses the different pathways in which rural households manage to continue farming in the context of intra-household labour loss. The following is a summary of the key findings.

6.1 Remittance: A new capital source for farming investment

There is no doubt that rural-urban migration for wage labour has become a very crucial financial source for sustaining households. Table 4.4 shows the respondent's purpose for the remittance. The main uses of remittances in this village as I determined after the focus group step included: house improvement and consumption, agriculture investment, health care, debt reimbursement and education. Table 6.1 shows that in general daily consumption was the most common (64.4) use of the remittance, while house construction and spending for children's education were the second priority (57.5 and 54.8 respectively). Health care payments and savings were in third place (48.4 and 41.7 in that order). Only one third of migrants use the remittances they receive for farm production (38.8). Non-farm investment and debt payment accounted for a very limited proportion (10.5 and 11.9 respectively).

That point is consistent with the implication of E. Taylor (1999:65) that the main effect of remittances is an increase of the purchasing power in the locality, rather than investment capital for productive purpose, and the high levels of consumption spending triggers investments by other households. Therefore, remittances become the source of income used for purchasing whatever products other investors have to offer. These include anything from restaurants to meat markets, mechanical services, etc. Remittances are the lifeline of all the businesses going on in the locale. All the entrepreneurs interviewed expressed a common feeling that remittances had boosted their business and any cutting off of remittances would remarkably affect local economic growth. For many other rural Vietnamese, their dream is to build a

new house or to renovate their old house. Agricultural inputs are another important expense item. This commentary of Mai Thon villagers illustrates vividly the consistent finding that house-building, living expenses, and agricultural inputs account for the bulk of migrant remittances: *“Buying buffalo, getting married and building a house are the three main purposes and milestones of our life. So, when a husband sends money back home, it was saved firstly to improve living conditions, you know, even though I want to save for my children to go to university. But all other households in the village are renovating their houses.”*

Moreover, combined with the survey results about household consumption and reports that the interviewers yielded from the field, the remittance is firstly used for household consumption to improve the housing and living conditions of the family, followed by better access to health and then education services. Remittances are often used to upgrade the frequency of consumption, quality and variety of food, which is particularly important for families with very young and elderly members. Regarding the education purpose, 22 respondents who chose that purpose are all households in the sample survey who had children still of school age. All of them indicated that they devoted most of the amounts remitted for their children’s education. Even in some cases, although their living standard is subsistence, they attempt to invest in their children’s education. It is possibly considered as a long-term investment in human capital which would result in long-term patterns of differentiation as suggested by some authors (Ellis, 2003a; Hugo, 2009a). The impacts of remittance on rural society are much more complicated than the current simple economic view¹⁶ (L. De Haan & Zoomers, 2005; P. Deshingkar, 2006).

However, whether remittances are used for productive purposes or not is still at the heart of the debate. It is manifest that they give preference to investments that improve their traditional economic activities in agriculture rather than establishing new enterprises in other branches of the local economy, as de Haas (2005:6) also concluded. There is *“a weak link between migrant remittances and commercial investment as compared to housing and agriculture”*. The survey data shows that the share of respondents who use remittances for productive investments, especially in agricultural production, is relatively large. Indeed, 38.8 of the respondents indicated that they had invested in agriculture production.

There was a significant difference in remittance use for farming among three groups of migrant households. Group 3 is more prone to use remittances in agriculture (47.9) in comparison with group 1 (34.2) and group 2 (33.3). The

¹⁶ In Red River Delta villages, remittances have a social as well as an economic function; they are not only a means to maintain or improve economic status but also a means to achieve higher prestige and standing in the local community and family, for instance, by spending part of the remittance on ceremonies or local amenities.

reason is because the mixed migration group lacked labour to a greater extent at some peak time of the season; therefore, they had to spend a larger amount of the remittance to hire labour and machinery while the daily commuting groups were better at arranging intra-household labour. However, the groups characterised by long-term migration had the lowest investment proportion, most of them keeping agriculture at the lowest level, or even making loans to others (discussed in detail in Chapter 7). Remittances used for agricultural production are four times higher than for non-farm. Unlike farming disbursements, households in group 2 spent twice as much of the remittances on developing services or small businesses than group 1 (9.2) and group 3 (7.1) A popular strategy is to run businesses related to crop production and animal raising, for example small shops selling groceries and agricultural inputs.

Although the businesses have minimum risks and innovation in relation to the activities established in the local economy and are based on previously acquired skills, their potential contribution to the local economy should not be underestimated, particularly in terms of employment creation. Each shop visited employs one or two shop tenders to run the daily business. Some were immediate family members, some extended family and some total strangers employed on strictly on a wage basis. In turn, the shops provide basic services to the villagers and the absence of the shops would require that villagers travel long distances to access these basic services. With substantial remittance flows in one direction or the other or in both, it likely affects income distribution, which has had an accelerating or facilitating effect on local service and economic development.

Table 6.1 Use of remittances made by migrants

	Group of migration households							
	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Total	
	N (76)	%	N (43)	%	N (98)	%	N (219)	%
<i>No remittance</i>	0	0.0	5	11.1	9	9.2	14	6.4
Farming spent	26	34.2	15	33.3	44	44.9	85	38.8
Non-farm investment	7	9.2	9	20.0	7	7.1	23	10.5
Education	52	68.4	20	44.4	48	49.0	120	54.8
Debt payment	12	15.8	2	4.4	12	12.2	26	11.9
House construction	44	57.9	22	48.9	60	61.2	126	57.5
Health care	41	53.9	19	42.2	46	46.9	106	48.4
Daily consumption	49	64.5	28	62.2	64	65.3	141	64.4
Saving	20	26.3	25	55.6	46	47.4	91	41.7
Others	10	13.2	7	15.6	8	8.2	25	11.4

Source: Household survey 2015

Table 6.2 introduces the agricultural categories that the remittance is mainly used in the migrant's household, including land purchase or rental, labour and farming equipment. It must be kept in mind that this section is still analysing remittance from the standpoint of the migrants' purpose, while the next part will focus more on the household's perspective regarding the decision on agricultural factors made possible by family mobility. Table 6.2 shows that 2.4 of migrants' report that their remittance was spent on other activities, for example going from land cultivation to aquaculture. Regarding agricultural land, two-thirds of the respondents (77.6) spent the remittance on maintenance of their paddy fields while only 10.6 used it for other purposes such as renting extra land to expand their farming activities. One popular use of remittance for farming is paying wages for agricultural labour, with 81.2 of the respondents using it for that purpose. In general, each household usually hires labourers for around five days each rice season. The people who rent out their labour are mostly villagers who stay put in the locality and attempt to diversify their income. The wage is around 200,000-250,000 VND per day, roughly equivalent to wage labourer's daily pay. Even though the wage is relatively as high as income earned from circular migration, this type of job is only available during some short periods of the rice growing cycle, for example seeding or harvesting. Therefore, these opportunities are limited and unstable. Moreover, the villagers who hire out their labour also need to focus on their own paddy fields at the same time due to the nature of agriculture.

In terms of renting machinery for agrarian production, the practice is widespread. Nearly 100 of the households rent machinery for basic work, particularly ploughing and threshing. Since 2012, the combine harvester was introduced in Mai Thon and has become popular. The use of these machines is related to national policy in terms of support for the industrialisation of agriculture and modernisation of rural areas. Unlike some other regions of the Red River Delta where irrigation is not practical, Mai Thon peasant households do not need to buy hand pumps to water their paddy fields. The villagers have a good irrigation service throughout the village and do not need to manage water at the household level. There were three cases of buying of cultivators and one case of buying a harvester in the village in recent years.

There are two interesting points concerning the ownership of these means of production: firstly, their use through lease and, secondly, the gender issue related to the farming equipment. In all four cases of buying machinery, besides using the machine for their own family cultivation, they also work for their neighbours around Chi Lang commune. Therefore, it is considered not only as an investment for the family farm but also for small off-farm work. It is noteworthy that only men cared for managing farming equipment. No woman drives a tractor or harvester mainly because it is "so heavy and complicated" and designed for a male operator. However, motorcycles were used in farming operations by both males and females, both sexes using them to transport crops from the field to their home in the village.

Table 6.2 Remittance spending in farming

Farming spending items		Group of migration households							
		Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Total	
		N (26)	%	N (15)	%	N (44)	%	N (85)	%
Land	Land quality improvement	17	65.4	10	66.7	39	88.6	66	77.6
	Other	2	7.7	4	26.7	3	6.8	9	10.6
Labour		14	53.8	15	100	40	90.1	69	81.2
Farming equipment	Rent	26	46.1	15	100	44	100	85	100
	Buy	3	11.5	0	0	1	2.3	4	4.7
Others		1	3.8	0	0	1	2.3	2	2.4

Source: Household survey 2015

Even if the remittance is used for consumption, there are also the multiple impacts of the remittance (Adger et al., 2002). When a migrant household buys a motorcycle, it makes it easier for its members to transport agricultural produce to an urban centre where they can sell it for a higher price. This, in the end, would promote agricultural activities. In general, although remittances do not always go directly toward production investments, they are a crucial part of household strategies. Households with migrant members have a higher propensity to invest than households without migrants. Furthermore, positive remittances can be used for labour and non-labour inputs in the family farming operations to offset any labour constraints, which will be discussed in Part 6.3

6.2 Impact of migration on agricultural land

6.2.1 Overview of agricultural land in Mai Thon village

Mai Thon is a predominantly agricultural village, so land has traditionally been the foundation of the household economy. Following the promulgation of the Land Law in 1993 and Government Decree number 64-CP on the redistribution of lands to peasant households as discussed in Chapter 3, Mai Thon commune also started the process of land distribution early in 1992 and completed it in 1993. The logistics of land reform and (re)distribution in 1993 was to make land again the basic unit of production. Households supported

implementation of the Household Contract Responsibility System Policy. The agricultural land was divided equally among village residents born before 1992, referred to as *định mức*¹⁷. Not all land within a commune was allocated; 5% of land was kept to defray public expenses or readjust land allocation periodically to demographic changes such as family members returning from military service (P. H. Le, 2005; V. Nguyen et al., 2006). Other land such as ponds, lakes and garden areas, which are difficult to divide, were often left unallocated, and then assigned to individual households on the basis of competitive bidding. Land was basically distributed as follows: each *định mức* was entitled to receive several small plots of land some of which would be fertile cropland while others of low quality. Some plots of land would be close to the residential areas while others in more distant locations.

At that time, the whole village had 531.5 *định mức*. One *định mức* was allotted 1 *sào* 12 *thước*, later in 2007-2008 when implementing land consolidation, each *định mức* was reallocated 1 *sào* 5 *thước*, equivalent to around 470 m² (in fact, some households say they were allocated 1 *sào* 2 *thước*/*định mức*). The type of agricultural land in the area is relatively diversified so Mai Thon village households have also been allocated fairly diverse kinds of land, often including residence (home + garden/pond); agricultural land and alluvium land¹⁸. The aim of this distribution was to ensure that all households felt that they had been treated in an equal manner in the allocation of agricultural land. The disadvantage, however, was that the land plots distributed to individual households were often too small and fragmented for efficient agricultural production.

Therefore, in 1997, the General Directorate of Land Survey organised a conference on land reallocation to solve the problem of fragmentation of agricultural plots. The outcome of this was the reallocation of agricultural land with the aim of reducing the number of plots owned by a household. In Mai Thon, agricultural land reallocation followed the directives, resolutions, plans and projects as issued by the provincial level to the district and commune levels. Reallocation was implemented through the “Project of transforming small plots of land into larger plots of land in order to change the economic structure for carrying out industrialisation and modernisation of rural areas”

¹⁷ In the law, *định mức* is defined as a village member, from young child to the oldest person; 1 person was 1 *định mức*, except those who were of age to get a pension, at which time calculated as 0.5 *định mức*.

¹⁸ *Inning land* (reclaimed land) was also allocated to households in 1992. However, village households later met and agreed to allocate this land by lease. This *inning land* was first leased in 1999-2009 to make bricks. Villagers divided the profit according to their land area. Then, from 2009-2019, *inning land* has been leased for banana plantations. The rent is collected to rebuild dams, field canals and for the land consolidation campaign of 2009.

(Ủy ban Nhân dân xã Chi Lăng 2001a: 1-6). This process of reallocation extended over four months, from August to November 2009. The rules for reallocation were that each household was to retain the same area of land as before, while the number of plots should not exceed three parcels, in three locations, and of three land ranks.¹⁹ Therefore, overall, Mai Thon village shares the same characteristics as other villages in the Red River Delta provinces.

Wealth differentiation of rural households does not depend on the size of their land holding because the great majority of households have only small plots of about 1,000-3,000 m² per household, and as a matter of fact, most people “*don’t make a fortune from farming activities*”(Bui, 2010:14). As (Rambo, 1973:15) commented, “[Red River Delta] farmers will not get rich from these lands, but at least they are guaranteed a source of livelihood that more or less adequately provides for their family’s sustenance”.

Before the implementation of land consolidation in 2009, each household usually had over a dozen plots of agricultural land. However, after successful land consolidation, the number of these plots for each household was considerably reduced. On paper, each household usually has four plots, according to a four-round split: low field, high field, plating (seedbed) fields²⁰, and gardening land. However, the village cadre emphasised that they are only numbers on paper for purpose related to the Vietnamese government’s granting funds for land consolidation. Village households could exchange land between themselves, although this needed to be approved by the commune officials. These additional mechanisms allowed households some flexibility in coming to joint arrangements, which proved to be particularly attractive among relatives, so that each household ended up with about 2-3 agricultural plots of land.

According to the law, the land needs to be reallocated in harmony with the demographic changes after 20 years. Therefore, the agricultural land in Mai Thon was reallocated in 2013, but all the villagers agreed to keep the agricultural land as it was. Besides, the duration of land assignment and recognition of agricultural land use rights for households and individuals directly engaged in agricultural production have to comply with the provisions of Clauses 1 and 2, Point b of Clause 3, Clause 4, and Clause 5, of Article 129, Land Law 2013, i.e. 50 years. Peasants have the usufruct rights on the land and there would be no change in the 50-year land tenure period.

¹⁹ This content has been published in Nguyen Thi Minh Khue et al. (2019), Agricultural Land Use Change under Migration Context: evidence from a Vietnamese Village, Journal of Sustainable Development 12 (4).

²⁰ High-quality land specified for growing the rice seedlings.

Recently the arable land on which villagers could work is broken down as following:

Total area of arable land: 57 ha

Area of rice fields: 30 ha

Aquaculture surface: 15 ha

Area of other cultivable lands/alluvium land: 7 ha

Gardening land²¹: 5 ha

Residential/homeland: 13 ha

According to a land survey carried out in 2015, Mai Thon has a surface area of 57 ha. The agricultural land area is used mainly to cultivate wet-season rice (30 ha). Besides growing two harvests of rice per year, some of these areas are also used for subsidiary vegetable crops. There are 15 ha used for aquaculture production. Currently, land equivalent to 15 ha is used for ponds managed by five households to for fish and duck raising, fruit growing and pig farming. There are also 7 ha of alluvium/inning land by the Duong River. Regarding housing and gardening, the residential areas occupy 13 ha, whereas areas for gardening amount to 5 ha.

Table 6.3 Mean agricultural land-holding among Mai Thon households

Indicators	Group 1 (n=42)	Group 2 (n=23)	Group 3 (n=42)	Group 4 (n=15)	Sig
Agricultural land (1993, mean, m ²)	1706.4	1931.3	1632.5	2169.0	0.032*
Agricultural land (2014, mean, m ²)	1724.6	1763.8	1543.6	2350.0	0.004*

Note: * indicates a 95% significance level. Source: Household survey 2015

Table 6.3 shows that there was little land conversion for commune purposes. The agricultural land market is not well-developed in Vietnam in general and in Bac Ninh in particular. Overall, the farm households cannot sustain their livelihoods with such a small land area, so they have to find off-farm jobs outside the village. However, the overall trend is that most of the group members maintain their own agricultural land, except for a slight decrease in group 2 and increase in group 4 landholdings in comparison with 1993 (time of land redistribution in Vietnam) and in 2015. This group of households with no migrating members were likely to rent additional land from migration households in the village or commune to expand their agricultural production.

²¹ Garden land belongs to the residential land areas and is used for cultivating

However, it should be noted that they rarely expand their agricultural production into large-scale farms.

A similar relationship between migration and land entitlement is observed throughout Southeast Asia. Migrating farmers in Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam who make cash income from non-agricultural and off-village activities still keep their own land (R. T. Paris et al., 2009). Maintenance of land use rights is always a priority in Southeast Asia (Peemans, 2013), even when the owners have other employment and income opportunities elsewhere. When rural people migrate out, they are unlikely to sell their land. They prefer leasing the land or even leaving it fallow for the casual cultivation of certain crops. Vietnamese migrants maintain their agricultural land use rights as an insurance because of the fear of unstable jobs in the cities as well (Li, 2010; T. M. K. Nguyen et al., 2019). In that sense, land is considered as a social protection for migrants themselves and even for their next generation. In some cases, rural households bought agricultural land for wealth accumulation but still do not farm it, which means land use has changed and agricultural production has continued to decrease. Moreover, although households with migrant members usually keep practicing agriculture at very limited levels, in most cases, agricultural land can ensure the food subsistence of the family remaining back in the village. As for food safety, growing food for home consumption is considered as an everyday practice of rural households to ensure food quality (T. M. K. Nguyen et al., 2016).

6.2.2 The change of agricultural land use

Over 30 years of *Đổi Mới* have gone by and land tenure in Mai Thon has undergone remarkable change. It must be kept in mind that at the outset, land throughout the country is considered to be “owned by all the people” (*sở hữu toàn dân*). Agricultural households possess only land use rights, not land ownership rights. According to article 129 of the Land Contract Law, the right to use the land may be passed on by subcontracting, leasing, exchanging, transferring, or other means. Notably, peasants must return land to the state for public interests, such as the construction of highways, water conservation facilities, and national defence projects. Selling agricultural land or converting it for other purposes is strictly limited under the regulations.

Even though it is the smallest province of the Delta, Bac Ninh province has been considered as prominent in terms of industrial development in Vietnam. At the time of its formation in 1997, Bac Ninh was an agricultural province, with only several handicraft villages and no industrial zone or industrial cluster. Since 1998, the provincial government started acquiring agricultural land for industrial purposes, after which the first industrial zone was built. To date, Bac Ninh has 15 industrial zones and more than 35 industrial clusters.

More than 9,400 ha of agricultural land had been acquired²². That encouraged many rural households to sell their agricultural land use rights. The average level of compensation for 1 *sào* of agricultural land in 2000 was 30 million VNĐ. It doubled by 2007, including four items of compensation and assistance.

That rapid increase in land price compensation made some farmers into millionaires overnight. However, in sharp contrast to the land boom in Bac Ninh itself, this did not occur in Mai Thon. Located in Que Vo district which has the largest industrial zones in the province with 1,204 ha already converted for industrial zones, Mai Thon villagers in contrast with other villagers in the same district, have no conversion of land for purposes other than another agricultural activity²³. Figure 6.1 shows that 84.4 of the respondent households kept their land for agricultural production. Among the groups with migrants, households that only commuted devoted their land to farming activities in the highest proportion (90.5) which is consistent with the analysis of migration types in Part 4. It is also interesting that the majority of daily commuter migrants are female, the main persons taking care of their family farming. When female labourers migrate, they tend to find jobs not too far from their village so that they can manage to do the agricultural work, especially during peak times. Besides, Vietnamese gender norms dictate that housework is the female's job and the breadwinner are the male.

Therefore, in Vietnamese feudal times when agriculture was the main earning source, it is observed that mainly males did the farming. However, recently, even though agriculture is no longer the main source of household income, farming has gradually become an extension of the female's housework responsibilities. It happens that when women migrate and the men are left behind, women also need to support the men and work together with the men. Thus, female migration seems to have positive impacts on agricultural land use for agricultural production (discussed more in Chapter 7). Table 6.4 shows that while no households in the village totally leave their farming land fallow, 6.3% of households partially abandoned their land. In case of 4.8% of households, they conducted no agricultural activities; in reality, they rented/lent all of their paddy fields to other households (which will be discussed in more detail below). Therefore, on paper, they still kept their land use right. This usage of agricultural land in Mai Thon is more

²² The data was collected from the official website of Bac Ninh Industrial Zone (<http://www.izabacninh.gov.vn/?page=home&portal=kcnb> accessed on 16 February 2014) and Decision 396/QĐ-UBND, issued on 31 October 2013 on the approval of cluster planning in Bac Ninh province to 2020, vision 2030).

²³ This content has been published in Nguyen Thi Minh Khue et al. (2019), Agricultural Land Use Change under Migration Context: evidence from a Vietnamese Village, *Journal of Sustainable Development* 12 (4).

pronounced than other in villages in Chi Lang commune, for example Que O has already abandoned a few hectares (Chi Lang Commune report, 2014).

Table 6.4. Migration and agricultural land use change

Agricultural land use (Unit: hhs)	Group 1 (n=42)		Group 2 (n=23)		Group 3 (n=42)		Group 4 (n=15)		Total (N=122)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Agricultural production	38	90.5	17	73.9	35	83.3	14	93.3	104	85.2
No agricultural production	4	9.5	6	26.1	7	16.7	1	6.7	18	4.8
Land converted	1	2.4	0	0	1	2.4	1	4.7	3	2.4
Land partially abandoned	1	2.4	2	8.7	5	11.9	0	0	8	6.3

Source: Household survey 2015

Moreover, households with migrant members usually keep practicing agriculture at very limited level. In many cases, agricultural land can ensure the food subsistence of the family remaining in the village. Besides, having land also implies the villager may be waiting for some extra value if land conversion comes along. The case of Mr Huong also illustrates how villagers engage in land exchange transactions in order to make up for the imbalances between labour and land within and between households, which have become even more pronounced as a result of labour migration. We now turn to that point. Most transactions involve rental and the most important reasons leading to the practice of land rental are changes in the size and nature of the household labour force.

Following the land division round, most households had approximately one-third of their paddy field of high quality which could be used to grow two seasons of rice and one winter season of vegetable and/or other cash crops. However, in 2015, 90 of Mai Thon households abandoned winter season vegetable growing. In terms of rice production, some households grow only one crop in the season in order to keep their land, because the 2013 Land Law states that if the peasant does not cultivate his or her land for two continuous seasons, it would be withdrawn to public land. This is considered to be the main reason forcing peasant households to keep agricultural production on their land in one of multiple ways: partial abandon, partial leasing, partial lending and partial producing while they pursue another non-farm business or migrate. The case of Mr Huong illustrates these various ways.

Mr Huong's household has five members, including his mother, his wife and two children who were all born before 1993 – the land distribution time. The agricultural land that his family was allocated (5.2 sào combined with 2.6 sào he inherited from his parents) give a total farming land area of 7.8 sào. He has

been a construction worker for ten years so normally spends 20 days a month commuting around the village for work. When their children were small, his wife took care of them and they farmed together with good results. They grew rice twice each year and vegetables in winter on 1 sào of high-quality land. In 2018, his wife followed her sister, migrating to Hanoi to work as a house cleaner. His agricultural land situation changed dramatically. First, his family totally stopped growing vegetables. Then, he lent one third of the land (3 sào) to his brother-in-law to grow rice. Recently he rented 2 sào to Mr Phuc to grow potatoes. Therefore, his family now really only takes care of 2.8 sào and they only grow high-quality rice for family consumption. The year before, he had a work accident so now Mr Huong mostly stays at home and cares for the farming tasks. His wife comes back home for transplanting and harvesting. His first son, Hoang 31 years old opened a hairdresser shop with his wife in Pho Moi town, near Bac Ninh City three years ago after working for a few years in a Que Vo industrial zone. Mr Huong's son and his wife live in their clothing shop, but their 3-year-old child is now living in Mai Thon village with Mr Huong. They normally come back home to be with their child on the weekend. Hoang intends to let his wife take care of the shop herself and he will come back home to take charge of farming and his sick farther. He stated if he did that, he would take back all their paddy fields.

Mr Huong's case shows that agricultural land provides people with work, a livelihood. It is something like a backup strategy. Whatever they do outside, if it fails, they can always go back to their own land. Li (1996) pointed out that Vietnamese migrants maintain their agricultural land use rights as an insurance because of fear of unstable jobs in the cities as well. The agricultural land is not only a means of livelihood for themselves but also for their children in any circumstances. Therefore, Mr Huong lent the land to his brother-in-law for free. He even needed to help his brother-in-law pay the Chi Lang commune department of agriculture (*around 200,000 VND per year*) to ensure that the agricultural land stays with his family. Keeping agricultural land is always the priority of Mai Thon peasants. Devoting agricultural land to agricultural use ensures food security (both in quantity and quality) for Vietnamese families (X. T. Hoang et al., 2013; D. L. Nguyen & Grote, 2012). Reflecting on his research in rural Thailand, Vandergeest (2012:154) also argues that maintaining land and agrarian activities provides higher incomes and better health than unskilled wage labour among those who could be the most marginalised. Likewise, in Laos, for most poor rural households, daily basic food requirements were commonly met by subsistence farming, since most of them own farmland (Ducourtieux, Laffort, Sacklokham, & Change, 2005)

6.2.3 Agricultural land exchange in transition

As noted above, in 1992 and 1993, each household in Mai Thon was allocated an area of agricultural land for a period of 20 years depending on the number of people living in the household. Under the new Land Law that came into effect as of July 2013, that period was extended to 50 years. During the

reallocation in 2009, the division of plots changed, but not the size of land allocated to each household. However, between the original land allocation in 1992 and the reallocation in 2009, the number of people living in each household had changed, sometimes quite dramatically, and this altered the use of land and the organisation of agricultural production in the village. In some households, there were more people of working age because household members had married and their spouses were living with the household, or children had simply become adults in the intervening years. In other households, the number of members had increased because of the birth of children. Conversely, ageing and death had reduced the number of working-age adults, or migration had taken members out of the household labour force even though they were still regarded as part of the household. Those demographic fluctuations led to an unsettling of the balance between land and available labour, which in turn has driven the land rental market. We see this illustrated in the case of Mr Manh:

Mr Manh was born in 1974 and graduated from high school in 1991 before going to agricultural vocational school. However, he was not able to secure a job with this diploma, so he stayed home to work as a peasant. His wife comes from Bac Ninh City. They have two children, aged 6 and 2. They all live with Mr Manh's mother, who is widowed. Mr Manh and his wife have 5 sào of agricultural land. This is the field share allocated to him and his parents in 1993. His wife moved to live with him after the village's agricultural land had been allocated, so she did not receive a field share. His two children were also born after the time of land allocation in Mai Thon, so they also have no field shares. In addition to the field shares, Mr Manh's household rents 4 sào of agricultural land from two other households in the village, Ms Nam's and Mr Hồng's. Ms Nam is 71 years and she has been sick for long time. Her husband died a long time ago and she lives with their first son. She has four children. Her three adult children have migrated and settled in other localities. Her household has 7 sào of agricultural land but cultivates only 3 sào to produce enough rice for the household's consumption. The rest of his household's field shares have been let out to other households including Mr Manh's. Since 2008, Mr Manh has rented 1.8 sào of rice land from Ms Nam. At that time, Mr Manh visited Ms Nam and asked whether he could rent some of her land. Ms Nam agreed. In return Mr Manh pays her 70 kg of rice per sào, which he takes to her house as payment the following harvest. This transaction is based on a verbal agreement between the two parties.

Mr Vinh is 65 years old. He and his wife have five children. Four have gone to work and live in other localities, and one child is a college student. His household has 7 sào of agricultural land consisting of the field shares of his children, his wife, and himself. His children and his wife have left to work so his household does not have enough labour to cultivate all the land. Mr Vinh therefore started letting out his fields. In 2008, Mr Vinh let 2.2 sào of agricultural land to Mr Manh. Since the land is of good quality, the rent was set at 120 kg per sào. This is, however, not paid in paddy but in cash. At

harvest time, Mr Manh calculates the amount of money that his household has to pay for renting 2.2 sào of rice land, based on the prevailing local rice price, and gives this amount of money to Mr Vinh.

The example of Mr Manh illustrates the changes in land-to-labour ratios since the original land distribution and how this is driving the rental land market in the village. Ms Nam and Mr Vinh are old and have largely withdrawn from work; in addition, their children have left the village to work in other localities. The households of Mr Vinh and Ms Nam have, as a result, insufficient labour to cultivate the land allocated to them. They therefore only retain a portion of their total field area to cultivate. The rest they let out to others who are in labour deficit, such as Mr Manh's household. Mr Manh's household is comparatively young. His children and his wife did not receive shares of agricultural land at the time of the distribution and they therefore have to resort to renting agricultural land from Mr Vinh and Ms Nam to be able to meet their subsistence needs and derive an income.

The fact that Mr Manh's household has dependent children also limits its scope for migration. This practice of letting land shows that demographic changes and out-migration do not necessarily lead to de-agrarianisation or fallow lands, as some scholars (J. Rigg, 2001; J. Rigg & Nattapoolwat, 2001) predicted, but rather to arrangements that shift the use of agricultural land from labour-deficient households to labour-rich households. The remittances from migrant household members partially release those left behind from farm work. Instead of leaving the land fallow, rental arrangements allow young households that have enough labour but lack land to farm extra land to provide for their families (discussed further in Chapter 7). This also has implications for how land use is linked to prosperity: cultivating large areas of rice land is not necessarily a sign of being well-off, but more likely a labour use and allocation strategy. Such arrangements link migrant households with non-migrant households in distinctive ways. The arrangements are, however, informal and temporary in nature. By renting out land, migrant households do not give up their land use rights. They keep their connections with the land and the village and, in many cases, by receiving a share of the harvest, continue to eat rice cultivated on their land. Land remains an important source of security to hold onto in case migrants return to their place of origin, be it by preference or being forced (e.g. the threat of being fired by the age of 35 as mentioned in chapter 5).

Table 6.5 reveals the exchange activities in Mai Thon village, in which land rental and lending are far more common than land sale. Villagers are unlikely to sell their land (0.8), but rather lease (10.7) or lend (18) or even leave it fallow for certain crop as discussed before. The case of Ms Nga illustrates the complex picture of land-holding fluctuation in rural households, which was a remarkable influence in family member migration.

Based on the 1992 land allocation exercise, Ms Nga and her husband were each allocated 2.6 sào of land. One plot (0.6 sào) she was allocated was far

away from the village and close to the river. Since it was not very convenient to work this plot because her children were small and her husband migrated to Hanoi for work, she rented out the land to Mr Lam, who paid her a fixed rent of 30 kg of paddy per year. In turn, Ms Nga rented 2 sào from her mother-in-law, who was old and, after Nga's father-in-law had died, no longer needed her land. When her children were young, 4 sào were enough to grow rice for her family. When there were numerous households in the village who left their paddy fields to go to Ho Chi Minh City in 1998, Ms Nga rented 2 additional sào from Ms Van, to whom she pays a rent of 60 kg of paddy per year. In other words, during the 2000s Ms Nga now works 6 sào of paddy field, of which only 2 sào is owned by the household. Recently, Ms Nga followed her cousin to work in Hanoi. She rented out 3 sào to Mr Phuc to grow potatoes. To complicate things further, Mr Lam has now sublet Ms Nga's plot of land to a villager in neighbouring Thon Dong village.

Table 6.5 Land exchange transactions among household groups

Land use pattern	Group 1 (n=42)		Group 2 (n=23)		Group 3 (n=42)		Group 4 (n=15)		Total (N=122)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Rent out	3	7.1	3	13.0	7	16.7	0	0	13
Rent in	3	7.1	3	13.0	3	7.1	2	13.3	11	9.0
Lend out	2	4.7	5	21.7	15	35.7	0	0	22	18.0
Lend in	3	7.1	4	17.4	2	4.7	7	46.7	16	13.1
Sell	1	2.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.8
Buy	0	0	1	4.3	0	0	0	0	1	0.8

Source: Household survey, 2015

It could be observed that most land rental agreements were based on fixed-rent tenancy, although the rental fee fluctuated from year to year. The unit used to calculate the price was the number of kilograms of rice per sào per year. In many cases, in order to make the payment, the tenants brought the rice to the lender after each harvest. In some cases, however, the tenants paid in cash. The rental fee varied in general from 30 kg to 80 kg of paddy per sào per year, depending on the quality of the land, the weather conditions, and the relationship between the owner and the tenant. The difference between renting and lending is remarkably blurred because revenue from rice production is so low that the rental fee is sometimes omitted. Besides, the ultimate purpose of both renting and lending agricultural land in Mai Thon is to keep land; therefore, the rental fee is not the big thing. Ms Nga did not pay her mother-in-law because she lived with and took care of her. Ms Nga paid Ms Van 60 kg of paddy per sào because Ms Van's piece of land was of high quality while the land Ms Nga rented out to Mr Viet was, on the contrary, of poor quality. Land

is not only rented out to fellow villagers, but also to people in neighbouring villages, such as Thon Dong village as illustrated in the case of Mr Lam subletting Ms Nga's riverside plot. As the villager explained, neighbouring Thon Dong village differs from Mai Thon as its inhabitants are relatively poor, and they do not send migrant members out to supplement their village incomes, so they prefer to rent land from a Mai Thon villager. Most of the contracts are verbal and normally valid from one year to the next. When either the land lender or tenant wishes to end the contract, they simply meet and agree to end it. Ms Nga's case also illustrates how migration exacerbates the imbalance between labour and agricultural land.

Table 6.5 also points out that group 4 of non-migration households has the highest proportion that borrow land for farm expansion (46.7) meanwhile they did not rent out or lend out any piece of land. On the other hand, migrating household groups also kept their own land; the maintenance of land rights is always their priority. Thus, most households lease out their paddy field to their brothers or cousins. Among migration households, group 3 experienced the highest proportion both of lending out (35.7) and renting out (16.7) while the group 1 was the lowest category in lending out (4.7) and renting out (7.1). It is interesting to witness the change in land transactions only over the five years of my research here. In 2016 when I came back for data updating and gathering more information on the opinion of young people regarding agriculture, there is the case study of Mr Phuc who has rented 10 ha of paddy field with the support of the Chi Lang authorities. They stated that under the new Land Law of 2013, rural households could change their rice fields to grow cash crops. Even though the contract is only year by year, it is noteworthy with regard to land consolidation. Going against this trend is Ms Trac who refuses to lend out her land but continues to grow vegetables for sale.

Ms Trac was a Mao villager. She married a resident of Mai Thon village in 1983, therefore she was allocated agricultural land as a resident of Mai Thon. Her household has three members. Her husband is sick and mostly stays at home. Her son worked for the Canon firm in the Que Vo Industrial Zone, however, he was fired due to gambling and now he is unemployed and a vagabond. She therefore became the breadwinner of her family. She cultivates 8 sào for rice and 2 sào for vegetables. Rice is grown both seasons each year while vegetables are grown year-round: corn, cucumbers, tomatoes, chili peppers, depending on the weather and market. The first interesting point is she was the only villager to keep growing vegetables small-scale for sale. The second point is that her plot of land for vegetable growing was located in the middle of a large farm belonging to Nguyen Van Phuc. Ms Trac rented this land to Mr Phuc for two years (2015 and 2016). However, in 2017, she took her land back to cultivate on her own, even though many people tried to persuade her to rent it out. She explained that although it was cleaner to work for a company in the industrial zones, such jobs are unstable and low income, so she needs the back-up from farming. Besides, she prefers to cultivate her land rather than rent it out because it permits her to be independent in daily

consuming and sale. She is busy, but Ms Trac also works for Mr Phuc if he needs labour at peak times. She was a daily commuter who struggled with informal work, so agricultural land and agricultural activities are her best option.

Mr Trac's case on the one hand shows the instability of renting land under contract among villagers. The time contract, which is renewed annually, from the government perspective, is considered as a constraint to land consolidation, large-scale farm and rural development. However, from the peasant's view, a short-term contract gives them security. Whenever they face difficulties in the migration process, they can come back to their own land and their original livelihood. Land is not only a natural resource, but also a social, economic, political and cultural resource, important for generating a livelihood. It is both a means of production and a status symbol, determining to a great extent one's chances of a better living in a rural community. In other words, keeping land was the response of peasants to the modernisation process, showing their resilience and to some extent strengthening their autonomy.

6.3 Impact of migration on agricultural production choice

6.3.1 Rice production and vegetable growing

Literature reported the hypothesis that migration may result in a shift of the agricultural production choice. In Vietnam, it might have been expected to prompt a change from rice production to other cash crops and/or livestock husbandry due to the labour deficit created by out-migration. However, the data in Mai Thon shows there is no significant shift in production patterns from rice production to other agricultural activities. Rice remains completely dominant even though, as we will see later, significant changes have already begun in food consumption and expenditure patterns. Overall, migration encourages rice production. It becomes the main focus while at the same time reducing cash-crop cultivation and livestock raising. Mai Thon went against the trend of many other northern villages in Vietnam where the number of households diversifying their agricultural activities is increasing beyond previously predominant rice production.

Table 6.6 shows that 81.1 (99/122) of Mai Thon households keep rice production as the fundamental agricultural activity, and the majority of those households also cultivate rice at a "suitable" level even though most households released part of their paddy fields as discussed in Part 6.1. A "suitable" level of rice production means cultivating enough of the staple food for their family members. For example, Ms Huong's family has five adult members; each would consume about 100 kg of rice per year, so the whole family would require 500 kg of rice for staple food security. On average, each *sào* of paddy field would produce 180 kg of rice per season for a high-yield

variety and 120 kg for a high-quality rice variety. Therefore, Ms Huong needs to cultivate one season and use 3 *sào* of the paddy field to: 1) supply enough staple food for her family for a whole year, 2) keep the family's land, and 3) release family members for other income-generating activities.

From the perspective of the peasants, in recent times, growing rice is the best strategy for their households. The Mai Thon villagers consider rice production first to be the least *time and labour consuming* in comparison with other farming activities even though, among cultivation activities, rice growing is high cost and has the lowest cash return. Second, there are the low paddy field areas which can only grow rice. Thirdly, on the one hand, rice production ensures household food security and food quality. Mai Thon peasants refer to their rice production as *đong gạo chủ động* (measuring out rice proactively), in other words, rice production is more important for food than for profit. And the most vital aspect of rice production is that it enables the farmers to retain their land use rights as discussed earlier. Therefore, the best combination strategy of households in Mai Thon village is producing rice only for household consumption and releasing some of their family members to engage in out-of-village and off-farm activities. Among three household migration groups, group 1, daily commuters, shows the highest proportion of households (92.9) while group 2 has the lowest proportion of households (60.9) participating in rice production. It is noteworthy that agriculture practice is defined when the family has its own member(s) participating in these activities. Section 6.1 shows cases when migrating households rent or lend out all of their rice growing lands so that it is used for farming and thus, they can keep their own land although they do not practice farming in reality.

Because the rural households in Mai Thon grow rice primarily for home consumption, they give priority to high-quality rice varieties. Some varieties commonly grown in Mai Thon include sticky rice N97, sticky rice BM 9603, sticky rice PD2, BT7, HT1, TU8 and TBR225. BC15, KD18 are reputed to be of high quality. Interestingly, the rural households in Mai Thon seem to have gone against the mindset of maximising productivity and yields which has been encouraged through 30 plus years of the *Đổi Mới* agricultural policy (World Bank, 2016). Chi Lang commune has promoted three types of rice: commercial, food security and high-quality varieties in each village. However, Mai Thon villagers refused to cultivate most hybrid varieties (developed for food security) even though they are supposed to be high-yield and benefit from commune price support. One villager shared that “*the commune officers supply us with Chinese hybrid varieties for free, claiming it is very productive. We receive the rice seed, but we feed it to the family poultry rather than planting it. You know, no one eats that, and we even have a hard time selling it, so we do not waste our time growing it*”. Thus, such high-yield rice varieties do not help the peasants to sell a rice surplus in the market as before because of it is of low quality and disliked by consumers.

Table 6.6 Migration and agricultural production choice change

<i>Unit: hhs</i>		Group 1 (n=42)		Group 2 (n=23)		Group 3 (n=42)		Group 4 (n=15)		Total (N=122)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rice production	<i>No practice</i>	3	7.1	9	39.1	8	19	3	20	23	18.9
	Practice	39	92.9	14	60.9	34	81	12	80	99	81.1
Cash crop production	<i>No practice</i>	39	92.9	23	100	42	100	14	93.3	118	96.7
	Practice	3	7.1	0	0	0	0	1	6.7	4	3.3
Pig production	<i>No practice</i>	41	97.6	22	82.6	41	97.6	9	60	113	92.6
	Practice	1	2.4	1	4.3	1	2.4	6	40	9	7.4
Poultry production	<i>No practice</i>	32	76.2	20	87	34	81	4	26.7	90	73.8
	Practice	10	23.8	3	13	8	19	11	73.3	32	26.2
Cattle production	<i>No practice</i>	39	92.9	22	95.7	41	97.6	13	86.7	115	94.3
	Practice	1	2.4	1	4.3	1	2.4	2	13.3	5	4.1
Aqua-culture	<i>No practice</i>	40	95.2	22	95.7	42	100	12	80	116	95.1
	Practice	2	4.8	1	4.3	0	0	3	20	6	4.9

Source: Household survey 2015

There are two main inter-seasons on the rice production calendar: winter-spring (November–January) and summer-autumn (March–May). During these two inter-seasons, peasants grow non-rice crops such as soybeans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, carrots, and other vegetables on part of their fields. This produce supplies the household’s subsistence, while the surplus is sold in nearby markets. The winter inter-season (November to January) used to contribute a sizable amount of cash for households. However, as discussed in Part 6.2, this winter season activity gradually diminished (96.7 of households in 2015) when female migration increased massively in the village. First, vegetable growing is mainly cared for by females. Therefore, when females

started migrating in large numbers, this agricultural activity suffered. Second, cash-crop cultivation in this winter season is very labour-intensive in comparison with its return, which does not encourage the stay-behind family members to carry on with it. While most households dropped growing vegetables on their paddy fields, some villagers emerged as an exception – large cash-crop farming.

Mr Nguyen Van Phuc is 42 years old. Mr Phuc got married in 2002. His wife is 42 years old and she is a nurse in the Chi Lang commune health station. He has two sons, one 16 years old and the other 11. After graduating from high school, Mr Phuc did his military service from 1997 to 2001. After leaving the army, he learnt to drive a van, borrowed money, bought a truck and has operated it until now. From the beginning, he transported agricultural produce to Bac Ninh industrial zones. He normally commuted daily, except for four years from 2007 to 2011, when he migrated elsewhere to work in Hung Yen and only came back home once a month. At that time, he got addicted to gambling and caused problems for his family. Therefore, he decided to quit migrating far away and come back Mai Thon to work in agriculture. Before 2015, he only rented 2 ha to grow potatoes and carrots. During the years of driving a van, he built up a good network for selling his farm produce. Recently, due to the new policy on land, he rented about 10 ha and set up a cooperative and became its chief manager. His new-type cooperative²⁴ uses most of the land for cash crop cultivation, using only 3 sào for rice production. Mr Phuc needs to hire around 20 workers. He is not only the producer but also the collector, trader and driver of agricultural production. Mr Phuc's net income comes to around 1 billion VND per year.

Mr Phuc's case illustrates firstly the hidden role of migration for land consolidation rather than land accumulation because the villagers did not sell their land use rights whether they wanted to or were under obligation to. From 4.5 sào of his family's allocated land, he gathered 2 ha of high paddy field in 2012 for cash-crop growing and extended it to 10 ha in 2015. However, most of the rented land plots would expire in just one year and the villagers could withdraw their land if desired, as in the case of Ms Trac. Mr Phuc complained that this mechanism created numerous constraints for him to make a large, stable investment in cash-crop development. Even though he received

²⁴ The agricultural cooperative transformation in Vietnam is based on the Cooperative Law (effective 1 January 1997), and the Revised 2003 Cooperative Law (effective as of 1 July 2004) With the issuance of Decree 151 in October 2007 (Decree 151/2007/ND-CP). The Vietnamese cooperative has divided into two main types of agricultural cooperatives: (1) transformed ones as the successful former agricultural production co-operatives and (2) newly established ones which are based on already operating informal self-help groups (pre-cooperatives). The new type cooperatives are mostly based on their own efforts, more independent from the government administration and rapidly increased during the last few years (Axel Wolz, 2000; Axel Wolz & Pham, 2010; World Bank, 2016)

considerable support from the commune for longer-term land consolidation, he still needs to follow the village institutions. It seems that capitalist-style production with large-scale farms has some success in rural areas, but village and small-scale farms still have their own way of managing and keeping their autonomy. Mr Phuc's case also demonstrates the network built up from the migration process. It created opportunities for migrants to develop agricultural production. Moreover, his successful farming business is useful and an inspiration for raising public awareness of agricultural production. Mr Phuc and Mr Cuu (described in the aquaculture part) illustrate the male preference for investment. While some females grow crops and promote small-scale and family farms, males are prone to develop large-scale, semi-industrialised farms.

6.3.2 Animal husbandry

With the focus on rice production it is not surprising that domestic animal husbandry traditionally had a minor place in the economic activities. The livestock of most Mai Thon households consists of a few chickens and ducks, a pig or two, and perhaps a cow or buffalo. Selling such animals and chicken eggs had always been an important source of supplementary earnings for Mai Thon households. It was found that in general the villagers have tended to reduce livestock rearing in terms of number and income contribution over the past 10 years. Livestock raising in general is a notoriously risky activity; farm animals are vulnerable to accidents, diseases, and market fluctuation. However, while the proportion of villagers raising cattle and pigs and engaging in fish farming dramatically decreased, family poultry raising still interests a handful of households (26.2). Not surprisingly because family poultry raising is an important provider of eggs and meat, not to mention social and spiritual benefits.

There are three production systems for family poultry in Mai Thon – free range, backyard and small-scale intensive production with 20-60, 30-100 and 80-150 eggs/hen/year, respectively. A normal local chicken weighs 1.2 kg at 32 weeks, a dwarf breed 800 g in the free-range system. Poultry, particularly free-range, provides meat, eggs, feathers, manure (convertible to fertiliser and natural gas), pest control, weed clearance, seed cleaning of grasses for mulch, scratching, and foraging. In Mai Thon village, poultry is used for ceremonies, sacrifices, gifts and savings. When the villagers pay a visit to their acquaintances, or share in social events, chickens are used as gifts for the visitors. Chickens are given or received as a sign of a good relationship, to express thanks for a favour or help. Moreover, family poultry production is an appropriate system that makes the best use of locally available resources. In the context of migration, poultry raising has the advantage of having a lower labour cost in comparison with other types of livestock raising. When the main labour of households is away due to migration, the elderly and children help with poultry feeding and care. Table 6.4 shows that 28.3 of group 1 and 19 of group 3 continue to raise poultry. In the past, egg production for sale was less

significant than meat production because consumption of eggs in the village is more common, especially for children and the elderly. One villager stated: *“I only have ten chickens, but they supply enough eggs for my grandchildren and I to eat. We raise free-range chickens because their eggs are more delicious and nutritious. Yes, you can see the difference with your own eyes, and you can taste the difference.”*

There is a change in the main purpose of raising poultry in Mai Thon. Before, most poultry products were sold to complement earnings from cash crops. Prices fluctuate during the year – low during the off-season when the granaries are empty, the crops are still in the fields and everybody needs ready cash. Recently, the main purpose of poultry raising is similar to that of rice production: firstly, for the household’s consumption (both eggs and meat) and the surplus is sold, albeit a minor amount. From the peasant’s perspective, the daily consumption of chicken meat is still more expensive than other foods, but it ensures higher quality. Therefore, poultry production may contribute less to the annual income of the household, but it is important for household food security (which will be examined more in the coming section).

However, in the context of raising poultry mainly for home consumption Mai Thon households keep their poultry flocks small in size, reduce the use of industrial feeds and favour local breeds. On the one hand, that ensures food quality for rural households because the meat and eggs from indigenous chickens constitute a high-quality food source, densely packed with essential macro- and micro-nutrients. On the other hand, with higher quality eggs and meat, the small holder could make a higher profit from the niche network. In the past, most poultry products were sold in the village market, while recently most poultry products are sold at the farm-gate to the network, including neighbours, relatives and a large number of migrants who have a relationship with Mai Thon villagers. For migrants, eggs and chicken meat originating from their hometown or bought from their neighbour are an important source of food. It is certainly considered cheaper and of higher quality than food bought in the city. At times, traders come to collect poultry in the village to resell in big cities. Sometimes, middlemen are involved. However, the main purpose for chicken raising is similar to that of vegetable growing (see Figure 6.1)

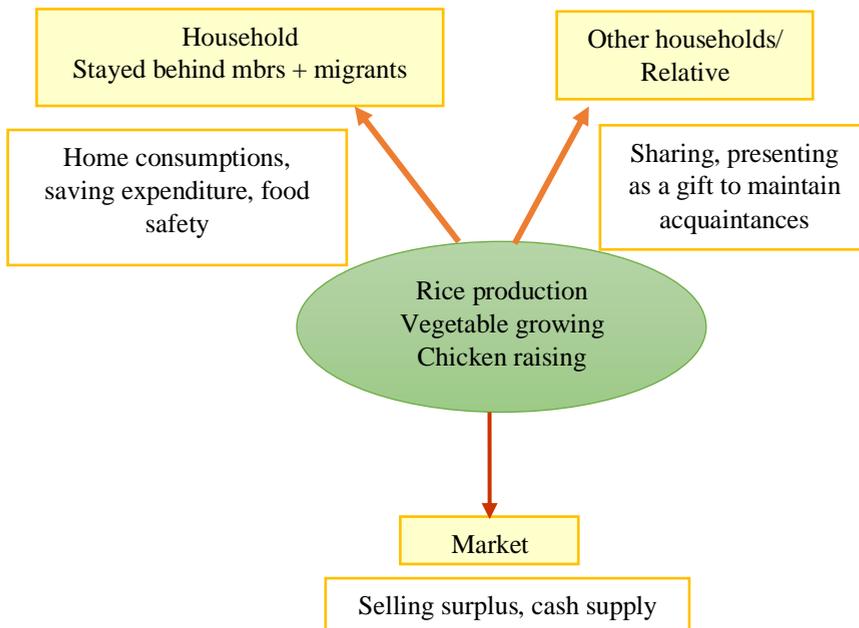


Figure 6.1 Main purposes of vegetable growing and chicken raising

Source: In-depth interviews and focus groups

Poultry raising has been a steady activity, while pig raising seems more up and down and dependent on the market. Pig production in Mai Thon village nearly doubled in 10 years starting from 2001. From 2001-2007, the number of finishing pigs rapidly increased with an annual average growth rate of 6. However, after 2007 when villager migration bloomed, pig production decreased dramatically because of several swine disease outbreaks. The proportion of pork in livestock meat production decreased slightly because villagers had more meat options in their diet, especially beef and poultry. At the time of my research in 2015, there were only nine households (7.4) raising pigs. Besides the issues of swine diseases and the low price of pork, the villagers complained about the odour of pig pens in comparison with other livestock. The Mai Thon villagers say that their residence lots have become smaller due to the increasing population, so it is no longer possible to follow the VAC²⁵ system for raising pigs and piglets. One Mai Thon villager

²⁵ VAC is the abbreviation of the Vietnamese phrase *Vườn-Ao-Chuồng* (garden-pond-animal pens/cages, or, horticulture-aquaculture-animal husbandry). VAC stands for integrated production systems comprising three components: horticulture (gardening), aquaculture and animal husbandry.

commented: *“The offensive smell of pig pens used to be a severe problem in our village. However, during the 2000s, pig growers experienced several disease outbreaks and the market was unstable so most of them reduced their production. Besides, work opportunities in Bac Ninh’s industrial zones and migration drew away most of the young villagers so growing pigs has almost disappeared in the village. Young people don’t like the heavy, dirty work involved even when pork prices seemed good. But with the drop in pig raising, the village air smells better.”*

Similarly, aquaculture and cattle production have decreased sharply over the last 20 years after out-migration became an important source of income. However, while cattle production in Mai Thon remains small-scale mainly due to increased farm mechanisation, aquaculture underwent a more complex change due to migration. Due to the decrease of residence land and home gardens, most Mai Thon households no longer have a pond to raise fish or shrimp. However, two households rented public land for aquaculture and developed into semi large-scale farms. One is Mr Cuu whose household belongs to group 1.

Mr Nguyen Van Cuu is 69 years old. His wife is 67 years old. He and his wife have four children: two sons and two daughters, now married and living in their own households. Mr Cuu and his wife live with the second son who is a freelance bricklayer. That son’s wife works in the Que Vo industrial zone. Mr Phuc served in the military in Quang Tri in 1970, was wounded and demobilised in 1972, returning to his hometown. He got married that same year when he was 23 years old. At that time, his family had 3 sào of land but could only cultivate one season with low productivity. Therefore, when the government promoted aquaculture development in Bac Ninh province, he went for training and converted his land into a freshwater fishery. Five years later, he started renting 2 mẫu (equivalent to 0.72 ha) of village public ponds and low land for conversion to aquaculture, bringing his aquaculture farm now to 5 mẫu (equivalent to 1.8 ha). This land was rented for 20 years and he has already been using it for 11 years. Fish raising brings from 250 to 300 MVND to his household each year. Surrounding the fishponds, he grows 200 longan trees (revenue of 60-70 MVND/year), 200 banana trees (15-20 MVND/year). His wife also grows vegetables such as water spinach, cabbage, broccoli, potatoes, sweet potatoes and beans depending on the season for home consumption. The surplus is sold, bringing in around 10 MVND/year. The income from vegetable and banana production is small in comparison with aquaculture and the longan orchard, but it is spread throughout the year while fish raising runs from February to August. Longan fruit ripens and is sold in August-September. These supplemental income sources play an important role in dealing with some emergency needs for cash. His household has 8 sào of paddy field to grow rice only for his household’s consumption and that of his children.

The agricultural area farmed by Mr Cuu's household is relatively large, but he does not hire labour. Instead, he arranges for all his family members to pitch in. His second son and daughter-in-law help with farming, but they mainly migrate out for work. His case shows when the migration decision was made, all family members also reached an agreement on how the agricultural tasks and housework would be shared amongst *all family members, not only those who stay behind*, which situation is usually reported in migration research (Bélanger & Xu Li, 2009; Bergstedt, 2012; Kazushi & Otzuka, 2009). At the village level, there is no labour shortage because exchanging labour and hiring labour or equipment within the village or from neighbouring villages meet the need. However, in the case of individual households, it is seen that they need to manage and restructure labour resources properly to maintain agricultural productivity, while at the same time releasing one or two members to migrate out to earn an income, which will be discussed more in the next section.

6.4 Adaptation of household labour allocation and organisation for agricultural activities

Wetland rice production in Vietnam requires considerable labour input, especially during transplanting and harvesting. Therefore, the literature reports that the movement of people from farm to non-farm employment and from rural to urban areas typically causes agricultural labour shortages and forces farmers to adapt their farming techniques. In southern Vietnam (Mekong River Delta), farmers have mechanised rice production (X. T. Hoang et al., 2013). However, the Red River Delta household division of labour and production process easily adapt to the out-migration of one or two members, and to the subsequent relative labour shortage and decreased flexibility in production.

6.4.1 Labour management in agricultural activities

In Mai Thon, losing a household member was found generally to be unproblematic to agricultural production, mostly rice. A large majority of respondents (91.5) indicated that their households did not suffer a negative impact due to the loss of labour. This can be explained in part by the large population which resulted in a huge labour surplus and limited land. Only a few households said that because of migration out of the country or moving to the southern part of Vietnam, migrants cannot easily come back during the peak period of the harvest, so some labour shortage occurred, but its effects have not been drastic. Table 6.7 shows that 74.8 of Mai Thon households rearrange their internal labour for rice cultivation. As already discussed in the previous section, rice production is considered as the fundamental agricultural activity in this village because on the one hand, it does not take as much time and labour as other agricultural activities; on the other hand, unlike other agricultural activities, rice production has a high labour demand at only some

periods of season; therefore, households can get by if members migrate elsewhere. Table 6.7 shows rice production witnessed a greater measure of exchanging and hiring external labour than other farming activities. Table 6.7 shows that among the migration households, group 3 witnessed the highest proportion of households participating in labour exchange (50); while group 2 showed the lowest percentage (21.4).

Table 6.7 Labour management in agricultural production activities

(Unit: <i>hhs</i>)		Group 1 (n=42)		Group 2 (n=23)		Group 3 (n=42)		Group 4 (n=15)		Total (N=122)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rice production	<i>No practice</i>	3	7.1	9	39.1	8	19	3	20	23	18.9
	Family labour	32	82.1	7	50.0	23	67.6	12	100	74	74.8
	Exchange labour	12	30.8	3	21.4	17	50.0	2	16.7	34	34.3
	Rent labour	6	15.4	7	50.0	4	11.8	1	8.3	18	18.2
Cash crop production	<i>No practice</i>	39	92.9	23	100	42	100	14	93.3	118	96.7
	Family labour	3	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	4	100
	Exchange labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rent labour	1	33.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.8
Pig production	<i>No practice</i>	41	97.6	22	95.7	41	97.6	9	60	113	92.6
	Family labour	1	100	1	100	1	100	6	100	9	100
	Exchange labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rent labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poultry production	<i>No practice</i>	32	76.2	20	87	34	81	4	26.7	90	73.8
	Family labour	10	100	3	100	8	100	11	100	32	100
	Exchange labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rent labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cattle production	<i>No practice</i>	39	92.9	22	95.7	41	97.6	13	86.7	115	94.3
	Family labour	3	100	1	100	1	100	2	100	7	100
	Exchange labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rent labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aqua-culture	<i>No practice</i>	40	95.2	22	95.7	42	100	12	80	116	95.1
	Family labour	2	100	1	100	0	0	3	100	6	100
	Exchange labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hire labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Household survey 2015

The concept of *đôi công* has three implications in Vietnamese culture: (1) the effective response of a household confronting different situations; (2) a resource that a household can present to another as a gift in the course of social interaction; and (3) social norms which people have to abide by in order to get along well with other people. Owing and returning *công* are important elements in Vietnam social life. Beyond its economic function, this exchange strategy seems to create a social connection which offers family groups a

portion of the means necessary for them to evolve and reproduce and, by extension, the development and reproduction of local society as a whole. At the same time, it maintains family units in a local network of interdependence and in certain situations, it can be used as a tool of exclusion. Although it is often thought that this kind of mutual help has deteriorated with migration, along with the mechanisation and monetisation of agricultural production, our survey results show that 34.3% reported that their households members exchanged labour (either helping other households and/or receiving help from their neighbours and households of their relatives) in the year prior to the survey. It is interesting that wage labour and mutual help both play an important role. Even though mutual help has decreased over the years while paid labour has increased, only 18.2 of households claimed they hired external labour. The following case studies illustrate how rural households cope with the change resulting from out-migration.

Ms Hang was born in 1962. She was a farmer and junk dealer in Hanoi. Her husband, Mr Chi, born in 1959, was a farmer and bricklayer. She has three children and his household has 7 sào of agricultural land allocated by the commune. Before 2005, she had rented an additional 5 sào from her cousin to grow rice. Since 2005, her children had grown up and settled in other localities, and she followed other villagers who had migrated to Hanoi to do junk dealing and housework; therefore, she gradually returned the rented land. Recently, her household only farms their own agricultural land. She also rented 2 sào out to her neighbour so she only farms 7 sào in total. Her household now has only two working labourers – she and her husband – and both have migrated out for work. Thus, during the planting and harvesting season, she is obliged to exchange labour with other households in the commune. She now lives in Hanoi, but she will come back to transplant rice seedlings or to harvest. Because she only has few days off, she needs help from relatives and neighbours. She herself even works out in the fields all night pulling up rice seedlings and preparing things for those helping during the next few days. Before, she would return the favour of transplanting for those helper households with the same number of working days as the labour exchange. But now she is busy and can only help a few days doing transplanting. To make up for the remainder, Mr Chi would plough because her household has a ploughing machine. Otherwise, her husband also sometimes helps the other households repair their houses, using his bricklaying skills.

The example of Ms Hang's household shows that the exchange of labour does not necessarily diminish in a context of agricultural change, monetisation and labour out-migration. In a context of out-migration and the rental of additional land, the practice of exchanging labour remains relevant for many households who lack the labour to work their land. Labour exchanges between households are flexible and can be deployed for a range of agricultural and sometimes non-agricultural activities. Besides exchanging equal days for equal types of work (transplanting or harvesting, for instance), labour exchange may,

as the example of Ms Hang's household illustrates, also involve exchanging one kind of work or service (ploughing, bricklaying) for a day of harvesting. This exchange of farm labour perceived through the lens of the government's economic and developmental aspirations would be considered as "backward" and inefficient (B. T. Hoang, 1998-12), not contributing to a more industrialised, professionalised, and efficient agricultural sector. However, from the perspective of family and household maintenance, these labour exchanges are part of a network of support and mutual assistance. At the same time, these labour arrangements enhance the preservation of a sense of village sentiment and facilitate opportunities for the villagers to perform money-generating activities outside the household. Besides, it preserves the solidarity between kin and neighbours, somewhat reducing the incongruities between the commercial and the communal values of farm work (Bélanger & Xu Li, 2009). Labour exchange in rice cultivation often involves relatives or neighbouring households working on each other's land. Ms Hang noted: *"For the winter-spring crop when I have more free time, I would help my relatives for five days to transplant rice seedlings. The households that usually exchange labour with my household are Ms Van's household and Ms Lim's household – who are my sisters, along with the households of Ms Lan, Mr Manh and Ms Nhuan who are in my husband's patrilineage."* Monetary contributions were, of course, important for the households, but that was not sufficient to hold a community together. And to some extent, transactions of money served to undermine the feeling of solidarity as the short-term and unequal aspects of these arrangements set the villagers apart from each other.

Moreover, the labour exchange continuity gives evidence of the existence of the village as a rural institution, even though it has adapted within the new context of migration to become a mixed village where the modalities for labour exchange have changed. As Bergstedt (2012:162) also observed in northern Vietnam, the increased access to money *"provided the option of hiring labour, and organising work in a way that released people from the time-consuming task of recompensing other people's labour efforts by an equivalent number of working hours."* Table 6.7 shows that 18.2 of Mai Thon households who continue to grow rice did hire external labour. Among them, 50 of group 2 households need this labour source to maintain rice production. However, because hired labour, on the one hand, is restricted to certain kinds of activities, on the other hand, it pushes the production cost so high that in many cases, Mai Thon households combine it with renting and lending out their own land. Ms Hang, for example, now lets Ms Van, her sister, use 2 *sào* of her land for free. When we asked Ms Hang why, instead of lending out her land she did not hire labourers, she noted that hiring labour is costly and that a lot of other work still remains to be done – for which she has no time and strength. She therefore only cultivates the 5 *sào* of land needed to grow sufficient rice for the household's own consumption. The experience of Ms Hang illustrates the relationship of mutual dependency that exists between those with a land surplus but labour deficit, and vice versa. In assessing the

nature of such relationships – and whether they are exploitative, for example – it is necessary to consider the place of rice farming within the context of wider household livelihoods.

Rice cultivation is carried out on a rather small scale in the village, and rarely generates any profit, as such. Growing rice is largely for household consumption rather than for sale. This means that viewing the renting of land and the hiring/exchanging of labour in the village through the lens of ‘exploitation’ misrepresents the nature of such transactions. Those are, in effect, production management arrangements, often undertaken between relatives, to maximise production and smooth out scarcities at the household level. The notion of ‘exploitation’ in such a context does not reflect the nature of the agreement and the relationships that underpin them. Whether this extends to other villages in northern Vietnam, it is hard to say. Another important factor influencing the exchange of labour is the mechanisation of agricultural production. Rice cultivation has become less labour-intensive due to the mechanisation of ploughing and transportation. These are activities that are increasingly paid, instead of giving rise to a labour exchange. Mechanisation of agricultural labour has, to some extent, also facilitated a feminisation of rice cultivation. With many husbands and adult sons absent working elsewhere, women are now often in charge of growing rice for the family’s consumption. Ms Linh, for example, works on her own 4 *sào* of land as her husband has migrated to the south and her daughters are too young to be of much help. She noted: *“Farming is always heavy work. But it has been mechanised a lot so I can handle it. Before, I rented machines for ploughing and harvesting, but few years ago, I also rented a harvesting machine right to the edge of the paddy field. I just need to transport the sacks of rice by motorcycle home. All is door-to-door service if you have money. Of course, it is costly, but to the extent my husband sends money back home, I can manage to farm on my own because it is less manual than before.”*

6.4.2 Multiple-site household: labour adjustment in the context of migration

Of the three ways of managing labour for rice production, Table 6.7 highlights internal household adaptation. Here, 74.8 of households reported that they keep their rice production at a level that their own family members can handle. Among migration groups, 81.2 of households in group 1 prefer this approach. Figures 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 show the differences between the labour divisions of three groups of households with migrating members. It is noteworthy that in Vietnam, migration is a decision made at the household level based on arrangements that suit its members, thus the possibility and anticipated profit (L. A. Hoang & Yeoh, 2011). Household membership is usually defined as living “under the same roof”; however, in the context of the industrialisation recently taking place in Vietnam, this concept is gradually changing into diversified models.

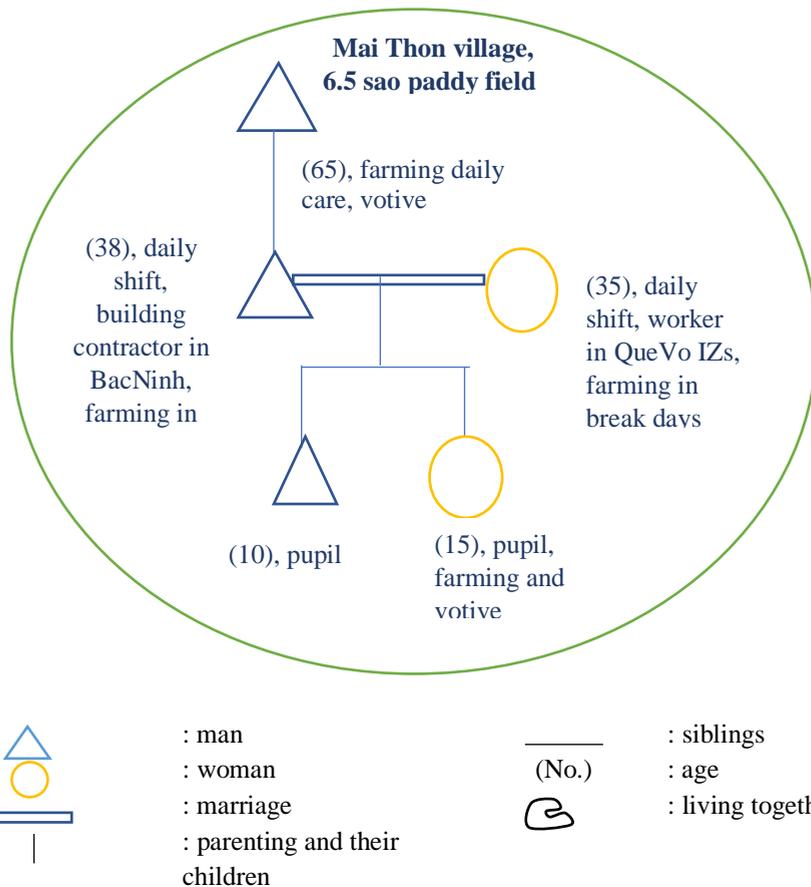


Figure 6.2 Model of labour division in group 1 households

Figure 6.2 describes the case study of Ms Ha who is part of a typical household in group 1. Ms Ha is 35 years old. She works for Canon Company located in Que Vo Industrial Park, around 25 km from home. Her company has a bus to pick up its workers, so she chose to go back and forth daily for work. Her husband, Mr Cong is a small building contractor and he normally takes on projects in Bac Ninh province and elsewhere nearby, which permits him to go home every day. Unlike other freelance bricklayers in Mai Thon who only work around 15 days per month, Ms Ha's husband is quite busy and normally works 25 days each month. Ms Ha's household has 4.5 *sào* of paddy field which was allotted to Mr Cong and his parents in 1993. Because Mr Cong's mother lives with him, this paddy field belongs to his family. Her family borrowed 2 *sào* for free from Mr Cong's brother, so they cultivate 6.5 *sào* in total. His mother is 65 years old and in good health, so she takes care of most

routine farming work. Ms Ha and Mr Cong help on their days off. In peak season, Ms Ha would even change her working shifts from day to evening to do farming while her husband would take a few days off. This is interesting because even though Mr Cong's income is reported to be much higher than Ms Ha's salary, he keeps helping his wife and his mother himself instead of hiring labour. He considers it is as his way of sharing which hiring labour cannot show. This labour arrangement illustrates the flexibility in the rural household labour division. The two main labourers in Ms Ha family migrate daily for work and practice agriculture at the same time. These arrangements maximise their earning opportunities while reducing the risks involved in migration, not to mention the involvement of the uncategorised labourer – their mother. She contributes to farming work and non-farm activities, but also has an important role in the production and reproduction of the entire family. In turn, the younger family members also support both farm and non-farm work.

Figure 6.3 describes the typical model of the group 2 household labour arrangement. *The person interviewed is Mr Ta, 24 years old, the oldest son in the family of Mr Nguyen Van Tin and Ms Pham Thi Trung. His parents got married in 1990, and in 2000 migrated to District 12 in Ho Chi Minh City to work in the garment manufacturing outsourcing sector. Among many Mai Thon households who migrated to the south in 2000, his family is one of the few who have settled in Ho Chi Minh City until now. His family was allocated 4.5 sào of paddy field. Even though his family only comes back home for Tet (Lunar New Year) and for important family social events, they keep their land use rights. Before, the paddy field was mainly taken care of by his grandparents. However, they become old and weak, so his family decided to let him return to the hometown. On the one hand, he can look after his grandparents and their paddy field; on the other hand, he can set up his own family here. Although having lived a long time in Ho Chi Minh City, he feels comfortable with the rural lifestyle and being with people he is familiar with. His wife is his childhood friend and she is a hairdresser. He is now a taxi driver and helps his grandmother with the farm work. However, because of his wife's pregnancy and his busy schedule, he needs to hire a lot of labour for rice production – ploughing, transplanting and harvesting. His farming activities are mainly to keep the land use rights. His parents intend to return Mai Thon as well so their children do not marry in the south and leave the ancestral land. His parents intend to open a sweatshop in Bac Ninh, combined with Thuy village, rather than go back to agriculture. On the one hand, garment manufacturing is his family's strength, and on the other hand, their land area is too small, which had motivated them to migrate in 2000s.*

Mr Ta's case demonstrates many aspects of the relationship between migration and agricultural production. Firstly, this case study reminds us of the closed yet flexible linkage between migrants and their families. The labour arrangement among family members changed over time, depending on the members' abilities and wishes. When Mr Ta's grandparents were strong and able to handle the farming and family work, Mr Ta's whole family could

migrate. Recently, when the grandparents became weak, Mr Ta was sent home to take care of both production and reproduction work which would belong to his father according to tradition. Secondly, it is observed that most members of the older generation take care of the paddy field by themselves and exchange labour, while the younger generation is likely to hire labour to farm so that they can care for their many different jobs. They are not as concerned about the profit from farming but grow rice mainly to keep the land. That is in keeping with the finding about the relationship between migration and agricultural land in Part 6.1. Thirdly, it is noteworthy that long-term migration does not necessarily become permanent, especially in Vietnam, where the feeling of homeland, ancestral land, stays in the blood of the villagers. Therefore, Mr Ta returned home to get married, and his parents intend to return to their hometown. There is a complex, multi-layer process in the migration decisions of rural household. A household could be involved in different types of migration at the same time and each household member could move from one migration type to another as dictated by their household's strategy. This leads to unpredictable results regarding the impact of migration on agricultural production in Vietnamese villages. In the case of Mai Thon, it seems to come out on the positive side, but it is hard to generalise this outcome.

According to the 2009-2010 peasant survey, in northern rural areas, very few peasants work full-time as farmworkers, even among landless households. A little more than 10 of interviewed households in the Red River Delta have members working as farm wage labourers (Bui Minh, 2012). A report from the International Food Policy Research Institute in 1996 found that while hired labour represented 33-39 of the total labour use in the Mekong Delta, the figure was just 5 in the Red River Delta (as cited in Minot and Goletti (2000:14)). Noting a study in Phú Thọ Province in the northern region, Hy (2010:223) explained that no "*villager had to rely exclusively or primarily on selling his/her labour to agricultural employers,*" because they were instead "guaranteed some land for their livelihood". Timothy Gorman (2014:518) commented that the Red River Delta does not have a "*bifurcation of agrarian classes into large-scale producers and agrarian wage labourers*" as in the Mekong Delta.

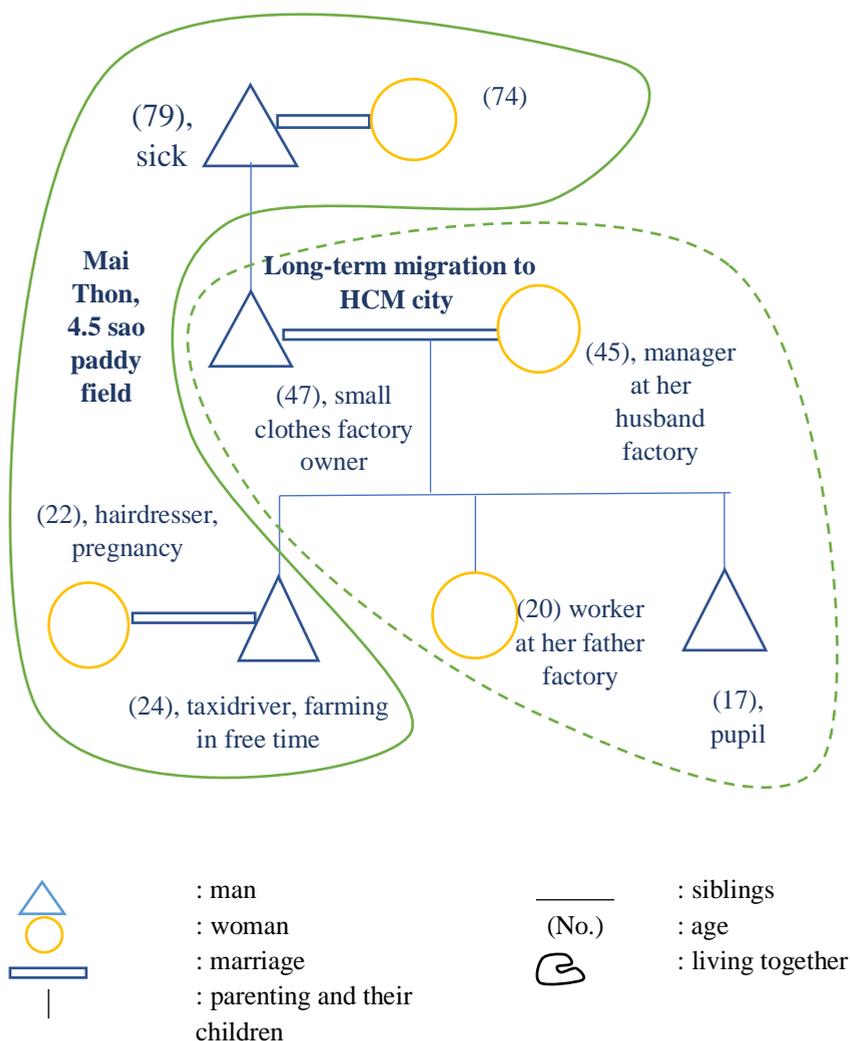


Figure 6.3 Model of labour division in group 2 households

Figure 6.4 demonstrates the typical labour division in group 3. *Mr Lam*, 55 years old, is a farmer and bricklayer. His household was allocated 8 sào of land in 1993, however, they have rented out 2 sào to their relatives since 2013 so they only cultivate 6 sào in total. He usually works in construction about 15 days a month around Bac Ninh province which permits him to go home daily. He is now living with his mother who is 72 years old. She still does votive weaving and takes care of her great-grandchildren. *Mr Lam's* wife migrated long-term to Hanoi in 2011, following her cousins to do junk dealing and freelance household cleaning. One of the important reasons why she

migrated is because their daughter graduated from high school and began to study at the University of Commerce. She moved to Hanoi to work and live with their daughter. Most of the daily farm work, including application of nitrogen-potash-phosphorus fertilizer, insect pest control, weeding, etc. is done by Mr Lam and his son when he has free time on weekends. Mr Lam's wife takes one week off per season to come back home for rice seedling transplanting and later on for harvesting. Regarding harvesting work, peasants of the Red River Delta recently can choose to do it manually or rent a combine harvester. Renting a machine for harvesting is cheaper and faster than hiring labourers for manual harvesting. Harvesting machines cost around 150,000 VND per day while hiring a labourer for manual harvesting ranges from 250,000 to 300,000 VND per day. The harvesting machine can handle one hectare a day while manual harvesting takes three days. However, a harvesting machine can only be used in a large, dry paddy field and only if the rice has ripened evenly. Besides, if a storm or monsoon hits at harvesting time, the machine cannot be used. Moreover, Bac Ninh peasants usually choose manual harvesting in the winter-spring season, because following this season they will grow some cash crops. If the paddy is harvested by machine, it leaves deep trenches in the field which make water drainage for vegetable growing difficult. Therefore, they normally rent a harvesting machine for the summer-autumn rice season. Mr Lam's wife reported that if she did not return home for transplanting and harvesting, their household would have a hard time continuing rice cultivation. The oldest son is 27 years old and has been working in the Yen Phong Industrial Zone since he finished high school. He met his wife at his workplace and got married in 2000. They are now both working for Samsung Electronics Company and rent a room near their factory. Because their son is living in Mai Thon with Mr Lam and the great-grandmother, they come back home every weekend. He also helps with farming when his father is absent for work.

The case of Mr Lam's household consists three types of migration, including daily commuting, short-term migration and long-term migration combined with non-farm activities. This case well illustrates that multiple job holdings do not need to erase agricultural production as long as suitable labour arrangements are in place. From another perspective, migration can maintain a solid link to household farming as long as it keeps circular. However, it has little effect on rice cultivation in Mr Lam's household because his household is able to farm continuously by managing arrangements well among the family members.

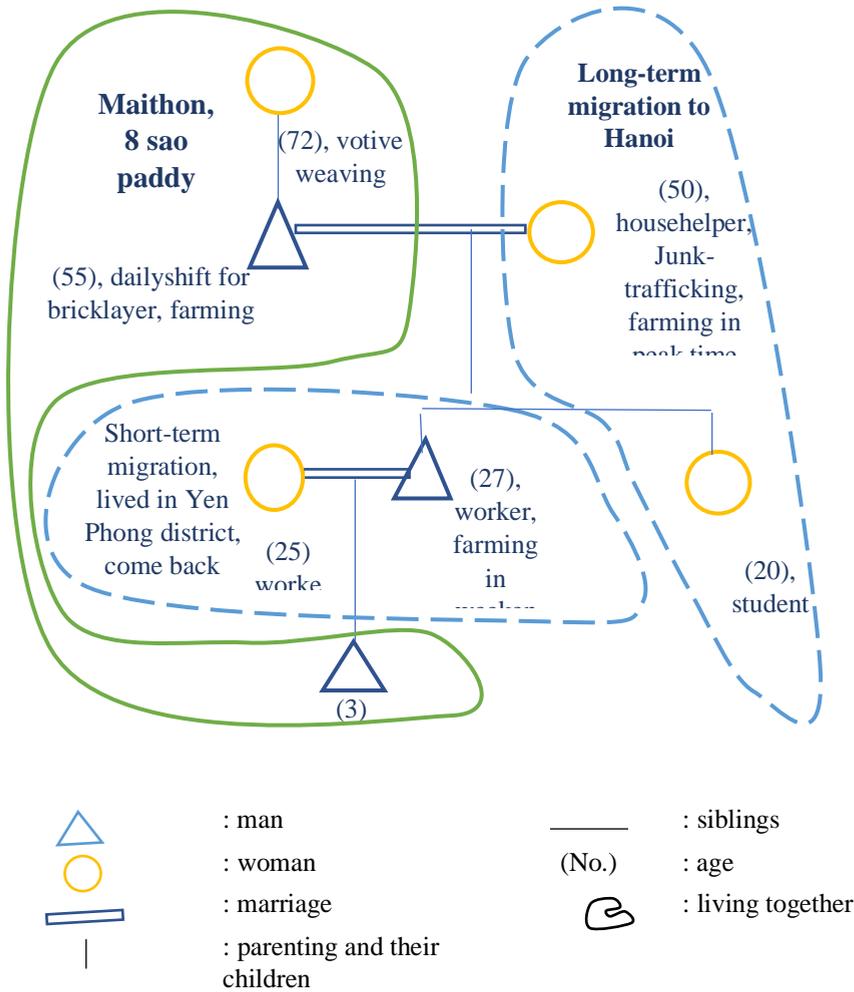


Figure 6.4 Model of labour division in group 3 households

Overall, the three models of the migration household groups show the same story: the younger generation family members have been freed from housework, family care work, and farming by the older generation, that is, their parents/parents-in-law, and can thus focus on non-agricultural occupations. The new family structure, namely multi-function households and multi-spatial households, makes this possible. These case studies challenge the traditional concept of households which are uni-dimensional, bounded entities described by the UN in the following summary: *“The household, in all its different cultural connotations, is the primary social living unit. In it are encapsulated a cluster of activities of people who live together most of the time*

and provide mutual physical, socio-psychological, and developmental support and functions within” (Masini, 1991:28) or *“a co-residential unit, usually family-based in some way, which takes care of resource management and primary needs of its members.”* (Rudie, 1995:228). This concept shows that a household is biologically based, while co-residence and resource management involve a process that maintains a household. Recently, the notion of co-residence has been challenged by the large number of non-resident members present due to out-migration. Therefore, some scholars suggest generating greater acceptance of the concept that households are social institutions or the network of the household members, thus broadening the concept of household to a collective of both resident and non-resident members. The geographical and occupational mobility of the family members modified the classical extended family to create the modified extended family that indicates the possibility of maintaining a family or a household without living in the same residence. The strong commitments and obligations between family members show that this household model is functioning well with mutual support divided across space. It illustrates the multi-spatial household which has recently become widespread in Vietnam. In rural areas, people who are already married tend to migrate more than people who are unmarried. The reason for this can be attributed to cultural differences between Vietnam and other countries. In the West, the most important precondition for a “family” is the unity of the family at a specific residence (Rothausen, 1998; Trost, 1999); therefore, individual migrating decisions of the man in a family can severely affect the harmony. However, in Vietnam, as in other eastern countries, living together is less important than loyalty to each other.

The normal pattern of the household labour division is observed in Mai Thon. The older generation stays at home, taking on all tasks of farming, housework and caring for the grandchildren, while the younger generation focuses on non-agricultural income-generating work in or near the hometown. Where the younger generation works and how much the two generations can earn respectively are the determinants for the budget arrangement. The household arrangement is actually a strategy to maximise family members’ ability to earn money, while minimising possible intergenerational conflicts. Recently, Elmhirst (2012) conceptualised the multi-locality of household livelihoods to explain the support relationship among resident and non-resident members of the same household. Additionally, due to differences in access to and control over resources among its members, the household as a single decision-making and resource-managing entity has been contested in the literature. Agarwal (1997:3) describes the household as a site of interaction and negotiation, while Sen (1990) sees the household as a site of both cooperation (adding to total availabilities) and conflict (dividing the total availabilities among household members). The social position of a member depends on a person’s bargaining power that is based on how well-off that person would be if co-operation within the household failed (Agarwal, 1997). A. Niehof (2011) argues that the household structures people’s daily life to

provide for their needs and well-being, assuming responsibility for dependents and family members. Mai Thon confirms the perception that the household is the arena of day-to-day life of its members, regardless of their spatial place of residence at any particular moment, for generating and mobilising resources and fulfilling primary needs and achieving well-being.

Even though there is no significant labour deficit due to migration, Figure 16 shows that it does affect the amount of work required of the people who stay behind. Thus, 100 of households in group 3 claimed that they need to perform more agricultural work involving different types of support from labour exchange, hiring labour, reducing farming activities, and renting out part of their agricultural land. The main reason is because they release the highest number of members to migrating labour. While group 1 and group 2 have a similar proportion of households claiming to take on the heavier work, the reasons for that are very different. While group 1 is mostly based on making suitable family labour arrangements and labour exchange, group 2 mostly uses hired labour to reduce the burden of farming work.

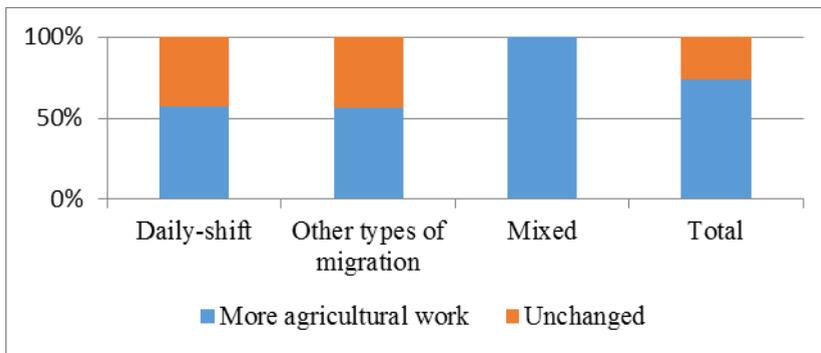


Figure 6.5 Agricultural work division after migration

Source: Household survey 2015

Wetland rice production in Vietnam requires considerable labour input, especially during transplanting and harvesting. The literature reports that the movement of people from farm to non-farm employment and from rural to urban areas typically causes agricultural labour shortages, and forces farmers to adapt their farming techniques. In southern Vietnam (Mekong River Delta), farmers have mechanised rice production (X. T. Hoang et al., 2013) However, in the Red River Delta, the household division of labour and production process easily adapts to the out-migration of one or two members, and to the subsequent relative labour shortage and decreased flexibility in the production sphere.

Vietnamese agriculture has traditionally relied on human and animal labour and little on machinery. Mechanisation has increased quite significantly over the past decade however, driven by such factors as rising labour costs,

increased attention to reducing post-harvest losses, and the development of specialised forms of agricultural production in livestock and horticulture. Some type of machinery is used on more than 90 of paddy farms for land preparation and threshing. Machine use for other purposes was more variable: 23 for seeding, 78 for harvesting, and 14 for drying. Tractors, water pumps and various forms of mechanical harvesters are increasingly used, particularly on larger farms of over 1 hectare.

6.4.3 Gender dynamics in the links of migration and agricultural production

As to the gender-related issue, Mai Thon Village is influenced by traditional Vietnamese culture, as is the case in most parts of Vietnam: “the woman’s place is inside, the man’s outside”. Thus, the woman is usually responsible for caring for the family members and doing the household chores while the man is the breadwinner. It is interesting to observe the change in this traditional norm. Before, when agricultural production played the main role in a rural household’s livelihood, it was primarily considered as men’s work while housework was women’s work. Women also did agricultural field work, but their work was supplementary. They were not the main labour force in agriculture. However, when farming became a minor source of income in comparison with migration and other non-farm business, the role of women in agriculture in Vietnam increased (Bélanger & Xu Li, 2009; Bergstedt, 2012). Chapter 5 points out the increase in female migration, stating that while female migrants prefer stable jobs near their homes, male migrants prefer high income jobs. Thus, female migrants are in the best position to take care of the family and agricultural activities. In comparison to male migration, female migration has positive impacts on agricultural production because the traditional gender norms associated with their choices related to the pattern of migration allow female migrants to combine a migrating job with agricultural production. Although the income of the households with female migrants is lower than that of those with male migrants, they have a greater interest in using their remittance for farming investment.

Chapter 6 and Section 7.2 also remark that remittances help the Mai Thon peasant farmers to reduce their need to sell their agricultural produce for cash, which would increase their own food security. This implies that migration would be considered as a supplemental strategy to agriculture production, increasing the household’s security and autonomy. However, a turning point in female migration is noted. Even though the number of female migrants has increased recently, they usually come back to the village to take care of their children and the family after marriage, and they do agricultural production simultaneously at home. Compared to caring for the (grand)-children and family, migration and all other income earning activities take second place for most Mai Thon females. Men’s migration and caring for children at home (cultural influence) are the main reason why the women stay behind and increase their labour contribution to agricultural production. When the men of

a household migrate (especially those who are family heads), the effects on the female relatives left behind could be negative, in particular for spouses or partners. Not only does it leave the household chores and family events solely to the women, but also the farm labour structure needs to be reworked.

A woman's performing agricultural tasks is considered as an extension of "domestic work" because taking care of the family meals was traditionally the woman's responsibility. Even with the arrival of remittances to the village and the growth of the local economy, women are not the primary beneficiaries. Often, women have to step in, doing more work and taking on traditionally male chores, all of which somehow changes the relationship with the agriculture land such as in Thailand (Aimimthan, Wongsamun, & Paris, 2005), Vietnam (Bélanger & Xu Li, 2009; Bergstedt, 2012) and Laos (Thongmanivong & Fujita, 2006). Although this "feminisation of agriculture" could be seen as a positive trend (Deree, 2005; Yamanaka & Piper, 2005), it is important to recognise that while women have increased their working hours in agricultural production, there has been little change in the gender division of labour within the household with regard to reproductive work (T. R. Paris et al., 2009)

Especially among households with migrants, the highest proportion in this sharing of work is in group 1, with 64.1, almost five times higher than group 2 and twice as high as in group 3. That implies the role of decentralised industrialisation and local non-farm work. Similarly, females mainly take care of poultry in 50 of total households, while males do this in only 18.7 of households. And among three migration groups, group 1 witnessed the highest share (30) in chicken-raising jobs in agricultural work shared among family members. The 2009-2010 survey shows that in the Red River Delta, rural household wives account for 74.8 of agricultural tasks, while the percentage among husbands attains only 17.0 (Bui, 2011:35). Linked to household labour division, it reveals that circular migration every day permits rural households to maximise their intra-labour arrangements. On the one hand, it reduces the burden for the family members staying behind and, on the other hand, it shows the positive impact on agricultural activities.

Table 6.8 Gender dynamics in agricultural activities

<i>(Unit: hhs)</i>	Principal members	Group 1 (n=42)		Group 2 (n=23)		Group 3 (n=42)		Group 4 (n=15)		Total (N=122)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rice production	<i>No practice</i>	3	7.1	9	39.1	8	19	3	20	23	18.9
	Male	2	5.1	2	14.3	3	8.8	2	16.7	9	7.4
	Female	12	30.8	10	71.4	19	55.9	3	25	44	36.1
	Both	25	64.1	2	14.3	12	35.3	7	66.7	46	37.7
Cash crop production	<i>No practice</i>	39	92.9	23	100	42	100	14	93.3	118	96.7
	Male	2	66.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	66.7
	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Both	1	33.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33.3
Pig production	<i>No practice</i>	41	97.6	22	95.7	41	97.6	9	60	113	92.6
	Male	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11.1
	Female	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	16.7	2	22.2
	Both	0	0	1	100	0	0	5	83.3	6	66.7
Poultry production	<i>No practice</i>	32	76.2	20	87	34	81	4	26.7	90	73.8
	Male	2	20.0	0	0	2	25.0	2	18.2	6	18.7
	Female	5	50.0	3	100	4	50.0	4	36.3	16	50.0
	Both	3	30.0	0	0	2	25.0	5	45.5	10	31.3
Cattle production	<i>No practice</i>	39	92.9	22	95.7	41	97.6	13	86.7	115	94.3
	Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Female	2	66.7	0	0	1	100	0	0	3	42.9
	Both	1	33.3	1	100	0	0	2	100	4	57.1
Aqua-culture	<i>No practice</i>	40	95.2	22	95.7	42	100	12	80	116	95.1
	Male	2	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	3	75.0
	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Both	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	25.0

Source: Household survey 2015

Traditionally, the home garden was considered “inside” work, which was the woman’s task and a part of the housework. It seems to be a culturally rooted gender division of labour in the household, even in the extension services. Sachs, Tornell, and Velasco (1996) find that rural women focus on garden produce. My research confirms this: vegetable gardening is the woman’s domain in the household. In Mai Thon village, 85 of the respondents have a vegetable garden around their houses and women do all the vegetable gardening. As to the function of vegetable gardening, home gardens played an important role in the collectivist era. When all land belonged to the commune, it was under the management of the collective’s production team. Farming households made their living by cultivating collective land and earning working points. They only had a small home garden plot land for private use. “Households had different incomes because of differences in home garden management.” (Hy & Unger, 1998:64).

Home gardening used to be an important source of food and materials for rural households even though the size of home gardens was relatively small. Still, it provided various daily necessities for the household such as fruit, vegetables, spices, firewood, and staple foods year-around, thus making a steady contribution to the household’s economy. At the present time, compared to migrant job incomes and crop production, vegetable gardening does not bring in as much money as it would in the collectivist period. Female peasants no longer think that vegetable gardening is a substantial part of the household work. They would never have mentioned vegetable gardening as a part of agricultural production if I had not mentioned this issue explicitly. “*It is enough for the household’s consumption*”; “*we do not need to pay additional money for vegetable consumption*”, and “*we have only a small plot of gardening land*” are comments commonly heard about vegetable gardening.

From their statements, it seems vegetable gardening does not play an essential role in the households. However, from my field work, I found out that the main function of vegetable gardening is self-evident and the woman’s role in managing it is neglected and is not recognised. My empirical research finds that vegetable gardening plays some essential roles in the household: feeding the family members and saving on some daily household expenses; providing a space and feed for free-range poultry; functioning as a way to make gifts to or networking with relatives or friends of the household. Firstly, vegetable gardening can save on the household’s daily food expenses and provide the household members with safer vegetables. The size of gardens is relatively small, ranging from 100 m² to 300 m², but almost all female peasants (98) think that the output of vegetable gardening is sufficient for the family’s consumption needs and they do not have to buy vegetables at the market. Women can decide what kind of vegetables they want to grow each season when they take their family members’ diet preferences into account.

The vegetable types include water spinach, cabbage, pepper, eggplant, carrots, sweet potatoes, beans, cucumbers, pumpkins, tomatoes, leeks, celery,

white gourd and so on. Beyond saving money for the household, vegetable gardening provides family members with safer food. The majority of peasants state that they do not use chemicals on their vegetable gardens, because “it is for our family or our neighbours. If we spray, we all consume it.” Therefore, vegetable gardening is a useful tool in maintaining relationships with relatives and friends, in part because of its ‘low-chemical’ feature. There is a significant trend that peasants are migrating in a circular pattern, daily or weekly. Taking home-grown vegetables as a gift for friends or relatives who do not have a vegetable garden in town or at the location they have migrated to, is an effective means of communication. Ms Huong claims: *“Our garden produces more than enough for our family. Sometimes the vegetables mature very fast, so I give them to my relatives in Hanoi. You know, they do not have gardening land and they prefer our pesticide-free vegetables. My sister-in-law even asks if I can supply her family weekly, but she lives too far away.”*

Therefore, the woman’s role in managing the vegetable garden plays a substantial function, however, but it is taken for granted and considered as unimportant. When a lot of females in the village migrated, vegetable gardening dropped off. A similar situation is observed with vegetables grown in paddy fields in the winter. Oppositely, cash-crop production and aquaculture activities are the domain of males, at 66.7 and 75 respectively. When males are the main actors, all of these farming activities are commercial and lend themselves to large-scale farming.

In summary, Chapter 6 presents a core answer to the way that Mai Thon households manage to “adapt” within context of migration. Even though it is not a priority, Mai Thon village demonstrates positive remittance spending on farming. The groups involved in diversified migration types tend to spend more of the remittance to overcome farming constraints than other groups. Besides, remittances help to increase the household’s cash source, so that it reduces the need to sell the agricultural output and increases their own food sovereignty. This implies that migration could be considered as a supplemental strategy for farming production to increase household security and autonomy because the majority of households keep their paddy fields and continue their agricultural production rather than converting them for other purposes. Renting or exchanging agricultural land is much more common than selling, amounting to an unofficial re-distribution of land among households which have dissimilar labour resources. Possessing land therefore is more for investment than for agricultural production. The multiple ways of Mai Thon households to maintain their land usufruct right includes partial abandonment, partial leasing, partial lending, and partial production while they pursue other non-farm activities or migrate. In comparison to male migration, female migration has positive influences on agricultural land use for farming because the gender selection related to the form of migration allows female migrants to combine a job available through migration and agricultural production. In

terms of agricultural production choice, rice remains completely dominant even though, as we will see later, significant changes have already begun in food consumption and expenditure patterns. Meanwhile, cash-crop cultivation and livestock raising have been vastly reduced. Giving priority to home consumption encourages rural households in Mai Thon to grow high-quality rice varieties. It implies a so-called “post-modern agriculture” in which women peasants play a key role.

Regarding labour adaptation with labour out-migration, the Mai Thon household strategy is 1) keeping rice production at a limited level while abandoning other labour-costly farming activities; 2) maximising the family labour arrangement; 3) hiring external labour and using mutual help, emphasising the female migrant’s role; and 4) developing agricultural services rather than investing in technology change. The householder responses collected through the survey during this research indicated that they gave their consent for the migration of a family member due to monetary reasons, as the spouse working outside can bring in a stable cash income for the family. Even though the burden of work, primarily agriculture, has increased, along with it the incomes have also risen, which permits them to manage by renting machines or hiring labour during times of labour shortage. The next section will review the role of farming in Mai Thon households, with a greater focus on the role of agricultural production in households from the standpoint of the peasants.

CHAPTER 7

Who tend to farm? Future of small-scale farming

Looking at another aspect of the interaction between migration and farming, this chapter analyses the gender and generational dimensions related to agriculture. Section 1 highlights the role of agricultural production in the context of migration. The second section focuses more on the future of small-scale farm households in Mai Thon in terms of generation and agricultural activities. (The content of this section was already published in the Thi Minh Khue Nguyen, Thi Dien Nguyen, Philippe Lebailly, 2019. *The participation of rural youth in smallholder farming in Red River Delta, Vietnam*, Youth Voice Journal Vol 14, No 6) The third part will provide a bigger canvas for the integration between migration and agricultural production in Southeast Asia.

7.1 Role of small-scale farming in the households

7.1.1 The importance of agricultural income

This part will start with a focus on the peasant's ideological thinking about agricultural production. In the Red River Delta, a rapidly declining proportion of households still derive much of their income from agriculture. In Mai Thon, the judgement of villagers regarding farm work can influence their practice in farming and vice versa. Recent studies show that the higher income from migration work suggests that agricultural production is no longer the main source of income for most rural households. In other words, the economic contribution of migrant jobs has become increasingly important, eclipsing farm work (Kazushi & Otzuka, 2009; Stifel, 2010). Mai Thon village also supports that claim. Earnings from an extra off-farm job is the main source of income for most households. Agricultural production is contributing comparatively less to the household's earnings. As one female villager said, *"The net yearly income from farming is equal to the income of two or three months of work as a migrant."* However, they also claim that *"farming cannot make the family rich; it can only keep the family members alive. If we want to have more money for our children's education, marriage, or savings, we need to migrate out to work and earn money in addition to farming."*

Agriculture has been an enduring source of both economic and social stability for Vietnam, going well beyond GDP and employment. For example, its performance in reliably delivering an affordable and increasingly diverse supply of food has helped to contain inflation and thus dampen wage pressures which might have undercut the competitiveness of manufacturing. During the financial crisis of the late 2000s and throughout the more recent ups and downs of the macro-economy, rural communities and (at least part-time) agricultural employment have provided a safety net or shock absorber for many people. However, migration does seem to help households cope with shocks – specifically to maintain per capita food expenditures – at least when the purpose of migration is to work. This is consistent with recent literature on migration that has found it to correspond most closely, at times, to a strategy of income risk diversification within households, particularly when it involves household members moving to another labour market. Earlier literature on migration attributed domestic, rural-to-urban migration primarily to wage

differentials between the place of origin and the destination (Harris and Todaro (1970) cited in Arjan De Haan (1999)), and to factors such as income uncertainty and relative deprivation (Stark & Taylor, 1991).

Mai Thon shows the same picture as other rural households in the Red River Delta; the majority of them cannot be referred to as “farming households” but instead as “rural households that continue to farm”. Interestingly, this reality prompted a more careful look at the concepts of “agricultural household” or “farming household”, basing them upon the following definition in the Handbook of Household Surveys: “A household is considered to be an agricultural household when at least one member of the household is operating a holding (farming household) or when the household head, reference person or main income earner is economically active in agriculture” (UN, 1984). When the peasant become more mobile, his or her household back in the rural village becomes multiple site with multiple job holdings. This multi-functional household is considered to emerge from processes of re-peasantisation, as Van der Ploeg suggests, in essence, a modern expression of the fight for autonomy and survival in a context of deprivation and dependency.

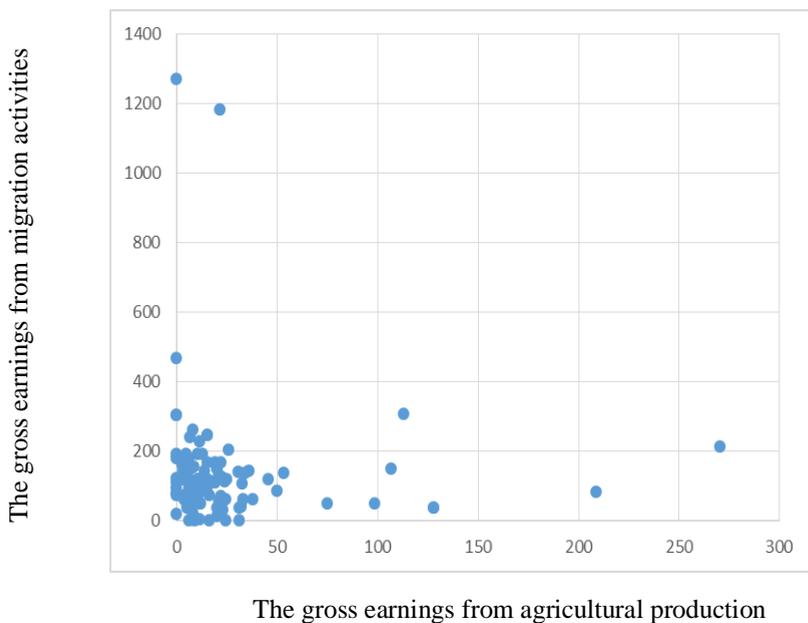


Figure 7.1 Contribution of agricultural income

Source: Household survey 2015

Figure 7.1 supports the argument that in general the earnings from off-farm activity are the main household economic source. In Figure 7.1, the X-axis stands for the gross earnings from agricultural production and the Y-axis stands for the

gross earnings from migration activities. The gross earnings of agricultural production include market-oriented farming activities in some families. Most of the higher values in gross earnings from agricultural production stand for market-oriented farming. For households in which agricultural production is mainly limited to crop farming, the net earnings of farming are equal to one-third of the gross earnings in general.

The net earnings from migration activities is absolutely more than the net earnings from crop farming. Figure 7.1 supports the finding that earnings from an extra job are the main economic source for the households. However, this does not imply that the earnings from agriculture are not important to the households. Instead, the relation between agricultural production and non-agricultural production is complementary. In most households, agricultural production and non-agricultural production activities are both needed. This is the situation without factoring in the contribution from various kinds of agricultural production that is used for household consumption, for example vegetables, fruit and some cereals. Agricultural production is essential to the households in providing food and/or money to the household members, a refuge from the uncertainty of migrant jobs, a guarantee to avoid being a burden for the children when one gets old. Earnings from agricultural production and/or an extra job beyond farming cover household expenses and allow the migrant's earnings to be saved for other major expenditures. Without agricultural work and earnings, the remittance cannot be saved, and the household member cannot work away from home without worries.

However, when moving from actual practice to the value-loaded perception of this practice, it turns out that 65 of the peasants confirm that farming only plays a supplementary role in the households. They tend to underestimate the role of the farming contribution to the household in terms of net money that they can access. Other researchers also reveal that, on average, diversification away from agriculture has been welfare enhancing, and that household enterprise activities have been among the most economically beneficial to households. Non-farm work has, according to several studies, been associated with higher per capita consumption as well as lower vulnerability to shocks, especially for those participating in skilled work (A. Niehof, 2004). A reduction in farm work due to an increase in non-farm work, interestingly, has not translated into less agricultural income (Kazushi & Otzuka, 2009). At the same time, non-farm employment has seemingly widened the non-farm income gap between rich and poor households (Development Analysis Network 2003). These findings are generally consistent with the literature on income diversification, which shows that it is positively correlated with income and wealth but can be associated with greater inequality. This is generally explained by the fact that better-off families are generally better able to engage in high-return activities than those that are worse off. And this pattern tends to be more pronounced when diversification is spurred by push factors such as shocks or survival (Newman & Kinghan, 2015).

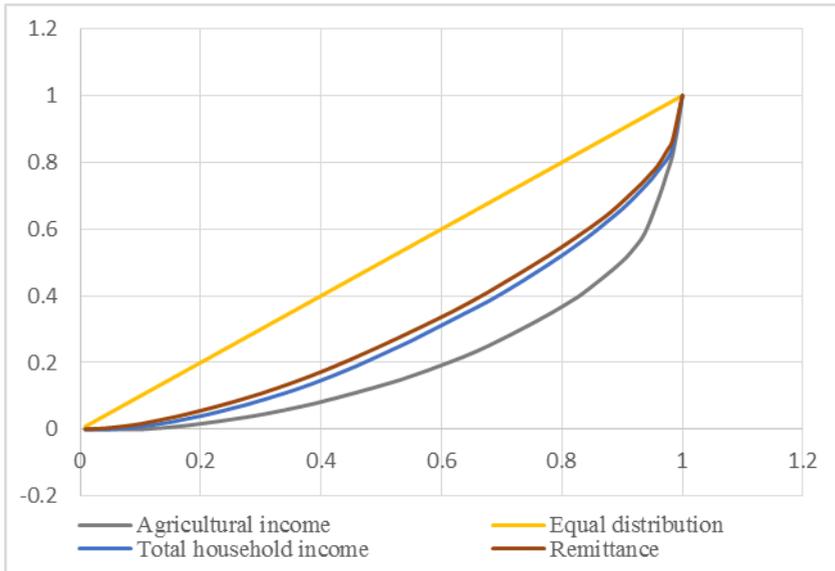


Figure 7.2 Income distributions among household sources of earnings

Source: Household survey 2015

Theoretically, agricultural production and non-agricultural production jobs function equally for the households. However, in reality, even people who are farming themselves think they are different. Peasants believe non-farm earnings make a larger contribution to the household because it brings in more money than farming. The most important value that they use as their basis to estimate the contribution is money. This is the crux of their ideology. This idea changes the role of farming at the practical and symbolic level and seems to be a threat for agricultural production from the long-term perspective. Some believe that the relatively bigger contribution of earnings from migrant jobs might trigger a new problem for farming when the labour force, especially rural youth, do not want to farm anymore (which will be discussed further in this chapter). This implies the warning in recent agrarian literature that massive migration leads to a regression of agricultural production. However, regardless, farming has become a subsidiary economic activity for the majority of households. Most villagers continue practicing rice production but with a change in their main purpose. Interestingly, in Mai Thon village, we observed the focus of farming on household consumption, which likely results in higher quality food.

Moreover, the figure presents the Lorenz curves²⁶ of income distribution of Mai Thon households between migration, agricultural activities and total budget of

²⁶ Applying the formula of Simpson’s error bound rule, the results of error bounds are calculated as below: E_s (Agricultural Income) = 0.0786 and E_s (Remittance) = 0.0765 and E_s (Total Income) =

households. The Gini index from agricultural earnings is 0.59, which is higher than Gini index from migration (0.43) and the Gini index from total income (0.39). That supports the idea that migration is a developmental strategy, as a means for upward mobility, rather than a mechanism of social differentiation in rural areas.

Similarly, with the impacts of migration on inequality, some studies (de Haas, 2005; Dean & Choi, 2007; Portes, 2010) suggest that it can help to reduce inequality but it is also very dependent on the context. Researchers in Laos (Jonathan Rigg, 2007) and Indonesia (Yamauchia et al., 2009) revealed that international migration created more inequality than internal migration. Besides, in some cases like Vietnam, while migration widened income disparities within villages, it reduced those between provinces (D. L. Nguyen & Grote, 2012). At a more macro level, D. Phan and Coxhead (2010) explore the determinants of inter-provincial migration and the effects of migration on inter-provincial inequality. Using a gravity model, the authors showed that migrants move from low-income to high-income provinces and the results show that that the impact of migration on inequality can be either negative or positive. Therefore, migration and remittances have the potential of contributing to development, but that depends on the specific political, economic, and social circumstances in both places of origin and destination.

Recent empirical studies reviewed briefly below show a more diversified picture of the impact of migration on the sending households and rural areas which focus on the effects of the loss of human capital and on remittance flows. One of the interesting findings I observed in six years of thorough research in Mai Thon is that the reality is changing very fast and inconsistently. In early 2014, scarcely a young person ever thought of working in agriculture. However, with the success stories of other villagers involved in farming, there is a new wave of juveniles interested in ways to come back to or start up with agriculture.

0.0759. The small error bound values reflect well the household income distribution presented in Lorenz curves.

7.1.2 Small-scale farming and food security in the context of migration

Labour out-migration comprises two simultaneous processes: labour goes out and remittances come in. Remittances can have productive and consumptive uses, both relating to household food security. Productive use aims at longer-term security, whereas consumptive use satisfies immediate needs. The way remittances are spent largely depends on whether people find it important to spend them on immediate consumption or invest them in long-term productive use (Jokisch, 2002). Food security is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon comprising social purposes and cultural meanings (A. Niehof, 2010; Waldman et al., 2006). Moreover, objective indicators of food security do not necessarily correspond to how people value food and perceive food security. Maxwell and Frankenberger (1995:4) distinguish four conceptual categories of food security: i) sufficiency of food, defined mainly as the calories needed for an active, healthy life; ii) access to food, defined by entitlements to produce, purchase or exchange of food or receiving it as a gift; iii) security, defined as the balance between vulnerability, risk and insurance; and iv) according to time, where food insecurity can be chronic, transitory or cyclical. Common to all these aspects is the emphasis on the availability of and access to food, which can be acquired either from one's own production or from the purchase, exchange and borrowing of food and receiving food gifts. The study of food security has shifted its focus from the availability and access at the regional or national levels to household-level access to food (A. Niehof, 2010).

Since the seminal work of Sen (1981) there have been simultaneous shifts in the discourse from a supply orientation to one emphasising distribution and access through entitlement. In the wake of modernisation processes and urbanisation, food provision through one's own production declined and the acquisition of food by other means increased. This chapter is framed within the changing social, cultural and policy contexts that act upon people's livelihood practices and access to food, which shows a shift from an agriculture-based economy to an economy based on flows of remittances and non-agricultural sources of income. Using this framework, we investigate how land, food security and labour out-migration and the relationships between them are perceived differently by different social groups and across the generations, and how land acquires a 'new' meaning. By doing so, we advance the works of Sen (1981), Maxwell and Frankenberger (1995), Porter et al. (2017) to define food security by incorporating the perceptions about accessing food among different social groups in the context of societal change.

Access to safe and healthy foods is a fundamental element of food security. However, over the past 30 years since *Đổi Mới*, food consumption has been far from worry-free. Initially a country struggling with food scarcity and famine, the rapid development of Vietnam into a socialist-oriented market economy with food abundance, has resulted in a prominent shift from concerns about 'having enough to eat' to concerns about whether the food is 'safe to eat'. Especially since the turn of the century, as a consequence of advancing modernisation, industrialisation, agricultural intensification, and urbanisation, food safety has become a major social and political issue. Food safety is a real problem in Vietnam with costs of food-

borne diseases to the economy estimated to amount in 2003 to US\$450 million (World Bank, 2016:19). It was approximated that there were 12.8 million cases of food-related diseases of which 27 million required medical attention, including 3.5 million hospitalisations.

Mai Thon has no land converted to industrial use, therefore even though sharing the same characteristics as other Red River Delta areas of small and fragmented paddy fields, Mai Thon households produce enough rice for their own consumption. Given that rice is the fundamental staple food and the main dish in Vietnamese meals, having enough rice always means food security. Moreover, keeping their position as net producers rather than net consumers as in other villages in Bac Ninh province or other rural areas of Vietnam, it protects Mai Thon households from food crisis and food price fluctuations, in other words, it strengthens their own food security. Moreover, positive remittances from migration have reduced rural household cash emergencies, pushing Mai Thon peasants to maximise productivity and sell their surplus farming produce. Only needing to produce enough rice for home consumption makes the rural households in Mai Thon avoid large-scale, government-supported commercial agriculture as a way of boosting food security. Beyond that, Mai Thon peasants have more autonomy in variety, choosing quality rather than high-yield rice varieties, as discussed in Part 6.2. From the peasant's perspective, the high-quality-types of rice, though of lower yield, were much more resistant to pests than the currently predominating varieties. In contrast, high-yield rice has remarkably changed the output volume, but at the cost of increases in inputs such as fertilizers, insecticides, and pesticides.

Therefore, aiming for home consumption encourages Mai Thon households to choose high-quality varieties and reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizer in order to decrease the cost on the one hand and ensure the food safety for their own consumption on the other hand. Even though peasants minimize pesticide use largely due to concern of economy rather than ecology, they are aware of the potential environmental costs of their otherwise heavy reliance on chemical production inputs. FAO and IFAD (2019) also recognized of the family farmers' multifunctionality related to their roles within the community and as caretakers of the environment. That allows for efficient and sustainable use and management of natural resources, such as the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the prevention of soil depletion, water pollution and environmental degradation. Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, vegetable gardeners have often prospered at the expense of soil erosion, pesticide contamination, wildlife extermination, and the like (James F Eder, 1999; Hefner, 1990). The small-holder rice producer in Vietnam is considered to be very inefficient and generally making excessive use of fertilizer, chemicals, and other inputs. Focusing on home consumption to promote higher quality rice production despite lower input. Mai Thon village illustrates a very considerable potential for reducing both material and environmental costs. Overall, it would be referred as an amazing indirect effect of migration. The 2009-2010 survey conducted by (Bui, 2011:11) also stated that nearly half of farming households in the Red River Delta retained their rice output only for family

consumption, 28.2 retained rice mainly for consumption and sold it only in a situation of necessity, and almost no one sold their entire rice output.

Even though rice is the mainstay of the Vietnamese diet, diversity is emerging. Over the past decade, rural households in Vietnam have seen very high levels of growth in the consumption of meat, milk and eggs as rice consumption declined. There is also a surprising change in the consumption of fruit and vegetables. Thus, FAO and WB predicted food security concerns are likely to be increasingly tied to the cost and availability of animal feed and the performance of a livestock sector now going through a major restructuring. In terms of this “feed security”, the majority of livestock raising in Mai Thon focuses on household consumption. Interestingly, aiming for household consumption permits Mai Thon households to keep their poultry flocks small in size, reduce industrialised food and favour local breeds, thus ensuring food security and food safety for rural households.

Meat (both muscle and organ meat) and eggs from indigenous chickens constitute a high-quality food source, densely packed with essential macro- and micronutrients. Animal-sourced foods are particularly concentrated in highly bioavailable iron, vitamin A, vitamin B12, zinc, and riboflavin – nutrients that are often deficient or absent in the largely vegetarian diets common in rural, resource-poor settings (de Bruyn, 2017; Turk, 2013) Slaughter of livestock for home consumption is conducive to use of the entire carcass, including organ meats and bones, which are good sources of high bioavailable vitamin A, vitamin B12, iron, riboflavin, niacin, thiamine and folate (Murphy & Allen, 2003). Consuming foods with high concentrations of bioavailable nutrients is particularly important for infants and young children, with limited gastric volume, pregnant and lactating women who have increased nutrient requirements, elderly people who may have decreased intestinal absorption capacity, and those who are ill (Olaoye, 2011)

From the peasant’s perspective, they rarely consume foods that they or their neighbours have not grown or raised. Interestingly, the longer the food chain becomes, the more stronger the people lean on their network to find safe food. Farming products become not only food for rural household consumption but also gifts to maintain relations of kinship locally or with relatives who have migrated to the city as discussed in Section 6.3. Therefore, agricultural production not only provides safe food and sustains the food security of households in the village but also preserves to some extent the village institutions. For the individual, agricultural production becomes an important reason for him or her to define their personal identity (discussed in more detail in the coming section).

7.1.3 Self-identities of Mai Thon villagers

Đổi Mới (or renovation) has been highlighting modernisation and agro-industrialisation for over 30 years, in which both peasants as a social form and small-holding as an agricultural form are targets for transformation. This contemporary political and popular discourse has done much to put in people's minds that a "peasant" is ignorant and backwards and that traditional agriculture involves heavy work, is a low status, low-value, pre-modern sector which should be "developed" or "modernised". As elsewhere in Vietnam, Mai Thon people are now not only more mobile as commuters, but they are also more able to maintain connections between their places of origin and destination than ever before (as discussed in Chapter 5). Most migrants still keep their roots in their home village and most migrants retain village "membership" regardless of their current place of residence. Hugo (2009a) pointed out that "most retain a strong commitment to their home communities since they leave their families there". However, in some cases, when migrants become urban dwellers, they still manage to set up residential bases in both town and village, moving between the two areas. As illustrated in the case of Mr Ta in Section 6.3, even though his family has settled in Ho Chi Minh City, they visit home every year during the Tết holiday and other important social events such as the marriage or funeral of close relatives.

Agricultural work is now primarily a part-time or seasonal activity in Vietnam. Yet, people without formal employment in rural areas are deemed to be "working in agriculture" (WB, 2016). A Mai Thon villager may only be working in agriculture for 60, 90 or 120 days, while working in other activities for much of the remainder of the year. In Mai Thon, many people either commute or temporarily migrate to jobs in industrial zones, construction and the informal service sector. Often, they remain formally registered in their place of origin. Reforms in the household registration system and better protection for seasonal or migrant workers would contribute to a more efficient release of surplus agricultural labour, both in reality and statistically.

Mai Thon migrants maintain various kinds of linkages with their hometown to help them cope with the daily challenges. Migrants prefer stretching the titles of "household member" and "village member" to secure and integrate multiple residences or multiple belongings. Normally, they send remittances back home and bring food from home to the city. This reduces their daily living costs in the city and helps them generate additional savings, which in turn, enables higher remittances. In the new context of globalisation and rapid social changes, it is no longer adequate to consider migration and migrant adjustments as just a one-way journey. Migrants, therefore, are not only the linkage between rural space with other areas but also the bridge among agriculture and other sectors.

Secondly, migration does not necessarily mean the de-peasantisation process because it is highly dependent on how people think about who they are (Royal B. & Rafique, 2003). Evidence shows that in Southeast Asia people seem to prefer keeping "peasant" as their self-defined identity and livelihood. Peasant farmer (*nông dân*) is also a complex and multi-layered category which used to be understood as

referring to small-holder farmers who directly work with agricultural land. However, the administrative and legal contemporary definition uses *nông dân* to refer to anyone with a rural *hộ khẩu*, as already discussed in Part 4.3. This definition found in policy and development studies creates a gap between paper and the reality when rural people massively migrate out of their rural homes into other sectors, as has recently occurred. A *nông dân* no longer stays in a rural area or does agriculture as his or her main job anymore. Besides, while peasant migrants may be playing double roles as both urban workers and farmers, most still consider themselves peasants rather than having double (peasant-urbanite) identities (T. D. Nguyen, Nguyen, Le , & Lebailly, 2015). The most common description by migrant workers of themselves is *nông dân* (peasant farmers) or *người nông thôn* (village people),

However, when I consulted the villagers, especially migrants, they consider themselves as peasant farmers; amazingly 83.6 of respondents claimed peasant as their identity. It is also noteworthy that they distinguish quite clearly between jobs that they pursue and their identity. They state their real work with a wide range of job names, but *nông dân* appears as their official work and identity in their personal data. Therefore, the multi-function of the migrant peasant when he or she normally does several types of work, does not affect much their own identity. Other reasons include that they used to do farming and agriculture is their ancestor's work and they intend to come back to agriculture.

Table 7.1 Reasons for self-identifying as a peasant of 2015 survey respondents

		N	%
Self-identified as <i>nông dân</i>		107	87.7
Reasons	Have been doing agriculture	85	69.7
	Used to do agriculture	62	40.8
	Ancestral work	53	43.4
	Having agricultural land	82	67.2
	Others	9	7.4

Source: Household survey 2015

The highest proportion among reasons given for considering themselves as *nông dân* even though their main source of income is otherwise is because they still manage to do some farming and have agricultural land (69.7 and 67.2 respectively). From their own perspective, these characteristics (having access to land and securing the family's livelihood) are the most fundamental reasons for defining themselves as peasants. These implied the Vietnamese peasant's deep attachment to the land of Vietnamese peasant which were reviewed in many studies (see at (Bui Minh, 2012; Bui & Dang, 2011; Popkin & Popkin, 1979). Other reasons include that they used to do farming and agriculture is their ancestor's work and they intend to come back to agriculture. However, 12.3 of respondents did not consider themselves as *nông dân* mostly because they already have another "high-ranking" occupation such as teacher, government official, and the like. Peasant migrants are typically portrayed as passive, tolerant, but I argued that peasant migrants have choices, and their

choices are expanding. After all, peasant migrants can choose to return to the countryside, and many have done so or plan to do so in the future.

In sum, despite the increasing importance of non-farm earnings in Mai Thon household incomes, farming keeps on enduring despite its diversified transformation. As A Haroon Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010) argues, the recent development of synergies between farming and non-farming employment is central to rural transformation. As discussed before, income from non-farm jobs and diversification indeed sustains rural household farms and keeps them alive. Rural households are resilient enough to adapt their lives in the face of the challenging socio-political situations (Vaddhanaphuti & Wittayapak, 2011). People have adapted their livelihoods to cope with on-going change. Some of the practices employed by farmers include switching between farm and non-farm jobs, growing non-rice cash crops and utilising social capital such as kinship ties in times of need. Subsistence agriculture in Mai Thon is likely resilient, even in the face of large-scale out-migration, because it provides consistent access to a level of production sufficient for rural households. Income derived from outside the village also contributed to agricultural production, which means that livelihoods no longer need to be localised in either rural or urban areas but rather straddle the two (J. Rigg, 2005; Soda, 2007).

Based on circular mobility, peasants are able to be simultaneously peasants and labourers. Such an approach recognises the importance of “multiple job holding” (van der Ploeg & Jingzhong, 2010), or “occupational multiplicity” (Breman, 2007) or “diversified livelihoods” (Krishna, 2012). In these new realities of urban and rural expansion, the peasantry is prone to present “hybrid features: peasant workers and urbanised villagers” (Peemans, 2013). This once again shows the hybrid nature of not only the peasant but also the rural household and the village. Even though these new concepts are sometimes criticised by “not this and not that” meanings, but somehow that best reflects the transition in developing countries. Moreover, it leads to questions regarding the de-agrarianisation process which has recently been raised in agrarian literature.

7.2 Who will be the next small-scale farmers?

Even though small-holder farming has an important role in the livelihood of rural households, the contribution of agriculture to farmer income and rural development depends on the active participation of youth who are the potential labour force. FAO and IFAD (2019) claimed that “*the future of food and agriculture lies in the hands of the next generation of family farmers*”, which implied the recognition of the role of family farming role in food security and sustainable development as well as the importance of young people’s involvement in agricultural sector and contribution to rural development. In Vietnam, according to the 2012 census, youth constitute about 35.5 of the population (UNFPA, 2012). At the same time, according to the FAO (2014b) agriculture has the potential to create close to a million new jobs by 2030, of which about half would be in the small-holder sector, largely meaning self-employment. However, there is a common perception in Vietnam that youth are not

choosing to take up agriculture either as a career or as a key component of a livelihood strategy. Rural youth are prone to migrate to cities as they do not find enough incentive, profitable economic opportunities and an attractive environment in rural areas (Coxhead et al., 2019). Given the importance of agriculture and youth in sustainable development, this section aims to highlight the determinants of rural youth participation in agriculture and identify conditions under which capable youth can be attracted to agriculture. The next section provides an overview the socio-economic characteristics of youth. The third section discusses the constraints that prevent youth participation in agriculture while the fourth section focuses on the difficulties and needs of youth who have practiced agriculture.

7.2.1. Young farmer characteristics

A number of factors have been associated with youth participation in agricultural activities. Table 7.2 reveals some basic information including socio-demographic and economic factors. The socio-demographic factors are marital status, gender, level of education and the individual's current living place. In terms of gender, Table 1 reveals that female youth account for 55.1 which is slightly higher than male youth at 44.95. Table 1 also illustrates that 70.8 of Mai Thon youth are married, and 29.2 are not. Table 1 also points out that the mean age of Mai Thon youth is 29.5; among which group 4 is highest (32) while the mean age of group 4 is lowest (27).

Table 7.2 Demographic characteristics distribution of the youth respondents

		Youth in household groups									
		Group 1 (43)		Group 2 (14)		Group 3 (27)		Group 4 (5)		Total (89)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	22	51.2	7	50.0	9	33.3	2	40.0	40	44.9
	Female	21	48.8	7	50.0	18	66.7	3	60.0	49	55.1
Marital status	Married	34	79.1	10	71.4	16	59.3	3	60.0	63	70.8
	Single	9	20.9	4	28.6	11	40.7	2	40.0	26	29.2
Education level	Primary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Middle school	2	4.7	1	7.1	2	7.4	1	20.0	6	6.8
	High school	17	39.5	8	57.1	10	37.0	1	20.0	36	40.4
	Higher education	24	55.8	5	35.7	15	55.6	3	60.0	47	52.8
Age	(mean)	29		30		27		32		29.5	

Source: Field research 2016

In terms of education, it is interesting that the youth education level in Mai Thon is relatively high with 52.8 of youth getting a higher education, which unsurprisingly explains why the majority of Mai Thon households prefer that their children pursue other “decent” employment. Table 7.3 reveals that only 3.9 of rural households prefer that their children continue farming. However, they also state that they would respect their children’s choice and 13.3 would help their children to develop farming plans. One villager stated: “*We sacrificed our lives for our children to get a better education and better chance; we want them to find a good-paying, decent job. Farming work is heavy, you know. But life is unpredictable, and it also depends on my children’s wishes and abilities. What we want is perhaps something they are not able to do. So what can we do but go along with them?*” and “*When our children grow up, I will let them decide and whatever they choose I will support. At the end of the day, they are the ones who live their own lives.*”

Table 7.3 Attitude of 2015 survey respondents regarding the next generation’s participation in farming (Unit: hhs)

	Migration type hhs									
	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	(42)		(23)		(42)		(15)			
<i>HHs without youth members</i>	8	19.0	5	21.7	5	11.9	7	33.3	25	19.5
Young family member participating in farming	20	47.6	7	30.4	25	59.5	4	19.0	56	43.8
Wish their children keep farming	2	4.8	1	4.3	2	4.8	0	0.0	5	3.9
Support children in farming	6	14.3	1	4.3	8	19.0	2	9.5	17	13.3

Source: Household survey 2015

There is a dilemma in the perspective of rural people: on the one hand they do not want their children to do small-scale farming, on the other hand they do not want them to totally abandon agriculture and give up their paddy field. They consider themselves as peasants and know the role of agriculture, but they do not highly esteem agriculture and consider farm work as the last choice for their children. This points to the common education trap in developing countries: young people are more educated than their parents, yet a higher level of education does not translate automatically into good jobs (B. White, 2012). Many high school graduates have had to turn to the daily labour of farming or other menial jobs.

There is also a clear hierarchy among the youth on the research site: those who had done well at school were expected to attend university and seek professional jobs in an urban area. But many young people who graduate from university cannot get a decent job in the city and have come back to choose agriculture as a steppingstone while awaiting another chance. According to youth, education alone has not been enough for a successful non-farm business. The young people in Mai Thon show a high proportion (73) helping their family with activities in the paddy fields. Especially, among three group of migrants, the daily commuter category has the highest proportion of youth participating in farming (93) while group 3 has the lowest (44.4). It is likely that decentralisation, industrialisation and the availability of non-farm jobs in rural areas are having a positive impact on youth involvement in their household farming.

Table 7.4 Mai Thon youth participation in farming and opinions

<i>(Unit: pers)</i>	Migration household types									
	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4		Total	
	N (43)	%	N (14)	%	N (27)	%	N (5)	%	N (89)	%
Farming participation										
Yes	40	93	8	57.1	12	44.4	5	100	65	73
No	3	7	6	42.9	15	55.6	0	0	24	27
Preference for farming										
Dislike	38	88.4	9	64.3	24	88.9	4	80.0	75	64.3
Like	5	11.6	5	35.7	3	11.1	1	20.0	14	15.7
Intention to farm										
Yes	10	23.3	3	21.5	6	22.2	1	20.0	20	22.5
No	29	67.4	10	71.4	17	63.0	3	60.0	59	66.3
Probably	4	9.3	1	7.1	4	14.8	1	20.0	10	11.2
If yes, when?										
<5 years	1	10.0	0	0	1	16.7	1	100	3	15.0
5<=10 years	5	50.0	1	33.3	1	16.7	0	0	7	35.0
10-<15 years	2	20.0	1	33.3	3	50.0	0	0	6	30.0
15<=20 years	2	20.0	0	0	1	16.7	0	0	3	15.0
>20 years	0	0	1	33.3	0	0	0	0	1	5.0

Source: Field research 2016

Yet, although agriculture is considered as a significant alternative to youth unemployment and to have the potential to overcome economic issues, it seems that young people have a negative attitude toward agriculture (Ommani, 2011). Table 7.4 shows that only 15.7 of youth really like agriculture but imagine it in terms of a large farm or commercial model rather than merely a means of subsistence.

Interviews of family heads show a similar idea about their children's future in agriculture. They would prefer their children do other more stable work and earn more. They will help if their children would like to enlarge the farm. It is also noteworthy that children with a rural *hộ khẩu* born after the 1993 land redistribution were not granted the right to use agricultural land. The question if land would be a constraint for young people wanting to get involved in farming will be discussed more in the last part of this section.

However, data from Table 7.4 also reveals that even though the majority of youth dislike farming work, one-third of young people intends to come back to farming, with 22.5 determined to get into agriculture along with 11.2 of respondents who have unclear target for their farming future. Still, many youth (66.3) claim that they do not have any plans for agriculture. There is no remarkable difference among the groups of households related to both their preference and their intention with regard to farming. Besides, the majority identified their plans in a long-term perspective, over the next 5 to 15 years (65), while in the near future, less than 5 years, only 15 responded. Some studies show that villages are now emptying, the rural population is floating, and agriculture opportunities are abundant. However, the opposite seems to be taking place. At the age of 30, it is likely that a large wave of rural youth will come back to rural areas and take care of agriculture. In short, young people do intend to do agriculture, but what are the important push factors?

7.2.2 Factors impacting on youth participation in agricultural activities

This section will discuss the preventive factors and supportive factors which impact on the participation of non-farmer youth in farming and the agricultural value chain.

Preventive factors

On the research site, the negative attitude to agriculture is spawned by a wide range of constraints perceived to militate against active participation in agricultural production activities. Overall, Table 7.5 reveals that inadequate credit facilities, low and unstable returns on agricultural investment, the drudgery of agricultural work and availability of other employment were the major constraints that caused the respondents to view negatively active participation in agriculture. Interestingly, those constraints have complex interlinks with each other. Credit facilities are considered as the most important factor for young people because credit is essential to obtain a “developed” farm model: a bigger model farm, farming skills and training in agricultural technologies (Abdullah, 2013). Most of the young respondents claimed they were only interested in modernised farming, market-oriented farming, not in a kind of subsistence-based agriculture which was always considered as “heavy”, “dirty”, and “backbreaking” work (ranked 2nd).

Young people also feel unhappy with farming because they cannot wear nice clothes and accessories when they do farm work, unlike their friends who work elsewhere. Besides, if they work for a company, they only spend around eight hours a day on the job and they don't need to take their work or responsibility home. In

case of vegetable growing, day or night, rain or shine, if they have contract with a customer, they need to wake up early and work in the fields to ensure their own job. One 22-year-old female student confides: *“I saw my parents toiling and moiling all their lives. I don’t want to work in muddy fields which makes me itchy and under the sun which burns my skin. I want to have an office job with air-conditioning and have chance to wear nice clothes.”* That idea about life-style and employment is emphasised in the media and on social networks, which makes agriculture very unattractive to youth (F. Proctor & Lucchesi, 2012). If young people fail to find work in the city and are forced to return to their hometown, agriculture is still not their primary choice (T. D. Nguyen et al., 2015), except for the new farming models such as hydroponic farming or organic farming that make farming look cleaner, easier, more modern and high-tech. The availability of rural credit facilities is related to such a farming model in the minds of youth.

Most respondents said their family would not support them to work in paddy fields in the traditional way (ranked 8th). That statement is confirmed by interviews with rural households, such as a 56-year-old farmer who said: *“I have sacrificed everything for my children’s education not expecting they will be peasants like me. There is no future in agriculture. Only children who cannot get an education work in the fields.”* That perception is spread by the policy package supporting robust agro-industrialisation. It is aimed at the peasantry as a social form and small holding as an agricultural form targeted for capitalist transformation. In another words, political discourses define peasants and small-scale farming in Vietnam as “problems” and “backward” and “low status” which need to be “developed” (ranked 13th, 14th). It is ironic that although traditional agriculture creates food, people who work in this sector starve due to its low profit. The study found out that the poor profit return makes farming lack appeal for most young people in the village (ranked 2nd). A 34-year-old male migrant affirms: *“No work is easy. I am a motorcycle driver in Hanoi, so I’m on the road day and night. I also suffer from being far away from home. I’m not scared of heavy work, but farming is not enough to make ends meet.”*

Youth find that farm earnings are not enough and too infrequent to meet their cash needs (B. White, 2011). In other words, income from agriculture is considered lower than that from other jobs, insufficient to cover the material needs of the youth. It is noteworthy that the income from other sources is supposed to be higher because normally a young person who lives with his or her parents has his or her living costs covered, including food which comes directly from farming such as rice, vegetables, eggs, poultry, fish, etc. Thus, there is a trend: When a young person gets married, after a period living with the husband’s family, when they divide households, they will arrange for their own family member to go back to the field, combining farming with the household’s strategy for food security.

This indicates that age is associated with the rate of youth participation in agricultural activities, along with marriage. Age refers to the individual age appropriate for agricultural activities. As they get older, young people are increasingly aware of the importance of agriculture in development. It was found

that the participation of rural youth in agriculture depended on their age. A unit increase in age increases the chance of a youth's involvement in agricultural activities. Therefore, as young people get older, they are more likely to participate in agriculture. It is also observed that being married and having a baby is an incentive for youth to come back to agriculture. After getting married and having small children, they need to arrange for family members at home to take care of reproductive work and agricultural production at the same time. Secondly, companies in the industrial zones normally lay people off at the age of 35, forcing many to come back to farming while quite young. Thirdly, marriage permits a young person to separate his or her household from the parent's household and gives the person decision-making power over his or her own livelihood strategy, including farm production, which has been a major incentive for younger people to participate in agriculture. Fourthly, they may have their own savings which allows them to invest in their agricultural plans.

Table 7.5 Perceived constraints for rural youth participation in agriculture

No.	Constraints	Frequency	Rank
1	Limited entertainment and social activities in rural areas	14	15 th
2	Lack of initial capital	17	12 th
3	Low return on investment	39	2 nd
4	Availability of employment alternatives	35	4 th
5	Family does not support	25	8 th
6	Low status of agriculture and of farmer	22	9 th
7	Drudgery/ heavy, dirty work	39	2 nd
8	Lack of access to land	30	5 th
9	Rural infrastructure problems (<i>communication technology, transportation...</i>)	13	16 th
10	Inadequate credit facilities	40	1 st
11	Basic farming knowledge	20	9 th
12	Storage facilities & other farm inputs	12	17 th
13	Market availability	29	6 th
14	No future in agriculture	14	14 th
15	No agricultural insurance and social security	19	11 th
16	Government incentives for farmers	15	13 th
17	Independent decision on farming	29	6 th

Source: Field work 2016

On other hand, "high" income from other sources is calculated in the cash that they receive monthly. That income indeed is not really higher than vegetable growing; however, it is always preferred because the young person has full authority over it, "*the money they earn themselves*". However, if they participated in growing vegetables with their parents, their contribution remains in the household's income and under their parents' control, which is really disliked by the young people when

they need money for personal use. Agricultural profit is not only lower in amount of earnings but also in liquidity compared with other sources of income. It is only accessible within at least a three-month interval between planting a crop and harvesting it, depending on the weather, and selling it, which depends on market availability (ranked 6th).

Many of these constraints are not new, such as limited entertainment and social activities in rural areas or opportunities limited by a lack of skills or capital (Sumberg J, N. A. Anyidoho, J. Leavy, D. T. J. te Lintelo, & Wellard, 2012). Sometimes, young people will not even be able to fall back on agriculture because they lack agricultural knowledge (ranked 9th). Despite agriculture being a dominant sector and employer, there is still a lack of agricultural curricula in the education stream. Again, the willingness to work on agricultural production might be there, but a lack of land and capital limits their independent decision on farming (ranked 6th). In terms of independence, on the one hand, young people do not want to stay at home, farm, and remain under parental control. On the other hand, being dependent on others in the decision-making process could be the main thing hindering the participation of youth in agriculture. Youth have less decision-making power over what and how their household does in the realm of farming. Therefore, until they get married and have their own agricultural land, youth prefer to migrate out and experience life on their own. Besides, at this period of their life, their parents normally take care of all farming work, enabling them to go without any worry.

Some youths mentioned that they did not master farming because they only did what their parents told them. Besides, lack of access to agricultural land is also an important impediment to youth involvement in agriculture. Young people are unwilling to participate in agriculture because they think the business requires ability which not everyone possesses equally.

Therefore, drawing on insight from migration research, youth migrate out at some time in their own life not only due to the need for cash (de Brauw, 2010a; P. Kelly, 2012) but also because temporary migration is a method to overcome the issue of intergenerational transfer of land and power (B. White, 2012). Savings from non-farm jobs and migration support their access to land, improve farm inputs and/or develop the farming business, as they decide. The study suggests that while youth appear to be moving away from farming, they also prefer keeping their land and other assets, not only for economic security but also as an important part of their identity. However, the expectation at the root of peasant identity among youth is still far from an incentive for their pursuing farm work in rural areas. Land access, capital, and other material inputs are expected to encourage young people to follow their farming ambitions. However, those factors are only part of the story, to which a 76-year-old peasant villager attests: *“If young people were provided with land, farming implements, and a ready market for farm produce, maybe that would attract them to farming. But youths aren’t motivated to get into farming because they feel respect for nature and see farming as a life-style.”* This complicated combination of determinants makes it hard to configure an answer for the future of small-scale farming. More urgent research is needed on the development agenda.

Supportive factors

There is a trend among some educated youth who are interested in farming and living in a rural area. They quit a stable job elsewhere, come back to their hometown and rent 3-4 *sào* to do small-scale horticulture, aviculture, or aquaculture. Table 7.6 is interesting in that the earnings from agriculture become an attractive factor for young people to farm because they came to realise the surprising equality between farm and non-farm income. Moreover, the start-up investment in a small farm is quite small (20 million VND), but could bring in as much as their salary (5-6 million VND per month). Moreover, youth are more aware of the potential from farming while they are busy with their own schedule and work. At the same time, they feel satisfied because they can concentrate on what they are interested in (ranked 3rd) and their own advantages (5th).

In Mr Van's case, he firstly invested in growing 2 sào of chili peppers, which only cost around 10 million VND that he had already saved from his time away working as a migrant. He then bought a tractor which made field bed preparation much easier and more economical. Besides, he could plough for hire when time allowed. Overall, his earnings from agricultural activities came to around 6 million VND per month, similar to his factory worker salary.

Table 7.6 Supportive factors for youth to participate in farming

	Frequency	%	Rank
Income	15	34.1	1 st
Interest	13	29.5	3 rd
Parents' wish	3	6.8	6 th
Village living	10	22.7	4 th
Application of personal skills	5	11.4	5 th
No other choice	15	34.1	1 st

Source: Field work 2016

However, the diversification of livelihoods pursued by young people in recent times is noteworthy. Some have a job outside, come back to help their family doing agriculture and return to work as normal. Most young people reported that they help their family do farm work on weekends and whenever they have free time. An increasing number of young people take the daily commuter form of migration so they can help more with their family farming. They indicated that most companies in the industrial zones have buses to pick up their workers, an important reason to attract labour in the area and save time. On the one hand, the young person still gets his or her income from non-farm work and benefits from reduced living costs. On the other hand, they can help their family do agriculture work and support other family activities. However, because the non-farm job is still considered as their main occupation, labour shortage remains a challenge for agricultural production. Hiring

farm labour increases production costs considerably. However, because young people are available and cheaply at that, it becomes important to encourage them to participate part- or full-time with their households.

Needs of rural youth

A study of the priority needs of the respondents (Table 7.7) reveals that credit support (96.7) is of utmost importance to most of them. About 66.7 of them named marketing and administrative training as important next to high-tech farming skills (60.0) and 56.7 ranked the availability of farm inputs in third place. Others indicated needs such as: leadership training (10) and supporting activities (6.7).

Table 7.7 Needs of rural youth to participate in farming

Type of assistance	Frequency	%
Credit support	29	96.7
Agricultural training	18	60.0
Farm inputs availability	17	56.7
Marketing/administrative training	20	66.7
Leadership training	3	10.0
Supporting activities	2	6.7

Source: Field work 2016

In sum, this section demonstrates the capacities, difficulties and scenarios of rural youth in the context of agricultural development in the study area. It can be seen that despite the central role of agriculture in rural social systems, little progress has been achieved thus far towards raising the income and living standards of youths engaged in its practice. Other challenges being faced by youths engaged in farming include lack of finance, poor access to farm inputs, good market channels, and other services. The prospects for success in the future lie in the fact despite its low return, most rural youths still engage in family farming and somehow believe it as their way of life. Therefore, the way to ensure the generational sustainability of family farming could be through enabling youth to get access to land, other natural resources, information, education, infrastructure and financial services, markets, and policymaking processes related to family farming. FAO (2014a) also highlighted that family farming is an important part of the solution to attain diversified, innovative, and dynamic agricultural systems, food security, and rural sustainable development. This newly launched United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 considers that one of the main preconditions for keeping family farming viable and sustainable is the generational renewal of agriculture in rural communities. Therefore, one of its seven “pillars” is to “*support youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming*” through providing the intergenerational transfer of tangible and non-tangible farming assets, stimulate young farmers to interconnect traditional, local knowledge with innovative ideas to become agents of inclusive rural development (FAO & IFAD, 2019:29-30)

7.3 Mai Thon in a comparative Southeast Asia perspective

Many studies have shown that both agriculture and migration play a key role in the livelihood of rural households in Southeast Asia (P. F. Kelly, 2011; Portes, 2010; J. Rigg, 2005). Here, agriculture continues to provide the bulk of rural incomes in most rural regions, but there is also a clear trend of household diversification into non-farm business and especially rural out-migration (Peemans, 2013; J. Rigg, 2001). A slow growth rate in agriculture and a high growth rate in non-agricultural areas have essentially induced an adjustment in farm resource allocation between sectors and within agriculture. Out-migration from rural areas is now increasingly becoming an important livelihood strategy and escape out of poverty. Rural out-migration has taken multiple directions and characteristics: rural-urban, rural-rural, urban-rural, in-country and international, permanent and cyclical. Rural out-migration keeps a multiple and complex tie-in with agriculture (Hugo, 2009a; McCarthy N., Carletto G., Davis B., & Maltoglou I., 2006; Paris T., Rola-Rubzen, T.N.C. Truong, & Wongsanum, 2009). Migration in Southeast Asia is more than an outcome of agrarian transition; it has recently become a driver of agrarian change and rural transformation (P. F. Kelly, 2011). While there is little doubt about the motivation for migration and its improving the living standard of migration households in Southeast Asia (Abdelali-Martini M., 2012; R. Skeldon, 2009), its impact on agriculture remains debated and less straightforward and polarised into optimistic or pessimistic points of view.

From the economic perspective, rural out-migration has the potential of promoting agricultural production and sectoral efficiency gains (McCarthy N. et al., 2006) and provides an endorsement against agricultural shocks (F. Ellis, 2000; Singh R.K.P., K.M. Singh, & Jha, 2012). However, some hypothesise that rural out-migration could lead to land abandonment and de-agrarianisation as a part of “agrarian change” (J. Rigg, 2005; A. Saith, 1999). Recently, the social dimensions of migration processes raised the issue of migrants’ self-identities, which was clearly redefined by migration when they experienced a multi-functional, multi-spatial life (Soda, 2007). The common observation is that the nature of the rural household itself has been transformed, if not fragmented, by the rise of out-migration (Blaikie, Cameron, & SEDDON, 2002:1268).

7.3.1 Panorama of rural out-migration in Southeast Asia

R. Skeldon (2005) criticised the classic migration assumption that most migration was made up of permanent moves from one place to other whereas, in reality, migration is a complex system of various types of movement which happen throughout a whole lifetime. The counter flow and its socio-political effects have been researched in Southeast Asia recently. Because migration is not a new phenomenon in this region, its characteristics have, however, fundamentally changed due to revolutionary technological and infrastructural developments and rapid urbanisation (Deshingkar P. & Anderson, 2004; Lebailly Ph. et al., 2015). Due to industrialisation and modernity, most of these countries have essentially

experienced an adjustment in farm resources in rural areas to other sectors and areas. As just stated, rural out-migration has taken multiple directions and characteristics: rural-urban, rural-rural, urban-rural, in-country and international, permanent and cyclical. However, due to the modernity process, the places of origin and destination are relatively close together; improved transportation and telecommunications revolutions have made regular home visiting increasingly feasible over spaces, so rural out-migration is on the rise not only in quantity but also in types of migration which depend much on the interval of migrating time, whether daily commuting, seasonal migration, temporary migration, or long-term migration.

For example, migration in Vietnam has always had an important role in long-term changes within social processes; however, it was only after the 1980s, during the transitional economy, that Vietnam saw a dramatic increase in voluntary internal migration. In the early stages, the rural out-migration trend was prone to be permanent from rural to rural, but from the late 1990s forward it shifted from rural to urban and remained in circular patterns (Khuat & Le, 2008; Li, 1996). Other countries in the region also share the same characteristic of migration flows when temporary movement has become the dominant mode of labour migration in the region. For example, the Philippines and Indonesia in the contemporary period have experienced circular labour migration unprecedented in scale and diversity. In the Philippines, recent migration flows are interprovincial, typically in the direction of Metropolitan Manila and surrounding areas (IOM & SMC, 2013), while in Indonesia, good access to roads is stimulating internal seasonal migration (Yamauchia et al., 2009).

Modern forms of transport and communication have reduced the impediment of distance and allowed migrants to maintain closer and more intimate linkages with their places of origin than before. Therefore, a new feature of migration emerges; it is circular not only with respect to internal movements within developing economies but also among international migrants. For international migration, Hugo (Hugo, 2009b) supplied evidence from Indonesia and Thailand to show that in recent times migrant workers do not always settle in destination countries, while non-permanent and circular migration has increased rapidly. Since, in the past, immigrants were expected to apply for citizenship and commit themselves to the host country, now dual citizenship is common and recognised by more than half of the world's nations (Clark, 2007).

Compared with other type of migration, circular migration is preferred because it permits migrants at the same time to keep a foothold on land in their villages and seek cash incomes in other areas (Portes, 2010). In addition, migrants can obtain the best of both worlds by earning in high-income destinations and spending in low-cost origins. Also, by keeping their family back at their place of origin, migrants can maintain valued traditions and family ties and make frequent visits. Consequently, a wide range of researchers argue that migration in Southeast Asia is a key to enhancing rural household well-being and rural development (Bird K. & Deshingkar, 2009; J. Rigg, 2007; R. Skeldon, 2009). In Vietnam, out-migration has

had significant effects: improving rural livelihoods in many ways such as migrant households directly benefiting from migration through positive income growth effects. Migration increases income growth by 9 to 20 and those effects are more pronounced in provinces with fewer job opportunities (D. L. Nguyen & Grote, 2012).

Indirectly, migration can reduce rural unemployment and poverty, and create conditions for diversification of the rural economy through cash and commodity redistribution, labour transfer, information dissemination, and the modernisation of traditional rural social structures (X. T. Hoang et al., 2013; Oxfam & AAV., 2012; N. M. T. Tran, 2010). Similarly, evidence from the Philippines shows that over 7 of households depend on remittances as their primary source of income; for many more, remittances provide an important supplementary income (P. F. Kelly, 2011). Still, the consequences of different types of migration in the same area are not always clear-cut. Different forms of migration are likely to have significantly different effects, and internal migration usually has more positive impacts on rural areas (A.H. Akram-Lodhi, Borras, & Kay, 2007; T. D. Nguyen et al., 2014) in comparison with international migration.

Likewise, with the impacts of migration on inequality. Some studies suggest that it can help to reduce inequality but it also very dependent on the context. Researchers in Laos revealed that international migration exacerbated inequality more than internal migration (J. Rigg, 2007). Besides, in some cases like Vietnam, while migration could enhance income disparities within villages, it may reduce those between provinces (D. L. Nguyen & Grote, 2012). At a more macro level, Phan and Coxhead (2010) explore the determinants of inter-provincial migration and the effect of migration on inter-provincial inequality. Using a gravity model, the authors show that migrants move from low-income to high-income provinces and that the impact of migration on inequality can be either negative or positive. Therefore, migration and remittances have the potential of contributing to development, but it depends on the specific political, economic, and social circumstances in both places of origin and destination. Southeast Asia still tends to be characterised as a region where farming remains a very important occupation. Indeed, statistics show that even Southeast Asia has recently experienced rapid industrialisation and modernisation which would lead to the diminishing role of agriculture (R.A. Cramb, 2012; J. Rigg, 1998; Soda, 2007).

7.3.2 Remittance as a capital investment for agriculture

Still, the important, accessible channel to assess the migration-agriculture relationship is the remittance. Regarding the volume and stability of remittances, their role in rural households once again depends on the context, the duration, the migrant pattern, and social structure (A. de Haan, 1999). How the remittance is invested depends greatly on the socio-economic context and circumstances of an individual household. Yet, despite local differences, there are general patterns of investment that have been widely reported in migration research. The popular trend is that the major part of remittance income is used first to cover basic needs such as

food, health care and education, while the remainder is invested in land, livestock, housing, business ventures and savings (S. D., 2004). Better outcomes appear when remittances contribute to saving up through household investments in land, agriculture inputs, education or non-farm business (Ellis, 2003a), of which the latter allows them to have a better quality of life. However, while the patterns of remittance spending are observed to be similar in many developing countries (Clark, 2007; J. Hull, 2007), the specific implications of remittances regarding agriculture are doubtful. In Thailand where remittances are unlikely to be channelled toward agricultural expansion and intensification, they are suitable for non-farm business if there was any investment (J. Rigg & Nattapoolwat, 2001). If remittances are not invested in agriculture, the net impact of migration on agricultural production could be dramatically negative (M. D., 2005). A case study in Laos shows that the amount of the remittances was too small to invest in agricultural production since the costs for hiring labour and buying agricultural materials and chemical fertilizer were too high (Jonathan Rigg, 2007).

However, a positive impact could be observed in areas where the amount of remittances received by the household could promote household diversification, including agriculture. Remittances in the Philippines support transforming productive practices within agriculture by increasing the choice of more specialised crop mixes, the production of high-value commercial crops and the adoption of mechanised technologies (Gonzalez-Velosa, 2011). Findings in Vietnam show that households able to engage in costly high-return migration, i.e. international migration, are more likely to employ modern varieties of rice (T. D. Nguyen et al., 2015). In some circumstances, out-migration negatively affects traditional agricultural activities but positively affects livestock activities (McCarthy N. et al., 2006). Moreover, migration has a positive impact on agricultural investment as it reduces the credit and risk constraints faced by farming households in the Philippines (Dean & Choi, 2007; Santasombat, 2008). Remittances in Malaysia are low but nevertheless vital for food protection as a way to diversify risks and ensure support in case of a low harvest (R.A. Cramb, 2012). Therefore, the paper argues that if the right incentives for agriculture exist, migrants invest in agriculture in a rational manner.

There are also the multiple impacts of remittances even if they are used for consumption (Massey, 1998). For example, Hoàng Xuân Thanh did research in Vietnam and found that when migrant households buy a motorcycle it is very useful for them to transport their agricultural produce to the town/urban centre for higher sales and income. That, in the end, would promote agricultural activities. In general, although remittances do not always go directly to production investments, they are a crucial part of household strategies inasmuch as households with a migrant member have a higher propensity to invest than households without migrants. Furthermore, evidence from Southeast Asia shows that positive remittances can be used for labour and non-labour inputs in the farming sector to offset any labour constraint, which will be discussed in the next section.

7.3.3 Agricultural labour adaptation and/or technology change?

The literature identifies the negative as well as positive attributes of migration on agricultural labour. From the pessimistic point of view, with greater migration, agriculture faces a labour shortage, the degradation of agricultural systems and the reduction of agricultural land under cultivation (R. Skeldon, 2003), given that the migrants are mostly from the young, productive population. However, many studies paint an optimistic perspective when migration addresses the critical problem of under-employment faced by many, and, hence, does not necessarily create labour shortages (De Haas, 2006; J. Hull, 2007).

In Southeast Asia, migration studies have also shown the same trend. Migrants in Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia are often described as those who are relatively young, less likely to be married and disproportionately female (GSO and UNFPA 2005). Evidence from Southeast Asia shows that positive remittances in most cases can be used for labour and non-labour inputs in the farming sector to offset any labour losses. However, although out-migration caused a labour shortage for farm households, they were often able to find substitute labour by hiring external labour. As labour out-migration became more widespread with economic development in south-eastern Thailand, farmers increasingly resorted to multi-household farming as a response (Shigetomi, 2004).

The multi-household farming model in which two or more households work together on the same piece of land mostly based on their kinship bond is also popular in Vietnam to overcome the labour shortage and in some cases just to keep agricultural land (T. D. Nguyen et al., 2014). In the Philippines, or at the Thailand-Laos border, the agricultural labour loss is mainly and easily made up for by hired labour (Kazushi & Oztuka, 2009; Makpun, 2008). A different pattern can be found in Vietnam, where migrants try to manage their own schedule to participate in household field activities back home. When the migrants work outside the villages in non-farm jobs, they often come back to the field when needed (de Brauw, 2010b). Moreover, female migrants prefer the daily commuting form of migration because it allows them to take care of agricultural activities and make crop management decisions, in addition to household management (Nguyen Thi Minh Khue, Nguyen Thi Dien, & Ph., 2016; D. W. Pfau & Giang, 2008).

In other words, the movement of people from farm to non-farm employment forces farmers to adapt and improve their new farming techniques. For example, Thai farmers intensified their commercial cash-crop production under a contract farming system and maintained economic competitiveness in the global market. In an interesting study of households in Ifugao, Philippines, McKay (2003) finds that contract domestic female workers have changed farming patterns, for example, seed and fertilizer, to maximise their agricultural production. Studies in the Philippines show that remittances appear to have a positive impact on the choice of more specialised crop mixes, the production of high-value cash crops and the adoption of mechanised technologies (Gonzalez-Velosa, 2011; Yang, 2008). They share the same view that migrant farms have higher technical efficiency on average than the

non-migrant farms in comparison with the technical efficiency between non-migrant and migrant households in other related papers (Mendola, 2008). In general, migrant farms appear to have greater ability to allocate their inputs effectively in multiple dynamic pathways. One of the important aspects that migrant households deal with is associated with land.

7.3.4 Migration and land use change

Agriculture and land are still the basis for sustainable livelihoods in Southeast Asia (P. F. Kelly, 2011), even where access to land is frequently not viewed as the best way for raising rural incomes (J. Rigg & Vandergeest 2012). Agrarian studies on rural transformation reveal that one of the factors leading farmers to move away from agriculture is the diminishing importance of agricultural land (Li, 2010; Vandergeest, 2012). Recently many scholars have argued that rural livelihoods should no longer be considered as being directly tied to agriculture and land issues (J. Rigg, 2005; Vaddhanaphuti & Wittayapak, 2011). It becomes increasingly popular for rural households to be less engaged in agriculture than ever before and as a result land would be isolated from agriculture. That has been observed in Thailand (J. Rigg & Nattapoolwat, 2001) and the Philippines (M. D., 2005).

As a consequence of receiving remittances, land was less intensively cultivated and, in some cases, even abandoned because once dependency on remittances has increased, agricultural production diminished. The addition of capital from migration is considered to inflate land prices, driving the commoditisation of land, and decreasing the capacity of the poor to access land. In other words, remittances stimulate agricultural land accumulation which leads to changes in the agrarian structure, the system of tenancy and land management²⁷.

However, that trend, in fact, has a constraint, largely backed up. Migrating farmers who obtain their cash income from non-agricultural and off-village activities still keep their own land in Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam (Paris T. et al., 2009), and the maintenance of land rights is always the priority in Southeast Asia (Peemans, 2013), even when the farmers have other employment and income opportunities elsewhere. When rural people migrate out, they are unlikely to sell their land, but prefer leasing it or even leaving it fallow for certain crops. Vietnamese migrants also maintain their agricultural land use rights as type of insurance because of the fear of unstable jobs in the cities (Li, 1996). In that sense, land is considered as a social protection by the migrants themselves and even for the next generation. In some case, rural households have bought agricultural land for

²⁷ This content has been published in Nguyen Thi Minh Khue et al. (2019), Agricultural Land Use Change under Migration Context: evidence from a Vietnamese Village, *Journal of Sustainable Development* 12 (4).

wealth accumulation but have still left agriculture, which means the use of the land changed and agricultural production decreased.

Moreover, although migration households generally keep practicing agriculture at a very limited level, in most cases, agricultural land, on the one hand, can ensure the food subsistence of the family remaining in the village. In the context of food safety issues, producing one's food at home is also considered as an everyday need of rural households to ensure their food quality (Nguyen Thi Minh Khue et al., 2016). Reflecting on his research in rural Thailand, Vandergeest (2012) argues that maintaining land and agrarian activities provides higher incomes and better health than unskilled hired labour among those who could be the most marginalised. Overall, it appears that agriculture is likely to continue in a similar form despite large outflows of labour and some inflows of cash income generated by rural out-migration. Earnings from migration are not competitive with other sources of incomes from agriculture. Adaptation rather than the abandonment or expansion of agricultural activities is likely to be the more popular trend in Southeast Asian countries. Moreover, it should not be assumed that the impact of migration on agriculture takes place in a certain linear trajectory or is unidirectional. Here, an issue regarding the self-identification of the peasant is raised, because the "survival of peasantry remains rooted in identity and place". Some would argue that once peasants move, their self-identification shifts (Royal B. & Rafique, 2003). The peasants with their "visible feet" (Araghi, 2012:111) or "footloose labour" (J. C. Breman, 1996:222) circulate "along a wide variety of workplaces in differing branches of industry" and become migrant workers. The next section will review the impact of migration on peasant self-identity.

7.3.5 Peasants on the move in Southeast Asia

The last two decades have seen a growing amount of literature on "de-agrarianisation" in Southeast Asia. A wide range of studies conducted in Thailand by (Molle, 2003; J. Rigg, 2001; J. Rigg & Nattapoolwat, 2001), Laos (Jonathan Rigg, 2007), and the Philippines (P. Kelly, 1999) emphasise the movement of the rural population off the farm to non-farm employment and their income is continuously becoming less agrarian in nature. In the process, new spatialities are brought to bear upon rural life, new livelihoods are forged, and new identities take shape. However, this assumption firstly has a fundamental problem in claiming its only posits in the linear trajectories of rural lives or a single pathway to rural prosperity (Hirsch, 2011).

Across Southeast Asia, rural people are now not only more mobile as commuters, but they are also more able to maintain connections between their places of origin and destination than ever before (Section 7.3.1). Most migrants still keep their life roots in the village and most migrants retain village "membership" regardless of their current place of residence. Hugo (2007) pointed out that most peasants in Southeast Asia "*retain a strong commitment to their home communities since they leave their families there*" (Hugo, 2009a). However, in some cases, when migrants become urban dwellers, they still manage to set up residential bases in both town

and village, moving between the two areas (Soda, 2007). Many researchers pointed out that migrants maintain various kinds of linkages with their hometown to help them cope with daily challenges. Migrants prefer stretching the notions of “household” and “village member” to secure and integrate multiple residences or multiple belonging. Normally, they send remittances back home and bring food from home to the city. This reduces their daily living costs in the city and helps them generate additional savings, then in turn, higher remittances. In the new context of globalisation and rapid social change, it is inadequate to consider migration and migrant adjustments as a one-way journey anymore. Migrants, therefore, are not only the linkage between rural space with other areas but also the bridge among agriculture and other sectors.

Secondly, migration does not necessarily mean the “de-peasantisation” process because it highly depends on how people think about who they are (Royal B. & Rafique, 2003). Evidence indicates that Southeast Asian people seem to prefer keeping “peasant” as their self-defined identity and livelihood. Rural emigrants still keep the fundamental characteristics of peasants such as having access to land and securing the family livelihood (Edelman, 2013) as mentioned above. Moving back and forth, the migrants themselves are the key factors of the rural-urban continuum in Malaysia (Soda, 2007) and Vietnam (T. D. Nguyen et al., 2015). Work by E. C. Thompson (2004)’s research in northern Malaysia shows that migrant narratives permit them to become active agents in shaping the structure of feeling around the “village” and position themselves within that discursive field. Moving in and out of the village itself provides migrants with a perspective and degree of autonomy.

Depending on the type of job and its distance away, migrants can live in the city or return home daily. In any case, migrants still keep strong social ties with their hometown. Migrant workers also introduce their own agency which is sometimes very strong. For example, Vietnamese migrant workers may drop working to come home for the harvesting period or ceremonies even though there is a shortage of labour in their place of work (Harigaya & de Brauw, 2007; Khuat & Le, 2008). And sometimes, interestingly, it is not migrants and rural areas being urbanised but the city is becoming rural (Li, 1996).

Likewise, despite the increasing importance of non-farm earnings in household incomes as well as industrialisation and urbanisation, farming endures despite its diversified transformation (J. Rigg & Vandergeest 2012; Santasombat, 2008). As Kay (Gammage) argues, the development of synergies between farming and non-farming employment is now central to rural transformation. As discussed earlier, income from non-farm jobs and diversification indeed sustain rural household farms and keep them alive. Rural households are resilient enough to adapt to challenging socio-political situations (Vaddhanaphuti & Wittayapak, 2011). Vaddhanaphuti and Wittayapak reviewed the various ways in which farmers in Thailand, Laos and Vietnam have adapted their livelihoods to cope with ongoing change. Some of the practices employed by farmers include switching between farm and non-farm jobs, growing non-rice cash crops and utilising social capital such as kinship ties in times

of need. Subsistence agriculture in northern Vietnam is likely resilient, even in the face of large-scale out-migration, because it provides consistent access to a level of production sufficient for rural households. Income sourced from outside the Thai village also contributes to agricultural production, which means that livelihoods no longer need to be localised in either rural or urban areas but rather straddle the two (J. Rigg, 2005; Soda, 2007).

Reviewing recent empirical research in Southeast Asia, this section argues that the rural out-migration trend has changed from a permanent to a circular pattern as the result of processes of modernity. Therefore, the impacts of migration have yielded mixed results, neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Firstly, earnings from migration do not become a threat, totally erasing other sources of farming incomes, as migrants are surprisingly not investing in agricultural production. Secondly, peasants in most cases keep agricultural land as it is a preferred future investment rather than directly using it for agricultural cultivation. Thirdly, maintenance of agricultural production was found to be taking place at reasonable levels. There is no total abandonment of agricultural activities in Southeast Asian countries. Fourthly, in keeping with a multi-functional and multi-spatial life, rural villagers mostly identified themselves as peasants. Therefore, migration which is usually considered as a mechanism of rural transformation and small-scale farming turns out to promote agrarian change in multiple ways. With the extra income from migration, many peasants have begun to return to small-scale, diversified agriculture and are converting cash crops to paddy fields in order to ensure that they retain their traditional way of living and identity. In other words, there has not been a uniform conversion of peasants and local production from traditional methods into modern ones as suggested by many theories. This section provides some insights on this important policy issue by evaluating the impact of rural out-migration with the social dimension highlighted.

Evidence in Southeast Asia suggests that the migrants somehow move out for employment and a better life, but they also want to come back. Earning money outside but keeping their linkage with the village helps migrants to maintain a form of insurance as well as to establish a new social status. The duality is part of the nature of migrants' lives; therefore, migration does not necessarily lead to de-agrarianisation. Subsistence agriculture is resilient and survived despite many previous predictions of its disappearance. The implication of this research is that migration can potentially be promoted as a development strategy especially in regions which are limited in non-farm businesses. Moreover, the perception of peasants demonstrates their capacity to reconstruct new images of agrarian change in order to create a more dynamic symbolic representation of themselves.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion and discussion

As described in Chapter 1, the objectives of this research paper are to: 1) explore the migrant's characteristics, remittances and the investment behaviour of remittance recipients; 2) analyse the sustainable impacts of migration on agricultural production through four main dimensions: remittance as source of investment, land use and land holdings in cultivation; agricultural production choice and labour adaptation for agriculture; 3) Exploring the social impacts of migration including social differentiation, intra-household gender and generational relations related to agricultural activities and revising the peasant concept. In this final chapter of the thesis, the individual research objectives are addressed by bringing together findings and insights from the different empirical chapters in the first part. Then, some discussion and policy recommendations are put forward in the second part.

8.1 Answering the research questions

Research objective 1: Explore the migrant's characteristics, the remittances, and the investment behaviour of remittance recipients

Chapter 5 firstly highlighted the change in nature of migration flows out of Mai Thon village. Sharing the same trend with migration elsewhere in Vietnam, Mai Thon village has seen its migration flows become much more diversified and complex. On the one hand, migration out of Mai Thon shifted from long-term and far distance movement to short-term and short distance movement. Moreover, migration flows became more circular with the development of infrastructure. Recently, when Mai Thon people migrated for work about 30-50 km away, they would choose to travel back and forth. The thesis showed that the majority of migrants are young and married with a good level of education. The largest proportion of migrants participate in the daily commuter type of migration, mostly working in industrial zones.

While male migrants prefer high-income jobs, females search for stability. Twice as many female migrants as males work in industrial zones, which are preferred because of their flexible working hours, enabling them to care for household and care-giving responsibilities. Remittances play a central role for the families of all respondents. Remittances are spent mostly for consumptive expenses and when they are invested in capital goods or in their own enterprises, these usually involve the traditional economic activities of the locality. The main benefit of remittances lies in increasing the purchasing power and sustaining a robust demand that creates opportunities which, in turn, fuel private sector development. Those that see the opportunities and act upon them, whether themselves being the receivers or not, take advantage of the remittance inflows as the bloodline that sustains the local economy. Even though it is not viewed as a priority, Mai Thon shows a positive case of remittance investment in farming. The groups involved in diversified migration types tend to spend more of the remittance to overcome farming constraints than other groups. Remittance use for agricultural production is four times higher than for non-farm.

Given these opportunities, the economic potential of internal remittances needs to be recognised by policy makers and service providers to maximise the development of internal migrants, their families and their communities. Combined with Chapter 7 analysing the attitude of youth toward farming, an interesting observation is made about the intertwine between migration, farming and the life cycle of rural people. It must be kept in mind that migration is not a simple, one-dimensional move. Moreover, during their lives, rural people experience different sides of migration as well as different patterns of migration, or even practice different types of migration at the same time.

Research objective 2: Analyse the sustainable impacts of migration on agricultural production through four main dimensions: 1) Remittance as a source of farming investment; 2) land use and land holdings under cultivation; 3) agricultural production choice; and 4) labour adaptation in agriculture

Multiple facets of agricultural production have changed in the context of massive migration. This thesis focused on four sides including: capital investment, land use, agricultural production choice and labour division. Agriculture and land are used as the basis for sustainable livelihoods in Southeast Asia (P. F. Kelly, 2011), even where access to land is frequently not viewed as the best way for raising rural incomes (J. Rigg & Vandergeest 2012). Agricultural land is no longer seen as the most crucial livelihood resource in the rural areas of Vietnam. Because Mai Thon is a principally agricultural village, land has traditionally been the foundation of household economy. The majority of households keep their paddy fields and continue their agricultural production rather than using them for other purposes.

While no household in the village definitely leaves its farmland fallow, some households partially abandon their land. Because the 2013 Land Law stipulates that if the peasant does not cultivate in his land for two continuous seasons, the land will be withdrawn and become public. This is considered to be the main reason forcing the peasant household to keep agricultural production active on his or her land in multiple ways including: partial abandonment, partial leasing, partial lending and partial production while members of the household pursue other non-farm activities or migrate. It is noteworthy that even though the agricultural land market is strictly prohibited, underground exchanges take place. In their everyday language, peasants continue to talk of “selling land” or “purchasing land” instead of “transferring land use rights”, as legally and officially specified. Renting or exchanging agricultural land is much more common than selling, amounting to an unofficial re-distribution of land among households which have dissimilar labour resources.

A remarkable blur exists between renting and lending because income from rice production is so low that the rental fee is sometimes omitted. Besides, the ultimate purpose of both renting and lending agricultural land in Mai Thon is to keep the land; therefore, the rental fee is not the priority. That implies that possessing land is more for investment than for agricultural production. In comparison to male migration, female migration has positive influences on agricultural land use for farming because the gender selections related to the form of migration allow female migrants to combine a job available through migration and agricultural production.

Non-migration households represent the highest proportion that borrows fields to expand their farming; meanwhile they do not rent out or lend out any land.

Conversely, migrating household groups also retained their own land and the maintenance of land rights is always their priority; therefore, most households lease out their paddy fields to their next of kin. Among migration households, the group of households with multiple types of migration experienced the highest proportion both of lent out and rented out land while the group of daily commuter migrants were the lowest in the category of lending out and renting out. There is also a dramatic change in renting land with a case of a 10 ha farm for growing potatoes and carrots. However, it is noteworthy that, against the mainstream of land consolidation, the yearly renewable contract in land transactions is a form of security for Mai Thon villagers whenever they had issues with migration. Agricultural land and farm work are always a stable resource, a guarantee of subsistence, or a safety net for rural people which boost their autonomy.

In terms of agricultural production choice, the literature reports the hypothesis that migration may result in a shift from rice production to other cash crops and/or livestock due to the labour deficit created by out-migration. However, the data in Mai Thon shows there is no significant shift in production patterns from rice production to other agricultural activities. Rice remains completely dominant even though, as we will see later, significant changes have already begun in food consumption and expenditure patterns. Meanwhile, cash-crop cultivation and livestock raising have been vastly reduced.

Migration has made rice production the main focus in Mai Thon paddy fields. Data shows this village is not following the trend of many other villages in northern Vietnam wherein households are increasingly diversifying their agricultural activities beyond the previously predominant rice production (World Bank, 2016). The majority of Mai Thon households keep rice production as their fundamental agricultural activity, and all of these households also cultivated at a “suitable” level while most households release part of their paddy fields. The “suitable” level of rice production refers to cultivating enough staple food for their family members. From the peasants’ perspective, growing rice is the best strategy for their households in recent times. First, Mai Thon villagers consider rice production as the least *time- and labour-consuming* activity in comparison with other farming activities even though the cost of rice growing is high and the cash return lowest. Second, there are the low paddy fields on which only rice can be grown. Third, rice production ensures household food security and food quality. And the most important implication of rice production is that it enables the household to retain its land use rights. Besides, giving priority to home consumption encourages rural households in Mai Thon to grow high-quality rice varieties.

Apart from rice production, Mai Thon villagers also grow vegetables, mainly in the home garden, sometimes in the paddy fields. The significance of household vegetable gardening has not received the attention it deserves by rural households nor by scholars. Vegetable gardening plays an essential role in the household: feeding the family members non-chemically polluted, or less polluted, food and

saving on some daily household expenses; providing a place and feed for free-range poultry raising; providing a means to make gifts to network with relatives or friends of the household.

With the focus on rice production, it is not surprising that domestic animals traditionally had a minor place in the village's economic activities. It was found that in general the villagers tended to reduce livestock raising in terms of the number of head and income contribution over the past ten years, except for poultry. There is a change in the purpose for poultry raising in Mai Thon. Recently, the main purpose of keeping poultry has been similar to that of rice production: firstly, for household consumption (both eggs and meat) and the rest for small-scale selling or making gifts to maintain relationships. Interestingly, that priority for home consumption permits Mai Thon households to keep their poultry flock small in size, reduce industrialised food consumption, and favour local breeds. Moreover, family poultry production is an appropriate system that makes the best use of locally available resources. In the context of migration, poultry raising has the advantage of requiring less labour in comparison with other livestock raising. The households with commuter migrants favour small-scale husbandry.

At Mai Thon village, the departure of a household member was found to be generally unproblematic regarding agricultural production, here mostly rice growing. A large majority of respondents (91.5) indicated that their households did not suffer a negative impact due to the loss of labour. This can be explained in part by the large population which resulted in a huge labour surplus and limited land. However, in the case of individual households, it is seen that they need to manage and restructure labour resources properly to maintain agricultural productivity, while at the same time also releasing one or two members to migrate out to gain cash income. The way that Mai Thon households adapt to their labour movement includes: 1) keeping rice production at a limited level while abandoning other high labour-cost farming activities; 2) maximising the family labour arrangement; 3) hiring external labour and using mutual help (here we can emphasise the role of the female migrant); 4) developing agricultural services rather than investing in technology change. It is interesting that in Mai Thon, when families decided that a member would migrate, all family members also reached an agreement on how agricultural tasks and housework would be shared amongst all family members, not only those who stay behind. The burden put on the ones left behind is usually reported in migration research (Bélanger & Xu Li, 2009; Bergstedt, 2012; Kazushi & Oztuka, 2009). The household responses collected through the research survey indicated that they gave their consent for the migration of their family member due to monetary reasons, as a spouse can bring in a stable cash income for the family. Even though the burden of work, primarily agricultural, has increased, along with it, incomes have also risen which has permitted them to manage by renting machinery or hiring labour during times of labour shortages.

Migration has instead been found to be a part of a diversification strategy to “keep a foot on the farm”, as migrating peasant labour, “hybrid features: peasant workers and urbanised villagers” (Lebailly Ph. et al., 2015). Migrating peasants are able to be

peasants and labourers at the same time. Such an approach took into account the importance of “multiple job holding” (van der Ploeg & Jingzhong, 2010), or “occupational multiplicity” (Bremen, 2007) or “diversified livelihoods” (Lahiri-Dutt et al., 2014; Scoones, 2009). In other words, migration is therefore found to be simply a good choice in the peasants’ livelihood portfolio, to diversify their incomes through low investment providing stable income. Moreover, regarding the expansion of multi-functional households and multi-spatial households, Mai Thon shows the same picture as other rural household in the Red River Delta. The majority of them cannot be referred to as “farming households” but instead as “rural households which continue to farm”. These case studies challenge the traditional concept of household defined as “members living under the same roof”. The strong commitments and obligations between family members show that this household model is functioning well with mutual support divided across space. It illustrates the multi-spatial household which has become popular in Vietnam recently.

In terms of agricultural contribution, peasants believe non-farm earnings make a greater contribution to households because it brings them more cash than farming. This idea change about the role of farming role at the practical and symbolic level seems like a threat to agricultural production from a long-term perspective. Some believe that the relatively bigger contribution of the earnings from migrant jobs might trigger a new problem for farming when the labour force, especially young rural residents, do not want to farm anymore. This gives rise to the warning in recent agrarian literature that massive migration is leading to the regression of agricultural production. However, regardless, farming has become a subsidiary economic activity for the majority of households. Most villagers continue practicing rice production. In contrast, having an extra job elsewhere is a strong incentive for peasants to continue farming. In other words, agricultural production and non-agricultural production activities are complementary to each other in the households. However, the purpose of farming focuses more on household consumption, which likely results in higher quality food. This reaction shows the interesting resistance of the peasant in the context of global food crises, not only in terms of food security but also food safety and food sovereignty. Thanks to the cash contribution from migration, Mai Thon households keep farming on a small-scale, preferring local varieties or breeds with a higher nutritional value, better local resource usage, more environmentally friendly for their own family and friends

Research object 3: Explore the social impacts of migration including: social differentiation, intra-household gender, and generational relations related to agricultural activities and revising the peasant concept.

Chapters 5 and 6 remarked that female migrants play essential roles in the diversification strategy of rural household livelihoods. Chapter 5 showed that while female migrants prefer stable jobs near their homes, male migrants prefer high income jobs. Therefore, female migrants are in a better position to take care of the family and agricultural activities. In comparison to male migration, female migration has positive impacts on agricultural production because the traditional gender norms associated with their choices related to the pattern of migration allow female

migrants to combine a job as a migrant and agricultural production. Although the income of households with a female migrant is lower than that with a male migrant, they have a greater interest in using their remittances for farming investment. Remittances help to improve household income, thus reducing the need for peasants to sell their agricultural produce for cash and increasing their own food sovereignty. This implies that migration could be considered as a supplemental strategy for agriculture production to increase household security and autonomy. Decentralized rural industries provide rural people nearby extra job opportunities beyond farming but could be an incentive for people to continue farming and thereby contribute to food security and food sovereignty in Vietnam.

Even though small-holder farming plays an important role in rural household livelihoods, the contribution of agriculture to farmer incomes and rural development depends on the active participation of youth who are the potential labour force. In Mai Thon, the negative attitude toward agriculture is born of a wide range of constraints perceived to argue against their active participation in agricultural production activities. Inadequate credit facilities, low and unstable returns on agricultural investment, the drudgery of farm work and availability of other employment alternatives were the major reasons why respondents did not favour active participation in agriculture. Those constraints have complex interlinks with each other. The prospects for success in the future lie in the fact despite its low returns; most rural youths still engage in agriculture and believe it to be a way of life.

Migration has an impact on agrarian change in the way peasants think who they are and if they want to continue with agriculture. Migration obviously has the potential to broaden people's experience, knowledge, desires and even identity. Mai Thon migrants maintain various kinds of linkages with their hometown to help them cope with daily challenges. Migrants prefer stretching the titles of "household member" and "village member" to secure and integrate multiple residences or multiple belonging. Normally, they send remittances back home and bring food from home to the city. Mai Thon migrants still keep the fundamental characteristics of peasants such as having access to land and securing the family livelihood (Edelman, 2013) as mentioned above. Moving back and forth, the migrants themselves are the key factors in the rural-urban continuum. Thompson shows that migrants' narratives permit them to become active agents in shaping the structure of feeling around "village" and positioning themselves within that discursive field (E. C. Thompson, 2004). Moving in and out of the village itself provides migrants with a perspective and a degree of autonomy. That multi-function becomes the migrant's nature once he or she has worked at several jobs, presented several identities, and has been mobile among several places. Migrants, therefore, are not only the linkage between rural space with other areas but also the bridge between agriculture and other sectors.

While Chapter 3 focused on the linkage between migration and agricultural change from the historical view, Chapter 7 provided a comparison with Southeast Asia experiences involving migration and agrarian changes, aiming to provide a larger

canvas for the Mai Thon story. In its review of current empirical research in Southeast Asia, this research argues that the impact of rural out-migration has yielded mixed results, neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but rather a polarisation, as most existing literature highlights the economic dimension of migration. First, earnings from migration do not mean that other farming sources of income are threatened with disappearance notably because of not being invested in agricultural production. Second, peasants in most cases keep agricultural land even though they prefer to regard it as a future investment rather than directly using it for agricultural cultivation. Third, maintaining agricultural production at a reasonable level rather than abandoning agricultural activities has become a popular trend in Southeast Asian countries. Fourth, although keeping a multi-functional and multi-spatial life, rural villagers mostly identified themselves as peasants.

Therefore, migration which is usually considered as a mechanism of rural transformation and the end of small-scale farming turns out to promote agrarian change in multiple ways. With extra income from migration, many peasants have begun returning to small-scale, diversified agriculture and converting cash crops to paddy in order to ensure their own living and identity. In other words, there is no conversion of peasants and local production from traditional into modern. In contrast, the peasants demonstrate their capacity to create a more dynamic symbolic representation of themselves. Vietnamese history also highlights the repeated experience between migration and agricultural production, especially its contemporary history. The long-term relationship between migration and agriculture has been demonstrated as a part of history which has been largely ignored not only in Vietnam policy-making, but also in general studies of de-agrarianisation. The village has never disappeared regardless of how seriously many research papers and reports claim they have after over 50 years since Reunification. The rural village as an institution has been changing but remaining. Everything changes and nothing changes. Migration, therefore, need not to destroy the village, but rather, reshape it, refill it, and keep it as the place for peasants to secure their own livelihood and identity.

8.2 Implications of the study for theory, research and policy

Although this study is a limited generalisation of findings due to the research site, it provides a new point of view on circular migration and agricultural development in rural areas of Vietnam. Sharing the same characteristics with other villages in the Red River Delta in northern Vietnam, the results from the survey of Mai Thon village show a typical picture of a village transformation impacted by the *Đổi Mới* renovation process which resulted in high level of rural out-migration. Migration appears to be a development strategy, a means for improvement, in other words, a mechanism for upward mobility, rather than a “coping” or “survival” strategy in the face of declining income or livelihood collapse. The study shows that circular migration has a positive relationship with agricultural production and development in the village. Migrants’ movements between the origin and destination and among places of work, both underscore the notion that it is circulation, not moving for the purpose of staying, that defines rural-urban labour migration in Vietnam. These

circulatory movements will continue to increase when the experienced migrants have already mastered the art of circularity and their children are following their footsteps and joining the flows. This presents a tremendous challenge to conventional approaches of studying migration, which rely on definitions of migration and return migration that assume a high degree of permanency and that are not designed to address frequent movements and multiple locations.

On the one hand, even though the amount of remittances tends to be small, it remains a crucial financial resource for improving household living standards. It is also reliable and frequent, providing a steady income. On the other hand, it was seen that there has been no remarkable labour deficit as a result of migration. Better management of household labour allocation enables rural households to release family members to migrate to urban areas to earn a cash income and at the same time extend agricultural production in rural areas. Migrant households managed to accumulate and invest, thereby also diversifying and strengthening their economic base. Moreover, remittances were found to be used for education purposes, playing a significant role in reinforcing human capital, which in the long-term will possibly contribute to the improvement of rural society. Therefore, migration has been adopted as a way to sustain and improve rural households and their status. Moreover, it has become a means for rural households to integrate the urban economy. This allows peasants, on the one hand, to keep their foothold on their own land and village and, on the other hand, to gain access to a cash income in urban areas. Investigating circular migration, from the rural perspective, has therefore provided insights and evidence to reconfirm the important role that it plays in development.

Therefore, if the labour policy not only supports its economic purpose, but also the livelihoods of rural households, it should not be restrictive. Alleviating barriers to migration could considerably improve household welfare in the sending areas. Recognition of the important role that internal migration and remittances can play in rural household livelihoods is imperative to the development of pro-migration policies. Future research on the impact of internal remittances should acknowledge the predicament of migrant workers. For example, including a subset of the migrant population linked with their household of origin could provide important insight into the challenges that migrants face during the migration process and in sending remittances. Where pro-migration policies are considered, it is imperative that protection strategies for migrant workers also be implemented and enforced to limit the exploitation of this highly vulnerable workforce.

In line with agricultural production, this thesis remarked that migration becomes a supplement to small-holder farming. Small-holder farming is an important source of employment as well as food security and has become a priority on the development agenda, focusing attention on the next generation of farmers. However, emerging research shows that even though young people have the potential to promote agriculture, most of them appear reluctant to enter farming. This study aimed at finding out the determinants which influence the participation of rural youth in agriculture and identified conditions under which capable young people can be

attracted to agriculture. Despite the central role of agriculture in rural social systems, little progress has so far been achieved towards raising the income and living standards of youths engaged in its practice. Other challenges faced by youths engaged in farming include lack of finance, poor access to farm inputs, good market channels, and other services. Based on the empirical findings in the Red River Delta of Vietnam, the study revealed that that age, sex, marital status, education level and family background are interlinked with youth's participation in agriculture.

The main obstacle for young people to undertake farming is the poor assessment of credit facilities. There are various incentive programmes through interest rate subsidies to support agricultural development. The problem is that the programmes have not specifically been focused on young people. Therefore, the government of Vietnam could make specific concessions for youth and beginner farmers by offering much higher incentives. Priority should be also given to assist young people to gain access to agricultural land, which would directly reduce a major constraint for young people. Some authors suggest taking land out of private property markets and allocating it in use-right form to young people and also to reduce speculative investment in land (Sumberg J et al., 2012; B. White, 2015). To overcome the constraints of the agricultural production market, agricultural institutions must be built from upstream and downstream, not only providing production facilities and post-harvest management, but also develop business and market training.

A practical support related to English-language instruction and internet training could be considered to open new gates for youth on the global and digital markets for traditional agricultural production or organic products. Here, we found a need to improve the status of traditional agriculture, for example through farming internships, peer training, experience sharing, and local farm networking. This could also reduce the perception of agriculture as being heavy work, backward, and unprestigious, which has made farming unattractive for many. Doing this will restore the dignity of farming, influence the decisions of youth regarding farming choices, and stymie the trend of young rural migration.

Moreover, the implication of this research is that migration can potentially be promoted as a development strategy especially in regions which are limited in non-farm business practices. Although migration has certainly contributed to agrarian change, it is also clear that its potential has not yet been fully realised, which would be a promising venue for future research. Additional research on the impact of internal migration and remittances on rural households and agriculture is required to understand this relationship further. Rural out-migration can serve to complement sustainable agriculture and rural development. The development of a standard method of analysis would facilitate comparison of findings across studies. Presently, the varied approaches to data analysis restrict the comparability or generalizability of findings.

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ANNEX

ANNEX 1 : HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

Interviewer			Date	
Commune		Village		

HSHH ID:

Subject: Impacts of migration on agricultural production in a Red River Delta village. Vietnam

Section I. General information (Note: Check (*) on the interviewee)

1.1 Household information

No	Name	Gender 1.Male 2.Female	Age	Relationship with hh head 1.HH head 2.Husband/wife 3.Children 4.Other	Marital Status 1.Married 2.Single	Education level	Occupation 1. Peasant/Farmer 2. Industrial Worker 3. Officer 4. Labourer 5. Sale 6. Handicraft 7. Others	Working place 1.In village 2. Out of the village 3. Foreign (detailed)
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								

1.2 Clarified HH characteristics (interviewer calculation)

- Family size.....
- Labour size (healthy people from 16 to 60 years old):
- Male labour.....Female labour.....
- Number of migrants:
- Number of male migrants.....Number of female migrants:

Section 3: HH's Income and Expenditure

Please give the information about income and expenditure of HH in 2015?

Unit: million VND

Income categories	In village	Out of local	Total
Crop income (cost included)		0	
Husbandry income (cost included)		0	
Pension			
Service/ Trading			
Wage labour (per days)			
Salary (per month)			
Other			
Total income			

Expenditure	Amount of money
Cost for crop (whole year)	
Cost for husbandry (whole year)	
Cost for other farming activities (whole year)	
Cash spending for daily consumption	
Education spending	
Health spending	
Home supplies spending	
Farming fixed assets spending	
Debt	
Cash spending for migrants	
Other	
Total expenditure	
II. Variance Total income – Total expenditure (= Savings)	

Section 4. Migration and remittance characteristics

4.1 Migrants information

Family member	Have migrants send money back home? 1. Yes 2. No	Sending remittance frequency 1. Every week 2. Every month 3. Once per few months 4. Annum 5. Limited	Amount of remittance last year (million VND)	Remittance purpose 1. Farming investment 2. Non-farm investment 3. Education 4. Debt 5. Consumption for home supplies/ House improvement 6. Health care 7. Social events 8. Savings 9. Other (Detailed)

4.2 Remittance characteristics

Family member	Started year of migration	Has the migrant continuously migrated since then? 1. Yes 2. No	Type of migration 1. Daily shift 2. Seasonal migration 3. Long-term migration 4. Permanent migration 5. International migration	Working sector 1. Public Service/ Government sector 2. Private Sector 3. International Company 4. Self employed 5. Other	Living place 1. In village 2. Out of village 3. Foreign	Earnings (per month)

If there was investment for farming, please make detailed (multiple choice):

- a. Buying agricultural land
- b. Renting-in agricultural land
- c. Buying farming machine
- d. Renting farming machine
- e. Renting farming labour
- f. Others (detailed)

4.3 Agricultural production choices under the context of family member movement

Crops

Type of crops	Before migration		After migration	
	Areas (m ²)	Estimated income in a year (<i>million VND</i>)	Areas (m ²)	Estimated income in a year (<i>million VND</i>)
Rice production				
Vegetable				
Fruit trees				
Others				

Husbandry

Animal	Before migration		After migration	
	Areas (m ²) /number of animals	Estimated income in a year (<i>million VND</i>)	Areas (m ²) /number of animals	Estimated income in a year (<i>million VND</i>)
Pig				
Poultry				
Castle				
Aquaculture				

4.4 Reasons to maintain agricultural production

- a. Food security
- b. Supplementary for HH income source
- c. Have free time
- d. Can combine with other earnings activities
- e. Others

4.5 Labour management for HH earnings income activities

Activities	Before migration				After migration			
	Family member		Exchanged labour	Rented labour	Family member		Exchanged labour	Rented labour
	Male	Female			Male	Female		
1. Rice production								
2. Vegetable growing								
3. Pig raising								
4. Poultry raising								
5. Aquaculture								
6. Castle raising								
7. Other farming activities								
8. Service								
9. Handicraft								
10. Trade								
14. Others (detailed)								

4.6 Please estimate the importance of these activities under the context of migration (*The more important. the lower score*)

Activities	Before migration	After migration
1. Rice production		
2. Vegetable growing		
3. Pig raising		
4. Poultry raising		
5. Aquaculture		
6. Castle raising		
7. Other farming activities		
8. Service (detailed)		
9. Handicraft (detailed)		
10. Trade		
11. Wage labour		
12. Working salary		
13. Others (detailed)		

If there was a change in estimating the importance level. please provide the reasons.

.....

5. Impacts of migration on social aspects

5.1 In comparison with before migration. how does the household change in different aspects?

- a. Household income
 - a1. Increased
 - a2. Stayed the same
 - a3. Decreased
- b. Children’s education
 - b1. Increased
 - b2. Stayed the same
 - b3. Decreased
- c. Family members’ health
 - c1. Increased
 - c2. Stayed the same
 - c3. Decreased
- d. Social status
 - d1. Increased
 - d2. Stayed the same
 - d3. Decreased

5.2 Feelings of the left behind on spouse’s migration

	Agreed
Worried about the loyalty of their spouse	
Worried about the tiredness of their spouse	
Worried about the labour safety of their spouse	
Other (detailed)	

5.3 Impact of parents’ migration on children

	Agreed
Better education conditional	
Healthier	
Doing more housework	
More negative behaviour	
More negative emotions	

5.4 Labour division under the context of migration

Tasks	Before migration		After migration	
	Main performer		Main performer	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Cooking/ Prepared meals				
Cleaning				
Children care				
Children's education care				
Elder care				
Washing				
Other				

5.5 House conditions

House type	Built year
Storey house	
Concreted house	
Hut	
Others	

5.6 Household assets *(Interview combine with observation)*

Items	Number	Value
Television		
Refrigerator		
Motorcycle		
Mobile phone		
Television		
Air conditioner		
Other		

5.7 General estimated on the role of migration in local development in different aspects

Aspects	Significantly Positive	Little Positive	None	Little Negative	Significantly Positive
Infrastructure					
Public activities					
Education					
Health care					
Employment generator					
Social's vices					

5.8 Do you agree if your children prefer to work in farming sector?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes. what do your households will support?

.....

If no. please provide the reasons

.....

5.9 What do you identify yourself in CV and why?

.....

Thank you for your cooperation!

ANNEX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE ON YOUTH

“♣”: multiple answers question.

I. BACKGROUND

1. Correspondent name _____
Tel:..... Address.....
2. Age: _____
3. Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

4. ♣ Primary profession

Student	1
Casual worker	2
Self-employment	3
Government employment	4
Private employment	5
Non-salaried homemaker	6
Unemployed	7

5. ♣ Marital status

Single	1
Married	2
Divorce	3
Widowed	4
Other please specify _____	

6. ♣ In the last 6 months. do your husband/wife have been leaving the home?

Yes	1
No	2

7. What are your parents' current profession

a. Father's profession

Farmer	1
Not farmer	2

b. Mother's profession

Farmer	1
Not farmer	2

8. ♣ What is your household income in comparison to others in community?

Less than	1
More than	2
The same	3

9. ♣ Do you have any farmland?

Yes	1
No	2

II. Attitude and interest in agriculture

1. Do you think society considers farming as a respectable profession?

Yes	1
No	2

2.a ♣ Are you ever considering a career as a farmer?

Yes	1
No	2
Maybe	3

2.b If yes. in many years.....

3. According to you. what attracts youth in a career in farming?

Potential income	1
Personal interest	2
Prestige	3
My relatives/partner's wishes	4
Willingness to stay in the countryside	5
Applying my skills	6
No other choice	

4. If no: According to you what are the main factors discouraging youth from becoming a farmer?

Lack of land	1
Degraded land	2
Lack of capital	3
Lack of labour	5

Lack of basic farming knowledge	6
Lack of market	8
No interest	9
Low income	10
My family doesn't want me to become a farmer.	11
Energy intensive work	13
People's negative perception of farming	14
Wanting to escape village life	15
Increased risks from climate change	16
Other	

III. Youth and migration

1. a Are you thinking about migrating to another area?

Yes	1
No	2

1b ♣ If yes. what are the main reasons why you consider migrating

My family encourages me to	1
Better job prospects	2
Joining friends/relatives in the city	3
Better recreational activities	4
Escaping my family	5
Higher chance of finding a husband / wife	6
Escaping village life	8
Better education	9
Others_____	10

1c. If no. what are the main reasons encouraging you to stay in the countryside?

Being close to my friends	1
Being close to my relatives	2
Job opportunities	3
Enjoying rural life	4
Access to land and productive resources	5
Others_____	6

IV. POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

1. What should be done to make agriculture attractive to the youth?

Factors	1. Yes 2.No/	Rank by order of priority from 1-5
Teach agriculture at school		
Organize short accelerated training courses on agriculture and agribusiness (i.e. 6 months)		
Share positive stories of young farmers on social and traditional media		
Set up youth farming groups		
Request the government to support land access for young people		
Facilitate credit access for young farmers		
Support young farmers with market linkage and business skills		
Increase young people's access to information on existing agricultural training & support systems		
Others		

2. Please share additional ideas what should be done to make agribusiness attractive to the youth?

Thank you for your cooperation!

ANNEX 3

CHECKLIST FOR INDEPTH INTERVIEWS

Introduction

The purpose of this interview is to better understand the impacts of migration on agricultural production in a Red River Delta

We have requested your collaboration because of your expertise and knowledge of the local context. We are very thankful for your collaboration.

Introductory question

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Position
- Can you briefly tell us about your job?

Addition questions for specific interviewee Policy makers at provincial level (DARD)

1.1 Mission/staff/division of work of the department

1.2 General situation of agricultural production in the province?

1.3 What do you perceive on the impact of migration on agricultural production?

1.4 What are the influences of youth migration and disinterested in agricultural production?

1.5 What do you think about the feminization and ageing of agricultural production?

1.6 Are there any program at the national and provincial level that specifically aim to improve/support gender equity in agriculture / agribusiness?

1.7 Are there any program at the national and provincial level that specifically aim to encourage young people to take a job in farming / agribusiness or to support them in the process?

Youth Union

2.1 Mission/number of member/activities of Youth Union

2.2 The participation of youth in agricultural production

2.3 Does the Youth Union organize activities for youth related to agriculture or agribusiness? If yes. what are they? At what level are those activities organized (village. district. and province. national)? The reasons for the participation of youth (male/female)?

2.4 Attitudes towards farming

- In your experience. what's the attitude of young people towards agriculture?
Do you see a difference in attitudes / perceptions between men and women?

How does this influence their participation in agriculture and agribusiness activities?

- In your experience, what are the main reasons why some young people decide to take a job as a farmer?
- According to you, what are the main reasons why many young people don't want to work in a) agriculture? b) agribusiness?

2.5 *Access to resources?*

- In your opinion, do most young people have enough resources to start a job as farmer?
- What resources do young people lack the most to start a career as a farmer? Do you see any difference between young men and young women?
- In your opinion, do most young people have enough resources to start a job in agribusiness?
- What resources do young people lack the most to start a career in agribusiness? Do you see any difference between young men and young women?
- In your opinion, what should be done to increase young people's access to these resources?
- In your opinion, what are other obstacles preventing young people from taking jobs in the agriculture / agribusiness sector?

2.6 *Support systems for youth in agriculture and agribusiness?*

- Are you aware of organizations that specifically support young people who want to work in agriculture or start a job in agribusiness? If yes, how do they support young people? Can you describe their activities?
- Are you aware of existing programs that encourage the youth to start a career in agribusiness / agriculture (from education services? extension services, mass organizations, etc.)?
- What have their results been so far? What are the strengths of those programs? What are their weaknesses?
- What's the best way to reach out to young people who could potentially be interested in farming / agribusiness? What are the best channels to reach them?
- What role can cooperatives and collaborative groups play in encouraging the youth to work in agricultural value chains? How can they support the youth? Should they have specific services targeted at them? If yes, which ones?
- Are you aware of any factors preventing the youth from actively participating in the activities of cooperatives / collaborative groups (e.g. trainings collective marketing, and meetings)?
- How do you communicate with young people? What channels do you use?

2.7 *Are there any policies at the national and provincial level that specifically aim to encourage young people to take a job in farming / agribusiness or to support them in the process?*

2.8 *What are the encouraging factors or the constraints for people to become member of your management board?*

2.9 *The recommendation?*

- What areas should we focus on to encourage more young people to take a job in agriculture or agribusiness? What specific activities should be carried out?
- What advice would you give us in order to work better with young people?
- What partners would you recommend us to work with to better reach out to young people?
- Do you have any other remarks or suggestions?

Women Union (at commune level)

3.1 *Mission/staff/activity?*

3.2 *Changing of woman's roles in agriculture?*

- In the past 5 years, have you noticed any changes in how men and women participate in agricultural production (e.g. do you see an increase / decrease in the number of men/women in the agricultural labour force? Have roles shifted?) Are there any new trends? What are the reasons behind those trends?
- Traditionally, what roles are taken up by women in rice / vegetable production? Are there roles that specifically belong to men? In your opinion, what are the reasons why some roles are taken up by men? and some others by women?

3.3 *Gender-based challenges and constraints to participation in agricultural activities?*

- What are the main challenges for women to make a decent living from farming? Are those challenges the same for men? Are there any barriers/difficulties that are stronger for women than for men?
- What are the main challenges for women to be involved in agribusiness either as a worker or as a business owner?
- For the two topics above, are there differences between young and older women?

3.4 *The opinion of the skills and knowledge of woman and man (for option)*

- Are there areas where you feel women usually lack more capacity? If yes, which ones? What should be done to remediate that?
- In your experience, do male and female farmers have the same level of skills and knowledge on farming? Do you perceive any differences? If yes, which ones? What's the cause of those differences in skills / knowledge? What are the challenges for women to strengthen their skills? Are those challenges the same for men?
- In your opinion, are extension services adequate to ensure female farmers' access to learning (e.g. training methodologies, content, delivery by extension staff, etc.)? If no, what should be improved?
- In your opinion, is there a difference made between young and older women in this particular domain?

3.5 Social capital and the role of networks (for option)

- What role can cooperatives and collaborative groups play in ensuring that women benefit fairly from participating in agricultural value chains? How can they support women? What should they do to support them even more?
- Are you aware of any factors preventing women from actively participating in the activities of the cooperative / collaborative group (e.g. trainings, collective marketing, and meetings)?
- Are you aware of any (in) formal groups set up by and for women on specific issues related to the value chain (e.g. labour groups to collectively support each other on their farms, community-funds, etc.)? If yes, what are those groups and what's their purpose?
- We often see that leadership positions within cooperatives and collaborative groups are often occupied by men. In your opinion, what are the reasons for this? What can be done to ensure more women take leadership positions

3.6 Access to and control over resources

- In your experience, how do men and women usually divide decision-making power regarding the purchase and use of inputs for agriculture?
- In your experience, how do men and women usually divide decision-making power regarding the sales and use of crops?
- General decisions regarding the household (buying assets, migration, organization ... etc)? What about the split of resources (what is under the name of who)?
- What about division between young women and their in-law family?

3.7 Recommendations

- Are there specific areas where you think women should receive more support?
- What can we do to reduce the amount of time dedicated by women to difficult tasks (both at home and in the field)?
- In your opinion, what are the changes main stumbling blocks related to gender equity in agricultural value chains?
- Are you aware of any approaches / activities in Vietnam that have successfully contributed to reduce women's workload at home (i.e. housework) or contribute to a more equitable division of non-productive activities (i.e. cooking, taking care of children, cleaning, shopping, etc.) between men and women?
- Are there any policies at the national and provincial level that specifically aim to improve gender equity in agriculture / agribusiness?
- What activities do you organize? At what level (village, district, province)?
- From your experience, are younger women more or less interested to take part to Women's union than older women? Which criteria could influence this decision?

Farmer Union

- 4.1 *Structures/activity/mission/staff/ main constraints/advantages?*
- 4.2 *Does the Farmer Union organize specific activities for young people? If yes. which ones and with what purpose?*
- 4.3 *Does the Farmer Union have specific activities to improve gender equity? If yes. which ones and with what purpose?*
- 4.4 *What are the encouraging factors or the constraints for people to become member of your management board?*

Heads of village

- 5.1 *Story of village/land/changing/migration/agriculture/agribusiness: general situation?*
- 5.2 *What does the direct and indirect impacts of villager movement on agricultural land uses. farming technology. labour management. farming investment. agricultural production choice in the whole village?*
- 5.3 *Do the village leaders (or district / provincial) provide specific support to agriculture / agribusiness? If yes. can you provide examples? What type of support do you provide and with what purpose? What results have you achieved?*
- 5.4 *Do the village leaders (or district / provincial) provide specific support to women/young people in agriculture? If yes. can you provide examples? What type of support do you provide and with what purpose? What results have you achieved?*
- 5.5 *The participation of youth in agriculture production (number/activities)?*
- 5.6 *The informal groups in the village and the participation of woman/youth in these groups?*

Heads of cooperative

- 6.1 *Member and its structures/activities/connections?*
- 6.2 *The benefits of joint cooperative?*
- 6.3 *Do you think that your cooperative has a role to play to encourage young people to join farming?*
- 6.4 *Specific roles of youth could well perform in cooperative (i.e. related to input. marketing. collection. etc.)?*
- 6.5 *What are the encouraging factors or the constraints for people to become member of your cooperative's management board?*

Farmers (2 y/f. 2o/f. 2y/m. 2o/m)

- 7.1 *General information of household?*
- 7.2 *Experience and attitude to agricultural production?*
- 7.3 *Their job experiences and the reasons to choose that job?*
- 7.4 *Their constraints and opportunities in agriculture production/agribusiness?*
- 7.5 *Their recommendations?*

Annex 4: News on worker dismissing after age of 35 in Vietnam IZs

The collage consists of several news snippets:

- Top Left (Viet Nam News):** "Workers over 30 face grave unemployment crisis". Article text: "Viet Nam News (VNN) - The fact that industrial parks (IPs) at an industrial assembly factory in the Quang Binh Industrial Zone (IZ) are not meeting the job needs of workers..."
- Top Middle (Công an nhân dân):** "Workers lose their jobs after the age of 35: At the end of their working age, they work as street vendors". Article text: "According to a survey of the Labor Union Research Institute (Vietnam General Confederation of Labor) in some parks, 85% of workers over 30 years old working in industrial zones have been forced to quit or work by themselves, quit with the main reason being reorganizing or a crisis from being able to enhance working conditions..."
- Top Right:** "Dismissing employees after the age of 35: Compliance with the law is the solution to the 'problem' against dismissal". Article text: "(PLO) - In 2017, the survey results of the Institute of Workers and Trade Unions - the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor at 64 enterprises in industrial parks across the country recorded the status of eliminating older workers..."
- Middle Left:** "Labor dismissal at age 35: The inevitable trend of the market economy?". Article text: "Although there are no accurate statistics on the number of employees being fired at the age of 35, however, this fact is still happening, potentially many social security risks..."
- Middle Right (tin tức):** "Retiring after age 35: Great impact on the social security system". Article text: "The situation of employees leaving work in industrial parks and export processing zones (EPZ) after reaching the age of 35 is happening and will greatly affect the social security system..."
- Bottom Right:** "Proposal to amend the policy to limit the dismissal of workers over 35 years old". Article text: "Citizens reflect - Agency answers. According to the statistics of the survey in the past periods, many businesses currently recruit and employ workers aged 18-35, when they are past the age in many ways, the enterprises have trimmed the contracts, causing difficulties for labor..."

Source: Author adjusted from online newspaper