

MONTAGNARD DESIRE TO RETURN TO ORIGINAL HAMLET SITES .

AND

VIETNAMESE FARMING WITHIN MONTAGNARD HAMLETS

November 1970 .

by

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With the assistance of
Province Pacification
Attitude Survey Teams
of the Pacification
Studies Group (PSG),
CORDS

Sponsored by ADLR, USAID, Vietnam
under Contract No. AID-730-3249

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE INQUIRY

Background: The Government of Vietnam (GVN) is planning a program of land identification for areas inhabited by Montagnards. The seven completely highland provinces of Darlac, Kontum, Lam Dong, Phu Bon, Pleiku, Quang Duc and Tuyen Duc will have priority. The program will grant Montagnard hamlets title to lands their members customarily farm.

To assist the major GVN agencies involved, the Ministry of Land Reform, Agriculture and Fisheries Development (MLRAF) and the Ministry for the Development of Ethnic Minorities (MDEM), the Office of the Associate Director of USAID for Land Reform (ADLR, USAID) is endeavoring to ascertain the following of Montagnard hamlets in the above provinces:

1. What percentage practice shifting agriculture and what percentage farm the same plots every crop year;
2. How much land is now being used by Montagnard hamlets, and whether for shifting or settled agriculture;
3. Whether Montagnards in hamlets relocated because of the war desire to stay where they are or return to their original farming areas;
4. Approximately how many ethnic Vietnamese are farming land within Montagnard hamlets, and approximately how many plots and hectares are involved.

Field work on problems 1 and 2 has been done by Dean Stanton of ADLR and reported separately. The purposes of this research are to discover, if possible, answers to problems 3 and 4.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Method: Interviewers, each team of which included ethnic Montagnards, were sent into provinces in the highlands. With the assistance of province and district Vietnamese and American officials they found Montagnard hamlets which have been relocated during the past five years because of the war. There they interviewed Montagnard hamlet chiefs or deputy chiefs. Instructions to interviewers and the questions put to respondents are given in Appendix A.

The Sample: Interview teams were available in only three of the seven completely highland provinces: Darlac, Pleiku, and Tuyen Duc. It was desirable to use the teams in their native provinces to minimize language problems and avoid social barriers between interviewers and Montagnard hamlet officials. Persons of ADLR, USAID having knowledge of and experience in the highlands state that the provinces selected are representative of relocation and land use problems in the seven-province plateau region.

Interviewers obtained data in thirty relocated Montagnard hamlets in Darlac (25% of all relocated Montagnard hamlets of A, B, or C security status); in twenty in Pleiku (17% of all of A, B, or C security status) and in seventeen in Tuyen Duc (100% of all of A, B, C, or D security

status).¹ It was not possible to sample truly randomly. The sample is 20% of all relocated Montagnard hamlets (of A, B, C, or D security status) in the three provinces sampled. It is 12% of all relocated Montagnard hamlets (of A, B, C, or D security status) in the entire seven-province plateau. Assuming relocated Montagnard hamlets under GVN control are similar in ability to adapt to new farming and living sites, in ties to tradition, and in proximity to ethnic Vietnamese, one can be about 87% confident that the findings are within $\pm 13\%$ of the circumstances of all Montagnards under GVN control in the highlands.

The districts and Montagnard hamlets sampled are given in Appendix B.

¹ Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES) as of 31 July 1970.

RESULTS

According to their hamlet chiefs:

61% of the Montagnard hamlets want to return to their original living sites;

33% want to stay where they are now;

6% report their people divided: some want to stay, some want to return to original sites, several want to leave where they are now and search out new sites.

Table 1 shows their desires by province, and the reasons given.

The differences, between provinces, in those who want to return and those who want to stay are understandable when one examines the geography of the areas from which they came and where they are now. In Darlac most want to return. In Darlac many Montagnard hamlets were moved from fertile lands (once, before the Viet Cong, known as "Happy Valley") to crowded areas on much less fertile and poorly watered lands. In Tuyen Duc more want to return than want to stay, but less than in Darlac. In Tuyen Duc Montagnard hamlets were relocated in mountain country, good but rugged land. In Pleiku more want to stay than want to return. In Pleiku relocated Montagnard hamlets were set up in fertile gently rolling hill country where irrigated rice can be grown. In Pleiku urban jobs are moderately easy to find.

TABLE 1

MONTAGNARD DESIRE TO STAY OR RETURN TO
ORIGINAL SITES

Percentage of Hamlets in which Inhabitants:	in Darlac	in Tuyen Duc	in Pleiku	Reasons: (from most to least frequent)
Overwhelmingly want to return to original land sites	77	60	40	There is little land here; present sites are very crowded; arable land is many kilometers away from the hamlet; one cannot raise cattle here; there is not enough water.
Overwhelmingly want to stay where they now are	16	30	60	They have built houses here; the men have jobs or are in the military here; life is less hard here; the old land was too mountainous.
Are divided; some want to stay, some want to return or search out new sites	7	10	0	
	100	100	100	

Concerning ethnic Vietnamese farming within Montagnard hamlets:

20% of Montagnard hamlet chiefs say they don't know of any
(which almost certainly means there are none)

65% say there are none

15% say there are some

In Montagnard hamlets in which some ethnic Vietnamese are farming
(15% of all Montagnard hamlets sampled):

in about 50% there are from 2 to 6 Vietnamese farmers

in about 25% there are from 10 to 20

in about 20% there are 50 or more, or "a great number"

In Montagnard hamlets in which ethnic Vietnamese are farming (15%
of all Montagnard hamlets) slightly less (10%) can estimate the number
of plots involved. Thus:

in about 50% ethnic Vietnamese farm 2 to 6 plots in the hamlet

in about 30% they farm from 10 to 20 plots

in about 20% they farm "a great number," 50 - 60, etc.

Concerning the hectarage of these plots farmed by ethnic Vietnamese:

in about 40% ethnic Vietnamese farm a total of 2 to 6 hectares in
the hamlet

in about 20% they farm a total of 10 to 20 hectares in the hamlet

in about 40% they farm a total of 30 to 60 hectares in the hamlet

Conclusions:

1. Most of the Montagnards prefer where they were before relocation to where they are now. Most want to return to the hill country life of swidden agriculture, cattle raising, and abundant land.
2. None, however, contemplate returning to their original hamlet sites in the near future. The following excerpts from hamlet chiefs' and deputy hamlet chiefs' comments illustrate this:

From Darlac: All the people in this hamlet want to return . . . but when they return there the GVN forces must provide them with security protection; otherwise they won't return.

Yes, we all want to return very much, but not until perfect security is observed . . .

Yes, everyone is willing to return . . . where they may have farm land to till, places to raise domestic animals, vegetables and fish . . . but returning there now is impossible

From Pleiku: We want to go back, if true peace is restored.

We will return to the old village if it is secure.

People here want to return to their old hamlet but not until true peace is restored. Even during cease-fire they won't return.

From Tuyen Duc: If peace is truly restored they will go looking for another locality and resettle there

Given the higher priorities of the coastal plain of Central Vietnam, the heavily populated ring of provinces around Saigon, and the delta, and the manpower needs to garrison the vast underpopulated highland plateau, it does not seem likely that many relocated Montagnard hamlets will return to their original living sites soon.

3. Intrusion into Montagnard relocated hamlets by ethnic Vietnamese farmers is a problem in about 7% of all such hamlets. In about 3% of all such hamlets there are a "great number" of ethnic Vietnamese farming within Montagnard hamlet boundaries.

APPENDIX A

Instructions: Ask at Province Headquarters for the names of Montagnard hamlets which have been relocated any time during the past five years. The Deputy Province Chief for Security, or Deputy for Administration, or representative of the Ministry for Development of Ethnic Minorities, or Province Senior Advisor, or other CORDS personnel, or the District Chiefs, or District Senior Advisors--any of these persons will have this information.

Montagnard hamlets which have been relocated are almost all "B" or "C" hamlets. Almost all are located close in to centers of security, on the roads. They will be easy to reach.

Go to any relocated Montagnard hamlet. Find the Hamlet Chief or his assistant. Write down the following:

Name of Province _____

Name of District _____

Name of Hamlet _____

Questions: Ask the following questions of the Hamlet Chief or his assistant:

1. Do you think most families in your hamlet want to go back where they came from, or want to stay here?
 - a. Most want to return
 - b. Most want to stay here
 - c. Doesn't know
 - d. Other (Please write down any other answers.)

2. About how many Vietnamese farmers are growing crops in this hamlet? By crops we do not mean commercial plantation crops like coffee but crops to eat like rice, beans, corn, and such.
 - a. Number, or range (write it down)
 - b. Doesn't know
 - c. Other

Instructions, Question 2: If necessary, ask this question several times. It is important to learn the number of farmers, or farm families who are Vietnamese, not the Vietnamese population. It is also important to learn the number farming in the Montagnard hamlet, not the number of Vietnamese living in the hamlet.

3. About how many plots of land are these Vietnamese farmers farming in this hamlet?

- a. Number or range (write it down)
- b. Doesn't know
- c. Other

4. About how many hectares of land are these Vietnamese farmers farming in this hamlet?

- a. Number or range (write it down)
- b. Doesn't know
- c. Other

Đi đến bất cứ ấp định cư người Thượng nào, tìm gặp Trưởng Ấp hoặc người phụ tá. Ghi lại các chi tiết sau :

Tên Tỉnh : _____

Tên Quận : _____

Tên Ấp : _____

CÂU HỎI : Hỏi Trưởng Ấp hoặc người phụ tá các câu hỏi sau :

1. Ông có nghĩ rằng đa số các gia đình trong ấp muốn trở về Buôn (Sóc) cũ hay muốn ở lại đây?
 - a. Đa số muốn trở về
 - b. Đa số muốn ở lại
 - c. Không biết
 - d. Ý kiến khác (xin ghi lại tất cả mọi ý kiến) :

CHỈ DẪN :

2. Có bao nhiêu nông dân người Kinh trồng trọt hoa màu trong ấp này? Nói đến hoa màu không có nghĩa là đề cập đến các đồn điền có tính cách thương mại trồng loại cây như cà-phê, nhưng mà là các loại ngũ cốc để ăn như gạo, đậu, ngô v.v...

Nếu cần, hỏi lại câu hỏi này nhiều lần. Điều quan trọng là hỏi cho biết số nông dân hay gia đình làm ruộng người Kinh, chứ không phải biết dân số người Kinh. Còn điều quan trọng nữa là phải biết số người làm ruộng sống trong ấp Thượng, chứ không phải số người Kinh sống trong ấp.

 - a. Cho con số đích thực hoặc vào khoảng từ bao nhiêu tới bao nhiêu (ghi lấy).
 - b. Không biết
 - c. Chi tiết khác :

3. Vào khoảng bao nhiêu thửa đất được nông dân người Kinh đang canh tác tại ấp này?

a. Cho số đích thực hoặc vào khoảng từ bao nhiêu tới bao nhiêu (ghi lấy).

b. Không biết

c. Chi tiết khác (xin ghi lại tất cả mọi chi tiết) :

4. Có khoảng bao nhiêu mẫu đất do các nông dân người Kinh này đang canh tác trong ấp?

a. Cho số chính xác hay vào khoảng từ bao nhiêu tới bao nhiêu (ghi lấy).

b. Không biết

c. Chi tiết khác (xin ghi lại tất cả mọi chi tiết) :

APPENDIX B

PROVINCES, DISTRICTS, AND MONTAGNARD HAMLETS SAMPLED

<u>Province</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Buon (Hamlet)</u>
Darlac	Banmethuot	Drao Ye A Bour Ea-Kao Ebung Ea Tieu Kram B Ea-Pur Enao B HDrah Kbu Erang U Nui Kreh A Ea Po Pu-Hueh Kang Kreh B Dha Kma Ea Bong
	Phuoc An	Cu Pam Cu Enun B Jat Cu Phiang Tlier Bhung Cu Sren Yang Bong Hang Mdu
Pleiku	Le Trung	Thong Kop De Krot De Hrel De Hrak Plei Brep Ie Plei Brep Tih

<u>Province</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Buon (Hamlet)</u>
Pleiku (cont'd.)	Le Trung (cont'd.)	Plei Gol
		Plei Bla
		De Angleh
		De Got
		Dak Hiam
		De Goh
		De Drot
		De Klanh
		De Yoh
		De Mong
		De Thung
		De Doa
		De Tul
		Daktrok
Tuyen Duc	Don Duong	Kado
		Ta ly
		Prongo
		Suoi Thong A
		Ka Don*
	Duc Trong	Komdorate
		Da Wing
		Dame A
		Dame B
		Pririong
Lac Duong	R Chai	
	Dagun	
	Koglam	
	Lac Duong	Klongeur A
		Klongeur B
		Daraha A
		Daraha C

* Sometimes spelled Kadeune.